

L. A. HILL

# Drills and Tests

IN ENGLISH SOUNDS

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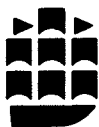
LONGMAN

# DRILLS AND TESTS IN ENGLISH SOUNDS

*Ear and Speech Training Drills and Tests  
for Overseas Students of English*

L. A. HILL

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**By the same author**

**PICTURE COMPOSITION BOOK AND TEACHER'S GUIDE  
COMPREHENSION AND PRÉCIS PIECES FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS**

**By L. A. Hill and R. D. S. Fielden**

**FURTHER COMPREHENSION AND PRÉCIS PIECES FOR OVERSEAS  
STUDENTS**

## INTRODUCTION

This book is based on the modern view that the sounds of a language are significant only when they contrast with each other: i.e., when the substitution of one sound for another in otherwise the same utterance produces a change of meaning. For example, in English, i: (the vowel sound in *seat*) and i (that in *sit*) are two significant sounds, because if you put i: in p-k you get a different meaning from the one you get if you put i there (the difference is that between *peak* and *pick*). In French, on the contrary, whether you put i: or i in p-k does not change the meaning (*pique*), although one sounds more familiar to a Frenchman than the other. In Hindi *phal* (with aspirated p, or p with a puff of air after it) is different in meaning from *pal*, with unaspirated p. In English, on the contrary, it makes no difference whether you put aspirated or unaspirated p before -æ; you still get the word *pal*, although one version sounds more familiar than the other. English *insult* with the stress on the first syllable is a noun, but *insult* with the stress on the second is a verb. No such stress contrasts are possible in, for instance, Czech and Hungarian.

Different languages have thus different contrasts between sounds. If two languages happen to make the same contrasts between a certain pair of sounds, it will be easier for speakers of one of the languages to learn that contrast in the other: for instance, both English and German have a contrast between n (the last sound in *sin*) and ŋ (the last sound in *sing*). In German a pair such as *Bann* and *bang* provides an example of this contrast. But Spanish does not have this contrast: there is no pair of words in that language that differ in meaning solely because n occurs in one in the place where ŋ occurs in the other. Spanish students will therefore have difficulty in learning the n-ŋ contrast in English, whereas German students will not.

A trained phonetician with experience of the problems of learning the pronunciation of a foreign language can forecast the difficulties a teacher will meet in teaching the pronunciation of Language A to students whose own language is Language B by making an analysis of the sound system of each language and then comparing these

analyses. But this is a process which requires considerable time and skill. Most teachers have not the good fortune to possess enough of these for the purpose, nor to be able to get someone who has the time and skill to do the job.

This book is intended to solve this problem. It provides tests for finding out what the students' problems are, and exercises to enable them to overcome their difficulties.

Teachers should use only those sections in which their particular students have difficulty: if, for instance, a teacher finds, after a few questions, that his students can distinguish between *n* and *l* in all positions (i.e. at the beginning and end of words, in the middle of words, after vowels and after consonants, etc.), he can skip the remainder of the tests and drills that deal with this point. This book deals with more contrasts than could possibly cause difficulty to any one particular group of students, because it is intended for use with students with a large variety of mother-tongues. What is easy for one group of students may be a major difficulty for another group, and vice versa.

Most teachers of English abroad who teach English pronunciation conscientiously will have had this type of experience: your students seem to have no difficulty at all with, say, *l* and *n* (e.g. in *low*, *no*; *lip*, *nip*, etc.). Then suddenly, when you are testing something quite different, you find that Mr. Wan in the front row has written down *bin* when you said *bill*. You investigate, and find that many other students in the class have made the same mistake. You ultimately discover that, whereas in their own language there is a contrast between *l* and *n* at the beginnings of words, there is none at the ends of words, so that either *l* or *n* can be used quite freely in that position. As a result, the students can hear the difference between *low* and *no* in English perfectly well, but *bill* and *bin* sound just the same to them.

By using this book, it will be possible to pinpoint most difficulties of this kind easily. If it were less extensive and less complete, it would be less useful, because it would leave loopholes—possibly just where your students have a major problem.

### *Second Edition*

The following sections have been added in the Appendix to Part I—Vowels on page 90:

1 æ — a: as in cat — cart

2 ɔ — ɔ: — ou as in not — nought — note

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE TESTS AND DRILLS

Each section in this book concentrates attention on the difference in the pronunciation of a specific set of sounds. Most of the sections deal with two sounds, but some provide exercises in as many as six. Each section consists of five tests and drills, lettered A, B, C, D, E, and each of these has its special purpose, as explained below.

