



Introducing British English Pronunciation: Received Pronunciation

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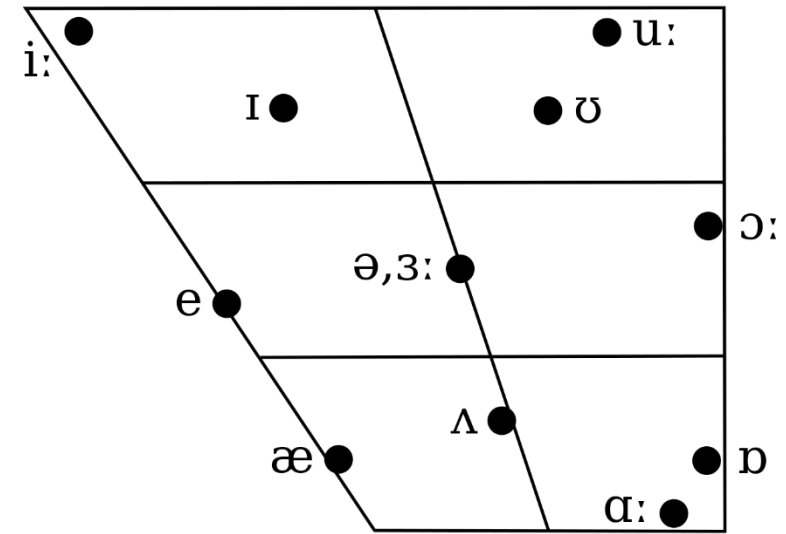
I. Introduction

Received Pronunciation, commonly abbreviated as RP, is a variety of British English pronunciation that is traditionally associated with educated speakers in southern England. RP is often referred to as "the Queen's English" or "BBC English" due to its historical use in the British broadcasting media and the Royal Family.

The origins of RP can be traced back to the 18th century, when a standardized form of English pronunciation emerged among the upper classes in London and Oxford. This form of pronunciation was characterized by its clear, crisp enunciation, and lack of regional accent features. RP became the standard for public speaking and formal communication in Britain, and it is still considered a prestigious and desirable accent to this day.

In contemporary English language, RP is widely recognized as a marker of educated and refined speech, and it is often used as a model for language learning and accent reduction. Many non-native speakers of English aspire to learn RP as a way of improving their pronunciation and achieving greater fluency and accuracy in spoken English.





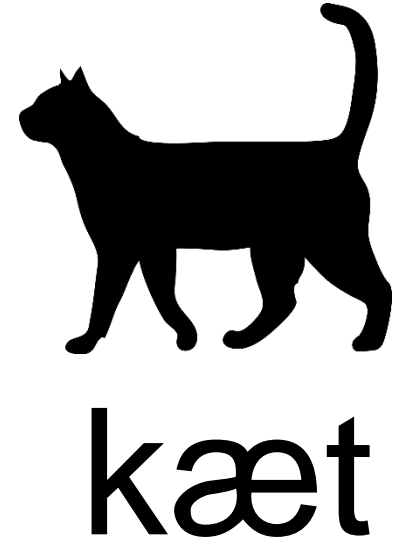
[aɪ p^hi: eɪ]

This ebook is designed to provide an introduction to the key features of Received Pronunciation, including the vowel sounds, consonant sounds, international phonetic alphabet, and monophthong chart. Through this ebook, you will gain a deeper understanding of RP pronunciation and learn practical techniques for improving your own spoken English. Whether you are a language learner, a public speaker, or simply interested in the art of pronunciation, this ebook will help you develop the skills and confidence to communicate effectively in RP.

II. The Vowel Sounds

One of the distinctive features of RP is its system of vowel sounds, which are pronounced with a clear and precise articulation. In this section, we will explore the 12 vowel sounds of RP and learn how to produce them accurately.

- /æ/ as in "cat" - This is a short, low-front vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue low and forward in the mouth.
- /ɪ/ as in "sit" - This is a short, high front vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue slightly lower and further back in the mouth than /i:/.
- /ʊ/ as in "put" - This is a short, high-back vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue high and back in the mouth.
- /ɛ/ as in "pet" - This is a short, mid-front vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue slightly higher than the /æ/ sound.
- /ɒ/ as in "hot" - This is a short, low-back vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue low and back in the mouth.
- /ʌ/ as in "cut" - This is a short, mid-central vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue in a neutral position in the mouth.



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- /ə/ as in the first syllable of "about" - This is a neutral, mid-central vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue in a relaxed, neutral position in the mouth.
- /i:/ as in "need" - This is a long, high front vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue high and forward in the mouth.
- /ɜ:/ as in "herd" - This is a long, mid-central vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue in a neutral position in the mouth.
- /ɔ:/ as in "caught" - This is a long, mid-back vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue in a rounded position in the mouth.
- /u:/ as in "moon" - This is a long, high-back vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue high and back in the mouth, and the lips rounded.
- /ɑ:/ as in "car" - This is a long, low-back vowel sound that is pronounced with the tongue low and back in the mouth, and the mouth forms an oval shape.



