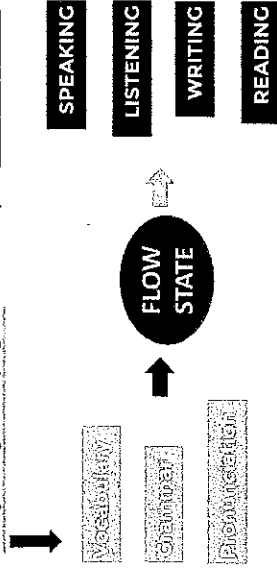


# Techniques for Teaching English Pronunciation

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## THE FORMULA

Steady and significant progress over time equals Master English level.



## What effects pronunciation?

- Native language
- Age/beyond puberty it is difficult to sound native but adults can be successful if all other factors are equal
- Exposure/quality and intensity of exposure is more important than length of time
- Innate phonetic ability/be aware of own limitations and consciously focus on doing something to compensate for the limitations
- Identity and language ego/don't be afraid of a second identity emerging/identify positively with speakers of the target language
- Motivation and concern for good pronunciation will move English Learners (ELs) toward improvement

## Assessing Speaking and Pronunciation Skills

- Initial spoken language assessment:
  - Speaking sample (record and transcribe exactly as spoken a short 2-3 minute narrative)
  - Oral reading (text at or lower than reading level)
  - Discuss with the student where they feel they are having problems with their English pronunciation.

## Threefold Focus of Teaching Pronunciation

- To enable (ELs) to understand and to be understood
- To build confidence in entering communicative situations
- To enable ELs to monitor their speech based on input from the environment

## Enable English Learners to Understand

- Provide practice in listening comprehension
  - ELs need to hear it before they can say it.
  - Encourage the EL to get as much listening experience outside of your sessions as possible.
  - Assign listening reports for each session and find out what your EL has listened to. ELs can listen to music and lyrics, TV shows, movies, anything in English will work!
  - Understanding longer streams of spoken language (try our Randall's Listening Lab [www.esl-lab.com](http://www.esl-lab.com), read to your EL and ask questions about what you have read, listen to short TED Talks, or Writers Almanac)
  - Call and leave a message for the EL

**Enable English Learners to  
be Understood**



**Enable English Learners to  
be Understood**



Enable English Learners to  
be Understood

- Practice vowel length, contrasting exercises where long vowels are extra long (e.g. 'seeeeeeat') and short vowels are very abrupt (e.g. 'sit'). Long vowels (& diphthongs)
- The vowels in: beat, boat, boot, bait, bite
- Short vowels: bet, bot, but , bat, bit

Minimal Pair Practice

R & L Pronunciation Bingo

		FREE		

Put the words from below into a line on your bingo card above:

luck	luck	luck	new	new	new
big	big	big	new	new	new
bad	bad	bad	bad	bad	bad
up	up	up	up	up	up
new	new	new	new	new	new
red	red	red	red	red	red

## Enable ELs to be Understood

- Provide explicit instruction in how to position the mouth while speaking greatly helps learners tackling difficult sounds.
- Demonstrate with videos and exaggerate making the sounds yourself. Then pass out mirrors and have ELs observe their own mouth positions while forming the sounds.
- Most important mouth positions:
  - Open mouth: bot, bought (note: for some English dialects, there is no distinction between these vowels)
  - Round mouth: boat, boot,
  - Neutral position: but, bit, bet
  - Corners of mouth pointed down (makes a frown): beat / bat
  - Tongue between teeth: threat

## Enable ELs to be Understood

- Tongue twisters are a great way to practice pronunciation, but instead of doing all the work, share the load with your ELs.
- Have ELs create their own tongue twisters. This helps them to not only practice their pronunciation, but be more aware of which sounds are in the words they know. They will have to really think about how to say words to know which ones to include in their tongue twister, and will have a laugh sharing the crazy sentences that result.

## Enable ELs to be Understood

### Put the Stress on Stress

- ELs are misunderstood when speaking not because of the individual sounds, but because of inappropriate stress.

(Say "A-luh-BAM-uh." Now say it with inappropriately placed reduced syllables "AL-uh-buhm-uh." The word is essentially unrecognizable.)

- Try the following stress marking activity:
  - Give your EL a list of words they know and have them identify stressed and unstressed syllables until they understand the idea of stress. Practice knocking on the desks for each syllable; knocking extra loudly on the stressed syllables and very gently for unstressed.

## Enable ELs to be Understood

### Put the Stress on Stress

The best way to learn word stress is to practice as you introduce new vocabulary words. As students study their new vocabulary, tell them which syllable to place the stress mark on so they can practice accurate pronunciation while learning the word.

## Enable ELs to be Understood

### Put the Stress on the Stress

Say a sentence and have the EL show which word is stressed: *I didn't buy a car.*  
Say the same sentence but shift the stress to another word: *I didn't buy a car.* Discuss how the stress affects the meaning of the sentence. Have your EL copy each sentence and underline the stressed word.

## Enable ELs to be Understood

### Put the Stress on the Stress

Try this matching exercise to practice sentence stress  
On one side of the worksheet write several sentences of varying length.  
On the other side, the sentences represented by a series of numbers; underline the number for the word that is stressed. For example:

I bought my sister a present.      1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5  
Mike didn't break the window.      1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6

Mix up the order in which the sentences appear on the left side. Say each sentence out loud, emphasizing the stressed word. Students must then match each sentence with its representation in numbers. Try this matching exercise to practice sentence stress.



## Enable ELs to be Understood

### •Put the Stress on the Stress

Now the EL must figure out which word is stressed based purely on the context. For instance:

*I was so angry at John. He forgot to call me on my birthday. He said he had remembered, but that it was too late to call.*

## Enable ELs to be Understood

### Rising and Falling: Intonation

To convey the correct intonation, ELs must first understand it. Try an exercise in which students can see that the intonation, not the words, is what conveys real meaning. Make this a multiple choice exercise. For each question, write a short sentence or phrase. Below it write several options students may choose from.

I have something to tell you.

How does the speaker feel?

a) happy and excited

b) sad and worried

c) nervous and worried

Now, read each sentence/phrase out loud. Make sure you convey the right feeling. For instance, say, "I have something to tell you" in a way that conveys that it is a serious matter that worries you, and you're nervous talking about it. Students listen to each one and circle the right feelings.

## Enable ELs to be Understood

### **Rising or Falling: Intonation**

Give the EL a series of questions they must evaluate.

Tell your EL to indicate whether each has a rising or falling intonation. For example:

*Did you remember to buy the milk? (rising) Where did you buy that? (falling)*

Can the EL see a pattern (yes/no questions have rising intonation; wh- questions have falling intonation).

## Enable ELs to monitor their speech based on input from the environment

- Provide practice in producing longer streams of language

- Practice dialogues (<http://esflow.com/foodrestaurantlessonplans.html>)

## Feedback

Give feedback early and often to avoid incorrect pronunciation habits. Corrections can be made immediately or make notes while students are speaking. Make notes of specific words/sounds that the EL struggles with. Focus on the most frequent pattern of errors for that particular. You can also have the students keep track of errors on their note card; for example, when you make a correction the EL can make a note of the mispronounced word on their card so they can remember to practice later.

