

# Best Practices for Helping Students with Pronunciation

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# Agenda

## 1. The Basics

- When to correct
- When NOT to correct

## 2. What to look for

- Mouth positions
- Vowels
- Consonants
- Stress Pattern

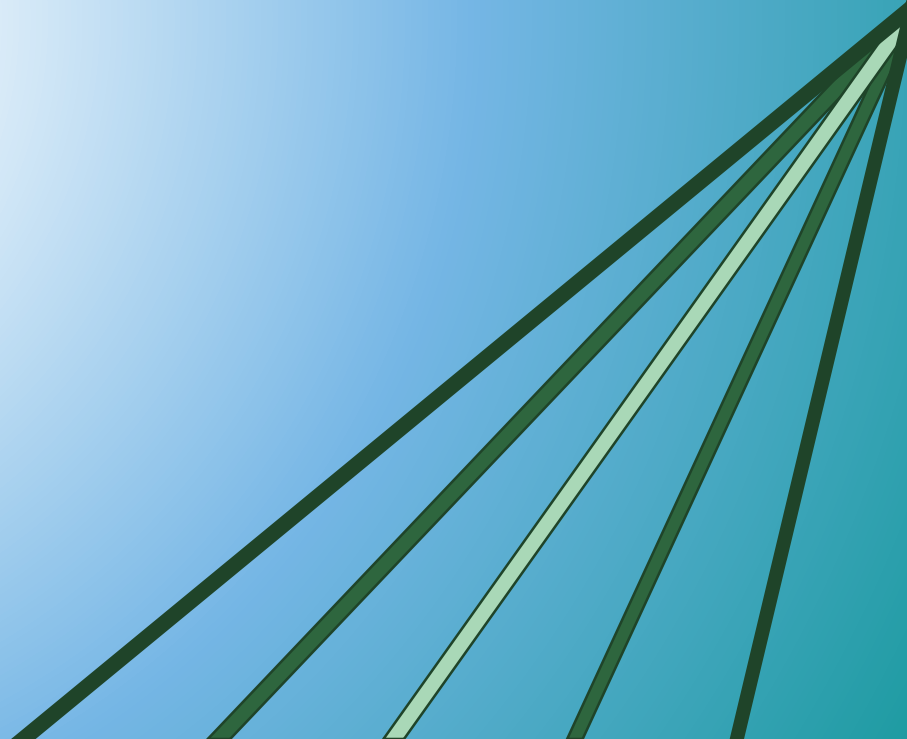
## 3. First Language Interference

- Switching sounds
- New sounds

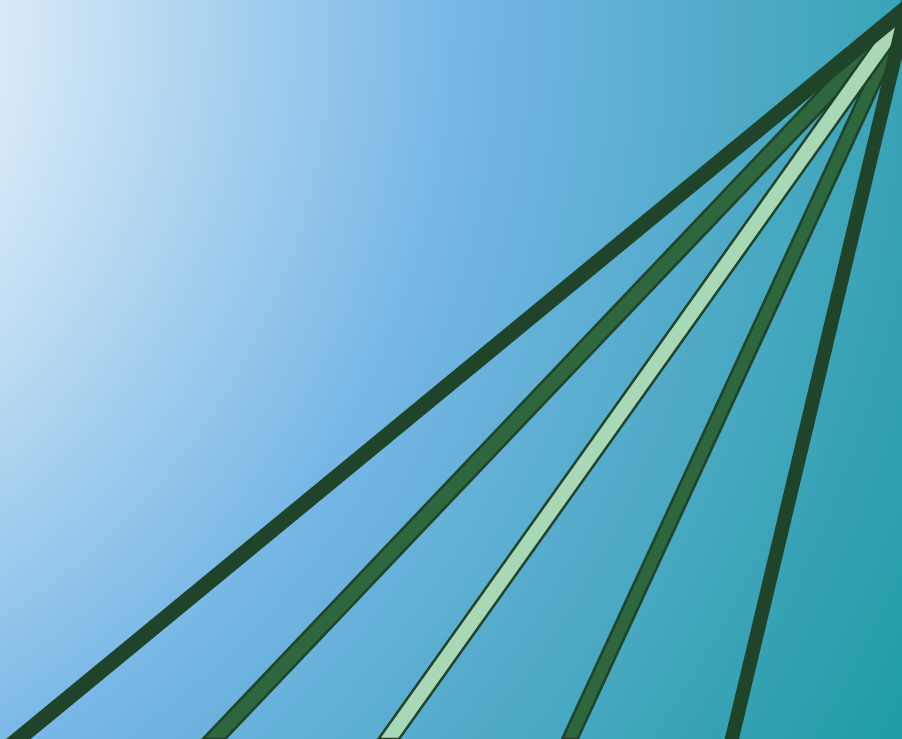
## 4. General Advice

- Tips
  - Tools
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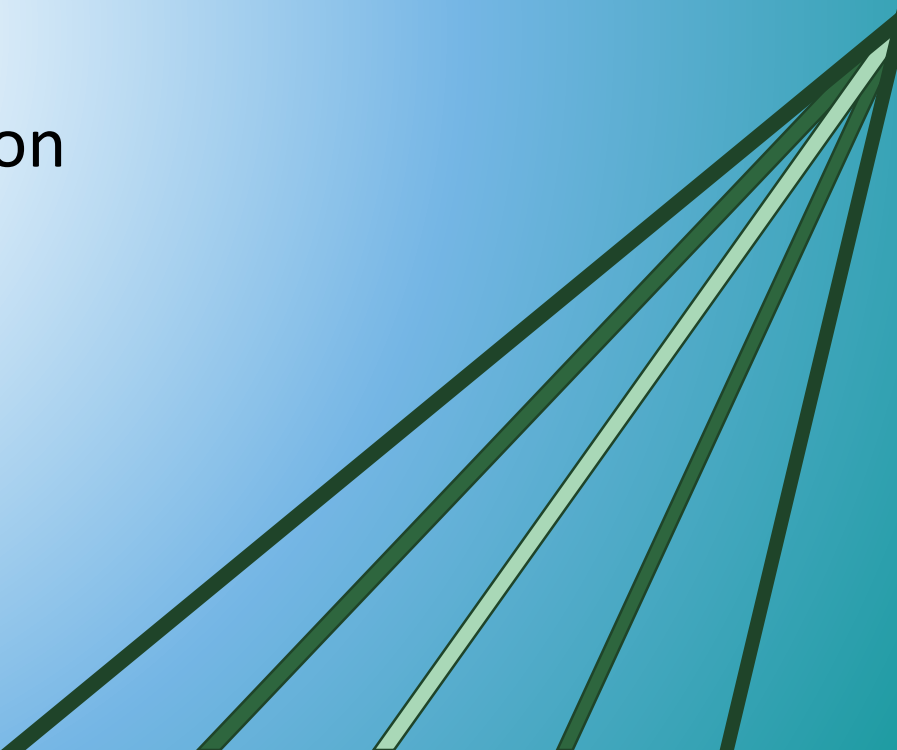
