m/b	more	bore	summing	subbing	jam	jab
n/d	nine	dine	Anna	adder	pawn	pod
ng/g	bring each	geese	singer	cigar	ring	rig

Review Exercise 12-2: Ending Nasal Consonants

M	**N**	**NG**
rumᵊ	runᵊ	rungᵊ
some	son	sung
hum	hun	hung

Review Exercise 12-3: Reading Nasal Consonant Sounds

Some young men wanted to fling a ring along the rim of the fountain, but we told them to clam up and clear. up their game. One was a well-mannered young man with the name Dan Wang. He said, "Yes, ma'am."

Review Exercise 13-1: Throaty Consonants

	Initial	**Middle**	**Final**
h	how	rehire	
k	cow	accent	sink
g	go	regard	drag
ng	bring in	thanks	sing
r	row	mirror	car

Review Exercise 13-2: The Letter X

[ks]		**[gz]**	
excite	[ɛk**säit]**	example	[ə**gz**æmpᵊl]
extra	[**ɛk**strə]	exactly	[ə**gz**æklee]
except	[ək**sɛpt**]	examine	[ə**gz**æmən]
excellent	[**ɛk**sələnt]	exit	[**ɛg**zit]

Review Exercise 13-3: Reading the H, K, G, NG, and R sounds

Dr. Baxter's exact experience was such that when the good doctor traveled to the Sahara, he inhaled the arid air, picked up his still packed bags, and headed for the bar. It was time to examine the sorry situation, which was exactly the case with Dr. Igor Baxter, an English historian with a peg leg and a unquenchable thirst for Mexican rum. Baxter had had a pair of strange experiences in the area, but he was still game to accomplish his goal in the exiled purgatory of the great, dry Sahara. When he saw that his patients were to be camels, however, he packed up and took off for green England, without a single pang of regret.

171

Nationality Guides

No matter what language you speak, you will have different sounds and rhythms from a native speaker of American English. These Nationality Guides will give you a head start on what to listen for in American English from the perspective of your own native language. In order to specifically identify what you need to work on, this section can be used in conjunction with the *diagnostic analysis.* The analysis provides an objective rendering of the sounds and rhythms based on how you currently speak, as well as specific guidelines for how to standardize your English; call (800) 457-4255 for a private consultation.

Each section will cover *intonation, word connections, word endings, pronunciation, location of the language in the mouth,* as well as particular difficulties to work through, and solutions to common misperceptions.

Most adult students rely too heavily on spelling. It's now your job to listen for pure sound, and reconcile that to spelling—not the other way around. This is the same path that a native speaker follows.

As you become familiar with the major characteristics and tendencies in American English, you will start using that information in your everyday speech. One of the goals of the diagnostic analysis is to show you what you already know, so you can use the information and skills in English as *transfer skills,* rather than *newly learned skills.* You will learn more readily, more quickly, and more pleasantly—and you will retain the information and use the accent with less resistance.

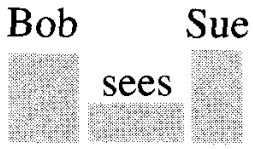
Read all the nationality guides—you never know when you'll pick up something useful for yourself. Although each nationality is addressed individually, there are certain aspects of American English that're difficult for everyone, in this order:

1. Pitch changes and meaning shifts of intonation
2. Regressive vocalization with a final voiced consonant *(bit/bid)*
3. Liaisons
4. R&L
5. æ ä ə (including the æo in *ow)*
6. Tense & lax vowels (i/ē and ü/ū)
7. Th
8. B&V&W

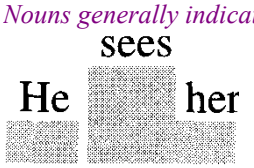
Ideally, you would have learned intonation before you learned grammar, but since that didn't happen, you can now incorporate the intonation into the grammar that you already know. When you first start listening for intonation, it sounds completely random. It shifts all around even when you use the same words. So, where should you start? In basic sentences with a *noun-verb-noun* pattern, the nouns are usually stressed. Why? Because nouns carry the new information. Naturally, contrast can alter this, but noun stress is the default. Listen to native speakers and you will hear that their pitch goes up on the noun most of the time.

