
UNIT 2: THE VOWELS OF ENGLISH

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 The Vowels
- 2.3 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.4 Answers

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Having established the need for a phonetic alphabet in the previous Unit, we introduced the phonetic symbols for the consonant sounds as given in ‘Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary’ and practiced associating each symbol with the consonant sound it stands for. We also practised the difference between consonant sounds we are likely to find difficult to differentiate between.

In this unit we shall study the phonetic symbols for the vowels of English and associate them with the vowel sounds they represent. We shall help you produce each vowel correctly and provide extensive practice in distinguishing between one vowel and another, particularly those English vowels that we find difficult to produce.

At the end of this unit you should be able to:


- recognize the phonetic symbols for the vowel sounds;
- associate each symbol for the vowel sound it represents;
- distinguish between one vowel sound and another;
- transcribe English words using the consonant and vowel symbols;
- consult the Dictionary for the pronunciation of words; and
- pronounce words as transcribed.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Learning to recognize the vowels and produce them correctly can be more difficult than recognizing and producing the consonants. One of the reasons for this is that during the articulation of consonants there is some contact between the tongue and other parts of the mouth (even if it be ever so slight) which we can feel and touch. There is no such contact between the tongue and the other parts of the mouth for the articulation of vowels. Another reason why we find the difference between vowels more difficult to perceive and produce is that the vowel letters are overburdened. While there are only 5 vowel letters i.e. a, e, i, o, u there are 20 vowel sounds. So neither the articulators nor the spelling can help us produce or perceive the difference between one vowel and another. A technique that might help us perceive the difference between vowels would be to compare the extent to which the lower jaw moves away from the upper jaw and the shape of the lips (spread, neutral or rounded) during the production of one vowel and another. We shall use this technique to distinguish one vowel from another.


Let us look at the symbols for the following vowel sounds as given in ‘Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary’.

	Symbol	Keyword
1.	/i:/	eat, sheet, tea
2.	/ɪ/*	in, tin, spin
3.	/e/	edge, gem, men
4.	/æ/	add, flag, gap
5.	/ɑ:/	ask, flask, star
6.	/ɒ/	odd, box, pot

Listen to the sound each symbol stands for. Repeat each sound and the keywords in which it occurs. 


*Note: ‘Advanced Learner’s Dictionary’ lists another vowel symbol /i/. This does not need to be learnt because, in its place, we can use /ɪ/. But remember that both stand for the same sound.

1 The Vowel /i:/

(a) Listen to the following words with the vowel /i:/ 


/i:/

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. <u>e</u> asy | 6. <u>ce</u> ive | 11. <u>qu</u> ay | 16. <u>ke</u> y |
| 2. <u>e</u> ven | 7. <u>pol</u> ice | 12. <u>th</u> eme | 17. <u>ski</u> |
| 3. <u>e</u> qual | 8. <u>sie</u> ge | 13. <u>se</u> a | 18. <u>fee</u> |
| 4. <u>e</u> el | 9. <u>w</u> ee <u>p</u> | 14. <u>tr</u> ee | 19. <u>kn</u> ee |
| 5. <u>a</u> esthetic | 10. <u>pe</u> ople | 15. <u>be</u> | 20. <u>fl</u> ea |

(b) Listen to some sentences with words that have the vowel /i:/, and repeat them. 


1. She loves to eat sweets.
2. Keep your street clean.
3. We walk to the beach every evening.
4. He’s never seen beech trees.
5. They breed ducks and geese here.
6. This is not the breeding season for sheep.
7. Please buy me some shelled peas.

2 The Vowel /ɪ/

(a) Listen to the following words with the vowel /ɪ/ and repeat each word. 

/ɪ/


- | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <u>in</u> | 7. <u>e</u> clipse | 13. <u>sie</u> ve | 19. <u>bu</u> sy |
| 2. <u>ill</u> | 8. <u>e</u> cology | 14. <u>si</u> mile | 20. <u>bi</u> scuit |
| 3. <u>in</u> stant | 9. <u>e</u> ffect | 15. <u>rh</u> ythm | |
| 4. <u>e</u> vade | 10. <u>e</u> lect | 16. <u>fo</u> reign | |
| 5. <u>e</u> voke | 11. <u>car</u> riage | 17. <u>w</u> omen | |
| 6. <u>e</u> lude | 12. <u>mi</u> schief | 18. <u>bu</u> ild | |

(b) Listen to the following sentences containing words with the vowel /ɪ/ and repeat them. 


1. There's no improvement in the living conditions.
2. Have you filled the pitcher with water?
3. This is the only village that has electricity.
4. Fill in this form and hand it in.
5. Is this the building they live in?
6. Give the chit to the captain of the ship.
7. If you give in, you'll never win.

Check Your Progress 1


Compare vowels /i:/ and /I/. To produce /i:/ move the lower jaw quite close to the upper jaw and spread your lips wide as you do when you smile. To produce /I/ move the lower jaw down slightly and keep your lips loosely spread.

