

# The American R Sounds


What you need to know

Askademic

A large, bold, black letter 'R' is centered on a red rectangular background. The 'R' is a simple, sans-serif font. The red background is a solid, vibrant color and is slightly tilted to the right. In the top left corner of the overall image, there is a red circular shape with a white wavy line extending from it. In the bottom right corner, there is a white wavy line.



# What this lesson will cover

- A walkthrough of the different types of American R sounds
  - How the American R is different from the Arabic R
  - Pronunciation challenges
  - Practice techniques
- 

# The 3 R sounds

Strong R (consonant) – Run

Soft R (vowel) – Car

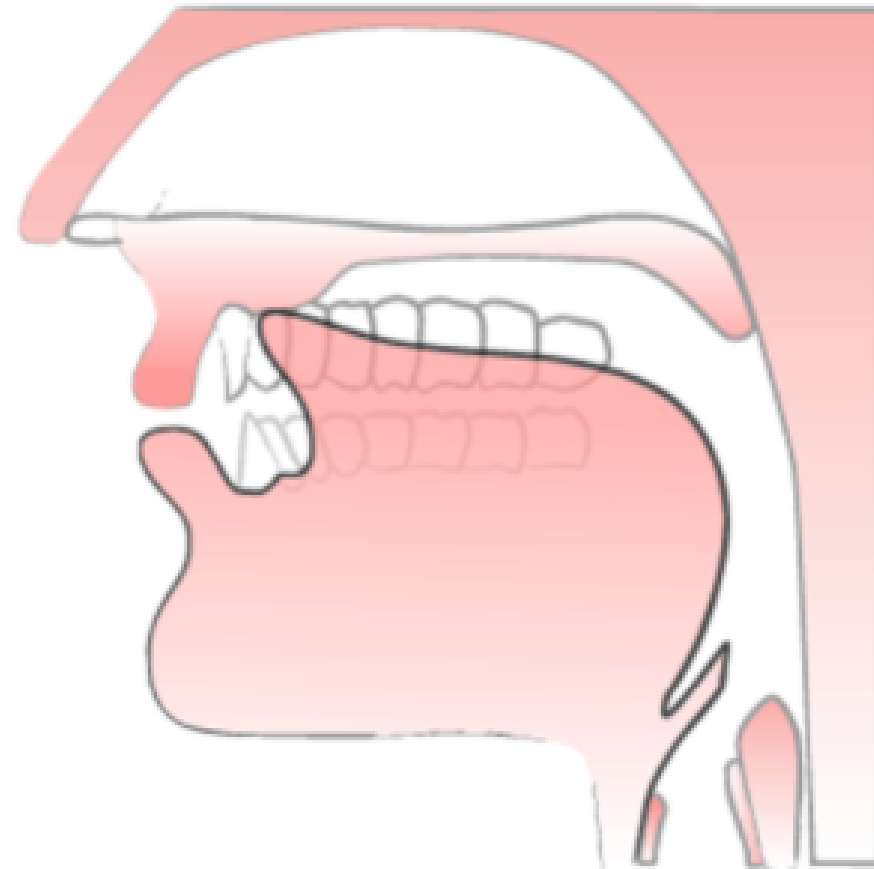
/ɜ:/ as in 'stir'

## How to pronounce the R

- Tongue pointing up and forward, but does NOT touch the roof of your mouth
- Sides of your tongue pushing out against your upper teeth
- Lips are rounded, similar to the W sound

Front /R/

vs. American R  
(Back /r/)



tongue is forward  
front of tongue lifts, taps



tongue is pulled back  
sides of tongue brace against teeth  
tongue is tight



# Pronunciation challenges

Native Arabic speakers have the tendency to naturally make their trilled R



# When to use the strong R



# **When to use the strong R**

*At the beginning of a word or before a vowel*







# When to use the strong R

*At the beginning of a word or before a vowel*

*Examples:*

*Red - Run - Write*

*Bread - Sorry - Alright*





# Sentences

I **wrote** the **response** for the **readers**.

