



READING WORKS

The Schwa

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What on earth is a schwa?

The easiest way to learn about the schwa is to say the following words out loud:

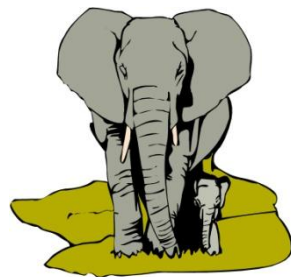
<p><i>pedal</i></p> 	<p><i>pilot</i></p> 	<p><i>artist</i></p> 
<p><i>garden</i></p> 	<p><i>circus</i></p> 	<p><i>vinyl</i></p> 

Without realising it, you have just used the schwa sound six times for the vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* and *y*. Say them again to hear how the schwa comes on the unstressed or soft part of each word. This book will now take you gently through its pages to show you how the schwa is your constant companion whenever you speak, read, think, chat to your friends, buy a bus ticket or ask Mum what's for dinner ... There it will be.

The pronunciation symbol for the schwa is easy to remember because it's an upside-down e: ə.

See more information about the schwa at the end of this book (page 21).

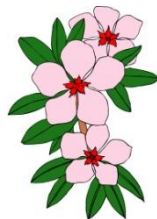
schwa a
 elephant
 giant
 petals
 Brisbane
 important
 capital
 cottage
 primary



elephant



giant



petals



Brisbane important



cottage



primary

The African elephant has larger ears than the Indian variety. How about that!

I'm afraid I need to leave the giant alone for a while so that I can talk to the media about his amazingly bad acting.

Not long ago I came across a flower with huge petals.

Brisbane is an important capital city in tropical Australia.

The husband and wife agreed to purchase a comfortable cottage a short distance away from us.

A thousand children have used our primary school library!

schwa e

basket

blanket

golden

dozens

garden

dessert

television

comedy



basket



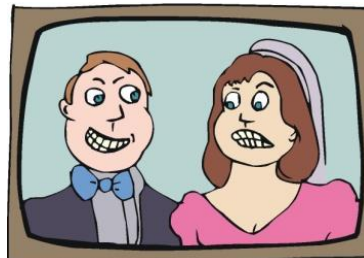
blanket



golden dozens garden



dessert



comedy

television

I'll take the lunch basket and yellow blanket to our picnic spot in the forest.

The field has dozens of magnificent golden sunflowers growing beside the * old bakery. The local scenery is enjoyed by lots of men, women and children.

In a moment we'll have the pie I've prepared for dessert. (I must remember to whip the cream.)

Every single Wednesday we watch a comedy on television.

* The word *the* is pronounced as *thee* when it precedes a word beginning with a vowel.

Hear these differences when you say the phrase *the old and the new*. (pron. *Thee old and thə new*.)

schwa i
 pencil
 president
 artist
 animal
 beautiful
 university
 uniform
 hospital



pencil



president policy



artist



animal beautiful



university



uniform hospital

Did you notice if my cousin's pencil is available for me to sign the admiral's service register?

The visiting president was directed to the receptionist's office to check our policy book.

The trapeze artist seemed to defy gravity with his incredible and well-practised routines.

I definitely think my cousin's horse is my top-favourite animal. She has a beautiful nature.

When I go to university I'd like to study Medicine if possible.

People who work in a hospital usually wear a uniform.

schwa er

mother

brother

tower

butterfly

supermarket

advertise

interview

computer



mothə sistə fathə



brothə



towə



butterfly flowə



supəmarkət



advətise



intəvju



computə

My mother and father took me to see a musical the other day.

My brother piggy-backs me because I'm smaller than he is.

The tower is a fine property to wander around for an afternoon.

Butterflies hold their wings together when they rest on a flower. (Moths leave their wings open.)

The backpacker bought water and a paper at the supermarket, then a layer cake at the bakery.

We'll advertise our airline with an interview with the manager before sending a letter to our shareholders via computer link. Did you understand all that?

schwa or
doctor

mirror

sailor

anchorage

author

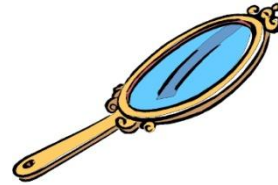
error

competitor

cursor



doktə



mirrə



sailə angkərəj



authə



errə



cursə

The doctor checked my medical chart to see if I could go home.

I love this antique mirror!

The sailor in the ship's rigging yelled out that he'd found a safe anchorage at last.

I decided to put the books of my favourite author together on the same shelf of my bookcase.

'Making an error can be the best way to learn!' said my tennis competitor sagely. (i.e. wisely)

Sometimes I lose the cursor on my computer and have to hunt around for it with my mouse.