

# Answering questions

## **1. About previously obtained certificates:**

If a student has obtained an English B2 certificate elsewhere, he/she can get a course exemption/credits for English 135IN, provided the certificate is considered valid and updated. The student must present a formal written request addressed to the Department and attach the certificate. Until getting a response, it is up to the student's judgment to attend to classes regularly.

## **2. About exams:**

At the end of this course, the student will obtain the qualification "Approved-Non approved". A final written multiple-choice exam based on the syllabus content will be administered. First call tentative date: December 4, 2019.

3. Following and approving this course will not lead to a diploma or certification of any specific English level. At the end of the course, and having passed the final exam, the student will have the 3 units corresponding to English 135IN approved.

# Summary of previous lesson

1. The most spoken languages worldwide are Chinese, Spanish, English. English, for political, economical, strategic, reasons is the most studied language, the most consulted language in the Internet, etc.
2. English is a key to research: Most scientific articles, independently of the country they are published in, demand that at least the abstract be presented in English.
3. We'll concentrate first on oral difficulties encountered by Italian speakers.

# English B2 objectives

## Obiettivi

Il corso si propone di fornire agli studenti le seguenti competenze conoscitive e capacità:

- Preparazione per uno scambio verbale di idee con fluidità e spontaneità, particolarmente nel campo della specializzazione professionistica.
- Capacità di comprensione delle idee principali di testi complessi su argomenti concreti o astratti, includendo discussioni tecniche del campo della specialità dell'alunno.
- Abilità per la produzione scritta di testi riguardanti il campo accademico, professionistico dell'ingegneria con chiarezza e minuziosità.

## Objectives

English 259 aims to provide students with the following cognitive skills and abilities:

- Preparation for a verbal exchange of ideas with fluidity and spontaneity particularly in the field of professional specialization.
- Ability to understand the main ideas of complex texts on concrete or abstract topics, including technical discussions of the field of the student's specialty.
- Ability for the written creation of texts concerning the academic and professional field of engineering with clarity and meticulousness.

# Phonetics (sound units)

## English consonants (23-26?)

### The Consonants of English

	Bilabial		Labio-dental		Dental		Alveolar		Palato-alveolar (Post-alveolar)		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
<i>Unvoiced (-V) Voiced (+V)</i>	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V
Stops (Plosives)	p	b					t	d					k	g	ʔ <sup>1</sup>	
Fricatives			f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ					h	
Affricates									tʃ	dʒ						
Nasals		m						n						ŋ		
Lateral (approximants)								l								
Approximants		w <sup>2</sup>						r				j		w <sup>2</sup>		

We are going to concentrate on the sounds unfamiliar to the Italian speaker. They are indicated by the red arrow.

## International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

### Definition:

**International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)**, an alphabet developed in the 19th century to accurately represent the pronunciation of languages. One aim of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was to provide a unique symbol for each distinctive sound in a language—that is, every sound, or phoneme, that serves to distinguish one word from another.

Read the whole article in:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/International-Phonetic-Alphabet>

## “Tricky” sounds for the Italian speaker

IPA symbol	Example
θ	<b>thin</b>
ð	<b>this</b>
r	<b>air</b>
h	<b>home</b>
n	<b>pin</b>
ŋ	<b>ping</b>
ʔ	<b>fountain</b>

Do you remember the classroom exercise with your phone? Now, you can repeat it paying special attention to the **th** sounds in sentences 3, 5,8 and 10.

1. I need to buy a new flash
2. I'm looking for a store to buy bed sheets
3. How **thin** is a sheet of paper?
4. How expensive is a gram of pepper?
5. Do you **think** Mary is a tramp?
6. Where does Mr. Trump lives?
7. Who was Luke Skywalker?
8. I would like to look into **that**
9. Who are Bert and Ernie?
10. What's the **weather** like today?

# th letters = two sounds

[θ]

- thin
- thinker
- thigh
- thug
- thrust
- thanks

[ð]

- this, that
- they, them
- those
- this, these
- weather



# Mispronunciation of *th* may result in words that are completely different!

[θ]