My **primary** **reason** for **renting** the **room** was  
because I can **run** to **work**.

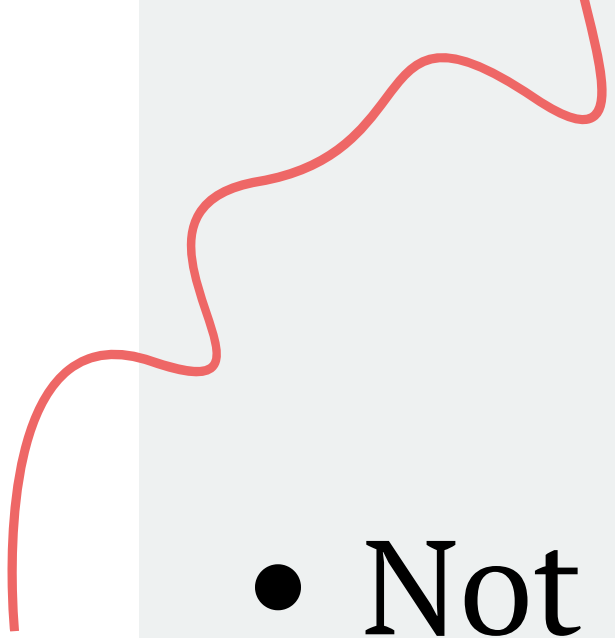
I'm **ready** to **present** my **research**.





# Common Pronunciation Mistakes



- 
- Not rounding your lips enough
  - Touching the roof of your mouth with your tongue
  - Not making contact with the sides of the teeth and your tongue



# When to use the soft R

# When to use the soft R

*At the end of a word or after a vowel*

*The trick for the soft R?*

*90% vowel, 10% R*

*This means we can round our lips a little less*



# Let's compare

Run - Car

Read - Care

Wrote - Fear



# **More words with soft R**

Here - Store - Air

Tour - Boring - Short



# Phrases

This **party** is **boring**.

It's **over there** in the **chair**.

Let's have a **beer** and play **cards**.



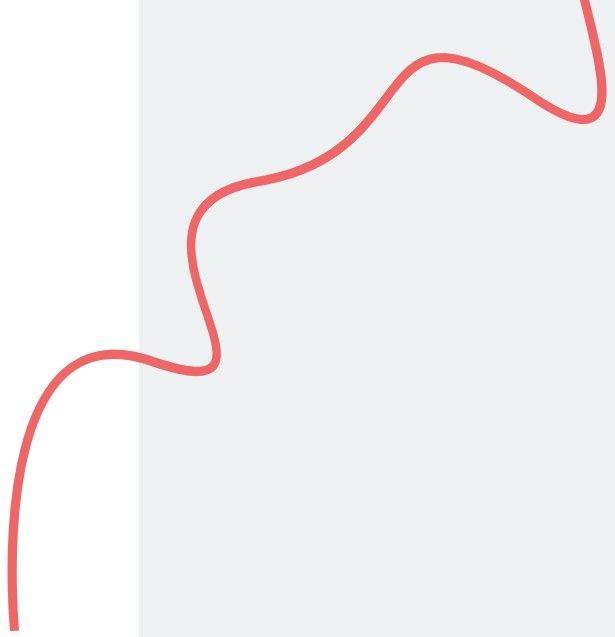
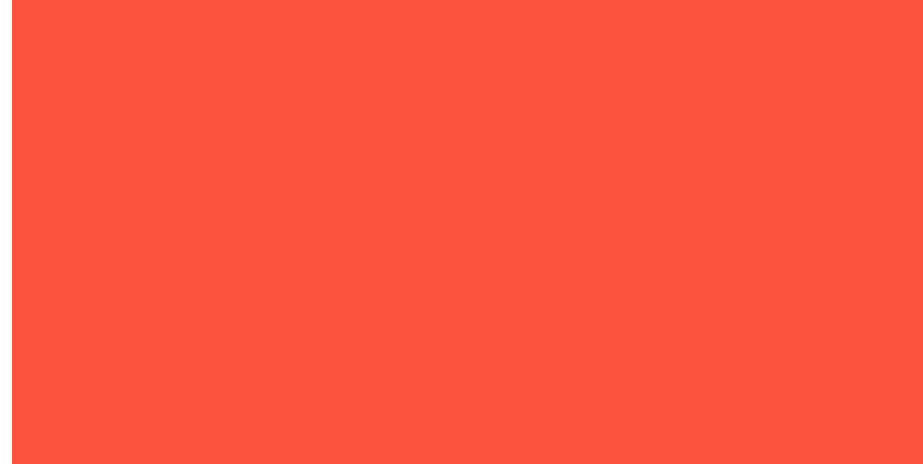


