

## The Long and Short 'U' Sound - Transcript

Welcome back, everyone, to another episode of "Pronunciation Clinic," the podcast series where we dive deep into the world of phonetics and explore the sounds that make up the language we speak. I'm your host, Aurelia.

In today's episode, we're going to take a closer look at two vowel sounds that are sometimes difficult for students to differentiate; the long and short U sound. I'm not including the "u" (ah) sound today because that will be compared to a different vowel sound in a separate podcast.

There are actually 4 different types of U sounds but we are going to categorise them today, as 2, to keep things simple; perhaps in a future episode, we'll dive deeper into the differences, but for the purposes of today let's keep things more basic.

### Let's start with the short u sound:

1. The spelling of /ʊ/ is sometimes 'u'; eg. 'put' /pʊt/, 'push' and 'pull'.
2. Sometimes the spelling is commonly with 'oo'; eg. 'cook' /kʊk/, 'good', 'book', 'look', 'football'.

There are exceptions as well, like 'should', 'would' and 'woman'.

Make a note that 'wood' and 'would' sound the same.

### Let's look at some example sentences with the short u sound:

- When it's cold, I like to relax on the sofa with a **good book**.
- If I **could**, I **would** travel all around the world.
- **Football** is one of the most popular sports in Spain.

### Let's focus on the long U sound:

The spelling of /u:/ is sometimes:

1. 'Ou' like 'you' or 'through'
2. 'Oo' like 'school' or 'choose' or 'too' and 'boot'
3. 'O' like 'do' or 'lose'
4. 'Ui' like 'juice' or 'suit'

5. 'U' like 'use' or 'pollution' - it often takes on a 'y' sound. This is the difference between 'moo' and 'mew'. We say 'myusic' not in the same way as in Spanish.
6. 'Ew' like 'few' or 'knew'

There are other exceptions like 'shoe' and 'blue'.

### Some example sentences:

- I have to get a **new suit** because I spilled some **juice** on it.
- There are very **few** places in the world that aren't **polluted** with contamination.
- Keep your money in your **shoe** so that you don't **lose** it.

### How are the sounds different?

In a broad sense, they aren't very different, especially when speaking quickly. However, when you compare the sounds, for instance:

We say 'football' not 'fooootball'

We say 'book' not 'boooook'

We say 'choose' not 'chUs'

We say 'school' not 'schUI'

The difference is subtle but the long U sound is nearly double in length when you break it down.

Both sounds create a small circle of the mouth, not a lot of effort is needed in the mechanics of the sound. It is the timing of the sound that is important.

Let's practise! I'm going to say some words with long and short U sounds and you decide which one it is. You can find the transcript of this podcast on the blog for you to see the answers if you'd like.

Long	Spanish	Short	Spanish
<i>zoo</i>	zoo	<i>bull</i>	toro
<i>human</i>	humano	<i>sugar</i>	azucar
<i>universe</i>	el universo	<i>wolf</i>	lobo
<i>argue</i>	discutir	<i>bully</i>	bravucon
<i>ruby</i>	rubí	<i>butcher</i>	carnicero
<i>cruise</i>	crucero	<i>wool</i>	lana
<i>wound</i>	herida	<i>full</i>	lleno
<i>broom</i>	escoba	<i>could</i>	podría
<i>tooth</i>	diente	<i>look</i>	mirar
<i>stew</i>	estofado	<i>hood</i>	capucha

So, to all our listeners, practice those short and long "u" sounds, and pay attention to how they sound whilst speaking.

That's all for today's episode of "Pronunciation Clinic." We hope you enjoyed our exploration of the long and short "u" sounds. If you have any questions or want to suggest topics for future episodes, don't hesitate to reach out to us on our website or social media.

Thanks for tuning in, and we'll catch you in the next episode. Until then, keep experimenting with the language, and remember that practice makes perfect!