

## Practice with Weak Forms

### Task 1: S Endings

The sound of the letter <S> at the end of words can have three pronunciations. Classify the words below in the appropriate place in the chart. Then write some rules to help you know when the <S> takes the different sounds.

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/	Word List
<b>Books</b> <b>Mark's</b> <b>Likes</b> <b>Girls</b> <b>Cars</b>	<b>Guns</b> <b>Boys</b> <b>Pages</b> <b>Watches</b>	<b>Roses</b> <b>Prizes</b> <b>He's</b>	<b>Books</b> <b>Mark's</b> <b>Roses</b> <b>Guns</b> <b>Pages</b> <b>Watches</b> <b>Likes</b> <b>Boys</b> <b>Girls</b> <b>Prizes</b> <b>Cars</b> <b>He's</b>

- **Rule 1:** <S> is pronounced /s/ when...
- **Rule 2:** <S> is pronounced /z/ when...
- **Rule 3:** <S> is pronounced /ɪz/ when...

### Task 2: S Endings in Verbs, Plural Nouns, Contractions, and Possessives

Read the sentences and identify the pronunciation of all the S endings by transcribing the sound of the S in the parentheses.

- **Charles:** Hi, James ( /s/ ). What's ( /s/ ) new?
- **James:** Nothing, Charles ( /s/ ). All the guys ( /z/ ) have dates ( /s/ ) for the prom except me!
- **Charles:** That's ( /s/ ) all right. You can take Bess's ( /ɪz/ ) sister Nancy.
- **James:** What's she like?
- **Charles:** She measures ( /z/ ) about 5 feet 2 inches ( /s/ ), has blue eyes ( /z/ ), and weighs ( /s/ ) 102 pounds ( /s/ ). She looks ( /s/ ) like a model.
- **James:** What are her hobbies ( /s/ )? She probably hates ( /s/ ) sports ( /s/ )!
- **Charles:** She golfs ( /s/ ), plays ( /ɪz/ ) tennis, and swims ( /s/ ). She also dances ( /s/ ) very well.
- **James:** There's ( /s/ ) got to be SOMETHING wrong!
- **Charles:** No, she's ( /s/ ) great.

### Task 3: Syllabic Consonants

In most cases, a syllable contains a vowel at its center. However, in some cases, a consonant can form a syllable. We call this a syllabic consonant. Read these examples slowly and tell your partners what is happening in your mouth.

- **Syllabic /l/**: Read these words carefully and notice how /l/ and the preceding consonant form a syllable.
  - **Apple, normal, bubble, controversial, angel, middle, final, humble, devil, tackle, people, cattle, Rachel, criminal, lethal, puzzle, juggle, nasal, special, official**

Now place those same words in the chart below.

Plosive + /l/	Affricate + /l/	Nasal + /l/	Fricative + /l/
Bubble Middle Apple Humble Tackle People Cattle Juggle	Rachel Angel	Normal Final Criminal	Puzzle Controversial Devil Lethal Nasal Special Official

- **Syllabic /n/**: Read these words carefully and notice how /n/ interacts with the previous /d/ or /t/ consonant sound to form its own syllable.
  - **Button, sadden, wooden, student, didn't, sudden, important, tighten, curtain, frighten, gluten, kitten**
- Can you think of any other words that have a syllabic /n/ after a /d/ or /t/ consonant?
  - Shorten, straighten, listen

#### Task 4: Desyllabification

In informal situations where we are speaking naturally, it is common for us to reduce the number of syllables in a word. You are already familiar with words like “comfortable” and “vegetable”. We do not pronounce all of the syllables in those words. Now look at these other examples and pronounce them yourself.

Word	Full Form IPA	Reduced Form IPA
Bubbling	/ˈbʌbəlɪŋ/	/ˈbʌblɪŋ/
Poisonous	/ˈpɔɪzənəs/	/ˈpɔɪznəs/
National	/ˈnæʃənəl/	/ˈnæʃnəl/
Reasonable	/ˈrɪzənəbəl/	/ˈrɪznəbəl/
Emotional	/əˈmoʊʃənəl/	/əˈmoʊʃnəl/
Fill in the missing spaces with the IPA Transcription.		
Professional	/prəˈfeʃənəl/	/prəˈfeʃnəl/
Traditional	/trəˈdɪʃənəl/	/trəˈdɪʃnəl/
Rational	/ˈræʃənəl/	/ˈræʃnəl/
Personal	/ˈpɜrsənəl/	/ˈpɜrsnəl/

#### Task 5: Other Reductions

There are plenty of other reductions that are done during fluid natural speech. Complete the following exercises to review some of them.

