

# **Advanced Pronunciation**

Tips for Refining your Pronunciation of American English

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The audio recordings for this book can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/2rs9bd4n>

# Front Matter

## ***Acknowledgements***

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# Front Matter

## *Overview*

This class will focus on the details of American English pronunciation in conversations and sentences. We will focus on the small individual sounds as well as stress and intonation. To take this class, you should be able to hold everyday conversations in English on basic topics.

Sounding like a native speaker isn't the most important thing. What's important is speaking clearly and fluently. However, if you want to speak more like a native speaker (and understand how native speakers talk), this course should help you.

This textbook is divided into 3 sections:

- The first section focuses on individual, small sounds, like vowels and consonants. In this section we will talk about pronouncing sounds correctly, simplifying sounds to pronounce them more easily, and linking sounds.
- The second section focuses on word stress. Word stress is probably more important than vowels and consonants. We will learn rules for pronouncing nouns, verbs, adjectives, and numbers correctly.
- The third section focuses on rhythm and intonation. In this section, we will focus on speaking smoothly. We will learn how to use pitch, intonation, and stress to make sentences sound more natural.

# Unit 1: Reviewing Sounds

## Vowels and Consonants

### Focus of the Unit

A language's pronunciation has two main parts: 1) the small sounds that make up words and 2) the music and rhythm of how the words are said. In this unit, we will look at the first one, including the phonetic symbols for the sounds.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Review English vowels and consonants so you can pronounce them correctly
- 2) Recognize IPA symbols

### Warm-Up

**Exercise 1: Listen and check the phrase you hear. Then answer the question below.**

Read each pair aloud. Which sound the same to you or your partner?

#	A	B
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> use the long number	<input type="checkbox"/> use the wrong number
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> a white ship	<input type="checkbox"/> a white sheep
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> a sick feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> a thick feeling
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> watch out for the curb	<input type="checkbox"/> watch out for the curve
5.	<input type="checkbox"/> I need a new collar	<input type="checkbox"/> I need a new color
6.	<input type="checkbox"/> a different type of wine	<input type="checkbox"/> a different type of vine
7.	<input type="checkbox"/> did he heal?	<input type="checkbox"/> did he hear?
8.	<input type="checkbox"/> losing face	<input type="checkbox"/> losing faith

## International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

- In English, there are more sounds than letters of the alphabet.
- English spelling can be very confusing. You can't know how a word is pronounced just by looking at it.
- This course uses symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet.
- These symbols help us read and write the exact pronunciation.
- IPA symbols are written between two slashes ( / / ), to clarify that they're sounds not spelling.

Below are all the IPA symbols used in this book with an example word. You don't need to memorize them right away, but you will see them often in this book and get comfortable with them as the course continues.

/i:/ seat	/ʊ/ put	/b/ best	/ʒ/ garage	/ð/ that
/ɪ/ sit	/aʊ/ mouth	/d/ dad	/tʃ/ choice	/ʔ/ button
/eɪ/ face	/aɪ/ price	/g/ guy	/dʒ/ just	/r/ data
/ɛ/ dress	/ɔɪ/ choice	/m/ met	/f/ feel	/r̥/ her
/æ/ bath	/r/ rope	/n/ near	/v/ voice	/l/ people
/ɑ/ lot	/l/ loud	/ŋ/ sing	/w/ west	/ŋ/ nation
/ə/ fun	/p/ peace	/s/ sigh	/y/ you	: long symbol
/oʊ/ hope	/t/ test	/z/ zoo	/h/ hit	
/uː/ goose	/k/ kid	/ʃ/ ship	/θ/ thing	

## Vowels

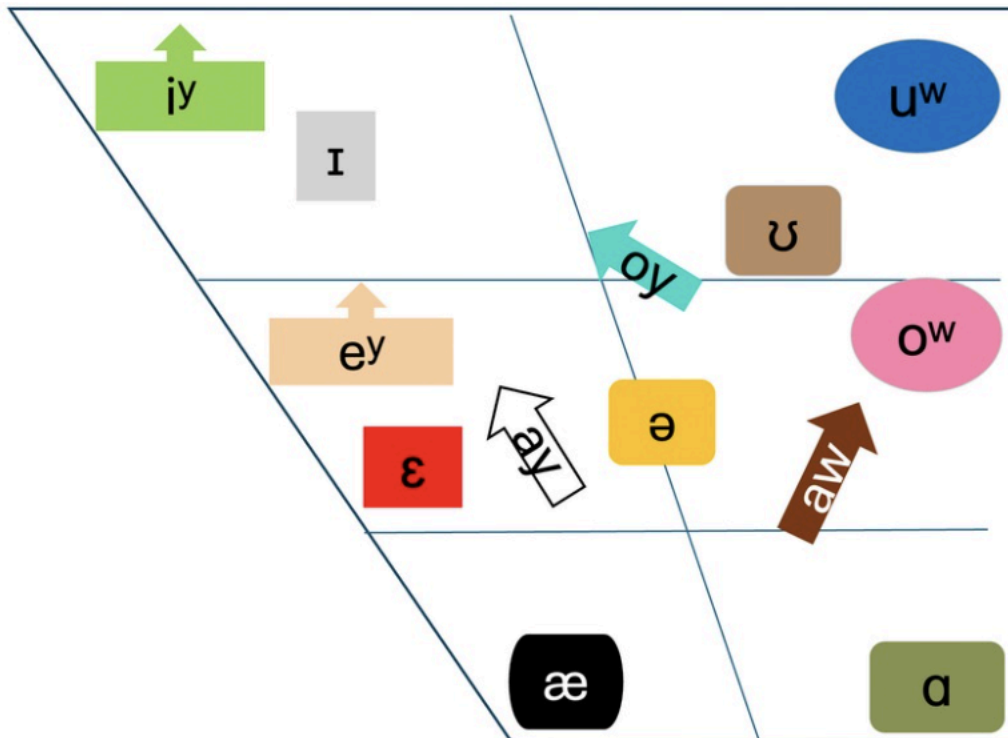
A 'vowel' is a sound that flows out of the mouth freely without blocking air. The position of the tongue changes the vowel sound.

The chart below is like a map of the mouth (facing left). Each symbol is where the tongue goes when you make that sound.

- Vowels with a small symbol /y/ and /w/ have a small amount of movement to them.
- Vowels with a big /y/ or /w/ have a lot of movement across the mouth.
- The other vowels are more relaxed and don't move much.

One way to help you remember the sounds of English vowels is color. Each vowel symbol can be related to a color word that includes that vowel sound. The list is below:

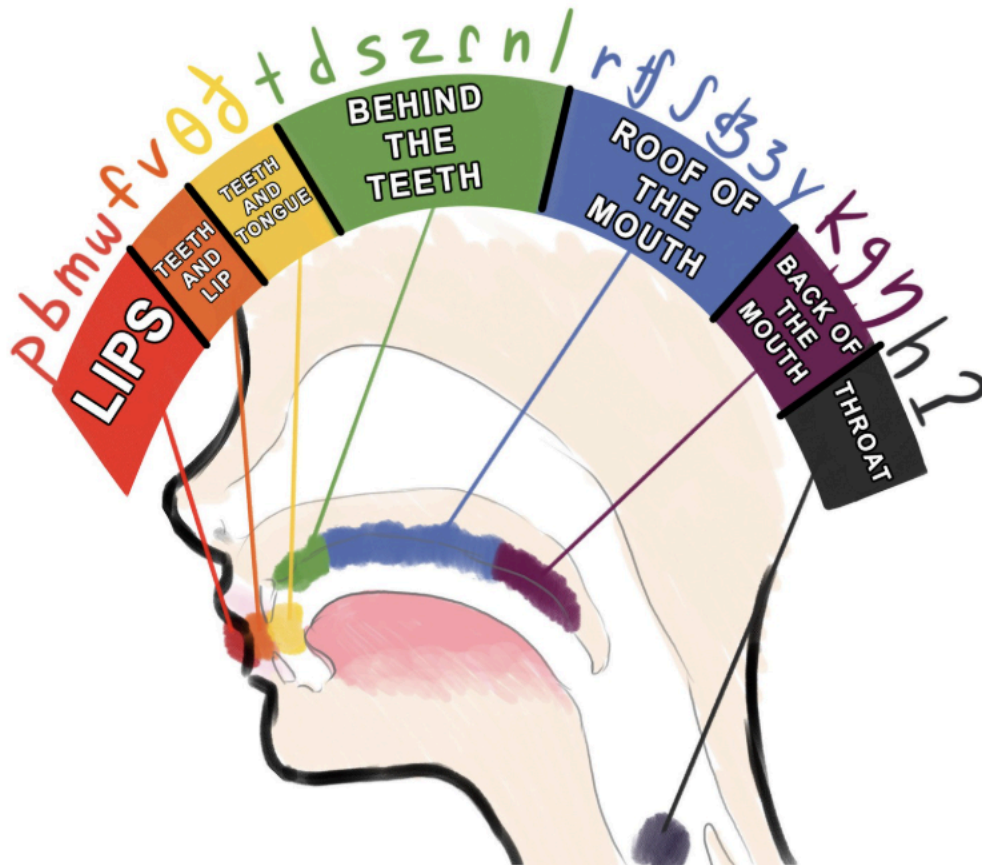
/iː/	/ɪ/	/eɪ/	/ɛ/	/æ/	/ɑ/	/uː/
green	silver	beige	red	black	olive	blue
/ʊ/	/oʊ/	/ə/	/ɔɪ/	/aɪ/	/aʊ/	
wood	rose	mustard	turquoise	white	brown	



## Consonants

The difference between vowels and consonants is that consonants block (or partially block) the air. This means the tongue, lips, or teeth will do something to change the airflow to make the sound.

The chart below shows all English consonant sounds and where they are made in the mouth.



Places of articulation:

- Lips: /p/ /b/ /m/ /w/
- Teeth and lip: /f/ /v/
- Teeth and tongue: /θ/ /ð/
- Behind the teeth: /t/ /d/ /s/ /z/ /n/ /l/
- Roof of the mouth: /r/ /ʃ/ /ʒ/ /dʒ/ /ʒ/ /y/
- Back of the mouth: /k/ /g/ /ŋ/
- Throat: /h/ /ʔ/

### Pronunciation Tip - Difficult Sounds

The most common vowel error is pronouncing two different vowels as the same sound. The biggest ones are:

Pronouncing /ɪ/ and /i/ the same (like /i/).

Pronouncing the vowel in the middle of the mouth /ə/ incorrectly, which many learners pronounce like /a/ or /ɔ/.

Some of the hardest consonant sounds for English learners are:

The sounds between the teeth /θ/ and /ð/ (like the 'th' in 'thing' and 'rather')

The voiced lip sounds /v/ and /w/ (like 'vet' and 'wet')

/r/ and /l/ (which can sound similar, but their mouth shapes are very different!)

## Listening Practice

**Exercise 2: Listen to the audio. Was the underlined word or phrase pronounced correctly or incorrectly? Then practice reading the sentences correctly.**

Sentence	Correct	Incorrect
1. I can see the bright light.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. He has bad hearing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Can you hand me that thing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Don't forget to vote.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. He's gotten really thin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. That was very weird.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I lost my voice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. What were they wearing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Can I talk to you for a bit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Do what you love.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. How do you feel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. It's high quality clothing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Unit 2: Voiced and Voiceless Sounds

## *Stops, voicing, and vowel length*

### Focus of the Unit

Many words in English differ by only one small sound, like 'dog' and 'dock' or 'pill' and 'bill'. It can be difficult to hear the difference. However, there are small details in these sounds that help recognize these words. We will study these details in this unit.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Pronounce consonants at the beginnings of words with the correct aspiration
- 2) Use vowel length to pronounce voiced and voiceless consonants correctly at the end of words

### Warm-Up

#### Exercise 1: Check the phrase you hear.

#	Voiceless Sounds	Voiced Sounds
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> got a good price	<input type="checkbox"/> got a good prize
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> back it up	<input type="checkbox"/> bag it up
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> pie ingredients	<input type="checkbox"/> buy ingredients
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> major leak	<input type="checkbox"/> major league
5.	<input type="checkbox"/> new coat	<input type="checkbox"/> new code
6.	<input type="checkbox"/> blue ice	<input type="checkbox"/> blue eyes
7.	<input type="checkbox"/> hear a bus	<input type="checkbox"/> hear a buzz
8.	<input type="checkbox"/> a big fan	<input type="checkbox"/> a big van

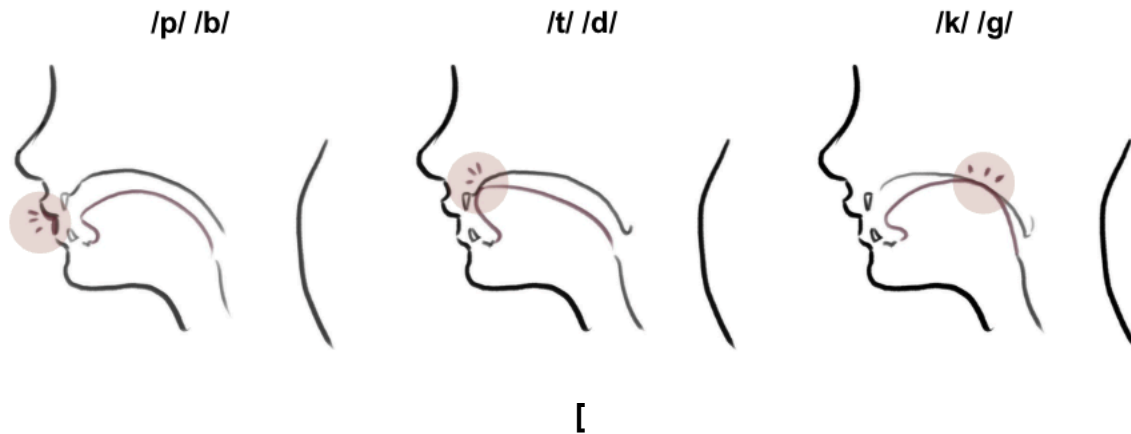
Which ones were clear and easy to hear? Which ones were hard?