You will, however, also hear verbs stressed. When? The verb is stressed when you replace a noun with a pronoun. Because *nouns are new information* and *pronouns are old information*—and we don't stress old information—the intonation shifts over to the verb. Intonation is the most important part of your accent. Focus on this, and everything else will fall into place with it.

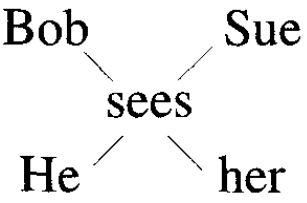
• *Intonation*
• *Liaisons*
• *Word endings*
• *Pronunciation*
• *Location in the mouth*
• *Particular difficulties*



Nouns generally indicate new information and are stressed.



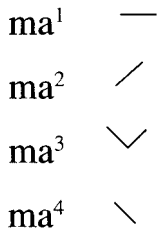
Pronouns
indicate old information and are unstressed.



172

Important Point

In English, a pitch change indicates the speaker's intention. In Chinese, a pitch change indicates a different word.
The four "ma" tones of Mandarin Chinese



Chinese Intonation Summary

1. Say the four ma's.
2. Write them out with the appropriate arrows.
3. Replace the stressed word in a sentence with each of the four ma's.
4. Decide which one sounds best.

5. Put the stressed word back in the sentence, keeping the tone.

Chinese

Intonation

There are several immediately evident characteristics of a Chinese accent. The most notable is the lack of speech music, or the musical intonation of English. This is a problem because, in the English language, *intonation* indicates meaning, new information, contrast, or emotion. Another aspect of speech music is *phrasing,* which tells if it is a statement, a question, a yes/no option, a list of items, or where the speaker is in the sentence (introductory phrase, end of the sentence, etc.). In Chinese, however, a change in tone indicates a different vocabulary word.

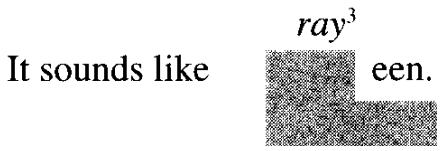
In English, Chinese speakers have a tendency to increase the *volume* on stressed words, but otherwise give equal value to each word. This atonal volume-increase will sound aggressive, angry, or abrupt to a native speaker. When this is added to the tendency to lop off the end of each word, and almost no word connections at all, the result ranges from choppy to unintelligible.

In spite of this unpromising beginning, Chinese students have a tremendous advantage. Here is an amazingly effective technique that radically changes how you sound. Given the highly developed tonal qualities of the Chinese language, you are truly a "pitch master." In order for you to appreciate your strength in this area, try the four *ma* tones of Mandarin Chinese. (Cantonese is a little more difficult since it has eight to twelve tones and people aren't as familiar with the differentiation.) These four tones sound identical to Americans — *ma, ma, ma, ma.*

Take the first sentence in Exercise 1 -5 *It sounds like* ***rain*** and replace *rain* with *ma*[1]. Say *It sounds like ma* [1]. This will sound strangely flat, so then try *It sounds like ma*[2]. This isn't it either, so go on to *It sounds like ma*[3] and *It sounds like ma*[4]. One of the last two will sound pretty good, usually *ma*[3]. You may need to come up with a combination of ma[3] and *ma*[4], but once you have the idea of what to listen for, it's really easy. When you have that part clear, put *rain* back in the sentence, keeping the tone:

It sounds like *ma*[3]. It sounds like *rain*[3].

If it sounds a little short *(It sounds like ren),* ***double*** the sound:



When this exercise is successful, go to the second sentence, *It sounds like rain* and do the same thing:

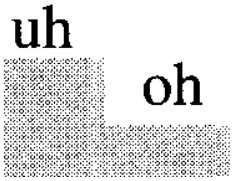
It *ma*[3] like rain. It *sounds*[3] like rain. Then, contrast the two:

It sounds like *rain*[3]. It *sounds*[3] like rain.

