


UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE

# LINGUA INGLESE 259MI

Dipartimento di Ingegneria e Architettura

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## English 259MI Level B2

Based on The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

B2 is one of the CEFR levels described by the Council of Europe.

*The capacity to achieve most goals and express oneself on a range of topics.*

Examples:

1. Can show visitors around and **give a detailed description of a place.**
2. Can **understand the main ideas of complex text** on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.
3. Can **interact** with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible **without strain for either party.**
4. Can **produce clear, detailed text** on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.



# SYLLABUS

Note: the syllabus was sent through Moodle and personal mail





## **SYLLABUS EXPLAINED**

24 hours class

- Ground linguistic concepts to learn a language
- Why learning English
- English in the world
- Phonetics
  - Italian consonant and vowel systems
  - English consonant and vowel systems



# SYLLABUS

(CONTINUATION)

- Italian specific problems with English pronunciation

## Morphology:

- Italian morphology
- English morphology for Italian speakers

## Semantics:

Faux-amis



## ACADEMIC TEXTS

Reading and writing

- Curriculum and résumé
- Cover letters, formal letters.
- The proposal
- The academic article: abstract, presentation, results and conclusions.
- The bibliography



# Important concepts in language learning

Communication

Language

Speech

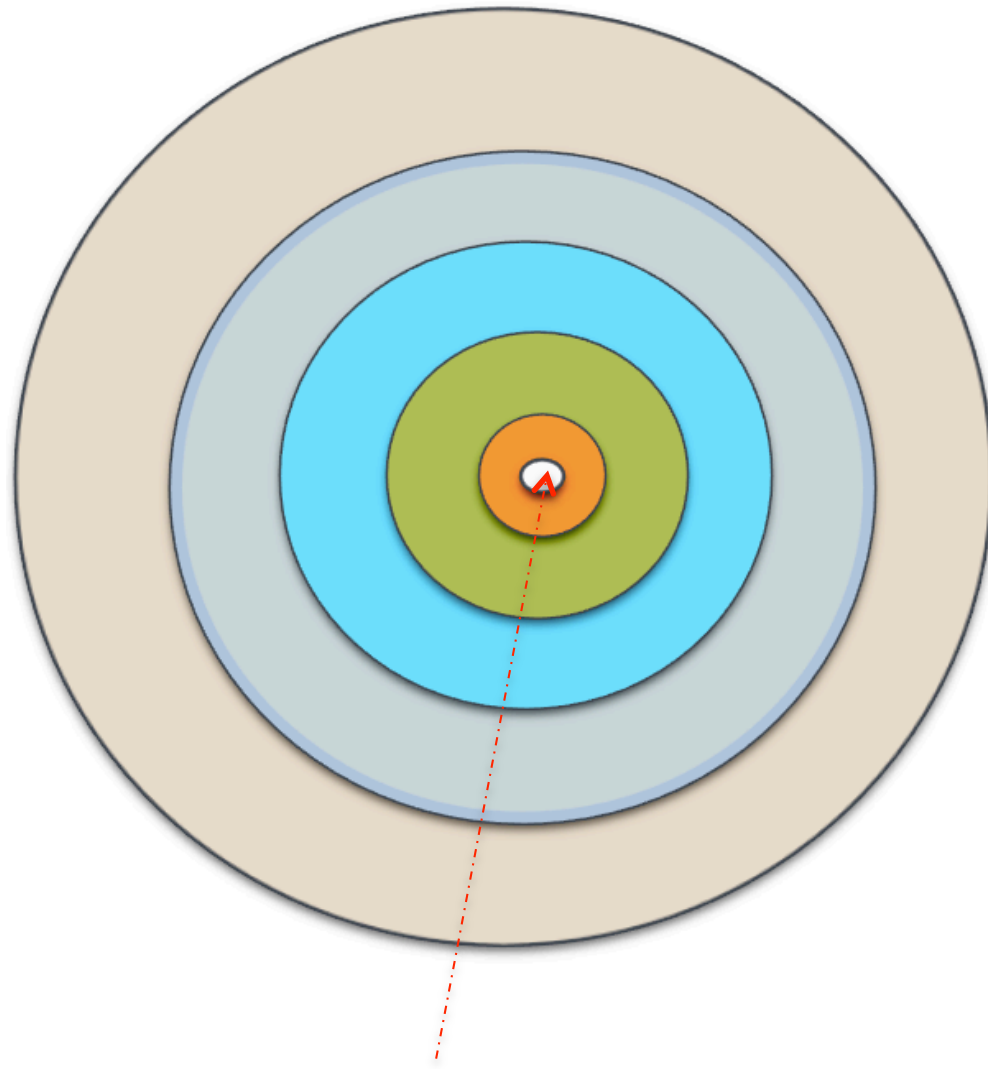
Dialect

Sociolect

Idiolect

*Note: You will find all linguistic concepts beautifully explained in [britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com)  
You are not required to learn these concepts by heart, but to understand them.*

# Concepts interrelated



**IDIOLECT:** our own speech

**COMMUNICATION:**  
capacity of all living creatures

**LANGUAGE:**  
capacity of all human beings

**SPEECH:**  
language in action

**DIALECT:**  
speech of different regions

**SOCIOLECT:**  
speech of different social groups

# Any language on earth:

- Phonetics (sound) *house* [h][a][u][z]
- Morphology (word, roots) *lived* = *live* + *ed*
- Syntax (word order in sentences):  
*The wolf killed the hunter / The hunter killed the wolf*
- Semantics (meaning, sense):  
*bank* (of the river, clouds, switches, money, etc.)
- Pragmatics (use):  
➤ *thanks / any time, my pleasure*

# Is language homogenous?

## Is English, Italian, Spanish, etc. homogenous?

**NO**

Any language varies according to:

- Geographical region (dialects)
- Social groups: (sociolects)  
*Sports, profession, religion, etc.*
- Age groups
- Sex/Gender (*special vocabulary*)
- Style (*intimate, formal/private, public*)

## Language varies according to:



Society



Geography



Profession



Age, gender



## ...and other factors

- Health:
  - Drugs, medications, alcohol
  - Depression, ictus, Parkinson
  - Tiredness, nervousness...
- Interlocutors (mirror neurons)

