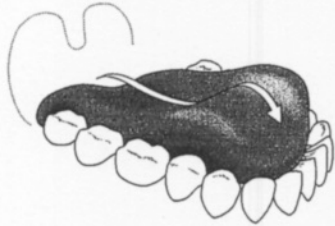
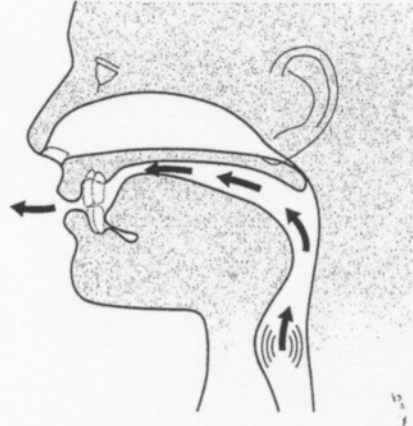


SHEEP

/i:/

/iː/



Make the sound

Vowel grid reference: 1

This vowel is long.



- 1 The jaw is slightly open.
- 2 Relax your tongue and allow the tip to rest just behind your bottom front teeth. If you look in a mirror, you should be able to see the middle of the tongue move strongly up and forward.
- 3 The sides of the tongue should push lightly against the top teeth.
- 4 The lips do not need to spread for this sound, but some speakers do spread their lips slightly, and that's okay.

When do I use this sound?



Spelling	Examples
<i>e</i>	me, he, evil
<i>ea</i>	each, pea, sea
<i>ee</i>	speed, needy
<i>ie</i>	grieve, belief
<i>ei</i>	receive
<i>i</i>	police
y on the ends of words (NB: this sound is slightly shorter)	happy, money

- ! In older pronunciation dictionaries, y on the end of a word can be written as an /ɪ/.

Now try it!

Say each of these words and sentences aloud. Then compare your pronunciation with the model on tracks 90–92.



A me she please quay leaf mean creased bead
key tea indeed seed grief believe conceive police

- B**
- 1 He seems to me to be mean, and really creepy. What does she see in him?
 - 2 She didn't believe she was speeding, and was annoyed the policeman took away her keys.
 - 3 Sweet cream and berries are very pleasing indeed at teatime.

C Sheep

Sheep are normally raised for their fleece, meat, milk and, in some regions, cheese. Sheep is the word used for both a single animal and a group of them, which can seem a little confusing to international speakers keen to distinguish between 'these sheep' and 'this sheep'.

There are many breeds of domestic sheep with the most common being a white colour. Sheep eat green leaves, grass and seeds. They eat most quickly in the morning as they digest their food later in the day. They seem quite timid and tend to flee any situation they find scary, but they are really very intelligent animals.

Am I doing something wrong?

- X** Many speakers will swap this vowel for its similar, shorter partner /ɪ/, making the same sound in the words SHEEP and KIT.
- ✓** You can correct this mistake by slightly raising the tongue and lightly pushing the front edges of the tongue against the top teeth. Remember, don't make it too short.

Watch the DVD to see and hear the difference between the two sounds.

Try these exercises:



- 1** Learning to hear the difference between the two sounds will help you to correct this problem. You can practise the contrast from the /i:/ vowel sound (see page 58) if you want. Or try some new ones:

lip-leap

lip-leap

lip-leap

pick-seed

pick-seed

pick-seed

- 2** Learning to hear the difference between the two sounds will help you to correct this problem. Compare the two sounds in a full sentence. /i:/ as in SHEEP is the long vowel shown in CAPITALS, and /ɪ/ is the shorter vowel shown in *italics*.

SpEAKing isn't as EAsy as wE think it is. WE will nEEd to practise!

Notice how the vowels in *italics* seem faster and more bouncy, whilst the CAPITAL sounds are more stressed and weightier.

Ashton & Shepherd 2012: 60, 61