

## A Standard British Dialect

Also known as “Received Pronunciation” (RP)

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For The Clarence Brown Theatre  
(with Thanks to Paul Meier)

<https://sites.google.com/site/theactorsvoice/home/rp>

### SIGNATURE SOUNDS – VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS

- 1.) The “long o” sound, which in American English is generally sounded as the diphthong [OU], becomes a diphthong that begins with a neutral “shwa” sound [əU].

Examples: **protein, motor, holy, goats, broken, loan, go, alone**

*I don't want to go home alone.*

- 2.) The “short a” sound, which in American English is generally sounded [æ], becomes [ɑ] as in “father” on all “Ask List” words and **only** those words. Other “short a” words do not remain “short a” words. (“Ask List” is attached)

Examples: **ask, basket, can't, dance, fast, glass, half, past**

*He laughed as he danced to the bath past his aunt in pajamas.*

- 3.) The vowel [ɔ], as in “all”, is pronounced with much more lip-rounding and a smaller mouth opening than most American English speakers would use. Also, RP speakers often pronounce it with long duration, as much as twice as long as North Americans.

Examples: **awful, daughter, fault, awkward, caught, water, small, chalk,**

*Paul's daughter Laura is awfully, awkward when she talks and walks.*

- 4.) In Standard British, there is no “r-coloration” (also known as “rhoticity”). An “r” following a vowel at the ends of words (*car, here, water*) is lost and does not color it **within** words (*hard, horse, bird*)

Examples: **coward, mother, barnyard, course, horse, formal, hurt, work**

*Sergeant Bork started toward the frontier, then charged toward the barn full of birds.*

- 5.) The final “y” (or unstressed “e”) is pronounced as a “short i” [ɪ]

Examples: **lovely, duty, happy, very, putty, city, fiery, funny, really**  
*He was a very funny, happy man.*

- 6.) The “short o” sound, pronounced variously in America as [ɒ] or [ɑ], is pronounced closer to the [ɔ], as in “all”, but it remains short in duration.

Examples: **dog, obvious, knowledge, collar, along, want, fox**  
*They stopped a lot of nonsense at the college at Watford.*

- 7.) “-ile” endings are pronounced as [aɪl], as in “aisle.”

Example: **mobile, fertile, futile, tactile, hostile**  
*The hostile man escaped through the fertile field in a futile attempt to be mobile.*

### SIGNATURE SOUNDS - CONSONANTS

- 1.) The “r” consonant is pronounced when linking a word whose **spelling** ends in “r” with a word that begins with a vowel. This is known as the “linking r.”

Examples: **for it, her eyes, there are, fear of, near it, forever, mother asked**  
*Mother asked her bear of a boss to never abandon her uncle.*

- 2.) Unvoiced plosive consonants (“p,” “t,” “k”) can be very much aspirated, no matter where they occur in a word. Especially the “t.” Over-articulate them.

Example: **butter, city, lot, eating, stop, kicked**  
*A lot of better writers print a bit or proper work.*

- 3.) “Wh” words are pronounced with “w.”  
*We don't what he's doing or why.*

### RHYTHM, PLACEMENT AND MELODY

The quality of this dialect is one of refinement and care. People who speak RP are proud of the sound of their speech. There is quite a wide range of melody pattern, though rarely reaching the absolute extremes, which might sound shrill or harsh. RP speakers are more willing to use high pitches for emphasis, while Americans prefer to use volume without so much pitch range. RP speakers are usually careful to clearly articulate all final consonants.