- 1 Listen to the following pairs of words and repeat each pair. 

(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
1. beat	bit	6. neat	knit
2. cheat	chit	7. leak	lick
3. deep	dip	8. meal	mill
4. feel	fill	9. sleep	slip
5. heed	hid	10. wheat	wit


- 2 Listen to the following words and fill in the blank spaces with the vowel /i:/ or /I/ whichever you hear. 

- | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 1. /w__f/ | 2. /s__n/ | 3. /b__d/ | 4. /fl__t/ | 5. /s__z/ |
| 6. /ð__s/ | 7. /br__sk/ | 8. /d__p/ | 9. /w__p/ | 10. /gr__d/ |

- 3 Listen to following words and transcribe them using the consonant symbols you have learnt and the vowels /i:/ or /I/ or both. 


- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. ship..... | 2. cheap..... | 3. weak..... |
| 4. tin..... | 5. sing..... | 6. sheet..... |
| 7. zeal..... | 8. beneath..... | 9. reveal..... |
| 10. begin..... | 11. dismiss..... | 12. refill..... |
| 13. civics..... | 14. peace..... | 15. easy..... |

3 The Vowel /e/

- (a) Listen to the following words with the vowel /e/ and repeat each word. 

/e/

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 1. egg | 6. feather | 11. bury |
| 2. echo | 7. friend | 12. guess |
| 3. effort | 8. leisure | 13. says |
| 4. any | 9. leopard | 14. sense |
| 5. escort | 10. said | 15. tempt |


- (b) Listen to some sentences with words containing the vowel /e/ and repeat them. 

1. I like bread and butter, and eggs for breakfast.
2. He's been sent on several errands since eleven o'clock.
3. When can you get the dress ready?


4. Can one do better than one's best?
5. They collect birds' feathers.
6. All the seventy seven members attended the convention.
7. It's best to let them help themselves.

Check Your Progress 2

Compare vowels /ɪ/ and /e/. To produce /e/ move the lower jaw slightly lower than you do for /ɪ/ and spread your lips just a little more than you do for /ɪ/.

1. Listen to the following pairs of words carefully and repeat each pair. 

(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
1. big	beg	6. lift	left
2. fill	fell	7. miss	mess
3. hid	head	8. win	when
4. knit	net	9. sit	set
5. lid	led	10. pin	pen

2. Listen to the following words and fill in the blank spaces with either /ɪ/ or /e/ whichever you hear. 

1. /f__tʃ/ 2. /b__ld/ 3. /θ__ŋk/ 4. /r__st/ 5. /kl__n tʃ/
6. /w__l/ 7. /bl__s/ 8. /r__st/ 9. /l__tə/ 10. /bl__s/

3. Listen to some words and transcribe each word using the symbols for the consonants you have learnt and either the vowel /ɪ/ or /e/ whichever you hear. 

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. ridge | 2. chemist |
| 3. frisk | 4. middle |
| 5. guess | 6. selfish |
| 7. dissect..... | 8. finish..... |
| 9. cheque..... | 10. said..... |

4 The Vowel /æ/

- (a) Listen to the following words with the vowel /æ/ and repeat each word. 

/æ/


- | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <u>a</u> bsent | 6. <u>a</u> llopath | 11. <u>a</u> nd | 16. <u>a</u> alendar |
| 2. <u>a</u> ction | 7. <u>a</u> lly | 12. <u>a</u> rrriage | 17. <u>a</u> mmock |
| 3. <u>a</u> ddict | 8. <u>a</u> mbulance | 13. <u>a</u> ttle | 18. <u>a</u> late |
| 4. <u>a</u> lbum | 9. <u>a</u> narchy | 14. <u>a</u> sket | 19. <u>a</u> lait |
| 5. <u>a</u> lgebra | 10. <u>a</u> ttitude | 15. <u>a</u> bit | 20. <u>a</u> satisfy |

- (b) Listen to some sentences with words that have the vowel /æ/ and repeat them. 


1. Put some oil into a shallow pan.
2. That man practices black magic.
3. This was one aspect of her character we hadn't seen before.
4. He deserves a pat on the back.
5. In fact they're not satisfied with the plan.
6. The land allocated to villagers is for agriculture.
7. Who ran away with the fans we had?
8. Catch the first plane if you can.

Check Your Progress 3


Compare vowels /æ/ and /e/. To produce /e/ move your jaw slightly lower than for /ɪ/ and spread your lips a little more than for /ɪ/. To produce /æ/ open the jaw fairly wide and spread your lips wider than you do for /e/.

1. Listen to the difference between the vowel /æ/ as in bad and /e/ as in bed in the following pairs of words and repeat each pair. 

