The letter "i" and the sound [i]

1. Sounds produced by the letter "i"

In English, several sounds are produced by the letter "i", such as:

[ɪ] h**i**d
[aɪ] h**i**de
} Letter "i"

> ➢ **In Spanish, only one sound is produced by the letter "i."**

This sound is the [i] as in the letter "e" in "be."

[i] h**i**jo, **i**mportante, tr**i**ste → Letter "i"

2. Letters that produce the sound [i]

In English, more than one letter can produce the sound [i].

Letter "e" → [i] as in **E**nglish
Letter "y" → [i] as in slowl**y**
Letters "ee" → [i] as in h**ee**d
Letters "ea" → [i] as in h**ea**t

> ➢ **In Spanish, only one letter produces the sound [i].**

Letter "i" → [i] as in h**i**jo

3. Pronunciation Reminder

The Spanish vowels are "cut short" in comparison to English; the sound is not lengthened, like in the phrase "Dude, this car is sw**eeeeeee**t." It is short, like in the phrase, "Let's get something to **ea**t soon!"

4. Making the Sound

The sound [i] is called a high unrounded anterior vowel. The tongue approaches the roof of the mouth near the front of the oral cavity. The lips are tensed more than in the sound [e]; it

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The sound [i] is called a high unrounded anterior vowel. The tongue approaches the roof of the mouth near the front of the oral cavity. The lips are tensed more than in the sound [e]; it is as if the corners of the mouth are being pulled. The drawing below illustrates the approximate position of the tongue while producing the sound [i].



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Exercises to practice the Spanish [i]

A. For the following list of English words, look at the bold vowel. Say the words aloud, and circle the words with bold vowels that produce the [i] sound like the Spanish letter "i."

Thimble	Ringer	Slide
Remind	Spanish	Elated
Hit	Eagle	Idol
Feed	Important	Think
Quickly	Quickly	Right

B. Look at the following pairs of words in English and Spanish. Listen to them aloud and note the different pronunciations of the bold vowels. Using the phonetic guide table, choose the correct phonetic symbol for the bold vowel and write it on the line next to the word. Try to use correct pronunciation of all the vowels, but focus particularly on the letter "i."

	English		Spanish	
1.	Important	[_____]	Importante	[_____]
2.	Italian	[_____]	Italiano	[_____]
3.	Crime	[_____]	Crimen	[_____]
4.	Family	[_____]	Familia	[_____]
5.	Delicious	[_____]	Delicioso	[_____]
6.	Thesis	[_____]	Tesis	[_____]
7.	Mexico	[_____]	México	[_____]
8.	Information	[_____]	Información	[_____]

C. Look at the following really long words. Sound them out slowly with correct vowel pronunciation, then practice saying them faster while maintaining correct pronunciation.

Antirreglamentario	(against regulations)
Desvalorización	(devaluation)
Ininterrumpidamente	(without a break)
Occidentalizarse	(to become westernized)
Sentimentalismo	(sentimentalism)
Sobrealimentación	(overfeeding)
Vitivinicultor	(grape grower/wine producer)

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