# The Basics



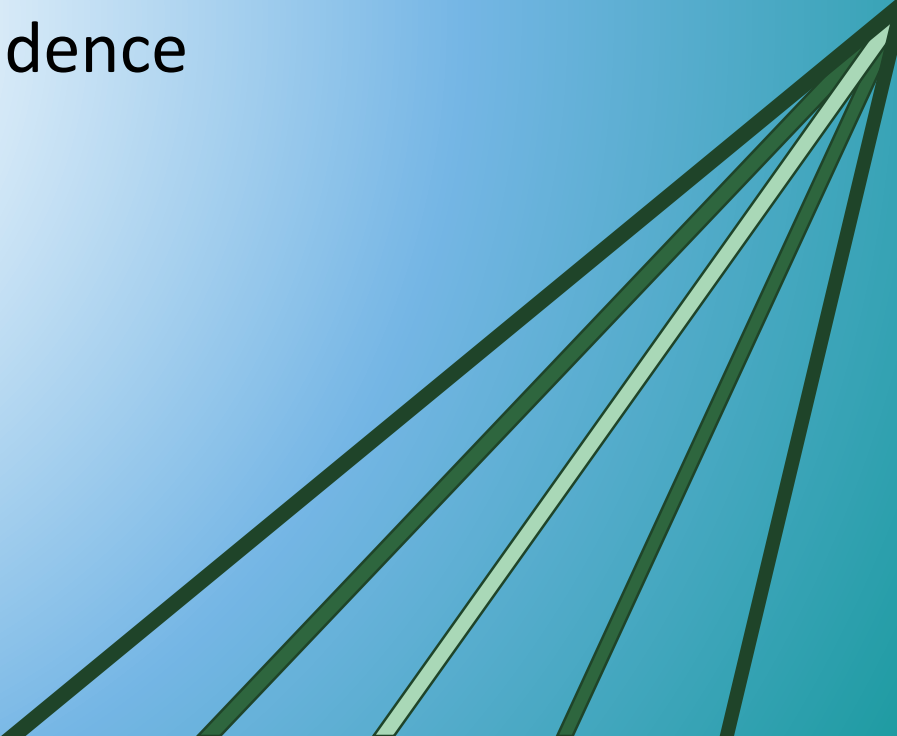
# What you need to understand

- Perfection will not happen overnight
  - Practice thoughtfully
  - Work at least a little bit every lesson
  - Repetition
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- A decorative graphic consisting of several lines radiating from the bottom right corner towards the center of the slide. The lines are in various shades of green and blue, creating a sense of movement and focus.

