

T Sounds

accentraser.com/blog/the-5-types-of-t-sounds-in-american-english



A: Alveolar Flap (sometimes known as “tap”)

How do you make the alveolar flap sound? Touch the tip of your tongue lightly and quickly to the roof of your mouth just behind your top front teeth, making a light /d/ sound.

When is the letter “t” pronounced like an alveolar flap? Between two vowel sounds. Examples:

1. batter	2. bitter	3. butter	4. caterpillar	5. city	6. whatever
7. letter	8. matter	9. meeting	10. meter	11. relative	
12. sitter	13. sweater	14. water	15. hotter	16. latter	

After a “vowel + r” sound (sometimes called “r-colored vowel”). Examples:

17. barter	18. charter	19. comforting	20. dirty	21. quarter	22. thirty
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Before syllabic /l/; in other words, before the unstressed “ul” sound (International Phonetic Alphabet: /əl/).

23. battle	24. bottle	25. capital	26. fatal	27. hospital	28. rattle	29. metal	30. turtle
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In a phrase or sentence, before the stressed vowel at the start of the next word. Examples:

31. know it all	32. meet Alice	33. not on	34. What are you doing?
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We have a lot of word pairs in English that sound exactly the same, even though one is spelled with “t” and one with “d”. The following word pairs are pronounced the same even though they’re spelled differently:

35. atom = Adam	36. betting = bedding	37. bitter = bidder
38. futile = feudal	39. greater = grader	40. hearty = hardy
41. matter = madder	42. metal = medal	43. petal = peddle
44. seating = seeding	45. title = tidal	46. traitor = trader
47. writing = riding	48. coating = coding	49. latter = ladder
50. rated = raided	51. wetting = wedding	

B: Glottal Stop /ʔ/

How do you make the glottal stop sound? You suddenly cut off your voice in the back of your throat, like in the middle of “uh-oh”.

When is the letter “t” pronounced like a glottal stop? The glottal stop appears: Before a syllabic nasal, spelled t + vowel + n. In other words, the glottal stop occurs before an unstressed “un” sound (International Phonetic Alphabet: /ən/).

52. beaten	53. bitten	54. Britain	55. button	56. certain
57. cotton	58. curtain	59. eaten	60. forgotten	61. fountain
62. gluten	63. gotten	64. important	65. kitten	66. Latin
67. Manhattan	68. mitten	69. rotten	70. satin	71. written

When a word or syllable ends with a “t” just before a consonant sound. This could be at the end of a syllable within a word (e.g. “football”) or at the end of a word within a sentence/phrase (e.g. “I can’t go”). Examples:

72. atlas	73. curtly	74. flightless	75. football	76. hate mail
77. greatness	78. right now	79. seat belt	80. settler	90. treatment
91. witless				

C: Aspirated “t”

How do you make the aspirated “t” sound? Touch your tongue to the roof of your mouth just behind your top front teeth, make the /t/ sound, then immediately pull your tongue back and downward to release a puff of air. *Practice Tip:* Say the “tuh” sound with your hand in front of your mouth. If you feel a burst of air on your hand the instant after you say it, you’re doing it right.

When is the letter “t” pronounced with the aspirated “t” sound? When the word starts with “t”.

92. table	93. take	94. talk	95. tango	96. tap	97. turn
98. tea	99. teach	100. tear	101. teeth	102. tell	103. try
104. ten	105. tie	106. time	107. tongue	108. too	109. true
110. took	111. top	112. touch	113. toy	114. traffic	115. trouble
116. train	117. tree	118. trend	119. triangle	120. trip	

At the beginning of a stressed syllable.

121. attack	122. attend	123. between	124. eighteen	125. eternal
126. Italian	127. mistake	128. particular	129. participant	130. photography
131. retire	132. return			

After a consonant (except “n”, see #5).

133. actor	134. after	135. doctor	136. empty	137. lunchtime
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D: Held “t” (sometimes called Unreleased “t” or Unaspirated “t”)

How do you make the held “t” sound? Touch your tongue to the roof of your mouth just behind your top front teeth, make the /t/ sound, then hold the tongue for an extra moment so that the puff of air is held in and not released.

When is the letter “t” pronounced with the held “t” sound? It appears at the end of a word. Examples:

138. amount	139. ancient	140. bat	141. boat	142. bet	143. won’t
144. bit	145. blunt	146. bought	147. but	148. can’t	149. sweet
150. cat	151. coat	152. dent	153. don’t	154. elite	155. tint
156. faint	157. font	158. goat	159. hat	160. hot	161. vent
162. it	163. lint	164. lot	165. mint	166. not	167. slant
168. paint	169. pat	170. patient	171. pint	172. pot	173. sent

E: Regular /t/

How do you make the /t/ sound? Touch your tongue firmly to the roof of your mouth just behind your top front teeth, then pull it back, making a /t/ sound. There is neither a big nor a small release of air, and it does not resemble the “d” sound.

When is the letter “t” pronounced with the /t/ sound? Before and after /s/.

174. bats	175. boats	176. cats	177. coats	178. fruits	179. meets
180. starts	181. steep	182. sting	183. stop	184. store	

After /n/ (unless “t” is the last letter of the word, see #D).

central	enter	internet	international
magenta	painting	printer	sentence