/er/ pronunciation

Welcome to Broken English, the quick fix for your pronunciation on Fluent American. My name is Geoff. Today, we’re looking at the /er/ sound. Before we begin, some standard notes: to really study pronunciation, please repeat the sounds with me as you listen. I even suggest recording yourself so you can see how you sound, if you are able. Alright, let’s get started.

To make the /er/ sound, your mouth does not need to be open. The key is the middle of your tongue. It will be high and push up towards the top of your mouth. The tip of your tongue is low; so is the back of your tongue.

There are many ways to write this sound.

Firstly, you can use an *ER*: “dinner”, “serve”, and “river”.

An *IR*: “dirt”, “birth”, and “shirt”.

A *UR:* “surgeon”, “blur”, and “surf”.

A *URE:* “sure”, “lure”, and “culture”.

An *EAR:* “earn”, “searched”, “learn”.

Finally, an *OR:* “work”, “doctor”, and “worse”.

Again, those words: “dinner”, “serve”, “river”, “dirt”, “birth”, “shirt”, “surgeon”, “blur”, “surf”, “sure”, “lure”, “culture”, “earn”, “searched”, “learn”, “work”, “doctor”, and “worse”.

Here are a few word pairs with this sound:

earned work/ search surgeons/ dirty shirt/ dinner’s served/ learn to surf/ certain culture/ first surfer

Now, some practice sentences:

I learned about the first culture I searched.

The river is dirty and the surf is worse.

I gave firm words to the doctor before the surgery.

Dinner was served when the waiter came to work.

Alright, that’s it for today! Again, record yourself. See if you can pronounce the words like me, and we’ll practice again next time. Thanks for listening!