

# Help:IPA/English

< [Help:IPA](#)

*This page is about the pronunciation of words in English. For sounds not found in English, see [Help:IPA](#). For a basic introduction to the IPA, see [Help:IPA/Introduction](#). For a guide to adding IPA characters to Wikipedia articles, see [Wikipedia:Manual of Style/Pronunciation § Entering IPA characters](#).*

## This is the pronunciation key for IPA transcriptions of English on Wikipedia.



It provides a set of symbols to represent the pronunciation of English in Wikipedia articles, and example words that illustrate the sounds that correspond to them. Integrity must be maintained between the key and the transcriptions that link here; do not change any symbol or its value without establishing [consensus](#) on the [talk page](#) first.

Throughout Wikipedia, the pronunciation of words is indicated by means of the **International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)**. The following tables list the IPA symbols used for English words and pronunciations. Please note that several of these symbols are used in ways that are specific to Wikipedia and differ from those used by dictionaries.

If the IPA symbols are not displayed properly by your browser, see the [links below](#).

If you are adding a pronunciation using this key, such pronunciations should generally be formatted using the template {{IPAc-en}}. The template provides tooltips for each symbol in the pronunciation. See the template page for instructions.

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## Key

If the words given as examples for two different symbols sound the same to you (for example, if you pronounce *cot* and *caught* the same, or *do* and *dew*, or *marry* and *merry*. This often happens because of dialect variation – see our articles [English phonology](#) and [International Phonetic Alphabet chart for English dialects](#).), you can pronounce those symbols the same in explanations of all words.<sup>[1]</sup> The footnotes explain some of these cases.

If there is an IPA symbol you are looking for that you do not see here, see [Help:IPA](#), which is a more complete list. For a table listing all spellings of the sounds on this page, see [English orthography § Sound-to-spelling correspondences](#). For help converting spelling to pronunciation, see [English orthography § Spelling-to-sound correspondences](#).

[Consonants](#)

[Vowels](#)

| IPA              | Examples                             |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| b                | buy, cab                             |
| d                | dye, cad, ladder <sup>[2]</sup>      |
| dʒ               | dew <sup>[3]</sup>                   |
| dʒ               | giant, badge                         |
| ð                | thy, breathe, father                 |
| f                | fan, leaf                            |
| g                | guy, bag                             |
| h                | high, ahead                          |
| hw               | whine <sup>[4]</sup>                 |
| j <sup>[5]</sup> | yes, hallelujah                      |
| k                | sky, crack                           |
| l                | lie, sly, gal <sup>[6]</sup>         |
| lj               | lute <sup>[3]</sup>                  |
| m                | my, smile, cam                       |
| n                | nigh, snide, can                     |
| nj               | new <sup>[3]</sup>                   |
| ŋ                | sang, sink, singer                   |
| p                | pie, spy, cap                        |
| r <sup>[7]</sup> | rye, try, very                       |
| s                | sigh, mass                           |
| sj               | consume <sup>[3]</sup>               |
| ʃ                | shy, cash, emotion                   |
| t                | tie, sty, cat, latter <sup>[2]</sup> |
| tj               | tune <sup>[3]</sup>                  |
| tʃ               | China, catch                         |
| θ                | thigh, math                          |
| θj               | enthuse <sup>[3]</sup>               |
| v                | vine, leave                          |
| w                | wine, swine                          |
| z                | zoo, has                             |
| zj               | Zeus <sup>[3]</sup>                  |

