

Introducing the IPA - an audio recording by Eric Armstrong

I've made this recording to illustrate the sounds associated with the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet. This is a copyright recording, and may not be reproduced without permission. It was recorded on January 11, 2001 at Roosevelt University. My name is Eric Armstrong.

My primary audience is actors and those who work in theatre and film, and plan to use IPA as a tool for learning accents and dialects for performance. My assumption in making this tape is that you speak English so that you can use its sounds as a reference point to learn the sounds of other languages. For the English reference words listed, I will use a generic *General American* dialect, unless I specifically refer to another dialect.

1. Consonants

We will start with the consonants of English.

Stop/Plosives

	Voiceless	Voiced
Bilabial	p	b
Alveolar *	t	d
Velar	k	g
Glottal	ʔ	

1a. I will say each **Stop/Plosive** *initially*, followed by the vowel [a], then *medially*, surrounded on either side by [a], then *finally*, both released (aspirated if voiceless) after [a], and unreleased after [a].

[p̚a, ap̚a, ap̚^h, ap̚[̚]; b̚a, ab̚a, ab̚, ab̚[̚]; t̚a, at̚a, at̚^h, at̚[̚]; d̚a, ad̚a, ad̚, ad̚[̚]; k̚a, ak̚a, ak̚^h, ak̚[̚]; g̚a, ag̚a, ag̚, ag̚[̚]; ʔ̚a, aʔ̚a, aʔ̚[̚]]

*The *medial* voiceless alveolar stop [t], [ata] is often replaced in North American speech by the voiceless alveolar tap / flap [ɾ], [ara], as in "better".

Next I will speak the same patterns, but using words or phrases that feature them.

[p̚a, əp̚aɪt, ʌp̚^h, tæp̚[̚]; bɒg, əb̚ɔəd, lɒb, dʒæb̚[̚]; tɔk, ətɒp, æt̚^h, bɪt̚[̚]; dæn, 'aɪdə, bɪd, tɛd̚[̚]; ki, əkɪn, dɒk̚^h, blɒk̚[̚]; gʌt, bɪ'gɛt, bɪg, dʌg̚[̚]; ʔ̚eɪp, ʔ̚ʌʔ̚ɪ, hɪʔ̚[̚]]

Pat, apart, up, tap; bog, aboard, lob, jab; talk, atop, at, bit; Dan, idea, bead, Ted; key, akin, dock, buck; gut, beget, big, dug; Ape, uh-un, hit (à la Britney Spears).

Nasals

	Voiced
Bilabial	m
Alveolar	n
velar	ŋ

1b. I will say each **Nasal** *initially*, followed by the vowel [a], then *medially*, surrounded on either side by [a], and *finally*, after [a]. Note that, though we do it here, [ŋ] does not normally begin syllables in English, though it may link to a word that begins with a vowel.

[ma, ama, am; na, ana, an; ŋa, aŋa, aŋ]

Next I will speak the same patterns, but using words or phrases that feature them.

[ma, 'imem, [æm; na, 'ænə, on; sŋ ə sŋ]

Ma, e-mail, sham; gnaw, Anna, on; Sing-a song.

Fricatives

	Voiceless	Voiced
Labiodental	f	v
Dental	θ	ð
Alveolar	s	z
Postalveolar	ʃ	ʒ
Velar	x	
Glottal	h	ɦ
Labial-Velar	ɸ	w

1c. I will say each **Fricative** *initially*, followed by the vowel [a], then *medially*, surrounded on either side by [a], and *finally*, after [a]. Note: the voiceless velar fricative [x] is used only in loan words, such as Bach; the [h] is used *initially* and the voiced [ɦ] is used medially in between two vowels; [ʒ] is never used *finally* in English; this is also true of [ɸ] and [w]. (Technically [w] is not a fricative, it is a labial-velar approximant).

[fa, afa, af; va, ava, av; θa, aθa, aθ; ða, aða, að; sa, asa, as; za, aza, az; [a, a[a, a[; ʒa, aʒa, aʒ; xa, axa, ax; ha, aɦa; ɸa, aɸa; wa, awa]

Next I will speak the same patterns, but using words or phrases that feature them.

