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BSc Degree

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English – 1 (Basic English)
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Sounds and Writing Symbols in English

Welcome to the class. Today we will talk about sounds of English. We are going to talk about writing system in English. These are the two separate things and right at the outset, that is, right at the beginning of this class, I would like to tell you to pay attention to these things carefully. In order to learn different aspects of English language it is important to separate these two.

Once again, we are talking about writing system in English and sound system of English. If we try to simplify it further, we are going to be talking about how we spell things, that is, writing system and what happens when we speak. Are these two things different? If it is surprising to you, then you require even closer attention to these facts, they are very different things.

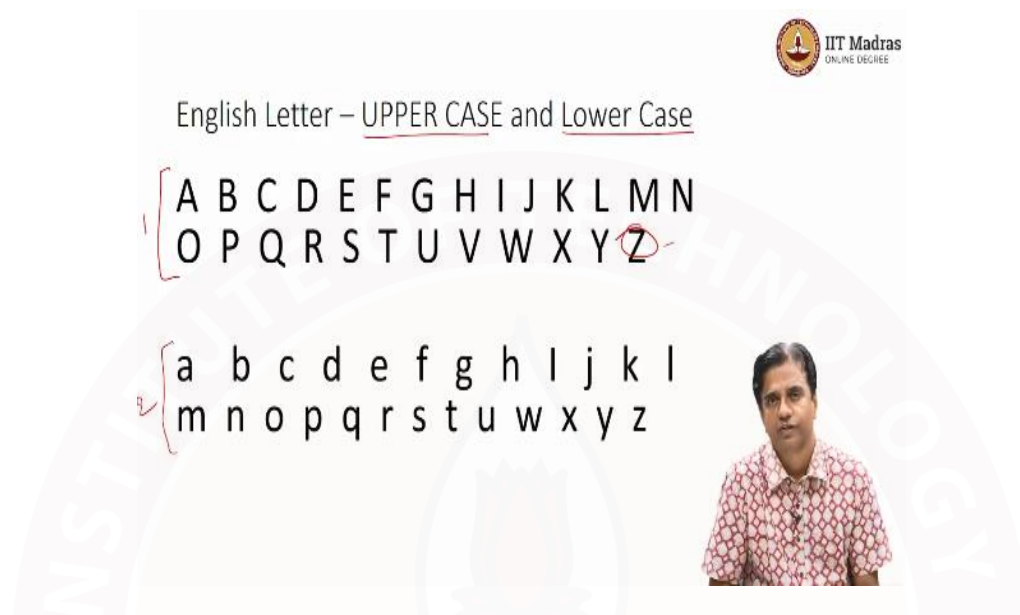
Speaking is contingent upon sound system and writing, particularly in English, has a different system. That is, we follow, we have different symbols to represent sounds of English. We are going to elaborate on that today. As a note, as a footnote to this, let me also add to you that learning to write is one of the skills that we can learn by putting in efforts, but learning to speak, particularly for children, is quite intuitive and once we pay attention to these things, things become easier for us to learn.

Let us move ahead and talk about it. One more disclosure right at the beginning, we are going to be talking about writing system and sound system. We do not intend, or we do not employ that we are going to begin teaching you alphabets. We understand that you know language and almost all of you are at many different levels in the process of learning.

Through these things we are trying to work on something, we are trying to draw your attention to something that is rarely paid attention to in the process of learning. So, let me talk more about it when we move further. So, one more time: learning to speak and

learning to write and we are going to look at these things for the purpose of learning English.

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When you learnt English alphabet for the first time, I am sure you have paid attention to this but I want to draw your attention to more questions and then going to invite you to check if these questions came to your mind. I am sure what you see on the screen is familiar to you. These are 26 symbols of English writing system. Depending upon when we started to learn English writing system, we have to learn this thing first and these things are taught in different ways. Whatever method you applied to learn these things you have learnt these 26 letters they are a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y and z.

Right from this point when we, the last part, when we, some people say this as 'z' some people say as 'zed'. The difference is between British and American spoken system. In American system, this is known as 'z', in a British system this is known as 'zed'. That is how we, irrespective of the method applied in learning, we learn these things. Then you must have learned the second set as well, set one and set two. The difference between these two sets is one is called upper case and the other is called lower case.

So, uppercase symbols and lowercase symbols, I do not mean anything else when I say symbols, I know they are alphabets and they are used in writing system but the reason why I am calling them symbols again and again is very simple and I want you to know that. The reason is we use these symbols to represent sounds that we speak, and we will dwell upon that when we move further, but let us stick to the other question for the time being and here is what I am inviting you to think.

