

A Concise Pronouncing Dictionary
of British and American English

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Foreword

English now holds an undisputed place as the first international language. If it is to remain an efficient instrument of world communication, those who speak it, especially as a second language, must conform to certain accepted rules of pronunciation. There can be little doubt that on the grounds of general influence it is the British or American styles of pronunciation which provide the most appropriate models to follow. It is for this reason that Mr Windsor Lewis's *Concise Pronouncing Dictionary*, showing both types of pronunciation in a carefully selected word list, is particularly valuable.

He has not sought to show the whole complexity of pronunciation even within the traditional British and American standards, but has wisely chosen to recommend only one form for the foreign speaker to adopt. Too often, English dictionaries persist in showing pronunciations which are seriously archaic. The forms given by Mr Windsor Lewis consistently reflect current usage; and the phonetic transcription which he employs is both simple and economical. His decision to emphasize the differences of quality rather than of quantity between vowels is especially welcome, since the former have a greater practical relevance for the foreign learner.

This is a reference book which is sure to be widely used abroad; it is also certain that many who have English as their native language will consult its pages with profit.

A C GIMSON
Professor of Phonetics
University College, London

Preface

Two broad types of English have been recorded, a British and an American. Each represents the fluent, spontaneous, everyday usage of those educated speakers on either side of the Atlantic whose speech is of the most generally accepted kind and least restricted in terms of geographical region or social grouping.

The question will no doubt be asked why a new dictionary has been prepared when we already have such excellent reference works as the Daniel Jones *English Pronouncing Dictionary* (the EPD) and the Kenyon and Knott *Pronouncing Dictionary Of American English* (the PDAE). An immediate answer is that neither of these was planned solely for the benefit of users of English as a foreign or second language. Each is offered as 'a record of facts' and these can be of such complexity that an interpretation and to some extent simplification of these facts in the form of a limited set of recommendations can be of value to the learner.

Many teachers of English as a foreign language and others with an academic interest in this book may wish to know something of how it was planned: they are referred to the account below of The design of the dictionary, p xiv.

Acknowledgments

There is no doubt that this dictionary would not exist at all if it were not for Professor A C Gimson whose kind encouragement and invaluable advice have to my good fortune been readily forthcoming ever since its preparation was begun in 1964. I offer him my sincerest thanks.

I am also grateful to Mrs Muriel Higgins who undertook the laborious job of typing the whole of the first draft of the manuscript and to Mr David Gibbons for advice on American pronunciations.

J WINDSOR LEWIS
University of Leeds

Advice to the learner

Very often it is only the pronunciation of a word that you need to refer to. Using a general dictionary with its very long word list and searching within involved paragraphs or following up cross-references can waste time. This is why you should use a pronouncing dictionary. This one has been designed so that it is quick and easy to refer to. To get the most out of it you should always try to keep it within reach, look up any words you are in doubt about with the least possible delay and, if circumstances permit you to, *read the transcription aloud*. Even muttering to yourself under your breath is much better than just imagining what it sounds like. Best of all, repeat it two or three times clearly so that you store it in all three memory 'banks' involved – the visual, the auditory and the muscular. Remember that the more common the word is the more important it is to get it right, the more unusual the word is the less you need worry about it.

This book has been planned not only as a reference book to be consulted but as a companion to your English pronunciation textbook. You should find some time to read it every day if possible, say a page a day. This should not be too time consuming because you can pay less attention to words that are unfamiliar to you in print and concentrate your attention on those you know well by sight. You will no doubt get a number of 'shocks'. Most teachers are only too familiar with the painful experience of hearing learners mispronounce words they are supposed to have learnt in the first few months of their English studies. By reading the text you will come across many things it would never have occurred to you to look up. Did you know, for instance, that the regularly spelt plural form of *house* is irregular phonetically? Do you know what might be unexpected about the pronunciations of *bedroom* and *rectangle*? Are you absolutely certain that you know the right vowels for *pretty*, *said*, *broad*, *bury*, *tongue*, *worse*, *break*, *height*, *pear* or *were*? Should you omit the *h* in *human*? Does *use* have *s* or *z*?

A word of warning: if in conversation various people around you repeatedly use a word with a pronunciation not given here, either raise the matter for discussion or join them in their usage. Only an insensitive person prides himself on being 'the only soldier in step'.

