

TEACHING PRONUNCIATION/ CC-14

Pronunciation means the way of producing the sounds of a language. The users of the language do not pronounce the words in any language the same way. Researches reveal that the pronunciation of the same word gets changed within the radius of 30 kilometres. It is right in all senses.

If that is the case with the language that is spoken in 300 kilometre circumference, what would be the case with English that is being spoken all around the world? It will be definitely difficult to understand English in different dialects. So we need a common pronouncing pattern to make the encoding and decoding of the English pronunciation go together. And for this purpose **Daniel Jones** has brought out a pronouncing dictionary with Received Pronunciation.

Received Pronunciation means the pronunciation that is acceptable to all.

There are 44 sounds in English. They are classified as:

- 1) Pure Vowels - 12
- 2) Diphthongs - 08
- 3) Consonants - 22
- 4) Semi-vowels - 02

CONSONANTS

Consonants are best described in terms of their articulation. The following questions should be asked to describe the consonants.

- 1) Does the air come out from the lungs or from some other organs?
- 2) Is the air pushed out or drawn inwards'?
- 3) Do the vocal cords vibrate or not?
- 4) Is the soft palate raised or lowered?
- 5) Where does the articulation take place?
- 6) What is the manner of articulation?

Place of Articulation

Articulation means jointing. Place of Articulation means, where the active articulators and passive articulators meet to produce sounds. Active articulators are the speech organs which can move from their place of rest towards passive articulators in order to produce sounds.

Phonetic Transcription

There are 12 pure vowels and 08 diphthongs. Diphthongs are all along vowels. They are also called gliding vowels.

English Pure Vowels

Sl.No.	Symbol	Key Words	Phonetic Transcription
01	/i/	ink, think, rusty	/ɪnk/, /θɪnk/, /rʌsti/
02	/i:/	eat, beat., sea	/i:t/, /bi:t/, /si:/
03	/e/	echo, better,	/ekəʊ/, /betə /, -----
04	/æ/	act, cat, -----	/ækt/, /kæt/, -----
05	/ɑ:/	arc, part, harp	/ɑ:k/, /pɑ:t/, /hɑ:p/
06	/ʌ/	upper, cup, suffer	/ʌpə/, /kʌp/, -----
07	/ɔ/	dog, fog. Chop	/dɔg/, /fɔg/, /tʃɔp/
08	/ɔ:/	cork, dawn, talk	/kɔ:k/, /dɔ:n/, /tɔ:k/
09	/u/	wood, cook, put	/wud/, /kuk/, /put/
10	/u:/	moon, stool. Tooth	/mu:n/, /stu:l/, /tu:θ/
11	/ɜ:/	curl, pearl, her	/kɜ:l/, /pɜ:l/, /hɜ:/
12	/ə/	balloon, banana, abacus	/bəlu:n/, /bəna:nə/, /æbəkəs/

Classification of English Vowels

(i) According to the part of tongue raised

/i: i e æ/ ----- are front vowels

/ʌ ə: ə/ ----- are central vowels

/ɑ: ɔ ɒ: u u: / ----- are back vowels

According to the height of the tongue

/i: u:/ ----- are close vowels

/i u ə:/ ----- are half-close vowels

/e ɔ: ʌ ə/ ----- are half-open vowels

/æ a: ɔ/ ----- are open vowels

(iii) /i: i e æ/ ----- are spread vowels

/a: ʌ ə: ə/ ----- are neutral vowels

/ɔ ɔ: u u:/ ----- are round vowels

Diphthongs

Sl. No.	Symbol	Key Words	Phonetic Transcription
01	/eɪ/	rate, game, train	/reɪt/, /geɪm/, /treɪn/
02	/aɪ/	sky, try, pride	/skɑɪ/, /traɪ/, /praɪd/
03	/ɔɪ/	coil, soil, boy	/kɔɪl/, /sɔɪl/, /bɔɪ/
04	/əʊ/	home, above, rose	/həʊm/, /əbəʊ/, /rəʊz/
05	/aʊ/	cow, plough, rout	/kaʊ/, /pləʊ/, /raʊt/
06	/ɪə/	spear, deer, tear	/spɪə/, /dɪə/, /tɪə/
07	/eə/	wear, share, despair	/weə/, /ʃeə/, /dɪspeə/
08	/ʊə/	poor, duel, cruel	/pʊə/, /dʒʊəl/, /kruəl/

