THIRD EDITION

Mastering the American Accent

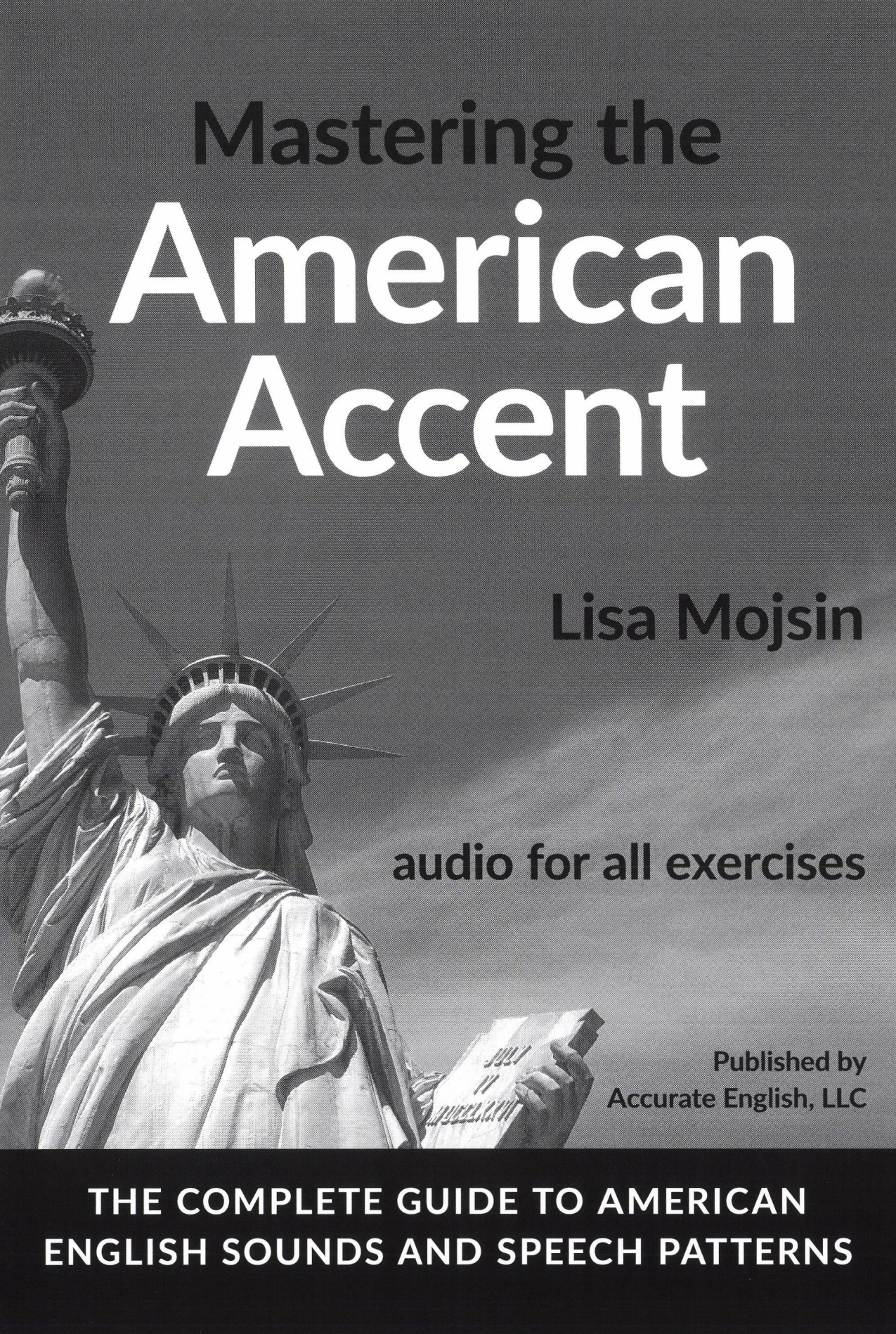
Lisa Mojsin



audio for all exercises

Published by
Accurate English LLC

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO AMERICAN ENGLISH SOUNDS AND SPEECH PATTERNS


Mastering the
American
Accent
Lisa Mojsin
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Accurate English, LLC
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Register on the website to access the audio recordings for all exercises in this book.

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About the Third Edition

The first edition of this book was published in 2009 and included physical CDs. Since then, thousands of students around the world have improved their accents, and the book has been used in English as a Foreign Language classrooms worldwide. Beginning with the second edition and continuing in this third edition, the audio materials are provided as digital audio files, making them easier to access and use.

This third edition introduces several new features designed to help learners develop more natural-sounding speech and greater overall fluency. One of the most important additions is the inclusion of common everyday idioms and expressions used by native speakers. These expressions are often overlooked in traditional English instruction, yet using them naturally can make speech sound more authentic and fluent.

These exercises appear throughout the book as "Fluency Boost" lessons. After practicing a specific pronunciation topic, you apply what you have learned by practicing common expressions that include the target sound. This approach strengthens accurate pronunciation while helping you speak more naturally, like a native speaker, in real-life conversations.

This edition also features a significantly expanded Chapter 9, "Memorizing the Exceptions." This chapter now covers several essential topics, including differences between British and American pronunciation of common words, commonly confused words, unusual spelling patterns that challenge learners of English everywhere, and a greatly expanded section on homophones.

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Introduction

This book is designed for non-native speakers of English who want to develop a natural-sounding American accent. It will help you communicate with greater clarity and confidence in professional settings, social interactions, and everyday situations.

As you work through the exercises, you will gain a deeper understanding of how American English is spoken and produced. With consistent practice, you can build new speaking habits and improve the accuracy and ease of your speech.

Each exercise includes audio so you can listen, repeat, and practice until your speech sounds more natural and consistent.

How Do I Access the Audio Files?

To access the audio files that accompany this book, go to:

AccurateEnglish.com/book

Or scan the QR code below.

Which American Accent Will This Book Teach Me?

This book teaches the standard American accent, sometimes called General American or Broadcaster English. It is the neutral, non-regional speech commonly heard on major news networks and in professional settings throughout the United States.

Speakers of this accent are not associated with a particular region, and their speech is widely understood across the country. Because of its clarity and broad acceptance, it is the most practical accent for communication in the US, from the East to the Midwest to the West.

How Should I Practice?

Listen to the audio material regularly. Each word and sentence is spoken clearly, followed by time for you to repeat aloud. Use these pauses to practice speaking, not just listening.

Recording yourself as you practice can be very helpful. When you listen to your own speech, you can compare your pronunciation to the speakers on the audio and notice areas that need adjustment.

Then apply what you learn in real communication. Try using new sounds and speech patterns in everyday conversations, when reading aloud, or when speaking at work. Consistent use helps new pronunciation habits become more natural.

Throughout the book, you will also find study tips from the author and from students who have successfully improved their American accent.

How Much Should I Practice?

Consistency matters more than long study sessions. Practicing twenty to thirty minutes each day is more effective than studying for several hours once a week.

Regular daily practice helps your mouth muscles develop new movement patterns, making pronunciation easier and more natural over time.

Progress Faster with a Professional Accent Evaluation

A professional accent evaluation will help you use this book more efficiently and make faster progress. At Accurate English, we have been helping professionals speak with a clear American accent for over 25 years. Our detailed accent evaluations are designed to identify your specific pronunciation patterns and create a clear, focused plan for improvement.

After you submit recordings of your speech, one of our experienced accent coaches will carefully analyze your accent. A personalized curriculum will then be created for you. It will outline which sections of the book to focus on, the order in which to study them, and how to use your practice time for the greatest results.

With personalized guidance, you will skip sections of the book that are not relevant to your needs and avoid unnecessary practice. This allows you to focus on the areas that matter most and use your practice time efficiently.

For more information about accent evaluations, professional training, and additional learning resources, visit AccurateEnglish.com/evaluation.

My Journey

I am the founder and director of Accurate English, LLC, which I established in 1999 to help professionals develop a clear, natural American accent and speak with confidence. My own journey with accents began not with English, but with French.

While studying at UCLA as a French major, I enrolled in a French phonetics course. Throughout the semester, our professor required us to transcribe dictations using the phonetic alphabet. Those classes trained my ear in an entirely new way. I learned to hear subtle differences in vowel and consonant sounds and reproduce them with precision. The course transformed my French accent dramatically. During a trip to France, I was occasionally mistaken for a native speaker. Achieving that level of mastery was immensely rewarding. That experience showed me that with the right instruction it's possible to dramatically change an accent.

Later, while earning my Master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, I began teaching international students at Santa Monica College. Although many had studied English for years, their strong accents often made it difficult for others to understand them. I saw how frustrating and limiting this was. They hesitated to participate in class, their personalities did not fully come through, and they often found it difficult to form friendships with native speakers. As a result, they tended to socialize mainly with other students from their own country.

This realization changed the direction of my career. I began teaching pronunciation classes at Santa Monica College to students from all over the world. As I watched them improve their accents and grow in confidence, I saw firsthand how transformative this type of training could be. I understood that pronunciation and accent clarity are not minor details; they are central to personal and professional success. That experience led me to specialize in American accent training and to establish Accurate English, my training center in Los Angeles.

Since founding Accurate English, I have trained thousands of professionals across a wide range of industries, including executives, physicians, engineers, attorneys, professors, entrepreneurs, and actors pursuing careers in Hollywood. Regardless of their field, they share one goal: clear, confident communication and the freedom to focus on their message rather than their pronunciation.

Living in Los Angeles, I have worked with many foreign-born actors drawn here by Hollywood. Coaching actors demands exceptional precision. Every sound must be accurate, every rhythm intentional, and every line delivered naturally and convincingly. At times, I am required to detect even the smallest accent shifts and the most subtle pronunciation details.

This level of scrutiny challenged me and pushed me to develop the ability to notice very subtle pronunciation differences. Working with actors refined my skills and strengthened my ability to analyze speech at the highest level.

That same discipline and attention to detail now guide all of my training, whether someone is preparing for a boardroom presentation, a university lecture, a medical consultation, or a performance on stage.

This book reflects decades of experience teaching the American accent. My goal is to help you develop clear, confident speech so your voice can be heard, understood, and valued. I encourage you to continue moving forward and to pursue your dreams. As Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined."

audio 1.1

CHAPTER ONE

The Vowel Sounds

The English alphabet has five vowels, ***a, e, i, o*** and ***u,*** but it has about 15 main vowel sounds. For some learners this is one of the most difficult aspects of American English to master. Speakers of languages with fewer vowel sounds are likely to speak English using only the same number of sounds that exist in their native language. Sometimes they do not even hear the distinction between certain sounds in English. Consequently, non-native speakers might pronounce "hill" and "heal" the same way. Similarly, the words *sell* and *sale,* or *cup, cop,* and *cap* may also sound the same when spoken by a non-native speaker.

In this chapter you will learn how to accurately pronounce all of the main American English vowel sounds. First, you will be briefly introduced to each of the vowel sounds. Then, you will study each sound in detail. At that point, you will learn the correct lip and tongue positions of each sound. Then you will have an opportunity to practice them in word groups and in sentences. You will also practice the sound contrasts so that you can learn to clearly distinguish between the different vowel sounds that may have previously sounded the same to you.

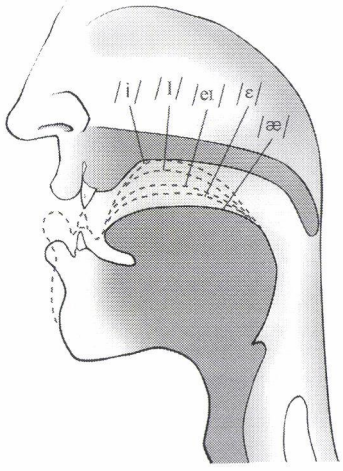
Each vowel sound also includes a "Fluency Boost" lesson with common English expressions that contain the vowel sound. This helps you practice the vowel sound and improve your English fluency at the same time.

audio 1.2

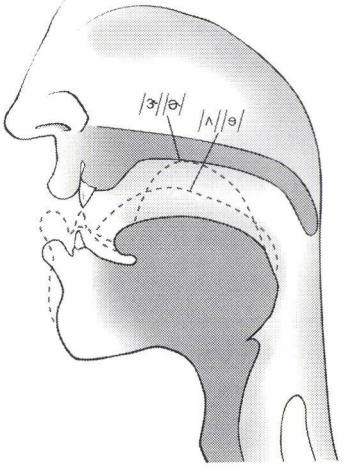
Production of Vowels

We categorize vowels as **front**, **middle** or **back** depending on which part of the tongue is used to produce the sound. For example, /i/ is a front vowel because the front part of the tongue goes up in the front of the mouth, and /u/ is a back vowel because the back of the tongue goes up in the back of the mouth. We also categorize vowels as **high** or **low.** In high vowels, the tongue is pushed up higher near the roof of the mouth as /i/ and in low vowels, the tongue is flat down at the bottom of the mouth, as in /ae/.

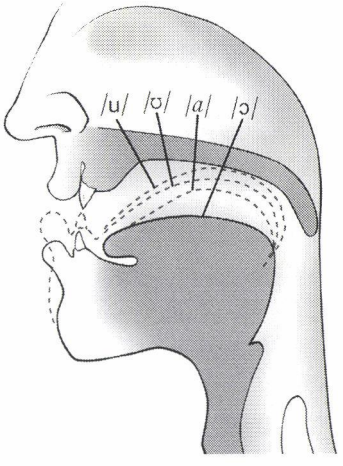
Diphthongs consist of two different vowel sounds that are closely joined together and treated as one vowel. They are represented by two phonetic symbols. To create these sounds, move your tongue smoothly from one vowel position to another. The following vowels are diphthongs: /eɪ/ as in "take," /OU/ as in "boat," /aɪ/ as in "time," /aʊ/ as in "house" and /ɔɪ/ as in "boy." You will now learn how to correctly pronounce each of the vowels.



front vowels
/i/ meet
/ɪ/ sit
/eɪ/ take
/ɛ/ get
/æ/ fat



middle vowels
/ɝ/ bird
/ə˞/ teacher
/ɘ/ about
/ʌ/ fun



back vowels
/u/ too
/ʊ/ good
ɑ/ father
/ɔ/ saw

audio 1.3

The Main Vowel Sounds of American English

1. /i/	read, heat, meet, seat, seen, feet	Please eat the meat and the cheese before you leave.
2. /ɪ/	in, bit, this, give, sister, will, city	My sister Linda will live in a big city.
3. /eɪ/	late, gate, bait, fail, main, braid, wait	Jane's face looks great for her age of eighty-eight.
4. /ɛ/	let, get, end, any, fell, bread, men, said	I went to Texas for my friend's wedding.
5. /æ/	last, apple, add, can, answer, class	The handsome man lost his baggage after his travels.
6. /ɑ/	stop, lock, farm, want, army, possible, got	John is positive that his car was parked in that lot.
7. /ə/ or /ʌ/	come, up, jump, but, does, love, money, about	Your younger brother doesn't trust us, does he?
8. /ɔ/	all, fall, author, also, applaud, thought, fought	Paula was doing laundry all day long.
9. /oʊ/	go, slow, so, those, post, moment, drove	Oh, no don't open the window, it's cold.
10. /ʊ/	look, took, put, foot, full, wolf, cookie	He would read the good book if he could.
11. /u/	cool, soup, moon, boot, tooth, move, true	Sue knew about the food in the room.
12. /ɚ/	her, work, sure, first, early, were, earn, occur	What were the first words that girl learned?
13. /aɪ/	time, nine, dry, high, style, five, China	I advise you to ride a bicycle in China.
14. /aʊ/	south, house, cow, found, down, town	He went out of the house for about an hour.
15. /ɔɪ/	oil, choice, moist, enjoy, avoid, voice	Let's avoid the annoying noise.

audio 1.4

/i/ AS IN "MEET"

*A th**ief** bel**ie**ves everybody st**ea**ls.*
E.W. Howe

Lips: Slightly smiling, tense, not rounded.

Tongue: Tense, high and far forward near the roof of the mouth.

Common spelling patterns for /i/

"ee"	meet, feel, see, free
"ea"	team, reach, mean, sea
"ie" and "ei"	belief, piece, neither, receive
final "e"	me, we, she, he
"e"+ consonant + "e"	these, Chinese, Peter
final "y"	city, duty, country, ability
endings with "ique"	unique, boutique, critique

audio 1.5

The Most Common Words with the /i/ Sound

1. agree
2. be
3. deep
4. eat
5. feel
6. free
7. he
8. keep
9. key
10. leave
11. me
12. mean
13. meet
14. need
15. please
16. read
17. see
18. seem
19. she
20. sleep
21. speak
22. three
23. tree
24. we
25. week

audio 1.6

Word Pairs for Practice

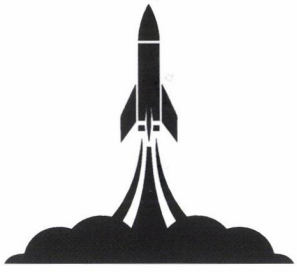
deep sea
beans and cheese
severe heat
breathe deep
three meals
green leaves
extremely easy
sweet dreams
peaches and cream
speak Chinese

audio 1.7

Sentences for Practice

1. The employees agreed to meet at eight fifteen.
2. Don't keep the TV near the heater.
3. It's extremely easy to cheat when the teacher isn't here.
4. Please speak to Peter about the employee meeting.
5. Steve will reread the email before he leaves.
6. She was feeling sleepy after eating the big meal.
7. These three people speak Chinese.
8. We love the green fields and the beach breezes.
9. Marie believes she will see Peter this weekend.
10. I will leave the East Coast in three weeks.

audio 1.8



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /i/ Sound

Practice the /i/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/i/ /i/

1. the **real deal**
   meaning: something or someone genuine or true; a person or thing who is genuinely superior or impressive in some regard

"He's the real deal as a boxer."

/i/

2. to **beat** around the bush
   meaning: to avoid saying something directly

"Stop beating around the bush and tell me what happened."

/i/

3. a **piece** of cake
   meaning: very easy

"The test was a piece of cake."

/i/

4. to have a **green** thumb
   meaning: to be good at gardening and growing plants

"With her green thumb, the garden looks amazing."

/i/

5. to get cold **feet**
   meaning: to be nervous or hesitant about something you planned to do

"He's getting cold feet about getting married."

/i/

6. to make ends **meet**
   meaning: to have enough money to cover expenses

"It's hard to make ends meet with a small salary."

/i/

7. to break **even**
   meaning: to neither make a profit nor a loss

"The business finally broke even this year."

audio 1.9

/I/ AS IN "SIT"

In the middle of a difficulty lies opportunity.

Albert Einstein

Lips: Slightly parted, relaxed.

Tongue: Relaxed, high, but not as high as for the /i/ sound. Sides of the tongue touch upper back teeth.

Common spelling patterns for /i/

"i" (most common)	sit, give, this, dinner
"ui"	build, quit, quick, guilty
"y" between two consonants	system, gym, symbol, hymn

exceptions:

been in American English "been" is pronounced the same as "bin," but in British English "been" sounds like "bean."

women sounds like "wimin" (the "o" is an /I/ sound)

audio 1.10

The Most Common Words with the /I/ Sound

1. big
2. bit
3. did
4. give
5. him
6. his
7. hit
8. if
9. in
10. into
11. is
12. it
13. little
14. live
15. miss
16. since
17. sit
18. still
19. think
20. this
21. until
22. which
23. will
24. win
25. with

audio 1.11

Word Pairs

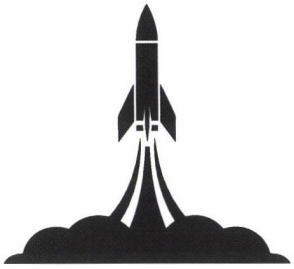
big city
innocent victim
drink milk
children's film
simple living
fish and chips
trip to Italy
spring picnic
this thing
winter wind

audio 1.12

Sentences for Practice

1. Kim will visit her big sister Linda in Virginia.
2. In the beginning it was difficult for Jim to quit drinking.
3. The Smiths invited him to an informal dinner.
4. This city has an interesting history.
5. When did Bill Clinton visit the Middle East?

audio 1.13



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /ɪ/ Sound

Practice the /ɪ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/ɪ/ /ɪ/

1. through **thick** and **thin**
   meaning: to stay loyal and supportive in good times and bad

"She supported me through **thick** and thin."

/ɪ/ /ɪ/

2. **hit** and **miss**
   meaning: inconsistent; sometimes successful, sometimes not

"The service at this restaurant is **hit** and **miss**."

/ɪ/ /ɪ/ /ɪ/

3. to **hit it big**
   meaning: to achieve great success or fame

"They really **hit it big** with their new business."

/ɪ/ /ɪ/

4. to **chip in**
   meaning: to help or contribute, often with money or effort

"Everyone **chipped in** to buy her a birthday gift."

/ɪ/ /ɪ/

5. to **sink** or **swim**
   meaning: to fail or succeed entirely on your own

"When I started the job, it was **sink** or **swim**."

/ɪ/ /ɪ/

6. to **fit in**
   meaning: to belong or feel comfortable in a group

"He tried hard **to fit in** with the other students."

/ɪ/ /ɪ/

7. to **fit** the **bill**
   meaning: to be suitable or exactly what is needed

"This candidate **fits the bill** perfectly."

audio 1.14

Quick Review

Vowel Contrasts for /i/ and /I/

Make sure that you don't pronounce these words the same.

/i/	/I/	/i/	/I/
leave	live	beat	bit
feel	fill	steal	still
least	list	each	itch
he's	his	seek	sick
sleep	slip	feet	fit
cheap	chip	sheep	ship

audio 1.15

Word Combinations for /i/ and /I/

Make sure that the two words are pronounced with different vowel sounds.

st**i**ll sl**ee**py	b**i**g d**ea**l
ver**y** **i**nteresting	th**e**se th**i**ngs
f**ee**ling **i**ll	M**i**ddle **Ea**st
it's **ea**s**y**	l**i**ttle m**ea**l
is h**e**?	gr**ee**n p**i**ll

audio 1.16

/eɪ/ AS IN "TAKE"

*T**a**ke time for all things: gr**ea**t h**a**ste m**a**kes gr**ea**t w**a**ste.*
Benjamin Franklin

Lips: Not rounded, relaxed.

Tongue: Tense, moves from the mid-high to high position.

Common spelling patterns for /eɪ/

"a" + consonant + "e"	late, came, take, save
"ai"	rain, wait, pain, aim
"ay"	say, away, play, Monday
"ey"	they, survey, obey
"eigh"	weigh, eight, neighbor, freight
less common:	
"a"	April, alien, angel

audio 1.17

The Most Common Words with the /eɪ/ Sound

1. age	**6.** change	**11.** late	**16.** place	**21.** stay
2. away	**7.** day	**12.** make	**17.** play	**22.** take
3. break	**8.** face	**13.** may	**18.** same	**23.** they
4. came	**9.** gave	**14.** name	**19.** say	**24.** wait
5. case	**10.** great	**15.** pay	**20.** state	**25.** way

audio 1.18

Word Pairs

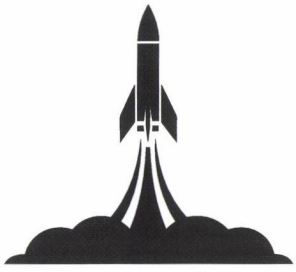
the same day	explain the situation
stay away	play baseball
escape from jail	eighty eight
take a break	bake a cake
stay the same	save the whales

audio 1.19

Sentences for Practice

1. She complained about her weight but ate the cake anyway.
2. Jake hates waiting for trains and planes.
3. It rains and hails in April and May.
4. I will stay in the game even though it's late.
5. My neighbor from Spain moved away today.

audio 1.20



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /ei/ Sound

Practice the /ei/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/ei/ /ei/

1. to **make** or **break**
   meaning: something that will lead to success or failure

"This job interview could **make** or **break** his career."

/ei/ /ei/

2. no **pain**, no **gain**
   meaning: you must work hard to achieve something

"He exercises every day. No **pain**, no **gain**."

/ei/ /ei/

3. to **rain** on someone's **parade**
   meaning: to ruin someone's happiness or plans

"She rained on his parade by telling him the bad news."

/ei/ /ei/

4. to **make waves**
   meaning: to cause trouble or attract attention by doing something different

"Why do you always make waves at meetings?"

/ei/ /ei/

5. to **take** the **bait**
   meaning: to be tricked or to fall for something

"He teased her, and she took the bait."

/ei/ /ei/

6. to **play** it **safe**
   meaning: to avoid risk and be careful

"Let's play it safe and bring extra food."

/ei/ /ei/

7. 7. to be on the same page
   meaning: to think in a similar way; to agree

"I'm glad we're all on the same page about this decision."

audio 1.21

/ɛ/ AS IN "GET"

Every exit is an entry somewhere.
Tom Stoppard

Lips: Farther apart than for /eɪ/ and relaxed.

Tongue: Relaxed, mid high position.

Common Spelling Patterns for /ɛ/

"e" get, end, next, general

"ea" heavy, head, read, measure

exceptions: said, says, again, against, any, many

Warning: Common Mistake!

The verb "say" is pronounced with the /ɛ/ sound in the past tense and in the present tense when it is followed by an "s".

/eɪ/ /ɛ/
Example: I say I said

he says

audio 1.22

The Most Common Words with the /ɛ/ Sound

1. bed
2. better
3. best
4. check
5. end
6. friend
7. get
8. head
9. help
10. left
11. less
12. let
13. men
14. next
15. red
16. said
17. set
18. step
19. tell
20. them
21. then
22. well
23. went
24. when
25. yes

audio 1.23

Word Pairs

presidential election

bend your legs

plenty of energy

remember the pledge

better friend

heavy metal

get better

elegant dress

next Wednesday

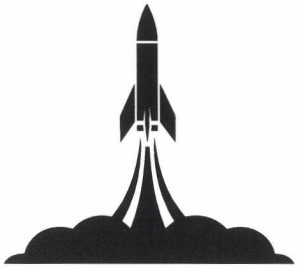
well read

audio 1.24

Sentences for Practice

1. Without some extra effort you will never excel.
2. Jenny and her friend had eggs for breakfast.
3. I expect this session to end at ten.
4. On the seventh of February the weather was wet.
5. I see my best friend Fred every seven days.

audio 1.25



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /ɛ/ Sound

Practice the /ɛ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/ɛ/ /ɛ/

1. to **get** your feet **wet**
   meaning: to start trying something new in a simple way in order to become more familiar with it

"I'll get my feet wet by volunteering first."

/ɛ/

2. to be pulling someone's **leg**
   meaning: to tease or joke with someone.

"I don't believe you. I think you're pulling my **leg**."

/ɛ/

3. to **bend** over backwards
   meaning: to make a big effort to help someone

They **bend** over backwards to help their customers.

/ɛ/ /ɛ/

4. **dead end** job
   meaning: a job with no chance of promotion; no opportunity for advancement

I don't want to be stuck in a dead end job."

/ɛ/ /ɛ/

5. **better** late than **never**
   meaning: it's better to do something late than not at all

"It's better late than never to apologize"

audio 1.26

Quick Review

Vowel Contrasts for /ɛ/ and /eɪ/

Make sure that you don't pronounce these words the same.

/ɛ/	/eɪ/	/ɛ/	/eɪ/
pen	pain	tell	tail
sell	sale	Ed	aid
wet	wait	test	taste
west	waste	men	main

audio 1.27

Word Combinations for /ɛ/ and /eɪ/

Make sure that the two words are pronounced with different vowel sounds.

less rain	wet day
taste test	main men
neck pain	great dress
fell away	headache

audio 1.28

/ae/ AS IN "FAT"

*He who l**au**ghs l**a**st l**au**ghs best.*
American proverb

Lips: Open, not rounded.

Tongue: Lowest of all the front vowels. Flat on the floor of the mouth.

Common Spelling Pattern for /æ/

"a" hat, apple, man, answer

audio 1.29

The Most Common Words with the /æ/ Sound

1. act	**6.** bad	**11.** fact	**16.** hand	**21.** ran
2. add	**7.** black	**12.** family	**17.** last	**22.** sat
3. apple	**8.** can	**13.** fast	**18.** man	**23.** staff
4. ask	**9.** chance	**14.** had	**19.** past	**24.** stand
5. back	**10.** class	**15.** half	**20.** plan	**25.** that

audio 1.30

Word Pairs

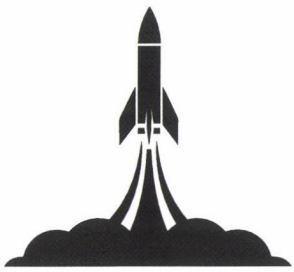
bad example	practical plan
national anthem	annual gathering
back at the ranch	last chance
accurate answer	handsome actor
bad habit	angry man

audio 1.31

Sentences for Practice

1. This is your last chance to give me an accurate answer.
2. Sam sat at the back of the math class.
3. Danny had a salad and a sandwich in the cafeteria.
4. Nancy has a bad attitude in her Spanish class.
5. Kathy would rather study acting at the national academy.

audio 1.32



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /æ/ Sound

Practice the /æ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/æ/ /æ/ /æ/

1. **have** the **last laugh**
   meaning: to be successful after others doubted you

"He had the **last laugh** after winning the competition."

/æ/ /æ/

2. to get **back** on **track**
   meaning: to return to the correct path or progress

"I'm finally **back** on **track** with my studies."

/æ/

3. at the dro p of a **hat**
   meaning: to do something immediately, without hesitation

"I'm ready to travel at the drop of a **hat**"

/æ/ /æ/

4. a **bad apple**
   meaning: a bad person who negatively influences others

"Be careful of the **bad apple** in the group."

/æ/ /æ/

5. to **stab** someone in the **back**
   meaning: to betray someone who trusts you

"A good friend will never stab you in the back."

audio 1.33

Quick Review

Vowel Contrasts for /ɛ/ and /ae/

Make sure that you don't pronounce these words the same.

/ɛ/	/ae/	/ɛ/	/ae/
men	man	guess	gas
said	sad	slept	slapped
end	and	head	had
then	than	expensive	expansive

audio 1.34

Word Combinations for /ɛ/ and /ae/

Make sure that the two words are pronounced with different vowel sounds.

sad endings	ten gallons
less land	last exit
angry men	bad friend

audio 1.35

/ɑ/ AS IN "FATHER"

*Never go to a d**o**ctor whose **o**ffice plants have died.*
Erma Bombeck

Lips: Apart, as if you are yawning. Not rounded.

Tongue: Relaxed, flat at the floor of the mouth.

Common Spelling Patterns for /ɑ/

"o"	hot, stop, modern, job
"a"	father, watch, dark, want

audio 1.36

The Most Common Words with the /ɑ/ Sound

1. body
2. bottom
3. box
4. clock
5. college
6. common
7. doctor
8. dollar
9. drop
10. father
11. God
12. hot
13. honest
14. job
15. lot
16. mom
17. not
18. office
19. often
20. problem
21. respond
22. rock
23. shop
24. stop
25. top

audio 1.37

Word Pairs

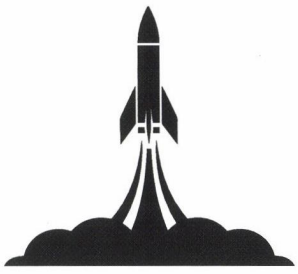
common problem	logical response
body shop	hot topic
occupy the office	modern hospital
office politics	non stop
from top to bottom	sloppy job

audio 1.38

Sentences for Practice

1. Ronald is confident that he got the job.
2. Scott goes to a lot of rock concerts.
3. The doctor operated in the modern hospital.
4. Bob will probably lock the office.
5. He's got a lot of dollars in his pocket.

audio 1.39



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /ɑ/ Sound

Practice the /ɑ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/ɑ/

1. to **drop** the ball
   meaning: to make a mistake; to miss an opportunity

"You really dropped the ball on that project."

/ɑ/

2. to rock the **boat**
   meaning: to upset a calm situation or to cause trouble

"Be careful not to rock the boat in the meeting."

/ɑ/

3. on the **dot**
   meaning: exactly on time

"The meeting will start at 9:00 am on the **dot**."

/ɑ/

4. to pop the question
   meaning: to propose marriage

"He's planning to pop the question to his girlfriend."

/ɑ/

5. to hit the **spot**
   meaning: to be exactly what is needed or to be satisfying

"A cold drink after running hits the **spot**."

/ɑ/

6. to call the **shots**
   meaning: be in control or make the decisions

"Who calls the **shots** in this department?"

audio 1.40

Quick Review

Vowel Contrasts for /ae/ and /ɑ/

Make sure that you don't pronounce these words the same.

/ae/	/ɑ/	/ae/	/ɑ/
hat	hot	cap	cop
lack	lock	add	odd
sack	sock	rack	rock
sang	song	tap	top

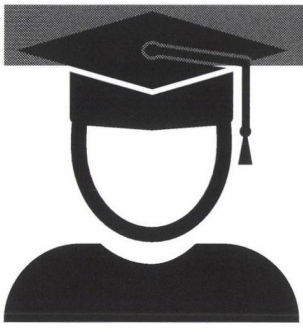
audio 1.41

Word Combinations for /ae/ and /ɑ/

Make sure that the two words are pronounced with different vowel sounds.

hot pan	got back
man's job	bad dog
top answer	back pocket

audio 1.42



Advice from a Successful Student

During my drive to and from work, I always listen to audio books. The speaker's voice is usually very clear and not sloppy like the speech I sometimes I hear on the street. I listen closely to the accent of the speaker and try to imitate it. I play back certain parts over and over again. The more I do this the better my accent gets.

Katarina Petrovic, Croatia

audio 1.43

/ə/ AS IN "ABOUT" and /ʌ/ AS IN "FUN" *

*L**o**ve all, tr**u**st **a** few, do wrong to n**o**ne.*
William Shakespeare

Lips: Completely relaxed, slightly parted.

Tongue: Relaxed, middle position.

Common Spelling Patterns for /ʌ/

"u" but, fun, summer, drunk

"o" love, done, come, son

"ou" cousin, country, enough

*The IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbol for the stressed vowel is /ʌ/ and for the unstressed vowels it is /ə/. They are basically the same sound. For further study of this reduced, neutral sound, refer to Chapter Five, which deals with syllable stress and reduced vowels.

audio 1.44

The Most Common Words with the /ʌ/ Sound

1. brother
2. but
3. come
4. country
5. cut
6. does
7. done
8. enough
9. just
10. love
11. money
12. mother
13. much
14. must
15. number
16. once
17. run
18. some
19. study
20. such
21. sun
22. under
23. up
24. us
25. young

audio 1.45

Word Pairs

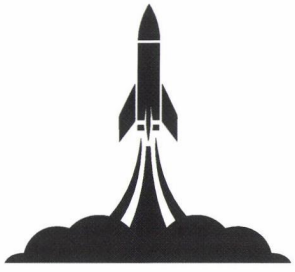
young son
fun in the sun
wonderful mother
number one
enough money
jump up
another subject
under the rug
undercover
Sunday brunch

audio 1.46

Sentences for Practice

1. Your younger brother doesn't trust us.
2. What country does he come from?
3. I had another fun summer in London.
4. I don't have much stuff in the trunk of my truck.
5. I love the sunny summer months.

audio 1.47



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /ʌ/ Sound

Practice the /ʌ/vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/ʌ/
1. in a **nutshell**
   meaning: to summarize something in a few words; to give only the main point

"In a nutshell, the meeting went well."