| Strong vowels                             |   | ...followed by R <sup>[12]</sup> |  |
|---|---|----------------------------------|--|
| IPA                                       | Examples  | IPA                              | Examples   |
| ɑ:  | PALM, bra   | ɑ:r                              | START  |
| ɒ   | LOT, blockade <sup>[13]</sup>                       | ɒr                               | moral <sup>[14]</sup>                            |
| æ   | TRAP, tattoo <sup>[15]</sup>                        | æɹ                               | marry <sup>[16]</sup>                            |
| ɑɪ  | PRICE, pie <sup>[17]</sup>                          | ɑɪər                             | hire <sup>[18]</sup>                             |
|   |   | ɑɪ.ər                            | higher <sup>[19]</sup>                           |
| ɑʊ  | MOUTH, how <sup>[17]</sup>                          | ɑʊər                             | flour <sup>[18]</sup>                            |
|   |   | ɑʊ.ər                            | flower <sup>[19]</sup>                           |
| ɛ   | DRESS, prestige <sup>[20]</sup>                     | ɛɹ                               | merry <sup>[16]</sup>                            |
| eɪ  | FACE  | ɛər                              | SQUARE, Mary <sup>[16][21]</sup>                 |
|   |   | eɪər                             | player <sup>[19]</sup>                           |
| ɪ   | KIT, historic <sup>[22]</sup>                       | ɪr                               | mirror   |
| i:  | FLEECE, pedigree, idea <sup>[23]</sup>              | ɪər                              | NEAR, serious <sup>[21]</sup>                    |
|   |   | i:ər                             | freer  |
| oʊ  | GOAT <sup>[24][22]</sup>                            | oʊər                             | mower  |
| ɔ:  | THOUGHT <sup>[25]</sup>                             | ɔ:r                              | NORTH, FORCE <sup>[26]</sup>                     |
|   |   | ɔ:ər                             | sawer  |
| ɔɪ  | CHOICE  | ɔɪər                             | coir <sup>[18]</sup>                             |
|   |   | ɔɪ.ər                            | employer <sup>[19]</sup>                         |
| ʊ   | FOOT  | ʊr                               | courier  |
| u:  | GOOSE, cruel <sup>[23]</sup>                        | ʊər                              | tour, CURE (/ˈkjʊər/) <sup>[21][27]</sup>        |
|   |   | u:ər                             | truer  |
| ʌ   | STRUT, untidy, justiciable <sup>[28][29]</sup>      | ɜ:r                              | NURSE, blurry, urbane, foreword <sup>[30]</sup>  |
|   |   | ʌr                               | hurry <sup>[31]</sup>                            |
| <b>Weak vowels</b>                        |   |                                  |  |
| IPA                                       | Examples  | IPA                              | Examples   |
| ə   | COMMA, about  | ər                               | LETTER, forward, history <sup>[32]</sup>         |
| ɪ   | edition, rabbit, Latin, heating <sup>[22][33]</sup> | oʊ                               | motto, retroactive, follower <sup>[22][34]</sup> |
| i   | HAPPY, mediocre <sup>[35]</sup>                     | iə                               | California <sup>[36]</sup>                       |
| u   | fruition <sup>[34][35]</sup>                        | uə                               | influence <sup>[37]</sup>                        |
| <b>Syllabic consonants<sup>[32]</sup></b> |   |                                  |  |
| IPA                                       | Examples  | IPA                              | Examples   |

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ʒ | pleasure,<br>beige <sup>[8]</sup> |
|---|-----------------------------------|

|    |                             |    |                              |
|----|-----------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| əɪ | bottle (either [əɪ] or [ɪ]) | ən | button (either [ən] or [ŋ])  |
|    |                             | əm | rhythm (either [əm] or [rɪ]) |

| Marginal segments |                                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| IPA               | Examples                              |
| x                 | ugh, loch,<br>Chanukah <sup>[9]</sup> |
| ʔ                 | uh-oh /'ʔʌʔoʊ/                        |
| õ                 | bon vivant <sup>[10]</sup>            |
| æ̃                | fin de siècle <sup>[10]</sup>         |
| ɜː                | Möbius (UK<br>only) <sup>[11]</sup>   |

| Stress <sup>[38]</sup> |                           | Syllabification |   |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---|
| IPA                    | Examples                  | IPA             | Examples  |
| '                      | intonation /,ɪntə'neɪʃən/ | .               | /'haɪər/ hire, /'haɪ.ər/ higher <sup>[39]</sup><br>/'tæks.peɪər/ taxpayer |
| '                      |                           |                 |   |

## Notes

- Words in SMALL CAPITALS are the standard lexical sets.<sup>[40]</sup>
- The length mark (:) does not mean that the vowels transcribed with it are always longer than those without it. When unstressed, followed by a voiceless consonant, or in a polysyllabic word, a vowel in the former group is frequently shorter than the latter in other environments (see Clipping (phonetics) § English).

