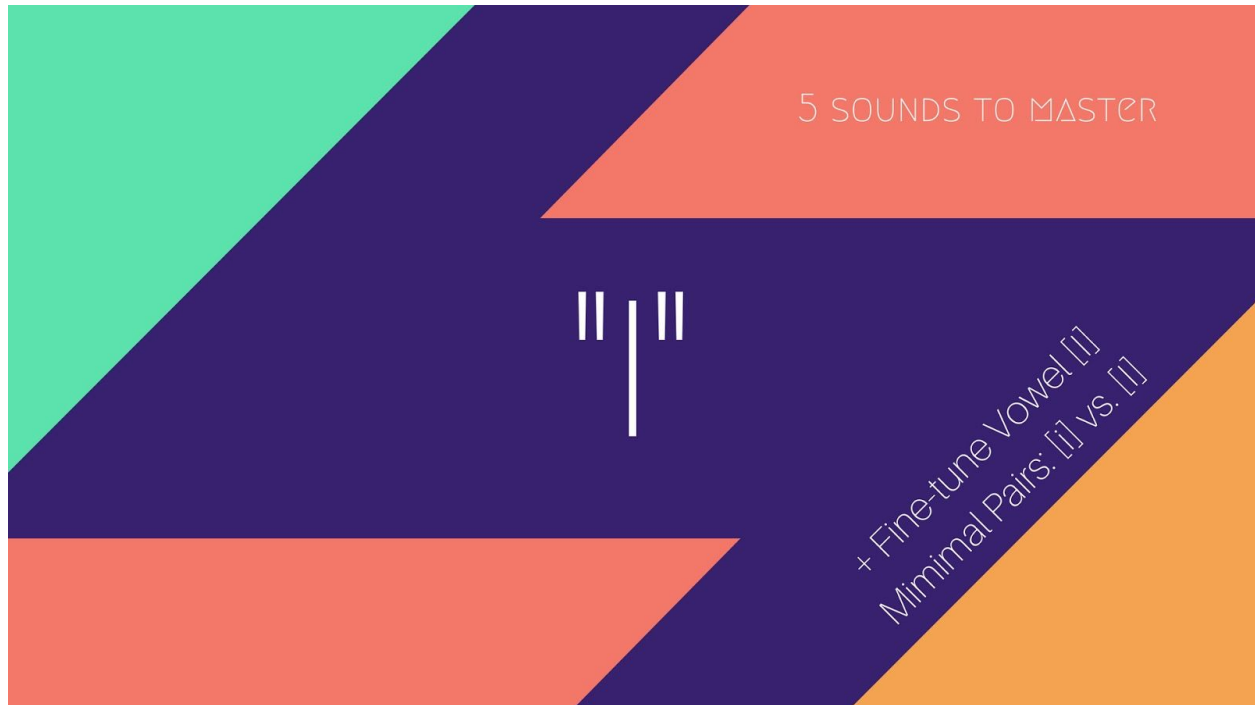


Vowel Introduction: "I"

5 different sounds, 1 fine-tune vowel [ɪ]



When you think about the letter i, a few sounds probably come to mind. Perhaps, the long "i" in the word *time*, or the short "i" in the word *win*? How about the "i" in *police* or the "y" sound [j] in *senior*. Did you think of the schwa sound [ə] that replaces the i in possible? There are a few ways to pronounce the letter i and in this lesson we will go over them.

You will need to:

1. Listen to all of the options for pronunciation of the "i" sound.
2. Learn the commonly mispronounced words with the [ai] sound, as in *island*.
3. Master the short i (I).

- In order to reduce your accent it's crucial to spend time learning how to produce the short i [ɪ] sound, as in *sit*, *hit* and *bit*. The short i is a fine-tune vowel.

4. Compare and contrast the long e [i] and short i [ɪ] sounds.

- This section will be more time consuming with a lot of listen and repeat activities.

