

Needs analysis

1. Do you speak American English, British English, or another variant? Why did you choose this variant?
2. How have you learned pronunciation in the past? Effective methods or tips you would like to share with others? Any “a-ha” moments you have had?
3. Do you use the pronunciation key (IPA symbols) or recorded words in your dictionary on a regular basis to learn and hear how certain words are pronounced?
- 4 and 5. Approximately what percentage of time do you speak and listen to English each day?
6. In what situation do you feel the most comfortable speaking English? Any situations that make you anxious about your pronunciation (e.g., on the phone or at an interview)?

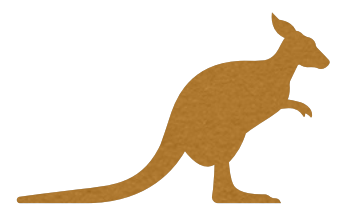
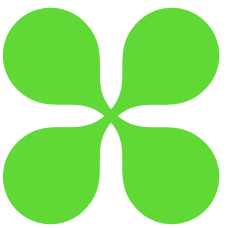
Take a look at this sentence, focusing on the words in bold: Do you know how to pronounce them?

*"The man didn't feel very **comfortable** in his grey **suit**. He didn't enjoy wearing smart **clothes**, and when he wore them he felt a **subtle** difference in his personality."*

English spelling hasn't evolved much over time, but how we pronounce words has. This makes pronunciation a real challenge for language learners. But good pronunciation is not just 'how words and letters sound'; there are other equally important features to consider, like intonation (how the tone of voice changes during a sentence, going up or down), stress (which words and syllables have more 'weight' when we are speaking), and connected speech - how words can sound different when they are joined together in natural speech. All of these features contribute to good pronunciation - but don't confuse them with accent.



In the UK, the USA and other English speaking countries there are many, many different types of accents, but people with those different accents can all be considered to have correct pronunciation. When you are learning English you don't have to sound British or American. Good pronunciation means being understood; not necessarily sounding like you were born in New York or London. In fact, many native speakers love hearing English spoken with a Spanish, Italian or French accent! So, how can you work on your pronunciation so that people from all over the world can understand you easily, even if you retain your native accent? Here are six top tips for you to practice and perfect your pronunciation.



6 tips for improving your English pronunciation from the British Council:

1 — Listen

2 — Record yourself

3 — Get to know the phonetic chart

4 — Use a dictionary

5 — Do some exercise!

6 — Get to know your minimal pairs



Fig. 1: ['eɪ mɪstə bɒndɔ: 'ði: mɪstə bɒnd]

1 - Listen! Listening to examples of authentic speech is the most obvious way to improve your own pronunciation. There are lots of ways to do this - watch a film in its original version, listen to podcasts about a topic that interests you in English, even listening to music can help. Try to notice the intonation that people use. You can add to this by 'shadowing'. Shadowing means listening to a short sentence or phrase, and then repeating it afterwards, trying to imitate the sounds, intonation and word stress and noticing how your mouth and tongue move when you speak.

(you could try the [British Council English podcasts app here](https://www.britishcouncil.pt/en/blog/6-tips-improve-your-english-pronunciation))

self-learning: grammar-monster.com

<https://www.grammar-monster.com/lessons/conjunctions.htm>

self-learning: 6-minute English

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/course/intermediate/unit-6/session-2/activity-3>

self-learning: englishgrammar.org

<https://www.englishgrammar.org/prepositions-exercise-50/>

academic resource: Cambridge University

<http://www.lcl.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html>

academic resources: University of Sussex

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/informatics/punctuation/colonandsemi/semi>

2. Record yourself. Once you have practiced shadowing, you could record yourself speaking - either repeating a short phrase that you have listened to, or doing a longer speaking task from a coursebook, like describing a picture. Listen back and make a note of any sounds that you have problems with - practice these words / sounds slowly and then record yourself again. Can you notice an improvement?

3. Get to know the phonemic chart. It might look strange and it might feel like you are learning a whole new language, but it can really help you with pronunciation. All dictionaries have a phonetic transcription of words so that you know how to pronounce them. This is really helpful with English because as we have already seen, English spelling doesn't always correspond with its pronunciation. Think about the letters 'ough' in the words 'though', 'through', 'tough', 'ought'. It would be impossible to guess how to say those words without some help.