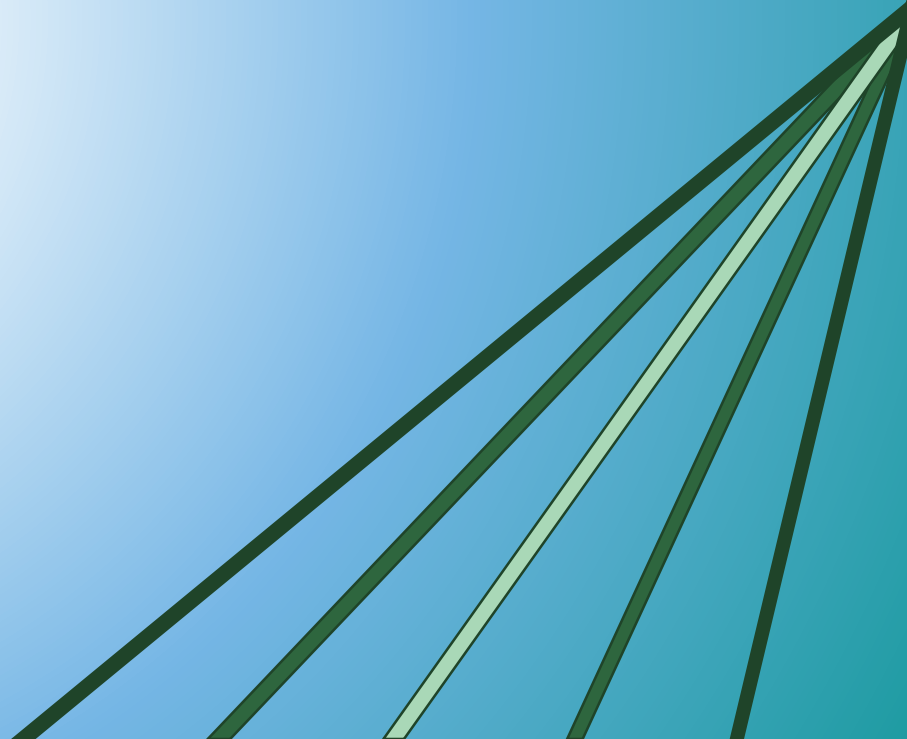
# When to Correct

- When the error drastically affects communication
  - When the error creates a different word, particularly if that could create an embarrassing situation for the student
  - When first learning new vocabulary
  - When the focus of the lesson is on pronunciation
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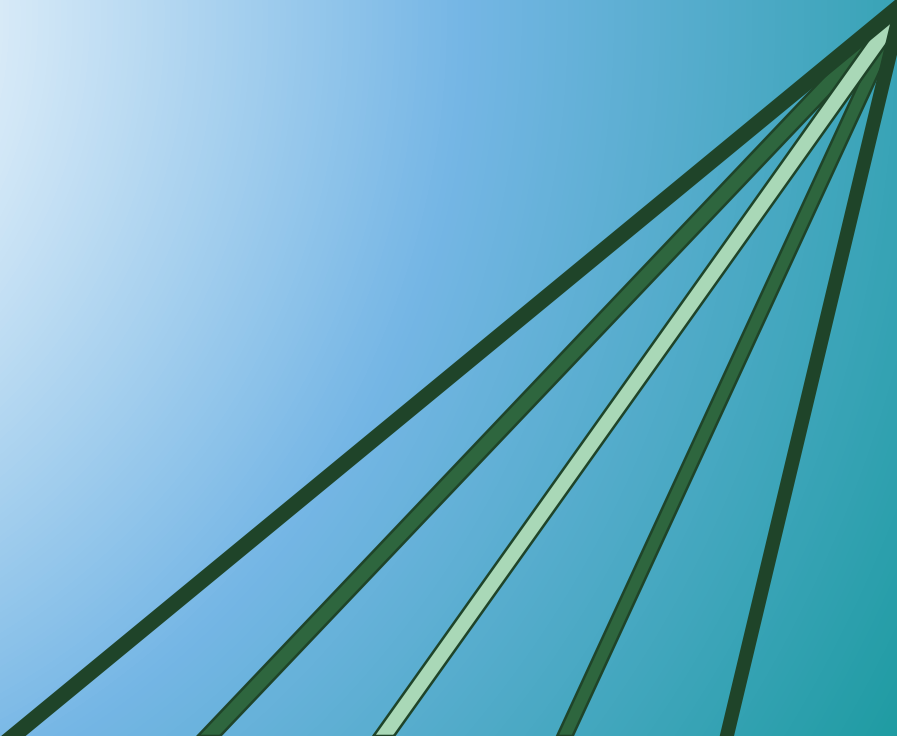
# When NOT to correct

