

Unit Twelve

/ʌ æ ɑ ε ɑ / tummy Tammy Tommy Betty tatami*

*Japanese word meaning 'mat'

In Unit Eight we looked at the differences between **æ** and **ε** (bat/bet). In this Unit, we will review and practice those sounds as well as contrasting them with three others: /ʌ ɑ ɑ/. The first of these two are common English sounds found in words such as **but** and **caught** (some English dialects will distinguish the difference between **caught** and **cot**; this workbook does not). The third one, /ɑ/, is usually found in borrowed words from other languages such as **Paris** (/pɑri/) and Japanese words like **sake** (rice wine /sake/) (English does have /ɑ/, but it is found in the diphthong /aɪ/ or /aɪ/). North American native-English speakers will often substitute other vowels for /ɑ/. For example, the Japanese city of **Yokohama** might be pronounced /yo^wko^whæmə/; **sayonara** (Japanese for 'goodbye') /sayo^wnɑrə/; and **Paris** /pəriy/.

Most languages have the /ɑ/ vowel, and often a non-native speaker of English will substitute it for /æ/. So, an English learner might say the word **batter** as /batər/, but a native speaker /bætər/. This difference usually doesn't cause any problems in comprehension for the listener unless there is a confusion with another word such as **butter** /bʌtər/. In other words, a learner should realize that there might be some confusion between words such as **bat**, **but**, and **bought** if care is not taken. In the vowel chart below, the proximity of these vowels can be seen:

The Vowels of English		Front (unrounded)	Central (unrounded)	Back (rounded)
high	tense	iy beat		u ^w boot
	lax	ɪ bit		ʊ book
mid	tense	ey bait	ə the	o ^w boat
	lax	ε bet	ʌ but	ɔ bought
low		æ bat	ɑ sake (Japanese rice wine)	ɑ pot

Exercise One: Gliding and Tongue Position

After studying the Vowel Chart above, try saying the following pairs of vowels. Try to feel your tongue position and if your mouth and lips move as you glide between the two sounds.

1. iy → æ 2. u^w → ɑ 3. iy → u^w 4. æ → ɑ

To make /ʌ/, curve your tongue half way up to the centre, with your jaws open. Your lips should be in a relaxed position. To make /ɑ/, your tongue should be lower than with /ʌ/, and flatter. Be careful not to put your tongue too far forward in your mouth. /ʌ/ is shorter than /ɑ/. To make /æ/, put your tongue low and pushed forward a little. Spread your lips slightly, and keep your jaw open. For /ɛ/, close your jaw while saying /æ/, and you will hear the change to /ɛ/. Try to avoid using /ɑ/ for the following exercises.

Exercise Two: Individual words for contrast

Listen to the words below and repeat them, making sure to distinguish between the sounds. Read from left to right

- | | | | |
|----------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1. mutt | mat | Mott | met |
| 2. nut | gnat | not | net |
| 3. udder | adder | odder | Ed |
| 4. buck | back | balk | beck |
| 5. cut | cat | caught | kettle |
| 6. dud | dad | Dodd | dead |
| 7. fun | fan | fawn | fender |
| 8. pun | pan | pawn | pen |

Exercise Three: Minimal Pairs

Listen to the words below and repeat them, making sure to distinguish between the two sounds.

- | | | | | | |
|----------|------|---------|------|----------|-----------|
| 1. putt | pat | 2. pat | pot | 3. pot | pet |
| 4. suck | sack | 5. sack | sock | 6. sock | secretary |
| 7. wreck | ruck | 8. rock | rack | 9. wreck | rack |

Exercise Four: Listening—Minimal Pair Distinction

Part One

Listen to the sentences below. Only one of the italicized words will be spoken. Circle the one word which you hear.

1. The team already had a *pecking/packing* order.
2. The group was *wandering/wondering* about the forest.
3. The *rest/rust* of the car was too much for Fred to work on.
4. The cowboy's horse was *backing/bucking* in the stall.
5. Jan had a *knock/knack* for getting good grades.

Part Two

Listen for the missing words and write them on the lines below.

6. After the rain the canoeists saw _____ .
7. Janet put the remainder of the chocolate kisses in the _____ .
8. Jenny's son was _____ in the playground after dark.
9. Fran's _____ needed exercise.
10. Melanie's shade was provided by a _____ .

Exercise Five: Dictation

Listen to the sentences and write them.

1. ___ Janet _____
2. _____ wondered _____
3. _____ offer. _____
4. _____ fronds _____
5. _____ pattered about, _____

Exercise Six: Questions for Answers Given

In this section, you will hear 5 answers. You will not hear the questions. Listen carefully to the answer, and then record the question in the space provided on your tape by using your drill/record button.

Example: _____ ? I'm fine, thanks.
(you record "How are you?" onto your tape BEFORE the answer.)

1. Was Ed's...
2. Is _____ wrecked?
- 3.
4. Did Dawn...
5. Were _____ cuddled?

Unit 12 Tongue Twisters

Say these tongue twisters out loud to practice the sounds.

