MASTERCING THE AMERICAN ACCENT

Learn to speak standard American-style English with clarity, confidence, and accuracy

Exercises help you master tricky vowel and consonant sounds and employ correct syllable stress

Illustrations show you correct configurations of lips and tongue for specific pronunciation exercises

Lisa Mojsin, M.A.

PLUS 4 AUDIO CDs
Male and female voices coach you in correct American-style pronunciation
MASTERING THE AMERICAN ACCENT

Lisa Mojsin, M.A.
Director, Accurate English, Inc.
Los Angeles, CA
Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to my accent reduction students who came to the United States from all parts of the globe. Their drive to excel, passion for learning, amazing work ethic, and belief in the American dream have inspired me to write this book. In the words of Henry David Thoreau, “Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.”

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Introduction
This book will help non-native speakers of English learn to speak with an American accent.

Which American Accent Will This Book Teach Me?
You will learn to produce the standard American accent. Some people also call it “broadcaster English.” It’s the kind of standard, neutral speech that you hear on CNN and in educated circles. It’s a non-regional American accent, meaning that people do not associate the dialect with any particular part of the United States. It is the accent most commonly associated with educated people in the American East, Midwest, and West.

How Should I Practice?
Listen to the recorded material over and over. You will hear words and sentences pronounced followed by a pause for you to repeat after the speaker. You may want to record yourself repeating so that you can compare your accent to the accents of the speakers on this audio. Then practice the new sounds in real-life situations.

There are numerous study tips throughout the book, both from the writer and from her many successful students who have greatly improved their American accent. For an individual professional analysis of your accent which will help you to study accent reduction more efficiently and tell you which sections of this book you should focus on most, please contact us at 1-800-871-1317 or visit our website at: masteringtheamericanaccent.com.
In this chapter you will learn how to accurately pronounce all of the main American English 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 cap, cop, and cup may also sound the same when spoken by a non-native speaker.

Because there is not always a direct relationship between how a word is spelled and how it is pronounced, you should become familiar with the phonetic symbols that represent the sounds that you are learning. This way, you will be able to use your dictionary when you come across a word that contains a vowel sound that you don’t know how to pronounce. Make sure you also become familiar with the phonetic symbols of your dictionary as they may be a bit different from the symbols that this book uses.

### Main Vowel Sounds of American English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. /i/</th>
<th>read, heat, meet, seat, seen, feet</th>
<th>Please eat the meat and the cheese before you leave.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. /ɪ/</td>
<td>in, bit, this, give, sister, will, city</td>
<td>My sister Linda will live in the big city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. /eɪ/</td>
<td>late, gate, bait, fail, main, braid, wait</td>
<td>Jane’s face looks great for her age of eighty-eight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. /ɛ/</td>
<td>let, get, end, any, fell, bread, men, said</td>
<td>I went to Texas for my friend’s wedding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. /æ/</td>
<td>last, apple, add, can, answer, class</td>
<td>The handsome man lost his baggage after his travels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. /ɑ/</td>
<td>stop, lock, farm, want, army, possible, got</td>
<td>John is positive that his car was parked in that lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. /ɘ/</td>
<td>come, up, jump, but, does, love, money, about</td>
<td>Your younger brother doesn’t trust us, does he?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 high near the roof of the mouth as in /i/, and in low vowels, the tongue is flat down at the bottom of the mouth, as in /æ/.

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 this sound, move your tongue smoothly from one vowel position to another. The following vowels are diphthongs: /eɪ/ as in take, /oʊ/ 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 type of vowel. Refer to the diagrams below to help you better understand the correct tongue and lip positions for these various vowel sounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Example Words</th>
<th>Example Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. /ɔ/</td>
<td>all, fall, author, also, applaud, thought, fought</td>
<td>Paula was doing laundry all day long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. /oʊ/</td>
<td>go, slow, so, those, post, moment, drove</td>
<td>Oh, no! Don’t open the window, it’s cold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. /a/</td>
<td>look, took, put, foot, full, well, cookie</td>
<td>He would read the good book if he could.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. /u/</td>
<td>cool, soup, moon, boot, tooth, move, true</td>
<td>Sue knew about the food in the room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. /æ/</td>
<td>her, work, sure, first, early, were, earn, occur</td>
<td>What were the first words that girl learned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. /aɪ/</td>
<td>time, nine, dry, high, style, five, China</td>
<td>I advise you to ride a bicycle in China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. /aʊ/</td>
<td>south, house, cow, found, down, town</td>
<td>He went out of the house for about an hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. /ɔɪ/</td>
<td>oil, choice, moist, enjoy, avoid, voice</td>
<td>Let’s avoid the annoying noise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
/i/ AS IN MEET

A thief believes everybody steals.
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/

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

Word Pairs for Practice

1. deep sea 6. green leaves
2. beans and cheese 7. extremely easy
3. severe heat 8. sweet dreams
4. breathe deep 9. peaches and cream
5. three meals 10. speak Chinese

Practice Sentences

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.

/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 /i/. Sides of the tongue touch upper back teeth.
Common Spelling Patterns for /i/:

1. i (most common)  
   - sit, give, this, dinner
2. ui  
   - build, quit, quick, guilty
3. 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)

Word Pairs for Practice:

1. big city  
2. innocent victim  
3. drink milk  
4. children’s film  
5. simple living  
6. fish and chips  
7. trip to Italy  
8. spring picnic  
9. this thing  
10. winter wind

Practice Sentences:

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?

Quick Review

Word Contrasts for /i/ Versus /I/:

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/i/</th>
<th>/I/</th>
<th>/i/</th>
<th>/I/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. leave</td>
<td>live</td>
<td>7. beat</td>
<td>bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. feel</td>
<td>fill</td>
<td>8. steal</td>
<td>still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. least</td>
<td>list</td>
<td>9. each</td>
<td>itch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. he’s</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>10. seek</td>
<td>sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. sleep</td>
<td>slip</td>
<td>11. feet</td>
<td>fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. cheap</td>
<td>chip</td>
<td>12. sheep</td>
<td>ship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word Pairs for Practice
Make sure the two words in each pair are pronounced with different vowel sounds.

1. still sleepy 6. big deal
2. very interesting 7. these things
3. feeling ill 8. Middle East
4. it’s easy 9. little meal
5. is he? 10. green pill

/ea/ AS IN TAKE
Take time for all things: great haste makes great waste.
Benjamin Franklin

Lips: Not rounded, relaxed.
Tongue: Tense, moves from the mid-high to high position.

Common Spelling Patterns for /ea/

1. a + consonant + e
   - late, came, take, save
2. ai
   - rain, wait, pain, aim
3. ay
   - say, away, play, Monday
4. ey
   - they, survey, obey
5. eigh
   - weigh, eight, neighbor, freight
6. a
   - less common:
     - April, alien, angel

Word Pairs for Practice

1. the same day 6. explain the situation
2. stay away 7. play baseball
3. escape from jail 8. eighty-eight
4. take a break 9. bake a cake
5. stay the same 10. save the whales

Practice Sentences

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.
/ɛ/ AS IN GET

Every exit is an entry somewhere.

Tom Stoppard

Lips: Farther apart than for /ai/ and relaxed.
Tongue: Relaxed, mid-high position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Spelling Patterns for /ɛ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  ea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warning: Common Mistake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The verb <em>say</em> is pronounced with the /ɛ/ sound in the past tense form and in the present tense form when it is followed by an s:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I say</td>
<td>I said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he says</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Pairs for Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. presidential election 6. heavy metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. bend your legs 7. get better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. plenty of energy 8. elegant dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. remember the pledge 9. next Wednesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. better friend 10. well read</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Without some extra effort you will never excel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Jenny and her friend had eggs for breakfast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I expect this session to end at ten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. On the seventh of February the weather was wet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I see my best friend Fred every seven days.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quick Review

Word Contrasts for /ɛ/ Versus /æ/

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/ and /æ/</th>
<th>/ɛ/ and /æ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. pen</td>
<td>5. tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. sell</td>
<td>6. Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. wet</td>
<td>7. test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. west</td>
<td>8. men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs for Practice

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

1. less rain |
2. taste test |
3. neck pain |
4. fell away |
5. wet day |
6. main men |
7. great dress |
8. headache |

/æ/ AS IN FAT

He who laughs last laughs best.
American proverb

Lips: Open, not rounded.
Tongue: Lowest of all the front vowels. Flat on the floor of the mouth.

Common Spelling Patterns for /æ/

a
hat, apple, man, answer

Word Pairs for Practice

1. bad example |
2. national anthem |
3. back at the ranch |
4. accurate answer |
5. bad habit |
6. practical plan |
7. annual gathering |
8. last chance |
9. handsome actor |
10. angry man |

Practice Sentences

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.
Quick Review

Word Contrasts for /ɛ/ Versus /æ/

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
<th>/æ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. men</td>
<td>man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. said</td>
<td>sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. end</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. then</td>
<td>than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. guess</td>
<td>gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. slept</td>
<td>slapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. head</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. expensive</td>
<td>expansive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs for Practice

Make sure the two words in each pair are pronounced with different vowel sounds: /ɛ/ or /æ/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
<th>/æ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. sad</td>
<td>endings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. less</td>
<td>land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. angry</td>
<td>men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ten</td>
<td>gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. last</td>
<td>exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. bad</td>
<td>friend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/ɑ/ AS IN FATHER

Never go to a doctor whose office 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/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ɑ</th>
<th>hot, stop, modern, job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>father, watch, dark, want</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs for Practice

1. common problem 6. logical response
2. body shop 7. hot topic
3. occupy the office 8. modern hospital
4. office politics 9. nonstop
5. from top to bottom 10. sloppy job

Practice Sentences

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.
Quick Review

Word Contrasts for /æ/ Versus /ɑ/

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/æ/</th>
<th>/ɑ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. hat</td>
<td>hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. lack</td>
<td>lock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. sack</td>
<td>sock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. sang</td>
<td>song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. cap</td>
<td>cop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. add</td>
<td>odd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. rack</td>
<td>rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. tap</td>
<td>top</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs for Practice

Make sure the two words in each pair are pronounced with different vowel sounds: /æ/ or /ɑ/.

1. hot pag  4. got back
2. man’s job  5. bad dog
3. top answer  6. back pocket

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 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 Matolek, Croatia

/ɘ/ AS IN FUN*

Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.

William Shakespeare

Lips: Completely relaxed, slightly parted.
Tongue: Relaxed, middle position.

Common Spelling Patterns for /ɘ/:

- 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 vowel it is /ɘ/. They are basically the same sound. Throughout this book the /ɘ/ will be used for both. For further study of this reduced, neutral sound, refer to Chapter Five, which deals with syllable stress and reduced vowels.
**Word Pairs for Practice**

1. young son  
6. under the rug  
2. jump up  
7. number one  
3. fun in the sun  
8. undercover  
4. another subject  
9. enough money  
5. wonderful mother  
10. Sunday Brunch

**Practice Sentences**

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.

**Quick Review**

**Word Contrasts for /ɑ/ Versus /ɘ/**

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑ/</th>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Don  done</td>
<td>5. lock  luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. shot  shut</td>
<td>6. non  none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fond  fund</td>
<td>7. robber  rubber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. got  gut</td>
<td>8. doll  dull</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Word Pairs for Practice**

Make sure the two words in each pair are pronounced with different vowel sounds: /ɑ/ or /ɘ/.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. cane on</td>
<td>5. fun ign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. got lucky</td>
<td>6. stop running</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. not enough</td>
<td>7. jump on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. cost much</td>
<td>8. runshot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**/ɔ/ AS IN SAW**

_Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all the others._

*Winston Churchill*

**Lips:** Apart, very slightly rounded, oval shape.  
**Tongue:** Slightly tense, down near the floor of mouth.

10 Mastering the American Accent
Common Spelling Patterns for /ɔ/

- aw: saw, law, awful, awesome
- au: author, August, applaud, audition
- al: small, walk, tall, always
- ought: bought, thought, fought
- ought: daughter, caught
- o: gone, off, long

Word Pairs for Practice
1. pause in the hall 6. walk the dog
2. awful thought 7. small talk
3. water the lawn 8. already exhausted
4. talk until dawn 9. tall wall
5. autumn in Austria 10. caught the ball

Practice Sentences
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!

Quick Review
Word Contrasts for /ɘ/ Versus /ɔ/
Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
<th>/ɔ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. cut</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. hull</td>
<td>hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. done</td>
<td>dawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. dug</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. but</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. sung</td>
<td>song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. cuff</td>
<td>cough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. flood</td>
<td>flawed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs for Practice
Make sure the two words in each pair are pronounced with different vowel sounds: /ɘ/ or /ɔ/.

1. another dog 4. bought lunch
2. lung mouth 5. coffee cup
3. much talk 6. small clgdb
/ɔʊ/ AS IN BOAT

No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings.
William Blake

Lips: Very rounded and tense.
Tongue: A bit tense, moves from mid to high position.

Common Spelling Patterns for /ɔʊ/

- o: no, don’t, home, only
- oa: road, coat, boat
- ow: own, slow, window
- ough: though, although

Word Pairs for Practice

1. phone home 6. don’t smoke
2. own a home 7. low profile
3. almost over 8. slow motion
4. open road 9. old poem
5. drove slowly 10. golden bowl

Practice Sentences

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.

Quick Review

Word Contrasts for /ɑ, ɔ/ Versus /ɔʊ/

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same. Please note that /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ sound almost the same, and therefore are both listed in the first column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑ, ɔ/</th>
<th>/ɔʊ/</th>
<th>/ɑ, ɔ/</th>
<th>/ɔʊ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. bought</td>
<td>boat</td>
<td>6. caught</td>
<td>coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. law</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>7. walk</td>
<td>woke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. clause</td>
<td>close</td>
<td>8. not</td>
<td>note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. odd</td>
<td>owed</td>
<td>9. got</td>
<td>goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. want</td>
<td>won’t</td>
<td>10. non</td>
<td>known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word Pairs for Practice
Make sure the two words in each pair are pronounced with different vowel sounds:
/a/, /æ/ or /oʊ/

1. old law 4. odd boat
2. not home 5. walk slowly
3. those dogs 6. only daughter

/æ/ AS IN GOOD
Without words, without writing and without books there would be no history, there could be no concept of humanity.

Hermann Hesse

Lips: Very slightly rounded.
Tongue: Relaxed, back is raised, higher than for /ou/.

Common Spelling Patterns for /æ/
- good, book, childhood, understood
- push, full, pull, sugar
- would, could, should
- woman sounds like “wumun”

Word Pairs for Practice
1. good book 6. sugar cookie
2. took a look 7. push and pull
3. good looking 8. wool pullover
4. fully cooked 9. wooden hook
5. shook his foot 10. good childhood

Practice Sentences
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.

/ʊ/ AS IN TOO
If you could choose one characteristic that would get you through life, choose a sense of humor.

Jennifer Jones

Chapter One: THE VOWEL SOUNDS 13
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
- **ə**
  - do, who, lose, prove
- **eu**
  - new, blew, drew
- **u**
  - super, rule, duty, student

### Word Pairs for Practice
1. too few  
2. fruit juice  
3. soup spoon  
4. new suit  
5. true value
6. blue shoes  
7. new moon  
8. suitable suitcase  
9. two rooms  
10. super cool

### Practice Sentences
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.

### Quick Review
**Vowel Contrasts for /ʊ/ Versus /u/**

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʊ/</th>
<th>/u/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. full</td>
<td>fool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. look</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/u/</th>
<th>/ʊ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. pull</td>
<td>pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. stood</td>
<td>stewed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Word Pairs for Practice
Make sure the two words in each pair are pronounced with different vowel sounds: /ʊ/ or /u/.

1. good food  
2. full room  
3. cook stew
4. blue book  
5. two cookies  
6. too full
/ɜː/ AS IN BIRD

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 /ɜː/

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

Word Pairs for Practice

1. first person 6. third term
2. purple shirt 7. firm words
3. learn German 8. early bird
4. other world 9. nervous girl
5. serve dinner 10. thirty-third

Practice Sentences

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.

/aɪ/ AS IN TIME

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

Nelson Mandela

Lips: Open, not rounded, closing a bit when moving to the /i/ position.
Tongue: Relaxed, moves from flat to high position.
Common Spelling Patterns for /aɪ/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>fly, sky, apply, style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>nice, kind, fine, sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>igh</td>
<td>light, fight, sight, night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ie</td>
<td>lie, tie, tried</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs for Practice

1. lime pies 6. bright light
2. white wine 7. fly high
3. fly a kite 8. sign on the line
4. nice try 9. fine dining
5. nine lives 10. ninety-nine

Practice Sentences

1. Why is the price so high for that design?
2. The wildfire 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.

/ɑʊ/ AS IN HOUSE

It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.

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 /ɑʊ/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ou</td>
<td>found, loud, around, thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ow</td>
<td>now, down, crowd, vowel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word Pairs for Practice
1. about an hour 6. around the mountain
2. crowded house 7. brown couch
3. downtown 8. found out
4. loud announcement 9. down and out
5. countdown 10. pronounce the vowel

Practice Sentences
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.

/ɔɪ/ AS IN BOY
Don’t worry about avoiding temptation. As you get older, it will avoid 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/
- əɪ  avoid, oil, moist, join
- oy  enjoy, toy, employ, royal

Word Pairs for Practice
1. enjoy the toy 6. annoying noise
2. spoiled boy 7. destroy the poison
3. appointment in Detroit 8. loyal employee
4. broiled oysters 9. moist soil
5. boiling point 10. avoid the moisture

Practice Sentences
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?
VOWELS IN DETAIL

This chapter will give you more detailed knowledge of the most problematic vowel sounds for non-native speakers. 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.

Review of /I/ and /i/ Sounds

"Real riches are the riches possessed inside."
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 most 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: Dangerous Mistake
Confusing /I/ and /i/ may cause embarrassment or can even be offensive.

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

Practice Dialogues

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?
Practice Paragraph

Guilty or Innocent?

Let’s be realistic. It’s not that difficult to see that he’s guilty. He steals, drinks, and cheats. He has cheated his victims, and he needs to be in prison. He did these terrible things, yet he insists that he’s innocent. Who is he kidding? In the beginning, many people did believe that he was innocent. But now we have the evidence that he needs. Even though he won’t admit his guilt, I foresee him being in prison for at least fifteen years. Don’t you agree with me?

Advice from a Successful Student

“When you leave phone messages for people, there’s often the option of listening to your message before you send it. I always listen to the message, and if I think my accent is too strong, I record the message again, sometimes several times, until I am satisfied with the way my speech sounds.”

Sonja Sokolova, Russia

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
<th>/æ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Don’t think about the pest.</td>
<td>Don’t think about the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. He gave me a letter.</td>
<td>He gave me a ladder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Send it carefully.</td>
<td>Send it carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The men helped me.</td>
<td>The man helped me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I need a new pen.</td>
<td>I need a new pan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you need to beg?</td>
<td>Do you need a bag?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs in Sentences

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

Practice Sentences

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 his generous present.

Voicemail Message for Practice
You have reached Ellen Edwards. I am sorry I can’t answer right now. I am away from my desk. Please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

Practice Paragraph

A 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 quoted 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.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
<th>/ɑ/ /ɔ/</th>
<th>/ou/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remember, the sound /ɘ/ as in fun or cap is a neutral vowel, meaning that everything in your mouth is relaxed and the lips are just very slightly open.</td>
<td>In contrast to the /ɑ/, the /ɑ/ as in father and /ɔ/ as in saw, require the mouth to be open. The sounds /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ are very similar, except that for the /ɔ/, the lips are 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 way. For example, many Americans pronounce hat and tall with the same vowel sound.</td>
<td>For the /ou/ sound, as in boat, the lips are rounded and tense.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Confusing /ɘ/, /ɑ/, /ɔ/, and /ou/ may cause embarrassment or can even be offensive.

Do you mean? Or?

Doug
dog

Also, mispronouncing words like coke, focus, fork, and folk can cause you to say an inappropriate or offensive word.

Practice Dialogue

Coffee Tomorrow

John: Hi Nicole. Can you talk?

Nicole: Oh, hi John. Can you hold on? I'm on another call. I'm talking to my boss.

John: No problem. I'll wait 'til you're done.

Nicole: Okay, now I can talk. I am sorry it took so long. What's going on?

John: Nothing much. I just wanted to know if we can meet for lunch or coffee tomorrow.

Nicole: That sounds like fun. I've been working nonstop and I'd love to get out of the office.

The Problematic O

Trouble is only opportunity in work clothes.

Henry Kaiser

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.
This quote from Helen Keller contains fourteen words spelled with the letter o and features all three different vowel pronunciations: “When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.” The confusion surrounding the letter o for non-native speakers is certainly understandable!

The Neutral Sound /ɘ/
First, let’s look at the most problematic sound with an o spelling. It’s the neutral sound /ɘ/, as in love, other, and Monday, which non-native speakers frequently mispronounce as laav, ather, and Mahn day. The wrong pronunciation occurs because the /ɘ/ 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 memorize some very common words with the neutral /ɘ/ sound that are spelled with an o, ou, or oo, or even a. Start by studying the pronunciation exceptions in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memorizing the Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Words spelled with o but pronounced as /ɘ/:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Words spelled with ou and pronounced as /ɘ/:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>double</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Words spelled with oo and pronounced as /ɘ/:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>blood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practice Sentences
1. My cousin is in another country.
2. I love some of those colors.
3. He makes a lot of money every month.
4. My other brother comes once a month.
5. Nothing was done on Monday.
6. None of the above are good enough.

Word Pairs in Sentences
The word pairs in each of the sentences below are spelled the same except for one consonant being different. Both words are spelled with an /o/, but this vowel is pronounced differently in each word. The second word of each pair contains the /ɘ/ sound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>other vowel sound</th>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. bother brother</td>
<td>Don’t bother your brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rome come</td>
<td>When will you come to Rome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. bone done</td>
<td>The dog is done with the bone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tom from</td>
<td>Where is Tom from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. pouch touch</td>
<td>Don’t touch the pouch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. cough tough</td>
<td>It’s tough to have a cough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. goes does</td>
<td>He goes there and does it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. collar color</td>
<td>What is the color of the collar?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. over oven</td>
<td>Come over to see my new oven.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sentence Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑ/</th>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You have a good lock.</td>
<td>You have good luck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Where is that cop?</td>
<td>Where is that cup?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I shot it.</td>
<td>I shut it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. He’s a big boss.</td>
<td>It’s a big bus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. This is Don.</td>
<td>This is done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The American /ɒ/ Sound
In American English the /ɘ/ sound as in caught and all is very similar to the /ɑ/ sound as in want or hot. In fact, these two sounds, /ɜ/ and /ɔ/, 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.
If you studied English outside of the United States, you might have learned British pronunciation. The vowel sound that is most noticeably different 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/.

**Sentence Pairs for Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɔ/</th>
<th>/oʊ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. He’s a bald man.</td>
<td>He’s a bold man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Where is the ball?</td>
<td>Where is the bowl?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. That’s a big hall.</td>
<td>That’s a big hole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Don’t pause now.</td>
<td>Don’t pose now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have a big lawn.</td>
<td>I have a big loan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Word Pairs in Sentences**

1. I bought a new boat.
2. There is a ball in the bowl.
3. Did you call about the coal?
4. You ought to eat oats.
5. I was awed that he owed so much.