/æ/	/e/	/æ/	/e/
(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
1. bat	bet	6. sand	send
2. sad	said	7. lather	leather
3. man	men	8. had	head
4. gas	guess	9. rack	wreck
5. knack	neck	10. fallow	fellow

2. Listen to the following words and fill in the blank spaces with the vowel you hear, either /e/ or /æ/. 

1. r____nt 2. bl____nd 3. fl____f 4. h____d 5. h____kl
6. s____nd 7. fl____f 8. p____k 9. m____ri 10. r____k

3. Listen to some words and transcribe each word using the symbols for the consonants you hear and either the vowel /æ/ or /e/ whichever you hear. 

1. 2. 3.
4. 5. 6.
7. 8. 9.
10.


5 The Vowel /ɑ:/

- (a) Listen to the following words with the vowel /ɑ:/ and repeat each word. 

/ɑ:/


- | | | | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|----------|
| 1. ask | 6. argue | 11. balm | 16. half | 21. bar* |
| 2. after | 7. armour | 12. basket | 17. last | 22. scar |
| 3. almond | 8. article | 13. calm | 18. laugh | 23. star |
| 4. alms | 9. artist | 14. class | 19. nasty | 24. far |
| 5. arch | 10. aunt | 15. dance | 20. staff | 25. jar |

* The vowel /ɑ:/ occurs in the word final position in Standard British English because the r is not pronounced in the final position in isolated words. In India, however, the r in the spelling is pronounced in all positions. In that case this vowel would not occur in the word final position.

- (b) Listen to some sentences with words that have /ɑ:/ and repeat them. 

- My car was parked in my aunt's garage.
- They asked for some plastic glasses.
- She'll end her fast at half past seven.
- A demanding boss is hard to please.
- Apart from being a cardiologist she's also an artist.
- Do you think he's mastered the art of storytelling?


6 The Vowel /ɒ/

- (a) Listen to some words with the vowel /ɒ/ and repeat each word. 

/ɒ/

- | | | | |
|--------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. odd | 6. oblong | 11. because | 16. quantity |
| 2. on | 7. opposite | 12. knowledge | 17. squash |
| 3. ox | 8. optimist | 13. jockey | 18. rocket |

4. occupy 9. honest 14. monarch 19. was
5. often 10. honour 15. quality 20. what


(b) Listen to sentences with words containing the vowel /ɒ/ and repeat each sentence. 

1. What have you got in that copper pot?
2. These locks cost a lot of money.
3. Can I have some orange squash please?
4. It didn't take long to solve the problem.
5. I'd like a pot of hot coffee and lots of sugar please.
6. The whole lot of them occupied the box in the theatre.


Check Your Progress 4

Compare vowels /ɑ:/ and /ɒ/. To produce /ɑ:/ and /ɒ/ your mouth must be wide open. While for /ɑ:/ the lips are not rounded, for /ɒ/ they are.


The main difference between the two vowels is that while for /ɑ:/ the lips are unrounded, for /ɒ/ they are rounded. The mouth is wide open.

1. Listen to the difference between the two vowels in the following pairs of words and repeat each pair. 


/ɑ:/	/ɒ/	/ɑ:/	/ɒ/	/ɑ:/	/ɒ/
(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
1. balm	bomb	4. heart	hot	8. calf	cough
2. cast	cost	5. large	lodge	9. dart	dot
3. guard	god	6. shark	shock	10. stark	stock
		7. last	lost		

2. Listen to the following words and fill in the blank spaces with the symbol for the vowel you hear — either /ɑ:/ or /ɒ/ 

- | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. f__st | 2. gl__s | 3. b__ks | 4. st__k | 05. l__k |
| 6. d__k | 7. k__f | 8. l__f | 9. l__dʒ | 10. st__k |

3. Listen to some words and transcribe each word using the symbols for the consonants you hear and either the vowel /ɑ:/ or /ɒ/ whichever you hear. 

- | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 7. | 8. | 9. |
| 10. | 11. | 12. |
| 13. | 14. | |

Look at the symbols for some more vowel sounds as given in 'Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary'. Listen to the sound each symbol represents and the key words in which it occurs. 

	Symbol	Keywords
7.	/ɔ:/	awe, caught, saw
8.	/ʊ/	put, wool, could
9.	/u:/	food, juice, flew
10.	/ʌ/	up, flood, tough
11.	/ɜ:/	earth, first, occur
12.	/ə/	above, animal, grammar

7 The Vowel /ɔ:/'

- (a) Listen to some words with the vowel /ɔ:/' as in caught and repeat each word.



/ɔ:/'

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. <u>all</u> | 5. <u>corn</u> | 9. <u>door</u> |
| 2. <u>audience</u> | 6. <u>cause</u> | 10. <u>jaw</u> |
| 3. <u>order</u> | 7. <u>fall</u> | 11. <u>saw</u> |
| 4. <u>ought</u> | 8. <u>story</u> | 12. <u>four</u> |

Notice that this vowel is longer than the vowel /ɒ/ as in hot and is only slightly different from it.

