

Unit 02

Refining goals

where you are, and what to do to get to where you need to be.

Slides for the session of

*Practical English Phonetics (British) /
Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)*

held on

décadi le 30 vendémiaire an CCXXXIV

Tuesday 21 October 2025

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{ English Department | LangSciTech }

Saarland University



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Two problems in transcribing sound(s)

Hearing *what's* said vs.
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What should we include in the
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Typical problems in reading aloud *Dialectal differences*

Envoi



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Prof. Dr. phil. habil. Albrecht Gotthold NEUBERT
3.3.1930--1.6.2017

- What is this person from the West End of London saying?

- What is this person from the West End of London saying?
 - *Dernchew filshie pled the Moonlet Snotter quett chommingly?*

- What is this person from the West End of London saying?
 - *Dernchew filshie pled the Moonlet Snotter quett chommingly?*
- What is this Australian saying?

- What is this person from the West End of London saying?
 - *Dernchew filshie pled the Moonlet Snotter quett chommingly?*
- What is this Australian saying?
 - *With air chew, with air chew,
Iker nardly liver there chew,
An I dream a badger kisser snite and die.*

- What is this person from the West End of London saying?
 - *Dernchew filshie pled the Moonlet Snotter quett chommingly?*
- What is this Australian saying?
 - *With air chew, with air chew,
Iker nardly liver there chew,
An I dream a badger kisser snite and die.*
- Source: Afferbeck Lauder *Fraffly Strine Everything: Comprising: Let Stalk Strine, Nose Tone Unturned, Fraffly Well Spoken and Fraffly Suite*. Sydney: Ure Smith, 1969.

Reprising STRATUM: Phonology (phonemics), phonetics, physics

There are different LEVELS a.k.a. STRATA in language, as well as different MANIFESTATIONS (e.g. written and spoken). It often helps to analogize between the spoken and the written:

TIN STEP LETDOWN		lexicogrammar
<t>	/t/	{graph phon}emics
τ ʈ ʈ	[tʰ] [t] [tʰ]	{graph phon}etics
photons	sound waves	physical reality

Note the conventions: <t> /t/ [t]
see Eckert & Barry, p. 289.

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Reprising RANK: A phonological rank scale for English

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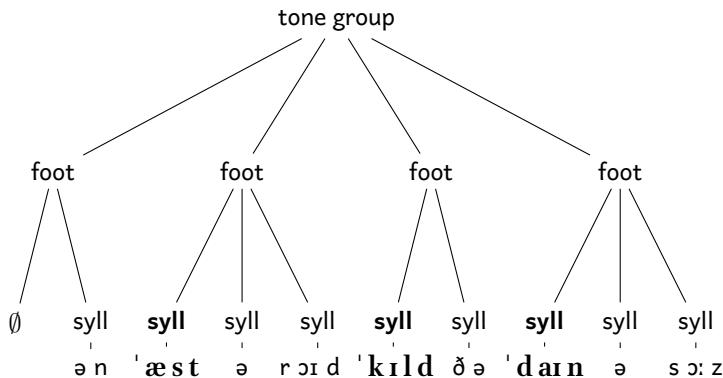
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(Context: 'What happened 65 million years ago?')

tone group → foot → syllable → phoneme

This is the most minimalistic description of English phonological units that actually works.

Problem 1: Hearing *what's* said vs. listening to *how* it's said

- Primarily, we listen to someone to hear what he/she is saying.

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Problem 1: Hearing *what's* said vs. listening to *how* it's said

- Primarily, we listen to someone to hear what he/she is saying.
- What did the person say? [Click here to hear \[klɪk hɪə tə hɪə\]](#)

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 - “Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?

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 - “Bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?

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 - “Bin in’n Laden reingegangen...”?

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- What did the person say? [Click here to hear \[klɪk hɪə tə hɪə\]](#)
 - “Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?
 - “Bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?
 - “Bin in’n Laden reingegangen...”?
 - “Bin in’n Lad’n reingegang’ng...”?

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 - “Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?
 - “Bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?
 - “Bin in’n Laden reingegangen...”?
 - “Bin in’n Lad’n reingegang’ng...”?
- Orthography is not very good at capturing the details of the pronunciation:

[bɪn mɪ 'la:dɪn raɪŋgə'gɑŋ]

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- What did the person say? [Click here to hear \[klɪk hɪə tə hɪə\]](#)
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 - “Bin in’n Laden reingegangen...”?
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- Orthography is not very good at capturing the details of the pronunciation:

[bɪn ɪn ˈlaːdən raɪŋɡəˈɡaŋŋ]
- But how much detail should we try to capture in our transcription of the sound?

