

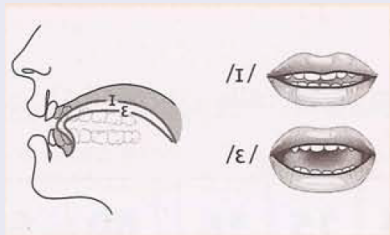
# English: American Pronunciation

A. Meduna, J. Martiško

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/ɛ/

## /ɛ/ pronunciation



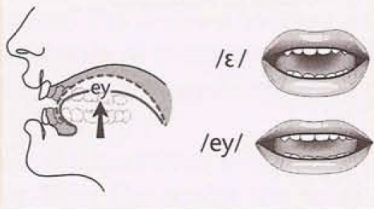
- Open your mouth a little more for /ɛ/
- /ɛ/ is a short, relaxed sound.

## Examples /ɛ/

pen, bell, checks, rest, spell

## /ey/

## /ey/ pronunciation



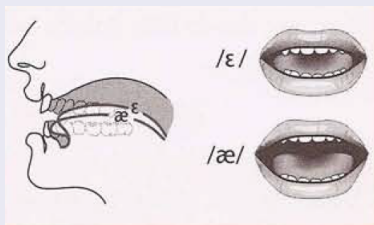
- Close your mouth a little for /ey/
- /ey/ is a long sound.
- Spread your lips and move your tongue up a little as you say it.

## Examples /ε/ × /ey/

pen × pain, wet × wait, test × taste, pepper × paper, shed × shade

/æ/

## /æ/ pronunciation



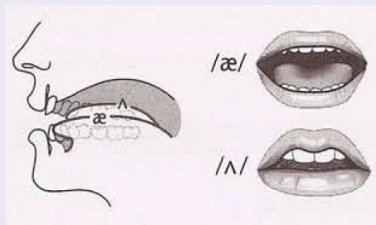
- Open your mouth a little more for /æ/ than for /ε/.

## Examples /ε/ × /æ/

X (letter) × axe, pen × pan, men × man, left × laughed, said × sad

/ʌ/

## /ʌ/ pronunciation



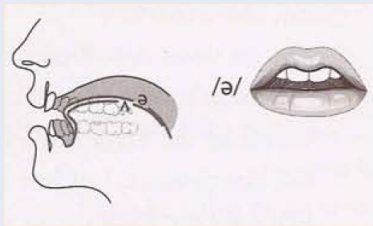
- Close your mouth a little for /ʌ/.
- Your tongue should rest in the middle of your mouth.
- /ʌ/ is a short, relaxed sound.

## Examples /æ/ × /ʌ/

cap × cup, bag × bug, cat × cut, rag × rug, angle × uncle

/ə/

## /ə/ pronunciation



- Practice the sound /ʌ/.
- Make it very short for /ə/.
- The sound of /ə/ is always short and weak.

## Examples /ə/

The sound /ə/ is used in many unstressed syllables and words. The examples below show when to use the sound /ə/. Stressed syllables are in bold.

**chick**ən, tə**mat**oes, **lett**əce, ə bə**nan**ə, ə **wom**ən, **wom**ən

## /ə/

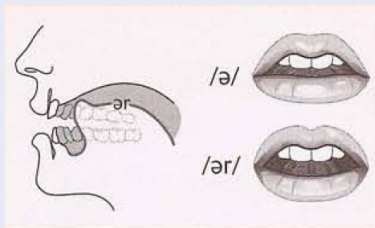
- /ə/ is the most common vowel sound in English.
- It is used in many unstressed syllables in words.
- It is also used in the weak pronunciation of many short structure words, such as *a*, *an*, *of* and *and*. These words almost always have a weak pronunciation with the sound /ə/.

## can and can't

- Can is usually unstressed and has a weak pronunciation when another word follows it in a sentence. The vowel sound is reduced to /ə/.
- Can has a strong pronunciation when it is at the end of a sentence. It has the clear vowel sound /æ/.
- Can't always has a strong pronunciation. It has the clear vowel sound /ə/.

/ər/

## /ər/ pronunciation



- Practice the short sound /ə/.
- Curl the tip of your tongue up and back to say /ər/.
- The sound /ər/ is pronounced as one short sound.