8 The Vowel /ʊ/'

- (a) Listen to some words with the vowel /ʊ/' as in put and repeat each word.



/ʊ/'

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <u>push</u> | 4. <u>wool</u> | 7. <u>good</u> |
| 2. <u>could</u> | 5. <u>should</u> | 8. <u>full</u> |
| 3. <u>cook</u> | 6. <u>woman</u> | 9. <u>sugar</u> |

- (b) Listen to some sentences with words containing the vowel /ʊ/' and repeat each sentence.

1. Could you buy me some wool to knit you a hood?
2. What would you like me to cook today?
3. They tried to bully the old woman but she stood her ground.
4. Put a little more sugar in the pudding.
5. Look at all the soot that has settled on the wood.
6. At the push of a button he could get a whole list of books.
7. He put his best foot forward.

9 The vowel /u:/'

/u:/'


- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. <u>food</u> | 6. <u>smooth</u> |
| 2. <u>crude</u> | 7. <u>blue</u> |
| 3. <u>choose</u> | 8. <u>flew</u> |
| 4. <u>juice</u> | 9. <u>queue</u> |
| 5. <u>beauty</u> | 10. <u>view</u> |

- (a) Listen to some sentences with words containing the vowel /u:/' and repeat each sentence.


1. She's always as cool as a cucumber.
2. They had no clue which route to follow.
3. The menu lists food to suit every palate.
4. Can you prove this is true?
5. Which shoes would you choose if they'd let us buy?
6. He played a new tune on his flute.

The vowels /ʊ/' and /u:/' do not occur in the initial position in words except for the word ooze in which /u:/' does occur initially. /ʊ/' occurs in the final position very rarely.

Compare vowels /ʊ/ and /u:/. To produce /ʊ/ move your lower jaw as close to the upper jaw as you would for /ɪ/ and make your lips rounded loosely. To produce /u:/ move your lower jaw very close to the upper jaw as you would do for /i:/, and make your lips closely or tightly rounded.


1. Listen to the difference between the two vowels in the following pairs of words and repeat each pair. 

/ʊ/	/u:/
(a)	(b)
1. full	fool
2. pull	pool
3. soot	suit
4. should	shooed
5. wood	wooded


2. Listen to each of the following words and fill in the blank space with the symbol for the vowel you hear — /ʊ/ or /u:/. 

1. /fr__t/ 2. /w__l/ 3. /gr__p/ 4. /sm__ð/ 5. /w__mən/
 6. /ɒkj__paɪ/ 7. /stj__pɪd/ 8. /g__s/ 9. /f__d/ 10. /br__k/

3. Listen to some words on the audio and transcribe each word using the symbols for the consonants you hear and the vowels you have learnt so far.

- 
- | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 7. | 8. | 9. |
| 10. | | |


10 The Vowel /ʌ/ as in hut

Listen to some words with the vowel /ʌ/ as in cut, and repeat each word.  This vowel does not occur in the final position in words.


- /ʌ/
- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| 1. ugly | 6. brother |
| 2. uncle | 7. multiply |
| 3. utter | 8. husband |
| 4. under | 9. once |
| 5. onion | 10. rough |

Check Your Progress 6

Compare /ʌ / as in cut and /ɑ:/ as in cart. To produce /ʌ/ keep the lower and upper jaw apart though not as open as for /ɑ:/, and the lips neutral. /ʌ/ is not as long as /ɑ:/.

1. Listen to the following pairs of words and repeat each pair. 

/ʌ/	/ɑ:/	/ʌ /	/ɑ:/
(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
1. bun	barn	6. hut	heart
2. come	calm	7. must	mast
3. cut	cart	8. tusk	task
4. duck	dark	9. lust	last
5. fuss	farce		

2. Listen to each of the following sounds and fill in the blank space with the symbol for the vowel you hear — /ɑ:/ or /ʌ/ 

1. /r__stɪk/ 2. /d__n/ 3. /st__f/ 4. /b__k/ 5. /d__ns/
6. /m__stə/ 7. /kl__k/ 8. /m__sk/ 9. /k__f/ 10. /l__k/

11 The Vowel /ɜ:/ as in bird

Listen to some words with the vowel /ɜ:/ and repeat each word. 

/ɜ:/

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. <u>early</u> | 5. <u>certain</u> | 9. <u>blur</u> |
| 2. <u>earn</u> | 6. <u>surface</u> | 10. <u>err</u> |
| 3. <u>earth</u> | 7. <u>thirst</u> | 11. <u>refer</u> |
| 4. <u>irksome</u> | 8. <u>worse</u> | 12. <u>stir</u> |


Notice that this sound is long and is generally represented in the spelling by a vowel letter or letters plus the consonant letter /r/. In British English /r/ in the spelling is not pronounced when it occurs before consonants or when it occurs word finally. In India the /r/ in the spelling is generally pronounced, and therefore the length of the vowel /ɜ:/ is reduced.