Why do we have two different sets, why do we have upper case symbols and lowercase symbols? I know one answer is very simple: we use uppercase in the beginning of a word, when those words are used in a sentence, we used the upper case only at the first, at the initial position of the first word in the sentence and then there are lot of words which begin with upper case, we use upper cases in abbreviations and so on.

We know, that is not my question. My question, is couldn't we have just one? What difference would it make? Why do we need two different sets? Think about it, not sure we have an answer to this question. Have you found an answer to this question for yourself so far? Please look at that try to find an answer for yourself, this is just an interesting thing, this does not have much to do with learning part. Nonetheless whether or not we have an answer to the question, we know that we have two different sets and we use them, we know how to use them.

So like I said, upper case, like one of them at the initial position of a word and at several words within a sentence also but not every word within a sentence begins with uppercase. So, most often proper names at initial position, we use uppercase like names etcetera.

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English Rhyme

A -- Apple	J	S
B -- Ball	K	T
C -- Cat - kak	L	U
D -- Dog	M	V
E -- Elephant	N	W
F -- Fan	O	X
G -- Girl	P	Y
H -- House	Q	Z
I -- Ink	R	

26 Letters



We were talking a minute ago, we were talking about different methods of learning. Some people learn it through rhymes. They have for particularly for kids, there are a lot of lines designed so that it sounds little melodious, musical, and becomes easy for children to memorize them, and at the next stage of learning is they give words like ‘a for apple’, ‘b for ball’, ‘c for cat’, ‘d for dog’, ‘e for elephant’, ‘f for fan’, ‘g for girl’, ‘h for house’, ‘i for ink.’, etcetera.

I remembered the other ones too but I have purposely left them blank because I want you to test your own understanding of learning alphabet at the initial point and see if you can fill up the rest of it. Now, so the first thing is learning the whole symbol through rhymes and then giving examples of those rhymes. So that, these are the two different stages. Then I asked you a question, why two different sets, like why uppercase and lowercase? You are going to, you are going to think about that.

Now, here is another question and with that question we begin our discussion in more serious sense. When we say ‘a for apple’, what do we mean? Say the word ‘apple’ for yourself and see if you hear ‘a’ in that. Apple, apple where do we hear ‘a’ in that? There is no ‘a’ sound in the word ‘apple’. This is a disconnect. So what we basically mean, and let me underline this again, I am not trying to make fun of it by drawing your attention to this, neither I am trying to ridicule the sense employed within this process.

What I am trying to tell you is when we teach kids and when kids memorize these things as ‘a for apple’, ‘b for ball’, ‘c for cat’, ‘d for dog’ etcetera, etcetera, what happens in that is they are trying to learn, or the purpose is to teach them writing system. What is the writing system? In the word ‘apple’, the first letter is ‘a’. In the, in the word ‘ball’, the first letter is ‘b’. That is the reason why we say ‘a for apple’ or ‘a as in apple’, ‘b as in ball’, ‘c as in cat’.

So, we mean the first symbol, first letter in the writing of the word cat is ‘c’ because there is no sound as ‘c’ in the word ‘cat’. What is the first sound in the word ‘cat’, which is represented with ‘c’? That sound is ‘k’. So, what are the sounds in this word? I am purposely taking this monosyllabic one small word ‘k’, ‘a’ and ‘t’. So, the word begins with ‘k’ sound but when we write the word ‘cat’ at the initial position we write ‘c’.

So, and if you look at all of them I have given you just few examples of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 words. In each one of them, there is no ‘a’ sound in the word ‘apple’, no ‘b’ sound there is no ‘b’ sound, no ‘c’ sound, no ‘d’ sound. In the word ‘elephant’, look at ‘elephant’ do we have ‘e’? It is ‘a’ elephant; ‘f’ there is no ‘f’ sound because the sound is ‘ph’, the sound is ‘ph’; girl ‘g’, the sound is ‘g’; house begins with ‘h’, the sound is ‘ha’.

So, if you pay attention to many words in English, you will realize that the way we speak a word is different from the way we write, in the sense that there is no direct one-to-one correspondence between the sound system of English, that is, the way words are spoken, and the way it is written with the symbols representing those sounds. This makes the learning little more difficult but my purpose of discussing this for you here is not to show you difficulty. My purpose is to draw your attention to this and please remember a key word here, paying attention. Please keep paying attention to differences and similarities and the points where we are trying to draw your attention. An effort in looking at underlying pattern, an effort in paying attention to these things will take you several steps ahead.