**Practice Sentences**

1. We all thought that Joe went to Rome.
2. I bought some clothes at the mall.
3. The audience applauded when the show was over.
4. Paul is going home in August.
5. We’re going for a walk even though it’s cold.
6. The author wrote his autobiography.
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 e into an /ou/ sound. “Hola amigo” often sounds like: "oula amigou." Similarly, “my friends Ricardo and Roberto” sounds like: “my friends Ricardo and Roberto.” A similar vowel change often occurs when Americans speak French. The vowel /e/ ends up sounding like /eɪ/; “Je vais au marché” can sound like: “Je veiiii au marchee.” So, when you speak English, prolong these vowels the same way, and you will be on the right track!

Review of /ɛ/, /æ/, /ɑ/, /ɔ/, /ɘ/, and /oʊ/

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

“I know God will not give me anything I can’t handle. I just wish that He didn’t trust me with so much.”

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
<th>/æ/</th>
<th>/ɑ,ɔ/</th>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
<th>/oʊ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kept</td>
<td>cap</td>
<td>cop</td>
<td>cup</td>
<td>cope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kettle</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>cot</td>
<td>cut</td>
<td>coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>best</td>
<td>bass</td>
<td>boss</td>
<td>bus</td>
<td>boast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shell</td>
<td>shadow</td>
<td>Shawn</td>
<td>shun</td>
<td>shown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leg</td>
<td>lack</td>
<td>lock</td>
<td>luck</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>net</td>
<td>gnat</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>nut</td>
<td>note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bet</td>
<td>bat</td>
<td>bought</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lend</td>
<td>land</td>
<td>lawn</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>loan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review of /ʊ/ and /u/ Sounds

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

1. a. Will you start to cook soon?
   b. No, I am still too full to think of food.

2. a. Who took my cookie?
   b. Don’t look at me.

3. a. You should have had some soup. It’s so good.
   b. No thanks, I’m really full.

4. a. He’s foolish to walk in the woods by himself.
   b. Yes. There are a lot of wolves in those woods.
   a. I think that wolves howl when the moon is full.
   b. Is that really true?

5. a. Do you like my new boots?
   b. Yes, they’re cool.
   a. And take a look at my blue suit. It’s made of wool.
   b. To tell you the truth, I wouldn’t wear the blue suit if I were you.
   a. Don’t you think it looks good on me?
   b. I think you should return it.
   a. And I think you shouldn’t be so rude!

Comparing /u/ and /yə/:

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 “Tʊ-z-day” (for Tuesday) instead of the British t+you+z-day. Similarly, you may have learned to say “t+you+n” (for tune) rather than “toon” as Americans do.

Words for Practice

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attitude</td>
<td>gratitude</td>
<td>reduce</td>
<td>stupid</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>costume</td>
<td>introduce</td>
<td>seduce</td>
<td>student</td>
<td>tumor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>due</td>
<td>opportunity</td>
<td>solitude</td>
<td>studio</td>
<td>tune</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duty</td>
<td>produce</td>
<td>Stewart</td>
<td>tube</td>
<td>tutor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Sentences

1. It’s your duty to produce it by Tuesday.
2. Those students like iTunes and YouTube.
3. May I introduce you to my tutor?
4. The producer is in the studio working on a new tune.
5. I assume that it’s due on Tuesday.
6. That’s a stupid attitude, Stewart.
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 /ɘr/. 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.”

Words for Practice
Practice saying the following words with the /ɘr/ sound. Make sure the vowel sound doesn’t change even though the spelling does.

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

Sentences for Practice
1. What were the first words that she learned?
2. I will learn some 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.

Vowels Followed by the /ɘr/ Sound
The quality of a vowel sound often changes when an r follows it. There is a slight /ɘ/ sound that is added after certain vowels, making it sound almost as if the word contains an extra syllable. For example, fire sounds like “fai /ɘ/ +r.”
Words for Practice

Remember to add an extra /s/ sound before the /t/ sound as you practice reading these words aloud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/fər/</th>
<th>/fɑr/</th>
<th>/hɔr/</th>
<th>/hɪər/</th>
<th>/fɔːr/</th>
<th>/hɑːr/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fear</td>
<td>far</td>
<td>hour</td>
<td>hire</td>
<td>four</td>
<td>hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>near</td>
<td>star</td>
<td>sour</td>
<td>tired</td>
<td>tore</td>
<td>there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hear</td>
<td>hard</td>
<td>power</td>
<td>expire</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear</td>
<td>large</td>
<td>flower</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>bored</td>
<td>stairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Sentences

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?
Chapter Three

CONSONANTS

This chapter will teach you how to form all of the consonant sounds of American English. You can either study this chapter first to get an in-depth understanding of how consonants are formed, or you can just skip to the next chapter (“Problematic Consonants”) and begin practicing the most difficult sounds for non-native speakers. Make sure that you also refer to the “Native Language Guide” at the end of the book, which will tell you which specific consonant sounds you need to focus on in this chapter and in the following one.

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 likely not moving your tongue and lips in 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 below will help you do this.
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: zzzzzzzz. 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: ssssssssssssssss. 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 positions of the /s/ and /z/ 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.

Voiceless and Voiced Consonant Pairs

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>mom, from lemon</td>
<td>Lips together. Air flows out of the nose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n/</td>
<td>non, fun, any</td>
<td>Tip of tongue touches gum ridge, and the sides of the tongue touch upper teeth; air flows out of the nose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ŋ/</td>
<td>going, spring, king</td>
<td>Back of the tongue touches the soft palate; air flows out of the nose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/l/</td>
<td>love, will, yellow</td>
<td>Tip of tongue touches upper gum ridge. Tongue is tense. Air comes out on the sides of the tongue, at the corners of the mouth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/</td>
<td>red, four, card</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/w/</td>
<td>win, lower, quiet</td>
<td>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/.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/y/</td>
<td>yes, mayor, young</td>
<td>Tip of tongue touches lower front teeth. Front of tongue is raised near the hard palate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Consonant /h/

This final consonant sound is voiceless and does not have a "voiced pair" that it corresponds to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/h/</td>
<td>happy, behave, who</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vowel Length and Voiced and Voiceless Consonants

Vowels are longer when followed by a voiced consonant. They are shorter when followed by a voiceless consonant. Even short vowels like /i/, /ɛ/, /ɘ/, and /ʊ/ are prolonged when followed by a voiced consonant.
When you lengthen a vowel, make sure that you do not change the sound of the vowel. For example, when you say *hid* make sure that it doesn’t sound like *heed*.

### Word Pairs for Practice

**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*.

### Practice Sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiceless</th>
<th>voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. advice</td>
<td>advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ice</td>
<td>eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. niece</td>
<td>knees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. mate</td>
<td>made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. hat</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. bet</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/f/</td>
<td>/v/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. half</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. life</td>
<td>live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. belief</td>
<td>believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. back</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. dock</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. duck</td>
<td>Doug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CD 2 Track 15

When you lengthen a vowel, make sure that you do not change the sound of the vowel. For example, when you say *hid* make sure that it doesn’t sound like *heed*.

### Word Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiceless</th>
<th>voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. advice</td>
<td>advise</td>
</tr>
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<td>2. ice</td>
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<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. bet</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>/g/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. half</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. life</td>
<td>live</td>
</tr>
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<td>11. dock</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. duck</td>
<td>Doug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CD 2 Track 16

When you lengthen a vowel, make sure that you do not change the sound of the vowel. For example, when you say *hid* make sure that it doesn’t sound like *heed*.

### Word Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiceless</th>
<th>voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. advice</td>
<td>advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ice</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. niece</td>
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<td>4. mate</td>
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<td>5. hat</td>
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<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. dock</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. duck</td>
<td>Doug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CD 2 Track 17

When you lengthen a vowel, make sure that you do not change the sound of the vowel. For example, when you say *hid* make sure that it doesn’t sound like *heed*.

### Word Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiceless</th>
<th>voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. advice</td>
<td>advise</td>
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<td>2. ice</td>
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<td>3. niece</td>
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<td>4. mate</td>
<td>made</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. hat</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. bet</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>/g/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. half</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. life</td>
<td>live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. belief</td>
<td>believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. back</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. dock</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. duck</td>
<td>Doug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CD 2 Track 18

When you lengthen a vowel, make sure that you do not change the sound of the vowel. For example, when you say *hid* make sure that it doesn’t sound like *heed*.

### Word Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiceless</th>
<th>voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. advice</td>
<td>advise</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. ice</td>
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<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. dock</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. duck</td>
<td>Doug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CD 2 Track 19

When you lengthen a vowel, make sure that you do not change the sound of the vowel. For example, when you say *hid* make sure that it doesn’t sound like *heed*.

### Word Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiceless</th>
<th>voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. advice</td>
<td>advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ice</td>
<td>eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. niece</td>
<td>knees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. mate</td>
<td>made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. hat</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. bet</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>/g/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. half</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. life</td>
<td>live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. belief</td>
<td>believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. back</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. dock</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. duck</td>
<td>Doug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CD 2 Track 20

When you lengthen a vowel, make sure that you do not change the sound of the vowel. For example, when you say *hid* make sure that it doesn’t sound like *heed*.

### Word Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiceless</th>
<th>voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. advice</td>
<td>advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ice</td>
<td>eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. niece</td>
<td>knees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. mate</td>
<td>made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. hat</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. bet</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>/g/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. half</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. life</td>
<td>live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. belief</td>
<td>believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. back</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. dock</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. duck</td>
<td>Doug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CD 2 Track 21

When you lengthen a vowel, make sure that you do not change the sound of the vowel. For example, when you say *hid* make sure that it doesn’t sound like *heed*.

### Word Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiceless</th>
<th>voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. advice</td>
<td>advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ice</td>
<td>eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. niece</td>
<td>knees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. mate</td>
<td>made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. hat</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. bet</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/j/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. half</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. life</td>
<td>live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. belief</td>
<td>believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. back</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. dock</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. duck</td>
<td>Doug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CD 2 Track 22

When you lengthen a vowel, make sure that you do not change the sound of the vowel. For example, when you say *hid* make sure that it doesn’t sound like *heed*.
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 “yessssssss.” 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. Therefore, /b/ is a stop. If we quickly open our lips, we can then “release” the stop and say job.

Holding Final Stops

Americans generally do not release many of 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.

Words for Practice

Pay special attention to the final consonants as you pronounce the words in each column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>final p</th>
<th>final b</th>
<th>final d</th>
<th>final t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>stop</td>
<td>club</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>cup</td>
<td>job</td>
<td>played</td>
<td>sat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>up</td>
<td>sub</td>
<td>sad</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>shop</td>
<td>tub</td>
<td>dad</td>
<td>cut</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Stops Followed by Consonants

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

Word Pairs for Practice

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

1. help him
2. keep talking
3. dig that
4. could go
5. stop that
6. job market
7. big park
8. cup cake
Chapter Four

PROBLEMATIC CONSONANTS

This chapter will help you fix the most common consonant errors that non-native speakers of English make. In some cases, the pronunciation of these sounds is exclusive to American English; in other cases, correct pronunciation can be difficult for a non-native speaker if that particular sound does not exist in his or her native language.

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 $t$ 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 cut. Also, it can change to a different sound when it is followed by an $r$ sound, as in try or truth.

The Held $t$

As a simple awareness exercise, let’s first practice saying the /t/ sound so that you get a feeling of where in the mouth it occurs. Repeat saying the $t$ “tttt.” You will notice that the tip of your tongue is touching and releasing your gum ridge, which is the upper part of your mouth, right behind your front teeth. Try it again: “tttt.” This is what we call a fully pronounced $t$. The tongue touches and releases.

Now say the following two words which end with a $t$: *cat, right*.

Say them again; this time do not release the $t$. Just let your tongue stay on top, touching the gum ridge, with no air coming out when you say the $t$. This is called the “held $t$.” The other way to make this kind of silent $t$ is just to press the vocal cords together to stop the airflow, and then release.
The letter \( t \) is generally held at the end of words and before consonants within words. This “held \( t \)” is very common in American English. Using it will help you to sound more like a native speaker since non-native speakers almost always tend to release the \( t \) when speaking English. 

*Note:* You will sometimes hear Americans release the final \( t \). If they do, it’s usually at the end of a phrase or a sentence, or for special emphasis of a word. For example: “That’s great!” “It’s so hot!” There is no absolute rule about always holding the \( t \), but keep in mind that if you release the \( t \) at the end of every word, it will sound like a foreign accent.

**Words for Practice**

1. cut  
2. Robert  
3. state  
4. out  
5. present  
6. budget  
7. list  
8. absent  
9. met

**Word Contrasts for Practice**

For the second word of each pair, the final “held \( t \)” interrupts and shortens the preceding consonant.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no ( t )</td>
<td>( t )</td>
<td>no ( t )</td>
<td>( t )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. can</td>
<td>can’t</td>
<td>4. men</td>
<td>meant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. fall</td>
<td>fault</td>
<td>5. fell</td>
<td>felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. star</td>
<td>start</td>
<td>6. car</td>
<td>cart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.

**Held \( t + \) Consonant**

A. Always hold the final \( t \) when the next word begins with a consonant.

1. it was  
2. might do  
3. can’t go  
4. at work  
5. didn’t like  
6. won’t need  
7. eight weeks  
8. budget cut

B. Always hold the \( t \) when the next letter within the same word is a consonant.

1. foo\( t \)ball  
2. out\( t \)side  
3. la\( t \)ely  
4. nigh\( t \)mare  
5. a\( t \)mosphere  
6. a\( t \)las  
7. A\( t \)lanta  
8. bu\( t \)ler

*Chapter Four: PROBLEMATIC CONSONANTS*
Practice Sentences

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 your confidence level when you are speaking in professional situations.

Held t Before /n/ Sound

When 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

1. certain  3. mountain  5. cotton  7. eaten  9. forgotten

Practice Sentences

1. I will shorten the curtain.
2. He has eaten the rotten food.
3. I’m certain that it was written in Britain.
4. I’ve already forgotten the sentence.
5. That cotton blouse has buttons.
6. Martin Luther King and Bill Clinton are famous Americans.

Silent t After n

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

1. interview  
2. twenty  
3. disappointing  
4. accountable  
5. dentist  
6. intellectual  
7. quantity  
8. advantages  
9. international  
10. center  
11. cantaloupe  
12. plenty  
13. Santa Monica  
14. Atlanta  
15. Orange County  
16. Sacramento

**Practice Dialogue for Silent t**

a. There are many advantages to working for that international company.

b. I'll be disappointed if they don't call me for an interview.

a. I hear they're looking for someone with interpersonal skills and plenty of energy.

b. It's only twenty minutes from Santa Monica.

**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 sound 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We don't say:</th>
<th>We say:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>better</td>
<td>bedder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Before an "l":

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We don't say:</th>
<th>We say:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>little</td>
<td>liddle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. After an "r" and a vowel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We don't say:</th>
<th>We say:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>party</td>
<td>pardy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forty</td>
<td>fordy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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."

**Words for Practice**

1. city  
3. better  
2. duty  
4. ability  
5. total  
6. matter  
7. meeting  
8. quality

**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.
Word Groups for Practice

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

Practice Sentences

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.

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.

Word Pairs for Practice

The following word pairs sound the same even though the first word is spelled with a "t" and the second word is spelled with a "d." Since the d and t are both positioned 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.
Words for Practice
1. already 3. Canada 5. ladder 7. middle
2. addict 4. editor 6. product 8. shadow

Word Pairs for Practice
1. add on 2. made it 3. hid it 4. fed up

Practice Sentences for “Fast d”
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 with the crowded elevator.

Note: Remember, if the d is within a stressed syllable, even if it is surrounded by vowels, the “fast d” rule does not apply.

The /tr/ Sound: tr
When a t is followed by an r sound, the t changes and becomes an almost /ʃ/ or “ch” sound. To create this sound correctly, say /ʃ/ 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.

Practice Words
1. travel 3. tradition 5. translate 7. traffic 9. turn
2. turkey 4. introduce 6. interest 8. extremely 10. terrific

The /dr/ Sound: dr
When d is followed by an r, the /d/ sound changes and becomes an almost /dʒ/ sound.

Practice Words
1. drink 3. drop 5. dream 7. drama 9. syndrome
2. children 4. address 6. cathedral 8. hundred 10. laundry


**Practice Dialogues for tr and dr**

1. a. Why do you travel by train?
   b. Because the traffic is so dreadful.

2. a. What did Sandra tell the attorney?
   b. She told him the truth about the drugs.

3. a. Have you traveled to Turkey?
   b. Yes, that country has some interesting traditions.

4. a. I told him a hundred times not to drink and drive.
   b. I’m sure he’ll try to stay out of trouble.
   a. To tell you the truth, I am drained from all this drama.

**The /dʒ/ Sound: du and d + y**

When a d is followed by the vowel u, they usually blend to create the sound /dʒ/ which is much like the sound j makes in a word like joke.

**Words for Practice**

1. gradual 4. education
2. schedule 5. procedure
3. graduation 6. individual

**Words for Practice**

Similarly, a followed by y usually produces the /dʒ/ sound.

1. Did you? 3. Could you?
2. Would you? 4. Should you?

**The /ʧ/ Sound: tu and t + y**

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

1. actually 3. ritual 5. virtual 7. statue 9. punctual
2. situation 4. adventure 6. fortunate 8. nature 10. picture

Similarly, a final t followed by a y usually calls for the /ʧ/ sound.

1. Don’t you? 3. Can’t you?
2. Won’t you? 4. Aren’t you?

---

40 Mastering the American Accent
Practice Sentences

1. Did you go to his graduation?
2. Would you take our picture?
3. Why can’t you be punctual?
4. Don’t you like nature?
5. Actually, this is a fortunate situation.
6. You’re adventurous, aren’t you?
7. Why won’t you do it gradually?
8. Can’t you change your schedule?

Words 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 /Id/ and as a separate syllable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>needed</th>
<th>admitted</th>
<th>attended</th>
<th>decided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>avoided</td>
<td>separated</td>
<td>visited</td>
<td>waited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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/, and /ð/.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>opened</th>
<th>changed</th>
<th>earned</th>
<th>pulled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>called</td>
<td>closed</td>
<td>loved</td>
<td>showed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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/.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>passed</th>
<th>helped</th>
<th>laughed</th>
<th>stopped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>washed</td>
<td>watched</td>
<td>worked</td>
<td>liked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practicing the -ed Sounds
In the spaces provided, write the correct past tense sound of -ed in the following verbs. (Is it /Id/, /d/, or /t/?)

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. admitted</td>
<td></td>
<td>8. hugged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. controlled</td>
<td></td>
<td>9. liked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. developed</td>
<td></td>
<td>10. marched</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. dressed</td>
<td></td>
<td>11. preferred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ended</td>
<td></td>
<td>12. pretended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. exploded</td>
<td></td>
<td>13. pulled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. finished</td>
<td></td>
<td>14. robbed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Linking ed Ending and 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 Eight, “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:

1. stayed in stay _d_
2. turned on turn _d_
3. developed a develop _t_
4. needed a need _d_

Words for Practice

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. worried</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. interested in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. looked at</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. worked on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. talked about</td>
<td></td>
<td>6. liked it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More Linking Practice: -ed + it
Practice linking the final consonant to the word it.

/Id/ 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.
Practice Dialogues for -ed Verbs
1. a. What did you think of the movie?
   b. I liked it a lot.
2. a. What did you do with the money?
   b. I deposited it in the bank.
3. a. How did you cook the chicken?
   b. I fried it in oil.
4. a. Is the heater on?
   b. No, I turned it off.
5. a. When did you paint the room?
   b. I painted it last week.

Practice Dialogues
The Job Interview
Listen to the -ed endings of the past tense verbs and try to determine which of the three possible sounds you 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 partyed 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.
Job Seeker: I am detail-oriented, highly motivated and organized. I am also focused and determined, and I work well in a fast-paced environment.
I have an advanced knowledge of computers. I am also educated and well traveled.
The *th* Sound

“You must **do the thing you think you cannot do.**”

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

One of the most difficult consonant sounds for non-native speakers is the *th* or */θ/* sound and the */ð/* sound. Remember that for this sound the tip of your tongue should touch the edges of your front teeth, and 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 through.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>anything</th>
<th>earth</th>
<th>nothing</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>author</td>
<td>ninth</td>
<td>thank</td>
<td>wealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both</td>
<td>health</td>
<td>thing</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Word Pairs for */θ/* (voiceless *th*)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>with nothing</th>
<th>both methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ninth birthday</td>
<td>third month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⚠️ **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.

* */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.
Practice Words for /ð/ (Voiced th)

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

Word Pairs for /ð/

that clothing  neither brother
this weather  mother and father

⚠️ 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.

/ð/  /d/
they  day
breathe  breed

Again, 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.

⚠️ 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.

Word Contrasts for Practice

Note the difference between the words with /t/ and those with the voiceless th or /θ/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>/θ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  bat</td>
<td>bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  boat</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  mat</td>
<td>math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  tank</td>
<td>thank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  team</td>
<td>theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.  true</td>
<td>threw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sound Contrasts for Practice

Note the difference between the words with \( d \) and those with the voiced \( th \) or \( /ð/ \).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( /d/ )</th>
<th>( /ð/ )</th>
<th>( /d/ )</th>
<th>( /ð/ )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. breeding</td>
<td>breathing</td>
<td>4. Dan</td>
<td>than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. dare</td>
<td>their</td>
<td>5. day</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. doze</td>
<td>those</td>
<td>6. wordy</td>
<td>worthy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Sentences 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.

Practice Sentences for \( th \) Versus \( d \)

*It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that things are difficult.*

Seneca

When the \( th \) 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.

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?

Comparing \( th \) with \( s \) and \( z \)

Some people wrongly pronounce the voiceless \( th \) as an \( s \). They say *sank* and *thank* the same way. They also tend to wrongly pronounce the voiced \( th \) as a \( z \). 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 shown in the illustrations below as you do the following exercises.
Word Contrasts for s Versus th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/θ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. mass</td>
<td>math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. sank</td>
<td>thank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. tense</td>
<td>tenth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. sing</td>
<td>thing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Contrasts for z Versus th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/z/</th>
<th>/ð/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. close</td>
<td>clothe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. breeze</td>
<td>breathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. bays</td>
<td>bathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Zen</td>
<td>then</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

1. Doe s th at 4. fif th s tep
2. What’ s th at 5. Wi th s om th ing
3. She’ s th in 6. Six th s ong

Practice Sentences for th Versus s and z

1. He’s enthusiastic that it’s his sixth birthday.
2. Is that the zoo that has the zebras?
3. He’s thankful for his wealth.
4. He’s thinking about his strengths.
5. If it’s Thursday, it’s the same thing.
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 different ways to produce the American r. Try the two described below and decide which one is easier for you.

