

Unit 7

Consonants (2)

English consonants from a German point of view

Slides for the session of

Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)

held on

Tuesday 20 May 2025

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English Phonetics: Unit 7:

/ˈɪŋ ɡlɪf fə ˈnet ɪks ˈjuːn ɪt ˈsev ən/

Consonants (2)

[ˈkɒnsənənts ˈtuː] (broad)

[ˈkʰɒnsənənts ˈtʰʊ] (narrow)

[ˈkʰɒnsənənts ˈtʰʊ] (alternative representation of diphthong)

English consonants from a German point of view

[ˈɪŋɡlɪf ˈkʰɒnsənən(t)s fɪəmə ˈdʒɜːməɪn ˈp(w)ɔɪnt ə(v) ˈvjʊː]

Tuesday 20 May 2025

/ˈtjuːz.deɪ ðə ˈtwent.i.əθ əv ˈmeɪ ˈtwent.i. ˈtwent.i. ˈfaɪv/

[ˈtjʊːz.deɪ ðə ˈtʰwɛnt.i̯ ˌeɪ̯tθ əv ˈmeɪ | ˈtʰwɛnt.i̯ ˈtʰwɛnt.i̯ ˈfaɪv]

Initial consonants (and
consonant clusters)

Final consonants (and
consonant clusters)

Some work for you!

- 1 Initial consonants (and consonant clusters)
- 2 Final consonants (and consonant clusters)
- 3 Some work for you!

The system of 'initials' in English

- See the list in your handout, also available at:
<http://spence.saar.de/phonetics/syllablestructure/initials.pdf>

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Consonants (2)

Outline

Initial consonants (and
consonant clusters)

Final consonants (and
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The system of ‘initials’ in English

- See the list in your handout, also available at:
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- This is a list of consonants and consonant-clusters that can occur ‘word-initially’ (i.e. ‘as the Onset of a syllable which is the first syllable in (the phonological realization of) a word’).

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- It has been checked against all the words in a major dictionary.

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- The system for the beginning of a syllable “in the middle of a word” might be slightly different.

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- It has been checked against all the words in a major dictionary.
- The system for the beginning of a syllable "in the middle of a word" might be slightly different.
- Can you pronounce all the consonants and consonant-clusters on the list?

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Some work for you!

A tip for producing English approximants

- If you have problems producing the English voiced approximants [w] ('labiovelar'), [ɹ] ('postalveolar') and [j] ('palatal'), then start with [u], [ə] and [i], and gradually decrease the openness of your mouth.

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- Make sure the airflow is still 'laminar' (smooth), not 'turbulent'.

A tip for producing English approximants

φων

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- If you have problems producing the English voiced approximants [w] ('labiovelar'), [ɹ] ('postalveolar') and [j] ('palatal'), then start with [u], [ə] and [i], and gradually decrease the openness of your mouth.
- Make sure the airflow is still 'laminar' (smooth), not 'turbulent'.
- As an alternative for [ɹ]: start with [ɜ] and gradually *increase* the openness of your mouth.

Practising English approximants (Sauer 6 1 to 6 2: /w/)

we	Gwendolyn	inward	worm	wolf	bewitch
[wi:]	['gwɛn.də.lɪn]	['ɪn.wəd]	[wɜ:m]	[wʊlf]	[bi.'wɪtʃ]
wigwam	Wycliffe	Wyoming	where	whistle	while
['wɪɡ.wæm]	['wɪk.lɪf]	[waɪ.ə'ʊm.ɪŋ]	[wɛɹ̩]	['wɪs.əl]	[waɪəl]

twist	twine	Twiggy	tweed	twig	Twain
[twɪst]	[twaɪn]	['twɪɡ.i]	[twi:d]	[twɪ'g]	[tweɪn]
quite	qualify	quack	quaint	queer	quiver
[kwɑɪt]	['kwɒl.i.faɪ]	[kwæk]	[kweɪnt]	[kwɪə]	['kwɪvə]
squeak	squirm	squeal			
[skwi:k]	[skwɜ:m]	[skwi:t]	[skwi:əl]		

Gwyn	Quinn	guano	quote
[ɡwɪn]	[kwɪn]	['ɡwa:nəʊ]	['kwəʊt]
dwelt	twelve	Dwight	twice
[dweɪt]	[twɛɹ̩tv]	[dwaɪt]	[twɑɪs]

wise	vies	wet	vet	Wales	vales
[waɪz]	[vaɪz]	[wɛt]	[vɛt]	[weɪlɪz]	[veɪlɪz]
worse	verse	wick	Vic	wiper	viper
[wɜ:s]	[vɜ:s]	[wɪk]	[vɪk]	[waɪpə]	[vaɪpə]
weird	veered	wine	vine	wary	vary
[wɪəd]	[vɪəd]	[waɪn]	[vaɪn]	[weɹ̩əɪ.i]	[veɹ̩əɪ.i]

φων

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Practising English approximants (Sauer 6 3: /w/)

Walter wanted vodka and wine. | His advice was too obvious.

