

Vowel sound /ə/ (schwa) as in "ago"



What Is a Schwa?

a vowel sound like "uh"

a	salad
e	elephant
i	cousin
o	lemon
u	upon
y	syringe
	rhythm

The reduced vowel sound called schwa is one of the most common vowel sounds in spoken English. The schwa vowel [ə] is a very short, quick sound. Your lips should be completely relaxed and barely move during its production.

WATCH VIDEO
Click the "Play" Button

<https://sandiegovoiceandaccent.com/american-english-vowels/introduction-to-the-schwa-uh-%C9%99-vowel>

QUICK TIPS

Other spelling patterns for [ə] consist of the letters **eo, ou, iou, io and ai**.

Pigeon **famous** **delicious** **nation** **certain**

The schwa [ə] can occur more than once and can be represented by different letters in the same word. For example:

President

accident

elephant



WATCH VIDEO
Click the "Play" Button

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BmkUa4Mv60>

https://soundsamerican.net/article/vowel_sound_schwa_as_in_ago

[ə] At the Beginning of Words

ago upon
away contain
along asleep
amaze suppose

[ə] In the Middle of Words

agony relative
holiday seventy
company telephone
buffalo photograph

[ə] At the End of Words

soda famous
sofa lemon
zebra cousin
reason circus

[ə] Spelled

<i>a</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>u</i>
arrive	oven	liquid	occur	upon
ashamed	open	humid	obtain	suppose
asleep	cement	capital	lemon	circus
away	jacket	typical	lesson	column
signal	belief	cousin	contain	support



INSTRUCTIONS

Listen and practice words with the sound the [ə].

Vocabulary

1 The sound /ə/ is used in many unstressed syllables and words. In the words below, the spelling has been changed to show you when to use the sound /ə/. Stressed syllables are in bold. Listen and repeat.



chicken



təmatoes



lettəce



ə bənana



ən oniən



səme chocoləte*



ə questiən



ə womeən



womeən

* A slash through a letter means it is not pronounced.

INSTRUCTIONS

Listen and practice words with the sound the [ə].

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) Symbol

schwa
ə

**Practice Words**

ago / ə'goʊ /	above / ə'bʌv /	again / ə'gen /	person / 'pɜr sən /
action / 'ækʃən /	ability / ə'bɪlɪtɪ /	abrupt / ə'brʌpt /	sofa / 'soufə /
abyss / ə'bɪs /	accurate / 'æk'yərət /	parent / 'peərənt /	across / ə'krəs /

INSTRUCTIONSPractice pronunciation of the **[ə] sound** with the top 30 most common words.**Click Here****schwa****WATCH VIDEO**

1. the	11. woman	21. ago
2. about	12. family	22. suppose
3. even	13. open	23. police
4. happen	14. together	24. person
5. again	15. idea	25. moment
6. away	16. problem	26. reason
7. around	17. tomorrow	27. afraid
8. listen	18. tonight	28. against
9. today	19. second	29. husband
10. another	20. alone	30. children

WATCH VIDEO
Click the "Play" Button<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8QcDHExsNs>

INSTRUCTIONS

Practice the pronunciation of the following words and sentences with the sound the [ə].

Schwa Words List

a

adapt
ago
alarm
alone
alphabet
amount
atlas
balloon
banana
comma
formal
human
idea
magazine
pleasant
thousand
zebra

e

algebra
blanket
camel
calendar
celebrate
children
effective
elephant
enemy
event
item
present
problem
silent
system
telephone
the

i

accident
animal
cousin
decimal
difficult
easily
festival
medical
pencil
president
promise

o

astronaut
bottom
brother
cannon
carrot
command
confess
dinosaur
freedom
harmony
lemon
occur
offend
parrot
phantom
reason
ribbon

u

album
campus
faculty
focus
suggest
supply
support
voluntary
upon

Y

analysis
catalyst
syringe

Pennsylvania
vinyl

Central vowel /ə/



1. How are you today?
2. See you tonight.
3. See you tomorrow.
4. Don't complain.
5. I suppose so.
6. I suppose it's possible.
7. Consider my complaint.
8. Complete today's lesson.
9. Don't complain about the problem.
10. My cousin will arrive at seven.



WATCH VIDEO

Click the "Play" Button

<https://thriveedservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Schwa-Words-list-791x1024.jpg>

INSTRUCTIONS

Practice the pronunciation of the following sentences with the sound the [ə].

Word Bank for **-TION**

- Question
- Action
- Education
- Construction
- Action
- Attention
- Solution
- Addiction
- Location
- Mention
- Celebration



Word Bank for **-SION**

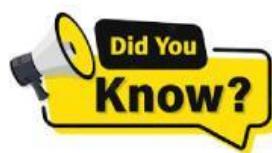
- Profession
- Impression
- Permission
- Depression
- Confession
- Possession
- Discussion
- Transmission

Word Bank for **-ious**

- delicious
- religious.
- conscious.
- ambitious.
- delicious.
- notorious.
- malicious.
- luxurious.
- ingenious.

