VOICEOVER MASTERCLASS

# SPEAK CLEARER ENGLISH

**The transcript from the best selling course from Voiceover Masterclass for your reference**

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# USEFUL ENGLISH PHRASES

**This PDF is not to be sold separately and is part of the course**

**How to Speak English Better in Only 30 Days!**

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# HOW TO SPEAK CLEARER ENGLISH IN 30 DAYS!

Video subject for each day

DAY 1 - INTRODUCTION
DAY 2 - REDUCING YOUR ACCENT – Part 1
DAY 3 - REDUCING YOUR ACCENT – Part 2
DAY 4 - REDUCING YOUR ACCENT – Part 3
DAY 5 - BODY LANGUAGE (done)
DAY 6 – COLLOQUIAL PHRASES & IDIOMS
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DAY 15 - AMERICAN ENGLISH – DIFFERENT PRONUNCIATIONS
DAY 16 - AMERICAN ENGLISH – DIFFERENT WORDS
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DAY 19 - TOUR GUIDE TIPS (done)
DAY 20 - PRESENTING TO PEOPLE (done)
DAY 21 - ACRONYMS
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DAY 24 - WORD EMPHASIS (done)
DAY 25 - EMOTION IN SPEECH (done)
DAY 26 - THE ELEVATOR SPEECH
DAY 27 - VOICE STRAIN (done)
DAY 28 – CULTURE DIFFERENCES – THE UK
DAY 29 – CULTURE DIFFERENCES – THE US
DAY 30 - SUMMARY



This video transcript is a useful file to have for when you need quick reference to all of the video sections. The days covering UK & USA Culture differences and Useful Phrases and Acronyms are also included in separate documents.

Maybe you'll watch a video over breakfast, then you could read the text transcript of that day on the train to work to remind yourself of the points covered. However you wish to use our resource materials, it's up to you.

Good luck, and here's to a clearer English Voice!




DAY 1: INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Day 1 of How to Speak English More Clearly in 30 Days!
The course has 30 separate sections, and we will present to you one video section to watch per day, and you can of course re-watch videos if you wish. We may well give you voice exercises or questions to answer at the end of each day's section as well. This will give you a day before the next section to think about what you have learnt and to do the exercises.

Everyone has busy lives, and we think the "one video section per day" format suits this. If you DO have the time to watch two or more sections per day, that is no problem if you are fully confident that you are not rushing your understanding. It's up to you! Tomorrow, we 'll start looking at reducing a strong accent and then we'll move onto exercises to strengthen the English sounds that may not be strong or even exist in your own native language. We've a lot of very useful information to teach you, but today we start with essential communication skills.

The English Language is the great international language, and for anybody who isn't born with English as their native language, it's of course in their interest to learn it. English has become a common means of communication in all areas of work, ranging from the tourism industry to global police and security organisations and of course the airline and shipping industries where the captain and crew have to speak English.

In manufacturing, top management in many German car manufacturers often agree to conduct business meetings in English even when they may be all native German round the board meeting table, and in our work as professional broadcasters and voiceover artists, much of our work comes from recording all-important English versions of promotional and training videos from virtually every country of the world.

Congratulations on learning English yourself, I'm sure you're glad you did, in whatever area of work you now find yourself in. But this course is all about giving you that all-important edge on others, and to help you communicate better with people who are native English speakers in the USA and UK in particular.

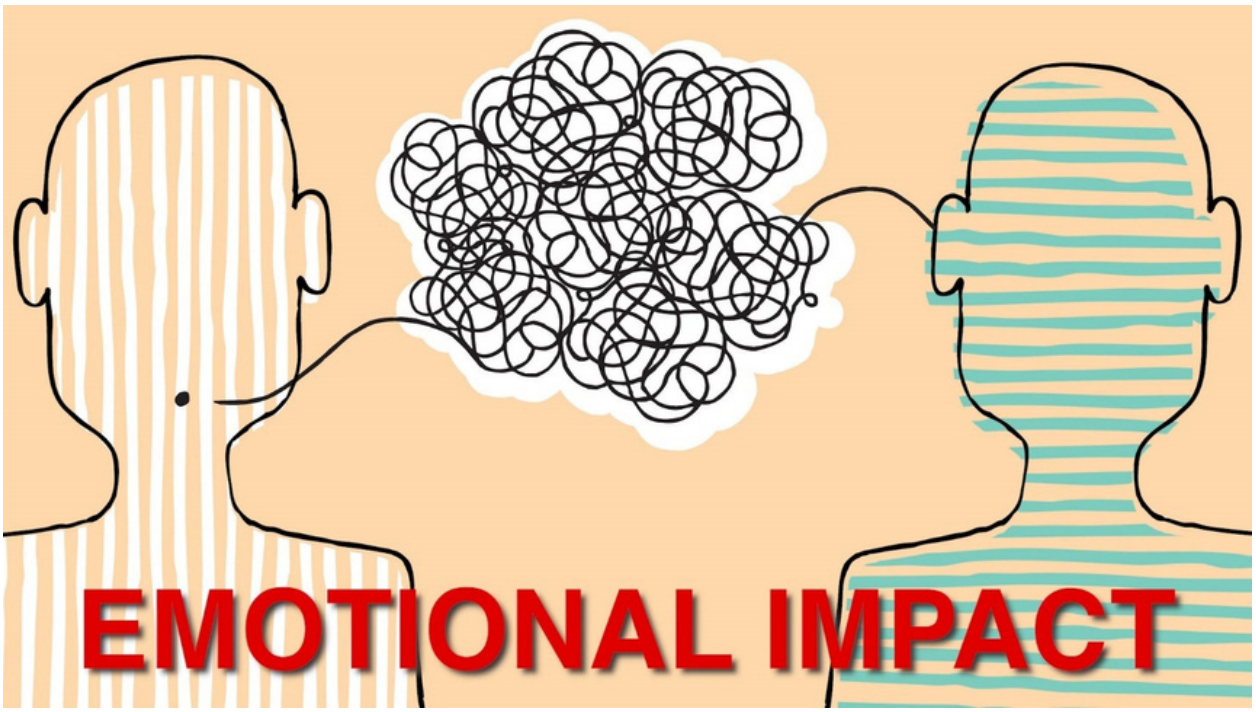
Your trainers are these days both busy voiceover artists and documentary narrators. We have also been training all sorts of individuals and groups round the world from Europe to Africa to Asia and the Middle East on improving their English for many years. We'd like to start on Day One by covering the very basics of communication skills that are essential to learn for everyone in life.



So, what do we mean by “Communication”? Communication is the act of expressing (or transmitting) ideas, information, knowledge, thoughts, and feelings, as well as understanding what is expressed by others. It’s a two- way process. The communication process involves both sending AND receiving messages and of course, can take many forms. The ability to communicate information accurately, clearly and as intended, is a vital life skill and something that should not be overlooked. It’s never too late to work on your communication skills and by doing so, will improve your quality of life particularly when talking to native English.

The speech that comes out of our mouths is only part of the overall communication process, so please don’t forget the importance of tone of voice, gestures and body language as well. Verbal communication is the name we give to spoken word, while nonverbal communication involves actions, facial expressions, body position, and gestures.

Communication can occur in one-on-one or group settings, and it involves not only the content of a message but also its emotional impact or the effect the message has on the person receiving it. In fact, communication experts suggest that between 65% and 93% of the meaning of a message is conveyed through tone of voice and nonverbal behaviours. So this means that the actual words you are saying in some communication situations is often not as important as your tone of voice and the body language. So, in addition to becoming aware of the WORDS you use, it is essential that you become aware of your TONE, EMOTIONS and BEHAVIOURS so that others can truly understand what you are trying to say. Successful, effective communicators focus not only on message CONTENT but also on how a message might be INTERPRETED by—and might affect—the receiver.




Beyond message content, then, communication also involves the EMOTIONAL IMPACT of the message on the partner.

How does what you are saying affect your listener? You need to “read” the emotions of your listener by looking at the micro-expressions on their faces and hearing the subtle tones in their replies to you.

You need to find out - are you confusing your listener? Are you annoying them? What can help here is to further develop emotional awareness by learning how to better get in touch with difficult emotions and manage uncomfortable feelings, including anger, sadness, fear, disgust, surprise, and joy. When you know how to do this well, you will be able to transmit your own emotions better as well as understand others emotions reacting to your speech, too.

Here’s a great tip. If you want to be an effective communicator, you need to be a “people watcher.” Simply observe people at a distance in public places, such as in a shopping mall, bus, train, café, restaurant, or on a television talk show or TV drama with the sound switched off.



Looking at how others use body language can teach you how to better receive and use body language when talking with others. Notice how people act and react to each other. Try to guess what their relationship is, what sorts of things they are talking about, and what each person is feeling about what is being said, just from watching the body language, head positions and eye contact between the speakers. We'd like you to do this later today as part of your "homework"!

Be aware of what YOUR OWN body is saying. Make your whole body talk! Body language can say so much more than a mouthful of words and it's so important. We look at body language in more detail later in the course. Whether you are speaking or listening, looking into the eyes of the person with whom you are talking can make the communication more successful. Eye contact shows interest and encourages your partner to be interested in you in return. Don't be shy, speak with others with good eye contact if you can, but be careful you're not over doing this eye contact and starting which can be seen as weird!

When the other person is speaking to you, nod occasionally, smile at the person, and make sure your posture is open and inviting. Don't fold your arms or turn your body away which can show that you're not really interested in what you are being told. Encourage the speaker to continue by saying small verbal comments like "yes" or "uh huh".

An open stance with arms relaxed at your sides tells anyone around you that you are approachable and open to hearing what they have to say. When you are talking, use gestures with your hands if appropriate to reinforce your emphasis words.

Be aware of the expression on your face as you're talking. If you are worried about making a good impression and you are also struggling to think of the best English words to use in each sentence, your face could look strained or worried and that may not match the mood or emotion of the words you are actually speaking, which could be positive things! Also remember that "listening" well is just as important as "speaking" well and on Day 17, we'll have much more on all of this.




The attitudes you bring to communication will have a huge impact on the way you compose yourself and interact with others. Choose to be honest, patient, optimistic, sincere, respectful, and accepting of others. Be sensitive to other people's feelings, and try and – as we say "put yourself in their shoes" and try to understand how THEY are understanding YOU!

Tomorrow, we will start to look at how to reduce a distracting accent.
Today, please actively look at how other people communicate and try to be a communication “detective”.
As we’ve mentioned, look at a TV drama or a news programme with the sound switched off and guess what relationships people have between each other. Assign emotions to characters as you see them on the screen. Are they determined? Angry? Bored? Upset?

Try and work these emotions out. Sit in a busy café or at a train station and look at the body language of the people around you.

How are people talking and expressing themselves? What are the listeners doing?

Here are some questions to answer at some point today.

**1 Have a think about your own communication skills. What do you think are those that you are good at, and what communication skills are you bad at? Make two lists.**

**2 Think of a time when your communication skills caused you a problem. Maybe there was a misunderstanding, or you got into an argument. What happened and why?**

**3 Think of someone who is a good communicator. What makes them good in your opinion?**

Finally, think of someone who is a good communicator. What makes them good in your opinion? Seek out a TV presenter, a TED Talk host or a YouTuber that you really admire and analyse why you think they are good in communicating.

