# Answers Unit 2

1. As a basis of comparison, use the following transcriptions of a slow version of this statement in R.P. and General American.

   R.P. [gəʊɪŋ tʊ wɒnt tʊ tɔːk tʊ juː]/[gəʊɪŋ tə wɒnt tʊ tɔːk tə juː]

   G.A. [goʊɪŋ tʊ wɑːnt tʊ tɑːk tʊ juː]

   It is unlikely that your informants will be so explicit even in their slow and careful pronunciations. Phonetic contractions such as [gɒnə] and [wɒnə] are so common that we even have conventionalised spellings for them: *she's gonna wanna talk to you*. In very rapid speech you might even get further reduction, e.g. [gnəwɒnə].

2.

| | **R.P.** | **General American** |
|---|---|---|
| car | ɑː | ɑː |
| bud | ʌ | ʌ |
| bed | e | e |
| bad | æ | æ |
| earth | ɜː | ɜː |
| seat | iː | iː |
| sit | ɪ | ɪ |
| hot | ɒ | ɑː |
| caught | ɔː | ɔː/ɑː |
| book | ʊ | ʊ |
| boot | uː | uː |
| about | ə | ə |
| time | aɪ | aɪ |
| house | aʊ | aʊ |
| boy | ɔɪ | ɔɪ |
| same | eɪ | eɪ |
| home | əʊ | oʊ |
| here | iə | -- |
| there | eə | -- |
| poor | ʊə | -- |

What is most noticeable is that a whole set of diphthongs (those in *here*, *there*, and *poor*) is absent in General American. These are called "centring diphthongs" because they end in the central vowel schwa. The reason such diphthongs have arisen in R.P. but not in General American is the loss of post-vocalic /r/ in R.P. (from the 18th century).
A further striking difference between R.P. and General American is the pronunciation of the vowel in *hot,* which in R.P. is short and produced with lip-rounding whereas it is realised as one of the two long vowels [ɑ:] or [ɔ:] in General American. What the contrastive list of phonemes in the diagram cannot bring out is the fact that phonemes which are present in both varieties do not necessarily appear in the same words. Cf., for example, [æ], which occurs in both pronunciations of the word *bad* but only in the American pronunciation of words such as *dance* or *staff*.

3.

| Minimal pair in | **R.P.** | | **General American** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| collar - caller | kɒlə - kɔ:lə | yes | kɑ:lər - kɔ:lər | yes |
| don - dawn | dɒn - dɔ:n | yes | dɑ:n - dɔ:n/ dɑ:n | variable |
| shot - short | ʃɒt - ʃɔ:t | yes | ʃɑ:t - ʃɔ:rt | no |
| can't - cant | kɑ:nt - kænt | yes | kænt - kænt | no |
| winter - winner | wɪntə - wɪnə | yes | wɪnər - wɪnər | no |

Note that for a growing number of Americans, the contrast between the two long vowels [ɑ:] or [ɔ:] has become neutralized in many phonetic environments, so that *don* and *dawn* are homophones (i.e. words pronounced identically). This merger is rare before [r], so that it does not affect the status of *shot-short*.

4. A good starting point for answering this question is works such as:
Upton, C. et al. 2001. *The Oxford dictionary of pronunciation for current English.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Wells, J. C. 2008. *Longman pronunciation dictionary.* 3rd ed. Harlow: Longman.

The most comprehensive and up-to-date reference work in this area is C. Upton/W. Kreztschmar. 2017. *The Routledge Dictionary of Pronunciation for Current English*. New York: Routledge.

You might consult it if your university library has a copy or provides access to the digital edition.

*dispute*: variable stress: [dɪsˈpjuːt] vs. [ˈdɪspjuːt] ; the former stress pattern is preferred by BrE speakers (1988 poll)

*controversy*: R.P. preferred version: [ˈkɒntrəvɜːsi]; widespread alternative: [kənˈtrɒvəsi]; only AmE version:[ˈkɑːntrəvɝːsi]

*applicable*: BrE preferred version: [əˈplɪkəbəl], AmE preferred version [ˈæplɪkəbəl]

*address*, noun, vs. *address*, verb:
There are two possible pronunciations for the noun: [ə'dres] and ['ædres]. The verb is invariably pronounced [ə'dres].

As for the regional differences, according to the reference works, [ə'dres] is the only variant in British English, whereas both [ə'dres] and ['ædres] are used in American English. However, according to a 1993 poll conducted by Wells, about 60% of speakers of American English prefer [ə'dres], while about 40% use ['ædres] (cf. Wells 2000).

*adult*: [ˈædʌlt] vs. [əˈdʌlt] (The latter is preferred by speakers of AmE - poll preference 1993)

*leisure*: BrE [leʒə] – AmE [liːʒər]

*data*: BrE preferred pronunciation: [ˈdeɪtə], other options: [ˈdaːtə]; AmE preferred option: [ˈdeɪɾə] but with flapped /t/, other options: [ˈdærə] (with flapped /t/)

5. *Ten bottles*:
Slow: [ten bɒtlz]
Rapid: [tembɒtlz]

Difference: in the rapid version, the alveolar nasal /n/ is assimilated to the following bilabial stop /b/ and is realised as the bilabial nasal /m/. This process is called regressive assimilation – in the sequence AB sound A becomes more similar to sound B.

