

## Transcription Practice Exercise 2—Narrow Transcription of English

In these exercises, you will hear words, phrases, and sentences of English. The orthographic representation for each item is listed in the left-hand column. For each example, you are to provide a phonetic transcription in the right-hand column.

For some items, transcriptions are already provided to give you some hints as to how the utterances should be transcribed. You will hear most utterances only once. In some cases, there are two different pronunciations of a word and two different transcriptions will be required. These are listed as (a) and (b) on the worksheet. Please note that there is no answer sheet for this exercise.

A few points to remember:

- It is best to begin with a fairly broad style of transcription, as for exercise #1 in this series. Greater detail need be indicated only as called for in the instructions for each section.
- You are to transcribe each item the way you hear it, not the way that you pronounce it or the way that you think it should be pronounced.
- You need not transcribe aspiration, and schwa may be used for both high and mid reduced vowels.
- Do not forget to mark the stressed syllable of the word with the short vertical line before the stressed syllable as in the following examples.

<u>English Orthography</u>	<u>Phonetic Transcription</u>
1. <a href="#">Stop it.</a>	'stɒpət OR 'stɒpɪt
2. <a href="#">camera</a>	'kæm.ɪə
3. <a href="#">moved</a>	_____
4. <a href="#">chocolate</a>	_____
5. <a href="#">javelin</a>	_____
6. <a href="#">reached</a>	_____

### ***Syllabic consonants***

In English, the nasal consonants [m, n, ŋ] and the liquids [ɹ] and [l] can constitute entire syllables on their own. Such syllables do not include any vowels at all. When these consonants function in this way, they are referred to as syllabic. For example, the final syllable of the word “single” is a syllabic [l] and does not contain any vowel at all. We transcribe these syllabic consonants with a line beneath them ([l̩ ɹ̩ m̩ n̩ ŋ̩]), as shown in the transcription of “single” below.

7. [single](#)                    'sɪŋɡl̩
8. [bottom](#)                    \_\_\_\_\_
9. [sample](#)                    \_\_\_\_\_
10. [letter](#)                    \_\_\_\_\_
11. a) [crying](#)                    a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) [cryin'](#)                    b) \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Extra stop consonant***

Some words whose orthography suggests the presence of only two consonants in a cluster may have an “extra” stop consonant between the two, as in “warmth,” transcribed below.

13. [warmth](#)                    wɔːɪmpθ
14. [prints](#)                    \_\_\_\_\_
15. [strength](#)                    \_\_\_\_\_
16. a) [something](#)                    a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) [somethin'](#)                    b) \_\_\_\_\_

### *Assimilation of place of articulation*

When a nasal precedes a stop consonant, the nasal will often assimilate in place to the following stop, as in the example “San Pedro,” below.

17. [San Pedro](#)            sæm 'pidʒɪəʊ

18. [in pieces](#)            \_\_\_\_\_

19. [within groups](#)        \_\_\_\_\_

### *Syllable reduction*

Some syllables in an utterance may be reduced to the point of disappearing. For example, the sentence “I didn’t write you” may contain five vowels in more careful speech, but often contains only four, as in (20), below. Reduction also includes the “collapse” of two consonants into one. For example, the final sound in “write” and the first sound in “you” are pronounced as a single [tʃ] in (20), so that “write you” is [ˈraɪtʃu] rather than [ˈraɪtju].

20. [I didn’t write you](#)    aɪ dɪn ˈraɪtʃə OR aɪ dɪn ˈraɪtʃu

21. [Don’t you think?](#)        \_\_\_\_\_

22. [Did he kiss you?](#)        \_\_\_\_\_

23. [I told you.](#)                \_\_\_\_\_

### *Schwa versus a consonant cluster*

In some words, the schwa in an unstressed syllable may be omitted, producing a word-initial sequence of two stop consonants. Although we usually think of this as prohibited in English, it is clearly audible in examples like (24b), below.

24. [Tacoma](#)                a) tə'koumə

b) t'koumə (t<sup>h</sup>'koumə)

25. [potassium](#)            a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

26. [catastrophe](#)          a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Consonant voicing***

The voicing of some consonants—especially those between vowels—may vary in the speech of a single speaker. No example is provided, but you may listen to each item as many times as necessary for you to hear the difference between the two pronunciations.

27. [exactly](#) a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

28. [exit](#) a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Glottal stop***

Sometimes English stop consonants, particularly [t] or [d], can be replaced by glottal stops. In a glottal stop, there is no constriction in the oral cavity. Instead, the vocal folds come tightly together, blocking the flow of air from the lungs. You are probably familiar with making glottal stops in the expression “uh-uh,” in which each syllable begins with a glottal stop. “Uh-uh” would be transcribed as in (29). In an English word such as “mountain,” the medial stop can be produced either as a full [t], as in (30a), or as a glottal stop, as in (30b). In other cases, glottal stop might appear where some other allophone, such as tap [ɾ], would also be possible. Before proceeding to the transcription items in this section, make sure you can hear the difference between the two pronunciations of “mountain.”

29. [uh-uh](#) 'ʔʌʔʌ ('ʔʌʔʌ̃)

30. [mountain](#) a) 'maʊntɪn

b) 'maʊʔn̩

*Note:* glottalization plus nasal plosion is also possible here

31. [bottle](#) a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

32. [I've got one](#) \_\_\_\_\_

***Additional practice items***

The utterances below provide more practice with the tendencies in casual English speech that you have already practiced transcribing. At the very bottom are two sentences for you to transcribe; these will require something new—transcribing pauses in speech using the # symbol.

- 33. [see you later](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 34. [bread and butter](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 35. [I can go](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 36. [Will he go?](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 37. [to sleep](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 38. [He said that it did](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 39. [What are you doing?](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 40. [Did you eat yet?](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 41. [I don't believe him](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 42. [I'm going to leave town](#) \_\_\_\_\_
- 43. [Could you wait for him?](#) \_\_\_\_\_

Use # to mark pauses; it can transcribe intonation contour, also.

44. a) [That man, who I saw yesterday, has five jobs.](#)

\_\_\_\_\_

b) [The man who I saw yesterday has five jobs.](#)

\_\_\_\_\_