By mastering the vowel sounds of RP, you can improve your pronunciation and sound more like a native speaker of British English. In the next section, we will explore the consonant sounds of RP and how to produce them correctly.

III. The Consonant Sounds

Received Pronunciation has a wide range of consonant sounds, including many that are not found in other English accents. Some of the key consonant sounds of RP include:

- /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, and /g/ - These are the voiceless and voiced stops, which are made by completely stopping the flow of air and then releasing it in a burst. These sounds are found in many languages and are fairly easy for most learners to produce.
- /f/ and /v/ - These are the voiceless and voiced labiodental fricatives, which are made by pressing the bottom lip against the top teeth and forcing air through the small gap. These sounds are not found in all languages and can be difficult for some learners to produce.
- /θ/ and /ð/ - These are the voiceless and voiced dental fricatives, which are made by placing the tongue between the teeth and forcing air through the small gap. These sounds are not found in many languages and can be difficult for some learners to produce.
- /s/ and /z/ - These are the voiceless and voiced alveolar fricatives, which are made by forcing air through a narrow gap between the tongue and the alveolar ridge (the bony ridge behind the upper teeth). These sounds are found in many languages and are fairly easy for most learners to produce.

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- /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ - These are the voiceless and voiced postalveolar fricatives, which are made by curling the tongue up towards the hard palate (the bony roof of the mouth) and forcing air through the small gap. These sounds are not found in all languages and can be difficult for some learners to produce.
- /h/ - This is the voiceless glottal fricative, which is made by forcing air through the small opening between the vocal cords. This sound is found in many languages and is fairly easy for most learners to produce.
- /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/ - These are the nasals, which are made by lowering the soft palate (the fleshy part at the back of the roof of the mouth) so that air can flow through the nose. These sounds are found in many languages and are fairly easy for most learners to produce.
- /l/ and /r/ - These are the lateral and retroflex approximants, which are made by allowing air to flow around the sides of the tongue (in the case of /l/) or by curling the tongue back towards the soft palate (in the case of /r/). These sounds can be difficult for some learners to produce, especially if they are not used to making fine distinctions between different tongue positions.

III. The Consonant Sounds

- /j/ and /w/ - These are the palatal and labiovelar approximants, which are made by allowing air to flow through a narrow channel formed by the tongue and the roof of the mouth (in the case of /j/) or by rounding the lips and constricting the air flow (in the case of /w/). These sounds are found in many languages and are fairly easy for most learners to produce.

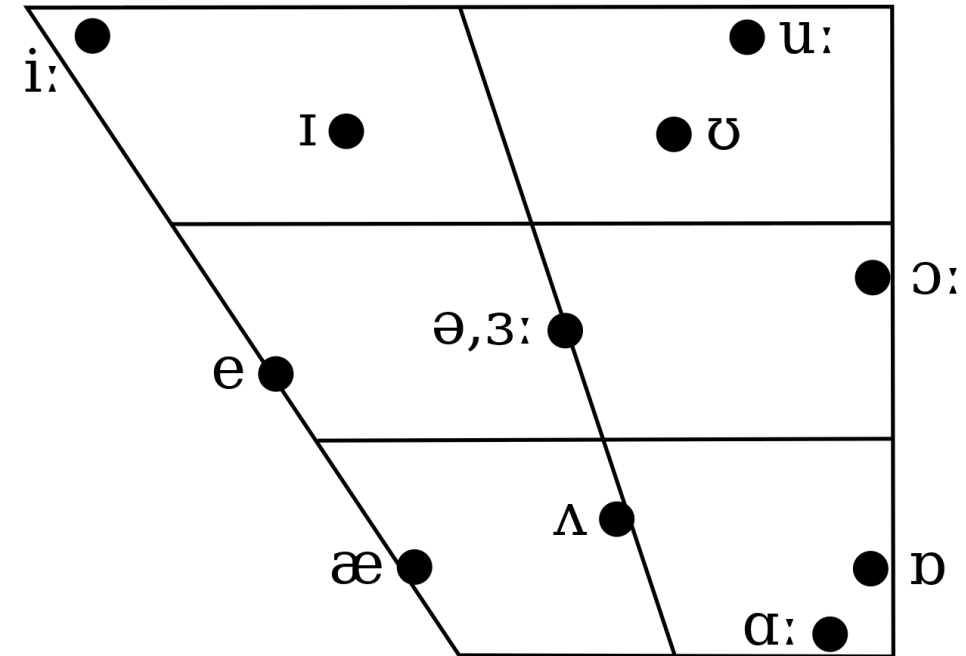
Overall, the consonant sounds of Received Pronunciation are quite diverse and can be challenging for learners who are not familiar with the phonetic distinctions between them. However, with practice and careful attention to the position and movement of the articulators, most learners can develop a clear and accurate RP accent.