## Dialect variation

*Further information: English phonology and International Phonetic Alphabet chart for English dialects*

This key represents diaphonemes, abstractions of speech sounds that accommodate General American, Received Pronunciation (RP) and to a large extent also Australian, Canadian, Irish (including Ulster), New Zealand, Scottish, South African and Welsh pronunciations. Therefore, not all of the distinctions shown here are relevant to a particular dialect:

- ⟨i⟩ does not represent a phoneme but a variation between /iː/ and /ɪ/ in unstressed positions. Speakers of dialects with happy tensing (Australian English, General American, modern RP) should read it as an unstressed /iː/, whereas speakers of other dialects (e.g. some Northern England English) should treat it the same as /ɪ/. In Scotland, this vowel can be considered the same as the short allophone of /eɪ/, as in *take*. Before /ə/ within the same word, another possible pronunciation is /j/ as in *yet*.
- Many speakers of American and Canadian English pronounce *cot* /'kɒt/ and *caught* /'kɔːt/ the same.<sup>[1]</sup> You may simply ignore the difference between the symbols /ɒ/ and /ɔː/, just as you ignore the distinction between the written vowels *o* and *au* when pronouncing them.
- Speakers of rhotic dialects (Irish English, North American English, Scottish English) do not distinguish between the vowels of *near* /'nɪər/, *cure* /'kjʊər/ and *square* /'skwɛər/ on the one hand and *freerunning* /'friːrʌnɪŋ/, *Q-rating* /'kjuːreɪtɪŋ/ and *dayroom* /'deɪruːm/ on the other. If you speak such a dialect, read /ɪər, ʊər, ɛər/ as /iːr, uːr, eɪr/.
- In Northern Ireland, Scotland and many North American dialects the distinction between /ʊr/ as in *courier* and the aforementioned /ʊər/ and /uːr/ does not exist. If you speak such a dialect, ignore the difference between /ʊr/, /ʊər/ and /uːr/.

- In Northern Ireland and Scotland this merger occurs in all environments, which means that *foot* /'fʊt/ and *goose* /'gu:s/ also have the same vowel.<sup>[k][l]</sup> If you speak such a dialect, ignore the difference between /ʊ/ and /u:/ in all contexts.
- In North America, the /ʊr/ of *courier* and the /ʊər/ of *cure* may instead merge with /ɔ:r/ as in *north* or /ɜ:r/ as in *nurse*. No such merger is possible in the case of the sequence which we transcribe as /u:r/ as there is an implied morpheme boundary after the length mark.
- In North American dialects that do not distinguish between /ʊr/, /ʊər/ and /u:r/ there is also no distinction between the /ɪr/ of *mirror* and the aforementioned /ɪər/ and /i:r/. If you speak such a dialect, ignore the difference between /ɪr/, /ɪər/ and /i:r/.
- In many North American dialects there is also no distinction between the vowels in *merry* /'mɛri/, *Mary* /'mɛəri/ and *marry* /'mæri/. If you speak such a dialect, ignore the difference between /ɛr/, /ɛər/ and /ær/. Some speakers keep *marry* and/or *merry* separate from the rest, but in the General American accent all three vowels are the same and may not be distinct from /eɪr/ as in *dayroom* /'deɪru:m/.
- In rhotic North American English there is no distinction between the vowels in *nurse* /'nɜ:rs/ and *letter* /'lɛtər/. If you speak such a dialect, read /ɜ:r/ as /ər/. The /ʌr/ of *hurry* often joins this neutralization; if you have it in your speech, read /ɜ:r/, /ər/ and /ʌr/ as /ər/.
- Some speakers from Northern England do not distinguish the vowel of *square* /'skwɛər/ and *nurse* /'nɜ:rs/.<sup>[m]</sup> If you speak such a dialect, ignore the difference between the symbols /ɛər/ and /ɜ:r/.
- In New Zealand English, the vowels of *kit* /'kɪt/ and *focus* /'fɒskəs/ have the same schwa-like quality.<sup>[n][o]</sup> If you are from New Zealand, ignore the difference between the symbols /ɪ/ and /ə/.
- In contemporary New Zealand English and some other dialects, the vowels of *near* /'nɪər/ and *square* /'skwɛər/ are not distinguished.<sup>[p]</sup> If you speak such a dialect, ignore the difference between the symbols /ɪər/ and /ɛər/.
- In Northern England English, the vowels of *foot* /'fʊt/ and *strut* /'strʌt/ are not distinguished.<sup>[q]</sup> If you are from Northern England, ignore the difference between the symbols /ʊ/ and /ʌ/.
- In Welsh English and some other dialects, the vowels of *unorthodoxy* /ʌn'ɔ:rθədɒksi/ and *an orthodoxy* /ən'ɔ:rθədɒksi/ are not distinguished.<sup>[r]</sup> If you speak such a dialect, ignore the difference between the symbols /ʌ/ and /ə/.
- Depending on the dialect, vowels can be subject to various mergers before /l/, so that e.g. *fill* /'fɪl/ and *feel* /'fi:l/ or *pull* /'pʊl/ and *pool* /'pu:l/ may not be distinguished. L-vocalization may trigger even more mergers, so that e.g. *cord* /'kɔ:rd/ and *called* /'kɔ:ld/ may be homophonous as /'kɔ:d/ in non-rhotic dialects of South East England. See English-language vowel changes before historic /l/ for more information.
- In many dialects, /r/ occurs only before a vowel; if you speak such a dialect, simply ignore /r/ in the pronunciation guides where you would not pronounce it, as in *cart* /kɑ:rt/.
- In other dialects, /j/ (**y**es) cannot occur after /t, d, n/, etc., within the same syllable; if you speak such a dialect, then ignore the /j/ in transcriptions such as *new* /nju:/. For example, *New York* is transcribed /nju: 'jɔ:rk/. For most people from England and for some New Yorkers, the /r/ in /jɔ:rk/ is not pronounced; for most people from the United States, including some New Yorkers, the /j/ in /nju:/. is not pronounced and may be ignored. (See yod-dropping.)

