

# Guide to Pronunciation

Pronunciation is not an intrinsic component of the dictionary. For some languages, such as Spanish, Swahili, and Finnish, the correspondence between orthography and pronunciation is so close that a dictionary need only spell a word correctly to indicate its pronunciation. Modern English, however, displays no such consistency in sound and spelling, and so a dictionary of English must devote considerable attention to the pronunciation of the language. The English lexicon contains numerous eye rhymes such as *love*, *move*, and *rove*, words which do not sound alike despite their similar spellings. On the other hand, it also contains rhyming words such as *breeze*, *cheese*, *ease*, *frieze*, and *sleaze* whose rhymes are all spelled differently.

This grand mismatch between words that look alike and words that sound alike does at least serve to record something of the history of the English-speaking peoples and their language. Spelling often indicates whether a word comes down from the native Anglo-Saxon word stock or was adopted in successive ages from the speech of a missionary monk chanting Latin, a seafaring Viking dicking in Old Norse, a Norman nobleman giving orders in French, or a young immigrant to turn-of-the-century America. For example, the sound \sh\ is spelled as *sh* in native English *shore*, as *ch* in the French loan *champagne*, as *sk* in one pronunciation of the Norwegian loan *ski*, as *si* in the Renaissance Latin loan *emulsion*, and as *sch* in the recent Yiddish loan *schlep*. English vowels present different complexities of sound and spelling, due in large part to the fact that William Caxton introduced printing to England in A.D. 1476, many decades before the sound change known as the Great Vowel Shift had run its course. With the rise of printing came an increasingly fixed set of spelling conventions, but the conventionalized spellings soon lost their connection to pronunciation as the vowel shift continued. The stressed vowels of *sane* and *sanity* are therefore identical in spelling though now quite different in quality. For the trained observer the vagaries of English orthography contain a wealth of linguistic history; for most others, however, this disparity between sound and spelling is just a continual nuisance at school or work.

Readers often turn to the dictionary wanting to learn the exact pronunciation of a word, only to discover that the word may have several pronunciations, as is the case for *deity*, *economic*, *envelope*, and *greasy*, among many others. The inclusion of variant pronunciations disappoints those who want their dictionary to list one "correct" pronunciation. In truth, though, there can be no objective standard for correct pronunciation other than the usage of thoughtful and, in particular, educated speakers of English. Among such speakers one hears much variation in pronunciation.

Dictionaries of English before the modern era usually ignored pronunciation variants, instead indicating a single pronunciation by marking the entry word with diacritics to indicate stress and letter values. These systems were cumbersome, however, and reflected the dialectal biases of the editors more than the facts about how a word was actually spoken. Lexicographers came eventually to recognize the need for separate respellings which could record the entire range of accepted variants along with appropriate notes about dialectal distribution or usage.

This dictionary records many types of variation in pronunciation. Distinctions between British and American speech are frequently noted, as are differences among the three major dialect areas of the U.S.—Northern, Southern, and Midland. Words that have distinctive pronuncia-

tions in Canada, such as *decal* and *khaki*, have those pronunciations duly noted. Pronunciations peculiar to certain spheres of activity are also represented, as for example the variants of *athwart* and *tackle* heard in nautical use. Finally, a wide range of unpredictable variations are included, such as the pronunciation of *economic* with either \e\ or \ē\. Unpredictable variations frequently cut across the boundaries of geographical dialects, sometimes running along the lines of social class, ethnicity, or gender instead. In fine, this dictionary attempts to include—either explicitly or by implication—all pronunciation variants of a word that are used by educated speakers of the English language.

The pronunciations in this dictionary are informed chiefly by the Merriam-Webster pronunciation file. This file contains citations that are transcriptions of words used by native speakers of English in the course of utterances heard in speeches, interviews, and conversations. In this extensive collection of 3 × 5 slips of paper, one finds the pronunciations of a host of people: politicians, professors, curators, artists, musicians, doctors, engineers, preachers, activists, journalists, and many others. The Merriam-Webster pronunciation editors have been collecting these citations from live speech and from radio, television, and shortwave broadcasts since the 1930s. It is primarily on the basis of this large and growing file that questions of usage and acceptability in pronunciation are answered. All of the pronunciations recorded in this book can be documented as falling within the range of generally acceptable variation, unless they are accompanied by a restricting usage note or symbol or a regional label.

No system of indicating pronunciation is self-explanatory. The following discussion sets out the significance and use of the pronunciation symbols in this book, with special attention to those areas where experience has shown that dictionary users may have questions. More detailed information can be found in the Guide to Pronunciation in Webster's Third New International Dictionary. The order of symbols discussed below is the same as the order on the page of Pronunciation Symbols, with the exception that the symbols which are not letter characters are here listed first. Those characters which have corresponding symbols in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) are shown with their IPA equivalents.

∖ ∖ All pronunciation information is printed between reversed virgules. Pronunciation symbols are printed in roman type and all other information, such as labels and notes, is printed in italics.

∖ ∖ ∖ A high-set stress mark precedes a syllable with primary (strongest) stress; a low-set mark precedes a syllable with secondary (medium) stress; a third level of weak stress requires no mark at all: \ˈpen-mən-ˌʃɪp\.

