

How to pronounce the letter A in British English?

Click on the links, listen to the sentences and say what pronunciation matches each word.



Swing Landscape is a fascinating image of America after the Great Depression.



It's a strange composition similar to a collage, full of jarring colours.



The picture is an elaborate composition, which was probably difficult to elaborate.



We can distinguish a strange hat, sun-glasses, ladders. But we can't see any human.

This table shows 5 possible pronunciations, but there are more.	æ as in land	ɑ: as in ask	eɪ as in Davis	ə as in musical (in unstressed syllables only)	I as in village (in words ending in -age only)
fascinating					
image					
America					
after					
Strange					
similar					
collage					
jarring					
elaborate (adjective)					
was					
probably					
elaborate (verb)					
can					
strange					
hat					
glasses					
ladders					
can't					
human					

To be remembered...

1. Endings in -ATE have two pronunciations (both in British and American English)

[ɛɪt] pour les verbes : 'alternate, as'sociate [ə 'sɒʃɪ ɛɪt], 'delegate, el'laborate, 'estimate, le'gitimate, 'decorate, dis'criminate, generate, 'moderate...

[ət] pour les noms et adjectifs : 'alternate, an as'sociate [ə 'sɒʃɪ ət], a 'delegate, el'laborate, an 'estimate, le'gitimate, a 'candidate, a cer'tificate, 'chocolate, the 'climate, de'generate, 'delicate, 'desperate, effeminate, 'moderate, passionate...

2. Endings in -AGE are pronounced [ɪ] (both in British and American English)

a'dvantage, 'beverage (boisson), 'carriage, 'cottage, dis'parage (dénigrer), 'garbage (ordure), 'heritage, 'hostage, 'imagage, 'language, 'marriage ['mæ rɪdʒ], 'manage, per'centage, 'sausage, 'village...

Exceptions : sabotage [ɑ:ʒ], collage ['kɒlɑ:ʒ], garage ['gæ rɑ:ʒ], massage ['mæ sɑ:ʒ]

3. Sequences -ANGE- et -ASTE- are pronounced [eɪ] (both British and American English)

change, range, strange, 'danger, angel, Assange / waste, 'toothpaste, taste, chaste, haste.

4. The letter A is pronounced [ɑ:] before a mute L (both in British and American English)

almond ['ɑ: mɒnd], balm [bɑ:m] (onction), calf [kɑ:f] (mollet ou veau), calm [kɑ:m], half [hɑ:f], palm.

5. The letter A is pronounced [ɑ:] before a mute R (in British English only): army, harmony, far, Mars...

6. Sequences AN+consonant ou AS+consonant are pronounced [ɑ:] (in British English only*)

[ɑ:] with AN+consonant	[ɑ:] with AS+consonant	[ɑ:] in other cases
ad'vant <u>age</u> , ad'vanc <u>e</u> , Ale'xander, 'answ <u>er</u> , a <u>un</u> t, 'avalanch <u>e</u> , br <u>an</u> ch, can't, chanc <u>e</u> , danc <u>e</u> , de'm <u>an</u> d, e'xasperat <u>e</u> , fast, 'fasten, Franc <u>e</u> , gl <u>an</u> ce, gl <u>ass</u> , gr <u>an</u> t, 'Glasg <u>ow</u> , Lanc <u>e</u> , plant, sl <u>an</u> t, tr <u>an</u> ce.	ask, 'bask <u>e</u> t, 'bast <u>ard</u> , blast, brass, cast, 'cast <u>le</u> , clasp, class, contr <u>ast</u> , di'sast <u>er</u> , grass, last, mask, mast, 'mast <u>er</u> , nast <u>y</u> , pass, past, 'plaster, 'raspb <u>er</u> ry, task, vast.	after, ba'n <u>al</u> , bath, 'craftsman, drama, 'draughtsman ['drɑ:fts mən], 'fat <u>h</u> er, photogr <u>aph</u> , 'lag <u>er</u> , pat <u>h</u> , raft, rat <u>h</u> er, staff, vase,

*except father and lager which are also pronounced [ɑ:] in American English, all these words are pronounced with æ in American English.