/ʌ/ /ʌ/
2. to **jump** the **gun**
   meaning: to do something too soon or before the proper time

"He jumped the gun and announced the news too soon."

/ʌ/ /ʌ/
3. don't **judge** a book by its **cover**
   meaning: don't form an opinion based on appearance

"He looks unfriendly, but don't **judge** a book by its **cover**."

/ʌ/ /ʌ/ /ʌ/

4. **what's done** is **done**
   meaning: the past cannot be changed, so there's no point in worrying about it

"We made a mistake, but what's done is done.

/ʌ/ /ʌ/

5. when push **comes** to **shove**
   meaning: when a situation becomes serious and action must be taken

"When push comes to shove, you can always count on her to help."

/ʌ/ /ʌ/

6. to **come undone**
   meaning: to fall apart emotionally or physically; to lose control or stability

"I hope she doesn't come undone when she hears the bad news.

/ʌ/ /ʌ/

7. **cover** to **cover**
   meaning: to read or examine something completely, from beginning to end

"I read the novel **cover** to **cover**."

audio 1.48

Quick Review

Vowel Contrasts for /ɑ/ and /ʌ/

Make sure that you don't pronounce these words the same.

/ɑ/	/ʌ/	/ɑ/	/ʌ/
Don	done	lock	luck
shot	shut	non	nun
fond	fund	robber	rubber
got	gut	doll	dull

audio 1.49

Word Combinations for /ɑ/ and /ʌ/

Make sure that the two words are pronounced with different vowel sounds.

come on	fun job
got lucky	stop running
not enough	jump on
cost much	gunshot

audio 1.50

/ɔ/ AS IN "SAW"

*Courage is the first of human q**ual**ities bec**au**se it is the q**ua**lity which guarantees **a**ll the others."*
Winston Churchill

Lips: Apart, very slightly rounded, oval shape.

Tongue: Slightly tense, down near the floor of mouth.

Common Spelling Patterns for the /ɔ/ Sound

"aw"	saw, law, awful, awesome
"au"	author, August, applaud, audition
"a" + "l"	small, walk, tall, always
"ought"	bought, thought, fought
"aught"	daughter, caught
"o"	gone, off, long

audio 1.51

The Most Common Words with the /ɔ/ Sound

1. all
2. almost
3. also
4. always
5. August
6. auto
7. awful
8. ball
9. bought
10. brought
11. call
12. draw
13. fall
14. fault
15. law
16. long
17. pause
18. saw
19. small
20. talk
21. tall
22. thought
23. walk
24. wall
25. water

audio 1.52

Word Pairs

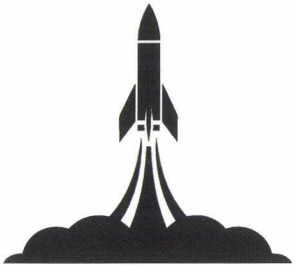
pause in the hall
awful thought
water the lawn
talk until dawn
autumn in Austria
walk the dog
small talk
already exhausted
tall wall
caught the ball

audio 1.53

Sentences for Practice

1. The audience applauded even though the talk was awful.
2. His small daughter thought that Santa Claus would come in August.
3. I saw your mother-in-law in the mall.
4. He bought an automobile at the auction last fall.
5. This sauce is awesome, Paula!

audio 1.54



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /ɔ/ Sound

Practice the /ɔ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/ɔ/

1. to be on the **ball**
   meaning: to be alert, capable or efficient

"The new manager is really on the **ball**."

/ɔ/

2. to have second **thoughts**
   meaning: to reconsider or doubt a decision

"I'm having second **thoughts** about quitting my job."

/ɔ/

3. a **tall** order
   meaning: a difficult task or request

"Finishing it in just one day is a **tall** order."

/ɔ/

4. at **all** costs
   meaning: to do something no matter what it takes

"She wants to win at **all** costs."

/ɔ/

5. to **draw** the line
   meaning: to set a limit or boundary on what is acceptable

"I work hard, but I **draw** the line at working on weekends."

/ɔ/

6. the last **straw**
   meaning: the final problem that makes someone give up

"That rude comment was the last **straw** for my patience."

audio 1.55

Quick Review

Vowel Contrasts for /ʌ/ and /ɔ/

Make sure that you don't pronounce these words the same.

/ʌ/	/ɔ/	/ʌ/	/ɔ/
cut	caught	but	bought
hull	hall	sung	song
done	dawn	cuff	cough
dug	dog	flood	flawed

audio 1.56

Word Combinations for /ʌ/ and /ɔ/

Make sure that the two words are pronounced with different vowel sounds.

another dog	bought lunch
long month	coffee cup
much talk	small club

audio 1.57

/oʊ/ AS IN "BOAT"

*N**o** bird s**oa**rs too high if he s**oa**rs with his **o**wn wings.*
William Blake

Lips: Very rounded and tense.

Tongue: A bit tense, moves from mid to high position.

Common Spelling Patterns for /oʊ/

"o"	no, don't, home, only
"oa"	road, coat, boat
"ow"	own, slow, window
"ough"	though, although

audio 1.58

The Most Common Words with the /oʊ/ Sound

1. both	**6.** hold	**11.** most	**16.** open	**21.** show
2. close	**7.** home	**12.** no	**17.** over	**22.** so
3. drove	**8.** hope	**13.** note	**18.** own	**23.** those
4. go	**9.** know	**14.** old	**19.** phone	**24.** told
5. grow	**10.** low	**15.** only	**20.** road	**25.** whole

audio 1.59

Word Pairs

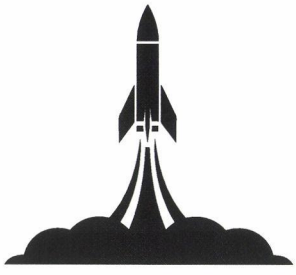
phone home	don't smoke
own a home	low profile
almost over	slow motion
open road	old poem
drove slowly	golden bowl

audio 1.60

Sentences for Practice

1. We both hope it's going to snow.
2. Oh no, don't open the window! It's cold.
3. Do you want to go bowling or roller skating?
4. I chose a bowl of soup, potatoes, roast beef and a soda.
5. I don't know if Joan smokes.

audio 1.61



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /oʊ/ Sound

Practice the /oʊ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/oʊ/

1. to hit the **road**
   meaning: to leave or start a journey

"Let's hit the **road** after breakfast."

/oʊ/ /oʊ/

2. to **blow** one's own **horn**
   meaning: to brag or boast about your achievements

"Don't **blow** your **own** horn. Let others praise you."

/oʊ/ /oʊ/

3. to **know** the **ropes**
   meaning: to know how something is done; to know the details of a job

"He's experienced and **knows** all the ropes."

/oʊ/

4. to be on a **roll**
   meaning: to be having continuous success; to have a series of successes

"The team is on a **roll** after winning five games."

/oʊ/ /oʊ/

5. to **go** with the **flow**
   meaning: to accept things as they happen; to adapt

"Try to **go** with the flow and enjoy the trip."

/oʊ/ /oʊ/

6. to go **overboard**
   meaning: to do too much; to do something excessively

"She went **overboard** decorating the room."

audio 1.62

Quick Review

Sound Contrasts for /ɑ, ɔ/ and /oʊ/

Make sure that you don't pronounce these words the same.

/ɑ, ɔ/	/oʊ/	/ɑ, ɔ/	/oʊ/
bought	boat	caught	coat
law	low	walk	woke
clause	close	not	note
odd	owed	got	goat
want	won't	non	known

audio 1.63

Word Combinations for /ɑ, ɔ/ and /oʊ/

Make sure that the two words are pronounced with different vowel sounds.

old law	odd boat
not home	walk slowly
those dogs	only daughter

audio 1.64

/ʊ/ AS IN "GOOD"

*Without words, without writing and without b**oo**ks there w**ou**ld be no history, there c**ou**ld be no concept of humanity.*
Hermann Hesse

Lips: Very slightly rounded.

Tongue: Relaxed, back is raised, higher than for /oʊ/.

Common Spelling Patterns for /ʊ/

"oo"	good, look, childhood, understood
"u"	push, full, pull, sugar
"ould"	would, could, should
exception:	woman sounds like "wumun"

audio 1.65

The Most Common Words with the /ʊ/ Sound

1. book
2. brook
3. bull
4. childhood
5. cook
6. cookie
7. could
8. foot
9. full
10. good
11. hook
12. look
13. neighborhood
14. pull
15. push
16. put
17. shook
18. should
19. stood
20. took
21. understood
22. wolf
23. wood
24. wool
25. would

audio 1.66

Word Pairs

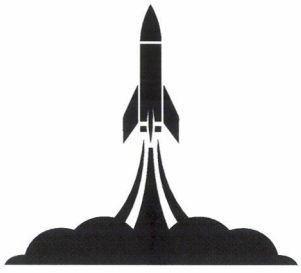
good book	sugar cookie
took a look	push and pull
good looking	wool pullover
fully cooked	wooden hook
shook his foot	good childhood

audio 1.67

Sentences for Practice

1. Would you help me look for my book?
2. The sugar cookies taste good.
3. The butcher is a good cook.
4. He would read the book if he could.
5. Butch visited his old neighborhood in Brooklyn.

audio 1.68



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /ʊ/ sound

Practice this /ʊ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/ʊ/ /ʊ/

1. to **put** your **foot** down
   meaning: to be firm or assert authority; to set strict rules

" She finally **put** her foot down and said no."

/ʊ/ /ʊ/

2. to **put** one's **foot** in one's mouth
   meaning: to say something embarrassing or inappropriate

"I **put** my **foot** in my mouth at the party."

/ʊ/

3. to do something by the **book**
   meaning: follow the rules or instructions exactly

"We follow the rules by the book."

/ʊ/

4. **look** before you leap
   meaning: think carefully before acting

"**Look** before you leap when making big decisions."

audio 1.69

/u/ AS IN "TOO"

*If you could ch**oo**se one characteristic that would get you thr**ou**gh life, ch**oo**se a sense of h**u**mor.*
Jennifer Jones

Lips: Tense, rounded, as if blowing a balloon.

Tongue: Slightly tense, high.

Common Spelling Patterns for /u/

"oo"	too, food, school, tool
"ue"	true, blue, avenue
"o"	do, who, lose, prove
"ew"	few, new, blew, drew
"u"	super, rule, duty, student

audio 1.70

The Most Common Words with the /u/ Sound

1. blue	**6.** group	**11.** pool	**16.** through	**21.** use
2. choose	**7.** lose	**12.** room	**17.** too	**22.** view
3. cool	**8.** moon	**13.** rule	**18.** true	**23.** who
4. do	**9.** move	**14.** school	**19.** truth	**24.** you
5. food	**10.** new	**15.** soon	**20.** two	**25.** youth

audio 1.71

Word Pairs

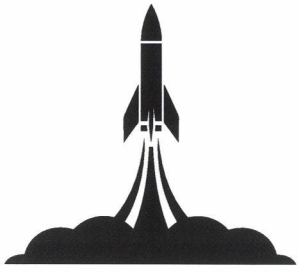
too few	fruit juice
soup spoon	new suit
true value	blue shoes
new moon	suitable suitcase
two rooms	super cool

audio 1.72

Sentences for Practice

1. The new roof was installed in June.
2. I drink fruit juice and eat a lot of soup.
3. Your blue shoes are really cool.
4. I need proof that you're telling the truth.
5. The statue on the avenue is truly beautiful.

audio 1.73



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with **the** /u/ **Sound**

Practice the /u/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/u/ /u/

1. once in a **blue moon**
   meaning: very rarely

"We go out for dinner once in a **blue moon**."

/u/

2. the elephant in the **room**
   meaning: an obvious problem that nobody talks about

"They avoided talking about the elephant in the **room**."

/u/

3. **cool** as a cucumber
   meaning: very calm and relaxed, especially under pressure

"She stayed **cool** as a cucumber during the interview."

/u/

4. out of the **blue**
   meaning: unexpectedly; suddenly

"The news came out of the **blue**."

audio 1.74

Quick Review

Vowel Contrasts for /ʊ/ and /u/

Make sure that you don't pronounce these words the same.

/ʊ/	/u/	/ʊ/	/u/
full	fool	pull	pool
look	Luke	stood	stewed

audio 1.75

Word Combinations for /ʊ/ and /u/

Make sure that the two words are pronounced with different vowel sounds.

good food	blue book
full room	two cookies
cook stew	too full

audio 1.76

/ɝ/ AS IN "BIRD" AND /ɚ/ AS IN "TEACHER"

Life is uncertain. Eat dessert first.
Ernestine Ulmer

Lips: Slightly rounded.

Tongue: Tense, mid level position. Tip is curled up a bit and pulled back.

Common Spelling Patterns for /ɚ/ and /ɝ/

"er"	her, mercy, mother, winner
"ear"	heard, learn, earth
"ir"	first, girl, firm
"or"	doctor, word, worry
"ur"	occur, curtain, jury
"ure"	insecure, culture
"ar"	grammar, collar

audio 1.77

The Most Common Words with the /ɚ/ and /ɝ/ Sounds

1. after
2. better
3. birthday
4. brother
5. circle
6. early
7. earn
8. father
9. first
10. heard
11. her
12. hurt
13. later
14. learn
15. mother
16. never
17. nurse
18. other
19. person
20. turn
21. water
22. were
23. word
24. work
25. world

audio 1.78

Word Pairs

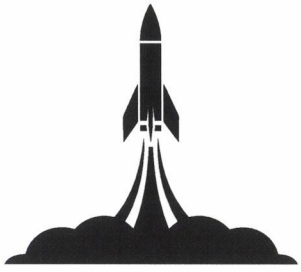
first person
purple shirt
learn German
other world
serve dinner
third term
firm words
early bird
nervous girl
thirty third

audio 1.79

Sentences for Practice

1. I will work during the third term.
2. They served turkey for dinner.
3. Her purple shirt is dirty.
4. She gave birth to a third girl.
5. It's not worth worrying about another birthday.

audio 1.80



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /ɜ˞/ sound

Practice the /ɜ˞/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/ɜ˞/ /ɜ˞/

1. **word** for **word**
   meaning: exactly as said or written

"He repeated the instructions **word** for **word**."

/ɜ˞/

2. to put in a good **word** for someone
   meaning: recommend someone to help them; to speaking positively about someone

"Please put in a good **word** for me with your boss."

/ɜ˞/

3. to be in the **works**
   meaning: being planned or developed

"A new project is in the **works** at the office."

/ɜ˞/

4. out of this **world**
   meaning: extremely good or impressive

"The concert was out of this **world**."

/ɜ˞/ /ɜ˞/ /ɜ˞/

5. the **early bird** gets the **worm**
   meaning: the person who acts first gets an advantage

"Do it now; the **early bird** gets the **worm**."

audio 1.81

/aɪ/ AS IN "TIME"

We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.
Nelson Mendela

Lips: Open, not rounded, closing a bit when moving to the /ɪ/ position.

Tongue: Relaxed, moves from flat to high position.

Common Spelling Patterns for /aɪ/

"y"	fly, sky, apply, style
"i"	nice, kind, fine, sign
"igh"	light, fight, sight, night
"ie"	lie, tie, tried

audio 1.82

The Most Common Words with the /aɪ/ Sound

1. buy	**6.** five	**11.** light	**16.** my	**21.** time
2. by	**7.** high	**12.** like	**17.** night	**22.** try
3. drive	**8.** I	**13.** line	**18.** price	**23.** white
4. eye	**9.** kind	**14.** might	**19.** right	**24.** why
5. find	**10.** life	**15.** mind	**20.** side	**25.** write

audio 1.83

Word Pairs

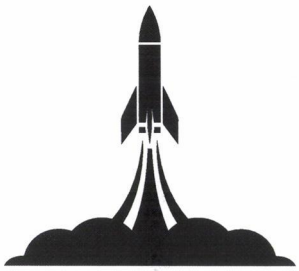
lime pies	white wine
fly a kite	nice try
nine lives	night sky
bright light	fly high
sign on the line	fine dining

audio 1.84

Sentences for Practice

1. Why is the price so high for that design?
2. The wild fire started on Friday night.
3. He was tired after hiking for five hours.
4. It's a nine-hour drive to Iowa.
5. We had lime pie and dry white wine.

audio 1.85



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /aɪ/ sound

Practice the /aɪ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/aɪ/ /aɪ/

1. a **fine line**
   meaning: a small difference between two things

"There's a **fine line** between confidence and arrogance."

/aɪ/ /aɪ/

2. **pie** in the **sky**
   meaning: An unrealistic or unlikely idea or plan.

"You plan for instant success is **pie** in the **sky**."

/aɪ/

3. to be the **life** of the party
   meaning: the most lively and fun person at a gathering

"She's always the **life** of the party at family events."

/aɪ/ /aɪ/

4. to have the **time** of one's **life**
   meaning: an extremely enjoyable experience

"I had the **time** of my **life** at the concert."

/aɪ/

5. to be on cloud **nine**
   meaning: to be extremely happy

"They've been on cloud **nine** since their wedding."

audio 1.86

/aʊ/ AS IN "HOUSE"

*It is better to keep your m**ou**th closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all d**ou**bt.*
Mark Twain

Lips: Start not rounded, but as you move toward /ʊ/, lips begin to close and become tense.

Tongue: Moves from relaxed, low to high position for the /ʊ/.

Common Spelling Patterns for /aʊ/

"ou" found, loud, around, thousand

"ow" now, down, crowd, vowel

audio 1.87

The Most Common Words with the /aʊ/ Sound

1. about
2. around
3. bound
4. brown
5. cloud
6. count
7. crowd
8. down
9. found
10. ground
11. hour
12. house
13. how
14. loud
15. mouth
16. now
17. out
18. power
19. proud
20. round
21. shout
22. sound
23. south
24. town
25. without

audio 1.88

Word Pairs

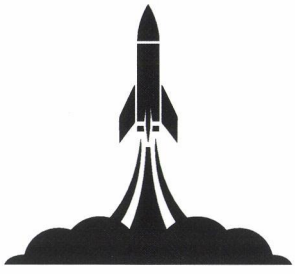
about an hour	around the mountain
crowded house	brown couch
downtown	found out
loud announcement	down and out
countdown	pronounce the vowel

audio 1.89

Sentences for Practice

1. I doubt that the clown will say something profound.
2. There are flowers all around the house.
3. Is that your spouse in the brown blouse?
4. The clouds behind the mountain will bring showers.
5. The brown cow is near the fountain.

audio 1.90



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /aʊ/ sound

Practice the /aʊ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/aʊ/ /aʊ/

1. to be **out** and **about**
   meaning: moving around, active outside

"He's finally **out** and **about** after his illness."

/aʊ/

2. to throw in the **towel**
   meaning: to give up

"After months of trying, he threw in the **towel**."

/aʊ/

3. by word of **mouth**
   meaning: information spread by talking

"The restaurant became popular by word of **mouth**."

/aʊ/

4. don't look a gift horse in the **mouth**
   meaning: don't criticize or question a gift

"If someone helps you, don't look a gift horse in the **mouth**."

audio 1.91

/ɔɪ/ AS IN "BOY"

*Don't worry about av**oi**ding temptation. As you get older, it will av**oi**d you.*
Winston Churchill

Lips: Move from slightly rounded, oval position to relaxed, slightly parted position.

Tongue: Relaxed, move from mid-high to high position.

Common Spelling Patterns for /ɔɪ/

"oi" avoid, oil, moist, join

"oy" enjoy, toy, employ, royal

audio 1.92

The Most Common Words with the /ɔɪ/ Sound

1. annoy
2. appoint
3. avoid
4. boil
5. boy
6. choice
7. coin
8. destroy
9. employ
10. enjoy
11. exploit
12. join
13. joint
14. joy
15. loyal
16. moist
17. noise
18. oil
19. point
20. poison
21. royal
22. soil
23. toy
24. voice
25. void

audio 1.93

Word Pairs

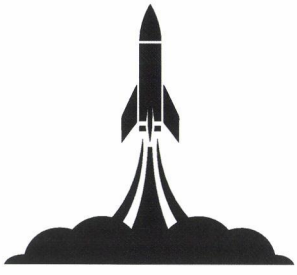
enjoy the toy	annoying noise
spoiled boy	destroy the poison
appointment in Detroit	loyal employee
broiled oysters	moist soil
boiling point	avoid the moisture

audio 1.94

Sentences for Practice

1. He destroyed the poison by flushing it down the toilet.
2. Roy had an appointment in Detroit.
3. Joyce is annoyed and a little paranoid.
4. I was disappointed with Joy's choice.
5. Why is Floyd avoiding Roy?

audio 1.95



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with the /ɔɪ/ sound

Practice the /ɔɪ/ vowel sound as you say each expression, and try to learn these idioms to build fluency.

/ɔɪ/

1. It's **boiling**!
   meaning: extremely hot or intense

"It's **boiling** outside today."

/ɔɪ/

2. it **boils** down to (something)
   meaning: to be simplified to a key point or issue

"It **boils** down to whether we can afford it."

/ɔɪ/

3. to be beside the **point**
   meaning: irrelevant to the main issue

"That's beside the **point**, let's focus on the main topic."

/ɔɪ/

4. to get to the **point**
   meaning: to focus on the main idea; to speak directly about the main issue

"Please get to the **point**. We don't have much time."

audio 2.1

CHAPTER TWO

Vowels in Detail

This chapter will give you a more detailed knowledge of the most problematic vowel sounds for non-native speakers. You will have the opportunity to practice more sound contrasts within word pairs, sentences, dialogues and stories. You will learn to clearly distinguish between certain sounds that may have seemed very similar to you in the past, and you will learn the common spelling exceptions for some vowel sounds within frequently used words. Memorizing these exceptions will significantly improve your accent.

audio 2.2

Review of /I/ and /i/ Sounds

*"**Real** r**i**ches are the r**i**ches possessed **i**nside."*
B. C. Forbes

The /I/ sound is easy to identify because it is almost always spelled with the letter *i* as in *big*. The /i/ sound is more commonly spelled with two vowels such as ***ee*** or ***ea***, as in *meet*, or *team*. Remember to relax your tongue and lips for the /I/ sound and to make them tense for the /i/ sound.

Warning: Common Mistake!



Confusing /I/ and /i/ can cause embarrassment or can be offensive.

Do you mean?	*Or?*
/i/	/I/
sheet	shit
beach	bitch
piece	piss

audio 2.3

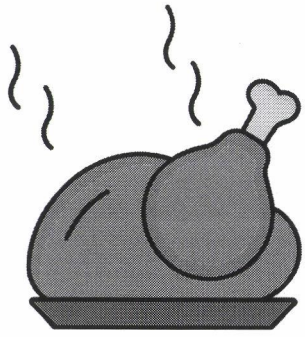
Practice Dialogue 1

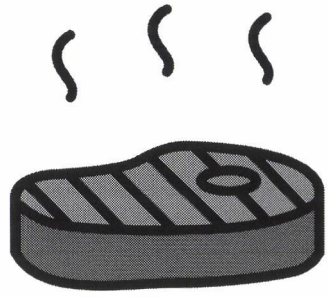
1. a. Is it difficult?
   b. No, it's unbelievably easy.
2. a. I feel ill.
   b. Drink some green tea.
3. a. Please meet me for dinner.
   b. I will be there at six.
4. a. Is it expensive?
   b. No, it isn't. It's really cheap.
5. a. I need a refill of these pills.
   b. Speak with your physician.
6. a. Is he still really sick?
   b. No, he's just feeling a little weak.
7. a. This is completely different.
   b. But it is interesting, isn't it?

audio 2.4

Practice Dialogue 2

Fish and visitors stink after three days.
Benjamin Franklin





Chicken or Beef?

A. What do you feel like eating for dinner? Chicken or beef?

B. Let's see. I don't want to eat meat. How about something different this week? We can eat seafood.

A. Fish? If you insist. But isn't fish expensive?

B. No, some fish can be cheap, but shrimp is a little expensive.

audio 2.5

Words with Multiple /I/ Sounds

The following words contain two or more /I/ sounds. The common mistake is to pronounce one of those vowel sounds as /i/ because the /I/ vowel sound doesn't exist in most other languages. Listen carefully and repeat.

1. ability
2. activity
3. business
4. citizen
5. creativity
6. critic
7. critical
8. diminish
9. discipline
10. dismiss
11. division
12. facility
13. finish
14. flexibility
15. ignition
16. imitate
17. intimidating
18. invisible
19. limit
20. lyric
21. minimum
22. Olympic
23. original
24. physical
25. physician
26. possibility
27. responsibility
28. significant
29. similar
30. simplicity
31. typical
32. visibility
33. visit

audio 2.6

CRISIS Versus CRISES

Vowel Sound Changes with Irregular Plurals

Some English nouns that originate from Greek or Latin have irregular plural forms. Nouns that end in ***-is*** often change to ***-es*** in the plural. Notice the vowel and consonant sound changes between the singular and plural forms of these words.

In the singular ***-is*** ending, the ***i*** is pronounced /ɪ/, as in *crisis*. In the plural ***-es*** ending, the ***e*** is pronounced /i/, as in *crises*. Additionally, in the singular **-is** ending, the ***s*** is pronounced as /s/. In the plural ***-es*** ending, the ***s*** changes to a /z/ sound.

1. analysis - analyses

Singular: The scientist conducted an **analysis**.

Plural: The researchers compared their **analyses**.

2. axis - axes

Singular: The Earth rotates on its **axis**.

Plural: We compared the **axes** of the two graphs.

3. basis - bases

Singular: Trust is the **basis** of a good friendship.

Plural: The studies rely on strong scientific **bases**.

4. crisis - crises

Singular: They are facing a financial **crisis**.

Plural: Several **crises** are affecting the economy.

5. diagnosis - diagnoses

Singular: The doctor gave a **diagnosis**.

Plural: The two doctors gave different **diagnoses**.

6. hypothesis -hypotheses

Singular: The researcher proposed a new **hypothesis**.

Plural: The experiment tested multiple **hypotheses**.

7. oasis - oases

Singular: We found an **oasis** in the middle of the desert.

Plural: There are several **oases** in the Sahara.

8. parenthesis - parentheses

Singular: I included the clarification in a **parenthesis**.

Plural: Use **parentheses** to add extra information.

9. synopsis - synopses

Singular: I read the **synopsis** of the movie.

Plural: The book includes **synopses** of all the chapters.

10. thesis - theses

Singular: She completed her master's **thesis**.

Plural: The professor reviewed several **theses**.

audio 2.7

REVIEW OF /ɛ/ AND /æ/ SOUNDS

Remember that for the /æ/ sound the jaw is more open, and the tongue is down at the floor of your mouth. For the /ɛ/ sound, the jaw is just slightly down.

Sentence Pairs for Practice

/ɛ/	/æ/
1. Don't think about the **pest**.	Don't think about the **past.**
2. He gave me a **letter**.	He gave me a **ladder**.
3. **Send** it carefully.	**Sand** it carefully.
4. The **men** helped me.	The **man** helped me.
5. I need a new **pen**.	I need a new **pan**.
6. Do you need to **beg**?	Do you need a **bag**?

audio 2.8

Word Pairs in Sentences

1. This **bed** is **bad.**
2. **Dan** is in the **den.**
3. She **said** that she was **sad.**
4. I **guess** I need **gas**.
5. They **laughed** after he **left**.
6. I **bet** that's a **bat**.

audio 2.9

Sentences for Practice

1. Every member of my family is left handed.
2. My best friend Frank is a successful dentist.
3. Kenny's bad headache lasted several days.
4. Glen drank ten glasses of fresh lemonade.
5. Everyone was happy that he was elected president.
6. Don't forget to thank Dan for the generous present.

audio 2.10

Practice Paragraph



"Trip to France"

Next January I'm planning to visit my friends in France. Last time I went there I was only ten or eleven. I would love to go back again. I am taking a class called "French for Travelers". We are memorizing vocabulary and learning the present and past tenses. I want

my French to get better and I am practicing every chance I get. I rented a French film and I felt so bad because I didn't understand a word they said. I guess I will have to make extra effort. I want to learn the language and have a better accent so that people can understand me when I am asking for directions and ordering in restaurants.

audio 2.11

Review of /ʌ/, /ɑ/, /ɔ/ and /ou/ Sounds

These sounds are frequently confused. Non-native speakers sometimes do not clearly distinguish the difference between *cup*, *cop*, *cap*, and *cope*.

/ʌ/	/ɑ/, and /ɔ/	/ou/
The sound /ʌ/ as in *fun* or *cup* is a neutral vowel, meaning that everything in your mouth is relaxed and the lips are just very slightly open.	In contrast to the /ʌ/ sound, the /ɑ/ as in *father* and /ɔ/ as in saw the mouth is open. The sounds /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ are very similar sounds, except for the /ɔ/ the lips a bit more oval in shape and the tongue is slightly tense. However, in many parts of the United States, the /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ are pronounced the same. For example, many Americans pronounce hot and tall the same way.	For the /ou/ sound, as in *boat* the lips are rounded and tense.

Warning: Common Mistake!



Confusing /ʌ/, /ɑ/, /ɔ/ and /ou/ can cause embarrassment or can be offensive.

Do you mean?	*Or?*
/ʌ/	/ɔ/
Doug	dog

audio 2.12

Practice Dialogue

"Coffee Tomorrow"

/ou/ /ɔ/
a. Hi Nic**o**le. Can you t**a**lk?

/ou/ /ɑ/ /ou/ /ɑ/ /ɑ/ /ʌ/ /ɔ/ /ɔ/ /ɑ/
b. **O**h, hi J**o**hn. Can you h**o**ld **o**n? I'm **o**n an**o**ther c**a**ll. I'm t**a**lking to my b**o**ss.

/ou/ /ɑ/ /ʌ/
a. N**o** pr**o**blem. I'll wait 'til you're d**o**ne.

/ou/ /ɔ/ /ɑ/ ou/ /ɔ/ /ʌ/ /ou/ /ɑ/
b. **O**kay, now I can t**a**lk. I am s**o**rry it took s**o** l**o**ng. Wh**a**t's g**o**ing **o**n?

/ʌ/ /ʌ/ /ʌ/ /ou/ /ʌ/ /ɔ/
a. N**o**thing m**u**ch. I j**u**st wanted to kn**ow** if we can meet for l**u**nch or for c**o**ffee tom**o**rrow.

/ʌ/ /ɑ/ /ɑ/ /ʌ/ /ɑ/
b. That sounds like f**u**n. I've been working n**o**n-st**o**p and I'd l**o**ve to get out of the **o**ffice.

audio 2.13

The Problematic "O"

*Tr**ou**ble is **o**nly **o**pportunity in work cl**o**thes.*
Kaiser, Henry

Words spelled with the letter ***o*** can cause many frustrations for students of the American accent. You have already learned that the pronunciation of a vowel does not necessarily correspond to the spelling of the vowel. This is especially true of the letter ***o***. The letters ***o*** in the words *job, love,* and *only* are all pronounced differently.

Here is quote by Helen Keller which contains fourteen words spelled with the letter ***o*** and has all three different vowel pronunciations:

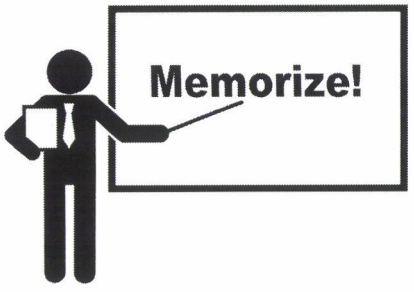
*"When **o**ne d**oo**r of happiness cl**o**ses, an**o**ther **o**pens; but **o**ften we look s**o** l**o**ng at the cl**o**sed d**oo**r that we d**o** n**o**t see the **o**ne which has **o**pened for us."*

The Neutral /ʌ/ Sound

First, let's look at the most problematic sound with an ***o*** spelling. It's the neutral sound /ʌ/, as in *love*, *other*, and *Monday*, which non-native speakers frequently mispronounce as *laav*,

ather, and *Mahn day*. The wrong pronunciation occurs because the /ʌ/ doesn't exist in some languages and also because learners are used to this sound usually being spelled with the letter ***u*** as in *up*, *fun*, and *Sunday*. You will improve your American accent if you simply mem- orize some very common words with the neutral /ə/ sound that are spelled with an ***o***, or ***ou***, or even ***oo***. Start by studying the pronunciation exceptions in the chart below.

audio 2.14



Memorizing the Exceptions

Words spelled with *a* but pronounced as /ʌ/.

above	done	money	once	somewhere
another	dove	month	one	son
brother	from	mother	other	ton
color	gonna	none	oven	tongue
cover	love	nothing	some	won
come	Monday	of	something	wonderful
does				

Words spelled with "ou" and pronounced as /ʌ/.

double	cousin	country	enough	couple
touch	tough	rough	Douglas	southern

Words spelled with "oo" and pronounced as /ʌ/.

blood	flood

Words spelled with "oo" and pronounced as /ʌ/.

what	was

audio 2.15

Dialogues for Practice

Pay attention to the words that have the /ə/ sound. As we noted before, most of the time the /ə/ sound is spelled with a ***u***, as in "lunch", but some common words with this sound are also spelled with an ***o***, such as "love" and "son."

1. a. Let's go out for l**u**nch.

   b. I would l**o**ve to, b**u**t I don't have en**ou**gh m**o**ney.

   a. I have s**o**me m**o**ney.

   b. Oh thanks so m**u**ch. I'll pay you back next m**o**nth.

   a. Don't worry about it. L**u**nch d**oe**sn't cost so m**u**ch.

2. a. Wh**a**t a l**o**vely r**u**g! How m**u**ch is it?

   b. Two h**u**ndred dollars.

   a. Do you have an**o**ther c**o**lor?

   b. I'm sorry it d**oe**sn't c**o**me in **o**ther c**o**lors.

3. a. Wh**a**t c**ou**ntry is she fr**o**m?

   b. She c**o**mes fr**o**m R**u**ssia.

   a. I w**o**nder if her h**u**sband D**ou**g speak R**u**ssian too.

   b. No he d**oe**sn't. He's fr**o**m L**o**ndon. He j**u**st speaks English. B**u**t he plans to st**u**dy it.

   a. I w**a**s in R**u**ssia **o**nce and I l**o**ved it.

4. a. What are you doing on S**u**nday?

   b. N**o**thing m**u**ch. I'm j**u**st going for a r**u**n.

   a. I'm having br**u**nch with my m**o**ther. Would you like to c**o**me with **u**s?

   b. That sounds w**o**nderful.

