




Some students (e.g. Cantonese) may have difficulty in distinguishing between /l/ and /n/ in initial position; this leads to pronouncing *laɪf* *life* as *naɪf* *knife* or *noʊt* *not* as *loʊt* *lot*, and must be avoided. Remember that /n/ is entirely nasal, all the air goes out of the nose; but /l/ is entirely oral, all the air goes out of the mouth. Try this: say a long /n/, and, whilst you are saying it, nip your nostrils so that the air cannot escape from the nose; this will interrupt the sound. Now say /l/ and do the same thing: if you are making /l/ correctly there will be no change at all; if there is a change it means that some air, or perhaps all the air, is passing through the nose, which is wrong for /l/. Do the same thing with a long /s/, and notice that nipping the nose makes no difference to the sound; then try /l/ again, until you are sure that you can always make it without any air going through the nose. It will be helpful to think of a slight /d/-sound in going from the /l/ to the following vowel, as mentioned above *l<sup>d</sup>aɪf*, *l<sup>d</sup>oʊt*, etc. When you are sure that your /n/ is entirely nasal and your /l/ entirely oral, practise distinguishing these pairs:

### Consonants

 tʃu:zdi Tuesday	kəmˈpjʊ:tə computer
tju:n tune	kju: queue
pjʊə pure	əkju:z accuse

Some English people use /tʃ/ instead of /tj/ and /dʒ/ instead of /dj/, pronouncing tʃu:zdi instead of tju:zdi *Tuesday*, and dʒu: instead of dju: *due*, but this is not generally accepted and should be avoided.


Most American speakers do not use /j/ in words where it would follow /t, d, n, l, s, θ/, pronouncing tu:n *tune*, du: *due*, nu: *new*, æbsəlu:t *absolute*, su:t *suit*, and ɪnθu:zɪzəm *enthusiasm*. R.P. speakers always use /j/ after /t, d, n/ in such words, but some do not use it after /l, s, θ/. If your model is American, do not pronounce /j/ after these consonants; if not, it is probably better to use /j/ after all of them. /j/ does not occur in final position.

Some of the commonest words containing /j/ are: *yard, year, yellow, use, yesterday, yet, you, young, your, us, usual, useful, Europe, amuse.*

**/w/**

This consonant consists of a quick glide from the vowel /u:/ or /ʊ/ to whatever vowel follows. It is much more difficult than /j/ because many languages do not have an independent /w/. But it is not difficult to learn to say. Start with /u:/ or /ʊ/ and follow this immediately by the vowel /ɔ:/ this is the word *wɔ: war*. The /w/ part must be short and weak, as with /j/, but the lips must be rounded quite firmly even English people move their lips noticeably for /w/!

Try these words in the same way, beginning each with a very short weak /u:/ or /ʊ/ with the lips well rounded:

	wɒtʃ watch	wɪn win	wɛə where
	wɛt wet	wi: we	wʊd wood
	wɑ:t white	wɛɪt wait	wʊl wool

When /w/ follows a consonant it is made in the same way; but the lips are rounded ready for /w/ before the previous consonant is finished. So in *swi:t sweet* the lips gradually become rounded during the /s/, and

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