



LEARNING
CENTRE



ENGLISH SPEECH PRACTICE

A PRONUNCIATION COURSE FOR
ADVANCED LEARNERS OF ENGLISH
Based on authentic Australian English dialogues

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHER

This course aims to improve the pronunciation of advanced learners of English, particularly those from Asian backgrounds studying at university level in Australia. However the course could be usefully followed by all advanced learners as it concentrates on problem areas experienced by all non-native speakers of English. The course is divided into two parts; the macro level and the micro level. The macro level comprises 6 lessons. Lessons 1 to 5 introduce different supra-segmental features of spoken English. These are described and exemplified using extracts from authentic dialogues. Student practice based on these dialogues is included in each lesson. Lesson 6 revises all of the features introduced in the previous 5 lessons. The micro level provides practice in a selection of sounds which have been found to be especially problematic for speakers from Asian backgrounds. Troublesome groups of sounds have been grouped together for practice. Each sound is contextualised in an authentic dialogue.

This course can be used both for individual study in a language laboratory or at home and for class study directed by the teacher in the classroom or language laboratory. The teacher should select lessons or extracts from lessons according to his or her own particular teaching situation.

Phonetic symbols, when used, follow the transcription system of the Macquarie Dictionary.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDENT

This pronunciation course has been specially prepared for advanced learners of English studying at Australian universities. In particular it has been prepared to help students who speak an Asian language. However even if you don't come from Asia, you will also find that this course will help you to improve your spoken English.

As a university student you may have already achieved a high level of competence in listening, reading and writing in English. However if your spoken English is weak, your ability to communicate with your lecturers or supervisors, your colleagues or fellow students, will be limited. We believe that you will be missing an important learning opportunity if you cannot communicate effectively in speech.

In general, courses in spoken English operate at two levels.

At the micro level, the sounds of English are isolated and practised as they occur in different combinations in words or specially constructed sentences or dialogues.

At the macro level, features of spoken English which affect the meaning of whole groups of words are practised. This includes features like intonation, stress and rhythm etc.

Both levels are important for improving communication in spoken English. However we think that you may already have had a lot of practice at the micro level and so this course will offer you more practice at the macro level. We also believe that in practising connected speech you will be practising individual sounds as well.

In the first part of this course we will introduce you to some of the important features of spoken English which operate at the macro level. Then, when you can recognise these features we will provide you with extra practice so that you can improve your ability to reproduce them.

In the second part of the course, certain problem areas at the micro level will be selected and explained and practice exercises will be given to help you to improve in these areas.

Please note, as authentic dialogues are used in this recording you will sometimes have to adjust the volume.

PART 1: THE MACRO LEVEL

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Lesson 1: Stress and Rhythm

Music has a beat or rhythm. Listen to the following piece of music. Can you identify the rhythm? This time I'll clap with the beat.

We recognise the rhythm by identifying the sounds which are emphasised most, the sounds which carry the beat.

In the same way, language has a beat or rhythm. The sounds which carry the rhythm in a language are those which are stressed or emphasised most. Different languages have different rhythms.

English rhythm

Now let's learn about the rhythm of English. Listen to this sentence and identify where the major beats are.

the man is out

There are just 2 major beats - on "man" and "out". We call these stressed syllables because they are emphasised or stressed most. In fact they're the words in the sentence which give us the most information.

the man is out

The other 2 syllables are unstressed. The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables forms the rhythm of English. Listen carefully and notice what happens to the unstressed syllables when I say the sentence again:

the man is out

Instead of "thee", I said "the" and instead of "is" I said "s". The vowel sounds in the and is have been weakened or reduced. We will talk about these WEAK FORMS in more detail in Lesson 2. But you can already see how important they are in getting the stress and rhythm right. Let's see what happens when we add an extra syllable to the sentence.

the man is out has 4 syllables

the man is away has 5 syllables

But the stress pattern and the rhythm remain the same. We can check this by clapping with the beat.

the man is out

the man is away

We can add even more syllables to the sentence:

the man is away

the lecturer is away

the supervisor is away

the supervisor is overseas

But every time we still have only 2 major stresses even though our last sentence is 9 syllables long compared with our original 4 syllable long sentence

the man is out

the supervisor is overseas

The most surprising thing is that we take about the same time to say both sentences even though the original sentence is much shorter. The only way we can do this is to say the unstressed syllables very quickly so they can fit in between the beats. Of course it's quite difficult to say these unstressed syllables in such a short space of time and so that's why we have to reduce some of their vowel sounds to weak forms and this helps us to fit them in. So we don't say:

the su per vi sor is o ver seas

Instead we use weak forms and say:

the supervisor is overseas

Now, let's listen to the rhythm and stress used by an Asian student who is being interviewed about what he wants to do in Australia.

Well, I have enrolled in the School of Chemistry,
University of Sydney and as the Phd candidate
I'm very interested in the Organic Chemistry
especially in the natural products. So my
field of study and research is the chemical
and biological aspects of natural products
and I like this field very much.

Let's help him to say this with an English rhythm. Repeat after me:

Well, I've enrolled in the School of Chemistry
at the University of Sydney as a Phd candidate
I'm very interested in Organic Chemistry
especially in natural products
So my field of study and research
is the chemical and biological aspects of natural
products
and I like this field very much.

Notice how we use weak forms to help us get the rhythm right. In fact, the student tried to use weak forms sometimes:

Well, I have enrolled in the School of Chemistry
University of Sydney.

However he paused much more often than a native English speaker and this upset his rhythm. Did you notice as well that he stressed the wrong syllable in "product"? He said "proDUCT", Listen:

especially the natural products.

This also upsets the rhythm pattern. (He should have said PROduct.)

English has other ways of helping us to fit in the unstressed syllables. Listen to this sentence again:

the man's out

This time I didn't say 'the man is out'. Instead of saying the syllable "s" I attached the "s" sound to the end of man - man's

the man's out

This means I lose a syllable

"the man is out" has 4 syllables

"the man's out" has 3

but both sentences still have 2 stressed syllables and we take about the same time to say them.

Let's see how CONTRACTING helps us to say the other sentences in about the same time. Repeat after me:

the man's away

the lecturer's away

the supervisor's away

the supervisor's overseas

We will talk about CONTRACTIONS in more detail in Lesson 3.

Another way in which English helps us is by allowing us to run words together when we speak instead of pronouncing them separately and pausing between each word. By LINKING UP words we can say them more quickly. For example I don't say:

the man's out

I say:

the man's out

Here I link the consonant sound "s" to the following vowel sound. This linking up would have helped our student to use the correct rhythm. Let's listen to him again. Now let's help him to link up.

I'm very interested in Organic Chemistry, /
especially in natural products. /
So my field of study and research */
is the chemical and biological aspects of natural
products, /
and I like this field very much.

/ this sign is used to mark the boundary of a 'spoken sentence', where a speaker usually pauses.

* notice that "research is" is not linked up as an English speaker would usually pause after "research".

We will discuss linking up in more detail in Lesson 4. We use all of these features - WEAK FORMS - CONTRACTIONS and LINK UP - when we are speaking, to help us to maintain the rhythm or beat on the stressed syllables. It doesn't matter how many unstressed syllables may occur between the beats. Since the time between beats depends on which syllables are stressed, not on the number of syllables between beats, we say that English is a STRESS TIMED language.

Now let's practise some English rhythm and stress. In this dialogue Patrick is giving Barry some instructions on how to use a camera. Repeat after me:

You pull the lever
a couple of times

(let's put these together)

You pull the lever a couple of times
How many
two or three
until you see
the number zero appear

(let's put these together)

until you see the number zero appear
And after that
you just got to close the back
make sure it's properly closed
and you're ready to go
I think I've got it this time

Listen to the way this would sound in natural spoken English.

- PATRICK: Now then, you pull the lever a couple of times -
BARRY: How many?
PATRICK: Oh, two or three until you see the number zero appear.
BARRY: Oh, right.
PATRICK: And after that, you just got to close the back - make sure it's properly closed, and you're ready to go.
BARRY: Right, right, I think I've got it this time.

Now this time I'll clap with the rhythm.

- PATRICK: Now then, you pull the lever a couple of times -
BARRY: How many?
PATRICK: Oh, two or three until you see the number zero appear.
BARRY: Oh, right.
PATRICK: And after that, you just got to close the back - make sure it's properly closed, and you're ready to go.
BARRY: Right, right, I think I've got it this time.

You're probably wondering why stress is so important. Let's see what happens when we change the stress pattern in the first part of the dialogue.

You pull the lever a couple of times - this means you don't pull the cord or the switch, you pull the lever.

Let's change the stress pattern again:

You pull the lever a couple of times - this means you don't push the lever you pull it.

So stress emphasises different meanings in the sentence. Also if you place the stress on the wrong word or syllable you can upset the rhythm. For example the word supervisor has 4 syllables and the main stress is on the first syllable.

the supervisor is overseas

If we stress the second syllable this will affect the stress pattern in the rest of the sentence.

the supervisor is overseas

Well, that's enough on stress and rhythm for the moment. Later in the course you'll have some more practice.

Lesson 2: Weak Forms

We've already learnt that English is spoken with a rhythm. The beat falls on the stressed syllables and the unstressed syllables fit in between the beats. We have to say the unstressed syllables very quickly to keep the same time between the beats. So some of the unstressed syllables have their vowel sounds reduced or weakened. We call these WEAK FORMS. Usually they occur in short words like pronouns (he, you, her ...), prepositions (to, of, from ...), articles (the, an, a), conjunctions (and ...) and parts of verbs (have, are, could, can ...). These words usually don't contain as much important information as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. However this doesn't mean that you can leave them out. Listen to what happens if you leave out "an" in the following sentence:

He gave me an address

He gave me a-ddress

So you see that putting in weak forms is very important for the meaning of the sentence. In the last example the clear vowel sound "æ" (in an) is reduced to the less clear vowel sound "ʊ" which we represent with a special symbol - ə, it looks like an upside down "e". This is the most common sound found in weak forms but there are other sounds, for example, the short "ɪ" sound. This sound is found in the weak form of "me".

pass me the salt

pass "mɪ" the salt

here me is the strong form

here mɪ is the weak form.

