

The sounds of English and the International Phonetic Alphabet

Traditionally, the following 44 characters of International Phonetic Alphabet ([IPA](#)) are used in dictionaries.

1. Short vowels ɪ ʊ ʌ ɒ ə e æ
2. Long vowels iː uː ɑː ɔː ɜː
3. Diphthongs ɪə ʊə aɪ ɔɪ əʊ eə aʊ eɪ
4. Voiceless consonants p t ʃ k f θ s ʃ
5. Voiced consonants b d ʒ g v ð z ʒ
6. Other consonants m n ŋ h l r w j

The following are examples of the use of these characters in describing the pronunciation of words. Examples have sound illustrations using speech synthesis technology (TTS).

Short vowels (7)

ɪ king [kɪŋ]; disk [dɪsk]; lift [lɪft]

ʊ book [bʊk]; foot [fʊt]; full [fʊl]

ʌ club [klʌb]; cut [kʌt]; sun [sʌn]

ɒ bomb [bɒm]; song [sɒŋ]; top [tɒp]

ə address [ə'dres]; allow [ə'laʊ]; than [ðən]

e bed [bed]; egg [eg]; pen [pen]

æ bank [bæŋk]; flag [flæg]; man [mæn]

Long vowels (5)

iː deep [di:p]; free [fri:]; key [ki:]

u: soup [su:p]; two [tu:]; who [hu:]

ɑ: car [kɑ:]; card [kɑ:d]; market ['mɑ:kɪt]

ɔ: ball [bɔ:l]; law [lɔ:]; pause [pɔ:z];

ɜ: girl [gɜ:l]; world [wɜ:ld]; Thursday ['θɜ:zdeɪ]

Diphthongs (8)

ɪə beer [bɪə]; dear [dɪə]; year [jɪə]

ʊə euro ['jʊərəʊ]; rural ['rʊərəl]; tourist ['tʊərɪst]

aɪ five [faɪv]; nine [naɪn]; time [taɪm]

ɔɪ boy [bɔɪ]; choice [tʃɔɪs]; noise [nɔɪz]

əʊ local ['ləʊkl]; moment ['məʊmənt]; ocean ['əʊʃn]

eə air [eə]; bear [beə]; hair [heə];

aʊ cow [kaʊ]; house [haʊs]; mouse [maʊs]

eɪ game [geɪm]; name [neɪm]; page [peɪdʒ]

Voiceless consonants (8)

p page [peɪdʒ]; pen [pen]; pause [pɔːz]

t top [tɒp]; two [tuː]; tourist [ˈtʊərɪst]

tʃ choice [tʃɔɪs]; rich [rɪtʃ]; speech [spiːtʃ]

k king [kɪŋ]; club [klʌb]; key [kiː]

f foot [fʊt]; full [fʊl]; flag [flæg]

θ Thursday [ˈθɜːzdeɪ]; method [ˈmeθəd]; thing [θɪŋ]

s city [ˈsɪti]; song [sɒŋ]; sun [sʌn]

ʃ sugar [ˈʃʊɡə]; show [ʃəʊ]; shoe [ʃuː]

Voiced consonants (8)

b ball [bɔːl]; bed [bed]; book [bʊk]

d day [deɪ]; deep [diːp]; dear [dɪə]

dʒ geography [dʒiˈɒɡrəfi]; gentleman [ˈdʒentlmən]; page [peɪdʒ]

g girl [gɜːl]; game [geɪm]; flag [flæg]

v five [faɪv]; visit [ˈvɪzɪt]; virus [ˈvaɪrəs]

ð than [ðən]; then [ðen]; they [ðeɪ]

z zebra ['zebrə]; pause [pə:z]; visit ['vɪzɪt]

ʒ measure ['meʒə]; pleasure ['pleʒə]; revision [rɪ'vɪʒn]

Other consonants (8)

m man [mæn]; market ['mɑ:kɪt]; mouse [maʊs]

n name [neɪm]; nine [naɪn]; sun [sʌn]

ŋ king [kɪŋ]; song [sɒŋ]; ring [rɪŋ]

h hair [heə]; house [haʊs]; who [hu:]

l ball [bɔ:l]; law [lɔ:]; lift [lɪft]

r red [red]; rich [rɪtʃ]; ring [rɪŋ]

w window ['wɪndəʊ]; water ['wɔ:tə]; website ['websaɪt]

j year [jɪə]; yes [jes]; you [ju]
