

### Activity 1 – Minimal Pairs

Minimal pairs can be useful for practicing individual sounds\*. Here are some examples of minimal pairs:

shore sore

ban pan

thirty dirty

fill feel

cot caught

watch watched

1. Write a definition for '*minimal pair*'.
2. Why are minimal pairs useful for practicing individual sounds?
3. Can you think of some more minimal pairs that would be useful for your learners, i.e. practice individual sounds that they find difficult to pronounce?
4. Here is another type of minimal pair. What aspect of pronunciation do these practice?  

The train leaves at **4** o'clock.                      The **train** leaves at 4 o'clock.

He is very good at **math**.                              He is very **good** at math.
5. Can you think of any more minimal pair sentences like the examples in question 4? Write them down:

### Activity 2.1 – Classroom Activities to Practice Individual Sounds

Could you use the following activities to help you learners practice problematic individual sounds?  
If not, could you adapt them to make them more suitable?

Activity	Adaptations
a. <b>Find Your Partner</b> Learners have to find someone else in the classroom with the same word as the one they have, by saying the word and listening for a match. They must not see the words; so have to rely on clear pronunciation.	
b. <b>The Right Question?</b> A listening discrimination exercise using questions with minimal pairs.	
c. <b>Bingo</b> Learners choose 6 or 8 words from a set of minimal pairs and play bingo with them.	
d. <b>Tongue Twisters</b> Learners make up their own tongue twisters, using a difficult individual sound/s.	

## Activity 2.2

Now discuss the following with your group. Make notes:

1. What causes individual sound problems?
2. Is it always necessary to practice and correct individual sound problems?
3. How can you fit these activities into your syllabus?

## Activity 3 – Avoiding and Correcting Individual Sound Problems

### 3.1 – Sounds & Spelling

Using the International Phonemic Alphabet (IPA), write, then exchange a message with a colleague. Can you understand the message?

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### 3.2 – Prevention is Better Than Cure

Teachers should try to prevent the incorrect pronunciation of individual sounds when introducing new language to learners. It is more difficult to correct problems later on, when the mispronunciation has become a habit.

Sometimes, learners don't know how to physically pronounce individual sounds, particularly if those sounds do not exist in L1, or are not used in the same position in words. For example, in Cantonese, the /v/ sound does not exist. Therefore, Cantonese speakers often have to be shown how to place their top teeth over their bottom lip in order to pronounce /v/ rather than /w/ – rather like a rabbit. This comparison with a rabbit helps them to remember the physical position.

Think of common problematic individual sounds in your L1 context, and how those sounds are produced physically. Note down how you can help your learners with the physical positions.

Problematic individual sound	How to help learners produce the sound
1. Eg. /p/ & /b/ pet/bet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Put hands over ears, or use piece of paper in front of mouth to demonstrate difference between 'p' and 'b'</li> <li>- b = voiced    p = unvoiced</li> </ul>
2. Eg. /z/ & /s/ zinc/sink	
3. Eg. /θ/ & /d/ thirty/dirty	
4. Eg. /g/ & /k/ cold/gold	
5. Eg. /d/ & /t/ drain/train	

### 3.3: Stress – Word Stress of Places Around the World

In pairs, complete the *Word Stress of Places Around the World* list, marking the stress of each word with a ●.

Eg. ●  
America

Australia	Venezuela
Palau	Airai
Philippines	Afghanistan
Melekeok	India
Mexico	Pakistan
Thailand	Germany
Indonesia	Croatia
Pohnpei	Micronesia
Japan	American Samoa
Aimeliik	Babeldaob

### 3.4: Recording New Vocabulary

Encourage your learners to record new words with potential pronunciation difficulties highlighted. This should include individual sounds and word stress (●). Use the International Phonemic Alphabet (IPA) if you can. For example, a teacher might indicate the following issues with the words *evaluate* and *threaten* on the board:

● e v a l u a t e <i>/v/</i>	● t h r e a t e n <i>/θ/   /e/   /ə/</i>
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Think of two words that may be problematic for your learners and show below how you could highlight the issues on the board for them to copy into their vocabulary lists.

