

Course : Phonetics

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Level : L2

Revision of consonants in British English

Lecture Objectives: Revision of consonants sounds

In this lecture, the student will

- Review of consonant sounds
- Allophones

Consonants are defined phonetically as sounds made by a closure or narrowing in the vocal tract so that the airflow is either completely blocked, or restricted with an audible friction. There are 24 consonantal phonemes classified in the table below into two general categories.

A. In this class, we find plosive, fricatives and affricates in which there is a total closure or a stricture causing friction and there is a distinctive opposition between fortis and lenis sounds.^[1]

B. In this class, there is a partial closure or an oral or nasal escape of air. Such articulations are typically voiced and frictionless. They share many phonetic features with vowel sounds.

Table 1: RP consonant phonemes

Place of Articulation Manner of Articulation		Bilabial	Labio- dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post- alveolar	Palato- alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
		A	Plosive	p , b			t , d			
Fricative			f , v	θ , ð	s , z		ʃ , ʒ			h
Affricate							tʃ , dʒ			
B	Nasal	m			n				ŋ	
	Lateral				l					
	Approximant ¹	w				r		j		

Tips for phonetic transcription

Letters	phonemes	examples
c	/s, k/ voiceless	cellar /'si:lə/ club /klʌb/, access /ək'ses/, account /ə'kaʊnt/ _
ck	/k/	Clock /klɒk/, pick /pɪk/ , peacock /'pi:kɒk/
g	/g, dʒ, ʒ/ voiced	Get /get/, Ginger /'dʒɪndʒə / , age /eɪdʒ/, beige /beɪʒ/
qu	/kw/	Queen /kwi:n/, quality /'kwɒləti/, quit /kwɪt/, quite/kwaɪt/
s	/s, z/ or /ʒ/ in some words	Sign /saɪn/, signal /'sɪgnəl/, basis, /'beɪsəs/, measure/'meɪʒə/, please/pli:z/, realise/'ri:əlaɪz/, , based /beɪzɪd/, vision/'vɪʒən/
th	/θ / or / ð /	thigh /θaɪ/, bath, thorough /'θʌrə/, there, thy, thee, bathe
x	/ks/ or /gz/	box /bɒks/, xerox/'ziərɒks/, exit /'egzɪt/, exact /ɪg'zækt/.
sh, ti, ssi	/ʃ/	Fish / ʃ /, station / ʃ /, expression / ʃ /, Russia / ʃ /
j, g, dg	/dʒ/	Judge / ʃ /, cage / ʃ /, wage / ʃ /, gadget / ʃ /, hedge.
ch, tch, tu	/tʃ/	Teacher / ʃ /, butcher / ʃ /, nature / ʃ /, puncture / ʃ /
y	/j/	Yoke / ʃ /, yeah, yesterday //, yeast //, yawn //, yield / ʃ /
r	/r/	Real/ ʃ /, Create/ ʃ /, clearing / ʃ /, fear / ʃ /, care / ʃ /, explore / ʃ /, wear / ʃ /, sphere / ʃ / . In RP, /r/ is only pronounced/transcribed <i>before</i> a vowel or when being <i>intervocalic</i> .

2.2. Tips for pronunciation of final ‘s’ and ‘ed’

Pronunciation of regular plurals, genitive- and 3rd person singular «s»:

/s/ after voiceless sounds (consonants): cats, tips, kicks, faults.

/z/ after all voiced sounds (some consonants and all vowels): pens, cars, songs, vows.

/ɪz/ after sibilants: /s, z, ʃ, tʃ, ʒ, dʒ/: bosses, fuzzes, dishes, boxes, judges, searches

1.2.2 Pronunciation of regular verbs in past and past participle «ed»:

/t/ after voiceless sounds (consonants)

/d/ after voiced sounds (some consonants and all vowels)

/ɪd/ after /d/ and /t/

Task 1: Transcribe the following words

Kicked, passed, skipped, finished, banned, followed, stayed, skied, amended, sorted, wanted, moved, laughed, agreed, showered, wired, numbered, smoothed, robes, ropes, doors, wells, homes, troughs, myths, lambs, youths, roses, buses, hours, batches, ridges, garages, John's, Peter's, Luisa's

Task 2: Write the spellings for the following transcribed words:

1- /ðæt/ /hɑʊ'evə/ /ə'nʌðə/ /'dɪfɪkəlt/ /wɜ:lɪd/ /ðeə/ /'θʌrə/ /wɪtʃ/
 /'eəriə/ /kɔ:s/ /'ʌndə/ /ʃʊd/ /'nevə/ /bɪ'twi:n/ /'sʌmθɪŋ/ /pɔɪnt/
 /hɪə/ /lɑ:dʒ/ .

Task 3: Find the mistakes: /kraɪm/^[SEP] /wreslɪŋ/ /pɑ:rkɪŋ/ /waɪvs/ /θi:z/
 /jækɪt/ /yeləʊ/ /sɪxti/

Task 4: Transcribe the following words phonemically

allow / / follow / / book / / why / / sorrow / / pool / / hurry / / sorry /
 / now / / orange / / there / / dear / / their / / here / / Junior /
 / dare / / liar / / buyer / / layer / / employer / / more / / isle / / bathe /
 / fur / / mayor / / boy / / cheers / / soap / / what / / good / / .

Task 5: Transcribe the following words phonemically (pay attention to finals):

spying / / chewing / / cried / / fetched / / lies / / crossed / / needed /
 / blessings / / kings / / bills / / .

3. Detailed study of consonants: allophones

3.1 A phoneme is the smallest sound that can make a difference in meaning. There are 44 phonemes in standard British English (RP). Some of them may be realized differently or have a variety of allophones.

3.2. An allophone is any of the various phonetic realizations of a phoneme, which do not contribute to distinctions of meaning. For example, /p/ in **pin** /pɪn/ is aspirated [p^hɪn] and /p/ in **spin** /spɪn/ is unaspirated [spɪn]. The first one [p^h] is an allophone of the phoneme /p/.

In [prə'p^həʊzɪ] the allophone [p^h] is **aspirated** and [ɪ] is **dark & syllabic**.

What is aspiration?

Definition of aspiration: it is when the production of /p/, /t/, /k/ is followed by an audible plosion (burst of noise) in the post release phase, producing a sound like h represented as [h].

Examples of allophones

1. Plosives: the Voiceless Fortis Plosives /p, t, k/ are **aspirated** [p^h, t^h, k^h] when **initial** in a **stressed syllable**. However, they are **unaspirated** in **final position** or when preceded by /s/.

2. Lateral: the English alveolar lateral phoneme /l/ has three main allophones:

a. Clear [l] with a relatively front resonance before **vowels** and /j/ or when it is intervocalic

E.g.: lead [li:d] follow ['fɒləʊ] lose [lu:z] sailor ['seɪlə] believe [br'i:vi]

b. Dark [ɫ] is articulated with a relatively back vowel resonance, final after a vowel⁽¹⁾, before a consonant preceded by a vowel⁽²⁾ and as a syllabic sound followed by a consonant⁽³⁾.

c. Voiceless [l̥] becomes voiceless when it is preceded by accented /p, k/

E.g.: class [klɑ:s] clap [klæp] clean [kli:n] place [pleɪs] pleasure ['pleɪzə] please [pli:z]

Task 6: Transcribe the following words phonetically

1. Feel canal pearl call well all

2. Help salt cold milk film elbow

3. Apple middle eagle table trouble able

4. Trial plead clever student clown plague