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978-0-521-23152-7 - Better English Pronunciation: Second Edition

J. D. O'Connor

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Second edition

J. D. O'Connor

Professor of Phonetics in the University of London



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521231527

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First published 1967, 2011

Second Edition 1980, 2012

Reprinted 2013

35th printing 2013

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-23152-7 Student's Book

ISBN 978-0-521-26349-8 Audio Cassettes (2)

ISBN 978-0-521-23152-7 Paperback

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Contents

Acknowledgements	vii
Foreword to the second edition	ix
1 Problems in pronunciation	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 'Lend me your ears'	3
1.3 Which English?	5
1.4 The basic sounds	6
1.5 Letters and sounds	7
1.6 Sounds and sound-groups	9
1.7 Words and utterances	11
1.8 Exercises	12
2 How the speech organs work in English	13
2.1 The vocal cords	13
2.2 The palate	15
2.3 The teeth	17
2.4 The tongue	17
2.5 The lips	21
2.6 Exercises	22
3 The consonants of English	24
3.1 Friction consonants: /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/	24
3.2 Stop consonants: /p, b, t, d, k, g, tʃ, dʒ/	39
3.3 Nasal consonants: /m, n, ŋ/	48
3.4 Lateral consonant: /l/	53
3.5 Gliding consonants: /j, w, r'/	57
3.6 Exercises	63
4 Consonant sequences	64
4.1 Initial sequences	64
4.2 Final sequences	67

Contents

4.3	Longer consonant sequences	76
4.4	Exercises	78
5	The vowels of English	79
5.1	Simple vowels /i:, ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, a:, ɒ, ɔ:, ʊ, u:, ɜ:, ə/	79
5.2	Diphthongs /əʊ, aʊ, eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ, ɪə, eə, ʊə/	84
5.3	Vowel sequences	87
5.4	Exercises	88
6	Words in company	90
6.1	Word groups and stress	90
6.2	Stressed and unstressed syllables	91
6.3	Weak forms of words	92
6.4	The use of strong forms	95
6.5	Rhythm units	95
6.6	Fluency	100
6.7	Changing word shapes	102
6.8	Exercises	105
7	Intonation	108
7.1	Tune shapes	109
7.2	The falling tune – the Glide-Down	111
7.3	The first rising tune – the Glide-Up	114
7.4	The second rising tune – the Take-Off	116
7.5	The falling-rising tune – the Dive	117
7.6	How to use the tunes	120
7.7	Exercises	125
	Conversational passages for practice	128
	Answers to exercises	134
Appendix 1	The difficulties of English pronunciation for speakers of Arabic, Cantonese, French, German, Hindi and Spanish	138
Appendix 2	Useful materials for further study	147
	Glossary	149

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[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

Every writer of a textbook owes a debt to his predecessors, to his teachers, to his colleagues and to his pupils; I gratefully acknowledge my deep indebtedness to all of these. In addition I wish to express particular thanks to Mrs M. Chan of Hong Kong, Miss Afaf M. E. Elmenoufi of Cairo and Dr R. K. Bansal of Hyderabad for very kindly helping me with regard to the pronunciation difficulties of Cantonese, Arabic and Hindi speakers respectively. Last, but far from least, my very sincere thanks go to my friends Pauline Speller, who typed the whole of a by no means easy manuscript and did it admirably, and Dennis Speller, who drew for me the original illustrations.

The responsibility for the book is mine; any credit I happily share with all those mentioned above.

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Foreword to the second edition

Since this book was first published, in 1967, my attention has been drawn by users of it to various errors and omissions, and suggestions have been made for improving its usefulness. In this second edition I have now remedied the errors and omissions and I have adopted those suggestions which I think improve the book. To all those readers who were kind enough to write to me on these matters I offer my sincere thanks.

My old readers will no doubt consider the greatest change in this edition to be the use of a different phonetic transcription, and I agree. The reason why I decided to change the transcription is this: when the book was first published I used the transcription of Daniel Jones's *English Pronouncing Dictionary* (Dent), which I considered to be the best guide to English pronunciation for foreign learners (as I still do). The present editor of the dictionary, A. C. Gimson, decided, rightly in my opinion, to change his transcription for the 14th edition of 1977. This meant that my transcription no longer corresponded to any of those found in the major dictionaries commonly used by foreign learners. I have now rectified this quite unacceptable situation by adopting the Gimson transcription which is also used in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1978) and the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (4th edition 1980).

There have often been understandable complaints from students that different writers on English pronunciation used different transcriptions. It seems to me that there is at least a movement towards using a standard transcription, namely, the one now used in this book, and this is a wholly welcome development.


The new transcription differs from the old only in the matter of symbols for the English vowels, and for the convenience of old readers I list both old and new forms below:

<i>Old form</i>	<i>Key word</i>	<i>New form</i>
i:	feel	i:
i	fill	ɪ
e	fell	e

Foreword

ɔ:	fall	ɔ:
u	full	ʊ
u:	fool	u:
ei	fail	eɪ
ou	foal	əʊ
ai	file	aɪ
au	foul	aʊ
ɔɪ	foil	ɔɪ
æ	cat	æ
ɔ	cot	ɒ
ʌ	cut	ʌ
ə:	curt	ɜ:
ɑ:	cart	ɑ:
iə	tier	ɪə
ɛə	tear	eə
ʊə	tour	ʊə
ə	banana	ə

Vowels which were previously differentiated only by the length mark (:) are now distinguished both by the length mark and by letter-shape, e.g. fi:l/frɪ. This makes for easier visual recognition and underlines the fact that the pairs of vowels differ not only in length but also in quality.

A recording of all the practice material is available on cassettes. The symbol  in the text indicates exactly what is recorded.

The book has been entirely re-designed and re-set, and the diagrams have been re-drawn; for this and much other help my thanks are due to the Cambridge University Press.

I hope that my book will continue to serve a useful purpose for both teachers and learners of English in helping them towards a better English pronunciation.