

# IMPROVING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION BY STUDYING PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

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# PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

The *mediocre* teacher  
TELLS.

The *good* teacher  
EXPLAINS.

The *superior* teacher  
DEMONSTRATES.

The *great* teacher  
INSPIRES.



ɪ SEE	ɪ SIT	ʊ BOOK	u: TOO	ɪə HERE	eɪ DAY		
e MEN	ə AMERICA	ɜ: WORD	ɔ: SORT	ʊə TOUR	ɔɪ BOY	əʊ GO	
æ CAT	ʌ BUT	ɑ: PART	ɒ NOT	eə WEAR	aɪ MY	aʊ HOW	
p PIG	b BED	t TIME	d DO	tʃ CHURCH	dʒ JUDGE	k KILO	g GO
f FIVE	v VERY	θ THINK	ð THE	s SIX	z ZOO	ʃ SHORT	ʒ CASUAL
m MILK	n NO	ŋ SING	h HELLO	l LIVE	r READ	w WINDOW	j YES

# LANGUAGE STUDY

1. What do people know when they know a language? For native speakers it is automatic (like driving a car). Language exists in the minds of the speakers and how language works is a puzzle for the linguists – many theories, but no consensus.

2. How speech sounds relate to meaning;

**The speech sounds** – medium we use to represent what we are saying: first we hear a stream of sounds and then we relate them to certain meaning which is actually Phonetics and Phonology.



Speech is not one of the five senses, and it has to be learned during the first few years of life.

Crying is the first use of the vocal organs and the first step towards speaking. Very soon babies start to babble (make different sounds).

# Phonetics vs. Phonology

- Phonetics is the science that deals with the sounds of human speech and sometimes they can be perceived of a particular language as something simple and mundane, it is much more than that. Phonetics is one of the main **building blocks in learning a new language**.
- Phonetics teaches about how different words are pronounced verbally by something called International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). **The IPA stands as a standardized representation of the sounds of spoken language.**
- Phonetics deals with the **physical aspects of speech production** and their relationship to speech perception, while phonology deals with the **functional and systemic nature of sounds** in certain languages i.e. the relationship between sounds and their meaning.

# Aims of studying Phonetics and Phonology

Languages differ a lot in their pronunciation patterns and rules. If the pronunciation of the English language is compared to the pronunciation of the Macedonian language it can be concluded that the relationship between spelling and sounds in English language does not appear to be one-to-one. This means that each spelling symbol does not apply to a single sound.

Examples:		Answers:	
1. fill	а) <u>книга</u>	1. three	а) 5
2. drunk	б) <u>теорија</u>	2. five	б) 7
3. chew	в) <u>телефон</u>	3. two	в) 7
4. single	г) <u>дрво</u>	4. five or six	г) 4
5. jungle	д) <u>клуба</u>	5. five	д) 5



# The Usage of IPA

- The relationship between the system of writing and pronunciation in English and Macedonian language can be seen from the above given examples.
- The aim of the English spelling system is to represent the sounds used by speakers and at first glance it may look easy but considering the above mentioned examples seems like that the aim looks a little bit complex in practice.
- If the Macedonian alphabet consists of 31 letters and the same number of sounds this cannot be said for the English language. The alphabet of the English language has 26 letters but the number of speech sounds is 44.

# The difficulties students face in learning the IPA

The most common mistakes the students usually commit and have to avoid are the following (Hlebec, 1995):

1. Transcribing proper names with capital letters
2. Transcribing silent letters
3. Words consisting of one syllable do not bear an accent mark when transcribed
4. Transcribing punctuation
5. Confusion between the transcription with the spelling

Word	Transcription	Mistake	Correct example
England	'ɪŋɡlənd	'ɪŋɡlənd, 'Eŋɡlənd	'ɪŋɡlənd
Chalk	tʃɔ:k	tʃɔ:lk	tʃɔ:k
Chat	tʃæt	'tʃæt	tʃæt
Stop!	stɒp	stɒp!	stɒp
Stop	stɒp	stɒp	stɒp



# Conclusion

- It is very important to point out the most essential purpose of Phonetics which is to explain how to pronounce the standard English chosen as such by the local population in England - Great Britain.
- Theoretical knowledge is necessary for anyone who is interested in learning and understanding the use of sounds in the English language especially the IPA which is easily accessible in any English dictionary.
- In order to be able to use it and make a practical implementation of it, one must learn the basic rules of the speech sounds i.e. the phonemes and allophones that are essential in differentiating the distinctive and non-distinctive features.