A Method for Transcription

¶ 6.1

Step 1



Say aloud & count sounds.

Step 2

Decide sounds
(Consonant by consonant, vowel by vowel).

Step 3

Mark stress.

Step 4

Check dictionary.

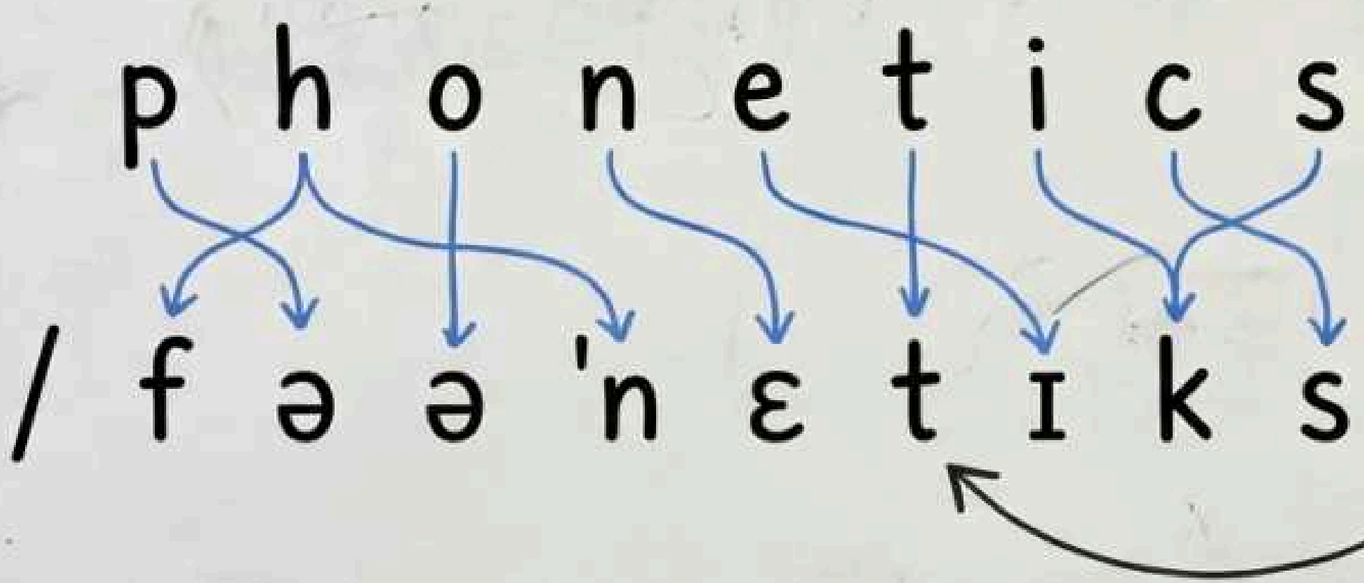
Always trust your ear over the spelling.

Gemini Notebook

Letters Do Not Equal Sounds

¶ 6.2

phonetics (9 letters) ≠ /fə'nɛtɪks/ (8 sounds)



Casual American speech:
/fə'nɛɾɪks/ (Flap)

