

Key to the Symbols

used in this book

Traditional Symbol or Name	International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)	PLA Phonetic Alphabet	Key Words
short ä	/æ/	A	<u>a</u> sk, tha <u>n</u> k
medium ä	/a/	AH	<u>a</u> re, fa <u>th</u> er
long ā	/eː/	AI	<u>a</u> te, ma <u>k</u> e
schwa a	/ə/	uh	<u>a</u> bout, ide <u>a</u>
b	/b/	B	<u>b</u> ig, jo <u>b</u>
soft c	/s/	S	<u>c</u> ity, dan <u>c</u> e
hard c	/k/	K	<u>c</u> ome, mus <u>i</u> c
ch	/tʃ/	CH	<u>ch</u> ild, mu <u>ch</u>
d	/d/	D	<u>d</u> o, nee <u>d</u>
short ě	/ɛ/	E	<u>e</u> njoy, be <u>s</u> t
long ē	/iː/	EE	<u>e</u> at, w <u>e</u>
f	/f/	F	<u>f</u> or, <u>i</u> f
soft g	/dʒ/	J	<u>g</u> entle, ag <u>e</u>
hard g	/g/	G	<u>g</u> ood, bi <u>g</u>
h	/h/	H	<u>h</u> appy, be <u>h</u> ind
short ĭ	/ɪ/	I	<u>i</u> f, w <u>i</u> th
long ī	/aː/	AY	<u>i</u> dea, t <u>i</u> e
diphthong oi	/oɪ/	OY	<u>oi</u> l, jo <u>i</u> n
j	/dʒ/	J	<u>j</u> ust, en <u>j</u> oy
k	/k/	K	<u>k</u> ee <u>p</u> , ba <u>ck</u>
l	/l/	L	<u>l</u> ook, schoo <u>l</u>
m	/m/	M	<u>m</u> ake, tim <u>e</u>
n	/n/	N	<u>n</u> o, fin <u>e</u>
long n	/ŋ/	N	did <u>n</u> 't, sudd <u>e</u> n
ng	/ŋ/	NG	l <u>e</u> ng <u>th</u> , sin <u>g</u>
short ǒ	/a/	AH	<u>o</u> n, st <u>o</u> p
long ō	/oː/	O	<u>o</u> pen, n <u>o</u>
diphthong ou or ow	/əʊ/	OU	<u>o</u> ut, <u>do</u> wn, <u>no</u> w

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schwa o	/ə/	UH	of, lo <u>v</u> e
open ô	/ɔ/	OR	or, sto <u>r</u> e
long ōō	/u ^w /	OO	too <u>l</u> , too
short ȯȯ	/ʊ/	U	bo <u>o</u> k, goo <u>u</u> d
schwa oo	/ə/	UH	blo <u>o</u> d, flo <u>o</u> d
p	/p/	P	pu <u>t</u> , sto <u>p</u>
qu	/kw/	KW	qu <u>i</u> ck, squ <u>a</u> re
r	/r/	R	ru <u>n</u> , ca <u>r</u>
r-controlled vowels	/r/	ER	ea <u>r</u> n, docto <u>r</u>
s	/s/	S	so, ye <u>s</u>
sh	/ʃ/	SH	she, wi <u>sh</u>
s pronounced ZH	/z/	ZH	televis <u>i</u> on, usu <u>a</u> l
t	/t/	T	te <u>n</u> , pu <u>t</u>
soft th	/θ/	th	tha <u>n</u> k, mon <u>th</u>
hard th	/ð/	TH	th <u>i</u> s, smoo <u>th</u>
tapped t	/t̬/ or /ɾ/	D	ci <u>t</u> y, matte <u>r</u>
short ŭ	/ə/	UH	u <u>p</u> , ru <u>n</u>
medium u	/u/	OO	ru <u>l</u> e, tru <u>u</u> e
long u	/yu/	YOO	U.S., valu <u>u</u> e
v	/v/	V	ve <u>r</u> y, gi <u>v</u> e
w	/w/	W	we <u>l</u> l, sho <u>w</u>
x	/ks/ or /gz/	KS or GZ	ne <u>x</u> t, ex <u>a</u> mple
short y	/y/	Y	yo <u>u</u> , wa <u>y</u>
long y	/i ^y /	EE	ea <u>y</u> , ve <u>y</u>
z	/z/	Z	zo <u>o</u> , si <u>z</u> e

Note: This book focuses on mastering the most frequently used words in North American English. Therefore, not every possible pronunciation of every alphabet letter appears here. Sound-to-letter correspondences that are infrequent in everyday speech are not included.