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### 3.5 – Treat the Cause

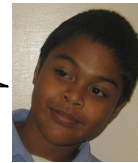
Teachers should notice and correct pronunciation problems that affect the communication of the message, at the introductory and controlled practice stages of lessons. But how?

Read these two dialogues between a teacher and a learner. Which teacher corrected the learner more successfully? Why?

#### Teacher A:



Teacher: Where did the girls go?



Learner: Swimming fool.



Teacher: No, no, no. Say, pool.

Learner: Fool.



Teacher: Not fool – pool.



Learner: Fffool.



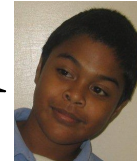
Teacher: Oh dear!



Teacher B:



Teacher: Where did the girls go?



Learner: Swimming fool.



Teacher: Swimming **fool**?



Learner: Yes, swimming fool.



Teacher: Writes on the board 'Swimming fool'

Learner: Oh, no.



Teacher: Shows the learner how to pronounce the /p/ sound by pressing her lips together and pointing at them.

Learner: Swimming pool.



Teacher: Well done!

## Activity 4 – Features of Connected Speech

### 4.1 Introducing Features of Connected Speech

Your trainer will drill the following sentences with you.

- a.           **Cats**            **eat**            **fish.**
- b.    The **cats**            **eat**    the **fish.**
- c.    The **cats** will            **eat**    the **fish.**
- d.    The **cats** will have **eaten**    the **fish.**

What happens to the ‘grammar’ words (articles, auxiliary verbs) in sentence *d*? Are they pronounced strongly or weakly?

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### 4.2 Practicing Features of Connected Speech

When English is used in connected speech, native speakers put stress on the words that carry the main meaning, or content, of the message, e.g. nouns, main verbs, adjectives and adverbs. The unstressed words in between are grammar words, such as auxiliary verbs, articles, prepositions, etc. These become ‘squashed’, i.e. not pronounced so clearly, in a number of ways:

- **Weak forms** – The schwa, /ə/, the most common sound in the English language is not usually stressed in a sentence or word. Therefore it is usually a weak form.
- **Assimilation/elision/contraction** – some sounds, especially consonant sounds, are changed, reduced or omitted, to make sentences easier to say, e.g. ‘brown(=m) ball’, ‘Chris(t)mas’, ‘comf(or)table’, ‘D(o) you wan(t) to go?’, ‘I (wi)ll do it.’
- **Linking** – words are linked together with consonant sounds to make speaking easier and smoother, e.g. ‘Give me-**y**-an-envelope’, ‘Do-**w**-it now’, ‘Lisa-**r**-is tired.’



4.2 continued:

**Stress and Weak Forms**

Read the following exchange out loud and decide which words are stressed in the conversation. Work with a partner and to mark the stressed forms with ● . The weak forms have already been marked with a Schwa (lə).

A: *What time is it?*

B: *It's a quarter to three. What time shall we leave?*  
lə            lə

A: *About four o'clock, before the rush hour.*  
lə            lə            lə            lə

**Assimilation/elision and Contraction**

Read this exchange out loud. Re-write it using contractions and/or omissions (refer to Assimilation/elision/contraction notes on previous page).

A: *Where do you live?*  
Eg. Where dya live?

B: *In the next village.*

A: *Me too. How are you going to get home?*

B: *I will take a green bus, no. 6. Do you want to join me?*

**Linking**

Read this final exchange out loud, then show which words may be linked together and how (refer to *Linking* notes on previous page).

A: *What did you have for lunch?*

B: *A tomato and cheese sandwich, an apple and a bar of chocolate.*

**Reflection**

The spoken form of English can sound quite different to how it looks when written down.

Should teachers introduce these features of connected speech to their learners? Why/why not?

