



Annie McDonald

tell me a little bit

a little bit

bit

Listening  
in Chunks



# Outline

## 1 Listening and the Classroom

## 2 Activities focusing on sound substance



## 3 Looking for chunks?

# Understanding Spoken English

1 Spaghetti car banana

Spaghetti carbonara

2 Products rip in plastic.

Products wrapped in plastic.

3 I was nice girl

I was a night owl

4 There's a bathroom on the right.

There's a bad moon on the rise.

# Listening in the classroom

## Before listening

- An activity to generate interest in the topic: Students find the names of the subjects a listening text from anagrams eg. IDVRLAO / LTRESYEVS NOTSLELA. This is followed up by students saying what they know about the people, and then reading biographies to check.
- Pre-teaching vocabulary – focus on *meaning* of individual words (citation forms)

## While listening (specific info, detail – key words)

- sequencing items
- true/false/doesn't say!
- open questions



## Post listening

- Use the text as a jumping-off point for discussion on the topic

# Priming



1. Wos the marrer?
  2. I gorra get to de ozzie
  3. I never dun nutt'n
  4. Put yerrandin yer pocket!
- (1966, Lern yerself SCOUSE)

Good morning

**Καλημέρα**

**Kahleemehrah**

‘imitated pronunciation’

(Greek Phrase Book,  
Berlitz)

# What are they saying?



/ˈaɪmə stævə baʊt/



/truː ɪ? ʌðə saɪmən θɪŋk/

/əˈdəʊ nɪvə spɪktə ˈjuː/

/deɪkət siː ˈenəhɪŋ/

/ɪf jə də? nəʊ faɪvʌnə dʊɪ/

# What are they saying?



**1 I must have about**

**2... through it all the time and I think**

**3 I don't even speak to you**

**4 They can see anything**

**5 If you don't know 500 of them, you**



# Class 1: post listening



1 I **must have about**

100%

2 through it all **the** time and I **think**

66%

3 I don't even **speak** to you

33%

4 They can see anything

0%

5 If you don't know 500 of them, you



# Class 2: pre + post-listening (1)



1 I must have about

2... **through** it all **the** time and I **think**

3 I don't even **speak** to you

4 **They** could see **anything**

5 If you don't know 500 of them, you

- **100%**
- **66%**
- **33%**
- **0%**



# Class 2: post listening (2)

1 I must have about

2 **through it all the time and** I think

100%

3 I don't even speak to you

66%

4 They **can see anything**

33%

5 **If you don't know** 500 **of** them, you

0%

See **Richard Cauldwell's** work (Speech in Action, 2013) for more detail on close analysis of radical reductions in spoken English

# More radical reductions



In the following snippets, taken from the facebook conversation and other texts, one word occurs in each group. What is it?

You will hear each snippet 3 times.



- 1 Do you **achly** know ...
- 2 If you **achly** highlight ...
- 3 Have you **achy** met them all?
- 4 but it **sachly** ...
- 5 It **tachy** ninety.



**mice**  
**Viking**  
**fe**  
**Greenland**  
**University**  
**went**  
**hundred**  
**travelled**  
**mouse**  
**known**  
**called**  
**world**  
**skeletons**  
**absolutely**  
**get**  
**twelve**  
**Norway**  
**Apparentlly**  
**ehm**  
**right**  
**Vikings**  
**let**  
**looked**  
**everywhere**  
**mitochondrial**  
**back**  
**according**  
**heyday**  
**UK**  
**thousand**  
**Iceland**  
**colleagues**  
**compared**  
**Sweden**  
**dating**  
**American**  
**realised**  
**sailed**  
**Elena**  
**DNA**  
**story**  
**Scientific**  
**Uppsala**  
**ago**  
**report**  
**Jones**  
**years**

# Acoustic drilling (1)



You are going to listen to 6 phrases. You will hear each one three times.

The phrases have been written as they sound ('imitated pronunciation' ish).

Write what the speaker said.

# Acoustic drilling (1)



1. sail does far
2. lep me juss get this
3. they look tut thee ya
4. which wa zabada thousand
5. all over the wood
6. mice fum new kay an Norway



# Acoustic drilling (1)



1. sail does far  
**sailed as far**
2. lep me juss get this  
**let me just get this**
3. they look tut thee ya  
**they looked at the er ...**
4. which wa zabada thousand  
**which was about a thousand**
5. all over the wood  
**all over the world**
6. mice fum new kay an Norway  
**mice from the UK and Norway**



# Listening in Chunks

You will hear 12 snippets or short bits of spoken text (spoken by different speakers).

There's one word that's the same in each snippet.



What is it?