Notes:	
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## Stop Consonants

The sounds /p/ /t/ /k/ and /b/ /d/ /g/ are called stop consonants. This is because the air stops in the mouth before being released.

- /p/ and /b/ stop at the lips.
- /t/ and /d/ stop at the front of the mouth with the tongue.
- /k/ and /g/ stop at the back of the mouth with the tongue.



<i>/p/ /b/</i>	<i>/t/ /d/</i>	<i>/k/ /g/</i>
Stops at the lips	Stops at the front of the mouth with the tongue	Stops at the back of the mouth with the tongue

## Voicing

- /p/ /t/ /k/ /f/ /s/ /θ/ /ʃ/ /tʃ/ are voiceless sounds because they're quiet sounds without vibration in the throat. /p/ /t/ /k/ are the voiceless stops.
- /b/ /d/ /g/ /v/ /z/ /ð/ /ʒ/ /dʒ/ are voiced sounds because there's vibration in the throat when you make these sounds, and they're louder. /b/ /d/ /g/ are the voiced stops.

If you put your hand on your throat, you can feel vibration when you pronounce voiced sounds. There's no vibration when you pronounce voiceless sounds.

*/p/ /t/ /k/ /f/ /s/ /θ/ /ʃ/*



*/b/ /d/ /g/ /v/ /z/ /ð/ /ʒ/*



<b>Voiceless: /p/ /t/ /k/ /f/ /s/ /θ/ /ʃ/ /tʃ/</b>	<b>Voiced: /b/ /d/ /g/ /v/ /z/ /ð/ /ʒ/ /dʒ/</b>
No vibration in the throat	Vibration in the throat

## Fill in the Blanks

**Exercise 2: Look at the sounds in Group 1 and the sounds in Group 2. Can you describe how they are different? We just talked about difference 1. Do you know difference 2?**

	Sounds	Difference 1	Difference 2
Group 1	/p/ /t/ /k/		
Group 2	/b/ /d/ /g/		

### Pronunciation Tip - Voiceless Stop Consonants at the Beginning

At the beginning of words and stressed syllables, voiceless stops /p/ /t/ /k/ are pronounced with aspiration. Having this strong puff of air can make you sound a bit more clear and native-like.

/p/	/t/	/k/
1. peach	4. tie	7. accuse
2. paddle	5. attend	8. coat
3. appear	6. tension	9. coffee

### Notes:

Aspiration (the puff of air) is a key part of English pronunciation. In fact, most of the time the difference between /b/ /d/ /g/ and /p/ /t/ /k/ is only aspiration. At the beginning of words, /b/ /d/ /g/ may not even be voiced. They are actually voiceless /p/ /t/ /k/, just without the aspiration.

## Listening and Speaking

**Exercise 3: Work with your partners. Say sentence A or sentence B. Your partner should reply with the correct sentence.**

#	Sentence	Response
1a.	That's a huge coat.	→ And it's really warm.
1b.	That's a huge goat.	→ Yeah, he's kinda scary.
2a.	I don't like peas.	→ Ok, then I won't cook peas.
2b.	I don't like bees.	→ Because they can sting you?
3a.	The meeting was tense.	→ Did someone get angry?
3b.	The meeting was dense.	→ Yeah, it sounded boring.
4a.	Pick up the pace.	→ Ok, I'll go faster.
4b.	Pick up the base.	→ It's really heavy.
5a.	Where did the time go?	→ I know! It's so late.
5b.	Where did the dime go?	→ It's in my wallet.

### Stops at the End

It's usually easier to hear the difference between stop sounds like /k/ and /g/ when they're at the beginning of a word, but it's harder to hear the difference when they're at the end. Most of the time, fluent speakers don't release these sounds at the end of the word.

- This means in natural speech, you make the shape of the sound, but you don't release the air.
- It always depends on the person and how they're talking in the moment.

## Glottal Stop /ʔ/

The sound /t/ is special because in natural speech, it gets pronounced many different ways. At the end of a word, it's usually pronounced as a "glottal stop."

- Glottal means "in the throat."
- The 't' stops quickly by cutting off the sound in your throat instead of with your tongue.
- The symbol for this sound is /ʔ/. So 'right' would be /rayʔ/.

### Pronunciation Tip - Stop Consonants at the End

At the ends of words, stops /p/ /b/ /d/ /k/ and /g/ should be mostly unreleased. By keeping these sounds "closed," it can help you sound more native-like. If you release these sounds, it may even sound like you are saying an extra syllable, which could be confusing.

The sound /t/ is different; it becomes a glottal stop /ʔ/ when it comes after a vowel.

/p/	/b/	/d/	/ʔ/
cap	cab	said	set
rip	rib	bad	bat
tap	tab	lid	lit

/k/	/g/
back	bag
pick	pig
dock	dog

## Vowel Length

Since stop consonants are often not released at the end of a word, it can be hard to tell the difference between voiced and voiceless stops. One way speakers can hear the difference is by the length of the vowel before it.

- When a vowel comes before a voiceless consonant, the vowel is a bit shorter.
- When a vowel comes before a voiced consonant, the vowel will be a little longer (to prepare for the voicing).

Many dictionaries say that some vowels are naturally long and short. They will use the symbol : for "long vowels", such as /i:/ or /ɑ:/. However, this is not accurate. Vowel length depends on things like voicing or stress (which we will study later).

### Pronunciation Tip - Vowel Lengthening

Vowels before voiced consonants are often a bit longer. Vowels that come before /b/ /d/ /g/ /z/ /v/ and /ʒ/ should be pronounced longer. This way, it's easier for people to hear the difference between 'beat' and 'bead' or 'ice' and 'eyes.'

/p/ short	/b/ long	/k/ short	/g/ long	/ʔ/ short	/d/ long
cap /kæp/	cab /kæ:b/	back /bæk/	bag /bæ:g/	set /sɛʔ/	said /sɛ:d/
rip /rɪp/	rib /rɪ:b/	pick /pɪk/	pig /pɪ:g/	bat /bæʔ/	bad /bæ:d/
tap /tæp/	tab /tæ:b/	dock /dɒk/	dog /dɔ:g/	lit /lɪʔ/	lid /lɪ:d/

## Listening and Speaking

**Exercise 4: Work with your partners. Say sentence A or sentence B. Your partner should reply with the correct sentence.**

#	Sentence	Response
1a.	I heard the bus.	→ Did it leave already?
1b.	I heard the buzz.	→ Was it a bee?
2a.	I want wide shoes.	→ I can only find narrow ones.
2b.	I want white shoes.	→ But they could get dirty.
3a.	I got a good price.	→ How much did you pay?
3b.	I got a good prize.	→ What did you win?
4a.	Put it in the back.	→ Ok, but the trunk is locked.
4b.	Put it in the bag.	→ The brown one or the black one?
5a.	It's a cotton rope.	→ Do you want me to tie it?
5b.	It's a cotton robe.	→ It looks comfortable.
6a.	How do you spell "proof"?	→ P-R-O-O-F
6b.	How do you spell "prove"?	→ P-R-O-V-E

## Nouns and Verbs

Sometimes there are noun-verb pairs like 'proof' (noun) and 'prove' (verb). Notice:

- The noun ends in a voiceless consonant /f/
- The verb ends in a voiced consonant /v/

There are a handful of examples like this in English. Here are more:

	Voiceless	Voiceless	Voiceless	Voiceless	Voiceless
<b>Noun</b>	advice /s/	device /s/	excuse /s/	grief /f/	belief /f/
<b>Verb</b>	advise /z/	devise /z/	excuse /z/	grieve /v/	believe /v/

Additional pair: bath /θ/ (noun) → bathe /ð/ (verb)

# Unit 3: Linking

## Sound changes and simplifications

### Focus of the Unit

Sometimes, people studying English spend more time reading than speaking. Because of this, they think of each word individually rather than together as a group. But fluent speakers connect words together. In this unit, we will look at common ways that sounds change or simplify when they're next to each other.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Connect groups of words using the correct sound changes
- 2) Connect groups of words using the correct simplifications

### Warm-Up

**Exercise 1: Listen. Which phrases sound different? Which ones sound the same?**

#	Phrase 1	Phrase 2	Different	Same
1.	I scream	ice cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	fork handles	four candles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	bad guy	bag guy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	made your mess	major mess	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	let her	letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	light green	like green	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	all of	olive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	writer	rider	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many were the same?

## Linking Words

Linking means saying two separate words like one connected word. Sometimes this means:

1. Changing or simplifying sounds at the border of each word.
2. Pronouncing word endings correctly, such as not adding extra sounds by accident.

For example, in the phrase 'cheap pizza and cold beer,' many students may accidentally pronounce each word with a release or a vowel in between them, like this:

**cheap<sup>uh</sup> pizza and<sup>uh</sup> cold<sup>uh</sup> beer**

A more correct way would be like this:

**cheappizza andcolbeer**

We will practice some of these techniques below.

### Pronunciation Tip - Linking an Ending Consonant to a Vowel

When one word ends in a consonant and the next word starts with a vowel, that consonant should be shared between both words. If it's a stop consonant, that consonant should release into the next vowel.

Other consonants (shared between words)	Stop consonants (release into vowel)
half an hour /hæ.fə.naw.ɹ/	keep asking /ki.v.pæs.kɪŋ/
feel uneasy /fi.v.lə.ni.v.zi.v/	job opportunity /dʒɑ.bɑ.pɹ.tu.w.nə.ri.v/
give up /gi.vəp/	good idea /gu.day.di.v.ə/
loose end /lu.w.sɛnd/	quick answer /kwɪ.kæn.sɹ/
with us /wi.θəs/	hot air /hɑ.rɛr/
finish early /fi.nɪ.fɹ.li.v/	log on /lɑ.gɑn/

### Pronunciation Tip - Linking Similar Consonants

When one word ends in a consonant that is the same as the first (or very similar), they should be pronounced as one consonant but held a little longer. Don't break the sounds apart!

Same consonant	Similar consonants
keep pushing /kiʊp:ʃɪŋ/	deep breath /di:pbrɛθ/
dark cave /dɑ:k:eɪv/	neat trick /ni:t:ɹɪk/
business school /bɪznɪs:kʊl/	big game /bɪg:em/
he'll look /hi:l:ʊk/	need time /ni:dtaym/
bad decision /bæd:əsiʒn/	grab bag /græb:æg/
half full /hæf:ʊl/	thick glasses /θɪkglæsəz/

### Pronunciation Tip - Linking Stops

When one word ends in a consonant that's behind the teeth, like /t/ /d/ or /n/, and the next word starts with a different stop consonant, the first consonant should blend into the next sound. This means it should be unreleased, allowing the next sound to be more clear.

/t/	/d/	/n/
great person /greɪp.pɹ.sən/	bad credit /bæɡ.krɛ.dɪt/	in both /ɪm.boʊθ/
hot bath /hɒp.bæθ/	red pepper /rɛb.pɛ.pɹ/	open book /oʊ.pɪm.bʊk/
eight girls /eɪk.gɹlz/	good game /ɡʊd.geɪm/	sun kissed /sən.kɪst/

## Flap-T

One thing that makes American English unique is the flap-t. This refers to when the /t/ sound is pronounced with the tongue quickly tapping behind the teeth. The IPA symbol for this sound is /ɾ/ which looks very similar to /r/. Since this can be confusing, you can just think of the flap-t as a very quick /d/.

