

h pronunciation

Southern British English (RP)

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i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:	ɪə	eɪ		
e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ	
æ	ʌ	a:	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ	
p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j



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Some h words

hi, hello, hat, head, hill, hot, heat, here
happy, healthy, hear, heard, herb, herbal
horse, hope, husband, hospital

who, whom, whose, whole (**silent w**)

behind, perhaps, incoherent
Ohio, Hamburg, Hawaii, Honolulu

Silent h

A few words have a silent h:

hour, heir
honest, honestly, honesty
honour, honourable

h after a consonant is usually silent:

chemistry, chaos, character, technology /k/
Thomas, Theresa /t/
rhythm, rhinoceros /r/
ghost, ghetto, /g/
why, when, what, which, whisper, wheel /w/
(**BUT:** who, whose, whole /h/)

gh is also usually silent in gh and ght:

though, high, higher, thought, bought, daughter

Now try these sentences:

Whose hat is this?
Where is his horse?
He is happily asleep over here.
Hello Helen! How are you?
Have you heard about Henry? He's in hospital.
He had a 3-hour hip operation in Ohio.
Hopefully his health will improve.
How was your holiday in Hong Kong?
Honolulu is the capital of Hawaii.
Perhaps he'll help us move house.
Hattie has never been to Helsinki or Hamburg.
Hanna and Herbie went on honeymoon to Holland.

I have honestly never had such a horrible hot-dog in my whole life!

Check where the h sounds were:

Whose hat is this?
Where is his horse?
He is happily asleep over here.
Hello Helen! How are you?
Have you heard about Henry? He's in hospital.
He had a 3-hour hip operation in Ohio. (*hour - silent h*)
Hopefully his health will improve.
How was your holiday in Hong Kong?
Honolulu is the capital of Hawaii.
Perhaps he'll help us move house.
Hattie has never been to Helsinki or Hamburg.
Hanna and Herbie went on honeymoon to Holland.

I have honestly never had such a horrible hot-dog in my whole life!

Note: In more formal English, nouns beginning with h take the indefinite article 'an' (instead of 'a') if the first syllable is unstressed:

this is an historic moment /his'toric/
an horrific accident /ho'rific/
but a horrible story /'horrible/

In common speech most people just say:
a horrific accident,
a historic moment, etc.