

Dialect Cheat Sheet

Getting Started

Listening

Listen to the accent that you are trying to learn as much as possible. The more you listen to it, the more you will be able to hear it in your own head and copy the sounds.

Watching

As you are learning, watch yourself in the mirror as you say your lines. Look at where you are placing your mouth and jaw, feel where you are placing your tongue. Practice becoming aware of this, both when speaking in your own accent and when practicing your cockney or RP (received pronunciation)

Knowing Your 'Equipment'

It is important to know the parts of your face and throat you use to create an accent. These are typically referred to as your '**Articulators**' or '**Palates**'.

Articulators are split up into two groups; passive and active.

Passive is non moving:

Teeth

Upper gum ridge

Hard palate (roof of your mouth)

Active is moving:

Lips/cheeks

Lower jaw

Tongue

Soft palate (back of throat)

When speaking with a London accent your cheeks are held, lips are flat (corners pinched), jaw closed and soft palate is low.

When speaking with an RP accent your cheeks are a little loose, lips are pouted, jaw loose.

Try and focus on where your articulators are when speaking in your normal accent. What are your natural 'settings', what do you have to change in these settings to create a London accent?

Planet Rhotic and Planet Non-Rhotic

OK, although this a little hard to get your head around, it will really help you with creating an authentic London sound, Cockney or RP.

Rhotic, people who **always** say an R whenever it is written. (Most of the USA)

ORDER MOTHER CART HERE

Non-Rhotic will only ever say an R if there is a vowel **SOUND** spoken after it. (London, UK)

HARRY HERO BRING SACRED RIGHT

Never pronounce an R if it is followed by a consonant.

Write down the phrase Law and Order. Say this sentence in your own accent. How many R's do you say?

English change the R's to a long vowel sound, keeping our tongue still and behind our bottom teeth. Don't move your tongue at all! Try it now in an English accent. Really focus on keeping your tongue low, behind your teeth and not moving.

Write down:

Court Caught Pour Paw Sore Saw Sort Sought

In a US accent, these words all sound different as you pronounce all written R's....In the UK, these words all sound the same. Practice these differences.

Try and find examples of this in your script.

The 'silent' R

When speaking with a London or Southern English accent the following words have a silent R added to them. This is an important one to learn as it instantly gives your accent away if you do not put an R sound in them.

Past, last, mast, fast, bath, grass, cast, glass, after

But, as we have learnt from the chewing gum advert – if the word has a double t in it, the 'a' sound is kept flat and no silent R is added.

Fatter, Batter, Latter, Matter, Tatter

Key Element to Cockney Accent

NG

Dropping the NG from a word and just creating an N sound is a classic Cockney trait. To create this sound, the action of the tongue has moved from the back of the mouth to the front, resting on the back of your top teeth.

Singing, ringing, listening all become singin', ringin', listenin'

ING verb (doing word) endings can and frequently are dropped.

BUT words ending in NG such as Gong and King (nouns – people and objects), NG verbs (doing words) such as hang and bring and NG adjectives (describing words) like long and strong the NG is **NEVER** dropped.

The smiling singer was singing for the King will become:

The smilin' singer was singin' for the King.

*Don't forget your er's become an 'a' sound, so singer sounds like singa etc.

Glottal Stop

Word glottal means made in the glottis (area between the vocal folds) and word stop refers to stopping of the air flow. Sounds like a tiny cough or grunt. Open the mouth and let the tongue rest against the bottom of the teeth and make a cough sound.

The technical way to show a glottal stop when written is similar to a question mark '?' without the stop sign at the bottom. If it helps add this to the words you say in the script where the glottal stop is used.

The glottal stop is typically used to replace a T – Remember, you still go to make the 'T' sound, only you replace it with a noise in the throat. Try it with this following sentence:

Hot water bottle or when saying these words Pit Hat Cut Hot

Unlike the silent R, the rule applies if you are saying a word with a double or single T in the middle; Matter Kitten Bottle Water Butter.

Sometimes Londoners put the t back in for clarity or emphasis, so do play around with this in your script.

TH

Another key Cockney trait is to replace the TH for an F or a v sound, but be careful as this can make things hard to understand. If you are going to lose one rule for the sake of clarity and diction, this would be it. But do still try it.

Arthur = Arfur

Thirty thousand feathers = Firty Fousand Feavers

With = Wiv

King Arthur had a bath with thirty thousand feathers in it.

King (don't drop the NG as it is a noun) Ar**F**ur had a ba'**R**'f wi**V** Firty **F**ousand **F**ea**V**ers in **i**?
(Glottal stop on the t)

Texts to go with Vocal Downloads

Track 97: The first section of this track is cockney Kit list*, Arthur the Rat and then free style. The second section is how many people from London speak nowadays. You don't need to listen to the second speaker but may do so if it interests you.

Track 98: This track is RP accent. The first part is the Kit list then Arthur the Rat and lastly free style.

*The kit list was devised by phonetician JC Wells so to illuminate the different way that accents use vowels. Listen to the track for your accent:

- 1.) Just listen
- 2.) Listen again and mimic each word after you hear it.
- 3.) Listen again and mimic again, but this time listen not for what you expect to hear, but what you really hear. Pay attention to vowel shapes and sounds different to your, vowel shapes and sounds similar but not quite the same and words that have unexpected vowel shapes and sounds.

KIT List

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| 1. KIT | 13. CLOTH |
| 2. DRESS | 14. THOUGHT |
| 3. STRUT | 15. NORTH |

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 4. FOOT | 16. FORCE |
| 5. GOOSE | 17. FACE |
| 6. FLEECE | 18. GOAT |
| 7. NURSE | 19. PRICE |
| 8. TRAP | 20. CHOICE |
| 9. BATH | 21. MOUTH |
| 10. PALM | 22. NEAR |
| 11. START | 23. SQAURE |
| 12. LOT | 24. CURE |

Arthur the Rat

There was once a young rat named Arthur, who could never take the trouble to make up his mind. Whenever his friends asked him if he would like to go out with them, he would only answer, 'I don't know'. He wouldn't say 'yes' and he wouldn't say 'no' either. He could never learn to make a choice.

His aunt Helen said to him, 'No one will ever care for you if you carry on like this. You have no more mind than a blade of grass.' Arthur looked wise but said nothing.

Once rainy day, the rats heard a great noise in the loft where they lived. The pine rafters were all rotten, and at last one of the joists had given way and fallen to the ground. The walls shook and all the rats' hair stood on end with fear and horror. 'This won't do,' said the old rat who was chief, 'I'll send out scouts to search for a new home.'

Three hours later the seven scouts came back and said, 'We have found a stone house, which is just what we wanted; there is room and good food for us all. There is a kindly horse named Nelly, a cow, a calf, and a garden with an elm tree.' Just then the old rat caught sight of young Arthur. 'Are you coming with us?' he asked. 'I don't know' Arthur sighed. 'The roof may not come down just yet.' 'Well' said the old rat angrily, 'we can't wait all day for you to make up your mind; right about face! March!' And they went off.

Arthur stood and watched the other rats hurry away. The idea of an immediate decision was too much for him. 'I'll go back to my hole for a bit,' he said to himself, 'just to make up my mind.'

That night there was a great crash that shook the earth and down came the whole roof. Next day some men rode up and looked at the ruins. One of them moved a board and under it they saw a young rat lying on his side, quite dead, half in and half out of his hole.