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The Precision of the IPA

¶ 6.3

-ough

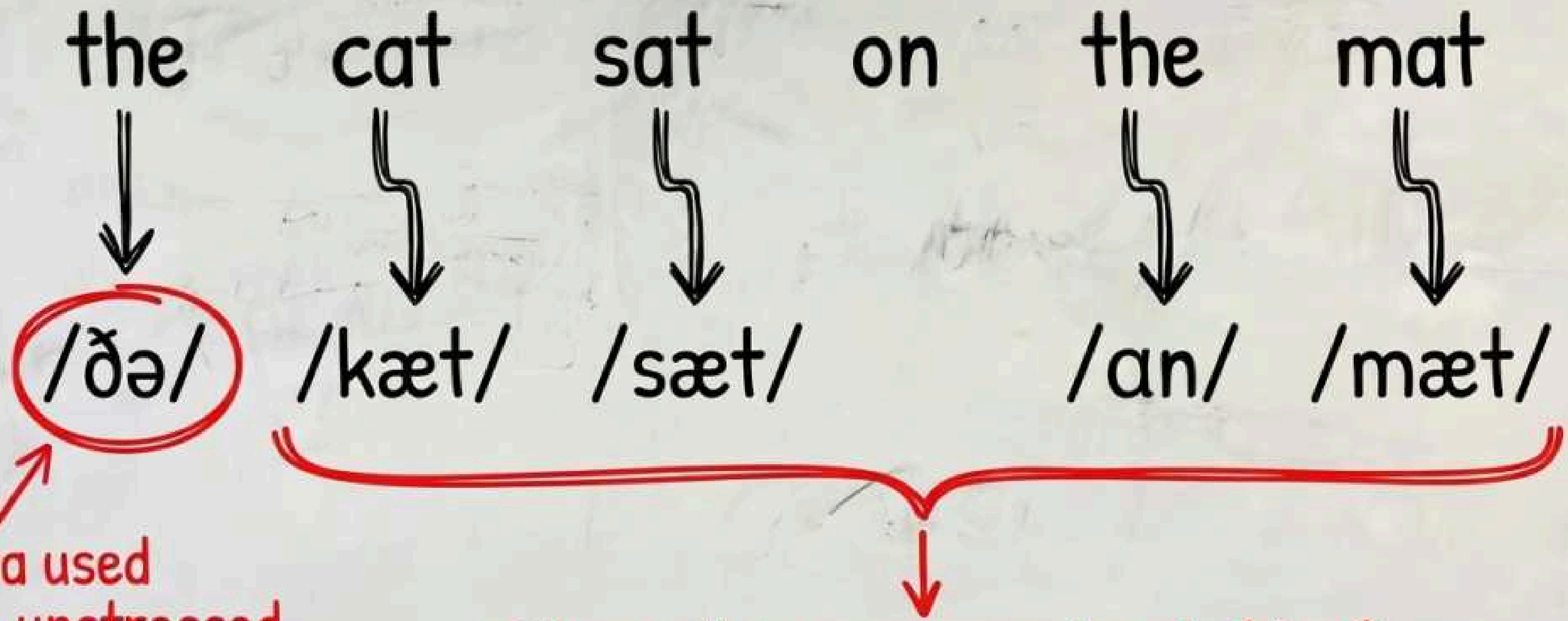
Through	/θɹu/
Though	/ðoʊ/
Tough	/tʌf/
Cough	/kɔf/
Bough	/baʊ/
Thought	/θɔt/

1 spelling = 6 distinct sound sequences = 0 IPA confusion

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Sentence-Level Transcription

¶ 6.4



Affricates and Digraphs

¶ 6.5

Ship → Full word: /ʃɪp/

{sh} = /ʃ/

Judge → Full word: /dʒʌdʒ/

{j} = /dʒ/ and {dge} = /dʒ/

↖ First and last sounds are the exact same affricate

Thing → Full word: /θɪŋ/

{th} = /θ/ and {ng} = /ŋ/

↖ Ends in /ŋ/. There is no 'g' sound at all.

