

## Practising pronunciation

### Get a 'pronunciation tool box'

This should include:

- a notebook specifically for pronunciation
- a recording device such as an mp3 recorder (or mobile phone)
- a dictionary with phonetic transcription (showing the sounds in words).

### Find someone to give you feedback

Let's call this person a 'pron buddy', someone who speaks English clearly and fluently, perhaps a friend, work colleague or fellow student. Your 'pron buddy' can be your 'sounding board', that is, someone who can give you regular support and feedback about how you sound in academic or work situations. You could practise difficult words or expressions from your subject area or even rehearse giving a talk or presentation. You could also ask for feedback on your speech in general conversation.

### Find some resources

Look at the listed pronunciation resources:

- books and audio
- internet

Use the comments to help you select books and web resources that have exercises on the pronunciation features you want to focus on, or provide intensive listening practice.

### Talking books

Did you know that many libraries, including the UTS Library have 'talking books', that is, books with CDs or audio cassettes? These will usually be novels and are useful because you can listen and read at the same time. They can help you to improve your pronunciation of general English, expand your vocabulary and gain confidence with English sounds and spelling conventions.

Search the [UTS Library for talking books](#).

### TED video

The [TED video](#) (opens an external site) has a wide range of excellent presentations. It is particularly useful for non-native speakers of English as interactive transcripts are provided.

## **Identify the speech features you want to improve**

Do some self-analysis. Your pron buddy may be able to help you. Here are some questions you can ask yourself.

- What aspects of my pronunciation are affecting my communication? What would help me to communicate more effectively?
- What words or expressions are people asking me to repeat?
- Are there some sounds which re-occur in these words, expressions etc?
- Is it hard to say longer words and word groups clearly and fluently?
- Am I getting feedback that I 'speak too fast'?

## **Learn to listen to yourself**

The feedback you can get from listening to a recording of your voice is very powerful. It's often a shock - even for native speakers - to hear themselves speaking! But this is one of the most useful things you can do. The best way to do this is to record yourself speaking so you can listen to yourself and reflect on how you sound. Very often we actually have a pretty accurate idea of what's making us difficult to understand when we listen carefully to how we are speaking. To be on the safe side however, check your impressions by getting feedback from your 'pron buddy'. Otherwise, you could be 'too hard' or 'too soft' on yourself!