**Forming the American /r/**

**Method 1**
Simply curl the tip of your tongue and pull it back a bit; keep the tongue tense.

**Method 2**
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.

**Words that End with r**
Unlike the British r, the American r is always pronounced. It’s never silent. Pay particular attention to r when it appears at the end of a word: for, more, far, and teacher.

**Words for Practice**

1. more  
2. here  
3. her  
4. four  
5. culture  
6. where  
7. sure  
8. car
Word Groups for Practice
All of the following words have an r at the end. Make sure you pronounce each one clearly.

1. four door car
2. her younger sister
3. they're never here
4. sooner or later
5. lobster for dinner
6. your older brother
7. four more over there

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

Word Pairs for Practice

1. important information
2. first person
3. hard to understand
4. Northern California
5. eagerly in the morning
6. survive divorce
7. learn German
8. undergoing surgery
9. thirty percent
10. modern furniture
11. Magh baghair
12. perfect performance

Practice Sentences

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.
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.

Story for Practice
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

The American /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. See the image below for correct tongue placement. The air stream flows through the sides of the tongue. When the /l/ occurs at the end of a word, make sure 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/ sound. This will weaken it and make it sound more like a /w/.

Words for Practice

1. although 4. cold 7. film 10. myself
2. call 5. difficult 8. little 11. people
3. children 6. felt 9. milk 12. will

Word Pairs for Practice

1. tall girl 3. old school 5. cold milk 7. little children
2. felt guilty 4. tall wall 6. gold medal 8. twelve soldiers

/l/ Before a Consonant

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/l/ + consonant</th>
<th></th>
<th>/l/ + consonant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>code</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>toad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>debt</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>wide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Sentences

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/l/ + əl</th>
<th>/eɪl/ + əl</th>
<th>/aɪl/ + əl</th>
<th>/ʊl/ + əl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>feel</td>
<td>sale</td>
<td>mile</td>
<td>oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>steal</td>
<td>mail</td>
<td>while</td>
<td>toil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>deal</td>
<td>whale</td>
<td>style</td>
<td>spoil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>real</td>
<td>pale</td>
<td>smile</td>
<td>foil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>wheel</td>
<td>fail</td>
<td>file</td>
<td>boil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>heal</td>
<td>exhale</td>
<td>trial</td>
<td>soil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs

1. fail school 3. miles and miles 5. steal the tool
2. cool style 4. real deal 6. file the mail
### 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/. For example, 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/ sound.

---

### Ill and Ir 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>final /l/</th>
<th>final /r/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feel</td>
<td>fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deal</td>
<td>dear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stole</td>
<td>store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mole</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bowl</td>
<td>bore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tile</td>
<td>tire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>while</td>
<td>wire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>file</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Consonants + r and l

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

#### Word Contrasts for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no /s/ or /l/</th>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/l/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fame</td>
<td>frame</td>
<td>flame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>head</td>
<td>breed</td>
<td>bleed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gas</td>
<td>grass</td>
<td>glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fee</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>flee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flight</td>
<td>fright</td>
<td>flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pay</td>
<td>pray</td>
<td>play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

52 Mastering the American Accent
Practice Sentences
1. It’s always pleasurable to travel first class.
2. He was clearly surprised about the promotion.
3. The president flies in his private airplane.
4. The training program will take place early in the spring.
5. I plan to regularly practice playing the flute.
6. Everyone went to Brenda’s surprise party.
7. I traveled to Britain last spring.
8. I frequently fly to Florida to visit my friend.
9. Clara looked truly lovely in her blue blouse.
10. Brian is fluent in French.

Review of /r/ and /l/

Practice Dialogues
1. a. Laura has curly brown hair.
    b. However, her brother Carl has straight blond hair.
2. a. What is that lawyer’s overall priority?
    b. Probably to win every trial.
3. a. I am gradually learning to pronounce all the vocabulary correctly.
    b. Really? It’s truly wonderful to hear that!
4. a. I heard he speaks several languages fluently.
    b. Yes, he speaks French, English, and Italian fluently.
5. a. Have you heard the fairy tale about Cinderella?
    b. Yes, she was a poor girl who eagerly felt pretty.
6. a. Central Park is a great place for rollerblading.
    b. And it’s only several minutes from her large apartment.
7. a. He’s an incredibly talented flute player.
    b. He also regularly plays the clarinet.

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
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 cup 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

Advice from a Successful Student
“My friend and I are both Chinese and both are studying accent reduction. We get together and speak only in English and we try to correct each other’s mistakes. We are able to point out a lot of mistakes to each other even though we are not American. We have learned what our main weaknesses are, and it’s now just a matter of reminding each other and practicing in order to break those old habits.”

Fang Lee and Mei Wu, China

The /v/ Sound
To produce the /v/ sound correctly, make sure the lower lip touches the upper teeth. (See illustration below.) 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.
Words for Practice
1. very 4. eleven 7. have
2. verb 5. involve 8. twelve
3. vote 6. achieve 9. five

Practice Sentences
1. Five of Dagd’s relations live in Vienna.
2. Steve and Virgin will come over at eleven.
3. I believe he will move to Vermont in November.
4. Whoevers involved will be investigated.
5. Twelve of us drove to the river near Vegas.
6. Avoid drinking vodka every day.
7. They served flavorful yeast 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.

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 /v/. Remember, for /v/, the upper teeth touch the lower lip. For /b/, both lips touch and fully close so that no air escapes. Examine the illustrations below to see the difference.

Word Contrasts for Practice

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/v/</td>
<td>/b/</td>
<td>/v/</td>
<td>/b/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. vest</td>
<td>best</td>
<td>4. vet</td>
<td>bet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. very</td>
<td>berry</td>
<td>5. curve</td>
<td>curb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. vow</td>
<td>bow</td>
<td>6. vote</td>
<td>boat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

Practice Sentences

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.

The /w/ Sound

The question is not whether we will die, but how we will live.
Joan Borysenko

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

Words for Practice

1. always 3. flower 5. well 7. wife
2. wish 4. work 6. window 8. swim
The /kw/ Sound
Words that are spelled with qu are pronounced as /kw/.
1. quick 3. require 5. quality
2. question 4. quiet 6. frequent

Word Pairs for Practice
1. white wine 6. wonderful weekend
2. always working 7. anywhere you wish
3. quick wedding 8. twenty flowers
4. powerful wind 9. windshield wiper
5. weak witness 10. frequent question

Practice Dialogue
Winter Weather
a. I wonder when the weather will get warmer.
b. Why are you always whining about the weather?
   a. It’s always so wet and windy. I would love to go for a quick swim or a walk in the woods.
b. Well, wait a few weeks and it won’t be so wet and windy.
   a. I wish you were right, but in a few weeks it will still be winter.
b. Ok then, we’ll have to move west. Maybe to Hollywood, where the weather is warmer.
   a. Wow, what a wonderful idea. But wait! Where will we work?
b. We won’t have to worry about work once we get there. Hollywood will welcome us. We’ll become wealthy movie stars.
   a. Wake up and stop your wishful thinking.

Song Lyrics for Practice
“After You Get What You Want You Don’t Want It”
After you get what you want, you don’t want it
If I gave you the moon, you’d grow 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

Excerpt from a song by Irving Berlin
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.

Rian Bach

Note the different lip positions in the illustrations below as you work through the following exercises. Do not confuse /w/ with /v/!

/v/ /w/

Word Contrasts for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/v/</th>
<th>/w/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. vine</td>
<td>wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. vow</td>
<td>wow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. vet</td>
<td>wet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. vest</td>
<td>west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. verse</td>
<td>worse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. veal</td>
<td>wheel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/v/</th>
<th>/w/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. every week</td>
<td>6. wonderful voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. very well</td>
<td>7. white yan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. wise investment</td>
<td>8. valuable watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. weigh the vegetables</td>
<td>9. wear the vest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. west Virginia</td>
<td>10. weird video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Sentences

1. Victor’s wife Vicky was very wise.
2. It was very warm all week.
3. Don’t wear your valuable watch this weekend.
4. When will Vicky weigh the vegetables?
5. Were you involved in Vigan’s wedding plans?
6. Will we view the video on Wednesday?
The /s/ and /z/ Sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/z/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

A bird doesn’t sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song
Maya Angelou

The letter s is sometimes pronounced as a /z/ sound and sometimes as a /s/ sound. When s follows a consonant, there are rules for pronunciation, but when it follows a vowel there are no rules—so it’s best to just memorize the exceptions. Studying the four basic rules below will also be helpful to you.

**Warning: Common Mistake**

The letter z is never pronounced as an /s/ sound.

If your native language is Spanish, compare the way Americans pronounce common Spanish last names (such as “Gomez” or “Alvarez”) with the way you pronounce them in Spanish.

**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 is followed by 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/.
boss           less          success
massive        lesson        essay
exceptions: possession, scissors, dessert (ss sounds like /z/)

**Rule 4**
An extra syllable is added to words that end with certain consonant sounds followed by s. These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sound:</th>
<th>consonant:</th>
<th>examples:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ʤ/</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>manages, changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʃ/</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td>washes, dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʧ/</td>
<td>ch</td>
<td>churches, matches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>s, ss, c</td>
<td>bosses, faces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ks/</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>boxes, fixes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Memorize these very common words that have a final $s$.
The $s$ is pronounced as /z/ and not as /s/.

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

Note that the $s$ in the prefix dis- is pronounced as /s/ and not as /z/.

disagree
digobey
disappear
disorder
disapprove
disability

Verbs and Nouns and the Letter $s$
The following words spelled with an $s$ have a /z/ sound when they are verbs but have a /s/ sound when they are nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun: /s/</th>
<th>Verb: /z/</th>
<th>Noun: /z/</th>
<th>Verb: /s/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. use</td>
<td>to use</td>
<td>4. house</td>
<td>to house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. abuse</td>
<td>to abuse</td>
<td>5. excuse</td>
<td>to excuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. close</td>
<td>to close</td>
<td>6. advice</td>
<td>to advise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dialogues for Practice

- a. Do you still use this? /z/
- b. No, I have no use for it any more. /s/
- a. Where will they house their guests? /z/
- b. They have a guest house. /s/
- a. Does he abuse drugs? /s/
- b. Yes, he's getting help for his drug abuse. /z/
Practice Sentences

Remember to pronounce all of the final /s/ sounds of plural nouns. Also pronounce the final /s/ of verbs in the 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 washes dishes.
2. A bus driver drives buses.
3. A mechanic fixes cars.
4. A teacher teaches students.
5. A watchmaker makes watches.
6. A real estate agent sells houses.

⚠️ Warning: Common Mistake

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

s sound 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.
Story for Practice

Mark’s Day

Every morning he gets up early, brushes his teeth, washes his face, and eats breakfast. He kisses his wife and kids goodbye. He takes two buses to work. He usually manages to get to work before his coworkers. He reads his email, checks messages and returns phone calls. He speaks with his colleagues and clients and conducts meetings. He focuses on his daily tasks and likes to take only 30 minutes for lunch.

The /ŋ/ Sound: Pronouncing ng

There's as much risk in doing nothing as in doing something.

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 going shopping” by releasing the g too strongly. To create the /ŋ/ sound raise the back of the tongue and let it touch the soft palate, which is the soft area at the rear of your mouth. Don’t release your tongue when you pronounce /ŋ/, 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 to create a /n/ sound. And if you say “going shopping,” the mistake is that the /ŋ/ is released too much.

Words for Practice

1. doing 4. listening
2. teaching 5. being
3. coming 6. going

Word Pairs for Practice

1. doing nothing 4. wedding ring
2. something wrong 5. bring everything
3. looking young 6. feeling strong

Practice Sentences

1. Don’t bring the wrong rings to the wedding.
2. I love running, skiing, and swimming.
3. He’s looking young and feeling strong.
4. They sell anything and everything in that clothing store.
Confusing \(n\) and \(ng\) Endings

Remember, for \(/n/\) as in thing, the tip of the tongue touches the gum ridge, just behind the teeth. For the \(/ŋ/\) sound 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.

Word Contrasts for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(/n/)</th>
<th>(/ŋ/)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. thin</td>
<td>thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ran</td>
<td>rang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fan</td>
<td>fang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. win</td>
<td>wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ban</td>
<td>bang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. run</td>
<td>rung</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consonant Clusters

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

Two or more consonant sounds together are called “consonant clusters.” Many languages do not have any words with consonant clusters. Therefore, when native speakers of these languages speak English, they tend to skip one or more of the consonants. Make sure you pronounce every consonant sound! Pay special attention to words spelled with the letter \(x\) since it represents a blend of two consonant sounds: /ks/ or /gz/. Also, many verbs that take -ed in the past tense consist of consonant clusters; for example: watched, stopped, picked.

Common Words with Consonant Clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>say:</th>
<th>don’t say:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>instantly</td>
<td>instan…ly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hopefully</td>
<td>ho…fully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apartment</td>
<td>apar…ment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worked (sounds like “words”)</td>
<td>wor…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>textbook (sounds like “textbook”)</td>
<td>tes…book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extra (sounds like “ekstra”)</td>
<td>extra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vodka</td>
<td>vo…ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strength</td>
<td>stren…th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>reco…nize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Different Sounds for x
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 a word, it is pronounced as /ks/, as in expert and tax. Also, note that a double e often produces an x or /ks/ sound, as in the word accent. If these two sounds don’t occur together in your native language, be very careful to pronounce both of these consonant sounds.

Words for Practice for x and cc
1. extreme 4. extra 7. extract 10. exact
2. accept 5. success 8. context 11. expect
3. next 6. accident 9. extinguish 12. example

Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the words in the following pairs differently. Notice that the first word contains just an s sound; the second word contains a k and an s sound and is spelled with the letter x.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/ks/</th>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/ks/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>nest</td>
<td>next</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>test</td>
<td>text</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>contest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3.    | session | section | 6.   | mass | Max

Practice Dialogue
a. How did you do on the entrance exam?
b. I wasn't so successful. I expected to pass, but it was extra difficult.
a. Did you study all the sections of the textbook?
b. Yes, but I have to study harder on the next test and hopefully I will be successful.
a. When do you expect to take the next test?
b. I will attempt it in September. I'll be ecstatic if I get accepted at the best school.

Words Ending with ts
Make sure 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
1. it's 3. states 5. what's
2. that's 4. lasts 6. doubts
**Word Contrasts for Practice**

Make sure you pronounce the words in the following pairs differently. The first word contains just an /s/ or /z/ sound, and the second word contains a /t/ and an /s/ sound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/s/ or /z/</th>
<th>/ts/</th>
<th>/s/ or /z/</th>
<th>/ts/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. is</td>
<td>its</td>
<td>5. was</td>
<td>what's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. stays</td>
<td>states</td>
<td>6. pains</td>
<td>paints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. less</td>
<td>lets</td>
<td>7. knees</td>
<td>needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. fax</td>
<td>facts</td>
<td>8. lies</td>
<td>lights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Sentences**

1. There are three flights to the United States.
2. She adds and subtracts the costs.
3. Please give the dates to the courts.
4. The applicants signed the contracts.
5. He accepts the facts about the Democrats.

**Pronouncing the ds Cluster**

Make sure 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**

1. needs 3. sends 5. kids
2. decades 4. friends 6. sounds

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/z/</th>
<th>/dz/</th>
<th>/z/</th>
<th>/dz/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. fines</td>
<td>finds</td>
<td>4. rise</td>
<td>rides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. cars</td>
<td>cards</td>
<td>5. lens</td>
<td>lends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fees</td>
<td>feeds</td>
<td>6. bills</td>
<td>builds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Sentences**

1. David’s and Ed’s kids are friends.
2. She feeds the cats and cleans the yards.
3. The bridges got diamonds from their husbands.
4. He accepts rides from friends.
5. He needs the facts about the debts.
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:

\[ \text{ba na na} \] (All three syllables are stressed equally.)

In English, we pronounce the word as:

\[ \text{ba na na} \] (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 don’t understand a particular word you are saying, chances are you stressing the wrong syllable.

Note: Phonetically, banana looks like this: /ˈbænə/, The small accent symbol in front of the /n/ indicates that the syllable that follows is stressed. Your dictionary may have different stress markers.

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 each 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.
Now listen to vowel changes of words that have a reduced first syllable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>full vowel</th>
<th>reduced vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>/oʊ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>/ɛɪ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>/ɔ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>/ɛɪ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>/ɔ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now listen to vowel changes of words that have a stressed first syllable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>full vowel</th>
<th>reduced vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ɘ/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. **noble**  honorable, distinguished, aristocratic  Noble  a prestigious award of achievement
   "He won the Nobel Prize for his noble effort."

2. **invalid**  a sick or disabled person  invalid  not valid, void
   "The invalid has an invalid permit."

3. **personal**  individual, private  personnel  a group of people employed in an organization or a place of work
   "Some of the personnel have some personal problems."

4. **eligible**  worthy of choice, suitable, legally qualified  illegible  impossible or hard to read
   "You won't be eligible for that position if your handwriting is illegible."

5. **pronouns**  parts of speech that substitute for nouns are pronouns such as he and she  pronounce  to say words, to utter
   "Can you pronounce those pronouns correctly?"

6. **comedy**  a humorous drama or play  committee  a group of people elected or appointed to perform a function
   "The committee watched a comedy."

7. **advantages**  benefits or gain  advantageous  beneficial, useful
   "It would be advantageous to learn about the advantages of that method."

8. **decade**  ten years  decayed  become rotten or ruined
   "Their relationship has decayed in the past decade."

9. **access**  ability or right to enter  excess  extra, additional
   "Do you have access to the excess data?"

10. **content**  (noun) the subject matter of a book, speech, etc.  content  (adjective) satisfied and happy
    "Are you content with the content of that letter?"
11. career
   profession
   "He had a career working for an aircraft carrier."

carrier
   a person or company that carries or transports something

12. discus
   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."

---

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two-Syllable Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOUNS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress the first syllable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. garden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 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. First you will hear the noun, and then the verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOUNS</th>
<th>VERBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. addict</td>
<td>addict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. conduct</td>
<td>conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. conflict</td>
<td>conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. contest</td>
<td>contest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. convert</td>
<td>convert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. convict</td>
<td>convict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. defect</td>
<td>defect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. desert</td>
<td>desert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. increase</td>
<td>increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. insult</td>
<td>insult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. object</td>
<td>object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. present</td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. produce</td>
<td>produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. progress</td>
<td>progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. rebel</td>
<td>rebel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. record</td>
<td>record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. research</td>
<td>research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. subject</td>
<td>subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. suspect</td>
<td>suspect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Some of the above words have completely different meanings in the verb and noun forms.

### Practice Sentences

Underline the stressed syllables in the verbs and nouns in bold letters. To check your answers, listen to the audio.

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**.

### Practice Dialogue

Once again, underline the stressed syllables in the bold words before listening to the audio.

a. Have you heard? The police caught the **suspect**!
   b. Do you mean the one who is **suspected** of robbing the bank?
   a. Yes, I heard that he had a criminal **record**.
   b. Oh really? What crime was he **convicted** of?
   a. He's a drug **addict** who has been robbing banks to support his **addiction**.
   b. How many years do you think he will spend in prison?
a. A maximum of ten years. But he might be released early on good conduct.
   b. If he conducts himself badly and insults the prison guards, I wonder if his sentence will be increased.
   c. I don’t know. I haven’t heard of a prison term increase for insults and bad conduct.

Words Ending in -tion and -ate
Verbs that end with -ate have a stress on the first syllable. Nouns ending with -tion however, have a stress on the syllable before the suffix. Examine the examples in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs that end in -ate</th>
<th>Nouns ending in -tion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress is on the first syllable</td>
<td>Stress is on the syllable that precedes the suffix -tion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. activate</td>
<td>activation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. celebrate</td>
<td>celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. congratulate</td>
<td>congratulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. demonstrate</td>
<td>demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. donate</td>
<td>donation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. frustrate</td>
<td>frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. imitate</td>
<td>imitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. locate</td>
<td>location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-ate Endings of Verbs and Nouns
Note that the -ate word ending is pronounced fully in verbs but is reduced in adjectives and nouns. For example, the -ate ending of the word separate is pronounced /seɪˈpərət/ when it is a verb and /ˈseɪpərət/ when it is a noun.

Word Pairs for Practice
1. a. separate /seɪˈpərət/ (verb) They have decided to separate.
   b. separate /ˈseɪpərət/ (adjective) They will live in separate houses.
2. a. alternate /ælˈtərneɪt/ (verb) She alternates between feeling happy and sad.
   b. alternate /ˈælˌtərneɪt/ (adjective) Do you have an alternate plan?
3. a. graduate /əˈɡ्रɛdʒət/ (verb) He will **graduate** next spring.
b. graduate /ˈɡrædʒuət/ (noun) He will be a college **graduate**.

4. a. estimate /ˈɛstɪmeɪt/ (verb) Can you **estimate** the cost of the repairs?
b. estimate /ˈɛstɪmeɪt/ (noun) I would like to have an **estimate** of the costs.

5. a. duplicate /dəˈpləʊt/ (verb) I will **duplicate** this document.
b. duplicate /dəˈpləʊt/ (noun) Please make a **duplicate** of it.

6. a. appropriate /əˈprəʊprɪət/ (verb) The city **appropriated** the money for the new park.
b. appropriate /əˈprəʊprɪət/ (adjective) It was an **appropriate** decision.

---

**More Stressed Suffixes**

Look for words with the following suffixes: **ee**, **ette**, **ique**, **ese**, **eer**, and **ain**. The suffix is always stressed in these words:

1. employee
2. trainee
3. cigarette
4. cassette
5. unique
6. boutique
7. Japanese
8. Chinese
9. engineer
10. volunteer
11. maintain
12. explain

---

**Rules for Prefixes**

Sometimes the prefix is stressed and other times it’s not. Prefix + verb combinations usually have second syllable stress. Here are a few examples:

- oversleep
- understand
- outlive
- rewrite
- overdo
- undertake
- outperform
- redo

However, if the prefix + the root word function as a noun, the first syllable is stressed:

- oversight
- undertaker
- refill
- outsourcing
- overdose
- underwear
- repeat
- outcome

With reflexive pronouns, the last syllable is stressed. Note these common examples:

- myself
- himself
- itself
- yourself
- herself
- ourselves
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREFIX</th>
<th>Prefix + root word = NOUN</th>
<th>Prefix + root word = VERB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stress the prefix</td>
<td>Stress the root word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre–</td>
<td>preview, prefix</td>
<td>prevent, prepare, predict, precede, prefer, pretend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per–</td>
<td>permit</td>
<td>perform, persuade, permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pro–</td>
<td>product, process, profit, progress, project, program</td>
<td>produce, protect, propose, project, prolong, profess, promote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mis–</td>
<td>mischief, misprint, misfit</td>
<td>misplace, misquote, misread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>con–</td>
<td>concert, contest, conflict, congress, concept, content,</td>
<td>confess, control, conduct, confuse, confirm, consent, console</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>com–</td>
<td>complex, compound</td>
<td>compete, complain, compare, compose, compute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ob–</td>
<td>object</td>
<td>observe, obtain, obsess, obscure, obstruct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub–</td>
<td>subject, suburb, subway</td>
<td>subtract, submit, subscribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ex–</td>
<td>expert, exile, excerpt</td>
<td>explain, extract, exhale, excuse, exchange, exceed, exclude, excite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de–</td>
<td>detail, defect, decrease</td>
<td>deny, demand, defend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dis–</td>
<td>discount, discourse, district</td>
<td>discuss, distrust, disturb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a–</td>
<td>access, addict, anchor</td>
<td>agree, apply, admit, adore, afford, alert, applaud, approve, arrange, attack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practice Paragraph
Underline the stressed syllables in the highlighted verbs and nouns.

