

SILENT LETTERS

b - comb, debt, plumber, tomb, subtle, dumb, bomb, doubt, subpoena, womb, etc.

c - Connecticut

ch - yacht

e - plaque, vegetable (veg'tab'l), bridge, Wednesday (commonly said Wens-day)
clothes, (almost all CVCV words ending in e, and many other vowel combinations.)

g - sign, gnat, gnu, foreign

gh - right, drought, eight, weigh, etc.

h - hour, honor, honest, herb, rhyme, rhythm, thyme, Thailand

i - business, parliament

k in kn words, the k is silent: know, knot, knee, etc.

l - talk, walk, could, should, would, folk, half, calf, etc.

n - autumn, column, government, damn

o - sophomore, opossum

p - cupboard, pneumonia, psalm, raspberry, receipt, coup

r - surprise (this is a common pronunciation)

s - aisle, island, patios

t - beret, Chevrolet, depot, listen, whistle, wrestle, trestle, mortgage, apostle
(In rapid speech, the t is very lightly pronounced in such words as Christmas,
mountain and little)

th - asthma, isthmus, northeaster

u - biscuit, build, guest, plague, plaque, tongue, catalogue, fugue

w - who, whole, write, wrong, two, sword, wrist, answer

x - faux

z - rendezvous



A helpful list of sounds in English & some of the letters that make them:

The usual letters that make this sound:

Vowel Sounds

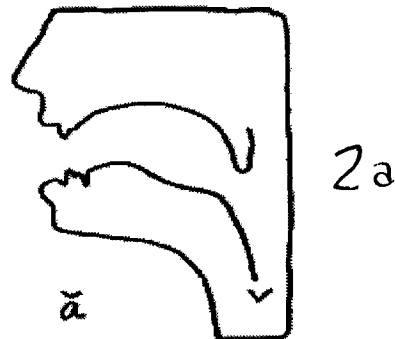
a (short sound)

apple
pat, crash
catch, bank, sarcasm
half, gallon
badge
dance, chance

Exceptions - other words with this sound:

ave - have, halve
ai - plaid

How this sound is made:

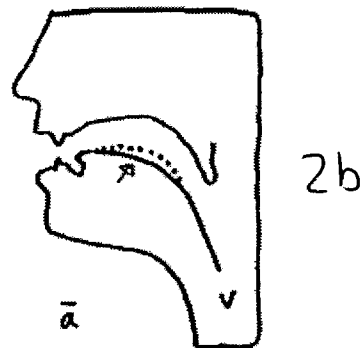


jaw: quite open; lips slightly apart;
tongue: quite low, relaxed, slightly pushed forward

a (long sound)

ace
pale, pail
way, gray
*straight, *strait

au - gauge
ey - they, prey, obey, convey
ea - great, break, steak
ei - eight, weigh, neighbor, vein, freight, veil, sleigh
ee - matinee
et - buffet, fillet, Chevrolet, crochet, bouquet, beret
ie - lingerie
e - blase', naive'te'

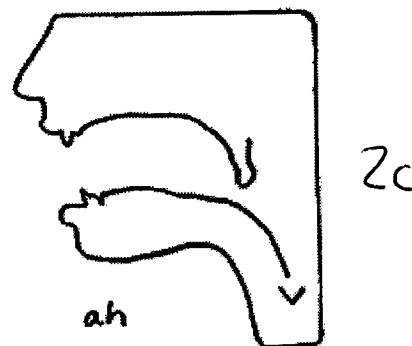


jaw, slightly open; lips: unrounded
tongue: starts out the same as short e, quite low, but tenses and moves up to long e

ah (close to o - short sound)

afraid, ago
aha! ha, papa
spa, algebra
phobia, sofa

a - father, want, wash, watch, watt, wand, swan, swap, calm, swamp, garage.
balmy, suave, façade
eois - bourgeois (bur-zhwa)