Gemini Notebook

Diacritics: Adding Detail

¶ 6.6

[ʰ] = Raised h → Aspiration

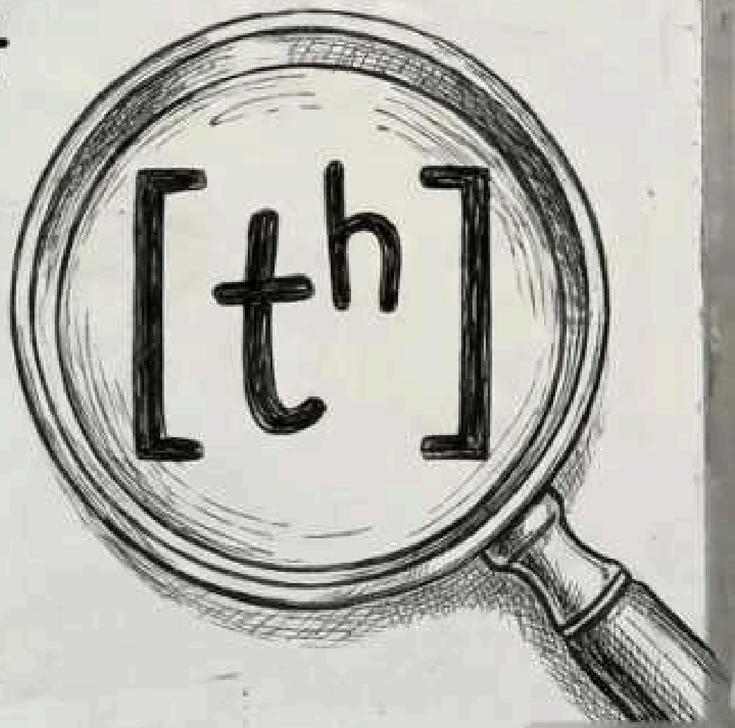
[~] = Tilde over vowel → Nasalization

[ː] = Colon → Length

[ˌ] = Small line below → Syllabic consonant

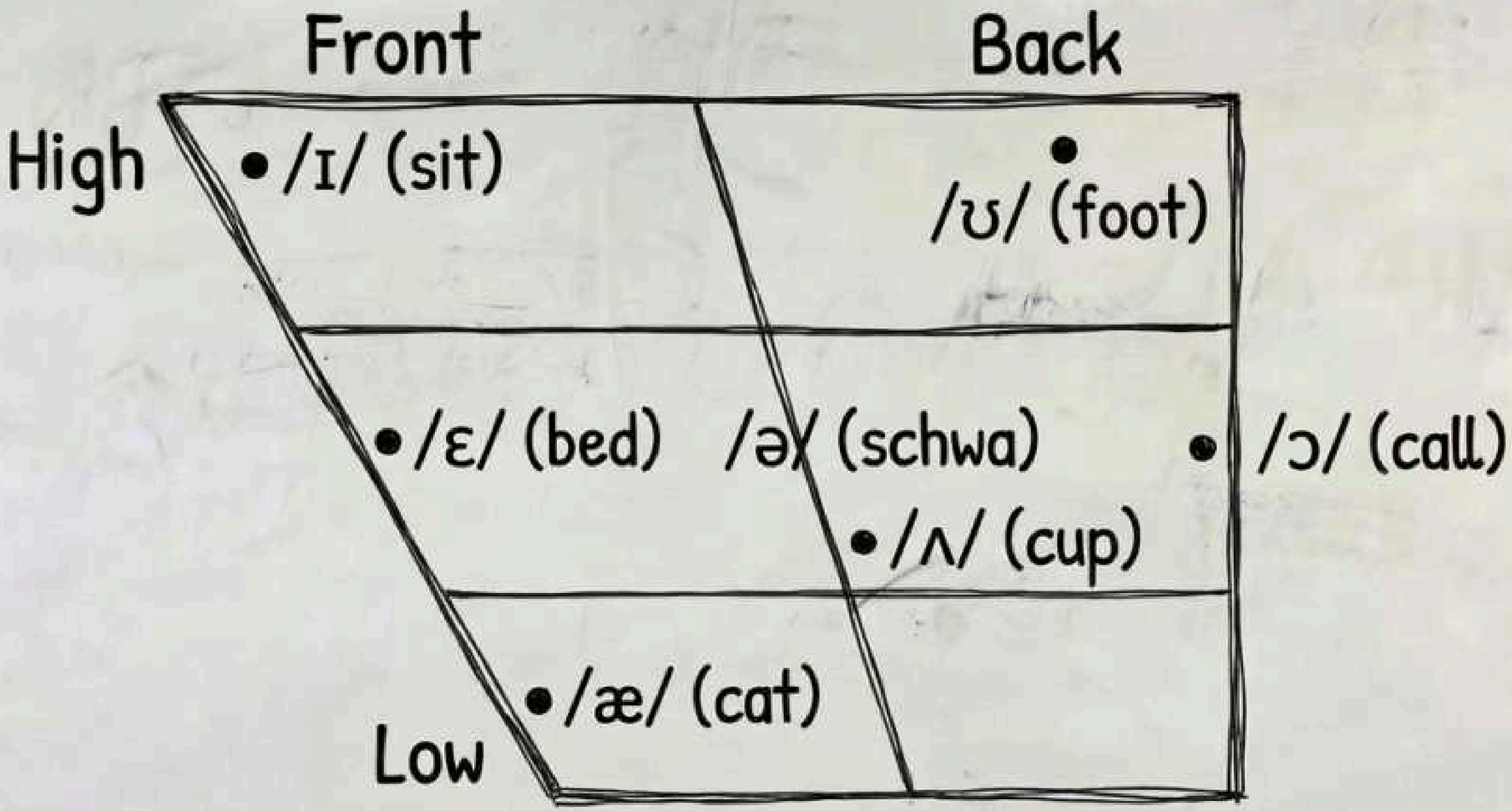
[̥] = Circle below → Voiceless

(for a normally voiced sound)



The Special Vowels

¶ 6.7



The Special Consonants

¶ 6.8

/ŋ/	ng (sing)
/θ/	th (think)
/ð/	th (this)
/ʃ/	sh (ship)
/ʒ/	s (vision)
/ɹ/	r (English r)
/j/	y (yes)
/ɾ/	tap (butter)
/ʔ/	catch (uh-oh)