The Protest
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
Practice reading aloud, underlining longer words and determining syllable stress by looking in the dictionary. Your dictionary may come with an audio CD which will help you hear the correct word pronunciation.

Syllable Stress Changes
When a word changes from a noun to a verb or to an adjective or adverb, frequently the stress placement changes as well. Listen to these common words that non-native speakers tend to mispronounce (read across).

1. politics political politician
2. photograph photographic photography
3. compete competitive competition
4. economy economical economize
5. democrat democracy democratic
6. family familiar familiarity
7. necessary necessarily necessity
8. hospital hospitality hospitable
9. origin original originality
10. mechanism mechanical
11. define definition definitely
12. vary variety
13. courage courageous
14. probably probability
15. geography geographic
16. memory memorial
17. Canada Canadian
18. ignore ignorance
Sentence Pairs for Practice

Underline the stressed syllables in the highlighted words. To check your answers, listen to the audio.

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.

Practice Paragraph

Underline the stressed syllables in the highlighted words. Check your answers by looking in the dictionary.

American Declaration of Independence

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.
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 lists 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.

| A. Practice these 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 |

| B. Practice these 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 |

| C. Practice these 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 |
Chapter Five: SYLLABLE STRESS

Note: In this grouping of words the first syllables, rather than the last, are reduced.

D. Practice these words ending in ... /as/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ace</th>
<th>ous</th>
<th>ose</th>
<th>uce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>terrace</td>
<td>cautious</td>
<td>purpose</td>
<td>lettuce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>necklace</td>
<td>fabulous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>palace</td>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>grimace</td>
<td>curious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>surface</td>
<td>delicious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>preface</td>
<td>religious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. Practice these words ending in ... /ant/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ant</th>
<th>ent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>distant</td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>elegant</td>
<td>accent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>infant</td>
<td>talent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>instant</td>
<td>frequent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>constant</td>
<td>document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>important</td>
<td>payment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Words beginning with... /ə/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>o</th>
<th>u</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>attain</td>
<td>enough</td>
<td>obtain</td>
<td>undo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>achieve</td>
<td>elect</td>
<td>object</td>
<td>unfit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>admit</td>
<td>effect</td>
<td>observe</td>
<td>untie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>adore</td>
<td>equip</td>
<td>obsess</td>
<td>unhappy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>awake</td>
<td>exam</td>
<td>offend</td>
<td>uncover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>announce</td>
<td>example</td>
<td>occur</td>
<td>unlock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 words, 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 "I have a nice day." sounds foreign to the American ear. Try changing the word stress and say: "I'll see you later." and "Have a nice day." Native speakers will recognize a familiar speech pattern this time 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.

It’s important to note that 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.

**Compound Nouns**

Compound nouns are two individual words that carry one meaning. They are part of one unit and have become a set phrase. Usually a compound noun consists of two nouns such as credit card. In compound nouns, the first word is stressed, and the two words are said together, with no pausing in between the words. (Note that compound nouns can be written either as a single word or as two separate words.)

**Compound Nouns for Practice**

Stress the first word and pronounce the two words as one.

1. parking lot 5. book shelf 9. credit card 13. football
2. parking ticket 6. book cover 10. post card 14. baseball
3. parking meter 7. book store 11. report card 15. ballpark
4. parking space 8. bookmark 12. green card 16. ballroom
More Compound Noun Practice
Stress the first word in these compound nouns within compound nouns.

1. cell phone number 5. basketball coach
2. football game 6. blood pressure medicine
3. bedroom furniture 7. website address
4. high school girl 8. parking lot attendant

Words for Practice
These professions are all examples of compound nouns.

1. taxi driver 6. research scientist
2. computer programmer 7. physician’s assistant
3. real estate salesperson 8. math teacher
4. airline pilot 9. postal worker
5. brain surgeon 10. high school principal

Practice Dialogue
Leaving for Vacation
a. Hi Christine. Are you all packed?
b. I’m packing my suitcase right now.
a. Did you remember to take everything?
b. Yes, I’ve got my toothbrush, bathing suit, sun block, hair dryer, hairspray, airline ticket, running shoes, alarm clock, and credit cards.
a. Don’t forget the telephone number of the hotel. And reading material for the airplane. How are you getting to the airport?
b. The taxi cab will take me.
a. Do you have your flight information?
b. Yes, it’s on the airline ticket and on the boarding pass. Uh oh. I forgot my passport!

Practice Paragraph
At the Computer Store
I went to the computer store to buy a new computer. I couldn’t decide between a laptop and a desktop. The salesman was very helpful. He told me all about the hard drives and the operating systems. I decided to get a laptop even though it has a smaller keyboard. He recommended a good webcam and a flash drive. I ended up also getting some software, head phones, a sound card, and a mouse pad. I also got a fax machine, a few video games, and a navigation system for my car. But when I got to the cash register and gave them my credit card, they said I went over my credit limit. I was so embarrassed! I think I went overboard!
Proper Stress with Adjectives

When an adjective is followed by a noun, the noun is stressed.

nice day small room blue eyes old man
big house long time good job 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

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.

Word Pairs for Practice

Practice saying the word pairs while stressing the words in bold letters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compound Noun</th>
<th>Adjective + Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>swimming pool</td>
<td>deep pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drug store</td>
<td>large store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>newspaper</td>
<td>new paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>credit card</td>
<td>plastic card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sunglasses</td>
<td>nice glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postman</td>
<td>tall man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus driver</td>
<td>fast driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>textbook</td>
<td>good book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palm tree</td>
<td>tall tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fingernails</td>
<td>long nails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girlfriend</td>
<td>great friend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Sentences

1. They had a good time playing football.
2. I bought some sunglasses at the new store.
3. My hairdresser has blond hair.
4. The postman brought me an important letter.
5. That salesman 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.
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 6. green card
2. green house 7. darkroom
3. hot dog 8. cold cut
4. blue jeans 9. Bluetooth
5. high school 10. high rise

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phrasal verb</th>
<th>synonym</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He picked up the box.</td>
<td>He lifted the box.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He put out his cigarette.</td>
<td>He extinguished his cigarette.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He looked over the material</td>
<td>He reviewed the material.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Dialogues**

**Practice with turn**

1. a. We don’t need the heater.
   b. 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)
### 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 “workout,” if it’s a noun.

### Sentence Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrasal verbs</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(stress on second word)</td>
<td>(stress on first word)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The car was tuned up.</td>
<td>My car needed a tune-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I worked out yesterday.</td>
<td>I had a great workout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The papers were handed out.</td>
<td>We got some interesting handouts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. They covered it up well.</td>
<td>I heard about the cover-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A lot of food was left over.</td>
<td>We ate leftovers for lunch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. That really turns me off!</td>
<td>That’s such a turnoff!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. They let me down.</td>
<td>It was a big letdown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The order was mixed up.</td>
<td>We’re sorry about the mix-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. He dropped out.</td>
<td>He’s a high school dropout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I need to sign up for the class.</td>
<td>Where is the sign-up sheet?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### More Words for Practice

Stress the first word in these phrasal nouns within compound nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>backup plan</th>
<th>pickup truck</th>
<th>stand-up comedy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cutoff date</td>
<td>carry-on case</td>
<td>drive-through window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sign-up sheet</td>
<td>play-back button</td>
<td>sit-down dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>check-out time</td>
<td>drop-out rate</td>
<td>makeup remover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warm-up exercises</td>
<td>workout room</td>
<td>move in date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Practice Sentences

Stress the highlighted words.

1. We have a backup plan in case things don’t work out.
2. I found out that my pickup truck needs a tune-up.
3. The marriage was called off because the couple broke up.
4. Let’s eat out after our workout.
5. He called me up to tell me about the holdup 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 printout.
10. There was a mix-up at the drive-through window.
Abbreviations and Numbers

Always stress the last letter or the last number when pronouncing abbreviations.

Abbreviations for Practice
1. MBA  4. CNN  7. FBI
2. UCLA  5. USA  8. PhD
3. JFK  6. IBM  9. AT&T

Numbers for Practice
1. 1997  3. 11:45  5. 911
2. 5:15  4. $37.99  6. (310) 555-2389

Practice Sentences
1. He arrived at LAX at 8:25 AM.
2. He has a PhD from UCLA.
3. My SUV was made in the USA.
4. I love my IBM PC.
5. We arrived in the USA in 2007.
7. My class starts at 9:15 and ends at 10:45.

Names of Places and People
When pronouncing a name—whether of a person or place—always stress the last word.

Place Names for Practice
1. New York  5. Las Vegas
2. Central Park  6. Palm Springs
4. Venice Beach  8. Mount Everest

Names of People for Practice
2. Bill Clinton  5. Martin Luther King
3. Tom Cruise  6. Julia Roberts
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
I am planning to visit the West Coast. I will take United Airlines flight 307. It leaves JFK at 9:00 am and arrives at LAX 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 jetlag pretty quickly. After I check in at the hotel, I will call a taxi 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 layover in Las Vegas. I really think it’s going to be a nice getaway.

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 /ɑ/ 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.

Practice with Vowel Length
Make sure you raise your pitch and prolong the underlined vowel in the stressed words below.

Stressed Words with /ɑ/
1. I got it.
2. I got a new job.
3. I think I got a new job.

Stressed Words with /æ/
1. I have a new class.
2. I can’t stand it.
3. I can’t stand my new class.
4. I’ll call you back.
5. ... as soon as I can.
6. I’ll call you back as soon as I can.
Stressed words with /ou/
1. It's so cold.
2. I didn't know.
3. I didn’t know about it.
4. I didn’t know it would be so cold.

Stressed words with /i/
1. How do you feel?
2. When did he leave?
3. How did you feel when he had to leave?

Stressed words with /ɔ/
1. That’s awful.
2. It’s too long.
3. That awful novel is too long.
4. I’m exhausted.
5. I’ve been talking all day long.
6. I’m exhausted from talking all day long.

Advice from a Successful Student
“I record myself reading in English. I listen to the recordings and write down the mistakes. This way, I catch the sounds that I don’t normally catch when I am speaking with people.”
Mai Ling, China

Which Words Should I Stress?
Now that you have 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.

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, or where. 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, imagine that 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 of content words can be found in newspaper headlines. They would say: “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.

**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 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.

**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.

**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:**

1. He told John.
2. I like that car.
3. I need a job.

**reduced pronouns:**

1. He told him.
2. I like it.
3. I need it.

**Content Words in Detail: Adjectives**

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:**

1. That was good.
2. It's really hot.
3. It's long.
4. John is nice.

**adjective + noun:**

1. That was a good film.
2. It's a really hot day.
3. It's a long drive.
4. John is a nice man.

**Practice Sentences**

A.

1. Wait!
2. I'll wait for you.
3. I can wait for you.
4. I am waiting for you.
5. I'll be waiting for you.
6. I've been waiting for you.
7. I could've waited for you.
8. I could've been waiting for you.
9. I'll wait for you in the car.
10. I should've been waiting for you in the car.
B.
1. Tell her.
2. He’ll tell her.
3. He’ll be telling her.
4. He didn’t tell her.
5. He should have told her.
6. He should’ve been telling her.
7. He didn’t tell his wife.
8. He should’ve been telling his wife.
9. He didn’t tell his wife about the situation.
10. He should’ve been telling his wife about the situation.

C.
1. I bought it.
2. I bought a watch.
3. I bought a new watch.
4. I bought a new gold watch.
5. I bought a new gold watch for him.
6. I bought a new gold watch for his birthday.
7. I bought a new gold watch for his thirtieth birthday.
8. I would have bought a new gold watch for his thirtieth birthday.

D.
1. He lost it.
2. He lost the money.
3. I think he lost the money.
4. I think he lost the money again.
5. I think he lost the money that I gave him.
6. He might have lost the money that I gave him.
7. I think he might have lost the money that I gave him.

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:

- **pronouns** - he, she, you, they, mine, his, himself, etc.
- **prepositions** - to, in, for, at, by, on, with, from, etc.
- **conjunctions** - and, but, or, nor, so, yet
- **auxiliary verbs** - am, is, was, were, do, does, been, have, can, could, should, etc.
- **articles** - a, an, the
- **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:**
- I can do it.
- He should try it.
- I’d like it.

**negative:**
- I can’t do it.
- He shouldn’t try it.
- I wouldn’t like it.

**Weak Forms**

When a word is reduced we use the “weak form” of the word. The weak form is said more quickly and more softly. The vowel becomes the schwa sound, /ə/. For example, the preposition *for* sounds like “fur” or /fə/, and *at* sounds like /ət/. Let’s now practice using the weak forms of some commonly unstressed words.

**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 /ənd/
1. bacon ’n’ eggs
2. black ’n’ white
3. in ’n’ out
4. rock ’n’ roll

*for* becomes /fər/
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 /ər/
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.
Strong Forms
When the function word is at the end of the sentence, or if it's used for emphasis, make sure you use the “strong form” of the word. Let’s compare a few sentences with weak and strong forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>weak form reduced vowel</th>
<th>strong form full vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>for</td>
<td>Who are you looking for?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>I’d love to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>Are you laughing with me or at me?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Dialogues
1. Reducing yourself, myself
   a. I’m really ashamed of myself.
   b. You need to forgive yourself and tell yourself that everyone makes mistakes. Stop punishing yourself. Otherwise, you’ll drive yourself crazy. Why do you doubt yourself so much?
   a. I guess I can’t help myself.

2. Reducing anywhere, anyone, anything
   a. How was your weekend? Did you do anything interesting?
   b. I didn’t do anything. I didn’t see anyone, I didn’t go anywhere.

3. Reducing to, for, as, of, can, an
   a. Are you the owner of this restaurant?
   b. Yes I am.
   a. Can I talk to you for a moment?
   b. Sure, how can I help you?
   a. We’ve been waiting for our food for over an hour.
   b. I’m sorry for the delay. I’ll talk to the chef and I’ll bring it out as soon as I can.

90 Mastering the American Accent
Don’t speak quickly unless you know for certain 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.

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 had 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.

Practice Sentences

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 // 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.)
**Practice Conversations: Telephone Messages**

Practice these voicemail messages using correct word stress. The focus word of each thought group is in bold letters. The thought groups are divided by slashes.

**A. 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 back // 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.

**B. Sales Call**

Note that individual speaking style or some circumstances can determine the number of thought groups there are in a sentence. For example, 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?

**Contrastive Stress**

*Be nice to people // on your way up // because you might meet them // on the way down.*

Wilson Mizner

We also sometimes stress words to bring out a special meaning or to clarify what we mean when there is confusion. In this case, any word in a sentence 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.
   I don’t love him.
   I don’t love him.
   I don’t love him.

2. implied meaning:
   I may drive to New York.
   I may drive to New York.
   I may drive to New York.
   I may drive to New York.

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 inside or outside?
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.

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.
**Practice Dialogue**

Making an Appointment

a. Hello, dentist’s office.
b. I’m calling to make an appointment for a dental checkup.
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.
"Intonation" is the melody of language and is made up of 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.

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.

Questions
Falling intonation is also used when asking questions if they contain interrogative words such as where, what, why, when, how, and who. For example:

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?

### Rising Intonation

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.”

### Practice Sentences

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?

### 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 you are still making mistakes. Developing an American accent is a process. It doesn’t happen overnight.”

Sabrina Stoll, Germany
Sentence Pairs for Practice

The following question pairs contain both rising and falling intonation, depending on whether they contain a "question word" or whether they are "yes/no" questions. The first question of the pair has rising intonation, and the second has falling intonation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yes/no question</th>
<th>question words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you teach?</td>
<td>What do you teach?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did you see the movie?</td>
<td>When did you see the movie?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you know that guy?</td>
<td>How do you know that guy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Did you buy the car?</td>
<td>Where did you buy the car?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you work there?</td>
<td>Why do you work there?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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..."

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.

Chapter Seven: INTONATION 97
Introductory Words
Non-final intonation is also used with introductory words, such as actually or by the way. Since these types of words indicate that a thought is not finished, the non-final intonation is appropriate.

Practice Sentences
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?

Series of Words
Non-final intonation is used in words and phrases that are listed in a series. The voice rises at the end of each item, but falls with the final item.

Practice Sentences
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

Expressing Choices
Finally, 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?

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You did?</td>
<td>curious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. You did?</td>
<td>very surprised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You did?</td>
<td>disappointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. You did?</td>
<td>angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. You did.</td>
<td>in agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now try saying the expression, thanks a lot, in three different ways. Change the intonation each time.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thanks a lot.</td>
<td>normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thanks a lot.</td>
<td>very happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Thanks a lot.</td>
<td>sarcastic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Try saying okay with different emotions.

Okay.  | normal
Okay.  | hesitant or unwilling
Okay!  | very excited
Okay!  | frustrated and angry

Try saying no with different emotions.

No!  | angry
No!  | surprised
No... | hesitant
No.  | sarcastic
Practice Dialogues

Angry Friends

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

Losing Weight

This dialogue has examples of all of the types of intonation you have learned so far.

Emily: Rachel, is that you?
Rachel: Hi Emily.
Emily: I didn’t recognize you at first. Did you lose weight?
Rachel: As a matter of fact, I lost twenty pounds.
Emily: Really? How did you do it?
Rachel: Well, I stopped eating cake, ice cream, potato chips, and candy bars, and I started eating healthier foods like salads, fruit, nuts, and vegetables.
Emily: Wow! I have to say, you look amazing.
Rachel: Do you really think so?
Emily: Absolutely!
Chapter Eight

SOUND LIKE A TRUE NATIVE SPEAKER

This chapter will share some important information that will help you 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.

Linking Words for Smoother Speech Flow

Many non-native speakers of English believe they should pronounce each word separately because they want to make sure 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 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. In this way, the final sound, which is always more difficult to pronounce, becomes the first sound of the word that follows it. For example, it’s more difficult to say “burned 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.
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, and 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.

Rules for Linking

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. Study the examples below to make this point clear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sounds like:</th>
<th>1. hold on</th>
<th>&quot;whole Don&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I like it</td>
<td>&quot;I lie kit&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. deep end</td>
<td>&quot;depend&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. get up late</td>
<td>&quot;get a plate&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. picked out</td>
<td>&quot;pick doubt&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. this guy</td>
<td>&quot;the sky&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Dialogues

Note that the words in bold get the most stress.

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_.

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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 a good film.
   b. Too bad it's sold out.

7. a. I have an awful headache.
   b. Take an aspirin.

8. a. This is my brother-in-law.
   b. We've already met.

Linking Consonant to Same Consonant
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. See the example below.

**sounds like:**
1. She speaks Spanish.
2. turned down
3. help Paul
4. well lit
5. black cat
6. foreign name

**Word Pairs for Practice**
1. big game
2. well lit
3. can never
4. good day
5. this Saturday
6. far right
7. stop playing
8. Tom might
9. book club
10. what time

**Practice Sentences**
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.
Final Stop Between Consonants

In Chapter Three you learned the difference between stops and continuants. Remember, when a stop is followed by another consonant, do not release the stop. The release creates a puff of air and an extra syllable. Make sure that good time doesn’t sound like "good a time" and that help me doesn’t sound like "help a me."

Word Pairs for Practice

1. pop music 4. that man
2. good book 5. drop down
3. can’t go 6. keep trying

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 a short /w/ sound after a front vowel (such as /eɪ/, /ɪ/, and /ai/) and a short /y/ sound after a back vowel (such as /ʊ/ and /oʊ/).

Sounds like:
- Insert a very quick /w/ sound: go out "go – wout"
  How are you? "how ware you"
- Insert a very quick /y/ sound: I am "I yam"
  they are "they yare"

Practice Sentences

1. I _ate out. 5. May _I come _in?
2. Go _on. 6. So _awesome!
3. They _agree. 7. I’ll buy _it.
4. I know _it. 8. He _ate _out.

Practice Dialogues

1. a. Why _are you so _upset?
   b. I _am not!
2. a. Who _is he?
   b. He _is the _announcer.
3. a. How _is the weather?
   b. Go _outside and find _out.
4. Do _I need to do _“it”?
   No, I _already did _“it.”
Do I Say the or thee?

When the article the is followed by a vowel sound, it is pronounced with /i/ and sounds like "thee." When it is followed by a consonant, the final sound is /ɘ/, like the u in fun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/i/</th>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the earth</td>
<td>the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the apple</td>
<td>the banana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Linking Vowels Within a Word

When an individual word contains two vowel sounds together, we also add a little y or w sound. We don’t say “die it” we say “die + yet.”

Word Pairs for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sounds like:</th>
<th>sounds like:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>client</td>
<td>&quot;cli /y/ ent&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>science</td>
<td>&quot;sci /y/ ence&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serious</td>
<td>&quot;seri /y/ ous&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quiet</td>
<td>&quot;qui /y/ et&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciate</td>
<td>&quot;appreci /y/ ate&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>museum</td>
<td>&quot;muse/y/um&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cooperate</td>
<td>&quot;co /w/ operate&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience</td>
<td>&quot;experi /y/ ence&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diet</td>
<td>&quot;di /y/ et&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furious</td>
<td>&quot;furi /y/ ous&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negotiate</td>
<td>&quot;negoci /y/ ate&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>&quot;San Di /y/ago&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Dialogue

This exercise and those that follow will help you 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.

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. 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!

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More Practice Dialogues

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. Okay then, I’ll leave too.

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 kind of hard to keep track of all the rules and exceptions. I had 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 said 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 stop practicing.
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 example below.

sounds like:
1. I love her "I lover"
2. I knew her "I newer"
3. stuff he knows "stuffy nose"
4. did he "didee"
5. 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.

Practice Dialogues

Remember that the h in he and him is silent except when these words begin the sentence.

The New Boyfriend

Is he nice?
What’s his name?
What does he look like?
How old is he?
Where does he live?
What does he do?
How long have you known him?
Do you love him?
Where’s his family from?
When can we meet him?
Did you tell him we’d like to meet him?
What did he say?
Answer: He said that he thinks my friends ask too many questions!

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Who's Laura Jones?

Now you will practice the silent h of the pronoun her.

a. Do you know Laura Jones?
b. Yeah, 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.

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 boil 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.

Study Tip

When you watch an American film, try to watch it with closed 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 actors’ lines several times until you can say them the same way.

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 informal.
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 learn in this book.

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.