The arrangement of the entries

A prime objective has been to make this dictionary self-explanatory. In general it should only be necessary to consult the key to symbols and notes immediately inside the covers at either end to check the values of the phonetic symbols until the user is familiar with them. The extended explanations which follow are given to ensure that there is no possibility of misunderstanding. The terms British English pronunciation and American English pronunciation in these notes stand for what may be termed more exactly as the 'General British' and 'General American' pronunciations of English, as explained below in *B The accents represented*

p xiv.

I Pronunciations common to British and American English

At the majority of entries a single pronunciation is shown in **bold type**.
For example:

abolish ə'bolɪʃ

advice ad'vays

2 Alternative pronunciations

In many cases one or more alternative pronunciations are shown in medium weight type. Any of these, while not being the preferred recommendation, need not be avoided if the user has already adopted it or would prefer to do so. For example:

again əˈɡen əˈɡein

applicable 'æplikəbl ə'plikəbl

3 British-American differences

Contrasts between British and American English are frequent. In such cases the recommended British pronunciation appears in bold type immediately after the headword, and the recommended American pronunciation follows preceded by the symbol \$. This symbol indicates that the pronunciation is, or pronunciations are, chiefly or solely American. For example:

asthma 'æsmə \$ 'æzmə

ate *past of 'eat'* et \$ eit

docile 'dəusəl \$ 'dosi

half haf \$ hæf

4 Recommended American forms also current in British usage

Where the recommended American pronunciation of a word can also be given as an alternative British form, the symbol \$ for the American pronunciation is immediately followed by £. For example:

room rum \$ £ rum

version \v3fn \$ £ \v3zn

5 British-only alternatives

All forms of words which are not preferred recommendations are shown in medium weight type. If such a form is recommended for British English only, it is identified by a preceding £. For example:

default dr'folt & dr'folt

tissue ˈtɪʃu & ˈtɪsju

6 American-only alternatives

An alternative pronunciation for American English only is identified by a preceding \$ in its medium weight form. For example:

adamant 'ædəmənt \$ 'ædəmənt drama 'drəmə \$ 'dræmə

If these alternatives follow an American preferred recommendation, the American currency symbol is not repeated. For example:

armada a'mədə \$ ar- ar'meɪdə café 'kæfeɪ \$ kə'feɪ kə-

7 American alternatives which are recommended British forms

If a word given a separate American preferred pronunciation has an alternative form which corresponds to what has already been shown as the preferred British form, the previous transcription is not repeated but the abbreviation *etc* appears. For example:

suggest sə'dʒest \$ səg'dʒest *etc* wheel wil \$ hwɪl *etc*

8 Gradation words

There are fifty or so very important words listed such as *can*, *from*, etc which have two or more pronunciations that are shown in bold type because there is no single form suitable for all situations. The vital selection in turn, according to the word's prominence, of either the more usual weak-form or the less usual but still frequent strong-form, can only be summarized here. For a full treatment see my *Guide to English Pronunciation*, Chapter IV.

9 Hyphens showing part repetition

When alternative British forms, or recommended and alternative American forms, differ in part only from the preferred British transcription already given, often only that part of the transcription which differs is repeated. This is indicated by preceding and/or following hyphens. For example:

ceremony 'serəməni \$ -məʊni realization 'rɪəlaɪzeɪʃn \$ -ɪz-

appreciation ə'prɪʃɪeɪʃn -ɪs- explosive ɪk'spləʊsɪv -ɪv

10 Hyphens showing syllable separation

Hyphens also appear occasionally within full phonetic transcriptions. Here their function is the completely usual one of indicating that there is a greater degree of separation between the syllables on either side of the hyphen than might be taken to be the case if it were not present and no space was left between the parts of the word. For example:

biped 'baɪ-ped cartridge 'kɑ-trɪdʒ

If the hyphen had been omitted at *biped*, the stressed vowel aɪ could be expected to have the value it has in *type* when in fact it is considerably longer, more or less as in *eye*. In *cartridge* the hyphen is used to suggest that the following tr has the value it has beginning syllables, as in *trip*, rather than the value with a longer, more separate t, as in *heart-rending*.