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- Based on material by William Barry and Ingmar Steiner.

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Problem 2: What should we include in the transcription?

- 〈Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen.〉

— standard orthography

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— standard orthography
- /ɪɪç bɪn ɪn de:n 'la:dən 'ʁaɪŋgəˌɡaŋən/
— an idealised phonemic transcription
with word breaks

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- [ˈbɪn.ɪn.ɪ.ˈlaː.dɪ.ˈʁaɪ.ŋ.gə.ˌɡaŋ.ɪ]
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- [bɪn ɪn ɪ ˈlaːdɪ ˈʁaɪŋgəˈɡaŋɪ]
— a phonetic transcription with word breaks
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— a phonetic transcription with syllable breaks
- Is the idealised phonemic transcription with word breaks an attempt to reform the existing spelling system?

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- Is the idealised phonemic transcription with word breaks an attempt to reform the existing spelling system?
- Why don't we indicate the syllable breaks in the phonemic transcription?

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- Is the idealised phonemic transcription with word breaks an attempt to reform the existing spelling system?
- Why don't we indicate the syllable breaks in the phonemic transcription?
- But where, exactly, *are* the syllable breaks?

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- Is the idealised phonemic transcription with word breaks an attempt to reform the existing spelling system?
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- The English spelling system is notoriously complicated.



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Sound vs spelling in English

- The English spelling system is notoriously complicated.
- “Languages tend to get the orthography they deserve.”

M.A.K. Halliday



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- The English spelling system is notoriously complicated.
- “Languages tend to get the orthography they deserve.”

M.A.K. Halliday

- The English spelling system is really two spelling systems in one, and both are out of date:



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- The English spelling system is really two spelling systems in one, and both are out of date:
 - An orthography for vocabulary items of Germanic origin:



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- The English spelling system is really two spelling systems in one, and both are out of date:
 - An orthography for vocabulary items of Germanic origin:
 - swine



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- “Languages tend to get the orthography they deserve.”

M.A.K. Halliday

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- For a good summary, see:
 - the *Falттаfeln* from Albrecht Neubert's *Englische Aussprache*:
http://spence.saar.de/phonetics/unit02_20251/B__Sound_and_Spelling/

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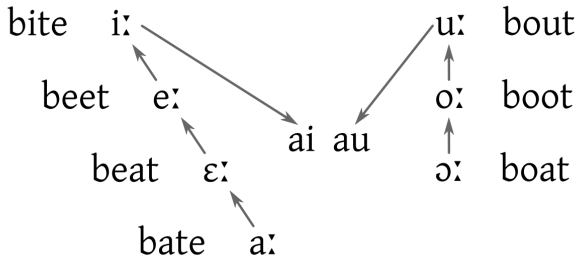


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The Great Vowel Shift

PHONETIC SCHEME

Consonants: b; ch (*chín*); d; dh (*dhe* = the); f; g (*go*); h; j; k; l; m; n; ng (*sing*); ngg (*finger*); p; r; s (*sip*); sh (*ship*); t; th (*thin*); v; w; y; z; zh (*vizhn* = vision).

Vowels: ā ē ī ō ū ōō (mate mete mite mote mute moot)

ă ě ĭ ŏ ŭ ōō (rack reck rick rock ruck rook)

ār ēr ĩr ōr ūr (mare mere mire more mure)

ār ēr ōr (part pert port)

ah aw oi oor ow owr (bah bawl boil boor brow bower)

Vowels marked may be pronounced either way, e.g. păt̄riot (pā- or pǎ-). In all vowel symbols with r (ār, ēr, etc.), the r, besides influencing the vowel sound, has its consonantal value when followed by a vowel in the next syllable of the word or in the following word (in *fearing* but not in *fearful*, in *far away* but not in *far gone*).

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How Oxford used to indicate pronunciation before

HE-WHO-MUST-NOT-BE-NAMED came

http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/unit02_20251/

B_Sound_and_Spelling/COD_5_xii-xiii.pdf

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 - If you elided a syllable in <*differences*>, which would it be?
 - What exactly is the vowel sound in the last syllable of <*differences*>?