On the other hand, there are some distinctions which you might make but which this key does not encode, as they are seldom reflected in the dictionaries used as sources for Wikipedia articles:

- The vowels of *kit* and *bit*, distinguished in South Africa.<sup>[s]</sup> Both of them are transcribed as /ɪ/ in stressed syllables and as /ɪ/ or /ə/ in unstressed syllables.

- The difference between the vowels of *fir*, *fur* and *fern*, maintained in some Scottish and Irish English but lost elsewhere.<sup>[1]</sup> All of them are transcribed as /ɜ:r/.
- The vowels of *north* and *force*, distinguished in Scottish English, Irish English and by a minority of American speakers.<sup>[1]</sup> Both of them are transcribed as /ɔ:r/.
- The vowels of *pause* and *paws*, distinguished in Cockney and by some Estuary English speakers.<sup>[1]</sup> Both of them are transcribed as /ɔ:/ when the spelling does not contain ⟨r⟩ and /ɔ:r/ or /ʊər/ (depending on the word) when it does.
- The vowels of *manning* and *Manning*, distinguished in some parts of the United States (see /æ/ raising). Both of them are transcribed as /æ/.
- The difference between the vowels of *pain* and *pane* found in some English, Welsh, and Newfoundland dialects. Both of them are transcribed as /eɪ/.
- The difference between the vowels of *holy* and *wholly* found in Cockney and many Estuary English speakers.<sup>[1]</sup> Both of them are transcribed as /oʊ/.
- Any allophonic distinctions, such as:
  - The vowels of *bad* and *lad*, distinguished in many parts of Australia. Both of them are transcribed as /æ/.
  - The vowels of *spider* and *spied her*, distinguished in many parts of Scotland,<sup>[1]</sup> plus many parts of North America. Both of them are transcribed as /aɪ/.
  - The vowels of *rider* and *writer*, distinguished in most parts of Canada and many parts of the United States. Both of them are transcribed as /aɪ/.
  - The vowels of *powder* and *pouter* distinguished in most parts of Canada and some parts of the United States. Both of them are transcribed as /aʊ/.
  - Allophonic vowel length (including the Scottish vowel length rule), as in *knife* /'naɪf/ vs. *knives* /'naɪvz/. Phonemic vowel length, which exists in some dialects and involves pairs such as /ɛ/ vs. /ɛər/ and /ə/ vs. /ɜ:r/ is also not marked explicitly. /i/ and /u/ do not represent phonemes; see above.
  - Flapping in words such as *better*, which we write /'bɛtər/, rather than /'bɛdər/.
  - Glottalization in words such as *jetlag* and, in some accents, *daughter*, which we write /'dʒɛtlæg/ and /'dɔ:tər/, rather than /'dʒɛɾlæg/ and /'dɔ:ʔər/. In this system, /ʔ/ is used only for paralanguage or in loanwords where it occurs phonemically in the original language.
  - L-vocalization in words such as *bottle* and *Alps*, which we write /'bɒtəl/ and /'ælpz/, rather than /'bɒtʊ/ and /'æwps/.
  - The difference between allophones of /ə/ in *balance* ([ə]) vs. the ones in *about* and *Russia* (and, in non-rhotic dialects, *better*), both of which may be closer to /ʌ/ in dialects with the foot-strut split (that is, [ɚ]) vs. the one in *button* (the syllabicity of the following consonant). All are transcribed as /ə/ in our system.
  - The difference between the phonetic realization of English sounds (mostly vowels) in various dialects. *Let's pick some grapes for Betty* should be transcribed /lɛts 'pɪk səm 'grɛɪps fər 'bɛti/ regardless of the variety of English and everyone should interpret that transcription according to their own dialect. Thus, a person from South East England will read it as something like [lɛʔs 'pʰɪk səm 'gɹɛɪps fə 'bɛtʰɪ], a Scot as [lɛts 'pʰɪk səm 'gɹɛps fə 'bɛtɛ], whereas someone from New Zealand will interpret that transcription as [lɛts 'pʰək səm 'gɹæɪps fə 'bɪɾɪ]. Because we are transcribing diaphonemes rather than phones (actual sounds), it is irrelevant that, for example, the vowel in *let's* as pronounced by someone from New Zealand overlaps with how people with England and Scotland typically pronounce the first vowel in *pick*, or that the Scottish realization of /r/ after /g/ overlaps with the New Zealand realization of /t/ between vowels. In other words, the symbol ⟨ɛ⟩ does not stand specifically for the open-mid front unrounded vowel in our system but any vowel that

