

**Better Spoken English**  
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**Lecture No # 33**  
**Some “Vowel” Sounds in English**

Good morning. Are you comfortable, are you all right? We are almost in the last module of the course, and in this part, we will have some drill in the pronunciation of some typical English speech sounds, you know some vowels and some consonants. English is one of those few languages which have a number of vowels and number of different kinds of consonants, and some of those consonants and some of those vowels and not always very easy for others to pronounce. As a result, sometimes there can be confusion.

So, I will today draw your attention to some of these vowels, and tell you how we can do them. May be you already do them all right. In that case, do not worry. If you do not, then this will be opportunity for you to learn how to pronounce them right and then you can do the drill on your own in the hostel or wherever you like. You know learning is a continuous process; it is not that you learn something today and then you do not need to learn further.

You know the more, greater the attention, the better the learning, that is there old axiom. But before I begin, you know and this kind of drill tends to be boring, you know it is all right for few minutes. It is all right for one or two days, but if you do it for long time for many days it is get to be boring, but then good thing about drill is that, when comes to skill you know, learning things physically rather than quote unquote mentally, then drill is a very good thing. It brings it you know you get habituated to it. Pronouncing the particular sound in the particular manner becomes a part of your habit.

So to form that habit, drill is important, but before we go into the drill, I will begin with little clipping from a movie called ‘My Fair Lady’. Actually ‘My Fair Lady’ is a movie made on a play called Pygmalion.

There has been an Irish play write George Bernard Shaw, have you heard of him? Have you heard of him? Let me write his name. How to pronounce him? George Bernard Shaw; a very fascinating personality you know. You can google him today when you go back to the hostel and see what kind of man he was. The only author, the only play write who said no to the Nobel Prize. Can you believe that?

People love the people you know do all kinds of things. Actually, the then king of England called him which is very unusual in England. The king does not telephone anyone. You telephone the king. The king called him on phone and pressured him to accept the Nobel Prize. He said to Bernard Shaw; it would bring us Nobel prize in this country, but Shaw was cheeky and witty. Shaw answered the king, he said, your majesty, you will be the only king who can ever say that your subjects can also refuse the Nobel Prize, no other king can say that. And you know he was allowed to refuse the Nobel Prize.

But this man was born very poor, dirt poor. Fatherless family, mother hardly much skill; except that mother was good at music. So, she gave some music lessons to the children of affluent families, made some money and brought her two sons up, Shaw George you know George and his brother. And George Bernard Shaw began working again a music teacher and music reporter, and slowly he moved into writing plays and his plays become enormously popular.

His plays always made fun of middle class morality you know, as you will if you get time over the week end or sometime during summer vacation, I would like you to watch this entire movie. It is great fun and it is also great education. It actually tells you what is education all about? But I would like you to read more about Shaw, read some of his plays. Before you are 25, I strongly recommend you to read at least one or two of his plays. They are very witty, very entertaining, enjoy. Bernard Shaw himself was a very witty person. Read about him, and I am very sure you will thank me for having told about him.

Anyone here who has read anything by Shaw? You know your time is just now beginning. Until about two years ago, you were preparing for JEE, and then now in the college you have so many courses, but in vacation, find time. It does not take long time

to read his plays; about eighty pages, hundred pages, you know usual ordinary stage play has to be done within three hours, and therefore it is of limited duration.

And you know when read these plays, your English also gets better. Your spoken English also gets better, because plays are written in written for being a spoken. Have you read any play in any language? Have you? Have you? Rohan you come from Bombay right? There then the one of the greatest play writes of modern India is from Bombay, and my students in Humanities department are staging a play by him in tomorrow. Have you got the notice? No do you know? Do you know, really?

Humanities department students are doing a play by Vijay Tendulkar, not Sachin Tendulkar; Vijay Tendulkar, tomorrow at five thirty in the CLT. Do come. There is so much to learn. You know your institute is different from all other institutes in this part of the country, not because you have mechanical engineering or electrical engineering, but because you have lot more opportunities for many other things including Sarang in Sastra; one of these things.

So, let us come and watch the play. I am going to play just clipping just about 10 or 12 minutes you know, how the lead person in this play, the flower girl you know we watched her song, do you remember the song? Anybody who remember the first line of the song?

Again, together please. We do it once together right. Actually do you remember, do you remember, do you remember right? Sorry I say one, two, three; we will begin. One, two, three; begin. Over, no one here who remember the entire song? Do you, no. What a pity. You see this is how you learn somebody else's language. if you want to learn Marathi, you must not only learn talking in Marathi, you must also learn Marathi songs, music, short stories, plays, you know is the entire culture, then you get it.

So, it is the same girl, the flower girl now undergoing training in speech, acquiring standard pronunciation. Let us watch it.