Manner of Articulation

I. Plosives

(a) Bi-labial /p/ and /b/

Both the lips brought together for awhile, air behind the closure is compressed then the articulatory organs (both the lips) part rapidly with explosion

e.g. /p/ - /pit/, /spit/, /skip/

/b/ - /bit/, /bet/, /rib/

Note: There is no doubling of consonants in transcription. We cannot transcribe „rabbit“ as /rabbɪt/ though there are two bs in the words rabbit.

(b) Alveolar /t/ and /d/

Tip of the tongue closed the air passage by pressing against the teeth ridge, the soft palate is raised and no air passage to the nasal cavity and the tip of the tongue is raised to release the air suddenly.

eg. /t/ - /tin/, /bet/, /bi:t/
/d/ - /din/, /splendid/, /bi:d/

(c) Velar /k/ and /g/

The back of the tongue is raised and pressed against the soft palate and the air passage is closed. The nasal passage is also closed. Then the air is allowed to rush out suddenly by lowering the tongue.

e.g. /k/ - /ki:p/, /skai/, /spi:k/
/g/ - /gəʊld/, /ægəʊ/, /dæg/

II. Fricatives

(a) Labio-Dental /f/ and /v/

Lower lip is pressed against the upper teeth causing a partial closure of air passage. The soft palate is up and the passage to nasal cavity is blocked and the air is allowed to escape through the narrow opening between the teeth and the lips.

e.g. /f/ - /fæn/, /selfi:/, /ka:f/
/v/ - /væn/, /la:və/, /li:v/

(b) Intra-Dental /θ/ and /ð/

The tip of the tongue is placed just behind the upper teeth. The Palate is up and the passage to nasal cavity is blocked. The air escapes through the narrow opening between the teeth

e.g. /θ/ - /θin/, /mʌnθs/, /ba:θ/
/ð/ - /ðen/, /ra:ðə/ /kləʊð/

(c) Alveolar /s/, /z/, /l/, /r/

The air passage is partially closed by raising the tip of the tongue against the teeth ridge. The soft palate is raised and the passage to nasal cavity is blocked.

e.g. /s/ - /sin/, /best/, /mis/
/z/ - /zink/, /bisniz/, /lu:z/
/l/ - //lid/, /kli:n/, /ku:l/

/r/ - /rinz/, /bri:m/, -----

(d) Palato-alveolar /ʃ/ and /ʒ/

The blade of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate. The air passage is partially closed. The sides of the blade of the tongue are pressed against the front of hard palate. The soft palate is up and the nasal passage is blocked.

e.g. /ʃ/ - /ʃip/, /wiʃiŋ/, /puʃ/

/ʒ/ - /ʒa:nə/, /meʒə/, /ru:ʒ/(rouge-red powder used on face)

(g) Glottal /h/

The glottis is open and the air passes through it with slight friction

e.g. /h/ - /haiv/, /biheiv/ -----

III Affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/

The soft palate is raised and the passage to nasal cavity is blocked. The air passage is closed by raising the tip of the tongue against the area between teeth ridge and hard palate. The air is first locked and then released slowly.

e.g. /tʃ/ - /tʃein/, /butʃə/, /ritʃ/

/dʒ/ - /dʒʌdʒ/, /peidʒə/, /bridʒ/

IV Nasals /m/, /n/, /k/

The oral passage is closed and the air is released through the nasal cavity.

e.g. /m/ - /mint/, /trimd/, dri:m/

/n/ - /nais/, /baind/, /spin/

/ŋ/ - /siŋə/, /brinŋ/ -----

Semi-vowels

Bilabial - /w/

The back of the tongue is raised towards the soft palate. The soft palate is up and the passage to nasal cavity is closed. The lips are closed rounded and they come forward before any sound is made

.e.g. /w/ - /win/, /swim/ -----

Palatal - /j/ - /jes/, /bju:ti/ -----

Courtesy : Dr. Md. Ejaz Alam