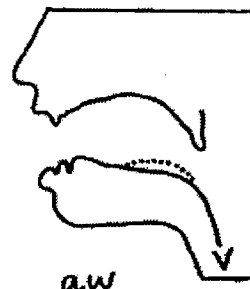
jaw: very open
tongue: very low, very relaxed
lips: slightly rounded



aw (same as **au**)

paw, yawn
all, wall, also
awful, awe
caught, haul, applaud
August

alk -talk, walk, chalk, etc.
oa - broad
ou - cough, thought, fought
bought, brought
o - off, soft, log, cost, cloth
ah - Utah
a - salt, false, Arkansas (saw)



3a

jaw: open; tongue: very low,
lax, raises slightly in back
lips: slightly rounded

e (short sound)

egg, happiness
pet, technique
wedding
edge, fence
defense

ea - bread, breakfast, dead,
deaf, feather, head, health,
instead, *lead, *read, sweater,
threat, meant, weather
sweat, weapon, etc.

ie - friend
ue - guess
ai - said (sed)
ay - says (sez)
elle - gazelle, mademoiselle



3b

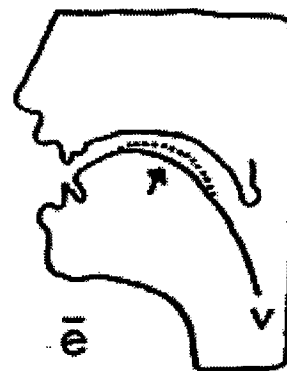
jaw: slightly open
lips: unrounded
tongue: quite low, relaxed

e (long sound)

eagle
peel
either, receive
money, key
me

eo -people
ie - belief, believe, chief, field,
grief, niece, piece, priest,
shield, thief, yield, diesel,
brief, siege, prairie, achieve, etc.

ile - automobile
ice - police
y - any, pretty, etc.
ly - poorly, happily, etc.
i - ski, chili, macaroni, pita, chic
ine - gasoline, vaccine,
nicotine, marine
magazine, machine, etc.
que - antique, technique,
unique
ae - Caesar salad
uite - suite



3c



3d

jaw: slightly open; lips: unrounded
tongue: tense, high, and moves
higher

i (short sound)

ink
 pit, children
 think
 mist, filth
 width
 journalism
 bridge, wince

e - English, pretty
 ee - been
 o - women
 ia - marriage
 u - busy, business
 ui - build
 ei- counterfeit, forfeit
 ie - sieve, handkerchief
 y - myth, syrup, synonym, lynx

Unaccented endings with ice: office, practice, etc.

“ “ “ ile: fragile, missile, etc.
 “ “ “ ine: engine, medicine etc.
 “ “ “ ite: opposite, favorite, etc.
 “ “ “ ive: positive, *live, etc.



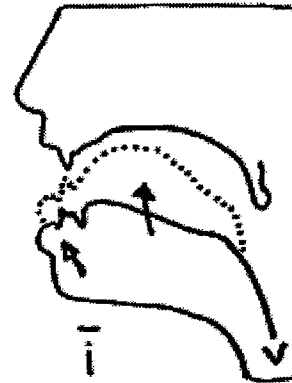
4a

jaw: slightly open
 lips: unrounded
 tongue: midlevel, does not move, half-tense

i (ah-ee: double sound)

ice, nice
 pie
 mile, reptile
 advice (ad-VICE)
 fine, valentine
 drive, arrive, *live
 *bite, excite
 final

ai - aisle
 ei - height, stein
 i - child, mild, wild,
 ight -light, right, night, etc.
 ind - blind, find, kind, grind
 ign - sign, benign, design
 gh - high, sigh, thigh
 is - island (silent s)
 oy - coyote
 ui - guide, disguise
 uy - buy
 y -my, try, fly, eye, rye, dye
 *byte, rhyme, electrolyte



4b

sound slides from back to front
 jaw and tongue: move up,
 start lax, become tense
 lips: from open to "smiling"

o (short sound - close to ah)

October, on, upon
 pot, doll, cloth
 clock, co-op
 log, cost

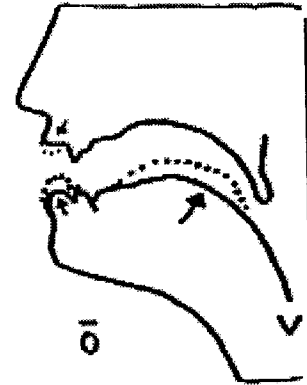
one - gone
 ho -honest, honor (silent h)
 -- response
 mosque
 omb - bomb

see ah: similar, but shorter

*check sound, spelling

o (long sound)
 open, owe
 coat, *pole,
 toe, *so
 no, ago, radio
 *clothes, *close
 chose, chosen
 dose, dosage