- When correcting would interrupt the flow of conversation
  - When the error is significantly beyond the student's current level
  - When the error is engrained
  - When correcting the student would harm confidence
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What to look for



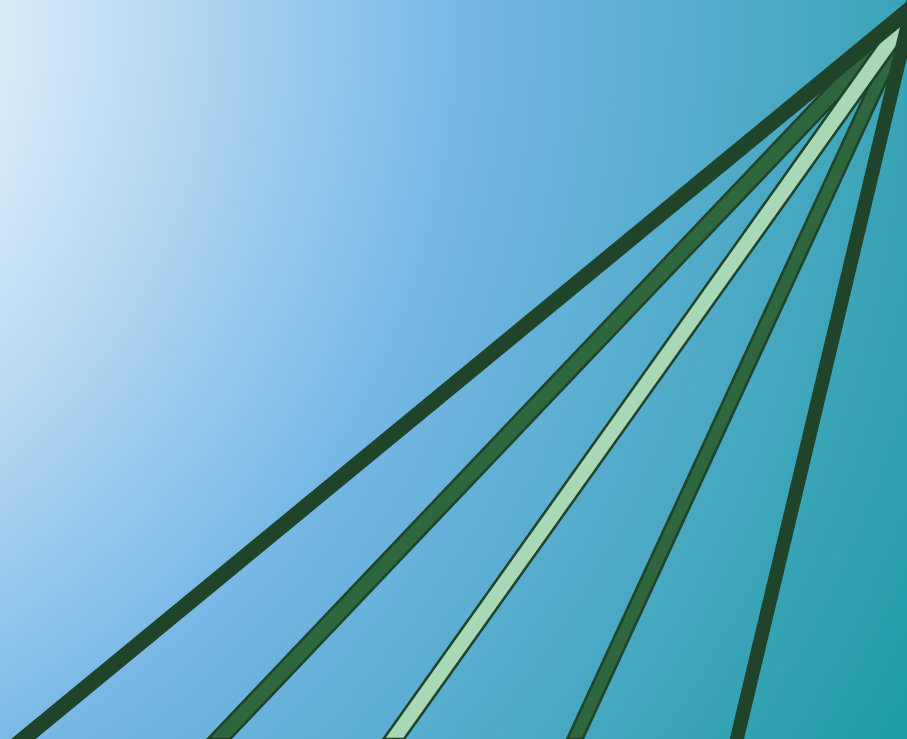
# What to look for:

- Mouth position
  - Vowel pronunciation and placement
  - Consonant pronunciation
  - Stress patterns
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- A decorative graphic consisting of several lines of varying colors (dark green, light green, and teal) radiating from the bottom right corner towards the center of the slide.