Come back to the class please. Slightly exaggerated, it is a bit of fun, but you know, Shaw is making fun of all these business of changing accents etcetera and he says that the difference between classes its nothing but limited to accents, but actually there was a professor that time known as, there was a professor at that time you know Professor of

Phonetics in London Henry Sweet, it is of course, a bit exaggerated you know, the drill should not be painful, you do not need to have marbles in your mouth.

If you want to do the drill, it does not have to be at one stretch through the day and through the night. You know these are all exaggerations. This is how Bernard Shaw makes fun of the English and English language. Actually you know, when you read about Shaw, you will understand. You will see he was not an English man, he was an Irish and Irish were colonised by the British, just as the British colonised India colonised other parts of Asia and Africa. So, they also colonised Ireland and Shaw never forgave them for that he always made fun of the British whenever he could.

So, it is when of those opportunities, but you know as Buddha said, the truth is somewhere in the middle. It is neither in extreme fasting, go on fasting for thirty days, you do not get God that way. Your attention is always on food. You are always thinking of food. Or you go on eating through the day like B Tech do on IIT campus, eating through the day, start we get up, and you begin eating and I see lots of crowds every evening in Gurunath; nobody in the line. You know people are constantly eating here. That is also not good. It is somewhere in the middle.

Similarly, you know with the drill, do not overdo it, but some drill together will help you acquire, help you relearn some of those sounds which will must and they will also help us slow down. So, what will do today is, like we did it last month, we will do some drill in some of these sound together. Can you, I will come to the book later. Let us first do this. I will say it first and you will say next with me.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:04)

/i:/ as in			
• Beach	Beam	Beast	Beat
• Cheap	chief	clean	cream
• Deem	Dream	East	Eat
• Fee	Feel	Field	Free
• Gleam	Greed	Great	Heal
• Heat	Keep	Lead	Me
• Need	Peace	Please	Sea



Some English sounds are very long such as you know this phonetic symbol stands for eee; your lips must spread. It looks funny, but somebody else's language always looks funny, until you get use to it. So, do not worry ok. So, this is eee. Keep, just say go on say it in isolation. Let us see how long you can say it. Eeeee Let your lips is spread. Great. Everybody please, now follow me; say

Beach

Beach

Beam

Beam

Beast

Beast

Beat

Beat

go on and look at it.

Cheap

Chief

Slowly, take pause, have your breath; go on.

Clean

Cream

Deem

Dream

East

Eat

Do not compromise on the length, go on please. (( ))

Fee

Field

Free

Gleam

Greed

Great

Heal

Heat

Keep

Lead

Me

Need

Peace

Please

Sea

These words should not have been here. You know it was pronounced greet you know in Newton's time. Can anyone tell me when Newton was born and when he lived? Seventieth and eightieth, but late seventeenth to the early decades of the eightieth. At that time, educated people in England pronounced g r e a t as greet. So, Newton was a greet scientist.

You know a British parliament has two houses; the House of Commons and the House of Lords. House of Commons pronounced it as greet and sorry great, and House of Lords pronounced it as greet, but language changes. You do not speak the same Kannada or Telugu or Hindi or Marathi that your great grand fathers spoke. Every hundred years, actually it changes constantly, but you notice the difference every fifty year, every hundred years.

So, it was you, but now you know, it is there mistake. This word G R E A T. Let us take up the, please can you open the page number 172, if you can take this copy, one on each bench, open page number 172. Actually come to page number 173 and do all the words there. Shall we do the together? Right here we go. Please follow me. Did you find the page? Everybody, do you have access to some book, some copy, right.

Seem

Seem

Seat

Seat

See

See

Seed

Seed

go on please. Slowly slowly, take your time.

Students speaking not very clear

Everybody please. Just as you know Alias the little had this sentence; the rain, what is the sentence?

Students speaking not very clear

More slowly and once again please, everybody.

Students speaking not very clear

Rain in the pain. These things give you practise in context.

So, for instance you know, for this sound e, you can write a sentence like, Can you any pronounce it aloud? Can you, can you speak?

Eat well to bet the heat

Once again

Eat well to bet the heat

Thirty seconds; can you give me an original sentence using these sounds only; using e. Give me an practise in e. Give me one sentence individually please. Give me some sentence which has words with e. Your time begins now. Just pull down, I will write it. Let others also finish. Great.

It is an exercise in imagination. Ok got it? Now, another I am giving you some more time; another ten seconds may be right. Let us come back. Does not matter if you have not got it. It is just you I am trying to draw your attention to your fact that in continuous speech, you know you can sometimes have words which are very long vowels.

Can you give me the sentence once again?

Students speaking not very clear



Lovely, anyone else who got any other sentence?