Sometimes pronouns which begin with "h" like, him, her or his drop this "h" sound in the weak form. For example:

Invite 'im to the party

He said 'e was coming

Is 'e coming by himself

Oh no 'e's bringing 'er with 'im.

(Listen and repeat).

Now let's practise some weak forms.

Repeat after me. Betty is describing someone to a police officer. (The weak forms are underlined).

Did you get a good look at him?
What'd he look like?
as you know it was a bit dark at the time
* he looked about 35 or 36 years old
and he had short, fair hair
curly or straight?
pretty curly and very fair.
Did you notice anything else?
he seemed to have a couple of teeth missing
and a five o'clock shadow. (he was unshaven)
What about his height?
Could you tell us how tall he was?*Oh I'd say about 5 foot 10.
5 foot ten, that's about 1 metre 77 isn't it?

* Notice that the strong form of "he" and "was" is used at the beginning and end of the spoken sentence. In general the strong form of these words tends to be used in these positions. Now listen to the dialogue in natural spoken English.

POLICE OFFICER: I see.... and, er, did you get a good look at him? What'd he look like?

BETTY: Well, as you know it was a bit dark at the time - but he looked about 35 or 36 years old.

POLICE OFFICER: 35 or 36?

BETTY: Yeh.... and he had short, fair hair.

POLICE OFFICER: Curly or straight?

BETTY: Pretty curly, and very fair - blond.

POLICE OFFICER: Good. Did you notice anything else?

BETTY: Yeh - he seemed to have a couple of teeth missing.... and a five o'clock shadow.

POLICE OFFICER: What about his height - could you tell how tall he was?

BETTY: Oh, I'd say about 5 foot 10.

POLICE OFFICER: 5 foot 10, that's about 1 metre 77 isn't it? Good. Anything else?

Listen to the next part of the dialogue and underline the weak forms.

BETTY: Well, he looked about 10 stone - you know a pretty light build.
POLICE OFFICER: 10 stone.... right.... that's about sixty three. Fine. Now is there anything else about him that'll help us? His eyes? Anything unusual?
BETTY: No, don't think so. I'd say he had blue eyes.
POLICE OFFICER: Good. Good. Any-
BETTY: Oh, and he was wearing blue jeans and a striped shirt - blue and green I think it was.
POLICE OFFICER: Well, that's very good - now we've got a pretty good picture of him now... thanks a lot.

Now repeat after me.

he looked about 10 stone*
you know a pretty light build
that's about sixty three*
Now is there anything else about him
that'll help us?
No don't think so.
I'd say he had blue eyes.
Oh and he was wearing blue jeans and
a striped shirt, blue and green I think it was.
That's very good
we've got a pretty good picture of him now
thanks a lot.

* "about" is a 2 syllable word which is stressed on the second syllable. The first syllable is reduced to the vowel ə

Now we'll go on to the next lesson.

Lesson 3: Contractions

In spoken English we can contract or shorten parts of verbs. These verb parts are called auxiliary verbs or helping verbs. They are forms of the verb "to be", "to have" and "to do" and modal verbs like "can", "could", "shall", "should", "will", "would" etc. Contractions are formed by leaving out certain sounds and we show this in writing by using an apostrophe '.

For example, the contracted form of:

we are	is	we're
I would	is	I'd
she will	is	she'll

When we use contractions we must remember that they are pronounced very softly and smoothly. There is no pause between the contracted form and the following word.

If we pause then we will put in an extra sound, for example:

I'də paid my fees

This isn't English. We should say:

I'd paid my fees

Be careful not to leave off the contracted form because this can lead to misunderstandings as in the following dialogue:

We'll stay in International House.
Is it nice living there?
Well we haven't moved in yet.
Oh, you mean, you're going to move in.
Yes, next week.

In this conversation, the speaker should have said: We'll stay in International House. Then the listener would have known that they weren't already living there. Now let's practice the contractions in the following dialogue. Annette has just met her friend Mark after a long time.

Repeat after me:

(First of all we'll say the contractions by themselves and then in a word group).

isn't	- if it isn't Annette
couldn't	- couldn't be better
can't	- can't take this humidity though
it's	- it's awful
isn't	- isn't it
	- it's awful isn't it

How's	- How's Brian
he's	- he's much better now
he's	- he's back at work
that's	- that's great
haven't	- I haven't seen her myself
I'm	- I'm not sure if it's true
she'd	- she'd split up with her husband
I'd	- I'd never have expected it
that's	- that's what I thought

Now listen to the dialogue in natural spoken English and see if you can underline the weak forms as well.

(Notice the vowel sound in negative contractions (couldn't, can't etc) usually can't be weakened).

MARK: Well, if it isn't Annette. How are you?
ANNETTE: Fine, couldn't be better. How about you?
MARK: Not too bad, considering. I can't take this humidity though.
ANNETTE: No, it's awful isn't it?
MARK: How's - um - Brian these days?
ANNETTE: Oh, he's much better now - he's back at work you know.
MARK: Really! that's great.
ANNETTE: Did you hear about Julie?
MARK: No, what happened?
ANNETTE: Well, I haven't seen her myself for about 3 months, so I'm not sure if it's true - but David told me that she'd split up with her husband.
MARK: No, really? I'd never have expected it. They seemed to be getting on really well.
ANNETTE: I know - that's what I thought.
MARK: Well - you can never tell, can you?

(Now see if you identified all the weak forms)

Let's practise the dialogue.

- MARK: Well, if it isn't Annette. How are you?
- ANNETTE: Fine, couldn't be better. How about you?
- MARK: Not too bad, considering. I can't take this humidity though.
- ANNETTE: No, it's awful isn't it?
- MARK: How's - um - Brian these days?
- ANNETTE: Oh, he's much better now - back at work . .
- MARK: Oh really! that's great.
- ANNETTE: Did you hear about Julie?
- MARK: No, what happened?
- ANNETTE: Well, I haven't seen her myself for about 3 months, so I'm not sure if it's true - but David told me that she'd split up with her husband.
- MARK: No, really? I'd never have expected it. They seemed to be getting on really well.
- ANNETTE: I know - that's what I thought.
- MARK: Well - you can never tell, can you?

Now it's time to go on to the next lesson.

Lesson 4: Link Up

Linking up or allowing words to run together happens in 2 ways in English.

Firstly, we link up a word which ends in a consonant sound to a word which begins with a vowel sound:

- link up a word -

Here "link" ends in a consonant sound "k" and "up" begins with a vowel sound "u". So we link them together. It may help you to think that the "k" sound is attached to the "u" sound.

"lin-kup"

But be careful because we don't say the "k" sound as strongly as in a word like "kick".

Secondly, we link up a word which ends in a vowel sound to a word which begins with a vowel sound:

- to a word -

Usually we put in an extra sound to help us to link up between vowels. For example when we say "to a", we add a soft "w" sound between "oo" and "ə".

to a
(w)

Now let's practise the first kind of linking up. We've heard the last part of this dialogue before. Here's the first part, where Patrick starts to tell Barry how to use a camera. Repeat:

Now look, first of all
you open it up by pulling this knob
then you have to put it in here
and after that
you pull about ten or twelve centimetres out
and place the end on these little wheels
they've got tiny teeth on them

Now listen to the real dialogue and notice the link ups.

PATRICK: OK, now look, first of all you open it up by pulling this knob -
right?

BARRY: Right, OK.

PATRICK: Then you have to put it in here and make sure it's sitting neatly,
OK.

BARRY: Yeah, I got that.

PATRICK: And after that you pull about ten or twelve centimetres out - not too much - and place the end on these little wheels here, see they've got tiny teeth on them, and they go into the holes. You are with me?

BARRY: Yeah - go on.

Now let's practise the second kind of linking up using the same dialogue.

You already know that we add an extra sound to help us link together vowel sounds. Let's look first of all at where we add a "w" sound. Repeat after me:

you open (w)	you open it up (w)
go into (w)	they go into the holes (w)
go on (w)	yeah go on (w)
you are (w)	you are with me (w)

We also add 2 other sounds "j" and "r". Let's practice linking up with a "j" sound.

the end (j)	place the end on these little wheels here (j)
----------------	--------------------------------------------------

Now let's look at linking up with an "r" sound.

When we say the word "here" on its own we don't pronounce the "r" sound, instead we say "heeə" not "here". But when the word following "here", begins with a vowel we say the "r" sound and link the words together.

here and (r)	put it in here and (r)
	put it in here and make sure (r)
sure it's (r)	make sure it's sitting neatly (r)
	put it in here and make sure it's sitting neatly (r) (r)

Listen again to how Barry and Patrick link up in normal speech.

Repeat after me (TURN BACK TO THE DIALOGUE ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE)

Now we're going to practise all the ways of linking up. Listen to this dialogue, a shop assistant is trying to start a conversation with a student. Try and identify all the times that the speakers link up.

SHOP ASSISTANT: Do you mind if I sit down?

STUDENT: No - go ahead

SHOP ASSISTANT: Um - er - do you work around here?

STUDENT: No.

SHOP ASSISTANT: Oh.... I do.... I work in Centrepoint, in a men's shop.

STUDENT: Oh - is it any good?

SHOP ASSISTANT: Oh, it's not bad.... it's a very busy shop. We're flat out all day.

STUDENT: At least you wouldn't get bored.

SHOP ASSISTANT: No - no time for that. What do you do?

STUDENT: Me? I'm a student.

SHOP ASSISTANT: Really? What are you doing?

STUDENT: Psychology

SHOP ASSISTANT: Psychology! That must be fascinating, I suppose you know all about people as soon as you meet them.

STUDENT: Well not exactly.... Um. Actually I haven't started yet. We start in March.

SHOP ASSISTANT: Oh. I see.... Um... do you want a coffee, or something.

STUDENT: No, thanks all the same. Actually I think I'd better be off. Nice talking to you.

SHOP ASSISTANT: Yes, it was.

Now repeat after me:

Do you mind if I sit down?

Go ahead.

