



Canadian Pronunciation

Vowel and Consonant Sounds

- One Vowel Rule: If there is only one vowel in a syllable, the vowel sound is short
Example: bad, bed, bid, body, bud).
- Two Vowel Rule: When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking. (Examples: rain, cream, fried, road, cue)
- Alphabet vowels, also called long vowels, sound like their letter name. (Examples are the first vowels in these words: Ace, Eagle, Ice, Oatmeal, Universe)
- The alphabet vowel sound “u” can sound like the “u” in “university” or the “u” in “Susan”.
- Short vowels, also called relative vowels, sound like the initial letters in these words: Apple, Egg, Igloo, Office, Umbrella)
- “Y” is sometimes considered a vowel in English and can sound like a long vowel “e” (Examples: city, quality, levity) or a long vowel “I” (Examples: cry, lye, by)
- For words that end in “o”, the “o” is pronounced as an alphabet vowel. (Examples: potato, tomato, ratio)
- When the vowels “I” and “o” are followed by two or more consonants, the vowels are alphabet vowels (Examples: right, thigh, own, old)
- When a word has only one vowel, and the vowel is the last letter in the word, the vowel is an alphabet vowel (Examples: he, be, we)



- Weak vowels are not pronounced clearly and do not follow the pronunciation rules for alphabet and relative vowels. The term for a weak vowel is a “schwa” and it is the most common sound in English.
- In English, there are strong, regular and weak vowels. Remember: only vowels are stressed in English, not consonants.
- When the letter “t” is between two vowels, it is pronounced as “d”. (Examples: water = wadder; cater = cader; later = lader)
- When 2 T’s appear together in a word, they are pronounced as “d” (Examples: little = liddle; cattle = caddle; kettle = keddle)
- When there are two P’s in a word, the vowel sound before the P is a relative vowel sound. (Examples: chopped, hopped, topped) When there is only one P, the vowel sound before the P is an alphabet vowel sound. (Examples: coped, hoped, eloped)
- If a “t” comes before the past tense ending “ed”, the “ed” is pronounced as a voiced “id” . (Examples: parented, relented, mounted)
- If a voiced consonant comes before the past tense ending “ed”, the “ed” is pronounced as “d” . (Examples: lived, bathed, rubbed)
- If a voiceless consonant comes before the past tense ending “ed”, the “ed” is pronounced as “t” . (Examples: washed, picked, voiced)
- The letter “s” has both voiced and voiceless sounds. Usually, the “s” in nouns is voiceless, while the “s” in verbs is voiced. (Example: This house houses many tenants.)
- The consonant blend “th” can be voiced (Examples: the, this, these) or voiceless (Examples: thing, three, through)
- Voiceless consonants do not use your voice and there is no vibration in your throat when you make the sound. (Examples: p, t, k, s, sh, ch)



- Voiced consonants use your voice – you will feel a vibration when you place your fingers on your throat as you make the sound. (Examples: b, d, v, l, r, z, j)
- A stop sound is a consonant sound made by blocking the flow of air in your voice and then releasing it. The stop sounds in English are: P, T, K, B, D and G.
- The stop sounds B, D and G are voiced.
- The stop sounds P, T and K are voiceless.
- For words ending in a voiced consonant, the plural “s” is voiced. (Examples: road, roads; dog, dogs; rub, rubs)
- For words ending in a voiceless consonant, the plural “s” is voiceless. (Examples: bank, banks; pup, pups; dot, dots)
- Practice your L’s and R’s with this tongue twister: Larry Hurley, a burly squirrel hunter, hurled a furry squirrel through a curly grill.
- To make the continuing sound “r”, your tongue almost touches your tooth ridge and is curled.
- To make the continuing sound “l” your tongue must be touching your tooth ridge – the bump behind your front teeth.
- To distinguish the present tense words from the past, remember to enunciate the stop sounds at the end of past tense suffixes. (Examples: stopped, kept, rubbed, moped)
- To make the “w” sound, round your lips like you would to whistle and then widen your lips as you say the sound.
- When the /th/ sound is a part of a function word or weak syllable, the tongue touches the back of the front teeth briefly instead of pushing through the teeth.
- To produce the voiced “th” sound, keep your tongue flat and close to the roof of your mouth. Place your tongue between your teeth so that it sticks out slightly and exhale so that you feel the air flow along the top of your tongue and vibrate your vocal cords.



- To produce the voiceless “th” sound, keep your tongue flat and close to the roof of your mouth. Place your tongue between your teeth so that it sticks out slightly and exhale so that you feel the air flow along the top of your tongue. There is no vibration of the vocal chords.
- The difference between the continuing sounds /l/ and /n/ is that the /n/ sound is more nasal. Your tongue position is the same for both sounds.