



Sounds Interesting: Observations on English and General Phonetics

By J. C. Wells



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How do you pronounce omega, tortoise and sloth, and why? Do chartered and chartered sound the same? How do people pronounce the names Charon, Punjab and Sexwale? In this engaging book, John Wells, a world-renowned phonetician and phonologist, explores these questions and others. Each chapter consists of carefully selected entries from Wells' acclaimed phonetics blog, on which he regularly posted on a range of current and widely researched topics such as pronunciation, teaching, intonation, spelling, and accents. Based on sound scholarship and full of fascinating facts about the pronunciation of Welsh, Swedish, Czech, Zulu, Icelandic and other languages, this book will appeal to scholars and students in phonetics and phonology, as well as general readers wanting to know more about language. Anyone interested in why a poster in Antigua invited cruise ship visitors to enjoy a game of porker, or what hymns can tell us about pronunciation, should read this book.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This delightful collection of fascinating anecdotes, keen observations about the ways things are pronounced, and erudite reflections from his long and distinguished career as a phonetician will ensure that John Wells continues to be an inspiration not just for established linguists and students of phonetics but also for a wide range of readers with a general interest in language."

David Deterding, Universiti Brunei Darussalam

"There is absolutely nothing having to do with the speech sounds of English - and languages in general - that John Wells cannot write about brilliantly, persuasively, knowledgeable and entertainingly. Sounds Interesting truly is extraordinarily interesting."

Peter Trudgill, University of Agder

"We are lucky to have the changes in the English language presented and described here by such a great scholar."

Liu Sen, East China Normal University

"This book is written clearly, in a style that should be approachable to both specialists and non-specialist[s] ... I would recommend [it] to anyone looking for clear and engaging discussion regarding English pronunciation, linguistics, phonetics, spelling, intonation and a wide variety of other topics."

Cory Holland, The Linguist List

"This book of lively observations generates enthusiasm in any reader, and it teaches you to listen more carefully to people's pronunciation habits and enjoy and appreciate pronunciation variation and oddities more than ever."

Dick Smakman, English Studies

About the Author

John C. Wells is Emeritus Professor of Phonetics at University College London and a Fellow of the British Academy. His interests centre on the phonetic and phonological description of languages but also extend to lexicography and language teaching.

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