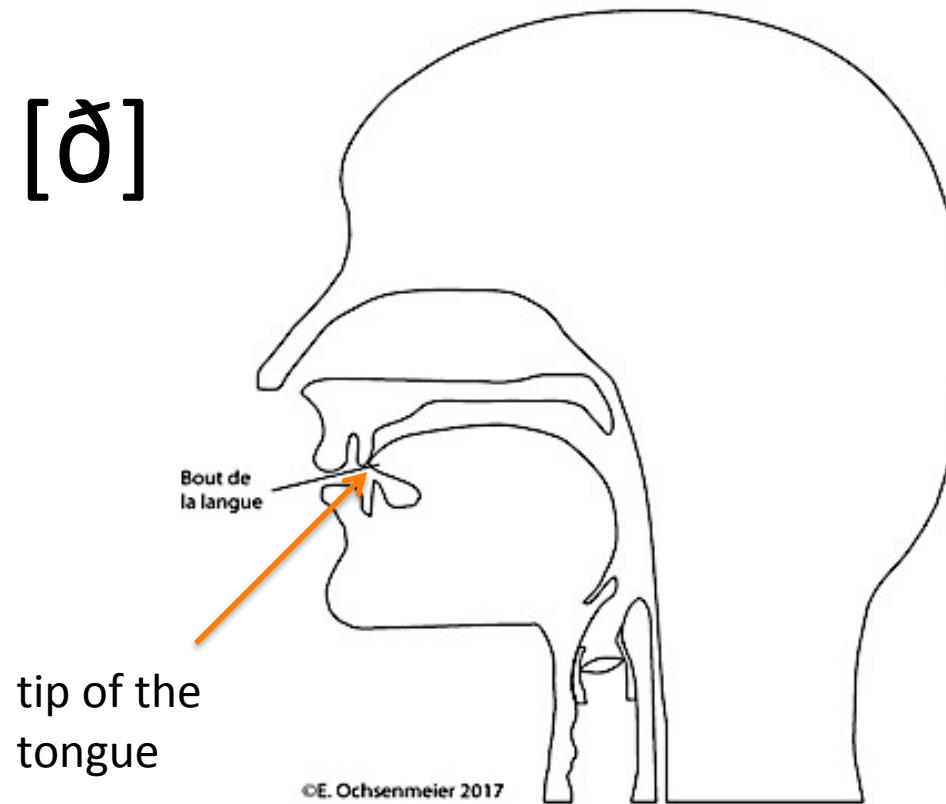
- thin tin sin
- thinker tinker sinker
- thigh tie sigh
- thug tug sug
- thrust trust
- thanks tanks

[ð]

- this 'tis
- that tat sat
- they
- them tem
- those toes
- these tease

[ð]

[θ]



This two sounds have the same place of articulation: between the teeth. Their difference is in the vibration of the vocal cords. When pronouncing the [θ] sound (as in **thin**), the vocal cords do not vibrate. When pronouncing de [ð] sound (as in **this**), instead, the vocal cords do vibrate.

# θ and ð: two difficult sounds for the Italian speaker

*Disclaimer: The following video has been used for pedagogical purposes only*

Link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axcWGcUC05c>

Watch and practice!



# Exceptions!!!

th = t in some nouns

Thames, Thailand, Theresa,  
Thomas, thyme, Esther.

# Thames [ˈtɛmz]



The river Thames flows through London

# r and r-less dialects (rhotic/non rhotic)

## Rhotic

Pronounce the **r sound** at the end of words:

- Scotland
- Ireland
- Canada
- America
- South west, North west England
- Caribbean

butter = bʌtər

## Non rhotic

Do not pronounce the **r sound** at the end of words:

England: East and central  
**England: Received Pronunciation**  
Australia  
South Africa  
America: Black English Vernacular and Boston area

butter = bʌtə

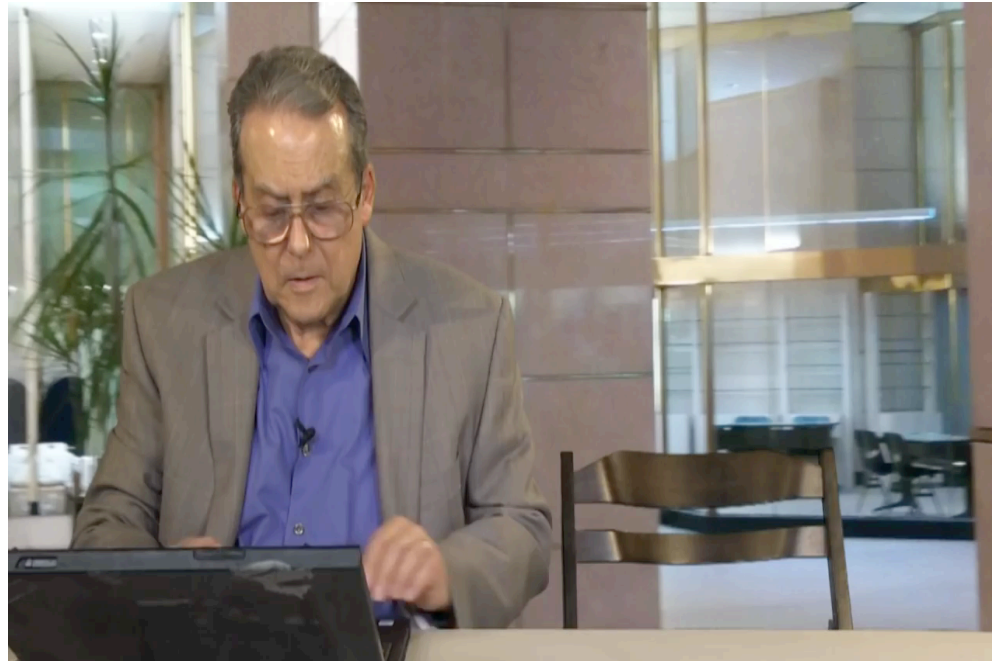
Exercise: go to the link <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Received-Pronunciation>  
Listen carefully and try to get a grasp of the concept “received pronunciation”.