't' is pronounced as a flap-t when:

- The /t/ is between vowels - 'data' /deɪ.rə/
- The /t/ is between /r/ and a vowel - 'party' /pɑr.ti/
- The /t/ is before a syllabic 'l' /l/ - 'bottle' /bɑ.rl/
- And the /t/ comes before an unstressed syllable - 'city' /sɪ.ti/

If the /t/ comes before a stressed syllable, it will be pronounced like a regular /t/ with aspiration (the puff of air) - 'return' /rə.tʰɹn/

The tapping sound is actually the same as the 'r' sound in languages like Spanish ('para'), Farsi ('barâdar'), or Russian ('khorosho').

### Pronunciation Tip - Linking Flap-t with Vowels

When /t/ comes between vowels or a vowel and /r/ or /l/, and the next syllable is unstressed, it should be pronounced as a flap-t, like a quick /d/ sound. This happens across multiple words.

Where the flap-t is in the word	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
<b>Between Vowels</b>	right away /raɪ.rə.weɪ/	a lot of /ə.lɑ.rəv/	put it on /pʊ.tɪ.rən/
<b>After /r/</b>	thirty /θɜr.ti/	sort of /sɔr.rəv/	starting /stɑr.tɪŋ/
<b>Before /l/</b>	little /lɪ.rl/	subtle /sə.rl/	title /taɪ.rl/

## Listening

**Exercise 2: Listen to the sentence. Fill in the blanks with the phrases you hear. Then practice reading these phrases out loud.**

1. When you press the button, this Christmas tree will \_\_\_\_\_.

1.1 Phrase:	
1.2 Phrase:	

2. He ignored his feelings for her, but he just couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ anymore.

2.1 Phrase:	
2.2 Phrase:	

3. You've been working hard all day—why don't you \_\_\_\_\_ for a while?

3.1 Phrase:	
3.2 Phrase:	
3.3 Phrase:	

4. Just give them a call and you can \_\_\_\_\_ an appointment.

4.1 Phrase:	
4.2 Phrase:	

5. Olivia left her backpack on the floor, but the teacher told her to \_\_\_\_\_.

5.1 Phrase:	
5.2 Phrase:	
5.3 Phrase:	

6. Even though they dated for years, she quickly \_\_\_\_\_ him.

6.1 Phrase:	
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6.2 Phrase:

*Answer key (right-side up): light up / fight it / take it easy / set up / put it away / got over*

**Pronunciation Tip - Linking with 'you'**

When a word ending in /t/ comes before a 'you' pronoun, like 'you/your' etc., the /t/ and /y/ link to become /tʃ/.

When a word ending in /d/ comes before a 'you' pronoun, they link to become /dʒ/.

This isn't something that is necessary, but most speakers do it. And in some situations, not linking can sound very serious.

/t/ + /y/	get your	can't you	let yourself
/d/ + /y/	did you	made your	could you

## Speaking Practice

**Exercise 3: Look at the conversation dialog below. Mark all places where you should link (Ending Consonant to a Vowel, Similar Consonants, Different Stop Consonants, Flap-T, /t+/y/, and /d+/y/). Then, practice reading the conversation dialog in a group.**

#	Speaker	Line
1.	<b>A</b>	Hi, thank you for dining with us. Could I get you started with something to drink?
2.	<b>B</b>	Black coffee, please. And my mom would like hot tea.
3.	<b>A</b>	Sure! Are you ready to order? Or do you need time?
4.	<b>C</b>	What are the specials?
5.	<b>A</b>	We have a red pepper curry with a side of rice and the grilled duck with a sweet berry glaze.
6.	<b>C</b>	Also, can I ask what desserts you have today?
7.	<b>A</b>	For dessert, we have chocolate cake or red bean ice cream.
8.	<b>B</b>	We'll start with the curry. Could we get it with an extra soup bowl for sharing?
9.	<b>A</b>	Sure! I'll get your drinks, and the food will be right up!

# Unit 4: Schwa and Syllables

## *The mid-central vowel*

### Focus of the Unit

A very common mistake that English learners make is adding short vowel sounds where there shouldn't be any. People usually do this to make it easier to pronounce complicated sound combinations. However, this error changes the number of syllables and can confuse listeners. We will practice the schwa vowel and when you should and shouldn't use it.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Pronounce the mid-central vowel properly
- 2) Recognize and pronounce words with the correct number of syllables

### Warm-Up

**Exercise 1: Listen to each phrase and mark if it was pronounced correctly or incorrectly.**

Phrase	Correct	Incorrect
1. for the state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. asked a question	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. watching the steam	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. takes his time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. planned a garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. explained to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. used to cook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. canned a salmon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why were the incorrect ones incorrect?

## Central Vowels

"Central vowels" refer to vowels that are in the middle part of the mouth.

- They are usually more relaxed than vowels like /i/ or /a/, which are in the front and back.
- In English, the most common vowel is the mid-central vowel, /ə/, also known as the 'schwa' sound.
- It's the sound in 'love' /ləv/ and 'fun' /fʌn/ and both syllables of 'above' /ə.bəv/.

### Pronunciation Tip - The mid-central vowel /ə/

When pronouncing /ə/ in English, hold your hand under your chin and push up. This will prevent your jaw from dropping and making the /a/ sound. Also, be very careful you do not pronounce the sound like /r/. The tongue should be very relaxed.

/ə/ in one syllable	/ə/ in two syllables
son /sən/	Russia /rʌ.ʃə/
rum /rəm/	undone /ən.dən/
glove /gləv/	above /ə.bəv/
some /səm/	adjust /ə.dʒʌst/

A Note on Pronunciation Dictionaries: Many books and courses will use the symbol /ʌ/ for the mid-central vowel in American English words like 'run' /rʌn/ or 'funny' /fʌ.ni/ . They will use the schwa symbol /ə/ for when the vowel is in unstressed syllables, like 'again' /ə.ɡeɪn/ or 'alive' /ə.laɪv/. This system isn't accurate because the symbol /ʌ/ actually represents a sound in the back of the mouth that is used in British English. The sound used in General American English is more closely /ə/. There is no need to use two different symbols for the same sound, so this book just uses /ə/.

## Syllabic Consonants

Pronunciation dictionaries will also sometimes use the schwa symbol /ə/ in words like 'pencil' /pɛn.səl/ or 'person' /pɜː.sən/. This is also inaccurate because in American English, those examples would not have a schwa vowel sound, they would have a syllabic consonant.

A syllabic consonant is when a consonant sound is a syllable itself, without a vowel.

The three syllabic consonants in English are:

- /ŋ/
- /l/
- /r/ (which is also written /ər/)

The lines underneath the symbols ( , ) mean syllabic consonant.

### Pronunciation Tip - Syllabic Consonants

Many students don't know about "syllabic consonants." Many times when /n/ /l/ or /r/ come right after a vowel, they take over the entire syllable. These sounds act like a vowel.

Syllabic /ŋ/	Syllabic /l/	Syllabic /r/
reason /ri:v.zŋ/	bottle /bɑː.dl/	urban /ɜː.bŋ/
hidden /hɪ.dŋ/	apple /æ.pl/	dollar /dɑː.lɹ/
listening /lɪ.sŋ.ɪŋ/	people /pi:v.pl/	winner /wɪ.nɹ/

## Syllable Count

An important part of fluent speaking is having the correct number of syllables.

- English has many words with multiple syllables, and it uses many small grammar words.
- If you delete or add an unnecessary syllable in a sentence, it might change the grammar or confuse the listener.

Some common mistakes learners make:

- Dropping the /ə/ schwa sound because it's difficult for them to hear.
- 'economics' - /ɛk.nɑ.mɪks/. This is incorrect; it should be /ɛ.kə.nɑ.mɪks/
- Adding a /ə/ schwa sound because it's difficult to pronounce words without it
- 'clock' - /kə.lɑ.kə/. This is incorrect; it should be /klɑk/

## Listening and Speaking

**Exercise 2: Work with your partners. Say sentence A or sentence B. Your partner should reply with the correct sentence.**

#	Sentence	Response
1a.	Is the date written down?	→ Yeah, it's February 1st.
1b.	Is the data written down?	→ Yeah, it's 40%.
2a.	She wants to leave now.	→ Ok, let's say goodbye.
2b.	She wants us to leave now.	→ Ok, let's go.
3a.	Did you read about the center?	→ No, what about it?
3b.	Did you read about the senator?	→ What did he do?
4a.	I'll explain the difference.	→ What is it?
4b.	I'll explain the differences.	→ What are they?
5a.	I learned about the status.	→ Is it good or bad?
5b.	I learned about the states.	→ All 50 of them?
6a.	I feel the wind below.	→ From the floor vent?
6b.	I feel the wind blow.	→ From the fan?
7a.	We need more sports.	→ Like soccer and basketball?
7b.	We need more supports.	→ Like more people to help us?

# Unit 5: Grammar Endings

## *-s and -ed endings*

### Focus of the Unit

Many English learners struggle with the grammatical endings of words, such as past and present tense or possessives. Sometimes, when students pronounce endings, they make a small error that doesn't sound fluent. This error is mostly heard when linking words and phrases. We'll go over the pronunciations of grammar endings in this chapter.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Pronounce past tense -ed endings with the correct syllables, voicing, and linking
- 2) Pronounce the -s endings with the correct syllables, voicing, and linking

### Warm Up

**Exercise 1: Which sentences have mistakes? Mark the box for each incorrect sentence.**

Mark	Sentence
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. My grandma loves spending time in her garden.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Every morning, she water the plant and checks for new flowers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Yesterday, she plant some herbs and pulled out the weeds.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. She also noticed that the roses had bloomed beautifully.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. When I visit my grandma house, I love to see if new fruits have grown.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Neighbors also admire her hard work when they stop by.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Last week, someone help her build a small birdhouse.
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. She believes that caring for plant brings peaces and joy.

## The -s ending

The '-s' ending has four grammatical uses:

Plural	3rd person sing. verbs	Possessives	Contractions
some cats	he decides	the house's entrance	the restaurant's busy
two garages	she brings	my dad's phone	he's left already

'-s' (or '-es') has different pronunciations depending on the word it's added to.

- If a word ends in a voiceless consonant, the -s ending is voiceless /s/.
- If a word ends in a voiced consonant, or a vowel, the -s ending is voiced /z/.
- If the word ends in a 'sibilant sound,' the -s ending is a new syllable /əz/.

Voiceless Consonants /s/									
/p/	/t/	/k/	/θ/	/f/	/ʃ/				
taps	cats	rocks	baths	laughs	students				
Voiced Consonants /z/									
/b/	/d/	/g/	/ð/	/v/	/n/	/m/	/ŋ/	/l/	/r/
Bob's	beds	brags	soothe s	loves	runs	homes	brings	pencils	stores
Sibilant Consonants /əz/									
/s/	/z/	/ʃ/	/ʒ/	/tʃ/	/dʒ/				
boss's	roses	dishes	garages	beaches	bridges				

### Pronunciation Tip - The -s ending

The most important thing to remember is that most words with an '-s' '-es' or '-s' ending do not add a new syllable. They need to be pronounced without adding an /ə/ sound. Only the words with sibilant consonants (/s/, /z/, /ʒ/, etc.) get a new syllable with /ə/.

Also, you don't have to force the voicing in the /z/ ending. It's pronounced with "half voicing." You should focus on saying the vowel before the ending consonants long, since the endings are voiced. For example, 'robs' is /rɑ:bz/

### Fill in the Blanks

**Exercise 2: Does each word get a new sound when it has an -s ending? Or a new syllable? Write the plural form and ending sound (/s/ /z/ or /əz/) in the correct column.**

Word	Just gets a sound	Gets a new syllable
1. hope	'hopes' /s/	
2. leave		
3. mark		
4. amaze		
5. approve		
6. machine		
7. organize		
8. reflect		
9. vanish		

## -s Ending Simplifications

When three or more consonants are in the same syllable, they can be hard to pronounce. When this happens, the pronunciation is often made simpler.

- In these cases below, the /t/ or /d/ is dropped.
- However, the -s ending has to stay for grammatical reasons.

<i>/kts/→/ks/</i>	<i>/pts/→/ps/</i>	<i>/ndz/→/nz/</i>	<i>/ksts/→/ks/</i>	<i>/fts/→/fs/</i>
acts	accepts	hands	texts	lifts
directs	interrupts	friends	contexts	gifts
conflicts	adopts	sends	pretexts	drifts

### **Pronunciation Tip - s ending simplifications**

Words with groups of consonants like /pts/ /kts/ /fts/ /ksts/ and /ndz/ should drop the middle /t/ or /d/ sound. You want to make the pronunciation easier by dropping a sound. Don't try to make the pronunciation easier by adding an /ə/ sound.

