

2

Plane, plan

The vowel sounds /eɪ/ and /æ/

When you say the letters of the alphabet, A has the long vowel sound /eɪ/. You hear this sound in the word *plane*. But the letter A is also pronounced as the short vowel sound /æ/, as in the word *plan*.

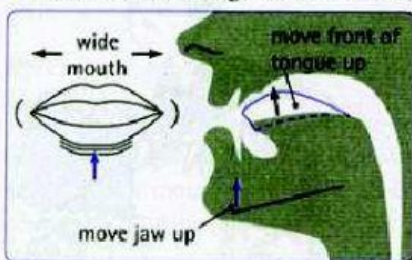
A

A5a

- Listen to the sound /eɪ/ on its own. Look at the mouth diagram to see how to make this long vowel sound.

A5b

- Listen to the target sound /eɪ/ in the words below and compare it with the words on each side.



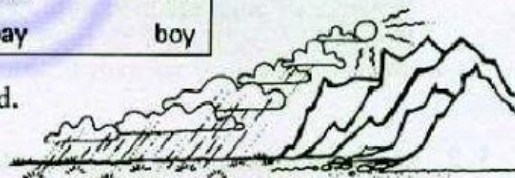
target /eɪ/

meat	mate	met
come	came	calm
white	wait	wet
buy	bay	boy

A5c

- Listen and repeat these examples of the target sound.

play played plare
grey grade great
aim age eight



"The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain."

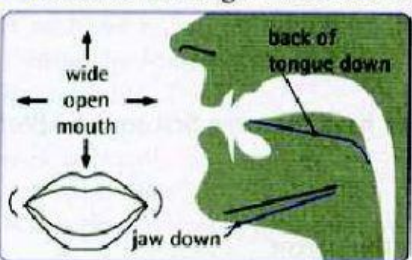
B

A6a

- Listen to the sound /æ/. Look at the mouth diagram to see how to make this short vowel sound.

A6b

- Listen to the target sound /æ/ in the words and compare it with the words on each side.



target /æ/

mud	mad	made
sing	sang	sung
pen	pan	pain
hot	hat	heart

A6c

- Listen and repeat these examples of the target sound.

bank bag back
can cash catch
ham has hat



"The fat cat sat on the man's black hat."

Important
for listening

In most accents, the following words have the vowel /æ/: *ask dance castle bath fast*. But in South East England, speakers change the A sound in words such as these to /ɑ:/. (For more about /ɑ:/ see Unit 14.)

C

Spelling

	frequently
/eɪ/	A-E (<i>mate</i>), AY (<i>say</i>), EY (<i>grey</i>), EI (<i>eight</i>), AI (<i>wait</i>), EA (<i>great</i>)
/æ/	A but note that if there is an R after the A (and the R does not have a vowel sound after it), A has a different pronunciation, for example <i>arm</i> : see Unit 14.