

Part 3

Speaking Naturally

- **Chapter 7** Pronunciation
- **Chapter 8** Stress and Intonation
- **Chapter 9** Pausing

Chapter 7 Pronunciation

Chapter 8 Stress and Intonation

Chapter 9 Pausing

The tips below can help you to improve both your fluency and clarity of speech:

During the speech:

- Open your mouth while speaking. Try not to mumble.
- Pay special attention to the pronunciation of content words and key terms.
- Stress each syllable correctly and accurately.
- Clearly pronounce both vowels and consonants.
- Smoothly link sounds between words within a phrase and in consonant clusters.
- Change pitch between stressed and unstressed syllables.
- Speak in sentences or phrases, not word by word.
- Speak with appropriate speed, not too quickly.

When practicing:

- Practice speaking by writing down every word you say and marking each place where you pause or vary intonation.
- Examine this transcript of your speech and look for possible mistakes. Practice these parts again, focusing on correcting the previous mistakes.
- Record and listen to your speech. Note any areas for improvement.

Stress and intonation are very important in English. The rhythm of sentences spoken in English alerts listeners to the message presented. Words or phrases important to the content of the message tend to be stressed, whereas words or phrases that are not important tend to be reduced.

Chapter 7 Pronunciation

Stress on content words

Certain words within a sentence are given importance because of the meaning they communicate. These words are referred to as content words. Words with little or no meaning outside their grammatical function are usually not stressed within the sentence.

→ **Content words:** nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs

→ **Function words:** modal auxiliary verbs, "be" verbs, most pronouns, prepositions, articles

Stressed syllables are pronounced longer, pitched higher, and spoken slightly louder.

► Step 1

🎧 Listen to the sentences and underline the words that are stressed. **Track 222**

1. However, I would definitely like to go to the park on my new scooter.
2. After this annual seminar is over, please do not forget to sign up for the one next year.
3. The small child was uncertain as to whether or not he should raise his hand.
4. I think it is better to keep a calendar in order to remember important dates.
5. My grandparents significantly influenced my happiness as a child.
6. Although I would like to take Saturday off, I believe it is more important that I go to the tutoring session.
7. So far, my experiences with skydiving have been fun and exciting.
8. The professor must conduct lots of research in order to publish his findings.

🎧 Listen again and repeat the sentences.

► Step 2

🎧 Listen to the paragraph. Write only the words you hear most clearly. **Track 223**

Stress on function words

The normal pattern of sentence stress reduces function words. However, function words can be stressed when the speaker is expressing strong emotion, is disagreeing, or is clarifying mistaken information.

Ex. Don't you agree that English is easy?

I do not agree! (Non-contracted forms are often used to show stress).

► Step 1

🎧 Listen to the following sentences and indicate whether each underlined word is reduced (R) or stressed (S). **Track 224**

1. However, Roger should know how to wash his own clothes. _____
2. Actually, I did guess many of the correct answers on yesterday's test. _____
3. Fifty years ago, my grandparents were married in Hawaii. _____
4. I am ready to register for my classes next week. _____
5. Despite evidence to the contrary, George is certain that he will get picked for the part. _____
6. He is not the one with the cold. I am. _____
7. I could participate in the game, but I really don't want to play. _____
8. Should you decide to attend the seminar, you will need to present a report. _____

🎧 Listen again and repeat the sentences.

► Step 2

🎧 Listen to the following sentences. Circle any underlined words that should be stressed. More than one word may be stressed in each sentence. **Track 225**

Example: Even though he did not win the marathon, he did win a trophy for second place.

1. I know you think I cannot do it, but I really can handle an after-school job.
2. Last year, it both rained and snowed during the month of June.
3. Are you absolutely certain that you cannot make the meeting today?
4. She prefers cleaning her bedroom over cleaning her bathroom.
5. I have so much homework that I do not know where to start.
6. It is impossible to trust anything that my best friend says.
7. Marketing 413 is only for business majors.
8. The instructor taught the girl to play the piano beautifully.

🎧 Listen again and repeat the sentences.

Intonation is also very important to English. The pitch of the speaker's voice alerts listeners to the particular message being conveyed. By modifying the pitch of the voice to rise, fall, or do both, the speaker stresses certain words and meanings. When modifying the pitch, the speaker often lengthens the amount of time each word is pronounced.

Chapter 8 Stress and Intonation

Changing pitch for emphasis

At the beginning of a conversation, the last content word in each sentence is usually the focus of meaning. Therefore, the primary stress in these sentences usually falls on the last content word. The sound of the speaker's voice rises on the focus word and then falls. If the sentence is a question, the sound of the speaker's voice rises but does not fall at the end of the sentence.

Ex. Is that a deer? No, it is a big dog.

However, the focus of a sentence can change. Thus, one sentence can have more than one intonation pattern. By noticing the word the speaker emphasizes, the listener can guess what will come next.

Ex. It is not small dog. It is a big dog.

► Step 1

👂 Listen to the first sentence and underline the focus word. Then choose the sentence most likely to come next. **Track 226**


1. It is a bad idea to wait until the night before a test to begin studying.
 - a. Tests are some of the hardest parts of school.
 - b. It is also not wise to wait until the last minute to do homework.
2. Teenagers should have certain restrictions on their driver's licenses.
 - a. Children should not be allowed to smoke until they reach adulthood.
 - b. However, those over 18 do not need any driving restrictions.
3. Are you sure you do not want to have lunch with me?
 - a. No, lunch is not until one o'clock.
 - b. No, I am eating lunch with another friend.
4. That is a really large piece of cake.
 - a. Actually, I made the cake for somebody else.
 - b. It is way too much for me to eat.