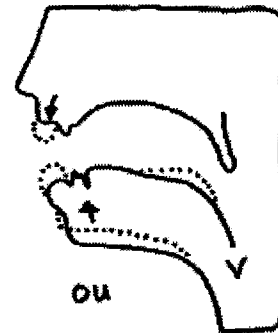
-- old, cold, hold, most, post, bolt, both
 *poll, both, folk, yolk
 ou - doughnut, though, boulder
 o - comb (silent **b**)
 ew - *sew
 ow - pillow, *bow, yellow, low, bowl,
 throw, know, mower, *row, *sow,
 --- own, owner
 eau - bureau, plateau
 au - chauvinist
 ou - soul
 eo - yeoman
 ot - depot



jaw: slightly open
 lips: rounded, move closer together
 tongue: tense, glides up and back

ou (ah-oo: double sound)
 out, flour, house,
 count, ounce, our,
 cow, flower, *bow, *row
 how, brown, owl

ough - bough, drought
 ho -hour (silent **h**)
 -- lounge



jaw: very open, closes slightly
 lips: open, then rounded
 tongue: relaxed, very low and flat in
 front, then moves up in back

oi (oh-ee: double sound)
 boy
 oil, coin

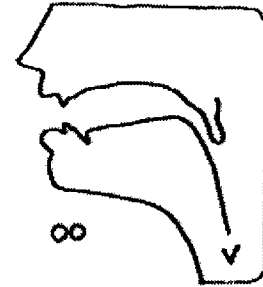
aw - lawyer
 oice, oise - noise, choice
 ois- Illinois



sound moves back to front
 jaw: slightly open, moves up
 lips: from rounded to unrounded
 tongue: tense, glides up, forward

oo (really between a short **o** and short **u**)

- o - woman, wolf
- oo - look, brook, good
root, wool, wood
- ou - could, would, should
- u - put



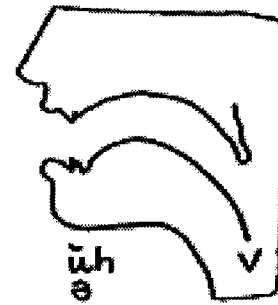
6a

jaw:open
lips:rounded, do not move
tongue: curves high in back

u (short sound)

- up, but
- butter, luck
- *sum, medium
- dumb (silent **b**)
- fudge, plunge
- dunce, pulse

- a - was, what
- oe - does (duz)
- ou - country, couple, cousin,
trouble, young, rough
- o - come, love, oven, cover,
*some, done, tongue,
front, brother, mother,
kingdom, etc.
- oo - flood, blood



6b

jaws: half open; lips: relaxed, not rounded. tongue: curved half-way up in the center. Sound is low: "uh"

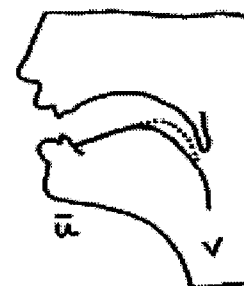
ALL UNSTRESSED VOWELS TAKE THIS SOUND, as in banana (buh-NA-nuh).
In dictionaries, the symbol for this sound is an upside-down e: **e̞**

- a - abbreviation
- e - silent
- i - Minnesota
- o - connect
- u - circus
- ai - captain
- ea - ocean
- io - fashion, nation
- ou - famous
- M_cDonald's

u (long sound, with **y** sound at the beginning)

- used
- university
- ukelele, *yule
- fuel, cute
- abuse, tube, excuse

- eau - beauty
- u - computer, butte,
fugue
- eu - feud, eulogy
- ie - few, pew, *yew
- iew - view



6c

same as **oo**, but held longer;
also see **y** sound

u (long sound, without **y** sound at the beginning)

blue, avenue,
June, tune
suit, cruise, juice
*flu, sue, emu
truth, produce
institute

eu - neutral, pneumonia, deuce,
neurotic, neutron
ew - blew, *flew, new, crew, dew,
drew, stew, brew, Jew, chew, etc.

oe - shoe
o - do *to
omb - tomb (silent **b**)
oo - balloon, boot. smooth, food
noon, room, tool, tooth, *too,
move, route, snooze, shampoo,
choose, loose, etc.