Practice with Contractions: will

1. I will do it. I’ll do it.
2. You will like it. You’ll like it.
3. He will call you. He’ll call you.
4. We will take it. We’ll take it.
5. They will see. They’ll see.
6. It will rain. It’ll rain.
7. It will be good. It’ll be good.
8. That will be all. That’ll be all.
9. There will be snow. There’ll be snow.
Practice with Contractions: *would*
1. I would go.  I'd go.
2. I would like some more.  I'd like some more.
3. He would go if he could.  He'd go if he could.
4. She would understand.  She'd understand.
5. 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*.
1. I had never seen it before.  I'd never seen it before.
2. She had known about it.  She'd known about it.
3. You had better fix it.  You'd better fix it.

Practice with Contractions: *have* *
*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."
1. I have been there.  I've been there.
2. I have already eaten  I've already eaten.
3. We have heard.  We've heard.
4. They have done it.  They've done it.
5. I would have done it.  I would've done it.
6. You should have told me.  You should've told me.
7. You must have seen it.  You must've seen it.

Practice with Contractions: *has*
1. She has left.  She's left.
2. It has been fun.  It's been fun.
3. He has already eaten.  He's already eaten.
4. Who has seen the film?  Who's seen the film?

Practice with Contractions: *is*
Note that this contraction sounds the same as the contraction of *has*.
1. He is working.  He's working.
2. She is a teacher.  She's a teacher.
3. It is hot.  It's hot.
4. Sam is American.  Sam's American.
5. Mary is tall.  Mary's tall.
6. Dinner is ready.  Dinner's ready.

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Practice with Contractions: am
1. I am fine. I’m fine.
2. I am from Japan. I’m from Japan.

Practice with Contractions: are
1. We are waiting. We’re waiting.
2. We are sorry. We’re sorry.
3. They are leaving. They’re leaving.
4. They are there. They’re there.
5. What are they doing? What’re they doing?
6. When are they coming? When’re they coming?
7. Where are they going? Where’re they going?

Practice with Contractions: not
1. I cannot swim. I can’t swim.
2. I should not go. I shouldn’t go.
3. I do not like it. I don’t like it.

Word Pairs for Practice
These words pairs are pronounced the same.
1. aisle I’ll 5. heel/heal he’ll
2. wheel we’ll 6. your you’re
3. there they’re 7. weave we’ve
4. weed we’d 8. heed he’d

Practice with Contractions: Common Expressions
2. What’s up? 11. How’ve you been?
3. What’re you doing? 12. Where’re you going?
4. What’ve you been up to? 13. Where’s he from?
5. What’s the matter? 14. Where’re they from?
6. What’ll it be? 15. I’d like that.
7. That’ll be all. 16. Who’s calling?
8. It’ll be hot. 17. What’s new?
9. It’ll be good. 18. I’m fine.
Practice Dialogues

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.

In the Restaurant

a. I've been looking forward to eating here.
b. Me too. Everyone's been talking about this place.
a. What're you gonna order?
b. I'm hungry. I think I'd like some meat tonight.
c. Hi folks. I'll be your waitress. Ready to order?
b. Yes, we're ready.
c. Great. What'll it be?
b. She'll have chicken and I'll have steak. And we'll both have a glass of red wine.
c. Is that it?
b. That'll be all.
c. Got it. Your food'll be ready in a few minutes.

Forgotten Birthday

a. It was my birthday two weeks ago.
b. Oh, I must've been too busy to look at my calendar. You should've told me. We could've celebrated together. I would've taken you out to dinner. Or I could've at least baked you a cake.

Song Lyrics 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

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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

(by Creamer/Layton)

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 “woudn’t.”

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 conditional 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 grammatical patterns. Practice them until you feel proficient using them.

Word Groups for Practice

Let’s start learning to use contractions in the easier part of the conditional past: the “if clause.”

sounds like:

1. If I had been… “If I’d been…”
2. If I had not called… “If I hadn’t called…”
3. If she had seen… “If she’d seen…”
4. 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:

1. would have “would’ve” “woulda”
2. would not have “wouldn’t have” “wouldna”
3. could have “could’ve” “coulda”
4. could not have “couldn’t have” “couldna”
5. should not have “shouldn’t have” “shouldna”
Conditional Questions
With questions using have you must add an /s/ 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’/ɘ’ve been there?” However, a statement would sound like: “You’ve been there.”

sounds like:
1. Would you have…? “Would you’/ɘ’ve…?”
2. Would you have been…? “Would you’/ɘ’ve been…?”
3. Would she have…? “Would she’/ɘ’ve…?”
4. Would she have wanted…? “Would she’/ɘ’ve wanted…?”

Practice Sentences
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’/ɘ’ve done that, if you’d been in my shoes?
7. What would you’/ɘ’ve said if she’d asked you about it?
8. Where would you’/ɘ’ve gone if you hadn’t come to the US?

Practice Sentences
The sentences below are examples of casual speech and use a instead of ‘ve for have
9. If it hadn’t rained we wouldna canceled the picnic.
10. It woulda been more fun if there’d been more people at the party.
11. If I woulda called you if you’d given me your number.
12. If they’d come on time, they wouldna missed their flight.
13. She wouldna known if you hadn’t told her.

Practice Dialogue
a. What would you’/ɘ’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, and I wouldn’ve had to study English. I wouldn’ve met my wife. I would’ve married someone else.
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

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:
   1. Do you want to go?  "Wanna go!"
   2. You’d better do it. "You better do it."

B. Speakers are less careful about pronouncing every consonant.

   sounds like:
   1. probably "probly"
   2. I don’t know "I dunno"
   3. remember "member"
   4. going "goin"
   5. until "till"
   6. because "cuz"

C. Slang is more acceptable.

   becomes:
   1. I need five dollars. "I need five bucks."
   2. I don’t have any money. "I’m broke."

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Below are some rules of the simplifications that are made in informal speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal, Careful Speech</th>
<th>Informal, Relaxed Speech</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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                   | You shoulda told me.  
| would’ve               | woulda                    | It woulda been nice.  
| could’ve               | coulda                    | We coulda come.  
| must’ve                | musta                     | You musta seen it.   |
| shouldn’t have         | shouldnda                  | You shouldna done that.  
| wouldn’t have          | wouldnda                   | I woundna known.  
| couldn’t have          | couldnnda                 | It couldnnda 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?   |
**Practice Dialogues**

**Invitation to a Movie**

a. Whadda you doin’ tonight?
   b. I dunno yet. I think I’m gonna just 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 shoudna 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. Okay, lemme know when you’re free again. See ya.

---

**Rules and Patterns of Casual Speech**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal, Careful Speech</th>
<th>Informal, Relaxed Speech</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a lot of</td>
<td>a lotta</td>
<td>That’s a lotta money. I’ve got a lotta friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kind of</td>
<td>kinda</td>
<td>It’s kinda hot. What kinda car is that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go to</td>
<td>goddu</td>
<td>I go to work. Let’s go to a concert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yeah, yup</td>
<td>Yeah. It’s good. Yup. I did it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>nope, nope</td>
<td>Nope. I’m not going. Nope. That’s not right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ing</td>
<td>in’, in’</td>
<td>What are you doin’? Nothin’ much.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commonly Confused Words

The following pairs of words are often mispronounced and end up sounding the same when spoken by some non-native speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Pair</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| sell / sale | e is /ɛ/ as in get  
  a is /æ/ as in take | Would you like to sell it?  
  Sorry, it’s not for sale. |
| series / serious | two syllables  
  three syllables | I love that new TV series.  
  Are you serious? I hate it. |
| color / collar | o is /o/ as in fan  
  o is /ɑ/ as in father | Do you like the color of this shirt?  
  Yes, but I want one with a collar. |
| costume / custom | o is /ɑ/ as in father  
  u is /u/ as in fun | Children wear costumes for Halloween.  
  Is that an American custom? |
| been / bean | ee is /i/ as in sit  
  ee is /i/ as in meet | What have you been cooking?  
  I’ve been cooking beans. |
| of / off | f is a /v/ sound  
  o is /ɑ/ as in father | What are you thinking of?  
  I’m thinking of taking the day off. |
| want / won’t | a is /ɑ/ as in father  
  o is /ou/ as in boat | Do you want to go?  
  No, I won’t go. |
| dessert / desert | second syllable stress  
  first syllable stress | I had dessert after dinner.  
  They drove through the desert. |
| where / were | er is /ɛr/ as in care  
  er is /ær/ as in bird | Where did they go?  
  They were here a minute ago. |
| wonder / wander | o is /o/ as in fun  
  a is /ɑ/ as in father | I wonder where they are.  
  They’re probably wandering in the forest. |
| warm / worm | o is /ɔ/ as in for  
  o is /ɔː/ as in bird | It’s a warm day.  
  There’s a worm in my apple. |
| woman / women | o is /ʌ/ as in good  
  o is /ʊ/ as in sit | She is a nice woman.  
  All of the women here are nice. |
| potty / party | t is almost /d/  
  sounds like “pardy”  
  (“fast d” sound) | The little boy wants to go potty.  
  He’s at the birthday party. |
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.

Same Spelling, Different Pronunciation

Below are common words that are spelled the same but have different pronunciations and different meanings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bass</td>
<td>a is /æ/ as in fat</td>
<td>a kind of fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a is /ɛ/ as in take</td>
<td>a musical instrument, or low voice or tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desert</td>
<td>first syllable stress</td>
<td>dry land with little or no vegetation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>second syllable stress</td>
<td>to leave empty or alone, to abandon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dove</td>
<td>o is /ʌ/ as in fun</td>
<td>a kind of bird similar to a pigeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o is /ou/ as in boat</td>
<td>past tense of dive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lead</td>
<td>ea is /ɛ/ as in get</td>
<td>to guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ea is /ɛ/ as in get</td>
<td>a kind of metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minute</td>
<td>i is /ɪ/ as in sit</td>
<td>sixty seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(first syllable stress)</td>
<td>small, tiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i is /ai/ as in time</td>
<td>very small, tiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(second syllable stress)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>o is /ou/ as in boat</td>
<td>(adjective) from Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polish</td>
<td>o is /ou/ as in father</td>
<td>to make a surface shine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two Correct Pronunciations

There are two ways of pronouncing the following words. Both choices are acceptable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>refuse</td>
<td>first syllable stress</td>
<td>(verb) to deny, reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>second syllable stress</td>
<td>(noun) trash, garbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resume</td>
<td>final e is silent (second syllable stress)</td>
<td>to begin again after an interruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>final e is /es/ as in take (first syllable stress)</td>
<td>a summary of work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tear</td>
<td>rhymes with care</td>
<td>to separate by force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rhymes with here</td>
<td>a drop of liquid coming from the eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wind</td>
<td>i is /ɪ/ as in sit</td>
<td>outdoor current of air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i is /a/ as in time</td>
<td>to turn in circular motions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wound</td>
<td>ou is /au/ as in food</td>
<td>injury, especially when skin is torn or cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ou is /aʊ/ as in house</td>
<td>past tense of verb wind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. either
   - ei is /i/ as in meet
   - ei is /æi/ as in time
     (more common in American English)
     (British English)

2. neither
   - ei is /i/ as in meet
   - ei is /æi/ as in time
     (more common in American English)
     (British English)

3. data
   - a is /eɪ/ as in take
   - a is /æ/ as in fat
     (more common)
     (less common)

4. aunt
   - a is /æt/ as in fat
   - a is /ɑː/ as in father
     (more common)
     (less common)

5. apricot
   - a is /æt/ as in take
   - a is /æ/ as in fat
     (more common)
     (less common)
**Especially Difficult Words**

The following words are frequently mispronounced by non-native speakers either because a similar sounding word exists in other languages, or because the spelling is unusual. Other times the combination of sounds simply makes the words difficult to say—even for native speakers!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficult Word</th>
<th>Correct Pronunciation</th>
<th>Incorrect Pronunciation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. aluminum</td>
<td>four syllables</td>
<td>In many languages, and in British English, this word has five syllables and is spelled <strong>aluminium</strong></td>
<td>I will wrap my leftover food in <strong>aluminum</strong> foil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. caffeine</td>
<td>two syllables</td>
<td>three syllables</td>
<td>I had too much caffeine and couldn’t fall asleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/kæf-ɪn/</td>
<td>/kæf-e-in/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. chaos</td>
<td>/kɛr- əs/</td>
<td>“house”</td>
<td>The apartment was in complete chaos after the burglary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. choir</td>
<td>sounds like:</td>
<td>“core”</td>
<td>The children’s choir sang at the church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“k-wire”</td>
<td>“core”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. cooperate</td>
<td>four syllables</td>
<td>three syllables</td>
<td>Children, please cooperate with your teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no- two separate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sound like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“kou – ap”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. cucumber</td>
<td>first u sounds like</td>
<td>first u sounds like</td>
<td>I made a tomato and cucumber salad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you</td>
<td>/u/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. entrepreneur</td>
<td>fourth syllable</td>
<td>first e sounds like</td>
<td>That business was bought by a foreign entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stress first e</td>
<td>/ɛ/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sounds like /s/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Europe</td>
<td>first syllable</td>
<td>second syllable</td>
<td>Many languages are spoken in Europe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stress, a is reduced</td>
<td>stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/oʊ/ sound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. foreigner</td>
<td>first syllable stress</td>
<td>second syllable stress</td>
<td>I don’t want to speak English like a foreigner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enɡ sounds like</td>
<td>second syllable stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enɡ are silent letters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. hierarchy</td>
<td>first syllable stress</td>
<td>second syllable stress</td>
<td>Honesty is the first of my heirarchy of values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>heir sounds like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“hire”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult Word</td>
<td>Correct Pronunciation</td>
<td>Incorrect Pronunciation</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. hygiene</td>
<td>two syllables: “hi + jean”</td>
<td>three syllables</td>
<td>In the medical environment hygiene is very important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. jewelry</td>
<td>“I and r together “jewel + ree”</td>
<td>vowel separating “I and r” “joo – le – ry”</td>
<td>I bought a gold necklace at the jewelry store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. length</td>
<td>pronounce g silent g</td>
<td>silent g</td>
<td>What is the length of that swimming pool?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. museum</td>
<td>say: m + you + zee + /əm/ stress second syllable</td>
<td>“moo” + “zel” + “oom”</td>
<td>Let’s see the new art exhibit at the museum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. of</td>
<td>/v sounds like r σ is reduced /ų/ sound</td>
<td>“off”</td>
<td>What is it made of?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. parentheses</td>
<td>second syllable stress</td>
<td>third syllable stress</td>
<td>Please write the information in parentheses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. pizza</td>
<td>sounds like “pee+za”</td>
<td>“pee+za”</td>
<td>We were hungry so we ordered a large pizza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. protein</td>
<td>two syllables “pro + teen”</td>
<td>three syllables “pro-te-en”</td>
<td>Meat and eggs contain a lot of protein.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. recipe</td>
<td>three syllables; final e sounds like “ee”</td>
<td>two syllables silent e</td>
<td>Can you give me the recipe for this delicious cheesecake?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. schedule</td>
<td>sch sounds like “sk”</td>
<td>sch = “sh”</td>
<td>I don’t like my new work schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. schizophrenia</td>
<td>sch sounds like “sk”</td>
<td>sch = “sh”</td>
<td>The psychiatrist was working with patients who have schizophrenia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. science</td>
<td>two syllables sci + /ʃ/ience</td>
<td>one syllable “signs”</td>
<td>I got a good grade in my science class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. strength</td>
<td>pronounce “g” silent “g”</td>
<td>silent “g”</td>
<td>I don’t have enough strength to carry that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. thermometer</td>
<td>second syllable stress</td>
<td>third syllable stress</td>
<td>I will check my fever with a thermometer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practice Sentences
1. I placed the frozen pizza on the aluminum foil.
2. I found a recipe for a cucumber salad.
3. Too much caffeine makes me feel schizophrenic.
4. We can cooperate and create a hierarchy.
5. That foreigner is an entrepreneur from Europe.
6. The schedule of the choir rehearsal is in parentheses.
7. They need better hygiene and less chaos.
8. The thermometer is used in the science class.

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," 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 9. every 17. favorite 25. desperate
2. aspirin 10. family 18. interest 26. diamond
3. average 11. generally 19. interesting 27. diaper
4. basically 12. broccoli 20. laboratory 28. practically
5. beverage 13. business 21. liberal 29. preference
6. different 14. camera 22. opera 30. several
7. extraordinary 15. catholic 23. comfortable 31. temperature
8. evening 16. chocolate 24. coverage 32. theory

Practice Dialogues
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 okay 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.

**Words with Silent Letters**

The chart below highlights many common words that have a letter that is not pronounced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Silent Letter</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>b</strong></td>
<td>bomb, debt, limb, thumb, crumb, doubt, numb, tomb, climb, dumb, plumber, comb, lamb, subtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c</strong></td>
<td>indict, muscle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ch</strong></td>
<td>yacht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>d</strong></td>
<td>adjective, adjust, handsome, Wednesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>g</strong></td>
<td>align, campaign, diaphragm, resign, assign, champagne, foreign, sign, benign, design, reign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>gh</strong></td>
<td>bright, fight, light, bought, fought, night, caught, height, weigh, drought, high, weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>h</strong></td>
<td>ghost, heir, honest, hour, honor, herb, vehicle, exhibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>k</strong></td>
<td>knee, knife, know, knot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>l</strong></td>
<td>calm, folk, psalm, talk, chalk, half, salmon, walk, could, Lincoln, should, would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td>hymn, autumn, column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>p</strong></td>
<td>cupboard, pneumonia, psalm, psychology, psychic, receipt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>s</strong></td>
<td>aisle, debris, island, Arkansas, Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>t</strong></td>
<td>ballet, Chevrolet, mortgage, gourmet, bouquet, Christmas, often, debut, buffet, fasten, whistle, soften, castle, listen, fillet, rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>th</strong></td>
<td>asthma, months, * clothes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>w</strong></td>
<td>answer, sword, toward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*You will hear some Americans lightly pronounce the **th** sound when saying these words but most just omit it.*
**Homophones**

Homophones are words with the same pronunciation but different spelling and meaning. Make sure you pronounce the second (and sometimes third) word the same as the first word, even though they look different.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homophones</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam–atom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>air–err–heir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aloud–allowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altair–alter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ant–aunt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ate–eight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>band–banned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bare–bear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>base–bass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beat–beet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>berry–bury</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bailed–build</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blew–blue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bored–board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brake–break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caller–collar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cell–sell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cent–sent–scent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chili–chilly–Chile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cite–site–sight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close–clothes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>core–corps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>course–coarse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dear–deer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>die–dye</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do–due–dew</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finish–Finnish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feudal–futile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fleas–fly–flee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flew–flu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flour–four</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece–grease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heal–heel–he’ll</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hear–here</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>him–hymn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hire–higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hire–higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hole–whole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I–eye</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll–isle–aisle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in–inn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lessen–lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maid–made</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mail–male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat–meet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metal–medal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new–knew</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nose–knows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not–knot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nun–none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oh–owe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one–won</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our–hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pair–pare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pair–pare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pass–past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace–piece</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace–piece</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>profit–prophet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>profit–prophet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rain–rein–reign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road–rode–rowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>role–roll</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>root–route</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seller–cellar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sea–see</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sea–see</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seems–seem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sea–see</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seas–sees–seize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scene–seen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seller–cellar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sides–sighed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sight–sight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sight–sight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some–sum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some–sum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son–sun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>steal–steel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>steal–steel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sweet–suite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tie–Thai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tail–tale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there–their–they’re</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to–too–two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tow–too</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weather–whether</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wheel–we’ll</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wore–war</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worn–warn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worn–warn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Sentences**

The highlighted words are homophones, so they pronounce them the same.

1. If they hire him, he’ll have a higher **salary**.
2. Reading **aloud** is not **allowed** in the library.
3. I **passed** by your house in the **past**.
4. I **hear** that he’s been **here**.
5. I **rode** my bike on the **road**.
6. Her young **son** went out in the **sun**.
7. He knows about your broken nose.
8. Only one team won.
9. I read the red book.
10. I have a male mail carrier.

**Practice Dialogues**

1. a. Does the nun have children?
   b. No, she has none.

2. a. Have you seen it?
   b. I have never seen such a strange scene.

3. a. When did the soldier wear the uniform?
   b. He wore it in the war.

4. a. I want two, and you?
   b. I want two, too.

5. a. Are they there already?
   b. They’re already there.
   a. Where?
   b. At their uncle’s house.

6. a. You should dye your hair green.
   b. I’d rather die than dye it green.

7. a. Is the gold medal really made of gold?
   b. I think the medal is made of metal.

8. a. Did I write that correctly?
   b. Yes, that’s right.

9. a. What time did you eat?
   b. I ate at eight.

10. a. How’s the weather in Chile.
    b. Sometimes it’s chilly in Chile.

11. a. Do you know when the report is due?
    b. Yes, I do. It’s due on Tuesday.

12. a. He broke his foot and injured his heel.
    b. I hope that he’ll heal soon.

13. a. I owe ten thousand dollars.
    b. Oh, you owe so much.

14. a. Do you want to sail the boat today?
    b. I can’t. My favorite store has a big sale.
This language guide will give you an overview of the sections of this book that you especially need to work on. This does not mean that you should neglect the rest of the book. All non-native speakers need to learn about syllable stress, word stress, and intonation which create the pattern of natural sounding American speech. These topics are covered in Chapters Five through Seven. Also, Chapter Eight, “Sounds Like a True Native Speaker,” and Chapter Nine, “Memorizing the Exceptions,” are very important for all foreign speakers of English to master.

For a detailed analysis of your accent (which will help you to use this book more efficiently) or for accent reduction training you may contact masteringtheamericanaccent.com or call 1-800 - 871-1317.

Chinese

Consonants

The /n/ sound

This consonant sound is one of the biggest problems for Chinese speakers, who tend to either completely drop the /n/ or pronounce it incorrectly when it is at the end of the word as in “phone” or before another consonant as in “ nonsense.”

Linking the final /n/ of a word to the vowel of the next word automatically solves this problem. So, when “can eat” becomes “c/æ/ + neat,” the problem is solved. You should always practice linking words since this will fix other consonant problems that occur at the end of the word, particularly with the letters m, r, d, t, and th.

If there is not a vowel sound following the difficult consonant, it’s a bit more challenging. You will need to really make an extra effort to clearly pronounce this sound and other consonant sounds that never occur at the ends of Chinese words.
The /n/ sound is never a problem when it is in the beginning of the word because the Chinese n in this position is the same as the American n. The American n sound is always produced in the front of the mouth, with the tip of the tongue touching the gum ridge which is behind the upper teeth. The Chinese /n/ sound is produced in the back of the mouth, with the back of the tongue touching the upper part of the mouth, similar to the "ng" sound in English. This is why some Chinese speakers of English tend to pronounce thing and thing the same way.

Practice Words

When the tip of your tongue makes contact with the gum ridge, make sure that you are continuing to produce sound by allowing air to come out through your nose. Otherwise your n will be silent, and will not sound like the American /n/.

1. one 4. man 7. nine 10. nineteen
2. invent 5. convent 8. pronounce 11. content
3. financial 6. attention 9. mention 12. consonant

Practice Sentences

1. He came to London in nineteen ninety nine.
2. He gained ten pounds in one month.
3. The sun shone after the rain.
4. That town is known for its fine wine.