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- *⟨Dialectal⟩*? Oops! Your Hegel is showing. Read it again.
- Is it *DI-a-LECT-al* or just *di-a-LECT-al*? Does it matter?
- How many syllables are there in *⟨differences⟩* when you speak the word aloud?
- Can you have ante-antepenultimate stress in English?
 - ultimate — last (syllable is stressed)
 - penultimate — almost-last ...
 - antepenultimate — before almost-last ...
 - ante-antepenultimate — before before almost-last ...
 - If you elided a syllable in *⟨differences⟩*, which would it be?
 - What exactly is the vowel sound in the last syllable of *⟨differences⟩*?
 - What about *⟨interesting⟩*?

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (1)

- <*Dialectical*>? Oops! Your Hegel is showing. Read it again.
- Is it *DI-a-LECT-al* or just *di-a-LECT-al*? Does it matter?
- How many syllables are there in <*differences*> when you speak the word aloud?
- Can you have ante-antepenultimate stress in English?
 - ultimate — last (syllable is stressed)
 - penultimate — almost-last ...
 - antepenultimate — before almost-last ...
 - ante-antepenultimate — before before almost-last ...
 - If you elided a syllable in <*differences*>, which would it be?
 - What exactly is the vowel sound in the last syllable of <*differences*>?
 - What about <*interesting*>?
 - Some linguistic dinosaurs can pronounce English words with ante-ante-antepenultimate stress:
 - <*disciplinary*>
 - <*laboratory*>



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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (2)

- How many ways can you pronounce the vowel sound in <the>?

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (2)

- How many ways can you pronounce the vowel sound in ⟨*the*⟩?
- How will people react if you get the consonant sound in ⟨*the*⟩ wrong?

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (2)

- How many ways can you pronounce the vowel sound in <the>?
- How will people react if you get the consonant sound in <the> wrong?
- What about the <th> in <whether> or <breathe>?

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (2)

- How many ways can you pronounce the vowel sound in <the>?
- How will people react if you get the consonant sound in <the> wrong?
- What about the <th> in <whether> or <breathe>?
- English has / v ð z ʒ /, but does German have any voiced fricative phonemes?

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (3)

- Which word were you trying to pronounce? <*homogenous*>? <*homogeneous*>?

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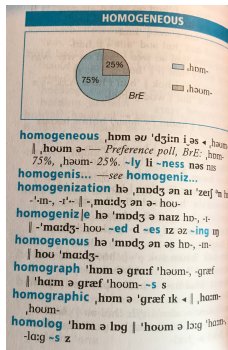
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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (3)

- Which word were you trying to pronounce? <homogenous>? <homogeneous>?
- This is what Wells says:



Longman Pronunciation Dictionary, 3rd edition

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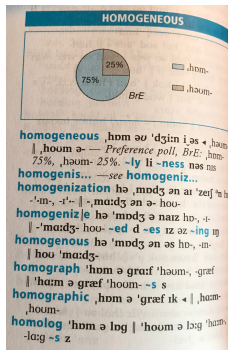
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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (3)

- Which word were you trying to pronounce? <homogenous>? <homogeneous>?
- This is what Wells says:



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- American pronunciations are after the ||

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (4)

- <*all over*>: the first syllable of <*over*> has a diphthong, not a long pure vowel

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (4)

- <all over>: the first syllable of <over> has a diphthong, not a long pure vowel
- vowel length and diphthongisation: typical First World Problems : -)

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (4)

- <all over>: the first syllable of <over> has a diphthong, not a long pure vowel
- vowel length and diphthongisation: typical First World Problems : -)
- the normal rhythm is slightly disturbed at this point in the text

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- <all over>: the first syllable of <over> has a diphthong, not a long pure vowel
- vowel length and diphthongisation: typical First World Problems : -)
- the normal rhythm is slightly disturbed at this point in the text
- the two words are 'run together' ('LINKING'):
not [ɔ:l ʔəʊvə] but [ɔ:l_əʊvə] and not [ɔ:l əʊvə] although
<not at all well> is
[nɒt_ə tə:l wel]
(how can you tell?)

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (5)

- How do you pronounce ⟨*marked*⟩? What does that say about your regional or social origins?