11 Syllabic consonants

When it would not otherwise be clear that an *m*, *n*, *l*, or *r* constitutes by itself a full syllable, a short vertical stroke appears beneath the letter. Such marks would be superfluous in the cases of e.g. *button* 'bʌtn, *bottle* 'bɒtl, *novelty* 'nɒvltɪ, *novelette* 'nɒv'let, etc. They are essential, however, in such cases as government 'gʌvnm̩nt, (contrast *pavement* 'pæv̩m̩nt which can only be two syllables), *modernize* 'mɒd̩naɪz, *novelist* 'nɒvlɪst, *passionate* 'pæʃn̩ət, *temporary* 'temp̩rɪ, etc.

It is noteworthy that all words with syllabic consonants which have been marked as such are also very often pronounced with unsyllabic forms of those consonants, especially in situations where they are passed over lightly owing to rhythmic pressures and/or lack of prominence of the word in which they occur. Almost always the last fully stressed word of a sentence, however, retains any syllabic consonant with which it has been transcribed.

12 R-sounds

In the transcriptions of words like *car*, *or*, *over*, *sailor*, *fire*, *cure*, etc which, in British English, only have *r* in their pronunciation when a word following immediately afterwards begins with a vowel sound, the frequent absence of the *r* is indicated by enclosing it in brackets. American English always has this *r* and these brackets should therefore be ignored by those adopting that accent. For example:

car kɑ(r)	over 'əʊvə(r)
cure kjʊə(r)	stir stɜ(r)

An *r* follows the symbol *ə* in a few words because, for users of British English only, it represents an extra sound which should never be omitted. American English users may ignore it. For them *ə* on its own always means a sound with *r*-quality. For example:

furry 'fəri	transference træns'færəns
-------------	---------------------------

13 The principal stress

Each word of more than one syllable is shown with an angled stress mark placed immediately before the beginning of that one and only principal stressed syllable which any such word must contain whenever it is uttered in isolation. For example:

about ə'baʊt	twenty 'twenti
capacity kə'pæsəti	syllable 'sɪləbl

14 Subordinate stresses

In addition to their principal stresses, words of two or more syllables may contain at least one further stressed syllable previous to the principal stress. Immediately in front of such subordinate stressed syllables upright stress marks are placed. For example:

pre-war 'pri 'wɔ(r)	uphill 'ʌp'hɪl
pronunciation prə'nʌnsi'eɪʃn	university 'juːni'vɜːsəti
individuality 'ɪndɪ'vɪdʒu'æləti	misapprehension 'mɪs'æpri'hensən

In connected speech any syllable bearing a stress mark in this dictionary may have its stress reduced from principal to subordinate, or even entirely suppressed. For example, 'prɪn'ses may become in the sequence *Princess Anne* 'prɪn'ses 'æn or 'prɪnses 'æn or 'prɪnses 'æn. Even in isolation the second of two subordinate stresses may be dropped at a very slightly faster than average pace.

15 Suspension points

Very occasionally a word or compound is rarely used in complete isolation and so the stress pattern is shown without a principal stress mark. For example:

whacking great 'wækɪŋ 'ɡreɪt . . . self-same 'self 'seɪm . . .

16 Variant spellings

If a word in this dictionary has more than one common spelling, as occurs most often with British and American differences, it is given separate entries at the appropriate alphabetical places. To avoid the waste of time that would be involved in following up a cross-reference, full information on pronunciation is given at each entry. An exception to this is that many verbs which have an alternative form of the suffix *-ize* (*-ise*) in British usage are listed only with *-ize*. At the entries of some compound words, the alternative forms given at the entries for their component parts may not be included, at least in full, in order to save space. Where two variant spellings would otherwise require separate entries immediately following or very close to one another, they have been incorporated in a single line with the alternative, usually American, form in parentheses. For example:

centre(\$ -er) 'sentə(r) colour(\$ -or) 'kʌlə(r)

17 Proper nouns

Most proper nouns, British and American, have their own entries in the dictionary. However, when a word has, besides its common form, a 'proper' form spelt with an initial capital letter, this proper noun does not have a separate entry but is indicated immediately after the common form. For example:

dickens, D- 'dɪkɪnz victor, V- 'vɪktə(r)

18 Compound words

Whether compound words are written as separate words, hyphenated or as a single unit is notoriously unpredictable in English. Broadly speaking the halfway house of hyphenation is more characteristic of British than American usage. I have shown British usage following, as a rule, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* for want of better information in cases of doubt and ordinarily giving one style only.

