Sample write-up of final project: The Sounds of ɪŋlɪʃ

1. Linguistic biography

The speaker, a male, was born in 1954 in Detroit, Michigan to parents whose sole language was ɪŋlɪʃ. Three years later, his family moved to Toronto, Ontario, where he remaining in an ɪŋlɪʃ-speaking community. Subsequently, the family returned to Detroit, then moved to Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania (the hometown of Joe Namath), and then finally to Wyoming, when the speaker was 14 years old. When the speaker was 10, the family lived for a year in Mexico, where the speaker learned Spanish. He subsequently studied this language extensively in high school, and he retains a good working knowledge of the language, although his ability to converse is now limited. He also studied German for two years in college, but only obtained reading proficiency.

2. The Sounds of ɪŋlɪʃ

a. Consonants

The consonants of ɪŋlɪʃ are listed in Table 1 below:

	Bilab	Lab-Den	Den	Alv	Post-Alv	Pal	Vel	Glot
Stops & Affricates								
Voiced	b			d	dʒ		g	
Voiceless	p			t	tʃ		k	ʔ
Fricatives								
Voiced		v	ð	z	ʒ			
Voiceless		f	θ	s	ʃ			h
Nasals	m			n			ŋ	
Lateral				l				
Rhotic					ɹ			
Glides	w*					j	w*	

Table 1. The consonants of ɪŋlɪʃ.

* [w] has both a bilabial and a velar constriction.

b. Consonantal variants

The contrast in voicing in the stops is realized differently in different contexts. In word-initial position, both series of stops are voiceless, /p, t, k/ are aspirated, and /b, d, g/ are unaspirated. Intervocalically, /p, t, k/ are voiceless unaspirated unless the following vowel is stressed, in which case, they are aspirated, and /b, d, g/ are voiced. At the ends of words and syllables, both kinds of stops are typically unreleased, although an audible release occurs when the word is emphasized. When it occurs, the release of /p, t, k/ is voiceless, while that of /b, d, g/ is voiced. The preceding vowels differ in duration, being noticeably longer before /b, d, g/ than /p, t, k/.

The words *bill, pill, dill, till, Jill, chill, gill,* and *kill* demonstrate that these eight stops and affricates contrast with one another word-initially. Word-finally, they contrast in *rib, rip, rid, writ, ridge, rich, rig,* and *rick*. Intervocalically: *rebel, repel, medallion, metallic, major, nature, again,* and *akin.*

The voicing contrast in fricatives is realized as the presence or absence of voicing during the constriction, except syllable- and word-finally, where both sets of fricatives are voiceless. The preceding vowels still differ in duration, just as they do before stops, being longer before /v, ð, z, ʒ/ than /f, θ, s, ʃ/. The voiced post-alveolar fricative only occurs syllable-finally, e.g. at the end of the second syllable in *garage*, but all the other fricatives can occur in both the beginnings and ends of syllables, e.g. *vat, fat, then, thin, zoo, sue, shoe; groove, roof, smooth, truth, raise, race,* and *crush.*

The voiceless glottal fricative /h/ is pronounced as the voiceless counterpart of any following vowel or glide, and may be produced with local friction when the following vowel or glide has a close constriction. The glottal fricative only occurs syllable-initially. The voiceless glottal stop /ʔ/ only occurs at the beginnings of vowel–initial words when they are pronounced with emphasis, occasionally between vowels in hiatus, and before syllabic [n̩] in words such *mountain* [maʊʔn̩].

Both alveolar stops are realized as taps or flaps, [ɾ] or [ɻ], when they occur inside a word before an unstressed vowel, e.g. in *grader* and *greater*.

The lateral [l] is pronounced with a velar constriction in all contexts, and without the tongue tip contacting the alveolar ridge when syllable-final, e.g. in *eel*.

There is little audible variation in the pronunciations of the nasals, rhotic, or glides as a function of where they occur in a word or syllable. The velar nasal only occurs syllable-finally. The bilabial and alveolar nasals, as well as the lateral, and the rhotic may all be syllabic, e.g. in *bottom* [m̩], *button* [n̩], *bottle* [l̩], and *butter* [ɻ̩] (also transcribable as [ə˞]), but only the rhotic is syllabic in stressed syllables, e.g. in *bird*.

c. Vowels

Table 2 shows the11 monophthongs and 4 diphthongs that contrast in stressed syllables in ɪŋlɪʃ; in addition there are at least two vowels in unstressed syllables, [i̱, ə].

Front		Central	Back	
Tense	Lax		Tense	Lax/Short
i	ɪ		u	ʊ
e	ɛ	ʌ	o	ɔ
æ		a		

Diphthongs: aɪ, aʊ, ɔɪ, ju

Table 2. Stressed monophthongs and diphthongs of ɪŋlɪʃ.

d. Vocalic variants

The following words illustrate the contrasts between the monophthongs and diphthongs: *seal* /i/*, sill* /ɪ/*, sale* /e/*, sell* /ɛ/*, Sal* /æ/*, pool* /u/*, pull* /ʊ/*, pole* /o/*, pall* /ɔ/*, dull* /ʌ/*.* The vowel /a/ does occur before /l/ in this speaker's speech, but the words *hot* /a/*, hut* /ʌ/*,* and *hat* /æ/, show that it contrasts with nearby vowels.

The lax vowels are much shorter than their tense counterparts, as well as lower and more centralized. The mid tense vowels /e, o/ are often but not always pronounced as diphthongs, [ɛɪ, ɔʊ]. The other tense vowels have a much weaker tendency to diphthongize toward the upper corners of the vowel space, while the lax vowels diphthongize toward its center.

The non-low back vowels are pronounced with lip rounding, which is more extreme in higher than lower vowels; similarly, the non-low front vowels are pronounced with the lips spread, which is also more extreme in higher vowels.

The mid lax vowel /ɔ/ is often pronounced quite low, as [ɒ], but remains rounded, i.e. it is never pronounced [ɑ].

Before /ɹ/, the tense:lax distinction collapses, and only the lax vowels are found,e.g. in *beer* [ɪ]*, bear* [ɛ]*, lure* [ʊ]*,* and *lore* [ɔ]. The diphthongs /aɪ, aʊ, ɔɪ/ are pronounced unchanged before the rhotic, but the nucleus in /ju/ also becomes lax, as in *cure* [kjʊɹ].

The first vocalic element is the nucleus in the diphthongs /aɪ, aʊ, ɔɪ/, while the second is the nucleus in /ju/.

3. Organized word list

Here you would list the word you collected in an organized way. The organization should facilitate your discussion of the sounds above. For example, you could list all the words illustrate initial contrasts together.