

Pronouncing the letter B

The consonant **b** is most often realised as /b/, e.g.:

boy /bɔɪ/
grab /græb/

In addition

b can be silent, or have a zero realisation. There are two combinations in which this can occur: **bt** and **mb**.

bt is either word medial or word final, e.g.:

doubt /daʊt/
subtle /'sʌt.əl/ (US) /'sʌt.əl/

Words containing **mb** in which **b** is silent have the **mb** in word final position, except where an inflection is added, e.g.:

bomb /bɒm/
bombing /'bɒm.ɪŋ/ (US) /bɑ:m/
 (US) /'bɑ:.mɪŋ/

However, the appearance of **bt** and **mb** does not necessarily indicate a silent **b**. In the case of **mb**, the **b** is pronounced if it occurs inside a morpheme or unit of meaning. Compare:

number = arithmetical value /'nʌm.bəʳ/
 (US) /'nʌm.bɔ:/
number = comparative of *numb* /'nʌm.əʳ/
 (US) /'nʌm.ə:/

For **bt**, the **b** is not silent if part of a prefix. Compare:

subtract /səb'trækt/
subtle /'sʌt.əl/ (US) /'sʌt.əl/

b (B) bi: -'s -z

B2B ,bi:.tə'bi: (US) -tə-

B2C ,bi:.tə'si: (US) -tə-

ba beɪ -s -z

BA ,bi:'eɪ

baa ba: (US) bæ, ba: -s -z -ing -ɪŋ -ed -d

Baader-Meinhof ,ba:.dɑ'meɪn.hɒf
(US) -dɑ'meɪn.hɑ:f, -hoʊf

Baal 'beɪ.əl *Jewish pronunciation*: ba:l

BAAL ba:l

baa-lamb 'ba:.læm (US) 'ba:-, 'bæ- -s -z

Baalim 'beɪ.əlɪm *Jewish pronunciation*: 'ba:lɪm

baas master: ba:s -es -ɪz

baas (from **baa**) ba:z (US) bæz, ba:z

baaskaap 'ba:s.kæp (US) -ka:p

Ba'ath ba:θ (US) ba:θ, bæθ -ist/s -ɪst/s

Bab ba:b

baba 'ba:.ba:ɪ, -bə -s -z

Babar 'ba:.ba:ɪ (US) bə'ba:ɪ; 'bæb.a:ɪ, 'ba:.ba:ɪ

Babbage 'bæb.ɪdʒ

babbit (B) 'bæb.ɪt -s -s

babblye 'bæb.əl -es -z -ing -ɪŋ, 'bæb.ɪŋ -ed -d -er/s -əʳ/z, '-ləʳ/z (US) '-əl.əʳ/z, '-əʳ/z -ement/s -mənt/s

Babcock 'bæb.kɒk (US) -ka:k

babe beɪb -s -z

babel (B) 'beɪ.bəl (US) 'beɪ-, 'bæb.əl -s -z

Babington 'bæb.ɪŋ.tən

Babjism 'ba:.bɪ.zəm -ist/s -ɪst/s -ite -aɪt

Babi Yar ,ba:.bɪ'jɑ:ɪ (US) '-jɑ:ɪ *stress shift*; ,Babi Yar 'massacre

bakka 'ba:b.kə -s -z

baboo (B) 'ba:.bu: -s -z

baboon bə'bu:n (US) bæb'u:n, bə'bu:n -s -z

baboonery bə'bu:n.ərɪ.ɪ, bæb'u:-ies -ɪz

Babs bæbz

babu (B) 'ba:.bu: -s -z

babushka bæb'u:f.kə, bə'bu:f-, '-bu:f- -s -z

baby (B) 'beɪ.bɪ -ies -ɪz -ying -ɪ.ɪŋ -ied -ɪd 'baby boom; 'baby boomer; 'baby grand; 'baby talk; 'baby carriage; throw the baby out with the bath water

Babycham 'beɪ.bɪ.fæm

Babygro 'beɪ.bɪ.grəʊ (US) -grou -s -z

babyhood 'beɪ.bɪ.hʊd

babyish 'beɪ.bɪ.ɪʃ -ly -li -ness -nəs, -nɪs

Babylon 'bæb.ɪ.lɒn, -ə-, -lən (US) -lɑ:n

Babylonija ,bæb.ɪ'ləʊ.nɪ.ə, -ə'-(US) -'ləʊ- -an/s -ən/z

baby/sit 'beɪ.bɪ.sɪt -sitter/s -sɪt.əʳ/z (US) -sɪt.əʳ/z -sits -sɪts -sitting -,sɪt.ɪŋ (US) -sɪt.ɪŋ -sat -sæt

