

Pronunciation as a listening skill:

Understanding authentic English

Mark Hancock

A PROBLEM Pronunciation of authentic English is not "what you learn in school"	
B Awareness-raising Variation according to context	C Awareness-raising Variation according to speaker
D Practice Using authentic texts: micro-listening	

Doctor, doctor, I've got two
tooth aches, an ear ache, sore eyes,
bruised arms, a stomach ache,
and I fart all the time!



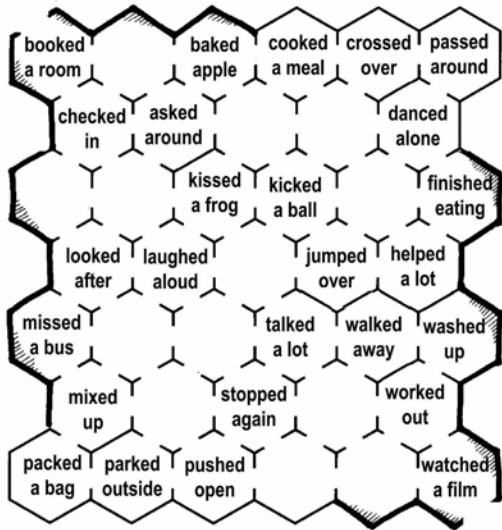
I see. Perhaps you'd like to
wait in the corridor?

Doctor, doctor, I've got tooth ache, an ear ache, sore eyes, bruised arms, a stomach
ache, and I fart all the time!

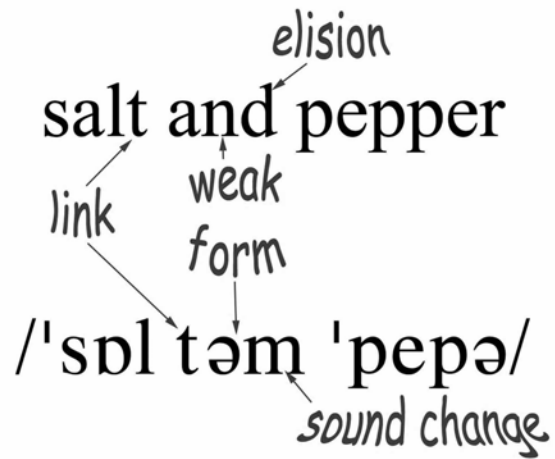
I see. Perhaps you'd like to wait in the corridor?

-ed = *t* on following word





so! tʌm pepə?



IN THE KITCHEN

1 sol tum pepper	2 a loafer slice bread	3 a napple ana norange
4 wom potato	5 frozum peas	6 frui cake
7 greem beans	8 sick seggs	9 a tinna sweek corn



A. CONSONANT MOVE
C. CONSONANT CUT

B. WEAK VOWEL
D. CONSONANT CHANGE

- 1 = salt and pepper (see explanation opposite)
 2 = a loaf of sliced bread (weak form of *of*, consonant cut from end of *sliced*)
 3 = an apple and an orange (linking of *an* to the following word)
 4 = one potato (consonant changed to /m/ at the end of *one*)
 5 = frozen peas (consonant changed to /m/ at the end of *frozen*)
 6 = fruit cake (consonant changed to /k/ at the end of *fruit*)
 7 = green beans (consonant changed to /m/ at the end of *green*)
 8 = six eggs (linking of final consonant of *six* to following word)
 9 = a tin of sweet corn (weak form of *of*, consonant change at end of *sweet*)

He **saw** her, he **liked** her **face**
He **asked** her her **name**, she **said** it was **Grace**
She **liked** him, his **name** was **Paul**
She **gave** him her **number**, he **gave** her a **call**
He **bought** her a **gift**, he **went** to her **flat**
She **gave** him a **drink**, she **showed** him her **cat**
He **liked** her, but **hated** her **cat**
He **never** returned, and **that** was **that**.

Accent Rhymes

- 1 I went for a walk  **in the streets of New York.**
at eleven o'clock.
- 2 The fish you caught  **is now in the pot.**
was really short.
- 3 Life was calm  **when I lived on the farm.**
where my mother was from.
- 4 When she started to talk  **I dropped my fork.**
it was quite a shock.

FIVE VULNERABLE VOWELS

1 /æ/	2 /ɑː/	3 /ɔː/	4 /ɒ/	5 /əʊ/
had bad cat	fast laugh dance	walk bought	hot shop not	cold slowly go

FIVE VULNERABLE CONSONANTS

1 /r/	2 /h/	3 /t/	4 /θ/	5 /ð/
rare reader	hear hair	waiting water	think faith	though mother

Here are some examples of accents with variations on these sounds.

Vulnerable vowels

1 *had, bad* and *cat* may sound like *head, bed* and *ket* in New Zealand English.