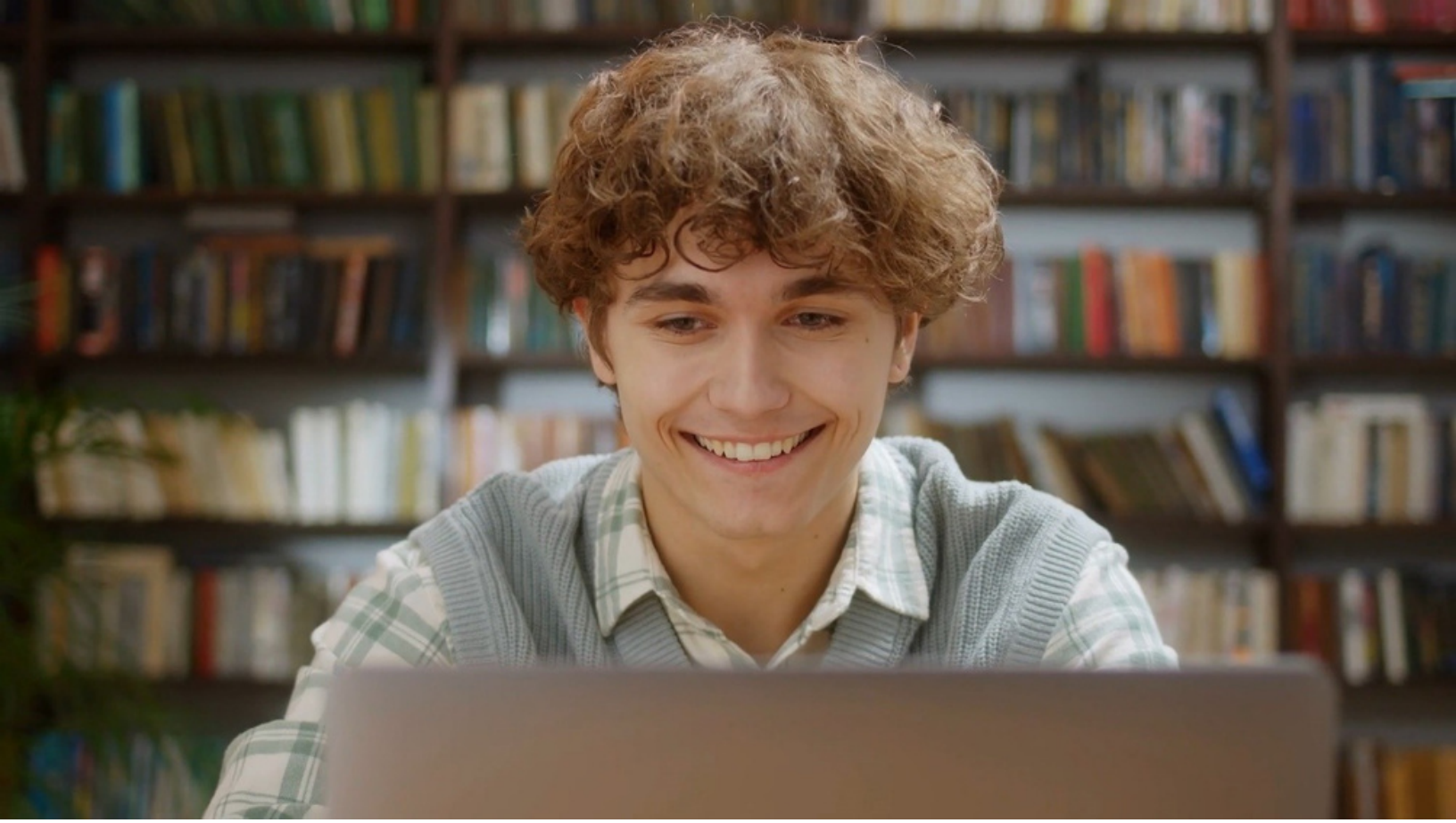
Pause the video in a section that you are enjoying, and after each sentence, repeat what they have said, word-for-word.

Try hard to imitate their delivery, performance and of course, word accents and pronunciations.

Once you get good at this, you can take it to the next stage and repeat as you hear English without pausing. In other words, you'd get a speech on a recording, audio or video of a voice you can relate to and simply play it and repeat as the speaker is talking!

As long as they are not speaking too fast, it's perfectly possible to do this and it's a great way to become fluent and clear as well as sharpening up your listening skills.

See you tomorrow when we start to look at reducing accents!



## DAY 2: REDUCING YOUR ACCENT – Part 1

Welcome to Day 2 of How to Speak Clearer English in 30 days.
We hope that yesterday you went out and about, actively looking at other people in conversation, and also, you have found a good, clear English speaker on YouTube or a Ted Talks presenter who you admire and can emulate, by trying to copy their speech patterns!

Now - there is a question we're often asked at Voiceover Masterclass, and people look to us for expertise.

The question is:

*“How can I get rid of my foreign accent when I’m speaking with native English people?”*

To be honest, you won't ever completely eliminate your native accent unless you have great acting skills, but don't worry about it! To be honest, we don't like the words "get rid of" in that question. A slight accent is nothing to be ashamed of at all, and often you'll meet new people who would genuinely love to find out where you are from when they hear your accent.

When we are babies and small children, we learn our language sounds from those we hear around us. It can be difficult when you grow up to accept a completely NEW set of vocal sounds from a different language.

When you hear a totally different accent or language, you start mapping the sounds you hear of the new language onto the language sounds you already know. So your brain makes up an approximation of the new sounds with a mixture of the sounds you already know - but that may not at all be accurate, so you sound to natives as if you have what is called "an accent". This is why reducing a strong accent can be difficult. But it's not impossible; let us help you!

So, an accent is not really a problem, unless it makes communication harder. When a STRONG accent makes communication harder, that's where the reduction of an accent can be very beneficial.

There are many OTHER ways of strengthening your communication as well as reducing an accent. As we cover in this course, these points are:

- Understanding how to "read" the listener, to make sure they are following what you're saying. Are you speaking too fast for them to keep up, or too slow and you are boring them?
- Using body language such as eye contact and arm gestures correctly.

- Emphasising key words to get the meaning over of what you're saying more effectively.
- Using the right and simplest words when appropriate and for the right culture, and using the right pronunciation.
- And using idioms or colloquial phrases that will endear your native listeners to you.

Professional voice actors like myself do our best to actually

LEARN
accents, as many as we can, so that we have a variety of voice recording work. For me, for one script, I may be asked to sound like an English BBC documentary narrator based in southern England, a so called "Received Pronunciation" accent. The next job may be for me to pretend to be a mid-European scientist for a computer game, then I could be asked to be a Scottish soldier, or maybe I need to perform a Mid-Atlantic or semi-American accent for a commercial that has international use. So, it's not about LOSING anything, it's often about GAINING the skill to understand and learn a new accent. BUT in doing so, and this is very important, you need to understand what changes are being made to your mouth movements, your tongue and teeth placement, sometimes your posture, and of course the way you actually pronounce the words.

Every language has its own unique vocal sounds that make up the various words, so you need to learn these basic main building blocks of sounds and as well as hearing them, understand how to shape your mouth and position the tongue and teeth to create them. For example, if you are French, it would be natural to you, in the way you were brought up, to easily create rolling "r's" or a "uvula trills" from the back of your throat. But if you want to sound more British or American, that "R" sounds needs to sound harder and more direct without any rolling. We have a special set of exercises later just on that "R" sound.

Many people learning English as another language have difficulties distinguishing the “i” (EEH) sound as in the word “Tip” and the “ee” sound as in the word “feel”. That’s why, for example, many non-native people call me “Meester Baker” and not Mister Baker.

There are also in various languages, differences in the importance of EMPHASIS in sentences. In English, native people make a big deal out of emphasising certain words to get the meaning over better.
But in, for example Spanish speech and general delivery, less emphasis is made on emphasis!

So, if you find it un-natural to put more power and volume on certain important words in your speech, try to understand that it can help make communication with native English speakers easier. We have exercises on EMPHASIS issues later.



Also, remember, for authenticity, you need to be able to learn the differences in words as well as pronunciations. For example, if you've learnt British English with its accent and all the colloquialisms and everyday phrases, and you want to fit into North American life, you will need to learn the differences in words such as diaper for nappy, sidewalk for pavement, flashlight for torch, and so on. And you'd also need to learn the differences and pronunciations and emphasis points for certain words, such as deTAIL, REsearch and PROR-cess and so on.

What about the actual voice accent itself? Well, if you've been brought up in a country that has a language different from English, quite often the way you use your mouth and the whole of your vocal apparatus will be different. Since many languages do not also have all the vocal sounds of English, many try to substitute the closest equivalent in their language. And there are certain sounds that you will find very easy to do, and some in English that you will find very difficult. In Japanese, for example, the “r” sound and the “l” sound don’t exist. Spanish students have difficulties with /b/ and /v/ ; Thai and South East Asian natives often have problems with /r/ and /l/ ; the French, Spanish and Polish people often stress the 2nd or 3rd syllable in words, while Germans and Finnish people stress the 1st syllable almost always. Some people when speaking English often leave off final consonants and don't sound others, also sometimes not lengthening vowels.

It works the other way too. If you are a native British person and you wish to live in Germany or Austria, no matter how well you've learnt the German language and all the colloquialisms and so on, try saying “Over the bridge” or “Uber die Brucke” in the English language. You see, the “Umlaut U” sound simply doesn't exist at all in English. So you have to learn it. It's very hard for us!

Here’s a good psychological tip, and this may work well even if you're not an actor or don't want to be. Just pretend that you ARE an actor and it will help you enormously. Imagine that you've got a starring part in a movie pretending to be a British or American native. We first mentioned this tip yesterday and it’s worth looking at it again. First of all, you need to identify what type of voice you have and then find a recording, maybe on YouTube or a news website or whatever of somebody who has a very similar voice to you. So in other words, you need to find someone of the same sex, similar age, similar depth of voice, similar style of speaking. However, this person needs to have an accent that you want to emulate.

Take one phrase or sentence at a time. Analyse this section of speech. If you happen to have any audio processing software like us voice artists have, look at the waveform, look at the peaks and the troughs, the timing of the words and the gaps between the words. This is what you need to replicate. English speakers often speak with a lot of variety of tone, in other words, “light” and “shade”. The spaces between words in English quite often are dramatic, whereas in many Latin languages, every syllable seems to have the same time and emphasis.

People also tend to speak faster in certain countries. The “melody” of speech is different in many cultures, so that's why you need to analyse, in great detail, phrases from the country you want to sound at home in.

Let's say I wanted to sound like a BBC Radio Four news announcer. I would find a recording of a radio announcer and play it back and try to copy their melody, timing and get every word perfect as I record myself saying the same words. “This is BBC Radio Four. Now the news at Six O’Clock”.

I’d then play it back. What does it sound like? Try this yourself with a voice that you wish to emulate. You need to do this again and again with various phrases that you've found from the person you want to sound like, and you will discover that certain phrases you will get absolutely right, where you’ll sound very authentic. Remember these and they will become your “anchor phrases”.

“Anchor phrases” will help you to programme your mind when you're about to speak. So once you've memorised these phrases that you get absolutely right in your training in real life, you would say these short anchor phrases under your breath before you open your mouth to others.
Saying one of your anchor sentences will help your brain to stay in the zone of that accent and you should be able to stick to the accent in conversation far better. They don't have to be long anchor phrases. Sometimes just a single word can be your “anchor”. A British person may “get into” an American accent simply by thinking or saying “Sure” or “Yeah!” in a US accent! All anchor words and phrases are personal. What anchor words or phrases could help you “get into” speaking British or American easier?

As you get more of these anchor phrases in your repertoire, soon you'll find you won't need to use them anymore before you speak, and you'll be naturally “in the zone” all the time.

Here’s your “homework” for today! Use the internet to listen to talk radio stations in the English accent you want to emulate. For the British accent, listen to BBC Radio 4 or BBC Five Live. The UK national commercial talk station is LBC and its sister station is LBC News. In the USA, any of the 3 main networks have TV and radio talk channels – NBC, CBS and ABC.




**BBC RADIO 4**
**BBC Five Live**
**LBC**
**LBC News**
**NBC**
**CBS**
**ABC**

Long term, you'll need to listen to podcasts on the go with headphones on in the bus, train or whatever.

You need to totally immerse yourself in the language and the accent, and it's amazing how quickly your brain will soak this up, and together with regular practise, you will really crack this.

Tomorrow, we'll start giving you important exercises to help improve your English vocal sounds. See you then!

# DAY 3 - REDUCING YOUR ACCENT – Part 2




Today, we are going to give you the first of voice exercises to help you train your mouth to speak English the way natives do, in order to further reduce any strong accent. Doing these exercises as well as reading aloud and listening carefully to recorded English speech will help you a lot.

We're going to start at the Alphabet! We hope you don't feel patronised into thinking you're back at school for this section, but it's very important to get the alphabet correct. On the video lesson, just listen to Peter saying each letter of the alphabet and repeat after him in the gap afterwards. He'll say each letter twice and you need to repeat it after every time he says it. Try to take notice, of not just the sound you are making, but for each letter, note the shape of your mouth, the lips, your teeth and the position the tongue is in. This muscle memory learning experience will help you enormously in speaking English much more authentically and clearer.

We have some specific exercises on clarity later, but while we are talking about the alphabet, here is a great clarity exercise that I use myself and teach native English students as well for voice over work. You now know how to pronounce every letter of the alphabet individually, but could you recite the whole of the English alphabet as fast as possible? When you get really good at it, you should be able to recite the whole English alphabet in less than 10 seconds, when you're very clever you could even try to read the whole alphabet in six or seven seconds.

