

DURATION OF ENGLISH SINGLE CONSONANTS AND CLUSTERS

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1. Single consonants and clusters are shortest in intervocalic position. Next in duration are initial consonants, and longest are final consonants and clusters.

2. In initial two member clusters the first component is longer than the second, except for /l/ and /r/, which tend to be longer than the first consonant in the cluster.

In intervocalic two member clusters the duration of the components is dependent on the word accent, a consonant in a stressed syllable always being the longest one.

In final clusters the last consonant is the longest, in clusters sonants followed by a voiced consonant are approximately twice as long as sonants followed by voiceless consonants.

3. In initial three member clusters the duration of the consonants decreases from the first to the third component according to a ratio 3:2:1.

In intervocalic clusters the second component (an obstruent) is the shortest; the duration of the first and third components depends on the word accent, the consonant belonging to the stressed syllable being the longest.

In final three member clusters the second consonant is the shortest and the last one is the longest. If the final cluster consists of voiced consonants, it is at least twice as long as the corresponding cluster with voiceless consonants.