#1. Let's review words with the letter i.

win [ɪ] (short i)	dim, whim, this, miss, hill, opinion, committee
time [aɪ] (longe i) (<i>daɪm</i>)	time, dime, albino, wine, identity
police [i] (<i>pə'lis</i>)	police, niece, ceiling, receive, grief, brief, hygiene, priest <i>** An e sound with the letter "i" does not occur regularly. Normally you will see an "e" after the "i" ("ie") to create this sound. Remember, "i" before "e" except after "c". (ceiling, receive).</i>
senior [j] (<i>'sɪnjər</i>)	senior, junior, savior, behavior <i>**These are the most common words with this combination.</i>
possible [ə]	visibility, legibility, flexibility, credibility, eligibility, compatibility audible, edible, eligible, expandible, feasible, horrible, intelligible, invisible, terrible, pencil. <i>**Notice that we create a schwa with the "i" when it's on the unstressed syllable and between two consonants.</i>

#2. Mastering the AI (as in "island")

The Portuguese "i" is normally pronounced like the American "e" (i).

Whereas the American "i" is most commonly pronounced (ai) as in *island* or (I) as in *internet*. For that reason, Brazilians often use what's familiar: the Portuguese i. As a result "island" turns to "eesland" and international sounds like "eenternational". **Both are incorrect and contribute to a Portuguese accent in English.**

You can avoid this by learning which words are commonly pronounced with the ai sound in English.

Repeat after me:

1. ice - *gelo*
 - *Don't slip on the ice.*
2. idea - *ideia*
 - *He always has very interesting ideas.*
3. ideal - *ideal*
 - *San Francisco is my ideal city.*
4. identical - *idêntico*
 - *Those twins are identical.*
5. identification - *identificação*
 - *Show me your identification (or ID).*
6. identify - *identificar*
 - *It was difficult to identify the problem.*
7. identity - *identidade*
 - *The suspect's identity is unknown.*
8. itinerary - *itinerário*
 - *Where's the itinerary for our trip?*
9. item - *item*
 - *How many items can I bring in the dressing room?*
10. iconic - *icônico*
 - *It's an iconic image of France.*
11. Iceland - *Islândia*
 - *You can visit volcanoes in Iceland!*

12. island - *Ilha*
 - *They were stranded on a deserted island!*
13. icebreaker - *Quebra-gelo*
 - *Have you thought of an icebreaker to start the meeting?*
14. idol - *Ídolo*
 - *Do you watch American Idol?*
15. IPA - *IPA*
 - *He only drinks IPA.*
16. Ireland - *Irlanda*
 - *We took a trip to Ireland last year.*
17. Irish - *irlandês*
 - *I'm a huge fan of Irish authors.*
18. iron - *ferro*
 - *Do you have an iron? I need to iron my clothes.*
19. irony - *irônia*
 - *What irony! He bought a new cell phone and then found his.*
20. isolated - *isolado*
 - *It's not abnormal to feel isolated in a city with millions of people.*

I in the middle

When "i" falls in the middle of the word in English, it's often given a full syllables length. It's quite common for non-native speakers to rush this "i" sound. Listen closely to how I pronounce the following words: I've highlighted the **syllable stress** in red. I will repeat each word three times before reading the example sentence.

Rid <i>i</i> culous	I think your new haircut is ridiculous .
Stup <i>i</i> idity	I can't stand his stupidity .
Idi <i>i</i> otic	His idiotic behavior is going to get him in trouble.
Or <i>i</i> gin	Darwin wrote the Origin of Species .
Ox <i>i</i> gen	There's not enough oxygen in this room.
Conti <i>n</i> uous	The tourists continuously complained about the weather.
Veh <i>i</i> cle	A sleigh is Santa's vehicle .
Exh <i>i</i> bit	There's an exhibit on mid-century artwork at the MOMA.

Minimal Pairs: E [i] vs. I [ɪ]

+ HOW TO CREATE THE SHORT I SOUND



It's quite normal for Brazilians to not be able to differentiate the long "e" [i] and short "i" sound, [ɪ], in English. The solution is to first build awareness of the difference between the two by listening to minimal pairs and a lot of audio. Second, you will need to learn how to adjust your tongue, lips and pressure. If you follow the steps below you WILL produce the correct sound. After that we will do a lot of activities to make sure your tongue gets used to the feeling.

Listen closely and (if you are watching the video) watch my lips and tongue.

