

Speech from Henry IV part 2 In Original Pronunciation

With audio recording and notation in the
International Phonetic Alphabet

Notating the sound changes for Original Pronunciation

O yet, for God's sake, go not to these Warrs;
The Time was (Father) when you broke your word,
When you were more endear'd to it, than now,
When your owne Percy, when my heart-dear Harry,
Threw many a Northward lookes, to see his Father
Bring up his Powres; but he did long in vaine,
Who then perswaded you to stay at home?
There were two Honors lost: Yours, and your Sonnes.
For Yours, the God of heaven brighten it:
For His, it stuck upon him, as the Sunne
In the gray vault of Heaven: and by his Light
Did all the Chevalrie of England move
To do brave Acts, He was (indeed) the Glasse
Wherein the Noble-Youth did dress themselves. * Q1 Cuts here
He was the Mark, and Glasse, Coppy, and Booke,
That fashion'd others. And him, O wondrous! him,
O Miracle of Men! Him did you leave
(Second to none) un-seconded by you,
To look upon the hideous God of Warre,
In dis-advantage, to abide a field,
Where nothing but the sound of Hotspurs Name
notin

Monologue From
Henry IV Part 2



Basic
Original Pronunciation

Monologue From
Henry IV Part 2



Performed
Original Pronunciation

Did seem defensible: so you left him.
Never, O never doe his Ghost the wrong,
To hold your Honor more precise and nice
With others, than with him. Let them alone:
The Marshal and the Arch-bishop are strong.
Had my sweet Harry had but halfe their Numbers,
To day might I (hanging on Hotspur's Necke)
Have talk'd of Monmouth's Grave.
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This is...

An audio recording and accompanying notation (in the International Phonetic Alphabet or IPA) of how we believe Shakespeare's words might have sounded when spoken for the first time in London, applied to a speech from Henry IV part 2.

In the digital portion of the display I have 3 pieces available to listen to:

- A reading, primarily for diction/dialect, in my 'standard' performance dialect for Shakespeare. This is a slightly heightened and more specifically articulated version of my everyday dialect.
- A reading, primarily for diction/dialect, in Original Pronunciation. I aimed to use as many of the phonemic changes and shifts as identified in my notes as possible.
- A reading in Original Pronunciation that integrates the dialect with character as I might in a full performance. While I want to get all of the sounds, in this read I am allowing myself to let some slide or go to places that feel 'right' - just as we all do in our day-to-day lives - just to see what happens.

Though they were speaking 'English' in early modern England, it sounded somewhat different from how we speak today - both in the United States and in the United Kingdom. Over the past 10+ years a group of scholars and artists have been working to piece out what the dialect of Shakespeare's London might have been, leaning primarily on indicators hidden in the text of his plays and poems.

By looking at how words are spelled, places where it appears words should rhyme but in current pronunciation they do not, puns, and observations by contemporary writers, we can piece together what certain words or sounds might have been.



Emily Sucher and Brendan Kennedy as Jessica and Lorenzo in Baltimore Shakespeare Factory's production of *The Merchant of Venice* in original pronunciation.

Photographed by Jacqueline Chenault, ©2015
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Dialect Work: My Approach

Outside of our Society, I am a professionally trained actor and teaching artist. My approach to working on dialects, most recently informed by a class with Zachary Campion¹ (voice and dialect coach for DC-area regional theaters including Arena Stage, Signature Theater, and Studio Theater among others) is as follows.

I begin by defining the sound changes for this dialect. What are the sounds in American English that are pronounced differently in the dialect? I note these using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). I do not work off of lexical sets or other groupings of sounds, I instead work through individual and specific phonemes to define the changes between my personal dialect and the one I am aiming for. Note that this is a departure from how Paul Meier breaks down Original Pronunciation in his materials², and for OP required significant work to combine his system, David Crystal's breakdown of the dialect³, and my own process.

In modern dialects, I will look for recordings of native speakers of a dialect or language speaking English to build my list of sound changes. I might also lean on resources from dialect coaches like Campion or Meier to develop the specific list of sound changes I am aiming to use for a character (whose dialect may vary depending on factors like age, race, place of birth, etc). In the case of OP, I of course have limited resources on that front but did consult publicly available recordings made by David and Ben Crystal⁴ as well as my personal collection of recordings made for *The Merchant of Venice*.⁵

I then read through my text, keeping one and only one of those sound changes in mind. Every place I see the initial sound, I mark what it should be changed to. I repeat this for each sound change in the dialect.