Listen to some sentences with words containing /ɜ:/ and repeat each sentence. 

- It's the early bird that gets the worm.
- That was the worst earthquake we've ever had.
- She worked hard for the first prize.
- They scrubbed the surface until it was smooth.
- It's your turn to search for the herb.
- They found the Indian Bustard perched on the roof of an old hut.
- The hungry children enjoyed the curd rice they were served with.

Check Your Progress 7

Compare the vowels /ɑ:/, /ɜ:/ and /ʌ/. While the lower jaw is lowered for the production of /ɑ:/ and /ʌ/, it is fairly close to the upper jaw for the production of /ɜ:/. While /ʌ/ is a short vowel /ɑ:/ and /ɜ:/ are long vowels. For /ɜ:/ the upper and lower lips are close to each other.

1. Listen to the following sets of words and repeat each set. 

- | /ɑ:/ | /ɜ:/ | /ʌ/ | /ɑ:/ | /ɜ:/ | /ʌ/ |
|---------|------|------|----------|-------|--------|
| (a) | (b) | (c) | (a) | (b) | (c) |
| 1. barn | burn | bun | 5. fast | first | fussed |
| 2. card | curd | cud | 6. heart | hurt | hut |
| 3. cart | curt | cut | 7. lark | lurk | luck |
| 4. mark | murk | muck | | | |

2. Listen to the following words.  They are transcribed. Fill in the blank space/s in each word with the vowel/s you hear — /ɑ:/, /ɜ:/ or /ʌ/

1. /k__rənt/ 2. /k__fju:/ 3. /g__gl/ 4. /h__d/ 5. /m__stə/
6. /g__gl/ 7. /s__b__b/ 8. /k__tn/ 9. /t__sk/ 10. /st__k/


3. Listen to some words on the audio and transcribe each word using the symbols for the consonants you hear and the vowels you have learnt so far.




1. shuttle 2. cartoon 3. begun
4. girdle 5. forfeit 6. format

7. sultry 8. cardboard 9. hockey
 10. service 11. expert 12. reverse

12 The Vowel /ə/

Listen to the following words with the vowel sound / ə / as in about. 

- | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <u>a</u> bout | 6. <u>cu</u> stom | 11. <u>fi</u> ctitious | 16. <u>do</u> nor |
| 2. <u>a</u> cross | 7. <u>fu</u> ngus | 12. <u>ill</u> ustrate | 17. <u>fa</u> ther |
| 3. <u>al</u> lot | 8. <u>gor</u> geous | 13. <u>sal</u> ary | 18. <u>popu</u> lar |
| 4. <u>ap</u> peal | 9. <u>le</u> mon | 14. <u>wel</u> come | |
| 5. <u>ap</u> prove | 10. <u>de</u> corate | 15. <u>col</u> our | |

Listen to the words again.  Notice that the vowel / ə / always occurs only in that part of a word which is not heard as prominent or which is not stressed.

Check Your Progress 8

1 Transcribe the following words. Check your transcription with the transcription of these words in the dictionary.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. essential | 2. territory..... | 3. solution..... |
| 4. furnishes..... | 5. pressure | 6. pollute..... |
| 7. nuisance | 8. burden..... | 9. atomic..... |
| 10. naughty | | |

2. Listen to the pronunciation of these words and repeat them. 

Diphthongs

In this section we shall listen to some more vowel sounds. Look at the symbols for these sounds and the key words for each.

	Symbols	Key words
13.	/eɪ/	As in <u>aim</u> , <u>eight</u> , <u>ache</u> , <u>make</u> , <u>straight</u> , <u>break</u> , <u>say</u> , <u>grey</u> , <u>they</u>
14.	/aɪ/	As in <u>ice</u> , <u>island</u> , <u>eye</u> , <u>mike</u> , <u>dive</u> , <u>rhyme</u> , <u>die</u> , <u>buy</u> , <u>try</u>
15.	/ɔɪ/	As in <u>oil</u> , <u>oyster</u> , <u>coin</u> , <u>toil</u> , <u>toy</u> , <u>ploy</u> , <u>buoy</u>
16.	/əʊ/	As in <u>old</u> , <u>own</u> , <u>oak</u> , <u>comb</u> , <u>bowl</u> , <u>mauve</u> , <u>toe</u> , <u>sew</u> , <u>beau</u>
17.	/aʊ/	As in <u>out</u> , <u>owl</u> , <u>mouth</u> , <u>brown</u> , <u>how</u> , <u>vow</u>
18.	/ɪə/	As in <u>ear</u> , <u>era</u> , <u>idea</u> , <u>clear</u> , <u>here</u> , <u>theory</u> , <u>fierce</u> , <u>serious</u> ,
19.	/eə/	As in <u>area</u> , <u>aerobics</u> , <u>airport</u> , <u>stairs</u> , <u>declare</u> , <u>wear</u> , <u>scarce</u> , <u>heir</u> , <u>precarious</u>
20.	/ʊə/	As in <u>gourd</u> , <u>jury</u> , <u>truant</u> , <u>poor</u> , <u>tour</u> , <u>pure</u> , <u>mature</u>

Notice that these vowel sounds have two symbols each. They represent the movement of the tongue from one vowel sound towards another and in this respect are different from vowels 1-12 in the production of which there is only one movement of the tongue. Therefore they are also known as monophthongs. Vowel sounds 13-20 are called **diphthongs**.

