

Lesson Twenty The Vowel Sound Schwa

1 There is another very common sound that is a lot like short <u>, or [u]. It is the sound you hear at the beginning of the word *alone*, a soft "uh" sound. It is called **schwa** (rhymes with *paw*). We will write schwa with what looks like an upside-down <e>: [ə].

Schwa sounds like the short <u>, [u], except that schwa is weaker. Short <u> always has strong stress, but schwa always has weak stress. Schwa sounds like a very weak [u].

2 Here are some words that have two vowel sounds, a short <u> and a schwa. The short <u> always has strong stress. The schwa always has weak stress. Sometimes the strong stress is on the second vowel sound, but usually it is on the first. Mark the strong stress in each word: *búttón*.

tún <u>ne</u> l	trú <u>st</u> ful	có <u>u</u> s <u>i</u> n	stó <u>m</u> ach
<u>a</u> mó <u>n</u> g	dó <u>z</u> e <u>n</u>	<u>a</u> dj <u>u</u> st	<u>o</u> nfró <u>n</u> t

3 Each weak vowel in those eight words is the sound schwa. Underline the vowel letters that spell schwa in each word. You should find five different spellings of schwa: <a>, <e>, <i>, <o>, and <u>:

4 Among those eight words, schwa is spelled <a> in above, adjust, and stomach.

5 Schwa is spelled <e> in oven and dozen.

6 Schwa is spelled <i> in cousin.

7 Schwa is spelled <o> in confront.

8 Schwa is spelled <u> in trustful.



Word Find. This Word Find contains fourteen words, all of which contain schwa. We are not telling you ahead of time what the fourteen words are, but we have printed in bold type the letters that spell the fourteen schwas. Your job is to find the fourteen words, circle them, and then use them to fill in the blanks at the bottom of the page.

3. American dictionaries have only been using the schwa symbol in their pronunciation respellings for the last few years. It is important that the students understand how their dictionaries represent the reduced sound we symbolize as [ə].