Bacall bə'kɑ:l (US) -'kɑ:l, -'ka:l

Bacardi bə'kɑ:ɪ (US) -'kɑ:ɪ -s -z

baccalaureate ,bæ.k.ə'lɔ:ri.ət, -ɪt (US) -'lɔ:ri.ɪ-, -ɪt -s -s

baccarat 'bæk.ə.ra:ɪ, '-ɪ- (US) ,bæk.ə'ra:ɪ, ,ba:ɪ.kə'-, ---

Bacchae 'bæk.ɪ:

bacchanal 'bæk.ə.nəl; 'bæk.ə'næl (US) ,bæk.ə'næl -s -z

bacchanalija ,bæk.ə'nei.lɪ.ə (US) -jə -an/s -ən/z

bachant 'bæk.ənt -s -s

bachante bə'kæn.tɪ, bə'kænt (US) -'kænt; -'kæn.tɪ, -'kɑ:n- -s -z, -s

bachic 'bæk.ɪk

Bacchus 'bæk.əs (US) 'bæk.əs, 'ba:ɪ.kəs

Bacchylides bæk'ɪl.ɪ.dɪz, bə'kɪl-

baccy 'bæk.ɪ

Bach *German composer*: ba:k as *if German*: ba:x (US) ba:k *English surname*: beɪtʃ, bæfʃ

Bach *Welsh term of address*: ba:k as *if Welsh*: ba:x (US) ba:k

Bacharach 'bæk.ə.ræk

Bache beɪtʃ

backelor (B) 'bæktʃ.əl.əʳ, -ɪ.ləʳ (US) -əl.əʳ -s -z -hood -hʊd -ship -ʃɪp, Bachelor

of Arts; Bachelor of Science; 'bachelor girl

backilform bə'sɪl.ɪ.fɔ:m, bæs'ɪl- (US) bə'sɪl.ə.fɔ:m

backillary bə'sɪl.ər.ɪ, bæs'ɪl- (US) bə'sɪl-

backilljus bə'sɪl.ləs, bæs'ɪl- (US) bə'sɪl- -i -aɪ, -ɪ;

back (B) bæk -s -s -ing -ɪŋ -ed -t 'Back Bay; back door stress shift; back door 'deal, back garden; back of be'yond; back seat; back seat 'driver; back talk; back yard stress shift; backyard 'special have one's, back to the wall; put someone's back up; turn one's 'back on someone/something

backache 'bæk.eɪk -s -s

backbeat 'bæk.bi:t

backbench 'bæk'ben.tʃ -ɪz stress shift; backbench 'speaker

backbencher 'bæk'ben.tʃəʳ (US) -tʃəʳ -s -z stress shift; backbencher 'vote

backbijing 'bæk.baɪ.lɪŋ (US) -tɪŋ -ter/s -təʳ/z (US) -təʳ/z

backboard 'bæk.bɔ:d (US) -bɔ:rd -s -z

backbone 'bæk.bəʊn (US) -bəʊn -s -z

backbreaker 'bæk.breɪ.kəʳ (US) -kəʳ -s -z

backbreaking 'bæk.breɪ.kɪŋ -ly -li

backchat 'bæk.tʃæt

backcloth 'bæk.klɒθ (US) -kla:θ -cloths -klɒθs, -klɒðz (US) -kla:θs, -kla:ðz

backcomb 'bæk.kəʊm, '-ɪ-

(US) 'bæk.koʊm -s -z -ing -ɪŋ -ed -d

backdate ,bæk'ɪdeɪt (US) 'bæk.lɪdeɪt -dates -'deɪts (US) -deɪts -dating

-'deɪ.tɪŋ (US) -deɪ.tɪŋ -dated -'deɪ.tɪd (US) -deɪ.tɪd stress shift; backdated 'cheque

backdrop 'bæk.drɒp (US) -dra:p -s -s

backer 'bæk.əʳ (US) -əʳ -s -z

backfield 'bæk.fi:ld

backfill 'bæk.fɪl -s -z -ing -ɪŋ -ed -d

backfirje ,bæk'faɪəʳ, '-ɪ- (US) ,bæk'faɪəʳ, '-ɪ- -es -z -ing -ɪŋ -ed -d