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# Phonetic Alphabet

This table contains all the sounds used in the English language. For each sound, it gives:

- The symbol in the **IPA** — the **International Phonetic Alphabet**, used for writing [phonetic transcription](#).
- Two English **words** where the sound is used. The underline shows where the sound is heard.
- The links labeled **Amer** and **Brit** play sound files (in [mp3 format](#)) where the words are [pronounced](#) in American and British English. The British version is given only where it is very different from the American version.
- If you want to speak good English, you have to know how to pronounce each of these sounds. You can learn more about each sound through the "**more**" link.

<http://www.antimoon.com/how/pronunc-soundsipa.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vowel#Articulation>

vowels	consonants
IPA words	IPA words
<b>ʌ</b> cup, l <u>u</u> ck	<b>b</b> <u>b</u> ad, lab <u>u</u>
<b>a:</b> <u>a</u> rm, fath <u>e</u> r	<b>d</b> <u>d</u> id, lad <u>y</u>
<b>æ</b> cat, bla <u>ck</u>	<b>f</b> <u>f</u> ind, i <u>f</u>
<b>ə</b> <u>a</u> way, cine <u>m</u> a	<b>g</b> <u>g</u> ive, fla <u>g</u>
<b>e</b> m <u>e</u> t, b <u>e</u> d	<b>h</b> <u>h</u> ow, <u>h</u> ello
<b>ɜ:</b> t <u>u</u> rn, l <u>e</u> arn	<b>j</b> <u>y</u> es, <u>y</u> ellow
<b>ɪ</b> h <u>i</u> t, sitt <u>i</u> ng	<b>k</b> <u>c</u> at, ba <u>ck</u>
<b>i:</b> s <u>e</u> e, h <u>e</u> at	<b>l</b> <u>l</u> eg, <u>l</u> itt <u>l</u> e
<b>ɒ</b> h <u>o</u> t, r <u>o</u> ck	<b>m</b> <u>m</u> an, le <u>m</u> on
<b>ɔ:</b> c <u>a</u> ll, f <u>o</u> ur	<b>n</b> <u>n</u> o, t <u>e</u> n
<b>ʊ</b> p <u>u</u> t, c <u>o</u> uld	<b>ŋ</b> s <u>i</u> ng, f <u>i</u> ng <u>er</u>
<b>u:</b> bl <u>u</u> e, f <u>o</u> od	<b>p</b> <u>p</u> et, ma <u>p</u>
<b>aɪ</b> f <u>i</u> ve, <u>e</u> ye	<b>r</b> <u>r</u> ed, t <u>r</u> y
<b>aʊ</b> n <u>o</u> w, <u>o</u> t	<b>s</b> <u>s</u> un, m <u>i</u> ss
<b>əʊ</b> g <u>o</u> , h <u>o</u> me	<b>ʃ</b> <u>s</u> he, cr <u>a</u> sh
<b>eə</b> wh <u>e</u> re, <u>a</u> ir	<b>t</b> <u>t</u> ea, gett <u>i</u> ng
<b>eɪ</b> s <u>a</u> y, <u>e</u> ight	<b>tʃ</b> <u>ch</u> eck, <u>ch</u> ur <u>ch</u>
<b>ɪə</b> n <u>e</u> ar, h <u>e</u> re	<b>θ</b> <u>th</u> ink, b <u>o</u> th
<b>ɔɪ</b> b <u>o</u> y, j <u>o</u> in	<b>ð</b> <u>th</u> is, m <u>o</u> th <u>er</u>

<b>uə</b>	pure, tour <u>is</u> t	<b>v</b>	vo <u>i</u> ce, fi <u>v</u> e
		<b>w</b>	w <u>e</u> t, w <u>i</u> ndow <i>ɹ</i>
		<b>z</b>	z <u>oo</u> , laz <u>y</u> <i>ɹ</i>
		<b>ʒ</b>	pleas <u>u</u> re, vis <u>i</u> o <i>ɹ</i>
		<b>dʒ</b>	ju <u>s</u> t, larg <u>e</u> <i>ɹ</i>

## Optional *r*

Many dictionaries use another symbol which looks like this: **ɹ**. This is not a sound — it is a short way of saying that an **r** should be **pronounced** only in American English. No **ɹ** is heard in British English.

For example, if you write that the **pronunciation** of *bar* is **/bɑ:ɹ/**, you mean that it is **/bɑ:r/** in American English, and **/bɑ:/** in British English.

## Syllabic *l* and *n*

The symbols **əl** and **ən** show that the consonant **l** or **n** is pronounced as a separate syllable. Before the **l** or **n**, there is a very small vowel, which usually is even shorter than an **ə** sound.

You can hear the syllabic **l** in words like *little* **/ˈlɪtəl/** and *uncle* **/ˈʌŋkəl/**. The syllabic **n** can be heard in *written* **/ˈrɪtən/** and *listen* **/ˈlɪsən/**.

Instead of the **ə** symbol, some dictionaries simply give an **l** or **n**, so that *little* is transcribed **/ˈlɪtl/**. Other dictionaries use the **ə** symbol (**/ˈlɪtəl/**).

## The apostrophe (word stress)

Most dictionaries use the apostrophe symbol ( **'** ) to show word stress. Usually, the apostrophe is placed before the stressed syllable in a word. **Word stress** is explained in our article about phonetic transcription.

