ENGLISH VOWEL SOUNDS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract
This guide was created as a response to the needs of the English phonetics and phonology class of the undergraduate Teaching Program of the Faculty of Education at Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia, where the English language is approached in a more technical, professional, and theoretical way that implicitly leads to an active and meaningful practice in the classroom with simple exercises but challenging enough for the initial level of the students. The guide gives priority to the vowel sounds of English since they are different from those in the Students’ Spanish linguistic inventory, thus, each of the short and long sounds are explained with clear examples. Finally, the guide comes with a QR code that can be easily scanned from any mobile device to access the audios of the proposed exercises to be studied in class or independently by students.

Keywords: exercises, phonemes, phonemic transcription, Phonetics and Phonology, vowel sounds.
Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to the entire academic community of the Faculty of Education of Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia, because they have been our motivation in creating this guide for the benefit of all. We would also like to extend our thanks in advance to all the English Language and Phonetics Teachers who are willing to incorporate our guide in their classes for students at the beginner levels of English Phonetics and Phonology. They are the main reason behind our collective efforts. Lastly, we would like to thank Professor Venancio Ríos, who, despite no longer being officially associated with us, contributed to the creation of this guide. We would also like to express our appreciation to Alixandra Mines Zabin for lending her voice to this project.

To Teachers

English and Phonetics teachers who are dedicated and committed to teaching are always striving to find appropriate resources for their classes. Sometimes, what is needed is not always readily available, and even the best books may have their limitations. With this in mind, we have designed this classroom guide which aims to address those needs with well-defined objectives.

One of the most important goals of this guide is to assist English Teachers in helping their students producing the different vowel sounds of English. This is often a challenging aspect for both teachers and students in this field of study. To support this goal, different types of exercises, such as minimal pairs, sound discrimination, sound contrast, and tongue twister, have been carefully selected and included. These exercises aim to help both teachers and students master the vowel sounds found in the English language.

Additionally, this guide addresses the need to isolate and practice specific aspects of speech that are typically problematic. We have provided exercises that review the proper pronunciation of regular verbs in the simple past tense, plural forms of nouns, the possessive case, and the pronunciation of the third person singular in the simple present tense.

By using this guide, students are expected to gain more confidence and significantly improve their ability to communicate. The main intention of this guide is not to replace the phonetics textbook, but rather to serve as an additional tool for phonetics and English teachers to achieve their outlined objectives. Our hope is that this work will provide strategies for resolving some of the difficulties encountered while teaching and learning the most important and the challenging English vowel sounds.
Introduction

The vowel sounds in English and Spanish differ, making it necessary to create an English pronunciation guide that allows new students in the English and Spanish language degree program to approach this foreign language in a more intuitive and natural way. This guide provides practical exercises that complement the activities planned by their professors in class.

Driven by our desire to create useful material that enhances the learning process of English as a foreign language, this guide aims to help students develop an intelligible pronunciation and avoid intercultural miscommunication. As expert foreign language teachers, we understand that phonetics in the initial levels of the program can be new and complex. Therefore, it is important to plan a resource that assists students in improving their pronunciation, enjoying the course, and viewing it as a vital tool for their teaching and professional development.

In this short guide, students will find not only oral exercises to practice in class, but also a concise summary of theoretical aspects related to English vowel sounds. They will also find an illustration of the location of the vowels in the phonemic quadrilateral of the human oral cavity. In addition, this guide includes exercises covering diphthongs and triphthongs in English, which are sounds completely different from those found in the phonetic system of our native language, Spanish.

Chapter I: Short Vowels in English

In Phonetics, a vowel is typically described as a sound in which there is no airflow obstruction as it goes through the larynx to the lips. In English, there are seven short vowels sounds (figure 1):

- /ɪ/: This short vowel is located in the frontal and close area of the oral cavity. During the production of this sound, the lips are slightly spread. **Examples:** Fish, pin, it.

- /ɛ/ also /e/: This short vowel is frontal and mid open, the lips in this sound are also slightly spread. **Examples:** Mess, desk, test.

- /æ/: This vowel frontal and low and it is not that open. In this sound, lips are slightly spread. **Example:** Cat, man, bad.

- /ʌ/: This is a central vowel sound, and it tends to be more open than others. During the production of this sound the lip position is neutral and relaxed. **Example:** bus, cut, some.

- /ɒ/: This is a not fully dark and back short vowel sound; it tends to be mid-open and the lips are slightly rounded. **Example:** dog, lock, pot.