Since the nineteenth century the International Phonetics Association has recommended that stress marks precede the stressed syllable, and linguists worldwide have adopted this practice on the basic principle that before a syllable can be uttered the speaker must know what degree of stress to give it.

∖ - ∖ Hyphens are used to separate syllables in pronunciation transcriptions. In actual speech, of course, there is no pause between the syllables of a word.

The placement of hyphens is based on phonetic principles, such as vowel length, nasalization, variation due to the position of a consonant in a syllable, and other nuances of the spoken word. The syllable breaks shown in this book reflect the careful pronunciation of a single word out of context. Syllabication tends to change in rapid or running speech: a consonant at the end of a syllable may shift into a following syllable, and unstressed vowels may be elided. The numerous variations in pronunciation that a word may have in running speech are of interest to phoneticians but are well outside the scope of a dictionary of general English.

The centered dots in boldface entry words indicate potential end-of-line division points and not syllabication. These division points are determined by considerations of both morphology and pronunciation, among others. Further discussion of end-of-line division is contained in the section of that name within the Explanatory Notes. In this book a consistent approach has been pursued, both toward word division based on traditional formulas and toward syllabication based on phonetic principles. As a result, the hyphens indicating syllable breaks and the centered dots indicating end-of-line division often do not fall in the same places.

**( )** Parentheses are used in pronunciations to indicate that whatever is symbolized between them is present in some utterances but not in others; thus *factory* \ˈfak-t(ə)rē\ is pronounced both \ˈfak-tə-rē\ and \ˈfak-trē\, *industry* \ˈin-(ɹ)dəs-trē\ is pronounced both \ˈin-dəs-trē\ and \ˈin-dəs-trē\. In some phonetic environments, as in *fence* \ˈfɛn(t)s\ and *boil* \ˈbɔɪ(-ə)\, it may be difficult to determine whether the sound shown in parentheses is or is not present in a given utterance; even the usage of a single speaker may vary considerably.

**, ; \** Variant pronunciations are separated by commas; groups of variants are separated by semicolons. The order of variants does not mean that the first is in any way preferable to or more acceptable than the others. All of the variants in this book, except those restricted by a regional or usage label, are widely used in acceptable educated speech. If evidence reveals that a particular variant is used more frequently than another, the former will be given first. This should not, however, prejudice anyone against the second or subsequent variants. In many cases the numerical distribution of variants is equal, but one of them, of course, must be printed first.

**÷** The obelus, or division sign, is placed before a pronunciation variant that occurs in educated speech but that is considered by some to be questionable or unacceptable. This symbol is used sparingly and primarily for variants that have been objected to over a period of time in print by commentators on usage, in schools by teachers, or in correspondence that has come to the Merriam-Webster editorial department. In most cases the objection is based on orthographic or etymological arguments. For instance, the second variant of *cupola* \ˈkyū-pə-lə, ÷-lō\, though used frequently in speech, is objected to because *a* is very rarely pronounced \ō\ in English. The pronunciation \ˈlɪ-ber-ē\ is similarly marked at the entry for *library* because some people insist that both *r*'s should be pronounced.

**ə** in unstressed syllables as in *banana*, *collide*, *abut* (IPA [ə]). This neutral vowel, called *schwa*, may be represented orthographically by any of the letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, *y*, and by many combinations of letters. In running speech unstressed vowels are regularly pronounced as ə\ in American and British speech.

Speakers of r-dropping dialects will often insert an \r\ after \ə\ when \ə\ precedes another vowel. (See the section on \r\.)

**ə** in stressed syllables as in *humdrum*, *abut*. (IPA [ʌ]).

Some speakers pronounce \ə\ and \ō\ identically before \l\, with the result that word pairs like *gull* and *goal* are homophones. The sound produced in such cases is usually the same sound that other speakers use for \ō\.

**ə** immediately preceding \l\, \n\, \m\, \ŋ\, as in *bat-tle*, *cotton*, and one pronunciation of *open* \ˈō-pᵻm\ and of *and* \ᵻŋ\ as in one pronunciation of the phrase *lock and key* \lɔk-ᵻŋ-ˈkē\. The symbol \ə\ preceding these consonants does not itself represent a sound. It signifies instead that the following consonant is syllabic; that is, the consonant itself forms the nucleus of a syllable that does not contain a vowel.

In the pronunciation of some French or French-derived words \ə\ is placed immediately after \l\, \m\, \r\ to indicate one nonsyllabic pronunciation of these consonants, as in the French words *table* “table,” *prisme* “prism,” and *titre* “title,” each of which in isolation and in some contexts is a one-syllable word.

**ər** as in *further*, *merger*, *bird* (IPA [ɜ, ə]). (See the section on \r\.) Actually, this is usually a single sound, not a sequence of \ə\ followed by \r\. Speakers of r-dropping dialects will pronounce \ər\ without r-color (IPA [ɜ, ə]) when unstressed, [ə] when unstressed, when it precedes a consonant or pause, but will insert a following \r\ when \ər\ precedes another vowel.

