

Teacher's Guide to Pronunciation in English

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"At UCSC-Extension, we found these programs* so good that we now offer them in our language lab, and have made language lab a required course for all full-time students in our IEP."

Janice Coury
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**Pronunciation in English, Idioms in English and Writing in English*

FOCUS

In the past, much time has been spent in pronunciation courses on individual sounds. The disadvantage of this approach is that it is very difficult and time consuming for adult learners to make changes in this area. There is an individual sound section in this program in chapter six, but this is clearly secondary to the focus of the program.

The emphasis is on the big picture items: **stress, intonation, and rhythm**. Research indicates that improvement in these areas makes the biggest difference in intelligible speech.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program was designed for ESL/EFL students at the low intermediate level through advanced. The estimated time frame for students to complete this coursework is 50 hours (the actual time will vary by student).

Please note the following:

1. The videos that present the concepts have text for all the audio so, students can follow along, but students are not asked to reproduce this language as it is part of the presentation for the lesson.
2. The audio tracks feature three native speakers with an American, British, and Australian accent.
3. Students receive audio and visual feedback on answers throughout the practices. In chapter one, the cuckoo plays in response to an incorrect answer. The woodblock sound plays in response to a correct answer, and students will also see the number for the syllable count show up in the

box. In chapter two, students will see the stressed syllable appear underlined in a different color in the box, along with the cuckoo and woodblock sounds for incorrect and correct answers respectively. In chapter 3, the correct answers show the words turning color and being underlined. In chapter 4 and 5, additional visual feedback includes: down/up arrows for intonation, dashes for linking, and reduced phrases like “gonna” for “going to.”

CUSTOMERS

This program is used at companies like IBM, Cisco, and Deloitte and at hundreds of schools including the University of California, the University of South Carolina, and the Wyoming Community College District. It is also used to train international teaching assistants at Carnegie Mellon University.

APPLICATION ACTIVITIES

This program is unique in that the content in the application section is generated by students. These activities guide students in applying the pronunciation skills presented in the program to language they use every day. This will help bridge the gap between the classroom and the world outside, which is always a challenge.

CRITICAL PIECES OF EQUIPMENT

It is essential for each computer to be multi-media enabled with a microphone. Students must be able to use the record and playback feature in each practice and application, which allows them to listen to their own work, evaluate it, and make adjustments and record again. This will guide them in bridging the gap between the classroom and the world outside where the teacher and the software are not available to give them immediate feedback.

The program can be used in any of the following settings:

1. **A lab setting** as an individualized self-paced learning tool
2. **A distance learning course** where the sound files for the applications are saved and e-mailed to the teacher who gives feedback to students on their progress ([See the online demo for Recording](#))
3. An **electronic textbook** for a **pronunciation course**
This allows students to practice outside of the class with the program.

The chapters are color coded for ease of navigation. Note the bar of color at the top of each screen, which is matched to the color of the chapters on the Table of Contents.

ORGANIZATION

Chapter One, Syllables

The first chapter focuses on listening skills. It begins with syllables as students sometimes make errors with pronunciation because they add or subtract a syllable in a word. This chapter can be covered very quickly if it is clear that the audience has good skills in this area. A useful preliminary technique for this chapter is to have students "show you" the number of syllables they hear. It is important that this be a silent exercise with no vocalization. The teacher models a word, and the students indicate the number of syllables by holding up the appropriate number of fingers. This technique can be used again in Chapter two to indicate the syllable that receives the most stress. This gives the teacher a very quick way to assess the entire group.

At the end of each chapter, there is a scored chapter review. Students receive audio and visual feedback on answers throughout the practices in each chapter, but the chapter reviews are structured more like tests.

Chapter Two, Stress in Words – A

Chapter two is the longest chapter as it introduces stress. Students coming from languages that do not have stress may need to spend more time here.

The use of the rubber band is introduced in chapter two. It is a very useful visual and kinesthetic tool to reinforce the concept of stress for students. Another option for showing syllables and stress in a word to a group is to have the teacher use a "knocking" gesture for each syllable and an "open palm" for the syllable that gets the most stress. So, for example, the word "expensive" would be shown by one knock, one open palm, and then one more knock for the third syllable in the word.