- /ʊ/: This short vowel sound is open and it is close to the center of the mouth. During the production of this sound lips are rounded. **Example:** Put, book, bull.

- /ə/: This short vowel sound is fully central and it is highly common in the English inventory. Lips are totally neutral and relaxed. **Example:** about, banana, again.

**FIGURE 1**

QUADRILATERAL OF short vowel sounds in English

Note. From ucl (2018), Language Sciences Department.
### THE /ɪ/ SOUND

#### Exercise 1
Listen and repeat the following words containing the /ɪ/ sound.

1. Itch  Sit  Lips  Blimp
2. Busy  Pick  Kiss  Gift
3. System  Simple  Listen  Bill

#### T3 Exercise 2
Listen. The /ɪ/ sound can be spelled in various ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/y/</th>
<th>/ui/</th>
<th>/ɪ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>Built</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Hymn</td>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Synonym</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>Pimple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Exercise 3
Listen and repeat. The words in bold in these sentences have the /ɪ/ sound.

1. Every time I sit I get an itch.
2. Although the system is simple I don’t get it.
3. Her husband gave her the gift of a kiss.
4. She listens to hymns on her vinyl records.
5. You would be thinner if you didn’t eat such a big dinner.

#### Exercise 4
Circle the word in each group that does not contain the /ɪ/ sound.

1. Pigeon  Mountain  Itch  Bite
2. Sweet  Signature  Pretty  Simple
3. Bin    Building  Bliss  Boom
4. Mint   Women   Woman  Lettuce
5. Steel  Still    Bicycle  Miniature

#### Exercise 5
Tongue twisters with the /ɪ/ sound. Listen and repeat.

1. The snitch had an itchy itch and couldn’t pitch.
2. Miss pin listens to quick slips of the lips.
3. Simple things make people think pretty good things

### THE /e/ SOUND

#### Exercise 1
Listen and repeat the following words with the /e/ sound.

1. Dead  Sell  Eleven
2. Head  Tell  Seven
3. Bed    Bell  Heaven
4. Red    Fell  Elephant

#### Exercise 2
Listen and repeat the following phrases and sentences. The words in bold should all be pronounced with the vowel /e/.

1. The man was found dead.
2. Go to bed!
3. The boy is only seven but he looks like even.
4. His head was shaven.
5. The girl with the red dress fell.
6. Tell her to sell her car as soon as possible.
7. If you are good, when you die you will go to heaven.
8. Don’t ring the bell!
9. Tell Ben not to come today.
10. He hit his head on the desk.
THE /æ/ SOUND

Exercise 1
Listen and repeat the following words with the /æ/ vowel sound.

1. Black  Angry  Absent
2. Back  Apple  Animal
3. Cap  After  Laughter
4. Map  Ask  Cat
5. Tap  Actor  Pat
6. Mat  And  Sad

Exercise 2
Listen and repeat the following phrases and sentences. The words in bold should all be pronounced with the vowel /æ/.

1. The black cat looked very scary.
2. At first glance he seemed sad.
3. Use the map to find the lost cat.
4. Al’s daughter is Pat.
5. He laughed until he cried.
6. Ask a doctor!
7. They say that laughter is the best medicine.
8. Back to reality.
9. The teacher was angry because the students were absent.
10. Pat loves animals.

Exercise 3
Listen and repeat. When saying /æ/, remember to open your mouth more than for /e/.

THE /ɒ/ SOUND

Exercise 1
Listen and repeat the following words with the vowel sound /ɒ/.

1. Odd
2. Option, on
3. Arm, hot, rock
4. Shop, march, lock, watch
5. Block, opera, honest, sock, fond

Exercise 2
Listen and repeat the following phrases and sentences. The words in bold include the vowel /ɒ/.

1. The fat black cat sat on his back and read the Persian map and never cracked once.
2. Al’s daughter Pat has a girl called Pat and she always sat at the back of the class with a red cap.
Exercise 3

Tongue twisters with the /ɒ/ sound.

1. He went from the bottom to the very top, hot then cold, he never gets old.

2. If the top of the pot is very hot, the bottom of the pot is even hotter.

THE /ʊ/ SOUND

Exercise 1

Listen and repeat. Remember to relax your lips and jaws as you produce /ʊ/.

1. Shook Push Good Pull
2. Took Put Book Wool
3. Brook Could Cook Bullet
4. Look Would Shook Pudding

Exercise 2

Listen and repeat. Pay attention to the /ʊ/ sound in the words in bold.