Do you work around here?

I work in Centrepoint

in a men's shop.

Is it any good?

It's a very busy shop

we're flat out all day.

I'm a student.

What are you doing?

I suppose you know all about people as soon as you meet them.

Not exactly.

Actually I haven't started yet,

we start in March.

Do you want a coffee or something?

Thanks all the same.

Actually I think I'd better be off.

Now let's see why linking up is so important. Listen to this student talking about his family:

I've go... a big family
and I have my parents
my 3 brothers
and 1 sister
my eldest brother has got marry...
and he have 3 children
and the eldest children
is aged 5 years ol...
and he study in the kindergarten
and my father is a worker
he work... in the plastic factory
and my mother is just a housewife
and my eldest brother run... a ready made clothes shop

Like many students, he leaves off the endings of some words and this can lead to misunderstandings. Linking up helps us to pronounce the endings of words. Let's help him to pronounce his word endings.

Repeat after me:

I've got a big family

I've my parents, my 3 brothers and one sister.

My eldest brother's got married and he has 3 children.

The eldest child is aged 5.

The eldest child is 5 years old and he studies in the kindergarten.

My father is a worker,

he works in a factory

and my mother is just a housewife

my eldest brother runs a ready made clothes factory.

Here's another dialogue about asking for directions. It will help you to practise pronouncing word endings. Repeat after me:

Well go up er

Up George Street?

No, up Elizabeth

Then take er

Take a bus?

No take a train from er

Town Hall?

No, from Museum

You'll have to wait er

Wait a long time?

No, wait a few minutes

You get off at er

Get off at the next stop?

No, get off at Circular Quay

Then you have to walk er

Walk a bit further?

Yes just a bit

You'll see it er

See it on the right?

No you'll see it on the left

Now listen to the dialogue:

Visitor: Excuse me, can you tell me how to get to the Opera House?

Passer By: Well go up er

V: Up George Street?

P: No, up Elizabeth. Then take er

V: Take a bus?

- P: No take a train from er
V: Town Hall?
P: No, from Museum. You'll have to wait er
V: Wait a long time?
P: No, wait a few minutes. You get off at er
V: Get off at the next stop?
P: No, get off at Circular Quay. Then you have to walk er
V: Walk a bit further?
P: Yes just a bit, and then you'll see it er
V: See it on the right?
P: No you'll see it on the left.

In fact in spoken English even when words aren't linked up they tend to run together. When a word ending in a consonant sound is followed by a word beginning with a consonant sound they can run together in 2 ways:

Firstly, they can form a consonant cluster, for example:

di-dyou go to the student bookshop?
di-dyou get a good look at him?

Secondly, the consonant ending can be swallowed up in the beginning sound. We pronounce the ending very softly and the beginning more strongly:

student bookshop

You can hardly hear the "t" sound in "student". In fact our tongue tip moves to the bony ridge behind our front teeth to make this sound but we don't release the air trapped behind our tongue until we make the "b" sound and that's why we can't hear the "t" sound very well.

But remember when there is a pause after a word which ends in a consonant we release the air and we should be able to hear the sound. Be careful, don't pronounce the final sound too strongly like this student:

So every year I teachi maybe
four hundred∂ classes

Did you notice he said "teachi" and "hundred∂". He should say:

So every year
I teach maybe four hundred classes

Now let's practise running consonant sounds together. In this dialogue Sarah is complaining to the estate agent about the flat she is renting. Repeat after me. (Try to pronounce the consonants in italics more softly and the underlined consonants more strongly. The consonant clusters are shown after the dash – Repeat:

What can I do for you?

I rent flat number three

at twenty seven Military Road

it - snot due yet

it's about the flat

* Thð-znothing wrong with that flat

well i-fyou'd just let me explain.

* Notice the weak form "thðz" for there's.

Now listen to the dialogue and put in the link ups.

AGENT: Yes, what can I do for you?

SARAH: Sarah Landen's my name. I rent flat No.3 at 27 Military Road.

AGENT: Oh yes - are you here to pay the rent?

SARAH: No. It's not due yet.... No, it's about the flat. We've got a few complaints.

AGENT: Complaints? There's nothing wrong with that flat. It's in -

SARAH: Well, if you'd just let me explain.

AGENT: Well, come on. We're pretty busy around here as you can see.

Repeat the link ups after me:

can I	what can I do for you
it's about	it's about the flat
got a	we've got a few complaints
me explain	if you'd just let me explain
come on	well come on
busy around	we're pretty busy around here
here as	pretty busy around here as you can see

Well it's time to go on to the next lesson.

Lesson 5 : Intonation

When we listen to music we recognise a tune. Listen. The tune or melody is made by the sounds or notes going up and down. In the same way languages have a tune or melody. This is called the intonation of the language. Intonation is important because it is an extra signal which helps us to understand the speaker's attitude. In English different intonation patterns used on the same word or group of words tell us what the speaker is really thinking.

Listen to the following patterns on the word "yes".

1. ↘yes this is a falling tone
2. ↗yes this is a rising tone
3. ↗yes this is also a rising tone but it doesn't go as high as the last tone
4. ✓yes this is a fall rise tone
5. ↗yes this is a rise fall tone

Now let's see what they mean. Notice that we don't usually say "yes" in natural spoken English, we say "ye".

1. Lectures begin tomorrow ↘ye here "ye" means exactly what it says.
2. Lectures begin tomorrow ↗ye this means "do they" "are you sure"
3. Lectures begin tomorrow
and my supervisor... ↗ye this means "please go on"
4. Lectures begin tomorrow ✓ye this means "I'm not sure that you're right"
5. Lectures begin tomorrow ↗yes this means "that's great"

These are only some of the possible intonation patterns in English. There are many more. However the first 2 patterns, the rising tone and the falling tone, tend to be used frequently and they are quite straightforward to learn.

If we aren't sure about something we ask someone to confirm or deny it. So we ask them a "yes/no" question. It's called a "yes/no" question because the answer has to be "yes" or "no". Generally we use a rising tone to ask this question. Listen to the following example:

Was that a Railway Square bus, just went past?

If we're talking normally and giving or asking for information, then we tend to use a falling tone:

No it was a special

However even these 2 main patterns vary according to the situation and the speakers. For example in the following dialogue the speaker uses a rising tone to give information (about 20 minutes):

you been waiting [↗]long?
about twenty [↗]minutes

Then the speaker uses a falling tone to ask a yes/no question:

So you [↘]work around here

Let's think about why the speakers use these patterns. Perhaps in the first example the speaker isn't quite sure about how long he's been waiting. So when he says

about twenty [↗]minutes

he uses a rising tone. In the second example the speaker is probably fairly sure that the person he is talking to does work in the area. So he isn't asking a true "yes/no" question but merely for confirmation of his opinion and so he uses a falling tone

So you [↘]work around here

Notice also that the sentence has the structure of a statement not a question. Well now you can see that intonation is very complex but please try and use it to make your spoken English sound interesting. If you don't change the intonation people will find it very difficult to listen to you. If I use the same tone all the time like this then people will probably fall asleep in this course.

Now listen to the following examples and repeat the intonation patterns.

↗ Just went past	was that a Railway Square bus just went past?
↘ a special	no, it was a special
↗ waiting long?	you been waiting long?
↗ twenty minutes	about twenty minutes
↘ terrible service along here	terrible service along here
↘ isn't it	terrible service along here, isn't it?
↘ sure	it sure is
↗ sometimes	I've waited 40 minutes for a bus sometimes
↘ work around here	so you work around here
↘ Post Office	at the Kingsford post office
↘ ah huh	
↗ before	I thought I'd seen you before

↘ Post Office
↘ blocks away

that's my local post office
I live a couple of blocks away

Let's listen to the real dialogue. Repeat the intonation patterns the speakers use.

1ST PERSON: Was that a Railway Square bus, just went past?
2ND PERSON: No, it was a special.
1ST PERSON: Oh.... you been waiting long?
2ND PERSON: About twenty minutes. Terrible service along here isn't it?
1ST PERSON: It sure is.... I've waited forty minutes for a bus sometimes.
2ND PERSON: So you work around here?
1ST PERSON: Yeh - at the Kingsford Post Office.
2ND PERSON: Ah huh - I thought I'd seen you before.... I... er... that's my
local Post Office
1ST PERSON: Oh.
2ND PERSON: Yeh.... I live a couple of blocks away.
1ST PERSON: Oh.

In general the speakers have a neutral, impersonal attitude to each other except at one point in the dialogue. Where does the attitude of the second speaker change? What is his attitude at this point in the conversation? You'll find the answer at the bottom of the page.

Let's listen to the beginning of the dialogue between Patrick and Barry. Do you remember Patrick was showing Barry how to load a camera.

PATRICK: No, not like that.
BARRY: Well, how? Look, I'm not quite sure. Will you go over it and tell me again.

What is Patrick's attitude?

The second speaker is very pleased with himself. He's been able to work out where he'd seen the first speaker before. His intonation shows his attitude when he says Ah huh.

What is Barry's?

Let's try to imitate them:

No not like that
well how
look I'm not quite sure
will you go over it
and tell me again

Patrick is quite emphatic that Barry is doing it the wrong way but he softens his command by hesitating. Barry is impatient and a little irritated so he uses a lot of falling tones and finally a rising tone when he asks Barry to repeat the instructions again. This rising tone softens the way he asks Patrick which is almost an order. Let's look at the intonation in one more dialogue.

You've heard this dialogue before as well. A shop assistant is trying to start a conversation with a student. Listen to the last part of the dialogue. What are the attitudes of the student and the shop assistant?

SHOP ASSISTANT: What do you do?

STUDENT: Me? I'm a student.

SHOP ASSISTANT: Really? What are you doing?

STUDENT: Psychology

SHOP ASSISTANT: Psychology! That must be fascinating, I suppose you know all about people as soon as you meet them.

STUDENT: Well not exactly.... Um. Actually I haven't started yet. We start in March.

SHOP ASSISTANT: Oh. I see.... Um... do you want a coffee, or something.

STUDENT: No, thanks all the same. Actually I think I'd better be off. Nice talking to you.

