

INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET CHART: VOWELS

Phonetic Symbol	Other Variant Versions	Pronunciation Guide
/ɑː/	/ɑ/	father (with relaxed mouth)
/a/		French la or the word hot in most American dialects
/ɒ/		not in England (a sound between /ɑ/ and /ɔ/)
/æ/		mat or at
/ɛ/	/e/	bet
/e/		swear; eh?
/ɛ/ (with a small tail curving on bottom)	/ey/ /eɪ / /et / /e:/	hay, pate
/i/	/iy/ /i:/	see, peat
/ɔː/		law (Round lips and laugh like Sesame Street's "the Count")
/o/	/ow/ /ʊ/ /o:/ /ɔʊ /	boat, so
/u/		boot
/uː/	/uw/ /u/	fool
/ɪ/	/i:/	bit
/ɔ/		bought, or law (with glide reduced)
/ʊ/	/u/ /ʊ/ /w/ /u/	full, pull, book
/ə/	/ʌ/	putt, uh, sofa, but (Midwestern accent)

DIPHTHONGS:

/ɔj/	/ɔj/	boy
/aj/	/aj/	by or bite (with Cockney accent)
/aw/	/au/ /aʊ/	house, bout
/eɪ/		eight, play (with Appalachian accent)
/ɔɪ/		pert, shirt

Note about Linguists' Secret Codes:

Virgules like /this/ refer to the *phoneme*--the sound made when saying the word.

Pointed brackets like <this> refer to the *grapheme*--the way the word appears written on the page.

Square brackets like [this] enclose either phonetic symbols or transcriptions (either phonemes or graphemes, depending on context).

Note about Aspiration:

Some linguists distinguish aspirated sounds by inserted a superscripted **h** after a letter. Technically, the sound represented by <k> in the words <kill> and <skill> are two subtly different sounds: /k^h/ and /k/. This is comparable to <pill> and <spill> (/p^h/ and /p/) or <till> and <stall> (/t^h/ and /t/). For our purposes in what is not a linguistics class *per se*, we will ignore this difference in aspiration.