

How do I pronounce this?

The Official Trivia Mafia Pronunciation Guide for Words We Use a Lot

Thank you for caring about saying words right. This document contains words we use frequently (as opposed to one-off words) that we've heard hosts have a hard time with. Have an idea that should be added? [Email Senior Editor Ruby!](#)

Entries are in the following format:

word (link goes to an audio pronunciation): pronunciation guide /International Phonetic Alphabet guide/, (additional explanation of pronunciation) definition

Common words

[archipelago](#): ark-ih-PEL-ah-go /,ɑrkɪ'pɛlə,ɡoʊ/, a chain of islands

[archipelagic](#): ark-ih-puh-LAH-djik /ɑrkɪpə'lædʒɪk/, of or relating to a chain of islands

[biopic](#): BY-oh-pik /'baɪ.əʊ.pɪk/, (like “bio” and “pic” put together), a biographical film

[Wiktionary](#) says by-AP-ik is “nonstandard” but listed in some places; you go ahead and say it that way if you want

[colonel](#): KER-nul /'kɜːnəl/, a military rank below a general

[couture](#): kuh-TOOR /ku'tʊər/, fashion designers and the high-end clothes they make

[coxswain](#): KOK-sihn /'kɒk sən / (like “cocks sin” if you said it fast), the athlete who steers a racing shell

[titular](#): TICH-uh-ler /'tɪtʃələr/ or TIT-yuh-ler /'tɪtyələr/, of or relating to the title of something, usually the character after whom a work is named (“the titular character”)

[posthumous](#): PAWS-chew-mus /'pɒs.tʃʊ.məs/, after death, usually referring to a work published after the author's death

Names

Janelle Monáe: juh-ENL moh-NAY, /dʒəˈneɪ moʊˈneɪ/, singer songwriter of “The Electric Lady” and “Dirty Computer”

Kamala Harris: KAH-muh-luh, /kɑ:mələ/ (like “COMMA-lah” – her stepkids call her “mom-ala” if that helps you) the 49th Vice President of the United States

Kamala Khan: kuh-MAH-luh, /kəˈmɑ:lə/ Ms. Marvel from the Marvel comics/MCU

Keanu Reeves: kee-AH-noo reevz, /keɪˈɑ:nu: rɪvs/ Neo from “The Matrix,” John Wick from “John Wick,” et cetera

Madeleine L’Engle: LEHNG-gul, /ˈlɛŋɡəl/, author of “A Wrinkle in Time”

Marquis de Sade: mar-KEE duh SAHD, /marki də sad/, French writer famous for his libertine sexuality (see also Sade, the singer)

Megan Rapinoe: ruh-PEE-noh /rəˈpi:nəʊ/, Captain of the US National Women’s Soccer Team

Nicki (Onika) Minaj: NIH-kee (oh-NEE-kah) min-AZH, /ˈnɪki: ɒˈni:kə mɪˈnɑ:ʒ/, Rapper, songwriter, Queen Radio host

Nguyen: WIN /wɪn/ or NOO-yen /nu:ˈjɛn/ (you can read more about different pronunciations [here](#); please feel free to say it correctly if your Vietnamese is good!) The most common surname in Vietnam

Sade: SHAH-day [ʃɑ:ˈdeɪ], a Nigerian-British singer, a smooth operator (see also Marquis de Sade)

Sia: SEE-uh [si:ə] an Australian singer songwriter

W.E.B. DuBois: double you ee bee doo-BOIS, /dju:ˈbɔɪs/ Sociologist, founder of the NAACP

Brands/Institutions

Atari: uh-TAR-ee, /əˈtɑ:ri/ (middle syllable rhymes with “star”), a video game company

Carnegie: kar-NEH-ghee, /kɑ:rˈnɛgi/ is closer to the original Scots pronunciation and preferred by **Carnegie Corporation and Carnegie Mellon**; **many English-speakers** say KAR-nuh-ghee /ˈkɑ:rnɛgi/; you can’t really go wrong with either. (Carnegie Hall more frequently uses the second pronunciation, but seriously, either is fine.) The Carnegie family were industrialists, lots of things are named after them, Andrew is probably the most famous one.

Duquesne University: doo-KAIN /du:'keɪn/ a school in Pittsburgh

Dufresne (as in Andy Dufresne from "Shawshank Redemption" follows the same pattern; doo-FRAIN)

Jägermeister: YAY-ger-my-ster /'jeɪgərmaɪstər/, a German aperitif

Reuters: ROY-terz /'rɔɪtərz/, a news agency

Places

Côte d'Ivoire: KOHT dih VWAR, /,kɔʊt di'vwaɪ/, the French name of the Ivory Coast

Mojave: moh-HAH-vee, /mɒʃ'hɑ:vi/, a people from the Southwestern United States and the places named after them

Sioux City: SOO /su:/ A city in Iowa

Same pronunciation for Sioux Falls, South Dakota

All Caps – Do I Say The Letters??

ABBA: AB-uh, not ay bee bee ay, '70s Swedish pop band

A\$AP Rocky: AY-sap, not ay ess ay pee, rapper

H.E.R.: HER, not aitch ee ar, current guitarist

GZA: GIZ-uh, not gee zee ay

NAACP: en double-ay see pee, not NAK-puh

RZA: RIZ-uh, not ar zee ay

Sports Leagues: say the letters in general! MLB = em el bee, NBA = en bee ay, NCAA = en see double-ay or en see ay ay, etc

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