From this point on, you only need to periodically listen for the appropriate ma, substituting it in for words or syllables. You don't even need to use the rubber band since your tonal sophistication is so high.

The main point of this exercise is to get you listening for the tone shifts in English, which are very similar to the tone shifts in Chinese. The main difference is that Americans use them to indicate stress, whereas in Chinese, they are fully different words when the tone changes.

A simple way to practice intonation is with the sound that American children use when they make a mistake—***uh****-oh.* This quick note shift is completely typical of the pattern, and once you have mastered this double note, you can go on to more complex patterns. Because Chinese grammar is fairly similar to English grammar, you don't have to worry too much about word order.



Liaisons

All of the advantages that you have from *intonation* are more than counterbalanced by your lack of *word connections.* The reason for this is that Chinese characters (words or parts of words) start with consonants and end with either a vowel or a nasalized consonant, *n* or *ng.* There is no such thing as a final *t, l,* or *b* in Chinese. To use an example we've all heard of, *Mao Tse Tung.* This leads to several difficulties:

- No word endings
- No word connections
- No distinction between final voiced or unvoiced consonants.

It takes time and a great deal of concentration, but the lack of word endings and word connections can be remedied. Rather than force the issue of adding on sounds that will be uncomfortable for you, which will result in overpronunciation, go with your strengths — notice how in *speech,* but not *spelling,* Americans end their words with vowel sounds and start them with consonants, just as in Chinese! It's really a question of rewriting the English script in

your head that you read from when you speak.
Liaisons or *word connections* will force the final syllable to be pronounced by pushing it over to the beginning of the next word, where Chinese speakers have no trouble — not even with *l*.

Written English	Chinese Accent	American (with Liaisons)
Tell him	teo him	tellim
Pull it out	puw ih aw	pü li dout

Because you are now using a natural and comfortable technique, you will sound smooth and fluid when you speak, instead of that forced, exaggerated speech of people who are doing what they consider unnatural. It takes a lot of correction to get this process to sink in, but it's well worth the effort. Periodically, when you speak, write down the exact sounds that you made, then write it in regular spelling, so you can *see* the Chinese accent and the effect it has on meaning *(puw ih aw* has no meaning in English). Then convert the written English to spoken American *(pull it out* changes to *pü li dout)* to help yourself rewrite your English script.
When you don't use liaisons, you also lose the underlying hum that connects sentences together. This *coassonance* is like the highway and the words are the cars that carry the listener along.
The last point of intonation is that Chinese speakers don't differentiate between voiced and unvoiced final consonants — *cap* and *cab* sound exactly the

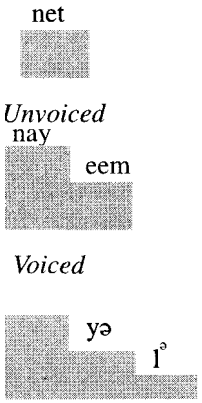
Goal

To get you to use your excellent tone control in English.
Chinese characters start with consonants and end with either a vowel or a nasalized consonant (n *or* ng).

Goal

To get you to rewrite your English script and to speak with sound units rather than word units.
174

same. For this, you will need to go back to the staircase. When a final consonant is voiced, the vowel is lengthened or doubled. When a final consonant is unvoiced, the vowel is short or single.
Additionally, the long *a* before an *m* is generally shortened to a short ɛ. This is why the words *same* and *name* are particularly difficult, usually being pronounced *sem* and *nem.* You have to add in the second half of the sound. You need *nay + eem* to get *name.* Doubled vowels are explained on page 3.