5.a. How's your y**ou**nger br**o**ther?

   b. He's visiting **u**s with his s**o**n.

a. Are they staying for the whole s**u**mmer?

b. No, j**u**st **u**ntil next M**o**nday.

audio 2.16

Word Pairs in Sentences

The following word pairs are spelled the same except for one consonant being different. Both words are spelled with an ***o***, but the ***o***'s are pronounced differently**.** The second word of the pair is the /ʌ/ sound.

other vowel sound	/ʌ/	
1. bother	brother	Don't b**o**ther your br**o**ther.
2. Rome	come	When will you c**o**me to R**o**me?
3. bone	done	The dog is d**o**ne with the b**o**ne.
4. Tom	from	Where is T**o**m fr**o**m?
5. pouch	touch	Don't t**ou**ch the p**ou**ch.
6. cough	tough	It's t**ou**gh to have a c**ou**gh.
7. goes	does	He g**oe**s there and d**oe**s it.
8. collar	color	What is the c**o**lor of the c**o**llar?
9. over	oven	Come **o**ver to see my new **o**ven.

audio 2.17

Sentence Pairs for Practice

	/ɑ/	/ʌ/
1.	You have a good **lock**.	You have good **luck**.
2.	Where is that **cop**?	Where is that **cup**?
3.	I **shot** it.	I **shut** it.
4.	He's a big **boss**.	It's a big **bus**.
5.	This is **Don**.	This is **done.**



Study Tip

Words spelled with the letter ***o*** can be confusing because there are three different ways to pronounce the ***o***. Here are three tips to help you avoid pronunciation mistakes:

1. Memorize the words that you use most frequently.
2. Practice listening to native speakers.
3. When in doubt, check the dictionary.

audio 2.18

Three Different Ways to Pronounce the *o*.

Remember, the ***o*** spelling can be pronounced as either /ʌ/ as in *love*, /ɑ/ as in *lock* or /ou/ as in *post*.

Words for Practice

/ʌ/	/ɑ/	/ou/
come	comma	coma
company	common	cold
cover	college	comb
done	dot	donor
love	lock	local

money	modern	mobile
month	mom	moment
mother	model	motor
some	soccer	social
tongue	top	told

audio 2.19

Review of /ae/ versus /ʌ/

Two commonly confused vowel sounds are the /ae/ and /ʌ/. Because neither one of these vowel sounds exist in most other languages, many non-native speakers wrongly pronounce both vowel sounds as /ɑ/. For example, they pronounce both *ran* and *run* as "raaan" Let's practice fixing this common mistake.

audio 2.20

Word Pairs for Practice

Make sure that the two words in each pair are pronounced with different vowel sounds:

/ae/	/ʌ/	/ae/	/ʌ/
ankle	uncle	fan	fun
bat	but	lack	luck
began	begun	match	much
cap	cop	ran	run
cat	cut	sang	sung
crash	crush	staff	stuff
drank	drunk	swam	swum

Word Pairs

good book	sugar cookie
took a look	push and pull

good looking	wool pullover
fully cooked	wooden hook
shook his foot	good childhood

audio 2.21

Word Pairs in Sentences

Make sure that you pronounce the two similar sounding words with different vowel sounds. One is /ae/ and one is /ʌ/.

1. That **stuff** is for the **staff.**
2. My **uncle** sprained his **ankle.**
3. It's **fun** to meet the **fans**.
4. He got **drunk** because he **drank** a lot.
5. The tennis **match** was so **much** fun.
6. Give me **back** my ten **bucks**.

audio 2.22

The American /ɔ/ Sound

In American English, the /ɔ/ sound as in caught and all is very similar to the /ɑ/ sound as in want or hot. In fact, these two sounds, /ɔ/ and /ɑ/, are so similar in many parts of the United States that some language experts even claim that they are the same sound. So, while going through these lessons, if you are not able to clearly distinguish between these two vowels, don't worry about it; neither can many native speakers of American English.

audio 2.23

Warning: Common Mistake!



If you studied English outside the United States, you might have learned British pronunciation. The vowel sound that is most noticeably differ- ent between British and American English is the /ɔ/. In British English, this sound is much more rounded, almost like the /oʊ/. The words "coat" and "caught" sound similar in British English, but as you have learned, they are very different in American English. Let's practice pronouncing the differences between these two sounds /ɔ/ and /oʊ/.

audio 2.24

Sentence Pairs for Practice

	/ɔ/	/oʊ/
1.	He's a **bald** man.	He's a **bold** man.
2.	Where is the **ball**?	Where is the **bowl**?
3.	That's a big **hall**.	That's a big **hole**.
4.	Don't **pause** now.	Don't **pose** now.
5.	I have a big **lawn**.	I have a big **loan**.

audio 2.25

Word Pairs in Sentences

/ɔ/ /oʊ/
1. I **bought** a new **boat**.

/ɔ/ /oʊ/
2. There is a **ball** in the **bowl**.

/ɔ/ /oʊ/
3. Did you **call** about the **coal**?

/ɔ/ /oʊ/
4. You **ought** to eat **oats**.

/ɔ/ /oʊ/
5. I was **awed** that he **owed** so much.

audio 2.26

Sentences for Practice for /ɔ/ and /oʊ/

1. We **a**ll th**ou**ght that J**oe** went to R**o**me.
2. I b**ou**ght some **clothes** at the m**a**ll.
3. The **au**dience appl**au**ded when the sh**ow** was **o**ver.
4. P**au**l is g**oi**ng h**o**me in **Au**gust.
5. We're g**oi**ng for a w**a**lk even th**ou**gh it's c**o**ld.
6. The **au**thor wr**o**te his **au**tobiography.



Study Tip

Have you ever heard Americans speak your native language? Practice imitating their accent. This will help you get in touch with the American mouth movements and sounds.

For example, when Americans speak Spanish, you will notice that they often prolong the Spanish ***o*** into an /ou/ sound. "Hola amigo" often sounds like saying: "**ou**la amig**ou.**" Or, "My friends are Ricardo and Roberto." Sounds like: "My friends are Ricard**ou** and Robert**ou**."

A similar vowel change often occurs when Americans speak French. The vowel **/ɛ/** ends up sounding like /eɪ/**.** "Je vais au marche" can sound like: "Je ve**iii** au marche**iii**. When you speak English, prolong these vowels the same way, and you will be on the right track!

audio 2.27

Review of /ɛ/, /æ/, /ɑ/, /ɔ/, /ʌ/ and /oʊ/.

Here is a quote by Mother Theresa which contains all of the vowels we just finished reviewing:

/oʊ/ /ɑ/ /ɑ/ /ɛ/ /æ/ /æ/ /ʌ/ /æ/ /ʌ/
"I kn**ow** G**o**d will n**o**t give me **a**nything I c**a**n't h**a**ndle. I j**u**st wish th**a**t He didn't tr**u**st

/oʊ/ /ʌ/
me with s**o** m**u**ch."

audio 2.28

Let's review the vowel sounds that we have been working on so far. Practice saying the short words that contain the sounds /ɛ/, /æ/, /ɑ/, /ɔ/, /ʌ/ and /oʊ/.

/ɛ/	/æ/	/ɑ,ɔ/	/ʌ/	/oʊ/
kept	cap	cop	cup	cope
kettle	cat	cot	cut	coat
best	bass	boss	bus	boast
shell	shadow	Shawn	shun	shown
leg	lack	lock	luck	low
net	gnat	not	nut	note
bet	bat	bought	but	boat
lend	land	lawn	London	loan
Ned	Nancy	non	none	known
red	rat	rot	rut	wrote
end	and	on	under	own
went	wag	want	won	won't

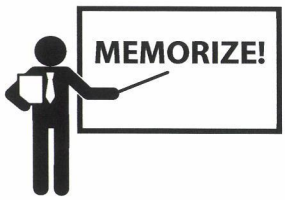
audio 2.29

The Problematic /ʊ/ Sound

The /ʊ/ sound can be very challenging for many non-native speakers of English. Learners often confuse it with the /u/ sound. For example, they mistakenly pronounce "book" or "foot" with the same vowel as in "boot" or "food." The /u/ sound in "food" is familiar to most learners. It exists in most other languages. However, the neutral and relaxed /ʊ/ sound, as in "good" or "foot" often requires extra practice. These two sounds are especially confusing because they are both often spelled with "oo."

Some very common English words are pronounced with the difficult /ʊ/ sound, but luckily there aren't too many of them. Therefore, it is advisable that you memorize them. Here are the most common words pronounced with the /ʊ/ sound organized by their spelling patterns.

audio 2.30



Memorize These Words

Most common words with the /ʊ/ sound spelled with "oo."

adulthood	book	childhood
cook	cookie	foot
football	good	hood
hook	look	neighborhood
shook	stood	took
understood	wood	wool

Most common words with the /ʊ/ sound spelled with "u." bull

bullet	bush	butcher
full	pull	push
put	sugar	hood

Words with the /ʊ/ sound spelled with "ould."

could	should	would

Words with the /ʊ/ sound spelled with "o"

wolf	woman

audio 2.31

Review of the /ʊ/ and /u/ Sounds

Remember, the /**ʊ**/ is a relaxed sound with the lips almost neutral, just very slightly rounded. In contrast, the /**u**/ is tense sound. The lips are rounded and tense.

Sentence Pairs for Practice

	/u/	/ʊ/
	A.	B.
1.	Are you a **fool?**	Are you **full?**
2.	Take care of that **food.**	Take care of that **foot.**
3.	I bought some new **boots**.	I bought some new **books.**
4.	This is a **cool** book.	This is **cook** book.
5.	We need a **pool.**	We need to **pull**.
6.	Where is the **shoe**?	Where is the **sugar**?

audio 2.32

Dialogues for Practice

1. a. Will you start to c**oo**k s**oo**n?

   b. No, I am still t**oo** f**u**ll to think of f**oo**d.

2. a. Who t**oo**k my c**oo**kie?

   b. Don't l**oo**k at *me*.

3. a. You sh**ou**ld have some s**ou**p. It's so g**oo**d.

   b. No thanks, I'm really f**u**ll.

4. a. He's f**oo**lish to walk in the w**oo**ds by himself.

   b. Yes. There are a lot of w**o**lves in those w**oo**ds.

   a. I think that w**o**lves howl when the m**oo**n is f**u**ll.

   b. Is that really tr**ue**?

5. a. Do you like my n**ew** b**oo**ts?

   b. Yes, they're c**oo**l.

a. And take a l**oo**k at my bl**ue** s**ui**t. It's made of w**oo**l.

b. To tell you the tr**u**th, I w**ould**n't wear the bl**ue** s**ui**t if I were y**ou**.

a. Don't you think it l**oo**ks g**oo**d on me?

b. I think you sh**ou**ld return it.

a. And *I* think *you* sh**ou**ldn't be so r**u**de.

audio 2.33

Comparing /u/ and /yu/

Certain words that contain the letter u are sometimes pronounced differently in other English accents. For example, some British speakers often add an extra /y/ sound before the /u/. Students who studied British English in their native countries are often surprised to learn that Americans say "Tooz-day" for *Tuesday* instead of the British t+youz-day. Similarly, they may have learned to say "t+you+n" for *tune* rather than "toon" as Americans do.

Here are some common words spelled with the letter "u" and pronounced as /u/ rather than as "you".

audio 2.34

Words for Practice

attit**u**de	gratit**u**de	red**u**ce	st**u**pid	T**ue**sday
cost**u**me	introd**u**ce	sed**u**ce	st**u**dent	t**u**mor
d**ue**	opport**u**nity	solit**u**de	st**u**dio	t**u**ne
d**u**ty	prod**u**ce	t**u**be	t**u**tor	

audio 2.35

Sentences for Practice

1. It's your d**u**ty to prod**u**ce it by T**ue**sday.
2. Those st**u**dents like iT**u**nes and YouT**u**be.
3. May I introd**u**ce you to my t**u**tor?
4. The prod**u**cer is in the st**u**dio working on a new t**u**ne.

5. I assume that it's due on Tuesday.
6. That's a stupid attitude, Stewart.

audio 2.36

Review of the /ɝ/ Sound

Life is uncertain. Eat dessert first.
Ernestine Ulmer

The words *work, turn, bird,* and *early* are all spelled with a different vowel, yet the vowel sound is the same. This frequently happens when a vowel is followed by the letter ***r***. The sound remains /ɝ /. Non-native speakers are frequently tempted to pronounce the vowels as they are spelled, and they make the common mistakes of saying "wore+k" instead of "were+k" (for *work*) and "two+rn" instead of *turn*. Sometimes they will even pronounce *bird* as "beer+d."

audio 2.37

Words for Practice

Practice saying the following words with the /ɝ / sound and make sure that the vowel sound doesn't change even though the spelling does.

	ER	EAR	IR	OR	UR
1.	her	early	circle	work	turn
2.	serve	earth	dirt	worry	curly
3.	verb	earn	first	worse	burn
4.	were	heard	girl	worm	Thursday
5.	nerd	learn	birthday	world	hurt

audio 2.38

Sentences for Practice

1. What were the first words that she learned?
2. I will learn the German verbs by Thursday.
3. It's too early to serve dessert.

4. The third version is worse than the first.
5. It's not worth worrying about another birthday.
6. I heard some curse words at work.
7. They weren't certain that the Earth circles the sun.

audio 2.39

Vowels Followed by the /r/ Sound

The quality of the vowel often changes when the ***r*** follows it. There is a slight /ə/ sound that is added after certain vowels, making it sound almost as if the word contains an extra syllable. "Fire" sound like "fai /ə/+r"

Words for Practice

Remember to add an extra /ə/ sound before the /r/ sound.

/ iər/	/ɑər/	/aʊər/	/aɪər/	/oʊər/	/ɛər/
fear	far	hour	hire	four	hair
near	star	sour	tired	tore	there
hear	hard	power	expire	more	care
clear	large	flower	Ireland	bored	stairs

audio 2.40

Sentences for Practice

1. Take the stairs in case of fire.
2. The employer is hiring and firing.
3. I hear that it expired on the fourth.
4. I can't afford to shop in that store.
5. I am near the cashier by the stairs.
6. How far is Ireland from here?

audio 3.1

CHAPTER THREE

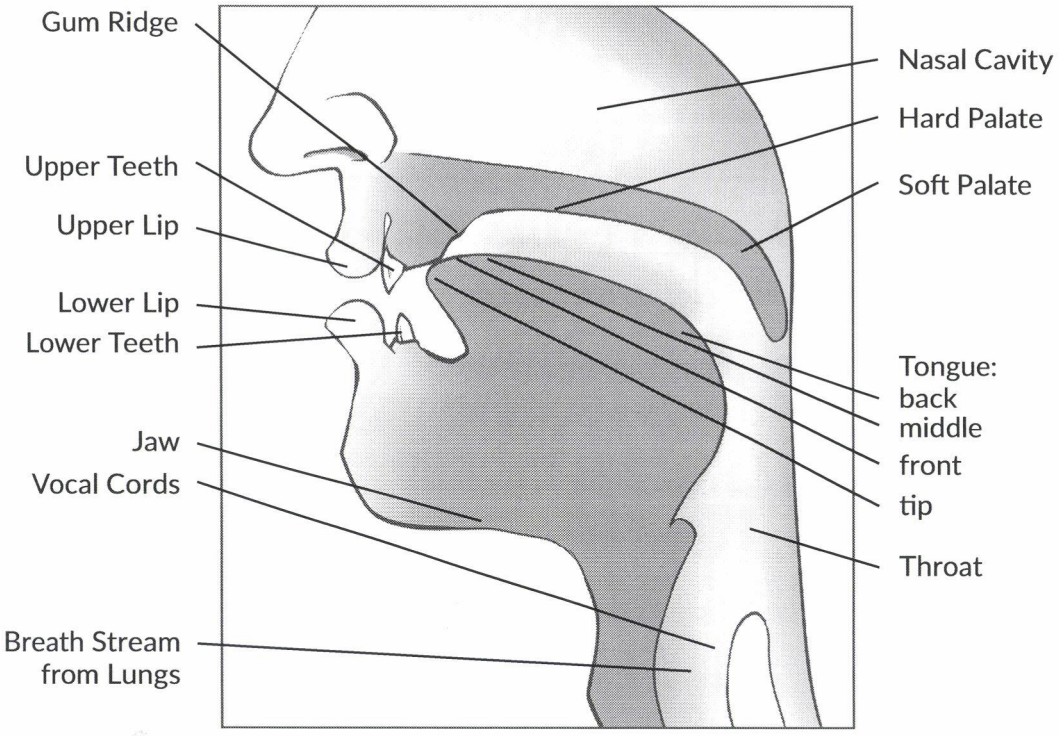
Consonants

Forming American Consonants

When you are learning another accent, it is very helpful to know how the instruments of the mouth work together to produce sound. One reason that you have an accent when you are speaking English is that you are may not be moving your tongue and lips the same way as a native speaker.

A consonant is a sound that is made when the airflow is blocked by either your lips or your tongue. The different places where this block may occur are called "points of articulation." The point of articulation is, therefore, a point of contact of one part of your mouth with another part. For example, when you produce the sound **/p/** (which is spelled with the letter ***p***) your lips come together and close shut. So, the points of contact here are your two lips. The sound **/b/** (which is spelled with a letter ***b***) is also produced by your lips touching, as is the sound **/m/.**

Sometimes the points of contact, or points of articulation, occur when the tip of your tongue touches directly behind the upper teeth, a part of your mouth called the gum ridge. The sounds that are produced at this point are **/t/**, **/d/**, **/n/**, and **/l/**. Another point of contact occurs when the back part of your tongue touches the back part of your mouth, near the throat, as in **/g/** and **/k/**. You don't necessarily need to learn the formal names of the different parts of your mouth, but you should develop an awareness of where the points of contact are. Studying the illustration on the next page will help you do this.



audio 3.2

Voiceless And Voiced Consonants

One way that we categorize consonants is by determining whether they are "voiceless" or "voiced." It's important to know the difference between these types because the length of a vowel that precedes a consonant is determined by whether the consonant that follows it is voiceless or voiced. You will learn more about this later in the chapter. Also, knowing whether a sound is voiceless or voiced will help to correctly pronounce letters such as *-ed* and *-s* at the ends of words. You will learn about this in detail in the next chapter.

First, let's learn how to distinguish between a voiced and a voiceless consonant. Place your fingers in the front, middle part of your neck. Now say /z/ as in the word zoo. Now, let's make it longer: zzzzzzzzzz. You should feel a vibration in your vocal cords. This is how you know that the /z/ sound is voiced. Now let's try this with the /s/ sound as in the word sat. Say /s/. Now let's prolong it: *sssssssss*. This time there was no vibration in your vocal cords, so this consonant is considered unvoiced. That's all there is to it. The tongue and lip posi- tions of the /z/ and /s/ are identical. The only difference between them is vibration or no vibration. Look at the other consonant pairs that are produced exactly the same way, except for the vibration in the vocal cords.

audio 3.3

Voiceless and Voiced Consonant Pairs

Voiceless: vocal cords do not vibrate		**Voiced:** vocal cords vibrate		**How to Produce the Sound**
/p/	pet rope	/b/	bet robe	Lips fully together, then parted quickly to produce a small release of air.
/t/	ten seat	/d/	den seed	Tip of the tongue is slightly tense as it firmly touches and then releases the gum ridge.
/k/	class back	/g/	glass bag	Back of tongue presses up against soft palate (back of mouth) and releases.
/f/	fault leaf	/v/	vault leave	Lower lips lightly touch upper teeth; vibration occurs on the lips from the flow of air created.
/θ/	thank breath	/ð/	this breathe	Tip of the tongue touches back of front teeth or edges of front teeth. Air flows out between tongue and teeth.
/s/	sink price	/z/ /	zinc prize	Sides of tongue touch middle and back upper teeth. Tip of tongue is lowered a bit. Air flows out of middle part of the tongue.
/ʃ/	pressure wish	/ʒ/	pleasure massage	Tip of tongue is down, sides of tongue are against upper teeth on sides of mouth. Air flows out through middle of tongue.
/tʃ/ choke rich		/dʒ/	joke ridge	Tip of tongue is down, sides of tongue are against upper teeth on the side of mouth. Tip of tongue quickly touches gum ridge and then releases.

More Voiced Consonants

Now let's go through the rest of the consonant sounds of English. These consonants are all voiced but they have no voiceless pair. Make sure that you feel the vibration in your vocal cords as you say them.

/m/	**m**om fro**m** le**m**on	Lips together. Air flows out of the nose.
/n/	**n**on fu**n** a**n**y	Tip of tongue touches gum ridge, and the sides of the tongue touch upper teeth; air any flows out of the nose.
/ŋ/	goi**ng** spri**ng** ki**ng**	Back of the tongue touches the soft palate; air flows out of the nose.
/l/	**l**ove **l**ill **l**ellow	Tip of tongue touches upper gum ridge. Tongue is tense. Air comes out on the sides of the tongue. Air comes out on the sides of the tongue, at the corners of the mouth.
/r/	**r**ed **r**our **r**ard	There are two ways to produce this sound: 1: Tip of tongue curls a bit and then is pulled back slightly. 2: Tip of tongue is down; center of the tongue touches hard palate.
/w/	**w**in **l**ower **q**uiet	Rounded lips as for the vowel /u/ in *moon*. Air flows out through the lips. Tongue is in position for the vowel sound that follows the /w/.
/y/	**y**es ma**y**or **y**oung	Tip of tongue touches lower front teeth. Front of tongue is raised near the hard palate.

The Consonant /h/

The final consonant sound is voiceless and does not have a voiced pair.

/h/	**h**appy be**h**ave **wh**o	Vocal cords are tense and restricted, back of tongue is pushed against the throat to create friction as the air flows out from the back of the mouth.

audio 3.4

Vowel Length and Voiced and Voiceless Consonants

Vowels are **longer** when followed by a **voiced consonant** and **shorter** when followed by a **voiceless consonant**. Even short vowels like /I/, /ɛ/, /ʌ/, and /ʊ/ are prolonged when followed by a voiced consonant.

Warning: Common Mistake!



When you lengthen a vowel make sure that you don't change it to a different vowel sound. For example, when you prolong the vowel of *hid* make sure that it doesn't sound like *heed*.

Voiceless and Voiced Consonants

Word Pairs for Practice

voiceless	voiced	voiceless	voiced
/s/	/z/	/t/	/d/
advice	advise	mate	made
ice	eyes	hat	had
niece	knees	bet	bed
place	plays	neat	need
prices	prizes	got	God
voiceless	**voiced**	**voiceless**	**voiced**
/f/	/v/	/k/	/g/
half	have	back	bag
life	live	dock	dog
belief	believe	duck	Doug
leaf	leave	tack	tag
proof	prove	buck	bug

audio 3.5

Sentence Pairs for Practice

	voiceless	**voiced**
1.	My wallet is in the **back.**	My wallet is in the **bag**.
2.	I saw five **bucks** on the floor.	I saw five **bugs** on the floor.
3.	He has blue **ice**.	He has blue **eyes**.
4.	I heard about the **lice**.	I heard about the **lies**.
5.	We need **peace.**	We need **peas**.

6. Take these **seats**.	Take these **seeds**.
7. Did you like the new **place**?	Did you like the new **plays**?
8. That's a great **price**.	That's a great **prize**.

audio 3.6

Word Pairs in Sentences

1. He told me **lies** about the **lice.**
2. His **eyes** are **ice** cold.
3. There was a **buzz** in the **bus**.
4. The **dog** is on the **dock**.

audio 3.7

Stops and Continuants

There is another important way that consonants are categorized, besides whether they are voiced or voiceless. Consonants can either be "stops" or "continuants," depending on whether the airflow is stopped or if it is continued. For example, when we say the /s/ sound we can prolong it by saying "yesssssss." The /s/ sound is considered a continuant because the air flow can continue as long as we have air in our lungs. But if we say a word like "job," we cannot continue the final consonant, /b/. We stop the airflow by closing our lips. There- fore, /b/ is a stop. If we quickly open our lips, we can then "release" the stop and say job.

audio 3.8

Holding Final Stops

Americans generally do not release the final stops. For example, when they say the sound /p/ in the word *stop*, the lips stay closed. No air comes out. This creates almost a silent version of the sound /p/, or a half ***p***. We know the ***p*** is there, but we don't hear all of it. If the lips were released, there would be a slight puff of air.

Let's try another stop: the sound /g/. When you say the word *big*, don't release the /g/. Make sure that your tongue remains up in the back of your mouth when you are done saying the word.

audio 3.9

Words for Practice

final *p*

stop	cup	up	shop

final *b*

club	job	sub	tub

final *d*

married	played	sad	dad

final *t*

that	sat	it	cut

audio 3.10

Final Stops Followed by Consonants

The final stop is held when the next word within the same sentence is another consonant. However, when the final stop is at the end of the sentence, this rule is much more flexible. The sound can either be held or released.

Word Groups for Practice

Make sure you hold the final consonant of the first word of the pair.

hel**p** him	sto**p** that
kee**p** talking	jo**b** market
di**d** that	bi**g** park
coul**d** go	cu**p** cake

audio 4.1

CHAPTER FOUR

Problematic Consonants

This chapter will help you to fix the most common consonant error that non-native speakers of English make. The pronunciation of some of these sounds is exclusive to American English, and other times the pronunciation is difficult for non-native speakers because the sound does not exist in their native language.

audio 4.2

The Various *T* Sounds of American English

"A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes."
Hugh Downs

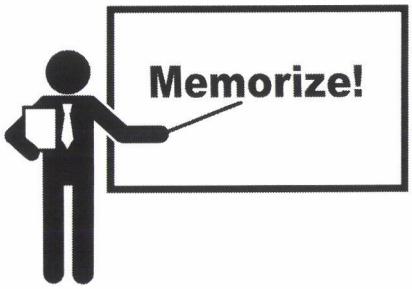
We'll start with one of the most distinctly American consonants, the letter ***t***. The ***t*** can be pronounced in several different ways, depending on its position in a word and depending on the other sounds that surround it. Sometimes the ***t*** sounds more like a ***d*** (as in *water* and *atom*), and sometimes it is not pronounced at all, (as in *often* and *interview*). Other times it's barely pronounced (as in *but* and *cat*.) Also, it can change to a different sound when it is followed by an ***r*** sound (as in *try* or *truth*).

audio 4.3

The Held *T*

In the previous chapter you learned how to hold the final consonants. The ***t*** is the most commonly held consonant in American English and holding the ***t*** is one of the most recognizable features of the American accent. Native speakers of other English accents, such as British English, tend to release the final ***t*** sound when the next word begins with a consonant. And non-native speakers of English also almost always release the ***t*** the same way.

The held t is created with the tongue touching the gum ridge (the top part behind your teeth) and not coming back down. You hold the tongue up and no air comes out of your mouth. The other way to create that held ***t*** is to close the vocal cords to stop the air flow and then quickly release.



Study Tip

We always hold the ***t*** when the following letter is a consonant, regardless if that following consonant is part of the same word or if is at the beginning of the next word.

Examples: "apar**t**ment"

"tha**t** man"

Did you say *can* or *can't*?

The silent *t* is one of the reasons why you may have a hard time hearing the difference between the words *can* and *can't*. Listen for the held *t* for *can't*. Also the vowel in the word *can't* is usually longer because negative auxiliaries are stressed more than affirmative auxiliaries within sentences. You can learn more about word stress in Chapter Six.

audio 4.4

Held "t" + Consonant

a. Always hold the final *t* when the next word begins with a consonant.

i**t** was	can'**t** go	didn'**t** like	eigh**t** weeks
migh**t** do	a**t** work	won'**t** need	budge**t** cu**t**

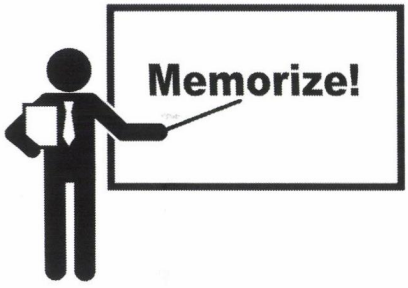
b. Always hold the *t* when the next letter within the same word is a consonant.

foo**t**ball	la**t**ely	a**t**mosphere	A**t**lanta
ou**t**side	nigh**t**mare	a**t**las	bu**t**ler

audio 4.5

Sentences for Practice

1. I might not do that.
2. It's not that great.
3. He built that website last night.
4. It felt quite hot in Vermont.
5. What?! That can't be right!
6. Matt went out for a bite to eat.
7. That apartment felt quite hot.
8. If you eat out every night you'll get fat.



Study Tip

Make a list of the most common words that are used in your workplace, or if you are a student, the terminology in your field of study. Find out the correct pronunciation of these words. Also, master the pronunciation of the name of the company that you work for and the names of your American co-workers. This will greatly add to you confidence level when you are speaking in a professional situations.

audio 4.6

Held t Before /n/ Sound

When the *t* is followed by an /n/ sound within a word, make sure you hold the *t*. For example, when pronouncing *button*, hold the *t* as in *but*, and then add an /n/ without releasing the tongue from the gum ridge: "but + n."

Words for Practice

cer*t*ain	moun*t*ain	co*tt*on	ea*t*en	forgo*tt*en
go*tt*en	ligh*t*en	Bri*t*ain	wri*tt*en	frigh*t*en

audio 4.7

Sentences for Practice

1. I will short**ten** the cur**tain**.
2. He has ea**ten** the ro**tten** food.
3. I'm cer**tain** that it was wri**tten** in Bri**tain**.
4. I've already forgo**tten** the sen**ten**ce.
5. That co**tton** blouse has bu**ttons**.
6. Mar**tin** Luther King and Bill Clin**ton** are famous Americans.

audio 4.8

Silent *t* After *n*

The ***t*** after an ***n*** is often silent in American pronunciation. Instead of saying *in**t**ernet* Americans will frequently say "innernet." This is fairly standard speech and is not considered overly casual or sloppy speech.

Words for Practice

interview	dentist	international	Santa Monica
twenty	intellectual	center	Atlanta
disappointing	quantity	cantaloupe	Orange County
accountable	advantages	plenty	Sacramento

audio 4.9

Dialogue for Practice

a. There are many adva**nt**ages to working for that i**nt**ernational company.

b. I'll be disappoi**nt**ed if they don't call me for an i**nt**erview.

a. I hear they're looking for someone with i**nt**erpersonal skills and ple**nt**y of energy.

b. It's only twe**nt**y minutes from Sa**nt**a Monica.

audio 4.10

When *t* is Between Two Vowels

When a "t" is between two vowels it is generally pronounced like a fast /d/ sound. It also sounds the same as the "rolling r" sound, of many languages, when the tip of the tongue touches the upper gum ridge. This sounds is also sometimes called a "tapped ***t***"because you quickly tap the tip of the tongue on the gum ridge when pronouncing it.

A "t" becomes a "fast d" in the following cases:

a. Between two vowels:

We don't say:	***We say:***
better	bedder

b. Before an "l":

We don't say:	***We say:***
little	liddle

c. After an "r" and a vowel:

We don't say:	***We say:***
party	pardy
forty	fordy

Note: A ***t*** does not change to a "fast /d/" sound if it's within a stressed syllable. We don't say: "adack," we say "attack."

audio 4.11

Words for Practice

city	better	total	meeting
duty	ability	matter	quality

audio 4.12

When *t* Is Between Two Words

This "fast /d/" sound also occurs between two separate words, when the first word ends with a vowel + ***t*** and the next word begins with a vowel. Again, this is not sloppy or casual speech; it is a standard American accent.

audio 4.13

Word Groups

1. it is
2. get up
3. try it on
4. eat out
5. at eleven
6. wait a minute
7. what if
8. put it off

audio 4.14

Sentences for Practice

1. I'll eat it a little later.
2. I bought an auto battery for forty dollars.
3. Peter wrote a better letter.
4. I'd better go to the meeting at eleven.
5. He met her at a computer store in Seattle.
6. It's a pity that he's getting fatter and fatter.
7. Tell the waiter to bring it a little later.
8. He bought a lot of bottles of water.

9. Betty's knitting a little sweater for her daughter.

10. It'll be better if you heat it before you eat it.

audio 4.15

The Fast *d* Sound

In addition to the standard /d/ sound as in words like *dog*, *day* and *bed*, there is another kind of /d/ sound that occurs between two vowels and also before an ***l***. It sounds exactly like the t between two vowels and is often called "fast d". Again, it's a sound made with the tip of the tongue quickly tapping the gum ridge.

audio 4.16

Word Pairs for Practice

The following words pairs sound the same even though the first word is spelled with a ***t*** and the second word is spelled with a ***d***. Since they are both between two vowels, they sound identical.

1. **medal** He won a gold **medal** in the Olympics.
   metal My car is made out of **metal**.

2. **Adam** His first name is **Adam**.
   atom An **atom** is the smallest unit of an element.

3. **hit it** My hand hurts because I **hit it** hard.
   hid it You can't find it because I **hid it**.

4. **leader** The president is the **leader** of the country.
   liter How much is a **liter** of gasoline?

5. **feudal** There was a **feudal** system in the Middle Ages.
   futile My effort was totally **futile**.

audio 4.17

Words for Practice

already	addict	Canada	editor
ladder	product	middle	shadow

audio 4.18

Word Pairs for Practice

add on	made it	hid it	fed up

audio 4.19

Sentences for Practice

1. I already added it.
2. Adam will edit the middle part.
3. Those products are made in Canada.
4. She had on a Prada dress.
5. I'm fed up of the crowded elevator.

note: Remember, if the "d" is within a stressed syllable this rule does not apply.

normal "d"	**fast "d"**
adopt	addict
adore	audit

audio 4.20

The *t* + *r* Sound: /tʃr/

When a ***t*** is followed by an ***r***, the ***t*** changes and becomes an almost / tʃ / or "ch" sound. To create this sound correctly, say / tʃ / as in *chain*, but just make the tip of the tongue a bit more tense when it touches the gum ridge, and focus on creating a stop of air.

audio 4.21

Words for Practice

travel	tradition	translate	traffic	turn
turkey	introduce	interest	extremely	terrific

audio 4.22

The *d* + *r* Sound: /dʒr/

When a ***d*** is followed by an ***r***, the /d/ sound changes and becomes an almost /**dʒ**/ sound.

audio 4.23

Words for Practice

drink	drop	dream	drama	syndrome
children	address	cathedral	hundred	laundry

audio 4.24

Dialogues for Practice

1. a. Why do you **tr**avel by **tr**ain?

   b. Because the **tr**affic is so **dr**eadful.

2. a. What did San**dr**a tell the a**ttor**ney?

   b. She told him the **tr**uth about the **dr**ugs.

3. a. Have you **tr**aveled to **Tur**key?

   b. Yes, that coun**tr**y has some in**ter**esting **tr**aditions.

4. a. I told him a hun**dr**ed times not to **dr**ink and **dr**ive.

   b. I'm sure he'll **tr**y stay out of **tr**ouble.

   a. To tell you the **tr**uth, I am **dr**ained from all this **dr**ama.