## Speaking

### **Exercise 3: Cross out the sounds that get dropped and practice the sentences.**

1. She gives all her friends gifts during the holidays.
2. He didn't expect so many inconveniences, like how the schedule conflicts with his.
3. My mom sends me texts when I'm driving.
4. A cactus grows best in direct sun.
5. If the client accepts the terms, then he'll contract some workers to help him.
6. She always expects immediate results.

## The -ed ending

The '-ed' ending is used for regular verbs in the past tense (or past participle). Like the '-s' ending, it has different pronunciations depending on the word it's attaching to.

- If a word ends in a voiceless consonant, the -ed ending is voiceless /t/.
- If a word ends in a voiced consonant or vowel, the -ed ending is voiced /d/.
- If the word already ends in a /t/ or /d/, the -ed ending is a new syllable /əd/.

Voiceless Consonants /t/						
<i>/p/</i>	<i>/s/</i>	<i>/k/</i>	<i>/θ/</i>	<i>/f/</i>	<i>/tʃ/</i>	<i>/ʃ/</i>
tapped	passed	looked	birthed	laughed	watched	rushed
Voiced Consonants /d/						
<i>/b/</i>	<i>/z/</i>	<i>/g/</i>	<i>/ð/</i>	<i>/v/</i>	<i>/n/</i>	
grabbed	used	begged	bathed	loved	listened	
<i>/m/</i>	<i>/ŋ/</i>	<i>/l/</i>		<i>/r/</i>	<i>/dʒ/</i>	
seemed	belonged	called		remembered	changed	
Sibilant Stops /əd/						
<i>/t/</i>			<i>/d/</i>			
wanted			needed			
waited			sounded			
started			ended			

### Pronunciation Tip - The -ed ending

Remember, most past tense words with '-ed' don't add a new syllable; only a sound is added. Only the words with /t/ and /d/ get a new syllable with /ə/ (so that we can hear the -ed ending clearly). If you add an unnecessary /ə/ sound, it might sound like you're saying another word like 'it'. For example, "walked" would sound like "walk it."

### Fill in the Blanks

**Exercise 3: Does each word get a new sound or a new syllable when it has an -ed ending? Write the past tense word and what ending, /t/ /d/ or /əd/, in the correct column.**

Word	Add a sound	Add a syllable
1. walk	'walked' /t/	
2. accept		
3. miss		
4. judge		
5. change		
6. start		
7. decide		
8. watch		
9. agree		

## -ed Ending Simplifications

It can be hard to hear the -ed ending since oftentimes /d/ and /t/ are unreleased at the end of words.

Also, if an -ed ending comes before a word that starts with a /d/ or /t/, or a similar sound like the 'th' sound /θ/ or /ð/, they will link, becoming one sound.

- In this case, you can't hear the -ed ending. For example, 'finished this' would sound the same as 'finish this'. Only the context will tell you if it's past or present.
- However, when there is a vowel after an -ed ending, it should be very easy to hear because it will link to the next word.

-ed + /t/	-ed + /d/	-ed + /θ/	-ed + /ð/
watched TV /wɒtʃ.tɪv.vi/	opened doors /oʊ.pɪn.dɔːz/	earned thousands /ɪn.θaʊ.zənz/	crossed the street /krɒs.ðə.striːt/
asked to leave /æsk.tə.liːv/	played drums /pleɪd.rəmz/	finished things /fɪ.nɪʃ.θɪŋz/	passed the exam /pæs.ðɪv.ɛg.zæm/

-ed /t/ + vowel	-ed /d/ + vowel
worked out /wɜːk.taʊt/	filled out the form /fɪl.dəʊt.ðə.fɔːm/
pushed a door open /pʊʃ.tə.dɔː.oʊ.pɪn/	turned in the homework /tɜːn.dɪn.ðə.hoʊm.wɜːk/

### **Pronunciation Tip - -ed ending simplifications**

If an -ed ending comes before a /t/ /d/ or the 'th' sounds /θ/ or /ð/, you don't need to pronounce the -ed ending consonant very clearly. Don't try to force the pronunciation and then add an /ə/ sound after. When the -ed ending comes before a vowel, the consonant should clearly link to the vowel.

## **Listening and Speaking**

**Exercise 4: Cross out the -ed endings that are hard to hear, and mark the places where you should link the endings. Then practice the sentences.**

1. They moved in last weekend.
2. He returned early and opened the door.
3. I stopped eating sugar last year.
4. The professor announced the test date yesterday.
5. We needed extra time to complete the project.

# Unit 6: Basic Word Stress

## *Stress rules in simple nouns and verbs*

### Focus of the Unit

Word stress is one of the most important parts of speech. Listeners use their understanding of word stress to follow a speaker's sentences, and if the word stress is incorrect, it will confuse the listener. We will learn some key word-stress rules in this unit.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Pronounce nouns and compound nouns with the correct stress
- 2) Pronounce different types of verbs with the correct stress
- 3) Pronounce numbers with the correct stress

### Warm-Up

**Exercise 1: Listen and mark the phrase you hear.**

#	A	B
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Whitehouse	<input type="checkbox"/> white house
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> decade	<input type="checkbox"/> decayed
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> desert	<input type="checkbox"/> dessert
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> one person	<input type="checkbox"/> one percent
5.	<input type="checkbox"/> deep end	<input type="checkbox"/> depend
6.	<input type="checkbox"/> written	<input type="checkbox"/> retain
7.	<input type="checkbox"/> fourty	<input type="checkbox"/> fourteen
8.	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. E	<input type="checkbox"/> mystery

## Word Stress

Many languages have some kind of system that helps listeners understand words by using "the music" of a language, like tone, pitch, length, or loudness. English uses "stress." This is when a syllable is stronger and more noticeable than the syllables around it. Word stress is a mix of a few things:

- Loudness: A stressed syllable is usually louder than other syllables
- Tone: A stressed syllable usually has a higher pitch
- Length: A stressed syllable is usually a bit longer
- Vowel: A stressed syllable will usually have a clearer vowel

Notice, they all say "usually." There are many reasons why we might pronounce things differently, but it is a combination of these things that makes word stress.

## Listening

**Exercise 2: Listen to the words and write the stress pattern. For each word, write the syllable count and which syllable is stressed (e.g., "3 syllables, stress on 1st").**

#	Word	Stress pattern (write here)
1.	appreciate	
2.	aloe	
3.	entrepreneur	
4.	museum	
5.	comfortable	
6.	academic	
7.	vegetable	
8.	laboratory	

*Answer key: 1. appreciate (stress on 2nd of 4 syllables); 2. aloe (stress on 1st of 2); 3. entrepreneur (stress on 4th of 4); 4. museum (stress on 2nd of 3); 5. comfortable (stress on 1st of 3); 6. academic (stress on 3rd of 4); 7. vegetable (stress on 1st of 3); 8. laboratory (stress on 1st of 4).*

## Rules for Word Stress in Nouns

In nouns with two syllables, the stress is usually on the first syllable, like 'teacher'. 90% of the time you should stress the first syllable, but remember there are exceptions, like 'hotel'.

Nouns		
1. climate	2. aloe	3. signal
4. grammar	5. distance	6. market
7. patient	8. robin	9. mayor

## Compound Nouns

Compound nouns are nouns made by putting two or more words next to each other, usually nouns. In compound nouns, the first word should be stressed, and the following word should be un-stressed.

- This follows the pattern of putting stress at the beginning of nouns. For example: darkroom (stress on "dark")
- In other cases, if two words are not a compound noun (just an adjective and noun), both words are stressed equally. For example: dark clouds (equal stress on both)

Compound Nouns		
1. air conditioner	2. sunglasses	3. overtime
4. computer lab	5. coffee table	6. mother-in-law
7. raincoat	8. swimming pool	9. birdcage

### **Pronunciation Tip - Stressing Nouns**

English likes to stress nouns near the beginning, so most 2-syllable nouns (and names) have stress on the first syllable. Compound nouns also follow this pattern: stress the first noun. A common mistake students make is stressing both nouns equally, which can sound unnatural.

## **Speaking**

**Exercise 3: Look at the sentences below and circle all the nouns and compound nouns. Practice reading them with correct stress.**

1. He said his favorite dessert is pie, and he likes blackberry the most.
2. She found this yellow jacket at the market.
3. The sunlight came through the open window in the morning.
4. I bought a birthday present for my friend's younger brother.
5. The blue notebook is next to the coffee maker, under the air conditioner.
6. Kathy thought the job description was weird, but she still applied for it.

## Exceptions for Two-Syllable Noun Stress

English has a long history of borrowing words from the French language. Words that were borrowed from French a thousand years ago changed over time to fit English stress patterns. Words that were borrowed more recently still use French stress patterns. French stresses words on the last syllable, so many English nouns from French stress the second syllable.

Examples: valet (stress on 2nd syllable), mirage (stress on 2nd syllable)

Nouns from French		
1. hotel	2. baguette	3. machine
4. cuisine	5. salon	6. ballet
7. garage	8. fatigue	9. bouquet

## Rules for Word Stress in Verbs

Verbs with two syllables often have a root and a prefix. A root is the main part of the verb. A prefix is one or more syllables that comes before the root. The prefix changes the meaning and creates a new word:

Prefixes	Root	Verbs
re- (again, back)	-vert (turn or move)	revert (to turn something back to the way it was)
in- (in, inside)	-vert (turn or move)	invert (to turn something inside out)
sub- (under)	-vert (turn or move)	subvert (to turn something upside down or ruin it)
di- (away from)	-vert (turn or move)	divert (to turn a path away from something else)

However, many of the connections between the prefixes, roots, and their meanings aren't clear.

In two-syllable verbs, the stress is usually on the second syllable (the root). This happens about 80% of the time. The first syllable, (the prefix) is often unstressed with a schwa /ə/ vowel.

Examples: report /rə.pɔrt/ (stress on 2nd), produce /prə.duːs/ (stress on 2nd)

## Phrasal Verbs

Verbs that are made up of a main verb and another small word are called "phrasal verbs," like 'let go' or 'pick up'. With phrasal verbs, the second word is stressed.

Examples: let go (stress on "go"), work out (stress on "out")

If we use phrasal verbs with an object pronoun (him, it, me, etc.), the object goes between the two words, but the second word is still stressed.

Examples: let it go (stress on "go"), pick him up (stress on "up")

Phrasal Verbs		
1. drop in	2. drop off	3. drop out
4. turn on	5. turn off	6. turn up
7. check in	8. check out	9. check up

### **Pronunciation Tip - Stressing Verbs**

Opposite of nouns, two-syllable verbs usually have stress on the second syllable. So, verbs with a prefix and root stress the root, like in 'reDUCE'. Phrasal verbs stress the second word, like in 'get UP'.

## **Speaking**

**Exercise 4: Look at the sentences below. Circle the one-word verbs, and underline the two-word phrasal verbs. Then write the stress, and practice reading the sentences.**

1. I want to use that app to work out before the free-trial expires.
2. After we check into the hotel, I want to go out and get a croissant.
3. After he showed up unexpectedly, she decided to change her plans.
4. He relies on his team to cheer him up.
5. I misplaced my hair tie, but after a few days, it turned up.

## **Noun-Verb Pairs**

Sometimes a word can be used as both a noun or a verb; the spelling will be the same, but the pronunciation is different.

The stress follows the usual noun and verb stress patterns:

- When a word from a noun-verb pair is used as a noun, it will have stress on the first syllable.
- When it's a verb, it will have stress on the second syllable. There are also exceptions to this too.

Sometimes the noun and verb have very similar meanings:

insult (verb, stress on 2nd) - to say something mean to someone

insult (noun, stress on 1st) - the mean thing

Other times, the meaning is different:

object (verb, stress on 2nd) - to formally disagree

object (noun, stress on 1st) - a physical thing

## Noun-Verb Pairs with Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs like 'pick up' or 'work out' can also be used as nouns. When they are a noun, the words are put together, like 'workout', or with a hyphen, like 'check-in'. The stress also matches the typical noun stress, by stressing the first syllable. Again, these nouns and verbs usually have similar meanings.

take off (verb, stress on "off") - to leave and fly away

takeoff (noun, stress on "take") - the moment when a plane leaves

However, because phrasal verbs are usually conversational or informal, some of the noun and verb forms might have different meanings.

break down (verb, stress on "down") - to stop working, like a car OR to become very emotional and upset

breakdown (noun, stress on "break") - ONLY the incident where someone is very upset

Verb (stress 2nd)	Noun (stress 1st)
conflict	conflict
increase	increase
desert	desert
exploit	exploit

Phrasal Verb (stress 2nd word)	Noun (stress 1st)
print out	printout
work out	workout
break up	breakup
lay off	layoff

### Pronunciation Tip - Noun and Verb Pairs

Usually when a word can be used as a noun or as a verb, the noun form has stress on the first syllable, and the verb form has stress on the second syllable. This helps speakers recognize the words in English speech.

