

English Phonetics and Phonology

English consonants – Exercises

Exercise 1: Example words for major positional allophones

Essentially, you will be looking for sequences of specific phonemes. Thus, all that is needed to do this exercise is (1) an understanding of the POA and MOA terms from the previous class and (2) knowledge of the phonemic composition of English words (i.e. what phonemes are in there). A good dictionary (e.g. CUBE) and some searching skills might be helpful, too. For this exercise, you **don't** need to know how the individual allophones work.

1a Aspirated fortis plosives

An English fortis plosive will be aspirated when at the beginning of a stressed syllable, before a vowel, but not after /s/. Find six example words, with at least one example for each English fortis plosive, and three in which the stressed syllable is not the first one in the word.

1b Devoiced lenis plosives

An English lenis plosive will be (partially) devoiced when next to a pause (silence) or a fortis sound. Find six example words, with at least one example for each English lenis plosive, and three in which the devoiced plosive is in the middle of a word.

1c Unreleased plosives

Any English plosive will be unreleased (=will have no audible release) when it stands before another plosive. Find six example words, with at least one example for each English plosive.

1d Nasal and lateral release

An English plosive will have nasal release when followed by a homorganic nasal (a nasal made at the same place of articulation). An English plosive will have lateral release when followed by a homorganic lateral (a lateral made at the same place of articulation). Find four example words: two for nasal release, and two for lateral release.

1e Devoiced approximants

An English approximant will be completely devoiced when it stands at the beginning of a stressed syllable between a fortis plosive and a vowel. Find six example words, with at least one for each approximant, and at least two in which the stressed syllable is not the first one in the word.

1f “Clear” and “dark” /l/

A General British English /l/ will be “clear” before a vowel or /j/, and “dark” elsewhere. Find six example words: three with “clear” /l/, and three with “dark” /l/ (where in at least two of the latter the /l/ is not word-final).

Exercise 2: Diacritics for consonant allophones in allophonic transcription

Use the results of Exercise 1 to decide what each of the diacritics (the small additional symbols added to the main transcription symbols) means in the allophonic (narrow) transcriptions below. One of the symbols was not discussed in Exercise 1. Mark it X (for the time being).

decode [d̥ɪ'kʰoʊd̥]*computer* [kəm'pjʊ:t̚r]*Sydney* ['sɪd̥ni]*webcam* ['web̥'kæm]*goodness* ['gʊd̥nəs]*replay* (verb) [ri:'pleɪ]*arctic* ['ɑ:rkʰtɪk]*twitter* ['twɪt̚r]*Britain* ['brɪt̚n]*bottle* ['bɒ:t̚l̥]*Google* ['gʊ:ɡ̊]*Coldplay* ['kʰoʊld̥'pleɪ]*hot-dog* ['hɒ:t̚d̥ɔ:g̊]*chrome* [kɹoʊm]*kindle* ['kʰɪnd̥l̥]*Paypal* [pʰeɪpæt̚]

◊ is a placeholder symbol for the base letter

◊

means

◊

means

◊^h

means

◊^ʰ

means

◊

means

◊ⁿ

means

◊_i

means

◊^l

means

Exercise 3: Detecting ungrammatical allophones

For each of the transcription pairs below, circle the correct one and explain why the other one is not grammatical.

[skaɪp] [sk^haɪp]

[pə'li:s] [pə'ti:s]

[k^hu:t̚] [k^hu:t̚]

[web] [web̥]

['wɔ:t^hr] ['wɔ:t̚r]

['dɑ:kʰt̚r] ['dɑ:kt̚r]

[rɪ'kwest] [rɪ'kw̥est]

[ɜ:θ] [ɜ:θ̥]