

My 'simply better' Pronunciation Method

Guide to Phonetics

Consonants



My 'simply better' Guide to Phonetics



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Introduction

In this lesson, I will teach you the third and last group of phonemes: the consonants.

Always remember: the aim for you in these lessons is:

- to be able to look at a phoneme
- be able to say the sound it represents
- To be able to write the phoneme.

The lesson follows the same pattern as the lessons on vowels and diphthongs.

That is, you will see the phoneme as it is written, then the sound it makes, and finally, examples of it used in words.

That combination should help you understand them better.

Don't forget to have your notebook handy, to practise writing each phoneme.

So, let's start the lesson.

Coming down the other side of the mountain

The lessons on vowels and diphthongs were not easy.

You had to learn phonemes that did not easily reflect the sounds they represented.

Take /ɔɪ/ for example.

That phoneme did not easily suggest the sound of 'oy'.

Because of that, you found climbing the mountain of phoneme learning difficult.

But, you did it! Congratulations!

Now, you are on the other side of the mountain and coming down which is much easier than climbing up the mountain.

Why?

Because, as you will see, most of the consonants are 'intuitive' which means 'what you see is mostly what you get'.

For example, the phoneme /b/ is the sound of the letter 'B'.

Study the following chart of phonemes for consonants.

consonants	p	f	t	θ	tʃ	s	ʃ	k
	b	v	d	ð	dʒ	z	ʒ	g
	h	m	n	ŋ	r	l	w	j

You will recognise many being the same as you see them in the English alphabet.

Specifically, they are p, f, t, s, k, b, v, d, z, g, h, m, n, r, w, and j.

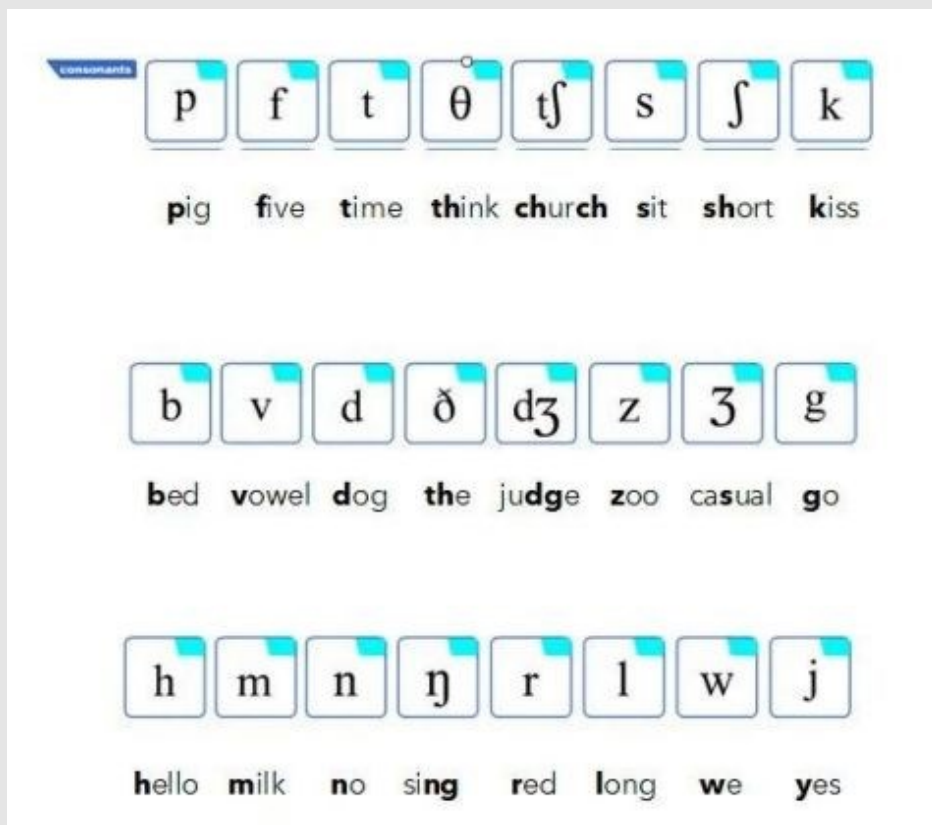
These consonants are pronounced as they are pronounced in the English alphabet.