# Mouth Placement

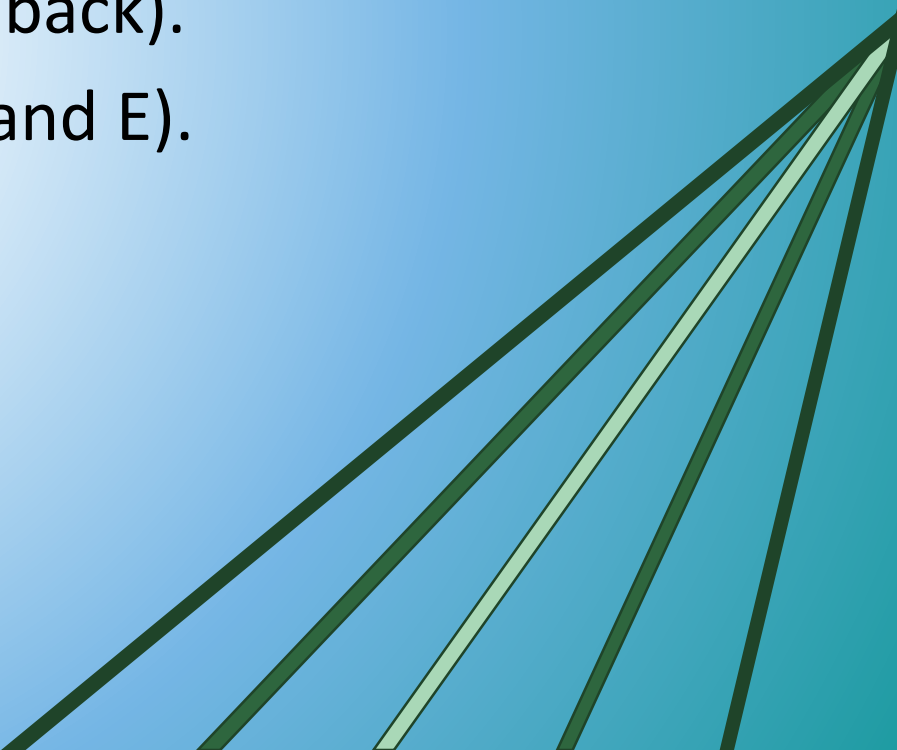
- Where is the sound vibrating?
- How much is the sound vibrating?
- What are your lips doing?
- What is your tongue doing?
- What are your teeth doing?



# Vowels

- What is a vowel?
  - That's easy: a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y
- Yes, but what IS it?

# Vowels

- A vowel is a speech sound that is made without significant constriction of the flow of air from the lungs.
  - The tongue can be at various heights in the mouth (e.g., high, mid, or low) and at various positions (front, central, or back).
  - The lips can be variously rounded (cf. a long O and E).
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- A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner of the slide, consisting of several lines radiating from a single point towards the bottom right. The lines are in various shades of green and teal, creating a fan-like effect.

# Caveat for the next few slides

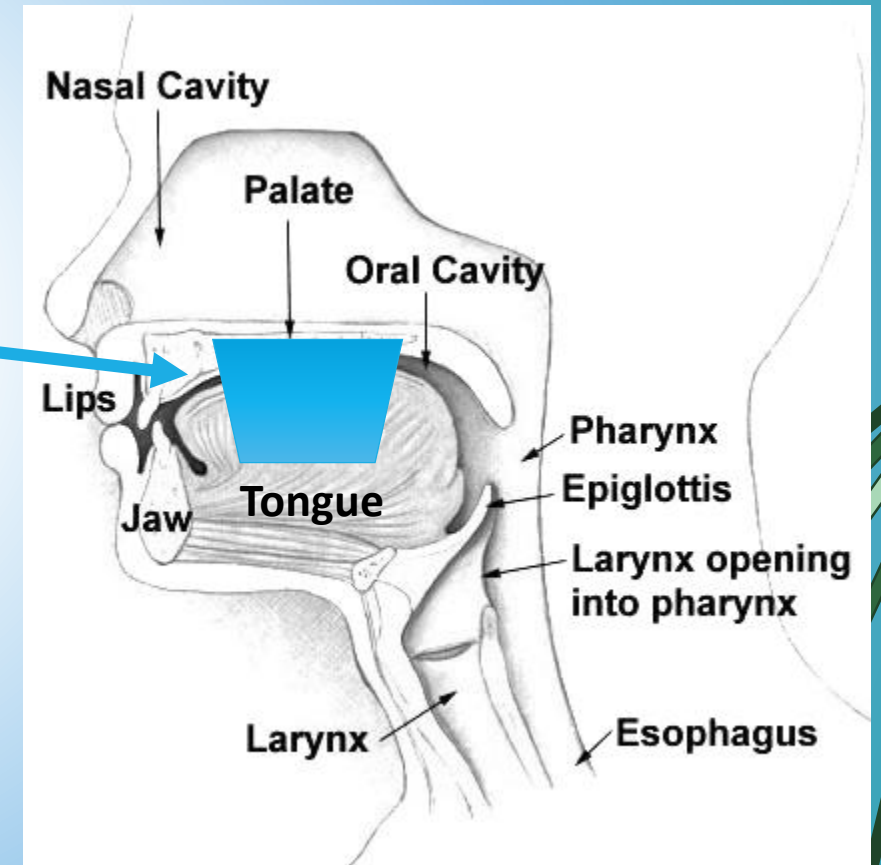
- Regional dialects influence pronunciation
- “sure” has (at least) three Standard American Pronunciations
  - /ʃʊər/, /ʃʊr/, and /ʃu:r/
- Teach it the way your students will hear it.

