

English Communication Guide
for
education, science, trade and industry

Jules Hellendoorn

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Auteur: Drs. Jules Hellendoorn

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PREFACE

As a former editor and translator with Shell research laboratories and as the manager of 'Translation Bureau Scandinavia' (specialised in English, Swedish and Dutch), I have collected for more than 45 years a large number of errors frequently made in verbal and written communication by non-native English-speaking researchers, report writers and others.

This collection does not pretend to be an exhaustive study of all problems in English. Rather, it should be regarded as a remedial aid for those eager to refresh or improve their British English in both its written and verbal form.

It could be used in secondary and higher education, report writing, theses, trade, industry, lectures and speeches.

I would like to thank Alan Broad, translation manager with Shell in The Hague, for suggestions and lending a critical ear.

Jules Hellendoorn

A limerick:

$$\frac{12 + 144 + 20 + 3\sqrt{4}}{7} + (5 \times 11) = 9^2 + 0$$

Doesn't look like a limerick to you? Try this:

A dozen, a gross, and a score
Plus three times the square root of four
Divided by seven
Plus five times eleven
Is nine squared and not a bit more

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KEY TO PHONETIC SYMBOLS

Please note that the phonetic transcriptions are intended for Dutch speakers

INTRODUCTION

The conventional phonetic system has not been used because part of its symbols are not available on typewriters and word processors. In addition, readers are not generally familiar with them. The pronunciation used here is that which is most frequently heard, which does not exclude the possibility of less frequent variants.

The list is a 'translation' of the international system into a system specially developed for this book.

For guidelines concerning the pronunciation, the reader is referred to 'Verklaring Fonetische Symbolen' (Explanation of Phonetic Symbols).

Unless otherwise indicated, the stress of the words in Chapter 3 is on the first syllable.

If a syllable other than the first is stressed, this is indicated by the sign ' before the stressed syllable.

Examples: *aftuh* (mark ' not used; hence, stress on first syllable), *dih'rekt* (mark ' before *rekt*; hence, second syllable stressed).

(to) before a word means that this word is used not only as a verb, but also as another part of speech, without any change in pronunciation and stress.

As some people tend to pronounce unusual combinations of phonetic symbols in a foreign way, an attempt has been made to counter this as much as possible by using 'vowel + h' or by doubling a consonant if a vowel is checked.

Verklaring fonetische symbolen

Klinkers

Symbol	Engels voorbeeld (klank in kwestie gecursiveerd)	Opmerking
a ah*	<i>up</i>	Ligt tussen 'u' van het Nederlandse woord 'lus' en 'o' van het Nederlandse woord 'los'.
a ah*	<i>car</i>	Lange, wijd open 'a' in het Nederlandse woord 'bah'.
ä äh*	<i>can</i>	Lange, wijd open 'è' in het Nederlandse woord 'misère'.
e eh*	<i>bed</i>	Tussen de Nederlandse klanken 'e' en 'i'.
eu(r)	<i>girl</i>	Zoals de Nederlandse uitroep 'uh' (lang aanhouden); geen lipronding; 'r' tussen haakjes bij fonetisch symbool laat zien dat de klank lijkt op de 'eu' in het Nederlandse woord 'geur'. De 'r' wordt echter niet uitgesproken.
i ih*	<i>it</i>	Als de 'i' in het Nederlandse woord 'pit'.
ie	<i>free</i>	Langer dan de Nederlandse klank 'ie'.
o oh*	<i>not</i>	Lijkt op de 'a' in het Nederlandse woord 'kat'.
o oh*	<i>ball</i>	Als de 'oa' in 'voader' in veel Nederlandse streektaalen.
oe	<i>put</i>	Korte Nederlandse 'oe'.
oe	<i>rude</i>	Lange Nederlandse 'oe'.
u uh*	<i>ago</i>	Zoals de Nederlandse uitroep 'uh' (kort aanhouden!).

*De 'h' is in de transcriptie opgenomen, wanneer dit de duidelijkheid ten goede komt.

Tweeklanken

Symbol	Engels voorbeeld (klank in kwestie gecursiveerd)	Opmerking
aai	<i>dry</i>	Ongeveer als `aai` in het Nederlandse woord `kraai`.
au	<i>now</i>	Bestaat uit korte `a`, gevolgd door korte `oe`.
ee	<i>day</i>	Ongeveer als `ee` in het Nederlandse woord `nee`, gevolgd door `j`, dus `neej`.
oi	<i>boy</i>	Ongeveer als `oi` in het Nederlandse woord `hoi`.
oo	<i>no</i>	Men begint met `oo` van het Nederlandse woord `roos`, gevolgd door een soort `oe`-klank; bij de Engelse `o`-klank komt geen liprondding voor.
au(r)	<i>hour</i>	Als in het Nederlandse woord `au`, gevolgd door het Nederlandse `uh`.
e(r)	<i>care</i>	`e` van het Nederlandse woord `er` lang aanhouden; invloed van de `r` is merkbaar, hoewel de `r` zelf niet moet worden uitgesproken.
ie(r)	<i>here</i>	`ie` lang aanhouden; invloed van `r` is merkbaar, hoewel deze zelf niet wordt uitgesproken.
oe(r)	<i>poor</i>	`oe` als in het Nederlandse woord `voer`; invloed van `r` merkbaar, hoewel `r` zelf niet wordt uitgesproken.