**ər-, ər** as in two different pronunciations of *hurry*. Most U.S. speakers pronounce \ˈhər-ē\ with the \ər\ representing the same sounds as in *bird* \ˈbɜrd\. Usually in metropolitan New York and southern England and frequently in New England and the southeastern U.S. the vowel is much the same as the vowel of *hum* followed by a syllable-initial variety of \r\. This pronunciation of *hurry* is represented as \ˈhə-rē\ in this book. Both types of pronunciation are shown for words composed of a single meaningful unit (or *morpheme*) as in *current*, *hurry*, and *worry*. In words such as *furry*, *stirring*, and *purring* in which a vowel or vowel-initial suffix is added to a word ending in *r* or *rr* (as *fur*, *stir*, and *purr*), the second type of pronunciation outlined above is heard only occasionally and is not shown in this dictionary.

**a** as in *mat*, *map*, *mad*, *gag*, *snap*, *patch* (IPA [æ]). Some variation in this vowel is occasioned by the consonant that follows it; thus, for some speakers *map*, *mad*, and *gag* have noticeably different vowel sounds. There is a very small number of words otherwise identical in pronunciation that these speakers may distinguish solely by variation of this vowel, as in the two words *can* (put into cans; be able) in the sentence “Let’s can what we can.” However, this distinction is sufficiently infrequent that the traditional practice of using a single symbol is followed in this book.

Many varieties of English do not allow \a\ to be followed by an \r\ which begins the following syllable. In such a case, the sequence of \a-r\ is replaced by \er\, and word pairs like *arrow* and *aero* are homophones. This is not always indicated in transcription. The reader should assume that any sequences of \a-r\ will be \er\ for such speakers.

When it precedes \ŋ\, \a\ is often followed by a \y\ sound. The resulting vowel sounds much like \ā\ for many speakers.

**ā** as in *day*, *fade*, *date*, *aorta*, *drape*, *cape* (IPA [e, eɪ, ei]). In most English speech this is actually a diphthong. In lowland South Carolina, in coastal Georgia and Florida, and occasionally elsewhere \ā\ is pronounced as a monophthong. As a diphthong \ā\ has a first element \e\ or monophthongal \ā\ and a second element \i\.

Before \l\, speakers may lose the second element \i\ and insert \ə\. Thus, a word like *ale* would be IPA [eəl]. Alter-

nately, many speakers will keep the second element  $\text{\i}$  and add a following  $\text{\ə}$  which creates a new syllable. Thus, the word *trail* will be  $\text{\}^{\text{t}}\text{r}\text{\a}\text{\i}\text{\l}$ , rhyming with *betrayal*.

$\text{\ä}$  as in *bother*, *cot* (IPA [a]). The symbol  $\text{\ä}$  represents the vowel of *cot*, *cod*, and the stressed vowel of *collar* in the speech of those who pronounce this vowel differently from the vowel in *caught*, *cawed*, and *caller*, represented by  $\text{\ò}$ . In U.S. speech  $\text{\ä}$  is pronounced with little or no rounding of the lips, and it is fairly long in duration, especially before voiced consonants. In southern England  $\text{\ä}$  is usually accompanied by some lip rounding and is relatively short in duration. The vowel  $\text{\ò}$  generally has appreciable lip rounding. Many U.S. speakers do not distinguish between *cot—caught*, *cod—cawed*, and *collar—caller*, usually because they lack or have less lip rounding in the words transcribed with  $\text{\ò}$ . Though the symbols  $\text{\ä}$  and  $\text{\ò}$  are used throughout this book to distinguish the members of the above pairs and similar words, the speakers who rhyme these pairs will automatically reproduce a sound that is consistent with their own speech.

In transcription of foreign words, the symbol  $\text{\ä}$  is also used to represent IPA [a], a vowel which is generally pronounced farther forward in the mouth than  $\text{\ä}$  but not as far forward as  $\text{\a}$ . Some speakers may also have such a vowel in words like *balm* which contrasts with the vowel in words like *bomb*. Such a contrast is rare, however, and it is not represented in this dictionary.

Speakers of r-dropping dialects will usually insert an  $\text{\r}$  after  $\text{\ä}$  when  $\text{\ä}$  precedes another vowel. (See the section on  $\text{\r}$ .)

$\text{\är}$  as in *car*, *heart*, *aardvark*, *bazaar*, *bizarre* (IPA [aə, aɚ, əɚ]). The initial element of this diphthong may vary from  $\text{\ä}$  to a vowel pronounced farther forward in the mouth than  $\text{\ä}$ , or it may be a vowel with some lip rounding resembling  $\text{\ò}$ . Speakers of r-dropping dialects will pronounce  $\text{\är}$  as a long vowel (IPA [ɑ:, a:ɪ]) when it precedes a consonant or pause, and may distinguish  $\text{\är}$  in *cart* from  $\text{\ä}$  in *cot* by the length and quality of the vowel, not by the presence of  $\text{\r}$ . However, speakers of r-dropping dialects will usually insert an  $\text{\r}$  after  $\text{\är}$  when it precedes a vowel. (See the section on  $\text{\r}$ .)