Now of course, in real life, it’s not important right now for you to say the whole alphabet as quickly as possible, but maybe it’s something that you’d like to aim towards in the future. The idea of it is to keep the CLARITY so every letter sounds OK, even if it is very fast!

## The “TH” SOUND

The two letters [th] – subtle but important breathy sound - can be incredibly difficult to sound correctly for some. As we’ve mentioned before, not all English sounds exist in other languages. For example, there is no [th] sound in Russian, French, German, Hindu, and many other languages. Many Russians pronounce a “s” or a “Z” sound instead of [th] and instead of "think" they may say "sink". Indian people often will pronounce a “d” sound instead of “th” and so instead of "that" they may pronounce "dat". When words sound differently to the listener, they often cannot understand what people are trying to say. This can be uncomfortable and embarrassing for both the speaker and the listener.

Let’s look at the word THANKS. There is no silent “H”, so it’s not “TANKS! Where is your tongue doing the “thhh” sound?

The tongue should be between the teeth, almost as if you were about to gently bite it while you breathe out air.

Here are some other words that have the “thh” sound, but be aware that not all of them have the longer “thh” sound of the word thanks, the “thh” sound is slightly shorter and neater.

We say these words twice on the video. Play this video chapter and repeat after us.

THE
THEATRE
SMOOTH
THERE
NORTHERN
RATHER
CLOTHES
BATH
FATHER
BREATH

And now some sentences with the “Th” sound in. Repeat after us on the video.

The thick fog threatened to harm the three of them.

I’d rather not bother them.

The northern fathers breathe smoothly.

Thank you! My throat is better and my breathing’s thankfully improved.

## The “R” sound.

Many people who are not native English speakers find that it is very difficult to say the “R” sound, so here are some exercises to make sure you've got it absolutely perfect, or “nailed”, as we say!

You must relax the mouth and lips and let the jaw hang loosely, with no tension in the cheeks. Pout your lips.

Lay your tongue on the floor of the mouth, and ensure that the resonant and clear “R” sound comes from the back of the throat.

Try these:

BAR
ART
DARK
START
PART
LAUGH
RIGHT
RATHER
GLASS

And now some sentences with many of these “R” sounds in.

“Right, reverse the Jaguar car into the fun fair car park space and then we’ll ride on the roundabout.”

The coroner wrote rules for the court to relate to.

Roll up the rope, and release the right receptacle

The creditor is corrupt, here he shall perish

Really? So the relevant rules are not right?

So we hope you have found these exercises useful, although they may be hard to start with. If you HAVE found it difficult, please repeat the video. Practice makes perfect! Your homework is to repeat all the phrases we have gone through today.

This time though, instead of repeating after us in the gap, I'd like you to record yourself using your phone, a computer or an old tape recorder if you like, it doesn't matter. Then play back the recording and see if you are improving! Ask a trusted native English friend to listen to your recording and they can give you feedback as well.






## DAY 4 - REDUCING YOUR ACCENT – Part 3

We are going to continue to look at various English sounds that native English speakers, or so-called Anglophones, use all the time, but may be difficult for you to say. Another sound that doesn't really exist in many Asian languages is the "L" – that sounds like "Luh" not "Ell" which is the sound of the alphabet letter sound. So it's "Luh". Try these:

LAUGH
BELL
PEOPLE
LIGHT
ANIMAL
ALLOW
LEAN
ROLLER

And now some sentences with the “Luh” sound in, another vocal sound that is weak or non-existent in many non-English languages.

Loading the wool into the large liner took a long time.

The lamp shone a low light over the landscape.

The bell shall toll for the jail.

Boil the kettle! I’d love some lemon tea.

How about the sound “b”, pronounced “buh”? Many Spanish speaking cultures find it difficult to hear the difference between “buh” and “vuh”. So let’s tackle both of these important sounds now, shall we? First the “buh” sound. The first two words here use the “th” sound we learnt yesterday.

BATH
BREATH
BRIGHT
BOY
BACKGROUND
GLOBE
ABSORB
MEMBER
GOODBYE

And now some sentences with the “buh” sound in.

Billy, can you bung me over that blue ball please?

The brightest members of the bird family are in the Bahamas.

The babbling brook has blue water and the sun is bright.

The globe you had broken was superb. What a bother!

As well as the sounds we have covered so far, many people who don’t have English as their native language get confused when words end in the letters E and D. What is this word? STOPPED. It’s not Stop-EDD! It’s Stopped!

Here are the pronunciation rules that you need to learn.

Rule 1 with “ED” at the ends of English words: After the sounds p, f, s, ch, sh and k, pronounce the letters at the end of a word, “ED” as T.

So STOPPED has the sound of “p” before the E.D. letters, so the E.D. sound is like a T. “STOPPED”.

LAUGHED. The sound before the “ED” is a “fff” sound. So the ED sounds again like a “T”. LAUGHED.

FINISHED. This has a “sh” sound before the ED. So the word is not FINISH-ED, but has the “T” sound again, as in FINISHED.

Rule 2 with “ED” at the ends of English words.
With the sounds “t” or “d” before the letters ED, it sounds like the man’s name Ed!

ENDED – there is a “d” sound before the letters E & D, so it’s ENDED
WANTED - there is a “t” sound before the letters E & D, so it’s WANTED
STARTED – there is also a “t” sound before the letters E & D so it’s STARTED.

Rule 3 with ED at the ends of English words.
In all other words ending with the letters E & D, the sound is simply “Duh”. Allowed. Spied. Lied. Cleaned. Or said without the emphasis to make the point, Allowed. Spied. Lied. Cleaned. Watch the video for clarification.

Now rules like that can seem very complicated to explain and to learn, but soon, and you may be already at this stage, soon things start to “sound right” or “sound wrong” and you won’t need to think about the rules anymore. Your homework is to repeat this chapter and repeat the exercises until you are 100% happy that you have mastered the words and the sentences. We’ll have more on reducing accents later in the course, but tomorrow, we’ll take a look at Body language and how by using your face expressions and hand movements and gestures, the understanding of what you are saying can be made much clearer!



## DAY 5 - BODY LANGUAGE

Everything is connected. Whatever goes through your mind will have an impact on your body. Whatever you do physically, you will do vocally.

So that's why when you're talking, gestures often help us communicate more. Body language can actually add power to your voice, even though the actual volume hasn't changed at all. As well as emphasising words, giving them a little more volume, just a small downward gesture with one of your arms, as you say “emphasis words” will emphasise them even more.

You know, we're often asked about arm and hand movements and whether you should use them a lot in speech and presentations. And it's one of those things where you really have to record yourself - and then play the videos back, and to analyse them.



You need a good, trusted friend or family member who can tell you honestly whether they find your arm and hand movements distracting or not. The problem is, of course, that if you ask someone to look out for the arm movements, they're going to notice them much more than someone who hasn't been asked to look out for them.

At the end of the day, don't worry about it too much, just relax. If you feel you're moving your arms around too much and you want to restrict them, this could cause problems anyway, because you end up tensing and worrying about the arms, taking that vital brain power away from putting it into your speech!



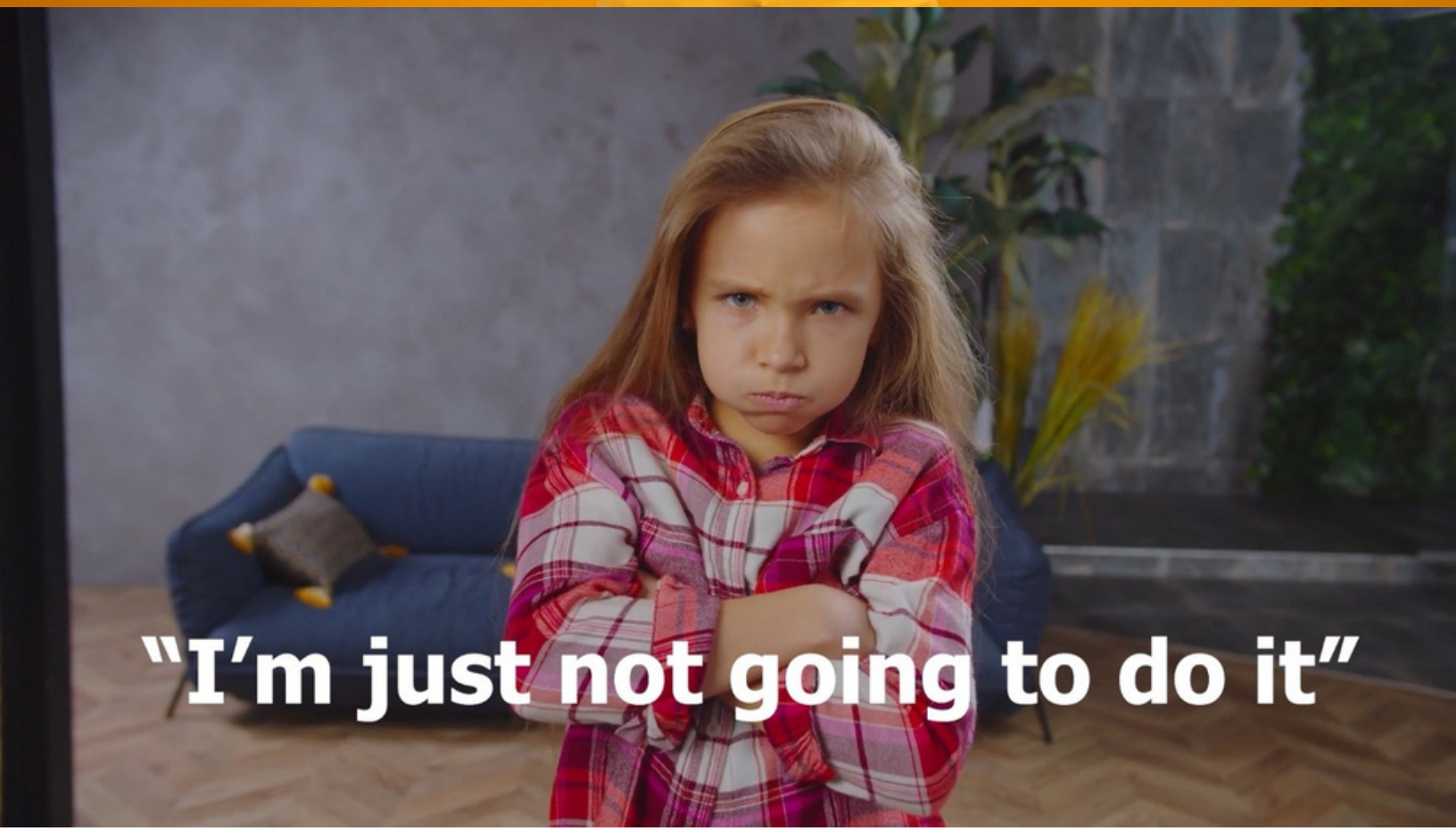

## The power of “people watching”

Have you ever been in a crowded and very noisy restaurant where you get distracted by people the other side of the restaurant? You start to look around, people watching. Even though you can't hear what people are saying, you can tell from their body language a good idea of what's going on. I try and work out what the people do for their jobs and also what the hierarchy is around the table.