The /l/ sound

All explanations and exercises for this /l/ sound are in Chapter Four. Make sure you learn to correctly produce a strong American l. Otherwise you will end up pronouncing code and cold, and too and tool, the same.

As you are raising the tongue for the /l/, don’t raise the jaw with it. Look in the mirror and try to make your tongue move up without the jaw moving. This will strengthen your tongue and help you to create a better sounding l.

Confusing /n/ and /l/

Make sure you do not confuse n and l, especially with words that contain both of these sounds, as in analyst or only. The primary difference between the two sounds is the location of the air flow. For n the air is coming out through your nose, whereas for l the air is coming out through the sides of your mouth. The tongue position is very similar for these two sounds. The tip of the tongue is a bit flatter for the n. With the l the jaw needs to open more to create space for the air to come out through the sides of the mouth. Practice keeping the jaw open while only moving the tongue for the l.
The /r/ Sound
All explanations and exercises for pronouncing /r/ are in Chapter Four. Make sure that you clearly pronounce the final /r/ at the end of words and before another consonant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;mo&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;morr&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;foam&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;form&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;moaning&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;morn&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;pot&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;part&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;fa&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;far&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;cone&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;torn&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;motha&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;mother&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;ha&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;her&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /v/ Sound
Native Chinese speakers have a tendency to drop /v/ in the middle or at the end of words. If you are speaking quickly, make sure that you don’t drop the /v/. All explanations and exercises for this sound are in Chapter Four.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;fai dollars&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;five dollars&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;goment&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;government&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;involved&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;involved&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Sentences
1. I have to have five.
2. He will prove that he can improve the government.
3. I have been involved with them for eleven or twelve years.

Also pay close attention to words with /w/. Do not make the common mistake of confusing the /v/ and /w/ sounds. All explanations and exercises for /v/ versus /w/ sounds are also in Chapter Four.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;hawe&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;have&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /z/ Sound
Sometimes Chinese speakers skip the /z/ sound. Make sure you have a strong /z/ sound in the middle and end of words. Note that this sound is often spelled with an /s/. Also, be careful when there is a /th/ and an /s/ in the same word or near each other.
Consonant Clusters

Consonant clusters (two or more consonants together) don’t occur in Chinese words, so there’s a tendency for Chinese speakers to pronounce only the first consonant of the group. Therefore *card* can sound like “car” and *extra* can sound like “extra.” Remember, the letter *x* represents two sounds /ks/. When there are two or more consonants next to each other, make sure that you pronounce every consonant. Review the “consonant clusters” section in Chapter Four for more information.

**one consonant:**
Where’s your car?
They ask about it.

**two consonants:**
Where’s your card?
They asked about it.

Vowels

It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for Chinese speakers of English.

The /eI/ sound

For native Chinese speakers the /eI/ sound creates by far the biggest vowel error when it is followed by *n*, *m*, or *l*. The formation of these consonants sometimes prevents the tongue from moving correctly for the /eI/ sound. Generally this /eI/ tends to be pronounced as /ɛ/ or /æ/ making the pronunciation of *pain*, *pen*, and *pan* sound similar or the same when Chinese speakers pronounce them. Also, *sale* and *sell* will often sound the same. Here’s a technique for fixing this problem.

Chances are you say *rain* and *ran* similarly or the same. To fix this problem say the word *ray*, then slowly add the /n/ sound. Seeing them as separate in your mind will help you to fully pronounce both of the vowel sounds before you begin to move your tongue into the *n* position.

The /eI/ sound is easier for Chinese speakers to produce if it is at the end of the word or when it is followed by any other consonant. It’s generally only a problem when it’s followed by an *n*, *m*, or *l*.

Words for Practice

Let’s practice the technique described above by saying some common words that have /eI/ + *n*, *m*, or *l/. First say the word that ends in /eI/ and then slowly add the consonant sound.
Words Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the two words in each pair below differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/æ/</th>
<th>/æ/ + /n/</th>
<th>/æ/ + /l/</th>
<th>/æ/ + /m/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td>may + /n/ = &quot;main&quot;</td>
<td>may + /l/ = &quot;male&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>say</td>
<td>say + /n/ = &quot;same&quot;</td>
<td>say + /l/ = &quot;sale&quot;</td>
<td>say + /m/ = &quot;same&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>way</td>
<td>way + /n/ = &quot;Wayne&quot;</td>
<td>way + /l/ = &quot;whale&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stay</td>
<td>stay + /n/ = &quot;stain&quot;</td>
<td>stay + /l/ = &quot;stale&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gay</td>
<td>gay + /n/ = &quot;gain&quot;</td>
<td>gay + /l/ = &quot;Gail&quot;</td>
<td>gay + /m/ = &quot;game&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pay</td>
<td>pay + /n/ = &quot;pain&quot;</td>
<td>pay + /l/ = &quot;pail&quot;</td>
<td>pay + /m/ = &quot;payment&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusing /æ/ and /ɛ/
Confusing these two vowel sounds will cause you to pronounce *men* and *man* the same way. Review Chapters One and Two to fix this type of error.

Confusing /i/ and /æ/
Make sure you pronounce these vowel sounds differently. Pay special attention to words that end with the /i/ sound: *very, actually, really, me,* and *we*. Make sure the /i/ is long.

Word Contrasts for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
<th>/i/</th>
<th>/æ/</th>
<th>/eI/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. way</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>6. hay</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. say</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>7. may</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. slave</td>
<td>sleeve</td>
<td>8. fail</td>
<td>feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. grain</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>9. raid</td>
<td>reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. straight</td>
<td>street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sentence Pairs for Practice

1. What did you say? What did you see?
2. They ate pork. They eat pork.
3. I had the mail. I had the meal.
4. When did you fail it? When did you feel it?

Longer Words

Since all Chinese words consist of only one syllable, there is a tendency for speakers of Mandarin and Cantonese to reduce English words with longer syllables. Make sure you pronounce every syllable of longer words. Also, pronounce every consonant and don’t lose vocal energy toward the end of the word. Pay special attention to this if you tend to speak fast. Don’t take any short cuts! Below are some examples of English words typically cut short by native Chinese speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>typical mistake (missing syllable)</th>
<th>should be pronounced:</th>
<th>correct number of syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>particularly</td>
<td>“par-ti-cu-ly”</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>government</td>
<td>“gov-ment”</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>“vis-ul”</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>usual</td>
<td>“us-al”</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>experience</td>
<td>“exper-ince”</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>immediately</td>
<td>“im-me-di-ly”</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>customer</td>
<td>“cus-mer”</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Practice Sentences**

The correct number of syllables is indicated above each word. Count them as you read the words, then try to say them more quickly making sure you are not skipping any syllable.

1. The scientist is enthusiastic about artificial intelligence.
2. I am confident that this advertisement will be meaningful to the customers.
3. It is unimaginable that the Europeans lost the championship.
4. The foreigner had a powerful vocabulary and communicated confidently.
5. The executive assistant primarily negotiated for the president.
6. We are investigating the developmental processes of our biggest competitors.
7. I primarily practice the pronunciation of the difficult sentences.
8. The entertainment industry is concentrated in Hollywood.
9. He is seriously investigating a career in technical consulting.
10. There is a spectacular exhibition at the museum.

**Word Ending Errors**

The endings of words can sometimes cause problems for the native Chinese speaker. For example, since plural forms don’t exist in Chinese, there is a tendency to omit them when speaking English.

*typical mistake:*  
“I have many American friends.”
*should be:*  
“I have many American friends.”

Another difficulty sometimes arises with the third person singular. The form of the verb doesn’t change in Chinese so you may tend to omit the final s.

*typical mistake:*  
“My friend says hello.”
*should be:*  
“My friend says hello.”

Finally, many native speakers of Chinese, even those who are very proficient in English, tend to randomly interchange the present and past tenses. Since these tense differences don’t exist in Chinese it is understandably confusing.

*typical mistake:*  
“I work yesterday.”
“I usually forget.”
*should be:*  
“I worked yesterday.”
“I usually forget.”
Linking
Chinese speakers of English tend to pronounce each word separately, which makes the section on linking in Chapter Eight one of the most important aids in helping you sound more American. You will definitely want to review that chapter, but to summarize:
don’t release the final consonant if it’s “a stop.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I had /s/ lunch.” or “I hada lunch.”</td>
<td>“I had lunch.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I used /s/ to…” or “I useda to…”</td>
<td>“I used to…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I made /s/ that.” or “I madea that.”</td>
<td>“I made that.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This mistake can be prevented by holding the final consonant and immediately saying the next word with no air created between pronouncing the two words. Study the section related to linking consonant + consonant in Chapter 8 for more practice.
Farsi

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to a few points directly related to native Farsi speakers. These are outlined below.

Consonants

The th Sound

Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. Note that you might make the common mistake of substituting a /t/ or a /d/ for a th.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;tank&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;thank&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;dose&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;those&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;mudder&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;mother&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusing /v/ and /w/

All explanations and exercises for the "v" and "w" sounds are in Chapter Four. Be careful not to make the common mistake below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;vine&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;wine&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;very well&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;very well&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /s/ Sound + Consonant

The Farsi language has no word that begins with an s and is followed by another consonant. There is usually a vowel in front of the s. Therefore, you will have a tendency to put an extra /ɘ/ sound before English words that begin with this letter. Make sure you don’t insert an extra vowel sound when you say the following words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;esmart&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;smart&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;estate&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;state&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I am going to /s/school.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I am going to school.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I /s/study /s/Spanish.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I study Spanish.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /l/ sound

Make sure that you don’t quickly release the tip of your tongue for the l at the ends of words. This will cause you to over-pronounce the /l/. The American /l/ sound is softer and longer than the Farsi /l/, and the tip of the tongue is more relaxed. Review the exercises for the American /l/ sound in Chapter Four.

Pronouncing ing

Over-pronouncing ing is another common mistake for Farsi speakers. Make sure you don’t release the /g/ sound in words that end with ing such as going and doing. Review the rules for this sound in Chapter Four.
The /r/ Sound
You need to learn to create the correct American /r/ sound by studying Chapter Three, and doing all of the /r/ exercises in Chapter Four. Make sure you do not roll the /r/ with the tip of your tongue, as this creates a harsh-sounding Farsi /ɾ/.

Farsi speakers tend to roll the /r/ particularly when it is followed by another consonant (as in bring, program, friend) or when it is in the beginning of a word (such as red and right).

Vowels
It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for Iranian speakers of English.

The /I/ Sound
You might have a tendency to pronounce /I/ (as in sit) incorrectly. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/I/</th>
<th>/I/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. sit</td>
<td>seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. live</td>
<td>leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fill</td>
<td>feel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ɘ/ Sound
You might confuse /ɘ/ as in fun, with /ɑ/ as in hop. Practice pronouncing the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑ/</th>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. shot</td>
<td>shut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. lock</td>
<td>luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. cop</td>
<td>cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ʊ/ Sound
Do not make the common error of confusing /ʊ/ as in good, with /u/ as in food. Make sure that you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʊ/</th>
<th>/u/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. full</td>
<td>fool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pull</td>
<td>pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. look</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Syllable Stress
Speakers of Farsi tend to stress the first syllables of English words. Since there are a lot of exceptions to the rules of English syllable stress, you will need to simply memorize the words that you commonly use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m from Iran.</td>
<td>I’m from Iran.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good afternoon.</td>
<td>Good afternoon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intonation
There’s a tendency for Farsi speakers to use rising intonation. This can unintentionally create a tone that sounds sarcastic or doubtful. Study the rules of falling intonation in Chapter Seven. Don’t overly prolong the final part of words and sentences and try not to go up in pitch, unless you’re asking a “yes/no question.”
Filipino Languages

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outlined below which are the common trouble areas for Filipino speakers of English.

Consonants

Confusing /p/ and /f/
People from the Philippines substitute a /p/ for an /f/ sound. This type of mistake is parallel to the also common /v/ and /b/ confusion, and it requires you to focus on using either two lips or just the lower lip. Be particularly careful with words that contain both a p and an f or when these two sounds are close together as in: perfect, perform, puffed, helpful, full page, and cup of coffee.

The /th/ Sound
Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. A common mistake for native Tagalog speakers is to substitute a /t/ or a /d/ for the /th/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical mistake:</th>
<th>Should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;tank&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;thank&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;close&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;those&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;mudder&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;mother&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusing /b/ and /v/
Practice the exercises in Chapter Four. Remember, the /b/ sound requires the lips to be completely closed, with no air coming out, whereas the /v/ sound only involves the lower lip, which touches the upper teeth and creates a vibrating air flow. Be particularly careful with words that contain both a b and v or when these sounds are close together as in: Beverly, November, vibrate, available, I've been and very big.

Confusing /s/ and /z/
The s in many English words is frequently pronounced as a /z/ sound. Learn the rules for this pronunciation and refer to the list in Chapter Four, common /z/-sound words. Words pronounced with a /z/ sound include: husband, design, observe, always, and chose.

Words Pairs for Practice
Make sure you say these pairs of words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/z/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. piece</td>
<td>peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. face</td>
<td>phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. bus</td>
<td>buzz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. price</td>
<td>prize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Confusing sh and ch
Make sure you can pronounce close and shoes differently. If you feel you need more practice, review these sounds in detail in Chapter Four.

Consonant Clusters
When a word contains two consonants next to each other, make sure that you pronounce both consonants. Review the last section of Chapter Four for further practice.

Words for Practice
Practice the following words with consonant clusters:

1. just  6. project
2. act  7. mixed
3. lost  8. paint
4. hand 9. sense
5. paint 10. desks

Vowels
It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for Filipino speakers of English.

Words Spelled with o
English words spelled with o are particularly difficult since o is usually pronounced as /ɑ/ as in stop and hot, but it can also be pronounced as /æ/ as in love and Monday or even as /ou/ as in so and only.

The /ɪ/ Sound
Pay attention to this tricky short vowel. Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair below differently:

/ɪ/      /æ/
1. sit      seat
2. live     leave
3. fill     feel

The /ɒ/ Sound
Practice pronouncing the following words differently:

/ɒ/      /ʌ/
1. shot     shut
2. lock     luck
3. cop      cup
The /ʊ/ Sound
The /ʊ/ sound, as in good, can also pose problems for you. Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair below differently:

| 1. full | fool |
| 2. pull | pool |
| 3. look | Luke |

Word Stress
Filipino speakers stress the adjective more than the noun in their native language. In English, the noun is stressed more than the adjective.

**typical mistake:**
"That's a nice car."
"He's an intelligent man."

**should be:**
"That's a nice car."
"He's an intelligent man."

Similarly, Filipinos tend to stress the first content word of a phrase or a sentence, whereas in English the last content word gets the most stress.

**typical mistake:**
"I drove my car."
"I went to the bank."

**should be:**
"I drove my car."
"I went to the bank."

Other common word stress errors:

**typical mistake:**
"I should go."
"Turn it off."
"UCLA"

**should be:**
"I should go."
"Turn it off."
"UCLA"

Study all of the other rules of word stress in Chapters Five through Eight and practice the exercises over and over.
French
Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outlined below. These are the common areas of difficulty for native French speakers.

Consonants
The Letter h
Make sure you pronounce the h sound at the beginning of words. The h is always pronounced in English except in these common words: hour, honest, honor, herb, heir, exhaust, vehicle, and ghost.

common mistake:  
"she as"  
"uman"

should be:  
"she has"  
"human"

Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no /h/</th>
<th>/h/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. art</td>
<td>heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. air</td>
<td>hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ate</td>
<td>hate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. angry</td>
<td>hungry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Native French speakers also have a tendency to insert an /h/ sound where there shouldn’t be one.

common mistake:  
"he his"  
"he’s hat home"

should be:  
"he is"  
"he’s at home"

"hi hate"

"I hate"

Practice Sentences
1. Henry hardly ever has a headache.
2. Perhaps he hasn’t heard of the hypothesis.
3. Have you ever eaten homemade Hungarian food?
4. I hope his habit doesn’t make him an alcoholic.
5. The horror movie had a horrible ending.

The Final s
In French, the s at the end of words is almost always silent. Make sure that you clearly pronounce all of the s endings when speaking English.

common mistake:  
"one of my uncle"  
"a few problem"

should be:  
"one of my uncle’s"  
"a few problems"
Confusing th with /s/ or /z/
Review the exercises for these sounds in Chapter Four. Be especially careful with words that have a th and s sound near each other, such as thousand and south.

Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>s</th>
<th>th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. mass</td>
<td>math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pass</td>
<td>path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. seem</td>
<td>theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. all so</td>
<td>although</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /r/ Sound
When it appears at the end of a word or before another consonant, the /r/ sound may pose some difficulties for the native French speaker. Review the explanations and exercises for the /r/ sound in Chapter Four. Make sure you pronounce the final /r/ at the end of words.

**typical mistake:**
- "mo" "mmeer"
- "fa" "fieer"
- "motha" "mother"
- "ha" "herr"

**should be:**
- "mo" "mmeer"
- "fa" "fieer"
- "motha" "mother"
- "ha" "herr"

Word Pairs for Practice
Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no r</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. foam</td>
<td>form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. moaning</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. pot</td>
<td>part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. tone</td>
<td>torn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. cone</td>
<td>corn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /l/ Sound
Make sure you don’t quickly release the tip of your tongue for the l at the end of words. This will cause you to over-pronounce the /l/. The American /l/ sound is softer and longer than the French, and the tip of the tongue is more relaxed. Review the exercises for the American /l/ sound in Chapter Four.

Pronouncing ing
Over-pronouncing ing is another common mistake French speakers make. Be sure not to release the /g/ sound in words that end with ing, such as going and doing. Review the rules for this sound in Chapter Four.

142 Mastering the American Accent
Vowels

It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for French speakers of English.

The /eɪ/ Sound

The /eɪ/ sound (as in take) doesn’t exist in French, so French speakers generally pronounce it as /ɛ/. Thus, the words take and tech end up sounding the same. Pay special attention to this vowel sound when it’s at the end of words. Listen to the way that Americans pronounce French words such as fiancé, résumé and bouquet. You will hear two vowel sounds at the end. For the word stay, instead of "sté," say "steiii."

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure that you pronounce the words in each pair differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
<th>/eɪ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wet</td>
<td>wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>west</td>
<td>waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>test</td>
<td>taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ɔ/ Sound

Be careful that your /ɔ/ sound (as in saw) is not influenced by the very different British version of this sound. In British English pause sounds almost like “pose,” but in American English it sounds much more like /pɑz/, and has the same /ɑ/ sound as in father or watch.

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑʊ/</th>
<th>/ɔ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boat</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coat</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woke</td>
<td>walk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ɪ/ Sound

You might have a tendency to pronounce /ɪ/ (as in sit) incorrectly. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɪ/</th>
<th>/ɪ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sit</td>
<td>seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>live</td>
<td>leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fill</td>
<td>feel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The /a/ Sound
You might confuse /a/ as in fun, with /ɑ/ as in hop. Practice pronouncing the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/a/</th>
<th>/ɑ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shot</td>
<td>shut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lock</td>
<td>luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cop</td>
<td>cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ʊ/ Sound
Do not make the common error of confusing /ʊ/ as in good, with /u/ as in food. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʊ/</th>
<th>/u/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>full</td>
<td>fool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pull</td>
<td>pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar Words in French and English
One of the biggest challenges for French speakers is the fact that there are many same or very similar words in English and French. Beware! Usually they are pronounced quite differently. People may have a hard time understanding you if say them with French pronunciation. Usually the difference is in syllable stress and vowel sound. You must simply get into the habit of looking up the pronunciation of these words and listening to native speakers of English.

Here is a sample of some of these words that exist in both languages but have different pronunciations. Test yourself by saying them in English. If you are not sure about their pronunciation, look them up in an audio dictionary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>develop</th>
<th>science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depend</td>
<td>specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services</td>
<td>normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realize</td>
<td>important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Syllable Stress
Chapter Five is particularly important for native French speakers. It will make you aware of the big differences between the rules of French and English word stress and vowel reduction. Review the explanations and exercises there.
Word Stress

In French, speakers stress the adjective more than the noun. In English it’s the opposite. It’s especially important for you to study all the rules of word stress in Chapter Six.

**typical mistake:**
"That’s a nice car.”
"He’s an intelligent man.”

**should be:**
"That’s a nice car.”
"He’s an intelligent man.”

Similarly, in French one tends to stress the first content word of a phrase or a sentence; in English the last content word gets the most stress.

**typical mistake:**
"I drove my car.”
"I went to the bank.”

**should be:**
"I drove my car.”
"I went to the bank.”

Other common word stress errors:

**typical mistake:**
"I should go.”
"Turn it off.”
"UCLA”

**should be:**
"I should go.”
"Turn it off.”
"UCLA”

Study all of the other rules of word stress in Chapters Five through Eight and practice the exercises over and over.

Intonation

There’s a tendency for French speakers to use rising intonation or wavering intonation. Study the rules of intonation in Chapter Seven. Wrong intonation can make you sound hesitant, doubtful, or even sarcastic.
German

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outline below. These highlight the common difficulties for native German speakers.

Consonants

Voiced and Voiceless Consonants

Review voiced and voiceless consonants in Chapter Three. There is a tendency for German speakers to change the final voiced consonant into a voiceless one, often at the ends of words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“fife”</td>
<td>fife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure you pronounce the following words in each pair differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiceless</th>
<th>voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>/g/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. back</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pick</td>
<td>pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʧ/</td>
<td>/ʤ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. rich</td>
<td>ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. batch</td>
<td>badge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>/d/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. bet</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. go</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. place</td>
<td>play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. price</td>
<td>prize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʃ/</td>
<td>/ʃ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. safe</td>
<td>sage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. proof</td>
<td>prove</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusing /s/ and /z/ Sounds

The s in many English words is frequently pronounced as a /z/ sound. Refer to the list in Chapter Four of common words with a /z/ sound. Other words pronounced with a /z/ sound include: husband, designer, Ogier, always, and change.
Confusing /v/ and /w/
All explanations and exercises for the /v/ and /w/ sounds are in Chapter Four.

Typical mistake: 

- "wine" 
- "very well"

Should be: 

- "wine" 
- "very well"

The /l/ Sound
Make sure you don’t quickly release the tip of your tongue for the l at the end of words. This will cause you to over-pronounce the /l/. The American /l/ sound is softer and longer than the German /l/, and the tip of the tongue is more relaxed. Review the exercises for the American /l/ sound in Chapter Four.

The /th/ Sound
Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. A common mistake is to substitute /t/ or /d/ for /th/. Some German speakers may also substitute an /s/ or /z/ for /th/.

Typical mistake: 

- "tank" 
- "dose" 
- "mudder"

Should be: 

- "thank" 
- "those" 
- "mother"

Word Pairs for Practice
Make sure that you don’t pronounce the words in each pair the same way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. mass</td>
<td>math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pass</td>
<td>path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. seem</td>
<td>theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. all so</td>
<td>although</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /r/ Sound
When it appears at the end of a word or before another consonant, the /r/ sound may pose some difficulties for the native German speaker. Review the explanations and exercises for the /r/ sound in Chapter Four. Make sure you pronounce the final /r/ at the end of words.