The [International Phonetic Alphabet \(IPA\)](#) is a visual representation of different sounds.

TeachingEnglish

vowels

i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:
e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:
æ	ʌ	a:	ɒ

diphthongs

ɪə	eə	
əʊ	aʊ	
eɪ	aɪ	ɔɪ

consonants

p	f	t	θ	tʃ	s	ʃ	k
b	v	d	ð	dʒ	z	ʒ	g
h	m	n	ŋ	r	l	w	j

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<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>

4. Use a dictionary. As well as printed dictionaries which will give you a phonetic transcription of a word, there are lots of online dictionaries where you can click and listen to the word being spoken. A particularly good one is [howjsay](#) - even the name of this website is a useful guide as to how to pronounce the common question 'How do you say...?' in a natural way. It's a great resource for checking how new words sound.

5. Do some exercise! Different languages have different sounds, and our mouths adapt to those sounds. Some sounds are physically very difficult for us to make, as they don't exist in our native language. Just like when you are learning a new sport or dance move, it's important that you train your mouth to know how to form new sounds - the more you practice the easier it gets. For example, lots of Spanish speakers have problems with the difference between the /b/ and /v/ sound. We make the /b/ sound by joining our lips together and then letting go. The /v/ sound is similar but your top teeth should touch your bottom lip before you let go. The more you practice this, the easier it gets - try saying "I'd like a very big beverage please"!

The [Sounds of English section](#) on the BBC's Learning English site has a good selection of video tutorials which explain how to make different sounds and activities to practice them.



<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcetz6gSk96-ayXj5thbTpbh2vHWpP08o>

6. Get to know your minimal pairs. Minimal pairs are words that have almost the exact same pronunciation, but with one sound that is different - for example, ship and sheep. The difference between the /ɪ/ in 'ship' and the /i:/ in 'sheep' is the length of the vowel. This can be difficult to hear for many language learners, and comes up in lots of different words. The first step is to be able to tell the difference between the sounds when you hear them, them.

You can listen to some [common minimal pairs here](#) - can you hear the difference? Can you make the different sounds yourself?

ship or sheep.com

English language pronunciation practice with minimal pairs - simply mouse over to hear

Page	Minimal pairs	Simplified IPA* symbols	How to use ship or sheep
1	sheep/ship	ɪ / i	
2	tin/ten	i / e	
3	bet/bat	e / æ	
4	bet/bait	e / eɪ	
5	bat/bad	æ / æ:	
6	cat/cut	æ / ʌ	
7	cat/cart	æ / ɑ:	
8	cart/cut	ɑ: / ʌ	
9	cut/curt	ʌ / ə:	
10	look/loop	ʊ / u:	
11	cart/caught	ɑ: / ɔ:	
12	caught/cot	ɔ:/ ɒ	
13	caught/coat	ɔ:/əʊ	
14	caught/curt	ɔ:/ə:	
15	coat/cot	əʊ/ɒ	
16	coat/coot	əʊ/u:	

Top Tip:

There are both short and long vowel sounds in English. Have a go at practising these minimal pairs so all the words sound different:

i / i: | æ / ɑ: | e / eɪ | ɒ / əʊ | ʊ / u:

<u>i / i:</u>	<u>æ / ɑ:</u>	<u>e / eɪ</u>	<u>ɒ / əʊ</u>	<u>ʊ / u:</u>
bit / beat	back / bark	met / mate	wok / woke	foot / food
hit / heat	had / hard	wet / wait	not / note	pull / pool
sit / seat	hat / heart	get / gate	cot / coat	full / fool

I am from Spain

eso es súper!



