

Activities for classroom use

PRONUNCIATION

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



1. Read the following groups of letters aloud. What do the letters in each group have in common?

A: eɪ iː aɪ əʊ juː

B: biː diː ef dʒiː ertʃ em ɑː(r) wə

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



2. Check the pronunciation of these words in the dictionary and group them according to their various **diphthongs** (i.e. two vowel sounds put together). Say the words aloud.

paint **mind** **eight** **fly** **sphere** **lounge** **day** **throw** **cow**
fear **soil** **bone** **spoil** **brow** **boy** **boat** **coin** **beard**
down **house** **break** **enjoy** **shear** **blind** **bake** **dear**
square **phone** **pear** **hair** **five** **chair** **dare** **snow** **high**

eɪ	aɪ	ɔɪ	aʊ	əʊ	ɪə	eə

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



3. All the words (except one) in the following groups share the same phonetic feature. Find the common sound and the odd one out, as in the example.

Common sound Odd sound

Ex.: heart, carp, cart, match, barn, March, clerk

ɑ:

æ in *match*

- a. shoe, ship, pass, rush, push, sheet, sure
- b. television, sheep, treasure, collision, casual
- c. chips, cherry, chop, catch, watch, sherry
- d. jeep, joke, gin, choke, age, large, jam
- e. wonder, blunder, thunder, wander, plunder
- f. shown, phone, town, loan, tone, groan
- g. said, paid, afraid, made, weighed, shade
- h. tomb, womb, loom, bomb, boom, room

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LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



4. Check the pronunciation of these words in the dictionary and find out whether *th* is pronounced θ, ð or t. Which word can be pronounced in two different ways?

	θ	ð	t
brother			
leather			
method			
mother			
mouth			
myth			
Thames			
thank			
theatre			
Thomas			
those			
through			
thyme			
with			

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



5. Which letter in the following groups of words is “silent”? Use the dictionary to help you. Say the words aloud.

Ex: calf, calm, palm, talk, walk

letter **l**

1. comb, debt, doubt, lamb, subtle, tomb, womb
2. handkerchief, handsome, Wednesday
3. assignment, foreign, gnat, gnome, reign, sign
4. heir, honest, honour, honourable, hour
5. knee, knife, knitting, knock, know
6. cupboard, pneumonia, psychic, raspberry, receipt
7. depart, formerly, gargle, morning, storm, worse
8. aisle, chassis, corps, debris, island, isle
9. bustle, castle, Christmas, depot, listen, thistle
10. wrap, wrinkle, wrist, write, wrong, wrought

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LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



6. Words that are derived from others often have the stress on a different syllable from that of the root word. Use the dictionary to find the stress patterns in each group of words.

Ex: eco'logical - e'cologist - e'cology

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| arithmetic | - arithmetical | - arithmetician |
| competence | - competition | - competitive |
| human | - humanistic | - humanity |
| oppose | - opposite | - opposition |
| photograph | - photographic | - photography |
| practicability | - practical | - practicality |

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



7. In English, almost all words ending with the suffixes *-ic* and *-ical* are stressed on the syllable immediately preceding the suffix, as in *romantic* /rəʊ'mæntɪk/. But there are some exceptions. Look up these words in the dictionary and find out whether or not they follow the rule.

economical catholic heretic sarcastic geographic
 ironical historic arsenic inelastic Arabic
 lunatic scientific arithmetic rhetoric

RULE	EXCEPTION

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



8. Re-write out the words below using the normal English alphabet; then say the words aloud. What do they have in common?

'kemɪstrɪ baɪ'ɒlədʒɪ dʒɪ'ɒɡrəfi ,mæθə'mætrɪks
 'lɪtrətʃə(r) dʒɪ'ɒmətɪ 'fɪzɪks fr'ɒsəfi
 'hɪstrɪ 'ældʒɪbrə 'sarəns

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LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



9. Read the following sentences and identify the stressed syllable, the Italian translation and the grammatical category of the underlined words.
- a. What general conclusion can you draw about the position of the stress in these words?
 - b. Find some other words of this kind in the dictionary.

	stress	translation	grammatical category
a.1. He was accused of unprofessional conduct
a.2. She's going to conduct us around the castle.
b.1. There is conflict of interests between his business activity and his position as a politician.
b.2. Their accounts of the events conflict with the police evidence.
c.1. I heard just a fragment of their conversation.
c.2. Most meteorites fragment on impact with the atmosphere.
d.1. Diseases like AIDS are on the increase
d.2. The world population continues to increase
e.1. The equation presents no problems if you know some basic trigonometry.
e.2. I like opening presents under the Christmas tree.
f.1. Anti-government rebels have taken control of the airport.
f.2. This is the story of a teenager who rebels against his father.
g.1. Two suspects were arrested yesterday in connection with the murder.
g.2. He strongly suspects his wife is lying.
h.1. I'd like to transfer £ 500 into my bank account.
h.2. The transfer from the airport to the hotel is included in the price.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



10. Use the dictionary to find out the British English and the American English pronunciation of these words and then say them aloud.

	<i>British English</i>	<i>American English</i>
a. arbitrary
b. booth
c. customarily
d. figure
e. financier
f. laboratory
g. sure

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



11. Some very common English words are easy for a foreign student to learn but particularly difficult to pronounce. Say the following words aloud. Then check their pronunciation and their stress in the dictionary. Did you get them right? Writing down their phonetic transcription may help you memorise the correct pronunciation!

1. bowling
2. computer
3. image
4. management
5. manager
6. orange
7. women
8. university

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



12. Using the dictionary, find a word from the following list that rhymes with each clue in **ACROSS** and **DOWN**. Remember that the spelling may be very different!