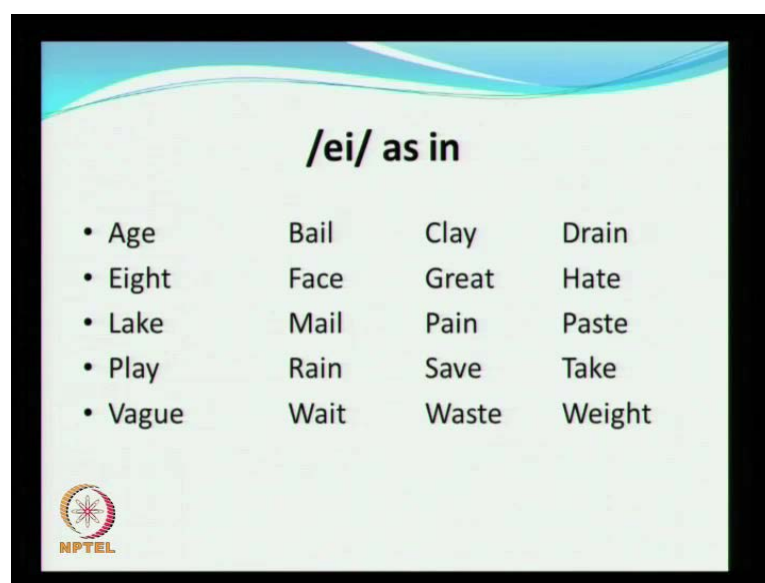
Students speaking not very clear

Come on, anyone else? Yes please.

Students speaking not very clear

Lovely. Anyone else? Please lead me to peace. Takes time. English is as I have been telling you; it is spoken in pause groups. Lovely, great sentence. Let us go to the next sound.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:43)



You know English have lots of long sounds unlike our languages. Look at this. Are we together, can you come back please? Can you pronounce the sound in isolation?

Age,

You know it is the same thing; you know the rain pain staice. It is ei. It you know in India, we have we have ei, but we do not have ei. It is both a and e after we pronounced. Can you just produce the sound in isolation? Ei; go on. Do it for one minute full. I will time you, start now.

Hardly, twenty five seconds. You guys are very weak. We will have the same practise once again. Please follow me and then do it on your own.

Age

Age

Bail

Bail

Clay

Clay

Drain

Drain

go on

Eight

Face

Great

Hate

Lake

Mail

Pain

Paste

Play

Rain

Save

Take

Vague, Watch your lips; vague. Round your lips;

Wait


Wait

Waste

Weight

Can you open the book on page number 176 please?

(Refer Slide Time: 35:56)

<b>Spray</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Stay</b>	<b>Steak</b>
<b>Stake</b>	<b>Strain</b>	<b>Strait</b>	<b>Straight</b>
<b>Strange</b>	<b>Stray</b>	<b>Sway</b>	<b>Tail</b>
<b>Taint</b>	<b>Take</b>	<b>Tale</b>	<b>Tame</b>
<b>Trace</b>	<b>Trade</b>	<b>Trail</b>	<b>Train</b>
<b>Trait</b>	<b>Tray</b>	<b>Vague</b>	<b>Vain</b>
<b>Vane</b>	<b>Vague</b>	<b>Veil</b>	<b>Vein</b>
<b>Wade</b>	<b>Wage</b>	<b>Wail</b>	<b>Wain</b>
<b>Waist</b>	<b>Waste</b>	<b>Wait</b>	<b>Waive</b>
 <b>Wake</b>	<b>Wane</b>	<b>Wave</b>	<b>Way</b>
<b>Weigh</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Whale</b>	

And let us go to last half of the list. I will begin it and you will please follow me and go slowly.

Vane; watch your lips coming close to the upper teeth, but do not bite it. Do not say vane, you do not have to do that. Just say vain; you know one of the most difficult sounds for us. We do not have problems with ra and la; like Japanese have, like Chinese have. They do not have problems with this. We have we do not have problem with ra and la, but we have problem with this sound; vane, vague. So, try and acquire that.

Once again, vane, vague. Can you go on,

\veil

Slowly, take your time.

Vein right.

Let us look at the next long sound. Once again, this is a let us try this time and say it for one minute. One, two, three; begin. Unique solution. No cheating. It does help, believe me you know.

Actually I am going to ask you a very simple question. Which part of your body do you think has strength, where does your body have strength from? Tell me, stomach, lungs where else. Arms; no. You have good biceps or forceps; biceps. Do you go to the gym every morning? You should. You are lucky to be a studying at college which gives you such a wonderful gym. I envy you guys not for your labs, but for your sports facilities. I grew up in a village where we will play football without boots. Even tennis without boots, but we had some tennis there, right.

Where were we? Let us come back to the word. I will say it first, and you will say it next.

