

Podcast intro:

Welcome to the InFluency Podcast. I'm Hadar. And this is episode number 266. Today we're gonna learn how to pronounce the months of the year.

I wonder, as you are listening to the intro of the podcast, if what you were more concerned about than how to pronounce the actual months of the year, was to how to pronounce the word 'months.' Did you just repeat the word 'months' wondering what to do with that TH? If the answer is yes, then you should definitely keep listening, cuz I do talk about how to pronounce the word 'months' (or muh-ns), both pronunciations are valid.

So yes, today we're gonna talk about how to pronounce the months of the year. And here's the thing about these very common words, words that we use on a regular basis, like months and days and numbers, and words like 'house' and 'dog' and 'me'. We don't think about their pronunciation anymore cuz we use them so often. And a lot of times we get attached to a certain pronunciation that we may have learned in school or that we have gotten used to pronouncing it a certain way before learning more about pronunciation, or before becoming more attentive to pronunciation.

Honestly, I think it's one of the first things I remember from school, that and the days of the week, when I first started learning English, I think it was like 5th grade or something like that. And I remember learning a song that was supposed to teach us the months of the year. And it went something like this. I'm gonna mess it up, but bear with me. I haven't sung this in 30-something years.

January, February, March and April, May, June, July, and August too. And then, and I so vividly remember the sound of my teacher, the voice of my teacher going up and squeaking:

September, October, November, December, these are the months of the year. Aye yai yai.

Okay. At least I learned something valuable.

So, that's when I learned how to pronounce the months of the year. Of course, that was not the pronunciation back then, cuz I learned it with a very distinct Israeli pronunciation. But either way, like we learned it in school and then we get attached to the pronunciation, and then it's really hard to change. But then sometimes there are different nuances that we don't notice anymore because we're so set on a certain pronunciation.

Now, it may not affect your clarity whatsoever, then it's your choice if you wanna change it or not. But if you're clear, then good for you. But sometimes it may make you feel uncomfortable, cuz you might avoid saying certain dates. Or you just become a little self-conscious every time you need to say a certain date, and then it's important to learn these things. And maybe sometimes you're pronouncing a month, the name of a certain month,

and it's not clear. And then I would definitely recommend focusing on the sounds that people expect to hear. And that's what we're gonna talk about today. And I hope you enjoy it. Let's listen.

Video transcript

"Oh, my birthday? My birthday is in Faburerer... Fabrurarry... You know March? So the month before that."

How to pronounce the months of the year. Today we're gonna talk about the 12 months and how to pronounce them effortlessly and clearly. But before that, let's talk about how to pronounce the word 'months'. There are actually two ways to pronounce this word. The first way is the proper way. You start with an 'm' sound, then the 'uh' as in 'cup' - 'muh'. Then you bring the tongue up for the 'n' - 'muhn'. You stick the tongue out for the 'th' - 'muh-n-th'. It's a soft 'th', allow the air to pass, and then you bring the tongue back in for the 's' - 'm-uh-n-th-s'.

However, since it is a very difficult transition, and I'm sure that you are feeling it right now in your tongue, you can drop the 'th', you can totally drop it and it's gonna sound just fine - 'muh-n-s'. Most people pronounce it like that: 'muh-n-s'.

But before we go into the months, if you are new to my channel, then hi and welcome. I'm so happy that you're here. My name is Hadar. I'm a non-native speaker of English, I'm a pronunciation coach. And I'm here to help you speak English with clarity, confidence, and freedom. And you can come on over and check out my website - hadarshemesh.com, where I have a bunch of resources for you to study and practice on your own. Or you can follow me on your favorite social platform where I share daily content.

All right, so let's talk about the months of the year. The first month is January. January. You start with a DJ sound, then it's the A as in 'cat' - DJA, and N Sound and a Y - DJAN-yuw, transition to an 'uw' sound. And then e-ree - an E sound, and R and an 'ee' - e-ree. DJAN-yuw-e-ree. Primary stress is on the first syllable. Even the A sound at the beginning leans towards the E - DJEN-yuw-e-ree because there is an N right after. And the A as in 'cat' before an N changes a little bit to an E[a] sound - DJE[a]N-yow-e-ree. January. 'The president will take office in January'.

The next word is February. A few months ago, I released a video with how to pronounce the word February, and it has gotten over 10 million views on Facebook. And the reason why is because people really didn't like how I was teaching this word, because I was teaching the American pronunciation that has a shortcut and makes it easier for people to pronounce. So,

let me teach you the two different ways to pronounce this word. Now, by the way, there are more than two ways, but I'm gonna teach you two ways that you can choose how to pronounce.