In drawing up the word lists of which these tests are composed, the author has made every effort to find the simplest and commonest words that would serve his purpose, but in some cases it has been impossible to avoid difficult and rare ones. While the teacher may omit what he considers to be beyond the range of his class, he should remember that the aim of this book is to teach pronunciation, not vocabulary, so that it is quite legitimate to use words without explaining what they mean.

**Test A.** This is a preliminary test to enable the teacher to find out whether his students have any difficulty in distinguishing the sounds at the head of the section. It consists of a list of words and letters each containing one of the sounds and each picturable or demonstrable. (For example, in §1 for the pair *i*: as in *seat* and *i* as in *sit* we have: *whip, beads, lips, knee, G, chin, fish, three, six, V.*) By getting the students to say these words the teacher will be able to discover any failure to make the distinction between the two vowels. The teacher should avoid pronouncing the words himself before he gets the students to do so, as this would only test their ability to parrot. He should point to pictures of the objects, or the objects themselves, asking: *What is this? What are these?*

Alternatively, he could put the words into simple sentences, leaving out the letters that represent the sounds to be tested and arranging the sentences in groups of three, e.g.,

1. He has no hair on his ch-n.
2. We f-sh in the river.
3. She was wearing b-ds round her neck.

He should ask the students to note down in which of the sentences

the missing letters have the same pronunciation (here the correct answer would be 1 and 2).

After using **Test A** to find out what sounds his students have difficulty with, the teacher can use **Drill E** to give them practice in these sounds. Then he can use **Test B** to test their progress.

**Test B.** It will be noticed that in this test five words are given in each column. The method of using the test is for the teacher to dictate each group of five words, saying each word twice, and getting the students to write the words either in ordinary spelling or in phonetic script, as he prefers.

To make the test easier at first, the teacher can write the words on the blackboard, arranged in pairs in two lines. Thus for §1 he would write:

- |    |       |      |      |      |      |
|----|-------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. | pitch | sin  | whip | bit  | hid  |
| 2. | peach | seen | weep | beat | heed |

The teacher would then read out: *pitch, seen, weep, bit, hid*, as given in the first column of the test and the students would have to note down which line on the blackboard each word came from. The correct answers in this case would be:

<i>Word</i>	pitch	seen	weep	bit	hid
<i>Line</i>	1	2	2	1	1

Alternatively, the teacher can get students to read the words out aloud while the rest of the class write them. This tests the readers' ability to make the distinctions comprehensibly.

**Test C.** This is a test of the students' ability to hear the specific sounds accurately in connected speech, even in cases where any of two or more words (distinguished only by the sounds under test) will make sense. After dictating the sentence once, the teacher repeats the dictation as many times as there are words in the brackets, varying these words as shown. For example, in §1 the teacher dictates:

The little boy beat his sister.  
 The little boy beat his sister.  
 The little boy bit his sister.

At each dictation the sentence should be pronounced in a perfectly natural manner, and the words under test (here *beat* and *bit*) should not be given the main stress of the sentence.

If it is desired to make the test easier the teacher can write both *beat* and *bit* on the blackboard before giving the test, so that the students merely have to say which of the two words is being used each time that the sentence is pronounced.

Here again, students can be selected to read the sentences out in place of the teacher.

**Test D.** This provides ear-training in its most effective form, since the lists are composed of meaningless words which when dictated give no clue through meaning to the sounds composing them. Most students find this an amusing test. The teacher again dictates the words in groups of five, saying each word twice, and the students write them down in phonetic script.

If necessary this test can be carried out by using numbers instead of phonetic symbols as a means of identifying the sounds under test.

**Drill E.** This provides representative lists of words that are distinguished from one another only by the sound under test, and is intended principally for oral drill. The teacher should read the words out, first downwards and then across, getting the students to repeat the words after him in chorus. Then the students drill, in chorus, in small groups, and individually.

These lists can also be used for a simple test as follows. The teacher dictates words in pairs taken from the list, sometimes repeating the same word and at others giving the two contrasting words. The students write down S (=same) if they think the two words dictated are the same, or D (=different) if they think they are different, or X if they do not know.

**The Tapes.** The tapes which go with this book (see inside front cover) can be used as follows:

1. Look at the top of the page of this book which you are going to listen to on the tape. Note down the sounds which you are going to practice. Call the first sound 1, the second 2, etc.; e.g. on page 1, i: (as in *seat*) will be 1, and i (as in *sit*) will be 2.

2. Then shut your book and listen to Test B on the tape. Each word will be said twice. If you think a word contains sound 1, write 1, if you think it contains sound 2, write 2; e.g. for page 1, Test B, column 1, you should write 2, 1, 1, 2, 2.

3. Open your book and check your answers by looking at Test B.

4. Repeat 2 and 3 for Test C. Here, each sentence is said once only.

5. For Drill E, listen to each pair of words (or groups of words, if there are more than two each time) on the tape, and then repeat it. If you can get a second tape-recorder, you can record the words of the master-tape and your own responses on this other tape-recorder, and then listen to both on the second recording to compare your responses with the master-tape.