## Feedback

Self-reflection feedback is also critical. If you're working with a more advanced EL, have them record themselves speaking and ask them to evaluate their own speech. If you're working with lower level learners, record yourself reading a passage or give them a recording of a native speaker reading a passage. Give them the same passage and have them record it. Tell them to listen to the two recordings multiple times to identify any words that don't sound the same. Repeating this task often will help them to monitor and be more aware of common errors.

# Resources

- Rachel's english.com American Phonetic Alphabet
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=579xk\\_cSxU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=579xk_cSxU)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcUj8rapC9A>
- List of Likely Errors (adapted from List of Likely Errors by Sakky Mellerish in *Introducing English Pronunciation* by Ann Baker, published by Cambridge University Press, 1982)
- Jazz Chants by Carolyn Graham, published by Oxford University Press, 2001
- Marshal Reading [http://resources.marshalleducation.org/reading\\_skills\\_home.htm](http://resources.marshalleducation.org/reading_skills_home.htm)
- <https://www.esphablab.com/poemnation/online-calm.htm>
- Randall's Learning Lab [www.rlablab.org](http://www.rlablab.org)
- Handout and McDonald Banded Speech <http://resources.mcdonald.com/alt/mcdonaldoid.com/illustrations/downloads/The%20Word%20Bands.pdf>

# List of Likely Errors

This is an index of errors commonly made and sounds found difficult by speakers of different languages or language groups.\* References are shown to units in the Student's Book providing practice in features of stress and intonation. Practice of individual sounds can be located using the table of contents.

## Arabic

### Vowels

Meaning is carried chiefly by consonants in Arabic; all English vowels may need practice.

A glottal stop is often added before vowels at the beginning of words.

ɪ (ship):	confused with ε (yes)
ʌ (cup):	confused with æ (hat) or ɑ (father)
ey (train):	confused with ε (yes) or ay (fine)
ɔ (ball),	
ow (no):	pronounced too short; may be confused with each other or with ʌ (cup) or ɑ (father)
ɜr (word)	
oy (boy):	confused with ay (fine)
ə (a banana)	

### Consonants

Silent consonants often pronounced.

Consonants in general may sound overemphasized.

Difficulty with groups of consonants, especially groups of three or more consonants; vowels often inserted between the consonants.

p:	confused with b
v:	pronounced f, or sometimes b
g:	may be confused with k or dʒ (joke)
θ (think):	usually pronounced t (though the sound θ exists in classical Arabic)
ð (feather):	usually pronounced d (though the sound ð exists in classical Arabic)
ŋ (ring):	pronounced ŋg, ŋk, or ng
r:	trilled; vowels before r confused
h:	pronounced as a harsh sound
ʒ (television):	may be confused with ʃ (shoe), z, or dʒ (joke)
tʃ (chair):	may be pronounced ʃ (shoe)

\*This list is adapted from the List of Likely Errors compiled by Sally Mellersh in *Introducing English Pronunciation* by Ann Baker, published by Cambridge University Press, 1982.

## Stress, intonation, and rhythm

May sound abrupt, commanding. Too many syllables are stressed.

Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29

Reduced vowels; weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19

Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46

Joining words: Units 27, 28, 29

Rising intonation (and almost all intonation exercises): Units 1, 3, 4, 12, 44

## Chinese

### Vowels

Almost all vowels will need practice. Variation of vowel length (for example, lengthening stressed vowels before a voiced consonant) causes difficulty.

i (ship):	confused with iy (sheep)
ε (yes):	confused with æ (hat) or ʌ (cup)
æ (hat):	confused with ʌ (cup), ε (yes), or ɑ (father); may be nasalized
ʊ (book):	confused with uw (boot)
uw (boot):	may be pronounced like the vowel y in French <i>tu</i> or confused with ʊ (book)
ʌ (cup):	may be confused with ɑ (father)
ey (train):	confused with ε (yes)
ɔ (ball):	may be confused with ow (no) or ɑ (father)
ay (fine), oy (boy), aw (house):	pronounced too short; sometimes replaced by first vowel alone
ə (a banana):	may be pronounced with rounded lips; often pronounced as the vowel in the spelling
3r (word):	may be pronounced with rounded lips

### Consonants

Difficulty with final consonants: may be dropped, especially after a diphthong, or a short vowel may be added at the end.

Great difficulty with groups of consonants: vowels often inserted between consonants in initial clusters, vowels added or consonants dropped in final clusters.

l:	confused with r; confused with n by some speakers
z:	usually replaced with s
dʒ (joke):	sounds close to tʃ (chair)
f (shoe):	confused with s or may sound close to h, especially before iy (sheep) or i (ship)
ʒ (television):	may be confused with f (shoe), s, or z
v:	replaced with f or sometimes w
θ (think):	replaced with t, s, or f
ð (feather):	replaced with d or z
b, d, g:	may be pronounced p, t, k, especially at the end of words

- h: may be pronounced harshly; confused with s or ʃ (shoe) before *ly*  
(sheep) or *i* (ship)  
y: found difficult before the vowels *iy* or *i*

### Intonation

Difficulty with intonation patterns that extend over a phrase or sentence.  
Intonation may sound monotonous or sing-song.  
Difficulty with the use of pitch as an element of English stress.  
Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44 (Almost all intonation exercises would be useful.)  
Expressing emotion: Units 4, 9, 37, 40, 44

### Stress and rhythm

Sounds staccato; too many syllables stressed.  
Joining words: Units 27, 28, 29  
Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46  
Reduced vowels; weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19  
Surprise; contrastive stress: Units 10, 38

## Czech and Polish

### Vowels

- æ (hat): pronounced *ɛ* (yes) or confused with *ʌ* (cup)  
iʏ (sheep): confused with *i* (ship)  
ow (no): confused with *ʌ* (cup) or *ɔ* (ball); pronounced too short  
ʊ (book): confused with *uw* (boot)  
uw (boot): may be pronounced close to *ʊ* (book) by Polish speakers  
ə (a banana)

### Consonants

- w: pronounced *v*  
θ (think)  
ð (feather)  
ŋ (ring)  
z: pronounced *s* in final position  
b, d, g: pronounced, respectively, *p, t, k* in final position  
v: pronounced *f* in final position  
dʒ (joke): pronounced *tʃ* (chair) in final position  
r: trilled

### Stress

Word stress (predictable in Czech and Polish, always falling on the same syllable):  
Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29  
Reduced vowels: Units 8, 14, 19

## Dutch

### Vowels

æ (hat):	pronounced ε (yes)
Λ (cup):	confused with α (father), or pronounced close to the vowel of 3r (word)
ɔ (ball):	confused with α (father) or ow (no)
ɪ (ship):	may be pronounced close to iy (sheep) or more like ε (yes)
u (book):	may be pronounced more like uw (boot) or close to Λ (cup)
3r (word):	pronounced with the lips pushed forward and rounded
oy (boy):	second sound may be too long

### Consonants

Voiced consonants (d, v, etc.) tend to be replaced with their voiceless equivalents (t, f, etc.) at the end of words.

w:	confused with v (w usually replaced with v), or an intermediate sound may be made for both
θ (think):	pronounced t or s
ð (feather):	pronounced d or z
g:	pronounced k or non-English sound x (Bach)
z:	pronounced s, especially in final position
v:	pronounced f, especially in final position
3 (television):	pronounced ʃ (shoe), especially in final position
dʒ (joke):	pronounced tʃ (chair) in final position; sometimes pronounced ʒ (television)
ʃ (shoe):	may be pronounced s in final position
tʃ (chair):	may be replaced with ʃ (shoe)
d:	pronounced t in final position
b:	pronounced p in final position
r:	pronounced too far back (uvular r) or trilled
l:	may be pronounced as dark l where English has clear l
ŋ:	may be confused with ŋk in final position; ŋg (finger) may be pronounced without the g sound

### Intonation

Intonation may sound flat or monotonous.