¹ Campion, Zachary. *Dialects*, Studio Acting Conservatory.

² Meier, Paul. *The Original Pronunciation (OP) of Shakespeare's English*

³ Crystal, David. *The Oxford Dictionary of Original Shakespearean Pronunciation*

⁴ Crystal, Ben. "Shakespeare On Toast" *Youtube (Channel)*. <https://www.youtube.com/@shakespeareontoast>

⁵ Crystal, David. *The Merchant of Venice*. Author's private collection

Once all the changes are marked, I can read through the fully-noted text in dialect with the marked changes.

As a final step, if there are words that feel like they should shift but have not been noted, I check them against a reliable source - in the case of OP, *The Oxford Dictionary of Shakespearean Pronunciation*. If there is something specific and useful noted there I include it in my notation.

An important note that may be obvious: I am working on this dialect from my own point of view. Our Kingdom and Society stretch across a vast territory and there are many regional dialects spoken within our borders. I have not aimed to create a map for any speaker to use Original Pronunciation, instead of I have aimed at a map that allows me - a female, an elder Millennial, born in New York City with family roots in Alabama and St Louis, raised in Seattle and now residing in Washington DC - to shift my dialect to something like what was spoken in Shakespeare's England. Other performers may require different phonemic shifts to perform this dialect.

What is the International Phonetic Alphabet?

“An internationally recognized set of phonetic symbols developed in the late 19th century, based on the principle of strict one-to-one correspondence between sounds and symbols”⁶

The International Phonetic Alphabet, or IPA, is a topic far too vast to properly cover in this document, but it is helpful to have a basic understanding of how I’m notating phonemes of the dialect.

The IPA is a system that can be used to identify specific phonemes in speech. It consists of several sections, of which I find two to be the most useful:

The Consonants/Pulmonic sounds

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

© 2020 IPA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

The consonants chart is a matrix with *types* of sound on the left hand side (Plosives, Nasal, Trill, Tap/Flap, Fricative, Lateral fricative, approximant, and lateral approximant), and *locations* for producing sound along the top (Bilabial, labiodental, dental, alveolar, postalveolar, retroflex, palatal, velar, uvular, pharyngeal, and glottal). All consonant sounds possible with the human

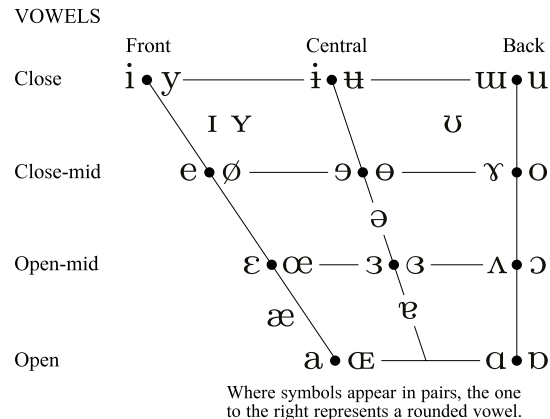
⁶ Definition from Oxford English Dictionary

mouth are located somewhere on this chart. Some are ‘voiced’, some are ‘unvoiced’ - that’s the difference between ‘s’ as in ‘snake’ and ‘z’ as in ‘zebra’. The vocal apparatus is in the same position, but you produce a different sound depending on if you voice the sound or not.

The Vowels

The vowels chart is also a matrix, but the axes are slightly different. As Zach Campion described them to me, they have most to do with the position of your tongue.

The left axis indicates where the cupped portion of the tongue is, from cupping near the front to the back. It’s a strange way to describe it but once you voice the sounds it makes sense. The top axis indicates position of the sound, front, center, or back of the mouth.



Useful Tools for IPA Work

If this all sounds confusing - it is! Luckily there are some very useful tools available to help with the sounds. To confirm that you have a sound right (and to better understand the tables), there are fantastic interactive IPA charts online, where you can click on a symbol and hear the sound associated with it. One of my go-tos is the one from International Phonetic Alphabet.com⁷.

