

Unit Thirteen: /h h^w f/

hail **whale** **fail** /hεɪl/ /h^wεɪl/ /fεɪl/

Introduction

We have already studied /w/ in Unit 6 and /f/ in Unit 11. In some dialects of English, there is no distinction between /w/ and /h^w/. That is to say, both are pronounced as the voiced /w/, not the voiceless /h^w/. For example, many Canadian-English speakers don't make a difference between **wail** and **whale**. For purposes of contrast, we will use /h^w/ in this Unit to compare it to /f/ and /h/. Try **Exercise One** below to practice the difference between /w/ and /h^w/, and remember that many English speakers don't distinguish between these two sounds.

To make the /h/ sound, breathe out and let your lips and tongue assume the position of the vowel which will follow in the word. Try these words to feel the different position allowed for /h/: **heat** **hat** **hoot** **hot**

In fact, /h/ is often known as a voiceless vowel: you don't vibrate your vocal cords, but you do make an aspirated sound in the back of your throat. It is the same sound which is made when a person is cleaning glass and 'blows' warm air onto it.

To make the /h^w/ sound, just make a short /h/ and then go immediately into a /w/ .

Exercise One: Word Pairs for /w/ and /h^w/

Listen to the following words and repeat, making sure to make the distinction between the two sounds.

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| way-whey | wet-whet |
| wear-where | wield-wheeled |
| weather-whether | wile-while |
| we'll-wheel | witch-which |

Exercise Two: Word Repetition

Listen to the following words and repeat (from top to bottom).

| | | |
|------|------|---------|
| hew | few | whale |
| who | phoo | wheat |
| hunk | funk | whine |
| hall | fall | whether |
| hoe | foe | whacked |
| her | fur | whirl |

Exercise Three: Minimal Pairs

Listen to the word pairs below and repeat them, making sure to make the distinction between the two sounds.

| | | | | | |
|--------|-------|---------|--------|--------|---------|
| hew | few | whale | fail | hail | whale |
| who'll | fool | wheat | feet | heat | wheat |
| home | phone | whirred | furred | heard | whirred |
| hire | fire | white | fight | height | white |
| horse | force | whacked | fact | hacked | whacked |

Exercise Four: Minimal Pair Distinction

Part One

You will hear the sentences below, but only one of the *italicized* words will be spoken. Circle the one word which you hear.

1. Wayne wanted lots of *feet/heat/wheat* in his field this year.
2. The wonderful restaurant made Fitch *fine/whine/wine*.
3. The high-fashion designer had a great *fit/hit/wit*.
4. Driving the racing car was unpleasant, as it had a bad *feel/wheel/heel*.
5. The *whale/wail/hail/fail* could be heard everywhere.

Part Two

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

6. That man was _____ when I saw him.

7. That machine is a _____ tractor.

8. Who'd seen the _____ ?

9. Walter observed a _____ of activity.

10. Sorry about the _____ , folks.

Exercise Five: Dictation

Listen to the sentences and write them.

1. ___ Frank's _____ whine. _____

2. ___ Phil's _____ afar. _____

3. _____ Falk's _____

4. ___ Fitch's _____

5. _____ hurl _____