2 This vowel sound is long in RP, but short in many other accents, such as the north of England.

3 This vowel sound is significantly different in RP and American English. For example, *walk* sounds a little like *wok* in American.

4 This vowel is different in RP and American. For example, *hot* said by an American sounds like *heart* said by an RP speaker.

5 This vowel sound is not a diphthong in North East English and Scottish. For example, *cold* sounds like *called*.

Vulnerable consonants

1 In RP, /r/ is only pronounced before a vowel. In other accents, such as Scottish and American, it is pronounced in all positions.

2 /h/ is dropped in informal speech in many native and non-native accents.

3 /t/ between vowels sounds like a /d/ in American. For example, *waiting* sounds like *wading*.

4 and 5 These sounds are absent from the speech of many English speakers, both native and non-native. They are replaced by alternative sounds. For example, *think* may sound like *tink* in Irish, *fink* in cockney and *sink* in French accented English.

**I head a good friend called Pet
Whose *ket* set on the met
Pet was said
When her clunsky old dead
Set on the *ket* on the met**

**I once had a friend called Jaw
Who slept in a hall in the snore
His caught was *all'd*
And his feet were saw called
That he walk with a *frawzen* tour**

I had a good friend called Pat
Whose cat sat on the mat
Pat was sad
When her clumsy old dad
Sat on the cat on the mat
(New Zealand accent)

I once had a friend called Joe
Who slept in a hole in the snow
His coat was old
And his feet were so cold
That he woke with a frozen toe
(North East England accent)

**I met a fat lady called Reader
Who drank her milk by the leader
She said, 'I'll get *fadder*
But what does it madder -
My belt is already a *meader*?'**

**I once add a friend called Fred
Ooo wore is at in bed
When *ee* took off is at
They said, 'Look at that -
Ee as-n't an air on is ed!'**

I met a fat lady called Rita
Who drank her milk by the litre
She said, 'I'll get fatter
But what does it matter -
My belt is already a metre'
(American accent)

I once had a friend called
Fred
Who wore his hat in bed
When he took off his hat
They said, 'Look at that -
He hasn't a hair on his head!'
(Cockney accent)

Mike: //How many people//ehm//does the average person have as friends//
//on Facebook?//

Nic: //Six hundred//

Mel: //Ooh no// I think it's less than that//

Nic: //Really?//

Mel: //I'd say two fifty//

Mike: //The average person//how many friends do you think they have on Facebook?//
//is that your final answer?//
//Two fifty// and six hundred//

Nic: //Six hundred//

Mel: //Yeah//

Mike: //It's actually ninety//

Nic: //Uh//

Mel: //Really?//

Mike: //Yeah//ninety//

Nic: //We're above average//

Mel: //That we are Nicola//That we are!//

Mike: //But//don't you think even ☒I think even that ☒I think it was ninety or//
//it could have been wrong //hundred and twenty//could be wrong//
//I think it was ninety//ehm //don't quote me on that// I'll just ☒ I just ☒//

Nic: //You are full of//

Mike: //I was adam ☒//|

Nic: //solid gold information//

Mike: //adam it ☒adamant that it was ninety//
//and now I'm thinking//was it one twenty?//

Mel: //Was it really?//

Mike: //but I ☒ but I remember this morning them saying//
//I do remember them saying //you know//even ninety// right//
//Do you really know//ninety people?//

N: It's a very good point,
I've j ☒, actually just put on Facebook.
'Do you actually know all your Facebook friends?'

M: Yeah.

N: 'Have you actually met them all?'

Mel: // I na ☒ I ☒I must have about five hundred//six//maybe even more people //
// and I go through it all the time // and think //I don't speak to you// delete //
//I don't even speak to you// delete // you don't know her // like //
//you knew them once in a lifetime // but you don't know them any more //
//and you don't speak to them // so what's the point in keeping them? //
//it's ☒it's stupid //

Mike: //And if you think // right // they can just look at anything // that you post on
there// they can see // all ☒ everything that you put up on there//all your nights
out // all your writing on people's walls // about your life //they can see
anything// but you don't know // as you say // if you don't know five hundred of
them you ☒/what's to say one of them // doesn't use that the wrong way?//

References

- * **Hancock, M (2012)** *English Pronunciation in Use Intermediate (2nd Ed.)*, Cambridge, CUP
- * **Hancock, M (1995)** *Pronunciation Games*, Cambridge, CUP
- * **Jenkins, J (2000)** *The Phonology of English as an International Language*, Oxford, OUP
- * **Field, J (2008)** *Listening in the Language Classroom*, Cambridge, CUP
- * **Audacity**, <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Mark Hancock has been an English teacher since 1984, in Turkey, Brazil, the UK and Spain. He has an MSc in Teaching English from Aston University, UK. He has written learning materials and coursebooks for all age groups.