

Sound Communication

Linguists study diverse languages. In order to transcribe the speech sounds of the world's many languages, linguists have developed a standardized alphabet known as the International Phonetic Alphabet, or IPA. Each symbol in this alphabet represents a different sound. See if you can decode some words using some of the IPA symbols.

Procedure

- 1 As a class, you will review how some consonants shown on this page are formed in your vocal tract.
- 2 In your team, review how some of the consonants are formed using the information on your "Forming Sounds" student handout.
- 3 Next, review symbols and their accompanying sounds. Sound out each of the sample words listed with each symbol until you feel comfortable that you understand the sound each symbol represents.
- 4 Once you have studied the chart, try some decoding. See if you can translate the IPA words in the chart below. When you are translating, you might want to write down the sound for each symbol in the word and then try to sound the word out.
- 5 When you have finished, try transcribing some words using the IPA. It might help to write down the sounds each word is composed of and then look for the corresponding sounds in the sample words in the IPA chart to find the symbols those sounds represent.
- 6 Once you are done with the words, translate the sentences from English using the IPA.

Sentences:

Is this chicken or fish?

To be or not to be? That is the question.

Quick, Robin. To the Batmobile!

Questions

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- 1 Why would linguists need to have a common language?
- 2 Why is it important study languages?

IPA Word	English Translation	English Word	IPA Phonetic Transcription
1. 'ʌntɪl		1. bath	
2. 'mʌŋki		2. CD	
3. mit		3. young	
4. 'bækpæk		4. got	
5. jɛs		5. them	
6. 'tʃɛkbʊk		6. chilling	
7. ðʌd		7. monthly	
8. ə'nʌf		8. poach	