SHOP ASSISTANT: Yeah. It was.

Let's try and imitate some of the intonation patterns:

What do you do
Me I'm a student
Really what are you doing
Psychology

Psychology
That must be fascinating
not exactly
we start in March
do you want a coffee or something
no thanks all the same

The shop assistant is very friendly and enthusiastic. He uses a lot of rise fall intonation to show this. However, the student doesn't want to really talk to the shop assistant. He isn't really interested in his conversation or questions. So most of his intonation is falling. He doesn't want to encourage the conversation. He is rather sarcastic as well. We can hear this when he says - "not exactly". The extra strong stress on the second syllable of "exactly" shows his sarcasm. So you see that intonation isn't the only feature which tells us the speaker's attitude. Now listen to the dialogue again and try and repeat the intonation patterns.

Did you notice in the above examples that the intonation changed most on certain words or syllables. These words or syllables contain the information which we really want our listener to hear. We signal this by changing the intonation, by moving from one level to another. This movement takes place on one word or syllable and we give this word a special name. It's called the TONIC. Normally the tonic occurs on the last important word in a word group or spoken sentence.

the lecturer is overseas

here overseas is the tonic and intonation changes on the 3rd syllable "seas"

But we can change the position of the tonic to give emphasis to other information in the sentence:

the lecturer is overseas

here "lecturer" is the tonic. So the "lecturer" not the "tutor" or "supervisor" is overseas.

the lecturer is overseas

here "is" is the tonic. So he/she really "is" overseas.

In the next dialogue Jan and Dave are asking for directions to Chifley Square in Sydney. As you will hear, the tonic is used to identify important information in the dialogue.

Listen. In the first part of the dialogue the tonics have been underlined. See if you can underline them in the second part.

DAVE: Here's a policeman. He's bound to know. Er excuse me....

POLICE OFFICER: Yes?

DAVE: Look we're new here. We're trying to find Chifley Square

POLICE OFFICER: Chifley Square. Right. Now, are you going to walk there?

DAVE: Yes.

POLICE OFFICER: OK. It's about 10 minutes from here. You see those lights? The ones opposite Myers.... sorry, it's Grace Brothers now (Grace Brothers is a Sydney department store and it is now called Myers again)

DAVE: Yeah. Yeah.

POLICE OFFICER: Well you head towards those and you just keep going. Walk past those shops and across a few more streets - there's Market Street, and then King Street, and then you'll come to Martin Place.

JAN: Market Place?

POLICE OFFICER: Martin Place, yeah, you'll know it - it's a pedestrian zone, big pedestrian zone.

JAN: Yeah.

POLICE OFFICER: Now, you turn into Martin Place and keep going until you get to Elizabeth Street. Are you with me? Elizabeth Street is the third cross street that you go through, OK?

JAN: Yeah. Yeah.

POLICE OFFICER: Right, So then you turn left into Elizabeth Street and you go straight for a couple of blocks. Right?

DAVE: So, it's straight down Elizabeth Street....

POLICE OFFICER: That's right. Straight down Elizabeth Street. Now after a couple of minutes you'll see the Qantas Building, it's a big curved glass building, next door to the Wentworth Hotel - and Chifley Square is right there, opposite. Have you got all that?

DAVE: Yeah. Yeah. Thanks a lot.

Repeat after me:

Well head towards those

and you just keep going

Walk past those shops

and across a few more streets

there's Market Street

and then King Street
and then you'll come to Martin Place
Market place
Martin Place
you'll know it
it's a pedestrian zone, big pedestrian zone
now you turn into Martin Place
and keep going
until you get to Elizabeth Street
Are you with me?
Elizabeth Street is the third cross street
that you go through
then you turn left into Elizabeth Street
and you go straight for a couple of blocks
right
it's straight down Elizabeth Street

Notice the intonation pattern which the police officer uses when he's giving directions. He uses a rising tone when he is listing the directions:

↗ head towards those
↗ keep going
↗ walk past those shops
↗ across a few more streets
↗ Market Street
↗ King Street

and then a falling tone for the last item in the list

↘ you'll come to Martin Place

He checks that his listeners have understood with a rising tone.

↗ right

They answer with a falling tone if they're sure

↘ ye ye

and a rising tone if they're unsure

↗ straight down Elizabeth Street

Well, we're nearly at the end of the first part of the course and in the last lesson we'll practise all the features which we've talked about so far.

Lesson 6

Listen to this conversation. Dani and Ben are comparing life styles. Dani prefers the city and Ben the country.

- DANI: Hello Ben - I haven't seen you around for ages! Someone told me you'd moved to the country.
- BEN: Yeah, I live up near Bellingham now - it's so much nicer than living in the city, you know, more laid-back (*relaxed*)
- DANI: Really!? I'd've thought it'd be a bit remote you know, not as many facilities as in Sydney. And besides, don't you find it lonelier than living here?
- BEN: Well, no, I don't actually. There are plenty of people up there and it's easier to find time to relax together.
- DANI: But isn't life harder in the country - you know, don't you have to find er... work is a lot harder?
- BEN: There's quite a lot of work to do on the farm - but there're a lot of advantages - the air is fresher, it's less polluted and the environment is more beautiful - and you can live more cheaply and more quietly.
- DANI: Don't you ever get bored? I mean isn't it more boring than it is here? I mean there aren't any theatres, cinemas, concerts - that kind of thing.
- BEN: Well that's true - but you make your own entertainment, get into playing music, singing, reading etc. You have enough time to do that - to be more creative.
- DANI: I don't think I could take it. I need the city - when I go to the country I get so bored I want to come home. It's too quiet for me. I miss the convenience of living in the city. I find life here more interesting.
- BEN: Well for me it's the other way round - the city's too hectic. I rush around too much, I get exhausted and never really do anything. In the city I had so little time to relax. Life in the city's more hectic and not so healthy.
- DANI: I do agree that the country's more beautiful but I don't think I could live there. There's too little for a person like me to do. And country people are more conservative and provincial.
- BEN: Oh look, I don't agree with that, they're friendlier and more tolerant than city people.
- DANI: What about the food up there - is it really as fresh and healthy as they say?
- BEN: Well, it's certainly fresher and healthier than it is here. And there's a lot less traffic so the air is cleaner. Everything's more.... well it's more natural I suppose.

Exercise A : Weak forms and contractions

We're going to listen again to the first part of the conversation. The contractions are easy to identify. So we'll practise them first. Repeat after me:

I haven't	I haven't seen you around
you'd	you'd moved to the country
it's	it's so much nicer
I'd've	I'd've thought
it'd	it'd be a bit remote
	I'd've thought it'd be a bit remote
don't	don't you find it lonelier
	I don't actually

Now listen and underline the weak forms.

DANI: Hello Ben - I haven't seen you around for ages! Someone told me you'd moved to the country.

BEN: Yeah, I live up near Bellingham now - it's so much nicer than living in the city, you know, more laid-back.

DANI: Really!? I'd've thought it'd be a bit remote you know, not as many facilities as in Sydney. And besides, don't you find it lonelier than living here?

BEN: Well, no, I don't actually. There are plenty of people up there and it's easier to find time to relax together.

Now repeat the weak forms after me.

I haven't seen you round for ages
you'd moved to the country
it's so much nicer than living in the city
you know more laid-back
it'd be a bit remote you know
not as many facilities as in Sydney
and besides
don't you find it lonelier than living here
There are plenty of people up there
and it's easier to find time to relax together

Did you manage to get all the weak forms?

Exercise B:

Now we're going to revise linking up. Look at the script and listen to the second part of the conversation again. Can you identify the link ups?

- DANI: But isn't life harder in the country - you know, don't you have to find er...
work is a lot harder?
- BEN: There's quite a lot of work to do on the farm - but there're a lot of
advantages - the air is fresher, it's less polluted and the environment is
more beautiful - and you can live more cheaply and more quietly.
- DANI: Don't you ever get bored? I mean isn't it more boring than it is here? I
mean there aren't any theatres, cinemas, concerts - that kind of thing.
- BEN: Well that's true - but you make your own entertainment, get into playing
music, singing, reading etc. You have enough time to do that - to be more
creative.

Now repeat after me:

But isn't life harder in the country
don't you have to find -er
work is a lot harder
there's quite a lot of work
to do on the farm
there're a lot of advantages
the air is fresher
it's less polluted and the environment is more beautiful
you can live more cheaply and more quietly
don't you ever get bored
isn't it more boring
than it is here
there aren't any theatres
that kind of thing
your own entertainment
get into playing music
you have enough time to do that

Let's practise running consonant sounds together as well.

isn't life harder

don-tyou have to find -er

work is a lot *harder

a lot of work to do on the farm

don-tyou ever get bored

that - strue

playing music

*"h" sounds are usually much softer than in this example and get swallowed up by the consonant ending.

Exercise C : Stress and Rhythm

Listen for the words which are stressed the most and underline them. They're also the words where the intonation pattern usually changes, that is, the TONICS. But notice that sometimes other words are stressed strongly too.

We're going to listen to the next part of the dialogue:

DANI: I don't think I could take it. I need the city - when I go to the country I get so bored I want to come home. It's too quiet for me. I miss the convenience of living in the city. I find life here more interesting.

BEN: For me it's the other way round - the city's too hectic. I rush around too much, I get exhausted and never really do anything. In the city I had so little time to relax. Life in the city's more hectic and not so healthy.

Now listen and repeat:

(stressed syllables are underlined; tonics in **bold**)

I don't think I could take it

I need the city

When I go to the country I get so bored

I want to come **home**

It's too quiet for me

I miss the convenience of living in the city
I find life here more interesting
For me it's the other way round
the city's too hectic
I rush around too much I get exhausted
and never really do anything
In the city I had so little time to relax
life in the city's more hectic
and not so healthy

Exercise D : Intonation

In the last part of the conversation listen carefully to the intonation patterns and highlight the tonics. Try and put in the arrows to show the intonation patterns.