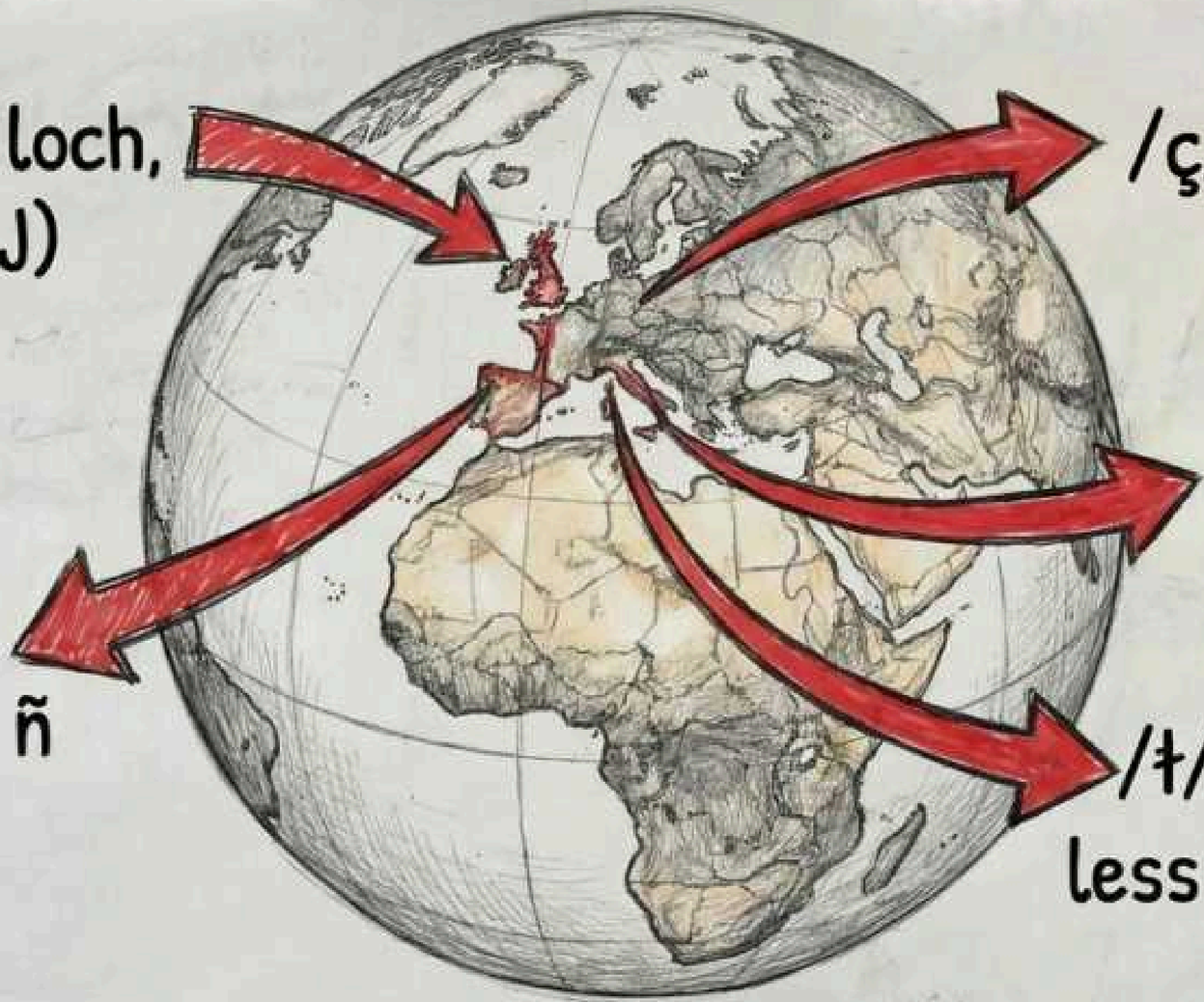
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Sounds Beyond English

¶6.9

/x/ (Scottish loch, Spanish J)

/ç/ (German ich)



/ʎ/ (Italian gli)

/ɲ/ (Spanish ñ - año)

/ɬ/ (Welsh ll -voiceless lateral fricative)

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Spanish Allophones: Environment Matters

