

THE 44 PHONEMES OF ENGLISH

Below are the phonemes of English. These are the phonemes of Received Pronunciation, the standard “British English” transcription found in the well-known dictionaries such as Longman’s, Cambridge or Oxford University Press and course books used in the Czech Republic. A good dictionary will also give you the transcription of the American English pronunciation. Online dictionaries should have a sound icon and the pronunciation in both British and American accents.

7 short vowels	/æ/ /ɒ/ /e/ /ə/ /ɪ/ /ʌ/ /ʊ/
5 long vowels	/ɑː/ /ɔː/ /iː/ /ɜː/ /uː/
8 diphthongs	/eə/ /ɪə/ /ʊə/ /eɪ/ /aɪ/ /ɔɪ/ /əʊ/ /aʊ/
6 plosives	/p/ /b/ /t/ /d/ /k/ /g/
9 fricatives	/f/ /v/ /θ/ /ð/ /s/ /z/ /ʃ/ /ʒ/ /h/
3 nasals	/m/ /n/ /ŋ/
2 affricates	/tʃ/ /dʒ/
1 lateral	/l/
3 approximants	/r/ /w/ /j/

There are also 5 triphthongs, which are the 5 closing diphthongs plus schwa/ ə/

short vowels	/ɪ/	/e/	/æ/	/aɪ/	/ɪə/
	/ʊ/	/ɒ/	/ʌ/	/eɪ/	/eə/
	/ə/	/ɑː/	/ɜː/	/ɔɪ/	/ʊə/
	/iː/	/ɔː/	/uː/	/aʊ/	/əʊ/
long vowels					diphthongs

Chart of 20 vowels

/p/	/b/	/t/	/d/	/k/	/g/
/f/	/v/	/θ/	/ð/	/s/	/z/
/ʃ/	/ʒ/	/h/	/tʃ/	/dʒ/	/l/
/m/	/n/	/ŋ/	/w/	/r/	/j/

Chart of 24 consonants