**English phonetic transcription 2nd year ( gr 4+5+6+7 )**

Phonetic transcription (also known as **phonetic script** or **phonetic notation**) is the visual

represenation of speech sounds (or [phones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phone_(phonetics))) by means of [symbols](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbols). The most common type of

phonetic transcription uses a phonetic alphabet, such as the [International Phonetic Alphabet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Phonetic_Alphabet).

## Versus orthography

The [pronunciation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pronunciation) of words in all languages changes over time. However, their written forms ([orthography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthography)) are often not modified to take account of such changes, and do not accurately represent the pronunciation. Pronunciation can also vary greatly among dialects of a language. Standard orthography in some languages, such as [English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) and [Tibetan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_Tibetan), is often irregular and makes it difficult to predict pronunciation from spelling. For example, thewords bough and through do not rhyme in English even though their spellings might suggest otherwise. Other languages, such as [Spanish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_language) and [Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language) have a more consistent (but still imperfect) relationship between orthography and pronunciation, while a few languages may claim to have a fully phonemic spelling system ([phonemic orthography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonemic_orthography)).

For most languages, phonetic transcription makes it possible to show pronunciation with something much nearer to a one-to-one relationship between sound and symbol than is possible with the language’s orthography. Phonetic transcription allows one to step outside orthography, examine differences in pronunciation between dialects within a given language and identify changes in pronunciation that may take place over time.

A basic principle of phonetic transcription is that it should be applicable to all languages, and its symbols should denote the same phonetic properties whatever the language being transcribed.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonetic_transcription#cite_note-2) It follows that a transcription devised for one individual language or group of languages is not a phonetic transcription but an orthography.

Narrow versus broad transcription

Phonetic transcription may be used to transcribe the phonemes of a language, or it may go further and specify their precise phonetic realization. In all systems of transcription there is a distinction between **broad transcription** and **narrow transcription**. Broad transcription indicates only the most noticeable phonetic features of an utterance, whereas narrow transcription encodes more information about the phonetic characteristics of the [allophones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allophone) in the utterance. The difference between broad and narrow is a continuum, but the difference between phonemic and phonetic transcription is usually treated as a binary distinction.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonetic_transcription#cite_note-3) Phonemic transcription is a particular form of broad transcription which disregards all allophonic difference; as the name implies, it is not really a phonetic transcription at all (though at times it may coincide with one), but a representation of phonemic structure. A transcription which includes some allophonic detail but is closely linked to the phonemic structure of an utterance is called an **allophonic** transcription.

For example, one particular pronunciation of the English word title may be transcribed using the IPA as /ˈtaɪtəl/ (broad, phonemic transcription) or [ˈtaɪɾɫ̩] (narrow, allophonic transcription); the former transcription, placed between slashes, indicates merely that the word ends with the phoneme /l/, but the other transcription, placed between square brackets, indicates that the final /l/ ([ɫ]) is [dark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Velarized_alveolar_lateral_approximant) (velarized or pharyngealized). Continuing with this example, in [North American English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_English), the phoneme /t/ when it occurs after a stressed vowel and precedes an unstressed syllable beginning with a vowel or a syllabic /l/ or /n/ is normally pronounced as a flap or tap ([t-/d-flapping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flapping)) resembling a brief /d/, for which the phonetic symbol is [ɾ]: consequently there is little or no audible difference between the pronunciation of title [ˈtaɪɾɫ̩] and tidal /'taɪdəl/]. Indeed, [middle](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/middle) [/ˈmɪdəl/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/English); [ˈmɪɾɫ̩] is a perfect rhyme of little in most North American accents.[[note 1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonetic_transcription#cite_note-4)

The advantage of the narrow transcription is that it can help learners to produce exactly the right sound, and allows linguists to make detailed analyses of language variation.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonetic_transcription#cite_note-5) The disadvantage is that a narrow transcription is rarely representative of all speakers of a language. While most Americans, Canadians and Australians would pronounce the /t/ of little as a [tap](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flap_consonant) [[ɾ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alveolar_tap)], many speakers in southern England would pronounce /t/ as [[ʔ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glottal_stop)] (a [glottal stop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glottal_stop); [t-glottalization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-glottalization)) and/or the second /l/ as a vowel resembling [[ʊ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near-close_near-back_rounded_vowel)] ([L-vocalization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L-vocalization)), possibly yielding [ˈlɪʔʊ].