Rising intonation: Units 1, 3, 4, 12, 44

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44

## Farsi (Iranians)

### Vowels

All vowels need practice.

ɪ (ship):	sounds close to iy (sheep)
æ (hat):	pronounced close to ε (yes), or confused with Λ (cup)



ʌ (cup):	sounds close to ɑ (father)
ə (a banana)	
ɜr (word):	often pronounced ɛr
ow (no):	confused with ɔ (ball)
u (book):	confused with uw (boot)
ɛ (yes):	may be confused with ɪ (ship) or æ (hat)
ɔy (boy):	confused with ay (fine) or ɔ (ball)
aw (house):	may be confused with ɑ (father) or ow (no)

### Consonants

Difficulty with groups of consonants, especially at the beginning of a word; a vowel like ɛ (yes) is added before or between consonants.

w:	confused with v
θ (think):	usually pronounced t
ð (feather)	
s + consonant:	found difficult at the beginning of a word
ŋ (ring):	pronounced ŋg or ng
r:	trilled or flapped r; vowels before r cause difficulty
l:	only clear l used

### Stress and rhythm

Word stress (predictable in Farsi): Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29  
 Reduced vowels; weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19  
 Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46  
 Joining consonant sounds: Units 27, 28, 29

## Finnish

A tendency to pronounce words as they are spelled.

### Vowels

æ (hat):	pronounced ɛ (yes)
ɜr (word)	
ə (a banana)	

### Consonants

Final groups of consonants may cause difficulty.

w:	pronounced v
θ (think)	
ð (feather)	
g:	confused with k
b:	confused with p, especially in final position
f:	confused with v, especially in final position
z:	pronounced s or ts

ʒ (television):	pronounced s or ts
d:	confused with t, especially in final position
ʃ (shoe):	pronounced s or ts
tʃ (chair):	confused with ʃ (shoe)
dʒ (joke):	pronounced tʃ (chair) or y

### Intonation

Intonation may sound choppy or monotonous; falling intonation may be added on words in the middle of a sentence.

Rising intonation: Units 1, 3, 4, 12, 44

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44

## French

### Vowels

Vowels in French are generally shorter in length than in English. They are also often produced further forward in the mouth, and the muscles tend to be tenser.

ɪ (ship):	sounds close to ɪ (sheep)
ʌ (cup):	may be pronounced close to the vowel of ʌ (word) or confused with ɑ (father)
ey (train):	confused with ɛ (yes); pronounced too short
ʊ (book):	sounds close to u (boot)
æ (hat):	confused with ʌ (cup), ɑ (father), or ɛ (yes)
ɔ (ball):	may be confused with ow (no), both being pronounced as a pure ɔ sound
ɪ (sheep):	pronounced too short; confused with ɪ (ship)
ə (a banana)	
ɔɪ (boy):	may be pronounced as ɔ (ball)
ʌ (word):	may be pronounced with lips pushed forward and rounded
ay (fine):	second sound may be too strong
aw (house):	second sound may be too strong

### Consonants

Vowels are generally not lengthened before final voiced consonants (e.g., g, d), creating confusion with corresponding voiceless consonants (e.g., k, t).

h:	omitted or put in the wrong place
θ (think):	often replaced with s
ð (feather):	often replaced with z
r:	pronounced too far back, as uvular r
tʃ (chair):	often pronounced ʃ (shoe)
dʒ (joke):	often pronounced ʒ (television)
ŋ (ring):	may be pronounced as a nasalized vowel, or replaced with other nasal sounds (e.g., a French palatal nasal sound)
t:	has a different quality in French (dental t)

- p, t, k: not aspirated at the beginning of a word, which may cause confusion with b, d, g
- l: only clear l used; a full vowel may be added before syllabic l

### Intonation

May sound flat or monotonous, or may have abrupt (rather than gliding) changes in intonation, giving an impression of being overemphatic.

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44

Questions: Units 1, 3, 4, 12, 20, 35, 44

Exclamations: Units 9, 37, 44

Surprise: Units 4, 10

### Stress and rhythm

An area of great difficulty. Stress in French is predictable, falling on the last syllable of a word or phrase.

All syllables may sound as if they are stressed equally; unstressed syllables are not shortened or pronounced with reduced vowels.

Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29

Reduced vowels; weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19

Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46

Contrastive stress: Units 10, 38

## German

### Vowels

A glottal stop may be added before a stressed vowel, especially at the beginning of a word.

Vowel sounds in general are made with tenser muscles in German and with more movement of the lips.

- æ (hat): pronounced ɛ (yes)
- ɔ (ball): may be confused with ow (no) or may sound close to ʌ (cup)
- ʊr (word): pronounced with rounded lips
- ə (a banana): not used frequently enough; may have a different quality
- ey (train): may sound too short; may be confused with ɛ (yes)
- aw (house): has a different quality

### Consonants

Consonants are often pronounced more emphatically in German.

- w: confused with v
- θ (think): pronounced s
- ð (feather): pronounced z
- z: pronounced s, especially in final position
- b, d, g: pronounced, respectively, p, t, k in final position
- v: pronounced f, especially in final position
- ʒ (television): may be pronounced ʃ (shoe)
- dʒ (joke): may be pronounced tʃ (chair) or confused with y (yellow)

- ŋ (ring): may be confused with ɲg or ŋk; g sound may be omitted in words with ɲg (finger)
- r: usually too far back (uvular r), or pronounced as a flap
- s: at the beginning of a word, may be pronounced z before a vowel or as ʃ (shoe) before a consonant
- l: only clear l used

### Stress and intonation

- May sound staccato (because of glottal stops).
- May sound abrupt or commanding.
- Some speakers tend to add rising tones on each word in a sentence. (Intonation varies, depending on where the speaker is from.)
- Joining words: Units 27, 28, 29
- Weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19
- Falling intonation (some speakers): Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44

### Greek

- A tendency to pronounce words as they are spelled.

### Vowels

- Fewer vowels in Greek. In general, vowels tend to be pronounced with less movement of the lips than in English.

