

## English Pronunciation – The Letter 'A'

English vowels have different pronunciations, depending on the surrounding consonants. For example, the letter 'a' has six possible sounds:

1. as in “bag”, “can” and “fat”
2. as in “bake”, “mate” and “lane”
3. as in “car”, “father” and “darling”
4. as in “talk”, “paw” and “fall”
5. as in “primary”, “company” and “wizard” (the schwa sound)
6. as in “any” and “many”

In a short word, the letter 'a' has a short sound:

- bat
- can
- flat
- sat
- mat
- tan

The letter 'a' followed by a double consonant also (usually) has a short sound:

- happy
- batter
- factual
- snack
- epitaph
- battle
- banner
- dagger

But, the letter 'a' followed by a consonant and an 'e' (aka silent 'e') usually has a long sound:

- cake
- tale
- late
- skate
- snake
- relate

Sometimes the pronunciation changes when we add a suffix:

grade (long sound)	-->	gradual (short sound)
nation (long sound)	-->	national (short sound)

**Exercise.** Say these words to your teacher:

- flat
- father
- paper
- mask
- scanner
- blank
- crazy
- plaster
- fake
- ladder
- avocado
- fatal

The rules of pronunciation in English have many exceptions! So, the best way to speak correctly is to remember how to pronounce every individual word!

Suggested video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8zWWp0akUU> (4 mins)