Another useful tool (and frankly the one I lean on the most for this sort of work) is one given to me by Zach Campion, his American English Phonemes Decoder Sheet. I have it next to me constantly when I’m doing dialect work and trying to identify what sounds I’m looking for and what sounds they change to. I’ve included it as an appendix to this documentation.

⁷ <https://www.internationalphoneticalphabet.org/ipa-sounds/ipa-chart-with-sounds/#ipachartstart>

How Can We Know What Shakespeare Sounded Like?

Short of inventing a time machine and sending someone back to Elizabethan England armed with a recorder, we will never know for certain how the words of Shakespeare sounded when they were first spoken aloud. If we cannot bend Newtonian and Einstein's physics, those of us with an interest in the question have to rely on a set of subtle (and not-so-subtle) hints left behind in the texts of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Part of what makes it possible to recreate the dialect is the work of Shakespeare itself. In publishing the First Folio, Edward Blount and Issac Jaggard⁸ captured a set of writings, meant to be spoken aloud, with rhyme and rhythm baked into the lines, all authored by a single person. It's a large data set that allows quite a bit of exploration and investigation.

To analyze the plays and develop the dialect independent of other researchers is the work of a lifetime, and certainly far outside the remit of this document. Luckily, in the past 25 years there has been a push to investigate and publish information around our best approximation of that dialect. In 2004, the Globe Theater hired David Crystal to develop the dialect for a groundbreaking production of *Romeo and Juliet*, where for one weekend the play was performed in Original Pronunciation. The experiment was a resounding success, and since then performances in OP have been produced at the Globe, at Jamestown's 400th anniversary celebrations, off-broadway in New York, at Kansas University and the University of Nevada, and more.⁹

As Crystal writes in the introduction to his dictionary, "The reconstruction of OP is based on four kinds of evidence ... : spellings, rhymes, puns, and observations by contemporary writers"¹⁰. Some examples of these, all provided by Crystal:

1. Spellings: In *Romeo and Juliet* act 1 scene 4, Mercutio describes Queen Mab as having a whip with 'a lash of film' in modern editions. In the Folio and Quarto, this is spelled '*philome*', indicating a bisyllabic pronunciation, 'fillum'

⁸ Applause First Folio of Shakespeare

⁹ Crystal, David. "Original pronunciation: the state of the art in 2016"

¹⁰ Crystal, David. *The Oxford Dictionary of Original Shakespearean Production*

2. Rhymes: In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Puck often speaks in or finishes lines with rhyming couplets. In act 3 scene 2, he says "Then will two at once woo one/That must needs be sport alone". It should rhyme, but it doesn't. This indicates a pronunciation of *one* that we no longer leverage in modern English.
3. Puns: In *Love's Labor's Lost*, there is a line "Your lion, that holds his pole-axe sitting on a close-stool, will be given to Ajax". This doesn't make much sense... unless 'Ajax" could also be pronounced 'a jakes'. Jakes means 'privy', and close stool... well, you get the idea. Body and bawdy humor abounds in Shakespeare if you know where to look.
4. Contemporary observations: In Ben Johnson's *English Grammar*, the letter *o* is describe as 'In the short time more flat, and akin to u; as ... brother, love prove', indicating that form him, 'prove' was pronounced like 'love'. This is reinforced by rhyme in the closing couplet of Sonnet 116, "If this be error, and upon me proved/I n'er writ, nor no man e'er loved".

My own exposure to OP began with the first Original Pronunciation production of *The Merchant Of Venice* with Baltimore Shakespeare Factory (BSF) in Baltimore, Maryland. In 2015, I had the pleasure of working with David and his son, Ben Crystal (a skilled actor and expert in the dialect in his own right) as we prepared the production.

Unfortunately, I had not yet been exposed to the IPA and the same held for the rest of my cast. This meant that I didn't have a reliable way to notate and record the dialect that I could apply to the future.

Luckily in the fall of 2023 I rectified that in a class with Zachary Champion at Studio Acting Conservatory on Dialects. With Zach, I learned the IPA and applied it to learning and working on a series of modern dialects.

