IPA practice

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The following exercises are for practice, and to prepare for the midterm exam. You should work on this in pairs and groups, write out your work on a separate piece of paper, and later, show me you work so I can give you credit, as this counts as an assignment (exercises, homework and other assignments on the syllabus). Your grade will be based on effort, not necessarily accuracy.

1 IPA to English

Translate the following into English.

1. 'sodonli ðə 'watərz ə'raʊnd ðəm 'sbləli sweld m bræd 'sɜːrkəz, ðən 'kwɪklɪ ərp'hɪvɪd, əz ðə 'sændwɛz' slædŋ frəm ðə səb marəd ə'sbɜːrg, 'swɪftli ræziŋ tə ðə 'sɜːrfəz. ðə ləu 'ræmləŋ 'sænd wəz hərd, ə streŋd həm, ənd ðən ðəl hɛld ðə breaθs. ðəz ðə ðə'drægləd wɪð 'trenɪŋ rʊps, ənd hər 'pʊnз, ənd lændiz, ə vəst frɔm ðə 'læŋwəuz, bət ðə 'blɪklɪ frəm ðə sɪ. 'frəʊdəd ɪn ðə 'drʊpɪŋ veɪl ov mɪst, ɪt hærvd fɔr ə 'məʊənt m ðə rɪmbəʊd ɜ, ənd ðən 'sædnlɪ fɪr bæk intu ðə dɪp. ʃəft 'θərti fɪt 'ʌpərdz, ðə 'watərz fɪəʃt fɔr ən 'ɪmstənt læk hɪps əv 'fɔʊntənz, ðən sɛŋk m ə ' Jáuwər əv flɛks, lɪvɪŋ ə 'sɜːrkəl ə ɪsfrəs kɹɪmd læk nu mɪlk ə 'raʊnd ðə ˈmærbl træŋk ov ðə weɪl.

Adapted from Moby Dick by Herman Melville, chapter 135.

Notes:

1 In some varieties of NAE, words ending in <-en>/en/, especially monosyllabic words, sound like /in/.
2 The progressive morpheme <-ing> as in making is often transcribed as /ɪŋ/; though it sounds more like /ɪŋ/; it is actually an allophone of /i/ that is between /i/ and /ɪ/. For this class, you can use /ɪŋ/ or /ɪŋ/, as the former would be more clear for your students.
3 The syllable /əɾ/ can also be transcribed as /ɜ/ (especially in British), or sometimes as /əɾ/.
4 Slash marks / / indicate phonemic or phonological transcriptions; angled brackets <> indicate orthography; and square brackets [] indicate phonetic transcriptions. For this class, it is not necessary to do detailed, phonetic-level transcriptions.

2 English to IPA

Transcribe the following in IPA.

1. The North Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger, when a traveler came along wrapped in a warm cloak. They agreed that the one who first succeeded in making the traveler take his cloak off should be considered stronger than the other. Then the North Wind blew as hard as he could, but the more he blew the more closely did the traveler fold his cloak around him; and at last the North Wind gave up the attempt. Then the Sun shined out warmly, and immediately the traveler took off his cloak. And so the North Wind was obliged to confess that the Sun was the stronger of the two.

(an Aesop fable)
2. Santa Claus lives in the Laughing Valley, where there stands the big, rambling castle in which his toys are manufactured. His workers live with him, and every one is as busy as can be from one year's end to another. It is called the Laughing Valley because everything there is happy. The brook chuckles to itself as it leaps rollicking between its green banks; the wind whistles merrily in the trees; the sunbeams dance lightly over the soft grass, and the violets and wild flowers look smilingly up from their green nests. To laugh one needs to be happy; to be happy one needs to be content. And throughout the Laughing Valley of Santa Claus contentment reigns supreme.

One would think that our good old Santa Claus, who devotes his days to making children happy, would have no enemies on all the earth; and, as a matter of fact, for a long period of time he encountered nothing but love wherever he might go. But the Daemons who live in the mountain caves grew to hate Santa Claus very much, and all for the simple reason that he made children happy.

(Frank L. Baum, The Kidnapped Santa Claus)

Notes:

1. For /i/ as in beat, you can also use /ɪ/. For /u/ as in elude, you can also use /ʌ/. For /ɔ/, you can use /ou/.

2. Some variation is possible in your transcriptions for the low mid/back vowel, /a/ ~ /ɑ/ ~ /ɔ/, depending on variations within varieties of North American English (NAE), and variations between NAE and British English (BE). Thus, it may be okay if your transcription of these sounds varies a bit from the answer key.

3. Some function words can vary (free variation, or depending on speech rate and emphasis), e.g., as = /æz/ ~ /ɑz/; to = /tu/ ~ /tʊ/ ~ /to/.

4. For /æ/, you can use /æ/. You can use /y/ for the glide /j/ as in yellow.

5. For your students, you can transcribe syllable consonants with a schwa instead; e.g., /l = /ɔl/, n = /ɒn/.

6. You do not have to transcribe stressed syllables with the vertical bars (e.g., /jɛbʊ/); you can simply use accent marks, e.g., /jɛb/.

7. In the Americanized system used by some American teachers, the following symbols are used (which I think are not very clear or helpful).
/ɪ/ for /i/
/u/ for /u/
/ɔ/ for /ɔ/

And for the true diphthongs:
/əʊ/ for /ɒ/;
/æ/ for /æ/;
/ɔ/ for /ɔ/.

8. Remember that the schwa /ə/ occurs in unstressed syllables, while its counterpart /ʌ/ occurs in stressed syllables. In syllables ending in -er, it is /ær/ in unstressed syllables (e.g., ker), and /ɔr/ in stressed syllables (e.g., hurt) - we usually do not use /ær/. Some books use other symbols for /ɔr/ and /ɜr/, which you do not need to use. For /ɔ/, some use /ɔ/ or /ɜ/; for /ɔr/, some use /ɔ ə/ or /ɜ/.

9. Be sure to use the correct symbols for the lax vowels such as /ɑ/ /ɑ/ and /u/ (some older books use /ʌ/ for /u/). The longer vowel /ɔ/ is British, not NAE, and this results from r-dropping and compensatory vowel lengthening in BE, e.g., north = NAE /nɔθ/, BE /nɔθ/.