The first is FEB-ruw-e-ree. You start with an F sound, that it's the E as in 'red' – FE, you close your lips for a B – FEB. Then 'ruw' – an R sound and a tense 'uw' – FEB-ruw. And then 'e-ree', like the ending of January. FEB-ruw-e-ree. Now, when you transition from an 'uw' sound to an 'e' – a back high vowel to a front vowel – what you get is an intrusive sound that sounds like a 'w' sound. Listen – FEB-ruw-we-ree. So maybe that would help you pronounce the 'uw' sound more clearly. February.

Now, you can drop, actually, the first R and pronounce it as FEB-yuw, with a 'y' instead – FEB-yuw-e-ree. This is what some people didn't like. FEB-yuw-e-ree. You choose whatever is easier for you. You're gonna be clear in both ways. FEB-ruw-e-ree – FEB-yuw-e-ree. 'My birthday is in February.

March, short and sweet. You start with an M sound, then it's the 'aa' as in 'father' – 'Maa'. Then you bring the tongue up for the R – Maar, and then you wrap it up with a 'ch' sound – a T and a SH. 'Maarch'. Make sure you don't bring the tongue up for the R too quickly, cuz then it's gonna sound like 'merch', which is a different word. 'Maarch'. March. 'I have an important conference in March'.

Next we have April. April. The A is pronounced as 'ei' as in 'day' – ei. It's a diphthong, a changing vowel. So you wanna hear it shifting from 'e' to 'i'. 'ei'. Then we have a P sound – 'eip', and then you wrap it up with r'l – an R sound, a schwa, and an L – r'l'. eip-r'l. April. 'Let's go on vacation in April'. April.

May is probably the easiest month to pronounce. You start with an M sound, then it's the 'ei' as in 'day' – mei. Start with an 'e', then shift to an 'i'. Not 'mai', but 'mei'. 'Yes, you may visit me in May'.

June starts with a 'dj' sound, then the 'uw' as in 'food', and it's a long vowel, so make sure you round your lips – djuw, and then close it with an N – djuwn. 'I'm not available in June. I'm gonna be too busy'. June.

The month July also has several pronunciations. The American pronunciation is either a 'dj' sound, then the 'u' as in cook, look, and book – 'dju'. And then LAI – and L sound, and then the AI as in 'my' – dju-LAI. But a lot of people drop the first vowel to a schwa. djuh-LAI. July. Which one is easier for you? dju-LAI – djuh-LAI. In British pronunciation, by the way, you'll hear more of an 'uw' sound – djuw-LAI. 'djuw', but a quick one – djuw-LAI. 'dju-LAI' or 'djuh-LAI'. 'On July 1st, I'm flying to New York'.

August has two syllables. The first one is 'aa' as in 'father' – AA. You can also round your lips to something more rounded like the daughter vowel. AA, and then g'st – a G sound, a schwa, and S and a T – g'st.

September has three syllables. The first syllable is 'sep'. TEM, right, make sure that you raise your pitch a little bit for the primary stress. sep-TEM, and then b'r – a B and an R – b'r. There is no vowel in between, it's not sep-TEM-ber, but sep-TEM-b'r. September. 'I can't wait for September'. September.

October starts with the 'aa' as in 'father' sound, so you wanna drop your jaw. 'aa'. And then a K sound – aak. TOW is the primary stress: a T sound, then the 'ow' as in 'go'. You can make the T a little aspirated so it feels like there is a little H right after – aak-ThOW. Can you hear it? aak-ThOW. And then b'r – same ending as in September. aak-ThOW-b'r. October. 'October is my favorite month'. October.

November – three syllables as well, same ending – b'r. Here we start with 'now' as in 'I said no'. Then VEM – that's the primary stress. now-VEM-b'r.

And then finally, we have the month of December. December. You start with a D sound, then it's the 'i' as in 'sit' – di. Then SEM – primary stress, di-SEM-b'r. 'December is the last month of the year'.

By the way, when you talk about months, you wanna use the preposition in: in April, in January. When you talk about a specific day in the month, you would want to use on: on April 15th.

All right, that's it. 12 months, you did it! Let me know in the comments below which one of those months is the hardest one for you to pronounce.

Thank you so much for watching. If you like this video, make sure you like it, and subscribe if you haven't yet. And come check out my website at hadarshemesh.com where I share with you a bunch of different resources for free to study and practice on your own.

Have a beautiful day, and I'll see you next week in the next video. Bye.