In this lesson, I will not explain the pronunciation of these consonants.

But, I have included a chart of all the consonants (below).

Below each consonant, is a word that explains the sound.

Take a moment to say each word. Perhaps write them in your notebook to help you revise them.



The ones you will need to learn how to write and pronounce are those that do not look like 'normal' letters..

.These are the ones I will focus on in this lesson.

I will begin at the top left with /θ/ and move from left to right and down and finish with /ŋ/

/θ/

You can see it used in these words:

moth /mɒθ/ [broth, both, ether (but not 'either')]

zenith

south, north (but not 'southern' and 'northern').

tooth /tu:θ/

with /wɪθ/

theme /θi:m/

Having learned the vowels, you should be able to look at the phonetic spelling of the above words and be able to know what the English word is.

It will be the same when you meet words in this lesson using diphthongs and the regular consonants.

Let's continue with the next consonant phoneme.

/tʃ/

This one is seen in words such as 'check' /tʃek/ and 'reach' /ri:tʃ/

Other words:

such /sʌtʃ/

cheese /tʃi:z/

church

each

teach

/ʃ/

The sound this phoneme makes is a 'sh' sound.

As in: 'sheep' /ʃi:p/. And ship, shame, shampoo.

Here are some others:

/fɪʃ/ fish

/fæʃ(ə)n/ fashion

/ʃaʊt/ shout

Also: 'position' (the 'ti' is pronounced /ʃ/)

Many words end in '-tion' :

Consumption, mention, caution, diction etc.

You have learned this one: **/tʃ/**

And you learned that it is pronounced in words such as 'catch' and 'champion'.

But it is pronounced /ʃ/ in words such as:

champignon

chauffeur

machine

/ð/

It's like a backwards 6 with a line crossing the top of the 6.

You can see it used in words like:

'the' /ði:/ or /ðə/

Yes, I have written 'the' in two ways.

We use /ði:/ when the following word begins with a vowel.

/ði:/ orange, /ði:/ apple, /ði:/ umbrella, /ði:/ ice cream etc.

However, we pronounce 'the' as /ðə/ when it comes before a word beginning with a consonant.

/ðə/ cat, /ðə/ dog, /ðə/ man etc.

Other words that use this phoneme are:

brother /brʌð'ə(r)/,

though / ðəʊ/,

southern /sʌð'ə(r)n/.

northern

/dʒ/

It appears twice in this word: 'judge': /dʒʌdʒ/

Other words:

edge: /edʒ/

ledge, dredge, fledge

ridge: /rɪdʒ/

bridge: /brɪdʒ/

giraffe: /dʒə'reɪf/

ingenious

Jelly

/ʒ/

This phoneme looks like a number three (3).

But it is different from /ʒ:/ (as in 'bird')

It is used in words such as:

'vision' /vɪʒ(ə)n/

'measure' /meʒə(r)/.

/ŋ/

This is the last one to learn.

Write this as an 'n' with a tail.

You can see this phoneme in words such as:

sing /sɪŋ/

thing, nothing, wing, fling, filing, wiring, singing

Also:

single /sɪŋg(ə)l/

jingle, mingle, tingle

ingot /ɪŋgət/

England /ɪŋg'lənd/

Important Variations to Note

I told you I would not be explaining the 'self-explanatory' consonant phonemes.

But there are a few that do deserve explanation.

Why?

Because they can be different phonemes for the same letter.

And here they are:

/j/

This one looks like the letter 'j' but is not pronounced as 'j' as in words like 'just' /dʒʌst/.

t is pronounced like a 'y' as in yellow /jeləʊ/.

Other words include:

yes /jes/

youth /ju:θ/

January /dʒæn'ju'ər'i/

/f/

This phoneme is easy.

‘Frog’ is pronounced and written this way: /frɒg/

Other words: fill, flap, fall, off, and half.

But, ‘phoneme’ also uses /f/ and is pronounced /fəʊ’ni:m/.