Listen to each vowel sound carefully once again. In vowels 13-15 the movement is towards the vowel /ɪ/, in vowels 16 and 17, there is a movement towards the vowel /ʊ/ and in vowels 18-20 the movement is towards /ə/.

Check Your Progress 9

13 /eɪ/

Compare the vowels /eɪ/ as in eight with /e/ as in let. In India the diphthong /eɪ/ is pronounced like the vowel in the Hindi words देख, लेख. The vowel in these words is the monophthong /e:/. There is no movement towards /ɪ/. This pronunciation of the vowel is understood by other speakers of English in India and is therefore quite acceptable.

1 However, this vowel is long and must be distinguished from the short vowel /e/. Listen to the difference between /eɪ/ and /e/ in the following pairs of words and repeat each pair. 🎧

	/eɪ/	/e/		/eɪ/	/e/
	(a)	(b)		(a)	(b)
1.	bait	bet	6.	late	let
2.	date	debt	7.	mate	met
3.	gate	get	8.	raid	red
4.	fail	fell	9.	taste	test
5.	hail	hell	10.	wait	wet

Check Your Progress 10

14&15 The Vowel /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/

Compare vowels /aɪ/ as in tile and /ɔɪ/ as in toil

1 Listen to the difference between /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/ in the following pairs of words and repeat each pair. 🎧

	/aɪ/	/ɔɪ/		/aɪ/	/ɔɪ/
	(a)	(b)		(a)	(b)
1	isle	oil	4	tie	toy
2	buy	boy	5	imply	employ
3	file	foil	6	line	loin
			7	ply	ploy

2 The following words are transcribed. Listen to each word and fill in the blank space/s with the symbol for the vowel/s you hear.

- 1 k__s 2 ch__st 3 s_l__br__t 4 d__t 5 __l__
 6 kr__t 7 tʃ__st 8 kl__m__t 9 p__nt 10 d__str__

16 The Vowel /əʊ/

Listen to some words with /əʊ/ as in goat and repeat each word. 🎧

/əʊ/

- | | |
|--------|-----------|
| 1 own | 6 boulder |
| 2 oath | 7 glow |
| 3 only | 8 sew |
| 4 comb | 9 owe |
| 5 goal | 10 toe |

In India this vowel is pronounced as a long vowel with no movement towards /ʊ/. It is pronounced like the vowel in the Hindi बोल, छोड़. This pronunciation is understood and is acceptable.

Check Your Progress 11

Compare vowels /əʊ/ as in coat and /ɔ:/ as in caught.

1 Listen to the difference between the two in the following pairs of words.

- | | | | |
|---------|--------|-----------|--------|
| /əʊ/ | /ɔ:/ | /əʊ/ | /ɔ:/ |
| 1. bone | born | 8. foe | four |
| 2. boat | bought | 9. cone | corn |
| 3. coat | caught | 10. load | lord |
| 4. bowl | ball | 11. phone | fawn |
| 5. owe | awe | 12. folk | fork |
| 6. sew | saw | 13. road | roared |
| 7. toll | tall | 14. low | law |

2 The following words are transcribed. Listen to each word and fill in the blank space in each word with the symbol for the vowel you hear. 🎧

- | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|----------|----------|
| 1. Ikspl__d | 2. fl__r | 3. st__k | 4. p__nt | 5. dr__n |
| 6. m__ld | 7. m__ld | 8. p__ltri | | |

17 The Vowel /aʊ/

Listen to some words with the vowel /aʊ/ as in cow and repeat each word. 🎧

/aʊ/

- | | |
|----------|------------|
| 1. out | 6. gown |
| 2. owl | 7. gout |
| 3. oust | 8. now |
| 4. frown | 9. bough |
| 5. doubt | 10. plough |

18 The Vowel /ɪə/

Listen to the following words with /ɪə/ as in real, and repeat each word. 🎧

/ɪə/

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. <u>f</u> ierce | 5. <u>s</u> erious | 9. <u>d</u> eer |
| 2. <u>i</u> deal | 6. <u>t</u> heatre | 10. <u>h</u> ere |
| 3. <u>i</u> nferior | 7. <u>r</u> eal | 11. <u>f</u> ear |
| 4. <u>p</u> eriod | 8. <u>a</u> ppear | 12. <u>t</u> ier |

19 The Vowel /eə/

Listen to the following words with /eə/ as in there and repeat each word. 🎧

/eə/


- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. <u>a</u> eroplane | 4. <u>p</u> arent | 7. <u>p</u> rayer | 10. <u>w</u> ear |
| 2. <u>c</u> areful | 5. <u>s</u> carce | 8. <u>f</u> lair | |
| 3. <u>d</u> aring | 6. <u>v</u> arious | 9. <u>t</u> heir | |

Check Your Progress 12

Compare vowels /ɪə/ as in here, and /eə/ as in hare.