A further disadvantage of narrow transcription is that it involves a larger number of symbols and [diacritics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diacritics) that may be unfamiliar to non-specialists. The advantage of broad transcription is that it usually allows statements to be made which apply across a more diverse language community. It is thus more appropriate for the pronunciation data in foreign language dictionaries, which may discuss phonetic details in the preface but rarely give them for each entry. A rule of thumb in many linguistics contexts is therefore to use a narrow transcription when it is necessary for the point being made, but a broad transcription whenever possible.

**Types of notational systems**

Most phonetic transcription is based on the assumption that linguistic sounds are segmentable into discrete units that can be represented by symbols. Many different types of transcription, or " notation", have been tried out: these may be divided into Alphabetic (which are based on the same principle as that which governs ordinary alphabetic writing, namely that of using one single simple symbol to represent each sound), and *Analphabetic* (notations which are *not* alphabetic) which represent each sound by a composite symbol made up of a number of signs put together.

**Alphabetic**

**IPA**

The [International Phonetic Alphabet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Phonetic_Alphabet) (IPA) is the most widely used and well-known of present-day phonetic alphabets, and has a long [history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_International_Phonetic_Alphabet). It was created in the nineteenth century by European language teachers and linguists. It soon developed beyond its original purpose as a tool of foreign language pedagogy and is now also used extensively as a practical alphabet of phoneticians and linguists. It is found in many dictionaries, where it is used to indicate the pronunciation of words, but most American dictionaries for native English-speakers, e.g.[*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Heritage_Dictionary_of_the_English_Language)*,*[*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Random_House_Dictionary_of_the_English_Language)*,*[*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Webster%27s_Third_New_International_Dictionary), avoid phonetic transcription and instead employ [*respelling*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Respelling) systems based on the English alphabet, with diacritical marks over the vowels and stress marks. Another commonly encountered alphabetic tradition was originally created by American linguists for the transcription of [Native American](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_languages) and European languages, and is still commonly usedby linguists be typed on existing typewriters to create printable material.

There are also extended versions of the IPA, for example:

[Ext-IPA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ext-IPA), [VoQS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VoQS)of [Slavic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavic_languages), [Indic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_India), [Semitic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semitic_languages), [Uralic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uralic_languages) (here known as the [Uralic Phonetic Alphabet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uralic_Phonetic_Alphabet)) and [Caucasian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasian_languages) languages. This is sometimes labeled the [Americanist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americanist_phonetic_notation) phonetic alphabet, but this is misleading because (although it has mostly been used by American or American-trained linguists) it has been widely used for languages outside the Americas. The principal difference between these alphabets and the IPA is that the specially created characters of the IPA are abandoned in favour of already existing typewriter characters with diacritics (e.g. many characters are borrowed from Eastern *Phonemics*and in many of the papers reprinted in Joos's *Readings in Linguistics* In the days before it was possible to create phonetic fonts for computer printers and computerized typesetting,European orthographies) or [digraphs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digraph_(orthography)). Examples of this transcription may be seen in Pike's

**Aspects of alphabetic transcription**

The [International Phonetic Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Phonetic_Association) recommends that a [phonetic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonetics) transcription should be enclosed in [square brackets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bracket) "[ ]". A transcription that specifically denotes only [phonological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonology) contrasts may be enclosed in [slashes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slash_(punctuation)) "/ /" instead. If one is unsure, it is best to use brackets since by setting off a transcription with slashes, one makes a theoretical claim that every symbol [phonemically](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoneme) contrasts for the language being transcribed.

For phonetic transcriptions, there is flexibility in how closely sounds may be transcribed. A transcription that gives only a basic idea of the sounds of a language in the broadest terms is called a *broad transcription*; in some cases, it may be equivalent to a phonemic transcription (only without any theoretical claims). A close transcription, indicating precise details of the sounds, is called a *narrow transcription*. They are not binary choices but the ends of a continuum, with many possibilities in between. All are enclosed in brackets.

