

# Unit Twelve

/ʌ æ ɑ ε ɑ / tummy Tammy Tommy Betty tatami\*

\*Japanese word meaning 'mat'

In Unit Eight we looked at the differences between **æ** and **ε** (bat/bet). In this Unit, we will review and practice those sounds as well as contrasting them with three others: /ʌ ɑ ɑ/. The first of these two are common English sounds found in words such as **but** and **caught** (some English dialects will distinguish the difference between **caught** and **cot**; this workbook does not). The third one, /ɑ/, is usually found in borrowed words from other languages such as **Paris** (/pɑri/) and Japanese words like **sake** (rice wine /sake/) (English does have /ɑ/, but it is found in the diphthong /aɪ/ or /aɪ/). North American native-English speakers will often substitute other vowels for /ɑ/. For example, the Japanese city of **Yokohama** might be pronounced /yo<sup>w</sup>ko<sup>w</sup>hæmə/; **sayonara** (Japanese for 'goodbye') /sayo<sup>w</sup>nɑrə/; and **Paris** /pəriy/.

Most languages have the /ɑ/ vowel, and often a non-native speaker of English will substitute it for /æ/. So, an English learner might say the word **batter** as /batər/, but a native speaker /bætər/. This difference usually doesn't cause any problems in comprehension for the listener unless there is a confusion with another word such as **butter** /bʌtər/. In other words, a learner should realize that there might be some confusion between words such as **bat**, **but**, and **bought** if care is not taken. In the vowel chart below, the proximity of these vowels can be seen:

The Vowels of English		Front (unrounded)	Central (unrounded)	Back (rounded)
high	tense	iy beat		u <sup>w</sup> boot
	lax	ɪ bit		ʊ book
mid	tense	ey bait	ə the	o <sup>w</sup> boat
	lax	ε bet	ʌ but	ɔ bought
low		æ bat	ɑ sake (Japanese rice wine)	ɑ pot

## Exercise One: Gliding and Tongue Position

After studying the Vowel Chart above, try saying the following pairs of vowels. Try to feel your tongue position and if your mouth and lips move as you glide between the two sounds.

1. iy → æ      2. u<sup>w</sup> → ɑ      3. iy → u<sup>w</sup>      4. æ → ɑ

To make /ʌ/, curve your tongue half way up to the centre, with your jaws open. Your lips should be in a relaxed position. To make /ɑ/, your tongue should be lower than with /ʌ/, and flatter. Be careful not to put your tongue too far forward in your mouth. /ʌ/ is shorter than /ɑ/. To make /æ/, put your tongue low and pushed forward a little. Spread your lips slightly, and keep your jaw open. For /ɛ/, close your jaw while saying /æ/, and you will hear the change to /ɛ/. Try to avoid using /ɑ/ for the following exercises.

## Exercise Two: Individual words for contrast

Listen to the words below and repeat them, making sure to distinguish between the sounds. Read from left to right

- |          |       |        |        |
|----------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1. mutt  | mat   | Mott   | met    |
| 2. nut   | gnat  | not    | net    |
| 3. udder | adder | odder  | Ed     |
| 4. buck  | back  | balk   | beck   |
| 5. cut   | cat   | caught | kettle |
| 6. dud   | dad   | Dodd   | dead   |
| 7. fun   | fan   | fawn   | fender |
| 8. pun   | pan   | pawn   | pen    |

## Exercise Three: Minimal Pairs

Listen to the words below and repeat them, making sure to distinguish between the two sounds.

- |          |      |         |      |          |           |
|----------|------|---------|------|----------|-----------|
| 1. putt  | pat  | 2. pat  | pot  | 3. pot   | pet       |
| 4. suck  | sack | 5. sack | sock | 6. sock  | secretary |
| 7. wreck | ruck | 8. rock | rack | 9. wreck | rack      |

## Exercise Four: Listening—Minimal Pair Distinction

### Part One

Listen to the sentences below. Only one of the italicized words will be spoken. Circle the one word which you hear.

1. The team already had a *pecking/packing* order.
2. The group was *wandering/wondering* about the forest.
3. The *rest/rust* of the car was too much for Fred to work on.
4. The cowboy's horse was *backing/bucking* in the stall.
5. Jan had a *knock/knack* for getting good grades.

### Part Two

Listen for the missing words and write them on the lines below.

6. After the rain the canoeists saw \_\_\_\_\_ .
7. Janet put the remainder of the chocolate kisses in the \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. Jenny's son was \_\_\_\_\_ in the playground after dark.
9. Fran's \_\_\_\_\_ needed exercise.
10. Melanie's shade was provided by a \_\_\_\_\_ .

## Exercise Five: Dictation

Listen to the sentences and write them.

1. \_\_\_ Janet \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ wondered \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ offer. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ fronds \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ pattered about, \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise Six: Questions for Answers Given

In this section, you will hear 5 answers. You will not hear the questions. Listen carefully to the answer, and then record the question in the space provided on your tape by using your drill/record button.

Example: \_\_\_\_\_ ? I'm fine, thanks.  
(you record "How are you?" onto your tape BEFORE the answer.)

1. Was Ed's...
2. Is \_\_\_\_\_ wrecked?
- 3.
4. Did Dawn...
5. Were \_\_\_\_\_ cuddled?