1. She took the cookbook from the crook.
2. Don’t pull the wool over her eyes.
3. The pudding was good, but I would choose the cake.
4. Look! The fool is on the stool!
5. If he could, he would buy that book.

Exercise 3

Tongue twisters with the /ɒ/ sound.

1. The pudding shook the fool’s drool.
2. She took the cookbook from the crook and took it to the brook.

THE /ʌ/ SOUND

Exercise 1

1. Listen and repeat.

2. Under Much Flush
3. Uncle Hug Some
4. Understand Hunt Must
5. Underestimate Hunger Mother
6. Us Hut Mundane
7. Up Hulk Month

Exercise 2

Listen and repeat. The words in bold in the following phrases and sentences should all be pronounced with the vowel /ʌ/.

1. Under the table, there is a huge rat.
2. His uncle understands English very well.
3. Never underestimate the power of teamwork!
4. The hunter hunted the huge hog.
5. Mondays are very mundane because it is the end of the weekend.
6. Mother does not understand much about science.
7. They live in huts.
8. You must show love!
9. January is my favorite month.
10. Kerry is going to move to Minnesota.

Exercise 3

Listen and circle the word that you hear.

/ʌ/ /a/
Hut Hot
Hug Hog
Nut Not
Cut Cot
Exercise 4
Tongue twisters with the /ʌ/ sound.
1. The hunter hunted the huge hog.
2. Mother may not like math much on Mondays or in the month of May.

THE SCHWA VOWEL /ə/

Exercise 1
Listen and repeat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the beginning</th>
<th>In the middle</th>
<th>At the end</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Along</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose</td>
<td>Photograph</td>
<td>Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 2
Listen and repeat. Be sure to pronounce the syllable with /ə/ with less force (weak) than other syllables.
1. He has an expensive telephone.
2. That’s a nice photograph!
3. Beauty is relative.
4. I suppose we can go down that street.
5. The campus is beautiful.

Exercise 3
Listen to the following paragraph about the first day on campus. Pay attention to the schwa vowel. (Some function words – of, at, the, from, for, a, an, and others can also become schwa. In the following examples we will only be dealing with the schwa within the words).

Upon arrival to the university’s main campus, Henry knew that it would be a great experience. He took many photographs at every building along the way. Henry’s main reason for going to university was because one of his relatives, Jim, was studying medicine there. The entire day was an exciting experience for Henry, and if he could, he would do it all over again.

Chapter 2: Long Vowels in English

In English phonetics and phonology there are 5 long vowel sounds. These vowel sounds are similar the short ones. However, these sounds tend to be longer than the previously studied vowel sounds. Look at figure 2 to see the differences. Then, get ready to practice with the help of your professor.

/iː/: This sound is produced like a natural smile. The lips are slightly spread and the sound last longer. Example: Mean, leek, eve.

/uː/: This is a barely close and back long vowel sound, lips are moderately rounded. Example: Loose, goose, food.

/e/ː/: This long vowel sound is height and it is a back and dark sound. During the production of this sound lips are strongly rounded. Example: horse, sport, short.

/ɜː/ː/: This is a fully central vowel and it is usually associated with a hesitation sound. In this sound, lips position is neutral. Example: earn, purse, err.

/əː/: This long vowel sound is fully open, but it is not back. During the production of this sound, lips are neutral. Example: Park, car, pass.

FIGURE 2

QUADRILATERAL OF long vowel sounds in English

Note. From ucl (2018), Language Sciences Department.
THE /iː/ SOUND

T3 Exercise 1

Listen and repeat. The following words have the /iː/ sound.

1. Neat Flea Sleep Sea
2. Meager Spleen Field Leak
3. Three Bead Either Beast

Exercise 2

The /iː/ sound can be spelled in various ways.

/e/ /ee/ /ea/ /ie/ or /ei/
Eve Peel Cream Priest
Meat Fleed East Receive
Scene See Plea Either

Exercise 3

Listen and repeat. The words in bold in these sentences have the /iː/ sound.

1. On Christmas Eve everyone ate ice cream.
2. Last evening we reached an agreement.
3. Can you see the sun set in the east?
4. There was a flea asleep in the sea.
5. Either we go to the field or Steve doesn’t eat dinner.

Exercise 4

Circle the word in each group of words that does not contain the /iː/ sound.