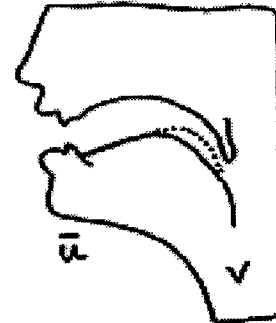
ou - group, routine, rouge, *you
youth, *you'll, souvenir

who - who, whose

wo - *two

ioux - Sioux

but - debut (silent **t**)



7a

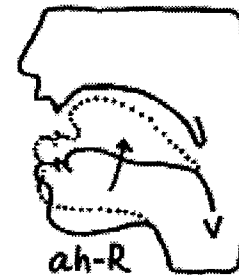
jaw: open; lips: quite rounded
tongue: flat in front, moves up in
back, tenses. Sound held long.

Vowel sounds with R

(ah-R)

far, park
boulevard
March, charge

ear - heart
-- are
uar - guard

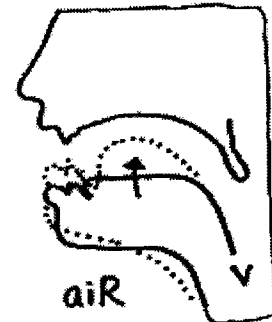


7b

(a-R)

fair, air
millionaire

are - care, scarce, *bare, etc.
arr - marry
ayer - prayer
ear - *bear, *tear, wear
ere - *there, where
ei - *their
err - error, berry
're - *they're
ur - bury



7c

(ee-R)

fear, ear,
weary
*tear, *hear
atmosphere

eer - beer, cheer
ere - here
e're - we're
eir - weird
ier - cashier, frontier, pierce.



7d

(ah-ee-R)

fire, *hire
acquire

oir - choir
igher - *higher

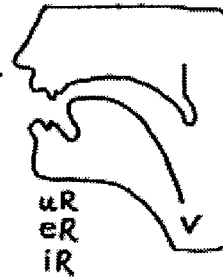


8a

(uR)

fir, girl, third, birth
offer, her, teacher
fur, burn, Thursday
nicer, happier
urge, merge

ear - learn, earth, search, etc.
or - work, worth, worst, word. etc.
her - herb, herbal (silent h)
ure- sure, endure, insurance
re - massacre
quor - liquor

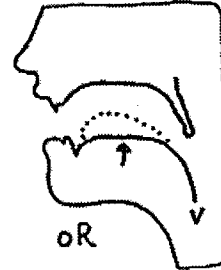


8b

(oh-R)

for, storm, born, short
boring, *worn
*course
absorb
porch, cord

oar - oar, *soar, *coarse, etc.
oor - door, poor, floor
ore - *sore, force, horse *wore, etc.
our - four, pour, *your, etc.
ou're - *you're
ar - warm, *war, wharf, *warn, etc



8c

(yuh-R)

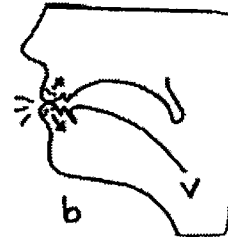
pure, cure, obscure

Consonant Sounds:

b

bed
rubber

pb - cupboard, raspberry



8d

note: same as p, but voiced

The letter **c** has no sound of its own! Followed by a, o, or u, it has the sound of **k**: cat, cot, cut. But followed by e, i or y, it has the **s** sound: cent, city, cyst. The blends **cl**, **cr** and **ct** have the **k** sound. **Ch** has a new sound.

d

duck
ladder

ld - would, could, should
ed - To add **ed** to words that end in *voiced* consonants (*except d*) the sound of **ed** is just **d**: smell'd, etc; banned is just like band!
With words that end in **d**, double the **d**, and say two syllables:
pad-ded, load-ded, etc.



