

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

The IPA represents how words in the English language are pronounced and symbolised and consists of 44 unique sounds or phonemes in English, despite the language having only 26 letters.

1. The **44 phonemes** are represented by various letters and letter combinations known as graphemes
2. These phonemes are divided into two main categories: Consonants: **24** / Vowels: **20** (including monophthongs and diphthongs)
3. Each phoneme can be represented by multiple graphemes. For example:

The phoneme /f/ can be represented by 'f', 'ff', 'ph', 'gh', 'lf', 'ft'

4. Some phonemes are *voiced* (produced with vibration of the vocal cords), while others are *unvoiced*
5. The English Phonemic Alphabet chart, which contains these 44 phonemes, is specific to the English language and is a subset of the full IPA system (that includes 107 sound symbols, 52 diacritics, and 4 prosodic marks, encompassing phonemes used in virtually every language on Earth)

Consonants

IPA	Examples
p	pit, lip
b	bit, tub
t	tip, sit
d	dig, sad
k	cup, sky, click
g	guy, bag
m	my, jam
n	not, ran
ŋ	sing, finger, link
tʃ	check, etch
dʒ	just, giant, judge, age
f	fish, cuff
v	vowel, leave
θ	thigh, breath
ð	thy, father, breathe
s	sip, mass
z	zip, jazz
ʃ	shop, wish
ʒ	genre, pleasure, beige
h	house, ahead
w	wit, swap
j	yes, young
r	rip, water, write
l	lap, pull

Vowels

Monophthongs (12 Symbols)

Short Vowels (7)

/ɪ/ as in "sit" bit it

/e/ as in "bed" set men

/æ/ as in "cat" mad man sad bat

/ʌ/ as in "cup" but trust under

/ɒ/ as in "hot" not lot lock

/ʊ/ as in "put" foot took

/ə/ (schwa) as in "about" again mother (most commonly used vowel)

Long Vowels (5)

/i:/ as in "seat" feet me (happy)*

/ɑ:/ as in "car" hard start father

/ɔ:/ as in "door" jaw yawn law

/ɜ:/ as in "bird" nurse heard third turn

/u:/ as in "boot" lose gloomy fruit chew

Diphthongs (8 Symbols) (2 vowels – 1 sound – 1 symbol)

Closing Diphthongs

/eɪ/ as in "day" face space rain case eight

/aɪ/ as in "my" sight pride kind flight

/ɔɪ/ as in "boy" joy employ coil oyster

/əʊ/ as in "go" no don't stones alone hole

/aʊ/ as in "now" out mouth house brown cow

Centering Diphthongs

/ɪə/ as in "near" ear clear beer fear

/eə/ as in "hair" there care stairs pear

/ʊə/ as in "pure" tour Europe poor

*Happy – the 'y' on the end is up for discussion /i:/ /ɪ/ or (/i/).

Somewhere in between /i:/ and /ɪ/. What do you think?

Consonants: Fricatives (sound by forcing air through a narrow space)

IPA	Examples
f	full, Friday, fish, knife
v	vest, village, view, cave
θ	thought, think, Bath
ð	there, those, brothers, others
z	zoo, crazy, lazy, zigzag, nose
ʃ	shirt, rush, shop, cash
ʒ	television, delusion, casual
h	high, help, hello

Consonants: Plosives (sounds that are formed by completely stopping airflow)

IPA	Examples
p	pin, cap, purpose, pause
b	bag, bubble, build, robe
t	time, train, tow, late
d	door, day, drive, down, feed
k	cash, quick, cricket, sock
g	girl, green, grass, flag

Consonants: Affricates (begin as plosive and end as fricative)

IPA	Examples
tʃ	choose, cheese, church, watch
dʒ	joy, juggle, juice, stage

Consonants: Nasals (allowing air to escape freely through the nose: also known as nasal occlusive or nasal stop)

IPA	Examples
m	room, mother, mad, more
n	now, nobody, knew, turn
ŋ	king, thing, song, swimming

Consonants: Approximants (bringing one articulator in the vocal tract close to another without causing audible friction – unlike Fricatives)

IPA	Examples
r	road, roses, river, ring, ride
j	yellow, usual, tune, yesterday
w	wall, walk, wine, world
l and ɫ	law, lots, leap, long, (vowel after)/ pill, cold, chill, melt (at end of word or before consonants)