*What do you want*:
Slow: [wɒt duː juː wɒnt]
Rapid: [wətʃəwɒnt]

Difference: In rapid speech, the final consonant of *what* and the two following words *do you* merge into an affricate cluster, followed by

the reduced vowel ([tʃə]).

*Smith is your boss*:
Slow : [smɪθ ɪz jɔ: bɒs]
Rapid: [smɪθs jə bɒs]

Difference: In rapid speech, the strong form of *is* /ɪz/ is contracted and reduced to the voiceless /s/ (voiceless because now the sound preceding it is voiceless). Just as in the previous example, the stressed vowel in *your* /ɔ:/ is weakened and reduced to schwa /ə/. Alternatively, assimilation could take place between *is* and *your*, yielding [ɪʒə]

6. The major **phonological** difference between R.P. and General American with regard to the pronunciation of /r/ is that in R.P., this phoneme is only pronounced when it occurs before vowels, as in *right* or *tiring*. R.P. is therefore called a non-rhotic accent. It is usually not pronounced after vowels, except in the cases of so-called "linking" and "intrusive" /r/. Linking /r/ occurs if a word ends with an *r* and is followed by a word beginning with a vowel; the /r/ is pronounced, thus linking the two words. In *far*, for example, the final consonant is not pronounced in R.P., but it is pronounced in *far away*. Intrusive /r/ is sometimes inserted if a word that ends in a non-high vowel (e.g. /ə/) is followed by a word beginning with a vowel, as in *China(r) and Japan* or *I saw(r) it*. In R.P., /r/ is **phonetically** realised as an alveolar approximant [ɹ] and sometimes as an alveolar trill [r] if it occurs between two vowels.

   In General American, /r/ is pronounced in all positions (i.e. before and after vowels; it is therefore a rhotic accent); it is realised phonetically as a retroflex approximant [ɻ], "retroflexion" being a technical term that denotes the fact that the tip of the tongue is curled back very slightly.

   In German, /r/ is produced as a voiced uvular fricative in the standard pronunciation and in many dialects.

7. OED:
   Schn: *Schnapper, schnap(p)s, schnauzer, schnebelite, schneider, schneiderian, schnitzel, schnockered, schnook, schnorrer, schnozz, schnozzle, schnurkeramik*

   Additionally in Webster's Third International Dictionary:
   *Schnell, schnoenauth, schnecke, schnitz, schnorkel*

   Shn: *Shnook* (only in Webster's Third International Dictionary)

According to the OED, *schnozzle* (pronounced [ʃnɒzl]) is a pseudo-Yiddish word, formed on the basis of the Yiddish word *shnabl* ("beak"). In fact, all words beginning with *schn-* are either originally Yiddish or German - both languages in which *schn-* is a common consonant cluster.

8. scr: *scrap, scramble, scrape, scratch, scream, …*
   spl: *split, splurge, splutter, splendid, …*
   spr: *spread, spring, spray, sprawl, sprint, …*
   str: *strangle, strap, strange, strategy, straight, street, strict, …*

   No doubt you can see a regularity emerging. The first consonant is an [s] in all cases, the third an [l] or [r]. Which class of sounds turns up in second place?

   Further syllable-initial phoneme clusters, including semi-vowels: /spj-/, smj-/, /stj-/, /spl-/, /spr-/, /str-/, /skl-/, /skr-/, /skw-/, /skj-/

   Syllable-final phoneme clusters: /ltʃ/, /ldʒ/, /rtʃ/, /rdʒ/, /ntʃ/, /ndʒ/, /ŋθ/, /lpt/, /lfθ/, /lts/, /lst/, /lkt/, /lks/ /rmθ/, /rpt/, /rps/, /rts/, /rst/, /rkt/, /mpt/, /mps/, /ndθ/, /ŋkt/, /ŋks/, /ŋkθ/, /ksθ/, /kst/

9. Mispronunciations:

   Yesterday I **w**ent to **th**e grocer'**s**. My mo**th**er ha**d** tol**d** me to buy e**ggs**, some s**a**lad and tomato ketchup. **Th**en I reali**zed th**at I ha**d** forgotten my money. I ha**d** to run b**a**ck, but my mo**th**er ha**d** already left **th**e house **wh**en I arri**ved** [...]

   **w(h)** is produced as a labio-velar approximant with lip-rounding in English, but is likely to be produced as a voiced labio-dental fricative (/v/) by German learners.

   **th** is produced as a voiced or voiceless dental fricative in English (/ð/ or /θ/). This sound does not exist in German and is likely to be replaced by a voiced or voiceless alveolar stop /d/ or /t/, as a voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ or as a voiced or voiceless alveolar fricative /z, s/.

   Voiced consonants at the end of a syllable are likely to become voiceless in a German learner's pronunciation. This is due to the fact that in German voiced plosives, fricatives and affricates become voiceless in syllable-final position, as is shown by a likely mispronunciation such as [əraɪft].

**r** is produced as an alveolar approximant in English but as a voiced uvular fricative in German.

As for the vowels, the English /æ/ sound will often be articulated as /e/ or /ɛ/ by German learners. In addition to the highlighted (bold type) difficulties, there are, of course, some additional ones. For example, learners might pronounce the diphthongs in *yesterday* (/eɪ/) and *grocer's* (/əʊ/) as long monophthongs.