In view of the innumerable compounds in use in English, the items offered are of necessity only a generous selection of examples of types which exist. They include notably such 'invisible' compounds as *at all*, *child's play*, *May Day*, *stock exchange* and other such traps for the unwary.

19 Derivatives

Straightforward derivatives such as *needless*, *kindness*, *hopeful*, *quickly*, etc where the transcription of the original word is not altered by the addition of a suffix, are generally omitted from this dictionary. So also are all phonetically regular inflections: plurals, genitives and past tense forms. However, when any of these are phonetically irregular they receive separate strictly alphabetical entries, as at *mice*, *crises*, *wives*, *termini*, *stigmata*, *sang*, *sought*, *driven*, etc. This is so even if they are orthographically regular as for *says*, *circumstances*, *consequences*, etc but not if they are orthographically irregular but phonetically quite straightforward as for *echoes*, *skies*, etc.

20 Suffixes

To provide assistance with derivatives which are not included in this dictionary, any common suffix is entered at its alphabetical position so long as it is possible to make a useful generalisation about its phonetic value. This is so for *-able*, *-ably*, *-ible*, *-ically*, *-ist*, *-ment*, *-ship*, *-shire*, etc but not for *-ade*, *-age*, *-ess*, *-ine*, *-land*, etc which do not have regular predictable pronunciations. A few prefixes are also included.

21 Abbreviations

The dictionary includes a selection of common British and American abbreviations that the learner is likely to meet in general literature and conversation such as *a.m.*, *BBC*, *USSR*, *FBI*, *Dr*, *Inc.*, *Ltd*, *Dept*, etc. Also included are common acronyms, i.e. abbreviations which are pronounced as single words, e.g. *NATO*, *OPEC*, *UNESCO*, etc.

22 Alphabetical ordering

All items in the dictionary are incorporated into a single alphabet in the strictest alphabetical order, regardless of the presence of any hyphens, spaces, capital letters, etc.

The design of the dictionary

A The contents

In order to keep the size of this volume to reasonable proportions, it was necessary to eliminate all specialised and technical expressions and to include only such words and such names of places and persons as were considered to be familiar over the whole of the educated English-speaking world. The total number of entries is approximately 2.4 000.

B The accents represented

Both the EPD and the PDAE display a much wider range of pronunciations than the present book. The PDAE records 'several different types of speech used by large bodies of educated and cultivated Americans' and the EPD the speech of 'Southern English people who have been educated at the public (i.e. residential) schools'.

By contrast the present dictionary excludes all American pronunciations with any specific association with either the Eastern or the Southern regions of the USA giving only those which are most general in the USA and Canada. This kind of American pronunciation is often referred to, with a looseness convenient to our purposes, as 'General American' pronunciation (GA).

Again by contrast this dictionary excludes any British pronunciations which are associated specifically and only with a public boarding-school or any socially conspicuous background. In general it also excludes pronunciations which clearly represent the usage solely of a relatively small minority (say less than 20%) of British speakers. For example, the pronunciations of *fire-engine*, *forearm*, *hair-oil*, *overawe*, *rear-admiral*, etc omitting the linking *r*. Also excluded are usages of even very slightly old-fashioned types and usages of any type associated solely with any particular, even very broad, regional subdivision of Great Britain. This most general type of educated British pronunciation, referred to popularly as 'BBC English', is described fully in Professor A. C. Gimson's *Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* (revised edition 1970) and more briefly in my *Guide to English Pronunciation* (1969). This variety of British pronunciation is fully specified in Gimson's terminology as the general Received Pronunciation of British English. It is a convenient parallelism with the term General American and a welcome avoidance of the 'less than happy' archaic-sounding term 'Received' to abbreviate this to simply General British pronunciation (GB).