IV. The Monophthong Chart

In Received Pronunciation, there are 12 vowel phonemes. These phonemes are represented by symbols in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The monophthong chart is a visual representation of these phonemes and shows their position in the mouth when they are pronounced.

The chart is divided into three sections based on where the tongue is positioned in the mouth when the vowel sound is produced: front, central, and back. Within each section, the vowels are further divided into high, mid, and low positions. The chart also includes information on the roundedness and length of each vowel sound.

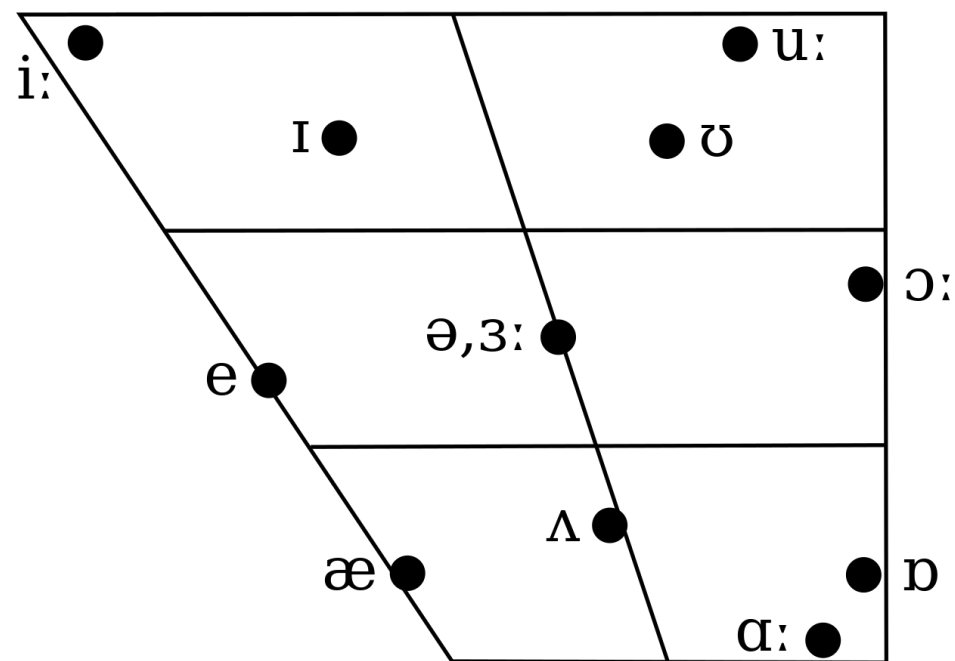
The monophthong chart is a useful tool for learners of Received Pronunciation as it provides a clear visual representation of the different vowel sounds and their positions in the mouth. By practicing the sounds using the chart, learners can improve their pronunciation and accuracy in RP.



IV. The Monophthong Chart

Monophthongs are vowels that have a single, unchanging sound. The following monophthong chart lists the 12 monophthong vowel sounds in RP, along with their corresponding IPA symbols and examples of words containing each sound:

Vowel Sound	IPA Symbol	Example Words
/i:/	meet	meet, bee, see
/ɪ/	sit	sit, hit, bit
/ɛ/	met	met, head, said
/æ/	cat	cat, hat, mat
/ɒ/	hot	hot, not, top
/ɔ:/	law	law, door, more
/ʊ/	put	put, book, foot
/u:/	boot	boot, too, through
/ə/	about	<u>a</u> bout, <u>a</u> go, <u>a</u> bove
/ɜ:/	bird	bird, turn, work
/ʌ/	cup	cup, love, come
/ɑ:/	car	car, start, father



V. Tips for Practicing Received Pronunciation:

Listen to RP speakers: Listen to native RP speakers and pay attention to their pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. This will help you develop a better understanding of how RP sounds and how it is produced.

Use the IPA: The International Phonetic Alphabet is an essential tool for learning and practicing RP. Use it to identify the correct pronunciation of words and to practice the different sounds of RP.

Focus on the basic sounds: When practicing RP, focus on the basic sounds such as the consonant sounds and the monophthongs. These are the building blocks of RP and mastering them will help you develop a more natural and accurate RP accent.

Practise regularly: Practicing regularly is essential for improving your RP pronunciation. Set aside a few minutes each day to practice the different sounds and to listen to RP speakers.

Get feedback: It can be helpful to get feedback from a pronunciation coach or a native RP speaker. They can help you identify areas where you need to improve and provide guidance on how to do so.

Watch your mouth: When practicing RP, pay attention to the position of your tongue, lips, and jaw. This will help you produce the correct sounds and improve your overall RP pronunciation.

Be patient: Learning RP takes time and practice. Don't get discouraged if you don't see immediate results. Keep practicing regularly and you will see improvement over time.