FLIEGENDE LIEBENDE (Penélope Cruz, Antonio Banderas)| Trailer & Filmclips german deutsch [HD]

<https://www.tefl.net/elt/articles/teacher-technique/spanish-speaker-pronunciation-problems/>

<https://oxfordhousebcn.com/en/6-pronunciation-mistakes-spanish-speakers-make-in-english-and-how-to-fix-them/>

In English **v** is *fricative*, which means the lips and teeth must touch

The **b** is *plosive* which means the lips come together

best / vest

bent / vent

bet / vet

boat / vote

bow / vow

Spanish words never start with an “s” sound, and words which are similar to English tend to have an initial “es” sound instead, as in *escuela*/school.

This is very common in Spanish speakers’ pronunciation of English as well.

Try pronouncing these words:

**sand sandwich star saturn solar system
spectograph supernova science substitute**

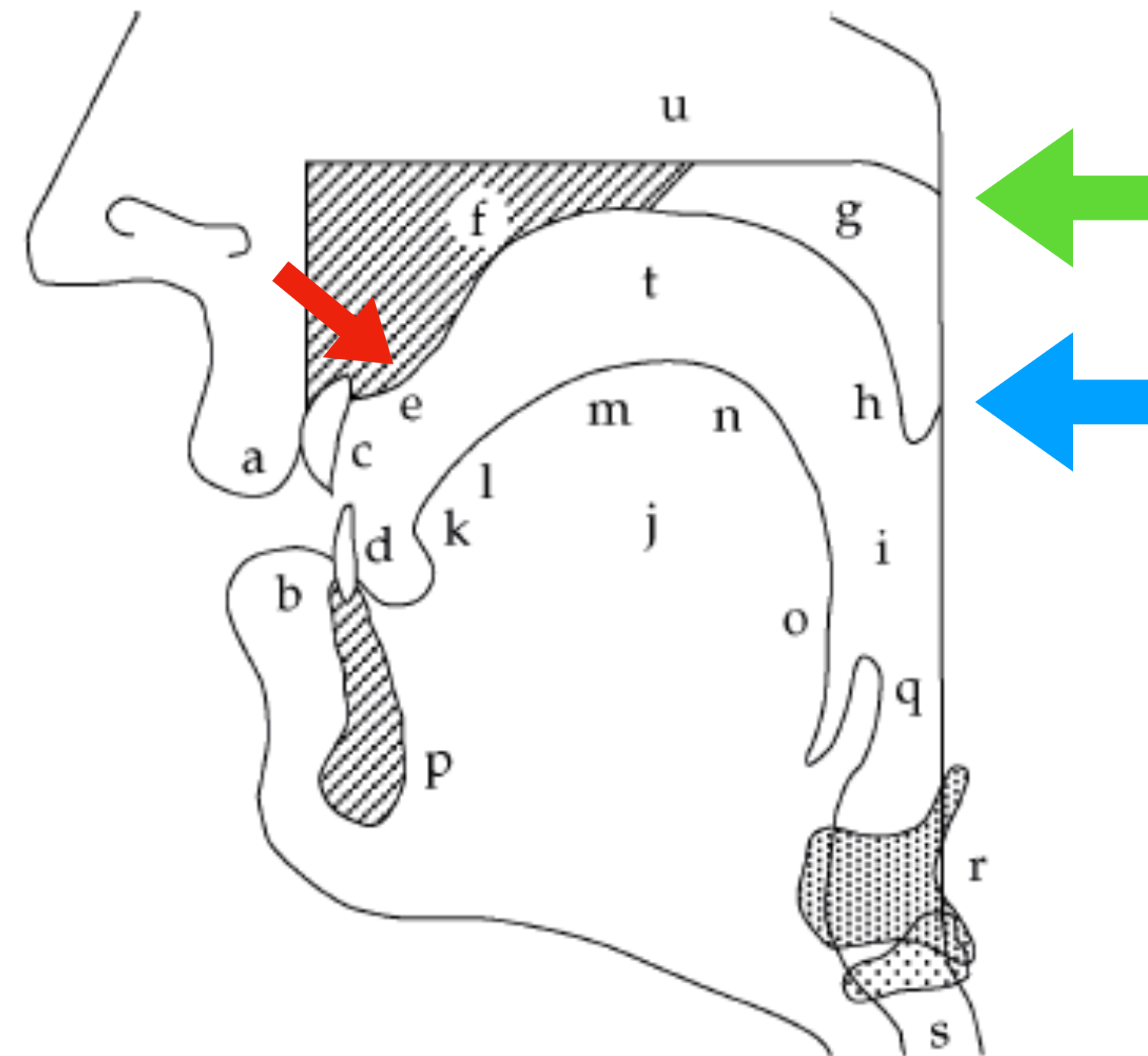
Part I – stop consonants & linking consonants

Stop consonants are distinguished from one another according to their place of articulation (bilabial, alveolar, velar) and their manner of articulation (voiceless or voiced).