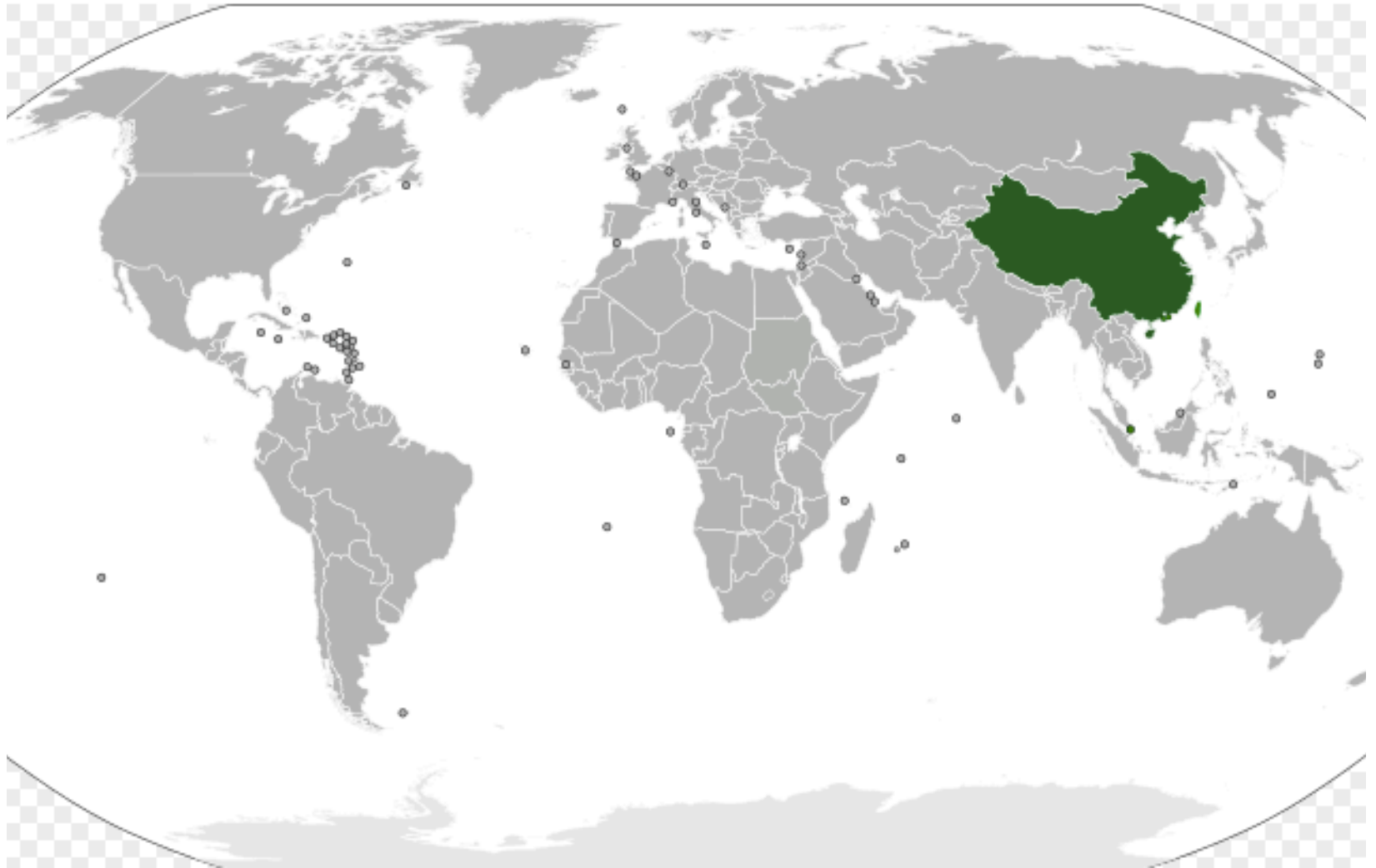
Language varies according to different factors: geography, social situation, mental/physical state, etc.

