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| **What is an allophone?** |
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| **Definition** | |
|  | An allophone is a phonetic variant of a [phoneme](http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAPhoneme.htm) in a particular language. |

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| **Examples (English)** | |
|  | * [p] and [pH] are allophones of the phoneme /p/. * [t] and [tH] are allophones of the phoneme /t/. |

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| **Examples (Spanish)** | |
|  | * [b] and [B] are allophones of the phoneme /b/. * [d] and [D] are allophones of the phoneme /d/. |

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| WHAT IS COMPLEMENTARY DISTRIBUTION? | | | | |
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| **Definition** | | | |
|  | Complementary distribution is the mutually exclusive relationship between two [phonetically similar segments](http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAPhoneticallySimilarSegm.htm). It exists when one segment occurs in an [environment](http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAnEnvironment.htm) where the other segment never occurs. | | |

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|  | A [phoneme](http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAPhoneme.htm) is made up of certain features that are basic to it. When this phoneme occurs in certain phonetic environments, one or more of its features may undergo changes caused by those environments. |

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| **Examples (English)** | |
|  | The phones [p] and [pH] are in complementary distribution. [pH] occurs syllable-initially in a stressed syllable, but [p] never does, as demonstrated here: |
|  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Phonetic representation** | **Gloss** | **Underlying representation** | | pHEpp«&u0279; | 'pepper' | /pEpp«&u0279;/ | | spIn | 'spin' | /spIn/ | |

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| **Examples: Cashinahua (Brazil/Peru)** | |
|  | The phones [b] and [B] are in complementary distribution. [b] occurs only at the beginning of words, while [B] occurs between vowels, as demonstrated here: |
|  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Phonetic representation** | **Gloss** | **Underlying representation** | | baka | ‘fish’ | /baka/ | | taBa | ‘washboard’ | /taba/ | |
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