- iy (sheep): pronounced too short; confused with i (ship)
- æ (hat): confused with a (father) or ε (yes)
- ʌ (cup): confused with a (father) or æ (hat)
- ə (a banana)
- ow (no): pronounced too short; confused with o (ball), ʌ (cup), or a (father)
- uw (boot): confused with u (book); pronounced too short
- o (ball): may be confused with ow (no)
- ey (train): may be pronounced ε (yes) or confused with ay (fine)
- 3r (word): often pronounced with ε (yes) as the vowel

### Consonants

- ʃ (shoe): pronounced s
- 3 (television): pronounced z
- tʃ (chair): pronounced ts
- dʒ (joke): pronounced dz
- w: may be pronounced gw or g
- h: pronounced as a harsh sound like the non-English x (Bach)
- r: trilled; vowels before r found difficult, with the vowel a (father) sometimes added before the r
- p, t, k: not aspirated at the beginning of words and may sound close to b, d, g
- g: sometimes pronounced as a softer, non-English sound

- s: pronounced z before m (and other voiced consonants)  
 z: in final position may be confused with s  
 ŋ (ring): may be pronounced ŋg

### Stress and intonation

All syllables tend to be the same length; unstressed vowels are not reduced.  
 Intonation may sound annoyed or brusque.  
 Reduced vowels; weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19  
 Word stress (Greek has one stressed syllable per word; secondary stress may be omitted): Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29  
 Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44  
 Questions (including tag questions): Units 1, 3, 4, 12, 20, 35, 44  
 Joining words: Units 27, 28, 29

## Hebrew

### Vowels

Meaning is carried by consonants in Hebrew. All vowels need practice.

- æ (hat): confused with ε (yes) or ʌ (cup)  
 ɪ (sheep): pronounced too short; confused with ɪ (ship)  
 ə (a banana): may be pronounced close to ε (yes) or as the vowel in the spelling (though Hebrew has the sound ə)  
 ɜr (word): pronounced close to ɛr (very) or with the vowel in the spelling  
 ʌ (cup): confused with ɑ (father)  
 ɛy (train): pronounced too short; confused with ε (yes)  
 ɒw (no): pronounced too short; confused with ʌ (cup)

### Consonants

Difficulty with groups of consonants. Vowels inserted between consonants.

- ð (feather)  
 θ (think)  
 r: pronounced too far back (uvular r) or confused with w  
 w: confused with r or v  
 dʒ (joke): may be confused with ʃ (shoe), z, or other sounds  
 h: may be omitted, or may be pronounced harshly  
 ŋ (ring): may be confused with m or n  
 l: has a different quality in Hebrew

### Stress, intonation, and rhythm

Intonation may sound annoyed, irritable, or complaining.  
 Stress sounds too even.  
 Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29  
 Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46  
 Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44

## Hungarian

### Vowels

æ (hat):	pronounced close to ε (yes), or confused with a (father)
ɪ (ship):	confused with ɪ (sheep)
ə (a banana)	
ʌ (cup):	confused with a (father), ɔ (ball), or other vowels
ɑ (father):	may be confused with ɔ (ball)
u (book):	confused with uw (boot)
ey (train):	sounds close to ε (yes)

### Consonants

w:	pronounced v
θ (think)	
ð (feather)	
ŋ (ring):	pronounced ŋk or ŋg
dʒ (joke):	pronounced dy or tʃ (chair)

### Note:

letter c: may be pronounced ts  
 letter j: may be pronounced y  
 letter s: may sometimes be pronounced ʃ (shoe) or z

### Stress and intonation

Sounds a little flat.  
 Exclamations: Units 9, 37, 44  
 Surprise; contrastive stress: Units 4, 10, 38  
 Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29

## Indian languages (including Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi)

### Vowels

Vowels may tend to sound too short.

æ (hat):	confused with ε (yes)
ɔ (ball):	confused with a (father) or ʌ (cup)
ey (train):	confused with ε (yes)
ow (no):	may be confused with ɔ (ball), both being pronounced as a pure vowel o
ɔy (boy):	may be pronounced as ay (fine)
ɜr (word)	
ə (a banana)	

## Consonants

Difficulty with groups of consonants, especially at the beginning of a word.  
An extra vowel may be added after final consonants.

- w: confused with v, or an intermediate sound may be used for both
- θ (think): pronounced close to t
- ð (feather): pronounced close to d
- t: pronounced with the tongue curled back
- d: pronounced with the tongue curled back
- z: sounds close to s, especially in final position; sometimes pronounced as dʒ (joke) or dz
- ʒ (television): may sound like z, ʃ (shoe), or y
- ʃ (shoe): may be confused with s
- l: found difficult at the end of a word; tendency for only clear l to be used
- ŋ (ring): often pronounced ŋg, especially between vowels
- r: often pronounced as a trill or tap; vowels before r are often confused
- p, t, k: often not aspirated at the beginning of a word and may sound close to b, d, g
- f: may be pronounced p

## Intonation

Intonation may sound lilting or sing-song, with too many high or rising tones, especially in the middle of a sentence.

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44 (and almost all intonation exercises)

## Stress and rhythm

Stress generally sounds too even.

Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46

Word stress (predictable in Indian languages): Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29

Reduced vowels; weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19

## Italian

### Vowels

- i (ship): sounds close to iy (sheep)
- æ (hat): confused with ε (yes) or α (father)
- ʌ (cup): confused with α (father) or æ (hat)
- ə (a banana)
- ɔr (word): confused with ɔr (north) or other sounds
- u (book): confused with uw (boot)
- ow (no): confused with ɔ (ball), both being pronounced as a pure vowel o; sometimes confused with α (father)
- ε (yes): confused with ey (train)

ay (fine),  
 oy (boy),  
 aw (house): second sound may be too strong

### Consonants

A tendency to pronounce words as they are spelled.  
 Difficulty with some groups of consonants.  
 An extra vowel is often added after final consonants.

h: omitted or put in the wrong place  
 θ (think): often pronounced t  
 ð (feather): often pronounced d  
 z: may be pronounced s, especially at the end of words  
 s: pronounced z before m, l, n  
 r: trilled  
 ʒ (television): may be pronounced dʒ (joke), ʃ (shoe), or zy  
 y: sometimes confused with dʒ (joke)  
 ŋ (ring): often replaced with ŋg or n  
 w: may be replaced with v  
 p, t, k: not aspirated at the beginning of a word; may sound, respectively, like b, d, g

### Stress and rhythm

Unstressed syllables pronounced with full vowels; all syllables may seem to be given equal weight.

Difficulty with reduced vowels and weak forms.

Joining words (an extra vowel may be added at the end of a word): Units 27, 28, 29

Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29

Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46

### Intonation

May sound choppy or too restricted in range.

Questions: Units 1, 3, 4, 12, 20, 35, 44

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44

Surprise; contrast: Units 4, 10, 38

Exclamations: Units 9, 37, 44

## Japanese

### Vowels

Usually sound too short.

