

# Pronunciation Practice

**THIS BOOK CONTAINS  
TEN SECTIONS OF  
PRONUNCIATION  
MATERIAL FOR  
EFFECTIVE TALK  
ABOUT THINGS,  
PLACES, &  
PEOPLE**

**High  
Beginning  
to Intermediate  
Instruction & Activities  
in Vowel & Consonant Sounds,  
Syllables, Stress, Rhythm, and  
Other Features of Clear American Accent**



**GETTING STARTED:  
GREET PEOPLE BY NAME**

**Symbols for Sounds / Letters of  
the Alphabet / Numbers /  
Pronunciation Terms**

**PART ONE: TALK ABOUT THINGS**

## **Vowel Sounds & Spellings**

1. Simple Vowel Sounds
2. Complex Vowel Sounds
3. All Vowel Sounds

**PART TWO:**

**TALK ABOUT PLACES**

## **Syllables, Stress, Focus, & Rhythm**

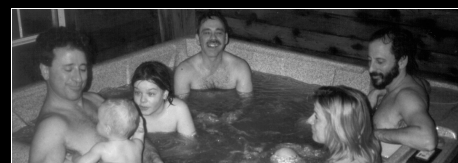
4. Syllable-Stress Patterns
5. Focus Points
6. Sentence Stress & Rhythm

**PART THREE:**

**TALK ABOUT PEOPLE**

## **Consonants & Features of Fluent Speech**

7. Initial Consonant Sounds
8. Medial & Final Consonant Sounds
9. Sound Linking, Pausing, & Intonation



**Also Available: two 90-Minute Audiotapes or 4 CDs  
of the Pronunciation Material in this Book  
ISBN 1-891077-52-X**

# INTRO TO TEACHERS & LEARNERS

High Beginning to Intermediate Instruction & Activities in Vowel & Consonant Sounds, Syllables, Stress, Rhythm, and Other Features of Clear American Accent

## What is This Book About? How Is It Best Used?

**Pronunciation Practice** is a high-beginning to high-intermediate pronunciation (accent acquisition or reduction) activity book for American-English learners of various native-language backgrounds. Because it is designed as a supplement to **Before Speaking: Activities for Practice & Preparation in Oral Language Skills**, it corresponds loosely in content and vocabulary to the major divisions of the **Before Speaking** text: "Talk About Things," "Talk About Places," and "Talk About People." Its purpose is to give participants the sound patterns, pronunciation principles, and clear-speaker models they need to improve the comprehensibility of their speech in everyday communication. To that end, in each of its ten sections it provides:

- **PRONUNCIATION EXPLANATIONS:** summaries of the most necessary sound-patterns and pronunciation principles, organized into topics such as *Elements of Speech, Sound-Symbols, "Simple" Vowel Sounds, "Complex" Vowel Spellings, Homophones, Syllables, Focus Points in Phrases, \*\*Voice Pitch on Focus Points, "Reduced" Syllables, Sentence Rhythm, Contrast in Stress Patterns, Voiced Vs. Voiceless Consonant Sounds, Initial Consonant Clusters, \*Vowel Lengthening, \*\*\*Consonant Reduction, Sound Linking, Rising-Falling Intonation*, and the like. To the right is an example:

To accommodate the abilities and interests of multi-level groups of participants, some of these explanations address the basic points of accent acquisition, while others are more sophisticated. The boxes or paragraphs with one, two, or three stars (\*, \*\*, \*\*\*) offer principles that struggling learners may have to put off until they can pronounce words, phrases, and sentences comprehensibly. More advanced learners, on the other hand, will appreciate the opportunity to connect sounds to less common spellings and to "polish" their accents, improving the clarity of their speech step by step.

### PRONUNCIATION: "SIMPLE" VOWEL SOUNDS

"Simple" vowel sounds are pure sounds. They are not doubled sounds or glides or diphthongs. They are "lax" vowels. The mouth muscles "relax" to pronounce them.

Some books call these sounds "short vowels." Here are drawings of the position of the lips for these sounds:

1. /æ/ or ă	2. /e/ or ě	3. /i/ or ĭ
4. /a/ or ă	5. /ɔ/ or ȝ	6. /u/ or ŭ
	Some speakers use Sound 4, /a/ or ă, for Sound 5.	
7. /o/ or oo		

Why do some people call the simple vowels "one-letter sounds?" Because they're most often spelled with one vowel letter: *a, e, i, o, u*. Here are the most common

1. /æ/ or ă = <u>a</u>	4. /a/ or ă = <u>a</u> or <u>ä</u>
2. /e/ or ě = <u>e</u>	5. /ɔ/ or ȝ = <u>a</u> , <u>aw</u> , or <u>o</u>
3. /i/ or ĭ = <u>i</u>	6. /u/ or ŭ = <u>u</u> or <u>o</u>
	7. /o/ or oo = <u>oo</u> or <u>u</u>

To make good use of the boxed **PRONUNCIATION EXPLANATIONS**, participants can read them silently and/or listen to them read aloud on the accompanying audiotape. They can summarize the important points in their own words. As accurately as possible, they can imitate native-speaker pronunciation of the examples in the box. Then they can say the same examples on their own, taking care to apply the patterns and principles they have just learned or reviewed. They can refer to the boxes again and again—as they work on the exercises and activities in the *Pronunciation Practice* book and as they communicate orally in everyday life.