1. Listen to the difference between the two vowels in the following pairs of words. 🎧

- | | | | |
|---------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| /ɪə/ | /eə/ | /ɪə/ | /eə/ |
| (a) | (b) | (a) | (b) |
| 1. deer | dare | 6. mere | mare |
| 2. beer | bear | 7. rear | rare |
| 3. ear | air | 8. sneer | snare |
| 4. fear | fare/fair | 9. steer | stare |
| 5. hear | hair/hare | 10. peer | pair/pear |

2. Listen to the following words.  They are transcribed. Listen to each word carefully and fill in the vowel/s you hear in the blank space/s in each case.

- | | | | |
|---------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. b__d | 2. v__l__nt | 3. st__r__ŋ | 4. m__l__n |
| 5. pr__ | 6. st__z | 7. __nd__n | 8. k__r__ |

20 The Vowel /ʊə/ as in poor


Listen to the following words with the vowel /ʊə/ 

/ʊə/

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <u>cr</u> uel | 6. <u>en</u> sure |
| 2. <u>dur</u> able | 7. <u>cure</u> |
| 3. <u>fu</u> el | 8. <u>obscure</u> |
| 4. <u>gru</u> el | 9. <u>matu</u> re |
| 5. <u>casu</u> al | 10. <u>tu</u> re |

In words like tour, poor, moor, pure, cure there is a growing tendency to use the vowel /ɔ:/ in place of /ʊə/. In other words, they are alternatively being pronounced with the vowel /ɔ:/ (instead of /ʊə/).

Check Your Progress 13

1. Transcribe the following words. Listen to each word carefully and write it down using the vowel and consonant sounds you hear. Check your transcription of each word in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. You can listen to a word as many times as you like. The first word has been transcribed for you as an example. 

1. admission /ədmiʃn/
2. allergy
3. amateur
4. anarchy
5. asthma
6. beverage
7. biography
8. blatant
9. cartoon
10. career
11. casual
12. character

2.3 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have learnt:

- that in the absence of a one-to-one correspondence between spelling and sound dictionaries have phonetic symbols each of which stands for one and only one sound. Dictionaries (even online ones) can be consulted for the pronunciation of words.

- that there are 20 vowel sounds in English.
- that it is easier to distinguish between one vowel and another by comparing them, particularly those between which the difference is slight and therefore difficult for us to perceive, and those that we are not familiar with.
- to associate the symbols for the vowels with the sounds they represent.
- to listen to words and transcribe them.
- to consult the dictionary for the pronunciation of words.
- to pronounce words as they are transcribed.

2.4 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 2 1 ɪ (wish) 2 ɪ, (sin) 3 i: (bead) 4 i: (fleet) 5 i: (seize)
 6 ɪ (this) 7 ɪ (brisk) 8 i: (deep) 9 ɪ (whip) 10 i: (greed)
- 3 1 /ʃɪp/ 2 /tʃɪ:p/ 3 /wi:k/ 4 /tɪn/ 5 /sɪŋ/
 6 /ʃi:t/ 7 /zi:l/ 8 /bmi:θ/ 9 /rɪvi:l/ 10 /bɪgm/
 11. /dɪsmɪs/ 12. /ri:fil/ 13. /sɪvɪks/ 14. /pi:s/ 15. /i:zi/

Check Your Progress 2

2. 1. e (fetch) 2. ɪ (build) 3. ɪ (think) 4. e (rest) 5. e (clench)
 6. e (well) 7. ɪ (bliss) 8. ɪ (wrist) 9. ɪ (letter) 10. e (bless)
- 3 1. /rɪdʒ/ 2. /kemɪst/ 3. /frɪsk/ 4. /mɪdl/ 5. /ges/
 6. /selfɪʃ/ 7. /dɪsekt/ 8. /fɪnɪʃ/ 9. /tʃek/ 10. /sed/

Check Your Progress 3

- 2 1. /e/ rent, 2. /æ/ bland, 3. /æ/ flash, 4. /e/ head, 5. /e/ heckle, 6. /e/ send
 7. /e/ flesh 8. /æ/ pack 9. /e/ merry 10. /æ/ rack

Audio script

1. friend, 2. shelf, 3. strand, 4. chef, 5. gang, 6. apple,
 7. hacked, 8. scratch, 9. health, 10. lens