Phonemic Symbol	AHD Symbol <sup>1</sup>	Examples	Phonemic Symbol	AHD Symbol	Example
/æ/	/ă/	can, hat	/ɔ:/	/ô/	caught
/eɪ/	/ā/	cane, bait	/ɔr/	/ôr/	north
/ɛər/	/âr/	air, hare	/ɔɪ/	/oi/	joy, noise
/ɑ:/	/ä/	father	/ʊ/	/oo/	took
/ɑr/	/är/	arm	/ʊər/	/oor/	tour
/ɛ/	/ĕ/	bet, head	/u:/	/oo/	soon
/i:/	/ē/	meet, beat	/aʊ/	/ou/	out
/ɪər/	/îr/	here	/ʌ/	/ü/	cut
/ɪ/	/ĭ/	pit	/ɜr/	/ûr/	word
/aɪ/	/ī/	my, light	/ə/	/ə/	about, the
/ɒ/	/ö/	hot	/ər/	/ər/	butter
/oʊ/	/ō/	no, know	/ju:/	/yoo/	view

<sup>1</sup>American Heritage Dictionary

# Vowel Placement

<u>Lip Placement</u>	Front	Middle	Back
Closed	Heat /i:/		Hoot /u:/
Half-Closed	Hit /ɪ/		Hook /ʊ/
Half-Open	Hate /eɪ/	Hum /ʌ/	Home /oʊ/
Open	Hat /æ/	The /ə/	Hot /ɒ/



# Diphthongs

Diphthongs (also called “Sliding” or “Gliding” vowels) are two vowel sounds connected together and created by sliding one mouth position to another.

- /aʊ/ as in “brown”
- /oʊ/ as in “know”
- /aɪ/ as in “might”
- /eɪ/ as in “they”
- /ɔɪ/ as in “toy”
- /eə/ as in “pair”
- /ɪə/ as in “meal”
- /ʊə/ as in “sure”

# R-colored Vowels

These are the vowels that are followed by the letter [r], which changes the pronunciation of that vowel.

- /əɹ/ as in “her”
- /ɑɹ/ as in “cart”
- /ɪɹ/ as in “ear”
- /jʊəɹ/ as in “fury”
- /aɪɹ/ as in “fire”
- /ɔɹ/ as in “store”
- /ɛəɹ/ as in “air”
- /jʊɹ/ as in “cure”



# Consonants

- What is a consonant?
  - Easy: everything that's not a vowel.
- What IS a consonant?

# Consonants

A speech sound produced by:

- stopping, with or without release (p, b; t, d; k, g),
- diverting (m, n, ng),
- or hindering (f, v; s, z, etc.),

the flow of air from the lungs.

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

<sup>1</sup>American Heritage Dictionary

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

# Digraphs

Two letters written together that make one sound:

- Ch
  - Sh
  - Th
  - Wh
  - Ph
  - Kn
  - Wr
  - -ck
  - -ss
  - -tch
- 
- A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner of the slide, consisting of several lines of varying colors (dark green, light green, and teal) that converge towards the right edge, creating a sense of depth and movement.

