

Sound Description

How to make the sound

Lip sounds

p & b In most Australian languages the b/p sound is usually just one sound, which is in between these two in English. However, in some languages of Victoria, people say a 'p' at the ends of words.

m The same as English 'm'

Tongue-tip sounds

These sounds are made with the tip of the tongue. There are two sets of tongue-tip sounds. Each set has a 'd', 'n' and 'l'.

Behind the Teeth

t or d This set of tongue-tip sounds sound like English 'n', 'l', or 'd/t'. Like the b/p sound, the 't/d' sound is usually just one sound, in between these two in English. However, in some languages people say a 't' at the ends of words.

n The same as English 'n'

l The same as English 'l'

r or rr Aboriginal languages may have two or three 'r' sounds, including one like the English 'r' sound in the word 'round', and a rolled sound like a Scottish pronunciation of 'round'.

Curled Back - Retroflex

retroflex t and d, often spelled rt or rd

This set of tongue-tip sounds is made by making a 't/d' sound but curling the tongue tip back behind the gum ridge.

retroflex n This sound is made by making an 'n' sound but curling the tongue back behind the gum ridge.

retroflex l This sound is made by making an 'l' sound but curling the tongue back behind the gum ridge

Tongue-middle sounds

These sounds are made with the middle of the tongue. There are two sets of tongue-middle sounds; tongue-middle on the back of the teeth and tongue middle on the roof of the mouth

Tongue-Middle and Teeth

t or d, often spelled th or dh

These sounds are made with the tongue-middle at the back of the teeth while making a 't/d' sound.

n often spelled nh

This sound is made with the tongue-middle at the back of the teeth while making an 'n' sound.

l often spelled lh

This sound is made with the tongue-middle at the back of the teeth while making an 'l' sound.

Tongue-Middle and Roof of Mouth

t or d, often spelled ty or dy

These sounds are made by making a 't' or 'd' sound with the middle of the tongue on the roof of the mouth.

n, often spelled ny

This sound are made by making a 'n' sound with the middle of the tongue on the roof of the mouth.

l, often spelled ly

This sound are made by making a 'l' sound with the middle of the tongue on the roof of the mouth.

Tongue back sounds

k or g

The 'k/g' sound is usually just one sound, in between these two in English. In some languages people say a 'k' at the ends of words.

ng

This sound is the same as English 'ng' as in 'singer'. In Aboriginal languages it is often found at the start of a word, which English speakers may find difficult because in English it never starts a word. Try saying sing, then ing, then just ng.