For this project, I've revisited the dialect I learned in 2015 with fresh eyes and new tools. Drawing from David's 2016 *Oxford Dictionary Of Original Shakespearean Pronunciation* and documentation from Paul Meier¹¹, I've determined a list of phonemic changes that I can use to modify my personal dialect to one which more closely resembles how Shakespeare would have been heard on the London stage.

¹¹ Meier, Paul. *The Original Pronunciation (OP) of Shakespeare's English*

Sound Changes from American English to 1600's Original Pronunciation

In comparison to my personal 'general American' sound, Shakespeare's pronunciation was more muscular and rhotic. Multiple vowel sounds are neutralized, or moved to the more central 'schwa' sound. Overall it is a rougher, looser sound than I typically use.

Building from Meier's work as well as that of David and Ben Crystal¹² I've developed the list of specific phonemes and sound changes to change my dialect to something like what was spoken in Shakespeare's England.

Rhotic 'R'

There is a Rhotic "R" sound with heavy r-coloration on vowels followed by "R"

Examples: nurse, start, north, force, air, flower, Orsino, Ferdinand.

Noted by underlining or writing 'r' in places where I anticipate using a heavy R sound.

Neutralizing aʊ to əʊ

The aʊ sound (as in 'mouth') becomes əʊ. This is a centered onset, moving the sound to more of a schwa/neutral vowel.

This sound is pretty natural for an American dialect, though it might need to be pushed a little.

Examples: mouth, out, loud, noun, count, crowd, bough

aɪ (Price) and ɔɪ (Choice) become əɪ

Another move towards neutralization, aɪ as in "price" and ɔɪ as in "choice" both become əɪ.

This is another centered onset that starts with the schwa.

Examples: Price, tribe, time, Friday, isle, eider, fight, Viola, choice, point, boil, toy, ahoy, royal

¹² Crystal, David. *The Oxford Dictionary of Original Shakespearean Pronunciation*

Words ending in i become əɪ

Words that end in i, like 'happy' become əɪ. Once more, this is a neutralized onset.

Examples: Happy, lovely, city, baby, money, Feste, valley

ʌ becomes ɤ

The ʌ as in "strut" becomes ɤ. This is a close-mid back sound.

Examples: Cup, rub, butter, love, monk, blood, hum, summer

ɝ becomes ɝ~

ɝ as in "Nurse" becomes ɝ~. This is a slightly more open, pronounced 'r' sound.

Examples: usurp, turn, mercy, shirt, assert, earth, worst, scourge

i becomes e or e̞

i as in 'fleece' becomes e or e̞. It is a slightly more open sound.

Examples: see, field, be, people, breathe, complete, Caesar, Phoenix

ɪŋ becomes ɪn

ɪŋ as in 'ing' at the end of sentences becomes ɪn. Note that this is NOT connected to social status, everyone has the option of dropping the 'g' off of -ing endings and does not indicate that a person is lower class.

Examples: Calling, singing, praying

ʃən becomes sɪən

In spellings like -sion and -tion, ʃən becomes sɪən.

Examples: Scansion, exclamation.

Additional Features: Elision and Dropping Sounds

This is a dialect with casual diction, using lots of elision and weak forms. In an unstressed position, 'and', 'as', 'being', 'for' and the like end up in the weakest form possible, which leads to speech that is rapid and can be delivered 'trippingly on the tongue'.

Initial 'h' sounds in unstressed positions will be dropped. They might be dropped on more substantial words as well. This is not *necessarily* class-based, lower-class speakers will drop it in general but upper class speakers do it on occasion as well.

A medial v as in 'heaven' and voiced th (ð) in some words may be elided. Examples: Heaven, even, seven, eleven, devil, hither, thither.

Vowels might be elided - in this case, trust the scansion of the verse, it will generally alert you to elision.

Also useful to note, this dialect uses aspirated m (wh) sounds.

The position of sounds is generally more forward with the mouth slightly pursed.

Pieces with Notation

I've chosen a piece from Henry IV, Part 2. In it Lady Percy, widow of the infamous and ultimately unsuccessful rebel Hotspur in Henry IV, Part 1, attempts to convince her father-in-law not to send troops to fight in a fresh rebellion against King Henry. It is one of my go-to pieces, and what I chose to work with is a cut I often use for auditions.