ʌ (word): sounds close to ɑ (father)  
 ə (a banana): pronounced ɑ (father) or as the vowel in the spelling  
 i (ship): sounds close to iy (sheep); in some words, may be pronounced as a whispered sound and appear to be dropped



æ (hat):	pronounced as ɑ (father) or ɛ (yes)
ʌ (cup):	confused with ɑ (father), æ (hat), or other vowels
ʊ (book):	confused with uw (boot) or other vowels; in some words, may be pronounced as a whispered sound and appear to be dropped
uw (boot):	has a different quality (the lips are not rounded)
ow (no):	confused with ɔ (ball), with both sounds being replaced by a pure vowel o
ey (train):	may sound close to ɛ (yes)
iy (sheep):	pronounced too short, causing confusion with ɪ (ship)

### Consonants

Great difficulty with groups of consonants; vowels are added between consonants. Difficulty with final consonants; an extra vowel is often added after the consonant, or the consonant may be dropped.

l:	sounds close to r
f:	confused with h before vowels like ɔ (ball) or uw (boot)
θ (think)	
ð (feather)	
v:	sounds close to b
w:	found difficult before uw (boot) or ʊ (book); when spelled <i>wh</i> may be pronounced f
z:	may be pronounced as dʒ (joke) before iy (sheep) or ɪ (ship) or as dz before uw (boot) or ʊ (book)
r:	confused with l; vowels before r may be confused, or the sound ɑ (father) may be added to the vowel
h:	confused with ʃ (shoe) before iy (sheep) or ɪ (ship); confused with f before uw (boot)
ʒ (television):	pronounced dʒ (joke) or ʃ (shoe)
s:	may be pronounced ʃ (shoe) before iy (sheep) or ɪ (ship)
t:	may be pronounced tʃ (chair) before iy or ɪ; may be pronounced ts before uw (boot) or ʊ (book)
d:	may be pronounced dʒ (joke) before iy or ɪ; may be pronounced dz before uw or ʊ
y:	found difficult before ɪ (ship) or iy (sheep)
n:	pronounced indistinctly in final position, where it may be confused with m or ŋ (ring)

### Stress, intonation, and rhythm

Sounds staccato; an extra vowel is often added at the end of a word.

All syllables may seem to have equal stress.

Contrastive stress; surprise: Units 4, 10, 38

Stress in noun compounds: Units 22, 25

Reduced vowels; weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44 (and almost all intonation exercises)

Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46

## Khmer (Kampucheans)

### Vowels

i (ship):	confused with iy (sheep)
u (book):	confused with uw (boot)
ə (a banana):	pronounced as the vowel in the spelling
æ (hat):	confused with ʌ (cup) and ɛ (yes)
ɜr (word):	sounds close to ɔr (north)
ey (train):	confused with ɛ (yes)
ow (no):	confused with ɔ (ball)
ay (fine), ɔy (boy), aw (house):	final consonants may be dropped after diphthongs

### Consonants

Great difficulty with groups of consonants, especially in final position; one or more consonants may be dropped.

z:	may sound like s
f:	found difficult, especially in final position
s:	may sound close to h
θ (think)	
ð (feather)	
v:	may be confused with w or may sound close to b
ʒ (television):	confused with dʒ (joke)
ʃ (shoe):	confused with tʃ (chair)
dʒ (joke):	may be pronounced tʃ (chair) in final position
y:	may sound like dʒ (joke)
tʃ (chair):	may sound like t in final position
l:	confused with r after k or g

### Stress and rhythm

Sound staccato.

Joining words: Units 27, 28, 29

### Intonation

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44 (and all intonation exercises)

Expressing emotion: Units 4, 9, 37, 40, 44

## Portuguese

### Vowels

Vowels may be nasalized before m, n, or ñ (ring).

At the end of a word, unstressed vowels may seem to be dropped.

ɪ (ship):	sounds close to iʏ (sheep)
æ (hat):	confused with ɛ (yes) or ɑ (father)
ʊ (book):	confused with uʊ (boot)
ʌ (cup):	confused with æ (hat) or ɑ (father)
ɔ (ball):	may be confused with ɑ (father) or ʌ (cup)
ə (a banana):	found difficult especially by Brazilians
ow (no):	may sound close to ɔ (ball)

### Consonants

Difficulty with groups of consonants; vowels often inserted before or between the consonants.

Final consonants dropped or not pronounced clearly.

r:	pronounced too far back or as a flap or trill; at the beginning of a word may sound close to h; vowels before r found difficult
h:	sometimes omitted, or added in the wrong place
θ (think)	
ð (feather)	
tʃ (chair):	pronounced ʃ (shoe)
dʒ (joke):	pronounced ʒ (television)
b:	may sound close to v
v:	may sound close to b in initial position
y:	sometimes omitted
z:	confused with s or ʒ (television), especially at the end of words
s + consonant:	found difficult, especially at the beginning of a word
n, m,	
ŋ (ring):	confused in final position, or may be pronounced as nasalized vowels
t:	may sound close to tʃ (chair) before iʏ (sheep) or ɪ (ship)
d:	may sound close to dʒ (joke) before iʏ or ɪ; may sound close to ð (feather) in the middle of a word
l:	in final position or before a consonant may be replaced with a vowel

### Stress, intonation, and rhythm

Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29

Stress in noun compounds: Units 22, 25

Sentence rhythm (especially speakers of Brazilian Portuguese): Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46

Reduced vowels; weak forms (especially speakers of Brazilian Portuguese): Units 8, 14, 19

Joining sounds: Units 27, 28, 29

Tag questions: Unit 20

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44

## Russian

### Vowels

Vowels may sound too short, especially where they should be lengthened (in final position or before a voiced consonant).

æ (hat):	pronounced ε (yes)
ɜr (word):	pronounced as ɛr, ɔr (north), or with the vowel in the spelling
iy (sheep):	confused with i (ship)
uw (boot):	confused with u (book)
ɔ (ball):	confused with ow (no)
ey (train):	confused with ε (yes)
ɑ (father):	may sound close to wa in some words
ay (fine),	
ɔy (boy),	
aw (house):	second sound may be too strong
ə (a banana):	may be pronounced as the vowel in the spelling (though the sound ə exists in Russian)

### Consonants

A tendency to pronounce consonants as soft, palatalized sounds before some vowels (like iy and ε).

θ (think)	
ð (feather)	
w:	confused with v
r:	trill or flap used
ŋ (ring):	pronounced n, ŋk, ŋg, or g
z:	pronounced s in final position
b, d, g:	pronounced, respectively, p, t, k in final position
v:	pronounced f in final position
h:	pronounced as a harsher, non-English sound x (Bach)
p, t, k:	not aspirated at the beginning of a word and may sound close to b, d, g
l:	clear l may be substituted for dark l, or dark l for clear l

### Note:

Because of the Cyrillic alphabet:  
 letter B may be pronounced v  
 letter C may be pronounced s  
 letter P may be pronounced r  
 letter H may be pronounced n  
 letter g may be pronounced d

### Intonation

What is considered to be neutral, unemotional intonation in Russian and English often differs. Intonation may sound impatient, unfriendly, bored, or overemotional in some types of sentences.