# Why do we learn English?



There are roughly **7.000** spoken languages in the world today

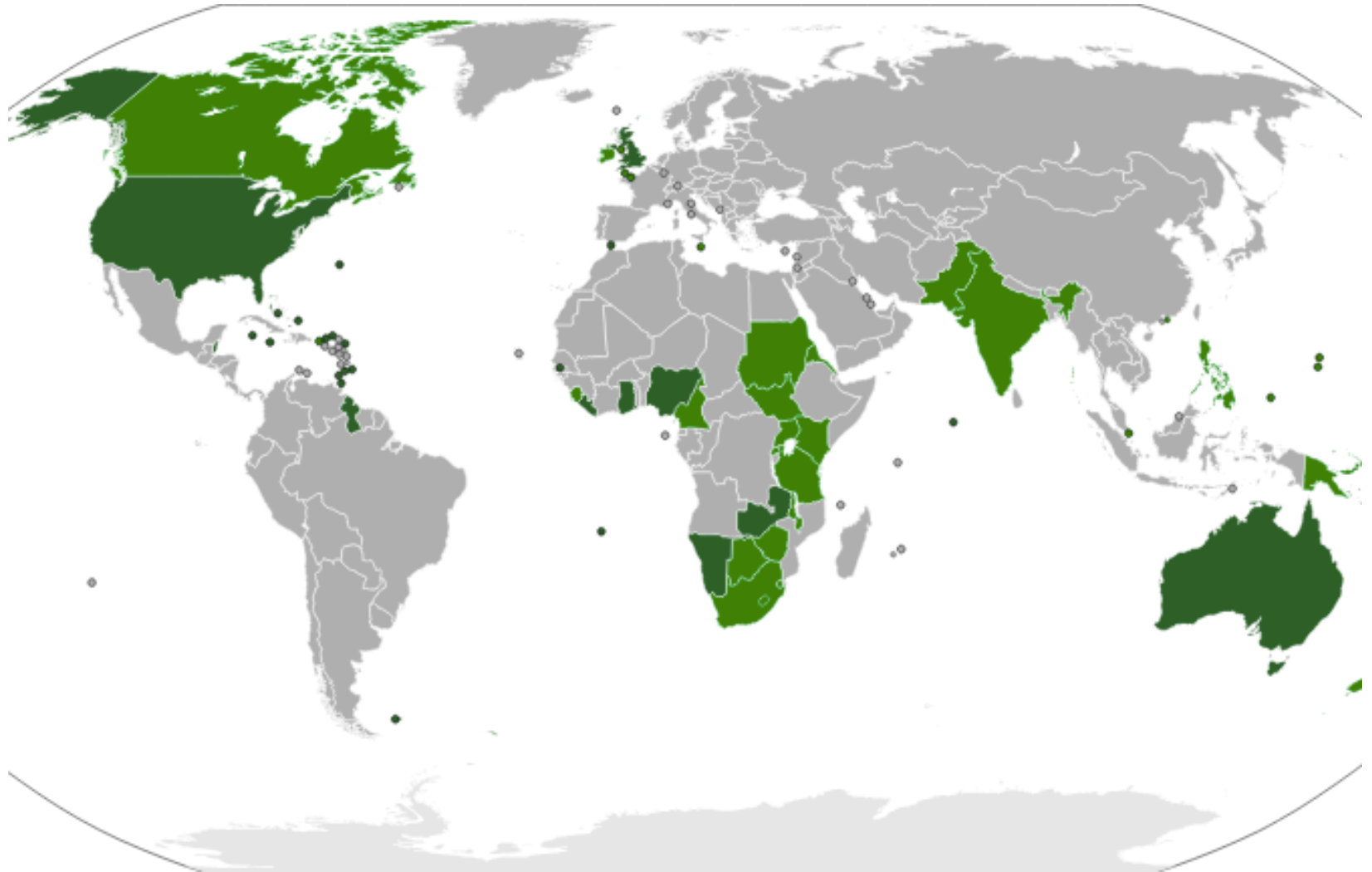
# Chinese in the world



# Spanish in the world



# English

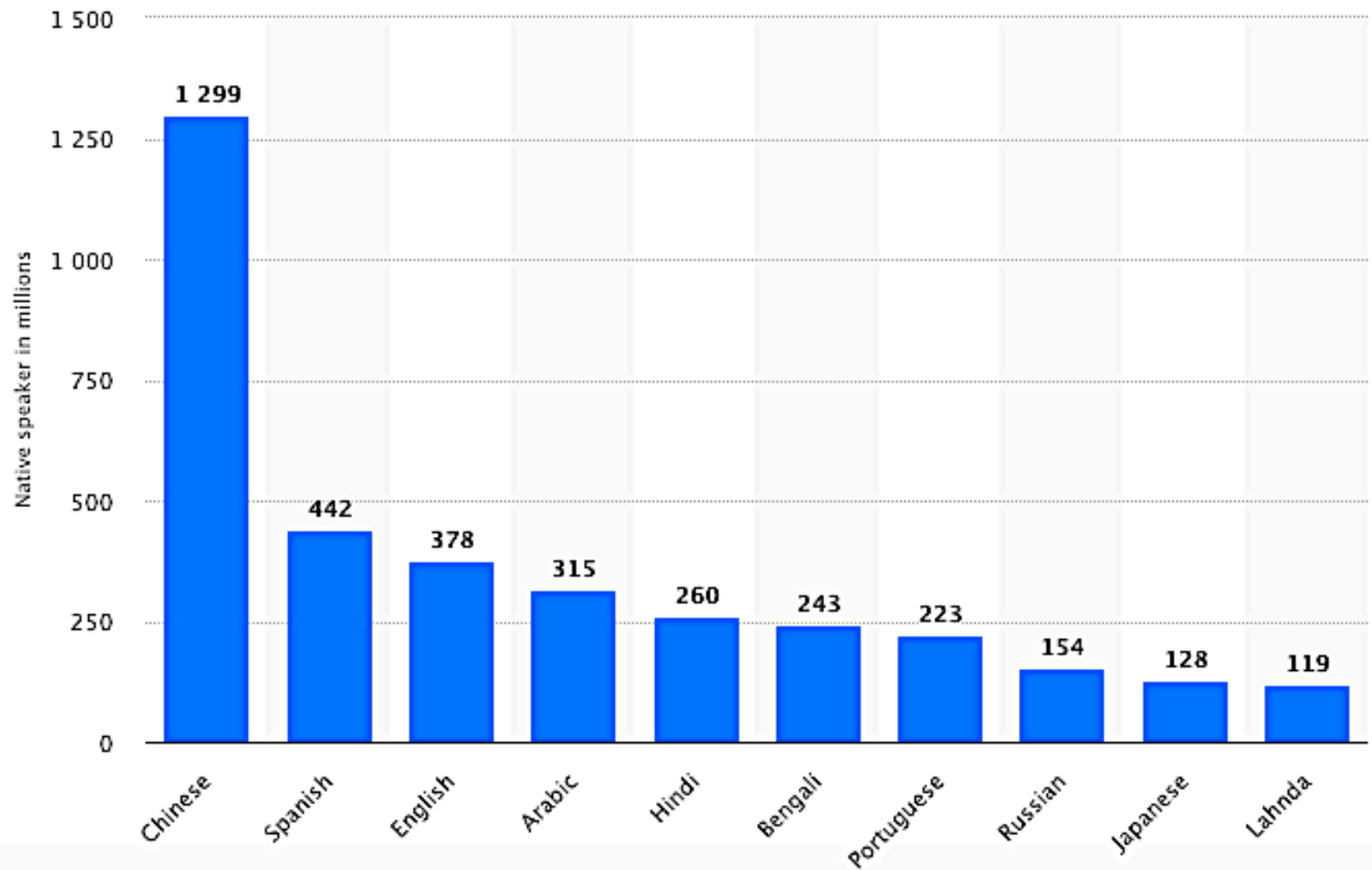


# Italian in the world (64 million)





# The most spoken languages worldwide (in millions)





Rank	Language	Percentage
1	English	54.4%
2	Russian	6.7%
3	German	5.3%
4	Spanish	4.9%
5	French	3.7%
6	Japanese	3.4%
7	Portuguese	2.7%
8	Italian	2.1%
9	Persian	2.1%
10	Turkish	1.6%
11	Polish	1.6%
12	Chinese	1.6%
13	Dutch	1.1%
14	Korean	0.9%
15	Czech	0.9%
16	Vietnamese	0.8%
17	Arabic	0.7%
18	Greek	0.6%
19	Hungarian	0.5%
20	Swedish	0.5%