## Reading

**Exercise 5: Look at the sentences below. Is the underlined word a noun or verb? Practice the sentences with correct stress.**

Sentence	Noun	Verb
1. Someone stood up in the courtroom and yelled, "I object!"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We experienced a series of layoffs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The produce aisle was empty when I was there.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. A new café opened up, and I wanna check it out.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you have a backup of your files?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The results were unfair, and he plans to contest them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The phone upgrade was expensive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. How long will the event take to set up?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Speaking Practice

**Exercise 6: Look at the conversation dialog. Write the word stress over the two-syllable nouns, two-syllable verbs, phrasal verbs, and compound nouns. Then practice reading the conversation dialog in a group.**

#	Speaker	Line
1.	<b>A</b>	Did you watch the singing contest last night?
2.	<b>B</b>	I couldn't. I had a tough morning, and it messed up my entire day.
3.	<b>A</b>	What happened?
4.	<b>B</b>	Well, my alarm clock didn't go off, so I showed up late for work. And, the copy machine broke down, so I had to repair it. Then I spent hours setting up my new laptop. Ugh... I had no time for anything.
5.	<b>A</b>	Oh I'm sorry, that sounds exhausting.
6.	<b>B</b>	Yeah, but anyway, how was the show?
7.	<b>A</b>	Well, the judges gave their critiques, and they announced the finalists! Next week, they're gonna present the award, and the winner will record a new single.
8.	<b>B</b>	Oh okay. Maybe next Wednesday we can watch it together?
9.	<b>A</b>	Yeah, try to come by, and we can see the results.

# Unit 7: Complex Word Stress

## *Stress rules for suffixes and numbers*

### Focus of the Unit

English word stress can be very complicated. When words change their form or are used in certain contexts, the stress sometimes changes too. If a long word isn't pronounced with the correct stress, the listener may have difficulty understanding it. We will look at different word endings and how they change the stress of the base word.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Pronounce long words with the correct stress and properly pronounce the syllables
- 2) Pronounce numbers with the correct stress

### Warm-Up

**Exercise 1: Listen to the words below. How many reduced sounds (short schwa /ə/, short /ɪ/, or syllabic consonant /ŋ/ /l/) do you hear in each word? Write the number.**

#	Word	Reduced sounds
1.	practical	
2.	official	
3.	photography	
4.	professional	
5.	conclusion	
6.	democratic	
7.	revision	
8.	confidential	

## Suffixes

Suffixes are endings to words that can make new words. Similar to prefixes (syllables or sounds at the beginning) they change the meaning, but suffixes (endings) usually change the grammatical function, like making verbs into nouns or nouns into adjectives.

Root	Suffixes	Result
creat(e) (verb)	-ion	creation (noun)
creat(e) (verb)	-ive	creative (adjective)
creat(e) (verb)	-or	creator (noun)
creat(e) (verb)	-ity	creativity (noun)

**Exercise 2: Look at the words below and identify their suffixes. List the six different suffixes you find. Then listen to their pronunciation. Can you find a pattern of stress for words with the same suffixes?**

1. photography	2. employee	3. electricity	4. biology
5. politician	6. academic	7. horrific	8. nationality
9. strategic	10. refugee	11. magician	12. biography
13. publicity	14. geology		

Suffixes you found:

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

## Stress Rules for Common Suffixes

Many English suffixes for long words have an 'i' in them like -ion, -ity, etc. These words originally come from Latin and Old French, and they are used for making nouns and adjectives. They all have the same stress pattern: the stress is pulled to the syllable before the 'i'.

Suffix	Find the syllable before the suffix	Examples
<b>-ion (-ian)</b>	decision (stress on "ci")	admission, civilization, electrician, comedian
<b>-ity</b>	visibility (stress on "bil")	sensitivity, accessibility, stability, equality
<b>-ient</b>	efficient (stress on "fi")	convenient, proficient, ancient, obedient
<b>-ial</b>	beneficial (stress on "fi")	industrial, financial, official, commercial
<b>-ic</b>	generic (stress on "ner")	democratic, economic, strategic, artistic
<b>-ical</b>	mechanical (stress on "ni")	political, musical, chemical, critical

Notes:

The -ion and -ian suffixes can be pronounced as one or two syllables.

- After 't', 'c', or 's', they are pronounced as 1 syllable /jŋ/. Example: 'nation' /neɪ.jŋ/.
- After other consonants, it will be 2 syllables /iɪ.ən/. Example: 'librarian' /laɪ.brɛ.rɪɪ.ən/
- The stress is still the same.

The -ient suffix can be pronounced as 1 or 2 syllables

- If it comes after a 'c' 't' or 'n' it's 1 syllable /ŋ?/. Example: 'efficient' /ə.fi.jŋ?/
- After other consonants, it's 2 syllables /iɪ.ən?/. Example: 'obedient' /oʊ.biɪ.diɪ.ən?/
- The stress is still the same.

**Pronunciation Tip - Stress with -i suffixes**

Many long English words that end in an 'i' suffix follow a pattern. If you're not sure how to pronounce these words, find the 'i' suffix and stress the syllable before it.

**Writing**

**Exercise 3: Sort the words into their stress patterns. For each word, identify which syllable carries the primary stress.**

1. musician	4. democratic	7. ingredients	10. economic
2. electronic	5. efficient	8. logical	11. attention
3. presidential	6. ethical	9. romantic	12. industrial

Pattern: . . — . (stress on 3rd of 4)	Pattern: . — . (stress on 2nd of 3)	Pattern: — . . (stress on 1st of 3)	Pattern: — . . (stress on 1st of 3, alt)

## Alternation

There is a common pattern in English where vowels will alternate. This means, every other syllable will use a clear vowel, and every other syllable will use a schwa /ə/ or syllabic consonant. For example,

democracy: /ə/ /ɑ/ /ə/ /ɪ/ — alternating reduced and clear vowels

presidential: /ɛ/ /ə/ /ɛ/ /l/ — alternating reduced and clear vowels

This even happens in phrases with multiple-syllable words.

"got an education at a university": /ɑ/ /ɪ/ /ɛ/ /ə/ /e/ /ɪ/ /æ/ /ə/ /u/ /ə/ /ɪ/ /ə/ /ɪ/

This doesn't happen every time, but it's still common.

## Stress Rules for Greek Suffixes

Many English suffixes for academic and scientific words come from Greek. The most common Greek suffixes also have stress patterns: the stress is pulled to the syllable before the suffix.

Suffix	Find the syllable before the suffix	Examples
<b>-logy</b>	biology (stress on "o")	eulogy, analogy, sociology, technology
<b>-graphy</b>	photography (stress on "o")	biography, calligraphy, geography, oceanography
<b>-tis</b>	bronchitis (stress on "i")	arthritis, dermatitis, appendicitis, laryngitis

## Stress Rules for French Suffixes

Many English words come from French and have a French suffix. Since French stresses words on the last syllable, most words with these suffixes stress the last syllable. One note: 'ue' is silent at the end of words in French, like 'unique,' so it does not count as a syllable.

Suffix	Find the syllable before the suffix	Examples
-ee	referee (stress on "ee")	nominee, refugee, trainee, marquee
-eer	career (stress on "eer")	pioneer, engineer, volunteer, auctioneer
-(vowel)que	antique (stress on "tique")	opaque, boutique, mosque, technique
-ese	Lebanese (stress on "ese")	Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Maltese

### Pronunciation Tip - Stress with loanword suffixes

There are rules for pronouncing words with confusing spelling from other languages like Greek or French. For Greek words, stress the syllable before the suffix. For French words, stress the last syllable. There will be many exceptions, but these rules are useful for learning new words.

## Speaking

**Exercise 4: Look at the sentences below and mark the stress on the words with suffixes. Many of these words are uncommon, and it's ok if you don't know them, but you should be able to pronounce the stress correctly. Then practice saying the sentences.**

1. The director made a strategic decision to delay the production and practice the choreography more.
2. Despite his tenacity, he couldn't overcome the company's bureaucratic policies.
3. Seismology is the study of tectonic plates and their dramatic effects on earthquakes.
4. The mother's views were parochial, expecting her children to be completely obedient.
5. The auctioneer sold an authentic rifle used by musketeers during the American Revolution.

## Stress Shift

In some situations, a word's primary stress will change to a different syllable. This is called, 'stress shift.' The most common situation is when a word comes before a noun. For example:

- 1) When a word with stress on the third or last syllable comes before a noun, the stress shifts to the first syllable. (The original stressed syllable becomes secondary stress.)
  - photographic (stress on "graph") → photographic memory (primary stress shifts to "pho")
  - afternoon (stress on "noon") → afternoon snack (primary stress shifts to "af")
  - indecisive (stress on "ci") → indecisive person (primary stress shifts to "in")
- 2) When a '-teen' number comes before a noun to count it, the primary stress shifts to the first syllable.
  - fifteen (stress on "teen") → fifteen dollars (stress on "fif")
  - I'm sixteen (stress on "teen") → sixteen years old (stress on "six")
  - We have seventeen (stress on "teen") → seventeen people (stress on "sev")
- 3) When a phrasal verb comes before a noun object, the first word gets stress.
  - pick it up (stress on "up") → pick up your room (stress on "pick")
  - figure it out (stress on "out") → figure out the problem (stress on "fig")
  - drop off (stress on "off") → drop off the kids (stress on "drop")

## Rules for Word Stress in Numbers

There is often miscommunication between English learners and native speakers with 'teen numbers' and 'ten numbers'. They sound similar, but the differences between the two are usually word stress and the individual sounds.

Ten Numbers (30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90)	Teen Numbers (13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19)
Stress the first syllable (this never changes). The 't' is usually pronounced with a flap-t, /r/.	Stress the second syllable if it's alone or at the end of a phrase. Stress the first syllable if it's counting a noun or in a number sequence. The 't' is pronounced as an aspirated, clear stop t, /tʰ/.
He turned thirty. (stress on "thir")	He turned thirteen. (stress on "teen")
It was (\$50.15) fifty-fifteen.	It was (\$15.50) fifteen-fifty.
Eighty people came to the event. (stress on "eigh")	Eighteen people came to the event. (stress shifts to "eigh" before noun)

### Pronunciation Tip - Teen and Ten Numbers

For English pronunciation, it's usually ok if you pronounce individual sounds a bit incorrectly, as long as you pronounce the word stress correctly. However, this isn't true for teen and ten numbers. The pronunciation of the 't' is very important to understand the difference. It's a flap-t or /d/ in the ten numbers, and a very hard, /tʰ/ with a puff of air in the teen numbers.

## Speaking

**Exercise 5: Choose phrase A or B and say it to your partner. They should listen and respond with the correct answer.**

#	Sentence	Response
1a.	The meeting is being held in room forty.	→ That's down the hall.
1b.	The meeting is being held in room fourteen.	→ That's on the fourth floor.
2a.	The appointment is at 3:50.	→ We have plenty of time.
2b.	The appointment is at 3:15.	→ That's now!
3a.	He said it cost like \$18.	→ That's not too bad.
3b.	He said it cost like \$80.	→ That's way too expensive!
4a.	I just turned sixteen.	→ Are you gonna get a license soon?
4b.	I just turned sixty.	→ Are you gonna retire soon?
5a.	There were 19 people at the party.	→ Sounds like a good crowd.
5b.	There were 90 people at the party.	→ That's a lot of people.
6a.	It's 17 miles from here.	→ It should take us fifteen minutes then.
6b.	It's 70 miles from here.	→ That'll take us an hour.

## Dialog Practice

**Exercise 6: Look at the conversation dialog. Draw the stress over the words with suffixes and numbers. Try to remember the pronunciation tips from this unit. Then practice reading the conversation dialog in a group.**

#	Speaker	Line
1.	<b>A</b>	What did you study in college?
2.	<b>B</b>	I majored in sociology, but it's hard to start a career in that field unless you teach.
3.	<b>A</b>	Yeah, so what are you doing now?
4.	<b>B</b>	Right now I'm a volunteer at a refugee center—doing social work. It's a very diverse demographic. What about you?
5.	<b>A</b>	Well, I studied geology, and now I'm a trainee in my university's oceanic geography department. It's small. Only thirteen people.
6.	<b>B</b>	That's cool. I'm not good at STEM. I'm more into photography and painting.
7.	<b>A</b>	That's great! I'm not artistic at all. Only my mom is. She studied Japanese calligraphy. She's 60, and she still does it even with her arthritis.