Yes/no questions: Unit 3  
 Statements: Units 3, 35  
 Tag questions: Unit 20  
 Alternative questions: Units 1, 27

### **Stress**

Secondary stress in words is often omitted.  
 Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29  
 Reduced forms: Units 8, 14, 19

## **Scandinavian languages: Swedish, Norwegian, Danish**

### **Vowels**

i (ship): sounds close to iy (sheep)  
 ʌ (cup): may be pronounced close to ɑ (father) or with the lips rounded and further forward  
 ɔw (no): may be replaced with uw (boot) or aw (house), or confused with ɔ (ball)  
 æ (hat): confused with ɛ (yes) by some speakers  
 uw (boot): may have a different quality  
 u (book): confused with uw (boot) or other vowels  
 ɜr (word): may be said with the lips pushed forward and rounded  
 ey (train): second part too long; sound may have a different quality  
 ay (fine),  
 oy (boy): second part too long  
 ə (a banana): may not be quiet enough; not used frequently enough

### **Consonants**

Swedes and Norwegians may make consonants spelled with doubled letters too long.

θ (think)  
 ð (feather)  
 w: sounds close to v  
 dʒ (joke): confused with y or pronounced dy  
 z: pronounced s  
 ʒ (television): sounds close to ʃ (shoe)  
 tʃ (chair): confused with ʃ (shoe) or pronounced ty  
 r: pronounced too far back (Danish) or trilled (Swedish, Norwegian)  
 b, d, g: pronounced by Danes as p, t, k in final position

### **Stress and Intonation**

Statements may sound like questions; sentences may sound incomplete.  
 Unstressed syllables are often said with a high pitch.  
 Intonation may have a sing-song quality.

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44 (and almost all intonation exercises)

Weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19

## Serbo-Croatian

### Vowels

ɪ (ship):	confused with ɪy (sheep)
æ (hat):	pronounced ɛ (yes) or confused with ʌ (cup)
ɜr (word):	confused with ɔr (north) or pronounced with the vowel in the spelling
ə (a banana):	pronounced as the vowel in the spelling
ʌ (cup):	confused with ɑ (father)
ʊ (book):	confused with uʊ (boot)
ow (no):	confused with ɔ (ball)

### Consonants

w:	pronounced v
θ (think)	
ð (feather)	
ŋ (ring):	pronounced ŋg or ŋk
r:	trilled; difficulty with vowels before r

See note on Cyrillic alphabet, under Russian.

## Spanish

A strong tendency to pronounce words as they are spelled.

### Vowels

Vowels may sound too short, especially where they should be lengthened, as before a voiced consonant.

ɪ (ship):	confused with ɪy (sheep)
æ (hat):	confused with ɑ (father) or ʌ (cup)
ə (a banana):	pronounced as the vowel in the spelling
ɜr (word):	pronounced as it is spelled
ʌ (cup):	pronounced close to ɑ (father) or ɔ (ball)
ʊ (book):	confused with uʊ (boot)
ow (no):	confused with ɔ (ball), both being pronounced as a pure vowel o
ɔ (ball):	may be confused with ow or pronounced close to ɑ (father) or ʌ (cup)
ɪy (sheep):	pronounced too short; confused with ɪ (ship)

ɛ (yes):	confused with ɔy (train)
ay (fine),	
ɔy (boy),	
aw (house):	second sound may be too long

### Consonants

Difficulty with groups of consonants; one or more consonants often dropped.  
 Final consonants dropped or not pronounced clearly.  
 Voiced consonants may be pronounced as voiceless at the end of words.

v:	pronounced b at the beginning of a word
h:	pronounced harshly, like the non-English sound x (Bach)
y:	confused with dʒ (joke)
ʃ (shoe):	pronounced tʃ (chair); confused by some speakers with s
z:	usually pronounced s
w:	sometimes pronounced b, gw, or g; found difficult especially before uw (boot) or u (book)
d:	confused with ð (feather): d may sound like ð, especially in the middle of a word; ð may sound like d at the beginning of a word
m, n,	
ŋ (ring):	in final position, may be confused with each other or pronounced indistinctly
r:	flapped or strongly trilled; vowels before r found difficult
b:	may sound close to v, especially in the middle of a word
s + consonant:	often preceded by a vowel at the beginning of a word
s:	may be pronounced z before voiced consonants like m; may be replaced by h by some Latin Americans
p, t, k:	not aspirated at the beginning of a word and may sound close to b, d, g
g:	may have a softer sound in the middle of a word
ʒ (television):	found difficult by some speakers
θ (think):	found difficult, except by Castilian speakers
dʒ (joke):	may be confused with y or replaced by tʃ (chair)
l:	only clear l used

### Stress, Intonation, and rhythm

Stressed and unstressed syllables do not sound clearly distinguished; stress and rhythm too even, with all syllables about the same length.

Unstressed vowels are not reduced.

Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46

Reduced vowels; weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19

Contrastive stress; surprise: Units 4, 10, 38

Stress in noun compounds: Units 22, 25

Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29

## Thai and Lao

### Vowels

Vowels may be nasalized after h, m, or n.

A strong tendency to insert a glottal stop before vowels at the beginning of word.

ʊ (book):	confused with uʊ (boot)
ɑ (father):	confused with ʌ (cup)
æ (hat):	confused with ɛ (yes) or ʌ (cup), or made too long
ey (train)	
ow (no)	
ay (fine)	
oy (boy)	

### Consonants

Final consonants may be dropped, especially after diphthongs.

t may be substituted for other final consonants.

Great difficulty with groups of consonants, especially in final position, where one or more may be dropped.

In initial clusters, a short vowel is often inserted between consonants or a consonant may be dropped.

r:	confused with l
l:	confused with n in final position
θ (think)	
ð (feather)	
v:	confused with w; may be pronounced b in the middle of word
z:	often pronounced s
ʒ (television):	confused with ʃ (shoe) or z
dʒ (joke):	pronounced tʃ (chair)
ʃ (shoe):	may be pronounced tʃ (chair)
g:	may be pronounced k

### Intonation

Thai is a tone language, and each syllable is pronounced with a set tone. All intonation exercises will be useful.

### Stress and rhythm

Sounds staccato. Rhythm is too even. Words are not connected smoothly.

Final syllable of words is often stressed.

Joining words: Units 27, 28, 29

Contrastive stress; surprise: Units 10, 38

Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46

Reduced vowels: Units 8, 14, 19

Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29



## Turkish

A strong tendency to pronounce words as they are spelled.