5. a. Where should I **dr**op off the chil**dr**en?

   b. **Dr**op them off at An**dr**ew's house.

   a. I don't have An**dr**ew's a**ddr**ess.

   b. Just go down the s**tr**eet and **tur**n right. You'll see his **tr**uck in the **dr**ive way.

6. a. Do you think I should **tr**y on this **dr**ess?

   b. Yes, it's **tr**endy and the design is in**ter**esting.

audio 4.25

The *d+u* and *d + y* Sound: /ʤ/

When a ***d*** is followed by a ***u***, the two combined sounds are usually pronounced as /ʤ/, which sounds like the ***j*** in *joke*.

Words for Practice

1. gra**du**al
2. sche**du**le
3. gra**du**ation
4. e**du**cation
5. proce**du**re
6. indivi**du**al

Similarly, a final ***d*** followed by ***y*** is usually pronounced as /ʤ/.

7. did you
8. would you
9. could you
10. should you

audio 4.26

The *t* + *u* and *t* + *y* Sound: /ʧ/

In many words, when a ***t*** is followed by a ***u,*** the resulting blended sound is /ʧ/, which sounds like the ***ch*** in *church.*

ac**tu**ally	adven**tu**re	sta**tu**e	punc**tu**al
si**tu**ation	vir**tu**al	na**tu**re	pic**tu**re
ri**tu**al	for**tu**nate		

Similarly, a final ***t*** followed by ***y*** is usually pronounced as /ʧ/.

Don't you?	Can't you?
Won't you?	Aren't you?

audio 4.27

Sentences for Practice

1. Di**d** **y**ou go to his gra**du**ation?
2. Woul**d** **y**ou take our pic**tu**re?
3. Why can'**t** **y**ou be punc**tu**al?
4. Don'**t** **y**ou like na**tu**re?
5. Ac**tu**ally, this is a for**tu**nate si**tu**ation.
6. You're adven**tu**rous, aren'**t** you?
7. Why won'**t** **y**ou do it gra**du**ally?
8. Can'**t** **y**ou change your sche**du**le?

audio 4.28

Verbs Ending in *-ed*

The final ***ed*** forms the past tense of regular verbs such as *needed* and *worked* and of some adjectives such as *interested* and *tired.* The ***ed*** can cause problems for some non-native speakers because it can be pronounced in three different ways: as /Id/, /d/ or /t/. Here are the three rules you need to know when pronouncing ***-ed***.

Rule 1

If the last letter of the word is spelled with a ***d*** or a ***t***, the ***ed*** is pronounced as a separate syllable: /Id/

needed	admitted	attended	decided
avoided	separated	visited	waited

Rule 2

If the last letter of the word ends in a voiced consonant or a vowel sound, the ***e*** is silent and ***d*** is pronounced as /d/. (Reminder: Voiced consonants are /b/, /d/, /g/, /v/, /m/, /n/, / r/, /l/, /z/, /ʤ/, /y/, /ð/)

opened	called	changed	closed
earned	loved	pulled	showed

Rule 3

If the last letter of the word ends in a voiceless consonant, the ***e*** is silent and the ***d*** is pronounced as /t/. (Reminder: Voiceless consonants are /p/, /t/, / k/, /f/, /s/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, and /θ/.)

passed	helped	laughed	stopped
washed	watched	worked	liked

Test Yourself

In the spaces provided, write the correct past tense sound of the following verbs. (/Id/, /d/ or /t/) (See the answer key at the bottom.)

1. admitted	_____	8. hugged	_____
2. controlled	_____	9. liked	_____
3. developed	_____	10. marched	_____
4. dressed	_____	11. preferred	_____
5. ended	_____	12. pretended	_____
6. exploded	_____	13. pulled	_____
7. finished	_____	14. robbed	_____

(answer key: 1. /Id/, 2. /d/, 3. /t/, 4./t/, 5. /Id/, 6. /Id/, 7. /t/, 8. /d/, 9. /t/, 10. /t/, 11. /d/, 12. /ed/, 13. /d/, 14. /d/)

audio 4.29

Linking *ed* Ending + a Vowel

Linking is connecting the final sound of one word to the first sound of the following word. You will need to learn to link words together to create smooth, natural speech. This is discussed in much greater detail in Chapter Nine, "Sound Like a True Native Speaker." It is especially important for you to learn to link words with ***ed*** endings. The final /t/ and /d/ sounds are much easier to pronounce if they are connected to the vowel that follows it.

example:	***sounds like:***
stayed in	stay **d**in
turned on	turn **d**on
developed a	develop **t**a
needed a	nee de **d**a

audio 4.30

Words for Practice

1. worried about	3. talked about	5. worked on
2. looked at	4. interested in	6. liked it

audio 4.31

More Linking Practice *ed + it*

Practice linking the final consonant to the word "it."

/ɪd/ verbs

1. I needed it.	3. I attended it.
2. I painted it.	4. I admitted it.

/t/ verbs

1. I cooked it.	3. I watched it.
2. I liked it.	4. I stopped it.

/d/ verbs

1. I used it.	3. I changed it.
2. I cleaned it.	4. I loved it.

audio 4.32

Practice Dialogues for *ed* verbs.

1. a. What did you think of the movie?
   b. I lik**ed** it a lot.

2. a. What did you do with the money?
   b. I deposit**ed** it in the bank.

3. a. How did you cook the chicken?
   b. I fri**ed** it in oil.

4. a. Is the heater on?
   b. No, I turn**ed** it off.

5. a. When did you paint the room?
   b. I paint**ed** it last week.

audio 4.33

Practice Dialogues

Job Interview

Listen to the ***ed*** endings of the past tense verbs and try to determine which of the three possible sounds your hear: /d/, /t/ or /Id/. In the first part of the job interview, each of the "ed" verbs is followed by a word that starts with a vowel. Make sure you are linking these two words.

Interviewer: Tell me about some of your experiences as a university student.

Job Seeker:

- I **studied** accounting and finance.
- I **graduated at** the top of my class.
- I **maintained a** 4.0 GPA.
- I **played on** my college basketball team and **participated in** many extra-curricular activities.

- I volunteered at the homeless shelter.
- I partied every weekend,
- I dated a lot of pretty girls,
- I loved every minute of it.

Interviewer: ***Describe some of your personal qualities that would make you qualified for this position.***

/ɪd/ /ɪd/ /d/
Job Seeker: I am detail-orient**ed**, highly motivat**ed** and organiz**ed**. I am also

/t/ /d/ /t/
focus**ed** and determin**ed**, and I work well in a fast-pac**ed** environment.

/t/
I have an advanc**ed** knowledge of computers. I am also

/ɪd/ /d/
college educat**ed** and well-travel**ed**.

audio 4.34

Story for Practice

Learning English

Pay attention to the pronunciation of the ***ed*** endings. Make sure that you are linking the final ***ed*** to the following word if it begins with a vowel sound.

/d/ /ɪd/
As soon as Pablo arriv**ed** in the United States from Spain he decid**ed** to work on his

/d/ /d/
English skills. He had studi**ed** English in school but he only remember**ed** a little bit of

/d/ /Id/
what he had learn**ed**. He want**ed** to have more confidence when speaking with

/d/ /Id/
Americans. He enroll**ed** in a local college that accept**ed** students from all over the world.

/Id/ /d/
When he start**ed** attending the courses, he realiz**ed** that he had a long way to go. He was

/Id/ /d/ /d/ /d/
frustrat**ed** and confus**ed** and he struggl**ed** to understand his classmates. He was surpris**ed**

/t/ /d/
that they talk**ed** so fast. It seem**ed** impossible to become fluent.

/d/ /t/ /d/
One day he stay**ed** after class and ask**ed** his teacher for advice. His teacher advis**ed** him

/Id/
not to give up and told him that he need**ed** American friends to practice speaking English

/d/ /Id/
with. He encourag**ed** him to start a foreign language club. He decid**ed** to do what the

/Id/ /Id/
teacher recommend**ed**. He invit**ed** a lot of his classmates to join the club. His English

/d/ /Id/ /t/
improv**ed** quickly and his accent sound**ed** better and better. Also, he help**ed** American

/d/
students improve their Spanish skills. Then one day, an American girl nam**ed** Emily

/t/ /d/ /Id/
walk**ed** into the club. She plann**ed** to travel to Spain and was interest**ed** in practicing

/t/ /Id/
Spanish with Pablo. Pablo and Emily practic**ed** speaking together and correct**ed** each

/t/ /t/
other's mistakes. Pablo lik**ed** Emily and he always look**ed** forward to seeing her at the

/d/ /Id/ /Id/
club. She seem**ed** interest**ed** in him too, so he decid**ed** to ask her out.

/d/ /Id/ /d/ /Id/
She agree**ed**. They date**ed** for a while and then he propose**ed**. She accept**ed** the proposal and

/Id/ /t/ /d/
they soon got marri**ed**. Pablo stopp**ed** attending the language club, achiev**ed** all of his

/d/
English goals, and they liv**ed** happily ever after.

audio 4.35

The *th* Sound - /θ/ and /ð/

*"You must **d**o **th**e **th**ing you **th**ink you cannot **d**o."*

Roosevelt, Eleanor

The ***th*** is one of the most difficult consonant sounds for non-native speakers.

Remember that for this sound the tip of your tongue should touch the edges of your front teeth, the tip of the tongue vibrates a bit while air flows out through your tongue and upper teeth. It's also acceptable to just touch the back of the front teeth as long as the air is flowing though.

There are two ***th*** sounds in English. The voiced ***th*** as in *that* and the voiceless ***th*** as in *think*.

audio 4.36

Words for Practice for /θ/ (voiceless *th*)

anything	earth	nothing	Thursday
author	ninth	thank	wealthy
both	health	thing	with

audio 4.37

Word Paris for /θ/ (voiceless th)

with nothing	both methods
ninth birthday	third month

audio 4.38

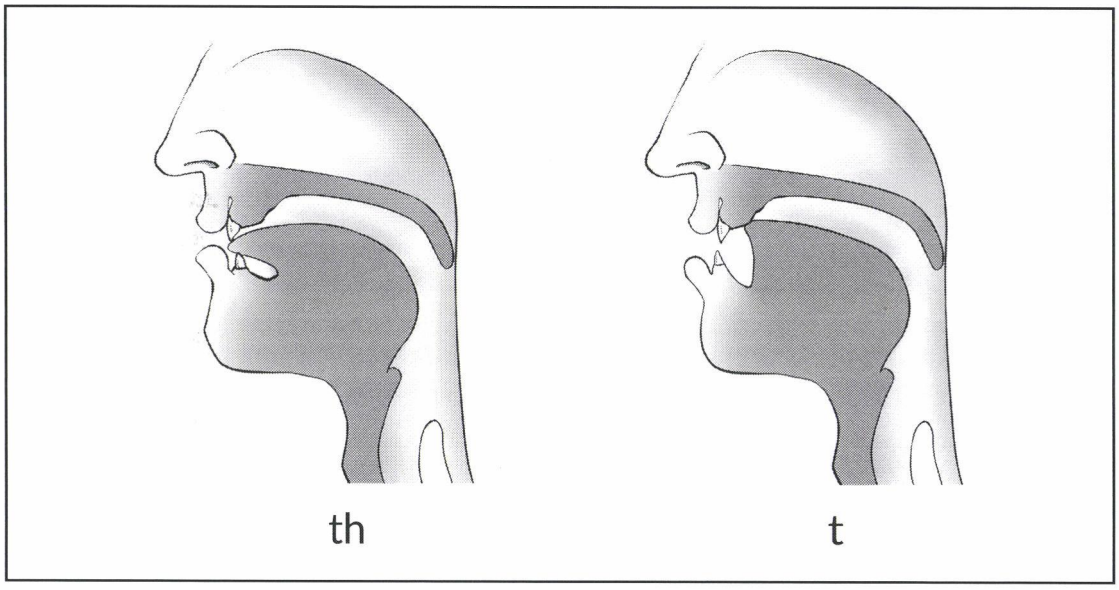


Warning: Common Mistake!

Voiceless th Versus *t*

Some non-native speakers incorrectly pronounce the voiceless ***th*** as a /t/ and the following words end up sounding the same.

	typical mistake:
/θ/	**/t/**
thank	tank
bath	bat



To correct this problem change the position of your tongue by moving it forward to touch the teeth. Also, make sure that there is a flow of air between your tongue and your teeth.

audio 4.39

Words for Practice for /ð/ (voiced *th*)

although	father	this	they
breathe	mother	the	those
clothing	rather	then	weather

audio 4.40

Word Pairs for /ð/ (voiced *th*)

that clothing	neither brother
this weather	mother and father

audio 4.41



Warning: Common Mistake!

Voiced th Versus *d*

Some non-native speakers incorrectly pronounce the voiced "th" as a "d." The following words end up sounding the same:

	typical mistake:
/ð/	/d/
they	day
breathe	breed

Again, to correct this problem change the position of your tongue my moving it forward, to touch the teeth. Also, make sure that there is a flow of air between you tongue and your teeth.



Warning: Common Mistake!

Make sure that your tongue vibrates under your upper teeth. Do not bite your tongue or press it on your upper teeth too strongly – this will block the flow of air that is required to produce the ***th*** sound correctly.

audio 4.42

Sound Contrasts for /t/ and the Voiceless "th" - /θ/

/t/	**/θ/**	**/t/**	**/θ/**
bat	bath	tank	thank

boat	both	team	theme
mat	math	true	threw

audio 4.43

Sound Contrasts for /d/ the Voiced "th" - /ð/

/d/	/ð/	/d/	/ð/
breeding	breathing	Dan	than
dare	their	day	they
doze	those	wordy	worthy

audio 4.44

Sentences for Practice for Voiced and Voiceless *th*

1. Her thirty third birthday is on the third Thursday of this month.
2. Those three things are worth thousands of dollars.
3. I think that Kenneth is Ethan's father.
4. That new theology doesn't threaten the faithful Catholics.
5. You can buy anything and everything in that clothing store.
6. There are those that always tell the truth.
7. I think that the south has more warmth than the north.
8. I'd rather have this one than that one.
9. Although they're rather thin, they're very healthy.

audio 4.45

Sentences for Practice for *th* Versus /d/

*It is not because **th**ings are **d**ifficult **th**at we **d**o not **d**are; it is because we **d**o not **d**are **th**at **th**ings are **d**ifficult.*

Seneca

When a ***th*** and /d/ are very close together, the tip of your tongue must move quickly from touching the teeth to touching the gum ridge so that both sounds can be distinctly heard.

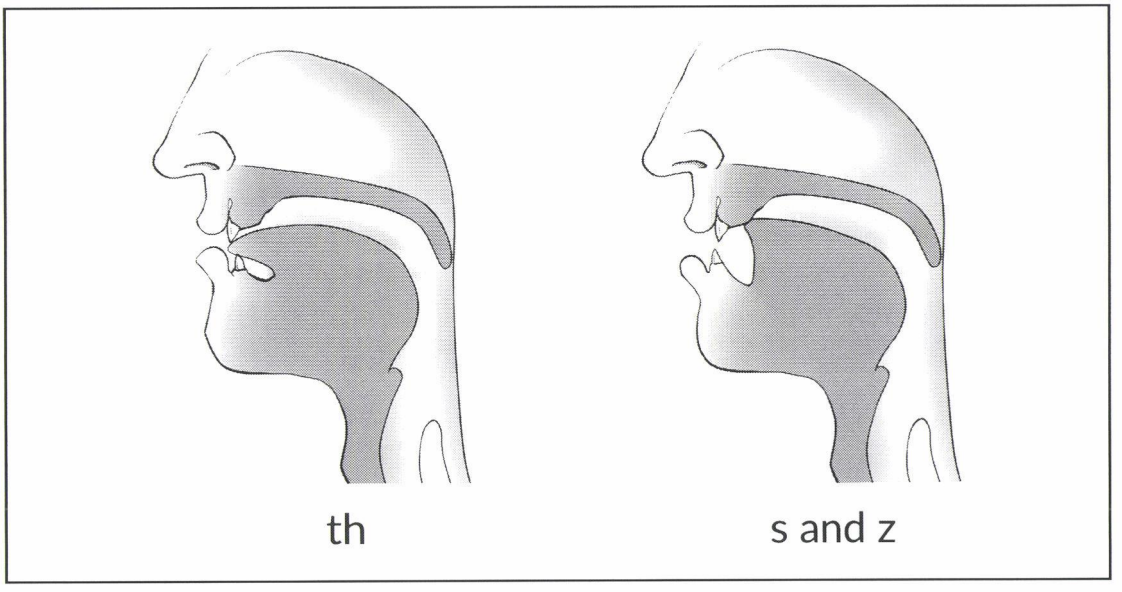
Sentences for Practice

1. Don't do that Dan.
2. What does that thing do?
3. Did they breathe in the dust?
4. Dan thought it was dad's birthday.
5. How dare they do that!
6. They did it the other day. Didn't they?

audio 4.46

Comparing *th* with *s* and *z*

Some people wrongly pronounce the voiceless ***th*** as an ***s***. They say *sank* and *tank* the same way. They also tend to wrongly pronounce the voiced ***th*** as *z*. They say *breeze* and *breathe* the same way. Again, the mistake lies in the position of the tongue. For the ***s*** and *z* there is also air passing through the tip of the tongue, but the tongue is not touching the teeth. It is touching a little bit behind, on the gum ridge. Pay attention to these tongue positions as you do the following exercises.



audio 4.47

Sound contrasts for *s* Versus *th*

/s/	/θ/	/s/	/θ/
mass	math	tense	tenth
sank	thank	sing	thing

Sound contrasts for *z* Versus *th*

/z/	/ð/	/z/	/ð/
close	clothe	bays	bathe
breeze	breathe	Zen	then

audio 4.48

Word Pairs for Practice

It's especially difficult to pronounce the "th" sound correctly if the "z" and "s" are nearby. Make sure that all of the consonant sounds are clearly heard. Don't blend them together and don't substitute one for the other.

doe**s** **th**at	fif**th** **s**tep
what'**s** **th**at	wi**th** **s**ome**th**ing
she'**s** **th**in	**s**i**xth** **s**ong

Sentences for Practice

1. He'**s** en**th**u**s**ia**s**tic **th**at it'**s** hi**s** **s**ix**th** bir**th**day.
2. I**s** **th**at **th**e **z**oo **th**at ha**s** **th**e **z**ebra**s**?
3. He'**s** **th**ankful for hi**s** weal**th**.
4. He'**s** **th**inking about h**is** **s**treng**ths**.
5. If it'**s** **Th**ur**s**day, it'**s** **th**e **s**ame **th**ing.

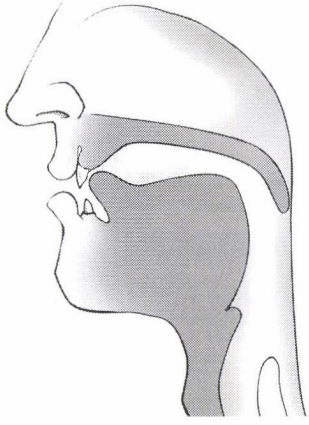
audio 4.49

The American *r*

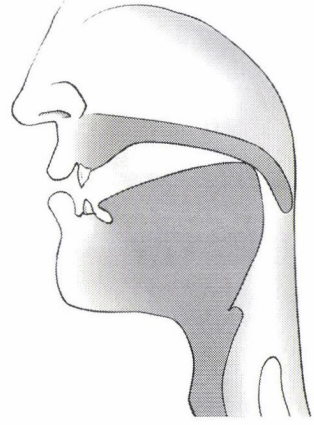
"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."
Gandhi

Many languages have what is called a "rolling r," where the tip of the tongue touches the gum ridge, similar to the /d/ sound, but with a quick and repeated motion.

In contrast, the American ***r*** is produced in the back of the mouth and the tip of the tongue never touches anywhere inside the mouth. There are several ways to produce the American ***r***. Try both of them and decide which one is easier for you to create.



Method 1



Method 2

Method One: Simply curl the tip of your tongue and pull it back a bit, and keep the tongue tense.

Method Two: Let the back of the tongue do all the work. Press the sides of your tongue up against the back teeth. In this case, you do not need to curl the tip of the tongue.

Unlike the British ***r*** the American ***r*** is ALWAYS pronounced. It's never silent. Pay particular attention to the ***r*** at the end of the word as in *for, more, far,* and *teacher*.

audio 4.50

R at the End of the Word

Individual Words for Practice

more	culture
here	where
her	sure
four	car

Word Groups for Practice

All of the following words have an *r* at the end. Make sure you pronounce each one clearly.

four door car	lobster for dinner
her younger sister	your older brother
they're never here	four more over there
sooner or later	

audio 4.51

R before a Consonant

The ***r*** before a consonant is also always pronounced in American English, but generally not pronounced in British English. Americans say: "morning," "first," "modern." In British English, these words are pronounced as: "moning," "fist," and "moden."

audio 4.52

Word Pairs

important information	early in the morning	thirty percent
first person	survive divorce	modern furniture
hard to understand	learn German	March bargain
Northern California	undergoing surgery	perfect performance

audio 4.53

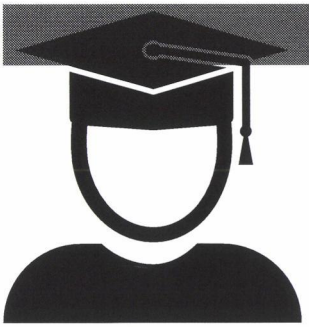
Sentences for Practice

1. I spent part of Thursday learning the new computer software.
2. I heard it was a four hour performance.
3. He won a journalism award for his report on Pearl Harbor.
4. Please inform the board about the formal procedure.
5. The terrible storm started yesterday morning.
6. Normally he works in New York.
7. George went to a formal party with his girlfriend.
8. Mark is determined to learn German.
9. I heard that the alternative procedure was better.
10. For your information, they're not divorced.

audio 4.54

Surprise Birthday Party

On Saturday afternoon at four, we're having a surprise birthday party for our daughter Rachel. She'll turn thirteen. Her cousins Charles and Barbara will arrive early to help prepare. We'll take pictures, play cards and some board games. We've ordered a birthday cake and her favorite dessert, strawberry ice cream. We've invited about thirty of her friends and told them to come over before four. We hope all her friends get here by four, before Rachel returns from the park. When they're all here, we'll call Mark to bring her over. When they open the front door the lights will be turned off. Her thirty friends will be waiting nervously in the other room. We hope it works out and that Rachel will be really surprised.



Advice from a Successful Student

I have collected a list of words that are difficult for me to pronounce. I make up sentences from these words and I practice saying them over and over.

Miroslav Nikolic, Serbia

audio 4.55

The American L ("The Dark L")

For the American /l/ sound the tip of the tongue touches the gum ridge behind the upper teeth, just the same as when creating the /t/ and /d/ sounds. The air stream flows through the sides of the tongue. When the /l/ occurs at the end of a word make sure that you don't release it quickly as you would do with a /t/ or /d/. This will make your /l/ sound foreign. The American "l" is softer and longer than the "l" sound of many other languages.



Warning: Common Mistake!

Don't round your lips when you are saying the /l/. This will weaken it and make it sound more like a /w/.

audio 4.56

Words for Practice

although	cold	film	myself
call	difficult	little	people
children	felt	milk	will

audio 4.57

Word Pairs for Practice

tall girl	felt guilty	old school	tall wall
cold milk	gold medal	little children	twelve soldiers

audio 4.58

L Before a Consonant

For Asian speakers the /l/ is particularly difficult to pronounce when it is followed by a consonant. If don't correctly move your tongue, the words "code" and "cold" will sound the same.

audio 4.59

Word Contrasts for Practice

Practice the following word pairs, making sure that you clearly pronounce the /l/ of the second word.

no /l/	**/l/ + consonant**	**no /l/**	**/l/ + consonant**
code	cold	toad	told
debt	dealt	wide	wild

audio 4.60

Sentences for Practice

1. Jill also doesn't feel well enough to go to school.
2. I'll call Paul and tell him that you'll be late.
3. Twelve people will build a tall wall around the castle.
4. It is doubtful that she'll be able to handle it.
5. He'll bring the cold drink to the ill soldier.
6. The wealthy man sold the building by himself.
7. Don't feel guilty about the spilled milk.
8. The girl told me about the old film.

audio 4.61

Long Vowels + /L/

When a long vowel is followed by an l, place an extra /ə/sound (schwa) in between. For the word *feel*, say "fee - əl." It's almost as if you are adding an extra syllable.

Words for Practice

	/i/ + əl	/eɪ/ + əl	/aɪ/ + əl	/ɔɪ/ + əl	/u/ + əl
1	feel	sale	mile	oil	tool
2	steal	mail	while	toil	school
3	deal	whale	style	spoil	rule
4	real	pale	smile	foil	fool
5	wheel	fail	file	boil	cool
6	heal	exhale	trial	soil	pool

audio 4.62



Warning: Common Mistake!

Make sure that you don't pronounce these word pairs ending with ***l*** the same way. The long /ei/ vowel sounds even longer because we add an extra /ə/ sound before the ***l***. "Sale" sounds almost like "say + all." **Don't say**: "I bought it on ***sell.***"

short sound	**long sound** + /ə/
sell	sale
fell	fail
well	whale

audio 4.63

Practice Dialogues

Make sure that you add an extra /ə/ sound before the /l/.

1. a. He stole the money and broke the **rules**.
   b. It's no big **deal**. He's just a **child.**
   a. Don't be a **fool**. He knows it's wrong to **steal.**

2. a. Did you say **Kyle** went to **jail**?
   b. No, I said he went to **Yale.**
   a. Oh that's a good **school**!

3. a. Have you read your **email**?

   b. No, I'll do it in a little **while.**

4. a. Did you see that **whale?**

   b. It's huge. I can't believe it's **real.**

5. a. What's wrong with the **wheel**?

   b. I think it needs some **oil.**

6. a. What do you think of the **style** of these shoes?

   b. I love the high **heels.**

   a. I bought them on **sale.**

7. a. I'm so tired. We've been driving for **miles** and **miles**.

   b. Relax. It'll help if you **inhale** and **exhale** slowly.

8. a. I heard your dog had five puppies.

   b. Yes, she had three **males** and two **females.**

audio 4.64

Understanding /L/ versus /r/

"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great."
Mark Twain



Warning: Common Mistake!

If your tongue is not touching the right place, your /l/ will sound like an /r/ and the word *wall* might sound like *war.* To correctly pronounce the /l/, make sure that the tip of your tongue is in the front, near the upper front teeth when it touches the top of your mouth. If the tip of your tongue is pulled farther back in the mouth, it might sound like an /r/ instead. Use a mirror to see the position of your tongue for the "l."

audio 4.65

/L/ and /r/ in the final position

Pay attention to the position of your tongue as you practice these two final sounds. Prolong the sounds as you concentrate on what your tongue is doing.

Sound Contrasts for Practice

final /l/	**final /r/**	**final /l/**	**final /r/**
1. feel	fear	5. bowl	bore
2. deal	dear	6. tile	tire
3. stole	store	7. while	wire
4. mole	more	8. file	fire

audio 4.66

Consonants + /r/ and /L/

When the /r/ or /l/ sound is after a consonant, make sure that it is strong enough to be clearly heard. Fully pronounce the first consonant before you begin the /r/ or the /l/. Otherwise, the words ***fright*** and ***flight*** will end up sounding like ***fight***. You can even add a short **/ə/** sound between the two consonants.

audio 4.67

Word Contrasts for Practice

no /r/ or /l/	**/r/**	**/l/**
1. fame	frame	flame
2. bead	breed	bleed
3. gas	grass	glass
4. fee	free	flee
5. fight	fright	flight
6. pay	pray	play

audio 4.68

Sentences for Practice

1. It's always **pl**easurable to **tr**avel first **cl**ass.
2. He was **cl**early sur**pr**ised about the **pr**omotion.
3. The **pr**esident **fl**ies in his **pr**ivate air**pl**ane.
4. The **tr**aining **pr**ogram will take **pl**ace ea**rl**y in the s**pr**ing.
5. I **pl**an to regula**rl**y **pr**actice **pl**aying the **fl**ute.
6. E**ver**yone went to **Br**enda's sur**pr**ise party.
7. I **tr**aveled to **Br**itain last s**pr**ing.
8. I **fr**equently **fl**y to **Fl**orida to visit my **fr**iend.
9. **Cl**ara looked **tr**uly lo**vel**y in her **bl**ue **bl**ouse.
10. **Br**ian is **fl**uent in **Fr**ench.

audio 4.69

Review or /r/ and /l/

Dialogues for Practice

1. a. **L**aura has cu**rl**y **br**own hai**r**.
   b. However, he**r** b**r**other Ca**rl** has st**r**aight b**l**ond hai**r**.

2. a. What is that lawye**r**'s ove**r**a**ll** p**r**io**r**ity?
   b. P**r**obab**l**y to win every t**r**ial.

3. a. I am g**r**adua**ll**y **l**ea**r**ning to p**r**onounce a**ll** the vocabu**l**a**r**y co**rr**ect**l**y.
   b. **R**ea**ll**y? It's t**r**u**l**y wonde**r**fu**l** to hea**r** that!

4. a. I hea**r**d he speaks seve**r**a**l** **l**anguages f**l**uently.
   b. Yes, he speaks F**r**ench, Eng**l**ish and Ita**l**ian f**l**uently.

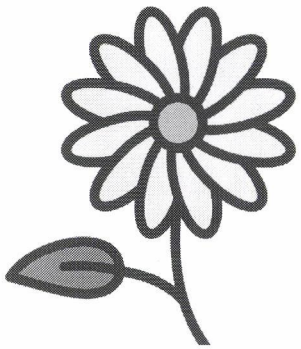
5. a. Have you hea**r**d the fai**r**y ta**l**e about Cinde**r**e**ll**a?
   b Yes, she was a poo**r** gi**r**l who **r**a**r**ely fe**l**t p**r**etty.

6. a. Cent**r**al Pa**r**k is a g**r**eat p**l**ace fo**r** **r**o**ll**e**r**b**l**ading.
   b. And it's on**l**y seve**r**a**l** minutes f**r**om he**r** **l**a**r**ge apa**r**tment.

7. a. He's an incredibly talented flute player.
b. He also regularly plays the clarinet.

audio 4.70

Poems for Practice



Alchemy

I lift my heart as spring lifts up

A yellow daisy to the rain;

My heart will be a lovely cup

Altho' it holds but pain.

For I shall learn from flower and leaf

That color every drop they hold,

To change the lifeless wine of grief

To living gold.

Sara Teasdale, (1915)

audio 4.71

Barter

Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up,
Holding wonder like a cup.
Life has loveliness to sell,
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirits still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.
Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count the cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been, or could be.

Sara Teasdale

audio 4.72

The /v/ Sound

To produce the "v" sound correctly, make sure that the lower lip touches the upper teeth.

People who speak quickly have a tendency to drop this sound at the end of words. Others may confuse it with an /f/ sound and some others change it to a /b/ or a /w/ sound.

audio 4.73

Words for Practice

very	eleven	have
verb	involve	twelve
vote	achieve	five

audio 4.74

Sentences for Practice

1. Five of David's relatives live in Vienna.
2. Steve and Vivian will come over at eleven.
3. I believe he will move to Vermont in November.
4. Whoever is involved will be investigated.
5. Twelve of us drove to the river near Vegas.
6. Avoid drinking Vodka every day.
7. They served flavorful veal and a variety of vegetables.
8. I've been given a favorable evaluation.
9. I would've invited you over but I had a fever.
10. They've never believed my viewpoint.

audio 4.75

Understanding /b/ Versus /v/

"I've been rich and I've been poor -- and believe me, rich is better."
Sophie Tucker

Non-native speakers of some languages have a hard time distinguishing between the /b/ and the /v/. Remember, for /v/ the upper teeth touch the lower lip. For /b/ both lips touch and fully close so that no air escapes.

audio 4.76

Word Contrasts

/v/	/b/	/v/	/b/
vest	best	vet	bet
very	berry	curve	curb
vow	bow	vote	boat

audio 4.77

Word Pairs in Sentences

1. That's a very good berry.
2. That's the best vest.
3. Can you vote on a boat?
4. Park next to the curb on the curve.
5. I bet he's a vet.

audio 4.33

Sentences for Practice

1. Beverly is very busy developing her new business.
2. Vince loves basketball and baseball.
3. Ben drove to Las Vegas in his black Volvo.

4. I believe they've been to Virginia before.
5. Did Vivian have a birthday in November?
6. They've never been able to prove it, have they?
7. Cucumber and broccoli are Ben's favorite vegetables.
8. Gabriel was overwhelmed when he won the Nobel Prize for the novel.

audio 4.79

The /w/ Sound

*The **qu**estion is not **wh**ether **w**e **w**ill die, but how **w**e **w**ill live."*
Joan Borysenko

The /w/ sound requires the lips to be fully rounded and pushed forward a bit. Many non-native speakers confuse the /v/ and the /w/ sounds. To avoid this mistake, make sure that your bottom lip is not touching your upper teeth when you are saying the /w/. Let's first practice the /w/ to make you are pronouncing it correctly. Then we will practice /v/ and /w/ together.

audio 4.80

Word for Practice

always	well
wish	window
flower	wife
work	swim

audio 4.81

q + w = /kw/

Words that are spelled with ***qu*** are pronounced as /kw/:

quick	quiet
question	quality
require	frequent

audio 4.82

Word Pairs for Practice

white wine
always working
quick wedding
powerful wind
weak witness
wonderful weekend
anywhere you wish
twenty flowers
windshield wiper
frequent question

audio 4.83

Dialogue for Practice

Winter Weather

a. I **w**onder **wh**en the **w**eather **w**ill get **w**armer.

b. **Wh**y are you al**w**ays **wh**ining about the **w**eather?

a. It's al**w**ays so **w**et and **w**indy. I **w**ould love to go for a q**u**ick s**w**im or a **w**alk in the **w**oods.

b. **W**ell, **w**ait a few **w**eeks and it **w**on't be so **w**et and **w**indy.

a. I **w**ish you **w**ere right, but in a few **w**eeks it **w**ill still be **w**inter.

b. OK then, **w**e'll have to move **w**est. Maybe to Holly**w**ood, **w**here the **w**eather is **w**armer.

a. **W**ow, **w**hat a **w**onderful idea. But **w**ait! **W**here **w**ill **w**e **w**ork?

b. **W**e **w**on't have to **w**orry about **w**ork **o**nce **w**e get there. Holly**w**ood **w**ill **w**elcome us. **W**e'll become **w**ealthy movie stars.

a. **W**ake up and stop your **w**ishful thinking.