1. Sweet Machine Polite
2. Peace Sit Field
3. Ever Speed Cream
4. Sleeve Fit Pretty
5. Mean Deal Vision

THE /uː/ SOUND

Exercise 5

Tongue twisters with the /iː/ sound. Listen and repeat.

1. She is eager to eat each meal.
2. Every tree is not free; it has a fee!
3. Even peace needs peace to live in peace.

Exercise 6

Pronunciation contrast between /iː/ and /ɪ/.

/ iː/ /ɪ/
1. Leap Lip
2. Feet Fit
3. Steel Still
4. Seat Sit
5. Bead Bid

THE /uː/ SOUND

Exercise 1

Listen and repeat the following words with the /uː/ sound.

1. New Stool Rude June
2. Room Jewel Route Blue
3. Glue Flew School Canoe

Exercise 2

The /uː/ sound can be spelled in various ways.

/u/ /oo/ /o/ /ew/ /ue/
1. Tuna Goose Do Stew Avenue
2. Lucy Tool Tomb Chew Due
3. Rude Spoon Womb Flew Hue

Exercise 3

Listen and repeat. The words in bold in these sentences have the /uː/ sound.

1. Do you have a new canoe?
2. He threw the ruler at school.
3. No food in the pool.
4. They glued the blue clue to the stool.
5. The cool shoe flew through the air.
Exercise 4
Read aloud the following paragraph. Circle all the words with the /u:/ sound.

New England

One of the most beautiful places to visit in the United States is New England, formed by the states Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. There you can find some of the best schools and many groups of students. In June the new thing to do is go to the beach on Cape Cod. There you can canoe and try the famous stew made with clams called “clam chowder.”

Exercise 5
Tongue twisters with the /u:/ sound.

1. If you snooze you will lose.
2. Unique soups and stews on a cruise.

THE /ɜ:/ SOUND

Exercise 1
Listen and repeat.

1. Aunt Almighty Boss Lost Dawn
2. Awe Audience Broad Long Drawn
3. Awesomme Always Bought Lawn Short

Exercise 2
Listen and repeat the pairs of words. When you pronounce the /ɜ:/ words, remember to protrude your lips.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɜ/</th>
<th>/ɜ:/</th>
<th>/ɜ:/</th>
<th>/ou/</th>
<th>/ɜ:/</th>
<th>/a/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dog</td>
<td>Dug</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Bought</td>
<td>Bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Drawn</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Bought</td>
<td>Boat</td>
<td>Fought</td>
<td>Far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Long</td>
<td>Lung</td>
<td>Bald</td>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Caught</td>
<td>Car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cough</td>
<td>Cuff</td>
<td>Tall</td>
<td>Toll</td>
<td>Stalk</td>
<td>Stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Naught</td>
<td>Nut</td>
<td>Can</td>
<td>Cone</td>
<td>Drawn</td>
<td>Dart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 3
Listen and repeat. Pay attention to the words in bold containing the vowel /ɜ:/.

1. It is always taught to call the dog.
2. The audience ought to be quiet.
3. Was it all wrong?
4. The only flaw in the straw is that it is too long.
5. Toss the salt you bought.

Exercise 4
Tongue Twisters with the /ɜ:/ sound.

1. My tall boss sang the wrong song and we stared in awe at his awful jaw.
2. When you fall, call the naughty stall at the long lost mall.

THE /ɔː/:/ SOUND

Exercise 1
Look at the following examples containing the /ɔː/: sound in different position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial position</th>
<th>Middle position</th>
<th>Final position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Turn</td>
<td>Prefer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn</td>
<td>Purse</td>
<td>Sir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 2
Listen and repeat. The words in bold in the following phrases and sentences all include the vowel /ɔː/.

1. Angela gets up early every day.
2. Turn the lights off!
3. Andre prefers to go to bed late at night.
4. Don’t say that word!
5. There is a circus in town.
THE /ɑː/ SOUND

Exercise 1
Listen and repeat.

1. Part  Harm  Lark  Heart
2. Lard  Hard  Balm  Part
3. Calm  Dark  Palm  Large

Exercise 2
Listen and repeat. Select the sounds that contain /ɑː/ sound.

1. Barn  Burn  First  Fast  Lark  Lurk
2. Curt  Cart  Life  Laugh  Hide  Hard
3. Are  Err  Spike  Spart  Star  Start
4. Perk  Park  Cat  Cut  Card  Cart

Exercise 3
Listen and classify the next words in the correct column according to the sounds /ɑː/, /ʌ/ and /æ/.