can be identified as the vowel in *let's*, depending on the accent. This is also why we use the simple symbol ⟨r⟩ for the second sound in *grapes*.

Other words may have different vowels depending on the speaker.

The pronunciation of the /æ/ vowel in most dialects of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Northern England and Wales has always been closer to [a]. Received Pronunciation has moved away from the traditional near-open front realization [æ] towards almost fully open front realization [a], and both the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the 2014 edition of *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* transcribe the vowel in *lad*, *bad*, *cat*, *trap* with /a/.<sup>[x]</sup>

For more extensive information on dialect variations, you may wish to see the [IPA chart for English dialects](#).

Note that place names are not generally exempted from being transcribed in this abstracted system, so rules such as the above must be applied in order to recover the local pronunciation. Examples include place names in much of England ending *-ford*, which although locally pronounced [-fəd] are transcribed /-fərd/. This is best practice for editors. However, readers should be aware that not all editors may have followed this consistently, so for example if /-fəd/ is encountered for such a place name, it should not be interpreted as a claim that the /r/ would be absent even in a [rhotic](#) dialect.

## Other transcriptions

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If you feel it is necessary to add a pronunciation respelling using another convention, then please use the conventions of [Wikipedia's pronunciation respelling key](#).

- To compare the following IPA symbols with non-IPA American dictionary conventions that may be more familiar, see [Pronunciation respelling for English](#), which lists the pronunciation guides of fourteen English dictionaries published in the United States.
- To compare the following IPA symbols with other IPA conventions that may be more familiar, see [Help:IPA/Conventions for English](#), which lists the conventions of eight English dictionaries published in Britain, Australia, and the United States.

## See also

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- If your browser does not display IPA symbols, you probably need to install a font that includes the IPA (for good, free IPA fonts, see the download links in the articles for [Gentium](#) and the more complete [Charis SIL](#); for a monospaced font, see the complete [Everson Mono](#))
- To add IPA pronunciations to Wikipedia articles, see the [{{IPA}}](#) template
- For a guide to adding IPA characters to Wikipedia articles, see [Wikipedia:Manual of Style/Pronunciation § Entering IPA characters](#).
- [Help:IPA/Conventions for English](#)
- [Help:Pronunciation respelling key](#)
- [Pronunciation respelling for English](#)

## Notes

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1. This rule is generally employed in the pronunciation guide of our articles, even for local terms such as place names. However, be aware that not all editors may have followed this consistently, so for example if a pronunciation of an English town ending in *-ford* reads /-fəd/, it doesn't mean that the /r/ would be absent in a rhotic dialect.