8e

note: same as t, but voiced

f
fish
offer
nephew

lf - half, calf, etc.
ph - phone, etc.
gh - laugh, trough, cough
rough, tough, enough



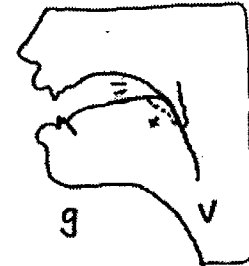
9a

note: same as **v**, but *unvoiced*

g has its own sound when followed by a, o, or u. When followed by e, i, or y, it has the same sound as **j**: gem, gin, gym. **G** sound exceptions:

game
go, wagon
gum

ge - gear, get, geese, finger, anger
gi - begin, giddy, gimmick,
girl, give, giggle
other exceptions:
gh - ghost
gui - guide



9b

note: same as **k**, but *voiced*

h
house

wh - who, whole
j - San Jose
ch - Chanukah
g - gyro sandwich



9c

j
jeep

ge - gem, budget,
gi - ginger, region
gy - Egypt
dge - edge, judge, advantage etc.
gg - exaggerate
di - soldier
___ -grad_uation

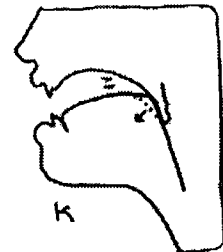


9d

note: same as **ch**, but *voiced*

k
key
cat
cot
cut
account
back

c - see **c**
ch - stomach, ache, orchid, chemical
chasm, chaos
lk - talk, walk
kh - khaki
qu - liquor, plaque
cch - saccharine
c -traffic, picnic (Add k to endings:trafficker,panicked)



9e

note: same as **g**, but *unvoiced*

l
lemon
bill

ln - kiln
le - little (lit'l)
al - pedal (ped'l), final (fin'l)
el - model (mod'l)



10a

m
money
dummy
rhythm

mb - comb, plumber
lm - calm, balm
mn - column, autumn, hymn
gm - diaphragm

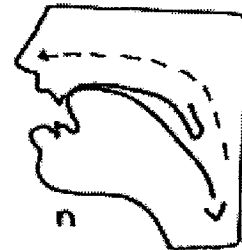


10b

note: air flows through nose

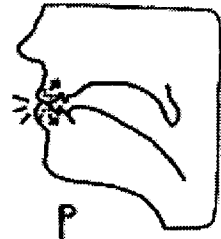
n
nest
banner

kn - knee, knife, know, etc.
pn - pneumonia
gn - sign, gnat, reign
en - open (op'n), etc.
on - cotton (cot'n), etc.
ain - certain (cer-t'n), etc.



p
pig
supper

ph - shepherd
ough - hiccough



10c

note: same as **b**, but *unvoiced*

q really has no sound of its own! It is always paired with **u** (**qu**) and usually has the sound of **kw**. See **kw** under blends.

r
rug
merry

wr - write, wrong, etc.
rh - rhythm, rhyme, rhinestone
rhinoceros
rrh - diarrhea
- colonel (kern'l)



10d

s

sun
kiss
cent
city
dose
goose

c - see **c**
ps - psalm
psy - psychology, etc.
sci - scissors, fascinate, etc.
st - listen , whistle, wrestle, etc.



11a

note: same as **z** but *unvoiced*

t

telephone
button

bt - debt, doubt, subtle, etc.
pt - receipt
th - Thomas, Thailand
ght - night, right, etc.
cht - yacht
z - pizza
ed - walked. When adding **ed** to words that end in *unvoiced* consonants (except **t**) the sound is just **t**: walk't.
With a word ending in **t**, say two syllables: pat-ted, lif-ted.