Word Bank for **-ous**

- Famous
- Dangerous
- Courageous
- Cautious
- Jealous
- Poisonous
- Anxious

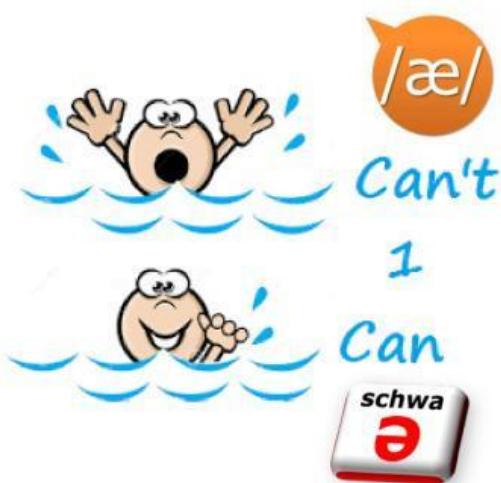


LIVEWORKSHEETS

can and can't

- Can is usually unstressed and has a weak pronunciation when another word follows it in a sentence. The vowel sound is reduced to /æ/.
- Can has a strong pronunciation when it is at the end of a sentence. It has the clear vowel sound /æ/.
- Can't always has a strong pronunciation. It has the clear vowel sound /æ/.

The difference in vowel sounds can help you hear the difference between can and can't.



CAN - CANNOT

Simple Present Tense

Woodward ENGLISH

USES OF CAN

1. ability or possibility
- I can swim.

2. permission
- You can use my pen.

CAN + VERB* *Base form of the infinitive

AFFIRMATIVE

SINGULAR	I	can	speak English.	I	can't	speak French.
	You	can	ride a bike.	You	can't	ride a horse.
	He	can	drive a car.	He	can't	drive a truck.
	She	can	play the guitar.	She	can't	play the piano.
	It	can	swim.	It	can't	fly.

NEGATIVE

PLURAL	We	can	play football.	We	can't	play tennis.
	You	can	see the stars.	You	can't	see germs.
	They	can	dance.	They	can't	sing.

QUESTIONS

+ Affirmative They can speak Spanish.

? Question Can they speak Spanish ?

Short Answer Yes, they can. / No, they can't.

CONTRACTION

can't = cannot

He can't sing.
= He cannot sing.

www.grammar.cl www.woodwardenglish.com www.vocabulary.cl

1 Listen and repeat.



She can ride a bike.



She can play the guitar.



She can sail a boat.



She can't drive a car.



She can't play the piano.



She can't swim.

2 Listen and repeat.

A Can she ride a bike?

B Yes, she can.

A Can she drive a car?

B No, she can't.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Discussion

1 Practice in a group of three to five people. List things you can and can't do.

Example: I can ride a bike.

I can't ride a horse.



Use the examples in task C, the ideas below, or your own ideas.

ride a bike	ride a horse
drive a car	drive a truck
play the piano	play the guitar
swim	sail a boat
do a handstand	do karate
bake a cake	speak three languages



2 Tell the class what all of you, some of you, and none of you can do.

Example: A All of us can swim.

B Two of us can play the piano.

C One of us can ride a horse.

A None of us can do a handstand.

Listening SECTION



INSTRUCTION

Listen to each sentence and choose the word you hear.

1. He can can't play the piano.



2. I can can't stand on my head.

3. She can can't ride a horse.

4. She can can't speak Japanese, but her children can can't

5. You can can't park your car here.

6. I can can't meet you at three o'clock.

INSTRUCTIONS

Discuss the following questions with a classmate. Make sure you pronounce the sound [ə] properly.



CAN

DISCUSSION

Student 'A'

- *Discuss the questions below with your partner.*

1. What languages **can** you speak?
2. What **can't** you do that most people **can** do?
3. What songs **can** you sing?
4. Where in your town or city **can** you eat great restaurant food?
5. What **can** you do to improve your English?
6. Which student(s) in your class **can** tell funny jokes?
7. What six animals **can** eat you? For example: sharks, bears, ... (think of six more)
8. **Can** you remember what you dreamed about last night?
9. Why **can't** chickens fly?
10. In how many languages **can** you say, "Hello"?



CAN

DISCUSSION

Student 'B'

- *Discuss the questions below with your partner.*

1. What **can** you do that most people **can't** do?
2. What **can** you do to make yourself feel happy?
3. What kinds of food **can** you cook?
4. At what age **can** people drive in your country?
5. What is another thing you **can** do to improve your English?
6. What six things **can** fly? For example: birds, airplanes, ... (think of six more)
7. What six animals **can't** eat you? For example: rabbits, ... (think of six more)
8. **Can** you make a sound like a bird or an animal?
9. What **can** you remember about your last English class?
10. In how many languages **can** you say, "Thank you"?