- [i]: Beach, teach, speak, week, sneak, peek, Pete, wheat, feet, neat.

This is a LONG VOWEL sound. In order to create this sound well, your lips need to be spread very widely across your face as if smiling. Your tongue should be high in the back of your mouth and the tip of your tongue should be down. There is a lot of tension or tightness of the mouth when saying words with a long "e" sound. You can see my tongue while speaking.

This sound will be created when you see the following letter combinations: "ea" "ee", "ie", "y" and "e + consonant + e" (as in Pete, or compete). There are a few exceptions. Notice that not all words with these letter combinations create this sound (been = pronounced "bin", for example).

- [i] Bit, sit, kit, knit, wit, commit, audit, live, give

This is a SHORT VOWEL sound. We say this vowel faster than the e sound [i]. The mouth is relaxed; there is not a lot of tension in my mouth. The biggest difference however is the placement of the tongue.

e [i:] vs. i [ɪ]

- e [i:] = Seat, Heat, Feet
- i [ɪ] = Sit, Hit, Fit

In order to create the short i [ɪ] you need to move your tongue back very slightly! Repeat words to a teacher until they say: "that's RIGHT!"

How to achieve this sound: Exercising your tongue and your ears through isolated sounds and minimal pairs will help build awareness of the difference. Relax your mouth

entirely when trying to create the short i. **You'll need to play around with your tongue and push it slightly farther back in your mouth than with the the e sound (i).**

Follow along and listen to the difference between these two sounds.

- **seat, seat, seat . . . sit, sit, sit. . . seat, seat . . . sit, sit . . . seat . . . sit . . .**
- **heat, heat, heat . . . hit, hit . . . heat, heat . . . hit, hit . . . heat . . . hit . . .**

#4. Minimal Pairs: [i] vs. [I]

Let's practice some minimal pairs together. The goal is to work on the movement of your mouth and tongue to produce the same sound as me.

These	These are the documents, I was talking about	This	This is the document I was talking about.
Seat	There are only 5 seats in the car.	Sit	You need to sit while the teacher is talking.
Beat	I hope the Giants beat the Dodgers.	Bit	The child bit his tongue while eating.
Feet	You have very stinky feet .	Fit	The child threw a fit in public.
Wheat	She has a gluten allergy so she can't eat wheat .	Wit	Be careful of her wit ! She's one smart cookie.
Pete	My friend Pete hosts the Aussie English podcast.	Pit	There's a fire pit at our campsite.
Bean	"Pinto" is a type of bean .	Bin	He threw the garbage in the bin .
Meat	We need to buy meat for the barbecue.	Mitt	He doesn't have a baseball mitt so he can't play today.
Teen	It's a teen magazine.	Tin	The tin man walked with Dorothy.
Leave	They leave on Monday.	Live	We live near the park.
Heel	My heel hurts from these high heels.	Hill	Do we have to walk up that hill ?

You will often be able to determine which word is being said based on context. However, it's important to be able to isolate the sounds out of context and be able to recreate them. This will help you avoid making errors during conversation.

Let's read these minimal pairs once again, next to each other. Afterwards, I will give you an audio quiz.

- these vs. this
- seat vs. sit
- beat vs. bit
- feet vs. fit
- wheat vs. wit
- Pete vs. pit
- bean vs. bin (remember - been is an exception, pronounce just like "bin)
- meat vs. mitt
- teen vs. tin
- leave vs. live
- heel vs. hill

Which word am I saying? You have 5 seconds to answer and then I will read it to you.

1. P - I - T
2. L - E - A - V - E
3. B - E - A - N
4. T - H - I - S
5. S - E - A - T
6. F - I - T
7. T - I - N
8. M - E - A - T
9. T - H - E - S - E

Reflecting on all of these words, one of the biggest mistakes I hear on a regular basis is the difference between "these" and "this". Be sure to learn the difference between these two words.

- "These" is for plural. *"These are the documents I was talking about."*
- "This. . . this. . . this," not these, this - *"this is the document I was talking about"* - is for singular words.

Read these examples to your language partner or your teacher. Have them work with you until you hear and feel a difference in your mouth.