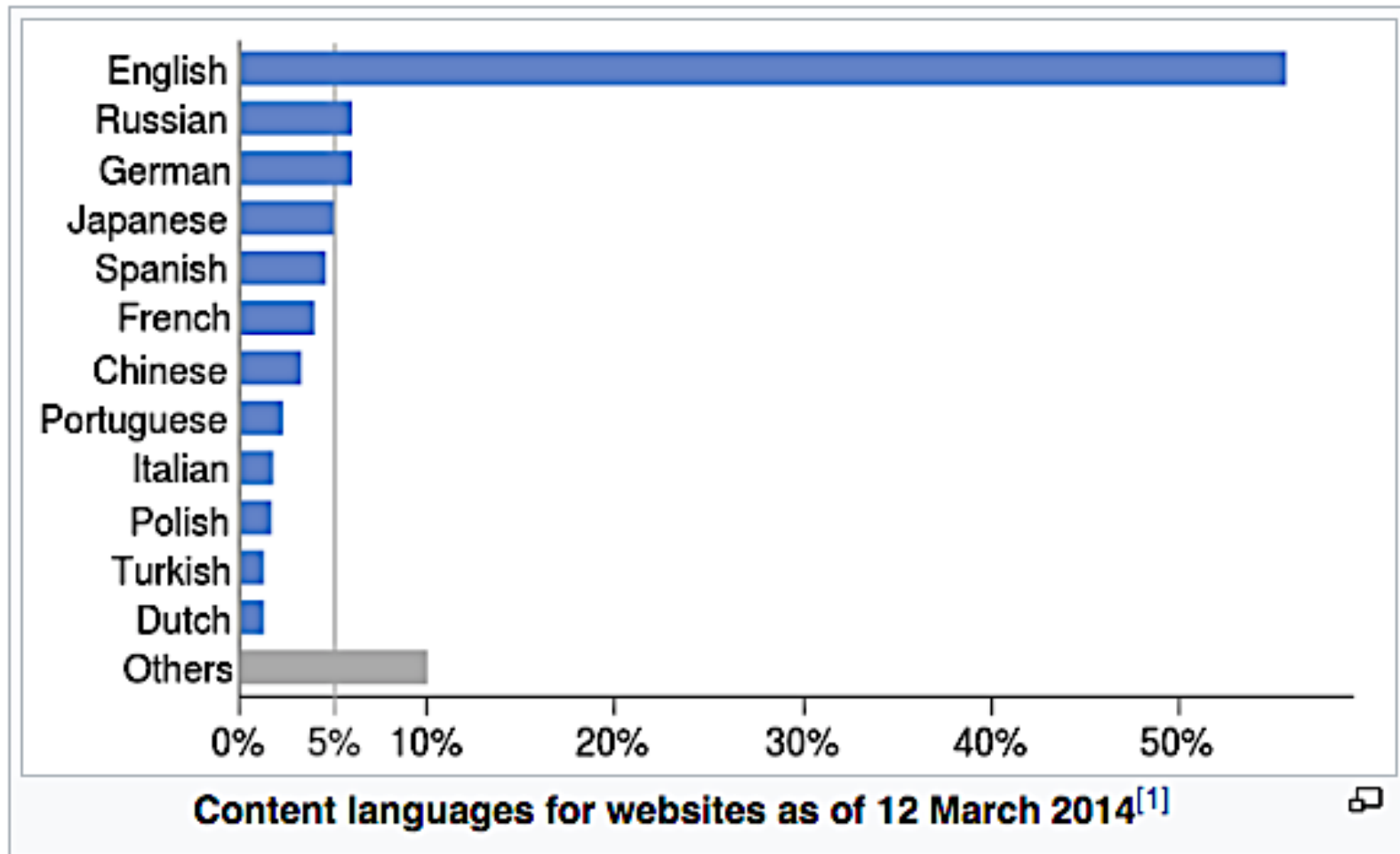
## CONTENT IN THE WWW



W3Techs estimated percentages of the top 10 million websites on the World Wide Web using various content languages as of September 2019



# CONTENT LANGUAGES FOR WEBSITES



Others? Google Translate proposes 102 languages

# ENGLISH: A bit of history:

## Important dates

- Old English 450-1100

Angles, Saxons and Jutes

- Middle English 1100-1500

Viking invasion

Norman invasion (French)

Modern English 1500-1800 1800-**today**

**Global English**

# What is Global English?

By United Language Group

The rules of what makes for good writing are universal. Good writing is clear, consistent and engaging to the reader. Writing for an audience that doesn't speak English is no different. But how can written English be better adapted for universal understanding? How can you be sure that your message can translate all over the world? This is where the writing style known as global English proves to be a useful tool.

Global English is a style of writing that makes written English more easily understood by non-native speakers. Global English does this by being precise, logical and literal. It is the language of manual and technical writers who want their writing to be extremely clear to anyone who reads it.

Additionally, because of its transparency, global English is the preferred style of translators. The rules and guidelines of global English make it ideal for translation by either **machine technology** or humans.

This doesn't mean that global English is only important for technical writers or translators to know about. Any individual or any company that seeks to speak to a global audience should know what it means to write globally.

# Why is English difficult to us?

- Out of context
- No motivation
- No need
- No opportunity to practice
- Taken for granted
- ...and:



**Inherent difficulties**

# Taken for granted?

- Latin loans in English (up to 30%)
- English loan-words in Italian

**OKAY**, this **WEEKEND** I used my **COMPUTER** and **MODEM** to go **ONLINE** to **TEST** my **WEBCAM** and **EMAIL** on the **INTERNET** with my new **ROUTER**.

