



“IH”

IPA Symbol: /ɪ/

How to Pronounce

The tongue should be in relaxed position for “IH” /ɪ/- lower than /i/”EE” as in “eat.” The lips are spread into a smile and the teeth are close together. Pull the middle of your tongue slightly lower in a more flat position from “EE” to achieve “IH.”

Spelling

The “i” spelling sounds like “IH” /ɪ/ more than 93% of the time.

The “i” spelling only sounds like “EE” /i/ in three instances.

- 1) With a silent ‘e’ in multisyllabic words (police, prestige, tangerine)
- 2) At the end of syllables followed by another vowel (stadium, piano, radius)
- 3) Foreign words (spaghetti, sushi, pizza, Helsinki Hawaii, bikini, zucchini)

Spelling Exceptions: There are a few other less common spellings for the pronunciation “IH” /ɪ/.

Below is the list of “IH” /ɪ/ words that require memorization.

| | |
|----|---|
| Y | system, gym, hymn, polyp, rhythm (in the middle of words) |
| e | pretty, English |
| u | busy |
| ei | forfeit, counterfeit |
| o | women |
| ui | build, guilty, biscuit, guitar, circuit |

Common Error

The most common error is to substitute “i” spelling with the “EE” /i/ sound.

To fix this issue, lower and flatten your tongue to create “IH” /ɪ/.

Minimal Pairs

The term “minimal pair” refers to one change in sound that changes the entire meaning of a word. As you say the second “IH” /ɪ/ version, feel that your whole tongue relaxes and lowers slightly.

| “EE” /i/ | “IH” /ɪ/ | “EE” /i/ | “IH” /ɪ/ |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| cheap | chip | each | itch |
| cheek | chick | ease | is |
| creek | crick | eat | it |
| deed | did | eel | ill |
| deep | dip | beach | bitch |



PROactive

PRONUNCIATION

| | | | |
|-----------|--------|-------------|-------|
| bead | bid | meal | mill |
| bean | bin | neat | knit |
| beat | bit | peach | pitch |
| feast | fist | peat | pit |
| feel | fill | peek | pick |
| fees | fizz | peel | pill |
| feet | fit | reason | risen |
| fiend | finned | scene/seen | sin |
| gene | gin | scheme | skim |
| greed | grid | seal | sill |
| green | grin | seat | sit |
| he'll | hill | seek | sick |
| he's | his | sheen | shin |
| heap | hip | sheep | ship |
| heat | hit | skied | skid |
| heed | hid | sleek | slick |
| keyed | kid | sleep | slip |
| leak/leek | lick | sleet | slit |
| leap | lip | steal/steel | still |
| least | list | teak | tick |
| meet | mitt | teal | till |
| | | teen | tin |