C The basis for the recommendations

Like all other compilers of such works I have relied primarily on general observations of as many different speakers as possible. Present-day television and radio broadcasting have facilitated this as never before. But

I have in particular sought to render my observations of General British as free from misjudgement as possible by a systematic collection of data on the pronunciation of a limited number of individual speakers. There was little difficulty in deciding who these individuals should be. A certain small group of speakers existed, selected with great care specifically for the widest national or international acceptability of their speech: the BBC and ITV national newsreaders and the newsreaders of the BBC World Service. Since the autumn of 1963, when the BBC discontinued its policy of anonymity for announcers in everything but continuity work, I have attempted to collect the most complete data possible on announcers' usages. These collections have proved useful correctives to the general impressions of myself and colleagues I have consulted. Such speech features as have to be displayed in a pronouncing dictionary which aims to represent the usages of fluent spontaneous everyday conversation differ very little on the whole from those involved in newsreading. I have been able to collect data on well over a hundred such speakers altogether. Many of them have been kind enough to complete questionnaires on their linguistic backgrounds which provided valuable checks on my impressions of current British pronunciation tendencies as revealed in their speech and I am glad of the opportunity to thank them now.

For the American pronunciations I have in almost all cases deferred to the judgments of the American authorities. In particular, I am pleased to record my great indebtedness to the meticulous observations of Mr Edward Artin, the pronunciation editor of the *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. On the differences between GA and GB see my article 'The American and British Accents of English' in the June 1971 issue of *English Language Teaching* (OUP) pp 239-248, my note on 'The So-Called Broad A' in the same journal for October 1968, p 65 and my *Guide to English Pronunciation*.

D Trends of change in pronunciation (a) extraneous words

With the highly developed mass-media communications and geographical and social mobility we have today, linguistic changes can be very rapid. The pronunciation of *Majorca* recommended, which was relatively unusual, perhaps even likely to sound affected twenty years ago, will quite possibly be the only one heard except from a minority of elderly speakers within the next twenty years. Similar cases are *Lyons*, *Marseilles*, etc. From around the period of the First World War there has been a steadily increasing tendency to adopt presumed Continental sound values in words of obviously non-English origin. An earlier example was the word *armada* which is shown in the current edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* in only one pronunciation rhyming with *Ada*. This form of the word seems to have almost entirely disappeared in Britain quite soon after the First World War. Such archaisms are to be found in very large numbers in general dictionaries designed essentially for the English speaking public.

Now rarely heard, except from the elderly, is the substitution of non-nasal vowel followed by *ŋ* for a nasal vowel in words borrowed from the French:

'pənsɪŋ for 'pɒnsɪ (pension) is now likely to sound amusingly old-fashioned possibly even incomprehensible to many educated speakers below retirement age. One or two popular words such as *meringue* and *charabanc* have settled into such pronunciations firmly but in most words with French nasal vowel origins a nasalized English vowel is heard. Our transcriptions containing nasalization signs are not to be interpreted in terms of a French sound system (as it seems they are in EPD). The number of educated English speakers who can pronounce such words exactly after the French fashion is minute and few of them would be disposed to do so in ordinary English conversation.

E Trends of change in pronunciation (b) the main word stock

Any change must have a point of equilibrium between old and new: this is the approximate state of thousands of English words at any one point of time. The rate of exchange of an older type of pronunciation for a newer one is not the same for all words and where two pronunciations in my judgment have seemed likely to maintain their relative state of equilibrium, as very often happens, for a very long time then I have been on the whole inclined to recommend the more conservative form. Such is the case for example with the words *absorb*, *explosive* and *forehead*.

Equilibrium or near equilibrium forms only are offered as alternatives. I have unhesitatingly omitted the British single-syllable unit ə formerly widely heard in e.g. *four*, *more*, *board*, etc which, except under regional influence, is now used regularly only by a small minority of the elderly and also the 'saw' vowel in such words as *soft*, *loss*, *frost*, *cloth*, etc now extremely unusual (except in *off*) in speakers under retirement age in Great Britain (though still the predominant type in America).

Among other such items are the important structural words *were* and *weren't* which have now become too unusual with ɜ to recommend. The *-shire* suffix for English counties is now very little heard in GB as ʃɪə. (In GA ʃaɪə seems to predominate except in the name *New Hampshire*.) Many more such examples, especially ones involving the spread of ə in unstressed syllables, may be found by comparing the entries in this dictionary with the forms given within square brackets in the EPD.