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (5)

- How do you pronounce ⟨*marked*⟩? What does that say about your regional or social origins?
 - If [mɑ:kt], you're speaking RP (“Received Pronunciation” – “the King’s English”; “Oxford English”; “BBC English”)

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (5)

- How do you pronounce ⟨*marked*⟩? What does that say about your regional or social origins?
 - If [mɑ:kt], you're speaking RP ("Received Pronunciation" – "the King's English"; "Oxford English"; "BBC English")
 - If [mɑ:kt], you might just be Australian

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (5)

- How do you pronounce ⟨*marked*⟩? What does that say about your regional or social origins?
 - If [mɑːkt], you're speaking RP ("Received Pronunciation" – "the King's English"; "Oxford English"; "BBC English")
 - If [mɑːkt], you might just be Australian
 - If [mɑɪkt], you might just be in the wrong course.

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- How do you pronounce <marked>? What does that say about your regional or social origins?
 - If [mɑːkt], you're speaking RP ("Received Pronunciation" – "the King's English"; "Oxford English"; "BBC English")
 - If [mɑːkt], you might just be Australian
 - If [mɑɪkt], you might just be in the wrong course.
- Although <pronounce> is /prəˈnaʊns/, <pronunciation> is not /prəˈnaʊnsiˈeɪn/ but /prəˌnʌnsiˈeɪn/.

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- How do you pronounce <marked>? What does that say about your regional or social origins?
 - If [mɑ:kt], you're speaking RP ("Received Pronunciation" – "the King's English"; "Oxford English"; "BBC English")
 - If [mɑ:kt], you might just be Australian
 - If [mɑɪkt], you might just be in the wrong course.
- Although <pronounce> is /prə'naʊns/, <pronunciation> is not /prə'naʊnsi'eɪn/ but /prə'nʌnsi'eɪn/.
- If you want to dispute this, you'll first have to persuade the Roman Catholic Church to change the name of one its feast days to <*The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*>. (Good luck with that one!)

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (6)

- *<note>*

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (6)

- ⟨*note*⟩
 - if you pronounce this with a long pure vowel, I will think you are from the North of England or from Scotland.

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (6)

- <note>
 - if you pronounce this with a long pure vowel, I will think you are from the North of England or from Scotland.
 - if you pronounce it with a diphthong, where is the starting point of the glide towards /ʊ/?

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (6)

- <note>
 - if you pronounce this with a long pure vowel, I will think you are from the North of England or from Scotland.
 - if you pronounce it with a diphthong, where is the starting point of the glide towards /ʊ/?
 - if central – /əʊ/ – I'll think you're from the South of England

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- <note>
 - if you pronounce this with a long pure vowel, I will think you are from the North of England or from Scotland.
 - if you pronounce it with a diphthong, where is the starting point of the glide towards /ʊ/?
 - if central – /əʊ/ – I'll think you're from the South of England
 - if back rounded – /oʊ/ – I'll think you're from the U.S. or from Australia

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (6)



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- <note>
 - if you pronounce this with a long pure vowel, I will think you are from the North of England or from Scotland.
 - if you pronounce it with a diphthong, where is the starting point of the glide towards /ʊ/?
 - if central – /əʊ/ – I'll think you're from the South of England
 - if back rounded – /oʊ/ – I'll think you're from the U.S. or from Australia
 - if front unrounded – /eʊ/ – I'll think you're sending up someone from the West End of London

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (6)



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- <note>
 - if you pronounce this with a long pure vowel, I will think you are from the North of England or from Scotland.
 - if you pronounce it with a diphthong, where is the starting point of the glide towards /ʊ/?
 - if central – /əʊ/ – I'll think you're from the South of England
 - if back rounded – /oʊ/ – I'll think you're from the U.S. or from Australia
 - if front unrounded – /eʊ/ – I'll think you're sending up someone from the West End of London
- If you don't shorten the diphthong slightly, I'll hear <node> instead of <note>.

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (7)

- Pronounce the following:

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (7)

- Pronounce the following:
 - <small island>

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (7)

- Pronounce the following:
 - <*small island*>
 - <*where only*>

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- Pronounce the following:

- <*small island*>
- <*where only*>
- <*are often*>

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (7)

- Pronounce the following:

- <*small island*>
- <*where only*>
- <*are often*>
- <*but there are*>

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- Pronounce the following:

- ⟨*small island*⟩
- ⟨*where only*⟩
- ⟨*are often*⟩
- ⟨*but there are*⟩
- ⟨*Near East*⟩

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- Pronounce the following:
 - <*small island*>
 - <*where only*>
 - <*are often*>
 - <*but there are*>
 - <*Near East*>
 - <*can't figure out*> (you're British)