11b

tongue: tip taps ridge behind teeth
note: same as **d**, but *unvoiced*

v

vest
savvy
over

f - of



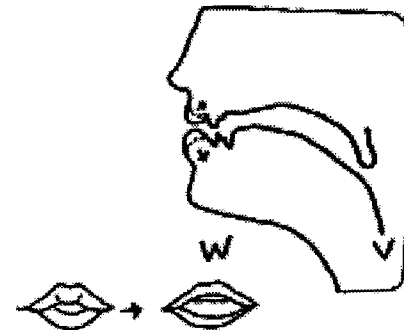
11c

note: same as **f**, but *voiced*

w

web

u - persuade, iguana
-- one (won)
ou - strenuous
wh - whale, why
(some Americans say all **wh** sounds as **w**)



11d

x has no sound of its own. Look under blends for **ks** and **kz**.

y (refer back to vowel section - **y** as a vowel can have the sound of long e or short i)
 yarn

- u - university, unit, cute etc.
- eu - Europe, feud
- ew - few
- eau - beauty
- i - opinion, onion
- u - strenuous
- j - hallelujah
- ll (in Spanish) torilla
- n with ~ (in Spanish) canyon



12a

z
 zipper
 jazz
 puzzle
 frozen

- ss - scissors
- s - days, lose, was, please, as, advise
- si - business (biz-ness)
- use - exCUSE (verb), fuse
- choose, loose, clothes
- chosen



12b

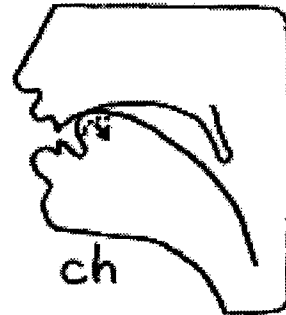
note: same as **s**, but *voiced*

Consonant Blend Sounds

Some consonants can be said together. Those that make new sounds are illustrated. The dash shows if they can only begin (bl-) or end (-ck) a syllable, or do both (-ch-).

bl-
 blue
br-
 brand
-ch-
 check
 lunch
 kitchen

- c - cello
- te - righteous
- ti - question
- tu- nature, picture (pik-chur)



12c

note: same as **j**, but *unvoiced*

-ck
cl- (really **kl** sound)
 clap
cr- (really **kr** sound)
 cross
-ct (really **kt** sound)
 act
dr-
 dress

(see **k**)

dw-
dwell
-dz

ds - roads, ads

fl-
flag
fr-
frog
-ft
lift

gl-
glad
gr-
gram

-gw- (not spelled)

gu - penguin

hw-

w - wheat, white

sound starts with puff of air

-l Words that end with an **le** have no **e** sound, just an **l** sound: table (ta-b'l), uncle (un-k'l), handle (han-d'l), rifle (ri-f'l), bugle (bu-g'l), tickle (tic-k'le), simple (sim-p'l), puzzle (puz-z'l).

-ld

hold

-lk

milk

kl- (not spelled)

cl - clap

kr- (not spelled)

cr - cross

chr -Christmas, chronology

-ks-

x - tax, text, exit, box, tuxedo, etc.

c - facsimile, exciting

cc - eccentric

cks - tacks, pecks, picks, pocks, pucks

-kz- (not spelled)

xes -taxes, mixes, oxen, luxury

-kw- (not spelled)

qu - quarter, quit, etc.

cqu - acquire

ch - choir

-mp

jump

-nch

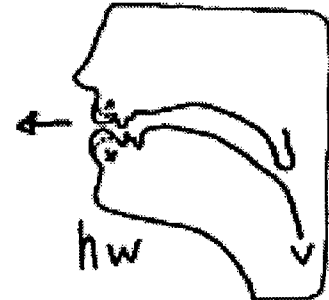
lunch

-nd

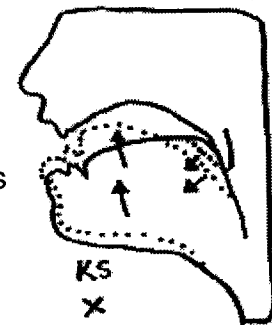
and

-ng

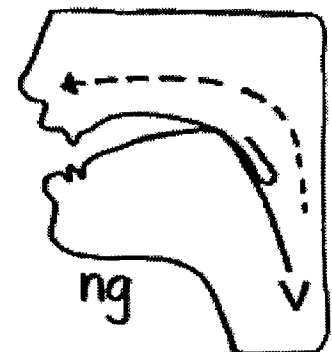
sing, sang, sung, song, strength



13a



13b



13c

-ng'd (not spelled)

-ng-g (not spelled)

-ngz (not spelled)