/ˈwɔ:l.tə ˈwɒnt.ɪd ˈvɒd.kəɪ ənd ˈwam/ | /hɪz əd.ˈvaɪs wəz ˈtuː ˈɒb.vɪ.əs/

Winifred read Advanced Linguistics.

/ˈwɪn.ɪ.fred ˈred əd.ˈvɑːnst lɪŋ.gwɪst.ɪks/

Whether the weather be fine | Or whether the weather be not,

/ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə bɪ ˈfam/ | /ɔː ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə bɪ ˈnɒt/

Whether the weather be cold | Or whether the weather be hot,

/ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə bɪ ˈkəʊld/ | /ɔː ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə bɪ ˈhɒt/

We'll weather the weather | Whatever the weather,

/wi:l ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə/ | /wət.ˈev.ə ðə ˈweð.ə/

Whether we like it or not.

/ˈweð.ə wi laɪk ɪt ɔː ˈnɒt/

We were invited for a glass of whiskey.

/wɪ wəɪ ɪn.ˈvaɪt.ɪd fəɪ ə ˈɡlɑːs əv ˈwɪsk.i/

The Wizard of Oz is a wonderful movie.

/ðə ˈwɪzəd əv ɒz ɪz ə ˈwʌn.də.fʊl ˈmuːvi/

φων

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Practising English approximants (Sauer 6 3: /w/) (continued)

We value the love of our brothers and sisters.

/wɪ 'væl.juː ðə 'lʌv əv ɑː 'brʌð.əz ən 'sɪst.əz/ (N.B. pronunciation of “our”)

Is it worth while working in the vineyard?

/ɪz ɪt 'wɜːθ 'waɪl 'wɜːk.ɪŋ ɪn ðə 'vɪnjəd/

Vampires usually ravish virgins.

/'væm.paɪəz 'juːʒ.u.əl.i 'rævɪʃ 'vɜːdʒ.ɪnz/

What weather will Vivian have in Venice?

/'wɒt 'weð.ə wɪl 'vɪv.i.ən 'hæv ɪn 'ven.ɪs/

We watched the Woodstock Festival on television.

/wɪ 'wɒtʃt ðə 'wʊd.stɒk 'fest.ɪv.l ɒn 'tel.ə.vɪʒ.n/

She couldn't find any vegetables at Woolworth's.

/ʃɪ 'kʊd.nt 'faɪnd en.i 'vedʒ.təb.lz ət 'wʊl.wəθs/

They visited Worcester and Wolverhampton.

/ðeɪ 'vɪz.ɪt.ɪd 'wʊst.ər ənd 'wʊlv.ə.hæm.tən/

Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania are very well known.

/'hɑːv.əd juː.n.i.'vɜːs.ɪt.i ənd ðə juː.n.i.'vɜːs.ɪt.i əv pens.ɪl.'vem.ɪ.ər ə 'veri 'wel 'nəʊn/

φων

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Practising English approximants (Sauer 6 3: /w/) (concluded)

φων

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There was an old woman and what do you think?

/ðeə 'wʊz ən əʊld 'wʊm.ən ənd 'wɒt dʊ jʊ 'θɪŋk/

She lived upon nothing but victuals and drink.

/ʃi 'lɪvd ə.pʊn 'nʌθ.ɪŋ bət 'vɪt.lz ənd 'drɪŋk/

And though victuals and drink were the chief of her diet,

/ənd ðəʊ 'vɪt.lz ənd 'drɪŋk wə ðə 'tʃi:f əv hə 'daɪ.ət/

This plaguy old woman could never be quiet.

/ðɪs 'pleɪɡ.i əʊld 'wʊm.ən kʊd 'nev.ə bɪ 'kwaɪ.ət/

She went to the baker, to buy her some bread,

/ʃi 'went tə ðə 'beɪk.ə tə 'baɪ hə səm 'bred/

And when she came home her old husband was dead.