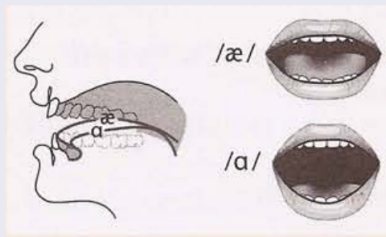
## Note

The sound /ər/ will be further explained after the sound /r/.



## /ɑ/

## /ɑ/ pronunciation



- Practice the sound /æ/.
- Open your mouth wide for the sound /ɑ/.
- Your tongue should rest in the bottom of your mouth.

## Examples /æ/ × /ɑ/

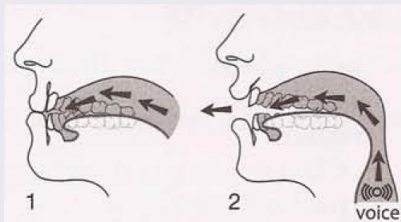
hat × hot, cat × cot, cap × cop, sack × sock, ran × Ron

## Examples /ʌ/ × /ɑ/

hut × hot, cut × cot, cup × cop, suck × sock

## /b/

## /b/ pronunciation



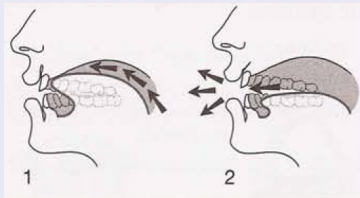
- Close your lips tight.
- Push air forward in your mouth.
- Open your lips quickly.
- Use your voice to say /b/.

## Examples /b/

buy, bear, bill, cab, robe

/t/

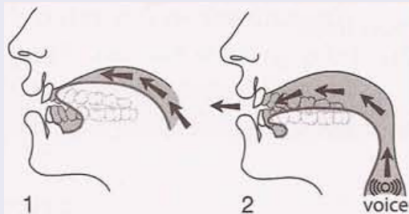
## /t/ pronunciation



- Put your tongue just behind your top teeth, but do not touch them.
- Push air forward in your mouth.
- Then quickly move your tongue away.
- Do not use your voice.

/d/

## /d/ pronunciation



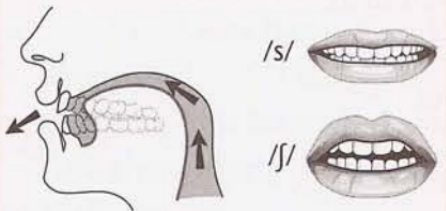
- Practice the sound /t/.
- Use your voice to say /d/.

## Examples /t/ × /d/

time × dime, tore × door, try × dry, write × ride, cart × card

/ʃ/

## /ʃ/ pronunciation



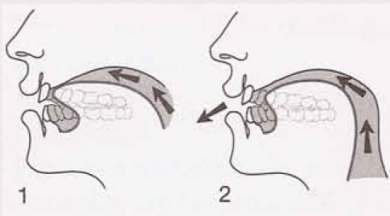
- Put the tip of your tongue up and back little to make /ʃ/.
- Push your lips forward a little into a circle.

## Examples /ʃ/

shoe, sheats, shell, shine, leash

## /tʃ/

## /tʃ/ pronunciation



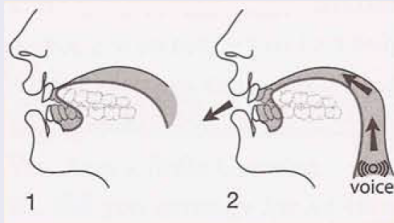
- To say /tʃ/, begin to make /t/. Then move your tongue back and away from the roof of your mouth as you say /ʃ/.
- Do not use your voice.

## Examples /ʃ/ × /tʃ/

shop × chop, sheep × cheap, ships × chips, cash × catch, wash × watch

## /dʒ/

## /dʒ/ pronunciation



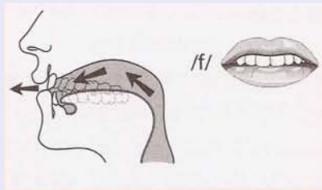
- Practice the sound /tʃ/.
- Use your voice to say /dʒ/.