- **Can:** The auxiliary verb “can” has two pronunciations. The full form is /kæn/ and the reduced form is /kən/. Read the example sentences below in a natural way. Then complete the rules about the pronunciation of “can”.
  - She can dance and sing really well and I can play the guitar.
  - Mark, can I see you in my office please?
  - She can swim and I can too.
  - He can't play the piano but I can.
  - I'm not sure if we can afford it.
  - Can you speak Spanish?
  - I'm sorry, did you say you can or you can't come to my party on Friday?
- When “can” is followed by a verb the pronunciation is: /kən/
- When we say “can” at the end of a sentence the pronunciation is: /kæn /
- The pronunciation of “can” in a question can be: /kən/ / or /kæn /
- When I want to clarify so there are no misunderstandings I pronounce “can” like:/kæn/
- The pronunciation of “can't” is always: /kænt/

- **H Dropping:** There are plenty of Spanish words that start with a silent “h”. In English, however, the “h” is only silent in some words like “honest” and “honor” BUT in fluent speech the “h” in “he”, “him”, “his” and “her” can be dropped and the rest of the word becomes the final syllable of the previous word. Read the sentences and transcribe the words in bold as a single word.
  - **Does he** like it? /dʌzi/
  - **Is he** at work? /ɪzi /
  - Have you **seen him**? /sinəm/
  - I **took her** to the doctor. /tʊkə /
  - He lives **with his** parents. /wɪðɪz /
  - We **gave him** a present. /geɪvəm /
    - Can you make more sentences that feature “h” dropping?
- **Informal Reductions:** In informal speech we often reduce “going to” to /gʌnə/ and “want to” to /wʌnə/. Read the sentences below in formal and informal ways.
  - What do you **want to** do tomorrow?
  - We’re playing basketball tonight. **Want to** come with us?
  - Mom says I have to go to bed now but I don’t **want to**.
- “Want to” can always be replaced with /wʌnə/ but “going to” and /gʌnə/ are not always interchangeable. Read the lines below and mark in **bold** examples that can be pronounced as /gʌnə/.
  - A: Where are you going for vacation?
  - B: I’m going to Spain.
  - A: What are you **going** to do in Spain?
  - B: We’re **going** to go to a soccer game.
  - A: Who are you going with?
  - B: I’m **going** to travel with my mom and dad. Oh and my sister is going too.
  - A: You should practice your Spanish!
  - B: Yeah, I’m **going to**.
- We can also reduce the past form of the modals “could have”, “should have”, and “would have” to /kʊdə/, /ʃʊdə/, and /wʊdə/ in informal contexts. Read these sentences in a formal and informal way.
  - You should have let me know you were traveling and I would have driven you to the airport!
  - Be more careful. You could have hurt somebody!
  - I really should have studied more in high school. I would have gotten better grades. Then I could have found a better job.

### Task 6: Affricate Blends

In relaxed, fluent speech the /d/ and /t/ sounds at the end of one word combine with the /j/ sound in the next word to make a /dʒ/ or a /tʃ/. Read the two examples then transcribe the others.

- **Did you:** /ˈdɪdʒjə/
- **Don’t you:** /ˈdaʊntʃjə/
- **Would you:** /ˈwʊdʒjə /
- **Had you:** /ˈhæddʒjə /
- **I loved you:** /ˈlʌvdʒjə /
- **She hated you:** /ˈheɪtɪdtʃjə/

- We **helped** you: /'hɛlptdʒə /
- They **placed** you in a higher level: /'pleɪstdʒə /

### IPA Transcription Guide

Voiced / Voiceless Pairs		Nasals	Monophthongs	Reduced Vowels
/ b /	/ p /	/ m /	/i/ Green Tea	/ ə / Beautiful Photograph
/ d /	/ t /	/ n /	/ɪ/ Silver Pin	/ ə / Later Alligator
/ g /	/ k /	/ ŋ /	/ɛ/ Red Dress	Diphthongs
/ v /	/ f /	<b>Approx.</b>	/æ/ Black Cat	/aʊ/ - Brown Cow
/ z /	/ s /	/ l /	/ɑ/ Coffee Pot	/oʊ/ - Rose Coat
/ ð /	/ θ /	/ ɹ /	/ɔ/ Auburn Dog	/eɪ/ - Gray day
/ ʒ /	/ ʃ /	/ j /	/u/ Blue Moon	/aɪ/ - White tie
/ dʒ /	/ tʃ /	/ w /	/ʊ/ Wooden Hook	/ɔɪ/ - Turquoise toy
		/ h /	/ ʌ / Mustard Cup	<b>Primary Stress [ ' ]</b>
			/ ɜ / Purple Shirt	<b>Secondary Stress [ , ]</b>