/ənd 'wen ʃi keɪm 'həʊm həɪ əʊld 'hʌzbənd wəz 'ded/

She went to the clerk to toll the bell,

/ʃi 'went tə ðe 'klɑ:k tə 'təʊl ðə 'bel/

And when she got home, her old husband was well.

/ənd 'wen ʃi ɡɒt 'həʊm həɪ əʊld 'hʌzbənd 'wəz 'wel/

A further note on pronouncing English /r/

- Note the following positional variants (“allophones”) of the English phoneme /r/ that are used by many speakers:

φων

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- Note the following positional variants (“allophones”) of the English phoneme /r/ that are used by many speakers:
 - 1 /r/ → [ɹ] ([ɹ] = voiced postalveolar approximant);

φων

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- Note the following positional variants (“allophones”) of the English phoneme /r/ that are used by many speakers:
 - ① /r/ → [ɹ] ([ɹ] = voiced postalveolar approximant);
 - ② /pr/, /kr/ → [pɹ̥], [kɹ̥] ([ɹ̥] = devoiced postalveolar approximant);

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 - ③ /θr/ → [θɹ] ([ɹ] = voiced alveolar tap or flap);

φων

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 - ④ /tr/ → [tɹ̠] ([ɹ̠] = devoiced retroflex approximant); cf [tʃ].

φων

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 - 3 /θr/ → [θɹ] ([ɹ] = voiced alveolar tap or flap);
 - 4 /tr/ → [tɹ̥] ([ɹ̥] = devoiced retroflex approximant); cf [tʃ].
 - 5 /dr/ → [dɹ̥] ([ɹ̥] = voiced retroflex approximant); cf [dʒ].

φων

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 - ④ /tr/ → [tɹ̥] ([ɹ̥] = devoiced retroflex approximant); cf [tʃ].
 - ⑤ /dr/ → [dɹ̥] ([ɹ̥] = voiced retroflex approximant); cf [dʒ].
- Note that the IPA symbol [ɹ] can stand for a dental, alveolar, or postalveolar voiced approximant, corresponding to the voiced fricatives [ð], [z], or [ʒ].

φων

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 - ⑤ /dr/ → [dɹ̥] ([ɹ̥] = voiced retroflex approximant); cf [dʒ].
- Note that the IPA symbol [ɹ] can stand for a dental, alveolar, or postalveolar voiced approximant, corresponding to the voiced fricatives [ð], [z], or [ʒ].
- If you really want to go into detail, you can indicate that /r/ is normally produced by many native speakers as [ɹ̠^w], i.e. retracted (not (laminal-) alveolar but (laminal-) postalveolar) and labialized (lips rounded), as in ⟨red⟩ /red/ → [ɹ̠^wɛd] or [ɹ̠^wɛ̹d].

One more reason why English /r/ [ɹ] is *postalveolar*

φων

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(in Onset position in native English words:)		/m/	/n/	/w/	/l/	/r/	/j/
alveolar fricative	/s/	/sm/	/sn/	/sw/	/sl/	—	/sj/
postalveolar fricative	/ʃ/	—	—	—	—	/ʃr/	—

Practising allophones of /r/:

wrist [ɹɪst]	rock [ɹɒk]	Rome [ɹəʊm]	race [ɹeɪs]	raze [ɹeɪz]	rhetoric [ˈɹet.ə.ɹɪk]
proud [praʊd]	practice [præktɪs]	priest [ˈpɹiːst]	crib [kɹɪb]	crest [kɹɛst]	Christ [kɹaɪst]
try [tɹaɪ]	chai [tʃaɪ]	trip [tɹɪp]	chip [tʃɪp]	drain [dɹeɪn]	Jane [dʒeɪn]
trill [tɹɪl]	drill [dɹɪl]	trout [tɹaʊt]	drought [dɹaʊt]	trawler [ˈtɹɔ:l.ə]	drawler [ˈdɹɔ:l.ə]
through [θɹu:]	thrombosis [θɹɒm.ˈbəʊsɪs]	throw [θɹəʊ]			
here /hɪə/ ⟨hier⟩	here and there /hɪə ən ðeə/ ⟨hier und dort⟩	hither /ˈhɪð.ə/ ⟨hierher⟩	hither and thither /ˈhɪð.ə ən ˈðɪð.ə/ ⟨hierher und dorthier⟩		
hence [hens] ⟨hierhin⟩	thence [ðens] ⟨dorthin⟩	hens [heːnz] ⟨Hühner⟩			

φων

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Some work for you!