Pronunciation

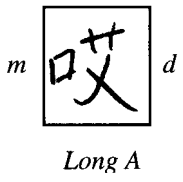
The most noticeable nonstandard pronunciation is the lack of final /. This can be corrected by either liaisons, or by adding a tiny schwa after it (l^{uh} or l^{ə}) in order to position your tongue correctly. This is the same solution for *n* and *ng.* Like most other nationalities, Chinese students need to work on *th* and *r,* but fortunately, there are no special problems here. The remaining major area is [ā], [ɛ], and [æ], which sound the same. *Mate, met, mat* sound like *met, met, met.* The [ɛ] is the natural sound for the Chinese, so working from there, you need to concentrate on Chapters 3 and 11. In the word *mate,* you are hearing only the first half of the [ɛi] combination, so double the vowel with a clear *eet* sound at the end (even before an unvoiced final consonant). Otherwise, you will keep saying *meh-eht* or *may-eht.*

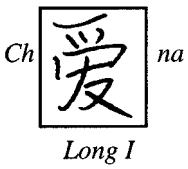
Goal

For you to hear the actual vowel and consonant sounds of English, rather than a Chinese perception of them.

a

It frequently helps to know exactly how something would look in your own language — and in Chinese, this entails characters. The characters on the left are the sounds needed for a Chinese person to say both the long *i* as in *China* and the long *a* as in *made* or *same.* Read the character, and then put letters in front and in back of it so you are reading half alphabet, half character. An *m* in front and a *d* in back of the first character will let you read *made.* A *ch* in front and *na* in back of the second character will produce *China.* It's odd, but it works.





fay

L A word that ends in *~ail* is particularly difficult for Chinese speakers since it contains both the hard [ɛi] combination and a final / (Chapter 5). It usually sounds something like *feh-o*. You need to *say fail* as if it had three full syllables — *fay-yə-l*[ə].

u, v, f, w Another difficulty may be *u, v, f,* and *w.* The point to remember here is that *u* and *w* can both be considered *vowels* (i.e., they don't touch anywhere in the mouth), whereas *v* and/are *consonants* (your upper teeth touch your lower lip). M, as in *too* or *use* should be no problem. Similar to M, but with a little push of slightly rounded lips is *w,* as in *what* or *white.* The letters / and v have basically the same sound, but / is unvoiced and v is voiced. Your lower lip should come up a little to meet your top teeth. You are not biting down on the outside of your lip here; the sound is created using the inside of your lower lip. Leave your mouth in the same position and make the two sounds, both voiced and unvoiced. Practice words such as *fairy, very,* and *wary.*

175

There is another small point that may affect people from southern mainland China who use / and *n* interchangeably. This can be corrected by working with *l* words and pinching the nose shut. If you are trying to say *late* and it comes out *Nate,* hold your nose closed and the air will be forced out through your mouth.

æ The *æ* sound doesn't exist in Chinese, so it usually comes out as *ä* or *ɛ*, so *last* sounds like *lost* or *name* sounds like *nem.* You need to work on Chapter 3, which drills this distinctively American vowel.

ä Because of spelling, the *ä* sound can easily be misplaced. The *ä* sound exists in Chinese, but when you see an *o,* you might want to say [o], so *hot* sounds like *hoht* instead of *haht.* Remember, most of the time, the letter *o* is pronounced *ah.* This will give you a good reference point for whenever you want to say *ä* instead of [o]; astr̲o̲nomy, c̲ä̲ll, l̲ä̲ng, pr̲ä̲gress, etc.

o Conversely, you may pronounce the letter *o* as *ä* or *ə* when it should be an *o,* as in *only, most, both.* Make sure that the American *o* sounds like *ou: ounly, moust, bouth.*

ə The schwa is typically overpronounced based on spelling. Work on Chapter 1, Intonation, and Chapter 3, Pronunciation. If your intonation peaks are strong and clear enough, then your valleys will be sufficiently reduced as well. Concentrate on smoothing out and reducing the valleys and *ignore spelling!*

ü The [ü] sound is generally overpronounced to *ooh.* Again, spelling is the culprit. Words such as *smooth, choose,* and *too* are spelled with 2 *o*'s and are pronounced with a long *u* sound, but other words such as *took* and *good* are spelled with 2 *o*'s but are pronounced halfway between *ih* and *uh;* [tük] and [güd].