- DANI: I do agree that the country's more beautiful but I don't think I could live there. There's too little for a person like me to do. And country people are more conservative and provincial.
- BEN: Oh look, I don't agree with that, they're friendlier and more tolerant than city people.
- DANI: What about the food up there - is it really as fresh and healthy as they say?
- BEN: Well, it's certainly fresher and healthier than it is here. And there's a lot less traffic so the air is cleaner. Everything's more.... well it's more natural I suppose.

Now listen and repeat (The stressed words are underlined and the tonics are in **bold**):

I do agree the country's more **beautiful**
but I don't think I could **live there**
There's too little for a person like me to **do**
and country people are **more** conservative and provincial
Oh look I don't agree with **that**
they're **friendlier** and **more** tolerant than city **people**
What about the **food** up **there**

Is it really as fresh and healthy as they say?
Well it's certainly fresher and healthier than it is here
And there's a lot less traffic
So the air's cleaner
Everything's more
Well it's more natural I suppose.

Both speakers are very interested in the topic under discussion. They are also quite sure of their opinions. So they use a lot of rise-fall tones to emphasise their point of view. However 2 other features besides intonation are used to show their attitudes.

They are:

- 1) extra strong stress: the speakers give strong stress to other words even though intonation does not change very much on these words.
- 2) wide voice range: the difference between the highest pitch and the lowest pitch they use is quite large. This means they sound interesting.

Besides rise-fall tones, Dani uses a rising tone to ask a "yes-no" question about the food. Ben answers with a rise-fall tone on "here". He's being rather sarcastic and he's suggesting that of course the food is much better than in the city. Ben finishes on a rising tone as he searches for a way to summarise country life. The rising tone reflects this search and the fact that he's not very satisfied with the word "natural" which he's chosen.

So we've come to the end of the first part of this course. In the second part we'll be talking about individual sounds but we'll also be practising connected speech. So you'll be practising all of the features you've just learnt in the second part of the course as well.

PART 2 : THE MICRO LEVEL

We won't be able to practise all the consonant and vowel sounds, so we've selected ones which we think are most difficult for you.

There are 5 lessons in this part. They are:

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Lesson 7 : Consonant Sounds: Fricatives

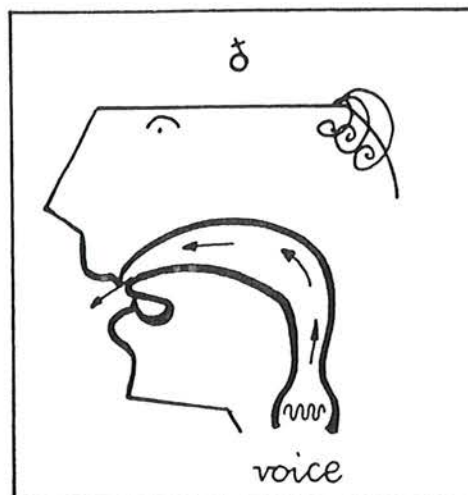
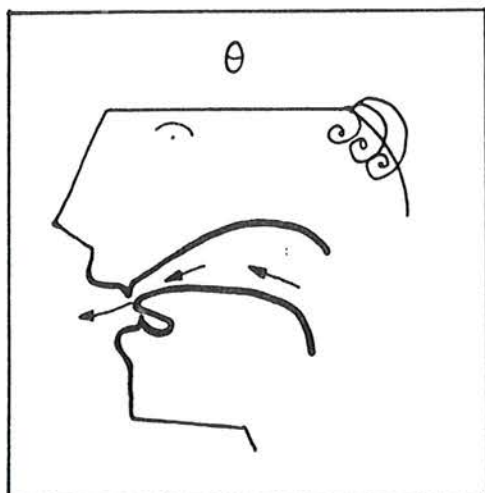
The first group of consonant sounds we will look at are called fricative sounds because they are made by friction. Friction is produced when air passes over our tongue, teeth or lips or a combination of these obstacles. The sounds that we will look at are the "th" sounds, the "v" sound and the "sh" sound.

The "th" sounds

Many Asian languages don't have these sounds and so you may have some difficulty pronouncing them. The "th" sounds are represented by 2 symbols which you can see in the script. /θ/ as in "thin" and /ð/ as in "the".

To make the θ sound, put the tip of your tongue just between your teeth, a little bit nearer your top front teeth. Now push the air out of your mouth. The movement of air over your tongue and between your teeth makes the sound θ - "thin".

ð is made in the same way. The only difference is that you use your voice to make it. This means that your vocal chords are vibrating to make ð.



You can feel your vocal chords vibrating. Place your fingertips on your larynx - that's the lump at the front of your neck. Now pronounce θ and ð alternately θ.... ð.... Can you feel your vocal chords vibrating when you say ð? Also try putting your fingers in your ears when you say θ and ð and you can hear the buzzing of the vibrations in your head when you say ð.... Try it.

Listen to the problems these speakers have in pronouncing these sounds.

On the seventh of July this year

Did you notice how ð in 'this' sounded like "d"? Also link up would have helped this speaker to say "seventh" more easily. Repeat:

On the seventh of July this year.

Listen again to another speaker:

July eleven this year

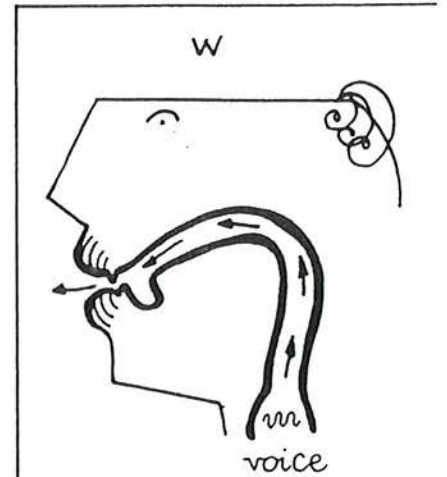
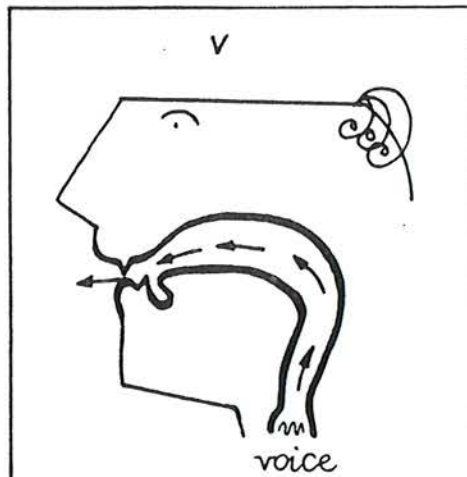
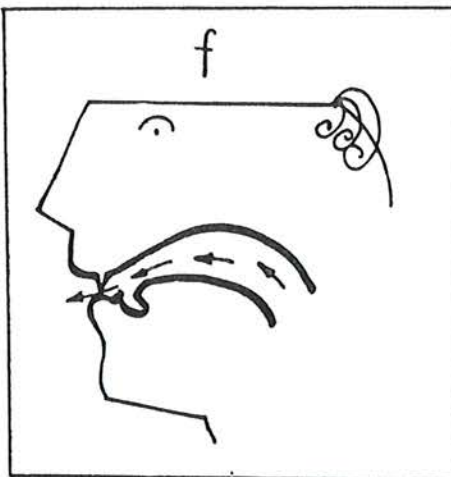
He also says "d" for ð and has problems with the ending of "eleventh". Repeat:

July the eleventh this year

Notice that when we say "eleventh" and "this" together we only need to make one "th" sound, ð. The θ at the end of "eleventh" is swallowed up by the ð at the beginning of "this".

The "v" sound

This is another fricative which you may find difficult. It is produced in the same way as f. But f is unvoiced and v is voiced. Place your front teeth lightly on your lower lip and push the air out through your mouth. This is f. Now vibrate your vocal chords to produce v. Remember to keep your teeth on your lower lip. If you don't, you may say w instead of v, "wowel" instead of "vowel".



The "sh" sound

The last fricative sound we will practice is "sh", as in "she". The symbol for "sh" is in your script /ʃ/. To make this sound the most important thing to remember is to push out your lips or make them round. But don't push them out too much. If you make the s sound and then the ʃ sound you can feel your lips moving outwards.

For example: s - "see" ʃ - "she"
 see she

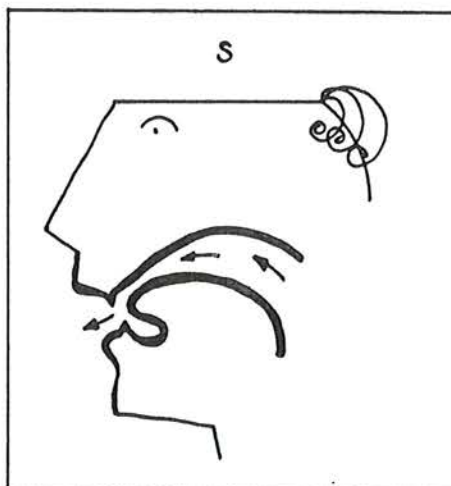
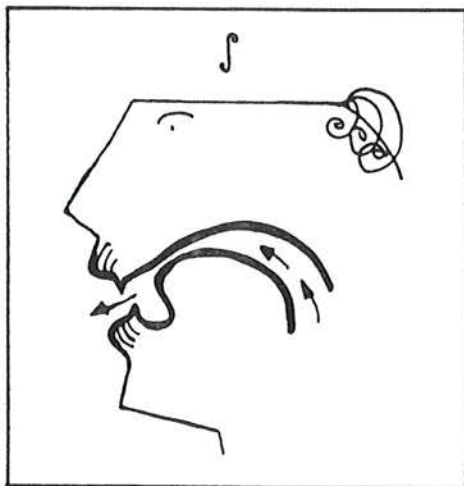
Now we're going to listen to a speaker who has difficulty making this sound - listen:

Yes, I should say it's been quite difficult

He pronounces ʃ as s.

Repeat:

ʃ - should - I should say it's been quite difficult



All of these sounds can occur at the beginning and end of a syllable and also in combinations with other consonants. We will practise all of these situations in the following dialogue.

Listen and underline the sounds θ, ð, v, ʃ and s.