2. Some people pronounce *latter* similar or identical to *ladder* with **flapping**. To include this variation, some dictionaries transcribe /t/ in these cases as ⟨d⟩ or ⟨ɾ⟩, but our transcription system ignores that variation, writing just /d/ both in *ladder* and *dye*, and /t/ in *later* and *tie*. Some people also pronounce *winter* similarly or identically to *winner*. This is also not distinguished in our system.
3. In dialects with **yod dropping**, /j/ in /ju:/, /ju/, or /jʊə/ is not pronounced after **coronal consonants** (/t/, /d/, /s/, /z/, /n/, /θ/, and /l/) in the same syllable, so that *dew* /dju:/ is pronounced the same as *do* /du:/. In dialects with **yod coalescence**, /tj/ and /dj/ mostly merge with /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, so that the first syllable in *Tuesday* is pronounced the same as *choose*. In some dialects /sj/ and /zj/ are also affected and frequently merge with /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. Where /j/ in /ju:/, /ju/, or /jʊə/ following a coronal is still pronounced in yod-dropping accents, place a syllable break before it: *menu* /'mɛn.ju:/.
4. The phoneme /hw/ is not distinguished from /w/ in the many dialects with the **wine–whine merger**, such as RP and most varieties of General American. For more information on this sound, see **voiceless labialized velar approximant**.
5. The IPA value of the letter ⟨j⟩ may be counterintuitive to English speakers, but the spelling is found even in some common English words like *hallelujah* and *fjord*.
6. /l/ in the **syllable coda**, as in the words *all*, *cold*, or *bottle*, is pronounced as [o], [u], [w] or a similar sound in many dialects through **L-vocalization**.
7. In most varieties of English, /r/ is pronounced as an approximant [ɹ]. Although the IPA symbol ⟨r⟩ represents the **alveolar trill**, ⟨r⟩ is widely used instead of ⟨ɹ⟩ in broad transcriptions of English.
8. A number of English words, such as *genre* and *garage*, may be pronounced with either /ʒ/ or /dʒ/.
9. In most dialects, /x/ can also be replaced by /k/ in most words, including *loch*. It is also replaced with /h/ in some words, particularly of Yiddish origin, such as *Chanukah*.
10. /ɔ̃, æ̃/ are only found in French loanwords and often replaced by another vowel and a nasal consonant: *bon vivant* /,bɔ̃n vi:'vɔ̃nt/, *ensemble* /ɔ̃n'sɔ̃mbɛl/, etc.<sup>[a]</sup>
11. /ɜ:/ is only found in loanwords and represents a situation where such an *r*-less vowel is used only in British or Southern Hemisphere accents, and therefore a transcription that includes it must always be prefaced with a label indicating the variety of English. It is to be used only when a reliable source shows that General American has a different vowel in the same position. If *r*-ful NURSE is used even in GA, even if spelled without ⟨r⟩, as in *Goethe* and *hors d'oeuvre*, use /ɜ:r/. /ɜ:/ is also not the same as ⟨æ⟩ seen in some American dictionaries. ⟨æ⟩ in those dictionaries is merely a notational convention and does not correspond to any vowel in any accent of English, so a transcription containing ⟨æ⟩ cannot be converted to one that uses this key.
12. In **non-rhotic accents** like RP, /r/ is not pronounced unless followed by a vowel.
13. In dialects with the **father–bother merger** such as General American, /ɒ/ is not distinguished from /ɑ:/.
14. In most of the United States, /ɔr/ is merged with /ɔ:r/, except for a handful of words such as *borrow*, *tomorrow* and *sorry*, which instead have /ɑ:r/. In some parts of the Southern and Northeastern US, it is always merged with /ɑ:r/. In Canada, it is always merged with /ɔ:r/.
15. In North America, /æ/ is often pronounced like a diphthong [eə~ɛə] before nasal consonants and, in some particular regional dialects, other environments. See **/æ/ raising**.
16. /æɪ/, /ɛɪ/ and /ɛəɪ/ are not distinguished in many North American accents (**Mary–marry–merry merger**). Some speakers merge only two of the sounds (most typically /ɛəɪ/ with one of the short vowels) and less than a fifth of speakers of American English make a full three-way distinction, like RP and similar accents.<sup>[b]</sup>