Chapter Two, Stress in Words – B

Chapter two addresses fossilized stress problems where students have learned the incorrect stress pattern for certain words. These old habits are hard to break and it takes lots of practice to change them. The "guide words" have worked well to reinforce the correct patterns. Once the problem words have been identified, they can be paired with "guide words" and used for practice with partners at the beginning or end of each session. (The guide word cards are designed to be printed out and used as an additional tool in correcting fossilized stress. (see *Ch. 2, application 9 "Learning Kit"*)

The schwa sound is introduced in chapter two. For many students, this is the first time they have heard of this sound. It is an important sound because it allows them to highlight the stressed syllable and minimize the unstressed syllable.

Chapter Three, Stress in Sentences

Stress Skill 1, stress in sentences, needs some introduction, depending on the audience. If the students have had less formal education in English, you may need to start by eliciting examples of nouns, main verbs, adverbs, and so on. It can be useful to have the class divided into groups that brainstorm words in these categories and then post them, so that participants start to internalize the terms.

Chapter Four, Intonation

The teacher may choose to bring in a kazoo or hum the intonation pattern to facilitate work on intonation. The “thumbs up” and “thumbs down” signal is a useful technique with work on intonation in questions. The teacher models the two types of questions, information and yes/no, and students note whether the intonation goes up or down at the end using the “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” signal.

Intonation is a complicated subject, which could easily rate its own book. The teacher needs to assess whether students are ready to deal with the nuances or just identify and reproduce the basics.

Chapter Five, Rhythm

Rhythm reinforces stress and intonation; rhythm is where students put it all together. This chapter introduces reduction and linking. Some students balk at reducing words like "going to" to "gonna," and the teacher needs to be sensitive to this and emphasize that being able to hear it is the first priority even if they do not want to reproduce it.

Chapter Six, IPA and Problem Sounds

There is a sample of the IPA similar to *Longman's Dictionary of American English* at the beginning of this chapter. The examples for each sound are modeled and students can review these audio files by clicking on the symbol to hear the examples.

The problem sounds section can be used early on if there is a problem and a need to work with these. The teacher may want to address other individual sound problems, but again keeping in mind that these are secondary, in terms of intelligibility, to stress, intonation and rhythm. Students who produce individual sounds perfectly with incorrect stress still have the audience asking , *Excuse me, what did you say?*

Chapter Seven, Review

This final chapter has rotating versions with question items rotating within each version. Based on their scores in the final review, students may need to review the program.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Kenworthy, Joanne *Teaching English Pronunciation*, (Longman Handbook for Language Teachers 1987)

Detailed Content for *Pronunciation in English*

Syllables

What are Syllables?

Counting Syllables

Counting Syllables with Past tense

“t” “d” ending

Hissing sounds (sibilants)

Stress in Words

What is stress?

Identifying the stressed syllable in a word

Rules for stress in words

Stress in compound nouns

Stress in phrasal verbs

Stress with acronyms

Correcting fossilized stress- (bad habits)

Reduced syllables

Identifying the schwa

Stress in Sentences

Rules for sentence level stress

Identifying sentence level stress

Identifying focus words in sentences

Intonation

What is intonation?

Identifying intonation drops

Identifying intonation rises

Intonation with numbers

Intonation with yes/no questions

Intonation with information questions

Intonation with choices

Intonation and Expectation

Changing the focus with intonation

Identifying new vs. old information with intonation

Rhythm

What is rhythm?

Linking with vowels

Linking with consonants

Reducing “h”

Reduced words

Individual sounds

The IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet)

Problem sounds: x, l, th, r, p, f, & n

(Please note that the latest version, ***Pronunciation English- Expanded Version*** has over 300 interactive lessons and practices.)

FURTHER RESOURCES

Kenworthy, Joanne *Teaching English Pronunciation*, (Longman Handbook for Language Teachers 1987)

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Teacher's Guide to <i>Idioms in English</i></h2>

[Click here for 3 minute Flash Slideshow](#)

BACKGROUND

Idioms like “shoot from the hip” and “step up to the plate” are used frequently in conversations, email, presentations, newspapers, magazines, and films in English. When students don't understand the idioms, they can feel left out of the conversation or presentation since the idiom is often the “point” of the sentence.