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A.	whip chin	beads fish	lips three	knee six	G V
B.	pitch seen weep bit hid	peach give lip beat leave	leap pitch sin ease whip	heed peak is sick bead	

- C.
- The little boy  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{beat} \\ \text{beat} \\ \text{bit} \end{array} \right\}$  his sister.
- I am  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{leaving} \\ \text{living} \\ \text{leaving} \end{array} \right\}$  with my brother.
- You ought to  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{fill} \\ \text{feel} \\ \text{feel} \end{array} \right\}$  it inside.
- The  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{peak} \\ \text{pick} \\ \text{peak} \end{array} \right\}$  couldn't be seen.
- They were making  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{bids} \\ \text{bids} \\ \text{beads} \end{array} \right\}$  for the shop.

D.	vib	ni:g	diz	fi:v
	vi:b	ni:g	diz	fiv
	vi:b	nig	di:z	fi:v
	vib	ni:g	diz	fi:v
	vib	nig	di:z	fiv

E.	beat	bit	weep	whip	fees	fizz
	leap	lip	leak	lick	peak	pick
	leave	live	heed	hid	deep	dip
	peach	pitch	feel	fill	bead	bid
	seek	sick	heap	hip	ease	is
	seen	sin	deem	dim	reach	rich

i: — ei  
feel — fail

- 2

# § 3

i: — iə  
feed — feared

- A.      bead          beard          ears          three  
         deer          here          B          C
- B.      reared          peas          hear          feed  
         ease          ears          feared          bearded  
         bee          mealy          cheese          bee  
         pierce          near          knee          merely  
         merely          reared          beer          fees
- C.      Where have our { bees } gone?  
                             { beers }  
                             { bees }
- Did you have any { fears } as a doctor?  
                             { fears }  
                             { fees }
- Can you see the { peas } over there?  
                             { peas }  
                             { piers }
- We saw men wearing strange { beads } around us.  
   { beards }  
   { beads }
- I { feared } the crocodile a lot.  
  { feed }  
  { feed }
- D.      dʒi:l          miəz          ziə          skwi:d  
         dʒi:l          miəz          zi:          skwiəd  
         dʒiəl          mi:z          ziə          skwiəd  
         dʒiəl          mi:z          ziə          skwi:d  
         dʒi:l          miəz          zi:          skwi:d
- E.      knee          near          beaded          bearded          reel          real  
         fees          fears          bee          beer          cheese          cheers  
         mealy          merely          peas          piers          read          reared  
         peace          pierce          feed          feared          ease          ears

# § 4

i — e  
bill — bell

A.      bell          belt          spell          pin          ten  
         sitting      bill          pen          bed          six

B.      pin              win              messed          hem  
         wet              wit              did              spelt  
         when              belt              belt              big  
         mist              dead              spelling          dead  
         messed              pen              big              bill

C.      Has he got a { pen  
                         pin } in his hand?

The servant brought us the { bell  
                         bill } we had asked for.  
                         bell

The printer { spilt  
                         spilt } the words out on the table.  
                         spelt

The birds were { picking  
                         pecking } up crumbs.  
                         pecking

John's just bought me some { pegs  
                         pegs } at the market.  
                         pigs

D.      len              dʒɪdʒ          hef              zeθ  
         mɪʃ              tʃeg              riz              vɛm  
         θɪb              fep              metʃ              hɪnɪŋ  
         ged              kɪv              lɪn              ðɪt  
         nɪlə              tɪð              vɪd              dʒɪk

E.      bill          bell          big          beg          pin          pen  
         built      belt          pick      peck      spelling spelling  
         did          dead      miss      mess      wit          wet  
         mist      messed      him      hem      spilt      spelt  
         win      when      sit      set      filled      felled

# § 5

i — ia  
his — hears

- A.      pin          in          near  
         beard      lid          lid
- B.      fears          leered          quiz  
         Ian          rill          rid  
         whizz      in          fears  
         bid          reared      pin  
         paeon      hears      real
- C.      Did you manage to get { Ian } again?  
                                 in  
                                 Ian
- Have you heard about his { bid } yet?  
                                 bid  
                                 beard
- D.      kriəd          kiz          kril  
         kiəz          kwɪən      pril  
         vil          nin          θiz  
         hiən      striəd      riən  
         smil      pliəz      friəd
- E.      bid          beard      |      quiz      queers      |      in          Ian  
         fizz      fears      |      his      hears      |      whizz      weirs  
         rill      real      |      lid      leered      |      rid      reared  
         pin      paeon      |      is      ears      |      chid      cheered