F The phonetic symbols

The phonetic transcription employed is fully in accordance with the principles of the International Phonetic Association and makes use of only their authorised symbols. There was no question of using the original (1917-1967) EPD transcription which Daniel Jones inherited so long ago from Henry Sweet. Jones never used it himself in any new book for the last fifty years of his life and was fully aware of its unsuitability for EFL use. He said of the EPD: 'If the book had been designed solely for the use of the foreign learner needing a representation of one particular kind of pronunciation which he can take as a model, a simpler notation might have been used.' There is no doubt that his simplifications would have included the symbols ɒ and ɜ as used in this dictionary.

The most unfortunate feature of the original EPD transcription as regards its suitability for the EFL user was its highly misleading emphasis on the relatively trivial contrasts of length between the vowels of such pairs of words as *bit/beat*, *not/nought*, *soot/suit* when other pairings equally deserving of such representation (e.g. *come/calm*) and far more vital length contrasts (particularly those of shortness in syllables closed by p, t, k, tʃ, f, θ, s or ʃ versus greater length in syllables not so checked) are not exhibited. This problem has been dealt with by adopting Professor A C Gimson's transcription of *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* with simplifications which, though they would have been unsuitable there, are highly appropriate to a non-comparative work like the present. One of these simplifications, ə, Professor Gimson has used himself in his 1977 revision of the EPD. Another is the use of the same initial element in aɪ and aʊ, which appear in the EPD as aɪ and aʊ. Professor Gimson is thus using in the new EPD a transcription that, like the one used here, has distinctive symbols for the vowels formerly distinguished in the EPD only by colons. Any colons used with it are in fact dispensable. They are dispensed with in this dictionary. For a full discussion of the choice of symbols for EFL transcription, see the Introduction to the author's *Phonetic Reader People Speaking* (1977).

G The transcriptions

On the principle that the simplest and therefore most readily comprehensible transcriptions will be those running least counter to what the ordinary orthography suggests, I have shown very few pronunciations displaying contextual adjustments of the adjacent sounds of compound words etc to each other even though such phenomena are very common in colloquial English. Assimilations, elisions and compressions are very common but are relatively rarely the only acceptable forms within the range of our 'unhurried' style. Examples of unavoidable cases may be seen at *newspaper*, *horse-shoe*, *rest-cure*, *breast-stroke*, *postscript*, *postman*, *first-class* and *tortoise-shell*. I have not shown most similar words with elided forms because the proper value of a plosive consonant in such situations produces a perfectly acceptable alternative. Such very common variants as ˈtrɪpmənt, əˈdʒasmənt, ˈæmˈpleznt, əbˈmɪt for *treatment*, *adjustment*, *unpleasant*, *admit* I have usually ignored altogether. So also with the trivially modified compressions of e.g. *radio* to ˈreɪdɪəʊ, *soloist* to ˈsəʊlɪst, *usually* to ˈjuːʒwəli, etc.

Similarly no attempt has been made to offer the common alternative pronunciations ˈemptɪ, ˈfʌŋʃn, ˈrestrɒnt, mɪnts, ˈtʃeɪnz, bɛnʃ for *empty*, *function*, *restaurant*, *mince*, *change*, *bench*, etc where presence or absence of a sound from a cluster makes a negligible auditory effect.

Some types of reduced pronunciation such as əʊpɪ for *open* or spəʊz for *suppose* have been avoided not merely from desire to simplify the presentation but from fear that in serious speech they might seem undignified or clumsy, though in markedly informal styles they are very frequent indeed.

Although my general practice has been to present a realistic representation of actual phonetic values rather than a more phonologically 'true' picture where the two aims clashed, I have in certain cases represented sounds which are not ordinarily heard in the 'unhurried colloquial' isolated or 'lexical' pronunciation because (i) they are present in the orthography and a transcription representing them will be likely to give rise to least puzzlement, (ii) they represent the underlying phonological values which could at least theoretically come to the surface in less 'normal' rhythmic contexts than the lexical, (iii) they seem certain to be unconsciously eliminated by the EFL learner as they are by the native English speaker. This applies to expressions like *Brussels sprout*, *primus stove*, *pumice stone*, etc which are lexically 'brʌsl' 'sprouts, etc and only potentially as displayed in the dictionary.

