



*The 'schwa'  
vowel sound*

## The “uh” sound in English (a ‘schwa’)

How do you pronounce the word “invalid”?

- In – v – **a** – lid      {**a** as in **cat**} = *not valid*
  - In – v – **uh** – lid      {**a** as in **Nottingham**}
- = *a weak or disabled person due to illness or injury*

It’s usually a short vowel sound as in “**a**ttack”.

It occurs in unstressed syllables.

It is uncommon in single syllable words.

## Some examples of the ‘Schwa’

- |                     |               |            |
|---------------------|---------------|------------|
| • Table             | • Pterodactyl | • Vulture  |
| • Manchester        | • Pedalling   | • Balloon  |
| • Permit (to allow) | • America     | • Problem  |
| • China             | • Carrot      | • Family   |
| • Wollaton          | • Garden      | • Bottom   |
| • Tomato            | • Lincoln     | • Support  |
| • Permanent         | • Singapore   | • Analysis |

## Spot the "schwa" (1)

allot pollen combust adapt scandal model

victim tablet vessel nickel ribbon affix

tunnel random pigment wisdom magnet dragon

## Spot the "schwa" (2)

planet attach husband scalpel pilgrim fossil

problem connect adult select gravel canal

insist hectic tonsil attic album happen

# *Triple vowel sounds*

## There are a few triple-vowel sounds

Add the 'schwa' ('uh') sound after a double vowel sound  
... for example:

**Hour** "ow" sound followed by "uh"

**Choir** "igh" sound followed by "uh"

**Visual** "ure" sound followed by "uh"

But mostly there's a pause between the double vowel sound and the next vowel:

**Lower** "oh" sound , then a pause, then "uh"

**Flower** "ow" sound , then a pause, then "uh"

**Buyer** "igh" sound , then a pause, then "uh"