Interestingly, the Quarto version is significantly shorter than the First Folio. Whether this is a function of print space or simply evidence that the plays continued to be workshopped after their initial productions is impossible to determine. The ending of the Quarto monologue is rather unsatisfying, so I opted to include a trimmed down version of the Folio monologue just to get a bit more material to transcribe into OP.

When working on a piece of Shakespeare, I usually start with an editor's version - because that is most often what is handed to me. My first step is to return the text to its original punctuation and spelling and my indispensable tool in this work is my copy of *The Applause First Folio in Modern Text*.

Then I mark the dialect, noting any phonemic shifts (or simply sounds I want to emphasize or highlight) in the piece. I prefer to do this in pencil rather than digitally - it's easier to change as I discover what the piece calls for, and quicker than trying to hunt and peck for IPA symbols on a digital chart and then copy and paste them into my work.

In the next few pages you will find a version of the speech as it might be handed to me to perform, my version with the original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, and finally a version of the speech with the dialect noted in IPA.

Original Text - Modern Edit ¹³

O yet, for God's sake, go not to these wars.

The time was, father, that you broke your word

When you were more <endeared> to it than now,

When Your own Percy, when my heart's dear Harry,

Threw many a northward look to see his father

Bring up his powers; but he did long in vain.

Who then persuaded you to stay at home?

There were two honors lost, yours and your son's.

For yours, the God of heaven brighten it.

For his, it stuck upon him as the sun

In the gray vault of heaven, and by his light

Did all the chivalry of England move

To do brave acts. He was indeed the glass

Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves.

He was the mark and glass, copy and book,

That fashioned others. And him - O wondrous him!

O miracle of men! - him did you leave,

Second to none, unseconded by you,

¹³ Folger Shakespeare Library, <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/henry-iv-part-2/read/2/3/>, accessed February 2024

To look upon the hideous god of war
In disadvantage, to abide a field
Where nothing but the sound of Hotspur's name
Did seem defensible. So you left him.
Never, O never, do his ghost the wrong
To hold your honor more precise and nice
With others than with him. Let them alone.
The Marshal and the Archbishop are strong.
Had my sweet Harry had but half their numbers,
Today might I, hanging on Hotspur's neck,
Have talked of Monmouth's grave.

Original Text - First Folio in Modern Type¹⁴

O yet, for God's sake, go not to these Warrs;
The Time was (Father) when you broke your word,
When you were more endear'd to it, than now,
When your owne Percy, when my heart-dear-Harry,
Threw many a Northward looke, to see his Father
Bring up his Powres: but he did long in vaine.
Who then perswaded you to stay at home?
There were two Honors lost; Yours, and your Sonnes.
For Yours, the God of heaven brighten it:
For His, it stuck upon him, as the Sunne
In the gray vault of Heaven: and by his Light
Did all the Chevalrie of England move
To do brave Acts. He was (indeed) the Glasse
Wherein the Noble-Youth did dress themselves.
He was the Mark, and Glasse, Coppy, and Booke,
That fashion'd others. And him, O wondrous! him,
O Miracle of Men! Him did you leave
(Second to none) un-seconded by you,
To look upon the hideous God of Warre,

* Q1 Cuts here

¹⁴ *Applause First Folio in Modern Type*

In dis-advantage, to abide a field,
Where nothing but the sound of Hotspurs Name
Did seem defensible: so you left him.
Never, O never doe his Ghost the wrong,
To hold your Honor more precise and nice
With others, than with him. Let them alone:
The Marshal and the Arch-bishop are strong.
Had my sweet Harry had but halfe their Numbers,
To day might I (hanging on Hotspur's Necke)
Have talk'd of Monmouth's Grave.

Notating the sound changes for Original Pronunciation

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That fashion'd others. And him, O wondrous! him,

O Miracle of Men! Him did you leave

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With others, than with him. Let them alone:

The Marshal and the Arch-bishop are strong.

