

## Integrating and using phonemic symbols

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What are these questions in words?

/dɪdʒəgəʊw'laʊ'læsnait/?

/wɒtʃədu:wɪ'leɪtə/?

/kənju:wʌndəstænfəni:mɪkskript/?

/dʌzɪtkənfju:zjɜ:'stju:dəns/?

Though it's easier to understand this than you might think, it is rather overwhelming. Perhaps the best way of using phonemic symbols is to use them little and often. Here are some activities that do this.

1. **Focus on the problem.** Spot the problem in each word or phrase and add the appropriate phonemic symbol. Crossing out silent letters can also help students.

women delicious weight knife heard aunt foreign knowledge  
/ɪ/ /ɪ/

2. **Odd one out** Students try and identify the odd one out and you then add the phonemes.

waited watched washed cough scoff through  
cushion cousin comfortable rude flood mood

3. **Correction or Feedback** When monitoring students' speaking, look for patterns or words with the same sound to point out.

These came up in an elementary class I taught last week.

fruit it suits you /u:/

4. **To help listening** Add phonemic symbols to a gapped text. Students can either listen to fill the gaps or try and predict first.

One example I used recently gapped past participles, including read and met. Students didn't hear them but when given the vowel phoneme /e/ were able to work out what they were and then hear them.

5. **With vocabulary** Instead of just brainstorming vocabulary, add some pronunciation.

How many words related to family members can you think of with this sound in? The vowel and consonant words are not mutually exclusive.

/ʌ/

/ɔ:/

/ð/

6. **Listening to raise awareness** *After listening comprehension, play the tape again while students read the tape script.*

*Ask them to mark aspects of connected speech. For example, all the syllables which have the schwa /ə/, or words which run together, or extra sounds between words (e.g. go out – see the first question at the beginning of the worksheet), or silent letters.*

7. **Connected Speech** *Use phonemes to show changes in sounds, especially at word boundaries.*

Here are the first two sentences from the beginning of the workshop. Which phonemes would you use?

/dɪdʒəgəʊw'au?læsnait/? Did you go out last night?

/wɒtʃædu:wɪŋ'leɪtə/? What are you doing later?

8. **Sound and spelling** *There are rules students can be made aware of.*

What is happening here? When do you need to double a consonant?

fat      fate      fattening      wait      father  
map      maple      happen      rebel      rebelled

9. **Phoneme of the week** *Students can brainstorm words with that sound. They can also read and write dialogues to include it, as in the example.*

Which phoneme is this one?

A: Are all your friends from university working now?

B: Almost. Kirsty's doing research into worms at Birmingham and Shirley's gone to work as a nurse in the Third World somewhere. Burma, I think.

10. **With songs** *You can use rhymes as well as meaning.*

With a copy of the lyrics, gap the last word of some or all lines (this can depend on how fast or slow the song is!) and put the phoneme for the rhyme next to the gap.

e.g. I wish my love was \_\_\_\_\_ /ɪə/.

I usually give students the gapped lyrics to read first so they can try and work out the words, using both the rhyming sound and meaning to do this. When they have predicted as many as they can you can play the song to check if they were right.