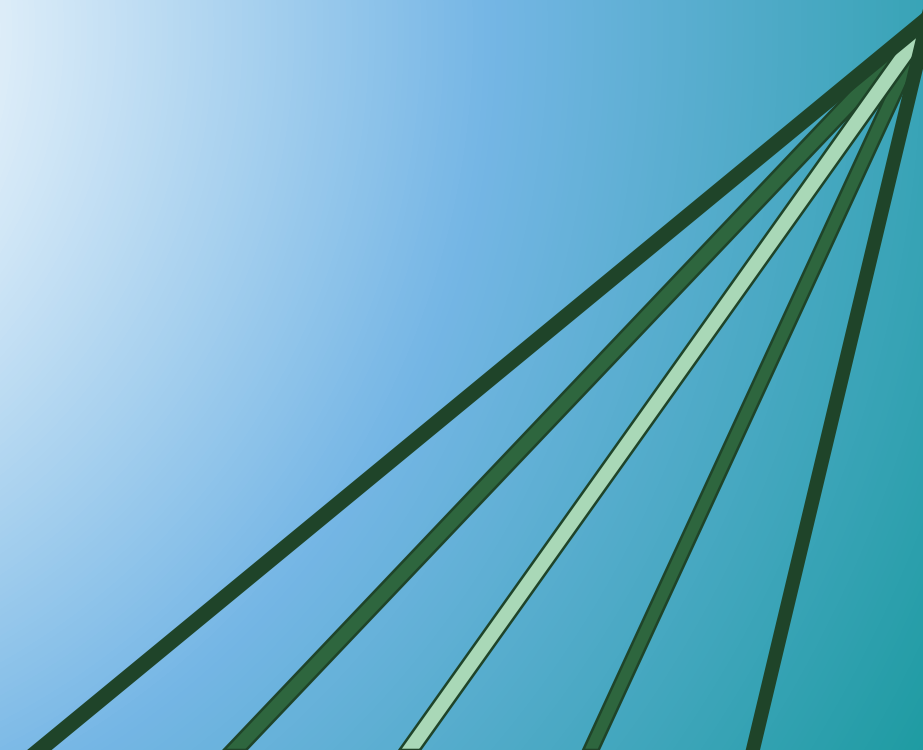
# Blends

- Bl
- Br
- Cl
- Cr
- Dr
- Fr

- Fl
- Gl
- Gr
- Pl
- Pr
- Sl

- Sm
- Sp
- St
- Tr
- Scr
- Spl

- Spr
- Str



# Quick Trick!

- Ask any trained actor or singer what will be the quickest thing to make you more easily understood on stage, and they will tell you:
- Focus on the final consonant sound.
  - Clean up final consonants, and it will make someone almost instantly more understandable.

# Stress Patterns

- Stress the first syllable of:
  - Most two-syllable nouns (examples: CLimate, TAble)
  - Most two-syllable adjectives (examples: CLEver, SPAcious)
- Stress the last syllable of:
  - Most two-syllable verbs (examples: reQUIRE, deCIDE)
  - Exceptions: • hoTEL • exTREME

Follow these rules when the word is both a noun and a verb

- PROgress and proGRESS
- RECord and reCORD

# Stress Patterns

- Stress the second-to-last syllable of:
  - Words that end in -ic (examples: ecSTATic, geoGRAPHic)
  - Words ending in -sion and -tion (examples: exTENsion, retriBUtion)



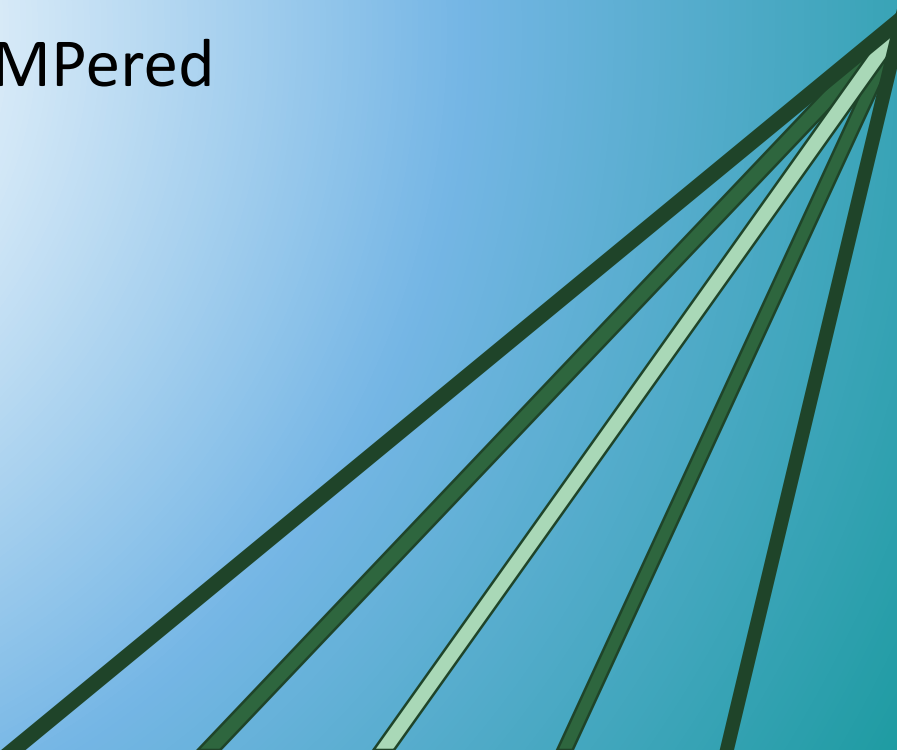
# Stress Patterns

- Stress the third-from-last syllable of:
  - Words that end in -cy, -ty, -phy and -gy (examples: deMOCracy, unCERtainty, geOGRAPHy, radiOLOGy)
  - Words that end in -al (examples: exCEPtionAl, CRItical)