# Unit 8: Thought Groups

## *Pausing and speaking in groups*

### Focus of the Unit

Language is usually grouped into units that are said continuously without a pause. The way you section your speech into units can impact the meaning. It's normal to pause often when speaking a second language. But in order to improve fluency, it's good to practice when you should pause and when you shouldn't pause.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Speak in thought groups without pausing within them
- 2) Use pauses to clarify meaning

### Listening

#### Exercise 1: Which phrase or sentence do you hear?

#	A	B
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-hour-long meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 / hour-long meetings
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> I saw her go	<input type="checkbox"/> I saw her / go
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't stop believing	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't / stop believing
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> She yelled Steve	<input type="checkbox"/> She yelled / Steve
5.	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow men working	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow / men working
6.	<input type="checkbox"/> Just call me Kia	<input type="checkbox"/> Just call me / Kia

## Thought Groups

When we write, we use punctuation to show where to pause and stop. But real-life language isn't always spoken in clear, perfect sentences with periods. We also don't speak in single, lone words. Real-life language is spoken in thought groups.

Thought groups (also called 'intonation groups') are groups of words that are said as one piece of speech.

- The words in a thought group link together with no pauses. Example: 'She was babysitting.' /ʃiː.wəz.beɪ.bɪ.sɪ.tɪŋ/
- Many words in a thought group will be said faster and weaker. Example: 'Where will he go?' /wɛr.wɪl.iː.goʊ/
- Each thought group has its own flowing pitch (or intonation). Example: 'They broke up?' [rising]
- Each thought group centers around one most important word. Example: 'It's gonna rain tomorrow.' (focus word: rain)

In the next chapters, we will study these in detail.

## Types of Thought Groups

Natural pauses can appear anywhere depending on the speaker and how they're talking. But the most common thought groups are:

Type of thought group	Example
<b>Sentences</b>	That's the thing. / Can I help you?
<b>Sentences</b>	We won. / It's hard to find good help.
<b>Clauses and Grammatical Units</b>	but when I told him / even though they don't live there
<b>Clauses and Grammatical Units</b>	in her mind / really confused me
<b>Single-Word Transition and Filler Phrases</b>	fortunately / well
<b>Single-Word Transition and Filler Phrases</b>	like / however
<b>Multi-Word Transition and Filler Phrases</b>	on the other hand / that being said
<b>Multi-Word Transition and Filler Phrases</b>	yeah but / at the end of the day

## Dialog Practice

**Exercise 2: Listen to this conversation. Write a slash / wherever there's a natural pause. Then listen again, and label each thought group as a "Sentence or Clause" (SC), "Single-Word Transition or Filler Phrase" (SW), or "Multi-Word Transition or Filler Phrase" (MW). The punctuation has been left out.**

Speaker	Line
A:	I was reading this thing that said / like / when you sleep / your brain cleans itself
B:	Cleans itself
A:	Yeah I mean it gets rid of unnecessary proteins and waste
B:	Like a computer clearing up storage
A:	Yeah so if you don't get enough sleep and you feel foggy it's like your brain hasn't been cleaned
B:	That makes sense cause sleep impacts memory you know what I mean
A:	Right you need to let your brain clean up storage so it can remember more
B:	Honestly sleep is more important than we give it credit for

# Unit 9: Reductions and Rhythm

## *Reducing words for speed*

### **Focus of the Unit**

Many English words are pronounced very differently when they're spoken in real conversations. Speakers make some words very short and unstressed and others more clear and stressed, and this is an important part of fluency. We will look at the techniques native speakers use to speak quickly.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Speak sentences with the correct reductions of grammar words
- 2) Use reductions and stress to speak with the appropriate rhythm and speed

### **Listening**

| **Exercise 1: Circle the two clearest words in each sentence.**

1. The cat's under the table.
2. She'll visit her friend tomorrow.
3. I was reading a book.
4. They're going to the park.
5. We can see the stars.
6. He's playing with the dog.
7. You should take a walk.
8. He'll call you in the morning.

## Content Words and Function Words

Content Words:

- Words that have more meaning, like nouns, verbs, and adjectives
- They're usually more stressed in a thought group because they are more important to understanding.

Opposite of content words are Function Words:

- Grammatical words like pronouns, prepositions, and articles.
- Because their meaning isn't as clear and important as content words, they are usually less stressed in a thought group.

## Writing

**Exercise 2: Look at the paragraph and make a list of all the words you can find for each part of speech below. Then remember which parts of speech are content words. Underline those words and listen to the paragraph again, paying attention to the stress.**

*There's a coffee shop I really like that's close to my work. When you walk in, you can smell coffee and warm pastries. The baristas there usually know my name, too. I always order a latte or a chai tea and sit down to work on my computer. It's nice to sit by the window and watch people walk by while I sip on a warm drink.*

Articles	Prepositions	Pronouns	Nouns

Verbs	Conjunctions	Adverbs	Adjectives

## Stress Timing

Many languages, like Japanese or Hindi, pronounce their syllables evenly. Even though speakers use different speeds and pitches, each syllable takes about the same amount of time to say and is equally spaced out. These are "syllable-timed" languages.

However, English is "stress-timed." This means that in a phrase, syllables that are more important are pronounced with more stress and a stronger beat, and less important syllables get unstressed and are said faster.

## Listening

**Exercise 3: Listen to the words from column A and the phrases from column B. Try to draw the stress pattern for each one. Use a small dot for unstressed syllables and a curve for stressed syllables. The first two are done for you.**

#	A: Word	Pattern	B: Phrase	Pattern
1.	musician	. — .	You hit him.	. — .
2.	reality		He went with me.	
3.	application		They all made it.	
4.	civilization		We're on vacation	
5.	presidential		It's essential.	
6.	employee		That's my tea.	
7.	geology		He's stopping me.	

What do you notice in each A and B pair? How many words are in A compared to B?

## Reductions

In natural thought groups, fluent speakers have to keep up with the beat of stressed content words, so they reduce grammar words and make them shorter and easier to say.

Most grammar words reduce in two ways:

- Dropping a consonant - the word loses a consonant sound like /f/ or /ð/ or /h/.  
Examples: them → /əm/, of → /ə/
- Reducing a vowel - the vowel becomes a schwa /ə/ or syllabic consonant /ŋ/ or /r/.  
Examples: to → /tə/, for → /fɹ/

It's like every grammar word has two forms:

3. The original form. Used in unnaturally slow speech, when it's at the end of a thought group, when it's spoken alone, when it's stressed for emphasis
4. The weak form. Used in natural speech, fast speech, when it's spoken in a thought group

Keep in mind: some people just speak a bit more slowly and clearly and do less reductions. Some grammar words reduce even more. It just depends on the person, the situation, and the speed.

Articles			
Grammar Word	Original Form	Weak Form	Example
a	/eɪ/	/ə/	a job
an	/æn/	/ən/	an emergency
the	/ðə/	/ðə/ (+ consonant) /ði/ (+ vowel)	the desk the other

Pronouns			
Grammar Word	Original Form	Weak Form	Example
him	/hɪm/	/əm/	Call him.
her	/hɜː/	/ɚ/	Promote her.
them	/ðeɪm/	/əm/	Hire them.
you	/juː/	/yə/	Are you coming?
I	/aɪ/	/ə/	I don't know.
our	/aʊ.ɹ/	/ɑː/	our house

*Note: /ə/ is like /ay/ with the /y/ glide cut off.*

Prepositions			
Grammar Word	Original Form	Weak Form	Example
of	/əv/	/ə/ (+ consonant) /əv/ (+ vowel)	date of birth best of all
to	/tuː/	(vowel +) /rə/ /tə/ (+ consonant) /tuː/ or /tə/ (+ vowel)	go to bed need to do this to another school
for	/fɔː/	/fə/	it's for everyone
at	/æt/	/əʔ/ (+ consonant) /ət/ (+ vowel)	at my house at an office

Conjunctions			
Grammar Word	Original Form	Weak Form	Example
that	/ðæt/	/ðər/ (+ vowel) /ðə?/ (+ consonant)	knew that I left that my card was lost
or	/ɔr/	/r/	pass or fail
and	/ænd/	/n/	soup and salad
Auxiliaries			
Grammar Word	Original Form	Weak Form	Example
do	/duː/	/də/	What do they want?
can	/kæn/	/kən/	He can sing.
have	/hæv/	/əv/	The students have left.
will	/wɪl/	/wəl/	My mom will call you.

### Pronunciation Tip - Reductions and Weak Forms

English language learners often study words in an "artificial" context, and they focus on reading before speaking. Because of this, they pronounce words in their original form. Native speakers listen and speak before reading; therefore they naturally use weak forms. Many native speakers don't even know they are doing it. Using weak forms will help you speak faster and more fluently.

## Listening

**Exercise 4: Listen to the sentences and fill in the blanks. Then practice the sentences.**

1. Now \_\_\_\_\_ know \_\_\_\_\_ that's \_\_\_\_\_ job.

1.1 Word:	
1.2 Word:	
1.3 Word:	

2. Barbara's neighbor brought \_\_\_\_\_ some fresh flowers.

2.1 Word:	
-----------	--

3. The professor \_\_\_\_\_ apply \_\_\_\_\_ teach math \_\_\_\_\_ science.

3.1 Word:	
3.2 Word:	
3.3 Word:	

4. We had \_\_\_\_\_ cancel because \_\_\_\_\_ the lack \_\_\_\_\_ people.

4.1 Word:	
4.2 Word:	
4.3 Word:	

5. We drove \_\_\_\_\_ pick up groceries \_\_\_\_\_ the store.

5.1 Word:	
5.2 Word:	

6. He proposed to \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ amusement park.

6.1 Word:	
6.2 Word:	
6.3 Word:	

7. \_\_\_\_\_ brother call \_\_\_\_\_ later tonight?

7.1 Word:	
7.2 Word:	
7.3 Word:	

8. \_\_\_\_\_ get to see the show? Or \_\_\_\_\_ gonna watch the recording?

8.1 Word:	
8.2 Word:	
8.3 Word:	
8.4 Word:	

## Contractions

Another feature of stress timing is contractions. A "contraction" refers to any time a grammar word is connected to another word with an apostrophe ('). Contractions are reductions in writing.

cannot → can't	she will → she'll
I am → I'm	will not → won't

Sometimes a contraction becomes even more reduced:

- they are → they're /ðeɪr/ → /ðɪr/
- we will → we'll /wiːl/ → /wɪl/
- we are → we're /wiə/ → /wɪr/
- you are → you're /jʊr/ → /jɪr/

### Pronunciation Tip - Contractions

Not only do contractions make your speech sound more fluent, they are so common in spoken English that it can sound strange if you don't do them. Speaking without contracting any words can sound formal, serious, or even angry. Using contractions sounds more conversational and friendly.

## To vs. Too

'to' and 'too' are both pronounced the same when they are alone or stressed (and even native speakers misspell them all the time!). However, when they are used naturally, they often have different pronunciations.

'to' is a grammar word, so it doesn't get stressed

- It reduces to /tə/ or /rə/ in many cases
- Sometimes 'to' is pronounced /tu<sup>w</sup>/ when it's linking to a word with a vowel: 'to another' /tu<sup>w</sup>.ə.nə.ðr/
- Sometimes 'to' is pronounced /tu<sup>w</sup>/ when it's at the end of a phrase: 'who are you talking to?'

'too' is a content word, so it's stressed

- It's always pronounced /tu<sup>w</sup>/

## Reading

**Exercise 5: Read the passage below. Find every 'too' and circle it. Find every 'to' and write if it is pronounced /tə/, /rə/, or /tu<sup>w</sup>/.**

*I've been starting to feel too stressed these days. I have too much to do. I have to drive from work to school to pick up my daughter, then to another school to pick up my son. I may have to take a break from it all so that I don't get too tired. I think I'll take a vacation to visit my sister, and maybe go to the lake too.*

## Can vs. Can't

A common point of confusion is the difference between 'can' and 'can't'.

- This is because they sound similar in spoken language.
- However, there is a difference in stress and pronunciation that helps fluent speakers distinguish the two.

'can' has different pronunciations based on the situation.

- Usually, it should be reduced and unstressed, and the partner verb should be stressed.
- For example, 'He can join us for the party' — 'join' is what he will do, so we should stress 'join'.
- 'can' should be pronounced /kən/. It's very fast, just the sound /k/ and syllabic 'n' /n/
- It should only be stressed when it's at the end of a thought group, alone, or emphasized.

'can'		
In a thought group (weak form)	At the end of a thought group (original form)	Emphasized (original form)
What can you do about it?	I can.	He can speak English.
I don't think I can make it.	Do what you can.	There are some things we can do, and some things we can't do.
Can we trust him?	We'll see if we can.	Yes, we can trust him.

'can't' is always pronounced the same.

- It should be stressed and clear, equal to the partner verb.
- For example, 'He can't join us for the party' — we have to stress 'can't' because it's important to clarify that it's negative.
- It's pronounced /kænʔ/. The vowel is a clear /æ/.
- The 't' is usually pronounced as a glottal stop /ʔ/. It abruptly stops the word.