i In most Chinese dictionaries, the distinction between *i* and *ē* is not made. The ē is generally indicated by [i:], which causes problems with final consonants, and the i sound is overpronounced to *eee.* Practice these four sounds, remembering that *tense vowels* indicate that you tense your lips or tongue, while *lax vowels* mean that your lips and tongue are relaxed and the sound is produced in your throat. *Unvoiced* final consonants *(t, s, k, p, ch, f)* mean that the vowel is short and sharp; *voiced* final consonants *(d, z, g, b, j, v*) mean that the vowel is doubled. Work on Bit or Beat? Bid or Bead? in Chapter 8.

r Chinese speakers usually pronounce American *r* as *ä* at the end of a word *(car* sounds like *kaaah)* or almost a *w* in the beginning or middle *(grow* sounds like *gwow).* The tongue should be curled back more, and the *r* produced deep in the throat.

th If you pronounce *th* as *t* or *d* (depending if it's voiced or unvoiced), then you should allow your tongue tip to move about a quarter of an inch forward, so the very tip is just barely between your teeth. Then, from this position you make a sound similar to *t* or *d.*

n Chinese will frequently interchange final *n* and *ng.* The solution is to add a little schwa at the end, just like you do with the *el.* This will make the tongue position more apparent, as you can see on page 89.

sh Some people pronounce the *sh* in a particularly Chinese-sounding way. It seems that the tongue is

too curled back, which changes the sound. Make sure that the tongue is flat, the tongue tip is just at the ridge behind the top teeth, and that only a thin stream of air is allowed to escape.

Final Consonants One of the defining characteristics of Chinese speech is that the final consonants are left off *(hold* sounds like *ho).* Whenever possible, make a liaison with the following word. For example, *hold* is difficult to say, so try *hold on = hol dän.* Pay particular attention to Chapter 2.

t American English has a peculiar characteristic in that the *t* sound is, in many cases, pronounced as a *d.* Work on Chapter 4.

176

Location of the Language

Chinese, like American English, is located in the *back of the throat.* The major difference between the two languages is that English requires that the speaker use the *tongue tip* a great deal: *l*, *th;* and final *t, d, n, l.*

Japanese

Intonation

Although Chinese and Japanese are both Asian languages and share enormously in their written characters, they are opposites in terms of intonation, word-endings, pronunciation, and liaisons. Whereas the Chinese stress every word and can sound aggressive, Japanese speakers give the impression of stressing no words and sounding timid. Both impressions are, of course, frequently entirely at odds with the actual meaning and intention of the words being spoken. Chinese speakers have the advantage of *knowing* that they have a tonal language, so it is simply a question of transferring this skill to English.

Japanese, on the other hand, almost always insist that the Japanese language "has no intonation". Thus, Japanese speakers in English tend to have a picket fence intonation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | . In reality, the Japanese language does express all kinds of information and emotion through intonation, but this is such a prevalent myth that you may need to examine your own beliefs on the matter. Most likely, you need to use the rubber band extensively in order to avoid volume increases rather than on changing the pitch.

One of the major differences between English and Japanese is that there is a fixed word order in English—a verb grid—whereas in Japanese, you can move any word to the head of a sentence and add a topic particle *(wa* or *ga).* Following are increasingly complex verbs with adverbs and helping verbs. Notice that the positions are fixed and do *not* change with the additional words.

	auxiliary	negative	perfect auxiliary	adverb	passive	continuous	main verb
Draw!							Draw!
He draws.	He						draws.
He does draw.	He	does					draw.
He is drawing.	He	is					drawing.
He is not drawing.	He	is	not				drawing.
He is not always drawing.	He	is	not	always			drawing.
He is not always being drawn.	He	is	not	always	being		drawn.
He has not always been drawn.	He	has	not	always	been		drawn.
He has not always been being drawn.	He	has	not	always	been	being	drawn.
He will not have always been being drawn.	He	will	not	have	always	been	being	drawn.

177

Liaisons

Whereas the Chinese drop word endings, Japanese totally overpronounce them. This is because in the katakana syllabary, there are the five vowels sounds, and then consonant-vowel combination. In order to be successful with