### Vowels

æ (hat):	confused with ε (yes)
ʌ (cup):	confused with æ (hat)
ɑ (father):	may sound close to ʌ (cup)
uw (boot):	confused with ʊ (book)
ey (train):	close to ε (yes)
ɔ (ball):	confused with ow (no)
iy (sheep):	may sound close to i (ship)
ə (a banana)	

### Consonants

Difficulty with groups of consonants, especially at the beginning of a word; extra vowels are often inserted.

w:	confused with v
θ (think)	
ð (feather)	
ŋ (ring):	pronounced ŋg or ŋk
r:	pronounced as a tap or trill; may be voiceless at the end of words; vowels before r found difficult
z:	pronounced s in final position
b, d, g:	pronounced, respectively, p, t, k in final position
v:	may be pronounced w, or in final position f
dʒ (joke):	pronounced tʃ (chair) in final position
k, g:	may have a different, softer quality before iy (sheep) and i (ship)
m, n:	may be pronounced indistinctly in final position

### Stress and Intonation

Wh-questions: Units 3, 35

Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29

Reduced vowels; weak forms: Units 8, 14, 19

## Vietnamese

### Vowels

i (ship):	confused with iy (sheep)
æ (hat):	confused with ʌ (cup) or ε (yes)
ʊ (book):	confused with uw (boot)
ɑ (father):	confused with ɔ (ball)
ɔr (word):	may sound close to ɔr (north)
ey (train)	
ow (no)	

### Consonants

Great difficulty with groups of consonants, especially in the middle or at the end of words; one or more consonants may be dropped.

Final consonants may be dropped, especially after diphthongs like ay (fine) and oy (boy).

θ (think)

ð (feather)

z: pronounced s, especially in final position

s: may be confused with t in final position

f: sounds close to p

b: confused with p in final position

p: may be pronounced b in initial position

d: pronounced t in final position

l: confused with n in final position

r: may be pronounced z

dʒ (joke): may be pronounced ʒ (television)

tʃ (chair): may be confused with t or ʃ (shoe), especially in final position

ʃ (shoe): may be confused with s or t

g: may have a different sound (softer or more guttural)

### Intonation

Each syllable in Vietnamese has its own set tone.

Falling intonation: Units 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 33, 35, 37, 44 (All intonation exercises will be useful.)

Surprise; contrast: Units 4, 10, 38

### Stress and rhythm

Sounds staccato.

Joining words: Units 27, 28, 29

Sentence rhythm: Units 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 39, 46

Word stress: Units 2, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29

Stress in noun compounds: Units 22, 25

Reduced vowels: Units 8, 14, 19

# Ask a Speech Coach

## Connected speech\*



Gene Zerna

Even if you can pronounce every English word correctly, you still won't sound like an American. You also have to be able to link\* one word to the next, the way Americans do.

Some languages do not have many consonants\* at the end of words. Speakers of those languages often "forget" the final\* consonant in English words. This makes it hard for people to understand them. *Those final consonants are very important. Your listeners need to hear them.*

In rapid speech, a consonant at the end of word links up with the beginning of the next word.

Actors in the theater must speak very clearly so people can understand them easily. I have trained actors for many years. Here is an exercise I give them to practice: Break the words so the final consonant is at the beginning of the next word. Then put the two words together and link them.

### 1. Linking a final consonant to a vowel

clean up everything = cleen nuh peverything =  
cleanu peverything

back away = ba kaway =	backaway
over all = ove rall =	overall
read it = ree dit =	readit
wash up = wah shup =	washup
catch on = ca tchon =	catchon
give away = gi vaway =	givaway
that's enough = tha tsenuough =	that's enough
erase it = era sit =	erasit
rob a bank = rah ba bank =	robabank
laugh a lot = la fa lot =	laughalot

### 2. Linking a final consonant to an unrelated consonant

keep this = kee pthis =	keepthis
word list = wor dlist =	wordlist
wash clean = wa shclean =	washclean
big deal = bi gdeal =	bigdeal
can't be = can tbe =	can'tbe
take time = ta ktime =	takeime
match cover = ma chcover =	matchcover
has been = ha zbeen =	hasbeen

### 3. Linking a final consonant to the same or a similar consonant

The final consonant of one word may have the same sound as the first sound of the next word (bad dog; big goat, black cat, etc.). Or the final consonant of one word may be made in the same location in the mouth: bad tiger; big cow; black goat). In these cases, prepare to make the consonant, hold that, and then add the second consonant.

good deal = goo ddeal =	gooddeal
bad time = ba dtime =	badtime
help pack = hel ppack =	helppack
dog collar = do gcollar =	dogcollar
don't talk = don' ttalk =	don'ttalk
sit down = si tdwn =	sitdown
stick close = sti ckclose =	stickclose
even now = eve nnow =	evennow
keep back = kee pback =	keepback
this zone = thi szone =	thiszone
life force = li fforce =	lifeorce

My name's Gene, and this is my wife Mary. These are our sons, Tim and Tom.

My name zGene, an dthi siz my wi fMary. Thee zare our son zTiman dTom.

My name'zGene, andthisizmy wifeMary. Thezeare our two sonzTimandTom.

Gene Zerna



## Resources

⑩ Rachel's [english.com](http://english.com) American Phonetic Alphabet

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c97xwLdSsXU>

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cU9fqpCqBA>

List of Likely Errors (adapted from List of Likely Errors by Sakky Mellersh in *Introducing English Pronunciation* by Ann Baker, published by Cambridge University Press, 1982)

- Jazz Chants by Carolyn Graham, published by Oxford University Press, 2001

- Marshal Reading [http://resources.marshalladulthoodeducation.org/reading\\_skills\\_home.htm](http://resources.marshalladulthoodeducation.org/reading_skills_home.htm)

- <https://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/minimal-pairs.htm>

- Randall's Listening Lab [www.esl-lab.com](http://www.esl-lab.com)

Handcock and McDonald Blended Speech

<http://hancockmcdonald.com/sites/hancockmcdonald.com/files/file-downloads/The%20Word%20Blender.pdf>

## **Ideas for Listening Activities:**

1. The following link contains videos on pronunciation

<https://mnliteracy.org/classroomvideos>

2. Storyline Online – A site that has a variety of children’s books read by celebrities. They are read slowly, with expression and are easy to follow along. <http://www.storylineonline.net/>
3. Check out Children/Young Adult Books on Tape at the library

4. Ted Talks/Pod Casts – some have transcripts

5. Listening Assignments for Homework:

- Listen to conversations while in line at the grocery store. At home, write down in English what you recall of the conversation.
- Listen to songs with the lyrics. You can download songs to your phone using Apple Music. You can Google most lyrics and print them. Student can underline words they don’t know.
- Randall’s Listening Lab: [www.esl-lab.com](http://www.esl-lab.com)

6. Practice tongue twisters for pronunciation practice – make up your own tongue twister using words that contain the sounds which prove most difficult for the student to pronounce.

7. Role Playing: Tutor and student role play life/work scenarios.

-The tutor pretends to be the receptionist at the doctor’s office and the student would have to call and explain the illness and make an appointment.

-The tutor plays student’s boss and student must call in sick.

8. Listening to Recorded Prompts: tutor & student call places that require you to listen to several recorded prompts. The pair could listen to this on speaker phone and discuss what was being asked of the caller. (Secretary of State; Airlines; IRS; Public library)

9. Record on the student’s phone a list of words containing the same sounds (ie. r/l). The student can practice these sounds at home/in the car

10. <http://www.truespel.com/esl-practice/> - pronunciation videos, phonics practice, tutorials





# Teaching Pronunciation



Submitted by Paul Rogers on December 3, 2017 - 12:12pm

👁 126 Views

**Groups:**

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**English Language Acquisition**

💬 8 Comments

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The pronunciation of English is very difficult, as we all know. Actually English may be the most difficult language in the world to pronounce!!! And that may be the reason so many English courses avoid teaching students good pronunciation.

