



IPA Transcription Exercise

This exercise is based on the *Dialectal Differences* text that you read aloud for me.

Using the table on the following pages, go through the entire text and write down the correct IPA transcription of each word, placing it in the correct column.

There are separate columns for:

1. monosyllabic content words (like *world* and *marked*)
2. polysyllabic content words (like *structurally* and *English*)
3. polysyllabic function words (like *over* and *between*)
4. monosyllabic function words (like *is* and *all*), some of which may have two different forms:
 - (a) strong form (like [bʌt] for *but*)
 - (b) weak form (like [bət] for *but*)

Content words comprise nouns, main verbs, adjectives, and most adverbs.

Function words comprise ‘little’ adverbs like *there*, *then*, *now*, etc., along with determiners, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, and conjunctions.

The first few words have been done for you.

Don’t rush with this exercise — we won’t need the results of it until about Unit 07, when we begin looking systematically at weak forms and English rhythm. This will then form the basis for the final part of the course, where we look at English intonation.

A key will be provided later (this is why pages 12 to 21 are missing).

The key uses the conventions of the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (ed. Wells), showing optionally omitted sounds and optionally inserted sounds; often, therefore, there is more than one possible answer in each case. We will look at the conventions of the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary over the first few weeks of the course; put simply, a raised (^{superscript}) letter represents a sound that can be optionally inserted, and a letter printed in italic (*slanted*) type represents a sound that can be optionally omitted. A tie represents the possibility of putting two sounds into the same syllable. Here are some possible expansions of Wells’s transcription of the first two words:

ˌdaɪ	ə	ˈlekt	əl	dɪf	ˌnʌnts	ɪz
ˌdaɪ	ə	ˈlekt	əl	ˈdɪf	ˌnʌnts	ɪz
ˌdaɪə		ˈlekt	l	ˈdɪf	ˌnʌns	ɪz
ˌdaə		ˈlekt	l	ˈdɪf	ˌnʌs	ɪz
ˌda	ə	ˈlekt	əl	ˈdɪf	ˌnʌts	ɪz

If you are using an Oxford dictionary to do the exercise, make sure it is one that does not use the symbol /ʌɪ/ – it should be /aɪ/.

WRONG! (words like:) **RIGHT!**

ɛ	BET	e	(ɛ is only mildly problematic)
a	BAT	æ	
ə:	NURSE	ɜ:	
ɛ:	SQUARE	eə	
ʌɪ	PRICE	aɪ	(ʌɪ is an abomination!)

See section 7 of:

<https://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/wells/ipa-english.htm>





ORTHOGRAPHY	CONTENT WORDS		FUNCTION WORDS				ORTHOGRAPHY
	monosyllabic	polysyllabic	polysyllabic	monosyllabic		strong form	
	PHONOLOGICAL TRANSCRIPTION						
dialectal		,daɪ_ə 'lekt əl					dialectal
differences		'dɪf ən'ts ɪz					differences
structurally		'stɹʌk tʃʉ_əl i					structurally
the				ði:	ði		the
English		'ɪŋ glɪʃ					English
language		'læŋ gwɪdʒ					language
is					ɪz		is
fairly		'feə li					fairly
homogeneous		,hɒm əv 'dʒi:n i_əs					homogeneous
all					ɔ:l		all
over			'əʊv ə				over
the				ði:	ðə		the
world	wɜ:l d						world
but				bʌt	bət		but
there				ðeə	ðə		there
are				ɑ:	ə		are
marked	mɑ:kt						marked



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[US English] “General American” (GA):

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[UK] “Received Pronunciation” (RP):

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