

1 How many letters, how many sounds? Spelling and pronunciation

A All sections with this symbol  are on the recording. Listen to them while you read this page.

A2a There are 26 **letters** in the English alphabet.
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

A2b There are five **vowel** letters. **A E I O U**

A2c And there are 21 **consonant** letters. **B C D F G H J K L M N P Q R S T V W X Y Z**

A2d But there are more than 40 vowel and consonant **sounds** in English.
 In some words, the number of letters is the same as the number of sounds.

best 4 letters, 4 sounds

b	e	s	t
1	2	3	4

dentist 7 letters, 7 sounds

d	e	n	t	i	s	t
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B But sometimes the number of sounds is different from the number of letters.

A3a In **green**, **ee** is one sound, and in **happy**, **pp** is one sound.

green 5 letters, 4 sounds

g	r	e	e	n
1	2	3	4	

h	a	p	p	y
1	2	3	4	

A3b In **bread**, **ea** is one sound.

bread 5 letters, 4 sounds

b	r	e	a	d
1	2	3	4	

A3c In some words there are silent letters (letters with no sound). In **listen**, **t** is silent.

listen 6 letters, 5 sounds.

l	i	s	t	e	n
1	2	3	-	4	5

A3d In some words, one letter is two sounds. The **x** in **six** is two sounds like **k + s**.

six 3 letters, 4 sounds

s	i	x	
1	2	3	4

C We sometimes write the same sound differently in different words. For example, the **e** in **red** sounds like the **ea** in **bread**.

A4a Sometimes two words have the same pronunciation but different spellings. (See Section E8 *Homophones*.)

know – no

A: **Do you know?** B: **No, I don't.**

A4b And sometimes two words have the same spelling but different pronunciations.

read (infinitive and present tense) – **read** (past tense)

A: **Do you want to read the newspaper?**

B: **No, thanks, I read it this morning.**

A4c Because there are more sounds than letters, we use symbols for pronunciation.

/best/ best /'dentɪst/ dentist /gri:n/ green /'hæpi/ happy /'kɒfi/ coffee /'lɪsən/ listen
 /θri:/ three /sɪks/ six /sɒks/ socks /bred/ bread /nəʊ/ no /nəʊ/ know /red/ red
 /red/ read (past tense) /ri:d/ read (infinitive and present tense)

The symbol ¹ (look at the beginning of the symbols for *dentist*, *happy*, *coffee*, *listen*) comes before stressed syllables (see Section B *Syllables and words*).



Exercises

1.1 Write the number of letters and the number of sounds in these words.

	letters	sounds
green	5	4
1 all		
2 back		
3 could		
4 knee		
5 sixty		
6 thing		
7 who		
8 address		

A5 Check with the Key (on page 138). Then listen and repeat.

1.2 Some pronunciation symbols are easy. Write these words in their normal spelling.

EXAMPLE /best/ *best*

1 /bɪg/ 2 /dres/ 3 /frend/ 4 /gɪv/

5 /help/ 6 /nekst/ 7 /'veri/ 8 /wel/

A6 Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

1.3 All five words in each group have the same vowel letter – a, e, i, o or u – but one has a different vowel sound. Circle the word with the different vowel sound in each group.

EXAMPLE

on	top	stop	<u>one</u>	gone
1 give	time	sit	think	rich
2 apple	bad	wash	catch	bank
3 much	bus	sun	push	up
4 many	maths	man	hat	flat

A7 Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

1.4 Write words that rhyme (the end part of the word sounds the same).

EXAMPLE

red	be <u>d</u>
1 key	tr_ _
2 blue	sh_ _
3 not	w_ _ _
4 one	r_ _
5 date	w_ _ _
6 lie	w_ _
7 so	sh_ _
8 beer	n_ _ _



A8 Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

2

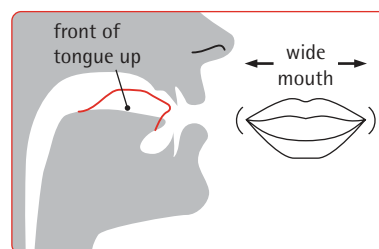
Pizza for dinner

/i:/ and /ɪ/

A

How to make the sound /i:/

- A9a** • /i:/ is a long sound. Look at the diagram. Listen and then say the sound. Make your mouth wide, like a smile. Your tongue touches the sides of your teeth. Target sound: /i:/



B

Sound and spelling

- A9b** • /i:/ is usually spelled ee or ea. Listen and say these words.
see agree eat seat team
- A9c** • Listen and say these other words with /i:/.
ie field piece
e these metre secret evening equal Peter museum European Chinese
Japanese complete
ey key
i ski kilo litre pizza police machine magazine
eo people

- A9d** • Now listen and say these sentences. You will need to pause the recording to give yourself enough time to repeat.

