

## PRONOUNCING [ə]

It is difficult to hear the difference between [ɜː] and [ɝ] when these sounds are produced in isolation. However, [ɝ] is produced with much less force and occurs only in unstressed syllables.

### Possible Pronunciation Problems

[ɝ] does not exist in most languages. The position of the lips and jaw is the same as for [ɜː], but the tongue muscles are completely relaxed. [ɝ] never receives strong emphasis and is found only in unstressed syllables.

## Practice

### EXERCISE A

 Listen and repeat. Be sure to emphasize [ɜː] less than the other vowels in words.

#### [ɜː] In the Middle of Words

liberty      butterfly  
perhaps      flowerpot  
surprise      understood

#### [ɝ] At the End of Words

baker      sooner  
butter      teacher  
mirror      deliver  
mother      weather

The vowel [ɝ] does not occur at the beginning of words.

### [ɜː] Spelled

<i>ar</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>or</i>	<i>ure</i>
sugar	after	color	nature
dollar	paper	actor	picture
collar	father	flavor	feature
regular	farmer	doctor	failure
grammar	silver	razor	measure

### note

The major spellings of [ɜː] are *ar*, *er*, and *or* when the sound occurs in the middle or at the ends of words.

sugar    advertise    summer    colorful    doctor