Also: graph, photograph, telephone

And, remember that the ‘f’ in ‘of’ is pronounced as /v/.

/g/

This phoneme is used in words such as:

grow /grəʊ/

Also: green, grey, great, garden, guard, go

But it can also be pronounced as /dʒ/ and seen in words such as:

gene

imagine

image

damage

cage and rage and magic

/k/

This one is easy to remember and write.

'Cat' and 'kitchen' use this phoneme.

/kæt/ cat /kɪtʃən/ kitchen

Other words include:

anchor - /æŋk'ə(r)/

blank - /blæŋk/

uncle - /ʌŋk'(ə)l/

beak - /bi:k/

question - /kwest'ʃ(ə)n/

Important

The letter 'C' in some words can be pronounced as a

/k/

For example: cook, car, colour

or as /s/.

ceiling, receipt, deceive, receive

The problem of silent letters

Some words have 'silent letters'.

These words have a **silent 'B'** and end in the phoneme /m/.

dumb
numb
tomb
womb
comb
limb
crumb

These words have a **silent 'P'** and are pronounced as /t/.**OR** /n/

receipt
ptomaine (food poisoning)
pterodactyl (a flying dinosaur)
pneumatic
pneumonia

These words have a **silent 'N'** and end in the phoneme /m/ :

damn
column
Autumn

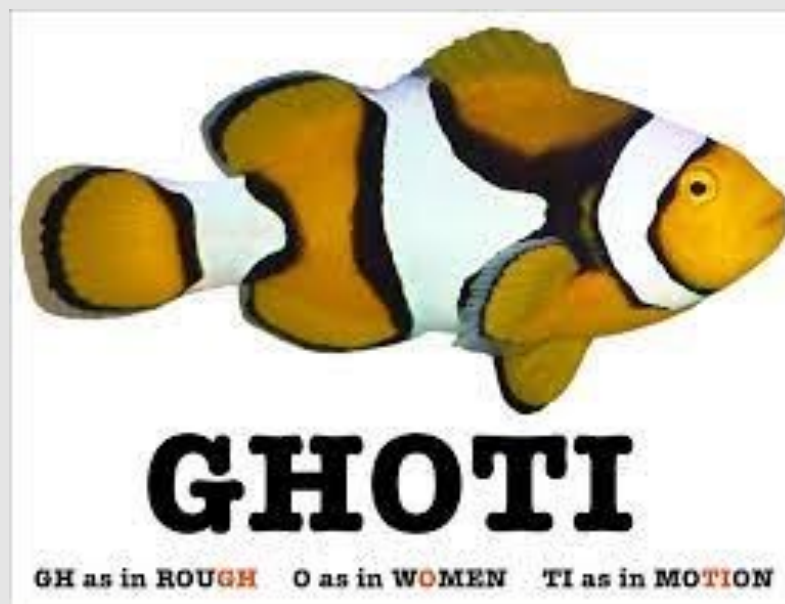
The problem of silent letters can easily be solved.

Knowing which letters are silent and then writing the phonemic script for those words correctly, is overcome by checking the dictionary.

Look at the word in English and its phonetic spelling and you will see immediately which letter is silent.

Finally, a little fun for you—and a lesson too.

Look at the picture.



The way that 'fish' is spelt (GHOTI) while being correct, has not used Phonemic Script.

Yes, GHOTI does spell 'fish' but 'gh' can also be the 'gh' in 'bough' which is not the F sound.

And it's the same with the other letters: O and TI.

Using those 'sound' letters is not precise or accurate enough.

Instead, the phonemic script makes it easier to be accurate.

There is NO pronunciation confusion when 'fish' in phonemic script is:

/fɪʃ/

Conclusion

This last short lesson on 'ghoti' is the perfect place to end this lesson on phonetics.

In this lesson, you have learned the phonetic scripts for consonants.

Now, you can write the entire EPA.

And you should be able to write, read and say any word in English (or any language!) correctly.

There is one more lesson.

I will teach you something that has not been covered so far.

Multi-syllabic words: words with more than one syllable, need to be explained.

[When you are ready click or tap to go here.](#)

Open the PDF

Multi-syllabic Words

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