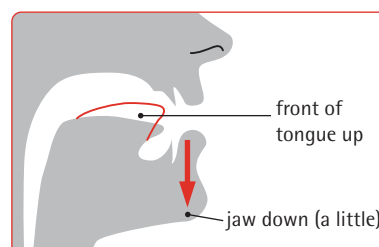
- 1 Can you see the sea?
- 2 A piece of pizza, please.
- 3 Peter's in the team.
- 4 A kilo of peaches and a litre of cream.
- 5 Please can you teach me to speak Portuguese?



C

How to make the sound /ɪ/

- A10a** • /ɪ/ is a short sound. Look at the diagram. Listen and then say the sound. Make your mouth a bit less wide than for /i:/. Your tongue is a bit further back in your mouth than for /i:/. Target sound: /ɪ/



D

Sound and spelling

- A10b** • /ɪ/ is usually spelled i. Listen and say these words.
if listen miss dinner swim

- A10c** • Listen and say these other words with /ɪ/.
busy business building system

- A10d** • Now listen and say these phrases.

- 1 fifty-six
- 2 dinner in the kitchen
- 3 a cinema ticket
- 4 a picture of a building
- 5 big business



- A10e** Note: Eight letters of the alphabet have the sound /ɪ/. Listen and repeat.
B C D E G P T V

- A10f** Note: Units 2 to 10 focus on vowel sounds in stressed syllables (see Section B *Syllables and words*). Vowel sounds in unstressed syllables often have the weak vowel /ə/. Listen and repeat.
agree equal kitchen museum Peter picture pizza

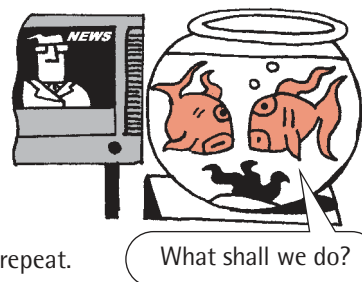
- A10g** Note: There is sometimes an /i/ sound at the end of a word in an unstressed syllable (see Section B *Syllables and words*), e.g. happy, coffee, busy. This sound is like /i:/ but shorter. Listen and repeat.
happy coffee busy sixty

Exercises

2.1 Put these /i:/ words in the dialogues.

email evening police secret Steve TV

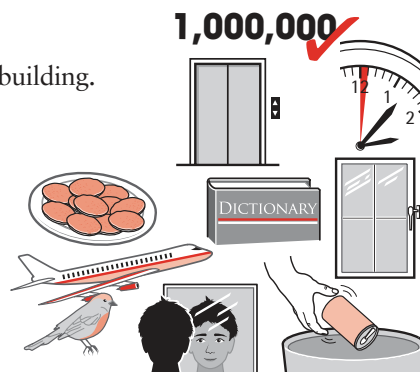
- 1 A: What shall we do this?
 B: Let's stay at home and watch
- 2 A: Let me read that
 B: No – it's a secret !
- 3 A: You know my friend?
 B: Yes.
 A: Well, he's got a new job. He's joined the



A11 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

2.2 Find the /ɪ/ words from these clues.

- EXAMPLE A thousand thousand is a million .
- 1 You can use a to go up and down in a building.
 2 There are sixty seconds in a
 3 A is a book of words to help you with your English.
 4 It's too warm in here – open the
 5 Would you like a with your coffee?
 6 Birds and planes have
 7 You can see yourself in a
 8 Don't drop – put it in a bin!



A12 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

2.3 Circle all the /i:/ sounds and underline all the /ɪ/ sounds.

big busy dinner give green in listen meet office people pizza
 please repeat six tea three

A13 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

2.4 Match the beginnings and endings of the sentences.

- EXAMPLE Let's have pizza for dinner .
- 1 We're always busy
 2 Would you like tea
 3 Give me that big
 4 There were only three
 5 Listen and
 6 Let's meet at
- a repeat.
 b people in the museum.
 c six o'clock.
 d in the office.
 e or coffee?
 f green book, please.
 g ~~for dinner~~.

A14 Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

2.5 Listen and circle the word you hear. Check with the Key. If any of these are difficult for you, go to Section E3 *Sound pairs* for further practice.