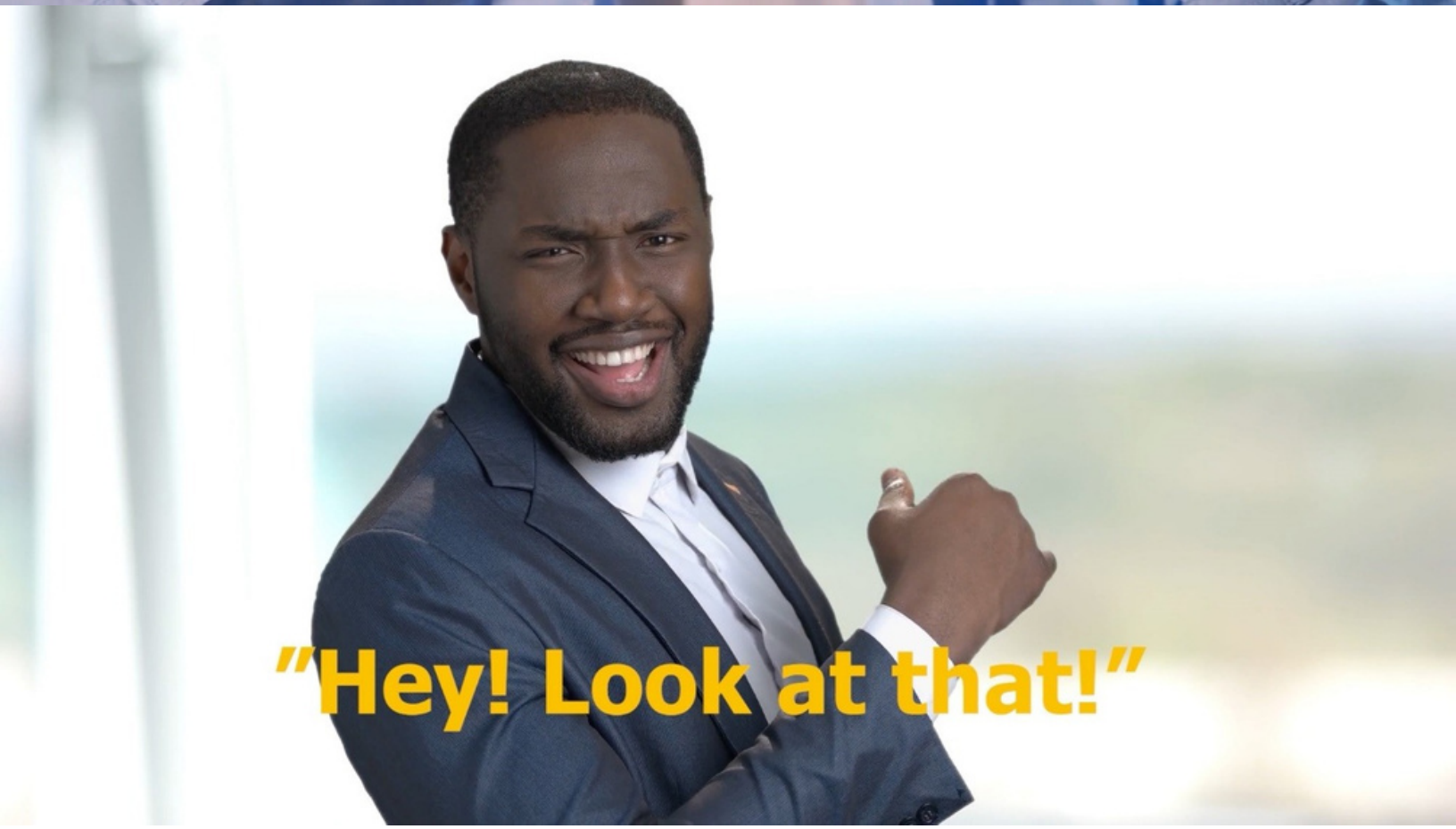
You can usually tell who the bosses are because as soon as he or she starts speaking or interrupts someone else, everyone then stops and darts their eyes towards them to hear what they have to say. Oh, yeah, they're the boss. Whereas other more nervous individuals, you could tell they're waiting their turn before they pipe up with their own contributions to the conversation.

Here are some general western culture body language gestures for you to look out for:


"It's our little secret"


"I'm just not going to do it"


"Yeah! Great! Let's do it"


"Hey! Look at that!"


"Oh no you don't!"
"We're making our minds up"







Body language is a huge subject. If you'd like to find out more about body language, there are loads of books or information on NLP (NeuroLinguistic Programming), which includes a lot about body language.




## DAY 6 – COLLOQUIAL PHRASES & IDIOMS

It helps not just to be clear in your speech, but to also understand and learn some special traditional phrases that British or American people have in their everyday language. If you pepper some of these phrases into your conversation, you will endear people to you enormously, they will love you! Using one of these phrases or idioms now and again, many of which are quite amusing will make your listeners appreciate that you have taken the trouble to learn the culture and you will make friends far easier that way.



In the UK we have a famous German stand-up comedian and TV panel show star called Henning Wenn. His whole comedy character is of a German coming to Britain and making fun of us, and he is proud of his German accent - yet is extremely clear in his speech, and throughout his comedy performance, he often puts in little phrases some of which we

would consider to be out of date, but that makes it all the funnier. I remember seeing Henning Wenn at a live performance talking about how difficult it was to get a bus ticket in Britain, and stating that it was all “a bit of a palaver”, which is a quaint old British phrase that got the audience to really relate to him!

So here are some idioms and colloquial phrases that are common in the United Kingdom and North America. Our list is no means the final full list, there are thousands of these types of phrases out there, but we have picked these as we feel they could be most useful to you. We have included an example with each one to strengthen the understanding.

“To go the extra mile” – To do more than is expected of you.
“Well John, you could have finished work an hour ago, but you’re still here. Thanks very much for going the extra mile!”

“You’re gilding the lily!” - Doing too much work that isn’t needed.
“Your painting is perfect as it is, you don’t need to work any more on it, you’re gilding the lily!”

“Water under the bridge” – to forgive and to forget
“That argument between us is in the past, that’s all water under the bridge now”

“In the blink of the eye” – very fast, or instantly
“Time goes so fast doesn’t it. The kids become adults in the blink of an eye”

“Let the cat out of the bag” – to reveal a secret by mistake
“The boss was trying to keep the takeover a secret, but over that meeting, he really let the cat out of the bag!”

“To weather the storm” – doing the best to get through a bad situation
“It’s going to be chaotic over the next few weeks, we’ve all got to weather the storm”

“To keep one’s chin up” – staying happy during bad times
“I think we’re going be OK in the end, I’ve got my chin up.”

“To bury one’s head in the sand” – ignoring problems that need attention
“I really don’t want to think about what happens after I lose my job. I’m just burying my head in the sand”

“Step up to the plate” – accepting responsibility
“The government need to step up to the plate and actually do what they promised at the election”

“Gift of the gab” – describing someone who can talk fluently
“She kept on chatting for over 20 minutes, he really has the gift of the gab”

“Burning the midnight oil” – working on something later than usual
“Still studying for your exam tomorrow? You’ll be burning the midnight oil”

“Under the weather” – not feeling very well
This comes from sailors feeling seasick, going below decks, literally going “under the weather”
“I’m not coming out tonight, I’m feeling a bit under the weather”

“Playing it by ear” – not planning anything
This comes from the world of music, with skilled musicians not needing sheet music to read from.
“I’ve no idea what I’ll say at the conference, I’ll play it by ear!”

“Driving me up the wall” – getting frustrated and annoyed
“The noise from those builders over the road is driving me up the wall”

“Bitten off more than I can chew” – Taken on too much responsibility
“I wish I hadn’t said that I’d run the club as well as being a volunteer. I think I’ve bitten off more than I can chew!”

“Breathing down one’s neck” – constantly checking up
“The boss doesn’t believe I’m doing the job properly, she’s always breathing down my neck!”

“Costing an arm and a leg” – very expensive
“That car wasn’t as cheap as I thought, in the end it cost me an arm and a leg!”

“I could eat a horse” – very hungry
“I haven’t eaten all day, I could eat a horse!”

“I’ve got bigger fish to fry” – more important things to deal with
“I haven’t got time to waste on negotiating your pay rise, I’ve got bigger fish to fry, trying to save the company”

“Egg on your face” – Looking foolish or misinformed.
“So you don’t think I’m going to score in the next game? I will, and then you’ll be left with egg on your face”

“Wrong side of the bed” – In a bad mood.
Oh, dear why are you so angry and moody? Did you get of the wrong side of the bed?

“Leave no stone unturned” – Doing one’s best to discover something.
“I want this missing document found – work hard – leave no stone unturned”

“Between the devil and the deep blue sea” – Any option is a bad one.
“Choosing one option, I lose my business, choosing the other option I lose my wife. I’m between the devil and the deep blue sea!”

“The straw that broke the camel’s back” – a maybe small but significant event after a series of events that make you choose a course of action.
“My company have given me terrible jobs to do all year, and then they gave me a pay cut! That was the straw that broke the camel’s back. I quit!!”

“In the doghouse” – someone is angry with you because of some action from you, or some inaction!
“I forgot to put the bins out for collection today, So I’m in the doghouse with my wife”

“Barking up the wrong tree” – Pursuing a course of action that is wrong or misguided.
“Look officer, why are you asking me questions about the robbery? I wasn’t even in that town on that day. You’re barking up the wrong tree!”

“Buttering someone up” – being deliberately nice or polite to someone in return to receive something.
The children have been so good, I guess they’re buttering me up so I’ll take them to the theme park!

“Until the dust settles” – Waiting until a situation becomes clearer.
“I’m sure you could claim compensation for this disaster. It would be best to wait until the dust settles though.”

“Don’t give up the day job!” – It may not be successful.
“Look, friend, I wish you well with the publication of your first book, but, hey, don’t give up the day job!”

“The magic touch” – a great ability or skill to do something.
“You really are so good at telling stories to my children, you really have the magic touch.

“Bringing something to the table”. To contribute well to a group.
“You really are a good new member of our team, you’ve brought so many good ideas to the table.”

“Making a good fist of it.” Doing well even though inexperienced.
“I have to say that even though you are new here, you really have made a good fist of things”

# DAY 7 – CLARITY # 1
# – WARM UPS & SHORT VOWELS




The vowels are A, E, I O and U. In this next exercise, we're going to learn to speak vowels clearly and give them sufficient length. Many people lazily shorten their vowels in conversation, which makes a lot of what they're saying hard to understand.

English is not a language that is “phonetic”, in other words if you look at the order of letters it doesn't always tell you the correct way to pronounce them. That's in fact often a problem for people who don't have English as their first language. The next thing is that with vowels there are three types - there are short vowels - long vowels and double vowels or diphthongs. Many people who haven't been brought up with English don't open their mouths big enough in particular or pronounce the long vowels long enough, because it's not common in their own language to do so, so they may say RAD-io – with a hard “D” - and not RAY-dee-o, for example.

Here are some exercises to understand these three types of vowels and are useful for everyone who wants to improve the clarity of their speech. I suggest you record yourself on your phone or any other device and playback your voice afterwards and see if all the words are really clear. Make sure you have really emphasised the vowels, giving them sufficient length and emphasis. That way, your speech will be stronger, clearer and easier to listen to.

So let's remind ourselves what the vowels are: A E I O U.

First the letter A.
So the short version is “Ah”
In each video section, we give you 10 words to read with excellent examples of the sound we are learning. We ask you to repeat after us:

slab fab cab app tab van ran pan tan

and now the short version of the vowel E
bed jet net set lend send smell tell wet dense

and now the short version of the vowel I
lid kid lip rip nip tip mill bill till rim

and now the short version of the vowel O
dog log stop drop rot mop job hod shop cod

and finally in the short versions, it's the vowel U
fun mud dud sun pub crust bud rub sub bun

So you have now been practising the SHORT version of the vowels, and “short” doesn't just mean “throw away” - they still must be very clear to be understood.

Go back and listen to your recording, and re-do any words that you felt you didn't speak clearly enough. In the next section, we’ll move onto LONG vowels.

## DAY 8 – CLARITY # 2 – LONG VOWELS

In this section, we will practise LONG vowels, these are the ones that many people are either lazy in giving the correct length to, or simply find it difficult if English isn't their first language, as they don't have the same sounds in their native language.

As before, please record yourself and you will see this word onscreen, say it and then we will say it, and there are 10 in each section for every vowel.

