

- **Free Lesson: Vowel Sound Short /a/**

Short /a/ Vowel Sound

- **File 7, Track 15 Short /a/ Words 4:25**

Short /a/: This short vowel sound exists in words such as “apple,” “ask,” and “cat.” This sound is challenging because most accented speakers are not used to such a large jaw drop and widening the mouth. It is the second largest jaw drop in American English. The short /o/ sound as in “caught” is the largest jaw drop and is presented in the Back Vowel Sounds section toward the end of this chapter. However, I personally feel that the short /a/ is the biggest mouth movement because of the large jaw drop and widening of the mouth. This sound requires a big mouth movement, and many accented speakers sometimes will doubt they are doing it correctly. My clients comment on how surprised they are by the big mouth movement for this sound. If the sound accuracy is not correct, check your degree of jaw drop and width. This new sound will definitely feel strange and require practice.

Mouth: This sound requires a significant jaw drop and wide mouth position.

Lips: Rounded and relaxed, not puckered.

Resonance: This sound is produced in the front of your mouth cavity.

Spelling: The spelling for this sound is fairly consistent in the language. There are always exceptions, such as in the word “laugh.”

Common Accented Behavior: If the mouth is not low or wide enough, short /a/ will only approximate the sound. For southern regional American speakers, when the mouth is not opened wide enough, there can be nasal resonance. For both foreign and regional speakers, this sound requires a lot of practice to get used to the correct mouth position.

Short /a/ in the Initial Position of Words

At After Apple Actress As Asking Adjective And An App

Short /a/ in the Middle Position

Dance Flat Has Had Have Happy Gallon Chance Rather Mad

Sentence Practice with All Short /a/ Possibilities

- **File 7, Track 16 Short /a/ Sentences 6:01**

Be aware of the speech stairs strategy for good range of motion with your mouth.

Elizabeth Peterson M.A.,CCC-SLP Excerpt from Accent Reduction 101: Speaking English Closer to the American Cultural and Business Style. 4th Edition 2026

1. An apple a day can keep the germs away.
2. That fat cat sat on the bed all day.
3. Tell Jack to wipe his feet on the mat.
4. The rack of lamb is a popular dish tonight.
5. The actor removed his mask when the curtain came down.
6. This bar has after hours for dancing.
7. Antioxidants from fruits and vegetables fight against free radicals.
8. You can't get mad at Sally for doing her best.
9. After the movie, the audience clapped their hands.
10. Mack wants to drink a gallon of water a day.