- A15** 1 *leave / live* (⇒ sound pair 1)
 2 *knee / near* (⇒ sound pair 2)
 3 *litter / letter* (⇒ sound pair 3)

3

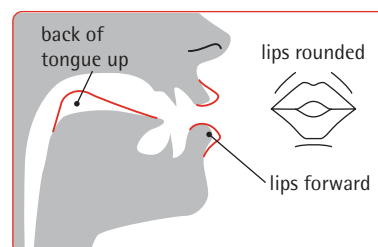
A spoonful of sugar

/u:/ and /ʊ/

A

How to make the sound /u:/

- A16a • /u:/ is a long sound. Look at the diagram. Listen and then say the sound. Make your lips into a tunnel shape. Your tongue is a long way back in your mouth. Target sound: /u:/



B

Sound and spelling

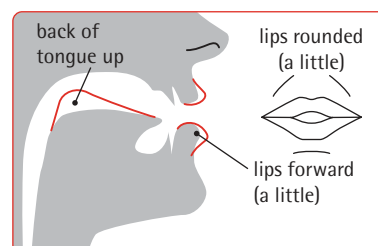
- A16b • /u:/ is often spelled **oo**, **ou**, **oe**, **u**, **ue** or **ew**. Listen and say these words.
too **group** **shoe** **blue**
- A16c • When the spelling is **u** or **ew**, there is often a /j/ sound before the /u:/. Listen and say these words.
music **new**
- A16d • There are also other spellings of /u:/. Listen and say these other words with /u:/.
two **fruit** **juice**
- A16e • Now listen and say these phrases.
 1 **me too**
 2 **work in groups**
 3 **new shoes**
 4 **red and blue**
 5 **listen to the music**
 6 **forty-two**
 7 **fruit juice**

⚠ Note: /ju:/ is the name of the letter U in the alphabet.

C

How to make the sound /ʊ/

- A17a • /ʊ/ is a short sound. Look at the diagram. Listen and then say the sound. Your tongue is not so far back as for /u:/. Target sound: /ʊ/



D

Sound and spelling

- A17b • /ʊ/ is often spelled **u**, **oo** or **ou**. Listen and say these words.
full **sugar** **book** **foot** **would**
- A17c • Listen and say this other word with /ʊ/.
woman
- A17d • Now listen and say these phrases.
 1 **My bag's full.**
 2 **Where's my book?**
 3 **my left foot**
 4 **a kilo of sugar**
 5 **Who's that woman?**

Exercises

3.1 Circle the words with /u:/. (There are nine.)

food four June look news room school soup spoon sugar town
 Tuesday two

A18 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

3.2 Put the /u: / words from Exercise 3.1 in the sentences.

- 1 Do you like fast food ?
- 2 Are you coming to ?
- 3 It's the second of
- 4 Let's watch the
- 5 is over there.
- 6 Here's a for your



A19 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

3.3 Circle the words with /ʊ/. (There are six.)

book cookery cough could good looking lunch soon sugar
 thought through

A20 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

3.4 Put the /ʊ / words from Exercise 3.3 in the sentences.

- 1 Do you take
- 2 you help me? I'm for a cookery

A21 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

3.5 Circle the words that have /u: / or /ʊ /, then put them in the correct column.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Is it really true? | 6 I'll be ready soon. |
| 2 You're standing on my foot! | 7 Here's your ticket – don't lose it! |
| 3 Are you a good cook? | 8 Go through that door over there. |
| 4 Where's my toothbrush? | 9 My keys! Where did I put them? |
| 5 Do you push or pull to open this door? | |

/u: /	/ʊ /
..... true foot
.....
.....
.....
.....

A22 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

3.6 Listen and circle the word you hear. Check with the Key. If any of these are difficult for you, go to Section E3 Sound pairs for further practice.

- A23
- 1 pool / pull (⇒ sound pair 4)
 - 2 look / luck (⇒ sound pair 5)
 - 3 soup / soap (⇒ sound pair 6)

4

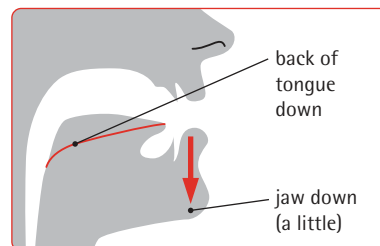
Father and mother

/ɑː/ and /ʌ/

A

How to make the sound /ɑː/

- A24a • /ɑː/ is a long sound. Look at the diagram. Listen and then say the sound. Open your mouth wide. Target sound: /ɑː/



B

Sound and spelling

- A24b • /ɑː/ is usually spelled a or ar. Listen and say these words.
 after afternoon ask answer bath bathroom can't class dance fast
 father glass tomato bar car card far park star start

- A24c • Listen and say these other words with /ɑː/.
 aunt laugh heart half (The letter l in half is silent.)