The long vowel, A: AAAAH

hazy crazy baby navel table radio bacon acorn apron plate

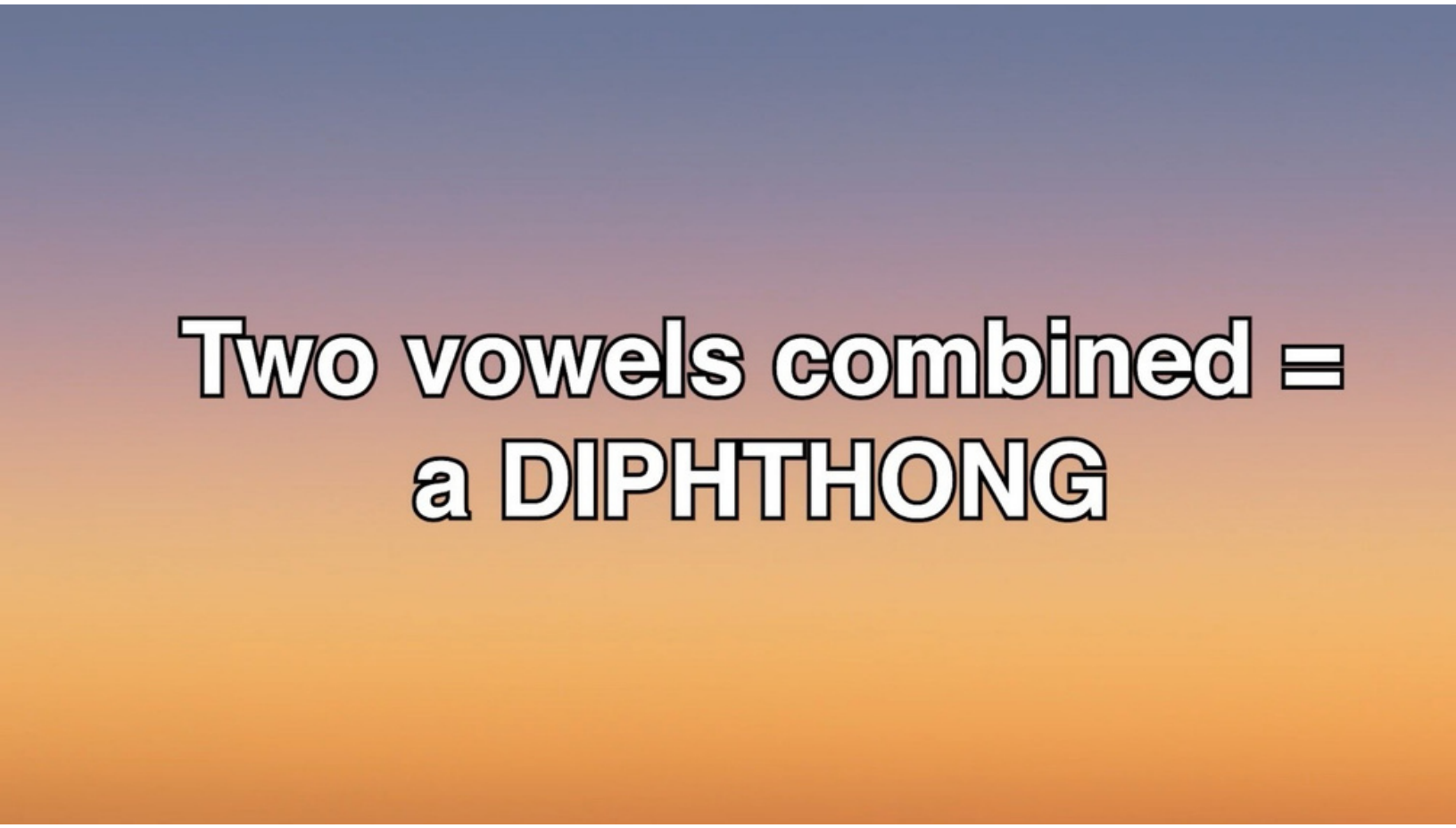
The long vowel E: EEEE
scene even ego equal veto theme evil evening Egypt be

The long vowel I: EYE
right ivory pine idea iron ice pilot life ride wide

The long vowel O:
go pony loan focus piano road total toe bonus hoe

The long vowel U:
duke bugle cue human music rude unit student statue confuse

How did you get on that? Go back and listen to your recording, and redo any words you didn't think were clear enough. In the next section will move on to diphthongs.



# DAY 9 – CLARITY # 3 – DIPTHONGS

As we've already learned, every vowel and there are five of them – A E I O and U can either be said short or long, depending what words they are in! But what happens when we combine two vowels?

This then becomes another single syllable, but this time it’s what's called a “diphthong”, and that's a Greek word that basically means “two sounds.” for example, if you put the vowel “O” with the vowel “I” it makes an “OY” sound, and that can help make the word “oiling”.

That word oiling is a good word to remember, because the transition between one vowel and the next vowel has to be “oiled”, or has to smoothly glide.

So you don’t say “O” and “I” as separate sounds very fast, that wouldn’t be right at all! It’s “OY”! One vowel glides into the other!
Here's another example and it makes one word. “E” and “A” glide to make “EAR”.

Depending what part of the world you come from, there are many different types of these combined vowels, and in this exercise we're just going to go through some of the most used ones in the English language.

Again record yourself and on the videos, when you see the word on the screen give it your best shot, and then we will say the word.

AU

author caught naught taught fraught daunt gaunt haunt jaunt taunt

AI

aim stain mail again afraid faith raise bait sail

EA

bread head meadow pleasant spread heading sweat threaten overhead heaven

OI

Oil boil coil foil soil toil spoil broil join loin

OO

pool tool drool school zoo food mood brood roof proof

OU

bound cloud found pound round sound wound couch pouch

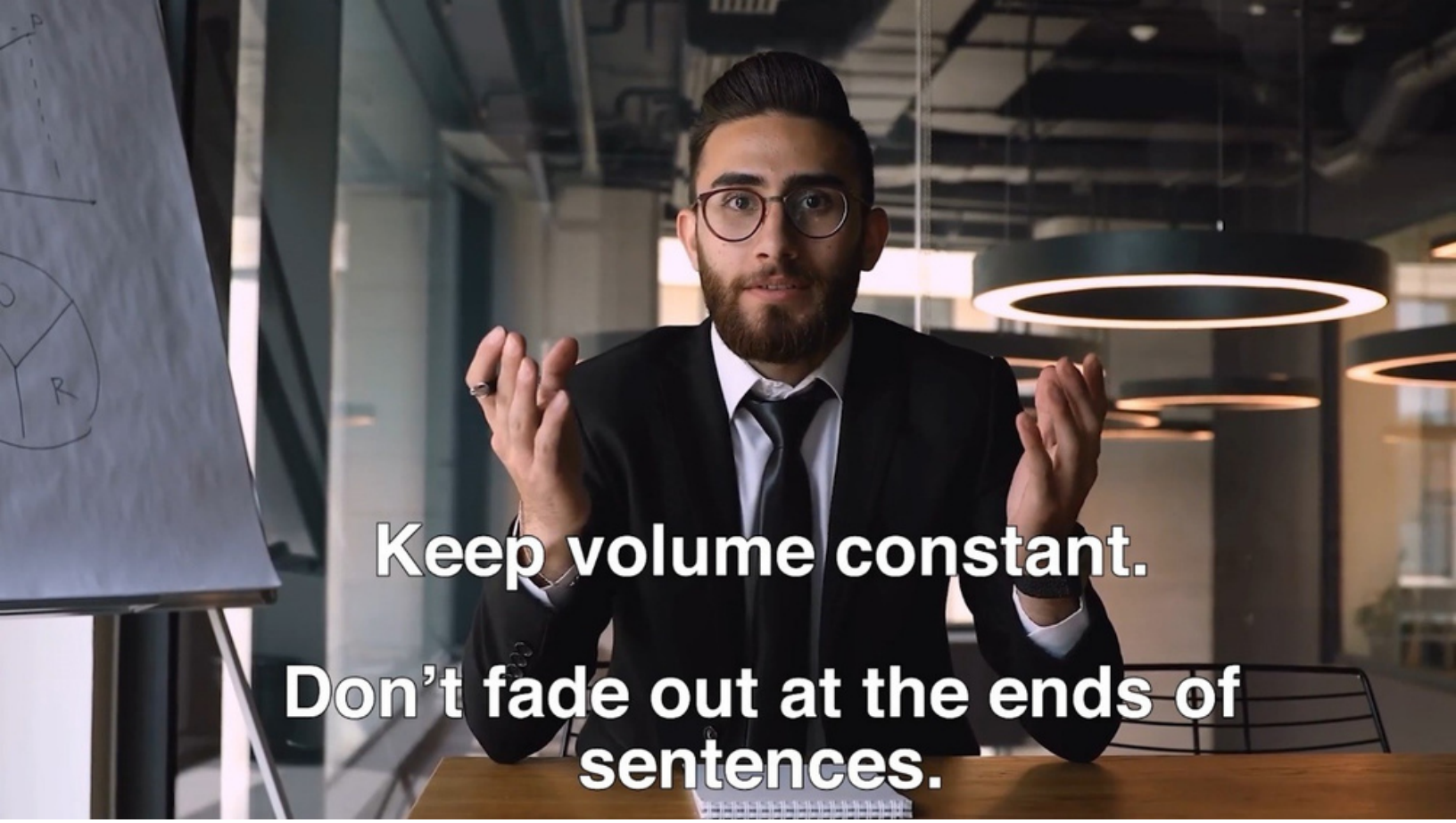
sour



## DAY 10 – CLARITY # 4 – PLOSIVES

Do people tell you you're a “mumbler”? Or do you have to repeat everything? Now this could be simply a case of understanding how sound travels, and you actually need to get closer to someone or get more aware of their aural distractions in the environment where you’re talking such as traffic noise, but it's usually because you need to boost the volume and of course improve the vocal articulation as well which makes it easier for people to understand you.

So what's the best way to get rid of a mumbling voice, to be clearer? The first thing to do is not to worry about completely - separating - words, although as we'll see in a second, it can be useful to speak like this to the computer where it's turning speech into text. But a human being listening to you separating each word will find it very annoying – it’d be like you’re speaking to a very small child!




It's more important to concentrate on saying words more precisely and making sure every syllable is said clearly. It's the missing sounds that your listeners will find annoying and is the main reason why they won’t be able to work out what you're saying. Also you need to keep the volume constant as well while you're speaking and not fade out at the ends of sentences.

The other thing is to make sure that you pay attention in your speech to the 6 sounds that are called “plosives”. These sounds are made by the human mouth by building up air pressure and then releasing it in tiny explosions!

Us voice overs have real problems with the letter “P” behind a microphone, because this creates a big explosion of air that makes a horrible noise and distorts the recording, but the other pesky sounds are B (Buh) D (Duh) K (Kuh) T (Tur) and the G (Gurh) sometimes. If you don't produce these little explosions cleanly, that's where speech becomes a mumble.

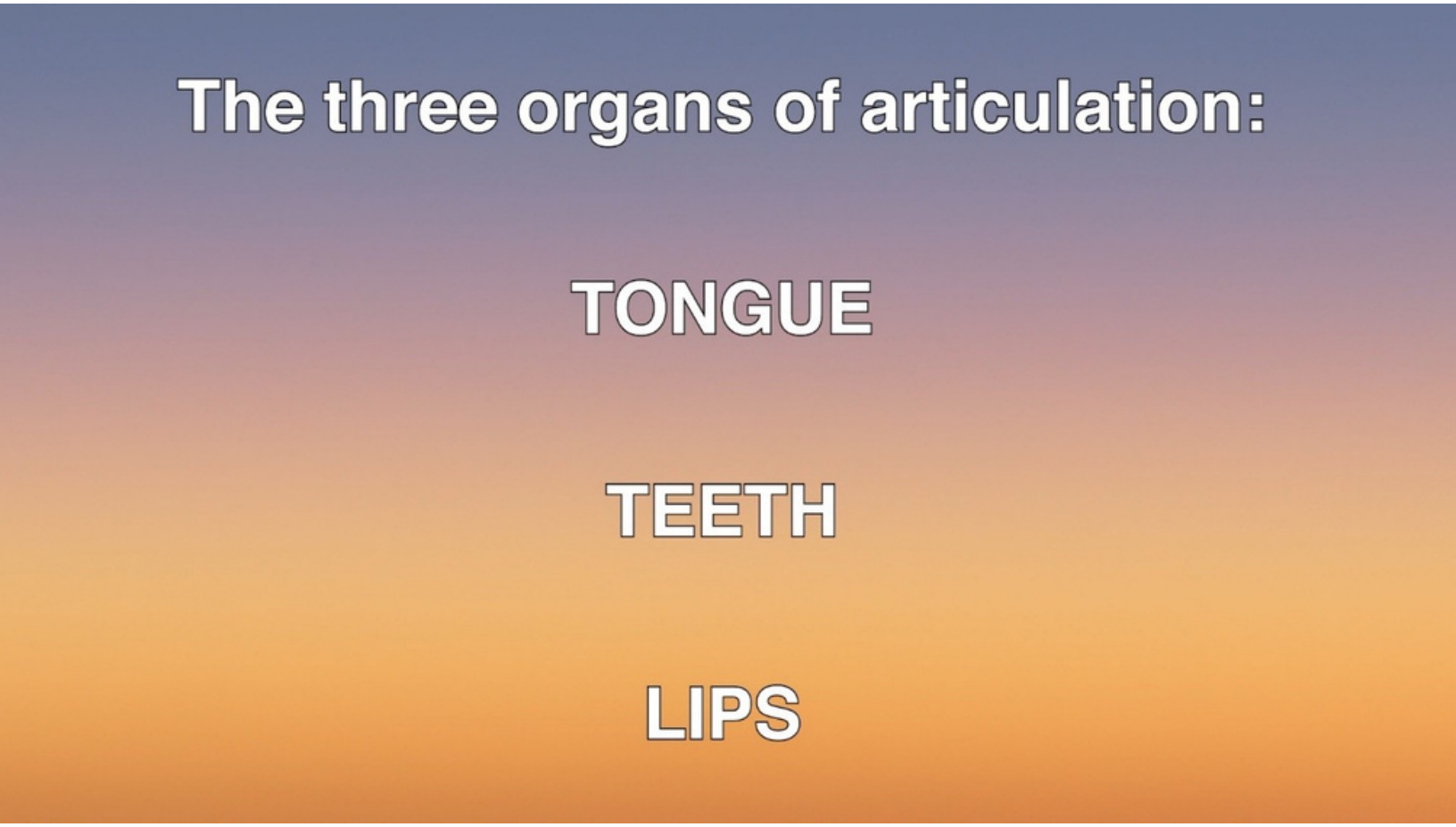
Would you like to say these plosives now and see how they feel in your head?