👂 Listen again and repeat the sentences. Ensure your voice is rising on the stressed syllables and dropping afterwards.

▶ Step 2

Read the two sentences. Try to figure out how the second sentence relates to the first. Underline the focus word in the first sentence according to this context.

1. The recreational center will offer a new self-defense course. It will teach young people how to protect themselves.
2. Butterflies are usually active during the day. Moths are more active at night.
3. I prefer not to have homework over the weekends. However, I do not mind having a little bit of homework then.
4. Everyone wants to buy a beautiful house. For this reason, houses that are ugly do not sell very well.
5. The fifth-grader was a very messy worker. Her partner was very organized.
6. The woman bought a new bag at the mall downtown. It had just opened a couple of weeks before.

 Listen and repeat the sentences. Ensure your voice is rising on the stressed syllables and dropping afterwards. **Track 227**

Commas and series with *and* or *or*

When there is a series of words with the conjunctions *and* or *or*, the intonation rises on all members of the series except the last. The last member has a rising-falling intonation.

Ex. We went to the park, / (↗) the beach, / (↗) and the mountains. (↘)

You can do it Monday / (↗) or Tuesday. (↘)

After the comma used between a sentence and an additional phrase, the intonation rises.

Ex. It is three blocks from here, / (↗) near the supermarket. (↘)

As for me, / (↗) I will have the soup and salad. (↘).

► Step 1

Divide the sentences into thought groups by using slashes (/) and mark the intonation of each group with arrows (↗ or ↘).

1. The man's chores included walking the dog, doing the laundry, cleaning the bathroom, and washing the car.
2. Recycling campaigns have been very successful in our city, partially due to the friendly publicity from local newspapers.
3. I was not certain whether the text should be placed at the top of the page or in the middle.
4. Young people often experience pressure from outside influences to conform to certain trends, particularly when they get into high school.
5. He could have told his mother that he had spent the evening studying, but it would not have been the truth.
6. The man was not sure whether to pick the striped tie, the green tie, or the purple tie.

 Listen and repeat the sentences. Track 228

Having appropriate pauses is also an important part of spoken English. Pauses are given after each message unit in order to give listeners time to process the information. If a speaker speaks too rapidly or without thought to the grouping of the information presented, listeners may have difficulty distinguishing the important content of the message.

Chapter 9 Pausing

Pausing, like stress and pronunciation, greatly adds to the clarity of speech. There are several reasons for adding a pause:


- To make the meaning clear: **Ex.** When the wind blows [pause] the waves run high.
- For emphasis: **Ex.** Frankly [pause] I am disappointed in you.
- To enable the speaker to catch a breath
- To give listeners time to understand complex sentences

Therefore, it is helpful to pause after commas, transitional words, and complicated ideas, such as lengthy subjects, prepositional phrases, and clauses in compound and complex sentences.

▶ Step 1

Look at the following sentences and circle any (/) that indicates an appropriate pause.


1. Although the Greeks / were credited with the first Western democracy / neither women / nor slaves had the right / to vote.
2. During the debate / the woman proved that Jason's argument was flawed / thereby embarrassing him / in front of everyone.
3. Those pineapples were / in my opinion / the best fruit / that I had ever tasted.
4. Many critics believe / that modern movies lack / what early movies possessed / namely / a strong plot and good actors.
5. Common pets / in American households include birds / cats / and dogs.
6. Nevertheless / I still do not agree that animal testing / is worthwhile.

 Listen and repeat the sentences. **Track 229**

► Step 2

Practice saying the sample response and write a slash (/) where you would pause.

1. His ability to track creatures across long distances enabled the man to compete in an annual competition where contestants tracked certain animals.
2. Many scientists contend that the universe started with a big bang, releasing enormous amounts of energy to create the solar systems and planets.
3. In the last three years, Joe's friends not only supported him during his illness, but they did everything in their power to make life easier for him so that he could recover more quickly.
4. Neela, a foreign exchange student from India, came from a small village in the mountains that depended almost entirely on farming.

 Listen and repeat the sentences. **Track 230**

Pause and pitch

Every clause or thought group within a sentence contains a focus word. A rise and then a fall in pitch is used to mark this focus word. This change alerts listeners to the central meaning of the thought group. The fall in intonation, combined with pausing, helps listeners recognize the end of a thought group.

Ex. I remembered to bring paper, / but I forgot my book.

When the water boils rapidly, / put the spaghetti in the pot.

When the water boils, / rapidly put the spaghetti in the pot.

► Step 1

Practice saying the sentences. Be sure to use appropriate pauses and pitch.

1. Remember that when the timer rings, it is time to give the baby his bottle.
2. Ultimately, a person's success in life depends on two things: hard work and dedication.
3. Albert Einstein, the scientist known for his strange hair, came up with his theory of relativity in 1915.
4. A college education should be provided for by the government, according to my economics teacher, Ms. Brown.
5. Since she had disobeyed her parents earlier, Emily was forbidden to leave her room for the rest of the night.
6. On the other hand, I do not believe that art should replace reading, writing, and arithmetic as a student's main priorities in school.

 **Listen and repeat the sentences.** Track 231