Pronouncing a foreign language involves...making foreign sounds which the tongue, the jaw and the mouth do not want to make!!! For example, like most Americans, when I was learning Spanish I could not roll my RRRs. I practiced for three months. Finally I could do it! I was very proud of myself.

But English has about 20 sounds that are very frustrating to pronounce.

At the same time learning how to pronounce English is very important. First, of course it helps in speaking English. But it also helps in “listening comprehension” and in reading well.

Over the years there are some techniques I have developed which work very well and are even enjoyable for my students.

I use patience and humor and always include a pronunciation lesson or reminder in almost all lessons or classes.

My method is this:

1. First, I hand out my booklets to all my students with the vocabulary written like this:

Table     tei' bal     mesa

2. I focus first on the most important sounds first such as the G/J, V, Th, short i, short and the short u. In later classes I introduce examples of other letter combinations.

3. I then introduce an example of how to make the sound using humor.

4. The students practice making the sounds, first as a group, then individually.

5. The we use lessons on the alphabet, greetings and numbers to practice. For example: spell your name, say out loud your phone number, etc.
6. Tongue twisters - trabalenguas are popular and useful.
7. I show how to divide long words into syllables and repeat slowly at first then gradually faster and faster.
8. And I always use a lot of humor and patience.

In this way we as a class can build a foundation so that pronunciation becomes just as important as grammar, verb tenses and idioms.

People have asked me why I do not use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). My answer is that it is too complicated, and that I spell the words phonetically the way that Spanish speaking students would probably write them. I learned this from my students.

Finally I also tell my students that accents are actually a good thing, because they make English a more interesting language. Personally I would prefer to speak English the way that Antonio Banderas speaks it!!!

The above is an outline of my pronunciation lessons, which are also included in my sites pumarosa and inglesconprofepablo.

I look forward to reading your comments.

## 📝 Comments (8)



Thomas Zurinkas / December 4, 2017 - 2:54pm / 0 Likes

### Teaching pronunciation with truespel

The problem with learning English pronunciation is that spelling is not very consistent with sounds, even though in print consonant are spelled 92% of the time in their most popular spelling and vowels 63%. Dictionary grade pronunciation quality can be obtained using truespel phonetics and the free tutorials and converter at <http://truespel.com>. Reading (and writing) phonetically in US English comes down to 40 sounds, most of which ESLs know already. Truespel links to US English phonics to make it simple.

To understand phoneme popularity and phoneme spelling popularity in print media see <http://bit.ly/2AKWZyo>

Once pronunciation of the 40 sounds is mastered the ESL learner can say any English word correctly by reading it phonetically. Then the job is to relate the phonetic word to the regularly spelled word. This is not hard because the phonetic spelling of sounds is 66% related to the most popular regular spelling of sounds. This is not bad since in regular spelling sounds are spelled 77% of the time in the most popular way. Again see <http://bit.ly/2AKWZyo>

The IPA of 1888 cannot do what truespel does and should be replaced by truespel as a better phonetic guide.



Paul Rogers / December 4, 2017 - 4:12pm / 0 Likes

### Example of Truespell with Adult English Learners

Tom - perhaps you could show us an example of how you would use Truespell with adult ESL students whose first language is Spanish. As I mention in my article I use my own method which is similar to what you describe as: "Then the job is to relate the phonetic word to the regularly spelled word."

Here is an example from my text which is also on pumarosa.com

Hello (jelou) hola

Good Morning (gud morning) Buenos dias

Good afternoon (gud aftirnun) Buenas tardes

Good evening (gud ivning) Buenas noches (cuando entra)

See you later (si iu leiter) Hasta luego

Good bye (gud bai) Adios

Come in (cam in) Pasale

How are you? (jau ar iu) ¿Como está Ud.?

I'm fine (aim fain) Estoy bien

What is your name? (uat ies iur neim) - ¿Como se llama?



Thomas Zurinkas / December 5, 2017 - 2:01am / 0 Likes

### Using truespel for ESL's

A Korean friend said that his high school Korean students learned truespel in less than an hour to help pronounce US English and preferred it to IPA especially because they could write with it.. I don[t prescribe a method but I would concentrate on pronunciation of the 40 sounds of English and have the students pronounce each one to validate correctness. Once they are able to say each written phoneme correctly, you can tell them that they can say any word in US English correctly, even slang, when reading it in truespel. The converter shows dictionary accent as spoken in talking US English dictionaries. Here is an instructional video <http://bit.ly/2bS6YDG> Have them write phonetically as well. Let me know how it goes. ~~Let mee noe hou it goez.~~



Paul Rogers / December 5, 2017 - 4:18pm / 0 Likes

### Truespel and Beginners?

Tom - At what level of English are the Korean students? For ESL students who know little or no English - beginners - a bilingual phonetic method like Pumarosa is needed. Maybe later Truespel Truespel lesons can be added.

Thomas Zurinkas / December 5, 2017 - 8:03pm / 0 Likes



### Truespel and ESL Beginners

My friend who did the informal truespel acceptability study has a job that places Korean students in US colleges, so I'm sure the students were savvy to much English. We also developed truespel for Korean as replacement for Hangul, and he was pleased with the outcome of that. Truespel could also be used to spell Spanish with a few additional sound-spellings., Note that truespel is based on English and does not look as friendly to other languages.



Paul Rogers / December 6, 2017 - 8:58am / 0 Likes

### Pronunciation first

Tom - to learn Korean we first would learn the characters and pronunciation, from day 1. But unfortunately ESFL is often taught without any attention placed on pronunciation at the beginning level. So...if you could find some way to adapt Truespel for use by Beginners, that would be an enormous help.

In my opinion, students who learn English without any pronunciation support learn it in a truncated and distorted way, which in some cases causes a great deal of anxiety and blocks learning. When students enter my class, usually they are nervous about speaking in English. I do my best to help them relax and try as best as they can, using a lot of humor, and eventually they actually enjoy learning pronunciation. In fact it becomes part of the class, along with grammar and other lessons.



Dr. Robin / December 5, 2017 - 1:26pm / 0 Likes

### Inquiry!

Hi ALL-- do any of you remember/know of the literacy assessment in many languages that was in circulation a few years ago? I believe it came out of a program in Virginia, but I could be wrong about that. I would greatly appreciate any clues on how to locate it. Thanks so much, Robin Lovrien



finnmiller / December 5, 2017 - 3:27pm / 0 Likes

### Native Language Screening Tool

Hello Robin, The state of Florida has developed Native Language Literacy Screening tools in 29 languages which are available at the [Adult Education section of the Florida Department of Education website](#). .

Cheers, Susan Finn Miller

Moderator, English Language Acquisition