

An IPA System for Blind Singers and their Teachers by Cheri Montgomery

**Overview of Symbols.** Phonetic symbols exist for students who use a Braille computer, but the keystrokes are awkward due to the number of unique characters involved. Singers only need those symbols that apply to lyric diction. An intuitive solution would involve replacing phonemes that require special symbols with capital letters or other easily recognizable characters. The replacement symbol for each character is provided below. Note that the format of this chart is designed for the sighted. Click on the button titled “Student’s IPA Chart with Lyrics” for charts formatted for the blind. An index of transcribed lyrics is provided on page 3 of this document.

Standard IPA Symbols	Braille	English	Italian	German	French
<b>FRONT VOWELS</b>					
Closed front [i]	[i]	key [ki]	ivi ['ivi]	Lied [li:t]	ici [isi]
Open front [ɪ]	[I]	sit [sIt]		Bitte ['bItt-]	
Closed front [e]	[e]	chaos ['keAs]	perché [per'ke]	Erde [' e:rd-]	été [ete]
Open front [ɛ]	[E]	bell [bEl]	bene ['bEne]	Feld [fElT]	rêve [rEv-]
<b>BACK VOWELS</b>					
Closed back [u]	[u]	moon [mun]	luna ['luna]	Ruh [ru:]	jour [Zur]
Open back [ʊ]	[U]	book [bUk]		jung [jUN]	
Closed back [o]	[o]	obey [ o'bEI]	solo ['solo]	Mond [mo:nt]	pauvre [povr-]
Open back [ɔ]	[O]	ought [ Ot]	core ['kOre]	Sonne ['zOnn-]	aurore [OrOr-]
<b>CENTRAL VOWELS</b>					
Central [æ]	[@]	glad [gl@d]			
Central bright [a]	[a]		cara ['kara]	allein [ al'laen]	voilà [vwala]
Central dark [ɑ]	[A]	father ['fATH-]		Abend [' A:b-nt]	âme [Am-]
Central [ʌ]	[>]	up [ >p]			
English vowel r [ɜ]	[3]	bird [b3d]			
German vowel r [ʁ] ([ɜ] with tongue tip down)	[3]			der [de:3]	
<b>MIXED VOWELS</b>					
Closed mixed [y] ([i] tongue with [u] lip)	[y]			Blüte ['bly:t-]	sûr [syr]
Open mixed [ɥ] ([ɪ] tongue with [ʊ] lip)	[Y]			Küsse ['kYss-]	
Closed mixed [ø] ([e] tongue with [o] lip)	[%]			schön [S%:n]	feu [f%]
Open mixed [œ] ([ɛ] tongue with [ɔ] lip)	[O/E]			könnT [kO/Ennt]	seul [sO/EI]
<b>FRENCH NASAL VOWELS</b>					
Central dark [ã]	[~A]				enfant [~Af~A]
Open front [ɛ̃]	[~E]				bien [bj~E]
Closed back [ɔ̃]	[~o]				ombre [~obr-]
Open mixed [œ̃]	[~O/E]				un [~O/E]
<b>BILABIAL CONSONANTS</b>					
Voiceless stop [p]	[p]	pure [pjU-]	pace ['patSe]	Perle ['pErl-]	porte [pOrt-]
Voiced stop [b]	[b]	babel [b@b-l]	bella ['bElla]	Bild [bIlT]	beauté [bote]
Voiceless glide [ɸ]	[hw]	wheat [hwit]			
Voiced glide [w] (rapidly articulated [u])	[w]	wish [wIS]	uomo ['wOmo]		oui [wi]
Voiced nasal [m]	[m]	mist [mlst]	mondo ['mondo]	Meer [me:r]	même [mEm-]
<b>LABIODENTAL CONSONANTS</b>					
Voiceless fricative [f]	[f]	faith [fElth]	fiore ['fjore]	Fest [fEst]	fois [fwa]
Voiced fricative [v]	[v]	Voice [vOIs]	vita ['vita]	Welt [vElT]	voix [vWA]