3. 1. /frend/ 2. /ʃelf/ 3. /strænd/ 4. /ʃef/ 5. /gæŋ/
 6. /æpl/ 7. /hækt/ 8. /skrætʃ/ 9. /helθ/ 10. /lenz/

Check Your Progress 4

2. 1 /ɑ:/ fast, 2 /ɒ/ gloss, 3 /ɑ:/ barks, 4 /ɒ/ stock, 5 /ɑ:/ lark,
 6 /ɑ:/ dark, 7 /ɒ/ cough, 8 /ɑ:/ laugh, 9 /ɒ/ lodge, 10 /ɑ:/ stark
3. 1. /stɒk/ 2. /frɒst/ 3. /pɑ:ks/ 4. /sɒŋz/ 5. /stɑ:vd/
 6. /grɑ:sp/ 7. /prɒŋd/ 8. /ʃɑ:ft/ 9. /hɑ:f/ 10. /brɑ:ntʃ/
 11. /glɒst/ 12. /plɒdz/ 13. /bɑ:θ/ 14. /brɒθ/

Audio script

1. stock, 2. frost, 3. parks, 4. songs, 5. starved, 6. grasp, 7. pronged
 8. shaft, 9. half, 10. branch, 11. glossed, 12. plods, 13. bath, 14. broth

Check Your Progress 5

- 2 1 /u:/ fruit 2 /ʊ/ wool 3 /u:/ group 4 /u:/ smooth
 5 /ʊ/ woman 6 /ʊ/ occupy 7 /u:/ stupid 8 /u:/ goose
 9 /u:/ food 10 /ʊ/ brook

Audio script:

1. pushing, 2. huge, 3. school, 4. mistook, 5. youth,
6. pudding 7. fulfill, 8. crooked, 9. frugal

3 1 /pʊʃɪŋ/ 2 /hju:dʒ/ 3 /sku:l/ 4 /mɪstʊk/ 5 /ju:θ/
6 /pʊdɪŋ/ 7 /fʊlfl/ 8 /krʊkɪd/ 9 /fru:gl/

Check Your Progress 6

2 1 /ʌ/ rustic 2 /ɑ:/ darn 3 /ʌ/ stuff 4 /ɑ:/ bark 5 /ʌ/ dunce
6 /ʌ/ muster 7 /ɑ:/ clerk 8 /ʌ/ musk 9 /ʌ/ cuff 10 /ɑ:/ lark

Check Your Progress 7

2 1 /ʌ/ current 2 /ɜ:/ curfew 3 /ɜ:/ gurgle 4 /ɑ:/ hard 5 /ʌ/ muster
6 /ɑ:/ gargle 7 /ʌ, ɜ:/ suburb 8 /ɑ:/ carton 9 /ʌ/ tusk 10 /ɑ:/ stark

3 1 /ʃʌtl/ 2 /kɑ:tu:n/ 3 /bɪgʌn/ 4 /gɜ:dl/ 5 /fɔ:ft/
6 /fɔ:m æt/ 7 /sʌltrɪ/ 8 /kɑ:dbɔ:d/ 9 /hɒkɪ/ 10 /sɜ:vɪs/
11 /ekspɜ:t/ 12 /rɪvɜ:s/

Check Your Progress 8

1 1. /ɪ'sənʃəl/ 2. /tærɪtri/ 3. /səljuʃən/ 4. /fɜ:nɪʃɪz/ 5. /prəʃər/
6. /pəlju:t/ 7. /ɪnjusəns/ 8. /bədən/ 9. /ætɒmɪk/ 10. /nɔ:ti/

Check Your Progress 10

2 1 eɪ (case) 2 eɪ (chaste) 3 e, ɪ, eɪ (celebrate) 4 aɪ (diet)
5 æ, ɔɪ (alloy) 6 ɪ, eɪ (create) 7 e (chest) 8 aɪ, ɪ (climate)
9 eɪ (paint) 10 ɪ, ɔɪ (destroy)

Check Your Progress 11

2 1 /əʊ/ explode 2 /ɔ:/ floor 3 /ɔ:/ stork 4 /əʊ/ potent 5 /əʊ/ drone
6 /əʊ/ mould 7 /ɔ:/ mauld 8 /ɔ:/ paltry

Check Your Progress 12

2 1 ɪə (beard) 2 aɪ, ə (violent) 3 ɪə, ɪ (steering) 4 ɪ, ɪə (million)
5 /eə/ (pray) 6 ɪə (steers) 7 ɪ, ɪə (Indian) 8 ə, ɪə (career)

Check Your Progress 13

1 Transcription of words:

1. /admɪʃn/
2. /ælədʒɪ/
3. /æmətə/
4. /ænəkɪ/
5. /æsmə/
6. /bevərɪdʒ/
7. /bærɒgrəfi/
8. /bleɪtənt/
9. /kɑ:tu:n/
10. /kəriə/
11. /kæʒʊəl/
12. /kærəktə/