Helen has just had her hair done. She meets Keith.

Hi Helen!
Hi!
Love your hair!
Do you?
Looks great. Where'd you get it done?
Slick Snips - you know in Market Street.
The colours are wild - they sort of clash with your eyes but go really well with your clothes.
Gee thanks.... I had a bit of trouble deciding what the third colour would be.... I mean the green and mauve were easy, but the silver took a bit of thinking about.
Wow. It's unreal, it really is! Those spikes!
Yeh.... but I wonder what they'll think of it at work on Monday.

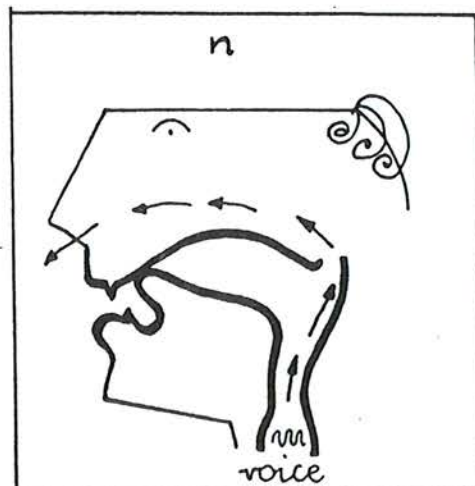
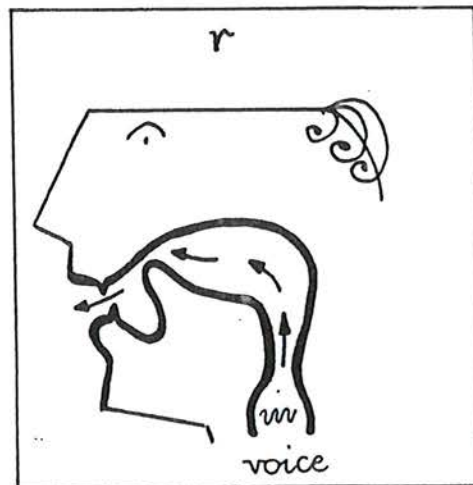
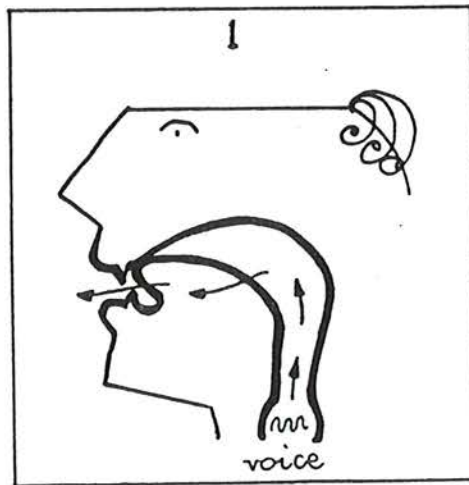
Repeat after me:

Love	love your hair
<u>S</u> lick <u>S</u> nips	<u>S</u> lick <u>S</u> nips in Market <u>S</u> treet
<u>T</u> he	<u>T</u> he colours are wild
cl <u>a</u> sh, s <u>o</u> rt of	<u>T</u> hey s <u>o</u> rt of cl <u>a</u> sh with your eyes
* cl <u>o</u> th <u>e</u> s	go really well with <u>u</u> your cl <u>o</u> th <u>e</u> s
<u>t</u> h <u>a</u> nks	gee <u>t</u> h <u>a</u> nks
<u>t</u> he <u>t</u> h <u>i</u> rd colour	what <u>t</u> he <u>t</u> h <u>i</u> rd colour would be
mau <u>v</u> e	the green and mau <u>v</u> e were <u>e</u> asy
<u>s</u> il <u>v</u> er took a bit of	
<u>t</u> h <u>i</u> nking about	but the <u>s</u> il <u>v</u> er took a bit of <u>t</u> h <u>i</u> nking about
<u>t</u> h <u>o</u> se	<u>t</u> h <u>o</u> se <u>s</u> p <u>i</u> kes
<u>t</u> h <u>e</u> 'll <u>t</u> h <u>i</u> nk	I wonder what <u>t</u> h <u>e</u> 'll <u>t</u> h <u>i</u> nk of it

* Notice that in spoken English we usually pronounce the θ sound in "clothes" as "s".
It's much easier for you to do that as well - close, goes well with your close.

Lesson 8 : Consonant Sounds: l, r and n

These sounds can be confused because the tip of the tongue is found in the same part of the mouth for all of them. This is the area near or touching the bony ridge behind your front teeth. This ridge is called the alveolar ridge. For both l and n, you rest the tip of your tongue on this bony ridge. But when you make the n sound, you trap the air behind your tongue and force it to go out through your nose instead of your mouth. When you make the l sound, the air escapes around the sides of your tongue and through your mouth. For the r sound, lower the tip of your tongue from the bony ridge and move it slightly back and allow the air to flow over it and out of your mouth.



All of these sounds combine with other consonants and often these combinations cause problems. Let's listen to some of these difficulties.

there's a lot of mountains and spring
river and South China is quite warm
than the North China
so you know even in the winter
we can see the flowers and the green grass
I like my home place, home town very much

Listen again to the same problem:

and after I applied to go to Australia
to do my higher degree

Did you notice that this speaker has most difficulty with the l sound in consonant clusters, for example with fl in "flower".

Let's try and help him to improve his pronunciation.

Repeat after me:

Springs, rivers	there's a lot of mountains and springs, rivers and South China is quite warm
North China	Warmer than North China
flowers and green grass	so you know even in the winter we can see flowers and green grass
home place	I like my home place very much
applied	I applied to go to Australia to do my higher degree

Now listen to the following dialogue and underline the l, r and n sounds.

GERRI: What do you reckon Phillip. I mean how do I look?

PHILLIP: Well to be honest - you don't look too fit.

GERRI: Come on - it's not that bad is it? Christ I've been - well, what do you do to keep yourself so trim? (trim = fit, slim)

PHILLIP: Exercise is the first thing. If you want to take my advice, I'd say that you ought to start running.

GERRI: Do you really think it'd do me much good?

PHILLIP: Course! What do you think Sal. You get up for a run every morning don't you?

- SALLY: Yeh - well as often as I can. Makes me feel terrific. But exercise isn't the only thing.
- GERRI: I know but it's hard enough even doing that I mean....
- SALLY: Really, you need to cut down on food, you know. What do you weigh?
- GERRI: About 75 kilos.
- SALLY: Well have you ever thought about going on a diet?
- PHILLIP: Course she has haven't you? But the hard thing is sticking to one. I know, I used to be overweight - about 15 stone....
- SALLY: You? God, you'd have no idea, now.
- PHILLIP: That's what I mean - diet, and you have to really stick to it, and exercise. It's hard work.
- GERRI: Maybe I should go on a crash diet. What do you think?
- PHILLIP: No - I don't think a crash diet is such a good idea.
- SALLY: No - you should really take these things slowly. Plan it.
- GERRI: Well then a really strenuous exercise programme? I mean what would you do in my....

Repeat after me

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| reckon, Phillip | What do you reckon Phillip? |
| mean, look | I mean how do I look? |
| well, honest | well to be honest |
| look | you don't look too fit |
| Christ | Christ, I've been well |
| trim | what do you do to keep yourself so trim? |
| | exercise is the first thing |
| want | if you want to take my advice |
| start running | I'd say that you ought to start running |
| really | Do you really think it'd do me much good? |
| course, Sal | Course, what do you think Sal? |
| for a run | |
| every morning | you get up for a run every morning don't you |
| well | well as often as I can |
| feel terrific | makes me feel terrific |
| only thing | but exercise isn't the only thing |
| I know | |
| enough | I know but it's hard enough even doing that |
| really | |
| need | really you need |
| cut down | you need to cut down on food you know |

on a diet

haven'ut you

crash diet

really slowly

plan

strenuous

programme

have you ever thought of going on a diet?

course she has haven'ut you

maybe I should go on a crash diet

I don'ut think a crash diet is such a good idea

you should really take things slowly

plan it

well then a really strenuous exercise

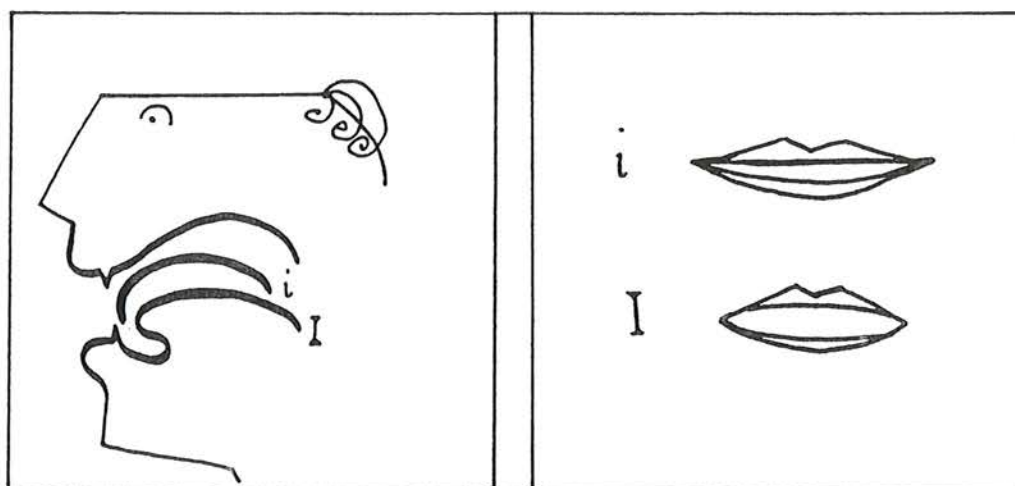
programme

Vowel Sounds

Describing how vowel sounds are made is more difficult than describing consonant sounds. We have to consider the position of our tongue and the shape of our mouth and lips.