## Examples /tʃ/ × /dʒ/

cheap × jeep, choke × joke, cheers × jeers, H × age, batch × badge

/f/

## /f/ pronunciation



- Touch your top teeth with your bottom lip.
- Blow out air between your lip and teeth.
- Do not use your voice.

## Examples /p/ × /f/

pan × fan, pull × full, peel × feel, copy × coffee, cup × cuff

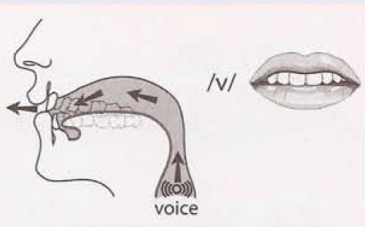
## Examples /f/ × /v/

fan × van, fine × vine, few × view, leaf × leave



/v/

## /v/ pronunciation



- Touch your top teeth with your bottom lip.
- Blow out air between your lip and teeth.
- Use your voice.

## Examples /b/ × /v/

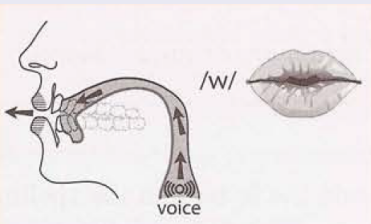
ban × van, B × V, best × vest, boat × vote, cabs × calves

## Examples /f/ × /v/

fan × van, fine × vine, few × view, leaf × leave

/w/

## /w/ pronunciation



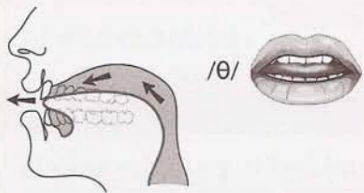
- Make your lips round and hard for /w/.
- Quickly relax your lips.

## Examples /v/ × /w/

V × we, vet × wet, vest × west, vine × wine, veil × whale

/θ/

## /θ/ pronunciation



- Put the tip of your tongue between your front teeth.
- Blow the air between your tongue and top teeth.
- Do not use your voice.

## Examples /s/ × /θ/

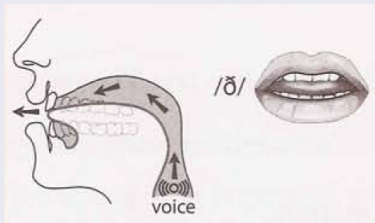
sick × thick, sum × thumb, sink × think, mouse × mouth, pass × path

## Examples /t/ × /θ/

tie × thigh, tree × three, tanks × thanks, bat × bath

/ð/

## /ð/ pronunciation



- Put the tip of your tongue between your front teeth.
- Blow the air between your tongue and top teeth.
- Use your voice.

## Examples /d/ × /ð/

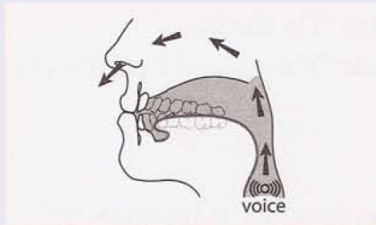
day × they, dare × there, doze × those, breed × breathe

## Examples /z/ × /ð/

closing × clothing, bays × bathe, breeze × breathe

## /m/

## /m/ pronunciation



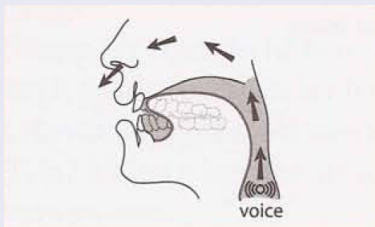
- Close your lips.
- Blow the air between your tongue and top teeth.
- Use your voice.
- The sound /m/ comes through your nose.

## Examples /m/

make, summer, time, met, small, comes, smart, remember

/n/

## /n/ pronunciation



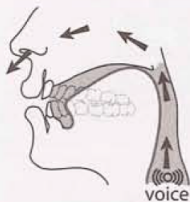
- Put the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth just behind your top teeth.
- Do not close your lips.
- Use your voice.
- The sound /n/ comes through your nose.

## Examples /m/ × /n/

me × knee, mail × nail, mine × nine, comb × cone, gum × gun

/ŋ/

## /ŋ/ pronunciation



- Touch the back of the roof of your mouth with the back of your tongue.
- Use your voice.
- The sound /ŋ/ comes through your nose.