What follows the sound? What precedes the sound?

- Note that people start preparing for a sound before they get to it:

φων

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φων

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- Note that people start preparing for a sound before they get to it:
 - /ɛɪtθ/ → [e_̩ɪ_̩tθ]

What follows the sound? What precedes the sound?

φων

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- Note that people start preparing for a sound before they get to it:
 - /ɛɪtθ/ → [eɪ̯t̪θ]
 - (dental t instead of alveolar t, because of the following dental fricative) ...

What follows the sound? What precedes the sound?

φων

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Some work for you!

- Note that people start preparing for a sound before they get to it:
 - /ertθ/ → [e₁t₂θ]
 - (dental t instead of alveolar t, because of the following dental fricative) ...
- ... and are still recovering from the preceding sound when the next one starts:

What follows the sound? What precedes the sound?

φων

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- Note that people start preparing for a sound before they get to it:
 - /ertθ/ → [eɪ̯t̪θ]
 - (dental t instead of alveolar t, because of the following dental fricative) ...
- ... and are still recovering from the preceding sound when the next one starts:
 - /'pʌpɹɔ̃gʌn/ → ['pʰʌp̚ɹ̥gʌn]

What follows the sound? What precedes the sound?

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 - /ertθ/ → [eɪ̯t̪θ]
 - (dental t instead of alveolar t, because of the following dental fricative) ...
- ... and are still recovering from the preceding sound when the next one starts:
 - /'pʊpɹgʌn/ → ['pʰʊp̚ɹ̥gʌn]
 - (devoicing of the lenis velar plosive);

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- Note that people start preparing for a sound before they get to it:
 - /ertθ/ → [eɪ̯t̪θ]
 - (dental t instead of alveolar t, because of the following dental fricative) ...
- ... and are still recovering from the preceding sound when the next one starts:
 - /'pʊpɾɒn/ → ['pʰʊp̚ɾɒn]
 - (devoicing of the lenis velar plosive);
 - but note that this is still different from the voiceless fortis velar plosive in ['pʰʊp̚kʰɔ:n]

Voice Onset Time (see Wikipedia article)

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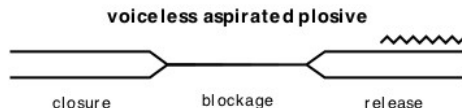
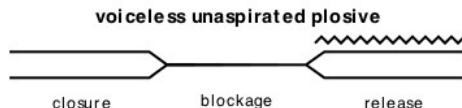
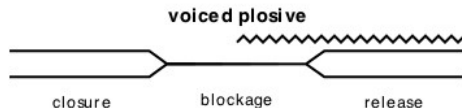
Consonants (2)

Outline

Initial consonants (and
consonant clusters)

Final consonants (and
consonant clusters)

Some work for you!



Frz. <gâches>

Engl. <gash>

Frz. <cachés>
Kölsch <Kölsch>

Engl. <cash>
Hochdt. <Kölsch>

voiced
(fully)

voiced
(partially)

voiceless
unaspirated

voiceless
aspirated

The system of 'finals' in English

- See the list of 'finals' in your handout, also available here:
<http://spence.saar.de/phonetics/syllablestructure/finals.pdf>

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- Many of the combinations only occur due to the inflexional and derivational morphology of English words: <-(e)s>, <-ed>, <-th>, etc.
- The system would be even more complicated if we included the possible ways a syllable can end in the *middle* of an English word.

Voiced final consonants

- The most important thing to practise is:

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- When practising, turn the voice off right at the beginning of a voiceless final consonant, but let it go right through and beyond a voiced one, producing a slight schwa at the end.

Don't try too hard!

- How do you pronounce <clothes> ('Kleider') – as opposed to <cloths> ('Tücher'), the plural of <cloth> ('Tuch')?

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- Why?
- You're in the neutral position (schwa), then you start closing your lips slightly, as if for w; then you have to get from there to z, but the tip of your tongue gets horribly in the way. So just "smooth things out a bit".

Homework (if you haven't done it already...)

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- Read the chapter on sound-spelling correspondences:
http:
[//www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/
unit04a_20211/englischephonetik_06.pdf](http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/unit04a_20211/englischephonetik_06.pdf)