¶ 6.10

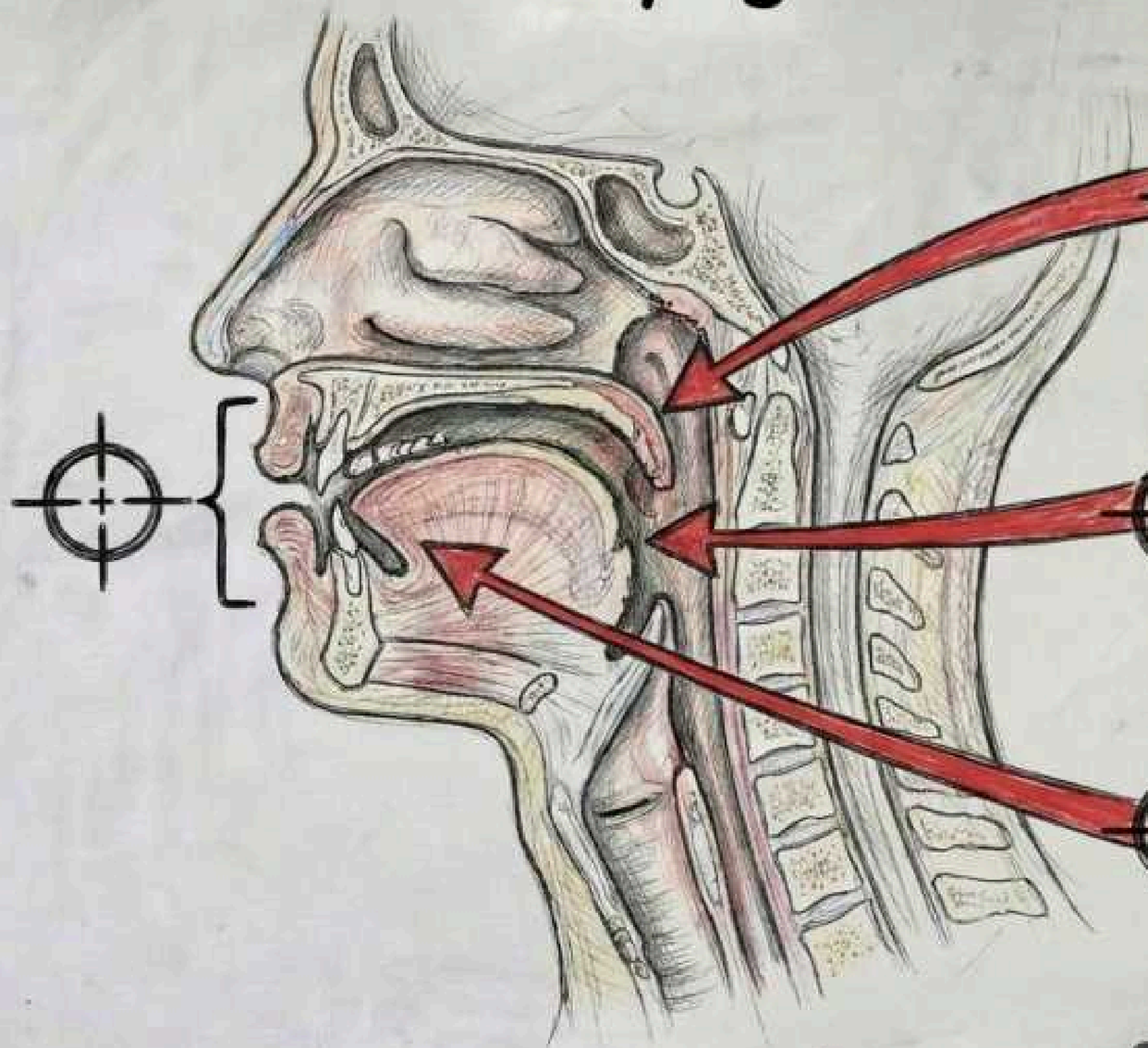
[Hard Stop] + [Between Vowels] → [Soft Fricative]

B → /β/ (haba)
D → /ð/ (cada)
G → /ɣ/ (lago)

Spanish speakers hear the same phoneme, but the mouth makes an entirely different sound. These are allophones.

Uvulars, Pharyngeals, and Clicks

¶ 6.11



The Uvula: French /ʁ/
(voiced uvular fricative).

Deep Throat: Arabic pharyngeal
and uvular consonants.

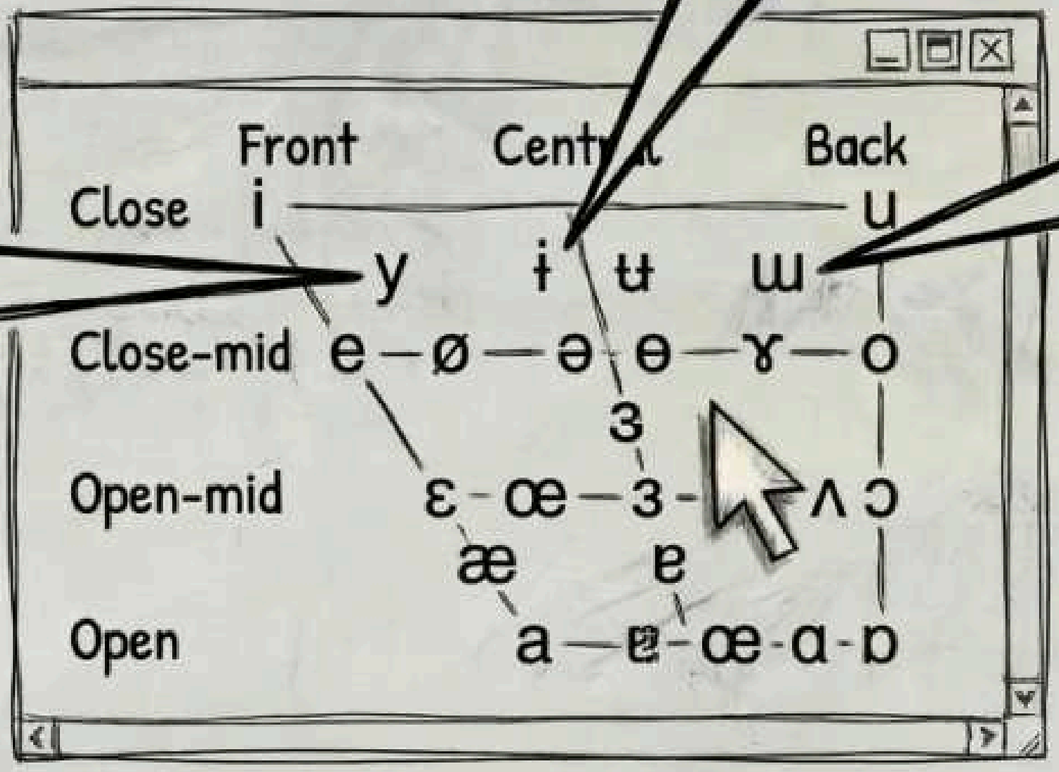
Zulu Clicks: Dental [ǀ],
Alveolar [ǃ], Lateral [ǁ].