$\text{\au}$  as in *now*, *loud*, *out* (IPA [au, au]). The initial element of this diphthong may vary from  $\text{\a}$  to  $\text{\ä}$ , the first being more common in Southern and south Midland speech than elsewhere. In coastal areas of the southern U.S. and in parts of Canada this diphthong is often realized as  $\text{\əu}$  when immediately preceding a voiceless consonant, as in the noun *house* and in *out*.

Many varieties of English do not allow  $\text{\au}$  to be followed by  $\text{\l}$  in the same syllable. Speakers of such varieties will insert a following  $\text{\ə}$  which creates a new syllable. This is indicated by the transcription  $\text{\au}(-\text{\ə})$ . For such speakers, *owl* will rhyme with *avowal*. Also, many varieties of English do not allow  $\text{\au}$  to be followed by  $\text{\r}$  in the same syllable. Speakers of such varieties will transform the following  $\text{\r}$  into  $\text{\ər}$ , thus creating a new syllable. This is indicated by the transcription  $\text{\au}(-\text{\ə})\text{\r}$ . For such speakers, *scour* will rhyme with *plower*.

$\text{\b}$  as in *baby*, *rib* (IPA [b]).

$\text{\ch}$  as in *chin*, *nature*  $\text{\}^{\text{n}\text{\a}}\text{\c}\text{\h}\text{\ər}$  (IPA [tʃ]). Actually, this sound is  $\text{\t}$  +  $\text{\sh}$ . The distinction between the phrases *why choose* and *white shoes* is maintained by a difference in the syllabication of the  $\text{\t}$  and the  $\text{\sh}$  in each case and the consequent use of different varieties (or *allophones*) of  $\text{\t}$ .

$\text{\d}$  as in *did*, *adder* (IPA [d]). (See the section on  $\text{\t}$  below for a discussion of the flap allophone of

$\text{\d}$ .) Many speakers pronounce  $\text{\d}$  like  $\text{\j}$  when it occurs before  $\text{\r}$  in the same syllable.

$\text{\e}$  as in *bet*, *bed*, *peck* (IPA [ɛ]). In Southern and Midland dialects this vowel before nasal consonants often has a raised articulation that approximates  $\text{\i}$ , so that *pen* has nearly the pronunciation  $\text{\}^{\text{p}}\text{\i}\text{\n}$ .

Many varieties of English do not allow  $\text{\e}$  to be followed by an  $\text{\r}$  which begins the following syllable. In such a case, the sequence of  $\text{\e-r}$  is replaced by  $\text{\er}$ , and word pairs like *very* and *vary* are homophones. This is not always indicated in transcription. The reader should assume that any sequences of  $\text{\e-r}$  will be  $\text{\er}$  for such speakers.

$\text{\er}$  as in *bare*, *fair*, *wear*, *derriere*, *millionaire* (IPA [ɛə, ɛə]). The initial element of this diphthong may vary from  $\text{\e}$  to  $\text{\ä}$ . Speakers of r-dropping dialects will pronounce  $\text{\er}$  without any r-color on the second element (IPA [ɛə, ɛə]) when it precedes a consonant or pause, but will usually insert an  $\text{\r}$  after  $\text{\er}$  when it precedes a vowel. (See the section on  $\text{\r}$ .)

$\text{\ē}$ ,  $\text{\ē}$  in stressed syllables as in *beat*, *nose-bleed*, *evenly*, *easy* (IPA [i]).

Many speakers will insert  $\text{\ə}$  after  $\text{\ē}$  when it precedes  $\text{\l}$ . Additionally, some speakers pronounce  $\text{\ē}$  and  $\text{\i}$  identically before  $\text{\l}$ , with the result that word pairs like *heel* and *hill* are homophones. The sound pronounced in such cases may be either  $\text{\ē}$  or  $\text{\i}$  as pronounced by those who distinguish the two.

$\text{\ē}$  in unstressed syllables, as in *easy*, *mealy* (IPA [i, i]). Though the fact is not shown in this book, some dialects such as southern British and southern U.S. often, if not usually, pronounce  $\text{\i}$  instead of unstressed  $\text{\ē}$ .

$\text{\f}$  as in *fifty*, *cuff* (IPA [f]).

$\text{\g}$  as in *go*, *big*, *gift* (IPA [g]).

$\text{\h}$  as in *hat*, *ahead* (IPA [h]).

$\text{\hw}$  as in *whale* as pronounced by those who do not have the same pronunciation for both *whale* and *wail*. Some U.S. speakers distinguish these two words as  $\text{\}^{\text{h}}\text{\w}\text{\ä}$  and  $\text{\}^{\text{w}}\text{\ä}$  respectively, though frequently in the U.S. and usually in southern England  $\text{\}^{\text{w}}\text{\ä}$  is used for both. Some linguists consider  $\text{\hw}$  to be a single sound, a voiceless  $\text{\w}$  (IPA [ɸ]).

$\text{\i}$  as in *tip*, *banish*, *active* (IPA [ɪ]).