How clearly can you pronounce them?

Say them five times as loud as you can without straining.



# DAY 11 – CLARITY # 5 – BANISH MUMBLING




The clarity and articulation exercises we are giving you on this course will help you enormously with mumbling, and that together with a boost in confidence can help as well.

Voice pitch is also important here, and in the section on melody and dynamics, well go into pitch in great detail, and show you how you can make your voice much more attractive, and easier to listen to.

A typical mumbler tends to stay on the same couple of notes, or even the same one which isn't that attractive, and it makes it hard to understand the sense of what is being said, because also there are few emphasis words.

A good exercise if you know you mumble, is to get something from a magazine or newspaper and read it aloud into a computer and see how accurate it comes up on the screen. The more accurate the words print themselves, the clearer the computer can hear you!

It’s a useful way to find out how you're improving the clarity. Now of course computers still aren't that clever at working out human voices accurately, and often need speaking to with every word separated.

But in real life, a nice fluent voice is best as long as every syllable is well enunciated. The ideal voice would be midway between total mumble, and ridiculous overenunciation where you sound very patronising!

Now of course, we're all different, and maybe you pride yourself on being a soft-spoken individual but are finding it frustrating when people don't hear what you say. So there are various tricks round this, and it's not just getting closer to people’s ears, but to have more eye contact with them too and using body language like arm movements too. This can help a lot.

Doing this together with vocal exercises where the three organs of articulation, the tongue the teeth and the lips; this will get you out of mumble mode completely and forever!

Has a sentence I'd like you to read naturally:

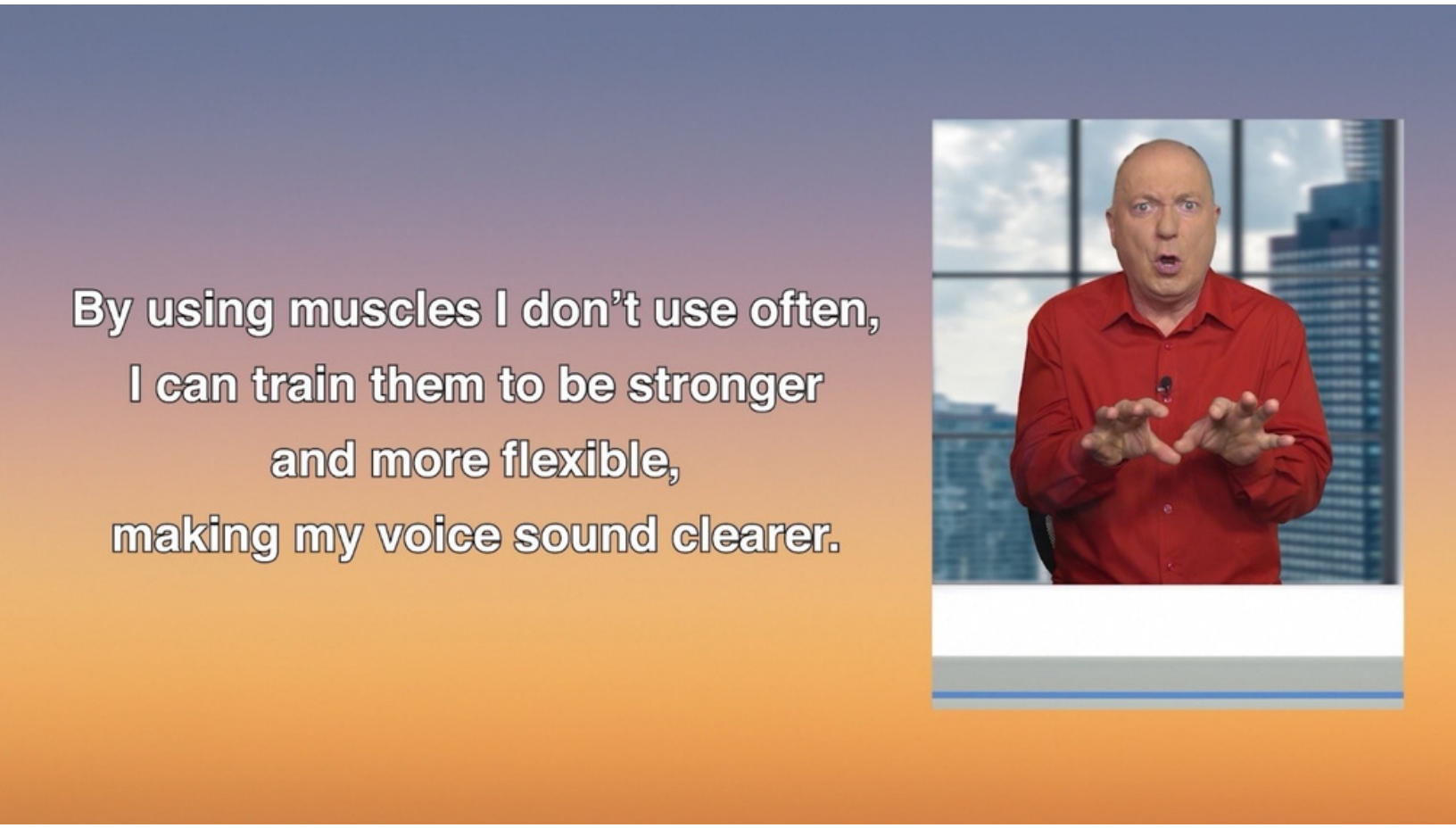
By using muscles I don’t use often, I can train them to be stronger and more flexible, making my voice sound clearer.

But now we're going to read that same sentence ridiculously over emphasised in a very unnatural way. The reason we're going to do this is to exaggerate jaw movement and also we're going to move our lips forward and really exaggerating everything about our speech.

We are going to look very silly, and that silliness will be emphasised when we look at ourselves in the mirror.

You are not gonna speak in real life like this, but it's another great exercise to get those mouth muscles working, and a tone at the whole of your articulation muscles.

Try it three to five times please. Make an effort to really stretch your mouth muscles!



Now, let's talk FLUENCY. So many people learn English and are obsessed with being "fluent". But what does that actually mean? "Fluency" means that you can speak smoothly and at a normal speed without stopping or hesitating.

There are two sides to fluency. One side is physical. Your mouth needs to produce and connect English sounds and words in a fast, smooth way.

The other side of fluency is in the mind. Your brain needs to find the right words and build English sentences quickly and smoothly. To improve your fluency, you need to work on both sides, physical and mental. The physical side is doing the mouth and tongue exercises we are giving you, such as doing tongue twisters and speaking English text as fast as you can, while keeping the clarity! The mental side is totally enveloping yourself in the English language and culture, so that your vocabulary improves and your thought processes aligns to that of a native English speaker.

There are many other ways you can improve your fluency. First of all, try and "think" sentences in English, rather than thinking of them in your native language and then translating in your head. How do you train yourself to "think in English"? A good way to start is to talk English as much as you can, all day. Try to have as many conversations as possible with real people in English, but if there is nobody's around to talk to, talk to yourself! Let me ask you - when you are on your own, what language are your thoughts in? Yes, your native language probably! But when you force yourself to speak in English, whether you are talking about the news of the day, or simply describing what you are doing at the moment, you will start to "think" in English too!

Here is a very strong tip. When you're driving a car on your own, or going for a walk in the country, just talk to yourself in English. Make stuff up, it doesn't matter, you could describe in detail what you are doing, it doesn't matter, as long as you are clear and not mumbling and remembering the correct sounds you should be making.

When you are at home and reading an English news website or book, read aloud!

Watching English programmes on TV? Put the subtitles on and read them aloud! Have fun and pretend to be the character in the drama on TV!
A variation of this is to do some "Audio Description" work. Watch a TV drama with the volume down, and describe in English what is going on as you watch it live on TV. Try this! Or maybe you like music? Put on an English Karaoke TV channel on and sing along!

We'd recommend you need to spend at least two to 3 hours a week speaking English if you want to improve. So how can you do this? Go to classes. Talk to people in English as much as you can. Join groups or activities with English speakers. Find a conversation partner online.

Do a language exchange. There are many possibilities!

Practice makes perfect!

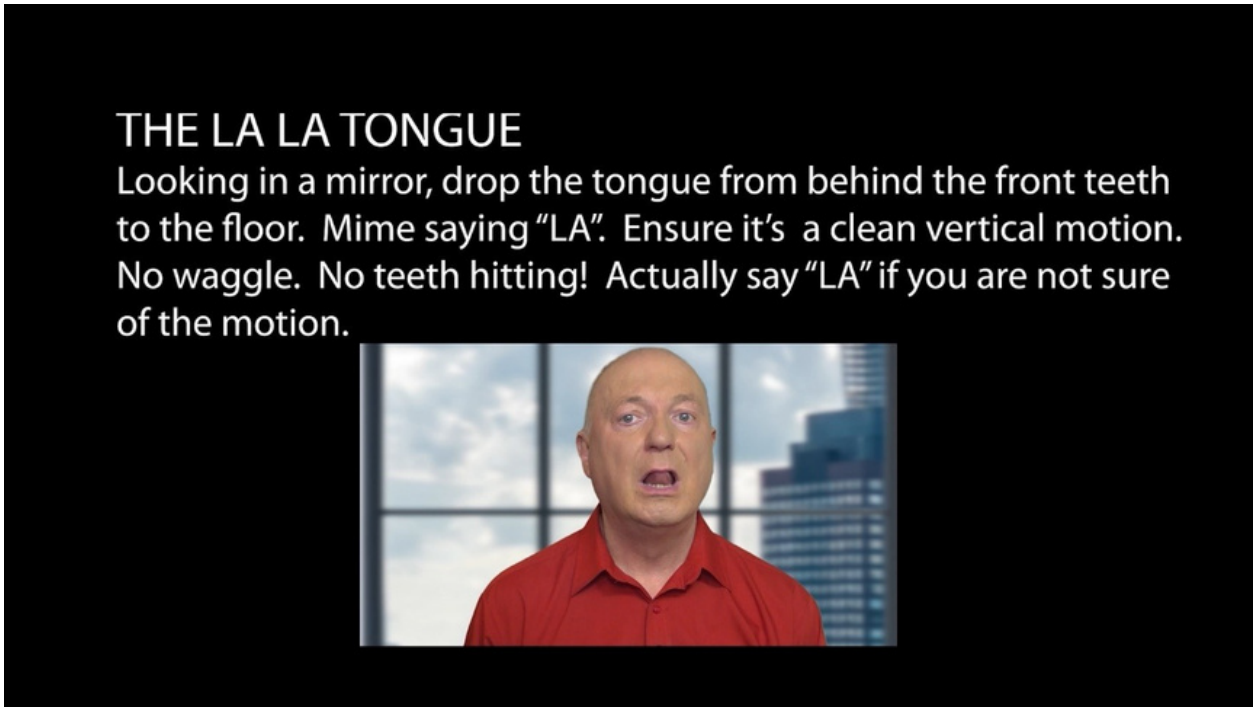


# DAY 12 – CLARITY # 6 – TONGUE EXERCISE

Here's a great simple exercise to strengthen the tongue, and it also helps you say hello to your soft palate! It may be an exercise you do in a way every time you burn the top of your mouth, which is very sensitive to hot food! First of all, put the tip of your tongue over the front of your teeth and try and stretch it as much as possible without hurting the tongue see if he can cover the whole of your front teeth and now without losing contact, slide that tongue back over the front teeth over the back of the front teeth and slide it back on your bony bit .... the hard palate .... and reach all the way back with the tip of your tongue as far back as it will go. There will be a point where you won't go any further as it curls in on itself. Just hold it there for a good 10 seconds and after that 10 seconds, let go and waggle it a little bit. You've heard of a tongue twister before, but not like this!