Typical mistake: 

- "mo"
- "fa"
- "motha"
- "ha"

Should be: 

- "more"
- "fat"
- "mother"
- "her"
Word Pairs for Practice
Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>foam</td>
<td>form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moaning</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pot</td>
<td>part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tone</td>
<td>torn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cone</td>
<td>corn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vowels
It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for German speakers of English.

Confusing /æ/ and /ɛ/
You might have a tendency to confuse /æ/ (as in bad) with /ɛ/ (as in bed.) If so, you will want to review the explanations and many exercises for these sounds in Chapters One and Two. A typical mistake would be to pronounce sand and send the same way.

Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair differently.

/æ/       /ɛ/
1. flash    flesh
2. man      men
3. salary   celery
4. ex       axe
5. taxes    Texas

The /ɔ/ Sound
Be careful that your /ɔ/ sound (as in saw) is not influenced by the very different British version of this sound. In British English pause sounds almost like “pose,” but in American English it sounds much more like /pɑz/, and has the same /a/ sound as in father or watch.

Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair differently.

/æ/       /ɔ/
1. low      law
2. boat     bought
3. coat     caught
4. woke     walk
The /I/ Sound
You might have a tendency to pronounce /I/ (as in sit) incorrectly. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɪ/</th>
<th>/i:/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. sit</td>
<td>seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. live</td>
<td>leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fill</td>
<td>feel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ɘ/ Sound
You might confuse /ɘ/ as in fun, with /ɑ:/ as in hop. Practice pronouncing the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑ:/</th>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. shot</td>
<td>shut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. lock</td>
<td>luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. cop</td>
<td>cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ʊ/ Sound
Do not make the common error of confusing /ʊ/ as in good, with /u/ as in food. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʊ/</th>
<th>/u/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. full</td>
<td>fool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pull</td>
<td>pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. look</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indian Languages

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outlined below. These are common areas of difficulty for Indian students of English.

Consonants

The /v/ Sound
You may have a tendency to confuse the /v/ and /w/ sounds. Be sure to review the explanations and exercises for these sounds in Chapter Four.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“havve”</td>
<td>“have”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“west”</td>
<td>“west”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dropping the r in the middle or at the end of a word is also a common mistake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“fai dollars”</td>
<td>“five dollars”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“goment”</td>
<td>“government”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“involved”</td>
<td>“involved”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Sentences
1. I havve to havve fiye.
2. He will provve that he can improove the govement.
3. I havve been invovled with them for eleven or twelve years.

The /r/ Sound
Learn to create the correct American /r/ sound by studying Chapter Three and by doing all of the /r/ exercises in Chapter Four. Make sure you do not roll the /r/ with the tip of your tongue, as this creates a harsh sounding Indian /r/.

Indian speakers tend to roll the /r/ when it is followed by another consonant, as in bring, program, friend, or when it is in the beginning of the word as in red and right.

When the /r/ sound is at the end of the word, as in far and compute, or before another consonant, as in slag and concept, Indian speakers tend not to pronounce it at all. Remember, the /r/ is never silent in Standard American English whereas in British English it sometimes is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“mo”</td>
<td>“more”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“fa”</td>
<td>“far”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“motha”</td>
<td>“mother”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ha”</td>
<td>“her”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Word Pairs for Practice**

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No /t/</th>
<th>/r/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. foam</td>
<td>form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. moaning</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. pot</td>
<td>part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. tone</td>
<td>torn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. cone</td>
<td>corn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The th Sound**

Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. A common mistake is to substitute a /t/ or a /d/ for the th.

 Typical mistake: should be:

- “tank” “thank”
- “dose” “those”
- “mudder” “mother”

**Vowels**

It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for Indian speakers of English.

**The /eɪ/ Sound**

Indian speakers tend to pronounce /eI/ (as in take) as /ɛ/ or /æ/, so the word same ends up sounding like Sam. Here are some other examples of words that tend to sound the same when Indian speakers pronounce them:

 Typical mistake: should be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
<th>/eɪ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“tech”</td>
<td>“take”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“sell”</td>
<td>“sale”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“test”</td>
<td>“taste”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“west”</td>
<td>“waste”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusing /ɛ/ and /æ/

Review Chapters One and Two to master the differences between /ɛ/ as in bet and /æ/ as in but.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/æ/</th>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. flash</td>
<td>flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. man</td>
<td>men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. salary</td>
<td>celery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ex</td>
<td>axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. taxes</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. sand</td>
<td>send</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The /ɔ/ Sound

Be careful that your /ɔ/ sound (as in saw) is not influenced by the very different British version of this sound. In British English pause sounds almost like “pose,” but in American English it sounds much more like /pɑz/, and has the same /ɑ/ sound as in father or watch.

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure you don’t pronounce the two words in each pair the same way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʌ/</th>
<th>/ɔ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boat</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coat</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woke</td>
<td>walk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Syllable Stress

The English spoken in India follows very different rules for syllable stress of words. Sometimes there seem to be no consistent rules, probably because of the many dialects in India that are influencing the evolution of spoken English. As a result, a variety of syllable stresses seems to be accepted. Once during an accent reduction lesson in the United States, three Indian software engineers were asked to give the correct syllable stress of the word engineer. Three different answers were given. One person was certain that the correct pronunciation was “engineer;” another student stated, “engineer;” and the third said, “engineer.”

If you speak fast and you make these types of mistakes, it will certainly be difficult for people to understand you. Learn the correct syllable stress of the words that you most commonly use. Mark the syllable that you believe should be stressed and then check your answers in the dictionary. The most common mistake is to stress the first syllable.

Here is a sample list of words that Indian speakers commonly pronounce with the wrong stress. First test out your knowledge of these words by marking the syllable that you think should be stressed, and then check your dictionary or ask a native speaker for the correct answers.

1. although 9. Europe 17. agree 25. understand
2. sophisticated 10. combination 18. variety 26. determine
3. information 11. efficient 19. eliminate 27. development
4. discuss 12. instead 20. consist 28. economical
5. develop 13. response 21. priority 29. technique
6. register 14. spontaneous 22. penalty 30. concern
7. communication 15. exactly 23. whenever 31. request
8. idea 16. colleague 24. beginning 32. already
Word Stress

Indians tend to place the most stress in the first part of a phrase or sentence, whereas Americans stress the endings more. Remember to place the most emphasis on the last content word of each sentence. Review Chapter Six for more guidance on this topic.

common mistake: should be:

"Nice to meet you."  "Nice to meet you."
"Have a nice day."  "Have a nice day."
"I have a car."  "I have a car."
"I don’t know."  "I don’t know."

Intonation

There's a tendency for Indian speakers to use rising or wavering intonation. Study the rules in Chapter Seven to work on this area.

Fast Speech

Indian speakers tend to speak very quickly and with a very different sentence melody. Combine that with mispronouncing some consonants and vowels, and you have a strong accent that can be difficult for Americans to understand. It is important for you to practice Chapters Five through Eight in order to master the rhythm and melody of English. Stressing content words will also help you to slow down your speech since you will be required to prolong the stressed vowels.
Indonesian

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outline below. These are common areas of difficulty for Indonesian students of English.

Consonants

The th Sound
Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. A common mistake is to substitute a /t/ or a /d/ for the th.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'tank'</td>
<td>'thank'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'close'</td>
<td>'those'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'mudder'</td>
<td>'mother'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voiced and Voiceless Consonants
Review voiced and voiceless consonants in Chapter Three. There is a tendency for Indonesian speakers to change a voiced consonant into a voiceless one.

Words Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair differently.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. light</td>
<td>lige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. fairy</td>
<td>very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. few</td>
<td>view</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Words Contrasts for Practice
Pronounce the two words in each pair differently

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>voiceless</td>
<td>voiced</td>
<td>voiceless</td>
<td>voiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. back</td>
<td>bag</td>
<td>5. bet</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. got</td>
<td>God</td>
<td>6. place</td>
<td>play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. half</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>7. bolt</td>
<td>bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. heart</td>
<td>hard</td>
<td>8. rich</td>
<td>ridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusing /s/ and /z/
The s in many English words is frequently pronounced as a /z/ sound. Learn the rules for this sound, and refer to the list of common words with a /z/ sound in Chapter Four. Other words pronounced with a /z/ sound include: husband, design, observe, always, and chase.
Words Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you say the words in each pair differently:

/s/  /z/
1. Sue  zoo
2. Sack  Zack
3. piece  peaz
4. face  phase

Consonant Clusters
When a word contains two consonants next to each other, make sure you pronounce both of the consonants. Review Chapter Four for more help with consonant clusters.

Words for Practice
Pronounce both of the final consonants in the words below:

1. just  6. project
2. act  7. mixed
3. lost  8. paint
4. hand  9. sense
5. paint  10. desks

Confusing /v/ and /w/
All explanations and exercises for the /v/ and /w/ sounds are in Chapter Four.

common mistake:  should be:
“wine”  “wine”
“very well”  “very well”

The Initial h
Make sure you pronounce the /h/ sound at the beginning of words. The /h/ is always pronounced in English except in these common words: hour, honest, honor, herb, heir, exhaust, vehicle, and ghost.

common mistake:  should be:
“she as”  “she has”
“human”  “human”

The /r/ Sound
Learn to create the correct American /r/ sound by studying Chapter Three and by doing all of the /r/ exercises in Chapter Four. Make sure you do not roll the /r/ with the tip of your tongue, as this creates a harsh sounding Indonesian /r/.

Indonesian speakers tend to roll the /r/ when it is followed by another consonant, as in living, program, friend, or when it is in the beginning of the word, as in red and right.
When the /r/ sound is at the end of the word, as in /far/ and /compute/, or before another consonant, as in /dark/ and /concept/, Indonesian speakers tend not to pronounce it at all. Remember, the /r/ is never silent in Standard American English whereas in British English it sometimes is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Mistake</th>
<th>Should Be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;mo&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;mope&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;fa&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;fa&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;motha&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;mother&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;ha&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;her&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs for Practice
Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no r</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. foam</td>
<td>form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. moaning</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. pot</td>
<td>part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. tone</td>
<td>torn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. cone</td>
<td>corn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusing s and sh
Indonesians tend to pronounce an /s/ sound when a word contains the letters /sh/. Common words that pose this problem include /finish/, /decision/, /physician/, /wish/, and /cash/.

Words Contrasts for Practice
Make sure that you pronounce the words in each pair below differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>s</th>
<th>sh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. see</td>
<td>she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. seat</td>
<td>sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. bass</td>
<td>bash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vowels
It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for Indonesian speakers of English.
The /eɪ/ Sound
Indonesian speakers tend to pronounce /eɪ/ (as in take) as /ɛ/ or /æ/, so the word same ends up sounding like Sam. Here are some other examples of words that tend to sound the same when Indonesian speakers pronounce them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ɛ/</td>
<td>/eɪ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;tech&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;take&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;sell&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;sale&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;test&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;taste&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;west&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;waste&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /a/ Sound
Be careful about words spelled with an o but pronounced with an /ɑ/ sound, as in father.
Common words in this category include: job, hot, God, problem, and possible.

Syllable Stress
Study Chapter Five to review the rules of syllable stress. Your tendency will be to stress the first syllable of a word. If you speak quickly and use the wrong syllable stress, your speech will be difficult to understand.

Word Stress
Indonesians tend to place the most stress in the first part of a phrase or sentence, whereas Americans stress the endings more. Remember to place the most emphasis on the last content word of each sentence. Review Chapter Six for more guidance on this topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Nice to meet you.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Nice to meet you.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Have a nice day.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Have a nice day.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I have a car.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I have a car.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I don’t know.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I don’t know.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Japanese

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outlined below. These are common areas of difficulty for Japanese speakers of English.

Consonants

The /r/ Sound

Learn to pronounce the correct American /r/ sound by studying Chapter Three and by doing all the /r/ exercises in Chapter Four.

When the /r/ sound is at the end of the word, as in far and computer, or before another consonant, as in dark and concert, Japanese speakers tend not to pronounce it at all. Remember, the /r/ is never silent in Standard American English whereas in British English it sometimes is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“mo”</td>
<td>“more”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“fa”</td>
<td>“far”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“motha”</td>
<td>“mother”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ha”</td>
<td>“he”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Pairs for Practice

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no r</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. foam</td>
<td>form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. moaning</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. pot</td>
<td>part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. tone</td>
<td>torn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. cone</td>
<td>corn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Native Japanese speakers tend to confuse the /r/ and /l/ sounds. Study Chapter Three to learn the difference between these two sounds, and do all of the r and l exercises in Chapter Four. Be especially careful about the r and l when they are near each other as in entirely, rarely, and hardly. Also take special care when they are preceded by another consonant as in fly and fry.

Confusing /f/ and /h/

The Japanese sound for f is a combination of the English /f/ and /h/. Be especially careful not to pronounce fu like “hu.” Compare how an American and a Japanese person would pronounce the word Fuji. For the American /f/, make sure that your lower lip is touching your upper teeth.
Confusing /b/ and /v/

Review the exercises in Chapter Four. Remember, the /b/ sound requires the lips to be completely closed, with no air coming out, whereas the /v/ sound only involves the lower lip, which touches the upper teeth and creates a vibrating air flow. Be particularly careful with words that contain both a b and v or when these sounds are close together, as in Berlinly, November, available, I've been and gray bug.

The /w/ Sound

Review the section on the /w/ sound in Chapter Four. Make sure that you are producing a puff of air and that your vocal cords are vibrating as you produce this sound. Don’t say "I us," say "I was." Pay special attention to the w in the middle of words and to words that begin with qu. Remember, qu sounds like /kw/ as in question. Don’t say "/kɛs/ + tion," say "/kwes/ + tion."

Here are some commonly mispronounced words with a /w/ sound:

1. twelve 5. someone (one = "won") 9. somewhere
2. forward 6. always 10. overwhelmed
3. question 7. would 11. quiet
4. quit 8. inquire 12. language (u = /w/)

Confusing /ʒ/ and /ʤ/

Both the /ʒ/ sound (as in beige) and the /ʤ/ sound (as in orange) are voiced. The easiest way to fix the problem of confusing these two sounds is to practice pronouncing their voiceless pairs. First say the sh sound as in shoes and then add the vibration to the vocal cords. That will produce the /ʒ/ sound. Now say the ch sound as in choose. If you add vibration and make it voiced, that produces the /ʤ/ sound. So, if you can pronounce shoes and choose differently, you can also pronounce massage (/ʒ/) and message (/ʤ/) differently.

The th sound

Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. A common mistake is to substitute a /t/ or a /d/ for th.

common mistake: should be:

“tank” “thank”
“dose” “those”
“mudder” “mother”

Some Japanese speakers also substitute an "s" or "z" for "th."

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure that you don’t pronounce these words the same:

s th
1. mass math
2. pass path
3. seem theme
4. all so although
Common Vowel Errors

The "ar" words

When the /ɑ/ sound is followed by /r/, it is pronounced incorrectly by many Japanese speakers. The /ɑ/ requires the tongue to lie flat at the bottom of the mouth and the jaw to be wide open, then the tongue must be quickly curled up to move into the /r/ position. This type of unfamiliar tongue movement can be quite a challenge for Japanese speakers. Usually one of these sounds ends up being compromised and the word farm ends sounding either like "firm" or "fam." You need to work on clearly pronouncing both sounds.

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair below differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑr/</th>
<th>/ɑ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. heard</td>
<td>hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. firm</td>
<td>farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fir</td>
<td>far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. stir</td>
<td>star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. perk</td>
<td>park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Sentences

1. I will park my car in his yard.
2. His large apartment is not very far.
3. Mark played his guitar in the dark bar.
4. Marshall Clark will start in March.
5. I paid for the seminar with my charge card.

The /ɔ/ Sound

Be careful that your /ɔ/ sound (as in saw) is not influenced by the very different British version of this sound. In British English pause sounds almost like "pose," but in American English it sounds much more like /pɑz/, and has the same /ɑ/ sound as in father or watch.

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure you don’t pronounce the two words in each pair the same way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑʊ/</th>
<th>/ɔ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. low</td>
<td>law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. boat</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. coat</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. woke</td>
<td>walk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The /ɪ/ Sound
You might have a tendency to pronounce /ɪ/ (as in sit) incorrectly. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɪ/</th>
<th>/ɪ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. sit</td>
<td>seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. live</td>
<td>leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fill</td>
<td>feel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ə/ Sound
You might confuse /ə/ as in fun, with /ɑ/ as in hop. Practice pronouncing the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɑ/</th>
<th>/ə/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. shot</td>
<td>shut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. lock</td>
<td>luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. cop</td>
<td>cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ʊ/ Sound
Do not make the common error of confusing /ʊ/ as in good, with /u/ as in food. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʊ/</th>
<th>/u/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. full</td>
<td>fool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pull</td>
<td>pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. look</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Korean

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outlined below. These are common areas of difficulty for Korean speakers of English.

Consonants

Confusing /r/ and /l/

Study Chapter Three to learn the difference between these two sounds and do all of the r and l exercises in Chapter Four. Be especially careful about the r and l when they are near each other as in: entirely, regularly, and barely.

Pronouncing Both /n/ + /l/

Because a similar tongue position is used to pronounce both /n/ and /l/, there is a tendency for Koreans to pronounce them as one when they are next to each other. Make sure you clearly pronounce both sounds in the following words:

unless only suddenly mainly

The /w/ Sound

Review the section on the /w/ sound in Chapter Four. Make sure that you are producing a puff of air and that your vocal cords are vibrating as you produce this sound. Don’t say “I us,” say “I was.” Pay special attention to the w in the middle of words and to words that begin with qu. Remember, qu sounds like /kw/ as in question. Don’t say “/kes/ + tion,” say “/kwes/ + tion.”

Here are some commonly mispronounced words with a /w/ sound:

1. twelve 5. someone (one = “won”) 9. somewhere
2. forward 6. always 10. overwhelmed
3. question 7. would 11. quiet
4. quit 8. inquire 12. language (u = /w/)

Confusing /b/ and /v/

Review the exercises in Chapter Four. Remember, the /b/ sound requires the lips to be completely closed, with no air coming out, whereas the /v/ sound only involves the lower lip, which touches the upper teeth and creates a vibrating air flow. Be particularly careful with words that contain both a b and a r or when these sounds are close together as in: Beverley, November, vibrate, available, I’ve been, and very big.

Confusing /p/ and /f/

Because the /f/ does not exist in Korean, there is a tendency to put the lips together and form a /p/ sound instead. This type of mistake is parallel to the /v/ and /b/ confusion, and it requires you to focus on using either two lips or just the lower lip. Be particularly careful with words that contain both a p and an f or when these two sounds are close together as in: perfect, perform, pdfly, helpful, full page, and cup of coffee.
Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair below differently.

/p/ /f/
1. pore for
2. pup puff
3. cups cuffs
4. plight flight
5. a pair a fair
6. praise phrase

Practice Sentences
1. That’s a perfect performance.
2. I will pay up front for the fans.
3. I prefer to have coffee before five pm.
4. Do you feel that I improved my French?

Confusing /z/ and /ʤ/
The following words all have a /z/ sound but they are commonly mispronounced with a /ʤ/ sound. Review Chapter Three which discusses the correct tongue positions for these sounds.
disease zoo business transition
physician thousand desire result
design busy exaggerate* exist*

*The x in the words exaggerate and exist is pronounced as /gz/.

Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair below differently.

/ʤ/ /z/
1. Jew zoo
2. budging buzzing
3. jealous zealous
4. range rains

Confusing /ʒ/ and /ʤ/
Both the /ʒ/ (as in beige) and the /ʤ/ sound (as in orange) are voiced. The easiest way to fix the problem of confusing these two sounds is to practice pronouncing their voiceless pairs. First say the /ʃ/ sound as in shoes and then add the vibration to the vocal cords. That will produce the /ʒ/ sound. Now say the /ʃ/ sound as in choose. If you add vibration and make it voiced, that produces the /ʤ/ sound. So, if you can pronounce shoes and choose differently, you can also pronounce massage (/ʒ/) and message (/ʤ/) differently. Below are a few common words with the /ʒ/ sound:
usual beige Asian garage
prestige vision occasion regime
The **th** sound

Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. A common mistake is to substitute a /t/ or a /d/ for **th**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“tank”</td>
<td>“thank”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“dose”</td>
<td>“those”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“mudder”</td>
<td>“mother”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vowels**

It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below.

**Confusing /æ/ and /ɛ/**

The sounds /æ/ (as in *bad*) and /ɛ/ (as in *bed*) are often confused by native Korean speakers. Review Chapters One and Two for more explanations and exercises related to these sounds.

**Word Contrasts for Practice**

Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/æ/</th>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. flash</td>
<td>flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. man</td>
<td>men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. salary</td>
<td>celery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ex</td>
<td>axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. taxes</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. sand</td>
<td>send</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **/ɔ/ Sound**

Be careful that your /ɔ/ sound (as in *saw*) is not influenced by the very different British version of this sound. In British English *pause* sounds almost like “pose,” but in American English it sounds much more like /pɔz/, and has the same /ɑ/ sound as in *father* or *watch*.

**Word Contrasts for Practice**

Don’t pronounce the two words in each pair the same way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɔs/</th>
<th>/s/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. low</td>
<td>law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. boat</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. coat</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. woke</td>
<td>walk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Syllable Stress

There is a tendency for Koreans to stress the first syllable of words. Review Chapter Five on syllable stress and continuously practice saying longer words while checking that you are stressing the right syllable. Don’t assume the first syllable is the one to be stressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “specific”</td>
<td>“specific”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “statistics”</td>
<td>“statistics”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “competition”</td>
<td>“competition”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. “familiar”</td>
<td>“familiar”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. “secure”</td>
<td>“secure”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. “whenever”</td>
<td>“whenever”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. “profession”</td>
<td>“profession”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. “consultant”</td>
<td>“consultant”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Stress

Just as Koreans tend to stress the first syllable of a word, they also tend to stress the first word of each sentence. Try to break this pattern. Practice the rules of word stress as outlined in Chapters Six and Seven.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. “My name is…”</td>
<td>“My name is…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Portuguese

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outlined below. These are common areas of difficulty for native Portuguese speakers.

Consonants

The Final /l/
The Portuguese final /l/ sounds almost like the English /w/ or /ou/ sound. Practice the I exercises in Chapter Four. Make sure that the tip of your tongue is touching the gum ridge behind your upper teeth.

- **typical mistake:** 
  - "Caw me"
  - "bow"

- **should be:**
  - "call me"
  - "bowl"

The /s/ Sound

The Portuguese language has no word that begins with an /s/ followed by another consonant. There is usually a vowel in front of the /s/. Make sure you don’t inadvertently insert an extra vowel sound when you say English words beginning with /s/. Here are some common words that demonstrate the "s" problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>English (no vowel in front):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>escola</td>
<td>school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espanhol</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estudar</td>
<td>study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>especial</td>
<td>special</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /th/ sound

Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. A common mistake is to substitute /ʃ/ or /d/ for /th/.

