



PHONEME CHEAT SHEET



Consonants

We use the articulators (lips, teeth, tongue, back of the throat) to produce these sounds.

Continuants

Consonants

r s f m
z w l h
v y n

can keep being held until you run out of breath...

Stop

Consonants

b d j k
c g p t

cannot be held as they just pop or explode out the mouth

Consonant Voicing

Some consonants are **voiced** and some are **unvoiced**. 'Voiced' means that the voice box is activated when we say that phoneme.

Tips for checking voicing?

Voiced consonants have little to no air flowing out through the mouth as you say them AND you can feel your voice box buzzing when you produce the sounds. Try it!

b d g j l m n r v w y z

Unvoiced consonants have more airflow coming out the mouth as you say them, and your voice box is not being activated when you produce these sounds: c f h k p s t ch sh

Vowels

All vowels are voiced!

Vowels are defined by where your tongue is positioned in the mouth. Have a go at feeling where your tongue is when you say /ee/ as in 'bee'... now try /a/ as in 'at'.

See how your tongue moves?

Diphthongs

are vowel sounds where your mouth starts to say one vowel but then finishes by moving to a new position in your mouth. It is like two vowels in one.

Notice how your mouth and tongue move as you say these sounds:

/ay/ as in 'rain'

/ow/ as in 'snow'

/igh/ as in 'shy'.

oa ay

i_e

o_e

a_e

ai

oy

u_e

oi ow

R-influenced vowels

are those vowel sounds that you can sometime hear the /r/ in some accents. Commonly they are spelled with the inclusion of the letter 'r' but not always!

'ear' 'air' 'ir' 'ur' 'or' 'aw' 'au' 'ore'

Say these examples- same sound but a different spelling!

/or/ as in 'corn'

/or/ as in 'author'

/or/ as in 'awful'

The not so almighty

Schwa ə

Schwa vowel is the most common vowel in Australian English, but it leaves many of us confused. That is because it is an 'empty' vowel. In fact the word 'schwa' is an ancient Hebrew word meaning 'empty'. It is considered this because it is the vowel in the part of a word that is not accented.

Most words that have 2 or more syllables have an accent or 'emphasis' on one syllable over the others. The syllables that are not emphasised are where the schwa is hiding.

Look at these examples:

placement... if you say that final 'e' that sounds a bit odd right? Now say the word normally... that final 'e' is a schwa.

incredible... try saying that final 'i' properly... now say it quickly... there's your sneaky schwa!

The best way to find a schwa is to over articulate every vowel sound and then listen for which one sounds 'odd'.

If you are unsure, look for this symbol in a dictionary for the schwa: ə