Song Lyrics for Reading Practice "w" sound

"After You Get What You Want You Don't Want It"

Excerpt from a Song by Irving Berlin

After you get **w**hat you **w**ant, you don't **w**ant it

If I gave you the moon, you'd gro**w** tired of it soon

You're like a baby

You want what you want when you want it

But after you are presented

With what you want, you're discontented

You're always wishing and wanting for something

When you get what you want

You don't want what you get

And tho' I sit upon your knee

You'll grow tired of me

'Cause after you get what you want

You don't want what you wanted at all

Understanding /v/ Versus /w/

You are never given a wish without also being given the power to make it come true. You may have to work for it, however." Riard Bach

audio 4.84

Word Contrasts

/v/	/w/	/v/	/w/
vine	wine	vest	west
vow	wow	verse	worse
vet	wet	veal	wheel

audio 4.85

Word Pairs

every week
very well
wise investment
weigh the vegetables
west Virginia
wonderful voice
white van
valuable watch
wear the vest
weird video

audio 4.86

Sentences for Practice

1. **V**ictor's **w**ife **V**icky **w**as **v**ery **w**ise.
2. It was **v**ery **w**arm all **w**eek.
3. Don't **w**ear your **v**aluable **w**atch this **w**eekend.
4. **W**hen **w**ill **V**ick **w**eigh the **v**egetables?
5. **W**ere you in**v**ol**v**ed in **V**i**v**ian's **w**edding plans?
6. **W**ill **w**e **v**iew the **v**ideo on **W**ednesday?

audio 4.87

The /s/ and /z/ Sounds

/z/ /s/ /z/ /z/ /s/ /s/ /z/ /z/ /z/ /s/

*A bird doe**s**n't **s**ing becau**s**e it ha**s** an an**s**wer, it **s**ing**s** becau**s**e it ha**s** a* **s**ong.

Maya Angelou

The letter ***s*** is sometimes pronounced as a /z/ sound and sometimes as a /s/ sound. When the ***s*** follows a consonant, there are rules for how you pronounce it, but when it follows a vowel there are no rules--so it's best to just memorize the exceptions. Studying the four basic rules on the following page will also help you.



Warning: Common Mistake!

The letter ***z*** is never pronounced as a /s/ sound. If your native language is Spanish, compare the way Americans pronounce common Spanish last names such as "Gomez," "Alvarez" with the way you pronounce them in Spanish.

audio 4.88

Rules for Pronouncing /s/ and /z/

Rule 1

When an ***s*** follows a *voiceless* consonant, it is pronounced as /s/.

books	stops	makes	likes
eats	cats	helps	surfs

Rule 2

When an ***s*** follows a *voiced* consonant or a vowel, it is pronounced as /z/.

eggs	beds	lives	cars
comes	boys	loans	feels

Rule 3

Double ***s*** is pronounced as /s/

bo**ss**	le**ss**	succe**ss**
mas**s**ive	le**ss**on	e**ss**ay

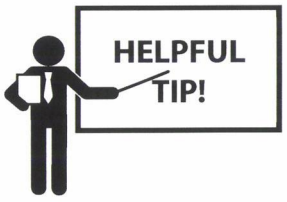
Note: exceptions: *po**ss**ession, sci**ss**ors, de**ss**ert* (***ss*** sounds like /z/)

Rule 4

An extra syllable is added to words that end with an "s" before these consonant sounds. The final **s** is pronounced as /z/

sound:	**consonant:**	**examples:**
/dʒ/	*g*	manages changes
/ʃ/	*sh*	washes dishes
/ʧ/	*ch*	churches matches
/s/	*s, ss, c*	bosses faces
/ks/	*x*	boxes faxes

audio 4.89



Study Tip

Memorize these very common words that are spelled with a final ***s***. The ***s*** is pronounced as /z/ and *not* as /s/.

was	his	these	goes	because
is	hers	those	does	
as	has	whose	always	

audio 4.90



Warning: Common Mistake!

The ***s*** in the prefix dis- is pronounced as /s/ and not as /z/. Examples:

disagree disobey disappear

disorder disapprove disability

Verbs and Nouns and the Letter *s*

The following words that are spelled with a ***s*** have a /z/ sound if they are verbs and an /s/ sound if they are nouns.

noun:	***verb:***	***noun:***	***verb:***
/s/	/z/	/s/	/z/
use	to use	house	to house
abuse	to abuse	excuse	to excuse
close	to close	advice	to advise

audio 4.91

Dialogues for Practice

/z/
a. Do you still **use** this?

/s/
b. No, I have no **use** for it any more.

/z/
a. Where will they **house** their guests?

/s/
b. They have a guest **house**.

/z/
a. Does he **abuse** drugs?

/s/
b. Yes, he's getting help for his drug **abuse**.

/z/
a. Please **excuse** me.

/s/
b. I don't accept your **excuse**.

/z/
a. Would you **close** the door?

/s/
b. You do it. You're **close** to it.

/z/
a. Can you **advise** me on this?

/s/
b. Sure, I can give you some **advice**.

audio 4.92

Sentences for Practice

Remember to pronounce all of the final /s/ sounds of plural nouns and of verbs with third person singular form (he, she, it). Say the following sentences quickly, making sure that you are not forgetting the "s" endings.

1. A dishwasher wash**es** dish**es**.
2. A bus driver driv**es** bus**es**.
3. A mechanic fix**es** car**s**.
4. A teacher teach**es** student**s**.
5. A watch maker mak**es** watch**es**.
6. A real estate agent sell**s** hous**es**.



Warning: Common Mistake!

Make sure that you are not pronouncing the words *this* and *these* the same.

	"s" is:	**vowel sound is:**
this	/s/	/I/ as in *sit*
these	/z/	/i/ as in *meet*
examples:		
I like **this** book.		I like **these** books.

audio 4.93

Story for Practice

Mark's Day

/s/ /iz/ /iz/ /s/
Every morning he get**s** up early, brush**es** his teeth, wash**es** his face and eat**s** breakfast. He

/iz/ /z/ /s/ /iz/ /iz/
kiss**es** his wife and kid**s** goodbye. He take**s** two buss**es** to work. He usually manag**es**

/z/ /z/ /s/ /iz/ /z/
get to work before his coworker**s**. He read**s** his email, check**s** message**s** and return**s** phone

/z/ /s/ /z/ /s/ /s/ /z/ /ɪz/
call**s**. He speak**s** with his colleague**s** and client**s** and conduct**s** meeting**s**. He focus**es** on

/s/ /s/ /s/
his daily task**s** and like**s** to take only 30 minute**s** for lunch.

audio 4.94

The /ŋ/ Sound – Pronouncing *ng*

*There's as much risk in doi**ng** noth**ing** as in doi**ng** someth**ing**.*
Trammell Crow

In American English, the final g in the word ending –ing should not be dropped, but it should not be over pronounced either.

Don't say: I'm goin shoppin." And don't say "I'm goin**g** shoppin**g**" by releasing the ***g*** too strongly. To create the "ng" /ŋ/ sound raise the back of the tongue and let it touch the soft palate, which is back soft area of your mouth. Don't release your tongue when you say the /g/, or just release it slightly. The mistake of saying "goin' shoppin' " is that the tip of the tongue is touching the area right behind the upper front teeth for the /n/ sound. And when you say goin**g** shoppin**g**, the mistake is that the /g/ is not released too much.

audio 4.95

Individual Words

doi**ng**
teachi**ng**
comi**ng**
listeni**ng**
bei**ng**
goi**ng**

audio 4.96

Word Pairs

doi**ng** nothi**ng**
somethi**ng** wro**ng**
looki**ng** you**ng**
weddi**ng** ri**ng**
bri**ng** everythi**ng**
feeli**ng** stro**ng**

audio 4.97

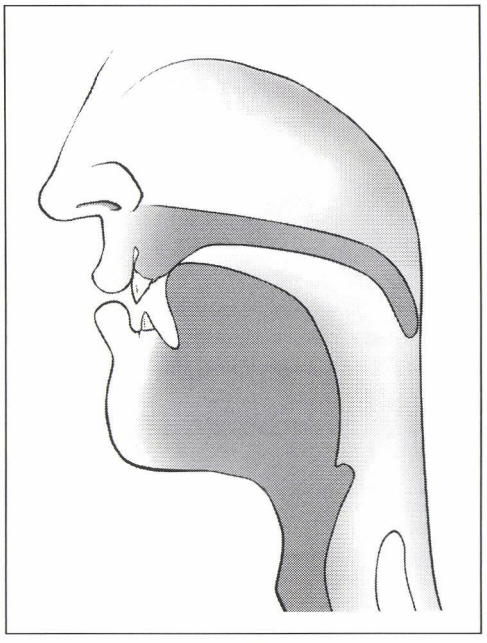
Practice Sentences

1. Don't bring the wrong ring to the wedding.
2. I love running, skiing and swimming.
3. He's looking your and feeling strong.
4. They sell anything and everything in that clothing store.

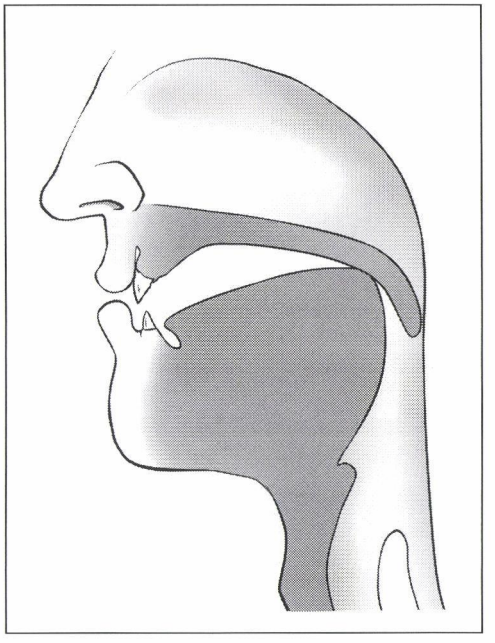
audio 4.98

Confusing /n/ and /ŋ/ endings

Remember, for /n/ as in *thin*, the tip of the tongue touches the gum ridge, just behind the teeth. For the /ŋ/ as in *thing* the tip of the tongue is down, not touching anywhere. The back of the tongue is up, touching the soft palate which is located in the back of your mouth. Examine the illustrations below to see the difference.



/n/



/ŋ/

audio 4.99

Word Contrasts with /n/ and /ŋ/

/n/	/ŋ/	/n/	/ŋ/
thin	thing	win	wing
ran	rang	ban	bang
fan	fang	run	rung

audio 4.100

Consonant Clusters

"Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you. Never excuse yourself."
Henry Ward Beecher

Many languages do not have words that contain two or more consonants sounds together called **consonant clusters.** When native speakers of these languages speak English, they tend to skip one or more of the consonants. Make sure that you pronounce every consonant sound. Pay attention to words spelled with the letter "x" since it represents two consonant sounds: /ks/ or /gz/. Also, many verbs which take the "ed" in the past tense consist of consonant clusters. For example: "wat**ched**," "sto**pped**," "pi**cked**."

audio 4.101

Common words with consonant clusters

say:	***don't say:***
insta**ntl**y	"instan..ly"
ho**pef**ully	ho..fully
apa**rt**ment	apar..ment
wo**rked** - sounds like:"wo**rkt**"	wor…
te**xtb**ook - sounds like "te**kst**book"	tes..book
e**xtr**a sounds like "e**kstr**a"	estra
vo**dk**a	vo..ka

stre**ngth**	stren...th
reco**gn**ize	reco..nize

audio 4.102

Pronunciation of *x* and *cc*

If the vowel following an *x* is stressed, the x is pronounced as /gz/, as in *examine* and *exist*. If an *x* is followed by a consonant, or if it's at the end of the word, it is pronounced as /ks/, as in *expert* and *tax*. Also, note that a double **c** produces a /ks/ sound, as in accent. If these two sounds don't occur together in your native language, make sure that you are pronouncing both of the consonant sounds.

Words for Practice for *x* and *cc*

extreme	extra	extract	exact
accept	success	context	expect
next	accident	extinguish	example

audio 4.103

Sound Contrasts for Practice

Make sure that you pronounce the following word pairs differently. Notice that the first word just contains an "s" sound and that the second word contains a *k* and an *s* sound and is spelled with the letter *x*.

/s/	**/ks/**	**/s/**	**/ks/**
nest	next	aspect	expect
test	text	contest	context
session	section	mass	Max

audio 4.104

Dialogue for Practice

a. How did you do on the e**ntr**ance e**x**am?

b. I wasn't so su**cc**essful. I e**xp**ected to pass, but it was e**xtr**a difficu**lt**.

a. Did you study all the se**cti**ons of the te**xt**book?

b. Yes, but I have to study harder on the ne**xt** te**st** and ho**pef**ully I will be su**cc**essful.

a. When do you e**xp**ect to take the ne**xt** te**st**?

b. I will atte**mpt** it in Se**pt**ember. I'll be e**cst**atic if I get a**cc**e**pt**ed at the be**st** school.

audio 4.105

Words ending with *ts*

Make sure that you pronounce both the /t/ and the /s/ sounds in the following words. The /t/ will need to be pronounced softly in order to ensure a smooth transition to the /s/.

Words for Practice

it's	states	what's
that's	lasts	doubts

audio 4.106

Sound Contrasts

Make sure that you pronounce the following word pairs differently. The first word contains just a /s/ or /z/ sound and the second word contains a /t/ and a /s/ sound.

/s/ or /z/	**/ts/**	**/s/ or /z/**	**/ts/**
is	its	was	what's
stays	states	pains	paints
less	lets	knees	needs
fax	facts	lies	lights

audio 4.107

Sentences for Practice

1. There are three flight**ts** to the United Sta**tes**.
2. She a**dds** and subtrac**ts** the cos**ts**.
3. Please give the da**tes** to the cour**ts**.
4. The applican**ts** signed the contrac**ts**.
5. He accep**ts** the fac**ts** about the Democra**ts**.

audio 4.108

Words ending with *ds*

Make sure that you pronounce both the /d/ and /z/ sounds in the following words. The /s/ is pronounced like a /z/ sound because it's followed by /d/, which is a voiced consonant. The /d/ will need to be pronounced softly in order to ensure a smooth transition to the /z/.

Words for Practice

needs	sends	kids
decade s	friends	sounds

audio 4.109

Word Contrasts

Make sure that you that you pronounce the following word pairs differently. The first word contains just a /z/ sound and the second word contains a /d/ and a /z/ sound.

/z/	/dz/	/z/	/dz/
fines	finds	rise	rides
cars	cards	lens	lends
fees	feeds	bills	builds

audio 4.110

Sentences for Practice

1. David's and Ed's kids are friends.
2. She feeds the cats and cleans the yards.
3. The brides got diamonds from their husbands.
4. He accepts rides from friends.
5. He needs the facts about the debts.

audio 5.1

CHAPTER FIVE

Syllable Stress

A syllable is a small unit of speech that consists of a vowel or a vowel and one or more consonants. Stressed and unstressed syllables form the basis of the rhythmic pattern of English words.

Many languages place the same amount of stress on each syllable. For example, in many languages the word *banana* is pronounced as:

— — —

ba na na *All three syllables are stressed equally.*

In English, we pronounce the word as:

— — —

ba **na** na *The second syllable is stressed.*

The vowel within the stressed syllable is longer, louder and higher in pitch. The vowel within the unstressed syllable is reduced and becomes a neutral, short vowel called the "schwa" and is pronounced as **/ə/.** It can be spelled with ***a, e, i, o,*** or ***u.*** All of the five vowels can sound the same if they are part of a reduced syllable. As you can see, it is more important to know which syllable is stressed than *how* the word is spelled. If people sometimes don't understand a particular word that you are saying, chances are you stressing the wrong syllable.

Note: Phonetically, *banana* looks like this: /bə ˈnænə/. The small accent symbol in front of the /n/ indicates that the syllable which follows is stressed. Your dictionary may have different stress markers.

audio 5.2

Stressed And Reduced Vowels

Listen to the following word pairs and notice the changes in the vowel sounds, depending on whether the syllable is stressed or reduced. The first word of the pair has only one syllable, so the vowel must be fully pronounced. The second word has two syllables, with the second

syllable reduced. Even though the ending of the second word is spelled exactly the same as the first word, the vowel is pronounced differently because it's part of the reduced syllable.

full vowel	reduced vowel
	unstressed second syllable
/æ/ man	/ə/ salesman
/oʊ/ pose	/ə/ purpose
/ɛi/ race	/ə/ terrace
/ɛi/ late	/ə/ chocolate
/ɔ/ cord	/ə/ record
/ɛi/ rage	/ə/ courage
/æ/ fast	/ə/ breakfast
/æ/ land	/ə/ England

Now listen to vowel changes of words that have a reduced *first syllable.*

full vowel	reduced vowel
stressed	unstressed first syllable
/ɑ/ con	/ə/ control
/æ/ ad	/ə/ advice
/ɑ/ pod	/ə/ podiatrist
/ɔ/ ball	/ə/ balloon
/ɛ/ red	/ə/ reduce
/ɔ/ off	/ə/ offend
/æ/ mat	/ə/ material
/æ/ mad	/ə/ Madrid

audio 5.3

Comparing Stressed and Reduced Vowels

Let's compare some words that begin with the letter ***a***. The first word has an initial ***a*** is part of the stressed syllable and the second word has an ***a*** as part of the reduced syllable. Pay attention to the differences in pronunciation. The first word has an /ae/ sound and the second one has an /ə/ sound.

Word Pairs for Practice

Stressed and reduced *a*

Stressed *a* = /æ/ sound	Reduced *a* = /ə/ sound
absent	a**bout**
after	af**ford**
address (noun)	a**dd**ress (verb)
adverb	a**dmit**
allergy	a**ller**gic
ally	a**llow**
angry	an**noyed**
apple	a**pply**

audio 5.4

Stressed and reduced *e*

Now let's practice stressing and reducing the letter ***e*** in some common words. The first word has the stressed first syllable and the ***e*** sounds like /ɛ/, and the second word has the unstressed first syllable with the ***e*** sounding like /ə/.

Stressed e = /ɛ/ sound	Reduced e /ə/ sound
envy	en**joy**
edit	**edi**tion
extra	ex**act**
enter	e**nough**
enemy	ex**plode**
episode	es**cape**
empty	em**ploy**

audio 5.5

Words beginning with *con*

Now let's practice stress and reduction of the letter ***o*** in words that begin with ***con***. The first word has a stressed first syllable and the second word has a reduced first syllable. In the first word the ***con*** sounds like /kɑn/, and in the second word the ***con*** sounds like /kən/.

Stressed *o* = /ɑ/ sound	Reduced *o* = /ə/ sound
concert	con**cern**
contact	con**clude**
conflict	con**fess**
conscious	con**firm**
contrary	con**tinue**
concept	con**fuse**
confident	con**vince**
contract	con**nect**

audio 5.6

Words beginning with *pro*

Let's practice some more words with the stressed and reduced ***o***. The following are very common words that are spelled with ***pro***. In the first word, the first syllable is stressed and therefore the ***pro*** sounds like /prou/, and in the second word the first syllable is reduced and the ***pro*** sounds like /prə/.

Stressed *o* = /ɑ/ sound	Reduced *o* = /ə/ sound
product	pro**duce**
process	pro**ceed**
problem	pro**cedure**
profit	pro**fessor**
progress	pro**fessional**
probably	pro**nounce**

audio 5.7

Dangers of Stressing the Wrong Syllable

Stressing the wrong syllable sometimes creates misunderstandings because people think you are pronouncing a completely different word. The following words are great examples of why syllable stress is such an important component of the American accent.

1. **no**ble — honorable, distinguished, aristocratic

   No**bel** — a prestigious award of achievement

   He won the **Nobel** Prize for his **noble** effort.

2. **in**valid — a sick or disabled person

   in**val**id — not valid, void

   The **invalid** has an **invalid** permit.

3. **per**sonal — individual, private

   person**nel** — a group of people employed in an organization or a place of work.

   Some of the **personnel** have some **personal** problems.

4. **el**igible — worthy of choice, suitable, legally qualified

   il**leg**ible — impossible or hard to read

   You won't be **eligible** for that position if your handwriting is **illegible**.

5. **pro**nouns — parts of speech that substitute for nouns, such as he or she.

   pro**nounce** — to say words, to utter

   Can you **pronounce** those **pronouns** correctly?

6. **co**medy — a humorous drama or play

   com**mit**tee — a group of people elected or appointed to perform a function.

   The **committee** watched a **comedy**.

7. ad**van**tages — benefits or gain

   advan**ta**geous — beneficial, useful

It would be **advantageous** to learn about the **advantages** of that method.

8. **de**cade ten years

   decayed become rotten or ruined

   Their relationship has **decayed** in the past **decade**.

9. **ac**cess ability or right to enter

   ex**cess** extra, additional

   Do you have **access** to the **excess** data?

10. **con**tent (noun) the subject matter of a book, speech, etc.

    content (adjective) satisfied and happy

    Are you **content** with the **content** of that letter?

11. **ca**reer profession

    carrier a person or company that carries or transports something

    He had a **career** working for an aircraft **carrier**.

12. **di**scus a heavy disc of metal thrown in an athletic competition

    discuss to talk over in detail, to examine in speech or writing

    The **discus** throwers **discussed** the competition.



Study Tip

Make a list of commonly used words at your workplace or your field of study. Ask a colleague or classmate who is a native speaker to pronounce the words for you as you record them. Listen to the recording, carefully noting which syllable is stressed.

audio 5.8

General Rules for Stress Placement

This section will give you some general guidelines and patterns of American English syllable stress. Keep in mind that there are many exceptions to these rules and that English syllable stress can be quite irregular. Get into the habit of using your dictionary or asking native speakers to pronounce new or confusing words for you.

Nouns With Two Syllables

Stress the first syllable	
action	**tea**cher
paper	**fa**ther
building	**win**dow
concert	**gar**den

Verbs With Two Syllables

Stress the second syllable	
pro**duce**	at**tach**
ach**ieve**	emp**loy**
ap**ply**	in**clude**
suc**ceed**	des**troy**

audio 5.9

Noun and Verb Pairs

The following pairs of nouns and verbs are spelled the same but pronounced differently because of changing syllable stress. Make sure you reduce the vowel in the unstressed syllable.

NOUNS	VERBS
addict	a**ddict**
conduct	con**duct**
conflict	con**flict**
contest	con**test**
convert	con**vert**
convict	con**vict**
defect	de**fect**
desert	de**sert**
increase	in**crease**
insult	in**sult**
object	ob**ject**
present	pre**sent**
produce	pro**duce**
progress	pro**gress**
rebel	re**bel**
record	re**cord**

research	re**search**
subject	sub**ject**
suspect	sus**pect**

Note: Some of the above words have different meanings in the verb and noun forms.

audio 5.10

Practice Sentences

Underline the stressed syllables in the verbs and nouns in italic letters. To check your answers, listen to the audio.

Sentences for Practice

1. The singer wants to *record* a new *record.*
2. The drug *addict* is *addicted* to heroin.
3. He *insulted* me with a rude *insult.*
4. I would like to *present* all of the *present* members.
5. This *permit permits* you to park your car here.
6. They *protested* in the *protest.*
7. Do you *object* to this *object*?
8. The *convict* was *convicted* again.
9. I *suspect* that they caught the *suspect.*
10. They are going to *contest* the results of the *contest.*

audio 5.11

Dialogue for Practice

Woman: Have you heard? The police caught the **suspect!**

Man: Do you mean the one who is **suspected** of robbing the bank?

Woman: Yes, I heard that he had a criminal **record**.

Man: Oh really, what crime was he **convicted** of?

Woman: He's a drug **addict** who has been robbing banks to support his **addiction**.

Man: How many years do you think he will spend in prison?

Woman: A maximum of ten years. But he might be released early on good **conduct**.

Man: If he **conducts** himself badly and **insults** the prison guards, I wonder if his sentence will be **increased**.

Woman: I don't know. I haven't heard of a prison term **increase** for **insults** and bad **conduct.**

audio 5.12

Words Ending in *-tion* and *-ate*

Words that end with *-ate* have stress on the first syllable. Nouns ending with *-tion* however, have stress on the syllable before the suffix.

activate	activation
celebrate	cele**bra**tion
con**gra**tulate	congratu**la**tion
demonstrate	demon**stra**tion
donate	do**na**tion
frustrate	frus**tra**tion
imitate	imi**ta**tion
locate	lo**ca**tion

audio 5.13

-ate Endings of Verbs and Nouns

b. The "ate" word ending is fully pronounced fully in verbs but reduced in adjectives and nouns.

1. a. separate /eIt/ (verb) — They have decided to **separate**.
   b. separate /It/ (adjective) — They will live in **separate** houses.
2. a. alternate /eIt/ (verb) — He **alternates** between feeling happy and sad.
   b. alternate /It/ (adjective) — Do you have an **alternate** plan?
3. a. graduate /eIt/ (verb) — He will **graduate** next spring.
   graduate /It/ (noun) — He will be a college **graduate**.
4. a. estimate /eIt/ (verb) — Can you **estimate** the cost of the repairs?
   b. estimate /It/ (noun) — I would like to have an **estimate** of the costs.

5. a. duplicate /eIt/ (verb) I will **duplicate** this document.
   b. duplicate /It/ (noun) Please make a **duplicate** of it.

6. a. appropriate /eIt/ (verb) They city **appropriated** the money for the new park.
   b. appropriate /It/ (adjective) It was an **appropriate** decision.

audio 5.14

Stressed Suffixes

For words with the following suffixes: *-ee, -ette, -ique, -ese, -eer,* and *-ain,* place the stress on the suffix.

employ**ee**	train**ee**	cigar**ette**
cass**ette**	un**ique**	bout**ique**
Japan**ese**	Chin**ese**	engin**eer**
volunt**eer**	main**tain**	exp**lain**

audio 5.15

Rules for Prefixes

Sometimes a prefix is stressed and other times it's not. Prefix + verb combinations usually have second syllable stress. Here are a few examples.

over**sleep**	over**do**	under**stand**	under**take**
out**live**	out**perform**	re**write**	re**do**

However, if the prefix + the root word function as a noun, the first syllable is stressed.

oversight	**over**dose	**under**taker	**under**wear
refill	**re**peat	**out**sourcing	**out**come

audio 5.16

With reflexive pronouns, the last syllable is stressed.

my**self**	your**self**	him**self**
her**self**	it**self**	our**selves**

audio 5.17

Practice with Prefixes

Practice saying the following groups of words with the same prefixes, paying attention to the changes in stress. In the nouns, stress the prefix. In the verbs, stress the root word.

	Prefix + root word = NOUN	Prefix + root word = VERB
	Stress the prefix	Stress root word
pre-	**pre**view, **pre**fix	pre**vent**, pre**pare**, pre**dict**
per-	**per**mit	per**form**, per**suade**, per**mit**
pro-	**pro**duct, **pro**cess, **pro**fit	pro**duce**, pro**tect**, pro**pose**
con-	**con**cert, **con**test, **con**flict	con**fess**, con**trol**, con**duct**
com-	**com**plex, **com**pound	com**pete**, com**plain**, com**pare**, com**pose**, com**pute**
de-	**de**tail, **de**fect, **de**crease	de**ny**, de**mand**, de**fend**
dis-	**dis**count, **dis**course, **dis**trict	dis**cuss**, dis**trust**, dis**turb**
a-	**a**ccess, **a**ddict, **a**nchor	a**gree**, a**pply**, a**dmit**

audio 5.18

Practice Paragraph

Underline the stressed syllables in the verbs and nouns in italic letters. To check your answers, listen to the audio.

The Protest

Underline the stressed syllables in the verbs and nouns in italic letters. To check your answers, listen to the audio. The *protesters* gathered in front of the government building *expecting* to *confront* the *elected* officials. They were *protesting* the recently *uncovered* corruption. It is *believed* that the officials were inside the building *discussing* the *conflict.* The crowds threatened to *disrupt* the meeting. Some workers *complained* about *receiving* threats from the *protesters.* The mayor *confirmed* that he would *conduct* an investigation and try to *resolve* the *conflict.* The sheriff will *assist* him to *compile* all the *details* of the investigation. The mayor *assured* the *public* that he would make an *effort* to *protect* the citizens from further corruption.



Study Tip

Record and analyze your own speech daily.

Choose a short one to two minute section of your workplace speech or presentation. Record yourself, then listen and identify one or two areas to improve (such as /r/, /th/, or syllable stress patterns) Make small, consistent corrections instead of trying to fix everything at once.

audio 5.19

Word Forms and Syllable Stress Changes

When a word changes from a noun to a verb or adjective or adverb, frequently the stress placement changes as well. Listen to these common words that non-native speakers tend to mispronounce.

politics	po**li**tical	poli**ti**cian
photograph	photo**gra**phic	pho**to**graphy
com**pete**	com**pet**itive	compe**ti**tion
e**con**omy	e**con**omical	e**con**omize
democrat	de**mo**cracy	demo**cra**tic
family	fa**mil**iar	famili**ar**ity
necessary	necess**ar**ily	ne**cess**ity
hospital	hospi**tal**ity	hos**pit**able
origin	origi**nal**ity	**orig**inal
me**chan**ic	**me**chanism	mech**an**ical
de**fine**	defi**ni**tion	**de**finitely
vary	va**ri**ety	vari**a**tion
courage	cou**rag**eous	
probably	proba**bil**ity	
ge**og**raphy	geog**raph**ic	
memory	me**mo**rial	
Canada	Ca**na**dian	
ig**nore**	**ig**norance	

audio 5.20

Sentence Pairs for Practice

1. He likes **politics**.
   He wants to be a **politician**.
2. I love **photography**.
   Do you take a lot of **photographs**?
3. He studied **economy**.
   He is an **economical** shopper.
4. Do you know that **family**?
   Yes, they're **familiar** to me.
5. He is a very good **mechanic**.
   He is fixing the **mechanism.**
6. Their opinions **vary.**
   There is a **variety** of opinions in the room.
7. We celebrate **Memorial** Day.
   It's in **memory** of the veterans.
8. Do you know the **origin** of your name?
   No, it's pretty **original.**
9. He is a registered **Democrat.**
   He watched the **democratic** debate on TV.
10. It is not **necessary** to do that.
    I don't **necessarily** agree.
11. He likes to **compete**.
    He's always been very **competitive**.

audio 5.21

Reduced Vowels for Review

As a final review of this important chapter on stress and reduction, you will have an opportunity to break the habit of pronouncing each vowel fully, as you would in your native language. You must remind yourself that one of the most important factors to a great American accent is the concept of stress and reduction.

Read the word list below, one row at a time, making sure that the vowel of the unstressed syllable is reduced and pronounced as /ə/, the schwa. The vowel spelling changes, but the vowel sound is the same in all of these groups of words.

audio 5.22

Words ending in /əl/

	LE	AL	EL	UL	OL
1.	little	social	level	awful	symbol
2.	gamble	mental	marvel	beautiful	idol
3	able	final	travel	careful	capitol
4.	double	practical	angel	faithful	
5.	cycle	local	bagel	harmful	
6.	handle	animal	novel	thankful	

audio 5.23

Words ending in /ən/

	AN	EN	ON	ION
1.	ocean	fasten	common	fiction
2.	American	children	person	nation
3.	urban	chicken	lesson	million
4.	German	dozen	iron	direction
5.	woman	given	melon	attention
6.	veteran	driven	Jefferson	action

audio 5.24

Words ending in /ər/

	AR	ER	OR	URE
1.	grammar	teacher	visitor	culture
2.	popular	driver	liquor	measure
3.	sugar	singer	actor	injure
4.	familiar	answer	color	future
5.	nuclear	sister	junior	failure
6.	regular	border	major	pressure

audio 5.25

Words ending in /əs/

	ACE/ASE	OUS	OSE	UCE
1.	terrace	cautious	purpose	lettuce
2.	necklace	fabulous		
3.	palace	dangerous		
4.	grimace	curious		
5.	surface	delicious		
6.	preface	religious		

audio 5.26

Words ending in /ənt/

	ANT	ENT
1.	distant	present
2.	elegant	accent
3.	infant	talent
4.	instant	frequent
5.	constant	document
6.	important	payment

audio 5.27

Note: In this group of words the first syllables, rather than the last, are reduced.

	A	E	O	U
1.	attain	enough	obtain	undo
2.	achieve	elect	object	unfit
3.	admit	effect	observe	untie
4.	adore	equip	obsess	unhappy
5.	awake	exam	offend	uncover
6.	announce	example	occur	unlock

audio 6.1

CHAPTER SIX

Word Stress

In this chapter you will learn the rules of stressing words within sentences. If you stress the right words your speech will have a natural rhythm and melody that is familiar to native speakers. The stress and reduction of words creates the music of English.

If your sentences are difficult to understand, it could be that you are not stressing *any* words, or else that you are stressing the *wrong* words. If you are not emphasizing any word your speech will sound flat and monotone, and the listener will not know where one word begins and another ends. If you are stressing the *wrong* words your speech will sound very foreign. For example, saying "I'll **see** you later." and "Have a **nice** day." sounds foreign to the American ear. If you change the word stress and say: I'll see you **later**." and "Have a nice **day**." native speakers will recognize a familiar speech pattern and will be more likely to understand what you said, even if you are speaking quickly. So, if you have a tendency to speak too fast, learning to speak with correct word stress will automatically force you to slow down.

Sometimes when the word stress changes, the meaning also changes. For example,

"I went to the white **house**

or

"I went to the **White** House"

The first example describes a house that is white, while the second one is name of the place where the US President lives. Let's now learn some rules of word stress.

audio 6.2

Proper Stress with Compound Words

Compound words are made up of two or more words that come together to create a new word. In compound words the first word is stressed and the words are said together, with no pausing between the words. *Key* and *board* are pronounced as *keyboard.*

Compound words can be formed in different ways. For example:

- Two nouns: *newspaper, bookshelf, phone number*

- An adjective and a noun: *Bluetooth, White House. freeloader*
- A noun and a verb: *to babysit, to proofread, to daydream*

Compound words can be written as one word (*newspaper*), or two separate words (*credit card*), or sometimes with hyphens. (*daughter-in-law*).

Compound Nouns

Make sure that you:

a. stress the first word

b. reduce the second word

c. pronounce the two words as one unit.

Example:

- *CREDIT card (not: credit CARD)*
- *BOOK store (not: book STORE)*

audio 6.3

Compound Nouns for Practice

⎍⎽	⎍⎽	⎍⎽	⎍⎽
parking lot	**book** shelf	**credit** card	**foot**ball
parking ticket	**book** cover	**post**card	**base**ball
parking meter	**book**store	**report** card	**basket**ball
parking space	**book**mark	**green** card	**meat**ball
backache	**tooth**ache	**stomach** ache	**heart**ache
bedroom	**bath**room	**class**room	**living** room

audio 6.4

Job Titles as Compound Nouns

Many English job titles are compound nouns. Some are written as two words, such as *police officer*, while some are written as one word, such as *sales person*. Practice stressing the first word in each title and saying both words together smoothly.