Some speakers pronounce  $\text{\ē}$  and  $\text{\i}$  identically before  $\text{\l}$ , with the result that word pairs like *heel* and *hill* are homophones. The sound pronounced in such cases may be either  $\text{\ē}$  or  $\text{\i}$  as pronounced by those who distinguish the two.

When it precedes  $\text{\ŋ}$ ,  $\text{\i}$  is often followed by a  $\text{\y}$  sound. The resulting sound often greatly resembles  $\text{\ē}$ .

$\text{\ir}$  as in *near*, *deer*, *mere*, *pier*, *souvenir* (IPA [ɪə, ɪə]). The initial element of this diphthong may vary from  $\text{\ē}$  to  $\text{\i}$ . Speakers of r-dropping dialects will pronounce  $\text{\ir}$  without any r-color on the second element (IPA [ɪə, ɪə]) when it precedes a consonant or pause, but will usually insert an  $\text{\r}$  after  $\text{\ir}$  when it precedes a vowel. (See the section on  $\text{\r}$ .)

$\text{\ī}$  as in *site*, *side*, *buy*, *tripe* (IPA [aɪ, ai, ai, ai]). Actually, this sound is a diphthong, usually composed of  $\text{\ä}$  +  $\text{\i}$ . In Southern speech, especially before a

pause or voiced consonant, as in *shy* and *five*, the second element  $\text{\i}$  may not be pronounced (IPA [a:]). Chiefly in eastern Virginia, coastal South Carolina, and parts of Canada the diphthong is approximately  $\text{\iə}$  +  $\text{\i}$  before voiceless consonants, as in *nice* and *write* (IPA [aɪ]).

Many varieties of English do not allow  $\text{\i}$  to be followed by  $\text{\l}$  in the same syllable. Speakers of such varieties will insert a following  $\text{\ə}$  which creates a new syllable. This is indicated by the transcription  $\text{\i(-ə)\l}$ . For such speakers, *file* will rhyme with *denial*. Also, many varieties of English do not allow  $\text{\i}$  to be followed by  $\text{\r}$  in the same syllable. Speakers of such varieties will transform the following  $\text{\r}$  into  $\text{\ər}$ , thus creating a new syllable. This is indicated by the transcription  $\text{\i(-ə)r}$ . For such speakers, *fire* will rhyme with *higher*.

$\text{\j}$  as in *job*, *gem*, *edge*, *join*, *judge*. Actually, this sound is  $\text{\d}$  +  $\text{\zh}$  (IPA [dʒ]). Assuming the anglicization of *Jeanne d'Arc* as  $\text{\zhän-}^{\text{d}}\text{\därk}$ , the distinction between the sentences *They betray John Dark* and *They betrayed Jeanne d'Arc* is maintained by a difference in the syllabication of the  $\text{\d}$  and the  $\text{\zh}$  in each case and the consequent use of different varieties (or *allophones*) of  $\text{\d}$ .

$\text{\k}$  as in *kin*, *cook*, *ache* (IPA [k]).

$\text{\k}$  as in German *ich* “I,” *Buch* “book,” and one pronunciation of English *loch*. Actually, there are two distinct sounds in German; the  $\text{\k}$  in *ich* (IPA [ç]) is pronounced toward the front of the mouth and the  $\text{\k}$  in *Buch* is pronounced toward the back (IPA [x]). In English, however, no two words otherwise identical are distinguished by these two varieties of  $\text{\k}$ , and therefore only a single symbol is necessary.

$\text{\l}$  as in *lily*, *pool* (IPA [l, ɫ]). In words such as *battle* and *fiddle* the  $\text{\l}$  is a syllabic consonant (IPA [l]). (See the section on  $\text{\ə}$  above.)

$\text{\m}$  as in *murmur*, *dim*, *nymph* (IPA [m]). In pronunciation variants of some words, such as *open* and *happen*,  $\text{\m}$  is a syllabic consonant (IPA [m]). (See the section on  $\text{\ə}$  above.)

$\text{\n}$  as in *no*, *own* (IPA [n]). In words such as *cotton* and *sudden*, the  $\text{\n}$  is a syllabic consonant (IPA [n]). (See the section on  $\text{\ə}$  above.)

$\text{\n}$  indicates that a preceding vowel or diphthong is pronounced with the nasal passages open, as in French *un bon vin blanc*  $\text{\œ}^{\text{n}}\text{-b}^{\text{o}}\text{-va}^{\text{n}}\text{-bl}^{\text{a}}\text{\n}$  “a good white wine.”

$\text{\ŋ}$  as in *sing*  $\text{\sɪŋ}$ , *singer*  $\text{\sɪŋ-ər}$ , *finger*  $\text{\fɪŋ-gər}$ , *ink*  $\text{\ɪŋk}$  (IPA [ŋ]). In some rare contexts  $\text{\ŋ}$  may be a syllabic consonant (IPA [ŋ]). (See the section on  $\text{\ə}$  above.)

