

# Better English Pronunciation

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Course: Pronunciation

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# Sounds vs. Letters

- A letter is a written symbol; a sound is a unit of speech.
- There are 26 letters in English, but over 44 distinct sounds.
- Example: the letter 'a' has different sounds in 'cat', 'car', 'cake'.
- RP (Received Pronunciation) focuses on accurate sound distinctions.

# Organs of Speech

- Main organs:
  - - Lips
  - - Teeth
  - - Tongue
  - - Hard and Soft Palate
  - - Alveolar Ridge
  - - Vocal cords
  - - Larynx
- (A diagram should be included here)

# Consonants and Vowels: Definition and Number

- Consonants: produced with obstruction in the vocal tract.
- Vowels: produced without any obstruction.
- RP includes 24 consonant sounds and about 20 vowel sounds.
- Examples:
  - - Consonants: /p/, /t/, /k/
  - - Vowels: /i:/, /æ/

# Consonant Description

- Voicing:
  - - Voiced: /b/, /d/
  - - Voiceless: /p/, /t/
- Place of Articulation:
  - - Bilabial: /p/, /b/
  - - Alveolar: /t/, /d/
- Manner of Articulation:
  - - Plosive: /p/, /t/
  - - Fricative: /f/, /v/

# Vowel Description

- Described by:
  - - Height: high /i:/, low /æ/
  - - Position: front /i:/, back /u:/
  - - Lip rounding: rounded /u:/, unrounded /i:/
- Monophthongs: single vowel sound (e.g., /ɪ/, /ʊ/)
- Diphthongs: two vowel sounds in one syllable (e.g., /aɪ/, /eɪ/)

# Word Stress

- Stress: giving prominence to a syllable in a word or sentence.
- Types:
  - - Word stress
  - - Sentence stress
- Example:
  - 'record (noun) vs. re'cord (verb)
- Stress can affect meaning and clarity.

# Weak and Strong Forms of Function Words

- Function words: to, and, have, of, etc.
- Strong form: used in isolation or for emphasis.
- Weak form: used in connected speech.
- Examples:
  - - I want to go → /tə/
  - - To be or not to be → /tə/



# Rhythm in English

- English rhythm is stress-timed.
- Stressed syllables occur at regular intervals.
- Content words are stressed; function words are often unstressed.
- Example:
- He WENT to the SHOP to BUY some MILK.

# Intonation and Intention

- Intonation: variation in pitch across a sentence.
- Used to express emotion, attitude, or sentence type.
- Patterns:
  - - Rising: often in yes/no questions
  - - Falling: statements or commands
- Example:
  - You're coming? (rising) vs. You're coming. (falling)