# Stress Patterns

- Stress the first syllable in three syllable words ending in –er or –ly
  - HAP-pi-ly • MA-na-ger


# Stress Patterns of Compound Words

- Stress the first syllable of compound nouns
    - FOOTball
    - KEYboard
  - Follow the stress pattern of the second word in compound verbs
    - air-CONditioned
    - underSTAND
  - Follow the stress pattern of the second word in compound adjectives
    - old-FAshioned
    - bad-TEMPered
- 

# First Language Interference

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# Switching sounds

- Spanish /dʒ/ and /j/ because the letter “j” in Spanish make the /j/ sound but make the /dʒ/ sound in English.
  - German /v/ and /w/ are switched from the English sounds.
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# Sounds that don't exist in first language

- Most Asian languages don't have a distinct /l/ and /r/ but rather a sound that is intermediate between the two.
- Often this sound will have a /r/ sound when medial but more /l/ sound when terminal. It's rarely used as an initial sound.

# Sounds that don't exist in first language

	English	Arabic	Dari	Pashto	Spanish	Turkish
Consonants	24	25	26	31	20	23
Vowels	12	6	6	7	5	8
Diphthongs	13	2	11	7	6	0

# Sounds that don't exist in first language


- /ð/ and /θ/ are rare phonemes. Of the LVCA students, it only exists in English, Spanish (in some dialects), Turkic, and Arabic (in some dialects)



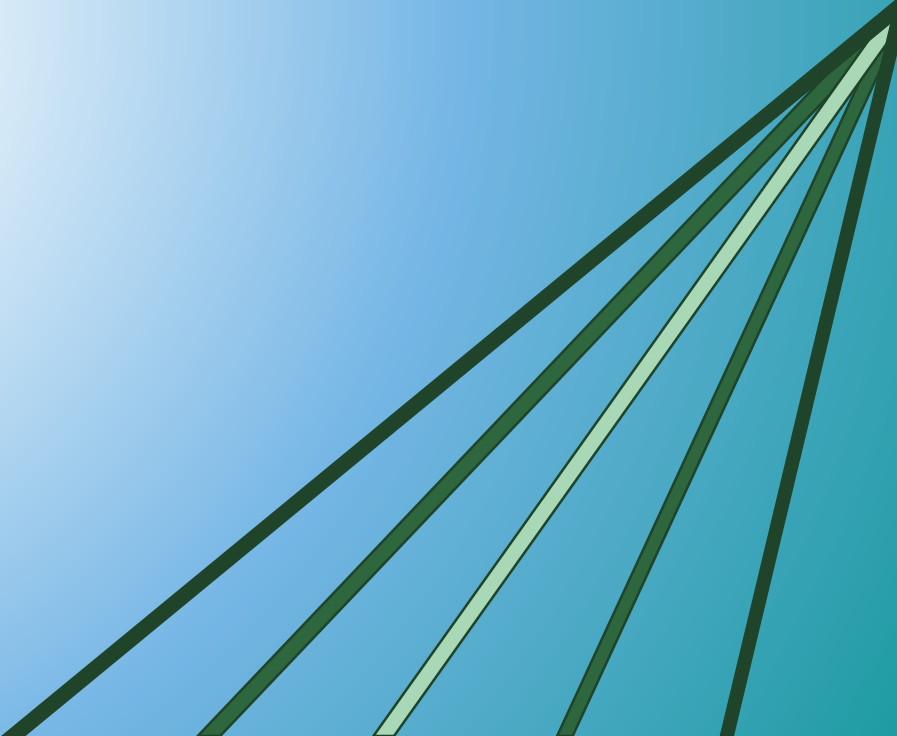
# General Advice

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# Tools for Practice

- Minimal pairs
    - Bat/bet
    - Sit/set
    - Major/mayor
  - Record and listen
  - Odd one out
    - With vowels: heat/seat/hit
    - With consonants:  
plays/place/space
  - Tongue twisters
  - “Clear Speech” by Judy Gilbert
- 

# Tips for Improving Pronunciation

- Slow down
  - Listen carefully
  - Repeat what you hear
  - Practice, practice, practice
- 

Questions?

The image features a light blue gradient background. In the bottom right corner, there are several dark green lines that converge towards a single point, creating a fan-like or triangular shape. The lines vary in thickness and color, with some appearing as solid dark green and others as lighter, semi-transparent green.