$\text{\ō}$  as in *bone*, *know*, *beau* (IPA [o, ou, ou]). Especially in positions of emphasis, such as when it occurs at the end of a word or has primary stress,  $\text{\ō}$  tends to become diphthongal, moving from  $\text{\ō}$  toward a second element  $\text{\u}$ . In southern England and in some U.S. speech, particularly in the Philadelphia area and in the Pennsylvania-Ohio-West Virginia border area, the first element is often approximately  $\text{\ə}$ . In coastal South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida stressed  $\text{\ō}$  is often monophthongal when final, but when a consonant follows it is often a diphthong moving from  $\text{\ō}$  to  $\text{\ə}$ . In this book the symbol  $\text{\ō}$  represents all of the above variants. As an unstressed vowel before another vowel,  $\text{\ō}$  is often pronounced as a schwa with slight lip rounding that is separated from the following vowel by the glide  $\text{\w}$ , as in *following*  $\text{\fä-lə-}$

$\text{\wɪŋ}$ . This reduced variant is not usually shown at individual entries.

$\text{\ō}$  as in *saw*, *all*, *gnaw*, *caught* (IPA [ɔ]). (See the section on  $\text{\ä}$ .)

Speakers of r-dropping dialects will usually insert an  $\text{\r}$  after  $\text{\ō}$  when  $\text{\ō}$  precedes another vowel. (See the section on  $\text{\r}$ .)

$\text{\œ}$  as in French *boeuf* “beef,” German *Hölle* “hell” (IPA [œ]). This vowel, which occurs only in foreign-derived terms and names, can be approximated by attempting to pronounce the vowel  $\text{\e}$  with the lips moderately rounded as for the vowel  $\text{\u}$ . This vowel is often Anglicized as the  $\text{\ər}$  of *bird* by those who do not “drop their r’s” or as the corresponding vowel of *bird* used by those who do (see the section on  $\text{\r}$ ).

This symbol is also used to represent the vowel in French *feu* “fire,” German *Höhle* “hole” (IPA [ø]). This vowel, which occurs primarily in foreign-derived terms and names, can be approximated by attempting to pronounce a monophthongal vowel  $\text{\ā}$  with the lips fully rounded as for the vowel  $\text{\u}$ . This vowel also occurs in Scots and thus is used in the pronunciation of *guidwillie*, mainly restricted to Scotland.

$\text{\oi}$  as in *coin*, *destroy* (IPA [ɔɪ, ɔi, oɪ, oɪ]). In some Southern speech, especially before a consonant in the same word, the second element may disappear or be replaced by  $\text{\ə}$ . Some utterances of *drawing* and *sawing* have a sequence of vowel sounds identical to that in *coin*, but because *drawing* and *sawing* are analyzed by many as two-syllable words they are transcribed with a parenthesized hyphen:  $\text{\d}^{\text{r}}\text{\ō}(-)\text{\iŋ}$ ,  $\text{\s}^{\text{o}}(-)\text{\iŋ}$ .

Many varieties of English do not allow  $\text{\oi}$  to be followed by  $\text{\l}$  in the same syllable. Speakers of such varieties will insert a following  $\text{\ə}$  which creates a new syllable. This is indicated by the transcription  $\text{\oi(-ə)\l}$ . For such speakers, *oil* will rhyme with *loyal*.

$\text{\ör}$  as in *boar*, *port*, *door*, *shore* (IPA [oə, ɔə]). The initial element of this diphthong may vary from  $\text{\ō}$  to  $\text{\ə}$ . Speakers of r-dropping dialects will usually pronounce  $\text{\ör}$  the same as  $\text{\ō}$ . (See the section on  $\text{\r}$ .) Historically, there has been a contrast between the vowel in words like *ore*, *bore*, *porch*, *sport*, and *hoarse* on one hand and the vowel in words like *or*, *for*, *torch*, *short*, and *horse* on the other hand. The vowel in the former set of words has been much like  $\text{\ō}$ , and the vowel in the latter set like  $\text{\ə}$ . However, the number of speakers that make such a distinction is currently very small, and we have not represented the distinction in this dictionary.

$\text{\p}$  as in *pepper*, *lip* (IPA [p]).

$\text{\r}$  as in *red*, *rarity*. What is transcribed here as  $\text{\r}$  in reality represents several distinct sounds. Before a stressed vowel  $\text{\r}$  denotes a continuant produced with the tongue tip slightly behind the teethridge (IPA [ɹ]). This sound is usually voiceless when it follows a voiceless stop, as in *pray*, *tree*, and *cram*.

In Received Pronunciation  $\text{\r}$  is sometimes pronounced as a flap (IPA [ɾ]) in the same contexts in which  $\text{\t}$  and  $\text{\d}$  occur as flaps in American English. (See the section on  $\text{\t}$  below.) Occasionally the flap may be heard after consonants, as in *bright* and *grow*. In other dialects of British English, particularly Scots,  $\text{\r}$  may be pronounced as an alveolar trill (IPA [r]) or as a uvular trill (IPA [R]).

In some dialects, especially those of the southeastern U.S., eastern New England, New York City, and southern England,  $\text{\r}$  is not pronounced or is pronounced as  $\text{\ə}$  after a vowel in the same syllable. Such dialects are often referred to as r-dropping dialects. This term is somewhat misleading, since speakers of such dialects will often pronounce an  $\text{\r}$  in certain situations where speakers of non-

r-dropping dialects will not have an `\r\`. This matter is discussed in some of the other sections of this Guide.

