

CONSONANTS

Aspirated medial / t^h /

In Neutral American, when /t/ occurs in an unstressed syllable between two vowel sounds, it is actually said as a very light 'd', represented phonetically by /t̬/, for example:

butter = / 'bʌt̬ə / or budder

In Classical American, the light 'd' sound is not spoken, a lightly aspirated /t^h/ is used instead. This is sometimes called a 'flutter t'. The tip of the tongue touches the gum ridge and voiceless 't' is released on a puff of breath.

The small phonetic marking /^h/ written in one's script can provide a useful reminder to speak a flutter 't'.

AUDIO 53 ► lightly aspirated medial /t^h/

Methinks nobody should be sad but^h I.

(King John: IV, i, 13)

It^h is the law, not^h I, condemn your brother.

(Measure for Measure: II, ii, 80)

Yes, I hear people talk of that^h; but^h it^h is utt^herly impossible.

(Ibsen: The Master Builder)

Highlight the vowel in the stressed syllable, and pronounce the 'flutter t' as part of the unstressed syllable. If the /t/ seems too sharp or intrusive, try releasing it on a little more breath.

butter: → 'bʌt^hə

litter: → 'lɪt^hə

batter: → 'bæt^hə

bitter: → 'bɪt^hə

better: → 'bet^hə

bit of: → 'bɪt^h əv

WORDS with lightly aspirated medial /t^h/

'witt ^h y	'pit ^h y	'kitt ^h y	'cit ^h y
'fatt ^h er	'ditt ^h y	a'bilt ^h y	'snott ^h y
'sanit ^h y	'litt ^h er	'migh ^h t	'writ ^h er
'prett ^h y	'vanit ^h y	'cheat ^h er	'fitt ^h ing
'ligh ^h ing	'seat ^h ing	ad'mitt ^h ing	'sweet ^h est

PHRASES with lightly aspirated medial /t^h/

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| 1. hitt ^h ing the lott ^h ery | 6. what ^h it ^h is |
| 2. that ^h everyone did | 7. stop hat ^h ing |
| 3. what ^h Alan thought | 8. whit ^h e as snow |
| 4. what ^h ever you want | 9. wait ^h ing outside |
| 5. vot ^h ing his conscience | 10. a little ¹ fight ^h ing |

SENTENCES with lightly aspirated medial /t^h/

- Your shirt is dirty.
- Where are you sitting?
- She's my favorite aunt.
- Katie isn't permitted to go.
- We'll meet in the waiting room.
- You danced a fine minuet on stage.
- She's waiting until there's available seating.
- My flashlight isn't working, it needs batteries.
- The bitter chocolate cookies need a sugar coating.
- People with no sense of gratitude have bad attitudes.
- I bet everyone will wait in line to get into the audition.
- I'll have a little bit of butter on my lettuce and tomatoes.
- How can you think of fighting on a beautiful autumn day?

¹ Syllabic endings spelled with a 't' as in beetle, little, bottle, are pronounced /t/ in Classical American, not /d/ as in Neutral American.

14. He tried to get out of it without¹ hurting anyone's feelings.
 15. The meeting was cancelled when the heating system broke.

Eat^hing Keat^hing's

Sweet^hie, it^h is bett^her to butt^her your biscuit^h and toast^h
 With the very best butt^her from Keat^hing's.
 If you cheat^h and use butt^her from Kat^hie's or Kroft's,
 You will never be sure what you're eat^hing.

Betty Botta bought some butter,
 "But," said she, "this butter's bitter.
 If I put it in my batter,
 It will make my batter bitter.
 But a bit of better butter
 Will make my bitter batter better."
 So she bought a bit of butter
 Better than the bitter butter
 And it made her bitter batter better.
 So, 'twas better Betty Botta
 Bought a bit of better butter.

(Anonymous)

See the patter trio by Gilbert and Sullivan on page 400 for additional 'flutter t' practice.

CLASSICAL AMERICAN TEXT lightly aspirated medial /t^h/. Mark the following for 'flutter t' and speak out loud.

It^h isn't money that matt^hers.

(Chekhov: The Seagull)

Arm me audacity from head to foot.

(Cymbeline: I, vi, 19)

That is very nice and dutiful of him.

(Ibsen: Ghosts)

¹ Use voiced 'th' /ð/ when speaking 'with' in all forms (without, within, etc.).

Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

(A Midsummer Night's Dream: III, ii, 44)

When we are both accoutered like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two.

(The Merchant of Venice: III, iv, 63)

She was brought up in a milieu of equality and women's rights,
and all that.

(Strindberg: Miss Julie)

I'm through with ghosted letters, borrowed wit,
And acting roles I know I just don't fit!

(Rostand: Cyrano de Bergerac)

It's carnival week, and the servants are so excited about it.

(Chekhov: Three Sisters)

I am so used to frequent flattery,
That, being alone, I now flatter myself.

(Webster: The White Devil)

I pray you let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials and the things of fame.

(Twelfth Night: III, iii, 22)

She better would have fitted me or Clarence;
But in your bride you bury brotherhood.

(3 Henry VI: IV, i, 54)

Saturday, the twenty-sixth—while supper waited—
M'sieur de Bergerac died. Assassinated.

(Rostand: Cyrano de Bergerac)

Well, wait a moment, Mrs. Alving. Let us look into the matter
a little more closely.

(Ibsen: Ghosts)

Leave it all behind! Tell me you love me, or else—what am I, what?

(Strindberg: Miss Julie)

But you know someone ought to write a play on how we poor
teachers live, and get it acted.

(Chekhov: The Seagull)

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