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**Assignment (optional – for existing teachers and/or student teachers on practicum)**

Your assignment is to try out a new idea/activity from this module with one of your classes. You should then reflect on your lesson. Use the following guidelines for your assignment.

1. Where appropriate, make up materials for the new idea/activity you will be trying out, focusing on the particular language points and learning outcomes you are aiming for.
2. Write your whole lesson plan, including your new idea/activity on the lesson plan document, then teach the lesson. After the lesson, write a reflection including: i. What went well? Why?; ii. What didn't go well? Why?; and iii. What changes will I make next time?
3. Attach your lesson plan (including list of materials used) and your reflection.
4. Submit your assignment by handing/emailing it to your trainer. The deadline for completion of this assignment is .....

**Glossary**

Concept	Definition
<b>connected speech</b>	Speech which consists of more than one word Eg. 'We'veeaten' = 'We have eaten.'
<b>individual sounds</b>	The separate sounds of English that make up words
<b>intonation</b>	This describes the rise and fall of pitch when speaking. In English, intonation is used to change meaning and show emotion.
<b>IPA</b>	The <b>International Phonemic Alphabet (IPA)</b> is a way to transcribe sounds of a language. It is especially used with languages that are spoken in a different way to their spelling, like English. For example, see how the IPA transcribes the 'ough' sound in these words: through /θru:/, rough /rʌf/, though /ðəʊ/
<b>L1</b>	The learner's first language, or mother tongue
<b>minimal pair</b>	A 'minimal pair' is a pair of words that almost sound the same, but one individual sound within them is different, for example: 'p <u>r</u> ay' and 'p <u>l</u> ay'
<b>schwa</b>	The name of the most common sound in the English language, pronounced like "uh". It is weak and can be spelt in many ways, e.g. pand <u>a</u> , open, doct <u>o</u> r, col <u>o</u> r. The phonetic symbol for the schwa is /ə/. In connected speech, many syllables change to a schwa, e.g. compare 'for' on its own, with 'It's for you'
<b>stress</b>	The practice of pronouncing syllables or words in a clear way – they are often louder and pronounced more 'completely' than other syllables or words
<b>word stress</b>	The concept of stress being put on one syllable of a word, while other syllables are not stressed so much, shown here with a ●, e.g. information ●

### Recommended Reading

- **How to Teach Pronunciation**, Gerald Kelly, Pearson Longman, 2000
- **How to Teach Speaking**, Scott Thornbury, Pearson Longman, 2005
- **Ship or Sheep: An Intermediate Pronunciation Course**, Ann Baker, Cambridge, 2006
- **Tree or Three: An Elementary Pronunciation Course**, Ann Baker, Cambridge, 2006
- **Pronunciation Pairs: An Introduction to the Sounds of English - Teacher's Manual**, Ann Baker & Sharon Goldstein, Cambridge, 2008
- **Sounds Easy: Phonics, Spelling & Pronunciation**, Sharon Bassano, Alto, 2002
- **Pronunciation Activities: Vowels in Limericks from Adam to Ursula**, Egelberg, Arlene, Pro Lingua, 1999
- **Discussion Starters series**, Keith Folse, Michigan University Press, 1996-2002,
- **Simple Speaking Activities**, Jill & Charles Hadfield, Oxford, 1999
- **English Pronunciation in Use: Intermediate**, Mark Hancock, Cambridge, 2003
- **Pronunciation Games**, Mark Hancock, Cambridge, 1995
- **Pronunciation Practice Activities: A Resource Book for Teaching English Pronunciation**, Martin Hewings, Cambridge, 2004
- **English Pronunciation in Use: Elementary**, Jonathan Marks, Cambridge 2007

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/connected-speech> – an article by Vanessa Steele, 2005, which explains the concept of weak forms and gives practical tips on how to teach it. The second article (<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/connected-speech-2> to the above address) focuses on linking and elision