Medeklinkers

Symbol	Engels voorbeeld (klank in kwestie gecursiveerd)	Opmerking
b	<i>ebb</i>	Aan het eind van een woord niet als 'p' uitspreken, zoals in Nederlandse woorden, bijv. 'heb'.
d	<i>did</i>	Aan het eind van een woord niet als 't' uitspreken, zoals in Nederlandse woorden, bijv. 'bed'.
g	<i>good</i>	Niet als 'k' uitspreken maar stemhebbend als in het Frans, bijv. 'garçon'.
h	<i>hard</i>	-
j	<i>yes</i>	-
k	<i>corn</i>	-
l	<i>lady</i>	-
m	<i>man</i>	-
n	<i>no</i>	-
p	<i>pan</i>	-
r	<i>river</i>	Deze klank mag niet trillen, en is noch een huig- noch een tongspits 'r'. Een van de methoden om de Engelse 'r' te leren uitspreken is: zeg 'zzzz', hef vervolgens de punt van de tong wat op, trek deze iets terug en zeg 'right'.
s	<i>cigar</i>	-

Symbol	Engels voorbeeld (klank in kwestie gecursiveerd)	Opmerking
t	<i>tin</i>	
v	<i>vast</i>	Niet als 'f' uitspreken.
w	<i>well</i>	Onderlip niet tegen de boventanden houden; lippen flink ronden, zodat men een 'oe' hoort.
z	<i>zinc</i>	Niet als 's' uitspreken.
dzj	<i>George</i>	Zoals 'tsj' in 'church', maar wel stemhebbend.
ng	<i>long</i>	Zoals 'ng' in het Nederlandse woord 'lang'.
sj	<i>short</i>	Als 'ch' in het Nederlandse woord 'machine'.
th	<i>think</i>	Tong tussen de tanden; stembanden niet laten trillen.
th	<i>the</i>	Tong tussen de tanden; stembanden laten trillen.
tsj	<i>church</i>	Als 'tsj' in het Nederlandse woord 'hatsjie'.
zj	<i>measure</i>	Als 'ch' in het Nederlandse woord 'machine'; stembanden laten trillen.
s-j	<i>suit</i>	Niet zoals 'sj' in 'short', maar de 's'en 'j' apart uitspreken
—		Teken voor verhoogde leesbaarheid.

ASK ME ANOTHER! (PITFALLS IN WRITING)

Key to symbols used:

(A) = American English

(B) = British English

(C) = Dutch

A

WRONG

- . 10 boxes à 10 pieces
- . 5 pieces à 10 pounds
- . 2 à 3 years
- . abt.
- . ± 500 people

- . this took place ± 1988
- . he had no money about him
- . there are above two hundred people in the hall
- . he was absent at the meeting
- . according to me
- . you are accustomed to do this
- . to achieve equilibrium
- . Mr X is gratefully acknowledged for his interest

- . the acoustic is amazing
- . the actual situation and not that of the past
- . ad item 1
- . A'dam and R'dam
- . you gave her a good advice

- . advices
- . it was advised to write
- . may I offer you a glass of advocate?

- . I couldn't afford to buy a new car
- . we were afraid to miss the plane
- . she's arriving on the afternoon of Monday 3 May
- . in the left-hand pocket you will find an agenda
- . aggressive
- . it is 5 years ago since my father left

- . aim of this is to
- . he did it with the aim to go
- . could you turn on the airco?
- . several aircrafts
- . Airport Luton
- . to raise alarm
- . after the divorce he will have to pay her alimentation

RIGHT

- 10 boxes of 10 pieces each
- 5 pieces at 10 pounds each
- 2 to 3 years / 2 or 3 years / 2 – 3 years
- about
- about/approx./approximately/roughly/
- some 500 people
- this took place about 1988
- he had no money on him
- there are more than/over two hundred people in the hall
- he was absent from the meeting
- in my view/I think/in my opinion
- you are accustomed to doing this
- to attain equilibrium
- the interest of Mr X is gratefully acknowledged/we are indebted to Mr X for his interest
- the acoustics are amazing
- the present/current situation and not that of the past
- re item 1
- Amsterdam and Rotterdam
- you gave her some good advice/a piece of good advice
- advice
- the advice was to write
- may I offer you a glass of egg-nog/egg-flip?
- I couldn't afford buying a new car
- we were afraid of missing the plane
- she's arriving in the afternoon of Monday, 3 May
- in the left-hand pocket you will find a diary
- aggressive
- it is 5 years since my father left/it is 5 years ago that my father left
- the aim of this is to
- He did it with the aim of going
- could you turn on the aircon?
- several aircraft
- Luton Airport
- to raise the alarm
- after the divorce he will have to pay pay her alimony

A

WRONG

- . I know all which/what he said
- . they all were delighted when they heard the news
- . you all must try to solve
- . it is not allowed to do

- . is it allowed to take photographs?