Doing this a few times as part of your warmup can really help your tongue’s flexibility. Try it now !

Secondly, say the word “LA”, (No, “LAAA”...not Los Angeles!) and you probably won't be able to tell me what the tongue does during that very short word. But for the first part of “LA”, the tip of the tongue hits the area behind the front teeth. Try it now in slow motion. And on the second part of this short word “LA”, it drops to the bottom. So I want you to hold your mouth open and look in a mirror. And say the word “LA”, and see this motion from top to bottom. See this?




That's what you're going to emphasise and exercise now. While looking at yourself in the mirror, say “LA” five times, making sure that the tongue goes cleanly down from behind the teeth to the floor in that word. Leave a gap every time to reset and make sure you know what you are doing. And then try five “LA”’s in a row, as fast as you can. This is a fantastic exercise for the tongue, and helps to make the tip of the tongue stronger.

Next today, here are some more general tips to help you with your communication skills if English is not your native language.

This next idea may seem an obvious one, but it's one that many people forget. You need to get feedback from the person that you're talking to, and as we have mentioned this before, you need to get visual feedback from looking at the listener's face to see if they understand you.

However, sometimes we can't SEE the person's face, if maybe you are sharing a car ride, it's not clear, or they may have a personality where they don't actually show much emotion on their face.

So what can you do?

The answer is to simply ask them questions to see if they have understood what you have said. You don't have to do this all the time, but certainly for important things that you are saying, just directly say :

“Is that clear?” or “Do you have any questions?” and so on.

So, ask questions to confirm if your listener has understood you.

Don't just assume that your listener is able to understand you well. If you work in a call centre, maybe you are already trained to say questions like this to your callers,

Now, what about making sure that the other person knows that YOU understand what THEY are saying, and also to ensure that the conversation flows, without going to an embarrassing silence?

Well, the next thing you can do, is to use some remembered so-called “stock phrases”.

We are going to give you some examples of stock “listening” phrases you can use to help a conversation continue, when you're listening to someone else talk to you.

Here are some you can memorize. First we’ll give you some general ones, and some of these need to sound like questions and not statements.

“Yes, I see!”

“I understand, yes!”

“Right?”

“OK?”

Next some stock phrases you can use when are really surprised by what the other person is saying.

“That’s amazing. Tell me more!”

“Surely not, really? What else happened?”

“Wow! Incredible. Then what?!”

“I’m amazed! Tell me more!”

“Really?”

What about if you're not really sure of what the other person is saying? Here are some good stock phrases to learn.

"Sorry, what do you mean?"

"Sorry, I didn't catch that"

"Sorry, can you explain further?"

"I'm a little confused, sorry!"

"Would you mind saying that again, please?"

Next some stock phrases to keep the conversation going when it's good news for you, such when somebody does something for you.

"That is very kind, thank you!"

"That is great news"

"Thank you for telling me"

"Wonderful! Thank you!"

Finally, some stock phrases when things have not gone that well.

“Oh dear”

“I’m sorry to hear that”

“That’s disappointing”

“That’s a great shame”

Try and learn phrases like this and have them ready to keep a conversation going. But don’t overuse the same ones, which could sound annoying to others.

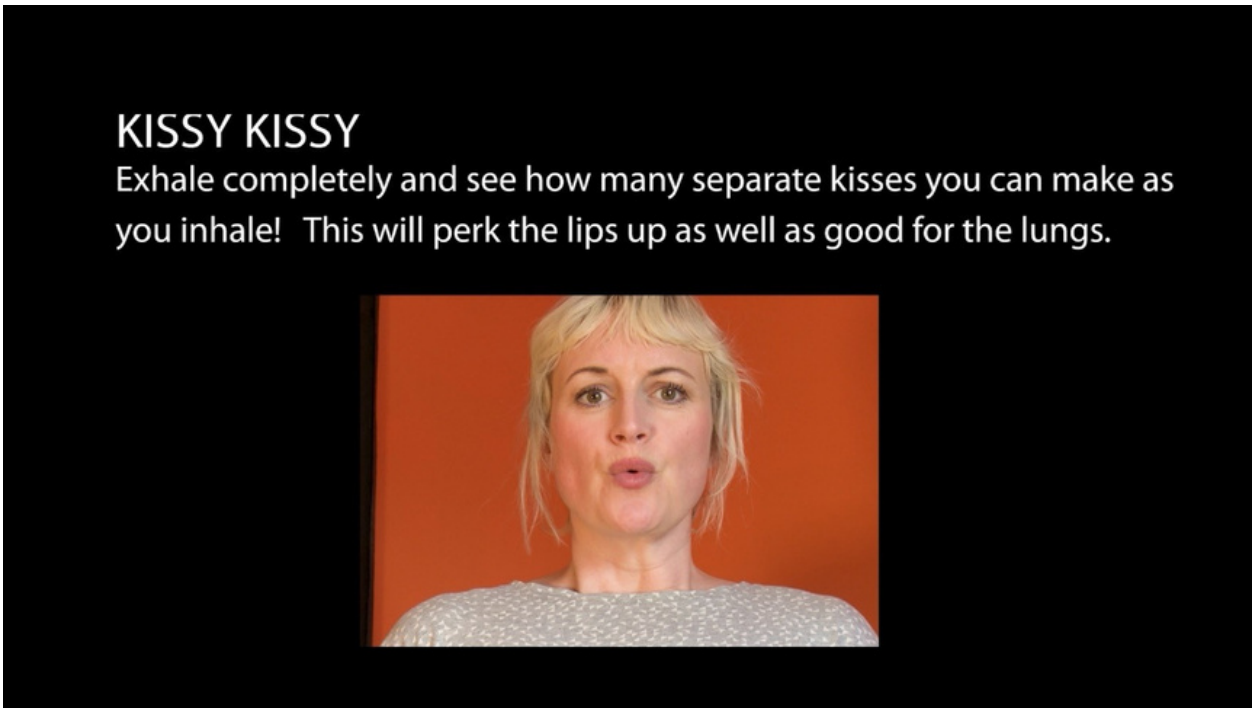
Many other useful stock phrases exist on top of the ones Peter has given you, both for when you are listening, and also for including when you are talking. But, of course, the stock phrases have to be RELEVANT to the situation, and they have to match your own personality.

Also, we have to say that there are some very “overused” stock phrases in the English language which we suggest you avoid when explaining something to others. This list includes: “You know what I mean?” or simply “You know?” Or saying the annoying “anyway” in between every sentence!

Please choose a couple of stock phrases we have learnt today and actually find a situation to use them, and see how useful they are!

# DAY 13 – CLARITY # 7 – LIP & LUNG EXERCISE

Here's a great pub quiz question. What sound can a human being do breathing IN rather than breathing OUT? 10 points if you said a “kiss” sound! This next exercise is a lovely one for perking up the lips, and you have to imagine someone that you really want to kiss. They could be someone you know, or someone you WANT to know! Get into the neutral position, or you can do this sitting. Close your eyes and breathe OUT fully this time not breathe IN!




And as you breathe in, see how many kisses you can do before you gasp! How much do you love your imaginary or real-life lover! This may seem a really silly exercise, but it is a good one. Try not to get too tensed up, you may have a real tendency to lean your neck back while making the kissing sound. Try and keep your head in the forward position and relax as much as possible. You are only meant to be exercising your lips and it's a good one for the lungs as well.

Now here are some tips about the speed of speech and how important it is to be aware of your speed.

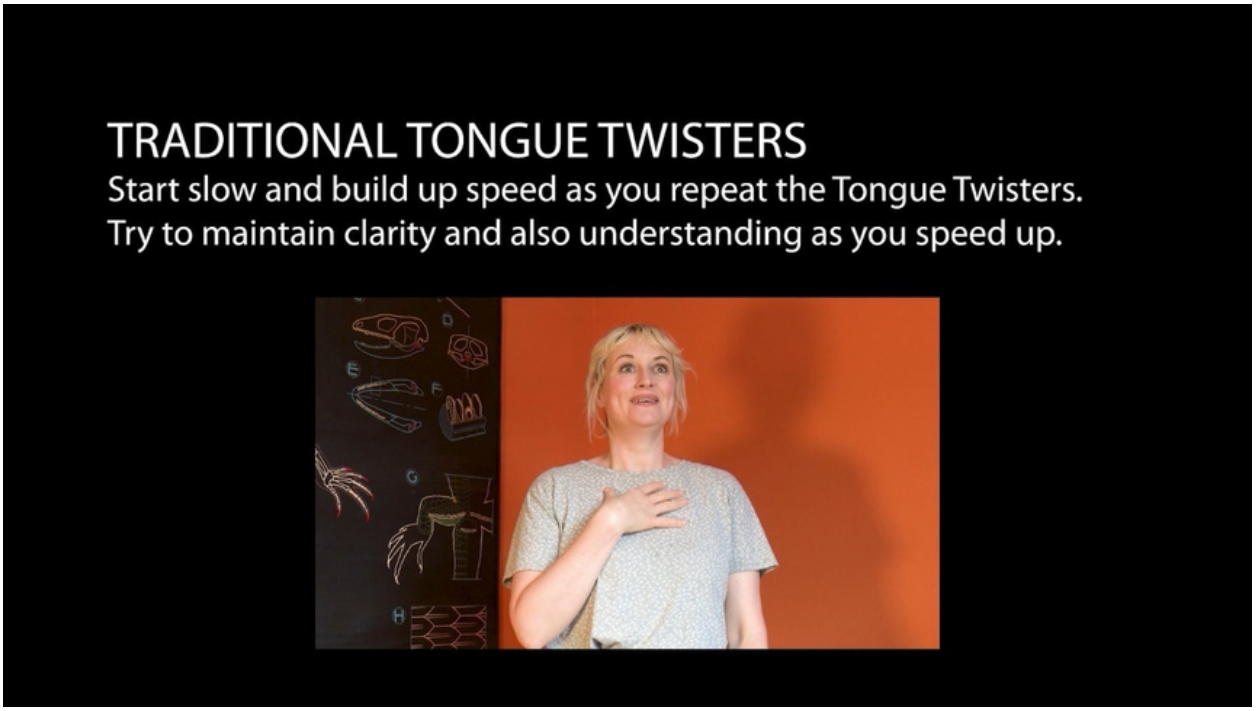
When you are talking with someone and you speak too slowly, that may be good news for you who may not be sure of your English and you need to speak the ends of all your words, but when you are TOO slow in speech, the other person may lose interest in talking to you. You may also sound patronizing. So please don't be too slow in your conversation. But of course, if you are wildly confident of your English, don’t speak too FAST either, especially if the listener doesn’t know you well, and hasn’t quite “tuned into” the style of your voice.

Balance your speed well. So not too fast, not too slow. A good guide you can follow is to listen to yourself carefully. Ensure that you are pronouncing the end syllables of every word clearly, and that will help you not speak too fast. Then by carefully observing the body language of your listener, you should look out for signs that they are getting bored, or look like they want to butt into the conversation.

That’s all for today. Soon on the course, we’ll go into detail about the language and culture differences between British English and American English. Then sections on EMPHASIS, EMOTION, PAUSES and ACRONYMS, plus introducing yourself to people and how to look after your voice so you don’t strain it!

Tomorrow, we have the final section on *clarity* when we will practice what we call “tongue twisters”.

# DAY 14 – CLARITY # 8 TONGUE TWISTERS




Traditional tongue twisters will always have their place. You will find as you go faster and faster, that your mouth and tongue will have to move much more than it does in regular speech, and these are fantastic and fun exercises to do. Just make sure you are extremely clear in your diction. As soon as the clarity goes, you know you are over the speed limit!

You will know what the words are, but make a lot of emphasis on pronouncing every syllable. The rules are that you start off at normal speed of speech and you need to get faster and faster until you find you are tripping over yourself! As you get more practise, you will find they will be a breeze! There are various ways of getting through tongue twisters, without tripping out, one method is to think of the meaning all the time. Keep thinking about the meaning, and that should keep you fairly stable as you speed up in your reading.

You know New York, you need New York, you know you need unique New York.

Susie works in a shoeshine shop. Where she shines, she sits, and where she sits, she shines.

Each Easter, Eddie eats 80 Easter eggs.

Whether the weather is cold, or whether the weather is hot, we'll be together whatever the weather, whether you like it or not.

Wilson went to Wales to watch welks being weighed.

Red lorry, yellow lorry.

I slit the sheet, the sheet I slit, and on the slitted sheet I sit.

Which wrist watches are Swiss wrist watches?

Ice cream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!

