

## Pronunciation Guide

American English Pronunciation of Consonant Sounds with Symbols					
Phonemic Symbol	AHD <sup>1</sup> Symbol	Examples	Phonemic Symbol	AHD Symbol	Example
/b/	/b/	<i>boy, cabin</i>	/p/	/p/	<i>pink, hip</i>
/tʃ/	/ch/	<i>cheer, watch, cello</i>	/r/	/r/	<i>rest, far</i>
/d/	/d/	<i>dog, bed</i>	/s/	/s/	<i>sink, bus</i>
/f/	/f/	<i>fill, phone, life</i>	/ʃ/	/sh/	<i>she, special,</i>
/g/	/g/	<i>go, log</i>	/t/	/t/	<i>tiny, little</i>
/h/	/h/	<i>his, cohort</i>	/ð/	/th/	<i>the, bathe</i>
/dʒ/	/j/	<i>joy, giant, budge</i>	/θ/	/th/	<i>thin, bath</i>
/k/	/k/	<i>cat, king, lack</i>	/v/	/v/	<i>view, weave</i>
/l/	/l/	<i>long, ill</i>	/w/	/w/	<i>win, when</i>
/m/	/m/	<i>my, team</i>	/j/ <sup>2</sup>	/y/	<i>you, mayor</i>
/n/	/n/	<i>no, knife</i>	/z/	/z/	<i>zoo, rise</i>
/ŋ/	/ng/	<i>sing, think</i>	/ʒ/	/zh/	<i>leisure, beige</i>

American English Pronunciation of Vowel Sounds with Phonemic Symbols					
Phonemic Symbol	AHD Symbol	Examples	Phonemic Symbol	AHD Symbol	Example
æ	ă	<i>can, hat</i>	ɔ:	ô	<i>caught</i>
eɪ	ā	<i>cane, bait</i>	ɔr	ôr	<i>north</i>
ɛər	âr	<i>air, hare</i>	ɔɪ	oi	<i>joy, noise</i>
ɑ:	ä	<i>father</i>	ʊ	oo	<i>took</i>
ɑr	är	<i>arm</i>	ʊər	oor	<i>tour</i>
ɛ	ě	<i>bet, head</i>	u:	oo	<i>soon</i>
i:	ē	<i>meet, beat</i>	aʊ	ou	<i>out</i>
ɪər	îr	<i>here</i>	ʌ	ü	<i>cut</i>
ɪ	ĭ	<i>pit</i>	ɜr	ûr	<i>word</i>
aɪ	ī	<i>my, light</i>	ə	ə	<i>about, the</i>
ɒ	ö	<i>hot</i>	ər	ər	<i>butter</i>
oʊ	ō	<i>no, know</i>	ju:	yoo	<i>view,</i>

<sup>1</sup> American Heritage Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> While the IPA symbol for this sound is /j/, I will use the AHD symbol of /y/



## Characteristic Difficulties with English for Speakers of Niger-Congo Languages

1. Languages in the family
  - a. Volta languages: Ewe, Krahn
  - b. Bantu languages: Swahili, Kikongo, Kirundi
2. 16 noun classes with prefix markers
  - a. Six classes for singular nouns
  - b. Five classes for plural nouns
  - c. One class for abstract nouns
  - d. One class for verbal infinitives used as nouns
  - e. Three classes to indicate location
3. Nouns have concords or affixes that relate the word to the rest of the sentence
4. Words contain grammatical particles
5. Niger-Congo languages are phonetic
6. Tonal languages (basically all but Swahili)
  - a. Words may have multiple meaning based on the tone attached to the word.
  - b. Example from Kikongo: (´) = high tone, (˘) = low tone
    - i. Mbàlà: time
    - ii. Mbalá: yam
7. Teach stress-timing and English question asking intonation
  - a. Focus on important words
  - b. Use correct inflection when asking questions
8. Only 5 vowel sounds
  - a. a = /a:/ as in “father”
  - b. e = /ɛ/ as in “bed”
  - c. i = /i:/ as in “ski”
  - d. o = /ɔr/ as in “north”
  - e. u = /u:/ as in “soon”

9. Tend to assign one of five Swahili vowel sounds to English words
  - a. Short i sound /ɪ/ becomes long e sound /i:/ (“bid” becomes “bead”)
  - b. Short e sound /ɛ/ may shift to long a sound /eɪ/ (“bed” becomes “bade”)
  - c. In East Africa, /ɜr/ becomes /eɪ/ (“bird” becomes “bade”)
  - d. In West Africa /ɜr/ become /ɒ/ (“bird” becomes “bod”)
  - e. /ɒ/ becomes /æ/ (“hard” become “had”)
10. No consonant clusters; all words end with a vowel sound
11. Normal pattern is CV or CVV
12. Stress usually falls on the penultimate syllable
13. L and r used interchangeably:
  - a. lead and read
  - b. led and red
14. R trilled
  - a. Similar to the “rolled r” in Spanish
  - b. Needs to be pulled back to a standard English r
15. Dropped h sound
  - a. Similar to the stereotypical “cockney” h in British English
  - b. Ed for head, arm for harm
16. G/k ; b/p ; j/-ch substitutions
  - a. Think for thing
  - b. Hib for hip
  - c. Jance for chance
17. Replacing /ʃ/ with /s/
  - a. Sew for show
  - b. Sip for ship