The **SERVER SOFTWARE** asked for a **PASSWORD**, then made me **DOWNLOAD** a **FILE**. Perhaps I lack the **KNOW-HOW**.

Later, I listened to an **ALBUM** with **MUSIC** by a **BOY BAND**, then a **CD** with **BLUES**, **HIP HOP**, **GRIND**, **CORE**, some **POP STAR**, **JAZZ** and a **HIT** by a **ROCK BAND**, but there was a **BLACK OUT. WOW!**

# Linguistic basics:

## Any language on earth:



- Phonetics (sounds) *house* [h][a][u][z]
- Morphology (words, roots) *lived* < *live* + *ed*
- Syntax (word order in sentences): *The wolf killed the hunter* / *The hunter killed the wolf*
- Semantics (meaning, sense): *bank* (of the river, clouds, switches, money, etc.)
- Pragmatics (use): *thanks* / *any time, my pleasure*

# Phonetics (sound units)

## Italian Consonants (23)

Consonant phonemes

	Labial	Dental/ alveolar	Post- alveolar/ palatal	Velar
Nasal	m	n	ɲ	
Stop	p b	t d		k g
Affricate		ts dz	tʃ dʒ	
Fricative	f v	s z	ʃ	
Approximant			j	w
Lateral		l	ʎ	
Trill		r		

# Phonetics (sound units)

## English consonants (23-26?)

### The Consonants of English

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar (Post-alveolar)	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unvoiced (-V) Voiced (+V)	-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>	

The consonants in the table above are the consonant *phonemes* of RP (Received Pronunciation) and GA (General American), that is, the meaning-distinguishing consonant sounds (c.f. *pat* – *bat*).

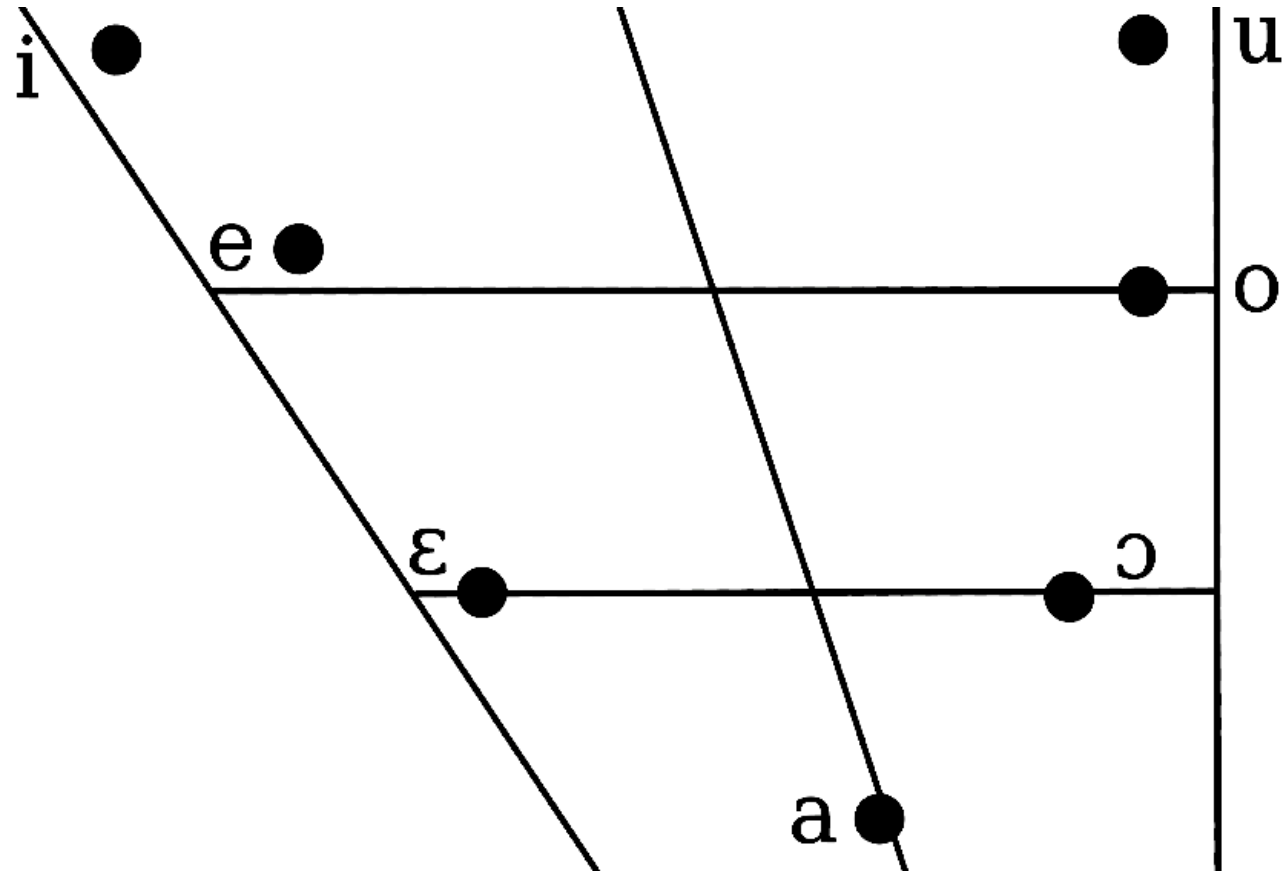
Phonemes are written within slashes //, e.g. /t/. Significant variations are explained in the footnotes.



