

Interpreting Pronunciation Symbols

Anyone who has tried to learn to speak—or to spell—English knows that spelling is not a reliable guide for pronunciation. Linguists and dictionary publishers need a way to write the pronunciation of words. Since symbols vary, even among dictionaries, this guide is designed to help you interpret the variance among the symbols used in popular resources.

VOWELS

	Longman	American Heritage	Webster's (print editions)
select	ə	ə	ə
seat	ɪ ^y	ē	ē
sit	ɪ	ī	i
same	e ^y	ā	ā
set	ɛ	ě	e
sat	æ	ǎ	a
sun	ʌ	ŭ	'ə
song	ɑ	ō	ä
saw	ɔ	ô	ó
so	o ^w	ō	ō
soot	ʊ	ö	ù
suit	u ^w	oo	ü
site, sight	aɪ	ī	ī
sound	aʊ	ou	aù
soil	ɔɪ	oi	ói
sir	ɜr	ûr	ər

CONSONANTS

	Longman	American Heritage	Webster's (print editions)
may	m	m	m
name	n	n	n

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CONSONANTS (CONTINUED)

	Longman	American Heritage	Webster's (print editions)
sing	ŋ	ng	ŋ
pay	p	p	p
bay	b	b	b
fade	f	f	f
veil	v	v	v
way	w	w	w
thin	θ	th	th
they	ð	<i>th</i>	<u>th</u>
tame	t	t	t
day	d	d	d
say	s	s	s
zoo	z	z	z
shade	ʃ	sh	sh
leisure	ʒ	zh	zh
chain	tʃ	ch	ch
jay	dʒ	j	j
lay	l	l	l
ray	r	r	r
yes	y	y	y
came	k	k	k
game	g	g	g
hay	h	h	h

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