[fɑð, 'ɔfəl, mɪf; vaɪ, ə'vaʊ, liʋ; θɔ, 'kæθoʊd, pɑθ; ðoʊ, 'aɪðə, beɪð; si, pasɪŋ, beɪs; zu, 'izi, wʌz; ʃɔ, ə'ʃɔə, mæʃ; zɑk, æzʊə, vɪzŋ; xʊts.pʌ, lɑ'xɑ.ɪm, bɑx; hɑəd, ə'hɛd; maɪt, ə'maɪl; want, ə'weɪ]

Far, awful, whiff; vie, avow, live; thaw, cathode, path; though, either, bathe; see, passing, base; zoo, easy, was; Shaw, ashore, mash; Jacques, azure, vision; Chutzpah, L' Chaim, Bach; hard, ahead; white, awhile; want, away.

Affricates

	Voiceless	Voiced
Alveolar / Postalveolar	tʃ	dʒ

1d. I will say each **Affricate** *initially*, followed by the vowel [ɑ], then medially, surrounded on either side by [ɑ], and *finally*, after [ɑ].

[tʃɑ, ɑtʃɑ, ɑtʃ; dʒɑ, ɑdʒɑ, ɑdʒ]

Next I will speak the same patterns, but using words or phrases that feature them.

[tʃæps, ɪtʃi, bɒtʃ; dʒɔ, ɛdʒə, bʌdʒ]

Chaps, itchy, botch; jaw, edger, budge.

Approximants

	Voiced
Alveolar	ɹ
Lateral Alveolar	l
Palatal	j

1e. I will say each **Approximant** *initially*, followed by the vowel [ɑ], then medially, surrounded on either side by [ɑ], and *finally*, after [ɑ]. Note that /l/ after vowels tends to be palatalized [ɹ].

[ɹɑ, ɑɹɑ, ɑɹ*; lɑ, ɑlɑ, ɑl, ɑɹ; ja, ɑja, ɑj*]

Next I will speak the same patterns, but using words or phrases that feature them.

[ɹɛd, ɑɹɑ, ɑɹ*; lɑ, 'ɑlɑ, ɑl, ɑɹ; ja, ɑja, ɑj*]

*Note that for our purposes, [ɑɪ] is only used to indicated a very strong R pronunciation of the diphthong [ɑɜ̃]and that [ɑj] appears only in dialects with a very intense closing of diphthongs, generally for [aɪ].

2. Vowels

Next, we will focus on the vowels of English. These are the vowels that you will encounter most often in your work as an actor. These words are merely given as a means to practice these sounds. You might not normally pronounce these words in your personal form of speech in this manner. For the purpose of learning the sounds, please try to repeat the following words as accurately as possible. I tried to give you every possible spelling for each sound. Where there are very few different spellings for a sound, I have given you enough words to get the feeling of the sound.

Front:

Lower case I	i	Read, <u>quay</u> , <u>female</u> , <u>beam</u> , <u>knee</u> , <u>seize</u> , <u>debris</u> , <u>believe</u> , <u>vis-à-vis</u> , <u>amoeba</u> , <u>Portuguese</u>
Small Cap I	ɪ	This, <u>advocate</u> , <u>captain</u> , <u>actress</u> , <u>foreign</u> , <u>active</u> , <u>women</u> , <u>connoisseur</u> , <u>business</u> , <u>build</u> , <u>penguin</u> , <u>analysis</u>
Lowercase E	e	<u>Café</u> , <u>penne</u> , <u>latte</u> , <u>papier mâché</u>
Epsilon	ɛ	<u>Fellow</u> , <u>any</u> , <u>haemorrhage</u> , <u>said</u> , <u>says</u> , <u>accent (v.)</u> , <u>abreast</u> , <u>heifer</u> , <u>leopard</u> , <u>friend</u> , <u>bury</u> , <u>guest</u>
Ash Lowercase AE digraph	æ	<u>Actors</u> , <u>plaid</u> , <u>meringue</u>
Type A	a	<u>Command</u> , <u>bath</u> , <u>ask</u> , <u>aunt</u>

Central:

Barred I	i	Quickly, algae, gimme, coffee, Raleigh, alley, khaki, eerie, ratatouille, Albuquerque, any
Schwa	ə	Above, cabaret, capable, villain, woman, meringue, arithmetic, pageant, pigeon, gorgeous, Asia, patient, anxious, alcohol, cupboard, tortoise, famous, bonus (n.b. all the words below for [ə] can be spoken without R-coloring.)
Flying Schwa Rhotic Schwa	ɚ	Better, altar, backward, after, actor, honour, auburn, censure, acre
Three Turned Epsilon	ɜ	Words, defer, earn, connoisseur, birth, colonel, worse, journal, burn, myrrh
Flying Three Rhotic Turned Epsilon	ɝ	Words, fern, heard, auteur, stir, word, courage, furry, myrtle

Back:

U glide Liquid U	ju/ru	Music, beautiful, eunuch, queue, curfew, ewe, lieu, view, abuse, argue, nuisance, you, Yukon.
Lowercase U	u	Moods, rheumatism, blew, approve, canoe, wound, through, dune, blue, bruise
Upsilon	ʊ	Good, wolf, crook, could, bush
Pure O	o	Obey, au gratin, motel, robust
Hut Turned V	ʌ	Luck, above, doth, does, blood, couple, bud, unarmed
Open O Turned C	ɔ	Always, alright, applause, bawdy, awe, Sean, broad, balk, bought
Script A	ɑ	Drama, Brahms, hurrah, bourgeois, bomb
Turned Script A	ɒ	Not, quad, wallow, cauliflower, rendezvous, alcohol, cough, knowledge

Diphthongs:

eɪ	Spain, sane, fail, gauge, away, yea, matinee, beige, ballet, obey
aɪ	Fine, aisle, aye, eye, alive, died, guide, buy, analyze, dye
ɔɪ	Boys, Freud, coin, destroy, buoyant
oʊ	Only, mauve, sew, yeoman, alto, coal, goes, though, glow, owe
aʊ/ɑʊ	Shout, bough, allow, crouch, count, prowl

R-colored Diphthongs (with [ə] or [ɚ]):

ɪə/ɪɚ	Here's, austere, clear, beer, weir, souvenir, fierce
ɛə/ɛɚ	Their, bare, chair, where, pear, heir
ʊə/ʊɚ	Poor, sewer, boor, contour, sure, lure
ɔə/ɔɚ	Ignored, award, drawer, George, bore, door, court
ɑə/ɑɚ	Car(t), ark, bard, charm, heart, memoir