Vowels Beyond English

¶ 6.12

Close central:
Russian /ɨ/

Front rounded:
French/German
/y/ and /ø/



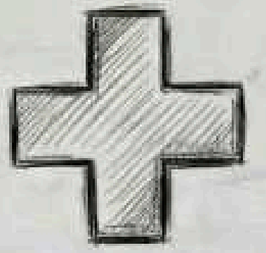
Unrounded 'oo':
Japanese /ɯ/

Use an interactive online IPA chart to hear
the full range by clicking each symbol.

Professional Applications

¶ 6.13

Speech & Language Therapists
(Describing a child's speech)



ESL Teachers
(Showing exact pronunciation)

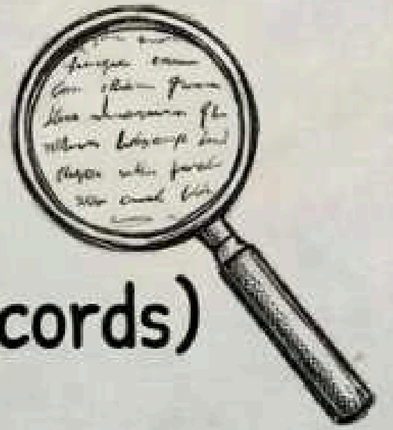


IPA



Singers & Actors
(Mastering diction)

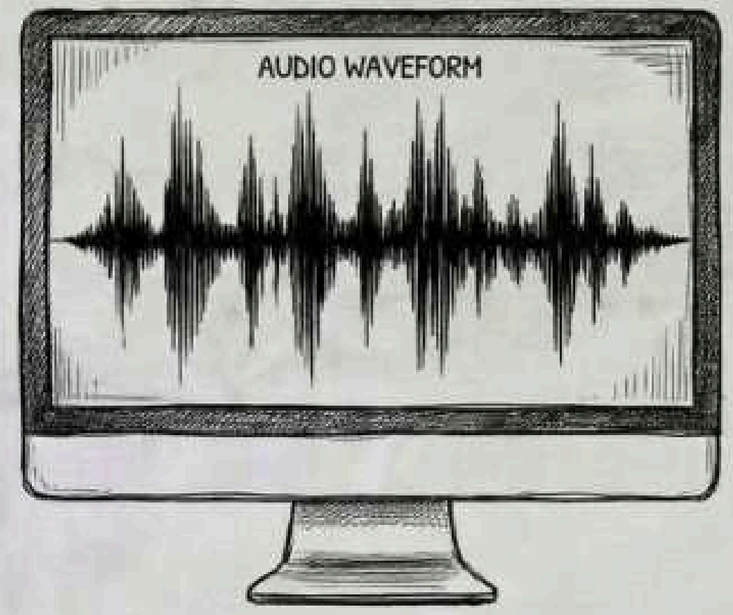
Dictionaries
(Standardizing
pronunciation records)



Forensics and Preservation

¶6.14

Forensics



Experts compare voices and analyze audio recordings for legal evidence.

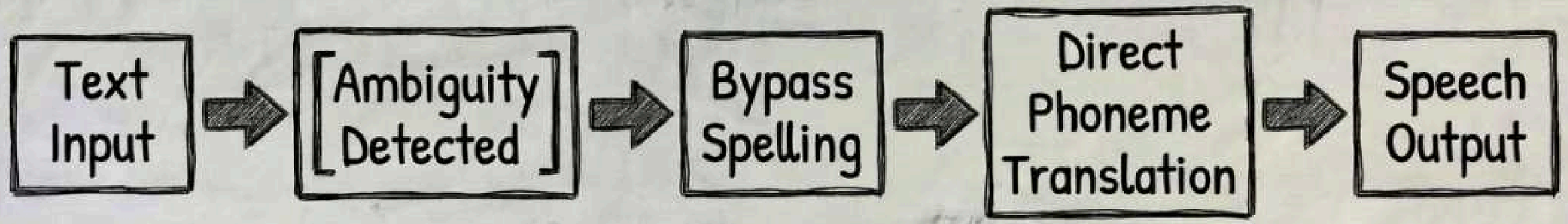
Preservation



Transcribing unwritten languages before the last speakers are gone. Keeping sounds alive for generations.