# American and British /r/ sounds

*Disclaimer: The following video has been used for pedagogical purposes only*

*Link to the video:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWjcoajXRVg&t=6s>



Exercise: Listen to the differences between American and British /r/ sounds

# /r/ pronunciation excerpt from “The IT Crowd”

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqQ6Z-HmAqY>

Exercise: Listen carefully to the [r] sounds pronounced by the “coding genius” Maurice Moss

***The IT Crowd*** is a **British sitcom** originally broadcast by **Channel 4**, written by **Graham Linehan**, produced by **Ash Atalla** and starring **Chris O'Dowd**, **Richard Ayoade**, **Katherine Parkinson**, and **Matt Berry**.

Set in the offices of the fictional Reynholm Industries, the programme revolves around the three staff members of its IT (**information technology**) department: coding genius Maurice Moss (Richard Ayoade), work-shy Roy Trenneman (Chris O'Dowd), and Jen Barber (Katherine Parkinson), the department head/**relationship manager** who knows nothing about IT. The programme also focuses on the bosses of Reynholm Industries: Denholm Reynholm (**Chris Morris**) and later, his son Douglas (**Matt Berry**). **Goth** IT technician Richmond Avenal (**Noel Fielding**), who resides in the dark server room, also features in a number of episodes.

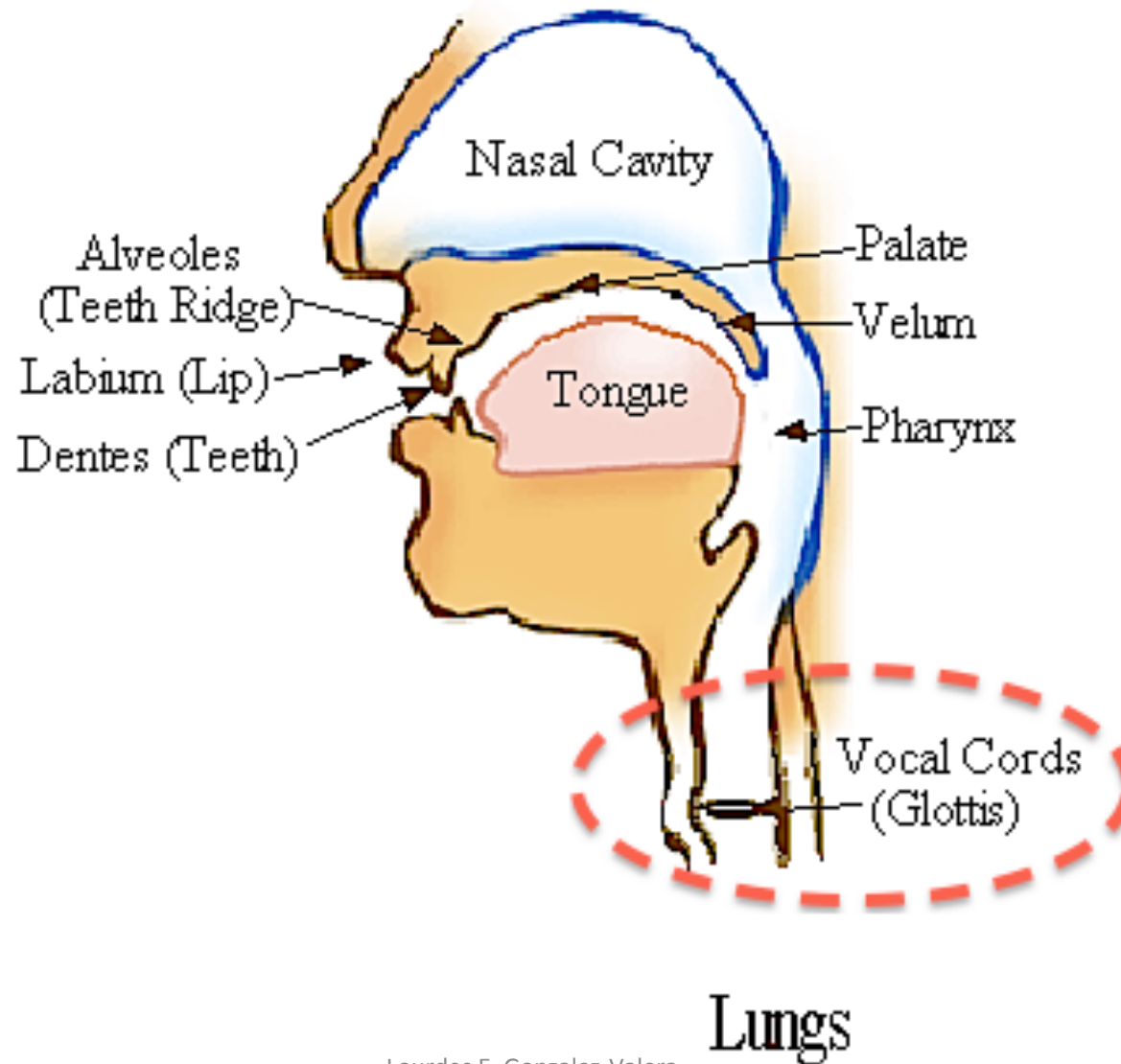


## The terrible /h/

Attention Italians: failing to pronounce [h] may result in different words than the ones we intended to communicate

- ham
- heart
- hair
- hate
- his
- hi
- heat
- home
- heater
- am
- art
- air
- eight / ate
- is
- eye
- eat
- Om
- eater

# /h/ point of articulation

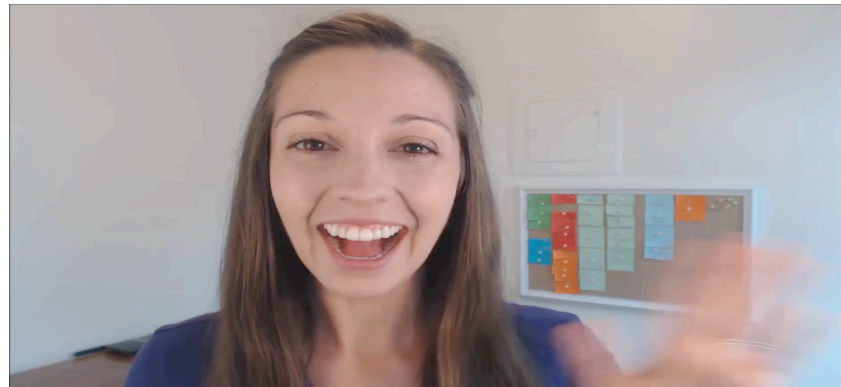


# the lovely /h/

*Disclaimer: The following video has been used for pedagogical purposes only*

*Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Do3FEh5ngw&t=3s>*

Exercise: Watch the video and practice your [h] sound: Don't be afraid to exaggerate!



# Exceptions!!!

**Do not** pronounce the [h] sound in the following words:

- Honor and related words: honorary, honored, honorable, honorific, honoring, honors, honorifics.
- Herb and related words: herbalist, herbicide, herbivore, herbs, herbalists, herbicides, herbivores.

*Note: Most British speakers do pronounce the [h] at the beginning of herb and related words*

- Honest, honesty.
- Hour, hours, hourly.

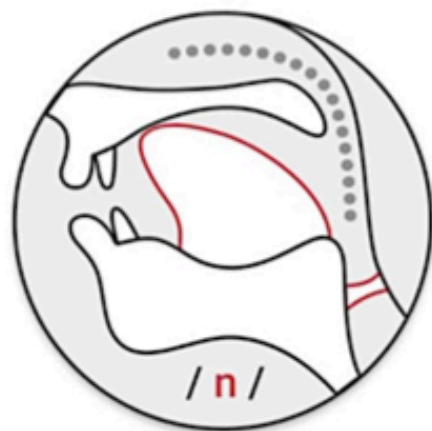
# Alveolar nasal **n** and velar nasal **ng**

- thin thing
- ran rang
- ton tongue
- ban bang
- win wing

# Tongue position for n/ng

## Tongue position

Consonant Sounds / **n** / and / **ŋ** / Key Distinction



as in "thin" / θɪ**n** /



as in "thing" / θɪ**ŋ** /

# [n] versus [ŋ]

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RfiBn9qPlM&t=6s>

Exercise: Watch and practice.

Important: [n] in English and Italian are practically the same sound. [ŋ], however, does not appear in Italian at the end of words, but we find ŋ sounds inside words like *angoscia*, for example.

The /ŋ/ Sound  
Pronunciation and Examples

Single Consonants  
Voiced

building    b i l d i ŋ  
feeling      f i : l i ŋ

A man in a dark suit and tie is visible on the right side of the frame, looking towards the camera.

# The glottal stop

Definition: The glottal stop is a consonant formed by the audible release of the airstream after complete closure of the glottis. It is widespread in some English dialects.

Glottal stop in IPA: ʔ



# Practicing the ʔ sound

Watch the following video and practice your glottal stop.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRhV-n7iN-w>