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Velar
Voiceless	/p/	/t/	/k/
Voiced	/b/	/d/	/g/

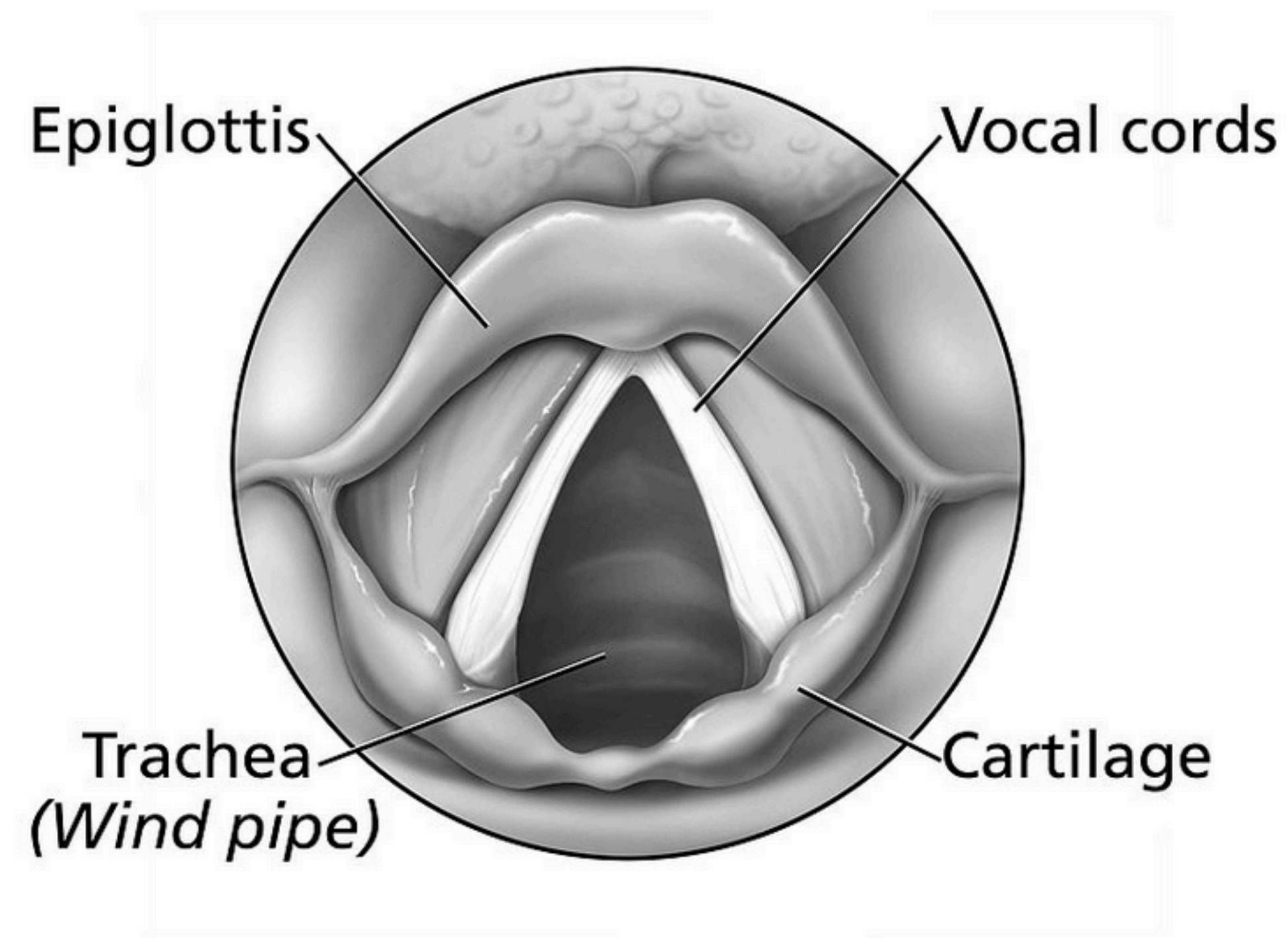
Perhaps you speak a dialect in which these consonants are exchangeable.
Can you share some examples from your own L1 (first) native language?