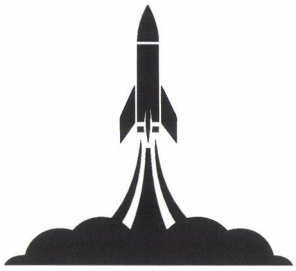
Written as two words

1. **police** officer
2. **bank** teller
3. **software** engineer
4. **history** teacher
5. **bus** driver
6. **airline** pilot
7. **flight** attendant
8. **hair** stylist
9. **office** manager
10. **car** mechanic
11. **film** actor
12. **piano** player
13. **ballet** dancer
14. **construction** worker
15. **business** owner

Written as one word

16. **sales**person
17. **bar**tender
18. **baby**sitter
19. **house**keeper
20. **fire**fighter

audio 6.5



Fluency Boost

To increase your fluency learn these commonly used compound words that describe people

Compound Words Describing People

Written as one word

1. **back**stabber (**meaning:** *someone who betrays others*)
   I trusted him, but he turned out to be a **backstabber**.
2. **whistle**blower (**meaning:** *someone who exposes wrongdoing or illegal activity in an organization)*
   Being a **whistleblower** can take a lot of courage.
3. **loud**mouth (**meaning:** *someone who talks too much or too loudly*)
   The **loudmouth** kept talking in the movie theater.
4. **dare**devil (**meaning:** *someone who takes risks*)
   The **daredevil** jumped off the cliff into the ocean.
5. **book**worm (**meaning:** *someone who loves reading*)
   I was such a **bookworm** in school.
6. **hot**head (**meaning:** *someone who gets angry easily*)
   Don't argue with him—he's a **hothead**.
7. **free**loader (**meaning:** *someone who takes without giving*)
   The **freeloader** never pays for dinner.
8. **wall**flower (**meaning:** *someone shy or quiet in social situations*)
   The **wallflower** didn't talk to anyone at the party.
9. **worry**wart (**meaning:** *someone who worries too much*)
   My mother the **worrywart** calls me five times a day.
10. **dead**beat (**meaning:** *someone who avoids responsibility*)
    The **deadbeat** didn't pay his bills again.
11. **goof**ball (**meaning:** *a silly or foolish person*)
    The **goofball** was making funny faces in class.
12. **chatter**box (**meaning:** *someone who talks a lot*)
    Even in the library, the **chatterbox** couldn't stay silent.

13. **peace**maker (**meaning:** *someone who tries to stop arguments*)
    The **peacemaker** helped everyone calm down.
14. **heart**breaker (**meaning:** *someone who breaks hearts emotionally*)
    Her friends warned her not to date the **heartbreaker**.
15. **busy**body (**meaning:** *someone overly interested in other people's business*)
    The **busybody** is always watching us through the window.

audio 6.6

Written as two words

1. **couch** potato (**meaning:** *someone lazy who watches a lot of TV*)
   Let's go for a walk. Don't be a **couch potato**.
2. **night** owl (**meaning:** *someone who stays up late*)
   I'm a **night owl** and usually go to bed after midnight.
3. **party** animal (**meaning:** *someone who loves parties*)
   He used to be a real **party animal** in college
4. **penny** pincher (**meaning:** *someone very careful with money*)
   The **penny pincher** never buys anything unnecessary.
5. **go**-getter (**meaning:** *an ambitious, energetic person*)
   She's a **go-getter** who always reaches her goals.
6. **big** shot (**meaning:** *an important or influential person*)
   The CEO is a **big shot** in the business world.
7. **know**-it-all (**meaning:** *someone who thinks they know everything*)
   Nobody likes a **know-it-all** who corrects everyone.
8. **show**-off (**meaning:** *someone who likes to display their abilities*)
   The **show-off** kept talking about his new car.

audio 6.7

Compound Nouns with Three Words

Stress the first word in these compound nouns within compound nouns.

cell phone number	**basket**ball coach
football game	**blood** pressure medicine
bedroom furniture	**web**site address
high school girl	**parking** lot attendant

audio 6.8

Dialogue for Practice



Going on a Business Trip

a. I'm getting ready for my **business** trip.

b. Have you bought your **airline** ticket?

a. Yes, I got a **window** seat.

b. Have you made **hotel** reservations?

a. Yes, I got a **hotel** room with a nice **view.**

b. Have you packed your **suit**case?

a. I still need to pack my **bathing** suit and **running** shoes.

b. Why are you taking a **bathing** suit and **running** shoes on a **business** trip?

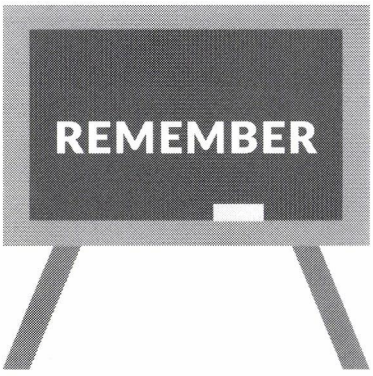
a. Because the hotel has a **swimming** pool and a **workout** room.

b. Don't forget your **lap**top.

a. It's on my **check**list.

b. And your **smart**phone.

a. Oh, I won't. I don't go anywhere without my **smart**phone.



Remember!

Stressing a word means that the stressed syllable of the word is:

1. louder – I have a nice WEEKend
2. longer – Have a nice weeeekend.
3. higher in pitch – have a nice ↑weekend.

audio 6.9

Proper Stress with Adjectives

When an adjective is followed by a noun, the noun is generally stressed more.

nice **day**	blue **eyes**
big **house**	good **job**
small **room**	old **man**
long **time**	first **grade**

When two adjectives precede a noun, stress the *first* adjective *and* the noun. The noun gets the most stress.

big blue **bus**	**nice** old **man**
really nice **day**	**cute** little **girl**
short black **hair**	**big** brown **eyes**

audio 6.10

Practice Sentences

Make sure that you stress the noun more than the adjective.

1. John has blue **eyes** and blond **hair**.
2. He has two **sons** and three **daughters**.
3. You did a great **job** working on the new **project**.
4. Did you get a good **deal** on that new **car**?

5. They bought an expensive **house** in a nice **neighborhood**.
6. I read an interesting **article** about the famous **architect**.
7. We took a long **walk** after eating a big **meal**.
8. That little **girl** with the curly **hair** is wearing a cute **dress**.
9. Her new **boyfriend** gave her red **roses** for her twenty-fifth **birthday**.
10. My favorite **films** are "American **Beauty**," "The Green **Mile**," and "Dark **Knight**."

audio 6.11

Practice Sentences

1. He's **got** big blue **eyes** and **short** black **hair**.
2. The **nice** young **man** helped the **little** old **lady**.
3. The **big** blue **bus** passed the **little** white **car**.
4. The **rich** young **man** bought that **big** old **house**.

audio 6.12

Practice Sentences

Adjective + Compound Noun

Now let's add adjectives to the compound nouns. The rules of stress still remain the same. We stress the noun more than the adjective, and we stress the first word of the compound noun.

1. I got a cheap **plane** ticket.
2. Do you like your new **cell** phone?
3. That's my old **high** school.
4. He's a famous **movie** star.
5. I watched an interesting **YouTube** video.
6. That's a large **computer** screen.
7. He's my former **college** professor.
8. She has long **finger**nails.
9. That's a difficult **math** problem.

10. He's a rich **business**man.
11. I'll give you my **email** address.
12. Is this the correct **website** address?
13. He went to a great **law** school.
14. She wore a white **wedding** dress.
15. That new **house** has big **bed**rooms and small **bath**rooms.

audio 6.13

Word Pairs for Practice

Practice saying the word pairs while stressing the words in bold letters.

Compound Noun	Adjective + Noun
swimming pool	deep **pool**
drug store	large **store**
newspaper	new **paper**
credit card	plastic **card**
sun glasses	nice **glasses**
postman	tall **man**
bus driver	fast **driver**
textbook	good **book**
palm tree	tall **tree**
fingernails	long **nails**
girlfriend	great **friend**

audio 6.14

Compound Noun and Adjective + Noun

Sentences for Practice

1. They had a good **time** playing **foot**ball.
2. I bought some **sun**glasses at that new **store**.
3. My **hair**dresser has blond **hair**.
4. The **post**man brought me an important **letter**.
5. That **sales**man is a very nice **man**.
6. Her large **apartment** is on the third **floor** of that **apartment** building.
7. I left my **cell** phone in the front **seat** of my friend's **car**.
8. Let's go see the new **film** at the **movie** theater.

audio 6.15

Compound Nouns Containing Adjectives

Sometimes in a compound noun, the first word is an adjective that no longer carries the original meaning. The meaning has been lost and has become a part of a fixed phrase or common expression. For example the adjective *super* in the compound noun *supermarket* doesn't make people think of the true meaning of the word *super*. Here are some other examples.

Words for Practice

1. **White** House
2. **high** school
3. **green**house
4. **green** card
5. **hot** dog
6. **Blue**tooth
7. **blue** jeans
8. **high** rise

audio 6.16

Phrasal Verbs

A "phrasal verb" is a verb + preposition combination that carries a special meaning. Phrasal verbs are idiomatic; they cannot be translated word-for-word. For example, *turn on*, *turn off*, *turn down*, and *turn up* are all phrasal verbs. These types of words are very common in English and are often more frequently used than their one-word synonyms. For example, you are more likely to hear "**put out** the fire" rather than "**extinguish** the fire." In phrasal verbs, **the stress is on the last word.** Note the bold words in the examples below.

phrasal verb	**synonym**
He *picked* ***up*** the box.	He *lifted* the box.
He *put* ***out*** his cigarette.	He *extinguished* his cigarette.
He *looked* ***over*** the material	He *reviewed* the material.

audio 6.17

Dialogues for Practice

Phrasal Verbs with *turn*

1. a. We don't need the heater.
   a. Turn it **off**. (stop, extinguish)

2. a. The music sounds good.
   b. Turn it **up**. (increase the volume)

3. a. Let's watch TV.
   b. Turn it **on**. (to light, to start)

4. a. He's impolite.
   b. That turns me **off**. (disgust)

5. a. The music is too loud.
   b. Turn it **down**. (decrease the volume)

6. a. Did he ask her out?
   b. She turned him **down**. (reject a request or a person)

7. a. He told me he'd be at the party.
   b. He didn't turn **up**. (appear, arrive)

8. a. Did you ask for help?
   b. They turned me **away**. (reject, refuse)

audio 6.18

Noun Forms of Phrasal Verbs

Sometimes the phrasal verb has a noun equivalent, or a "phrasal noun." In that case, the stress is on the *first* word. We say "work **out**" if it's a verb, and "**work**out", if it's a noun.

Sentence Pairs for Practice

	Phrasal verbs (stress on second word)	**Nouns** (stress on first word)
1.	The car was tuned **up.**	My car needed a **tune**-up.
2.	I worked **out** yesterday.	I had a great **work**out.
3.	The papers were handed **out**.	We got some interesting **hand**outs.
4.	They covered it **up** well.	I heard about the **cover** up.
5.	A lot of food was left **over**.	We ate **left**overs for lunch.
6.	That really turns me **off!**	That's such a **turn**off!
7.	They let me **down**.	It was a big **let**down.
8.	The order was mixed **up.**	We're sorry about the **mix** up.
9.	He dropped **out.**	He's a high school **drop**out.
10.	I need to sign **up** for the class.	Where is the **sign**-up sheet.

audio 6.19

More Words for Practice

Stress the first word in these phrasal nouns within compound nouns.

back up plan	**pick** up truck	**stand** up comedy
cut off date	**carry** on case	**drive** through window
sign up sheet	**play** back button	**sit** down dinner
check out time	**drop** out rate	**make** up remover
warm up exercises	**workout** room	**move** in date

audio 6.20

Sentences for Practice

Stress the highlighted words.

1. We have a **back**up plan in case things don't work **out.**
2. I found **out** that my **pick** up truck needs a **tune** up.
3. The marriage was called **off** because the couple broke **up**.
4. Let's eat **out** after our **work**out.
5. He called me **up** to tell me about the **hold** up at the bank.
6. We dressed **up** for the **sit**-down dinner.
7. We found **out** that the **check-**in time was put **off**.
8. I am trying to cut **down** on eating **out**.
9. I looked it **over** and gave him the **print**out.
10. There was a **mix** up at the **drive** through window.

audio 6.21

Abbreviations and Numbers

Always stress the last letter or the last number. Say them as one word.

Abbreviations for Practice

MB**A**	CN**N**	FB**I**
UCL**A**	US**A**	Ph**D**
JF**K**	IB**M**	AT&**T**

Numbers for Practice

199**7**	$37.**99**
5:**15**	91**1**
11:**45**	(31**0**) 55**5**- 238**9**

audio 6.22

Sentences for Practice

1. He arrived at LA**X** at 8:2**5** A**M**.
2. He has a Ph**D** from UCL**A**.
3. My SU**V** was made in the US**A**.
4. We arrived in the US**A** in 200**7**.
5. My class starts and 9:**15** and ends at 10:**45**

audio 6.23

Names of Places and People

When pronouncing a name, whether of a person or place, always stress the last word.

Names of Places for Practice

New **York**	Las **Vegas**
Central **Park**	Palm **Springs**
South **Africa**	North **Dakota**
Venice **Beach**	Mount **Everest**

Names of People for Practice

George **Washington**	John F. **Kennedy**
Bill **Clinton**	Martin Luther **King**
Tom **Cruise**	Julia **Roberts**

audio 6.24

Practice Paragraph

This passage includes examples of all of the different word stress rules you have learned so far. Stress the words in bold letters. The items you have studied in this chapter—such as compound nouns, names of people and places, phrasal verbs, abbreviations—are in italics.

Trip to LA



Stress the words in bold letters. The items you have studied in this chapter such as compound nouns, names of people, phrasal verbs, abbreviations, etc, are in italic letters.

I am planning to visit the *West* ***Coast***. I will take *United* ***Airlines*** flight *307*. It leaves *JF****K*** at *9:00* ***am*** and arrives at *LA****X*** at *12:15*. I *found* ***out*** that there's a ***three*** *hour* ***time*** *difference* between *LA* and *New* ***York.*** I hope I *get* ***over*** my ***jet****lag* pretty quickly. After I *check* ***in*** at the hotel, I will call a ***taxi*** *cab* to *pick me* ***up*** and take me to *Universal* ***Studios***. Who knows, I might even see some famous **movie** stars like *Tom* ***Cruise*** and *Brad* ***Pitt***. Oh, I hope I don't *pass* ***out***! I also plan to visit *Palm* ***Springs*** and *San* ***Diego***. On my way ***back,*** I'm planning a ***lay****over* in *Las* ***Vegas***. I really think it's going to be a nice ***get****away*.

audio 6.25

Word Stress Within A Sentence

You will now learn the rules of stress and reduction within sentences. First let's learn *how* words should sound when they are stressed. For now, just keep in mind that we generally stress words that carry the most meaning.

Lengthening The Main Vowel In Stressed Words

When the stressed word has only one syllable, just prolong the word and make the vowel higher in pitch. If the stressed word has more than one syllable, make sure that the stressed syllable of the word is prolonged and emphasized more than usual.

Prolonging the stressed vowel may sound exaggerated to you, particularly if the vowel is already a long vowel, such as /a/ and /æ/ and /ou/. For example, if you say, "It's really far." or "Stop that!," the vowel sound may be much longer than it would sound in your native

language. Don't say: "It's really far." Say: "It's really far (faaar)." Don't say "Stop that!" Say "Stop (staaap) that!" Let's first get used to prolonging the vowels within stressed words since this will create a distinctly American sound to your English.

audio 6.26

Practice with Vowel Length

Make sure that you raise your pitch and prolong the underlined vowel in the stressed words below.

Stressed Words with /ɑ/

1. I g**o**t it.

2. I g**o**t a new j**o**b.

3. I think I g**o**t a new j**o**b.

Stressed Words with /ae/

1. I have a new **cl**a**ss**.

2. I can't **st**a**nd** it.

3. I can't st**a**nd my new **cl**a**ss**.

4. I'll call you **b**a**ck**.

5. …as soon as I c**a**n.

6. I'll call you **b**a**ck** as soon as I **c**a**n.**

Stressed Words with /ou/

1. It's so **c**o**ld**.

2. I didn't kn**ow**.

3. I didn't **know** about it.

4.I didn't kn**ow** it would be so c**o**ld.

Stressed Words with /i/

1. How do you **f**ee**l**?

2. When did he **l**ea**ve**?

3. How did you **feel** when he had to **leave**?

Stressed Words with /ɔ/

1.That's **a**wful.

2.It's too l**o**ng.

3.That **a**wful n**o**vel is too l**o**ng.

4.I'm exh**au**sted.

5.I've been t**a**lking all day l**o**ng.

6. I'm exh**au**sted from t**a**lking **a**ll day l**o**ng.

audio 6.27

Which Words Should I Stress?

Now that you had a quick introduction to *how* words sound when they are stressed and reduced, let's learn the rules of which words are stressed and which are reduced.

Stress Content Words

Content words are the words that carry the most meaning. These words are usually *nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs* and sometimes *question words* such as *"when", "why", "where", etc.* If we removed the surrounding words and just spoke using content words, the general idea of what we were trying to say would still be understood.

For example if you heard someone say: "Went store morning." You would understand that they meant: "I went to the store in the morning." Also, content words are like key words that you would use when searching a topic on the internet. For example, you would only type: "SYMPTOMS, HEART ATTACK," instead of "What are the symptoms of a heart attack?" Another good example would be newspaper headlines. We would read: "SUSPECT ARRESTED" instead of "A suspect has been arrested," and "NEIGHBORS COMPLAIN" instead of "The neighbors have been complaining."

As a general rule, the **last** content word of a phrase gets the most stress. So, in the sentence "A suspect has been arrested," *arrested* will get the most stress. Similarly we don't say: "The **neighbors** have been complaining." Instead, we stress the last content word and we say: "The neighbors have been **complaining**."

Now let's practice stressing content words and placing the most stress on the final content word.

audio 6.28

Practice Sentences

Remember to stress the last content word in each sentence. Notice how the stress changes as more information is added to the end. The underlined word gets the most stress.

1. I like **bacon**.
   I like **bacon** and **eggs**.
2. It's **black**.
   It's **black** and **white**.
3. Do you want **salt**?
   Do you want **salt** and **pepper**?
4. That's **good.**
   That's a good **idea**.
5. It's **hot**.
   It's a hot **day**.
6. I **need** it.
   I need to **go**.
   I need to **go home.**
   I need to go **home** at five **o'clock**.
7. I **saw** him.
   I saw the **man**.
   I saw the **man** you **told** me about.*

*Note: "me" and "about" are not stressed because they are not content words.

8. He **drove** it.
   He **drove** the **car**.
   He **drove** the **car** he **bought** yesterday.
   He **drove** the **car** that he **bought** from his **friend**.

audio 6.29

Content Words In Detail: Verbs

Verbs are action words, such as *go*, *eat*, and *study*. We emphasize main verbs more than the participles or gerunds that come before them. That's because words like *can*, *could*, *am*, *been*, *don't*, and *have* (when it's a participle) are less important than the main verb.

Practice Sentences

Notice how the verbs are stressed the most and how the surrounding words have been reduced.

1. I'll **call** you.
2. I **saw** him.
3. I'll **wait** for you.
4. I **have** to **go.**
5. It's nice to **meet** you.

audio 6.30

Stress Nouns But Not Pronouns

We stress nouns like *man*, *book*, *John*, and *Mary*. We don't stress pronouns such as *he*, *it*, *her*, and *myself*.

Practice Sentences

stressed nouns:	***reduced pronouns:***
He told **John**.	He **told** him.
I like that **car**.	I **like** it.
I need a **job**.	I **need** it.

audio 6.31

Content Words In Detail: Verbs

Place full stress on an adjective if it's not followed by a noun. If it is followed by a noun, stress the noun more.

adjective alone:	***adjective + noun:***
1. That was **good.**	That was a **good <u>film</u>**.
2. It's really **hot.**	It's a really **hot <u>day</u>**.
3. It's **long.**	It's a **long <u>drive</u>**.
4. John is **nice.**	John is a **nice <u>man</u>**.

audio 6.32

Practice Sentences

1. Wait!

I'll **wait** for you.

I can **wait** for you.

I am **waiting** for you.

I'll be **waiting** for you.

I've been **waiting** for you.

I could've **waited** for you.

I could've been **waiting** for you.

I'll **wait** for you in the **car**.

I'll be **waiting** for you in the **car**.

I should've been **waiting** for you in the **car**.

2. Tell her.

He'll **tell** her.

He'll be **telling** her.

He didn't **tell** her.

He should have **told** her.

He should've been **telling** her.

He didn't **tell** his **wife**.

He should've been **telling** his **wife**.

He didn't **tell** his **wife** about the **situation**.

He should've been **telling** his **wife** about the **situation**.

3. I **bought** it.

I **bought** a **watch.**

I **bought** a new **watch**.

I **bought** a new gold **watch**.

I **bought** a new gold **watch** for him.

I **bought** a new gold **watch** for his **birthday**.

I **bought** a new gold **watch** for his thirtieth **birthday**.

I would have **bought** a new gold **watch** for his thirtieth **birthday**.

4. He **lost** it.

He **lost** the **money.**

I **think** he **lost** the **money**.

I **think** he **lost** the **money** again.

I **think** he **lost** the **money** that I **gave** him.

He might have **lost** the **money** that I **gave** him.

I **think** he might have **lost** the **money** that I **gave** him.

audio 6.33

Reducing Vowels in Unstressed Words

We reduce "function words." These types of words generally don't carry as much importance or meaning as the content words. If they were eliminated, the sentence would still make sense. Here is a list of the function words:

a. **pronouns** - *he, she, you, they, mine, his, himself,* etc.

b. **prepositions** - *to, in, for, at, by, on, with, from,* etc.

c. **conjunctions** - *and, but, or, nor, so, yet*

d. **auxiliary verbs** - *am, is, was, were, do, does, been, have, can, could, should,* etc.

e. **articles** - *a, an, the*

f. **indefinite pronouns** - *one, some, any, anywhere, somewhere, anything, something,* etc.

There is one exception to the rule above: auxiliary verbs are stressed in their negative forms. See below.

affirmative:	***negative:***
I can **do** it.	I **can't do** it.
He should **try** it.	He **shouldn't try** it.
I'd **like** it.	I **wouldn't like** it.

audio 6.34

Weak Forms

When a word is reduced we use the **weak form** of the word. The weak form is said more quickly and more softy. The vowel becomes the schwa sound, /ə/. For example, the

preposition "for" sounds like "fur" /fɚ/, and "at" sounds like /ɚt/. Let's now practice using the weak forms of some commonly unstressed words.

audio 6.35

Practice Sentences

***to* becomes /tə/**

1. I'd like *to* go.
2. I need *to* talk *to* you.
3. I'd like *to* go *to* the park.

***and* becomes /n/**

1. bacon *'n'* eggs
2. black *'n'* white
3. in *'n'* out
4. rock *'n'* roll

***for* becomes /fɚ/ (sounds like "fur")**

1. Let's go *for* a walk.
2. Wait *for* John.
3. This is *for* Bill.
4. I'm looking *for* my book.

***can* becomes /kən/**

1. I *can* do it.
2. You *can* call me.
3. *Can* you swim?
4. When *can* you come over?

***as* becomes /əz/**

1. It's *as* big *as* a house.
2. I'm *as* hungry *as* a wolf.
3. I'll call you *as* soon *as* I can.
4. Keep it *as* long *as* you need it.

***or* becomes /ɚ/**

1. Is it this one *or* that one?
2. I'll do it today *or* tomorrow.
3. I saw it five *or* six times.
4. I'm leaving on Monday *or* Tuesday.

audio 6.36

Practice Dialogues

Remember to reduce the vowel of the unstressed word.

1. Reducing *have*

a. What'*ve* you been doing?

b. I'*ve* been studying.

a. What'*ve* you been studying?

b. I'*ve* been studying English.

a. How long'*ve* you been studying it?

b. I'*ve* been studying it tonight for two hours.

audio 6.37

2. Reducing *has*

a. What *has* she been doing?

b. She'*s* been watching TV.

a. What *has* she been watching?

b. She'*s* been watching a film.

a. How long *has* she been watching it?

b. She'*s* been watching it for an hour.

audio 6.38

3. Reducing *to*

a. I have *to* go to the store.

b. What do you need *to* get?

a. I need *to* get some milk.

b. I'd like *to* come with you.

a. OK, but we need *to* hurry. The store's about to close.

audio 6.39

4. Reducing *can*

a. When *can* you do it?

b. I *can* do it next week.

a. *Can* you do it sooner?

b. I *can* try.

audio 6.40

5. Reducing *some*

a. I'm hungry.

b. Would you like *some* chicken.

a. I'd love *some*.

b. How about *some* rice?

a. *Some* rice would be good.

b. And *some* ice cream and *some* cake for dessert?

a. No, thanks. I need to lose *some* weight.

audio 6.41

6. Reducing *our*

a. Do you like *our* new apartment?

b. *Our* old apartment was bigger.

a. But *our* new one is cheaper.

b. That's true. We need to save *our* money to pay off *our* debts.

audio 6.42

7. Reducing *for*

a. I've been waiting *for* you *for* over an hour.

b. I'm sorry *for* making you wait.

a. You have excuses *for* everything.

b. I was shopping *for* a present *for* your birthday.

a. Is that *for* me? I forgive you *for* everything.

audio 6.43

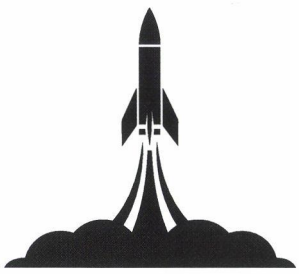
8. Reducing *myself, yourself*

a. I'm really ashamed of *myself.*

b. You need to forgive *yourself* and tell *yourself* that everyone makes mistakes. You're driving *yourself* crazy. Why do you doubt *yourself* so much?

a. I guess I can't help *myself.*

audio 6.44



Fluency Boost

Common Expressions with *as* + adjective + *as*

To increase your fluency, learn these common expressions. When saying these expressions, reduce *as* to /əz/ and connect all three words smoothly. Don't pause between the words.

Practice Sentences

1. I'm ***as*** hungry ***as*** a wolf.
2. This bag is ***as*** light ***as*** a feather.
3. He's ***as*** strong ***as*** an ox.
4. She's ***as*** quiet ***as*** a mouse.
5. This lesson is ***as*** easy ***as*** pie.

6. The night was ***as*** dark ***as*** coal.
7. My old computer was ***as*** slow ***as*** a snail.
8. The room is ***as*** clean ***as*** a whistle.
9. He's ***as*** stubborn ***as*** a mule.
10. That sports car is ***as*** fast ***as*** lightning.
11. The baby is ***as*** cute ***as*** a button.
12. This pizza is ***as*** good ***as*** it gets.
    (**meaning:** it can't be improved; it's the best possible)
13. I've been ***as*** busy ***as*** a bee all week.
    (**meaning:** very busy and active)
14. He's ***as*** sharp ***as*** a tack.
    (**meaning:** very intelligent)
15. She was ***as*** cold ***as*** ice when I said hello.
    (**meaning:** distant; unfriendly)
16. He was ***as*** cool ***as*** a cucumber under pressure.
    (**meaning:** calm and relaxed)
17. She's very old but she's ***as*** fit ***as*** a fiddle.
    (**meaning:** in good health)
18. Your explanation was ***as*** clear ***as*** crystal.
    (**meaning:** very easy to understand)

audio 6.45

Reducing Pronouns

In the chapter on word stress you learned that pronouns are not stressed. When we reduce the pronouns, the first letter is often silent. For example, the letter ***h*** is often silent for the words *he, him, his, her,* and *hers* when these pronouns are not the first words of a sentence. Also, the *th* sound is often silent for the word *them*. This is particularly true in casual speech, but it frequently occurs in formal speech as well. Study the examples below.

	sounds like:
I love her	"I lover"
I knew her	I "newer"
stuff he knows	"stuffy nose"

did he	"didee"
has he	"hazee"

Note: Always pronounce the first consonant of a pronoun when the pronoun is in the beginning of a sentence or a phrase.

audio 6.46

Practice Dialogues

Remember that the ***h*** in *he* and *him* is silent except when those words are at the beginning of a sentence.

Questions about the New Boyfriend

Is ~~*h*~~*e* nice?

What's ~~*h*~~*is* name?

What does ~~*h*~~*e* look like?

How old is ~~*h*~~*e*?

Where does ~~*h*~~*e* live?

What does ~~*h*~~*e* do?

How long have you known ~~*h*~~*im*?

Do you love ~~*h*~~*im*?

Where's ~~*h*~~*is* family from?

When can we meet ~~*h*~~*im*?

Did you tell *him* we'd like to meet ~~*h*~~*im*?

What did ~~*h*~~*e* say?

Response: He said that ~~*h*~~*e* thinks my friends ask too many questions.

audio 6.47

Dialogue 2

Now you will practice the silent ***h*** of the pronoun *her*.

a. Do you know Laura Jones?

b. Yes, I know ~~*her*~~.

a. How do you know ~~*her*~~?

b. I know ~~*her*~~ from school.

a. Have you seen ~~*her*~~ lately?

b. I just saw ~~*her*~~ a few days ago. I see ~~*her*~~ about twice a week. She has ~~*her*~~ dance class next door to mine.

a. Next time you see ~~*her*~~, tell ~~*her*~~ I want to talk to ~~*her*~~.

audio 6.48

All about Eggs

The ***th*** of the pronoun *them* is silent in these sentences.

a. I love eggs.

b. How do you cook ~~*them*~~?

a. All sorts of ways. I boils ~~*them*~~, I fry ~~*them*~~, I scramble ~~*them*~~, and I poach ~~*them*~~.

b. Do you just eat ~~*them*~~ for breakfast?

a. No, I have ~~*them*~~ for dinner too. I cut ~~*them*~~ up and put ~~*them*~~ in salads.

audio 6.49

Strong Forms

When the function word is at the end of the sentence, or if it's used for emphasis, make sure that you use the **strong form** of the word. Let's compare a few sentences with weak and strong forms.

	weak form **reduced vowel**	**strong form** **full vowel**
for	/fɚ/ I'm looking for you.	Who are you looking **for?**
to	/tə/ Would you like *to* go?	I'd love **to.**
at	/ət/ He's *at* the bank.	Are you laughing **with** me or **at** me?

audio 6.50



Warning: Common Mistake!

Don't speak fast unless you know the rules of which words to stress and which to reduce.

Some non-native speakers develop a habit of speaking English at a fast pace, thinking that this will make them sound more like native speakers. Instead, it actually makes their speech harder to understand. Remember, American speech follows the rules of stressing content words and reducing function words. So, we can conclude that Americans speak both quickly and slowly at the same time.

audio 6.51

Thought Groups And Focus Words

When sentences are longer, they are divided into "thought groups." Thought groups are words that naturally belong together as a grammatical unit. We instinctively pause between thought groups, although the pause is not as long as when there's a comma or a period.

Here is an example of a sentence that is divided into two different thought groups:

"I like bacon and eggs /early in the morning." It's natural to divide this sentence, and it sounds better than if you would have said: "I like bacon and eggs early in the morning," without pausing.

Within each thought group there is always one word that gets the most stress. That stressed word is called a "focus word." The focus word is the word that carries the key information of the thought group. It's usually the last content word within the thought group. For example, in the example sentence above, eggs and morning are the focus words.

There is some variation between different speakers regarding how often to pause within a longer sentence. People who speak quickly tend to pause less and their sentences have fewer thought groups.

audio 6.52

Sentences for Practice

Practice stressing the focus words and pausing between the thought groups.

1. I want to **talk** to you / about something **important**.
2. If you give me your **email** address, */ I will send you the **information.**
3. Every time I stop by his **office**, / he's too busy to **talk** to me.
4. I wonder how **long** / it will **take** me / to learn to speak **English** like you.
5. What did you think of the new **restaurant** / that we **went** to last night?
6. He has been looking for a new **job** / for a long **time** now / but he just hasn't **found** anything / that he really **likes**.

(*Email address" is a compound noun, so we stress the first word.)

audio 6.53

Conversations for Practice

Telephone Conversations

Practice these voicemail messages with correct word stress. The focus word of each thought group is in bold letters. The thought groups are divided by slashes.

audio 6.54

Phone Tag

Mary's Answering Machine: Hi, this is **Mary**. I am **sorry** / I missed your **call.** Please leave a **message** / after the **beep,** and I'll call you b**ack** / as soon as I **can.**

Mike: Hi **Mary**, this is **Mike**. It's been a **while** / since we last **spoke**. I hope you're **doing** well. I'm calling to **see** / if you're **free** tomorrow. I am going **hiking** / with some **friends** / and I wanted to **see** / if you'd like to **join** us. It would be great to **see** you. Give me a **call** / and let me **know** / if you're **available.**

Mary: Hi **Mike**, this is **Mary**, returning your **call**. It was great to **hear** from you. Sorry that we keep **missing** each other. Yeah, I'd love to go **hiking** with you. Let me **know** / what time you're thinking of **going**. I'm looking **forward** to it. I should be home **tonight** / after **seven**, so **call** me / and let me **know** / where we should **meet.**

audio 6.55

Sales Call

Note that individual speaking style or some circumstances can determine the number of thought groups there are in a sentence. The following speech has fewer thought groups because the speaker is a salesman who needs to deliver his message quickly.

Good **afternoon,** Mr. **Johnson**. This is Bill **Jones** calling. I would like to **tell** you about the new **product** / our **company** is selling. I **believe** / it will greatly benefit your **organization.** We recently conducted a **study** / on how your customer's **needs** are changing. We are able to help you run your business more **efficiently** /and at the same **time**, save you **money.** I think that people in your **firm** / would be very interested in our **services**. I'd like to set up a time to **talk** with you / about how our company can **help** you. I can **assure** you / that it will be worth your **while**. When would be a good **time** / for us to **meet**?

audio 6.56

Contrastive Stress

*Be nice to people / on your way **up** / because you might meet them / on the way **down**.*
Wilson Mizner

We also stress words to bring out a special meaning or to clarify what we mean when there is confusion. In this case, *any* word can be stressed, including a function word.

Practice Sentences

Each of the following sentences can be stressed in four different ways, depending on the meaning that the speaker wants to convey.

1.	***implied meaning:***
I don't love him.	*....but she does*
I don't love him.	*I really don't.*
I don't love him.	*But I think he's a nice person.*
I don't love him.	*But I love the other guy.*

2.	***implied meaning:***
I may drive to New York.	*Not she.*
I may drive to New York.	*Maybe, I'm not sure.*
I may drive to New York.	*Not fly.*
I may drive to New York.	*Not Boston.*

audio 6.57

Contrastive Stress for Clarification

*"What lies **behind** us and what lies **before** us are tiny matters compared to what lies **within** us."* -Oliver Wendell Holmes

Notice how the stressed words emphasize a particular meaning or a need for clarification.