In the case of such words as *always*, *Monday*, etc it seems possible that of the total number of occurrences of each word the majority may well nowadays take *eɪ* as the vowel of the second syllable. However, the version with that vowel as *ɪ* rather than *eɪ* is recommended since (i) it is completely unobtrusive in all situations, (ii) most of those who use *eɪ* seem to operate such words with gradation, e.g. preferring *ɪ* when no suggestion of pause follows in mentioning a succession of days as when BBC announcers who use *eɪ* use it only the second time in expressions of the common type *the outlook for Thursday and Friday*.

H The stress notation

The 'statements' involved in the marking of principal stresses and subordinate stresses are of quite different orders. The one type is absolute the other relative. In every 'lexical' pronunciation of a word of two or more syllables one and one only will normally bear a falling tone: this is the principle stressed syllable. The presence or absence of the level tones which may occur before the tonic is much less firmly predictable: as a rule the maximum number of stresses considered to be appropriate to an unstudied articulation has been given, but any English vowel (even *ə*) may carry stress, especially the 'long' vowels and diphthongs, so that the occurrence of /' / must be interpreted as a suggestion of likelihood rather than certainty.

A minute increase of tempo eliminates the second of two subordinate stresses: 'misæprɪ'hensɪn is scarcely less frequent if at all than 'mis'æprɪ'hensɪn.

Those familiar with the stress notations of the EPD and PDAE will notice that, whereas they distinguish what might be called four degrees of stress: tonic, pre-tonic primary, pre-tonic secondary, and post-tonic secondary, this dictionary distinguishes only two: tonic (*principal stress*) and pre-tonic (*subordinate stress*). The marks for these two stress types were adopted from the set of 'tonetic' stress marks developed by Mr Roger Kingdon. They have the advantage of visually distinguishing the more important tonic stress sign from the sign for subordinate stresses. Its being angled, and thus occupying slightly more space horizontally, usefully helps to emphasise its great importance.

I Word rhythmic patterns

It is only practicable for a pronouncing dictionary to represent in general one form of a word even though longer words with unstressed syllables tend to behave in a highly 'elastic' manner in English. The learner will ordinarily pick up most of these patterns of variation more or less unconsciously but if he has doubts about his handling of rhythm he must consult a teacher and/or a textbook on English pronunciation.

The rhythmic pattern of our transcriptions represents the typical way an English speaker would say the word in question in isolation without any special contrasts with what has been said before and in a manner which suggests that the topic is of definite interest and/or importance, but does not suggest extraordinary vivacity or emphasis, nor studied care. Where two or more possible ways of utterance fall within this *unhurried colloquial style* I have given preference to the slower of them.

Perhaps I should warn those familiar with older representations of English pronunciation that they may receive the opposite impression. The fact is that spoken English style in Britain has perceptibly speeded up in the last generation or so. For example a pronunciation such as four-syllabled 'tempərərɪ, which Daniel Jones in 1917, no doubt with some exaggeration, classified as 'approximately equally frequent' with three-syllabled 'tempərɪ, nowadays usually has an effect of sounding quite studied. One now hears usually three syllables for the word in situations of full prominence as 'tempɪ and elsewhere more often two syllables as 'tempɪ. Recordings of BBC news bulletins made even as recently as the forties now tend to sound almost ceremonial compared with the current styles of most announcers.

Less familiar expressions, however, are generally uttered more carefully and so more slowly. Today if one hears 'tempərəlɪ or 'lɪtərəl they are more likely to be *temporally* or *littoral* than *temporarily* or *literal* ('tempɪɪ and 'lɪtɪl). This should be borne in mind by the reader when he notices that sometimes words with similar spellings may have slightly different transcriptions.

J Syllable boundaries

Besides identifying which syllables receive stress, the stress marks also offer information on the relationships of syllables to each other. In particular, it should be noted that, although it has been suggested that a word like *astray* should be divided into its two syllables by a stress mark placed as in ə'stɹeɪ, because a *minimum of prominence continues through the whole of the 'stop' of the t*, I have preferred to place the mark as in ə'stɹeɪ. This is because, although in terms of its own phonetic value, the s in such a cluster may be considered as belonging to the previous syllable, it more often has the more important auditory effect of reducing or eliminating aspiration of a voiceless plosive it precedes. The policy of assigning such an s visually to the following syllable enables us to represent clearly the contrast between e.g. mɪ'steɪk and 'mɪs'taɪm (*mistake* and *mistime*): the t of *mistake* has the value it has in *stake* rather than in *take*, whereas the t