Learning as you know, is subconscious process. By paying attention to these things, this effort will fix several things in your subconscious and then you will sound more confident. So, first step is to pay attention, the second step is to allow these things to

function your subconscious, to fix some of them and then third step is to observe your own output, whether your output has impact of your learning or not. Watch yourself through this process and you will see the results coming out, that is, results of your efforts coming out in your performance.

That is a note on learning but, so the idea is not to show you difficulties, so the idea is not to show you problems, but the idea is to bring your attention to this point. Point is, there is a disconnect between the two, not a big problem but we pay attention to this and through that we learn; we give priority to learning sounds and I am going to show you these things further and then it will have an impact on learning.


We will also talk about sounds to see the differences between, that is our effort in paying attention to sound system of English will also help us pay attention to how English sounds are different from sounds in the language that we primarily speak and that difference, that understanding, is going to sort them out vividly, clearly and it will have impact on your learning.

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UPPER CASE and Lower Case Letters

TEST IMAGES												
UPPERCASE LETTERS												
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I				
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R				
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z					
LOWERCASE LETTERS												
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i				
j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r				
s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z					




So, this is what you have seen. This is just another table of uppercase and lowercase symbols. So, we use only these 26 letters to represent all sounds of English; we are going to talk about all of them. We are going to talk about each one of them and then we are

going to find them in different words and you will see how they help you learn to speak, they help you learn to write and they help you feel more confident in writing, reading and speaking and also in various different aspects, various different stages of your learning English.




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English Letters

A a	B b	C c	D d	E e	F f	G g	H h	I i
a	bee	cee	dee	e	ef	gee	(h)aitch	i
[eɪ]	[bi:]	[si:]	[di:]	[i:]	[ɛf]	[dʒi:]	[h)entʃ]	[aɪ]
J j	K k	L l	M m	N n	O o	P p	Q q	R r
jay	kay	el	em	en	o	pee	cue	ar
[dʒeɪ]	[keɪ]	[ɛl]	[ɛm]	[ɛn]	[ou]	[pi:]	[kju:]	[ɑ:/ɔr]
S s	T t	U u	V v	W w	X x	Y y	Z z	
ess	tee	u	vee	double-u	ex	wy(e)	zed/zee	
[ɛs]	[ti:]	[ju:]	[vi:]	[ˈdʌbəlju:]	[eks]	[waɪ]	[zɛd/zɪ:]	

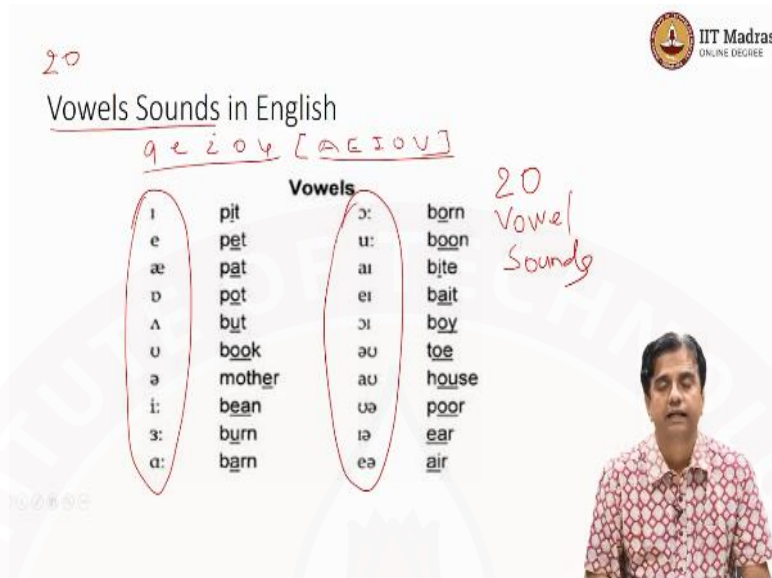


So, here is one more time I want your attention. I like this table and therefore, I brought this for you. So, this is uppercase, this is lowercase. Uppercase, lowercase and this is English, this is a spelling of these letters, that is, how these, when we say 'bee' how it sounds and in this one, you have been given a phonetic transcription of sounds involved, so pay attention to that.

So, here is one, so you will understand why I have put these square brackets. The first letter is 'a'. How do we read it? 'a'. So 'bee'. 'b' and long 'ii', so the letter, the pronunciation of the letter itself has at least two sounds in it, that is 'b' and long 'ii'. Same thing with 'cee', 's' and long 'ii', 'c'. So, look at this it 'b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w', look at this word this sound 'w'. The pronunciation of this one symbol involves sounds which is like a word; 'x, y, zed or 'z' as I said, you can see here z.