For example, in some dialects the English word *pretzel* in a narrow transcription would be [ˈpɹ̥ʷɛʔts.ɫ̩], which notes several phonetic features that may not be evident even to a native speaker. An example of a broad transcription is [ˈpɹ̥ɛts.ɫ̩], which indicates only some of the features that are easier to hear. A yet broader transcription would be [ˈpɹɛts.l] in which every symbol represents an unambiguous speech sound but without going into any unnecessary detail. None of those transcriptions makes any claims about the phonemic status of the sounds. Instead, they represent certain ways in which it is possible to produce the sounds that make up the word.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonetic_transcription#cite_note-10)

There are also several possibilities in how to transcribe the word phonemically, but here, the differences are generally of not precision but analysis. For example, *pretzel* could be /ˈprɛts.l̩/ or /ˈprets.əl/. The latter transcription suggests that there are two vowels in the word even if they cannot both be heard, but the former suggests that there is only one

Strictly speaking, it is not possible to have a distinction between "broad" and "narrow" within phonemic transcription, since the symbols chosen represent only sounds that have been shown to be distinctive. However, the symbols themselves may be more or less explicit about their phonetic realization.A frequently cited example is the symbol chosen for the English consonant at the beginning of the words 'rue', 'rye', 'red': this is frequently transcribed as /r/, despite the symbol suggesting an association with the IPA symbol [r] which is used for a tongue-tip [trill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trill_consonant). It is equally possible within a phonemic transcription to use the symbol /ɹ/, which in IPA usage refers to an [alveolar approximant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alveolar_approximant); this is the more common realization for English pronunciation in America and England. Phonemic symbols will frequently be chosen to avoid diacritics as much as possible, under a 'one sound one symbol' policy, or may even be restricted to the [ASCII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASCII) symbols of a typical keyboard, as in the [SAMPA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SAMPA) alphabet. For example, the English word *church* may be transcribed as /tʃɝːtʃ/, a close approximation of its actual pronunciation, or more abstractly as /crc/, which is easier to type. Phonemic symbols should always be backed up by an explanation of their use and meaning, especially when they are as divergent from actual pronunciation as /crc/.

Occasionally a transcription will be enclosed in [pipes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertical_bar) ("| |"). This goes beyond phonology into [morphological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morphology_(linguistics)) analysis. For example, the words *pets* and *beds* could be transcribed phonetically as [pʰɛʔts] and [b̥ɛd̥z̥] (in a fairly narrow transcription), and phonemically as /pets/ and /bedz/. Because /s/ and /z/ are separate [phonemes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoneme) in English, they receive separate symbols in the phonemic analysis. However, a native English speaker would recognize that underneath this, they represent the same plural ending. This can be indicated with the pipe notation. If the plural ending is thought to be essentially an *s*, as English spelling would suggest, the words can be transcribed |pets| and |beds|. If it is essentially a *z*, these would be |petz| and |bedz|.

To avoid confusion with IPA symbols, it may be desirable to specify when native orthography is being used, so that, for example, the English word *jet* is not read as "yet". This is done with [angle brackets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bracket) or *chevrons*: ⟨jet⟩. It is also common to italicize such words, but the chevrons indicate specifically that they are in the original language's orthography, and not in English [transliteration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transliteration).

**Iconic**

**Visible Speech**

In *iconic* phonetic notation, the shapes of the phonetic characters are designed so that they visually represent the position of articulators in the vocal tract. This is unlike alphabetic notation, where the correspondence between character shape and articulator position is arbitrary. This notation is potentially more flexible than alphabetic notation in showing more shades of pronunciation (MacMahon 1996:838–841). An example of iconic phonetic notation is the [Visible Speech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visible_Speech) system, created by Scottish phonetician [Alexander Melville Bell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Melville_Bell) (Ellis 1869:15).

**Analphabetic**

Another type of phonetic notation that is more precise than alphabetic notation is *analphabetic* phonetic notation. Instead of both the alphabetic and iconic notational types' general principle of using one symbol per sound, analphabetic notation uses long sequences of symbols to precisely describe the component features of an articulatory gesture (MacMahon 1996:842–844). This type of notation is reminiscent of the notation used in [chemical formulas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemical_formula) to denote the composition of chemical compounds. Although more descriptive than alphabetic notation, analphabetic notation is less practical for many purposes (e.g. for descriptive linguists doing fieldwork or for speech pathologists impressionistically transcribing speech disorders). As a result, this type of notation is uncommon.

Two examples of this type were developed by the Danish [Otto Jespersen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Jespersen) (1889) and American [Kenneth Pike](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenneth_Pike) (1943). Pike's system, which is part of a larger goal of scientific description of phonetics, is particularly interesting in its challenge against the descriptive method of the phoneticians who created alphabetic systems like the IPA. An example of Pike's system can be demonstrated by the following. A [syllabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syllable) [voiced](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voiced_consonant) [alveolar nasal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alveolar_nasal) consonant