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/integrating-pronunciation-classroom-activities> – an article by Barney Griffiths, 2004, outlining the importance of integrating pronunciation practice into lessons and some practical ideas on how to do this

<http://www.phonemicchart.com/> – a simple version of the IPA, used by many English teachers. There is a link to help you learn the sounds and test yourself. You can also cut and paste the symbols into your own document

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

## Additional Material

### Activity 2: Minimal Pairs Word List (Bingo)

Choose from the following:

shell, sell, goat, coat, pray, play, part, pot, wet, vet, sit, seat, three, tree, cot, caught, zinc, sink, pull, bull, ship, sheep, worse, verse, pat, bat, very, ferry, night, light, dirty, thirty, thin, tin, goal, coal, fill, feel, shore, sore, ban, pan, watch, watched

### Activity 3.1: An Ode to a Spell Checker

#### **An Ode to a Spell Checker** (or should it be Owed Two A Spell Checker):

Eye have a spelling checker  
It came with my pea sea  
It plainly marks four my revue  
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word  
And weight four it two say  
Weather eye am wrong oar write  
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid  
It nose bee fore two long  
And eye can put the error rite  
Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it  
I am shore your pleased two no  
Its letter perfect all the weigh  
My checker tolled me sew

Activity 3.1: The International Phonemic Alphabet (IPA)

Mark unvoiced sounds clearly using a different color.

	monophthongs				diphthongs		Phonemic Chart voiced unvoiced	
	i: sheep	ɪ ship	ʊ good	u: shoot	ɪə here	eɪ wait		
VOWELS	e bed	ə teacher	ɜ: bird	ɔ: door	ʊə tourist	ɔɪ boy	əʊ show	
	æ cat	ʌ up	ɑ: far	ɒ on	eə hair	aɪ my	aʊ cow	
	CONSONANTS	p pea	b boat	t tea	d dog	tʃ cheese	dʒ June	k car
f fly		v video	θ think	ð this	s see	z zoo	ʃ shall	ʒ television
m man		n now	ŋ sing	h hat	l love	r red	w wet	j yes

The 44 phonemes of Received Pronunciation based on the popular Adrian Underhill layout

adapted by EnglishClub.com

*Phoneme* - the smallest unit of meaning bearing sound (there are 44 sounds in standard English)

- based on a “standard” non-regional accent
- useful for students and teachers to refer to for standardization
- a consonant is where the airflow is somehow stopped or restricted; **voiced** or **unvoiced**; aspirated (lots of air); unaspirated (no air)
- vowels are when the airflow is not stopped; always voiced
- diphthongs are two vowels together; always voiced

3.3: Stress – Word Stress of Places Around the World - Answers

In pairs, complete the *Word Stress of Places Around the World* list, marking the stress of each word with a ●.

Eg. ●  
America

●  
Australia

●  
Palau

●  
Philippines

●  
Melekeok

●  
Mexico

●  
Thailand

●  
Indonesia

●  
Pohnpei

●  
Japan

●  
Aimeliik

●  
Venezuela

●  
Airai

●  
Afghanistan

●  
India

●  
Pakistan

●  
Germany

●  
Croatia

●  
Micronesia

● ●  
American Samoa

●  
Babeldaob

Activity 4.2 – Practicing Features of Connected Speech – Answer Sheet

**Stress and Weak Forms**

●  
A: *What time is it?*

● ● ● ●  
B: *It's a quarter to three. What time shall we leave?*

*ləl ləl*

● ● ●  
A: *At four o'clock, before the rush hour.*

*ləl ləl ləl*

**Assimilation / elision and Contraction**

A: *Where do you live?*

**dya**

B: *In the next village.*

**nex village**

A: *Me too. How are you going to get home?*

**ya gonna**

B: *I will take the number 6 green bus. Do you want to join me?*

**I'll greem bus dya wanna joim me**

**Linking**

A: *What did you have for lunch?*

B: *A tomato-w- and cheese-sandwich, a napple-an da ba rof chocolate.*