## The “tricky” consonants for the Italian speaker

/p/	pin	/f/	fat	/m/	man
/t/	tin	/θ/	think	/n/	name
/k/	kin	/s/	sin	/ŋ/	rang
/b/	bin	/ʃ/	shine	/r/	run
/d/	din	/v/	van	/l/	lip
/g/	gun	/ð/	this	/y/	young
/tʃ/	chin	/z/	zoo	/w/	wait
/dʒ/	judge	/ʒ/	measure	/h/	hang

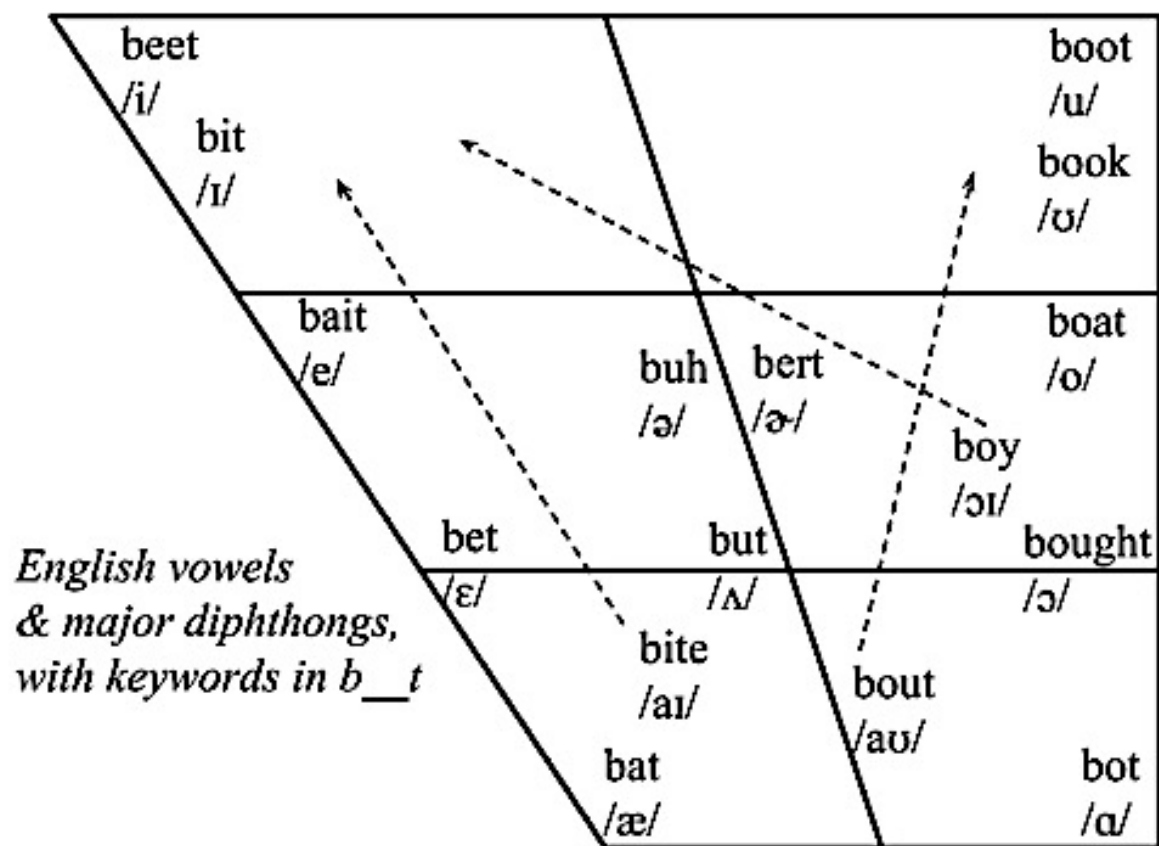
# Italian vowels



Vowels of Italian.

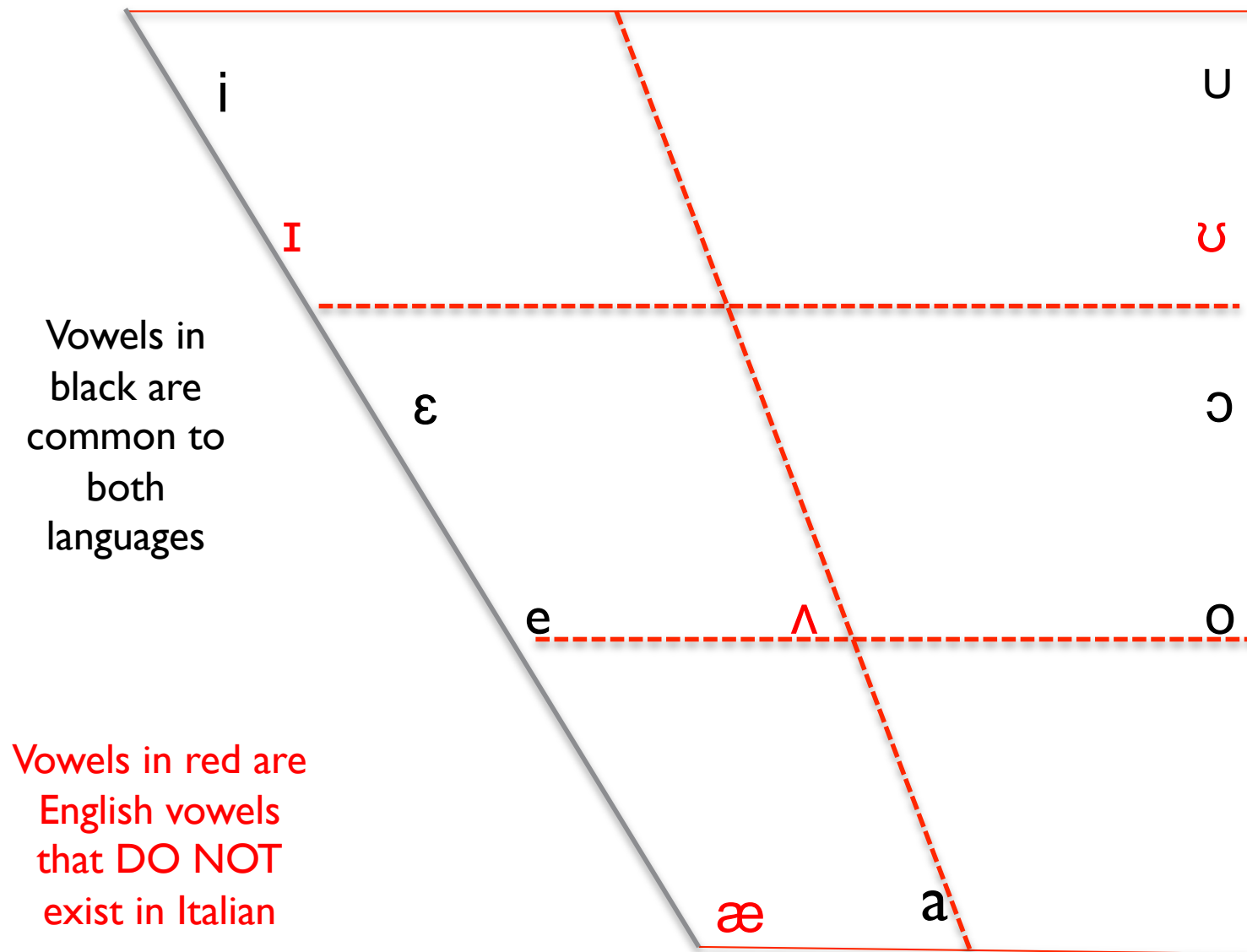
From Rogers & d'Arcangeli (2004:119)