Had my sweet Harry had but halfe their Numbers,

To day might I (hanging on Hotspur's Necke)

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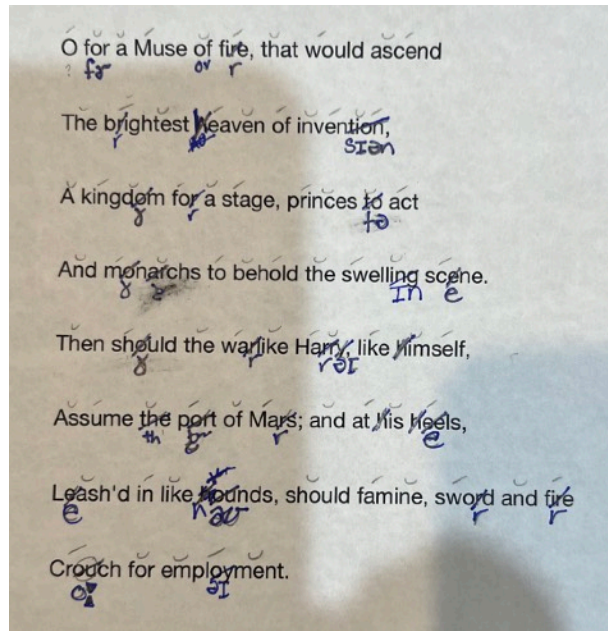
Final Result and what do we learn from working in original dialect?

After over 20 pages of information on this old dialect - why does it matter? Why study how these words were said 400 years ago, when to a modern audience they'll just sound weird and antiquated and unintelligible?

We are part of the Society for Creative Anachronism, so this question might seem a little silly - we tend to understand the value of and applications for experimental archaeology better than more mundane sorts.

However, for those who need additional evidence: consider these lines from the prologue of Henry V, emphasis mine:

O for a muse of Fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention.
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
And Monarchs, to behold the swelling
scene.
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself
**Assume the port of mars, and at his
heels,**
Leash'd in like hounds
Should famine, sword, and fire
Crouch for employment...



The bolded line makes absolutely no sense in the context of the piece. We aren't talking about ships or ports, we are talking about a warlike King and his qualities. But in OP, the word 'port' shifts to something much closer to a different modern word, 'part', with some lovely alliteration between the words 'port'/'part' and 'Mars'.

“Then should the warlike Harry, like himself/Assume the part of Mars, and at his heels...”
makes far more sense.

Every time I work on a piece of text in OP, I discover gems like this. Another little hint or clue that Shakespeare left to the mindset or outlook of the character. Another little detail or bit of specificity I can weave into my performance.

Needless to say, I intend to keep working on OP in my professional life. If there is interest, I might also offer it as a class within the SCA context (though others are also stepping onto that path). If there is interest in that - or in something more, perhaps even a production - it's something I'd certainly consider for the future.

In the meantime, it's a great tool to have in my toolkit. And I'm glad to have given folks a chance to go to 'heare a play' in the way someone did in Shakespeare's London.

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Appendix A: American English Phonemes Decoder Sheet

Courtesy Zachary Campion, <https://www.voicecoachdc.com/about.html>. Reproduced with permission.

PLOSIVES	p	power
	b	boy
	t	time
	d	date
	k	can
	g	girl
NASALS	m	mother
	n	night
	ŋ	king

FRICATIVES	f	fall
	v	victory
	θ	thimble
	ð	this
	s	steak
	z	zipper
	ʃ	shut
	ʒ	measure
h	hot	

APPROXIMANTS	r	red
	j	yellow

LATERAL APPROX.	l	lemon
	ɫ	well

AFFRICATES	tʃ	chimp
	dʒ	judge

OTHER SYMBOLS ʌ when

 w wet

MONOPHTHONGS i eat

 ɪ hit

 ɛ pet

 æ cab

 ɑ father, calm

 ɒ honest, dog

 ɔ law, awful, all

 u shoe, boots

 ʊ foot

 ə comma or plasma (unstressed)

 ʌ fun, punish (stressed, often one syllable word)

 ə̃ under (unstressed)

 ɜ̃ earth (stressed)

 ĩ happy, khaki, valley

DIPHTHONGS	aɪ	light
	aʊ	house
	eɪ	late
	oʊ	home
	ɔɪ	toy
	ɑɹ̩	hard
	ɪə̩	beer
	ɛə̩	share
	ɔə̩	lord
	ʊə̩	poor, tour, cure

TRIPHTHONGS	aɪə̩	hire
	aʊə̩	tower