-nk

sink, sank, sunk, honk

-nt

rent

pl-

plan

pr-

prime

-pt

adopt

-rb

curb

-rch

church

-rd

card

-rf

scarf

-rj (not spelled)

-rk

pork

-rl

curl

-rm

arm

-rn

earn

-rp

sharp

-rs

nurse

-rt

dirt

-rth

earth

-rz (not spelled)

-rv

curve

-rch

march

-rsh

marshmallow

nged - belonged, etc.

ng - finger, (fing-ger) anger (ang-ger)

sings

rge - large, etc.

rs - furs

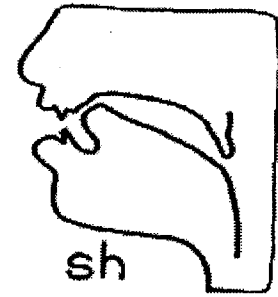
-sk- and **sc-** followed by a, o, u

scan, scout, scum
risk, skate

-sh-

ship
wish
worship

sch - school, schedule
scheme, schizophrenic
ci - special, ancient, musician
s - sugar, sure, censure
ch - machine, Chicago, chef
ion - nation, partial, patient
sion - tension (ten-shun)
ean - ocean (o-shun)
sci - fascism, conscious
ss - mission, tissue



15a

note: same as **zh**, but *unvoiced*

shr-

shrug

skl- (not spelled)

-skr- (not spelled)

-sks

desks

skw- (not spelled)

sl-

slip

sm-

small

sn-

snap

-sp-

spill, crisp

spl-

splash

spr-

spring

-sps

wasps

-st-

stack, first

str-

string

-sts

tests

sw-

swim

-tch

*witch, pitcher(pit-chur)

-th-

thigh,

with, withhold

scl - sclerosis

scr - describe, scratch

squirrel

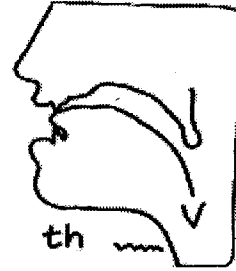
ch - *which, much, rich, such



15b

note: This **th** sound is *unvoiced*

-th-
 the, this, that
 father,
 these, those
 there



16a

note: This **th** sound is *voiced*

thd (not spelled)

thed - bathed

-ths

tenths

thr-

three

tr-

trip

tw-

twins, between

wh-

wheel, why (see **hw** for explanation and picture)

j - San Juan, marijuana

zh (not spelled)

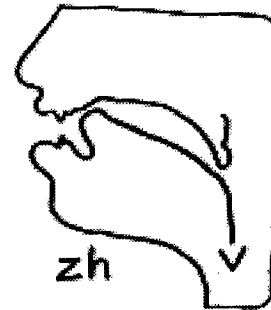
su -measure, pleasure, leisure

sion - vision

z - azure

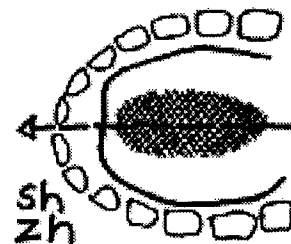
g - genre

ss - fission



16b

note: same as **sh**, but *voiced*



16c

Silent letters

b - comb, debt, tomb, subtle, dumb, bomb, doubt, subpoena

c - Connecticut

ch - yacht

e - plaque, vegetable (veg'tab'l), bridge, Wednesday (commonly said Wends-day)

g - sign, gnat, gnu

gh - right, drought, eight, weigh, etc.

h - hour, honor, honest, herb, rhyme, rhythm, thyme

i - business, parliament

k in kn words, the k is silent: know, knot, knee

l - talk, walk, could, should, would, folk, half, etc.

n - autumn, column, government, kiln, damn

o - sophomore, opossum

p - cupboard, pneumonia, psalm, raspberry, receipt

r - surprise (this is a common pronunciation)

s - aisle, island, patios

t - beret, Chevrolet, depot, listen, whistle, wrestle, Christmas, trestle

(in rapid speech, the **t** is very lightly pronounced in such words as mountain and little)

th - asthma, isthmus, northeaster, Thai, thyme

u - biscuit, build, guest, plague, plaque

w - who, whole, write, wrong, two, sword

x - faux

z - rendezvous