- A24d • Listen and say these sentences.
 1 How far's the car park?
 2 We went to a large bar full of film stars.
 3 We're starting in half an hour.

- A24e • In words with a letter r after the /ɑː/ sound, most Americans and some British people pronounce the r. Listen to the same sentences, this time with the letter rs pronounced.
 • Some people, especially in the north of England, pronounce the letters a or au as /æ/ in some of these words. Listen.

Important for listening

- A24f
 after afternoon ask answer aunt bath bathroom class dance fast glass laugh

- A24g Listen to these sentences, first with /ɑː/, then with /æ/.
 1 See you tomorrow afternoon. 3 We were laughing and dancing in the classroom.
 2 I'll ask my aunt. 4 I left my glasses in the bathroom.

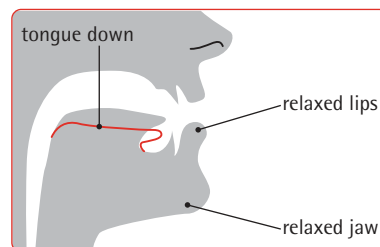


Note: The name of the letter R is pronounced /ɑː/ or /ɑːr/.
 Note: The word are is often pronounced /ɑː/ or /ɑːr/. (See Unit 40.)

C

How to make the sound /ʌ/

- A25a • /ʌ/ is a short sound. Look at the diagram. Listen and then say the sound. Open your mouth wide. Target sound: /ʌ/



D

Sound and spelling

- A25b • /ʌ/ is usually spelled u, but sometimes ou or o. Listen and say these words.
 bus colour come cup front London luck Monday month mother
 much nothing number run study sun uncle under



Note: The words son and sun have the same pronunciation.
 Note: The number one is pronounced /wʌn/.

- A25c • Listen and say these sentences.
 1 Good luck with your exam next month!
 2 Take the number one bus.
 3 I said 'Come on Monday', not 'Come on Sunday'.
 4 My brother's studying in London.

- A25d • Some people, especially in the north of England, say /ʊ/ instead of /ʌ/. Listen to the same sentences, this time with /ʊ/.

Important for listening

Exercises

4.1 Listen and write the words in the correct column.

A26

artist garden March part square talk warm watch

words with /ɑː/

artist

words with other vowel sounds

square

.....

Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

4.2 Listen and write the words in the correct column.

A27

business country fun home lots money mother push

words with /ʌ/

country

words with other vowel sounds

business

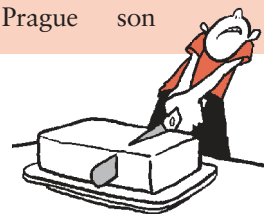
.....

Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

4.3 Complete the sentences with one /ɑː/ word and one /ʌ/ word.

butter carpet dark hard husband love Prague son

- The *butter's* too
- I'd to buy that
- Their 's got hair.
- I first met my in



A28 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

4.4 Listen and circle the word you hear. Check with the Key. If any of these are difficult for you, go to Section E3 *Sound pairs* for more practice.

A29

- heart / hat (⇒ sound pair 7)
- far / four (⇒ sound pair 8)
- cat / cut (⇒ sound pair 9)
- look / luck (⇒ sound pair 5)
- luck / lock (⇒ sound pair 10)
- butter / better (⇒ sound pair 18)

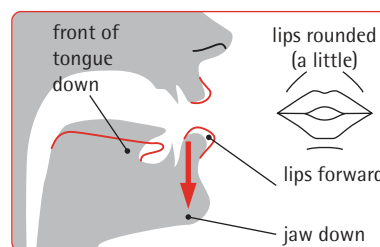
5

A dog in the corner /ɒ/ and /ɔː/

A

How to make the sound /ɒ/

- A30a • /ɒ/ is a short sound. Look at the diagram. Listen and say the sound. Round your lips a little. The front of your tongue is low and towards the back of your mouth. Target sound: /ɒ/



B

Sound and spelling

- A30b • /ɒ/ is usually spelled **o**, and sometimes **a**. Listen and repeat.
- bottle box chocolate clock coffee copy cost cross doctor dog gone
 got holiday hospital hot job lock long lost lot not off often
 possible shop song sorry stop top wrong
 quality want wash wasn't watch what



Note: The word *cough* is pronounced /kɒf/.