FOCUS

Our approach to teaching idioms also helps improve listening comprehension and pronunciation in English. We present the idioms in the context of a story or dialog. This helps students to hear the idioms in a more natural setting. Audio tracks for each page include four different native speaker models. Then there is a page devoted to each idiom. This page presents the definition and examples of how the idiom can be used in a sentence. We also show how the concepts we teach in the [***Pronunciation in English***](#) program apply to idioms. The pronunciation notes demonstrate how stress (with content words), intonation (with focus words) and rhythm (with reduction and linking) apply to each idiom. [***Idioms in English***](#) reinforces all of the concepts presented in the pronunciation program in a new context.

Every idioms page is followed by a scored dictation practice and a focus word exercise, both of which help build listening comprehension. At the end of every chapter is another scored dictation for the story/dialogue. Once students learn all the idioms, they can check their knowledge with the final exam at the end of the program. It is a lot of fun to spot idioms in everyday conversations, in newspapers, and in movies. Learning about idioms in English helps students become more fluent in the language as it used every day by native speakers.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The content in this program has been sheltered* to allow the intermediate level student to use it. It is important to note that this material is also very appropriate for advanced level students because the sheltered language allows them to focus on the task at hand, pronunciation of a new idiom. Many times students are distracted by vocabulary in the example that they don't understand when they need to focus on the new information being presented. This focus on the idiom is important because correct stress, intonation, and rhythm is so important to using idioms successfully.

*Sheltered material is altered in terms of verb tense, vocabulary level and sentence structure, so that it is accessible to intermediate level students.

FORMATS

The material is available online.

CUSTOMERS

This program is used at schools like Reedley College, the University of California and the University of South Carolina and companies like IBM and Deloitte to improve communication skills in English.

CLASSROOM EXPANSION OPTIONS

Grammar Focus

The instructor can add exercises where students use the idioms in context with a different verb tense.

Application in e-mail exchanges

The instructor can assign e-mail exchanges for homework where students use the idioms in context in their communication with each other.

New Idioms

The instructor can elicit other idioms students hear outside of class. These can be compiled and marked for stress and intonation.

Idiom of the Month

The instructor can set up a contest where students keep track of idioms from the course that they hear outside of class in terms of frequency. There could be an idiom of the month based on frequency.

Role Plays

The instructor can assign role plays to pairs of students that require using 4-5 idioms from each story. This communicative activity would be most appropriate at the end of the unit. Students will have had lots of practice with the pronunciation of the idioms at that point. The audience could also be given an assignment. They could be responsible for identifying the "jump up" word that the speaker

Building Communication skills in English

uses in each idiom. For example, role plays using idioms from “Negotiations” could cover the following situations:

1. Your teenager wants to stay out later on the weekend.

Characters: Parent and teenager

2. You are an employee who hasn't had a raise for over a year. You think it's time for the boss to give you a raise.

Characters: Boss and employee

3. You are looking for a reasonably priced used car for your commute.

Characters: Customer and used car salesperson

Idioms from “Negotiations”

1. *take the bull by the horns*
2. *be on the same page*
3. *think out of the box*
4. *shoot from the hip*
5. *see eye to eye*
6. *bend over backwards*
7. *lay it on the line*
8. *give and take*
9. *back out*
10. *meet someone halfway*
11. *cut the deal*
12. *water under the bridge*
13. *win-win situation*

**Teacher's Guide to
Writing in English**

From words to sentences to paragraphs

[Click here for 3 minute Flash Slideshow](#)

Writing in English builds awareness of common errors with over 200 screens of interactive presentations and practices. Clear explanations of grammar rules engage learners with interactive activities. Like a series of puzzle boxes, which open up to reveal smaller boxes nesting inside the larger ones, **Writing in English** begins with the grammar rules and asks the learner to click on specific words, which then change color and open dialogue boxes to reveal more information or examples of usage. Traditionally, learners are passive at the presentation stage of the lesson, listening to a lecture or reading text. Often, too much information is presented at this stage, and there's too much for the learner to absorb. The interactivity at this first stage of the lesson ensures, first, that the

learner is active, and second, that the learner is presented with information that slowly unfolds to reveal more details. Interactive practice activities follow each presentation and provide immediate feedback on answers with automatic scoring. Paragraph level reviews provide opportunities to identify errors and edit. A unique tool inside the program, *The Common Errors List*, allows students to capture their own mistakes with corrections as they proceed through the program.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Writing in English identifies common errors for nonnative writers at the intermediate through advanced level.