`\ S \` as in *source*, *less* (IPA [s]).

`\ sh \` as in *shy*, *mission*, *machine*, *special* (IPA [ʃ]). Actually, this is a single sound, not two. When the two sounds `\s\` and `\h\` occur in sequence, they are separated by a hyphen in this book, as in *grasshopper* `\ˈgras-  
hā-pər\`.

`\ t \` as in *tie*, *attack*, *late*, *later*, *latter* (IPA [t]). In some contexts, as when a stressed or unstressed vowel precedes and an unstressed vowel or `\l\` follows, the sound represented by *t* or *tt* is pronounced in most American speech as a voiced flap produced by the tongue tip tapping the teethridge (IPA [ɾ]). In similar contexts the sound represented by *d* or *dd* has the same pronunciation. Thus, the pairs *ladder* and *latter*, *leader* and *liter*, *parody* and *parity* are often homophones. At the end of a syllable `\t\` often has an incomplete articulation with no release, or it is accompanied or replaced by a glottal closure. When `\t\` occurs before the syllabic consonant `\n\` as in *button* `\ˈbət-  
tən\`, the glottal allophone is often heard. This may reflect a syllabification of `\t\` with the preceding stressed syllable (i.e., `\ˈbət-  
n\`).

Many speakers pronounce `\t\` like `\ch\` when it occurs before `\r\` in the same syllable.

`\ th \` as in *thin*, *ether* (IPA [θ]). Actually, this is a single sound, not two. When the two sounds `\t\` and `\h\` occur in sequence they are separated by a hyphen in this book, as in *knighthood* `\ˈnīt-  
hüd\`. In some dialects of American English, `\th\` is regularly replaced by `\f\`.

`\ th \` as in *then*, *either*, *this* (IPA [ð]). Actually, this is a single sound, not two. The difference between `\th\` and `\th\` is that the former is pronounced without and the latter with vibration of the vocal cords.

`\ ü \` as in *rule*, *youth*, *union* `\ˈyün-yən\`, *few* `\ˈfyü\` (IPA [u]). As an unstressed vowel before another vowel, `\ü\` is often pronounced as a schwa with slight lip rounding that is separated from the following vowel by the glide `\w\`, as in *valuing* `\ˈval-yə-wɪŋ\`. This reduced variant is not usually shown at individual entries. Younger speakers of American English often use a more centralized and less rounded pronunciation of `\ü\` in certain words (as *news* and *musician*), both in stressed and especially in unstressed syllables.

Some speakers pronounce `\ü\` and `\u\` identically before `\l\`, with the result that word pairs like *pool* and *pull* are homophones. The sound pronounced in such cases may be either `\ü\` or `\u\` as pronounced by those who distinguish the two.

`\ ü \` as in *pull*, *wood*, *book* (IPA [u]). Some speakers pronounce `\ü\` and `\u\` identically before `\l\`, with the result that word pairs like *pool* and *pull* are homophones. The sound pronounced in such cases may be ei-

ther `\ü\` or `\u\` as pronounced by those who distinguish the two.

`\ ue \` as in German *füllen* “to fill,” *hübsch* “handsome” (IPA [y]). This vowel, which occurs only in foreign-derived terms and names, can be approximated by attempting to pronounce the vowel `\i\` with the lips moderately rounded as for the vowel `\ü\`.

This symbol is also used to represent the vowel in French *rue* “street,” German *fühlen* “to feel” (IPA [y]). This vowel, which occurs only in foreign-derived terms and names, can be approximated by attempting to pronounce the vowel `\e\` with the lips fully rounded as for the vowel `\ü\`.

`\ ür \` as in *poor*, *tour*, *insure* (IPA [uə, uə]). The initial element of this diphthong may vary from `\ü\` to `\ü\`. Speakers of r-dropping dialects will pronounce `\ür\` without any r-color on the second element (IPA [uə, uə]) when it precedes a consonant or pause, but will usually insert an `\r\` after `\ür\` when it precedes a vowel. (See the section on `\r\`.) Many speakers do not have the diphthong `\ür\` and have merged it with either `\ər\` (when it follows palatal consonants such as `\sh\`, `\ch\`, or `\y\` in words like *sure*, *mature*, or *obscure*) or `\ór\` (in other environments). Similarly, many speakers of r-dropping dialects have merged `\ür\` with `\ər\` and `\ó\` in the same respective environments.

`\ V \` as in *vivid*, *invite* (IPA [v]).

`\ W \` as in *we*, *away* (IPA [w]).

`\ y \` as in *yard*, *young*, *cue* `\ˈkyü\`, *curable* `\ˈkyür-ə-  
bəl\`, *few* `\ˈfyü\`, *fury* `\ˈfyür-ē\`, *union* `\ˈyün-yən\` (IPA [j]). The sequences `\lyü\`, `\syü\`, and `\zyü\` in the same syllable, as in *lewd*, *suit*, and *presume*, are common in southern British speech but are rare in American speech and only `\lü\`, `\sü\`, and `\zü\` are shown in this dictionary. A sequence of `\h\` and `\y\` as in *hue* and *huge* is pronounced by some speakers as a `\k\` articulated toward the front of the mouth (IPA [ç]).

