

Script 1

Something I'm sure you all understand clearly is that the letter C in today's English has two very different pronunciations. It can be pronounced like a K, as in the words *car*, *can*, or *coal*. It can also be pronounced like an S, as in the words *cent*, *circle*, or *cease*. What is maybe not so clear is why the letter C has two different pronunciations. So let's look at the history and development of the letter c to understand how these two very different pronunciations for one letter came to be.

Precursors of the letters C existed as the third letter of a number of early alphabets. Look at the letters from these early alphabets, from early Semitic, from Phoenician, and from early Greek. These letters were the predecessors of the letter c. They were each the third letter in their respective alphabets, and they were all formed with a shorter and a longer line meeting at a sharp angle. Now, in each of these languages, the letter was pronounced with a hard G sound, as in *go* or *get*. This letter did not have an S or K sound.

As languages developed, this early C was used for both the G sound as in *go* and *get* and the K sound as in *kite* or *kid*. The angular letter seen here from early Latin had two sounds, a K sound and a G sound. By the classical Latin period, these two sounds were differentiated. The early Latin angular letter was rounded to create the letter C of today; this letter was pronounced with a K sound. A new letter was created by adding a line to the C. This new letter had a G sound. Thus, in classical Latin, the letter C was pronounced only with a K sound.

OK, the final change was the addition of the S sound to the letter C. This happened because of the French influence on English. You see, there was a major influence of French on the English language with the victory of the Normans over the Saxons in Britain in 1066. Now, because of this French influence, the letter C took on the S sound in addition to the k sound that it already had.

Uh, let's look at this chart of the pronunciation of the letter C. At this point in the English language, the letter C has a K sound when it precedes the vowels A, O, U, or a consonant such as L. The letter C generally has an s sound in front of the vowels E, I, and Y.

OK now, it's important to make sure, that all the pieces of the puzzle are in the right place. There were four stages in the development of the pronunciation of the third letter of the alphabet. In the beginning, the third letter of the alphabet was pronounced with a G sound. Then, in early Latin, the third letter had two sounds, G and K. In later Latin, a new letter was created for the G sound, and the letter C had only a K sound. Finally, because of the French influence on English, the letter C also took on an S sound.

KEY to Listening 1

1. According to the professor the letter C in present day English can be pronounced in 3 different ways. (F)
2. In several ancient alphabets the letter C was the third in succession. (T)
3. Graphically this letter looked different from the letter we know today. (T)
4. The letter C acquired its current shape in late Latin period. (F)
5. The letter G originated from the letter C. (T)
6. In classical Latin the letter C was pronounced as 2 different sounds. (F)
7. The letter C took on the S sound due to the French influence. (T)
8. The letter C has a K sound only when it comes before the vowels A, O, U. (F)
9. This letter had 4 main stages of historical development. (T)
10. The word CEPHALIZATION is pronounced with the sound S in present day English. (T)

Script 2

Receptionist: Good afternoon, Grandview Hotel.

Guest: Yes, hello. I, uhm... I'm planning to spend a few days in your city next week and I'd like to, uh, make a reservation.

R: Of course! When did you want to stay here?

G: Next week, Wednesday night and Thursday night.

R: So, that's February 13th and 14th, right?

G: Yes, that's right.

R: And how many guests will there be?

G: Just me. So, do you have a room available?

R: Yes we do. I'll just need to take some of your information. May I have your name, please?

G: Oh, right, yes. It's Roxanne Wilson. W-I-L-S-O-N.

R: Thank you, miss Wilson. And may I have your credit card number?

G: It's 233-618-9872.

R: 9872. Got it. Alright, miss Wilson. I have your reservation confirmed.

R: Can I help you with anything else?

G: Well, yes. I was wondering, since I'll have a couple of free hours Friday morning before I leave, is there anything interesting to see close to the hotel?

R: Do you like museums? The Art Museum's very close by.

G: I love museums! But, not art. Can't stand it! I've heard your city has a very interesting science museum, though.

R: Yes, but unfortunately it's closed in the winter. Are you interested in shopping?

G: Sure! I love shopping! Are there any good stores nearby?

- R: Yes, we have a large shopping mall just two bus stops away. You take the bus to Monument Square, and it's just half a block from there. Just look for the post office, and you'll see the mall entrance next to it.
- G: Fabulous! What about lunch? I hear your city has good restaurants.
- R: Yes, there's a nice restaurant very near! It's just across the street from the park.
- G: Sounds good! I can have lunch, then walk in the park afterwards! I have one more question: what's the best way to get to the hotel from the airport?
- R: Subway is the fastest, of course. There are buses, but they're quite slow.
- G: I'll be arriving quite late, after 10 pm! I thought I might have to take a taxi.
- R: The subway runs until midnight.
- G: Oh, good! Then I'll do that. Will there be someone at the hotel front desk that late?
- R: Oh yes. The front desk stays open until two.

KEY to Listening 2

1. February
2. 2 (two)
3. 1
4. Wilson
- 5-7. C F G (in any order)
8. C
9. A
10. C