

COCKNEY – General Characteristics
(Adapted and used with permission from David Alan Stern's Acting With An Accent: Cockney)

For more in-depth study, see Stern's CD and booklet

GENERAL FOCUS OF TONE: High back part of tongue; muscular speech impulse

VOWEL SUBSTITUTIONS:

i becomes əi as in: *each, agree, cheat, please*

u becomes əu as in: *noon, moon, lose, gloomy*

eɪ becomes aɪ as in: *able, fateful, delay, say*

aɪ becomes ɔɪ as in: *time, awhile, right, Eliza*

oo becomes əʊ as in: *loan, oaken, ocean, cello*

ɑ becomes ɒ as in: *honest, occupied, rock, potted*

ɔ becomes ɔ̃ (very rounded) as in: *bought, pause, author, ball*

æ becomes ɒ

- before the f sound, as in: *after, half, laugh* EXCEPT: *caffeine, saffron, sapphire*
- before θ as in: *bath, pathway, wrath*, EXCEPT: *catholic, mathematics, catheter*
- before the ns sound combination, as in: *France, dance, chancellor*, EXCEPT: *fancy, cancer, romance*
- before the nt sound combination, as in: *advantage, plant, chant*, EXCEPT: *banter, fantasy, fantastic, tantalize, ranting*
- sometimes before nd sound combination words, as in: *command, demand, slander*, HOWEVER, MOST nd words do not make this change, as in: *grand, stand, land, hand*
- before the s sound, as in: *grass, glass, fast, castle*, EXCEPT: *gastric, hassle, tassel*

Drill:

At last, the commander's repast is half ready.

After the batter scored, he tripped on the cat, who was dancin'.

Ask any bashful man and accept his answer.

CONSONANTS

r dropped in final position, as in: *mother, player, tailor, brother*

“hard r” when occurring between vowels, as in: *adore it, very, sorry, more and more*

h dropped, as in: *Henry Higgins*

l becomes w when a final or medial l follows a vowel, but is not itself followed by a vowel sound, as in: *cruel, hill, build, thrill, conceal*

Drill:

Steel workers always feel the need for real friends.

He was still able to conceal the state of his health.

Gail fell down the hill.

The snail crawled over the garden wall.

t can become glottal, ʔ as in:

Drill:

A glottal stop happens in a lot of unlikely dialects.

It's a pity that a little water is not more greatly valued.

What is it about city settlers?

Get out of the battle with a better position.

“ing” endings dropped to n, as in:

Drill:

I'm singing and dancing in the rain.

We're coming and going all at once.

He was walking around carrying the baby.

She was hurrying home, trying to avoid running.

from Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore*:

A British Tar is a soaring soul,

As free as a mountain bird,

His energetic fist

Should be ready to resist

A dictatorial word.

And his lip should curl,

His cheeks should flame,

And his brow should furl,

His bosom should heave

*And his heart should glow,
And his fist be ever ready
For a knock-down blow.*

From G & S's *Pirates of Penzance*:

*When a felon's not engaged in his employment,
Or maturing his felonious little plans,
His capacity for innocent enjoyment,
Is just as great as any honest man's.*

*Our feelings we with difficulty smother,
When constabulary duty's to be done,
Ah, take one consideration with another,
A policeman's lot is not an happy one.*