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (7)

- Pronounce the following:
 - <*small island*>
 - <*where only*>
 - <*are often*>
 - <*but there are*>
 - <*Near East*>
 - <*can't figure out*> (you're British)
 - <*can't figure out*> (you're American)

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- Pronounce the following:
 - <Britain>
 - in the Received Pronunciation of British English
 - as a working class person from London

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- Pronounce the following:
 - <Britain>
 - in the Received Pronunciation of British English
 - as a working class person from London
 - as an American (or Australian)

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- Pronounce the following:
 - <Britain>
 - in the Received Pronunciation of British English
 - as a working class person from London
 - as an American (or Australian)
 - <Kansas>

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- Pronounce the following:
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 - in the Received Pronunciation of British English
 - as a working class person from London
 - as an American (or Australian)
 - 〈*Kansas*〉
 - 〈*Yorkshireman*〉

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 - in the Received Pronunciation of British English
 - as a working class person from London
 - as an American (or Australian)
 - 〈*Kansas*〉
 - 〈*Yorkshireman*〉
 - 〈*Yorkshiremen*〉

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- Pronounce the following:
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 - in the Received Pronunciation of British English
 - as a working class person from London
 - as an American (or Australian)
 - 〈*Kansas*〉
 - 〈*Yorkshireman*〉
 - 〈*Yorkshiremen*〉
 - 〈*Londoners*〉

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- Pronounce the following:
 - 〈*Britain*〉
 - in the Received Pronunciation of British English
 - as a working class person from London
 - as an American (or Australian)
 - 〈*Kansas*〉
 - 〈*Yorkshireman*〉
 - 〈*Yorkshiremen*〉
 - 〈*Londoners*〉
 - 〈*Cockney*〉

Problems in *Dialectal differences*(9)

- Pronounce the word <fact>. What does it say about you if you pronounce it as:

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- Pronounce the word <fact>. What does it say about you if you pronounce it as:
 - /fɛkt/?

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Problems in *Dialectal differences*(9)

- Pronounce the word <fact>. What does it say about you if you pronounce it as:
 - /fɛkt/?
 - /fækt/?

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- Pronounce the word <fact>. What does it say about you if you pronounce it as:
 - /fɛkt/?
 - /fækt/?
 - /fakt/?

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- Pronounce the word <fact>. What does it say about you if you pronounce it as:
 - /fɛkt/?
 - /fækt/?
 - /fakt/?
- Pronounce the words <logical historical> as

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- Pronounce the word <*fact*>. What does it say about you if you pronounce it as:
 - /fɛkt/?
 - /fækt/?
 - /fakt/?
- Pronounce the words <*logical historical*> as
 - a British person

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- Pronounce the word <*fact*>. What does it say about you if you pronounce it as:
 - /fɛkt/?
 - /fækt/?
 - /fakt/?
- Pronounce the words <*logical historical*> as
 - a British person
 - an American

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (10)

- Should the word ⟨*hailed*⟩ receive the same amount of stress as ⟨*American*⟩ or ⟨*Kansas*⟩?

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (10)

- Should the word ⟨*hailed*⟩ receive the same amount of stress as ⟨*American*⟩ or ⟨*Kansas*⟩?
- You don't do functional grammar (which is a sin of omission on the part of your other teachers), but if you did do it, you might ask whether, to use linguistic baby-talk, ⟨*hail*⟩ in ⟨*an American who hailed from Kansas*⟩ behaves more like a verb of 'doing' or more like a verb of 'being'.

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- Should the word ⟨*hailed*⟩ receive the same amount of stress as ⟨*American*⟩ or ⟨*Kansas*⟩?
- You don't do functional grammar (which is a sin of omission on the part of your other teachers), but if you did do it, you might ask whether, to use linguistic baby-talk, ⟨*hail*⟩ in ⟨*an American who hailed from Kansas*⟩ behaves more like a verb of 'doing' or more like a verb of 'being'.
- Compare the rhythm of:

(‘kandidierte’)

/ **Herbert** / **Smith** / **stood** for / **Parliament**

/ **Herbert's** / **wife** stood for / **women's** / **rights**
(‘symbolisierte’)

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (11)

- Pronounce the following.