# English vowels



By: Englishthree Asia

## English and Italian vowels





# 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 clue 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.

# Review of 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
Unvoiced (-V) Voiced (+V)	-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
$\theta$	<b>thin</b>
$\delta$	<b>this</b>
r	<b>air</b>
h	<b>home</b>
n	<b>pin</b>
$\eta$	<b>ping</b>
ʔ	<b>fountain</b>



Do you remember the 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 different 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]** is sometimes incorrectly pronounced as “s” or “t”

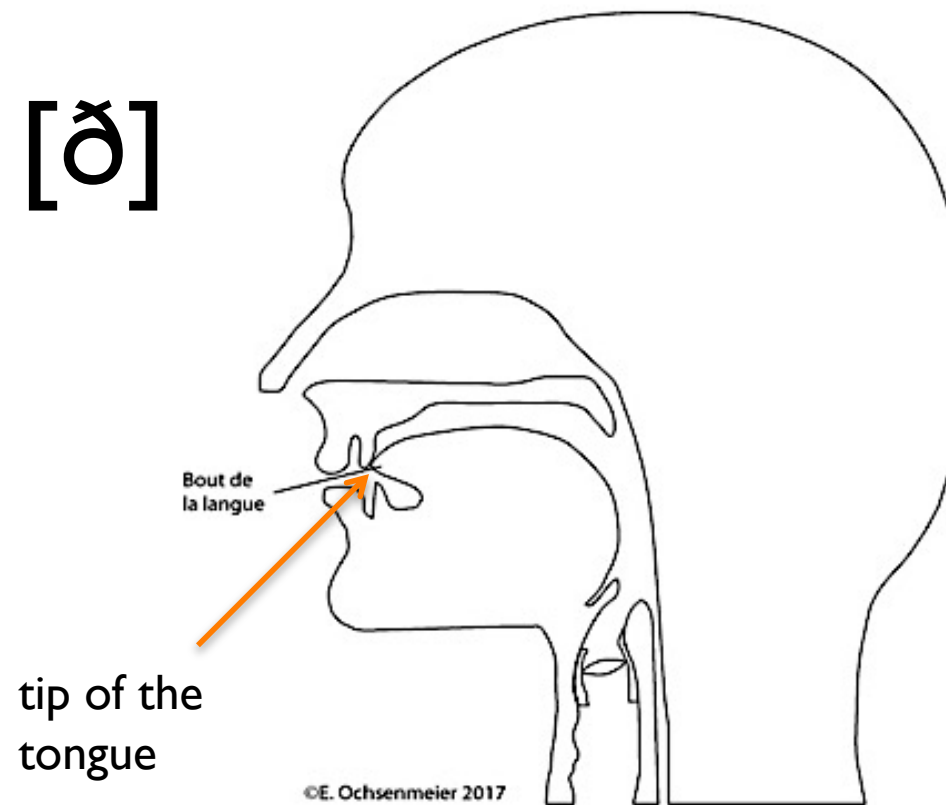
- thin      tin      sin
- thinker    tinker    sinker
- thigh      tie      sigh
- thug      tug      sug
- thrust      trust
- thanks      tanks

**[ð]** is sometimes incorrectly pronounced as “s” or “t”

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

[ð]

[θ]



These 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 the [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 [ˈtemz]



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

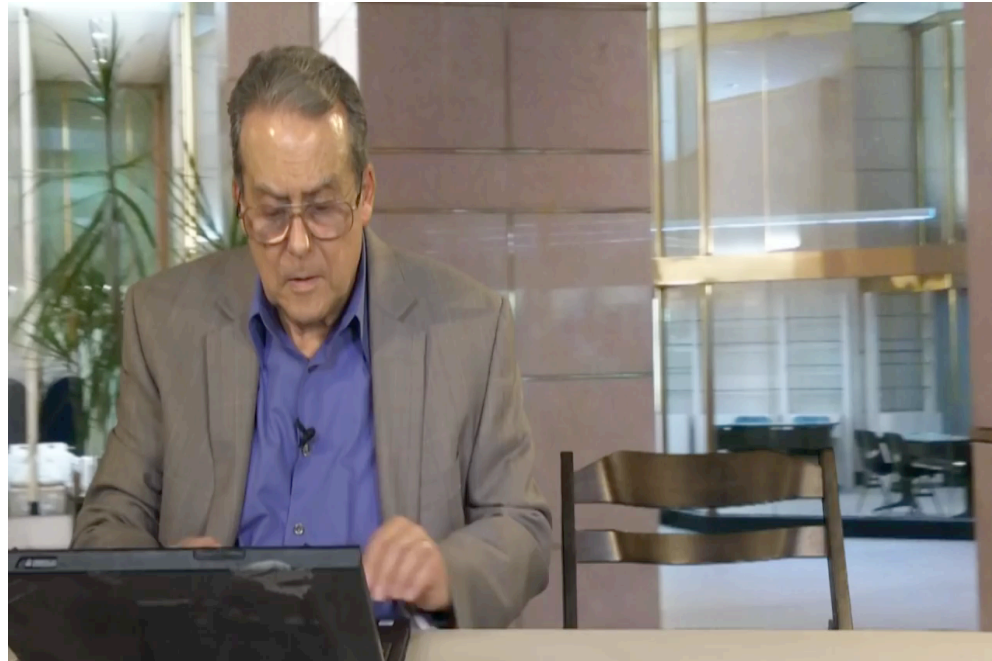
Exercise: go to the link <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Received-Pronunciation>  
Listen carefully and try to get a grasp of the concept “received pronunciation”.

