

# p and b pronunciation

Southern British English (RP)

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Remember!

p is unvoiced  
b is voiced

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



## P

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pot, pet, pull  
pop, pip, paper  
steep, stop, stoop  
cap, kip, cop, cope  
happy, apple, slurp  
spot, speak, lamp, stamp  
please, praise, plop, prop  
prim, appear, approve, April  
people, purple, popular  
pepper, pumpkin  
prepare, propose, properly  
perpetual, participate

### names:

Paul, Peter, Patrick, Philip  
Pippa, Penelope, Pauline, Patsy

## B

bee, buy, but, because  
bib, baby, the Bible, barb  
strobe, stab, hob, curb, verb  
bread, brick, blue, black  
able, table, cable, label, stable  
trouble, bubble, library, bribe, bribery  
blueberry, blackberry, suburbia  
brilliant, abnormal, combine, combination  
debatable, barbeque, Beelzebub, butter  
beans

### names:

Brian, Bob, Ben, Albert, Abraham  
Barbara, Beatrice, Elizabeth, Abie

## P and B

pub, public, publication, September  
burp, probe, crab apple, Pandora's Box  
proverb, capable, palpable  
probation, prohibition

## Try these sound pairs:

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pip	bib
pup	pub
curb	turp
peach	beach
best	pest
bat	pat
verbal	purple
pier	beer
brat	prat*
crap*	crab
stable	staple
born	pawn
punch	bunch
Abe	ape
amble	ample

\*offensive words!

pore	bore
pull	bull
prim	brim
happy	abbey
port	bought
cob	cop
lapse	labs
black	plaque
pro	bro
supper	suburb
lube	loop
brawn	prawn
boast	post
pill	bill
bat	pat

## NOTE!

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**In some words p is silent:** cupboard, raspberry, receipt, psalm, pneumonia, psychology, psychiatrist, psycho, pterodactyl(!)

**In some words b is silent:** debt, doubt, crumb, dumb, numb, thumb, tomb, lamb, climb, bomb, comb, plumb (also plumber, plumbing, climbing, climber, etc.)

**But b is pronounced in -mb- words when the m and b are in separate syllables:** number, September, November, December, bombard, Lombardy, combine, crumble, amble, ramble

**ph is usually pronounced as f (or even v !)**  
phone, photograph, phobia, Philip; Stephen (pronounced with v).

**But not when p and h are in separate syllables:**  
shepherd, loophole, uphill, uphold, upholstery, haphazard

**ph before th is often pronounced p:**  
diphtheria, diphthong, ophthalmic, methylnaphthalene(!)

## Now try these sentences:

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Pippa pulled the rope.  
Bernard broke the bed.  
The baby burped.  
Happy Birthday!  
Please put the bread and butter back on the table.  
Penelope picked some pretty pink tulips.  
Patsy was pen pals with a prisoner.  
Brian dropped his bus pass in the puddle.  
The big brown bear put his paws in the bowl.  
The border patrol stopped the bus.  
Barbara had to pay 20 pounds back to Barclays Bank.

Albert prepared his breakfast perfectly.  
Patty baked a big apple pie for Paul's birthday party.  
Perry B plays keyboard in a boy band.  
Peter sipped his butter bean soup.  
Pablo Picasso was a Spanish painter and sculptor.  
The pit bull barked before biting the postman.  
Polly, Philip and Peggy broke into the Prince's private property.  
Bart developed a bad pain in his back after bending backwards.  
Bob's been on business trips to Budapest, Brussels, Prague, Bavaria and Barbados.  
The computer beeped when Bert pressed the space bar.  
Bad Paddy McBeal is reportedly the brains behind the prison breakout.  
Even impolite bearded barbarians believe it bad manners to burp at the table.  
Mr. Prigg's abrupt approach was approved by April.  
"Beaded bubbles winking at the brim" *from Ode to a Nightingale by John Keats*  
Bernard the philanthropist becomes bad-tempered playing bridge.  
Philip worked in upholstery. His brother Stephen was a psychiatrist in Philadelphia.  
Ralph the plumber had a phobia of cupboards and combs.  
His obsessive addiction to expensive raspberries and apple crumble left him in perpetual debt.

## How fast can you say these two famous tongue twisters?

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,  
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked;  
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,  
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

[download many more tongue twisters](#)

Betty Botter had some butter,  
"But," she said, "this butter's bitter.  
If I bake this bitter butter,  
it would make my batter bitter.  
But a bit of better butter--  
that would make my batter better."

So she bought a bit of butter,  
better than her bitter butter,  
and she baked it in her batter,  
and the batter was not bitter.  
So 'twas better Betty Botter  
bought a bit of better butter.

(*'twas=it was*)