- . we have got an all-risk insurance

- . she almost fell
- . he has already been unemployed for three years
- . have you already been to Australia in your life?
- . already on my tenth birthday I knew ..
- . can you already tell me ...?
- . alright (=informal)
- . she does not like, and he does not like it also
- . we have also got no time!
- . he was also not present!

- . you also/also you
- . also strawberries/strawberries also
- . on alternative days
- . I am studying English since 1985
- . I'm beautiful, amn't I?
- . £ 55,--
- . she said she couldn't remember who she was and where she lived
- . an answer on a question
- . an antique system
- . a room full of antique
- . any of these two books is good
- . I wonder whether she has to say anything more
- . a.o.

- . cd's/MP's/the 1960's
- . I had an appendicitis
- . I would appreciate if you could.....
- . I would appreciate to receive an early reply

RIGHT

- I know all that he said
- they were all delighted when they heard the news
- you must all try to solve
- doing is not allowed/people are not allowed to do

- are you allowed to take photographs?/am I allowed to take photographs?
- we have got comprehensive insurance/all-risk policy
- she nearly fell
- he has been unemployed for three years

- have you ever been to Australia in your life?

- on my tenth birthday I already knew ..
- can you tell me ...?
- all right
- she does not like, and he does not like it either/and neither does he (like it) also, we haven't got time!
- he was not present either/neither was he present!
- you too
- strawberries too/strawberries as well
- on alternate days
- I have been studying English since 1985
- I'm beautiful, aren't I?
- £ 55
- she said she couldn't remember who she was or where she lived
- an answer to a question
- an antiquated system
- a room full of antiques
- either of these two books is good
- I wonder whether she has anything more to say
- among(st) others/among(st) other things/inter alia (=preferably not to be used)
- CDs/MPs/the 1960s
- I had appendicitis
- I would appreciate it if you could
- I would appreciate receiving an early reply

A

WRONG

- . either you or I are to work
- . there are 2000 guilders to pay
- . they are waiting now for two hours
- . we are with seven
- . expertise in areas as health and nutrition
- . Argentina
- . we have different arguments
- . I arrived at home
- . she arrived on the airport
- . he's arriving Tuesday afternoon
- . I prefer vegetables as tomatoes and lettuce
- . I use my computer as typewriter
- . how to use your webcam as camera
- . as I can remember, I did it
- . she is not as old as she looks
- . this is ascribed to negligence
- . as far as now
- . he talks as if he knows everything
- . she asked him a bottle of
- . I asked him if he was going
- . I'll go with you as long as I won't have to sing
- . he is asocial
- . (as) per 3th November
- . we shall do it as soon as he will come
- . we got our cat from the asylum
- . as usually, they arrived late
- . both in valleys as well as on mountains
- . Tom as well as George are coming
- . modernisation will ask for considerable capital expenditure
- . the letter has not been received as yet
- . they started at 1 December
- . I bought a book at fifty pence
- . I cannot buy it for such a price
- . that house was at 25 Cromwell Street
- . at his arrival in Berlin
- . the athletics was interesting to watch
- . first we did this, then we did that, and at last we ...
- . your application must reach us by 31 March at least
- . attached hereto

RIGHT

- either you or I am to work
- there is 2000 guilders to pay
- they have been waiting now for two hours
- there are seven of us
- expertise in areas such as health and nutrition
- Argentina
- we have different points of view
- I arrived home
- she arrived at the airport
- he's arriving on Tuesday afternoon
- I prefer vegetables such as tomatoes and lettuce
- I use my computer as a typewriter
- how to use your webcam as a camera
- as far as/so far as I can remember, I did it
- she is not so old as she looks
- this is attributed to negligence
- until now
- he talks as if he knew everything
- she asked him for a bottle of
- I asked him whether he was going
- I'll go with you as long as I don't have to sing
- he is antisocial
- from/as from (B)/as of (A) 3 November
- we shall do it as soon as he comes
- we got our cat from the pound/animal shelter
- as usual, they arrived late
- in valleys as well as on mountains/
both in valleys and on mountains
- Tom as well as George is coming
- modernisation will require/will take considerable capital expenditure
- the letter has not yet been received
- they started on 1 December
- I bought a book for fifty pence
- I cannot buy it at such a price
- that house was 25 Cromwell Street
on his arrival in Berlin
- the athletics were interesting to watch
- first we did this, then we did that, and finally we ...
- your application must reach us by 31 March
at the latest/not later than 31 March
- attached