Note: The word *was* is sometimes pronounced with /ɒ/. (See Unit 40.)



- A30c • Now listen and say these sentences.

- 1 Have you got a lot of shopping?
- 2 John's gone to the shops.
- 3 How much did your holiday cost?
- 4 She said the coffee wasn't very good, but I thought it was.



A30d Most Americans pronounce these words differently. Listen.

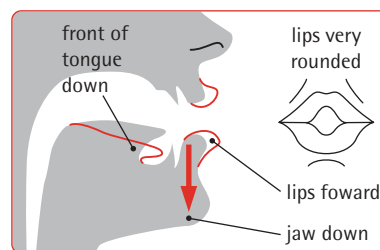
Important for listening

- 1 Have you got a lot of shopping?
- 2 John's gone to the shops.
- 3 How much did your holiday cost?
- 4 She said the coffee wasn't very good, but I thought it was.

C

How to make the sound /ɔː/

- A31a • /ɔː/ is a long sound. Look at the diagram. Listen and say the sound. Round your lips more than for /ɒ/. Target sound: /ɔː/



D

Sound and spelling

- A31b • /ɔː/ has different spellings. Listen and say these words.
- | | | | |
|------|-------------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| a | all ball call fall tall | ar | quarter warm |
| | wall water | or | born corner forty horse |
| al | talk walk | | short sort |
| au | autumn | oor | door floor |
| aw | saw | ore | before more |
| augh | caught daughter taught | our | four |
| ough | bought thought | | |



- A31c • Now listen and say these phrases.

- 1 quarter past four
- 2 born in autumn
- 3 have some more
- 4 walking on water
- 5 the fourth door on the fourth floor



A31d When there is a letter r after /ɔː/, most Americans, Scots and Irish, and some other English speakers pronounce this r. Listen.

Important for listening

- 1 quarter past four
- 2 born in autumn
- 3 have some more
- 4 walking on water
- 5 the fourth door on the fourth floor

Exercises

5.1 Write these words.

EXAMPLE /bɒks/ box

- 1 /klɒk/ 3 /wɒnt/ 5 /'sɒri/
- 2 /gɒn/ 4 /'wɒntɪd/ 6 /wɒt/

A32 Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

5.2 Listen and complete the dialogues with these /ɒ/ words.

A33

box chocolates clock doctor gone got holiday on stopped
what what

- 1 A: What time is it?
 B: I don't know. The 's
- 2 A: have you ?
 B: A of
- 3 A: Where's the ?
 B: He's



What time is it?

Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

5.3 Write the underlined verbs in the past tense.

EXAMPLE

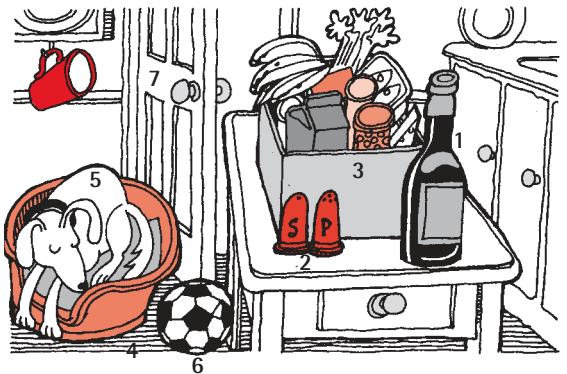
- We buy everything at the supermarket. → We bought everything at the supermarket.
 1 I think about you every day. → I about you every day.
 2 We always walk home from school. → We always home from school.
 3 I catch the first bus in the morning. → I the first bus in the morning.
 4 My daughter teaches English. → My daughter English.

A34 Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.

5.4 Write the names of the things in the picture. (They all have /ɒ/ or /ɔ:/.)

EXAMPLE 1 bottle

Check with the Key.



5.5 Listen and write the missing /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/ words.

A35

This is our kitchen. On the table there's a big full of shopping, a of wine and some and pepper. There's a on the and the 's asleep in the corner behind the

Check with the Key. Then listen and speak together with the recording.

5.6 Listen and circle the word you hear. Check with the Key. If any of these are difficult for you, go to Section E3 *Sound pairs* for more practice.

A36

- 1 not / note (⇒ sound pair 11) 4 shot / short (⇒ sound pair 13)
 2 luck / lock (⇒ sound pair 10) 5 walk / work (⇒ sound pair 14)
 3 coat / caught (⇒ sound pair 12)