

Common minimal pairs

Consonants

Phonemic symbols	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
/b/ vs /v/	berry / very	gibbon / given	bowels / vowels
/d/ and /ð/	day / they	sudden / southern	dare / there
/f/ vs /θ/	free / three	deaf / death	fort / thought
/f/ vs /v/	fan / van	surf / serve	belief / believe
/j/ vs /dʒ/	jam / yam	jaw / your	joke / yolk
/l/ vs /r/	alive / arrive	pilot / pirate	law / raw
/p/ vs /b/	pig / big	poured / bored	pier / beer
/s/ vs /θ/	sin / thin	miss / myth	symbol / thimble
/s/ vs /ʃ/	sea / she	sell / shell	seize / she's
/v/ vs /w/	vet / wet	vine / wine	vain / wane
/tʃ/ vs /ʃ/	choose / shoes	cherry / sherry	witch / wish
/ŋk/ vs /ŋ/	bank / bang	think / thing	sunk / sung

Vowels

Phonemic symbols	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
/ɪ/ vs /i:/	sheep / ship	hill / he'll	fist / feast
/e/ vs /ɪ/	left / lift	pet / pit	messed / mist
/e/ vs /eɪ/	sell / sale	trend / trained	phlegm / flame
/æ/ vs /ʌ/	cat / cut	mad / mud	rabble / rubble
/æ/ vs /e/	bad / bed	sad / said	cattle / kettle
/əʊ/ vs /ɔ:/	bowl / ball	moaning / morning	node / gnawed
/eɪ/ vs /æ/	bake / back	base / bass	reign / ran
/aɪ/ vs /aʊ/	find / found	tire / tower	aisle / owl
/əʊ/ vs /aʊ/	hole / howl	groaned / ground	scold / scowled
/ɪə/ vs /eə/	cheer / chair	really / rarely	earring / airing