

Singlish

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Singlish

- We sing “word sounds” – not words
- Vowels and diphthongs = the music
- Consonants = the language
- All vowels are shaped in the same “vowel pipe” – a tall “UHG space”.
- Minimal jaw action.
- Vowels are mostly shaped with tongue and lips.
- Target vowels don’t migrate



Vowels – target vowels

- ED
- EED
- IHD
- OOD
- OUHD
- URGE
- AWED
- AHD
- UGH
- OHD
- AD

Phonetics: The Sounds of American English

Consonants — manner place voice vowels — monophthongs diphthongs

bilabial labio-dental lingua-dental lingua-alveolar lingua-palatal lingua-velar glottal

Lingua-dental

Voiced Voiced

/θ/ /ð/ Fricative

/ð/ play

animation with sound step-by-step description

fonetiks anatomy feedback

/ð/ play

that wither smooth

Vowel/phonetics	Words	Comment
EED [i:]	Here, feel, see, weep, three	<i>Front vowel – square</i> Challenge: Keeping vowel tall, release tongue and jaw.
IHD [ɪ]	De(-sire), with, kissin, it, miss, sit, in, thing	<i>Front vowel – square</i> Ch: Can gravitate to ”eed” instead.
ED [e]	Ne(-ver), let, said, ha(-sty), tell, when, fed	<i>Front vowel – square</i> Ch: wide mouth
AD [æ]	Back, am, that, hat, and, man, sat, laugh, jazz	<i>Front vowel – square</i> Ch: Keeping resonance above the molars, not drop jaw too far.
UGH [ʌ] [ə]	Love, a(-gain), ’cuz, but, ya, was, the, (got-)ta, strut	<i>Central – square</i> Ch: Can gravitate to ”urge” or ”AHD”
URGE [ɜ]	Word, her, bird, earth	<i>Central – round</i> Ch: release tongue, not make the ”r-sound” until very last instant.
OOD [u]	Do, true, soon, food, you, loose	<i>Back – round</i> Ch: open vowel, no cat’s bum
OOHD [ʊ]	Good, full, should, stood, book	<i>Back – round</i> Ch: can gravitate to “ood”.
OHD [o]	No, no(-body), go, oh, so, o(-ver), thought, hope, boat, boy	<i>Back – round</i> Ch: Different “OHD-words” actually sound the same. Difficult to keep the target vowel open and not turn diphthong too early. Risk to swallow the note.
AWED [ɔ]	Heart, walk, long, gone, fall, wrong, soft, law (“ja”)	<i>Back – round</i> Ch: Can gravitate to “ohd” too far back in mouth.
AHD [ɒ]	Fire, my, I’m, die, father, got, brown (“ahh”, odd*)	<i>Back – square</i> Ch: Risk to swallow tone.

Vowel pipe

- UGH shape/space
- Oval space with a high “top”
- Inner smile
- “Mun-gipa” slightly forward [Muhn-yeehpah]
(corners of your mouth)
- Inner smile / lift, smell fresh bread
- Tongue and jaw are tension free
- Space above your molars

ED

WHEN

SET

RED

RAIN (ED-EED)

TEN

BEG-GING

GOL-DEN

EED

ME

SEE

FREE

WE (glide: OOD-EED)

FINE (diftong: AWE-EED)

IHD

SIT

WITH

BE-GIN

KISS

IT

OOD

FOOD

MOON

MOOD

TOO/TWO/TO

NEW

YOU'RE (different from your – choice)

OUHD

COULD

SHOULD

GOOD

FULL

LOOK

GOOD LOOKIN'

URGE

EARTH

BIRTH

NEV-ER

SHOW-ER

PITT-ER

PATT-ER

OHD

FOR

NO

GROW

GOL-DEN

YOUR (different from you're – choice)

AWED

LAW

SONGS

ON

LONG

UGH

THE (note: often “ th’ ”)

BUT

LOVE

A-GAIN

“AHD”?

AHD

“Ahhh”

FAR

GO-NNA

TALK

HEART

AD

AND

SAD

THAT

PA-TTER

A-FTER

CHANCE

Choosing your vowels

- It isn't always about what is the 'correct' way, but what rings the most, and comes across as most communicative within the American art form of barbershop singing.
- Make definitions/decisions that work for you and be consistent.
- Choose the vowel sounds and commit to them.
- Vowel modification – the higher in your register, the more open and round the vowels need to be. Lower in your register; brighter and more forward.

DIPHTHONGS

AWE-eed: I, MY, SHINE (AH-eed)

ED-eed: SAY, BA(BY), SAME, HEY, WAY

OH-ee: BOY, TOY, JOY, SOIL

AH-ood: HOW, NOW, COW, PROUD, OUT

OH-ood: LONE, ZONE, CONE

Turning a diphthong comes out as lower volume.

More energy and sound needed through diphthongs.

GLIDES & TRIPHTHONGS

ee-OOD: YOU

ee-ED: YET, YES(terday),

oo-EED: WE, WE'LL, WHEEL, WHISPER

oo-UGH: ONE, WON (oo-ODD/oo-AH)

AWE-oo-URGE: SHOWER

oo-AWE-eed: WHY, WHILE

ee-ED-ah: YEAH

Guess the song

ah-OOD EED IHD EED oh-OOD-UGH,
ah-OOD AWE-eed IHD UGH AWE-eed

UGH AWE-eed IHD EED, UGH AWE-eed, UGH
AWE-eed UGH-ED

UGH-ED OHD-URGE UGH EH-eed-OHD

Consonants

They convey the emotional intent of the lyrics

Express & create art

Voiced – unvoiced

UNVOICED → VOICED

p → [p] *b*

k → [k] *g*

t → [t] *d*

f → [f] *v*

ch → [tʃ] *j*

sh → [ʃ] *zh*

Voiced vowels activate the vocal folds.

Unvoiced vowels only let air out.

A few pointers

- Always sing emotional consonants.
- Consonants before a target vowel need to be sung a millisecond before the spot for the musical note, to ensure that the target vowel is right on the money.
- Always sing the consonant on the right note. Even with unvoiced consonants. Don't scoop the note.
- Like the second vowel in a diphthong, the singable consonants like *l*, *m*, *n*, *ng*, *v* need to be sung more intensely to match the volume of the target vowel.
- Place all vowels forward.
- Everything is doable. Stay curious and commit to details.