So, this chart helps you see the sounds involved in pronouncing these symbols, that is, names of these symbols 'a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y and z'. One more time: take any word, any one of these letters, and see like 'tee' 't' and long 'ii'; 'u', 'y' and long 'ii'; 'vee', 'v' and long 'ii'. So, they sound like a word and when we learn them, memorize them that is how we say these symbols.

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Vowels Sounds in English

20

9 e 2 0 4 [æ ɛ ɪ ɒ ʊ]

Vowels

i	pit	ɔ:	born
e	pet	u:	boon
æ	pat	aɪ	bite
ɒ	pot	eɪ	bait
ʌ	but	ɔɪ	boy
ʊ	book	əʊ	toe
ə	mother	aʊ	house
i:	bean	ʊə	poor
ɜ:	burn	ɪə	ear
ɑ:	barn	eə	air

20 Vowel Sounds

Now, so that that is about writing. At this point when I am talking about the difference between writing and speech sounds, I am going to draw another distinction and we will come back to these consonants and vowels again but it is important to mention them right at this point.

So, when we, when we learn how many vowels are there in English language, quite often you will find people say '5' and they are a, e, i, o, u; A, E, I, O, U. So, these are lower case, these are uppercase. What we, and that is not wrong, what we mean in that is, some of these symbols represent vowel sounds. That is another thing which I want you to pay attention to.

Some of these, these five symbols, represent vowel sounds in English writing system. However, when we look at vocalic sounds, vowel sounds, so all the sounds are classified in two categories. One is consonants and the other is vowel. The reason why we are talking about vowels first is because vowels are more fundamental to natural language and you will see the meaning of more fundamental, being more fundamental to natural language when we move on further.


So, here we have, this chart gives you an example of 20 vowel sounds in English language. 20 vowel sounds in English language and this chart also gives you an example of a word where they occur. So, look at this, look at some of them at least: 'pit' it has a vowel 'i' short 'i'; 'pet' and these sounds are underlined in these words; 'pat'. So 'i', 'a', 'aa'. 'pot' 'o', a short 'a'; 'book' short 'u'; 'mother' 'a', 'a', 'mother'; 'bean', burn, 'barn', 'born', 'boon', 'bite', 'bait', 'boy', 'toe', 'house', 'poor', 'ear', 'air'. These are 20 vowel sounds in English language.

Please look at this chart, these examples carefully and read them several times, these examples. Pay attention to these sounds in these words. What it will do is it will get you think about vowel sounds in remaining words that you know, vowel sounds in other words that you will speak, other than these. What you must also do is find another 5 words at least for each one of these vowel sounds. So, that means I am asking you to make a list of hundred English words, where 5 examples for each one of these vowel sounds.

You do not have to do that in one go, you do not have to do that in one day, but if you can come up with a set of 20 words, 20 different words 5 times for each one of these 20 vowels you will get an idea of how vowel sounds work. If 5 sets sound too much, start with one and then try to pay attention to words that we write or speak, what are the vowels involved in those words? It will be quite an exercise and will have serious impact on how we understand vowel system, vowel sounds of English language.

One more time, to underline this thing: all these vowel sounds, all these vowel sounds become clearer in the words and we are not talking about again, spelling, that is, the way we write words; we are talking about sounds the way we speak.


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24.

Consonant Sounds in words

1. /p/- pit	13. /h/- hot
2. /b/- bit	14. /l/- lad
3. /t/- tab	15. /r/- red
4. /d/- dab	16. /w/- wed
5. /k/- cab	17. /θ/- thought
6. /g/- gab	18. /ð/- them
7. /f/- fan	19. /ʃ/- shy
8. /v/- van	20. /ʒ/- treasure
9. /s/- sad	21. /tʃ/- chime
10. /z/- zoo	22. /dʒ/- jam
11. /m/- man	23. /j/- yum
12. /n/- not	24. /ŋ/- sing



Same way, there are 24 consonant sounds in English and this chart gives you example of each one of them within a word. So, some of the words are repeated and those sounds are, those consonant sounds are given in capital. So what we are doing here is like 'pit', the sound is 'p', we want your attention to sound 'p'; 'bit' attention to sound 'b'; 'tap' attention to sound 't'; 'dab' attention to sound 'd'; 'cab' attention to sound 'k'; 'gab' attention to sound 'g'; 'fan' attention to sound 'f'; 'van', 'sad', 'zoo', 'man', 'not', 'hot', 'lad', 'red', 'wed', 'thought', 'them', 'shy', 'treasure', 'shine', 'jam', 'yum', 'sing'. So, in the word 'sing', we want your attention to 'n' sound. So, these are 20 consonant sounds in English.