Lesson 9 : Long versus Short Vowel Sounds

It is helpful to think of vowel sounds in English as long or short. When the front part of the tongue is raised towards the front top part of the mouth, we can make 2 sounds. One is the long /i/ sound as in "beat" or "sheep" and the other is the short /ɪ/ sound as in "bit" or "ship". Notice how you stretch you lips and make them tense to say i "beat" and relax them to say I "bit". You must also open your mouth a little bit more to say "bit".



Let's listen to some of the problems speakers have with these sounds:

the material from leaving things
such as animal and plant
flower or you know the tree
this things

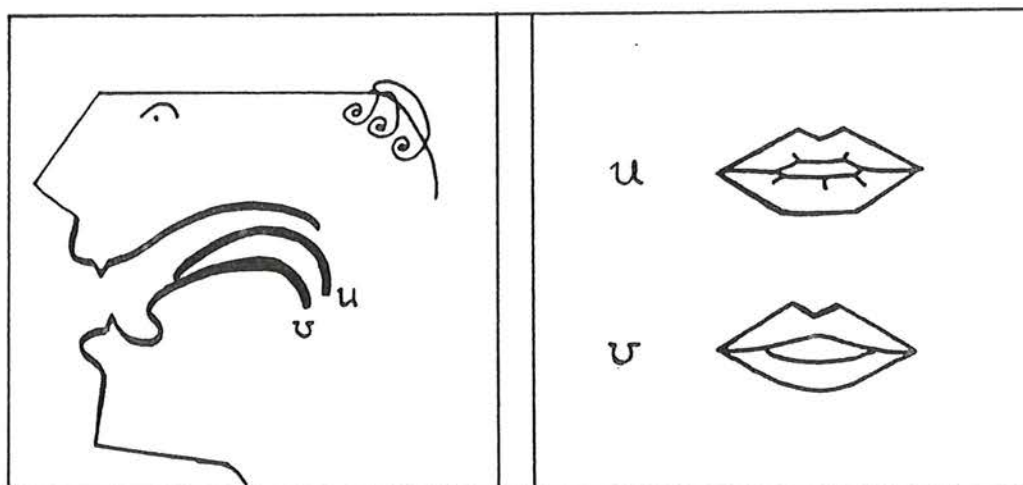
Here the speaker says "leaving things" instead of "living things" and "this" instead of "these".

Repeat:

the material from living things
such as animals and plants
flowers or trees
these things

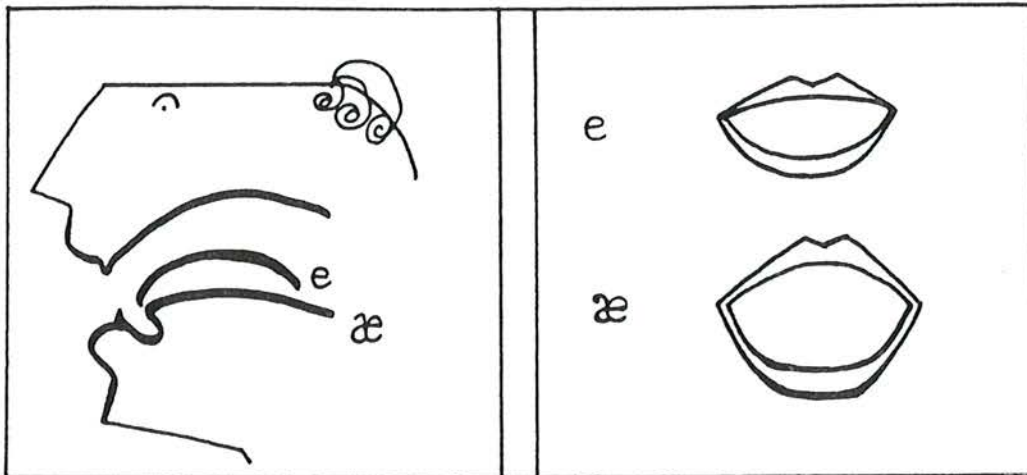
When the back of the tongue is raised towards the top part of the back of the mouth, we can make 2 sounds. One is the long /u/ ("oo") sound as in "pool" or "fool", and the other is the short /ʊ/ sound (written /ʊ/ in phonetic symbols) as in "pull" or "full".

Notice how you push your lips out and make them tense to say u, "pool" and relax them to say ʊ, "pull".



Let's see what happens to our lips when we say i as in "feel" and u as in "fool" alternately. "feel...fool...feel...fool...". To make these sounds our lips move backwards and forwards. Our lips are stretched to make the i sound and then we push them out and round them to make the u sound. You can feel the same lip movement if you say I as in "fill" and ʊ as in "full" alternately. fill...full...fill...full. But the movement isn't so strong.

We will look at one more short sound which you may find difficult because it isn't found in some Asian languages. This is the æ sound as in "man". To say this sound you must relax your lips and open your mouth much wider than for the sounds we've just practised. Your tongue is almost flat in your mouth.



Now listen to the following dialogue as many times as you like and try and pick out all of these sounds.

1. i as in "sheep"
2. I as in "ship"
3. u as in "fool"
4. ʊ as in "full"
5. æ as in "man"

Remember, English spelling is misleading, so you must listen carefully.

PHILLIP: Hello Bob, how are you today?
BOB: Not bad Phillip. How's yourself?
PHILLIP: Oh, fine. Look, I've been meaning to ask you - what are you doing on Saturday week?
BOB: Nothing, I don't think, why?
PHILLIP: Well we're having a get together at our place in the evening - a barbie. Would you like to come?
BOB: Sure. Love to come. Who else are you inviting?
PHILLIP: Oh, just a few friends from the office, some old friends. Actually I wanted to ask the new boss. Here she is now. 'Scuse me a second.
Ah - scuse me Mrs. Wilson, have you got a moment?
MRS. WILSON: Sure - what is it?
PHILLIP: Ahh - I was wondering if you and your husband would like to come to a barbecue at my place on the 5th of December. Just a few friends and a few people from the office.
MRS. WILSON: Well - I'd love to Phillip - but we've arranged to go away that weekend I'm afraid. Perhaps some other time.
PHILLIP: Yeah - well, sorry you can't make it. Maybe next time.

Repeat

<u>you</u>	how are <u>you</u> today	(Notice in some situations the weak form of you, /jə/ is used instead of /ju/).
<u>bad</u>	not <u>bad</u> Phillip	
<u>Phillip</u>		
<u>look</u>		
<u>been meaning</u>	<u>Look</u> I've <u>been meaning</u> to	(Notice the weak form of "been" is used here /bɪn/).
<u>Saturday</u>	What are you <u>doing</u> on	(Notice the use of /jə/ here)
<u>week</u>	<u>Saturday week</u>	
<u>nothing</u>		
<u>think</u>	<u>nothing</u> , I don't <u>think</u>	
<u>in the evening</u>	well, we're <u>having</u> a get	(Here the vowel sounds in "having" and "at" are both weak forms)
	together at our place <u>in the evening</u>	
<u>barbie</u>	a <u>barbie</u>	
<u>would</u>	<u>would</u> you like to come	
<u>who else</u>	<u>who</u> else are <u>you</u> <u>inviting</u>	
<u>you inviting</u>		
<u>few</u>	a <u>few</u> friends from the	
<u>office</u>	<u>office</u>	
<u>actually</u>	<u>actually</u> I wanted <u>to ask</u>	
<u>new</u>	the <u>new</u> boss	
<u>she is</u>	here <u>she is</u>	
<u>scuse me</u>	<u>scuse me</u> a second	
<u>Mrs Wilson</u>	<u>scuse me Mrs Wilson</u>	(Mrs /mɪsɪz/)
<u>you</u>	have <u>you</u> got a moment	
<u>it</u>	what <u>is it</u>	
<u>wondering if</u>		

<u>you</u> and your	I was wondering <u>if</u> <u>you</u> and your husband
<u>barbecue</u>	I was wondering <u>if</u> <u>you</u> and your husband <u>would</u> like to come to a <u>barbecue</u>
<u>fifth</u>	at my place on the <u>fifth</u> of
<u>December</u>	<u>December</u>
<u>people</u>	a <u>few</u> friends and a <u>few</u> <u>people</u> from the <u>office</u>
<u>weekend</u>	we've arranged to go away that <u>weekend</u> I'm afraid
<u>perhaps</u>	<u>perhaps</u> some other time
<u>sorry</u>	well <u>sorry</u> you can't make <u>it</u>

Now let's go on to the next lesson.

Lesson 10 : "or" and "er"

Now we're going to look at 2 long vowel sounds which are often confused. We've written them down here as "or" / ɔ / and "er" / ɜ / and you can see the phonetic symbols for these sounds in the script. There are many ways of writing these sounds in English. Let's look at some examples.

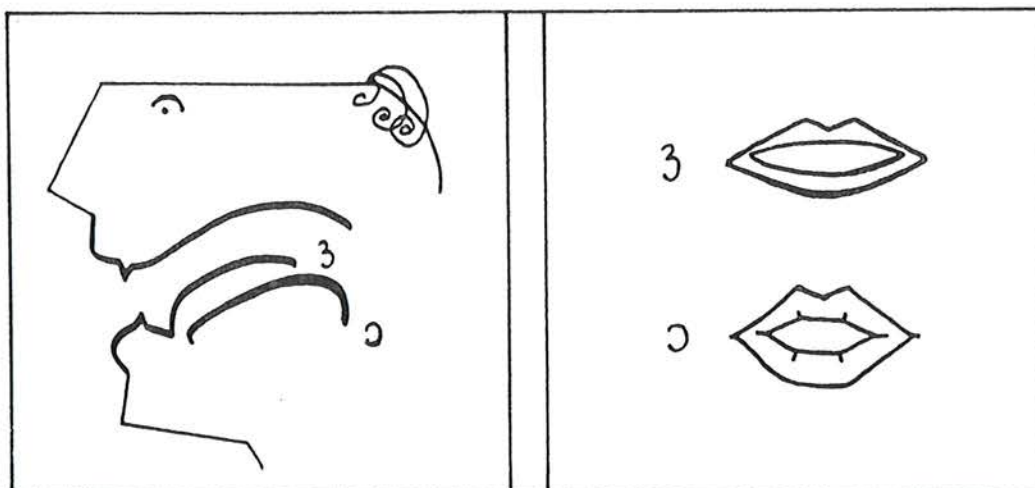
The "or" sound is found in:

law	door
war	pour
for	walk

The "er" sound is found in:

were	whirl
world	burn
pearl	work

How do we make these sounds? Well the "or" sound is made with the back of our tongue raised towards the middle back part of our mouth. We push our lips out slightly and open our mouth. The "er" sound is made more towards the middle part of the mouth. Our lips are slightly stretched and our mouth less open. Look at the diagrams.



