

ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION IN USE

**Self-study and
classroom use**

Elementary

Jonathan Marks

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To the student

The *English Pronunciation in Use Elementary* course is designed to help you with your English pronunciation.

What will I need?

You will need a phone, tablet or computer to listen to the recordings. The symbol  shows the track numbers of the recordings. It will be useful if you record your own voice, so that you can listen to your own pronunciation and hear your progress.

When you are studying individual sounds it is sometimes useful to have a mirror, so that you can see the shape of your mouth and compare it with the diagrams in the book.

How is *English Pronunciation in Use Elementary* organised?

There are 50 two-page units in the book. Each unit is about a different pronunciation point. Section A (Units 1 to 27) is about how to say and spell individual sounds, and groups of sounds together. Section B (Units 28 to 32) is about joining sounds to make words. Section C (Units 33 to 43) is about pronunciation in phrases and sentences. Section D (Units 44 to 50) is about pronunciation in conversation. The left-hand page of each unit has explanations and examples, and the right-hand page has exercises (except Units 49 and 50).

After these units is Section E, where you will find:

E1 Chart of phonemic symbols – with example words for every symbol.

E2 Guide for speakers of specific languages – Speakers of different languages have different problems with English pronunciation, and this guide shows which units in the book may be especially helpful for them.

E3 Sound pairs – If you have problems with hearing the difference between pairs of sounds, you can find extra practice here.

E4 From spelling to sound – In English, the same sound can often be spelled in different ways. Here you will find the most common spellings of each sound.

E5 The alphabet – exercises to help you say the letters of the alphabet, and understand them when you hear them.

E6 Pronouncing numbers – exercises to help you pronounce different kinds of numbers, and understand them when you hear them.

E7 Pronouncing geographical names – how to pronounce the names of countries, continents, etc.

E8 Homophones – words that are spelled differently but sound the same.

Why not have a look at Section E now, before you start the book?

At the end of the book there is a Key with answers to all the exercises.

The audio includes all the recordings for the left- and right-hand pages of the units, and Section E.

How should I use the course?

You can simply study the units from 1 to 50, or you can alternate units from different sections. For example, you could do Unit 1, then Unit 28, then Unit 33, then Unit 44, then Unit 2, and so on.

If you want to focus your work more closely, you can look at the *Guide for speakers of specific languages* in Section E2. This tells you which exercises in Section E3 are most useful for speakers of different languages.

In Section A, if you have problems hearing the difference between individual sounds, go to the *Sound pair* indicated (in Section E3).

When you are working with the recordings, you should replay a track as often as you need to. When you are doing an exercise you may also need to pause the recording after each sentence to give yourself time to think or write your answer. When you are asked to repeat single words, there is a space on the recording for you to do this, but when you are repeating whole sentences you will need to pause the recording to give yourself enough time to repeat.

Will *English Pronunciation in Use Elementary* only help me with my speaking? What about listening?

Pronunciation is important for both speaking and listening, and this course will also help you with your listening. Some pronunciation points are especially important for listening, and these are indicated like this:



What type of English pronunciation is used in *English Pronunciation in Use Elementary*?

As a model for you to copy when you speak, we have used only one type of pronunciation, a standard British type. But in the listening exercises you will hear a wider variety of accents, including some non-native speakers.

To the teacher

English Pronunciation in Use Elementary has been written so that it can be used for self-study, but it will work equally well in the classroom. The advantages of working on pronunciation in the classroom include the following points.

- Learners can get guidance and immediate feedback from the teacher.
- Learners can practise the dialogues and other exercises in pairs.
- You can direct learners with particular pronunciation difficulties to do specific units on their own or in small groups, if appropriate.

In order to make the material accessible to learners, terminology has been kept as simple as possible. The remainder of this Introduction describes how the course is organised, and it is followed by a *Map of the contents* using standard terminology.

English Pronunciation in Use Elementary progresses from individual sounds, through sequences of sounds, and stress in words, to intonation patterns in phrases and sentences. Of course, as soon as learners begin to speak English, they need to begin to develop control of all these features in parallel, but the step-by-step, incremental approach adopted here is designed to facilitate a clear progression and a clear focus on one thing at a time. Nevertheless, learners do not necessarily have to work their way through all the units in each section in sequence; they can alternate units from different sections.

Section A Sounds and spelling

Unit 1 deals with some general issues of pronunciation and spelling. Units 2 to 23 introduce the phonemes (sounds) of English, first the vowels and then the consonants. Generally, two sounds are introduced in each unit, though some units have one or three. They are paired on the basis of similarity of spelling, similarity of articulation and potential for confusion. Guidance is given as to the most frequent spellings of each phoneme, and practice is given in some significant contrasts between phonemes.

One phoneme not specifically focused on in Section A is the weak vowel /ə/, the *schwa*; the emphasis is on pronouncing vowel sounds (and consonants, too) in stressed syllables, where accuracy and clarity are most important, and the *schwa* is treated as a feature of unstressed syllables rather than a sound with the same status as the other vowel phonemes.

Units 24 to 27 deal with consonant clusters.

Section B Syllables and words

Section B introduces the concept of syllables, the distinction between strong and weak syllables, and stress patterns in words.

Section C Phrases, sentences and grammar

Section C moves the focus from individual words to phrases and sentences, and highlights links between pronunciation and various aspects of grammar which are learned at elementary level.

Section D Conversation

Finally, Section D deals with aspects of intonation in the context of sentences and longer stretches of language such as dialogues, stories and conversation. It also covers some characteristic intonation patterns of common lexical phrases.

Intonation is very variable, and the intonation patterns attached to phrases and grammatical structures in these units are certainly not the only ones possible. However, they are very commonly – characteristically, even – used in these contexts, and the associations between intonation and contexts should help to make the intonation patterns memorable.

Section E Reference

Section E contains various kinds of further reference and practice material. The *Guide for speakers of specific languages* and *Sound pairs* can be used to prioritise certain pronunciation points and to reject others, depending on learners' particular needs.

What model of pronunciation?

As a model for learners to copy when they speak, I have used a standard southern British accent. This can be regarded as a provisional target, but learners will vary as to how closely they will want or need to achieve it. Some features of pronunciation are important for listening, but less essential for learners to imitate, and these are labelled as such. Nevertheless, attempting to reproduce these features should help learners in their ability to understand speech which contains them, and they may want to make the effort of incorporating them in their own English. In the listening exercises, a wider variety of accents can be heard, including some non-native speakers; it is important that learners at this level begin to get exposure to a variety of accents.

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