Speech Technology & TTS

¶6.15



Meta-Example: How this course's narration

How this course's narration software reads the letter A:

- Inputting just 'A' is ambiguous.
- Engineer feeds the software /eɪ/ to force the exact pronunciation.

The Letter 'A': Symbol vs. Sound

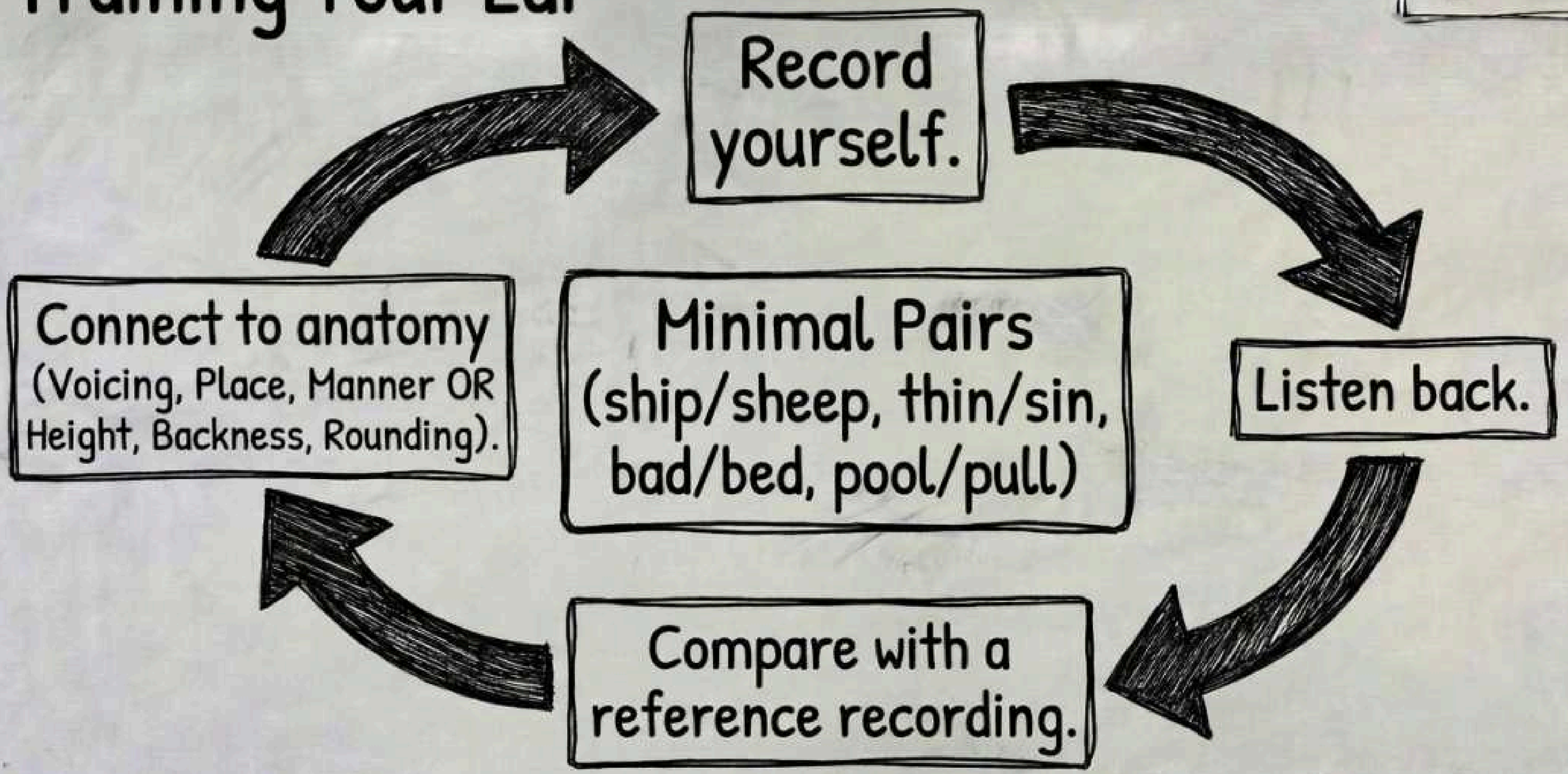
¶ 6.16

As a Symbol (Read by Name /eɪ/)	Inside a Word (Read by Sound /ə/)
- Algebra (Variable) - Music (Note) - Report Card (Grade)	- 'a cat' → The article is weak, pronounced as a schwa.