One more time, I want to repeat myself and I mean that, is it possible for you to find at least 5 set of words with these sounds? It should be easier with consonants. Please pay attention to them, please do this exercise for yourself and once you have these sets ready, the only thing you will need to do afterwards or you will end up doing afterwards is every word that you have, not in formal writing or speaking, not every moment every time but in your subconscious, many times you will end up finding consonants and vowel sounds in the words that you speak and that is a very productive exercise to do.

So, with that, we are talking about 24 plus 20, that is 44 sounds of English language. Remember, there are only 44 sounds in English language and these are the 44 sounds that

are responsible for infinite number of words that we make using these sounds. We speak infinite number of words using these sounds and I mean infinite in the sense that nobody knows total number of words in any given language. Do you know about total number of words, either in English or in the language that you speak as your primary language, as your native language? Do you know the total number of words?

So, how and why a finite set of 44 odd sounds are responsible for infinite set of words in any spoken language of the world including English is no less than miracle. We will continue talking about some of them for the purpose of learning English.

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Consonant Sounds in English

p	b	t	d	f	v	θ	ð
<u>/pɪn/</u>	<u>/bæd/</u>	<u>/tɪn/</u>	<u>/dɒg/</u>	<u>/faɪv/</u>	<u>/væn/</u>	<u>/θɪn/</u>	<u>/ðæt/</u>
pin	bad	tin	dog	five	van	thin	that
m	n	ŋ	h	ʃ	dʒ	k	g
<u>/mæn/</u>	<u>/nəʊz/</u>	<u>/θɪŋ/</u>	<u>/hɑːf/</u>	<u>/tʃəːtʃ/</u>	<u>/dʒæm/</u>	<u>/kaɪnd/</u>	<u>/ɡʌn/</u>
man	nose	thing	half	church	jam	kind	gun
s	z	ʃ	ʒ	l	r	w	j
<u>/seɪ/</u>	<u>/zuː/</u>	<u>/ʃɪp/</u>	<u>/meɪʒə/</u>	<u>/leg/</u>	<u>/rʌn/</u>	<u>/wɜːk/</u>	<u>/jes/</u>
say	zoo	ship	measure	leg	run	work	yes



This is a promise. So one more time, this is yet another table where 24 vowel sounds underlined colored with their phonetic transcriptions like ‘pin’, ‘bad’, ‘tin’, ‘dog’, ‘five’, ‘van’, ‘thin’, ‘that’, ‘man’, ‘nose’, ‘thing’, ‘half’, ‘church’, ‘jam’, ‘kind’, ‘gun’, ‘say’, ‘zoo’, ‘ship’, ‘measure’, ‘leg’, ‘run’, ‘work’, ‘yes’. So 24 sounds.

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Consonant Sounds

DICTIONARY PHONETIC SYMBOLS

B) CONSONANT SOUNDS

/b/	book	/bʊk/	/w/	we	/wi:/
/d/	day	/deɪ/	/m/	moon	/mu:n/
/g/	give	/gɪv/	/n/	name	/neɪm/
/v/	vast	/vɑːst/	/ŋ/	sing	/sɪŋ/
/ð/	this	/ðɪs/	/p/	path	/pɑːθ/
/z/	zoo	/zu:/	/t/	town	/taʊn/
/ʒ/	vision	/ˈvɪʒən/	/k/	cat	/kæt/
/dʒ/	jump	/dʒʌmp/	/f/	fish	/fɪʃ/
/l/	look	/lʊk/	/θ/	think	/θɪŋk/
/r/	run	/rʌn/	/s/	say	/seɪ/
/j/	yard	/jɑːd/	/ʃ/	she	/ʃi:/
			/tʃ/	cheese	/tʃiːz/



And then you have, again some examples here and finally I know I have talked about too many exercises for one day but they are not too difficult exercises. We will stop for today by telling you one more time, you do not have to do all these things in one go but for the purpose of learning, for the purpose of checking whether the things that we have discussed, that is, writing using symbols as a completely different exercise than understanding sounds of the language when we speak, they are two different things.

Sounds are definitely represented using, 44 sounds are represented using 26 symbols in, for the purpose of writing. That itself is a complex process which we go through and learn but paying attention, paying close attention to these 44 sounds of English is going to improve the way we are going to speak or when you are speaking, it's going to help you improve your speaking better. Thank you.