

IPA Symbols and Sounds

The following chart shows some of the International Phonetic Alphabet symbols and sounds they represent. Use it to decode the words found on your “Sound Communication” handout. The underlined portion of the word represents the part of the word where the symbol’s sound is heard. This chart only represents most, but not all, of the Standard American English IPA sounds.

CONSONANTS							
IPA Symbol		Sample Words		IPA Symbol		Sample Words	
Voiced	b	<u>b</u> est, skate <u>b</u> oard, cl <u>u</u> b	Voiceless	p	<u>p</u> ainful, <u>p</u> op <u>qu</u> iz, st <u>o</u> p		
	d	<u>d</u> ream, <u>e</u> dit, ki <u>d</u>		t	<u>t</u> ardy, <u>l</u> ate, <u>l</u> ast		
	g	<u>g</u> et, a <u>g</u> ar, ta <u>g</u>		k	<u>l</u> o <u>ck</u> er, ba <u>s</u> ket <u>b</u> all, st <u>r</u> eak		
	v	<u>v</u> ery, <u>o</u> ver, <u>o</u> f		f	<u>f</u> riend, <u>g</u> o <u>p</u> her, tou <u>gh</u>		
	ð	<u>th</u> ere, <u>o</u> ther, smoo <u>th</u>		θ	<u>th</u> ought, <u>e</u> ther, pa <u>th</u>		
	z	<u>z</u> one, la <u>s</u> er, ga <u>m</u> es		s	<u>s</u> inger, <u>c</u> elebrity, bli <u>ss</u>		
	ʒ	treas <u>u</u> re, leis <u>u</u> re, colla <u>g</u> e		ʃ	<u>sh</u> iny, prec <u>i</u> ous, a <u>sh</u>		
	dʒ	<u>g</u> iraffe, a <u>g</u> ile, <u>j</u> olly		tʃ	<u>ch</u> ild, na <u>t</u> ure, it <u>ch</u>		
	l	<u>l</u> istserv, b <u>l</u> og, coo <u>l</u>		h	<u>h</u> ide, <u>a</u> ha, coh <u>o</u> rt		
	m	<u>m</u> otion, lim <u>ber</u> , swi <u>m</u>		VOWELS			
	n	<u>n</u> othing, empt <u>i</u> ness, <u>n</u> ada		i	<u>pe</u> ek, <u>be</u> at, <u>me</u> ek		
	ŋ	ba <u>nk</u> , ear <u>n</u> ing, ba <u>ng</u>		ɪ	<u>pit</u> , <u>k</u> ick, <u>sit</u>		
	r	<u>r</u> ight, <u>w</u> rong, a <u>r</u> ena		e	<u>w</u> ait, <u>b</u> ake, <u>t</u> ake		
	j	<u>y</u> ell, <u>b</u> eyond, <u>y</u> ep		ɛ	<u>be</u> d, <u>pe</u> t, <u>me</u> t		
w	<u>w</u> ater, <u>q</u> uiet, a <u>w</u> ake	æ	<u>pa</u> d, <u>ba</u> t, <u>sa</u> t				
		Voiced	ɑ	<u>do</u> t, <u>po</u> t, <u>fa</u> ther			
			ʊ	<u>to</u> ok, <u>go</u> od, <u>pu</u> t			
			u	<u>bo</u> o, <u>mo</u> o, <u>du</u> e			
			o	<u>fl</u> oat, <u>mo</u> at, <u>br</u> oke			
			ə	<u>o</u> f, <u>id</u> ea, <u>a</u> bout			
			ʌ	<u>t</u> uck, <u>c</u> up, <u>h</u> ub			

Translation Tips

- The word using the IPA symbols may not be the same length or look like the traditional English spelling of the word.
Example: *Photograph* is transcribed as /fotogræf/
- As you translate each word, remember that although some IPA symbols resemble English letters, they are not pronounced in the same way. Make sure to use the sound associated with the IPA symbol listed in this key.
Example: The phonetic word *cast* is actually pronounced “cost”
- Letters that are not pronounced are not transcribed.
Example: *Note* is transcribed as /not/
- Some sounds are made with the breath only; others are made by adding your voice.
Example: In *pike*, the “p” is created using only your breath; in *bike* the “b” sound is created by adding your voice.
- An apostrophe symbol (') indicates where a word with more than one syllable should be stressed when spoken. The stress mark should appear before the stressed syllable.
Example: *Classroom* is transcribed /'klæsrum/.
- Slashes are used to indicate that the characters contained within them are IPA characters.
Example: *Take* is transcribed /'tek/.