# 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=hVWjcoajXRVg&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>

**Optional 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.

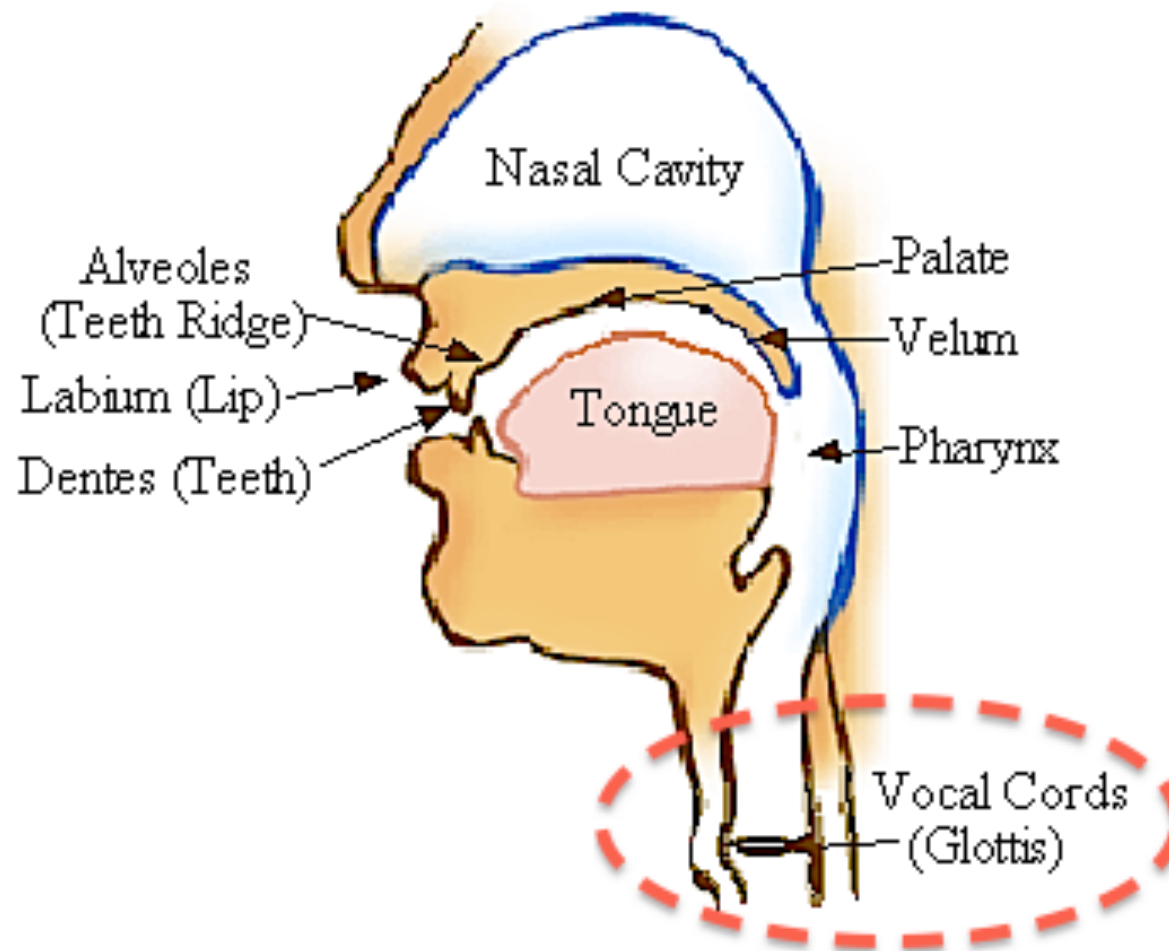
Set in the offices of the fictional Reynholm Industries, the programme revolves around the three staff members of its IT (information technology) department: coding genius Maurice Moss (Richard Ayoade), work-shy Roy Trenneman (Chris O'Dowd), and Jen Barber (Katherine Parkinson), the department head/relationship 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



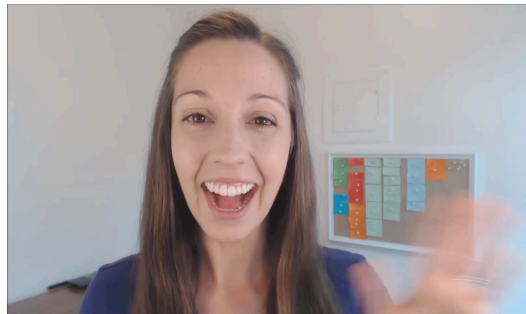
Lungs

## the lovely /h/

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

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

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



# 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**

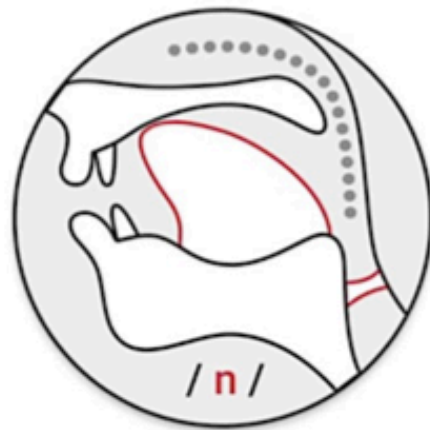
- thin thing
- ran rang
- ton tongue
- ban bang
- win wing



# 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=-RfiBn9qPIM&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

**ŋ**

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





# 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: ?

# Practicing the ? sound

Watch the following video and practice your glottal stop.

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





## INTERNET RESOURCES

- [britannica.com](http://britannica.com)
- [wordreference.com](http://wordreference.com)
- [englishclub.com](http://englishclub.com)
- [grammarly.com](http://grammarly.com)
- [google.translate](http://google.translate)
  - intelligent assistants: Siri, Google now, Alexa, etc.



# Answering some 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.

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 259MI approved.