



Phonetic Crosswords

This game can be played by any level, once they have been shown the phonemes for English and are relatively confident in their use. It's a good way to heighten students' awareness of the pronunciation of individual words, and also an opportunity for the teacher to correct mispronunciations.

Procedure:

1. Provide pairs of students with their own copy of the phonemes used in English. You're welcome to use the one on page 6.
2. Draw a grid on the board and place an example word on the grid.
3. Explain the game to your students; see below for an example of the instructions for the class.
4. Each team takes it in turns to write the phonetic script for a word on the board. They get a point for each correct word.
5. If students are daunted the first time round, give them as much help as you feel is appropriate. For example, you might like to pronounce what they have written so that they can compare it to the word they want to write.
6. The length of the activity is up to you and your students.

On page 5 you can see an example of a finished game that was played with a First Certificate class, along with the list of words used. If you're not confident with using phonemes, you might like to see if you can find all the words in the list in their phonetic form on the grid.

A word of warning; different dictionaries sometimes use slightly different phonemes. Also, an American English dictionary would give different pronunciation to a British English dictionary, so be ready for the occasional challenge from a disgruntled team!

Rules:

1. Words can only be written from left to right or from top to bottom.
2. Each new word must use one of the sounds in a previous word.
3. For each correct word, that team receives one point.
4. If a team writes an incorrect word, they don't get any points. (In addition, to make the game more demanding, you might decide to give every other team a point.)
5. Students are not allowed to use dictionaries to find the phonemes for their words.



Example of Instructions for the class:

(First, draw a grid on the board, and write an example word in the middle – in this case 'English')

		l	n	g	l	l	f		

The first team might add the word 'LONG' to the board. It's correct, so they would get 1 point;

		l	n	g	l	l	f		
					o				
					n				



The second team might add the word 'SIT' to the board. It's correct, so that team would get one point.

		s							
		i	η	g	l	i	ʃ		
		t			ɒ				
					η				

The third team might add the word 'ON' to the board. (left to right from the 'O' of 'LONG'). It's correct, so they would get 1 point, but they have also made the word 'IN' (top to bottom from the 'I' of 'ENGLISH', so they would get a second point.

		s							
		i	η	g	l	i	ʃ		
		t			ɒ	n			
					η				



The fourth team might add the word 'she' (top to bottom from the 'sh' of 'ENGLISH') and claim 2 points, 1 for 'she', and 1 for 'knee' (left to right from the 'n' of 'in'). However, there is a mistake – 'onknee' is not a word, so this team would get no points and the word would be removed;

		s							
		ɪ	ŋ	g	l	ɪ	ʃ		
		t			ɒ	n	i:		
					ŋ				

So this is how to play the game. If you get a word wrong, you don't get any points.
By the way, you are not allowed to use dictionaries to find the phonemes for your word.



An example of a finished game

		b											
		ʊ											
		k	æ	p	s				tʃ				
					ɪ	ŋ	g	l	ɪ	ʃ			
			b	ʌ	t		ʊ		p	i:	s		
		t	ɔɪ		ɪ		d	u:		t	u:		
ə	m	eɪ	z	ɪ	ŋ		n			s	n	æ	k
		k					ɪ						
							s	t	r	ɪ	ŋ		

Team A
(3 points)

good
caps
string

Team B
(3 points)

sitting
boys
amazing

Team C
(5 points)

but
goodness
snack + sheets +
soon

Team D
(6 points)

chip
sheet + sue + two
take + toy

Team E
(4 points)

peace + she
book
do



æ	ɑ:
man	part
_____	_____
ai	au
fine	house
_____	_____

e	ə	ɜ:
ten	ago	girl
_____	_____	_____
eə	eɪ	əʊ
chair	page	phone
_____	_____	_____

p	b
pen	bad
_____	_____
k	g
cat	girl
_____	_____
f	v
fan	voice
_____	_____
s	z
sun	zoo
_____	_____

t	d
tin	dog
_____	_____
ʃ	ʒ
she	vision
_____	_____
tʃ	dʒ
chin	jam
_____	_____
θ	ð
thin	then
_____	_____

ɪ	i:
sit	seat
_____	_____
ɪə	
beer	

ɒ	ɔ:
pot	ball
_____	_____
ɔɪ	
boy	

ʌ	ʊ	u:
cup	put	boot
_____	_____	_____
	ʊə	
	pure	

British English Phonemes
 To help you remember the sounds, write your own words on the lines.

l	r	w	j
leg	red	wet	yes
_____	_____	_____	_____
m	n	ŋ	h
man	no	sing	hat
_____	_____	_____	_____