17. In much of North America, /aɪ/ or /aʊ/ may have a slightly different quality when it precedes a **voiceless** consonant, as in *price* or *mouth*, from that in *ride/pie* or *loud/how*, a phenomenon known as **Canadian raising**. Since this occurs in a predictable fashion, it is not distinguished in this transcription system.
18. In some dialects, especially in the UK, the second segment in a diphthong followed by /ə/ is often omitted. This process or lack thereof may help choose between /aɪə, aʊə, ɔɪə/ in some words (*diary, admirer*) and /aɪr, aʊr, ɔɪr/ in others (*pirate, siren*), a distinction not always clear.
19. Some speakers pronounce *higher, flower, mayor* and *coyer* ("more coy") with two syllables, and *hire, flour, mare* and *coir* with one. Others pronounce them the same.
20. /ɛ/ is transcribed with ⟨e⟩ in many dictionaries. However, /eɪ/ is also sometimes transcribed with ⟨e⟩, especially in North American literature, so ⟨ɛ⟩ is chosen here.
21. /ɛə/, /ɪə/, or /ʊə/ may be separated from /r/ only when a stress follows it. The **IPAc-en** template supports /ɛəˈr/, /ɪəˈr/, /ʊəˈr/, /ɛəˌr/, /ɪəˌr/, and /ʊəˌr/ as distinct diaphonemes for such occasions.
22. /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ may be strong or weak depending on context.<sup>[c]</sup> Whether an instance of unstressed /ɪ/ is strong or weak may not be clear in some circumstances.<sup>[d]</sup>
23. Words like *idea, real, theatre, and cruel* may be pronounced with /ɪə/ or /ʊə/ in non-rhotic accents such as Received Pronunciation, and some dictionaries transcribe them with /ɪə, ʊə/<sup>[e]</sup> but since they do not stem from historical /r/ and are not pronounced with /r/ in rhotic accents, they should be transcribed with /i:ə, u:ə/, not with /ɪə, ʊə/, in this transcription system.
24. /ʊ/ is often transcribed with ⟨əʊ⟩, particularly in British literature, based on its modern realization in Received Pronunciation. It is also transcribed with ⟨o⟩, particularly in North American literature.
25. /ɔ:/ is not distinguished from /ɒ/ in dialects with the **cot–caught merger** such as Scottish English, Canadian English and many varieties of General American. In North America, the two vowels most often fall together with /ɑ:/.
26. Some conservative dialects make a distinction between the vowels in *horse* and *hoarse*, but the number of speakers who make this distinction any longer is very small and many dictionaries do not differentiate between them (**horse–hoarse merger**). The vowel in *hoarse* was formerly represented as /ɔər/ on Wikipedia, but is now represented as /ɔ:r/, identical to *horse*.
27. /ʊər/ is not distinguished from /ɔ:r/ in dialects with the **cure–force merger**, including many younger speakers. In England, the merger may not be fully consistent and may only apply to more common words. In conservative RP and Northern England English /ʊər/ is much more commonly preserved than in modern RP and Southern England English. In Australia and New Zealand, /ʊər/ does not exist as a separate phoneme and is replaced either by the sequence /u:ər/ (/u:r/ before vowels within the same word, save for some compounds) or the monophthong /ɔ:r/.
28. Some, particularly North American, dictionaries notate /ʌ/ with the same symbol as /ə/, which is found only in unstressed syllables, and distinguish it from /ə/ by marking the syllable as stressed. Also note that although ⟨ʌ⟩, the IPA symbol for the **open-mid back vowel**, is used, the typical modern pronunciation is rather close to the **near-open central vowel** [ɛ] in most dialects, including Received Pronunciation and General American.
29. /ʌ/ is not used in the dialects of the northern half of England, some bordering parts of Wales, and some broad eastern Ireland accents. These words would take the /ʊ/ vowel: there is no **foot–strut split**.
30. In Received Pronunciation, /ɜ:r/ is pronounced as a lengthened schwa, [ə:]. In General American, it is phonetically identical to /ər/. Some dictionaries therefore use ⟨ə:, ər⟩ instead of the conventional notations ⟨ɜ:, ɜr⟩. When ⟨ər⟩ is used for /ɜ:r/, it is distinguished from /ər/ by marking the syllable as stressed. Word-initially, /ər/ never occurs, giving way to /ɜ:r/. Where there is a free variation between /ɜ:r/ and /ər/ in RP, it is acceptable to transcribe only the more common variant (e.g. /ər/ for *persona*).