# The "stir" vowel sound



This sound is the same as the strong R.

In this case, the R appears to be a soft R, but we really transition straight from one consonant sound to the next with a quick schwa sound in the middle.



Bird

Work

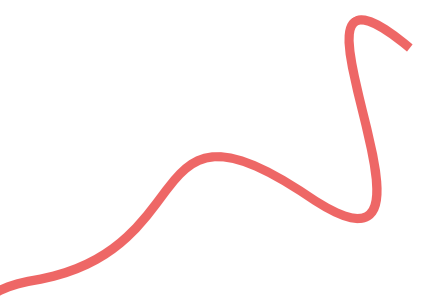
River

Heard

World

Stir

# Examples





# Sentences



Can you **stir** the food?

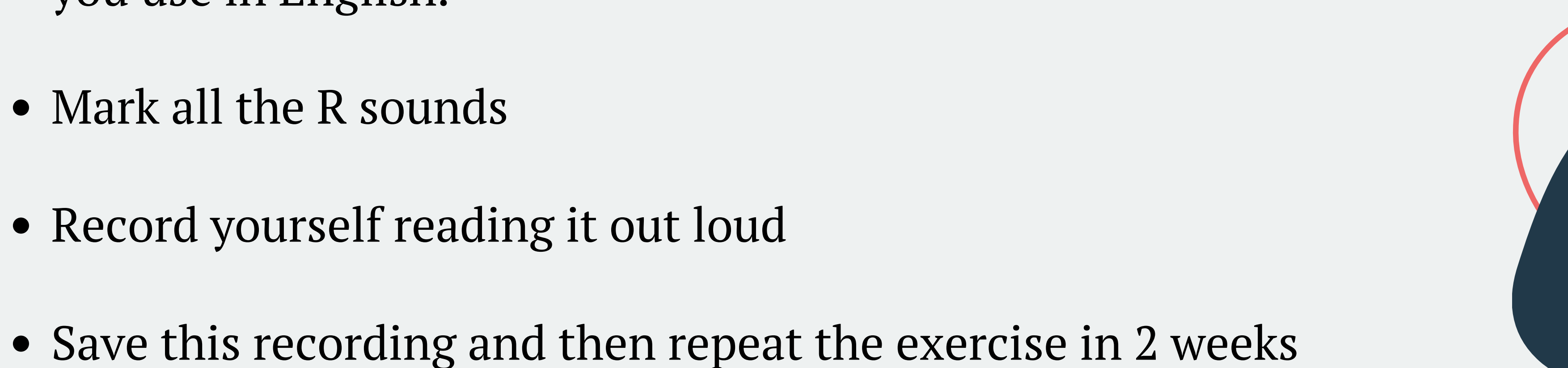
His **world** was his **work**.

The **farmer heard** a lot of **birds** by his **river**.



# Challenge time!

To keep practicing your speech analysis skills:

- Choose a paragraph from something that you read often. This could be the newspaper, a type of book you often read, or work materials that you use in English.
  - Mark all the R sounds
  - Record yourself reading it out loud
  - Save this recording and then repeat the exercise in 2 weeks
- 

# Tips for R Practice

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1 | Remember to round your lips                                  |  |  |
| 2 | Hold out your R sound when practicing to build muscle memory |  |  |
| 3 | Use a straw to find your tongue positioning                  |  |  |
| 4 | Practice with a pen  |  |  |



Practice makes **perfect**