

Phonetic Transcription and Speech Sounds

The English language has a very unusual **spelling**, which reflects the pronunciation of English of the 12th-14th centuries. This is explained by the fact that with the introduction of printing, the spelling of the English language was fixed early, while the sound structure of the language has since undergone a number of significant changes. All this is complicated by the influence of other languages on English, which has given rise to a large number of exceptions in spelling, therefore it is customary in English language dictionaries to display a phonetic transcription that reflects the real sound of the word.

Phonetic transcription is a graphic recording of the sound of a word, designed to accurately reflect the pronunciation, each individual sound is indicated by a certain sign that excludes double reading.

Basically, in English dictionaries, transcription is recorded using the "**International Phonetic Alphabet**" ("**IPA**") based on the Latin alphabet. In order to separate a phonetic transcription from another text, it is enclosed in square brackets [...] or slashes /.../.

Occasionally, transcription marks other than the IPA may be used to make fonts easier to work with or more familiar. Also, different versions of the English language have some difference in the sound of the same words. All this leads to the fact that in different dictionaries the transcription may differ slightly.

Punctuation, used in transcription

- ['] - the apostrophe, indicates that the next syllable is stressed
- [:] - the colon, indicates that the sound is long
- () - enclosing a sound in quotation marks allows it to be omitted, for example [plu(ə)rəl] is pronounced like [pluərəl] or [plurəl]

Vowel Sounds

Vowel are sounds formed by the free passage of air in the vocal tract, consisting only of a vocal tone.

Vowel pronunciation:

- [ɪ] / [i] - *pretty* ['prɪtɪ];
- [ɪ:] / [i:] - *tea* [tɪ:];
- [ʌ] - *cut* [kʌt];
- [ɑ:] - *past* [pɑ:st];
- [ɔ] / [o] - *cock* [kɔk];
- [ɔ:] - *ball* [bɔ:l];
- [u:] - *cool* [ku:l];
- [u] - *put* [put];
- [e] - *pen* [pen];

- [æ] – *back* [bæk];
- [ə] – unclear unstressed sound (neutral vowel);
- [ə:] / [ɜ:] – *bird* [bɜ:rd].

Diphthongs

Diphthong – is a combination of two vowels pronounced as one syllable, with a transition from the main vowel sound to another.

- [eɪ] – *say* [seɪ]
- [ɔɪ] / [əɪ] – *boy* [bɔɪ]
- [ɔʊ] / [əʊ] – *go* [gɔʊ]
- [aɪ] / [ʌɪ] – *life* [laɪf]
- [aʊ] / [aʊ] / [ʌʊ] – *now* [naʊ]

Consonant Sounds

Consonants are sounds formed by a break or change in the flow of air with the help of the tongue, lips, teeth, consonants cannot be sung.

Consonants are divided into **voiced consonants** and **voiceless consonants**). Some consonants form pairs "**voiced - voiceless sound**". But some consonants do not form such a pair, for example, "sonorant consonants".

Voiced consonants	[b]	[d]	[ʒ]	[dʒ]	[g]	[v]	[ð]	[z]
Voiceless consonants	[p]	[t]	[ʃ]	[tʃ]	[k]	[f]	[p]	[s]

Voiceless Consonants

- [p] – *pump* [pʌmp];
- [t] – *tongue* [tʌŋ];
- [ʃ] – *show* [ʃəʊ];
- [tʃ] – *chain* [tʃeɪn];
- [k] – *cut* [kʌt];
- [f] – *fall* [fɔ:l];
- [θ] / [p] – *thought* [θɔ:t];
- [s] – *sorry* ['sɔ:ri].

Voiced Consonants

- [b] – *boy* [bɔɪ];
- [d] – *did* [dɪd];

- [ʒ] – *vision* ['vɪʒən];
- [dʒ] – *jam* [dʒæm];
- [g] – *game* ['geɪm];
- [v] – *vain* [veɪn];
- [ð] – *these* [ði:z];
- [z] – *zero* ['zɪ(ə)rəʊ].

Sonorant Consonants

Sonorant consonants are consonants, in the formation of which the voice prevails over the noise. Sonorant consonants are close in sound to voiced consonants and do not form a voiceless pair:

- [m] – *come* [kʌm];
- [n] – *now* [naʊ];
- [l] – *leg* [leg];
- [ŋ] – *tongue* [tʌŋ] *singer* ['sɪŋər];
- [h] – *here* [hɪər];
- [ɹ] / [r] / [ʀ] – *red* [red] not rolling, not vibrating r;
- [w] – *wet* [wet];
- [j] – *yes* [jes].

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