

Ways of practising pronunciation

Work on the basics

Note down key words and high frequency terminology from your subject area or general conversation. Mark the syllable stress and note any problem sounds. Check your dictionary. Practise with your 'pron buddy'. Try reading the items and get feedback. If you need more help, ask your buddy to record the items you need to improve. Practise the items aloud, individually and in sentences.

Record your voice and listen to yourself

You will gradually become better and better at analysing your speech. This will help you to self-correct 'on the spot' when you are communicating in real-life situations.

Focus on one feature at a time at first and practise systematically

It's hard to do everything correctly, especially if you have a number of things to work on, so just practise one thing at a time, for example, words which contain a problem sound, word stress or the key words in a speech chunk. You can slowly build up to controlling more features at the same time.

Limit what you say

For example, the main key word and its tone, or link one or two words together, or only say the key words. Add more words to make phrases. Repeat several times till you feel more confident.

Build your fluency, accuracy and speed

When you are practising something difficult, speak slowly at first, saying just a few words at a time. Slowly add more words, repeating as you go along and getting a little faster each time.

Identify a 'model' speaker

In other words, someone who speaks English well and who you want to sound like. It could be someone you regularly see on TV for example. Or it could be a lecturer or someone in your class or workplace. Listen carefully to your 'model'. What strategies do they use to speak effectively? Try to imitate the way they speak.

Download a podcast and transcript from ABC radio

Choose a small chunk and listen carefully to it. Underline the key words and syllable stress in longer words. Identify key vocabulary to practise. Try reading the chunk and get feedback if possible. You could also record yourself reading. Compare your version with the model recording.

Access ABC radio podcast and transcript:

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/podcasts/>

Listen to a short chunk of a podcast

(15-20 seconds) and try to write what you hear as dictation. Use the transcript to check what you have written. Then listen again and underline the key words and syllable stress in longer words. Notice any features of fluent, connected speech such as the schwa or linking.

Use a system of notation

This is helpful because it's a way of marking a text and reminding you of what's important when you're practising. you can use the notation we are using on these web pages:

- speech chunks and pauses are marked with a slash / or // for a longer pause
- stressed syllables in key words are marked in **bold**
- focus words (the most important key words) have an underlined stressed syllable
- arrows mark the direction of pitch movement of the voice (e.g. ↘ for falling intonation; ↗ for rising intonation).

