

Pronunciation



University of
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Overview

This workshop will address the following:

- Pronunciation
- Pausing and Chunking
- Word stress

Why is pronunciation important?

Miscommunication can occur when someone:

- speaks too fast
- says words incorrectly
- has a strong accent
- hesitates too much when they speak

Activity

Read this poem aloud. What do you sound like? Does your partner understand you?

To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock,
In a pestilential prison, with a life-long lock,
Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock,
From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!
To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock,
In a pestilential prison, with a life-long lock,
Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock,
From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!
A dull, dark dock, a life-long lock,
A short, sharp shock, a big black block!
To sit in solemn silence in a pestilential prison,
And awaiting the sensation
From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!

by W.S. Gilbert of Gilbert and Sullivan from *The Mikado*

Phonemic Chart: Sound vs Spelling

i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:	ɪə	eɪ	/	
sheep	ship	book	shoot	here	wait		
e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ	
left	teacher	her	door	tourist	coin	show	
æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ	
hat	up	far	on	hair	like	mouth	
p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
pea	boat	tree	dog	cheese	joke	coin	go
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
free	video	thing	this	see	zoo	sheep	television
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j
mouse	now	thing	hope	love	run	we	you



Pronunciation Activity 1

Look at the phonemic chart and say out the sounds. Have you got them right?

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/activities/phonemic-chart>

Online Dictionary for Pronunciation

here Search

Thesaurus

MACMILLAN
DICTIONARY

practise - definition Show less

★★

VERB Pronunciation /'præktɪs/ Word Forms [View thesaurus entry for **practise**](#)
[What are red words?](#)
[Using the thesaurus](#)

- [INTRANSITIVE/TRANSITIVE] to repeat an activity regularly so that you become better at it
How many hours a day do you practise?
practise doing something: *Practise putting your tent up in the garden several times.*
practise for something: *I've been practising hard for the piano recital.*
practise something on someone: *Can I practise my French on you?*
Thesaurus entry for this meaning of practise
- [TRANSITIVE] to do something regularly, especially as a habit, custom, or tradition
The earliest colonists of the Amazon seem to have practised farming.
Thesaurus entry for this meaning of practise
- [TRANSITIVE] to perform the activities and duties of your religion
The Emperor gave Christians the right to practise their religion openly.
Thesaurus entry for this meaning of practise

Related dictionary definitions

practise on PHRASAL VERB

<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/colleague>

Activity 2: Pronounce these words

accessary	accessory
ail	ale
allowed	aloud
bald	bawled
band	banned
cast	caste
ensor	sensor
dear	deer
desert	dessert
earn	urn
fair	fare
flour	flower

gorilla	guerrilla
groan	grown
hall	haul
hear	here
idle	idol
in	inn
key	quay
knot	not
laps	lapse
lead	led
main	mane
scene	seen



Pausing and Chunking

Pauses and chunks are strategies that speakers use to communicate information in manageable bits

Sample 1	Sample 2
<p>Does it really matter whether people speak with an accent as long as they can be easily understood many people now believe that in an increasingly globalised world we should accept variations in pronunciation that is accent. however there's no point in speaking with an accent if people can't understand you is there?</p>	<p>Does it really matter / whether people speak with an accent / as long as they can be easily understood?// Many people now believe / that in an increasingly globalised world / we should accept variations in pronunciation / that is / accent. // However / there's no point in speaking with an accent / if people can't understand you / is there?//</p>

<http://www.ssu.uts.edu.au/helps/resources/pronunciation/pausing.html>

Word Stress

- Stress is used in speech to highlight important information
- Stress in the wrong place can cause confusion

<https://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/support/helps/self-help-resources/pronunciation/stress>

Word Stress: Examples

Common patterns

There are no simple rules relating to word stress: it is important to learn the correct stress pattern for each new word you learn.

Common patterns include:

o Q

prefer suggest benign contempt

This pattern is especially common in two-syllable verbs.

O o

easy station worker open

This pattern is especially common in two-syllable adjectives and nouns.

o o Q

volunteer employee

o Q o

deposit apartment

O o o

difficult operate

o o Q o

avaricious information

o Q o o

exceptional unbeatable

Words which change meaning

Sometimes words with the same spelling are pronounced with different word-stress patterns. Sometimes the meaning is related.

Noun Verb

O o o Q

object object

transfer transfer

record record

contrast contrast

Words stress and suffixes

Words which end in suffixes, such as -tion and -ese, often have predictable patterns of words stress.

-tion

End pattern: O o

organize organization

nationalize nationalization

-grapher, -graphy

End pattern: o Q o o

photograph photographer

telegraph telegraphy

-ic, -ical

End patterns: O o or O o o

history historic

philosophy philosophical

-ese

End pattern: o Q

China Chinese

Japan Japanese

-ity

End pattern: O o o

equal equality

active activity

Note, however, that some suffixes, such as -ness, have no effect on the stress of the root word:

O o Q o o

happy happiness

Word Stress

Stress shift in sentences

For some words, where stress is placed depends on their position in a sentence. When the word is spoken alone or at the end of a statement, the stress occurs near the end. When the word occurs before another word in a sentence, the stress occurs earlier.

Over half the students were Japanese.

Many people prefer Japanese cars.

In some cultures people sleep in the afternoon.

An afternoon meeting may be less productive than a morning one.



Activity: Say these words with the correct word stress

abbreviate	Arabic	epitome
abbreviation	association	facet
also	autobiography	indistinct
although	category	metaphor
analogy	compound (noun)	morpheme
analyse	contents	morphology
analysis	decade	mosaic
analyst	decadent	narrate
appalling	differentiate	narrative
appropriately	display	narrator



Sample Answer

abbreviate	Arabic	epitome
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Summary

Use the phonemic chart to learn how to pronounce words correctly.

Use the online dictionary to learn correct pronunciation

Learn how to apply the appropriate word stress in speech.

Practise regularly to perfect pronunciation.

Listen to proficient speakers to emulate correct pronunciation.

References

British Council 2010, Phonemic chart, viewed 12 April 2013, <<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/activities/phonemic-chart>>.

ESL Flow n.d., Pronunciation teaching ideas for ESL teachers, viewed 12 April 2013, <<http://www.eslflow.com/pronunciationlessonplans.html>>.

Underhill, A 1994, Sound foundations: learning and teaching pronunciation, Macmillan, Australia.

University of Technology Sydney 2013, *Pronunciation*, viewed 10 April 2014, <http://www.ssu.uts.edu.au/helps/resources/pronunciation/stress.html>