- **EXERCISES & ACTIVITIES:** Instructions for the exercises and activities in *Pronunciation Practice* are numbered *0.A* to *0.D*, *1.A* to *1.D*, *2.A* to *2.D*, etc.—as in the reduced-sized example to the right. This numbering system is designed to correspond to the sections of the *Before Speaking* text that contain content and language, especially vocabulary, of the same kind. If the two books are used in conjunction, participants do not *need* to cover either section of the same number immediately before or after the other. Even so, it may be advisable to make use of both within reasonable time proximity.

In their brevity and simplicity, the instructions for each exercise or activity are written to get to the point of the *Pronunciation Practice* they offer.

Nevertheless, participants are free to adapt procedures to the situations of individuals and groups—including their goals, proficiency levels, learning styles, motivation, need for competition or cooperation, preferences, time limitations, and the like.

For preparation and/or review, many sections may be covered individually—perhaps as homework or lab work. Under these circumstances, the services of helpers with native-like accents and/or the available or teacher-made audiotapes or CDs will help. Comparing their pronunciation with that of models, learners “develop an ear” for sounds and patterns. They approach their accent-acquisition or reduction goals little by little.

For the same and other sections, the interaction of small group work may enhance the effectiveness of the activity. As an example, in *Exercise 1.A* (reduced above), participants can follow these instructions: ***In turn, pronounce one of the words from the mouth diagram on page 9. Can your listeners identify the vowel by number 1-7?***

- Stars (\*, \*\*, or \*\*\*) indicate extra challenge. They can appear before steps in instructions, on examples, or with exercise items.

**Pronunciation Practice**  
*Part One: Talk About Things*

**1.A** **RECOGNIZE SIMPLE VOWEL SOUNDS.** In this diagram of the mouth, listen to and repeat the seven “simple” vowel sounds, numbered 1-7. In the word examples, the letters for those sounds are underlined. Can you read aloud the words?

Where to Pronounce the Seven “Simple” (Lax) Vowel Sounds in the Mouth

NOTES: <sup>[1]</sup> The symbols in the left part of the diagram are for “front vowel” sounds. Pronounce these sounds with the tongue in the front part of the mouth. The other sound-symbols are for “middle” or “back vowels.” For the sounds at the top of the diagram, the lips are partially closed. They are flat or spread for the front vowels. They are rounded for the back vowels. Open the lips wider for the sounds at the bottom.

The pronunciation material of **Pronunciation Practice** is designed to cover the important learning points of accent, to be balanced, and to be complete. For this reason, some exercises or activities may be multi-part—with additional instructions after the first section. Both exercise parts (1.C) in the two sample pages to the right, for instance, offer items with simple vowel sounds in contrast. The first has more words to read aloud in context, while the second requires learners to fill in letters for the sounds. The answers to items that require written responses may be in a section added to the book at the end.



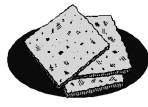

To maximize the effectiveness of each exercise or activity, participants can use a variety of procedures. With 1.C, for example, the instructor or a native-speaking helper can model the items for listeners to identify and/or repeat with a fluent accent. Individually or together, participants can listen to the accompanying audiotape, record their own pronunciation, and compare the two. They can work in small groups to give everyone a chance to pronounce some or all the items clearly—getting correction, suggestions, or additional modeling from native or near-native speakers. They can suggest additional words for each pair or group of contrasts—and work with those in the same or different ways.

Corresponding to the **Pronunciation Practice** book and audiotapes is a separate resource called *Instructions & Ideas for Cooperative & Competitive Pronunciation Activities & Games*. Some of the suggestions are for ways to present and practice the items in the book in more creative, motivating, or challenging ways. Others offer steps for the creation and playing of versatile, multi-level pronunciation board and card games. Still others are tips for proven teaching and learning techniques.

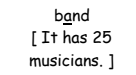
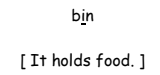
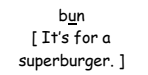
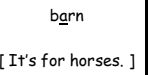
**1.C CONTRAST SIMPLE VOWEL SOUNDS. Finish each sentence 1-7 with a different vocabulary item. Can your listeners give the appropriate response?**

(\*) = a less common spelling. Can you identify the vowel sound?