1. Do you need a ticket **to** Paris or **from** Paris?
2. Did you say **in**side or **out**side?
3. I want **two** pieces, not **one**.
4. It's **under** the desk, not **on** the desk.
5. The government is **of** the people, **by** the people, and **for** the people.

audio 6.58

Emphasizing Auxiliaries

Notice the extra stress placed on the auxiliaries to clarify or strengthen a point. The underlined word indicates extra stress.

1. a. You don't understand me.

b. I **do** understand you.

2. a. You didn't go, did you?

b. I **did** go.

3. a. It's hot isn't it?

b. It **is** hot.

4. a. You've never been here, have you?

b. I **have** been here.

audio 6.59

Dialogue for Practice



Making an appointment

a. Hello, **dentist's** office.

b. I'm **calling** / to make an **appointment** / for a **dental** check-up.

a. I have an **opening** / on **Tuesday** / at 5 **pm**.

b. I'll have to **work** late / on that **day**. Do you **have** anything / on Friday **morning**?

a. I don't **have** anything / on Friday **morning**, but I **do** have / Friday **afternoon**.

b. Hmm, let me **check.** I **think** I can make it. Yes, I **can**. I **can make** it.

a. Would you like **three** o'clock or **four** o'clock?

b. **Four** o'clock sounds **good.**

a. Will this be your first **visit** / to our **office**?

b. No, it'll be my **second** visit.

audio 7.1

CHAPTER SEVEN

Intonation

Intonation is the melody of language and is made up pitches that rise and fall. This rising and falling melody is used to communicate our intentions and our emotions.

In spoken language, intonation replaces punctuation. It tells the listener whether we are finished talking or whether we have something more to say, whether we are asking a question or making a statement. Intonation also gives information that words alone cannot give. It can indicate anger, surprise, confusion, hesitation, sarcasm, interest or lack of interest. If your speech has good intonation it will be more dynamic and more interesting to listen to.

audio 7.2

Falling Intonation

Lower your voice at the end of the sentence to produce a 'falling intonation." This intonation is used for a variety of reasons:

Statements

Falling intonation is used in simple sentences that are not questions. For example:

1. My name is John.

2. It's nice to meet you.

3. Have a nice day.

4. I'm going outside.

5. I'll be back in a minute.

audio 7.3

Questions

Falling intonation is also used when making questions if they contain question words such as *where, what, why, when, how, and who.*

Sentences for Practice

1. What's his name?

2. Why did you leave?

3. Where are you going?

4. What are you thinking about?

5. How are you doing?

6. When does it start?

7. Who told you?

audio 7.4

Rising Intonation

Rising intonation is used in "yes/no questions."

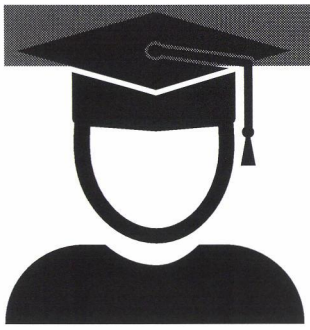
Raise the pitch of your voice at the end of a sentence to create "rising intonation." Rising intonation is used in "yes/no questions." For example, "Did you see it?" is a "yes/no" question. It can be answered with either a "yes" or a "no." Compare that question with this one: "When did you see it?" this one cannot be answered by a simple "yes" or "no."

audio 7.5

Sentences for Practice

1. Did he work yesterday?
2. Does he know about it?
3. Can you call me at five?
4. Is it good?
5. Is that it?
6. Excuse me?
7. Really?

audio 7.6



Advice from a Successful Student

I don't get upset with myself if my accent isn't perfect. I know I am making progress as long as I practice all the time. Don't be too hard on yourself if are still making mistakes. Developing an American accent is a process. It doesn't happen overnight.

Sabrina Stoll, Germany

audio 7.7

Rising and Falling Intonation Practice — Asking Questions

The follow questions pairs contain both rising and falling intonation, depending on whether they contain a question word or if they are "yes/no" questions. The first question of the pair has rising intonation and the second has falling intonation.

Sentence pairs for practice

yes/no question	questions word
1. Do you teach?	What do you teach?
2. Did you see the movie?	When did you see the movie?
3. Do you know that guy?	How do you know that guy?
4. Did you buy the car?	Where did you buy the car?
5. Do you work there?	Why do you work there?

audio 7.8

Non-Final Intonation

With "non-final intonation," the pitch rises and falls within the sentence or word. This type of intonation is used in various situations which are outlined below.

Unfinished Thoughts

Non-final intonation is often used to indicate that you have not ended a thought. To indicate that you have something more to say, raise your pitch at the end of the phrase. For example, "When I saw him..." or "If I study hard..."

audio 7.9

Sentence Pairs for Practice

The first sentence in each pair has falling intonation which indicates that the thought has ended. The second sentence contains rising intonation indicating that the thought has not ended.

1. I bought the book.	I bought the book, but I didn't read it.
2. I finished school.	When I finished school, I moved to New York.
3. I'll study hard.	If I study hard, I'll get an A.
4. I'm going inside.	I'm going inside, to get something to drink.

audio 7.10

Non-final intonation is used with introductory words.

Introductory words indicate that the thought is not finished.

Sentences for Practice

1. As a matter of fact, I do know the answer.
2. As far as I'm concerned, you did great.
3. Actually, it was pretty good.
4. In my opinion, it's too expensive.
5. If you don't mind, I'd like to close the window.
6. By the way, how did you know that?

audio 7.11

Words in a Series

Non-final intonation is used in words and phrases that are listed in a series. The voice rises at the end of each item and falls with the final item.

Sentences for Practice

1. I like football, basketball, tennis and golf.
2. I'm taking math, biology, French and history.
3. I left work, came home, and had dinner.
4. I need milk, apples, eggs and sugar.
5. "I learned law so well, the day I graduated I sued the college, won the case, and got my tuition back." ~Fred Allen

audio 7.12

Expressing Choices

Non-final intonation is used when giving a choice between two or more things.



1. Do you want to eat in or eat out?



2. Is your birthday in March or in April?



3. Do you speak Cantonese or Mandarin?



4. Is his name Matthew or Michael?



5. Do you want the blue one or the black one?

audio 7.13

Wavering Intonation

"Wavering intonation" is used for expressing specific emotions or attitudes. With this type of intonation, the pitch changes within words.

Some of the emotions you can express with your intonation include anger, surprise, sarcasm, hesitation, uncertainty, disgust, fear, amazement, and pity.

Let's start with the words *you did.* We can say them five different ways depending on the emotion or intention. Listen to the audio to hear the intonation changes.

	Meaning
You did?	*curious*
You did?	*very surprised*
You did?	*slightly disappointed*
You did?	*angry*
You did.	*in agreement*

Now say the expression *thanks a lot* in three different ways, changing the intonation each time.

Thanks a lot.	*normal*
Thank a lot.	*very happy*
Thanks a lot.	*sarcastic*

Saying *okay* with different emotions

Okay	*normal*
Okay	*hesitant or unwilling*
Okay!	*very excited*
Okay!	*frustrated and angry*

Saying *no* with different emotions

No!	*angry*
No?	*surprised*
No…	*hesitant*
No.	*sarcastic*

audio 7.14

Angry Friend

a. Did you do it?	*curious*
b. No.	*normal*
a. No?	*very surprised*
b. No!	*angry*
a. Why not?	*surprised*
b. I don't know.	*hesitant*
a. You don't know?	*angry*
b. I don't know.	*angry*
a. Oh really?	*sarcastic*
b. Yeah, really.	*angry or matter-of-fact?*

audio 7.15

Losing weight

This dialogue has examples of all of the types of intonation that you have learned so far in this chapter.

a. Rachel, is that you?

b. Hi Emily.

a. I didn't recognize you at first. Did you lose weight?

b. As a matter of fact, I lost twenty pounds.

a. Really? How did you do it?

b. Well, I stopped eating cake, ice cream, potato chips and candy bars, and I started eating healthier foods like salads, fruit, nuts and vegetables.

a. Wow! I have to say, you look amazing.

b. Do you really think so?

a. Absolutely.

audio 8.1

CHAPTER EIGHT

Sound Like a True Native Speaker

This chapter will share some final important information to help you to sound more like a true native speaker. You will learn the rules of how words are connected together so that your speech flows better and sounds more natural and more fluent. You will also learn more about which words to reduce and exactly how to reduce them. And you will learn the differences between casual, relaxed speech and more formal, careful speech.

audio 8.2

LINKING – CONNECTING WORDS FOR SMOOTHER SPEECH FLOW

Many non-native speakers of English believe that they should pronounce each word separately because they want to make sure that their speech is clear and easily understood. This does help their speech sound clear, but it also creates speech that sounds a bit foreign and a bit mechanical, almost like computer-generated speech.

Native speakers connect, or "link", words together if the words are part of the same thought group. They connect the last sound of one word to the first sound of the next word. Linking creates the smooth, uninterrupted sounds that are they key to natural, fluent sounding speech.

If you're making the common error of dropping the endings of words by not pronouncing the final consonant, the problem will automatically be solved when you apply the rules of linking to your speech. Linking requires you to connect the final consonant with the next word, if it begins with a vowel. This way, the final sound, which is always more difficult to pronounce, now becomes the first sound of the word that follows it. For example, it's more difficult to say "burn**ed** out" than to say "burn doubt."

Instead of saying "it's - a - cold - evening" with each word pronounced separately, say "it sa col devening," and your speech will instantly sound more native-like and you are guaranteed to pronounce the final consonants.

Warning: Common Mistake!



Linking and speaking fast are NOT the same thing! You don't need to speak fast. When native speakers link words, they are not necessarily speaking faster. The speech is just smoother, less choppy. It's extremely important to stress the content words when you are linking words because this will force you to slow down at the right place and it will make your speech more easily understood.

audio 8.3

RULES FOR LINKING

1. Linking Consonant to Vowel

When a word ends in a consonant and the next word begins with a vowel, connect the final consonant to the next vowel, making it sound as if the second word starts with a consonant.

	Sounds Like:		**Sounds Like:**
1. hold on	"whole Don"	4. get up late	"get a plate"
2. I like it	"I lie kit"	5. picked out	"pick doubt"
3. deep end	"depend"	6. this guy	"the sky"

audio 8.4

Common Expressions

Practice Sentences

Let's practice linking a final consonant of a word with the initial vowel of the following word using some everyday phrases in sentences.

1.	Good evening.	Have a good evening.
2.	Hold on.	Please hold on a minute.
3.	good idea	That's a really good idea.
4.	I like it.	I like it a lot.
5.	speak English	Do you speak English
6.	cup of coffee	I'd like a cup of coffee.
7.	Just a minute.	I'll be there in just a minute.
8.	where are	Where are you from?
9.	there are	There are a lot of people here.
10.	kind of	I'm kind of hungry.

audio 8.5

Linking with the article "an"

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." – Pablo Picasso

Remember to link the article "an" with the next word, which is always followed by a vowel sound. (Keep in mind that you also need to apply this linking rule when the word starts with a silent ***h***, as in the words "hour" and "honest.")

Practice Sentences

1. I ate an apple and an orange.

2. I have an IPad and an IPhone.

3. I made an offer to buy an amazing house.

4. He has an American accent.

5. Give me an honest answer.

6. That's an interesting question.

7. That's an unbelievable story.

8. That's an unusual situation.

9. I live in an apartment.

10. I'll be there in an hour.

audio 8.6

Linking *ing* + Vowel

Pay special attention to how you link the ***ing*** ending of one word with the vowel sound of the following word. Don't skip the /g/ sound. For example, when you link "going" and "on," don't say "goin' on." Make sure you create a quick nasal "ng" /ŋ/ sound by touching the back of your mouth with the back of your tongue.

audio 8.7

Practice Dialogues

1. a. What are you planning on doing tonight?

   b. Nothing special. Just hanging out with some friends. Are you going out?

   a. No, I think I'll be staying in and watching a movie.

2. a. I'm shopping around for a car.

   b. Are you planning on buying a new car or a used car?

   a. I'm thinking about getting a used car.

3. a. Why did you hang up on me?

   b. I hung up because you were yelling at me.

4. a. I'm breaking up with my boyfriend.

   b. You're kidding! Are you really doing it? Why?

   a. Well, it's just not working out between us.

   b. But you've been dating him* a long time. I thought you were planning on getting engaged.

   a. We're not getting along any more. We've been arguing a lot.

   b. How long has this been going on?

   a. As long as I can remember.

*(*the **h** is often dropped in the pronoun "him")*

audio 8.8

Practice Dialogues

Link the final consonant to the vowel sound of the following word.

1. a. Can I come in?

b. Yes, come on in. The door is open.

2. a. Should I leave it on?

b. No, turn it off.

3 a. What time is it?

b. It's already five o'clock.

4. a. Let's take a walk.

b. That's a good idea.

5. a. How far is it?

b. Four and a half hours away.

6. a. This is my brother-in-law.

b. We've already met.

audio 8.9

2. Linking Two Consonants

a. Two Same Consonants

When the final consonant of one word is the same as the first consonant of the following word, pronounce the consonant only once. Do not pause between the sounds, but just lengthen the sound a bit or say it with a little bit more energy.

Examples:

	Sounds Like:	**Sounds Like:**	
1. She speak**s** **S**panish	"She speak Spanish."	4. we**ll** **l**it	well it
2. turne**d** **d**own	"turn down"	5. bla**ck** **c**at	black at
3. hel**p** **P**aul	help all	6. foreig**n** **n**ame	foreign aim

audio 8.10

Word Pairs for Practice

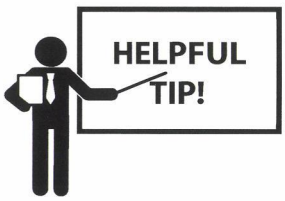
bi**g** **g**ame	fa**r** **r**ight
we**ll** **l**it	sto**p** **p**laying
ca**n** **n**ever	To**m** **m**ight
goo**d** **d**ay	boo**k** **c**lub
thi**s** **S**aturday	wha**t** **t**ime

audio 8.11

Sentences for Practice

1. Both things are from me.
2. Stop playing and help Paul.
3. She's single and she's so happy.
4. I'm married and I'm miserable.
5. It was so nice to meet Tom.

audio 8.12



Study Tip

There are two types of consonants:

1. **Stops** - A stop sound is created by stopping the air flow with either our lips as in /p/ and /b/, the front of the tongue as in /t/ and /d/, or the back of the tongue as in /k/ and /g/.
2. **Continuants** - A continuant sound is often longer. The air flow can continue as long as we have air in our lungs. Common continuants include: /s/, /z/ /m/, /l/, /f/, /v/ and /θ/.

audio 8.13

Linking Two Consonants

In Chapter Three you learned the difference between stops and continuants. Understanding how stops work in American English will help to connect words better. **When the stop sound is followed by another consonant, you must hold the stop sound**. In other words, don't release a puff of air after you create the sound with your lips or tongue. Releasing the air will create an extra syllable. Instead, simply hold the air pressure that is building up inside your mouth. Do this in the following two cases:

1. When the stop is at the end of the word and the next word begins with a consonant – for example, instead of saying "help/ə/ me" say "help me."
2. When the stop is in the middle of a word and the next letter is a consonant – for example, when you say "lobster" make sure that you don't release the "b". Don't say, "lob/ə/ster". Hold the "b" and say "lobster." (Please note that the final stop at the end of the sentence can either be held or released.)

Keep in mind that when a vowel sound follows the final stop, you simply need to link the two sounds. You do not need to think about holding the consonant; linking with the vowel naturally causes the consonant to be released. For example "stop it" is linked and sounds like "stopit." But when you say "stop that" the final "p" must be held because the word "that" begins with a consonant.

Linking continuants is much simpler. Just go from one consonant sound to another without stopping the air flow. This usually happens automatically. For example, "likes to" sounds like "like Stu," "it's top," sounds like "it stop" and "life and death" sounds like "lie fan death."

audio 8.14

Word Pairs for Practice

Make sure that you hold the final consonant of the first word.

up there	help me	drop down	baked beans
fried chicken	good music	great day	big deal
blog post	cook book	dark night	break time

audio 8.15

Words for Practice

Make sure you hold the stop sound in the middle of the word.

admit	cupcake	midterm
hopefully	grapefruit	stepmother
blog post	cook book	dark night

audio 8.16

Dialogues for Practice

1. a. How was the **big** party?
   b. We had a really **good** time.
2. a. Do you like **pop** **music**?
   b. I prefer **hip** **hop** **music**.
3. a. Did you **eat** **that** **cupcake**?
   b. Yes, I couldn'**t** **stop** myself.
4. a. Should we **stop**?
   b. No, I think we **should** **keep** going.
5. a. Why **did** the **cab** driver **stop** the car?
   b. Because there was a **stop** sign.
6. a. Should we **lock** the door?
   b. I **think** **that** **would** be **good**.
7. a. Did you **find** the answer?
   b. I'm looking it **up** right now.

audio 8.17

3. Linking Vowel to Vowel

If one word ends with a vowel and the next word begins with a vowel, do not pause between the words. For a smoother transition between the sounds and to ensure a complete pronunciation of both of the vowels, we insert and short /w/ sound after a front vowel and a short /y/ sound after a back vowel.

		Sounds like:
Insert a very quick /w/ sound	go out	"go – **w**out"
	How are you?	"how **w**are you"
Insert a very quick /y/ sound	I am	"I **y**am"
	they are	"they **y**are"

audio 8.18

Sentences for Practice for Linking Vowels

1. I ʸate out.
2. Go ʷon.
3. They ʸagree.
4. I know ʷit.
5. May ʸI come in?
6. So ʷawesome!
7. I'll buy ʸit.
8. He ʸate out.

audio 8.19

Dialogues for Practice - Linking Vowel to Vowel

1. a. Why ʸare you so ʷupset?

   b. I ʸam not!

2. a. Who ʷis he?

b. He ʸis the ʸannouncer.

3. a. How ʷis the weather?

b. Go ʷoutside and find out.

4. Do ʷI need to do ʷit?

No, I ʸalready did it.

audio 8.20

Two Ways to Pronounce *the*

The article ***the*** has *two* pronunciations: **/ðə/ and /ði/** (sounds like "thee").

When ***the*** is followed by a consonant sound, the final sound is /ʌ/, as in *fun*. When it's followed by a vowel sound, it is often pronounced as "thee". This is a natural result of connecting the two vowel sounds.

examples:

/ði/	**/ðə/**
th**e** earth	th**e** world
th**e** apple	th**e** banana

Sentences for practice:

Each sentence includes the word *the* pronounced in two different ways. Make sure that you do not pause between the article ***the*** and the following word. Connect them as if they are one word.

1. This is **the** end of **the** film.
2. **The** traffic is terrible in **the** afternoon.
3. **The** employees are at **the** meeting.
4. You're **the** only person who knows **the** truth.
5. I don't have **the** answer to **the** question.
6. **The** award for **the** best actor went to him.

audio 8.21

Linking Vowels within a Word

When an individual word contains two vowel sounds, we also add a little "y" or "w" sound. We don't say "die it" we say "die" + "yet."

	sounds like:		***sounds like:***
client	cli /y/ ent	cooperate	co /w/ operate
science	sci /y/ ence	experience	experi /y/ ence
serious	seri /y/ ous	diet	di /y/ et
quiet	qui /y/ ɛt	furious	furi /y/ ous
appreciate	appreci /y/ ate	negotiate	negoci /y/ ate
museum	muse /y/ um	San Diego	San Di /y/ ago

audio 8.22

Practice Dialogues

The following dialogues and story will help you to practice linking. Remember to place the most stress on the key word, usually a noun or a verb. For longer sentences place the most stress on the focus word of each thought group.

Linking Consonant to Vowel Sound

In the Department Store

a. Can I help you?

b. I'm looking for a pair of sunglasses.

a. The sunglasses are on the other side of the make up counter.

b. Oh these are nice. Can I try them on?

a. The mirror is over here.

b. How much are these?

a. They're on sale for one hundred and eighty dollars.

b. That's a lot of money. I don't think I can afford that.

a. They're made in Italy. The style is amazing. We're almost all sold out.

a. Do you have any that are cheaper?

b. No, I am afraid I don't. Is there anything else I can help you find?

a. As a matter of fact, yes. Help me find a rich husband.

audio 8.23

Linking Consonant to Same Consonant

Notice how two same or similar consonants blend into one to link words more smoothly. The final stops are not released.

1. a. I believe Veronica speaks Spanish.

   b. Of course she does. She's from Mexico.

   a. That makes sense.

2. a. When's the big game?

   b. Either this Saturday or this Sunday.

   a. Do you think they'll lose?

   b. I hope not.

3. a. Keep practicing.

   b. You're right, I need to.

4. a. You'll love it.

   b. I suppose so.

5. a. It was a fun night but I need to go.

   b. Let's stay a little longer.

   a. You stay, I'll leave with them.

   b. OK then, I'll leave too.

audio 8.24

Practice Paragraph

This passage provides practice in linking vowel to vowel, consonant to vowel, and consonant to consonant. The focus words are in bold letters. The thought groups are divided by a slash.

My American Accent

I've been practicing the American **accent** / for a **while** now. At **first**, / it was kin**d** of **hard** / to kee**p track** of all the rules and **exceptions**. I ha**d** no **idea** / there was so much to **learn.** I've been **practicing** / with the **audio** materials. /It's somewhat **easier** / to pronounce some of the **sounds/** but it's difficult to **know** / how I sound to **others**. I think I'm getting **better**. One of the hardest **things** for me / is to stress some **syllables** /and to reduce certain **others**. When I ask my **friends** / how I **sound**, they all **say** / they hear a difference in my **speech**. My **boss** sai**d** / that I am making **progress** / and that I **sound/** more and more like a native **speaker**. My clients are not **asking** me / to **repeat** myself as much. It makes it all **worthwhile.** I won'**t** sto**p practicing**.

audio 8.25

Warning: Common Mistake!



Don't pause within thought groups.

Don't say: He's / at work until eleven / o'clock.

Say: He's at work / until eleven o'clock.

audio 8.26



Study Tip

When you watch an American film, try to watch it with cloze captioning or subtitles in English. This is a very useful method for developing better listening skills, using the right melody and learning the common reductions of American speech. Play back some scenes and repeat the actor's lines several times until you can say them the same way.

audio 8.27

Contractions

A "contraction" is a word that is made shorter when it is linked to the word that comes before it. For example, "**She is** nice." is usually contracted to "**She's** nice." Contractions are a standard part of English speech and they're used even in very formal situations. Using contractions is not considered sloppy or lazy speech. In fact, if you don't use contractions, your speech will sound mechanical and foreign and might even give the impression that you are not very fluent in English. For example, you will hear people say, "**I'm** happy," rather than "I **am** happy." If you *do* hear "I **am** happy" it's usually in response to an opposite statement or question, such as "I don't think you're happy." If the response is "I **am** happy!" with stress on the word *am,* the meaning is "I *really* am happy."

Another situation in which a contraction may not be used is when a speaker pauses in order to think of what to say next. For example: "I am…happy."

Note: Do not use contractions in written language, unless the writing is very informal.

Warning: Common Mistake!



Don't make up your own contractions. There are specific rules that native speakers follow for contracting words. Only use the ones that you hear native speakers say and the ones that you will learn in this book.

audio 8.28

Commonly contracted words:

1. **The Verb to "be"**

   I'm happy.

   She's American.

2 Auxiliary Verbs

These include *be*, *would*, *will*, and *have*.

He's working.

He'd like to go.

I'll call you.

I've been there.

3. **The Word *not***

Not is contracted when it follows *have*, *be*, *can*, *could*, *should*, *would*, and *must*.

I **haven't** been there.

I **can't** do that.

audio 8.29

Practice with Contractions: *will*

	Contraction
I will do it.	**I'll** do it.
You will like it.	**You'll** like it.
He will call you.	**He'll** call you.

We will take it.	**We'll** take it.
They will see.	**They'll** see.
It will rain.	**It'll** rain.
It will be good.	**It'll** be good.
That will be all.	**That'll** be all.
There will be snow.	**There'll** be snow.

Practice with Contractions: *would*

	Contraction
I would go.	**I'd** go.
I would like some more	**I'd** like some more
He would go if he could.	**He'd** go if he could.
She would understand.	**She'd** understand.
We would like to see it.	**We'd** like to see it.

Practice with Contractions: *had*

Note that this contraction sounds the same as the contraction of *would.*

I had never seen it before.	**I'd** never seen it before.
She had known about it.	**She'd** known about it.
You had better fix it.	**You'd** better fix it.

Practice with Contractions: *have**

I have been there.	I've been there.
I have already eaten	I've already eaten.
We have heard.	We've heard.
They have done it.	They've done it.
I would have done it.	I would've done it.
You should have told me.	You should've told me.
You must have seen it.	You must've seen it.

Note: Americans generally contract the verb *have* only if it functions as an auxiliary verb. For example we say: "I've been" and "I've heard." But if *have* is the main verb, we don't say, "I've a car." We say, "I have a car."

Practice with Contractions: *has*

She has left.	**She's** left.
It has been fun.	**It's** been fun.
He has already eaten.	**He's** already eaten.
Who has seen the film?	**Who's** seen the film?

audio 8.30

Practice with Contractions: *is*

Note that this contraction sounds the same as the contraction of *has*.

He is working.	**He's** working.
She is a teacher.	**She's** a teacher.
It is hot.	**It's** hot.
Sam is American.	**Sam's** American.
Mary is tall.	**Mary's** tall.
Dinner is ready.	**Dinner's** ready.

Practice with Contractions: *am*

I am fine	**I'm** fine.
I am from Japan.	**I'm** from Japan.

Practice with Contractions: *are*

We are waiting.	**We're** waiting.
We are sorry.	**We're** sorry.
They are coming.	**They're** leaving.
They are there	**They're** there.
What are they doing?	**What're** they doing?

When are they coming?	**When're** they coming?
Where are they going?	**Where're** they going?

Practice with Contractions: *not*

I cannot swim.	I **can't** swim.
I should not go.	I **shouldn't** go.
I do not like it.	I **don't** like it.

audio 8.31

Practice with Contractions: *Common Expressions*

How's it going?	It'll rain.
What's up?	How've you been?
What're you doing?	Where're you going?
What've you been up to?	Where's he from?
What's the matter?	Where're they from?
What'll it be?	I'd like that.
That'll be all.	Who's calling?
It'll be hot.	What's new?
It'll be good.	I'm fine.

audio 8.32

Dialogues for Practice

Employee Meeting

a. Hi Tom. **I've** got a question. What **time's** our meeting?

b. **It'll** start at five.

a. Oh great. **I'm** glad **I'll** be able to make it. **Who's** coming?

b. **Let's** see… **Bob'll** be there, **John'll** be there and **I'll** be there, but Mary **won't** make it. **She's** out of town.

a. How about Nick?

b. He **can't** make it. He said he **would've** come if **he'd** known about it earlier.

a. Is Vivian coming?

b. She said **she'd** like to make it, but **she's** got a lot of work to do.

a. **It'll** only last an hour, **won't** it?

b. Yes, **we'd** better keep it short. **Everybody'll** want to go home by six o'clock.

Song Lyrics - Reading for Practice

"After You've Gone"

After **you've** gone - and left me crying

After **you've** gone - **there's** no denying

You'll feel blue - **you're** gonna be sad

You've missed the dearest pal that you ever had

There'll come a time - **don't** forget it

There'll come a time - when **you'll** regret it

Some day when **you'll** grow lonely

Your heart will break like mine - **you'll** want me only

After **you've** gone - after **you've** gone away

Writers: Creamer/Layton

audio 8.33

CONDITIONAL TENSE AND CONTRACTIONS

The grammar of the conditional tense requires a lot of small words that you will need to learn to contract. For example, the following sentence which is the conditional past unreal tense contains thirteen short words: "If you had not called me I would not have known about it." Saying each word separately obviously sounds unnatural and very foreign. Here's how an American would say that: "If you hadn't called me, I wouldn've known about it." Instead of "wouldn't have," we say, "woudn've." The ***t*** of the word *not* disappears. Or, in more casual situations, the *have* of *would not have* sounds like ***a*** as in "woudna."

This grammar point is often difficult for some intermediate students of English. It might also be difficult for some advanced speakers who have learned English informally, just by speaking it in the United States, rather than through classroom study. Producing these condi- tional sentences quickly and naturally, particularly in the past unreal tense is difficult for many learners of English. If this is your case, make an extra effort to master this grammar point. Repeating the sentences of the following exercises will help you memorize the gram- matical patterns. Practice them until you feel proficient using them.

audio 8.34

Word Groups for Practice

Let's start learning to use contractions in the easier part of the conditional past, the "if" clause.

	sound like:
If I had been…	If I'd been…
If I had not called…	If I hadn't called….
If she had seen …	If she'd seen…
If they had gone...	If they'd gone….

Now let's practice the second half of the past conditional sentence. There are two versions of this type of contraction: standard speech and casual speech.

	sounds like:	***casual speech***
would have	would've	woulda
would not have	wouldn've	wouldna
could have	could've	coulda
could not have	couldn've	couldna
should have	should've	shoulda
should not have	shouldn've	shouldna

audio 8.35

Conditional Questions

With questions using *have* you must add an /ə/ sound between the pronoun and the contraction. But for statements, don't do this. For example, a question like "Would you have been

there?" would sound like "Would you'/ə/ve been there?" However, a statement would sound like: "You've been there."

	sound like:
Would you have...?	would you' /ə/ve...?
Would you have been...?	would you' /ə/ve been...?
Would she have...?	would she' /ə/ve....?
Would she have wanted...?	Would she' /ə/ve wanted...?

audio 8.36

Sentences for Practice

These sentences are all in the past conditional tense.

1. If **I'd** known it was your birthday, I **would've** gotten you a present.
2. If you **hadn't** been driving so fast, you **wouldn've** gotten a ticket.
3. If the **weather'd** been warmer, we **would've** gone to the park.
4. If **he'd** been more careful, he **wouldn've** had an accident.
5. I **would've** passed the test if **I'd** studied more.
6. Would **you'/ə/ve** done that, if **you'd** been in my shoes?
7. What would **you'/ə/ve** said if **she'd** asked you about it?
8. Where would **you'/ə/ve** gone if you **hadn't** come to the US?

The sentences below are examples of casual speech and use ***a*** instead of ***'ve*** for ***have***.

1. If it **hadn't** rained we **wouldna** canceled the picnic.
2. It **woulda** been more fun if **there'd** been more people at the party.
3. I **woulda** called you if **you'd** given me your number.
4. If **they'd** come on time, they **wouldna** missed the flight.
5. She **wouldlna** known if you hadn't told her.

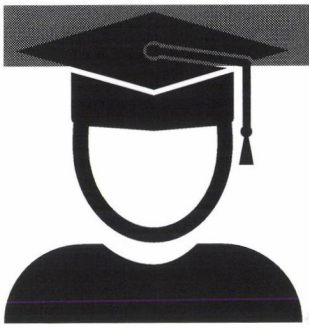
audio 8.37

Dialogue for Practice

a. What would you' /ə/ve done if you hadn't come to the United States?

b. If I hadn't come to the US, I would've lived with my family, I wouldn've had to study English. I wouldn've met my wife. I would've married someone else.

audio 8.38



Advice from a Successful Student

Speak with confidence. I have learned that your insecurity will actually make your accent stronger. When I go on acting auditions, I first do my homework and work on my major mistakes, and then I let go of all that work and I just do it. I am just myself. So, if you have an important interview or speaking situation coming up, just relax and let your true self come out. Don't be inhibited.

Mauricio Sanchez, Actor, Venezuela

audio 8.39

Casual Versus Formal Speech

Casual speech is used in an informal setting with friends and acquaintances. In casual situations, we are sometimes less careful with pronunciation and grammar. Remember, just like with contractions, there are rules to casual speech. Don't assume that you can randomly reduce any sounds that you feel like reducing. Doing this will only make your speech sound more foreign or more difficult to understand.

Casual speech has certain characteristics that distinguish it from formal speech. These are the main ones:

a. Sentences are shortened and grammar is simplified.

	sounds like:
Do you want to go?	"Wanna go?"
You'd better do it.	"You better do it."

b. Speakers are less careful about pronouncing every consonant.

	sounds like:
"probably"	"probly"
I don't know	"I dunno"
remember	"member"
going	"goin"
until	"til"
because	"cuz"

c. Slang is more acceptable.

	becomes:
I need five dollars.	"I need five bucks."
"I don't have any money".	"I'm broke".

audio 8.40

Rules and Patterns of Casual Speech

Below are some rules of the simplifications made in informal speech.

Formal, Careful Speech	Informal, Relaxed Speech
you	ya
	I'll call ya.
	See ya.
because	'cuz
	I did it 'cuz I wanted to.
	I'm tired 'cuz I worked all day.
I don't know	I dunno.
	I dunno why.
	I dunno what to do.
let me	lemme
	Lemme do it.
	Lemme help you.

	Lemme talk to him.
give me	gimme
	Gimme a call.
	Gimme a break!
	Can you gimme a minute?
did you	joo
	Joo call me?
	Why joo do it?
	Joo go out last night?
Do you want to...?	wanna?
	Wanna go out?
	Wanna dance?
	What do you wanna do?
have got to	gotta
	I gotta go.
	You gotta do it.
should've	shoulda, woulda, coulda, musta
would've	You shoulda told me.
could've	It woulda been nice.
must've	We coulda come.
	You musta seen it.
shouldn't have	shouldna, wouldna, couldna
shouldn't have	You shouldna done that.
couldn't have	I woundna known.
	It couldna happened.
going to	gonna
	I'm gonna go.
	It's gonna rain.
	What are you gonna do?
What do you...?	wadda you
	Whadda you want?
	Whadda you doing?
	Whadda you think?
a lot of	a lotta
	That's a lotta money.
	I've got a lotta friends.
kind of	kinda
	It's kinda hot.

	What kinda car is that?
out of	adda
	Get adda here.
	I'm adda money.
	You're adda your mind.
	meaning: You're crazy.
go to	goddu
	I go to work.
	Let's go to a concert.
tes	yeah/ yup.
	Yeah. It's good.
	Yup. I did it.
no	nope
	Nope. I'm not going.
	Nope. That's not right.
-ing	in'
	What are you doin'?
	Nothin' much.

audio 8.41

Practice Dialogues

Invitation to a Movie

a. Whadday you doin' tonight?

b. I dunno yet. I think I'm just gonna stay home.

a. Wanna go to a movie?

b. I'm kinda tired. I gotta get up early tomorrow.

a. Joo go out last night?

b. Yeah, I shoud na gone to bed so late. I woulda had a lot more energy today.

a. Why don cha just take it easy then, and we'll go out some other time.

b. OK, lemme know when you're free again. See ya.

audio 8.42

Missed Party

a. Why do you think John didn't come to the party?

b. He ***musta*** forgotten about it.

He ***coulda*** been sick.

He ***mighta*** gotten into an accident.