FORMATS

The material is available online.

CUSTOMERS

This program is used at schools like the University of California, the University of South Carolina, and companies like Altera and HSBC.

ORGANIZATION

Pre-assessment/ post assessment

Writing in English begins with a pre-assessment, which has five rotating versions. Students complete 50 items and receive a score. This score can be compared to their post-assessment score at the end to measure improvement.

Chapter One, Verbs and

Chapter Two, Parts of a Sentence

The first four chapters build sequentially. Chapter one and two quickly review parts of speech as sometimes even advanced students get confused about these. For example, some students identify the adjective “accomplished” as a verb in sentence five from practice 1.2, “He was already an *accomplished* scientist when he moved to the new job.”

Chapter Three, Using Verbs in Sentences and

Chapter Four, Problems with Gerunds and Infinitives

Chapter three is important for establishing clarity with verb tenses. Again, even advanced level writers are often confused about verb tense. Chapter four extends this work to focus on gerunds and infinitives.

The teacher can use the verb tense charts in chapter three to elicit student examples using the different tenses orally to reinforce the concepts and check comprehension. The charts for verbs that require gerunds vs. infinitives in chapter four are also great for oral work. As a review, the teacher could read verbs from both lists and have students show a “thumbs up” for verbs that require gerunds, for example, and a “thumbs down” for verbs that require infinitives. This

is a quick way to check to see if students have internalized the information in the charts.

Chapter Five, Writing Accurate Sentences

Chapter five deals with common problems for non-native writers: prepositions, word forms, phrasal verbs, prepositions with adjectives/verbs, and articles. There are interactive charts throughout this section. For example, students can click on a phrasal verb and see the definition along with sentences using that phrasal verb with more information about which phrasal verbs can be divided.

Again, the teacher can use the charts in this chapter for review with oral work. The chart for word forms, step 16 b, shows common suffixes with examples. The teacher could elicit student examples for these suffixes to reinforce the concept and check vocabulary.

The chart on phrasal verbs, step 17, could be reviewed by having the teacher read the phrasal verb and the students indicate which ones can be separated by a word with a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” signal. The charts on adjectives and prepositions and verbs and prepositions, steps 18a & 18b, could be reviewed by having the teacher read the preposition and have students supply the verbs or adjectives. This could also be done in writing. The teacher could post the prepositions around the room and have students rotate in groups to brainstorm the adjectives/verbs that go with them.

Chapter Six, Linking Sentences

This chapter covers connecting words in sentences, transitional or linking expressions to show connections between sentences, subordinating conjunctions to join clauses, and adjective clauses. Extended work in this chapter could include having students highlight connecting words, transitional expressions, subordinating conjunctions, and adjective clauses in newspaper articles or web pages.

Chapter Seven, Clarity

Chapter seven covers parallel structure, clear pronoun reference, and concise writing. Extended work in this chapter could focus on online resumes and job descriptions, which use parallel structure. Students can find both good and bad examples online and compare them.

Appendix

The Appendix covers the following: *you* vs. *I* messages, punctuation, guidelines and examples for effective voicemail/email, common verbs at work, and irregular verbs. Extended work here could include having students use both verbs from the “common verbs at work” chart and the irregular verb chart in sentences, orally. This is a great way to check for comprehension.

DETAILED CONTENT DESCRIPTION

1. Identify the verb
2. Identify modal auxiliaries
3. Identify active and passive voice
4. Identify the subject, verb and object/complement
5. Make the subject and verb agree
6. Use the correct verb tense
7. Use modal auxiliaries correctly
8. Use “do” correctly to form negative sentences and questions
9. Use active and passive voice appropriately
10. Use gerunds or infinitives after verbs that require them
11. Use gerunds after prepositions
12. Use the verb+ing correctly
13. Use prepositions correctly
14. Use the correct word form
15. Use the correct phrasal verb
16. Use the correct preposition with the adjective/verb
17. Use the correct article
18. Use connecting words for contrast and similarity
19. Use transitional expressions to show connections
20. Use the appropriate words to connect clauses
21. Use adjective clauses correctly
22. Use parallel structure
23. Use clear pronoun reference
24. Write concisely
25. Use punctuation correctly