## Chart Continued

Standard IPA Symbols	Braille	English	Italian	German	French
<b>DENTAL AND ALVEOLAR CONSONANTS</b>					
Voiceless fricative [θ]	[th]	thin [thIn]			
Voiced fricative [ð]	[TH]	them [THEm]			
Voiceless stop [t]	[t]	tone [toUn]	tempo ['tEmpo]	Tag [tA:k]	tête [tEt-]
Voiced stop [d]	[d]	deed [did]	donna ['dOnna]	Dank [daNk]	désir [dezir]
Voiceless fricative [s]	[s]	sing [sIN]	spesso ['spEsso]	Wasser ['vass-3]	soir [swar]
Voiced fricative [z]	[z]	zeal [zil]	sdegno ['zde~j~jo]	Seele ['ze:l-]	zéphyr [zefir]
Voiceless affricate [ts]	[ts]		senza ['sEntsa]	Zeit [tsaet]	
Voiced affricate [dz]	[dz]		mezzo ['mEddzo]		
Voiced nasal [n]	[n]	nine [nAIIn]	nome ['nome]	Nebel ['ne:b-l]	noir [nwar]
Voiced lateral [l]	[l]	little ['lIt-l]	luce ['lutSe]	Liebe ['li:b-]	lune [lyn-]
Voiced flipped [ɾ]	[ɾ]	thread [thrEd]	parola [pa'rola]	rot [ro:t]	riche [riS-]
Voiced rolled [r]	[rr]		rosa ['rroza]	Herr [hErr]	
Voiced retroflex [ɻ]	[R]	rose [RoUz]			
<b>PREPALATAL CONSONANTS</b>					
Voiceless fricative [ʃ]	[S]	sheep [Sip]	lascia ['laSSa]	Sterne ['StErn-]	chant [S~A]
Voiced fricative [ʒ]	[Z]	measure ['mEZ-]			jamais [ZamE]
Voiceless affricate [tʃ]	[tS]	child [tSAIld]	cielo ['tSElo]		
Voiced affricate [dʒ]	[dZ]	judge [dZ>dZ]	gioia ['dZOja]		
Voiced nasal [ɲ] (nasalized [j])	[~j]		sogno ['so~j~jo]		vigne [vi~j-]
Voiced lateral [ɭ] ([l] with tongue down)	[L]		figlio ['fiLLo]		
Ich-Laut [ç]	[x]	hue [xju]		Licht [lIxt]	
Voiced glide [j] (rapidly articulated [i])	[j]	yet [jEt]	miei [mje:i]	Jahr [JA:r]	yeux [j%]
Voiced glide [ɥ] (rapidly articulated [y])	[y]				nuit [nyi]
<b>VELAR CONSONANTS</b>					
Voiceless stop [k]	[k]	kiss [kIs]	casa ['kaza]	Kind [kInt]	cœur [kœr]
Voiced stop [g]	[g]	good [gUd]	guida ['gwida]	gern [gErn]	guerre [gEr-]
Voiced nasal [ŋ]	[N]	wing [wIN]	lungo ['luNgo]	Engel [' EN-l]	
Voiceless [χ]	[X]			Nacht [naXt]	
<b>GLOTTAL CONSONANTS</b>					
Voiceless stop [ʔ]	[ ]	ears [ I-z]		Augen [' Aog-n]	
Voiceless stop [h]	[h]	heart [hAt]		Herz [hErtz]	
<b>STRESS MARKS, LONG MARK AND SCHWA</b>					
Stressed syllable [ˈ]	[ˈ]	above [ˈ>b>v]	così [ko'zi]	Gesicht [g-'zIxt]	
Secondary stress [ˌ]	[ˌ]	melancholy ['mEl-n, kAlI]		Rosenbaum ['ro:z-n, bAom]	
Long mark [ː]	[ː]		mio [mi:o]	Boot [bo:t]	
Schwa [ə]	[-]	sofa ['soUf-]		Geliebte [g-'li:pt-]	petite [p-tit-]

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