# Acoustic/Chunk drilling (2)

tell us a **little bit** about, about their intelligence

tell me a **bit** about universities in your country

develop a **little bit** of a

tell me a **little bit** more about

could you tell me a **little bit** about that

to tell us a **little bit** more

stick out a **little bit**

in England at the moment, this is a **bit** of a, a big issue

can you tell us a **little bit** about that?

you can tell me a **little bit** more about it in a minute

tell me a **little bit** about

in a **little bit** of a cart thing

(Audio concordance - Authentic Listening Resource Pack,  
Hancock, M., McDonald, A., (2014), Delta Publishing

# **Activity 3 backchain drill**

**I know a little bit about kittens ...**

**bit about**

**little bit about**

**know a little bit about**

**I know a little bit about kittens ...**



# I know a little bit about kittens rap

I know a little bit  
about kittens  
I got bitten by a kitten  
last year  
A certain little kitten  
in Britain  
I've not forgotten  
that it bit me on the ear



# YouGlish: *a little bit about*

739 pronunciations of 'a little bit about' in British English (2 out of 739):

**Site name**

**type in chunk**

**accents**

**no. of examples**

**speed**

20

The screenshot shows the YouGlish website interface. At the top, the search bar contains the text 'a little bit about' and a red 'Say it!' button. Below the search bar, there are tabs for 'ALL', 'US', 'UK', and 'AUS', with 'UK' selected. To the right of the search bar, there are buttons for 'Listening English', 'English Speaking', and 'English Spoken'. Below these buttons, the text 'How to pronounce 'a little bit about' in British English (2 out of 739):' is displayed. A video player shows a man in a maroon shirt speaking. Callouts point to various features: 'Site name' points to the YouGlish logo; 'type in chunk' points to the search bar; 'accents' points to the 'UK' tab; 'no. of examples' points to the number '20' in the video player; and 'speed' points to the 'normal' speed setting. The video player also shows a progress bar at 0:06 / 25:44 and a 'Toggle UI' button.

739 pronunciations of 'a little bit about' x

Secure | <https://youglish.com/search/a%20little%20bit%20about/uk>

Apps Google University of Chester Web Sudoku - Billion EAP Vocabulary Using English for Academic The AWL Gapmaker Pre-sessional English Home - BBC News News, sport and opinion juncture\_exercise Meetings extended s

Speed: **normal** [slower, faster] Toggle UI

So, I'm gonna talk to you **a little bit about**

[Feedback] [Share] [Save]

⏮ ⏪ ⏩ ⏭

G Suite Get started now G Suite grows with you and your business. Add new employees, extensions and much more.

## Tips to improve English pronunciation:

Here are 4 tips that should help you perfect your pronunciation of 'a little bit about':

- **Break 'a little bit about' down into sounds:** say it out loud and exaggerate the sounds until you can consistently produce them.
- **Record yourself** saying 'a little bit about' in full sentences, then watch yourself and listen. You'll be able to mark your mistakes quite easily.
- **Look up tutorials on Youtube** on how to pronounce 'a little bit about'.
- **Focus on one accent:** mixing multiple accents can get really confusing especially for beginners, so pick one accent (US or UK) and stick to it.

To further improve English pronunciation, we suggest you do the following:

- **work on word/sentence reduction:** in some countries, reducing words and sentences can be seen as informal but in the United States, it's completely normal and part of everyday conversation (eg: what are you going to do this week end → what you gonna do this week end). Click **gonna** and **wanna** for more examples.
- **work on your intonation:** stress, rhythm and intonation patterns are not easy to master in English but they are

**audioscript**

**pron tips**

# Looking for chunks?

- 1 Pronunciation syllabus: linking – a/an; can/can't, unstressed words – a, of, some, and, with, or etc
- 2 Grammar syllabus: he lives alone; he hasn't got any; you aren't old (past tense inflections, modals, negatives etc. are always candidates)
- 3 Topically connected phrases (task, listen, repeat): leave the airport / take off / check in your bags etc.
- 4 Audio scripts with mp3 downloads
- 5 Phonology for Listening, Cauldwell, (2013) (Appendix 3 – word clusters of 3 or more words commonly squeezed together), Nobert Schmitt – lists – Univ Nottingham



# In sum ...

- Raise awareness / show connectivity in chunks: vocabulary and structure (pre and post listening)
- Develop accent repertoires and promote ambiguity tolerance with transcription activities and acoustic drills using texts with same/different speakers
- Use word clouds and build/elicit chunks
- Exploit course-book resources to the full eg. pronunciation activities, audio-scripts and mp3 downloads for micro-listenings (audio editing software)
- Encourage autonomous practice with [tubequizzard.com](http://tubequizzard.com), [youglish.com](http://youglish.com)
- Take every opportunity to remind and recycle so bottom-up processing skills become automatised



**Thank you!**



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