31. /ɹ/ is not distinguished from /ɜ:r/ in dialects with the hurry–furry merger such as General American.
32. In a number of contexts, /ə/ in /ər/, /əl/, /ən/, or /əm/ is often omitted, resulting in a syllable with no vowel. Some dictionaries show /ə/ in those contexts in parentheses, superscript, or italics to indicate this possibility, or simply omit /ə/. When followed by a weak vowel, the syllable may be lost altogether, with the consonant moving to the next syllable, so that *doubling* /'dʌb.əl.ɪŋ/ may alternatively be pronounced as ['dʌb.ɪŋ], and *Edinburgh* /'ɛd.ɪn.bər.əl/ as ['ɛd.ɪn.brə].<sup>[i]</sup> When not followed by a vowel, /ər/ merges with /ə/ in non-rhotic accents.
33. In accents with the weak vowel merger such as most Australian and American accents, /ɪ/ in unstressed positions is not distinguished from /ə/, making *rabbit* and *abbot* rhyme and *Lenin* and *Lennon* homophonous. Pairs like *roses* and *Rosa's* are kept distinct in American accents because of the difference in morphological structure,<sup>[f]</sup> but may be homophonous in Australian.<sup>[g]</sup> In these accents, unstressed /ɪ/, /ɪn/, /ɪm/ merge with /ə/, /ən/, /əm/, so that the second vowel in *Latin* may be lost and *cabinet* may be disyllabic (see the previous note).
34. /oʊ/ and /u/ in unstressed, prevocalic positions are transcribed as /əw/ by Merriam-Webster, but no other dictionary uniformly follows this practice.<sup>[h]</sup> Hence a difference between /əw/ in Merriam-Webster and /oʊ/ or /u/ in another source is most likely one in notation, not in pronunciation, so /əw/ in such cases may be better replaced with /oʊ/ or /u/ accordingly, to minimize confusion: /,sɪtʃə'weɪʃən/ → /,sɪtʃu'eɪʃən/, /'fɒləwər/ → /'fɒləʊər/.
35. ⟨i⟩ represents variation between /i:/ and /ɪ/ in unstressed positions. It is realized with a quality closer to /i:/ in accents with happy tensing, such as Australian English, General American, and modern RP, and to /ɪ/ in others. ⟨u⟩ likewise represents variation between /u:/ and /ʊ/, but is restricted to not only unstressed but prevocalic positions.
36. The sequence ⟨iə⟩ may be pronounced as two syllables, [i.ə] or [ɪ.ə], or as one, [jə] or [ɪə̯]. When pronounced as one syllable in a non-rhotic accent, it may be indistinguishable from, and identified as, the NEAR vowel (/ɪər/).<sup>[e]</sup> This transcription system uses ⟨iə⟩, not ⟨i.ə⟩, ⟨ɪə⟩, etc., to cover all these possibilities.
37. The sequence ⟨uə⟩ may be pronounced as two syllables, [u.ə] or [ʊ.ə], or as one, [wə] or [ʊə̯]. When pronounced as one syllable in a non-rhotic accent, it may be indistinguishable from, and identified as, the CURE vowel (/ʊər/).<sup>[e]</sup> This transcription system uses ⟨uə⟩, not ⟨u.ə⟩, ⟨ʊə⟩, etc., to cover all these possibilities.
38. The IPA stress mark (ˈ) comes *before* the syllable that has the stress, in contrast to stress marking in pronunciation keys of some dictionaries published in the United States.
39. Syllable divisions are not usually marked, but the IPA dot (ˌ) may be used when it is wished to make explicit where a division between syllables is (or may be) made.
40. Not all of the sets defined in Wells Standard Lexical Sets for English are used here. In particular, we excluded words in the lexical sets BATH and CLOTH, which may be given two transcriptions, the former either with /ɑ:/ or /æ/, the latter with /ɒ/ or /ɔ:/.

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