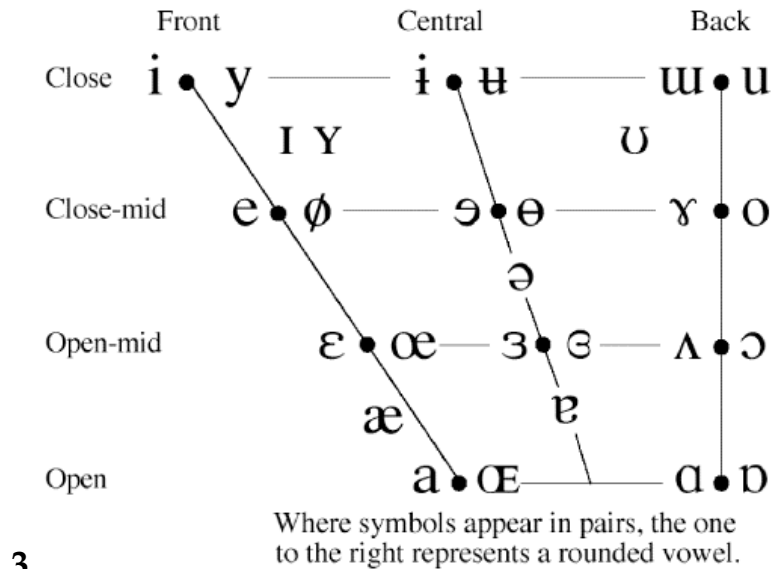
3a. The Three Vowel Boundaries

All vowels can be described in terms of three principle qualities, each associated with a different kind of shaping in the mouth. The first sound quality is modified by opening and closing of the mouth. This may be achieved by the jaw closing, and by so doing the tongue is brought closer to the roof of the mouth, or by the tongue moving independently of the jaw. The boundaries of this quality are called “close” to describe when the tongue is close to the roof of the mouth, and “open,” which describes the mouth when the jaw is dropped and the tongue is far from the roof of the mouth. The vowels [i] and [u] are both close vowels, while the vowels [a] and [ɑ] are both open vowels. By gradually opening the mouth we can hear how we end up sliding through a number of vowel sounds. In these sliding demonstrations, it helps to maintain the pitch of the sounds consistent, so that we concentrate on the vowel shift only.

The primary difference between these vowels is the degree of openness/closeness.

The second sound quality is modified by moving the tongue forwards and backwards in the mouth. There are three principle “steps” on that journey from the back of the mouth to the front, and they are termed “back, mid and front.” In

the last demonstration, the vowels were all front vowels: [i ɪ e ɛ æ a].



3

the. central Note that the box after the symbol name is gray if the sound is used in English (most variants), and white if it is a foreign language based sound (so you might use that sound in a foreign accent of English). An "L" is used to indicate if a sound is used in English only for loan words, or for regional dialects.

Front:

Close front rounded Lower case Y		y	Fr. <i>lu</i> [ly]; German <i>Füße</i> [fysə] "feet"
Fairly front, fairly close rounded Small Cap Y		ʏ	German <i>Flüsse</i> [flʏsə] "rivers"; Swedish <i>nyttā</i> [nyttā] "use (n.)"
Open-mid front rounded Lowercase O-E digraph		œ	Fr. <i>peur</i> [pœʁ] "fear"
Front unrounded vowel between open-mid and open Lowercase A-E digraph, ash		æ	Eng. <i>had</i> [hæd]
Open front unrounded Type A		a	Fr. <i>patte</i> [pat] "paw" SASD Eng. <i>bath</i> [baθ]
Open front rounded Small Cap O-E digraph		œ	Austrian German <i>Seil</i> [sœ:] "rope"

Central:

Close central unrounded Barred I		ɨ	Eng. <i>city</i> [sɪtɨ] Korean [ɟim] "gold"
Close central rounded Barred U		ɯ	Scottish Eng. <i>good</i> [gʊd] Norwegian <i>butt</i> [bʊt] "blunt"

Close-mid central unrounded Reversed E		ɘ	
Close-mid central rounded Barred O		ɵ	Hong Kong Cantonese [sɵtɿ] "shirt" Swedish <i>full</i> [fɵl] "full"
Mid central vowel Schwa		ə	Eng. <i>and</i> [ənd]
Open-mid central unrounded Turned Epsilon or Three		ɜ	Eng. <i>nurse</i> [nɜ]
Open-mid central rounded Closed Turned Epsilon		ɝ	
Central unrounded between open-mid and open Turned Type A		ɚ	RP Eng. <i>mother</i> [mʌðɚ] German <i>Butter</i> [butɚ] "butter"

Back:

Close back unrounded Doubled U or Turned M		ʉ	Vietnamese [tʉ] "fourth"
Close back rounded Lowercase U		u	Eng. <i>school</i> [skul]; Fr. <i>loup</i> [lu]
Fairly back, fairly close, rounded Upsilon		ʊ	Eng. <i>book</i> [bʊk]
Close-mid back unrounded Ram's horns		ɤ	Vietnamese [tɤ] "silk"
Close-mid back rounded Pure O		o	Fr. <i>lot</i> [lo] "share" Scottish Eng. <i>boat</i> [bot]
Open-mid back unrounded Turned V or "hut"		ʌ	Vietnamese [ʌŋ] "favor" Eng. <i>hut</i> [hʌt] (this sound is, in fact, closer to [ɚ] than to the IPA [ʌ])
Open-mid back rounded Open O or Turned C		ɔ	Brit. Eng. <i>caught</i> [kɔt] German <i>Gott</i> [gɔt] "God"
Open back unrounded Script A		ɑ	Eng. <i>father</i> [fɑðə]
Open back rounded Turned Script A		ɒ	Brit. Eng. <i>bother</i> [bɒðə]