Car, cut, cat, hard, up, ham, sandwich, farm, just, calm, bus, art, large, unfair, apple, heart, butter, harm, armed, march, partner, month, garden, half, fan, mad, sun, fast, palm, country, battle, packed, drugs, drunk, gun, back, jump, manage, panic, much, marry, sung, far, bark, luck, starred, mud, pubs, lack, charming, bad, come, wonder, colours, match, attacked, unhappy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑː/</th>
<th>/ʌ/</th>
<th>/æ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 4
Listen and repeat the following tongue twisters.

1. A large part of the park was dark; a large lark sings its part in the park.
2. It's hard for the father to start dancing in the dark part of the park.

Chapter 3: Diphthongs and Triphongs

DIPHTHONGS IN ENGLISH

In English Phonetics and Phonology, it is considered that a diphthong is a subtle movement or glide from one short vowel sound to another, in which there is no obstruction of air and the last sound is considered to be slightly longer than the first one. In English, there are eight diphthong sounds (figure 3).

/eɪ/: This closing diphthong starts in a short vowel sound /e/ and ends in short vowel sound /ɪ/. Example: Face, Pay, maid.

/əʊ/: This closing diphthong starts in a cardinal vowel sound /ə/ and ends in short vowel sound /ʊ/. Example: mouse, house, hour.

/ɜː/: This closing diphthong starts in a cardinal vowel sound /ɜ/ and ends in short vowel sound /ə/. Example: Thai, buy, cry

/ɔɪ/: This centering diphthong starts in a cardinal vowel sound /ɔ/ and ends in short vowel sound /ɪ/. Example: Oil, boy, soy.

/ɑː/: This centering diphthong starts in a cardinal vowel sound /a/ and ends in short vowel sound /e/. Example: Bear, air, hair.

/eə/: This centering diphthong starts in a cardinal vowel sound /e/ and ends in short vowel sound /ə/. Example: Beer, dear, here.

/ʌə/: This centering diphthong starts in a cardinal vowel sound /ʌ/ and ends in short vowel sound /ə/. Example: Tour, moor, cure.

/æə/: This closing diphthong starts in a cardinal vowel sound /æ/ and ends in short vowel sound /ə/. Example: Snow, no, low.
Exercise 3

Listen to the following paragraph about Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago and then read it aloud yourself.

Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago is a great experience. It happens once a year in February or March, but never in May. Carnival was created when enslaved persons imitated their French owners. Later on, it became popular in the nineteenth century. If you go to Trinidad, you must stay to experience carnival. But please don’t wait too long before you go.

Exercise 4

Tongue twisters with the /eɪ/ sound.

1. They say stay away from hay in the month of May.
2. You must have faith when you throw the bait ‘cause you may have to wait, wait, wait!
3. If you have faith just wait, you will never fail.

Exercise 5

Listen and repeat the following pairs of words. When pronouncing the words with [e], be sure to lower your jaw a bit more than for /eɪ/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/e/</th>
<th>/eɪ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell</td>
<td>Bail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed</td>
<td>Bait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fell</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell</td>
<td>Sail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melt</td>
<td>Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get</td>
<td>Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let</td>
<td>Late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pen</td>
<td>Pale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Exercise 6**

Tongue twisters with the [e] and /ɪ/ sound.

1. Seven steps to heaven and eleven to reach Kevin, then seven plus eleven to return.
2. He got the mail, to sail the mail to jail.

**Diphthong /aʊ/**

**Exercise 1**

Listen and repeat the sound /aʊ/ in different positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the beginning</th>
<th>In the middle</th>
<th>At the end</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hour</td>
<td>Loud</td>
<td>Allow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ounce</td>
<td>Crowd</td>
<td>Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ours</td>
<td>Vowel</td>
<td>Cow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 2**

Listen and repeat.

1. The music is very loud.
2. There was a crowd at the football match.
3. Vowel sounds can be difficult.
4. Wow! His shirt is inside-out!
5. How many hours are there in one day?

**Diphthong /ɔɪ/**

**Exercise 1**

Listen and repeat the following words containing sound /ɔɪ/.

