

Assignment 1: Phonetics I
Due 10 AM Thursday, 13 February, 2025
(100 marks total)

Assignment Objectives

These weekly assignments are intended to help you become familiar with the concepts we are learning in the course. You should plan to meet each week with your group, either in person or over remote chat, to review the questions and your responses.

You are free to try to use AI tools to check your answers, but please bear in mind that tools like ChatGPT are still not great at many of the tasks involved in linguistic analysis. In fact, we have checked each of the assignments on ChatGPT, and it cannot reliably do any of them. Maybe you can be part of a team in the future that helps large language models get better at linguistics!

Part I. 40 marks

A wild merlion blocks your path!

“Oh, you want to get to class? To get past me, you must answer my six phonetics riddles! Just to be fair, I’ll show you how to do the first one.”

Riddle 1. Start with the word ‘one’

- Step 1: Take the first consonant in the word and change its manner of articulation to an oral stop.
- Step 2: Take the final consonant in the word and change its manner of articulation to a fricative.
- What English word do you end up with?

IPA of starting word: AmE/BrE: [wʌn] / SgE: [wan]

(note: all of these riddles work in American, British, or Singapore English, so you may answer in any one of these three varieties. Please use the IPA transcription conventions that we have learned in class.)

IPA after Step 1: [bʌn] / [ban]

IPA after Step 2: [bʌz] / [baz]

English word that corresponds to the final IPA: ‘buzz’

Riddle 2. Start with the word ‘cute’

- Step 1: Take the first voiceless plosive in the word and change its place of articulation forward to the alveolar ridge.
- Step 2: Delete the second consonant.
- Step 3: Take the last consonant in the word and change its place of articulation to bilabial and its manner of articulation to a nasal stop.

- What English word do you end up with?

IPA of starting word:

IPA after Step 1:

IPA after Step 2:

IPA after Step 3:

English word that corresponds to the final IPA:

Riddle 3. Start with the word 'limb'

- Step 1: Take the final consonant in the word and change its place of articulation to velar.
- Step 2: Take the first consonant in the word and change its manner of articulation to central liquid.
- What English word do you end up with?

IPA of starting word:

IPA after Step 1:

IPA after Step 2:

English word that corresponds to the final IPA:

Riddle 4. Start with the word 'punch'

- Step 1: Take the first stop in the word and change its place of articulation to glottal and its manner of articulation to fricative.
- Step 2: Take the final consonant in the word and change its voicing to voiced.
- Step 3: Take the vowel and change its height to high and its frontness to front.
- What English word do you end up with?

IPA of starting word:

IPA after Step 1:

IPA after Step 2:

IPA after Step 3:

English word that corresponds to the final IPA:

Riddle 5. Start with the word 'unite'

- Step 1: Take the first consonant in the word and change its place of articulation to bilabial.
- Step 2: Take the first vowel in the word and change its frontness to front and its roundedness to unrounded.
- Step 3: Delete the second consonant in the word and the second vowel in the word.
- Step 4: Take the final consonant in the word and change its place of articulation to velar.
- What English word do you end up with?

IPA of starting word:

IPA after Step 1:

IPA after Step 2:

IPA after Step 3:

IPA after Step 4:

English word that corresponds to the final IPA:

Part II. (50 marks)

Vanda is a student taking EL1101E. The following table shows Vanda's answers to an assignment in which she was asked to indicate the broad IPA transcriptions in US English, UK English, and Singapore English for each of the given words, based on the conventions that we have learned in this course.

#	Word	AmE	BrE	SgE
1	chant	[chænt]	[chant]	[chant]
2	took	[tuk]	[tɒk]	[tuk]
3	force	[fɔ:se]	[fɒ:se]	[fɒse]
4	yolk	[yok]	[yɒk]	[yok]
5	wavy	[weivɪ]	[weivi]	[weivi]
6	scene	[ceɪn]	[ceɪn]	[cine]

Unfortunately, Vanda has made some errors above – there are 1 to 3 errors in each row (we will consider an error that has been made consistently across multiple transcriptions in the same row as a single error).

Let's help her out! For each of the items above, please explain the errors that she has made and give the correct transcription based on the conventions in our course. For each row, you must cite a source followed by the URL of the page you used to confirm your answer (see the example below). These sources will confirm the answers for AmE and BrE; for SgE, please base your answers on the information we have learned in class. The two possible sources you may use are below:

- *Cambridge Dictionary* (notes: This dictionary uses a slightly different IPA convention from the one we are using in our course, with [:] indicating the longer length of tense vowels; in our course, we are not using [:] except for [ɔ:]. So, please do not consider [i] in the assignment vs. [i:] in the dictionary to be an 'error').
- *Oxford English Dictionary* (notes: To access the OED, please log in via the library or with this link: <https://libproxy1.nus.edu.sg/login?url=https://www.oed.com>. The OED has the same issue for tense vowels as the *Cambridge Dictionary* above. Also, the OED indicates both the standard BrE pronunciation (the IPA given on the top left), which is the one we will refer to, as well as a northern pronunciation (on the bottom left), when those pronunciations differ.)

Please fill in your responses below. You may add rows to the error sections as necessary to identify all the errors. The answer to #1 has been given as an example.

Note: For the purposes of this assignment, let's consider SgE to be non-rhotic, meaning that we will not expect an [r] to appear after vowels in words like 'park' or 'car'.

Corrections:

Example:

1. 'chant':

- a. Error 1: Across all three transcriptions, [ch] is incorrect and should be replaced with [tʃ].
- b. Error 2: In the SgE transcription, the vowel [ɑ] is incorrect and should be replaced with [ə].

Correct transcriptions:

- AmE IPA: [tʃænt]
- BrE IPA: [tʃɑnt]
- SgE IPA: [tʃənt]

Sources used: Cambridge: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/chant>

2. 'took':

- a. Error 1:

Correct transcriptions:

- AmE IPA:
- BrE IPA:
- SgE IPA:

Source used:

3. 'force':

- a. Error 1:

Correct transcriptions:

- AmE IPA:
- BrE IPA:
- SgE IPA:

Source used:

4. 'yolk':

- a. Error 1:

Correct transcriptions:

- AmE IPA:
- BrE IPA:
- SgE IPA:

Source used:

5. ‘wavy’:

a. Error 1:

Correct transcriptions:

- AmE IPA:
- BrE IPA:
- SgE IPA:

Source used:

6. ‘scene’:

a. Error 1:

Correct transcriptions:

- AmE IPA:
- BrE IPA:
- SgE IPA:

Source used:

Part III. (10 marks)

Vanda is at it again! To learn more about lexical stress, Vanda has been practicing modifying the stress patterns of words. You can hear her pronunciations in the sound file titled “Assignment 1 Part III.mp3” in the assignment folder.

For each of the words in the table, please indicate how Vanda has actually pronounced the word versus how it would standardly be pronounced in American English, using IPA notation consistent with the conventions we have learned in class. You should indicate primary stress and (if relevant) secondary stress; there is no need to indicate boundaries between syllables. You should assume that Vanda’s vowel system is generally consistent with the vowels of AmE (e.g., her ‘ah’ vowel should be transcribed as [ɑ]), but she may be reducing and unreducing vowels in non-standard locations due to her stress patterns.

You may consult either of the dictionaries listed in Part II above to determine the standard pronunciation for AmE.

The answers for the first row have been given as an example.

#	Word	Vanda’s pronunciation	AmE pronunciation
1	emphasis	[əm' fæsis]	[' ɛmfəsis]
2	reconfigure		
3	syllable		
4	probation		
5	trigonometry		
6	calcification		