## Examples /n/ × /ŋ/

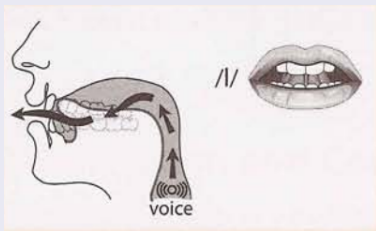
thin × thing, ban × bang, ran × rang, fans × fangs, wins × wings

## Examples /ŋk/ × /ŋ/

think × thing, bank × bang, sink × sing, rink × ring

/l/

## /l/ pronunciation



- Put the tip of your tongue just behind your front teeth.
- Use your voice.
- To make the sound /l/, the air goes over the sides of your tongue and out of your mouth.

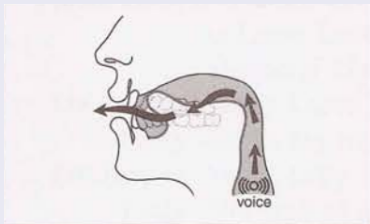
## Examples /n/ × /l/

night × light, no × low, nine × line, connect × collect, snow × slow



/l/

## /l/ pronunciation



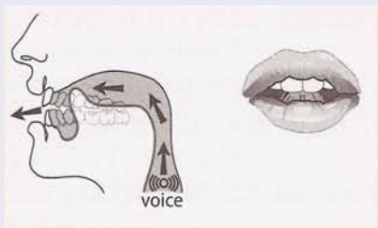
- /l/ sounds a little different at the end of a word or before a consonant.
- As you say /l/, raise the back of your tongue toward the roof of your mouth.

## Examples /n/ × /l/

ten × tell, pin × pill, bone × bowl, mine × mile

/r/

## /r/ pronunciation



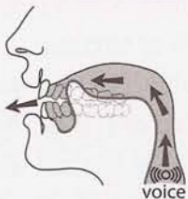
- Turn the tip of your tongue up.
- Do not touch the roof of your mouth with the tip of your tongue.
- Make your lips a little round.

## Examples /l/ × /r/

long × wrong, light × write, pilot × pirate, glass × grass, cloud × crowd

# /r/ after Vowels

## /r/ pronunciation



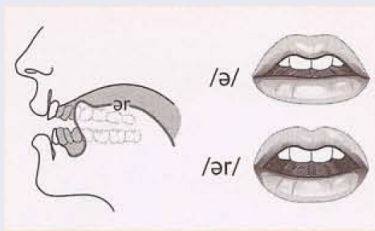
- To say the sound /r/ after a vowel, curl the tip of your tongue up.
- Do not touch the roof of your mouth with the tip of your tongue.

## Examples /l/ × /r/

heel × hear, pail × pear, fall × four, file × fire, towel × tower

## /ər/

## /ər/ pronunciation



- Practice the short sound /ə/.
- Curl the tip of your tongue up and back to say /ər/.
- The sound /ər/ is pronounced as one short sound.

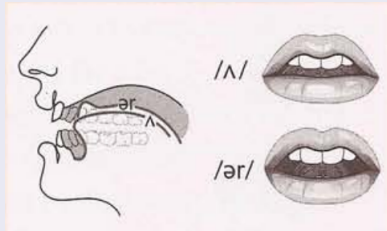
## Examples /ər/

The sound /ər/ is used in many unstressed syllables spelled with a vowel+r. The examples below show when to use the sound /ər/. Stressed syllables are in bold.

**wait**ər, **lawy**ər, **act**ər, **port**ər, **farm**ər, **teach**ər

# /ər/ (stressed)

## Stressed /ər/ pronunciation



- Practice the short sound /ʌ/.
- Close your mouth a little.
- Curl the tip of your tongue up and back to say /ər/.
- The sound /ər/ is pronounced as one sound.

## Examples /ər/

fur, stir, burn, hurts, shirt, bird, girl

## Further Reading



A. Baker and S. Goldstein.

*Pronunciation Pairs Student's Book with Audio CD.*

Pronunciation pairs: an introduction to the sounds of English.  
Cambridge University Press, 2007.



Bob Dylan.

Roll on John, 2012.