'cannot' is also always pronounced the same. The stress is on the second syllable.

- However, 'cannot' sounds very formal. It's rarely used in conversational English.
- 'cannot' also sounds strong or angry. 'I cannot believe it!'

'can't'	
In a thought group	At the end of a thought group or emphasized
I can't do anything about that.	Actually, I CAN'T help her.
She can't make it tonight.	She can't.
I can't trust him.	I'm pretty sure he can't.

#### **Pronunciation Tip - Weak form of 'can'**

Native speakers are used to hearing the word 'can' in its weak form unless it's stressed for emphasis or at the end of a thought group. If you don't pronounce it weakly, it will lead to misunderstandings because people will think they heard 'can't'. It's best to try and pronounce 'can' as /kən/ and stress the partner verb.

## Speaking

**Exercise 6: Circle any 'can', 'can't', or partner verbs that are stressed. Then work with a partner, and say sentence A or sentence B. Your partner should reply with the correct sentence.**

#	Sentence	Response
1a.	I can help you with your homework.	→ Thanks, that's helpful!
1b.	I can't help you with your homework.	→ That's okay, I'll figure it out.
2a.	I can stop by after work.	→ Great, see you then!
2b.	I can't stop by after work.	→ Oh, maybe another day?
3a.	I can stay for dinner tonight.	→ Awesome, I'll make something nice!
3b.	I can't stay for dinner tonight.	→ No problem. Maybe next time.
4a.	My mom can pick up the package.	→ Perfect! That saves me a trip.
4b.	My mom can't pick up the package.	→ Alright. I'll go get it myself.
5a.	We CAN take two cars.	→ Ok, then you and I will drive.
5b.	We CAN'T take two cars.	→ Why not?
6a.	Alex said he can drive us tonight.	→ Awesome, tell him thanks!
6b.	Alex said he can't drive us tonight.	→ We may have to call an Uber then.

## Dialog Practice

**Exercise 7: Look at the conversation dialog. Find the stressed content words and circle them. Find the reduced grammar words and write their reduced pronunciation above. Then practice reading the conversation dialog in a group.**

#	Speaker	Line
1.	<b>A:</b>	Were you able to talk to Maya today? [hint: were you /wɜː.yə/, to talk /tə.tɔk/, to Maya /tə.maya/]
2.	<b>B:</b>	I emailed her, but I haven't heard back yet. Why?
3.	<b>A:</b>	'Cause I wanted to ask about the candidate that we're considering hiring.
4.	<b>B:</b>	Oh right, Jeong. You interviewed him yesterday, yeah?
5.	<b>A:</b>	Yeah, and apparently she worked with him before, at a different job.
6.	<b>B:</b>	Well, what did you think?
7.	<b>A:</b>	He seems qualified. His background is in math and physics, and he has some good leadership experience.
8.	<b>B:</b>	Okay, I can try to give Maya a call later and tell her you were trying to reach her.
9.	<b>A:</b>	Sounds good. I'd like to get her input before I make a decision.

# Unit 10: Focus Words

## *Word Emphasis in Conversations*

### Focus of the Unit

Tone and stress are not only used to recognize words. They're also used to follow the natural flow of the conversation. Thought groups have one word that is stressed the most. There are rules for what word to stress. Stressing the correct word in a thought group is important for sounding natural and helping with understanding.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Recognize focus words in a sentence or thought group
- 2) Stress the correct focus words in dialogue

### Warm-Up

**Exercise 1: Underline the word that is stressed the most in each thought group.**

#	Speaker	Line
1.	A:	Miguel, / I'm freaking out.
2.	B:	Why?
3.	A:	I'm trying to cook this dish / for my dinner date tonight, / and / I can't get it to taste right.
4.	B:	What is it?
5.	A:	Soup.
6.	B:	What kind of soup?
7.	A:	It's like a bell pepper soup.
8.	B:	Let me try.
9.	A:	I thought it needed salt, / so I added salt. / But it still tastes funny.
10.	B:	Well, / for one thing / you didn't use bell peppers. / These are tomatoes.

## Focus Words

In every thought group, there is one word that is stressed the most. This is called the "focus word."

The focus word is the most important word in a thought group, and it helps us follow a conversation and its natural flow.

Generally, the focus word is the last content word in a thought group.

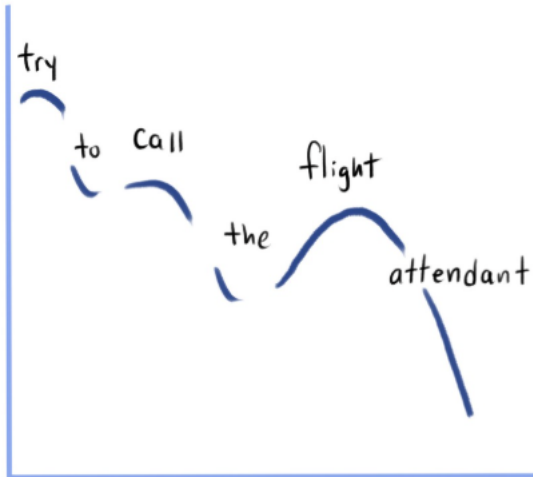
- I packed up my things, / and I moved to San Francisco. (focus words: things, Francisco)
- We decided to take that class, / and Mariam's gonna try and join, too. (focus words: class, join)

Many English learners already do this naturally. However, there are many reasons why you would not stress the last content word in a thought group. The most common error for English learners is that they choose the wrong focus word. Here is the list of reasons why the last word would not be stressed:

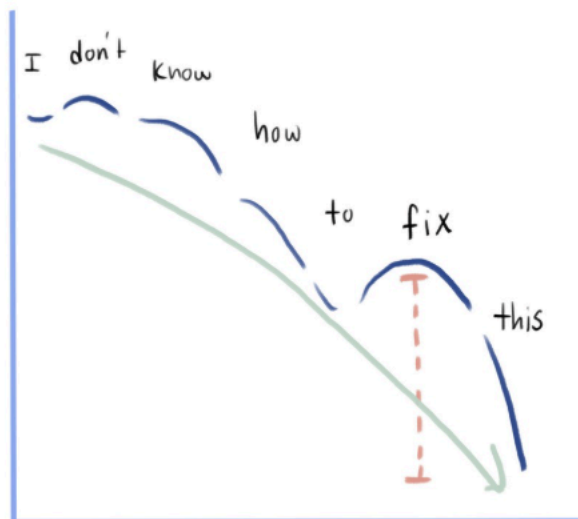
Words that usually aren't the focus word	
Why it's not the focus word	Examples (focus word in bold)
<b>Certain types of words like grammar words or time adverbs</b>	I wish I never met him. I don't know how to fix this. We have a meeting tomorrow. My boyfriend's cooking chicken later.
<b>The second (or third) word of a compound noun should not be a stressed focus word</b>	I'm gonna write a money order for him. Try to call the flight attendant. We're having dinner with my mother-in-law.
<b>Old information that is being repeated to clarify, contrast, or agree</b>	I said you could borrow my car / not crash my car. I have some good news, and some bad news. A: This food is spicy. B: I know, it is spicy. I'll have coffee, please / decaf coffee.

## Pitch and Stress

When we speak, our voice naturally gets lower. As the air leaves our lungs, the pitch and volume drop.



Focus words are words with a jump in pitch. The jump is a signal to the listener that this is the most important word in the thought group. Everything after the pitch jump should be un-stressed and low.



## Speaking

**Exercise 2: Look at the dialogs below and underline the focus word in each thought group. Then listen to the recordings and check. With a partner, read the dialogs.**

1. a. Why'd you leave so early yesterday? b. I had to go to the dentist.
2. a. What's wrong with the salad? b. I found a piece of plastic in it.

3. a. Where did you leave the keys? b. They're probably on the counter.
4. a. I'm out of cash. b. Me too. / I'll need to withdraw some.
5. a. Guess what? / I got a job. b. Now you can finally save for a car.
6. a. Have you heard from Omar lately? b. No. / I think I'm gonna text him.
7. a. What do you think of my new watch? b. Very funny. / That's my watch.

**Pronunciation Tip - Un-stressing Words**

If the last word in a thought group is not the focus word (like a grammar word, a compound noun, a time adverb, or old information) it's very important to make the word un-stressed. It should be said lower and less clear. If you stress the word when it should be un-stressed, it won't sound wrong, but it will sound unnatural.

## Grammar Words after the Focus Word

Grammar words are usually not the focus word. If they come after the focus word, they will be un-stressed.

- We already sent it to him. (focus: sent)
- I can't find my keys in this one. (focus: keys)
- My ride is here. (focus: ride)

If you stress a grammar word like a focus word, it puts a special emphasis on it. It changes the feeling of the sentence.

- This present is for him (not for you!) — focus: him

Unless there is a reason to stress a grammar word, it can sound unnatural.

## Compound Nouns as a Focus Word

Compound nouns are usually stressed on the first noun.

- sunglasses (stress on "sun")
- post office (stress on "post")

This rule stays true when the compound noun is the focus word.

- Trinh's on her way to the train station. (focus: train)
- Let's meet in the parking lot. (focus: parking)

If you stress the second half of the compound noun, it will sound unusual. You would only stress the second word if you are trying to show a special focus on that word or give a correction.

- A: You said you don't know where the car is.
- B: No, I don't know where the car key is! (focus shifts to: key)

## Time Adverbs after the Focus Word

Examples of time adverbs are: tomorrow, usually, now, later, this week, today.

Time adverbs are usually not a focus word.

- They have to turn in their assignment tomorrow. (focus: turn in or assignment, not tomorrow)
- We're meeting up later. (focus: meeting up)
- I have my appointment today. (focus: appointment)

If you stress a time word like a focus word, it means you are putting a special emphasis on the time. This will happen if the time is especially important to the situation.

- I can take you to the pharmacy, / but we'd have to go today (focus on "today" because the timing is critical)

### **Pronunciation Tip - Time Adverbs**

Time adverbs are usually not stressed focus words, but it depends on the situation. Only stress time adverbs if there is a reason to draw attention to the time. Otherwise, it can just sound strange.

## Focus Words to Show Contrast

When you want to emphasize two different things, the contrasting items become stressed focus words. The repeated information should be un-stressed.

- I thought the meeting was on the third floor, / but it was on the fourth floor. (focus: third, fourth)
- They gave you our phone number. / Let me give you our fax number. (focus: phone, fax)

The last words are being said twice, so that's why it's ok that they are un-stressed. We stress the important information more.

## Disagreeing, Correcting, and Clarifying

When we need to correct wrong information or disagree, we typically stress the correct information. Again, the repeated information is unstressed.

Sometimes we stress the auxiliary verb to show emphasis.

Auxiliary verbs are verbs like 'to be' (is, am, are, etc.), 'to do', and any verb that has a "partner verb." Examples: can, should, would, will, might, is.

- A: You need to call your mom. B: I did call my mom. (stress on "did")

Disagreeing, Correcting, or Clarifying	
A: Shanghai is the capital of China.	B: I think Beijing is the capital of China.
A: Is the reservation at six-thirty?	B: No, / it's actually at seven-thirty.
A: Can he drive?	B: No, / he can't drive / he's been drinking.
A: Maybe you could get a job.	B: Yeah, / I'm looking for a job.

## Agreeing

When we want to agree with someone, we can repeat what they said, but we stress the auxiliary verb to show agreement. The old, repeated information is unstressed.

Agreeing	
A: Writing English is easier than speaking it.	B: Yeah, / writing is easier.
A: They're so loud. / They sound like a bunch of kids!	B: They do sound like kids.

## Speaking

**Exercise 3: Look at the statements below with a partner. Underline the focus word. One person should say statement A. The other person should respond with disagreement, correction, clarification, or agreement.**

#	Statement A	Response cue
1.	Class starts at 10:00 am.	<i>(but it starts at 9:00 am)</i>
2.	You should get some sleep.	<i>(but you got some sleep)</i>
3.	Did you say 760?	<i>(you said 716)</i>
4.	Are you from Virginia?	<i>(you're from West Virginia)</i>
5.	This ice cream is really creamy.	<i>(you agree)</i>
6.	New York City is the capital of New York.	<i>(but it's Albany)</i>
7.	Is that a spider bite?	<i>(but it's a mosquito bite)</i>

## Dialog Practice

**Exercise 4: Look at the dialog below. Underline the focus words in each line. Remember the rules from this unit. Then practice the dialog.**

#	Speaker	Line
1.	<b>A:</b>	So you decided to move to Orange County?
2.	<b>B:</b>	Yeah / south Orange County
3.	<b>A:</b>	That's great / so now you can be closer to work
4.	<b>B:</b>	Actually / it's still gonna be pretty far from work / but the neighborhood is more affordable
5.	<b>A:</b>	Well that's good to hear / by the way / I got you a birthday gift
6.	<b>B:</b>	Oh thanks / that's nice of you / this feels like a sweater.
7.	<b>A:</b>	Yeah / a wool sweater
8.	<b>B:</b>	This is very nice / uhh / where exactly did you get this?
9.	<b>A:</b>	Um / actually it's a re-gift from Sam
10.	<b>B:</b>	Oh / I knew it / I gave this to Sam for his birthday

# Unit 11: Pitch and Intonation

## *Pitch in Questions and Statements*

### Focus of the Unit

Thought groups always have a tone or melody in them. Fluent speakers use these patterns to follow the path of the conversation and communicate different details and feelings. Sometimes, people learning English are more focused on the individual words, and they don't use the correct melody for the sentence. We will study these different patterns.

