

English Pronunciation Speech Assessment – Example

Speech Goals

1. *Lengthen your stressed vowels and change the pitch (Course Lessons 2.2, 3.1)*
 - a. Why? This helps you find the rhythm of English, which improves overall fluency, and helps you sound more like a native English speaker.
 - b. How? **Hold out the vowel in the stressed syllable longer** AND add a big “wave” of intonation while saying the stressed vowel sound.
2. *Widen your range of intonation (Course Lessons 7.1, 5:25-7:00)*
 - i. Why? Because it will make your speech more natural, engaging and interesting.
 - ii. How? **Exaggerate your intonation changes** to hit very high or very low notes on the stressed syllables of the most important words.
3. *Reduce unimportant words and syllables to schwa (Course Lessons 4.2 & 4.3)*
 - a. Why? This is the other key aspect of finding the rhythm of English.
 - b. How? Instead of saying the vowel sound as you would hear it when saying the word on it's own (e.g. the vowel sound in the word “to” sounds like the vowel in “blue moon”), **reduce the vowel to the schwa sound, /uh/** (e.g. “to” sounds like /tuh/).
4. *Link words within phrases whenever possible (Course Lessons 6.1 & 6.2)*
 - a. Why? Improves fluency
 - b. How? **Try not to pause within a phrase. And connect vowel sounds to consonant sounds whenever possible.** Most syllables in English should sound like they start with a consonant.
5. *Practice **vowel sounds** (specific to you, not in the course)*

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- a. your /ih/ sound, in the words “silver pin”, should be more relaxed. Let your jaw open a bit more; right now, your “silver pin /ih/” vowel sounds similar to your “green tea /ee/” vowel. This can cause problems with understanding (eg. the word “fill” sounded like the word “feel”).
- b. your /oh/ sound, like in the words “rose coat”, should move more, almost like you are saying /oh-wuh/ with a small /w/ sound at the end.
- c. your /ah/ sound, like in the words “olive sock”, needs a wide open mouth, like when you go to the dentist. Your brain is tricking you to say an /oh/ sound, but the letter O in words like “probably, following, and dominates” should sound like /ah/.
- d. Your /uh/ sound like in the words “someone” and “discussion” sometimes sounds like the “blue moon /uu/” sound, but it’s not very noticeable. I think you have been working on this!

6. Practice **consonant sounds** (specific to you, not in the course)

- a. The letter S at the end of a word after a voiced consonant should sound like /z/. Making this little change would be helpful for you because it will lengthen the vowel before the /z/ sound too.
- b. The American T is super challenging because it has many different sounds. We can talk about this consonant towards the end since it is one of the most challenging ones to fix.
- c. Sometimes I couldn’t hear the /NG/ sound. You replace it with /IN/, which is fine. It just sounds less formal.

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Speech Assessment

What have you observed about the ways people from different cultures use silence? Have you noticed that some people interrupt conversations more than other people? People don't always realize it, but they're probably following unspoken cultural communication rules and norms. Many Americans interpret silence in conversations to mean disapproval, disagreement, or unsuccessful communication. They often try to fill silence by saying something even if they have nothing to say! On the other hand, Americans don't appreciate a person who dominates a conversation. Knowing when to take turns in a conversation in another language can sometimes cause difficulty. Should you wait until someone has finished a sentence before contributing to a discussion, or can you break into the middle of someone's sentence? Interrupting someone who is speaking is considered rude in the United States. Even children are taught explicitly not to interrupt.

Pronunciation Errors

Stress	12	Intonation	2
Reductions (schwa)	21	Vowel sounds	13
Pausing and linking	9	Consonant sounds	12
Total Errors = 69			