- “voiced”: the vocal folds in the larynx are vibrating (superimposing aerodynamic pulses on the moving column of air flowing out of the lungs);
- “labial”: the lips are involved as articulators;



- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Upper lip | <u>h. Uvula</u> | o. Root of the tongue |
| b. Lower lip | i. Pharynx | p. Lower jaw |
| c. Upper teeth | j. Body of the tongue | q. Epiglottis |
| d. Lower teeth | k. Tip of the tongue | r. Cartilages of the larynx |
| <u>e. Alveolar ridge</u> | l. Blade of the tongue | s. Trachea (windpipe) |
| f. Hard palate | m. Front of the tongue | t. Oral cavity |
| <u>g. Velum (soft palate)</u> | n. Back of the tongue | u. Nasal cavity |

Figure 9.1 Schematic diagram of a cross-section of the vocal organs.
 Source: After Laver 1994a: 120.



A top-down view of the larynx National Cancer Institute

In phonetics and phonology, *voice* refers to the speech sounds produced by the vocal folds (also known as the vocal cords). Also known as *voicing*.

- *Voice quality* refers to the characteristic features of an individual's voice.
- *Voice range* (or *vocal range*) refers to the range of frequency or pitch used by a speaker.

Sounds in English: Consonants

Consonants:

made by restricting or blocking the air flow through the mouth
mark the beginning and ends of syllables

Discovery activity 1: difference between consonants and vowels

eee—key *ooh—two* *or—nor* *er—sir* *ah—bar*

Consonants:

- * voiced or unvoiced (chart: –, +)
- * place of articulation (where the sound is produced) (chart)
- * manner of articulation (how the sound is produced) (chart)

Fricatives

1. Say the following words:

fire, via, three, then, sue, zoo, shore, measure

/z/ and /s/ as consonants in English are phonologically differentiated by the distinctive presence or absence of a single *distinctive feature*, often represented as — VOICE versus + VOICE.

Voicing contrast in English fricatives via **minimal pairs**

Articulation	Voiceless	Voiced
Pronounced with the lower lip against the teeth:	[f] (<i>fan</i>)	[v] (<i>van</i>)
Pronounced with the tongue against the teeth:	[θ] (<i>thin, thigh</i>)	[ð] (<i>then, thy</i>)
Pronounced with the tongue near the gums:	[s] (<i>sip</i>)	[z] (<i>zip</i>)
Pronounced with the tongue bunched up:	[ʃ] (<i>Confucian</i>)	[ʒ] (<i>confusion</i>)

Wikipedia ©

Practicing *breathy* onset

- say the word *heavy*
- say the word *heat*
- say the word *face*

Practicing *easy* onset

- say the word *lovely*
- say the word *nice*
- say the word *rice*

Now let's practicing linking consonants. Say the following words:

group leader

clock radio

web design

space heater

Sounds like:

group leader

grou-pleader

clock radio

clo-ckradio

web design

webdesign

space heater

spaceheater





EXPRESSIVE READING

Read the following sentence. Place the accent or stress on a different word each time you read it.

How does the meaning of the sentence change with emphasis in different places?

- THIS is a book.
- This IS a book.
- This is A book.
- This is a BOOK.

First read each statement without expression. Then read each one with the appropriate feeling.

- What a wonderful sunset!
- Watch out, Jack! It's hot!
- I'm bored and sleepy.
- What do you want? I'm busy now.
- He's terrible! I hate him.
- I've just heard about your brother's death. I'm very sorry.