1. Fran's funny friends provided tropical palm fronds at minimal cost.

2. Hudd uttered another word about the other otters.

3. Hockey pucks pack a punch when shot at the body.

/hɑkiy pʌks pæk ə pʌntʃ wɛn ʃɑt æt ðə bɑdiy/

4. My buddy's body was odd but added bulk to the ruck.

/maɪ bʌdiz bɑdiy wʌz ɒd bʌt ædəd bʌlk tu ðə rʌk/

5. Wreck Rick's ruck wrongly and Ed will knock your socks off.

/rɛk rɪks rʌk rŋliy ænd ɛd wɪl nɔk jɔr sɔks ɔf/

6. An appalling second putter was rusted badly.

/æn əpəliŋ sɛkənd pʌtər wʌz rʌstəd bædliy/

7. It's odd adding other uttering authors.

/ɪts ɒd ædiŋ ʌðər ʌtərɪŋ ɔθərz/

8. The rotten rats rocked the rest of the rusting wrecks.

/ðə rɒtən ræts rɔkt ðə rɛst ʌv ðə rʌstɪŋ rɛks/

9. Stop meddling lest Lonnie get sacked again.

/stɒp mɛdliŋ lɛst lɔniy gɛt sækt əɡɛn/

10. Rodney wondered when the wandering minstrels would return.

/rɒdniy wʌndərd wɛn ðə wɒndərɪŋ mɪnstrelz wʊd rɪtərn/

UNIT 12: /ʌ æ ɑ ε a /

A

DIRECTIONS

Work with a partner. First, repeat the words below. Your partner will write down the word which sounds different. Then, your partner will read his/her words. Write down the word which sounds different.

1. rut rot rot _____
2. puck pack puck _____
3. buddy body body _____
4. sod sod sad _____
5. putt pet pet _____
6. utter otter otter _____
7. rack rack ruck _____
8. dad dud dad _____
9. rob rob rub _____
10. grub grab grub _____

UNIT 12: /ʌ æ ɑ ε a /

B

DIRECTIONS

Work with a partner. First, repeat the words below. Your partner will write down the word which sounds different. Then, your partner will read his/her words. Write down the word which sounds different.

1. rot rut rot _____
2. pack pack puck _____
3. buddy buddy body _____
4. sad sod sad _____
5. pet pet putt _____
6. otter utter utter _____
7. ruck rack ruck _____
8. dad dad dud _____
9. rub rob rub _____
10. grab grub grab _____

Unit Twelve: Information Gap Exercise

A

In this exercise, sit opposite your partner. Your partner will ask you which word or phrase goes into the empty boxes. You will pronounce the word in *your* box, and your partner will write down what you said. Then *you* ask your partner to pronounce the words in *your* missing boxes.

Possible questions:

"Can you tell me the words which are in D-3?"

"Could you repeat that, please?"

A1 subtle cuts	B1	C1 a pocked bucket	D1
A2	B2 a pet mutt	C2	D2 wreck my ruck
A3 my buddy's body	B3	C3 a sad otter	D3
A4	B4 a hick heckler	C4	D4 an uttered offer

Unit Twelve: Information Gap Exercise

B

In this exercise, sit opposite your partner. Your partner will ask you which word or phrase goes into the empty boxes. You will pronounce the word in *your* box, and your partner will write down what you said. Then *you* ask your partner to pronounce the words in *your* missing boxes.

Possible questions:

"Can you tell me the words which are in D-2?"

"Could you repeat that, please?"

A1	B1 cuddling cats	C1	D1 ruck my wreck
A2 a better putter	B2	C2 pucker up often	D2
A3	B3 my body's buddy	C3	D3 a solid offer
A4 an honest huckster	B4	C4 an offered utterance	D4

Unit Twelve: Dialogue

With a partner, practice the conversation below until you have memorized it. Then, perform it in front of your class.

(Rob or Roberta is telling Janet or John about his/her cousin Pat)

Rob/Roberta: Heh, have you met my cousin Pat?

Janet/John: No. Is Pat a 'he' or a 'she'?

Rob/Roberta: Patrick... it's a 'he'.

Janet/John: Oh. No, I haven't met Pat. Is he as nuts¹ as you?

Rob/Roberta: On the contrary. He's just subtly insane².

Janet/John: What do you mean by that?

Rob/Roberta: Well, he utters nonsense and has a knack for odd jokes³.

Janet/John: I'll be wary, then. When will I meet him?

Rob/Roberta: Wednesday at the earliest. He's wandering around London now.

Janet/John: Well, I just can't wait to have someone like you here to bug⁴ me.

1. **nuts**— crazy

2. **subtly insane**— not noticeably crazy, but he is

3. **knack for odd jokes**— is pretty good at telling and playing strange jokes

4. **bug**— bother

Unit 12 Answer Key

Exercise Four: Listening—Minimal Pair Distinction

Part One

1. The team already had a *pecking/packing* order.
2. The group was *wandering/wondering* about the forest.
3. The *rest/rust* of the car was too much for Fred to work on.
4. The cowboy's horse was *backing/bucking* in the stall.
5. Jan had a *knock/knack* for getting good grades.

Part Two

6. After the rain the canoeists saw **puddles** .
7. Janet put the remainder of the chocolate kisses in the **cap** .
8. Jenny's son was **caught** in the playground after dark.
9. Fran's **buddy** needed exercise.
10. Melanie's shade was provided by a **frond** .

Exercise Five: Dictation

1. Janet bet John but lost at the end.
2. Ed wondered whether wandering next summer was wise.
3. One day I want what others offer.
4. Fran's friends' fronds kept them in the shade.
5. Bob pattered about muttering about nothing.

Exercise Six: Questions for answers given

1. Was Ed's pet mutt a bit nuts? Yes, Ed's pet mutt was a bit nuts.
2. Is the front of the frond wrecked? No, the front of the frond is not wrecked.
3. Is Rob's cousin Bob's uncle? No Rob's cousin is not Bob's uncle.
4. Did Dawn and Tom knock their knuckles? Yes, Dawn and Tom knocked their knuckles.
5. Were all the cattle cuddled? No, all the cattle were not cuddled.