## THE "ASK" LIST

adv <u>an</u> ce	chancel	giraffe	plaster
adv <u>an</u> tage	chancellor	glance	prance
aft	chancery	glass	quaff
after	chandler	graft	raft
agh <u>as</u> t	chant	grant	rafter
alab <u>as</u> ter	clasp	grasp	rascal
answer	class	grass	rasp
ask	command	half	raspberry
aunt	commando	halve	rather
autograph	countermand	lance	repast
aval <u>an</u> che	craft	last	reprimand
avast	daft	lath	sample
bask	dance	lather	shaft
basket	demand	laugh	shan't
bastard	disaster	mask	slander
bath	distaff	masque	slant
behalf	draft	mast	staff
blanch	draught	master	stanch
blast	enchant	nasty	steadfast
branch	enhance	paragraph	supplant
brass	epitaph	pass	surpass
broadc <u>as</u> t	example	(not "passage")	Taft
calf	Falst <u>as</u> ff	passable	task
calve	fast	passerby	telecast
can't	fasten	Passover	telegraph
cask	flabberg <u>as</u> t	past	thereafter
casket	Flanders	pastor	trance
cast	Flask	pastoral	trespass
caster	France	pasture	vantage
castle	Frances	path	vast
castor	Francis	perchance	waft
chaff	gasp	planch	
chance	ghastly	plant	

## RP SPECIAL PRONUNCIATIONS

Schedule - (SHEH-jewl)	Garage - (GAH-raj)
Privacy - (PRIH-veh-see)	Patriot - (PAT-ree-et)
Issue - (ISS-you)	Glacier - (GLASS-eeya)
Tissue - (TISS-you)	Version - (VER-shun)
Figure - (FIG-uh)	Pattern - (PAH-en)
Patent - (PAY-tent)	Been - (BEAN)
Clerk - (CLAHK) Derby - (DAH-bee)	Shone (rhymes w/ "gone")
Laboratory - (lah-BOR-eh-tree)	Record - (reh-KORD)
Process - (PRO-sess)	Vitamins - (VIH-tuh-mins)
Nephew - (NEV-you)	Apricots - (APE-rih-cots)
all words with "ile" endings, e.g. hostile/fragile/mobile - (rhymes w/ "aisle)	

## RESOURCES FOR DIALECTS

- 1.) International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA) [www.web.ku.edu/~idea](http://www.web.ku.edu/~idea)  
Excellent resource for primary source material of variety of dialects. Uses real people (rarely are they actors) speaking about themselves and their countries.
- 2.) Paul Meier Dialect Services - [www.paulmeier.com](http://www.paulmeier.com)  
The creator of IDEA markets excellent dialect resources, which consist of written material and CDs of the desired dialect. Highly recommended. I have copies of the below materials.

Dialects include: Afrikaans (South Africa), American Deep South (Mississippi/Georgia/ Alabama), American Southern (Kentucky/Tennessee), Australian, Cockney, Downeast New England, French, General American, German, Hampshire, Indian, Irish, Italian, Liverpool, New York, Northern Ireland, Russian, Scottish, South Boston, Spanish (Castilian & Colonial), Standard British English (Received Pronunciation), Welsh, Yiddish, and Yorkshire.

- 3.) Gillian Lane Plescia - [www.dialectresource.com](http://www.dialectresource.com)  
Combines written and spoken material by Gillian with examples of primary source material. Highly recommended.

Dialects include: Aberdeen, Aboriginal Australian, Adelaide, Alabama, Argentina, Arkansas, Austria, Belfast, Belgium, Birmingham (UK), Brazil, Brisbane, Canberra, Cape Town, Chicago, Chile, Cockney, Colombia, Cork, Cumbria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Dublin, Durban, Edinburgh, Essex, Estuary, Ethiopia, France, Galway, Geordie, Georgia, Germany, Glasgow, Haiti, Honduras, Donegal, Italy, Jamaica, Johannesburg, Kent, Kentucky, Kerry, Lancashire, Liverpool, Louisiana, Manchester, County Mayo, Melbourne, Mexico, Mississippi, Moscow, Netherlands, New Orleans, Newcastle, Nigeria, North Carolina, South Carolina, Poland, Puerto Rico, RP, Rome, Russia, Scotland, Scottish Highlands, Scouse, Senegal, Spain, Standard British, Surrey, Switzerland, Sydney, Tennessee, Trinidad, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela, Virginia, Wales, Wolverhampton, Zululand,