

Phonotactic-rule assignment

1. Give two examples of phonotactic rules in English. I want two **rules**, not examples of words that violate a phonotactic rule. *Use examples other than those that were used in class. Please do not use examples of sound combinations that do not occur because they are either unpronounceable or very nearly unpronounceable; e.g., “words do not begin with [gb].”* There are many examples of sound combinations that are easily pronounceable but which do not occur in English. Two examples are given below:

English words cannot begin with [sv].

English words cannot end with [ɛ].

Notes:

1. **Letters are irrelevant.** Phonotactic rules specify permissible and impermissible combinations of speech sounds (or phonemes), not letters. Any answer using characters such as ‘q’, ‘c’, and ‘x’ has to be wrong. These are letters in English orthography but they are not phonetic symbols (at least not in English). *Spelling is irrelevant to all sound-pattern rules and it always will be.*
2. **The assignment needs to be turned in.** I’ll tell you when it’s due. The assignment will be graded pass/fail. If a good-faith effort has been made, you’ll have a chance to fix any errors and resubmit, but **just one chance**. Hand-written assignments are fine, but I need to be able to read the thing. This is sometimes a problem.
3. **Case matters.** If you are using an upper case phonetic symbol [G, F, N, L, ...], it is guaranteed to be wrong.
4. **Phonetic symbol font:** If you want to type the assignment, you’ll need to install a phonetic symbol font. I would recommend installing these fonts even if you don’t have an immediate need. The fonts may come in handy.
 - a. Go to my web page for 2040 (<http://homepages.wmich.edu/~hillenbr/204.html>).
 - b. Go almost all the way to the bottom. For Windows users, click the ‘Phonetic font installer’. Mac users need to look at the notes just below this.

The notes below are from an earlier semester in which I got quite a few messed up assignments. Please look these notes over.

Notes

1. The most common problem by far was not following the instructions. I asked for two phonotactic **rules**, not examples of words that violate a phonotactic rule. For example, I got quite a few assignments consisting simply of:

[mb]

[sv]

A list like that is not a rule.

2. Come up with an example of your own rather than one that was used in class.
3. A significant number of students are still confusing letters and speech sounds, letters and phonetic symbols. Once again, letters and spelling are entirely irrelevant to ***all*** sound-pattern rules.
4. **Case:** We still have quite a few students using upper-case phonetic symbols: [P] is not the same as [p], [T] is not the same as [t] ... You really have to stop doing this immediately.
5. The word *English* is a proper noun. **Stop writing it as 'english'**. The same is true of *Spanish, French, Japanese, Latin Roman*, etc.