Act

Act

Back

Back

you see these sounds are not difficult for us. We have them, but with them, we do not have them as long as the British have. And in the international context, when you are talking to somebody who is not as fluent in English as you are, internationally we are among the best speakers in English. And we are definitely the best writers of English.

I have been an examiner for the Cambridge university examination and I know that the Indian; average Indian is score in English is 7 on 9, but average spoken is 5 on 9. And one reason is we are in hurry. We do not say act, we say act and therefore, you know your (( )) is confused. Are you saying act or act or something else. So, take time, follow me.

Act

Act

Back

Back

go on.


Students speaking not very clear

Can you in your book, come to page number 179 please?

(Refer Slide Time: 41:23)

**Better Spoken English 179**

Spasm	Stamp	Stand	Tack
Tact	Tag	Tan	Tank
Tap	Tax	Thank	Track
Tract	Trap	Trash	Valve
Vamp	Van	Vat	Wad
Waft	Wag	Wax	

6.  /aa/ as in *arm*, *bark*, etc.

This is **one** of the longest vowels in English. It is

Let us go together.

Spasm

Spasm

Stamp

Stamp

Stand

Stand

Tack

Tack

go on.

Tact

Tag

Tan

Tank

Tap

Tax

Thank

Track

Tract

Trap

Take your time.

Valve

Vamp

Van

Vat

Wad

Waft

Wag

wax

Can you give me one sentence each quickly with this sound?

The cat and the rat ran to give... something. Do not worry about the sense, and we call them tongue twisters. Do not do not worry about sense. I will give you 30 seconds. begin now, give me a sentence. Make it still longer. It has only two words. At least three words.

Alisa the little made of five words; the rain spinster in mainly in the plains. So, rain, spain, main, plain; four words. Let us have at least three. Great. Another. lovely. Mad, jack, cash. lovely

You know there is a branch of literature. I wonder if you heard of it called nonsense poetry. Have you heard of it? Yes and very interesting. How many of us have read the book called Alice in the Wonderland? Do you know who wrote the book? Led Carroll and who was he? He was a mathematics teacher, a Professor of Mathematics in Cambridge, but he was so bored with mathematics that he did not have a family of his own. He was a bachelor, but he had a very good friend who had two or three daughters and one of them was called Alice. So, for one of the birthdays of Alice, he wrote this book Alice in the Wonderland.

How many of us have not read that book? Raise your hands. Before you come back to this institute in July or august, you must read it. One of the greatest books, ever written in any language. You will see that in language, sense is important not all that important. Language means something even without sense. It is a great book, is indeed great book ok. So, there also he has practise of this kind.

We will just have one or two quick things, and then will stop. Are we together? Are you tired, bored already? We will you finish, yes or no?

(Refer Slide Time: 45:04)



I want to hear no. I know you may be bored and tired, but please bear with me. Longest sound in any human language, you have to open your jaw fully like a crocodile. Aaa. Do not say aaa, just open your jaw as much as you can, and then slowly close it as I do saying aaa. That is the sound and English has lots of words of basic frequency; every day occurring words with this kind of sound. That is why I have been telling you from day one, if you have to learn one thing on this course, please learn to speak slowly. You will have no problem being understood anywhere by any one.

So, let us do some of these words slowly. I will say first, you will say next.

Art

Art

Aunt

Aunt

Bark

Bark

Calf



Calf

go on.

(Refer Slide Time: 46:24)



**/a:/ as in**

• Art	Aunt	Bark	Calf
• Charm	Card	Fast	Hard
• Heart	Palm	Past	Scarf
• Star	Task	Vast	Yarn

 MPTEL

Charm

Card

Fast

Hard

Heart

Palm

Past

Scarf

Star

Task

Vast

Yarn

Can you come to page number 180 please?

The first word on the page; what is that.

Clerk

It is not clerk, it is clerk. You see, we say clerk. We can say clerk, but make it long. Say clerk, better say clerk. Can you say all those words please? Begin there.

Card

Chance

Charge

Chart

Dance

Dark

Dart

Far

Farm

(Just one, you know another English has you know we also have a and aa, but English has something in between; between a and aa. They have aaaa. You know whenever their word has a vowel followed by ra sound, such as this; can you pronounce it, aaaaa make it long, go slowly.

(Refer Slide Time: 47:00)



**/ə:/ as in**

• Bird	Burn	Church	Dirt
• Earth	Girl	Curl	Hurt
• Nurse	Purse	Shirt	Surf
• Third	Verb	Word	Worse

 NPTEL

Bird

Burn

Church

Dirt

Earth

Girl

Curl

Hurt

Nurse

Purse

Shirt

Surf

Third

Go slowly

Verb

Word

Worse

What we will do is you know, you have the book, if you feel motivated do the practise on your own. Thank you. Have a good day.