

## German IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) Cheat-Sheet

Welcome to the wonderful, wacky world of IPA! If you've seen a transcription, it likely looked Martian to you, but never fear! The vast majority of it is "normal," and the rest is "easy!"

**The NORMALS:** All of the following symbols sound just like they look, and function the same way as in English.

[b] <u>b</u> at	[m] <u>m</u> an
[d] <u>d</u> og	[n] <u>n</u> an
[f] <u>f</u> ather	[p] <u>p</u> ot
[g] <u>g</u> og	[s] <u>s</u> ing
[h] <u>h</u> at	[t] <u>t</u> ick
[k] <u>k</u> ick	[v] <u>v</u> ase
[l] <u>l</u> help	[z] <u>z</u> oo

**The NEARLY NORMALS:** These still look "English," but don't function the same way.

- [a] Only used in English in diphthongs, but the closest is Boston (only if you're from there).
- [e] chaos (like cake, but without the diphthong slip at the end.)
- [o] Minnesota (but only if you're from there. Also like boat, but without the diphthong slip at the end.)
- [i] feet
- [ɪ] fit
- [u] boot
- [j] yes
- [r] Ricky Ricardo (but only if you're him. If you're curious, here's the American English version: [ɹ].)

**The WEIRD ONES:** Here's where the sausage is made. Make friends and make them memorable.

- [ə] cover (Mr. Schwa! Used for unaccented <e>, usually at the end of a word.)
- [ɐ] No English equivalent. (Used for <r>, almost always after [ə] and often at the ends of words or syllables.)
- [ɛ] seven
- [ɔ] cough
- [ɹ] No English equivalent. It's the flipped <r> that sounds like a fast "ta-da!"
- [ʊ] book
- [ɑ] pot (can be confused with [a] or [ɔ], depending on whence you hail. Think Peter Jennings if you're unsure.)
- [ŋ] sing
- [ʃ] shout
- [x] No English equivalent. It's like the sound you make when you, uh, hock a loogie.
- [ç] No English equivalent. It's like the sound of a hissing cat.

**The DON'T BE FOOLED:** These use regularish letters, but function not at all like English. Well, like German.

**1. Mixed vowels.** Basically a two-fer. *Simultaneously* sounding a lip vowel (outie) and a tongue vowel (innie) at the same time. Just like some people are innies and others outies, if it's more comfortable to start with the innie and then go to the outie (and vice-versa), excellent! Just don't move whatever you started with when you form the next part!

Innie + Outie

[y] [i] + [u] Sounds like "dude" in Surferese. Or calling a pig.

[ʏ] [ɪ] + [ʊ] Kinda like "dude" in sleepy Surferese.

[ø] [ɛ] + [o] No real equivalent, but if you're thinking Swedish Chef, I'm okay with that.

[œ] [ɛ] + [ɔ] Ditto

**2. Diphthongs.** Also a two-fer, but *sequential*. A long [:] primary vowel sound followed by a quick secondary vowel sound. The English words are approximations and apply to the English versions in parentheses.

[a:e] kite. (Some IPA sources use the English version [aɪ].)

[a:o] mouse (Some IPA sources use the English version [aʊ].)

[ɔ:ɻ] toy (Some IPA sources use the English version [ɔɪ].)

### 3. Other markings.

[] Brackets indicate a phonetic spelling.

[:] The fancy colon indicates lengthening of the sound (symbol) it follows.

['] Indicates the primary stress of the word. Carries the highly technical term "hoochiedauber." Ok, only at HBU.

[.] Indicates a syllable break.

[ʔ] Indicates a glottal stop.