

IPA Discard: Rules

Contents: There are 90 cards (plus 15 blanks for replacements or your own invented cards), 62 of which depict a unique consonant symbol from the full set of IPA consonants, both pulmonic and non-pulmonic, excluding consonants of general North American English (the goal is to learn the “strange” sounds!). To balance the game, there are 12 special cards (see rules below) and 16 cards with repeats of some of the 62 consonants: one extra of [ɱ ʋ ɮ ɥ | ʀ ɦ ʁ] and two extra of [ç ʒ ʁ ʃ].

Setup: Shuffle the IPA cards. Pile shuffling is a good way to break up matching sequences from previous rounds of play: place the cards face down into six piles, one card per pile, rotating through the piles, alternating directions, etc., and then mix the piles together.

Choose a starting player. The starting player deals five IPA cards to each player to form their starting **hand**. The starting player then places the remaining IPA cards facedown as the **draw deck** and flips over the top card of the draw deck face up into the **discard pile**. The top card of the discard pile is the **active card**. The starting player then can take the first turn.

Gameplay: On your turn, you must either (1) discard a card from your hand face up onto the active card in the discard pile or (2) draw a new card from the draw deck into your hand. If you cannot discard, you must draw, but you may choose to draw instead of discarding, if you wish. Note that once you draw a card, your turn is over, so you cannot discard the card you just drew. You must wait until your next turn to discard. Play continues clockwise.

To discard a card, your discarded card must **match** the active card in either (1) **place** of articulation or (2) **manner** of articulation (or both). For the purposes of this game, the following are the only valid places and manners of articulation:

places	manners
bilabial	plosives
labiodental	implosives
dental	ejectives (stops and fricatives)
alveolar	clicks
retroflex	nasal stops
alveopalatal	pulmonic fricatives (incl. lateral)
palatal	trills/taps/flaps (incl. lateral)
velar	approximants (incl. lateral)
uvular	
pharyngeal	
epiglottal	

Symbol notes:

- [r] is the alveolar trill, not a cover symbol for the various pronunciations of the English rhotic
- lateral airflow is ignored, so lateral fricatives count as fricatives, the lateral flap counts as a flap, etc.
- the places of the clicks are bilabial [ɓ], dental [ɗ], alveolar [ɗ̥ ɗ̧], and palatal [ɕ]
- the ejective fricatives [fʼ] and [sʼ] do not count as fricatives, only as ejectives
- [ɱ] counts as a velar approximant and [ɥ] counts as a palatal approximant; their rounding is ignored

There are 12 special cards with the text “rəples wɪθ [A] ɔr [B]”. These are **wild cards** that can be played on any active card, regardless of the active card’s place and manner. If you play a wild card or reveal one as the first card of the game, you must select either [A] or [B]. The symbol you choose counts as the active symbol, just as if you had played or revealed the ordinary corresponding card.

For example, if the active card is [!] and you play the “rəples wɪθ [d] ɔr [x]” card on top of the [!] card and choose [x], then [x] is the new active symbol, as if you had played an ordinary [x] card.

If any player draws the last card from the draw deck, they should set aside the current active card, shuffle the remaining discard pile, and place it facedown as the refreshed draw pile, returning the current active card to its position in the newly empty discard pile.

Winning: The first player to have no cards in their hand at any point is the winner.

Tips: Some places and manners are rarer than others, so certain cards are harder to get rid of. It is a good idea to discard cards with rarer places and manners (such as [f’], [m], [ɟ], and [ŋ]) as soon as possible and hold on to more easily matched cards (fricatives especially). Counting repeats, the places and manners have the following frequencies (wild cards are ignored):

places	manners
6 bilabial	12 plosives
6 labiodental	5 implosives
7 dental	6 ejectives (stops and fricatives)
9 alveolar	6 clicks
8 retroflex	5 nasal stops
7 alveolopalatal	28 pulmonic fricatives (incl. lateral)
9 palatal	7 trills/taps/flaps (incl. lateral)
7 velar	9 approximants (incl. lateral)
7 uvular	
6 pharyngeal	
6 epiglottal	

The goal of the game is to help you learn the IPA symbols for consonants, so you should try playing without memory aids. However, the following reference chart should be kept handy to resolve disputes or to look up symbols when you need a hint. It is also recommended that you repeat the entire phonetic description of every card you play, for example say “voiceless epiglottal fricative” if you play an [ɮ] card.

	bilab	labdent	dent	alv	retr	alvpal	pal	vel	uvu	phar	epi
plosives			t̪ d̪		t̠ d̠		c ɟ		q ɢ		ʔ
implosives	ɓ			ɗ			f	ɠ	ɣ		
ejectives	p’	f’	t’	s’			c’	k’			
clicks	⊙			!			ɥ				
nasal stops		ɱ			ɳ		ɲ		ɴ		
fricatives	ɸ β			ɸ ɸ̣	ɬ ɮ	ç ʒ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	ħ ʕ
trills/taps/flaps	ʙ	ʋ		r ɽ	ɽ				ʀ		
approximants		ʋ		ɹ	ɻ ɺ		ɥ ʎ	ɥ ʎ ʟ			

Advanced suggestions:

- Require matches based on pulmonic fricative manner of articulation to also match in voicing. Thus, [h] would match [ɸ] (voiceless) but not [ɸ̥] (voiced), and [ɸ̥] would match [ɸ] (voiced) but not [ɸ̥] (voiceless).
- Use the blank cards to add in cards with only a place or a manner, such as “bilabial” or “click”. These would work just like symbol cards, except that they can only be used to match the specified place or manner.
- Use the blank cards to add in more special cards. You might have cards like “palatal skip” which can only be played on a palatal card and forces the next player to skip their turn, or “plosive reverse” which can only be played on a plosive card and reverses the direction of play. These would then have to be matched by cards of the appropriate type (i.e. any palatal could be played on top of “palatal skip”).
- Give bonuses for matching both place and manner, such as getting to play any additional card for free. Thus, playing [!] on [!] (both alveolar clicks) would allow the player to put any other card from their hand on the discard pile as the new active card, without having to match the [!] card.
- If a player attempts to change the active symbol, they must pronounce the phone represented by their attempted new active symbol. If their pronunciation is not deemed acceptable by the rest of the players, the player has to withdraw their card and either play something else or draw a card.
- Note that the IPA symbols for most general North American English consonants are not included in this game, because it is intended for somewhat more advanced students who have already learned the symbols for English and are working on learning the rest of the IPA chart. The English consonants can be added in with the blank cards, but be careful about game balance. Only [m], [n], [ŋ], [l], [j], and [w] can be added safely without other changes. To add in the glottals [ʔ], [h], and [ɦ], it is recommended that you add in two copies of each, so that there are six glottal cards in the game. To add in the other English plosives and fricatives, it is recommended that you use the first advanced suggestion above, and require plosives and pulmonic fricatives to match in voicing, so that the plosive and pulmonic fricative groups are smaller and not so easy to match. To add in the postalveolars [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], and [dʒ], it is recommended that you add in two copies of the affricates (so there are six postalveolar cards in the game), as well as one copy of one or two pairs of some non-English affricates, such as [tʂ] and [dʒ̥] or [tʃ̥] and [dʒ̥] (so there are six to eight affricate cards in the game).