The goals for this unit:

- 1) Ask questions with the correct intonation and pitch for the focus words.
- 2) Give statements with the correct intonation and pitch for the focus words.

### Listening

**Exercise 1: Listen to each thought group and label the intonation. Mark each one as rising [R], falling [F], or flat [-]. There should be 13 labels.**

#	Speaker	Line	Intonation
1.	A:	Your dog's so cute. / Is it a boy / or a girl?	
2.	B:	She's a girl.	
3.	A:	What's her name?	
4.	B:	Ben.	
5.	A:	What is it?	
6.	B:	Ben. / I know, / it's an unusual name for a girl dog.	
7.	A:	Does she like to be pet?	
8.	B:	Yeah, / you can pet her.	

## Clarification or Disbelief

Sometimes we repeat a statement — but with a rising intonation — to show disbelief, surprise, or to ask for clarification.

To show disbelief or surprise...

- A: He hit my car... [falling] B: He hit your car?! [rising]
- A: The class was cancelled. [falling] B: The class was cancelled?! [rising]

If we're asking for clarification...

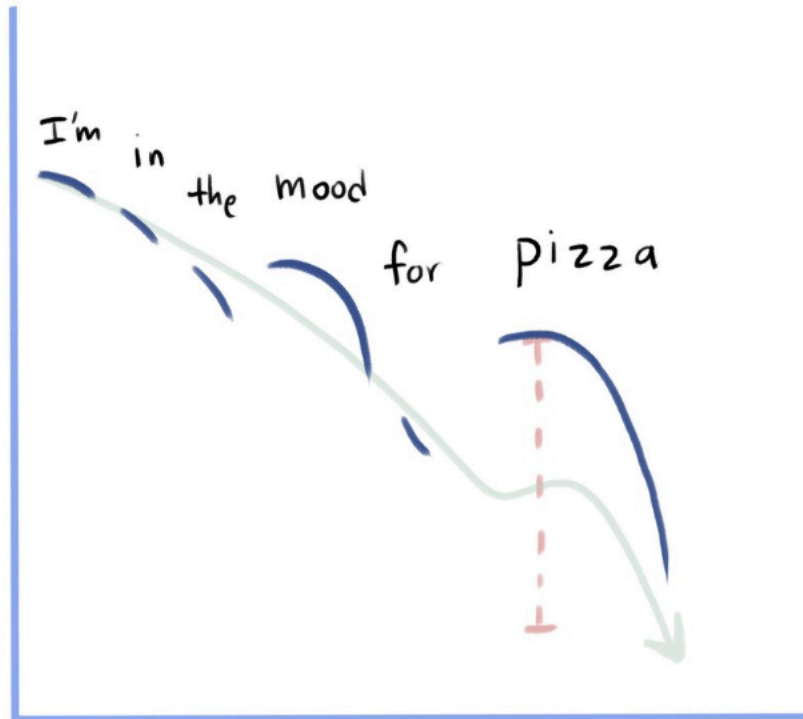
- A: How can I contact the manager? [falling] B: The manager? [rising] A: Here's his email. [falling]
- A: We have internet access [falling] B: We do? [rising]

### **Pronunciation Tip - Rising Intonation For Responses**

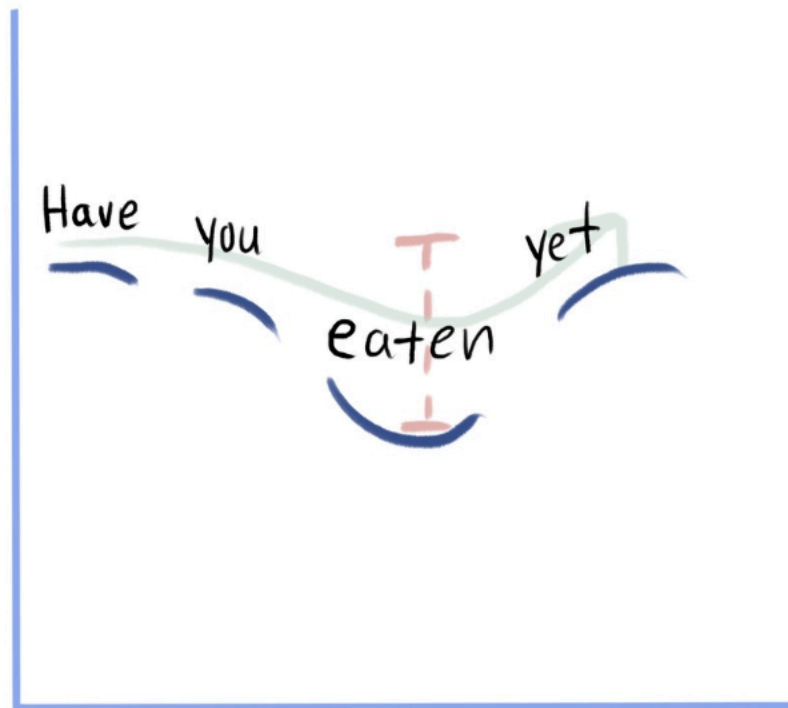
If we repeat a statement to clarify, the intonation should rise on the focus word. This can be considered a bit aggressive, especially if you repeat the entire sentence. It's more common to shorten the phrase, for example: "He broke up with her." "He did?!"

## Focus Words and Pitch

Normally, the focus word of a thought group is where the "pitch change" happens. In statements with a falling intonation, the pitch jumps up and then falls down.



However, sometimes we use a rising intonation, like for a question or for clarification. If a statement has a rising intonation, the focus word will be flipped. The pitch goes down before it goes up.



## Speaking

**Exercise 2:** Look at the thought groups below, and label the intonation pattern as rising [R] or falling [F]. For falling intonation, the pitch jumps on the focus word then falls. For rising intonation, the pitch lowers on the focus word then rises. Practice the sentences with a partner.

#	A (statement)	B (response)
1.	I lost my phone last night.	You lost your phone?
2.	They turned off the hot water.	They turned off the hot water?!
3.	You'll need to make an appointment with the front desk.	I need to make an appointment?
4.	I still haven't eaten yet.	You haven't eaten?
5.	A package just arrived for you.	A package?

### Pronunciation Tip - Rising Intonation and Focus Words

Remember, everything after a focus word should be un-stressed. In statements with falling intonation, any un-stressed words after the focus are very low in pitch. For a question or anything with rising intonation, any un-stressed words after the focus should be very high in pitch.

## Wh- Questions

On wh- questions (who, what, how, etc.), the pitch should have a falling intonation.

- Where are you from? [falling]
- What part of the city do you live in? [falling]

The only times we use a rising intonation is if we are asking for clarification or trying to be very polite.

- A: I'm moving to Jackson. [falling] B: Where? [rising] A: Jackson. In Mississippi. [falling]
- What's your name? [rising — polite]

A rising intonation on a Wh-Question can also be used to imply that we forgot the answer.

- When did you say you'll call me? [rising — forgot the answer]

### **Pronunciation Tip - Wh- Questions**

A common error that English learners make is saying every question with a rising tone. Most of the time, Wh-Questions should be said with a falling tone; this sounds more natural. Only use a rising tone in specific situations like asking for clarification.

## Speaking

**Exercise 3: Work with a partner. Student A reads the statement. Student B asks the wh-question with a rising tone or falling tone. Student A responds with the correct response. The response is different if the tone is falling or rising.**

#	Question	Response
1.	A: I'm moving to Mississippi.	
	B: Where? [rising]	A: Mississippi. It's a state.
	B: Where? [falling]	A: Jackson, the capitol.
2.	A: I'll text you in the afternoon.	
	B: When? [rising]	A: The afternoon.
	B: When? [falling]	A: Around 1.
3.	A: You need to turn that off.	
	B: What? [rising]	A: Turn that off!
	B: What? [falling]	A: The TV!
4.	A: There was a huge earthquake in California.	
	B: Where? [rising]	A: California
	B: Where? [falling]	A: Around LA
5.	A: I left my umbrella on the bus.	
	B: Where? [rising]	A: The bus.
	B: Where? [falling]	A: Probably on my seat.
6.	A: She's not coming tonight. She got in a fight with her boyfriend.	
	B: Why? [rising]	A: She got in a fight with her boyfriend.
	B: Why? [falling]	A: Not sure, something about using his car.

## Rising Intonation in Lists and Options

When we are giving a list of things, or giving options, we will use a rising-then-falling intonation.

- Like, "a or b" and "a, or b, or c, (etc.)"
- Even if we're asking a question, the tone should still fall at the end in this case.
- Do you wanna get coffee here [rising] or go someplace else? [falling]
- I have class Monday [rising], Wednesday [rising], and Friday. [falling]
- Would you like oat milk [rising], almond milk [rising], or soy milk? [falling]

## Flat Tone

Oftentimes, people will use a flat tone at the end of a thought group.

- This is used when we're going to continue talking or when we're still thinking about what we'll say.
- It's also sometimes used when giving lists.
- Her sister's really nice [flat] / but she's not my type [falling]
- Take two aspirin [flat] / and drink a lot of water [falling]
- I speak Spanish [flat] / some French [flat] / I'm studying Italian [flat] / and English, of course [falling]

## "Up-Talk"

Another feature of English intonation is ending a thought group with a rising tone, even if you aren't asking a question. This is called "up-talk."

- The exact reasons why people do this is complicated and not very clear, but it can be used in the same situations as a flat tone.
- It's more common in women, but men also talk this way naturally. Many younger people use a rising tone.

Some reasons why we will use a rising tone at the end of a thought group	
Why use a rising tone	Examples
<b>To show that we aren't done talking yet</b>	What I'm worried about [rising] / is that they'll message me outside of work [falling] I put in a request [rising] / but I don't think they'll do it [falling]
<b>If we aren't really sure what we're saying is important or true</b>	Maybe he's busy [rising] / he could just be with his friends [rising] A: He's an engineer [rising] / or a mechanic [rising] B: I think he does both [rising]
<b>To soften a command, disagreement, or suggestion to sound polite</b>	Go ahead and download the browser [rising] / and I can help you after that [falling] We were hoping to start the meeting at two [rising]

### **Pronunciation Tip - Rising tone and flat tone**

One way to make your English sound more fluent is using a flat or a rising tone in the right situations. When you are giving a list, giving options, or still thinking about what you're going to say, having a flat or rising tone will sound natural.

## Speaking

**Exercise 4: Finish the phrases with your own answers. Then label the intonation with [rising], [flat], [falling], or whatever feels natural or appropriate for the situation. Then practice the sentences.**

#	Phrase to finish (label intonation per group)
1.	Do you wanna get sushi / or _____ ?
2.	If you have any questions, / concerns, / or comments, / _____.
3.	For my birthday, / I want _____, / _____, / and _____.
4.	His cat is so fast, / so energetic, / and always _____.
5.	Finish your homework, / clean your room, / and then _____.
6.	Would you prefer to meet at 1:30 / _____ / or _____ ?

## Speaking

**Exercise 5: Look at the dialog below, and listen to the recording. Label the intonation patterns for each thought group as [rising], [falling], or [flat]. The speakers will use falling tone, rising tone, and flat tone depending on the context. Then practice the dialog.**

#	Speaker	Line
1.	<b>A:</b>	I haven't eaten yet.
2.	<b>B:</b>	What're you hungry for?
3.	<b>A:</b>	I was thinking tacos, / pizza, / or kebab.
4.	<b>B:</b>	Or what?
5.	<b>A:</b>	Kebab. / It's like... / Mediterranean food, / like beef and chicken on skewers / with rice.
6.	<b>B:</b>	Oh ok. / I think I'm in the mood for pizza, / and there's a place nearby in Irvine.
7.	<b>A:</b>	Where?
8.	<b>B:</b>	On Main St.
9.	<b>A:</b>	Oh I know that place. / Aren't they closed Mondays?
10.	<b>B:</b>	That's right / well then... / tacos or kebabs?
11.	<b>A:</b>	Let's get tacos.