

Phonetics

A problem-based introduction to phonetics, with 300+ exercises integrated into the text to help the student discover and practise the subject interactively. It assumes no previous knowledge of the subject and highlights and explains new terms and concepts when they are first introduced. Graded review questions and exercises at the end of every unit help the student monitor their own progress and further practise new skills, and there is frequent cross-referencing for the student to see how the subject fits together, and how later concepts build on earlier ones. The book highlights the differences between speech and writing in Unit 1 and covers all the essential topics of a phonetics course. An accompanying website (www.cambridge.org/knight) features audio samples and answers to selected exercises.

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Phonetics:

A coursebook

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PREFACE

This book details a fairly traditional view of articulatory phonetics, and some related aspects of phonology. Our focus throughout is on English phonetics, as English is the language of instruction, and the one with which all readers will therefore be familiar. Aspects of general phonetic theory are illustrated using examples from English, and supported by other languages where appropriate. We begin in Section 1 with a concentration on individual speech sounds, think about how sounds combine into words in Section 2, and finish in Section 3 with phenomena that occur when words are combined into longer stretches of speech.

The book is aimed at students with no prior knowledge of phonetics or linguistics; therefore, new terminology is emboldened and explained when it is first introduced. The book is suitable for first-year undergraduates studying subjects such as linguistics or speech and language therapy, and may also be used for revision by more advanced students. It would certainly be possible for students to teach themselves a good deal of phonetics using this coursebook. However, as phonetics is the study of speech, discussion with a tutor, who can demonstrate particular sounds and clarify any variant aspects of pronunciation, is sometimes recommended in the text. The book may also be used in class, with students working through the exercises either before or during contact hours. Whether used alone, with a tutor or in a class, the units should be attempted in order. Each unit builds on the last, and it is assumed that all previous units have been completed at each stage.

The aim of this book is to encourage students to think for themselves in order to discover facts about phonetics. One of my favourite textbooks as a student was Rowntree's *Statistics without Tears: An Introduction for Non-mathematicians*, so I was very happy to be asked to produce something along similar lines for phonetics. The book is formed of a large number of exercises which involve saying words and phrases, transcribing written material or simply thinking about particular issues. Exercises are there for students to discover particular aspects of phonetic content, and not simply to practise what has gone before in the text. This means that all the exercises within a unit should be considered compulsory. Students should attempt each exercise in full before reading the comment section that follows. And, as the comment sections

Preface

not only give answers to the exercises, but introduce new concepts and terminology, they should also be read in full. At the end of each unit there are review questions and review exercises. These are optional, but allow students to measure their own progress. Answers to the review exercises are found at the back of the book, while answers to the review questions can be checked by looking back through the relevant unit.

As in any textbook, there are a number of aspects that cannot be covered due to space limitations. In particular, this book is confined largely to articulatory rather than acoustic phonetics, because I have found that students seem better able to grasp articulatory aspects first, and then to apply these to acoustics. Likewise, decisions have to be made about how to present certain elements, such as when to introduce slash and square brackets, and whether to use terms such as ‘phonemic’ or ‘broad’ transcription. In every such case, I have relied on my teaching experience, and on the advice of my friends and colleagues, in order to present things in the clearest way for beginning students. I hope that this book will stimulate students to enjoy phonetics and go on to further study in this exciting area. To this end, some ideas for further study are suggested in the resources section.

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Any textbook is a synthesis and amalgamation of ideas, and not just the work of the person named on the cover. As such, I am indebted to many previous teachers of phonetics (some of whom are named below), and I would like to make a general acknowledgement of teaching materials and lecture handouts at University College London (UCL) and City University London, which have no doubt influenced several sections of this book. I would also like to acknowledge the resources that I have consulted most frequently while preparing the manuscript. They are Patricia Ashby's *Speech Sounds*, Alan Cruttenden's *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, David Abercrombie's *Elements of General Phonetics*, John Wells's *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, and Trask's *Dictionary of Phonetics and Phonology*. I have also relied on the *Handbook of the International Phonetic Association*, and, in particular, have borrowed examples from the illustrations of Thai, Chinese, Hungarian, Catalan, Hebrew, German, French, Hindi and Swedish. In addition, the *Speech Internet Dictionary* at UCL has been extremely useful.

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Austen, J. (1813). *Pride and Prejudice*. Project Gutenberg. Retrieved 24 June 2011: www.gutenberg.org/files/1342/1342-h/1342-h.htm

Conan Doyle, A. (1901–2). *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Project Gutenberg. Retrieved 24 June 2011: www.gutenberg.org/files/2852/2852-h/2852-h.htm