✱ **Note:** emphasis on the **second, third or fourth syllable** is common in longer English words, such as

2nd: emission, spectrography, photography, neutrino

3rd: instability, luminosity, radiation, resolution,
population, spectroscopic

4rd: nucleosynthesis, accommodation

An illustration of a person's mouth and tongue, rendered in shades of brown and tan. The tongue is sticking out, and the teeth are visible. The illustration is positioned on the right side of the image, partially overlapping a teal background.

**Thirty-three
thirsty, thundering
thoroughbreds....**

An illustration of a person's mouth and tongue, shown in profile, with a speech bubble containing a tongue twister. The background is a solid teal color. The tongue is extended and touching the roof of the mouth.

**Six sleek swans
swam swiftly
southwards.**

Speech Training - 1

Plosives

Make sure that the plosives really ***pop*** at the end.

stop ripe keep right late felt awake snake

bob tube stub ride load rug egg bag loved

Speech Training - 2

Tongue-Tip-Gum-Ridge Sounds

Be aware of these sounds, especially in the middle of the word.

t: beauty later eight bright

d: meadow tidy divide invaded

n: Phoenix sunny bean fireman

l: alligator wall biologist feel

Speech Training - 3

Consonant Clusters


act looked raked inject

under kindly fender binding


stopped kept slipped mopped

bold told railed build fooled

faint mountain painted entertained

A stylized illustration of a person's face in profile, facing left. The person has brown skin and is smiling, showing their teeth and tongue. A large white speech bubble is positioned to the left of the face, containing the text 'Rory the warrior and Roger the worrier...'. The background is a solid light blue color.

**Rory the warrior
and Roger the
worrier...**



**Ingenious
iguanas
improvising
an intricate
impromptu...**

Mouth Calisthenics -1

A common habit that interferes with clear voice and speech is decreased mouth movement. One movement is the up-and-down movement of the jaw.

my may tiny tame Einstein
able shine rain I sign time

Mouth Calisthenics -2

The other movement is the lips and mouth muscles.

tune should noisy do look

loyal royal shoes boy oil owl

Mouth Calisthenics -3

I waited for a break. Bob locked the door.

My friend Ray was late. Who moved the glue?

Put the mail on the table. Callie and Don had a baby boy.



**I slit the sheet,
the sheet I slit,
and on the slitted
sheet I sit.**

- Betty Botter made a bit of batter and thought it better to add a bit of butter, but the bit of butter didn't make the batter better but made Betty Botter's batter bitter.
- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?
- Rubber baby buggy bumpers.
- Fred fled the flood in Florida.
- The rabbit eats red rice in the room on the right.
- She sits, she thinks, she sings.
- Let's listen to the lesson and look at the letter.
- A noisy noise annoyed the noisy oyster.
- Red leather, yellow leather.
- Round and round the rugged rocks the ragged rascals ran.
- She sells sea shells by the sea shore.
- Sam sawed six slick, sleek, slim, splendid saplings.
- A swan swam over the sea. Swim swan, swim! The swan swam back again. Well swum, swan!

- Theodore Throstle threw a thimble into a thicket of thistles.
- I thought a thought, but the thought I thought wasn't the thought I thought I thought. If the thought I thought I thought had been the thought I thought, I wouldn't have thought so much.
- Unique New York. New York's unique.
- Whenever the weather is cold, whenever the weather is hot, we'll weather the weather, whatever the weather, whether we like or not.
- Which witch went west when the weather was worst?
- How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood? As many chucks as a woodchuck could chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood.
- Oh really, Lily! You took Larry to the rally.
- This thick thistle thrived in that thicket.
- The sheik's sixth sheep is sick.
- The fool pulled the full pail out of the pool.
- Good blood, bad blood.
- Three grey geese in a green field grazing.
- Mixed biscuits, mixed biscuits.

Can you say it?

"Through **three** cheese trees
three free fleas flew.

While **these** fleas flew,
freezy breeze blew.

Freezy breeze made **these three**
trees freeze.

Freezy trees made **these trees**
cheese freeze.

That's what made **these three** free
fleas sneeze."