Let's listen to some of the problems speakers have with these sounds.

I think the western world
especially Australia...

here the speaker is attempting to use the "or" sound "world" instead of the "er" sound - "world".

Repeat:

³wold Western ³wold

listen again:

my father is a worker

he works in the plastic factory

Here the speaker is using the "or" sound - "work" instead of the "er" sound - "work".

Repeat:

³worker ³walker

³work ³walk

my father is a ³worker

my father is a ³walker

he ³works in a plastics factory

he ³walks in the bush

listen again:

since China carry...out

a polic... of open to the wor...

it's easy to get a passport

Here the speaker uses the "or" sound instead of the "er" sound. He says "open to the war" instead of "open to the world". Also his problem is made worse because he doesn't link up. Repeat:

³war, ³were, ³wold

open to the world

a policy of open to the world

a policy of war

a war policy

a world policy

Now link up:

carried out - since China carried out
a policy of - a policy of open to the world
world it's - open to the world it's easy*
it's easy - it's easy to get a passport.

* the link up between "world" and "its" is optional. The speaker could have paused here.

Now we're going to listen to another dialogue. You've listened to the first part of this dialogue before. Sally and Phillip are giving Gerri advice about losing weight. Underline and label the "or" and "er" sounds.

SALLY: I wouldn't go doing that. At your age.... it's like the diet....

PHILLIP: Yeh, you have to be careful.

SALLY: Look, why don't we all do something together? You know - um - we all work here in the same place. Maybe we could....

PHILLIP: Yeh, good idea, that way we could give you a hand, encourage you.... keep an eye on what you eat.

GERRI: Well, do you think that'd work?

SALLY: Ah, that depends on you - nobody can make you fit - I mean it's all up to you.

GERRI: That's the whole problem, We....

PHILLIP: You mean it's your problem. Look, let's face it - we can suggest all sorts of exercises, and tell you which foods to cut down on, but really what you have to do is pull your finger out and decide that you really want to get yourself into good nick (nick=condition).

GERRI: Oh, come on, don't....

SALLY: No, he's right....

Repeat. The link ups have been put in to help you.

your age at your age
all why don't we all do something together

³
work

we all work here

do you think that'd work

it's all up to you

it's your problem (here "your" is given extra stress)

³
sorts of

we can suggest all sorts of exercises

³
finger out

pull your finger out (here the vowel sound in "your" /jɔ/ is weakened to /jə/)

Now here's another dialogue to give you more practice. The customer is complaining to the shop assistant about the jeans she's bought. Underline and label the "or" and "er" sounds.

- SALES ASSISTANT: Yes can I help you?
CUSTOMER: Yes - it's about these jeans?
SALES ASSISTANT: Yes?
CUSTOMER: Well - I bought them here only on Saturday.
SALES ASSISTANT: Yes?
CUSTOMER: And they've shrunk.
SALES ASSISTANT: Shrunk - course they haven't shrunk.
CUSTOMER: Well they have. Just take a look at them.
SALES ASSISTANT: Mm. I see. Well you can't have bought them here then.
Our jeans --
CUSTOMER: I did. Look here's the receipt.
SALES ASSISTANT: Oh, Well, you know there's really nothing I can do about it.
CUSTOMER: Well, I'd like my money back.
SALES ASSISTANT: Money back?
CUSTOMER: Yes I mean the jeans are only 3 days old and I can't fit into them anymore.
SALES ASSISTANT: But I can't give you your money back - you've washed them!
(here "your" is weakened to /jə/)
CUSTOMER: Look - be reasonable - I mean it's not my fault they've shrunk.
SALES ASSISTANT: Yes it is - you washed them!
CUSTOMER: Oh really. There is nothing on this label that says they can't be washed. I think I'd better talk to the manager.
SALES ASSISTANT: I am the manager.

Repeat

bought

I bought them here

of course

of course they haven't

Well you can't have bought them here

any more

I can't fit into them any more

fault

it's not my fault they've shrunk

talk

I'd better talk to the manager

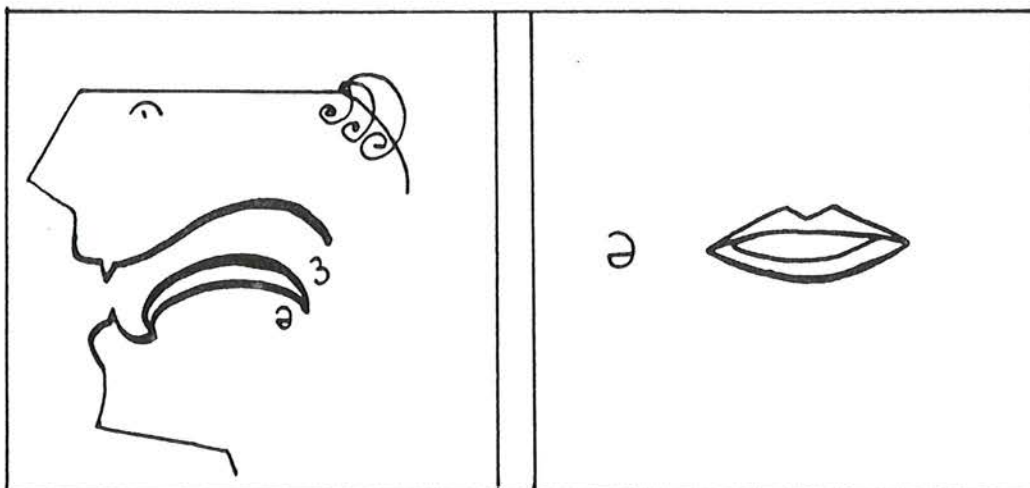
Lesson 11 : the "ugh" /ð/ sound

Well, this is the last lesson in the course and we're going to look at a vowel sound which you've already learnt about. This is the "ugh" /ð/ sound which we find in weak forms. It helps us to give the correct rhythm and stress to a sentence. In the same way it is used in many words in English which have more than one syllable, to give these words the correct stress pattern. Many students find it difficult to work out which syllable is stressed in English words because there are so many different patterns. Let's look at one word as an example:

"ecoNOmic" has 4 syllables and the 3rd syllable is stressed most.
The vowel in the second syllable is reduced to ə.

Now let's change the adjective "economic" into the noun form:

"eKOnomy" has 4 syllables and the 2nd syllable is stressed most.
The vowel in the third syllable is reduced to ə.



Let's listen to some of the problems speakers have in this area:

Our department is department of Health Statistics
So I teach statistics in China, Medical University.

Here the speaker gives equal stress to all the syllables in "statistics". He should have made the first vowel a weak form - stə - "staTIStics".

the department of Health Statistics
I teach statistics in China

Listen again:

just to separate some components
and this component is very useful to the medicine
or other things
for the perfume
and cosmetics

Here the speaker has difficulty saying "component". Can you hear which syllable is stressed and which syllable contains the weak vowel ə? "component". Well, the second syllable is stressed "comp**ON**ent" and the first syllable contains the weak vowel "cə**m**PO**n**ent". What about the other words which the speaker finds difficult:

"perfume" and "cosmetics", "perfume" has 2 syllables per-fume and the first syllable is stressed - PERfume.

"Cosmetics" has 3 syllables, cos-me-tics, and the second syllable is stressed - "cos**M**etics".

Did you notice how the speaker said "to SEparate". He said "SEparate", "to SEparate". He used the pronunciation for the adjective form "SEparate" - "SEparate tables". He should have said "SEpar**R**ATE". In the adjective form, "SEpə**r**ət", the first syllable is stressed and the second and third syllables are reduced to weak forms. In the verb form "to SEpə**R**ATE", the last syllable is stressed as well as the first and so the vowel is not weakened in the last syllable.

to SEpə**R**ATE

to SEpə**R**ATE some components

Listen to the following dialogue. You've heard part of it before. Sarah is complaining to the estate agent about her flat. Look at all the words which contain more than one syllable. Underline the syllable which is stressed most and put the ə symbol over any vowel sounds which are weakened.

AGENT: Look, that flat is not expensive! I could show you....

SARAH: That's not the point. It's about the gas hot water heater. I think it's dangerous and could do with a service.

AGENT: The hot water heater - it was serviced only 6 months ago!

SARAH: Yeah, but as you know it's a pretty old model - in fact it could do with a replacement.

AGENT: Well I'm sorry that's out of the question.

SARAH: Then you'll get it serviced?

AGENT: Oh all right. Now....is there anything else?

SARAH: So that's the window locks, the walls, the taps and the water heater. It'd be good if someone could come this week.

AGENT: Fine, fine, this week.

SARAH: When?

AGENT: Oh, I'll come myself with the handyman on er, um, Tuesday - in the morning; we'll let ourselves in, OK?

SARAH: Fine. Thanks a lot. I'll see you later.

AGENT: Bloody tenants. They know all their bloody rights these days.

Repeat

expensive the flat is not expensive

^ə
about

^ə ^ə
water heater it's about the gas hot water heater

^ə ^ə
dangerous I think it's dangerous

service could do with a service

serviced only it was serviced only six months

^ə
ago

pretty

model it's a pretty old model

^ə
replacement it could do with a replacement

sorry I'm sorry

^ə
question that's out of the question

anything is there anything else

window that's the window locks

someone it'd be good if someone could come this week

myself I'll come myself

handyman with the handyman

Tuesday on a Tuesday

ourselves we'll let ourselves in

^ə
later I'll see you later

bloody tenants

Well, now we've come to the end of this pronunciation course. I hope you've enjoyed it and learnt more about how English is spoken. Keep practising and good luck.

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