- **common mistake:** 
  - "tank"
  - "dose"
  - "mudder"

- **should be:**
  - "thank"
  - "those"
  - "mother"

Consonant Clusters

Practice all of the exercises on consonant clusters in Chapter Four. In the Portuguese language, when there are two consonants together, such as /rd/ or /ct/, a vowel usually follows. In English that is not the case. For example, Americans say "Robert" with /rt/ at the end. The Portuguese equivalent is "Roberto." Here the /rt/ cluster is followed by a vowel, making it easier to pronounce the second consonant. Because it doesn’t feel natural for Portuguese speakers to pronounce the consonant at the end, they tend to pronounce only the first consonant of the group, making the name Robert sound like "robbe." Also, /ed/ can sound like "eg," and Richard will sound like "riche." Another good example is the English word correct, which in Portuguese is correto.
When you come across a word with two or more consonants next to each other, make sure that you pronounce every consonant. Pay special attention to past tense -ed verbs. They generally form consonant clusters as in “worked” and “watched.”

**Verbs Ending in -ed**

Make sure you learn to pronounce the three different -ed endings of verbs. For example, the endings of the verbs needed, opened, and passed are all pronounced differently. Review Chapter Four for more guidance on this topic.

**Word Pairs for Practice**

1. worked hard
2. extra strength
3. long and found
4. played cards
5. extremely difficult
6. wild world

**Vowels**

It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for native Portuguese speakers.

**Confusing /æ/ and /ɛ/**

The sounds /æ/ (as in bad) with /ɛ/ (as in bed) are often confused by native Portuguese speakers. Review Chapters One and Two for more explanations and exercises related to these sounds.

**Word Contrasts for Practice**

Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair below differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/æ/</th>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. flash</td>
<td>flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. man</td>
<td>men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. salary</td>
<td>celery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ex</td>
<td>axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. taxes</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. sand</td>
<td>send</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The /ɑ/ Sound**

Be careful that your /ɑ/ sound (as in saw) is not influenced by the very different British version of this sound. In British English pause sounds almost like “pose,” but in American English it sounds much more like /pɑ/, and has the same /ɑ/ sound as in father or watch.
Word Contrasts for Practice
Don’t pronounce the two words in each pair the same way:

/oʊ/  /ɔ/
1. low     law
2. boat    bought
3. coat    caught
4. woke    walk

The /I/ Sound
You might have a tendency to pronounce /I/ (as in sit) incorrectly. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

/I/  /i/
1. sit     seat
2. live    leave
3. fill    feel

The /a/ Sound
You might confuse /a/ as in fan, with /æ/ as in hop. Practice pronouncing the following words differently:

/a/  /æ/
1. shot    shut
2. lock    luck
3. cop     cup

The /ʊ/ Sound
Do not make the common error of confusing /ʊ/ as in good, with /u/ as in food. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

/ʊ/  /u/
1. full    fool
2. pull    pool
3. look    Luke

Reduced Vowels in Unstressed Syllables
In Portuguese vowels within unstressed syllables are pronounced fully, whereas in English they almost disappear and become a reduced schwa /ə/ sound. For further study and practice, refer to Chapter Five on syllable stress. Below are some examples of the vowel differences between the two languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>doutor</td>
<td>doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>médico</td>
<td>method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urbano</td>
<td>urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Word Stress

In Portuguese, adjectives are stressed more than nouns are. In English it's the opposite.

Typical mistake: should be:

- “That's a nice car.” “That's a nice car.”
- “He's an intelligent man.” “He's an intelligent man.”

Similarly, Portuguese speakers tend to place the most stress in the first part of a phrase or sentence, whereas Americans stress the endings more. Remember to place the most emphasis on the last content word of each sentence. Review Chapter Six for more guidance on this topic.

Typical mistake: should be:

- “I drove my car.” “I drove my car.”
- “I went to the bank.” “I went to the bank.”

Other common word stress errors:

Typical mistake: should be:

- “I should go.” “I should go.”
- “Turn it off.” “Turn it off.”
- “UCLA” “UCLA”

Study all the rules of word stress in Chapters Five through Eight, and practice the exercises over and over.
Russian

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outlined below. These are common areas of difficulty for native Russian speakers.

Consonants

Hard and Soft Consonants

Almost all Russian consonants come in hard/soft pairs. The soft consonant (Мягкий) is created by adding a sort of /y/ sound. In some common English words, Russian speakers tend to use the soft /n/ and /l/ when they are followed by the /i/ and /I/ vowel sounds—but /n/ and /l/ are almost always hard (Твёрдый) in English. To fix this common mistake, make sure you are using just the tip of your tongue to create the /n/ and the /l/ when they are followed by /i/ and /I/. If the middle of your tongue touches your gum ridge, it creates a soft consonant. Also, be careful not to use the soft /h/ after an /æ/ sound as in have and happy. Again, this error has to do with how much of the surface of your tongue you are using to create the sound.

Words for Practice

Don’t use a soft /n/ when pronouncing the following common words.

1. any 6. anything
2. money 7. near
3. general 8. many
4. Chinese 9. beginning
5. communicate 10. Nick

More Words for Practice

Don’t use a soft /l/ with the following common words.

1. believe 3. really
2. analyst 4. actually

Voiced and Voiceless Consonants

Review voiced and voiceless consonants in Chapter Three. There is a tendency for Russian speakers to change the final voiced consonant into a voiceless one.

common mistake: should be:
“life” five

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure you pronounce the two words in each pair below differently.

voiceless voiced

/k/ /g/
1. back bag
2. pick pig
The /θ/ sound
Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. A common mistake is to substitute a /t/ or a /d/ for /θ/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/θ/</th>
<th>/ð/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rich</td>
<td>ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batch</td>
<td>badge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/z/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>get</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>got</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/z/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stage</td>
<td>play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>price</td>
<td>paze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʃ/</th>
<th>/ʃ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>safe</td>
<td>save</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proof</td>
<td>prove</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The /θ/ sound**

**common mistake:**
"tank"
"dose"
"mudder"

**should be:**
"thank"
"those"
"mother"

Confusing /v/ and /w/

All explanations and exercises for the /v/ and /w/ sounds are in Chapter Four.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/v/</th>
<th>/w/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vine</td>
<td>wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very &quot;well&quot;</td>
<td>very &quot;well&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The /r/ sound**

Learn to pronounce the correct American /r/ sound by studying Chapter Three, and by doing all the /r/ exercises in Chapter Four. Make sure you do not roll the /r/ with the tip of your tongue, as this creates a harsh sounding Russian /r/.

Russian speakers tend to roll the /r/ particularly when it is followed by another consonant, as in *ring, program, friend*, or when it is in the beginning of the word, as in *red* and *right*.

When the /r/ sound is at the end of the word, as in *far* and *computer*, or before another consonant, as in *dark* and *concept*, Russian speakers do not pronounce it at all. Remember, the /r/ is *never* silent in Standard American English, whereas in British English it sometimes is.
**typical mistake:**

- "mo" → "moe"
- "fa" → "fag"
- "motha" → "mother"
- "ha" → "her"

**Word Pairs for Practice**

Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no r</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>foam</td>
<td>form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moaning</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pot</td>
<td>part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tone</td>
<td>torn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cone</td>
<td>corn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pronouncing ing**

Over-pronouncing **ing** is another common mistake Russian speakers make. Be sure not to release the /g/ sound in words that end with **ing**, such as **going** and **doing**. Also make sure that you don’t change the /g/ into a voiceless /k/ sound. Review the rules for this sound in Chapter Four.

**Vowels**

It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic for Russian speakers.

**The /ɔ/ Sound**

Be careful that your /ɔ/ sound (as in saw) is not influenced by the very different British version of this sound. In British English **pause** sounds almost like “pose,” but in American English it sounds much more like /pɑz/, and has the same /a/ sound as in **father** or **watch**.

**Word Contrasts for Practice**

Don’t pronounce the two words in each pair below the same way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ow/</th>
<th>/a/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boat</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coat</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woke</td>
<td>walk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Words Spelled with o

English words spelled with o are particularly difficult for Russian speakers since o is usually pronounced as /a/ as in stop and hot, but it can also be pronounced as /o/ as in love and Monday or even as /ou/ as in so and only.

Another common mistake is to pronounce a final o as /a/ or /o/ as in so. Make sure it’s pronounced as /ou/ instead.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>/ou/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mexico”</td>
<td>“Mexicog”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“San Francisco”</td>
<td>“San Francisco”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /I/ Sound

You might have a tendency to pronounce /I/ (as in sit) incorrectly. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/I/</th>
<th>/i/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. sit</td>
<td>seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. live</td>
<td>leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fill</td>
<td>feel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ɘ/ Sound

You might confuse /ɘ/ as in fun, with /a/ as in hop. Practice pronouncing the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/a/</th>
<th>/ɘ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. shot</td>
<td>shut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. lock</td>
<td>luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. cop</td>
<td>cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /ʊ/ Sound

Do not make the common error of confusing /ʊ/ as in good, with /u/ as in food. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʊ/</th>
<th>/u/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. full</td>
<td>fool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pull</td>
<td>pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. look</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spanish

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outlined below. These are common areas of difficulty for native Spanish speakers.

Consonants

Consonant Clusters

Practice all of the exercises on consonant clusters in Chapter Four. In the Spanish language, when there are two consonants together, such as nd or ct, a vowel usually follows. In English that is not the case. For example, Americans say Robert with “rt” at the end. The Spanish equivalent is “Robertto”—the rt cluster is followed by a vowel, making it easier to pronounce the second consonant. Because it doesn’t feel natural to Spanish speakers to pronounce the consonant at the end, they tend to pronounce only the first consonant of the group, making the name Robert sound like “robbe.” Also, card can sound like “ca,” and Richard will sound like “richer.” Another good example is the English word correct, which in Spanish is “correto.”

When you come across a word with two or more consonants next to each other, make sure that you pronounce every consonant. Pay special attention to past tense -ed verbs. They generally form consonant clusters as in worked and watched.

Word Pairs for Practice

Be sure to pronounce every consonant in the words below.

1. worked hard 4. played cards
2. extra strength 5. extremely difficult
3. lost and found 6. wild world

Verbs Ending in -ed

Make sure you learn to pronounce the three different -ed endings of verbs. For example, the endings of the verbs needed, opened, and passed are all pronounced differently. Review Chapter Four for more guidance on this topic.

typical mistake: should be:
“I work yesterday.” “I worked yesterday.”

The th Sound

Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound. A common mistake is to substitute a /ʃ/ or a /ʒ/ for th.

common mistake: should be:
“tank” “thank”
“close” “those”
“mudder” “mother”
Confusing “b” and “v”
Because the Spanish b and v are pronounced the same, many Spanish speakers of English pronounce the words very and berry or carne and caribe the same. You can practice these sounds in detail in Chapter Four.

Confusing /ʤ/ and /y/
The Spanish lI as in the words sill, is usually pronounced like the English /ʤ/ and /y/ put together or, in certain Spanish dialects, like the /y/ sound. You need to learn the difference between these two English sounds. Otherwise, you might end up saying "I'm going to jail," when you wanted to say "I'm going to Yale."

For the /ʤ/ sound, the tip of the tongue quickly touches the gum ridge and then releases. The sides of the tongue are against the upper teeth. For the /y/ sound, the tip of the tongue is down touching the bottom teeth.

Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the two words in each pair differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʤ/</th>
<th>/y/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jet</td>
<td>yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jew</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joke</td>
<td>yolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jam</td>
<td>yam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>major</td>
<td>mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juice</td>
<td>use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusing sh and ch
Remember, sh or /ʃ/ requires a continuous air flow coming out through the tongue. For the /ʃ/ sound (/ʃ/), however, the tip of the tongue blocks the air flow.

Word Contrasts for Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʃ/</th>
<th>/ʃ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shoes</td>
<td>choose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share</td>
<td>chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wash</td>
<td>watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cash</td>
<td>catch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheet</td>
<td>cheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wish</td>
<td>witch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mash</td>
<td>match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>washing</td>
<td>watching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Take note of the following exceptions. These words are spelling with ch but are pronounced with a sh or /ʃ/ sound. These words are mostly French in origin.

1. chef 4. chandelier 7. Chicago
2. machine 5. champagne 8. Michigan
3. chic 6. chauffeur 9. Chevrolet
Dialogues for Practice

1. a. Which shoes should she choose?
   b. She should purchase the cheaper shoes.

2. a. Where are Shawn and Charlie?
   b. Charlie’s in church and Shawn’s in the kitchen washing dishes.

3. a. Should I switch the channel?
   b. Don’t switch the channel. I’m watching the show.

4. a. What’s the cheapest way to ship the chips?
   b. It’s much cheaper to ship the chips by ship.

5. a. These peaches are delicious.
   b. Do you wish to share them with each of us?

The /m/ Sound
When speaking quickly, Spanish speakers often don’t fully close their lips to produce the /m/ sound especially when it is in the middle of or at the end of a word. Therefore, From time to time can end up sounding like: from time to time. Also, the word sometimes can sound like sometme. Make sure you don’t confuse m with an /n/ sound.

Words for Practice
Be sure to fully pronounce the /m/ sound in the words below.

1. I’m
2. from
3. sometimes
4. some
5. time
6. minimum

The /s/ Sound
The Spanish language has no word that begins with an s followed by another consonant. There is usually a vowel in front of the s. Make sure you don’t inadvertently insert an extra vowel sound when you say English words beginning with s. Here are some common words that demonstrate the s problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English (no vowel in front):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>escuela</td>
<td>school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>español</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estudiar</td>
<td>study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteban</td>
<td>Steven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confusing /s/ and /z/
The s in many English words is frequently pronounced as a /z/ sound. Learn the rules for this and refer to the list of common words with a /z/ sound in Chapter Four. Other words pronounced with a /z/ sound include husband, design, observe, always, and chose. Also, note that in Spanish, a z is pronounced as an /s/ sound. This is not the case in English.
**Word Contrasts for Practice**

Make sure you say the two words in each pair below differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/z/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. piece</td>
<td>peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. face</td>
<td>phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. bus</td>
<td>buzz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. price</td>
<td>prize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vowels**

Since Spanish has a lot fewer vowel sounds than English, you will need to review all of the American vowel sounds in Chapters One and Two. Also pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for native Spanish speakers.

**Words Spelled with o**

English words spelled with o are particularly difficult for Spanish speakers since o is usually pronounced as /a/ as in stop and hot, but it can also be pronounced as /o/ as in love and Monday or even as /ou/ as in so and only. Study Chapter 2 in detail.

**The /i/ Sound**

You might have a tendency to pronounce /i/ (as in sit) incorrectly. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/i/</th>
<th>/i/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. sit</td>
<td>seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. live</td>
<td>leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fill</td>
<td>feel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The /a/ Sound**

You might confuse /a/ as in fun, with /a/ as in hop. Practice pronouncing the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/a/</th>
<th>/a/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. shot</td>
<td>shut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. lock</td>
<td>luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. cop</td>
<td>cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The /ʊ/ Sound**

Do not make the common error of confusing /ʊ/ as in good, with /u/ as in food. Make sure you pronounce the following words differently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ʊ/</th>
<th>/u/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. full</td>
<td>fool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pull</td>
<td>pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. look</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reduced Vowels in Unstressed Syllables

In Spanish all the vowels are pronounced fully, whereas in English vowels in unstressed syllables almost disappear and become a reduced schwa /ɘ/ sound. For example, the word *doctor* exists in both languages. In Spanish both of the *o* sounds are pronounced the same way. In English, the word sounds like “doctr.” The second *o* is changed to a short, reduced /ɘ/ sound because it’s part of the unstressed syllable. For further study and practice, refer to Chapter Five on syllable stress. Below are some examples of the vowel differences between the two languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English (no vowel in front):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>color</td>
<td>color – sounds like “cob”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>normal</td>
<td>normal – sounds like “normal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>popular</td>
<td>popular – sound like “popul”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Stress

In Spanish, adjectives are stressed more than nouns are. In English it’s the opposite.

**Typical mistake:**
- “That’s a nice car.”
- “He’s an intelligent man.”

**Should be:**
- “That’s a nice *car*.”
- “He’s an intelligent *man*.”

Similarly, Spanish speakers tend to place the most stress in the first part of a phrase or sentence, whereas Americans stress the endings more. Remember to place the most emphasis on the last content word of each sentence. Review Chapter Six for more guidance on this topic.

**Typical mistake:**
- “I drove my car.”
- “I went to the bank.”

**Should be:**
- “I drove my *car*.”
- “I went to the *bank*.”

Other common word stress errors:

**Typical mistake:**
- “I should go.”
- “Turn it off.”
- “UCLA”

**Should be:**
- “I should *go*.”
- “Turn it *off*.”
- “UCLA”

Study all the rules of word stress in Chapters Five through Eight, and practice the exercises over and over.
Vietnamese

Study the whole book, but also pay special attention to the topics outlined below. These are common areas of difficulty for native Vietnamese speakers.

Consonants

Voiced and Voiceless Consonants
There is a tendency for Vietnamese speakers to change voiced consonants into voiceless ones. Review voiced and voiceless consonants in Chapter Three.

Pay special attention to words with g particularly when the g is followed by an r as in great and graduate. Make sure that you fully release the back of your tongue after it touches the back of the mouth so that the g can be clearly heard. Otherwise, great may sound like “crate” or even “rate.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical mistake</th>
<th>Should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“fice”</td>
<td>“five”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“crass”</td>
<td>“grass”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure you pronounce the two words in each pair below differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voiceless</th>
<th>Voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>/g/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>Greg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grow</td>
<td>grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pick</td>
<td>pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>back</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ŋ/</td>
<td>/ɒŋ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rich</td>
<td>ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choke</td>
<td>joke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batch</td>
<td>badge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choice</td>
<td>Joyce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>/d/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bet</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>got</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bolt</td>
<td>bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heart</td>
<td>hard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The th Sound

Review Chapters Three and Four to learn the correct pronunciation of this sound.
A common mistake is to substitute a /t/ or a /d/ for th.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>typical mistake:</th>
<th>should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“tank”</td>
<td>“thank”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“dose”</td>
<td>“those”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“mudder”</td>
<td>“mother”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /n/ Sound

Pay special attention to n when it is in the middle or at the end of a word. When the tip of your tongue makes contact with the gum ridge, make sure that you are continuing to produce sound by allowing air to come out through your nose. Otherwise your n will be silent.

Words for Practice

1. one  4. man  7. pipe  10. nineteen
2. invent  5. cognize  8. pronounce  11. content
3. financial  6. attention  9. mention  12. consonant

Vietnamese speakers also tend to drop the n before another consonant. To fix this error, make sure that you fully produce n before you begin saying the following consonant. Feel the vibration of air in your nose as the tip of your tongue touches the gum ridge. Common mispronounced words include understand, friend, instant, importance, and sense.
Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure that you pronounce the two words in each pair below differently.

1. Fred  friend
2. me  meant
3. lad  land
4. sad  sand

Confusing /n/ and /l/
Make sure you do not confuse /n/ and /l/, especially with words like analysis or only that contain both of these sounds. The primary difference between the two sounds is the location of the air flow. For /n/ the air is coming out through your nose, whereas for /l/ the air is coming out through the sides of your mouth. The tongue position is very similar for these two sounds except the tip of the tongue is a bit flatter for the /n/. For the /l/, the jaw needs to open more to create space for the air to come out through the sides of the mouth. Be careful with words such as only and unless.

The “r” Sound
Learn to pronounce the correct American /r/ sound by studying Chapter Three and by doing all the /r/ exercises in Chapter Four. Remember, the /r/ is never silent in Standard American English, whereas in British English it sometimes is.

typical mistake: should be:
"mo" "morC"
"fa" "fag"
"motha" "mother"
"ha" "heg"

Word Pairs for Practice
Make sure you don’t pronounce these pairs of words the same:

no r r
1. foam form
2. moaning morning
3. pot part
4. tone torn
5. cone corn
Consonant Clusters

There's a tendency for Vietnamese speakers to pronounce only the first consonant in a group or cluster. Therefore, *card* can sound like "car" and *extra* can sound like "estra." When there are two or more consonants next to each other, make sure you pronounce every consonant. Review the section on consonant clusters in Chapter Four.

one consonant: two consonants:
"Where's your car?" "Where's your card?"
"They ask about it." "They asked about it."

*Remember, the letter *x* represents two sounds: /ks/

When an *s* is followed by a consonant, make sure you pronounce the /s/. Otherwise the word *sister* will sound like "sitter."

Final Consonants

Make sure you pronounce all of the final sounds of words, particularly those ending in *s, v, k, d*, and *t."

Vowels

It is recommended that you study all of the American vowel sounds in detail. (See Chapters One and Two.) However, pay special attention to the vowel sounds highlighted below which are the most problematic ones for Vietnamese speakers.

Confusing /æ/ and /ɛ/

The sounds /æ/ (as in *bad*) and /ɛ/ (as in *bed*) are often confused by native Vietnamese speakers. Review Chapters One and Two to master the differences between these two sounds.

Word Contrasts for Practice

Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair below differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/æ/</th>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>flash</td>
<td>flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salary</td>
<td>celery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ex</td>
<td>axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taxes</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sand</td>
<td>send</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The /ɔ/ Sound
Be careful that your /ɔ/ sound (as in saw) is not influenced by the very different British version of this sound. In British English pause sounds almost like "pose," but in American English it sounds much more like /pæz/, and has the same /ɑ/ sound as in father or watch.

Word Contrasts for Practice
Don’t pronounce the two words in each pair below the same way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/oʊ/</th>
<th>/ɔ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. low</td>
<td>law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. boat</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. coat</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. woke</td>
<td>walk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /eɪ/ Sound
Vietnamese speakers commonly pronounce /eɪ/ as /ɛ/ or as /æ/. This makes the pronunciation of pain, pen, and pan all sound the same. Also, sale and sell will often sound the same when pronounced by a Vietnamese speaker. The words take, available, break, and famous are also commonly mispronounced.

Word Contrasts for Practice
Make sure you pronounce the words in each pair below differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ɛ/</th>
<th>/eɪ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. sell</td>
<td>sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. well</td>
<td>whale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. tell</td>
<td>tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. men</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. pen</td>
<td>pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. plan</td>
<td>plain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Linking
Vietnamese speakers of English tend to pronounce each word separately, which makes their speech sound choppy and mechanical. The section on linking in Chapter Eight is one of the most important things to study to help you sound more American.
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/æ/ 2, 16, 17
/æ/ 1, 7–9, 19, 20, 25
/e/ 1, 6–8, 19, 20, 25

/ɛ/ 1, 5, 7
/ɛː/ 1, 9–11, 20–23, 26, 28, 51, 67.
/ɜː/ 6, 15, 27
/ɪ/ 1, 3–5, 18, 19
/ɪː/ 1, 3–5, 18, 19
/ʊ/ 2, 10–13, 20, 21, 24–26
/o/ 2, 17
/oː/ 2, 12, 13, 20, 21, 24–26
/uː/ 2, 13, 14, 25, 26
/u/ 2, 13, 14, 25, 26

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