He ***shoulda*** come. It ***woulda*** been good to see him.

audio 8.43

Stayed Home

a. Mary had a bad cold yesterday, but she went to work anyway.

b. I **woulda** stayed home.

c. She **shoulda** stayed home. I **wouldna** gone to work either.

She **coulda** made everybody else sick.

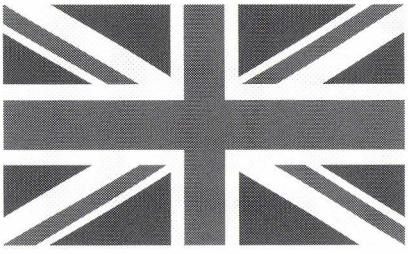
audio 9.1

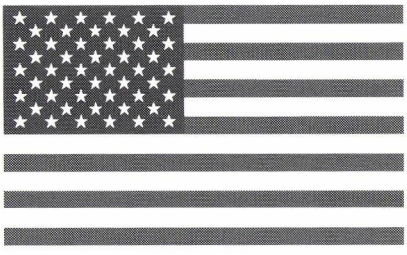
CHAPTER NINE

Memorizing the Exceptions

This chapter consists of words that are commonly mispronounced by non-native speakers. Some of these pairs of words are spelled the same but pronounced differently. Others are spelled differently but pronounced the same. Sometimes the same word exists in other languages but it has a different pronunciation. There is also a list of the most common words with silent consonants and another one with disappearing syllables. Finally, there is list of words that are universally hard to pronounce, even by some native speakers. But the goal of an educated speaker of English is to always use language well and to pronounce words clearly and correctly.

As you will see in this chapter, English is full of illogical spelling rules and exceptions. Fortunately, if you make it a point to memorize the correct pronunciation of the commonly used words that are in this chapter, you will certainly feel more confident about your accent.





audio 9.2

British Versus American Pronunciation

Some common English words are pronounced differently in the U.S. and the U.K. This list includes some of the most common pronunciation differences.

1. Words with Different Vowel Sounds

	American English	British English
vitamin	/ˈvaɪ.tə.mɪn/	/ˈvɪt.ə.mɪn/
advertisement	/ˈæd.vɚ.taɪz.mənt/	/ədˈvɜː.tɪs.mənt/
mobile	/ˈmoʊ.bəl/	/ˈməʊ.baɪl/
tomato	/təˈmeɪ.toʊ/	/təˈmɑː.təʊ/
garage	/gəˈrɑːʒ/	/ˈgær.ɑːʒ/ or /ˈgær.ɪdʒ/
privacy	/ˈpraɪ.və.si/	/ˈprɪ.və.si/
process	/ˈproʊ.ses/	/ˈprəʊ.ses/
leisure	/ˈliː.ʒɚ/	/ˈleʒ.ə/

2. Words with Different Stress Patterns

	American English	British English
adult	/əˈdʌlt/	/ˈæd.ʌlt/
laboratory	/ˈlæb.rə.tɔːr.i/	/ləˈbɒr.ə.tri/
brochure	/broʊˈʃʊr/	/ˈbrəʊ.ʃə/
research	/ˈriː.sɜːrtʃ/	/rɪˈsɜːtʃ/

3. Consonant Changes

	American English	British English
schedule	/ˈskedʒ.uːl/	/ˈʃed.juːl/
fillet	/fɪˈleɪ/	/ˈfɪl.ɪt/
herb	/ɜːrb/ *(silent h)*	/hɜːb/

audio 9.3

COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

The following pairs of words are often mispronounced and end up sounding the same when spoken by some non-native speakers.

	Pronunciation	**Example**
sell	"e" is /ɛ/ as in *get*	Would you like to **sell** it?
sale	"e" is /eɪ/ as in take	Sorry, it's not for **sale**.

series	two syllables	I love that new TV **series**.
serious	three syllables	Are you **serious**? I hate it.
color	"o" is /ə/ as in *fun*	Do you like the **color** of this shirt?
collar	"o" is /ɑ/ as in *father*	Yes, but I want one with a **collar**.
costume	"o" is /ɑ/ as in *father*	Children wear **costumes** for Halloween.
custom	"u" is /ə/ as in *fun*	Is that an American **custom**?
been	"ee" is /I/ as in *sit*	What have you **been** cooking?*
bean	"ee" is /i/ as in *meet*	I've been cooking **beans**?
of	f is a /v/ sound	What are you thinking **of**?
off	"o" is /ɑ/ as in *father*	I'm thinking of taking the day **off.**
want	"a" is /ɑ/ as in *father*	Do you **want** to go?
won't	"o" is /ou/ as in *boat*	No, I **won't** go.
dessert	second syllable stress	I had **dessert** after dinner.
desert	first syllable stress	They drove through the **desert.**
where	"er" is/ɛər/ as in *care*	**Where** did they go?
were	"er" is /ɚ/ as in *bird*	They **were** here a minute ago.
wonder	"o" is /ə/ as in *fun*	I **wonder** where they are.
wander	"a" is /ɑ/ as in *father*	They're probably **wandering** in the forest.
warm	"or" is /ɔr/ as in *for*	It's a **warm** day.
worm	"or" is /ɚ/ as in *bird*	There's a **worm** in my apple.
woman	"o" is /ʊ/ as in *good*	She is a nice **woman.**
women	"o" is /I/ as in *sit*	All of the **women** here are nice.
potty	"t" is almost /d/	The little boy wants to go **potty**.
party	sounds like "pardy" ("fast d" sound)	He's at the birthday **party**.

audio 9.4

Same Spelling, Different Pronunciation

Below are common words that are spelled the same but have different pronunciations and different meanings.

1. bass	/bæs/ — a kind of fish /beɪs/ — a low voice or tone; a musical instrument	We ate bass for dinner. He's a talented bass player.
2. bow	/boʊ/ — a weapon for shooting arrows /baʊ/ — to bend forward	The hunter carried a bow and arrow. He smiled and took a bow.
3. desert	/ˈdɛzərt/ — dry land with little or no vegetation I will not desert my friends.	Camels can survive in the desert. I will not desert my friends.
4. dove	/dʌv/ — a bird similar to a pigeon /doʊv/ — past tense of dive	A white dove flew above us. She dove into the pool.
5. lead	/lid/ — to guide /lɛd/ — a type of metal	He will lead the group. The pipes are made of lead.
6. live	/lɪv/ — to exist /laɪv/ — happening in real time	They live in New York. We watched a live concert.
7. minute	/ˈmɪnɪt/ — sixty seconds /maɪˈnut/ — very small	Please wait a minute. She noticed the minute details.
8. polish / Polish	/ˈpɒlɪʃ/ — to make something shiny /ˈpoʊlɪʃ/ — from Poland; the language of Poland	He will polish the shoes. Do you speak Polish?
9. read	/rid/ — present tense /rɛd/ — past tense	I read a book every night. He read the article yesterday.
10. refuse	/rɪˈfjuːz/ — to deny or reject /ˈrɛfjuːs/ — trash or garbage	She will refuse the offer. The workers collected the refuse.
11. resume	/ˈrɛzəˌmeɪ/ — a summary of work experience /rɪˈzuːm/ — to begin again after a pause	He has an impressive resume. Let's resume the meeting after lunch.
12. row	/roʊ/ — things arranged in a line /raʊ/ — a noisy argument	We sat in the front row. They had a row about money.
13. tear	/tɛər/ — to rip /tɪər/ — a drop from the eye	Be careful not to tear the paper. A tear rolled down her cheek.
14. wind	/wɪnd/ — to twist or turn	You need to wind the clock.
15. wound	/wuːnd/ — an injury /waʊnd/ — past tense of wind	The doctor cleaned the wound. I wound the old clock.

audio 9.5

Two Correct Pronunciations

There are two acceptable ways of pronouncing the following words.

either	"ei" is /i/ as in *meet*	(more common in American English)
	"ei" is /aɪ/ as in *time*	(British English)
neither	"ei" is /i/ as in *meet*	(more common in American English)
	"ei" is /aɪ/ as in *time*	(British English)
data	"a" is /eɪ/ as in *take*	(more common)
	"a" is /ae/ as in *fat*	(less common)
aunt	"a" is /ae/ as in *fat*	(more common)
	"a" is /ɑ/ as in *father*	(less common)
apricot	"a" is /eɪ/ as in *take*	(more common)
	"a" is /ae/ as in *fat*	(less common)

audio 9.6

Changing Vowels

Some vowel sounds change when a word changes form. For example, the ***a*** in *bath* differs from the ***a*** in *bathe*, and the ***i*** in *decide* is pronounced differently than in *decision*. Memorize the patterns of these common words.

1. The /æ/ to /eɪ/ Change

1. **bath /bæθ/** **bathe /beɪð/**	She took a **bath**. She will **bathe** the baby.
2. **state /steɪt/** **static /ˈstæt.ɪk/**	What is the **state** of the economy? The image on the screen remained **static**.
3. **nature /ˈneɪ.tʃɚ/** **natural /ˈnætʃ.ɚ.əl/**	I love being in **nature**. Is that your **natural** hair color?
4. **nation /ˈneɪ.ʃən/** **national /ˈnæʃ.ən.əl/**	The President spoke to the **nation**. They sang the **national** anthem.

5. grateful /ˈgreɪt.fəl/ gratitude /ˈgræt.ə.tuːd/	I'm **grateful** for your help. She expressed her **gratitude** to everyone.
6. sane /seɪn/ sanity /ˈsæn.ə.ti/	He tried to remain **sane** during the crisis. Don't let work stress affect your **sanity**.

audio 9.7

2. The /aɪ/ to /ɪ/ Change

1. mine /maɪn/ mineral /ˈmɪn.ɚ.əl/	They found gold in the **mine**. Salt is a common **mineral**.
2. sign /saɪn/ signature /ˈsɪg.nə.tʃɚ/	Please **sign** this document. Please write your **signature** here.
3. cycle /ˈsaɪ.kəl/ cyclical /ˈsɪk.lɪ.kəl/	The seasons form a **cycle**. The economy has **cyclical** changes.
4. type /taɪp/ typical /ˈtɪp.ɪ.kəl/	What **type** of music do you like? It's **typical** for him to be late.
5. wild /waɪld/ wilderness /ˈwɪl.dɚ.nəs/	Don't feed the **wild** animals. We went hiking in the **wilderness**.
6. precise /prɪˈsaɪs/ precision /prɪˈsɪʒ.ən/	Please be **precise** with your measurements. The surgeon worked with great **precision**.
7. divide /dɪˈvaɪd/ division /dɪˈvɪʒ.ən/	We will **divide** the money equally. The company has a new sales **division**.
8. decide /dɪˈsaɪd/ decision /dɪˈsɪʒ.ən/	We need to **decide** soon. We need to make a **decision**.

audio 9.8

3. The /i/ to /ɛ/ Change

1. please /pliːz/ pleasant /ˈplɛz.ənt/	It's impossible to **please** everyone. It was a **pleasant** afternoon.
2. mean /miːn/ meant /mɛnt/	I didn't **mean** to do it. He **meant** what he said..
3. deal /diːl/ dealt /dɛlt/	How did you **deal** with the problem? I **dealt** with it calmly.
4. read /riːd/ ead /rɛd/	I love to **read** books. I **read** the book yesterday.
5. breathe /briːð/ breath /brɛθ/	**Breathe** slowly to relax. Take a deep **breath**.

6. recede /rɪˈsiːd/ **recession** /rɪˈsɛʃ.ən/	The floodwaters began to **recede**. The country is facing a **recession**.
7. equal /ˈiː.kwəl/ **equity** /ˈɛk.wɪ.ti/	Two plus two **equals** four. The employees are treated with **equity** and respect.
8. meter /ˈmiː.ɾɚ/ **metric** /ˈmɛt.rɪk/	The pool is 50 **meters** long. The **metric** system is used worldwide.
9. compete /kəmˈpiːt/ **competitive** /kəmˈpɛt.ɪ.tɪv/	Athletes **compete** for a medal. I work in a **competitive** field.

audio 9.9

4. The /u/ to /ʌ/ Change

1. consume /kənˈsuːm/ **consumption** /kənˈsʌmp.ʃən/	I will try **consume** less sugar. I will limit my **consumption** of sugar.
2. assume /əˈsuːm/ **assumption** /əˈsʌmp.ʃən/	I **assume** you're coming to the meeting. That was a wrong **assumption**
3. reduce /rɪˈduːs/ **reduction** /rɪˈdʌk.ʃən/	We need to **reduce** our expenses. The company announced a **reduction** in staff.
4. produce /prəˈduːs/ **productive** /prəˈdʌk.tɪv/	Farmers **produce** fresh vegetables. She had a very **productive** day at work.
5. numerous /ˈnuː.mə.rəs/ **number** /ˈnʌm.bɚ/	There are **numerous** reasons to study English. Give me the exact **number**.

audio 9.10

Words With Dropped Syllables

When pronouncing the following list of words, do not pronounce all of the syllables. Instead of saying "choc-o-late," with three syllables, say "choc-late" with only two syllables. Instead of "brocc-o-li," most people say "brocc-li." In both of those words one of the middle vowels disappears. Below is a list of the most common words that have a dropped syllable.

1. actually
2. family
3. interesting
4. practically
5. different
6. Catholic
7. coverage
8. every
9. interest
10. diaper
11. beverage
12. camera
13. comfortable
14. theory
15. favorite
16. diamond
17. basically
18. business
19. opera
20. temperature
21. vegetable
22. desperate
23. average
24. broccoli
25. liberal
26. several
27. evening
28. aspirin
29. generally
30. laboratory
31. preference
32. extraordinary
33. chocolate

audio 9.11

Dialogues for Practice

1. a. What's your **favorite vegetable**?
   b. I like **broccoli.**
2. a. Is he **Catholic**?
   b. Yes, he comes from a **Catholic family**.
3. a. Do you like my **diamond** ring?
   b. It's really **extraordinary.**
4. a. Would you like some **chocolate**?
   b. Yes, I'll take **several** pieces.
5. a. What are you doing this **evening**?
   b. I'm going to the **opera**.
6. a. Is the **temperature** OK for you?
   b. Yes, it's quite **comfortable** here.
7. a. Do you need some **aspirin**?
   b. Yes, **desperately.**
8. a. Do you agree with that **theory**?
   b. I think it's an **interesting theory**.
9. a. Do you like that **restaurant**?
   b. Yes, they have many **different beverages**.
10. a. What is your **preference**?
    b. **Actually**, I don't have a **preference.** I'm **indifferent.**

audio 9.12

Words With Silent Letters

The chart below highlights many common words that have a letter that is not pronounced.

silent *b*

bomb	debt	limb	thumb
crumb	doubt	numb	tomb
climb	dumb	plumber	
comb	lamb	subtle	

silent *c*

indict	muscle

silent *ch*

yacht

silent *d*

adjective	adjust	handsome	Wednesday

silent *g*

align	campaign	diaphragm	resign
assign	champagne	foreign	sign
benign	design	reign	

silent *gh*

bright	fight	light	bought
fought	night	caught	height
weigh	drought	high	weight

silent. *h*

ghost	heir	honest	hour

silent *k*

knee	knife	know	knot

silent *l*

calm	folk	psalm	talk
chalk	half	salmon	walk
could	Lincoln	should	would

silent *n*

hymn	autumn	column

silent *p*

cupboard	pneumonia	psalm
psychology	psychic	receipt

silent *s*

aisle	debris	island
Arkansas	Illinois	

silent *t*

ballet	Chevrolet	mortgage	gourmet
bouquet	Christmas	often	debut
buffet	fasten	whistle	soften
castle	listen	fillet	rapport

silent *th*

asthma	months	*clothes*

*You will hear some Americans lightly pronounce the ***th*** sound when saying these words but most just omit it.

silent *w*

answer	sword	toward

Homophones

Homophones are words with the same pronunciation but different spelling and meaning.

Make sure that you pronounce the second (and sometimes third) word the same as the first word even though the spelling is different.

1. air – err – heir (/ɛər/)

air: the invisible mixture of gases we breathe
err: to make a mistake
heir: a person legally entitled to inherit something

"I breathe in the fresh **air.**"
"Everyone can **err** sometimes."
"The prince is the **heir** to the throne."

2. Adam – atom (/ˈædəm/)

Adam: a male name
atom: the smallest unit of matter

"My friend's name is **Adam.**"
"Everything is made up of tiny **atoms**."

3. aloud – allowed (/əˈlaʊd/)

aloud: spoken so people can hear
allowed: permitted

"She read the story **aloud**."
"You're not **allowed** to park here."

4. altar – alter (/ˈɔːltər/)

altar: a religious table used in worship
alter: to change something

"The priest stood at the **altar**."
"I need to **alter** my dress."

5. ant – aunt (/ænt/)

ant: a small insect
aunt: the sister of your mother or father

"There are a lot of **ants** in the kitchen."
"My **aunt** is visiting us."

6. ate – eight (/eɪt/)

ate: past tense of eat
eight: the number 8
"She **ate** all the cookies."
"I'll meet you at **eight** o'clock."

7. band – banned (/bænd/)

band: a musical group
banned: not permitted
"The rock **band** is playing tonight."
"Smoking is **banned** in this building."

8. bare – bear (/bɛər/)

bare: not covered
bear: a large animal
"Don't go outside with **bare** feet."
"I saw a **bear** in the forest."

9. berry – bury (/ˈbɛri/)

berry: a small fruit
bury: to cover with earth
"The **berry** is sweet."
"Did the dog **bury** the bone?"

10. base – bass (/beɪs/)

base: the bottom or foundation
bass: a low-pitched sound
"The lamp has a metal **base**."
"I like the **bass** in this song."

11. be – bee (/biː/)

be: to exist
bee: an insect that makes honey
"I want to **be** a doctor."
"A **bee** buzzed around the garden."

12. beat – beet (/biːt/)

beat: to hit or to win against
beet: a red vegetable
"He **beat** me at tennis."
"I made a **beet** salad."

13. billed – build (/bɪld/)

billed: charged for something
build: to construct
"The hotel **billed** us for two nights."
"We will **build** a new house."

14. blew – blue (/bluː/)

blew: past tense of blow
blue: a color
"She **blew** out the candles."
"She wore a **blue** dress."

15. boar – bore (/bɔːr/)

boar: a wild pig
bore: to make someone feel uninterested
"We saw a wild **boar** in the forest."
"Did the long speech **bore** you?"

16. board – bored (/bɔːrd/)

board: a flat surface or piece of wood
bored: feeling uninterested
"He nailed the **board** to the wall."
"I felt **bored** during the long lecture."

17. brake – break (/breɪk/)

brake: a device for making a car go more slowly or stop
break: to separate or shatter
"He pressed the car **brake**."
"Don't **break** that glass!"

18. buy – by – bye (/baɪ/)

buy: to purchase
by: near or next to
bye: short for goodbye
"She will **buy** a new dress."
"The chair is **by** the window."
"Say **bye** before you leave."

19. caller – collar (/ˈkɑlər/)

caller: someone who makes a phone call or visits
collar: part of a shirt around the neck
"The **caller** left a message."
"My shirt has a blue **collar**."

20. cell – sell (/sɛl/)

cell: a small room in a prison or biological structure
sell: to exchange for money
"A prison **cell** is very small."
"The human body has millions of **cells**."
"I plan to **sell** my car."

21. cereal – serial (/ˈsɪriəl/)

cereal: a breakfast food made from grains
serial: something happening in a series
"I eat **cereal** for breakfast."
"The detective solved the **serial** crimes."

22. cent – sent – scent (/sɛnt/)

cent: a unit of money; 1/100th of a dollar
sent: past tense of send
scent: a smell
"A penny is one **cent**."
"I **sent** the email yesterday."
"The **scent** of flowers filled the air."

23. chili – chilly – Chile (/ˈʧili/)

chili: a spicy pepper
chilly: cold
Chile: a country in South America
"We added **chili** to the soup."
"It's a **chilly** morning today."
"**Chile** is in South America."

24. cite – site – sight (/saɪt/)

cite: to quote or reference
site: a location or place
sight: vision or something seen
"Remember to **cite** your sources in the essay."
"I drove by a construction **site**."
"The sunset is a beautiful **sight**."

25. close – clothes (/kloʊz/)

close: opposite of to open
clothes: garments you wear (some people pronounce a slight th: /kloʊðz/)
"Please **close** the window.
"I packed my **clothes** for the trip."

26. complement – compliment (/ˈkɒmplɪmənt/)

complement: something that completes or goes well with something
compliment: praise
"The wine is a perfect **complement** to the meal."
"She gave me a **compliment** on my dress."

27. core – corps (/kɔːr/)

core: the central part
corps: a group of people, especially in the military
"The earth's **core** is very hot."
"He joined the Marine **corps** after college."

28. course – coarse (/kɔːrs/)

course: a class
coarse: rough in texture
"I took an English **course**."
"I'm taking a math **course**."
"The sand on this beach is **coarse**."

29. dear – deer (/dɪər/)

dear: loved or cherished
deer: a wild animal
"He is a **dear** friend."
"We saw a **deer** in the woods."

30. die – dye (/daɪ/)

die: to stop living
dye: to color
"The plant will **die** without water."
"She wants to **dye** her hair blonde."

31. do – due – dew (/duː/)

do: to perform an action
due: expected at a certain time
dew: moisture on surfaces in the morning
"What will you **do** today?"
"The rent is **due** on the first of the month."
"There is **dew** on the grass in the morning."

32. fairy – ferry (/ˈfɛri/)

fairy: a magical creature that looks like a small person
ferry: a boat that carries people or vehicles
"The story was about a **fairy** in the forest."
"We took the **ferry** across the river."

33. finish – Finnish (/ˈfɪnɪʃ/)

finish: to complete
Finnish: relating to the country Finland or its language
"Did you **finish** your homework?"
"**Finnish** is spoken in Finland."

34. feudal – futile (/ˈfjuːdəl/)

feudal: relating to the Middle Age system of lords and vassals
futile: useless
"The castle was built during the **feudal** era."
"Arguing about it is **futile**."

35. find – fined (/faɪnd/)

find: to discover
fined: penalized with money
"I hope to **find** my lost keys."
"He was **fined** for parking in the wrong place."

36. flea – flee (/fliː/)

flea: a small insect
flee: to run away
"My dog has a **flea** problem."
"They had to **flee** the city during the war."

37. flew – flu (/flu:/)

flew: past tense of fly
flu: influenza, a sickness
"We **flew** to New York."
"She caught the **flu** last week."

38. flower – flour (/ˈflaʊər/)

flower: the bloom of a plant
flour: powder from grain used for baking
"That's a beautiful **flower**."
"We need **flour** to make bread."

39. for – four (/fɔ:r/)

for: a preposition to indicate purpose or direction
four: the number 4
"What are you waiting **for**?"
"My car has **four** doors."

40. Greece – grease (/gri:s/)

Greece: a country in Europe
grease: oily substance
"We traveled to **Greece**."
"I got **grease** on my shirt."

41. guest – guessed (/gɛst/)

guest: someone invited to visit or attend
guessed: formed an opinion without knowing for sure
"We have a **guest** for dinner."
"She **guessed** the answer correctly."

42. gym – Jim (/dʒɪm/)

gym: a place to exercise
Jim: a male name
"He goes to the **gym** every day."
"**Jim** is my neighbor."

43. hair – hare (/hɛər/)

hair: strands growing from the skin
hare: a fast animal similar to a rabbit
"She cut her **hair** yesterday."
"A **hare** ran across the field."

44. heal – heel (/hiːl/)

heal: to recover
heel: the back part of the foot or shoe
"The cut will **heal** soon."
"The **heel** of my shoe broke."

45. hear – here (/hɪər/)

hear: to perceive sound
here: in this place
"I can **hear** the music."
"Please stand **here**."

46. heard – herd (/hɜːrd/)

heard: the past tense of hear
herd: a group of animals
"I **heard** the noise."
"A **herd** of cows crossed the road."

47. hi – high (/haɪ/)

hi: a greeting
high: elevated or tall
"She said **hi**."
"The kite flew very **high**."

48. hire – higher (/haɪər/)

hire: to employ
higher: more elevated
"They plan to **hire** new staff."
"The prices are **higher** this year."

49. him – hymn (/hɪm/)

him: objective pronoun for a male
hymn: a religious song
"I spoke to **him**."
"The choir sang a beautiful **hymn**."

50. hole – whole (/hoʊl/)

hole: an opening in something
whole: complete or entire
"There's a **hole** in my shoe."
"I ate the **whole** pizza."

51. I – eye (/aɪ/)

I: pronoun referring to oneself
eye: the organ for seeing
"**I** am a student."
"My **eye** hurts."

52. I'll – isle – aisle (/aɪl/)

I'll: contraction of "I will"
isle: small island
aisle: a passage between rows
"**I'll** see you later."
"The boat stopped near the **isle**."
"I prefer an **aisle** seat in the airplane."

53. in – inn (/ɪn/)

in: inside
inn: a small hotel or lodging
"Put the keys **in** the drawer."
"They stayed at a cozy **inn**."

54. know – no (/noʊ/)

know: to have knowledge
no: opposite of yes
"I **know** the answer."
"He said **no**."

55. leak – leek (/liːk/)

leak: an unintended hole letting liquid or gas escape
leek: a vegetable
"There is a **leak** in the roof."
"She cooked soup with a **leek**."

56. lead – led (/liːd/ – /lɛd/)

lead: a soft, gray metal
led: past tense of lead
"The old pipes are made of **lead**."
"He **led** the company for 30 years."

57. lessen – lesson (/ˈlɛsən/)

lessen: to reduce
lesson: a unit of teaching
"This medicine will **lessen** the pain."
"We learned a new **lesson** in class."

58. maid – made (/meɪd/)

maid: a female domestic worker
made: past tense of make
"The **maid** cleaned the house."
"She **made** a cake for the party."

59. mail – male (/meɪl/)

mail: letters or packages sent
male: a man or boy
"The **mail** arrived this morning."
"I have a **male** cat."

60. meat – meet (/miːt/)

meat: animal flesh used as food
meet: to encounter or come together
"Vegetarians don't eat **meat**."
"Let's **meet** after work."

61. metal – medal (/ˈmɛtəl/)

metal: a solid material like iron or gold
medal: an award
"The statue is made of **metal**."
"She won a **medal** in the Olympics."

62. minor – miner (/ˈmaɪnər/)

minor: small; or someone underage
miner: a person who works in a mine
"You made a **minor** error."
"You can't buy alcohol if you're a **minor**."
"The **miner** went underground to work."

63. morning – mourning (/ˈmɔːrnɪŋ/)

morning: the early part of the day
mourning: great sadness because someone has died
"I woke up early this **morning**."
"They are **mourning** the loss of their grandmother."

64. new – knew (/nju:/)

new: recently made or obtained
knew: past tense of know
"I bought a **new** car."
"She **knew** the answer."

65. night – knight (/naɪt/)

night: the dark part of the day
knight: a medieval warrior
"It gets cold at **night**."
"The **knight** wore shining armor."

66. nose – knows (/noʊz/)

nose: the organ for smelling
knows: is aware of
"My **nose** is itchy."
"He **knows** the rules."

67. not – knot (/nɒt/)

not: negation
knot: a tied loop
"I am **not** going to the party."
"He tied a **knot** in the rope."

68. nun – none (/nʌn/)

nun: a woman in a religious order
none: not any
"The **nun** is praying in a church."
"I have **none** left."

69. oh – owe (/oʊ/)

oh: an exclamation; an interjection
owe: to be in debt
"**Oh**, I forgot!"
"I **owe** you ten dollars."

70. one – won (/wʌn/)

one: the number 1
won: past tense of win
"I have only **one** apple."
"He **won** the game yesterday."

71. our – hour (/aʊər/)

our: belonging to us
hour: 60 minutes
"This is **our** house."
"I waited for an **hour**."

72. pail – pale (/peɪl/)

pail: a bucket
pale: light in color
"I filled the **pail** with water."
"His face looked **pale**."

73. pair – pare – pear (/pɛər/)

pair: two things that go together
pare: to cut off the outer layer of something
pear: a fruit
"I bought a **pair** of shoes."
"She will **pare** the apples for the pie."
"Would like an apple or a **pear**?"

74. past – passed (/pɑːst/)

past: previous time
passed: moved by; past tense of pass
"It happened in the **past**."
"He **passed** the exam."

75. peace – piece (/piːs/)

peace: freedom from conflict
piece: a portion of something
"We want **peace** in the world."
"I'd like a **piece** of cake."

76. pray – prey (/preɪ/)

pray: to speak to God
prey: an animal hunted by another animal
"They **pray** every morning."
"The lion chased its **prey**."

77. principle – principal (/ˈprɪnsəpəl/)

principle: a fundamental truth or rule
principal: head of a school
"Honesty is an important **principle**."
"The **principal** spoke to the students."

78. profit – prophet (/ˈprɒfɪt/)

profit: financial gain
prophet: a person who predicts or speaks for God
"The company made a large **profit**."
"The prophet warned the **people** about danger."

79. rain – rein – reign (/reɪn/)

rain: water falling from the sky
rein: a strap to control a horse
reign: period of time when someone is king or queen
"The **rain** ruined our picnic."
"He pulled the **rein** to stop the horse."
"The king's **reign** lasted 50 years."

80. red – read (/rɛd/)

red: a color
read: the past tense of the verb "to read"
"I bought a **red** dress."
"I **read** your email yesterday."

81. right – write (/raɪt/)

right: correct; also direction opposite of left
write: to form letters or words
"You gave the **right** answer."
"Please **write** your name here."

82. ring – wring (/rɪŋ/)

ring: a piece of jewelry for your finger; also a sound of a bell
wring: to twist wet cloth to remove liquid
"She is wearing a diamond **ring**."
"Please **wring** the water from the towel."

83. road – rode – rowed (/roʊd/)

road: a path for vehicles
rode: past tense of ride
rowed: past tense of row; to make a boat move using oars
"The car is on the **road**."
"He **rode** his bike to school."
"They **rowed** the boat across the lake."

84. roll – role (/roʊl/)

roll: to turn over; also a small bread
role: a character played by an actor
"I will roll the **rug**."
"He got a small **role** in the movie."

85. root – route (/ru:t/)

root: underground part of a plant
route: a path or course
"The tree's **root** grew under the sidewalk."
"This is the fastest **route** to the airport."

86. sail – sale (/seɪl/)

sail: to travel on water
sale: a discounted price
"They will **sail** around the world."
"The store is having a **sale**."

87. sea – see (/si:/)

sea: a large body of saltwater
see: to perceive with eyes
"The **sea** is very calm today."
"I can **see** the stars."

88. seam – seem (/si:m/)

seam: where two pieces of fabric are joined
seem: to appear
"My shirt tore at the **seam**."
"You **seem** happy today."

89. seas – sees – seize (/siːz/)

seas: large bodies of saltwater
sees: perceives with eyes
seize: to take hold of
"Sailors travel across the **seas**."
"She **sees** the bird in the tree."
"The police will **seize** the stolen car."

90. seen – scene (/siːn/)

seen: past participle of see
scene: a part of a play or movie; also a view
"I have **seen** that movie before."
"The movie has a funny **scene**."

91. seller – cellar (/ˈsɛlər/)

seller: someone who sells
cellar: a room under the house for storing things
"The **seller** gave me a discount."
"They keep wine in the **cellar**."

92. side – sighed (/saɪd/)

side: part or position
sighed: past tense of sigh; to breathe out expressing sadness or tiredness
"Please stand on my **side**."
"She **sighed** after hearing the bad news."

93. so – sow – sew (/soʊ/)

so: therefore; also very
sow: to plant seeds
sew: to make or repair clothes with a needle and thread
"I'm **so** happy."
"Farmers **sow** seeds in the spring."
"She can **sew** her own clothes."

94. sole – soul (/soʊl/)

sole: bottom of a foot or shoe
soul: the spirit or essence of a person
"The **sole** of my shoe is worn out."
"That music touches my **soul**."

95. some – sum (/sʌm/)

some: an unspecified amount
sum: the total amount
"She has **some** money left."
"The **sum** of 2 plus 2 is 4."

96. son – sun (/sʌn/)

son: a male child
sun: a star around which planets move
"I have a **son** and a daughter."
"The **sun** is shining brightly."

97. stare – stair (/stɛər/)

stare: to look fixedly
stair: a step
"Don't **stare** at people."
"Be careful on the last **stair**."

98. steal – steel (/sti:l/)

steal: to take without permission
steel: a strong metal
"He tried to **steal** my money."
"The bridge is made of **steel**."

99. sweet – suite (/swi:t/)

sweet: sugary or pleasant
suite: a set of rooms in a hotel
"The cake tastes very **sweet**."
"We booked a **suite** with a view."

100. tail – tale (/teɪl/)

tail: the rear part of an animal
tale: a story
"The dog wagged its **tail**."
"He told a funny **tale**."

101. tie – Thai (/taɪ/)

tie: to fasten; also, a neck accessory
Thai: relating to Thailand
"Please **tie** your shoelaces."
"He's wearing a suit and a **tie**."
"She loves **Thai** food."

102. there – their – they're (/ðɛər/)

there: in that place
their: belonging to them
they're: contraction of they are
"The book is over there."
"**Their** house is very big."
"**They're** going to the party."

103. to – too – two (/tuː/)

to: a preposition indicating direction
too: also or excessively
two: the number 2
"I'm going **to** the store."
"I want to go **too**."
"It's **too** hot in here."
"I have **two** cats."

104. tow – toe (/toʊ/)

tow: to pull a vehicle
toe: a part of the foot
"The truck will **tow** the car parked illegally."
"I hurt my big **toe** while running."

105. wait – weight (/weɪt/)

wait: to stay somewhere until something happens
weight: how heavy something is
"I will **wait** for you."
"He's trying to lose **weight**."

106. week – weak (/wiːk/)

week: seven days
weak: not strong
"There are seven days in a **week**."
"He felt **weak** after the illness."

107. weather – whether (/ˈwɛðər/)

weather: the temperature and other climate conditions
whether: expressing a choice
"The **weather** is sunny today."
"I don't know **whether** I should go or stay."

108. wheel – we'll (/wiːl/)

wheel: a circular object that turns
we'll: contraction of we will
"The car has a flat **wheel**."
"**We'll** meet you at the cafe."

109. which – witch (/wɪtʃ/)

which: asking to choose
witch: a woman believed to have magical powers
"**Which** color do you prefer?"
"She dressed as a **witch** for Halloween."

110. wood – would (/wʊd/)

wood: material from trees
would: expresses conditional
"The table is made of **wood**."
"I **would** go if I had time."

111. wore – war (/wɔːr/)

wore: past tense of wear
war: armed conflict; fighting between countries
"She **wore** a red dress."
"Soldiers fought in a **war**."

112. worn – warn (/wɔːrn/)

worn: past participle of wear, also, damaged or used
warn: to give caution
"I have **worn** this suit twice."
"His old shoes are badly **worn**."
"The signs **warn** people of danger."

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