- Oil
- Boil
- Coil
- Soil
- Foil
- Troy

**Exercise 2**

Listen and repeat the following words. Beware the contrast between /ɔː/ and /ɔɪ/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɔː/</th>
<th>/ɔɪ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tore</td>
<td>Toy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>Coin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball</td>
<td>Boil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bore</td>
<td>Boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Foil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diphthong /ɪə/:

Exercise 1
Listen and repeat.
Fierce Fear Beer Here Hear Tear

Exercise 2
Listen and repeat. Contrast the long vowel sounds with the diphthong.

/ɪə/ /iː /
Fear Free
Beard Bead
Mere Me
Steer Steed
Peer Pea

Diphthong /eə/:

Exercise 1
Listen and repeat the following word.
Rear Bear Tear There Were Area

Exercise 2
Listen and contrast the following pairs of words containing /eə/ and /eɪ/.

/eə/ /eɪ/
Dare Day
Stare Stay
Pair Pay
Hair Hay
Mare May

Diphthong /ʊə/:

Exercise 1
Listen and repeat. Then, circle the word that does NOT contain the sound /ʊə/.
Tour Poor Sure Cool Cure Moor Tool Fuel

Exercise 2
Listen and contrast the following pairs of words containing /ʊə/ and /ɔː/.

/ʊə/ /ɔː/
Poor Paw
Sure Shore
Moore More
Dour Lord
Tour Tore

Here are some keywords with the following vowel sounds.
TRIPHTHONGS IN ENGLISH

Due to several research work of several authors such as Roach (2005), it is known that in English Phonetics and Phonology, there is a phenomenon called triphthongs, they occur when a vowel sound glides from a starting point to a second one and then moving to a third one. Thus, triphthongs are not that simple to perceive because the movements are smooth. In other words, triphthongs in English are the combination of closing diphthongs and an ending schwa sound. There are only five cases of triphthongs in English (see figure 4).

/eɪə/: This triphthong starts in short vowel sound /e/ and quickly moves to a frontal /ɪ/ sound to be ended in the central short vowel /ə/. Example: Player, say, clay.

/aɪə/: This triphthong starts in open vowel sound /a/ and quickly moves to a frontal /ɪ/ sound to be ended in the central short vowel /ə/. Example: Fire, dire, Ireland.

/oɪə/: This triphthong starts in back vowel sound /ɒ/ and moves to a frontal /ɪ/ sound to be ended in the central short vowel /ə/. Examples: Coil, royal, employ.

/uə/: This triphthong starts in open vowel sound /a/ and moves to a back sound /ʊ/ sound to be ended in the central short vowel /ə/. Example: Hour, sour, flour.

/aʊə/: This triphthong starts in neutral vowel sound //ə/ and moves to a back sound /ʊ/ sound to be ended in the central short vowel /ə/. Example: Lower, mower, widower.

**Exercise 1**

Here are some words with triphthongs. Listen and repeat.

1. Hour
2. Fire
3. Cure
4. Player
5. Our
6. Lower
7. Year
8. Buyer
9. Flyer
10. Higher

**Exercise 2**

Here are some phonetics transcriptions. Listen and match the word with the correct phonetic transcription.
18 · Generación de contenidos impresos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Oasis</td>
<td>/ˈfjuːə/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Stereo</td>
<td>/ˈpəʊə/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Croatia</td>
<td>/əʊˈeɪsis/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Fewer</td>
<td>/ˈkrəʊər/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Slower</td>
<td>/ˈsləʊər/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Power</td>
<td>/ˈʃaʊər/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Romeo</td>
<td>/ˈstɪərɪoʊ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Shower</td>
<td>/ˈrəʊmɪər/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Audios

Please scan this qr code to have free access to the audios of this guide.

Conclusion

As authors, we believe that it is necessary to continue developing different academic tools to strengthen the process of learning English as a foreign language for our students, who are being trained as language teachers.

That is why it falls in our hands the responsibility of constantly creating and editing guides like this one, which will serve as support for both teachers and students interested in combining other classroom resources to strengthen the practices of the English phonetics and phonology class.

This guide arose not only from our academic interest in this particular field of study, but also from our experience as English phonetics and phonology teachers who understand the linguistic needs, the pronunciation challenges, and the differences and similarities between Spanish and English.

Finally, it is important to mention that as teachers and researchers it is not our intention to highlight one variety of English over another. In fact, it is important to teach English pronunciation without the intention of correcting the foreign accent of our students, as we understand that the identity and linguistic diversity of the students must be highlighted in favor of the new currents of English language as well as English as an international language.

We sincerely hope that our guide will be of great support in your classes and can be downloaded by students for class work and independent practice.
References


RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Guías prácticas