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (11)

- Pronounce the following.
 - <World War>

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (11)

- Pronounce the following.
 - <World War>
 - <boarding house>

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- Pronounce the following.
 - <World War>
 - <boarding house>
- Are they compounds in English? (Where is the main stress?)

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Problems in *Dialectal differences* (11)

- Pronounce the following.
 - <World War>
 - <boarding house>
- Are they compounds in English? (Where is the main stress?)
- On the question of stress in compounds, check the following pages from M.A.K. Halliday *A Course in Spoken English: Intonation*. Oxford: O.U.P., 1970:
http://spence.saar.de/phonetics/unit02_20251/C_Slides_and_Printout/Halliday1970_44-45.pdf
http://spence.saar.de/phonetics/unit02_20251/C_Slides_and_Printout/Halliday1970_46-47.pdf



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Envoi: Pronunciation prejudices

- People will judge you by your pronunciation.

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Envoi: Pronunciation prejudices

- People will judge you by your pronunciation.
- Purely physically, just by listening to your voice, they will categorise you as male or female, young or old ('indexical' features)

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Envoi: Pronunciation prejudices

- People will judge you by your pronunciation.
- Purely physically, just by listening to your voice, they will categorise you as male or female, young or old ('indexical' features)
- If you sound foreign, they will judge you by the nationality they ascribe to you.

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- People will judge you by your pronunciation.
- Purely physically, just by listening to your voice, they will categorise you as male or female, young or old ('indexical' features)
- If you sound foreign, they will judge you by the nationality they ascribe to you.
 - Prejudices about nationality work both ways.

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 - Prejudices about nationality work both ways.
 - *Americans are brash and inconsiderate.* (negative)

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- If you sound foreign, they will judge you by the nationality they ascribe to you.
 - Prejudices about nationality work both ways.
 - *Americans are brash and inconsiderate.* (negative)
 - *Americans are friendly and helpful.* (positive)

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- If you sound foreign, they will judge you by the nationality they ascribe to you.
 - Prejudices about nationality work both ways.
 - *Americans are brash and inconsiderate.* (negative)
 - *Americans are friendly and helpful.* (positive)
 - i.e. such prejudices are always logically inconsistent.

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- If you sound foreign, they will judge you by the nationality they ascribe to you.
 - Prejudices about nationality work both ways.
 - *Americans are brash and inconsiderate.* (negative)
 - *Americans are friendly and helpful.* (positive)
 - i.e. such prejudices are always logically inconsistent.
- If you don't sound foreign, people will judge you by the region and social class they ascribe to you(r pronunciation):

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- Purely physically, just by listening to your voice, they will categorise you as male or female, young or old ('indexical' features)
- If you sound foreign, they will judge you by the nationality they ascribe to you.
 - Prejudices about nationality work both ways.
 - *Americans are brash and inconsiderate.* (negative)
 - *Americans are friendly and helpful.* (positive)
 - i.e. such prejudices are always logically inconsistent.
- If you don't sound foreign, people will judge you by the region and social class they ascribe to you(r pronunciation):
 - There are advantages in sounding 'upper class'.

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Typical problems in reading aloud *Dialectal differences*

Envoi

Envoi: Pronunciation prejudices

- People will judge you by your pronunciation.
- Purely physically, just by listening to your voice, they will categorise you as male or female, young or old ('indexical' features)
- If you sound foreign, they will judge you by the nationality they ascribe to you.
 - Prejudices about nationality work both ways.
 - *Americans are brash and inconsiderate.* (negative)
 - *Americans are friendly and helpful.* (positive)
 - i.e. such prejudices are always logically inconsistent.
- If you don't sound foreign, people will judge you by the region and social class they ascribe to you(r pronunciation):
 - There are advantages in sounding 'upper class'.
 - George Bernard Shaw parodied this in his play *Pygmalion*, which was turned into a musical called *My Fair Lady*, which was then filmed, starring the immortal Audrey Hepburn as a young Cockney woman who is taught by a professor of phonetics to speak like a high-society lady. Here she learns to say *the rain in Spain* instead of the Cockney/Australian ("Strine") *the rine in Spine*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmADMB2utAo>



Refining goals

Dedication

Warm-Up

Reprise

Stratum

Rank

Two problems in transcribing sound(s)

Hearing *what's* said vs. listening to *how* it's said

What should we include in the transcription?

Sound vs spelling in English

Some useful links on the sound-spelling problems of English

The Great Vowel Shift

Oxford pronunciation key before

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