`\ y \` indicates that during the articulation of the preceding consonant the tongue has substantially the position it has for the articulation of the `\y\` of *yard*, as in French *digne* `\dēnʲ\` “worthy.” Thus `\y\` does not itself represent a sound but rather modifies the preceding symbol.

`\ Z \` as in *zone*, *raise* (IPA [z]).

`\ zh \` as in *vision*, *azure* `\ˈa-zhər\` (IPA [ʒ]). Actually, this is a single sound, not two. When the two sounds `\z\` and `\h\` occur in sequence, they are separated by a hyphen in this book, as in *hogshead* `\ˈhög-z-  
hed, ˈhäg-z-`

# Pronunciation Symbols

For more information see the Guide to Pronunciation.

ə	....	banana, collide, abut	ō	....	bone, know, beau
<sup>ˈ</sup> ə, ɪə	....	humdrum, abut	ô	....	saw, all, gnaw, caught
ə	....	immediately preceding \l, \n, \m, \ŋ, as in battle, mitten, eaten, and sometimes open \d̥-p³m, lock and key \-³ŋ-; immediately following \l, \m, \r, as often in French table, prisme, titre	œ	....	French boeuf, feu, German Hölle, Höhle
ər	....	further, merger, bird	oi	....	coin, destroy
<sup>ˈ</sup> ər- } <sup>ˈ</sup> ə-r }	....	as in two different pronunciations of hurry \ˈhər-ē, ˈhə-rē\	or	....	boar, port, door, shore
a	....	mat, map, mad, gag, snap, patch	p	....	pepper, lip
ā	....	day, fade, date, aorta, drape, cape	r	....	red, rarity
ä	....	bother, cot	s	....	source, less
är	....	car, heart, bazaar, bizarre	sh	....	as in shy, mission, machine, special (actually, this is a single sound, not two); with a hyphen between, two sounds as in grasshopper \ˈgras-hä-pər\
au	....	now, loud, out	t	....	tie, attack, late, later, latter
b	....	baby, rib	th	....	as in thin, ether (actually, this is a single sound, not two); with a hyphen between, two sounds as in knighthood \ˈnit-hüd\
ch	....	chin, nature \ˈnä-chər\	th	....	then, either, this (actually, this is a single sound, not two)
d	....	did, adder	ü	....	rule, youth, union \ˈyün-yən, few \ˈfyü\
e	....	bet, bed, peck	ù	....	pull, wood, book
er	....	bare, fair, wear, millionaire	ue	....	German füllen, hübsch, fühlen, French rue
<sup>ˈ</sup> ē, ɪē	....	beat, nosebleed, evenly, easy	ur	....	boor, tour, insure
ē	....	easy, mealy	v	....	vivid, give
f	....	fifty, cuff	w	....	we, away
g	....	go, big, gift	y	....	yard, young, cue \ˈkyü, mute \ˈmyüt, union \ˈyün-yən\
h	....	hat, ahead	y	....	indicates that during the articulation of the sound represented by the preceding character, the front of the tongue has substantially the position it has for the articulation of the first sound of yard, as in French digne \dēnʷ\
hw	....	whale as pronounced by those who do not have the same pronunciation for both whale and wail	Z	....	zone, raise
i	....	tip, banish, active	zh	....	as in vision, azure \ˈa-zhər\ (actually, this is a single sound, not two); with hyphen between, two sounds as in hogshedd \ˈhög-zhed, ˈhäg-z-\
ir	....	near, deer, mere, pier	\	....	reversed virgule used in pairs to mark the beginning and end of a transcription: \pen\
ī	....	site, side, buy, tripe	ˈ	....	mark preceding a syllable with primary (strongest) stress: \ˈpen-mən-,ship\
j	....	job, gem, edge, join, judge	ˌ	....	mark preceding a syllable with secondary (medium) stress: \ˈpen-mən-,ship\
k	....	kin, cook, ache	-	....	mark of syllable division
<u>k</u>	....	German ich, Buch; one pronunciation of loch	( )	....	indicate that what is symbolized between is present in some utterances but not in others: factory \ˈfak-t(ə-)rē\
l	....	lily, pool	÷	....	indicates that many regard as unacceptable the pronunciation variant immediately following: nuclear \ˈnü-klē-ər, ˈnyü-, ÷-kyə-lər\
m	....	murmur, dim, nymph			
n	....	no, own			
<sup>ˆ</sup> n	....	indicates that a preceding vowel or diphthong is pronounced with the nasal passages open, as in French un bon vin blanc \œ <sup>n</sup> -bō <sup>n</sup> -va <sup>n</sup> -blā <sup>n</sup> \			
ŋ	....	sing \ˈsɪŋ, singer \ˈsɪŋ-ər, finger \ˈfɪŋ-gər, ink \ˈɪŋk\			