Words rhyming with ACROSS clues

day bear so son eel or my eat ten none toast so word men
bought ought own and go shall no door cheap art

Words rhyming with DOWN clues

at here birds in do stay comb enough ate youth wash
rob on he some late at own arms goals told on at

1	2	E	3	P		4	E	5	6			7
							8				S	
9		10		11	12	R						A
13				14				15		16	17	
M		O		S		18				19	R	
20	O		21		22				23		24	25
		26			27		G	28			29	
	30		A					31		32		U
33					34	35	O			36		
			37	38				39	40			
41		N		42	O				43		N	

ACROSS: 1. sheep, 4. there, 8. coast, 11. third, 13. bone, 14. band, 16. way, 18. done, 19. door, 20. port, 24. fly, 26. snow, 27. sport, 29. throw, 30. gal, 31. deal, 33. flow, 34. or, 36. cart, 37. ago, 39. feet, 41. pen, 42. sun, 43. then.

DOWN: 2. tree, 3. fat, 4. curds, 5. hat, 6. sob, 7. away, 9. dome, 10. tough, 11. posh, 12. undergone, 15. sin, 16. blue, 17. farms, 21. moles, 22. fold, 23. pet, 25. truth, 28. hear, 30. dumb, 32. wait, 35. stone, 38. gone, 40. mat.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



13. Using the dictionary to help you, read the following groups of **homophones** aloud (i.e. words that have the same sound but differ in meaning or form) and write the corresponding phonetic transcription.

1. flew/flue/flu
2. for (*forma forte*)/four/fore
3. I/eye/aye
4. or/oar/ore
5. pair/pear/pare
6. peak/peek/pique
7. sight/site/cite
8. wheel/weal/we'll (*forma forte*)
9. where/wear/ware
10. you (*forma forte*)/yew/ewe

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



14. Find the **homophones** (there are at least two) in the following group of words and match them to their phonetic transcription, as in the example.

**saw arms caught peace aren't hall guessed ball talk
barren blue source blew sea course see kernel pour
guest its through some baron threw quay C weight
colonel strait court suite poor sauce coarse bawl sew
wait it's sum soar key sore straight sweet haul won
piece one so waste alms aunt waist torque sow pore**

Homophones	Phonetic transcription	Homophones	Phonetic transcription
a. <i>arms/alms</i>	/a:mz/	n.	/pi:s/
b.	/a:nt/	o.	/pɔ:(r)/
c.	/bɔ:l/	p.	/sɔ:s/
d.	/'bærən/	q.	/səʊ/
e.	/blu:/	r.	/sɔ:(r)/
f.	/si:/	s.	/sʌm/
g.	/kɔ:s/	t.	/streɪt/
h.	/kɔ:t/	u.	/swi:t/
i.	/gest/	v.	/tɔ:k/
j.	/hɔ:l/	w.	/θru:/
k.	/ɪts/	x.	/weɪst/
l.	/ki:/	y.	/wert/
m.	/'kɜ:nl/	z.	/wʌn/

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



15. Using the dictionary to help you, replace the phonetic transcription in each sentence with the appropriate homophone.

- a.1. Oh, no! It's starting to /reɪn/!
- a.2. The /reɪn/ of Queen Victoria lasted from 1837 to 1901.
- a.3. She keeps a tight /reɪn/ on spending.

- b.1. I can't come with you. I've got an essay to /raɪt/.
- b.2. You have no /raɪt/ to treat me like this.
- b.3. Many farmers still perform a traditional /raɪt/ at harvest time.

- c.1. She's a vegetarian. She doesn't eat /mi:t/.
- c.2. Why don't we /mi:t/ in front of the Red Lion Pub?
- c.3. A judge's job is to /mi:t/ out harsh sentences for various crimes.

- d.1. They're going to /baɪ/ a new car.
- d.2. Come and sit /baɪ/ me.
- d.3. /'baɪbaɪ/! See you next week!

- e.1. /ðeə(r)/ having a wonderful time.
- e.2. Ireland? I've always wanted to go /ðeə(r)/.
- e.3. The children washed /ðeə(r)/ faces and went to bed.

- f.1. /aɪl/ go as soon as I can.
- f.2. Would you like an /aɪl/ or a window seat?
- f.3. They went to a tiny /aɪl/ in the Mediterranean for their holidays.

- g.1. The children saw a /drə(r)/ in the park.
- g.2. /drə(r)/ Jane, how are you?
- g.3. She's a very /drə(r)/ friend of mine.

- h.1. She told the children a /teɪl/ of princesses and wicked fairies.
- h.2. The dog wagged its /teɪl/.
- h.3. The police decided to /teɪl/ the suspect.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY



16. Read the following sentences and with the help of the dictionary, find out the phonetic transcriptions and the Italian translations of the underlined words. They are all **homographs** (i.e. words that are spelt the same, but have a different pronunciation and meaning).

	Phonetic transcription	Italian translation
a.1. He lives in a nice cottage in the Cotswolds.
a.2. Thousands of lives were lost in the earthquake.
b.1. He has a lead of three points over his opponents.
b.2. Lead was often used for water pipes and covering roofs.
c.1. This concert is going out live
c.2. How long do elephants live ?
d.1. She changed her mind at the last minute
d.2. We'll study the project in minute detail.
e.1. The sow is a fully grown female pig.
e.2. Make sure he doesn't tell her! His words would sow the seeds of doubt in her.
f.1. During the summer she had the opportunity to put her teacher training into use
f.2. May I use your phone?
g.1. I can read German but I can't speak it very well.
g.2. She read of his accident in yesterday's paper.
h.1. Which way is the wind blowing?
h.2. He never knows the time, as he always forgets to wind his watch.
i.1. She is sitting in the front row
i.2. We never seem to stay together for very long before we have a dreadful row