Letters used as symbols are read by name.
Letters inside words are read by sound.

Training Your Ear

¶6.17



Four Common Errors to Avoid

¶ 6.18

- [x] Confusing letters with sounds.
- [x] Writing 'Y' for the sound /j/.
- [x] Using 'C' for the sound /k/.
- [x] Forgetting stress marks.

The Golden Rule: A transcription is a record of what the mouth does, never of how the word is spelled.

Course Recap

¶ 6.19

L6: Transcription & Special Symbols

L5: Syllables, Stress, & Connected Speech

L4: Height, Backness, Rounding, & Schwa

L3: 24 English Consonants

L2: Voicing, Place, and Manner

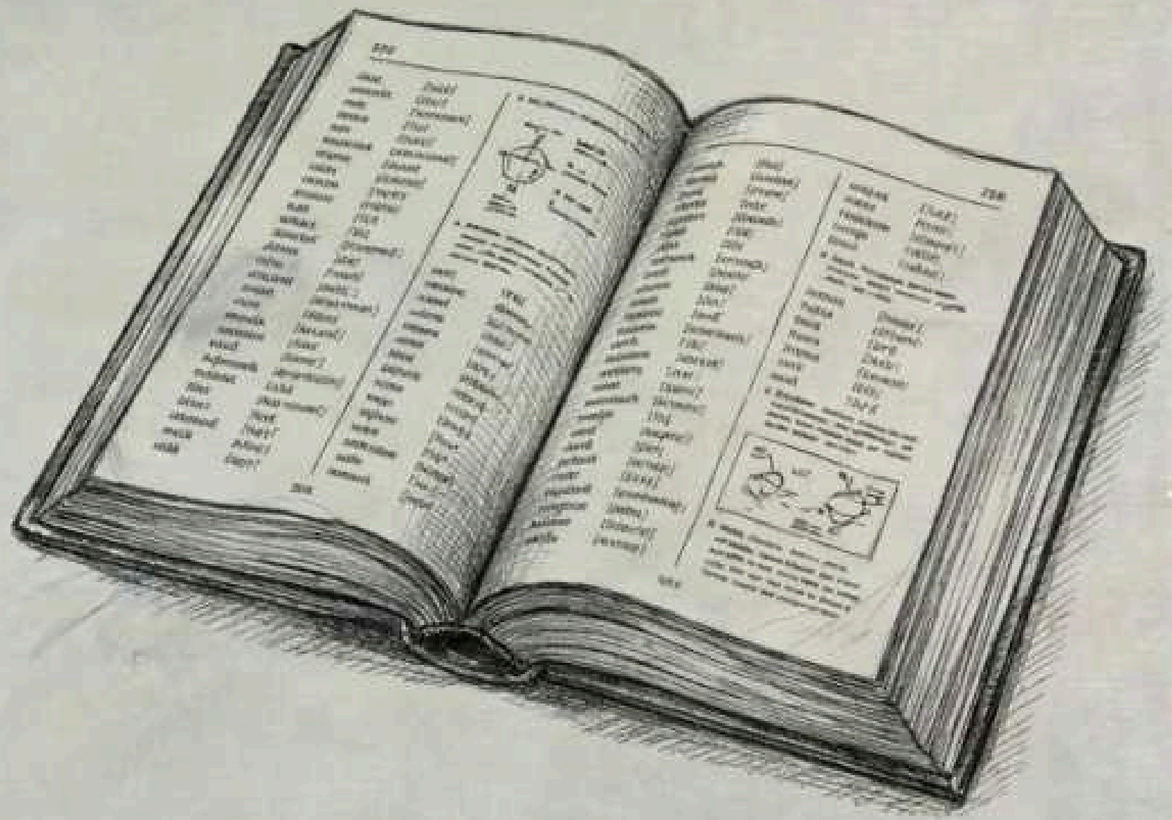
L1: Sounds vs. Letters & IPA

Your Daily Practice Routine

¶ 6.20

To-Do List

1. Make the IPA chart a daily companion.
2. Look up words, say them aloud, transcribe from memory, then check.
3. Listen to other accents/languages and visualize what their mouths are doing.



Within a month, you will hear speech differently.

The Universal Tool

¶6.21



You now own a tool that works for every language on Earth.

A way of saying exactly how a sound is made, and a way of writing it down.

Transcribe a little every day. Soon, the symbols will feel as natural as letters.

One Last Reminder

¶6.22

Questions or feedback:
Email: garyanderson@mail.grokbot.com
X: @garyanderson

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