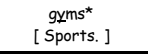
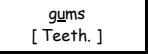
1. Look for a . . .

 cab [ You mean a taxi? ]	 cob [ You mean a corncob? ]	 carb [ You mean a carbohydrate? ]	 curb [ On a sidewalk? ]
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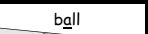
2. What a big . . . !

 band [ It has 25 musicians. ]	 bin [ It holds food. ]	 bun [ It's for a superburger. ]	 barn [ It's for horses. ]
--	--	---	---

3. What are . . . for?

 jams [ Muffins. ]	 gems [ Jewelry. ]	 gyms* [ Sports. ]	 gums [ Teeth. ]
--	---	---	---



4. We want a . . .

 ball
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**For each pair or group of items, write the letter or letters for the vowel sound. Use one of the words in the numbered question. Can your listeners give the right answer from under the picture?**

\* = a less common spelling. Look up the word if necessary.



8. What does a . . . have?

 c__t [ Fur and a tail. ]	 c__rt [ Four wheels. ]
--	---




9. What's a . . . ?

 t__p [ Part of a faucet. ]	 t__p [ A toy. ]	 t__rp [ waterproof cloth. ]
--	---	---



10. Who needs a . . . ?

 p__t [ A child. ]	 p__t [ A chef. ]
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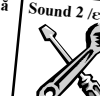

11. What's a . . . ?

 t__n [ Skin browning from sun. ]	 t__n [ A small can. ]	 t__n* [ 2000 pounds. ]
--	---	--



12. Who takes a . . . ?

 p__se [ A nurse. ]	 p__rse [ A shopper. ]
--	--




13. What's a . . . ?

 br__nch [ It's a tree part. ]	 wr__nch [ It's a tool. ]	 br__nch [ It's a midday meal. ]
---	--	---

14. What's a . . . for?

 c__ker [ One-dish meals. ]	 c__lker* [ Filling spaces in a wall. ]
--	---

15. Where can you find . . . ?

 p__ddles [ On a ping-pong table. ]	 p__dals [ On a bicycle. ]	 p__ddles [ On the street. ]
--	---	---



# How is This Book Organized?



**THE THREE PRINCIPLE PARTS:** The *Pronunciation Practice* book begins with a section called *GETTING STARTED: GREET PEOPLE BY NAME*. Then come *PART ONE: VOWEL SOUNDS*; *PART TWO: SYLLABLES, STRESS, FOCUS, & RHYTHM*; and *PART THREE: CONSONANT SOUNDS & FEATURES OF FLUENT SPEECH*. Designed as a supplement in an oral communication course, each part is approximately 25 to 30 pages in length. Depending on the size of the class, the chosen procedures, and the skills and needs of learners, groups might spend from ten to twenty interactive hours on each part. For individuals that want to maximize their own accent improvement, there is plenty of material for self-study and practice—especially in conjunction with accompanying tapes or CDs with clear and correct speaking models.

**THE NINE PRONUNCIATION TOPICS:** Each of the three principle parts contains three segments, numbered consecutively for the whole book. After the *GETTING STARTED* section come *Topics 1-9*. The material of each topic is organized into four major structured exercises or activities *A-D*—for a total of forty activity sections. Explanations of sound patterns, sound-symbol correspondences (phonics), pronunciation principles, and accent-acquisition advice appear in side boxes titled *PRONUNCIATION*.

<span style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Pronunciation Practice</span>		<span style="font-size: 4em; font-weight: bold;">T</span> <span style="font-size: 3em; font-weight: bold;">ABLE OF CONTENTS</span>	
High Beginning to Intermediate Instruction & Activities in Vowel & Consonant Sounds, Syllables, Stress, Rhythm, and Other Features of Clear American Accent			
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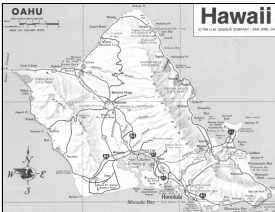

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**A**lso available for use with ***Pronunciation Practice:***

- ◆ ***Before Speaking:*** Activities for Practice & Preparation in Oral-Language Skills.  
166-Page Student Text **ISBN 1-891077-50-3**
- ◆ **Three 90-Minute Audiotapes or Four CDs of the Material in *Pronunciation Practice:*** **ISBN 1-891077-52-X**
- ◆ ***Pronunciation Activities & Games: Instructions & Ideas.***  
Reproducible Resource Guide **ISBN 1-891077-53-8**  
(In Development)

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