The sixth sick sheik's sheep's sick

Finally, a team of researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology say that this is the most difficult tongue twister in the world. Here we go:
Pad kid poured curd pulled cod.




## DAY 15 - AMERICAN ENGLISH DIFFERENT PRONUNCIATIONS

If you want to sound like a native in America, there are many words which are pronounced differently than in British English.

This is of course on top of the overall accent which is different in America then in the United Kingdom.

In very simple terms, and this is highly unfair to say, but usually the British accent can come over as rather “posh” and stuffy.

The American accent can be interpreted as more casual and nasal.

In this course, when we consider an “American accent”, we are talking about a General American, or “GenAm” accent, because the USA is a massive place, with many different types of accent throughout the various States and regions.

Don't worry too much about this though, unless you are wanting to do any formal acting work where you accent has to be region specific.

To be understood in general conversation, a British English accent is perfectly acceptable, and often can be much clearer for people from different areas of America to understand, as long as you are speaking clearly.

However, it is really worthwhile learning where certain words almost always have a different emphasis part, or where a word sounds completely different, UK vs US.

This is on top of the list of American words which are changed completely which we will look at in the next section.

Check out the video where Peter says the word on screen as a British person would say it, followed by the American way, and there’ll be a gap after each word for you to repeat what you hear.

| | BRITISH | AMERICAN |
|---|---|---|
| **Advertisement** | uhd-VER-tis-muhnt | AD-ver-ties-muhnt |
| **Amen** | Ah-MEN | Ay-MEN |
| **Basil** | Bah-suhl | Bay-suhl |
| **Clique** | cleek | clik |
| **Dynasty** | DIN-uh-stee | DIE-nuh-stee |
| **Either** | eye-thuh | ee-thuhr |
| **Evolution** | ee-vuh-LOO-shun | eh-vuh-LOO-shun |
| **Falcon** | FORL-cuhn | FAL-cuhn |
| **Leisure** | LEZH-uh | LEE-zhuhr |
| **Mischievous** | MIS-chiv-us | mis-CHEEV-ee-us |
| **Missile** | MIS-eye-ul | MIS-uhl |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Mobile** | MOH-bye-ul | MOH-buhl |
| **Neither** | NIGH-thuh | NEE-thuh |
| **Niche** | neesh | nitch |
| **Nissan** | nis-an | nees-arn |
| **Patent** | PAY-tuhnt | PAT-uhnt |
| **Patronise** | PAT-ruhn-eyez | PAY-truhn-eyez |
| **Privacy** | PRIV-uh-see | PRAI-vuh-see |
| **Progress (noun)** | PROH-gress | PROG-ress |
| **Project (noun)** | PROH-ject | PROJ-ect |
| **Route** | ROOT | ROUT |
| **Schedule** | SHED-jool | SKED-jool |
| **Semi** | SEM-ee | SEM-eye |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Stance** | starns | stans |
| **Tomato** | tuh-MAR-toe | tuh-MAY-toe |
| **Vase** | varz | vays |
| **Vitamin** | VIT-uh-min | VAI-tuh-min |
| **Wrath** | roth | rath |
| **Zebra** | ZEB-ruh | ZEE-bruh |




# DAY 16 - AMERICAN ENGLISH – DIFFERENT WORDS

In the last section, we listed a whole load of common American words which are pronounced differently than in the United Kingdom.

By the way, it may be that you have already been trained in American English, and need to convert the other way round as you are going to working in Britain, so this section and the previous one may be just as useful, but looking at it in reverse!

Wasn't it George Bernard Shaw who said, "The United States and Great Britain are two countries separated by a common language." English connects—and all too often divides—the U.S. and the UK.

Be aware that sometimes Americans and British people use the same word for something, but it means something different. For example, if you have a writer friend who said their new book “bombed”, in Britain, that means that it made a big impact and was generally positively received. However in the United States, saying something has bombed generally means that it was a disaster!

A “rubber” in the UK is used to erase pencil marks, but in the US it is a nickname for a condom!

In the UK “pants” mean underwear, but in the US, “pants” means trousers! In the UK you may wear “trainers” on your feet, but in US you would be talking about gym or physical fitness experts.

We’ll have more differences between countries and cultures later on in the course.

So here are various words starting with the British version, and what the word is generally known in America.

| BRITISH | AMERICAN |
|---|---|
| Aerial | Antenna |
| Autumn | Fall |
| Bank holiday | Legal holiday |
| Banknote | Bill |
| Restaurant Bill | Restaurant Check |
| Sweet Biscuit | Cookie |

| | |
|---|---|
| Savoury Biscuit | Cracker |
| Bonnet | Hood |
| Boot | Trunk /rear deck |
| Break | Recess |
| Car park | Parking lot |
| Chemist’s shop | Drug store / Pharmacy |
| Chest of drawers | Bureau |
| Chips | French fries |
| Cinema | Movie house/ theater |
| City Business District | Downtown |
| Clothes peg | Clothes pin |
| Cooker | Stove |
| Corporation | City |
| Cotton | Thread |
| Crisps | Chips |
| Cupboard | Closet |
| Curtains | Drapes |
| District | Precinct |
| Drain | Sewer pipe |
| Drawing pin | Thumbtack |
| Dressing gown | Bathrobe |

| | |
|---|---|
| Dustbin | Garbage can |
| Estate agent | Realtor |
| Estate car | Station wagon |
| Face flannel | Wash cloth |
| Filling Station | Gas station |
| Film | Movie |
| Flat | Apartment |
| Flyover | Overpass |
| Football | Soccer |
| Footpath | Sidewalk |
| Fortnight | Two weeks |
| Full stop | Period |
| Gallery | Balcony |
| Garden | Yard |
| Geyser | Water heater |
| Ground floor | First floor |
| Hairgrip | Bobbie pin |
| Holiday | Vacation |
| Hoover | Vacuum cleaner |
| Icing sugar | Powdered sugar |
| Label | Tag |

| | |
|---|---|
| Lift | Elevator |
| Lorry | Truck |
| Lounge suite | Business suit |
| Motorway | Freeway / superhighway |
| Nappy | Diaper |
| News agent | News dealer |
| Nought or “Oh” | Zero |
| Number plate | License plate |
| Packed lunch | Sack lunch |
| Parcel | Package |
| Pavement | Sidewalk |
| Penknife | Pocket knife |
| Petrol | Gasoline |
| Pillar-box | Mailbox |
| Post | Mail |
| Postal Code | Zip Code |
| Postman | Mailman |
| Pram | Baby carriage<br>Baby buggy |
| Pushchair | Stroller |
| Queue | Line |
| Receptionist | Desk Clerk |

| | |
|---|---|
| Return ticket | Round trip ticket |
| Ring up | Call |
| Road surface | Pavement |
| Roundabout | Traffic circle |
| Rubber | Eraser |
| Rubbish | Garbage |
| Saloon car | Sedan |
| Shop assistant | Sales clerk |
| Silencer | Muffler (car) |
| Single ticket | One way ticket |
| Solicitor | Lawyer /attorney |
| Stalls | Orchestra seats |
| Sweets | Candy |
| Take-away | Take-out |
| Tap | Faucet |
| Tea trolley | Tea cart |
| Telegram | Wire |
| Term | Semester |
| Time-table | Schedule |
| Tin | Can |
| Toilet | Restroom |

| | |
|---|---|
| Torch Flashlight | |
| Train Driver Engineer | |
| Trousers Pants | |
| Van Truck | |
| Vest Undershirt | |
| Waistcoat Vest | |
| Wallet Billfold | |
| Wash your hands Wash up | |
| Windcheater Windbreaker | |
| Windscreen Windshield | |

So today's homework is for you to go to YouTube and find obvious examples – obvious to you - of a strong British accent and a strong American accent. Then do as we suggested before; play sentences from both examples and pause the videos while you repeat what you have heard.

Can you feel in the way you are using your vocal equipment, and in particular the emphasis syllables and the mouth and tongue, the differences you are doing to sound "more British" or "more American"?

You may find that for the British accent, you are having to open your mouth more and with larger movements, and moving the mouth less so for American and with the sound coming from the back of your throat and forcing sound up your nose to sound more nasal.



## DAY 17 : LISTENING SKILLS

Good communication is more than just “transmitting” – we all need to effectively “receive” as well! We all need to develop effective LISTENING skills. Not only should we be able to speak effectively; we must listen to the other person's words and engage in communication on what the other person is speaking about. Active listening provides a lot more information about how to listen effectively and can help you to avoid misunderstandings.

In a conversation, many people make the mistake when listening to someone else speaking, of not truly listening to what they are saying, and simply cueing up in their head the next thought that they want to say as soon as the other person has stopped talking. In other words, they’re just waiting for the gap in conversation! This is not good. You should be listening with your full attention to what that person is saying. Don't worry

your brain will still have what you want to say ready to speak at some point later, but you may well have something to respond to what is being said much more important than your next thought you were initially going to say.

This is something that is taught to journalists and radio and TV interviewers. You can always tell the bad interviewers, who simply have a list of questions on their notepad they ask in order. A good radio or TV interviewer would not do this, and listen intently to what is being said in reply to their first question, and their next question would be related to the answer they've just heard, rather than just simply going to the next question on their pre-prepared list.

When listening, avoid judging what the other person is saying. In order to communicate effectively with someone, you don't have to like them or agree with their ideas, values, or opinions. However, you do need to set aside your judgment and withhold blame and criticism in order to fully understand a person. Adjust your nonverbal signals according to the context. The tone of your voice, for example, should be different when you're addressing a child than when you're addressing a group of adults.

Similarly, take into account the emotional state and cultural background of the person you're chatting with. Be aware of individual differences. People from different countries and cultures tend to use different nonverbal communication gestures, so it's important to take age, culture, religion, gender, and emotional state into account when reading body language signals.

Now that we're at the end of this section today, take a few minutes to answer these questions:

1 How well do you think you listen? Do you often miss things from other people?
2 What do you think can prevent you from being a good, active listener?
3 Can you think of a time when poor listening caused you a problem?

At the end of the day, a really good conversation between 2 people comes from when both talk and listen equally. It's a balancing act and it's part of the "emotional awareness" we discussed before.





## DAY 18 - SPEAKING MORE EFFECTIVLEY

When you are speaking to others, have the confidence that people WANT to hear what you have to say. Keep your volume up and maintain the power of your speech up even at the ends of sentences; many people have a bad habit of trailing away and dropping the volume at the end of every sentence. As discussed before, this is called “mumbling”. Do you do this?

Pronounce your words correctly. If you’re not sure of how to say a certain word in English, think of using a simpler word that you CAN pronounce well.

So instead of : “Can we discuss the affordability of this project?”

You may like to say: “Let’s talk money!”

To help the understanding of what you are saying, it's very important to EMPHASISE the words that will make the meaning clearer. First a business example:

"It's the blue zone area of our crops that need watering, and they need watering now."

Listen to the difference when emphasis is put on the important words:

"It's the BLUE zone area of our crops that need watering, and they need watering NOW."

Or in personal conversation:
"I've always loved you, and I have to say you're the first thing on my mind when I wake up every day"

So emphasise the important words to help this gain more emotion and power:

"I've ALWAYS loved you, and I have to say you're the FIRST thing on my mind when I wake up EVERY DAY"

Don't forget that you can use hand gestures to emphasise points as well as putting more power on individual words.

Other good tips include: Slow your speech down. People will perceive you as nervous and unsure of yourself if you talk fast. You may be extremely enthusiastic about something and want to speak fast, but try to hold yourself back.

Make sure that you keep eye contact, and also by looking at other people, you will notice if you are losing them, in other words they are finding it difficult to follow you. So you may need to actively slowdown, which will help the clarity of your speech as well.

Develop your voice. A high or whiny voice is not perceived to be one of authority. Begin doing exercises to lower the pitch of your voice, add resonance and improve clarity by doing the exercises we give you here and in other courses at Voiceover Masterclass.

Animate your voice. Avoid a monotone and boring voice and use dynamics. Your pitch should raise and lower periodically. This makes it interesting to listen to.

What pitch do you have at the ENDS of sentences? Note that in English, when you finish a sentence, the pitch normally goes down on the last syllable. When you ask a question, usually the pitch goes UP at the end of the sentence.

Use APPROPRIATE volume. Use a volume that is appropriate for the setting. Speak more softly when you are alone and close. Speak louder when you are speaking to larger groups or across larger spaces.

Effective communication combines a set of skills including nonverbal communication, attentive listening, the ability to manage stress in the moment, and the capacity to recognize and understand your own emotions and those of the person you’re communicating with.



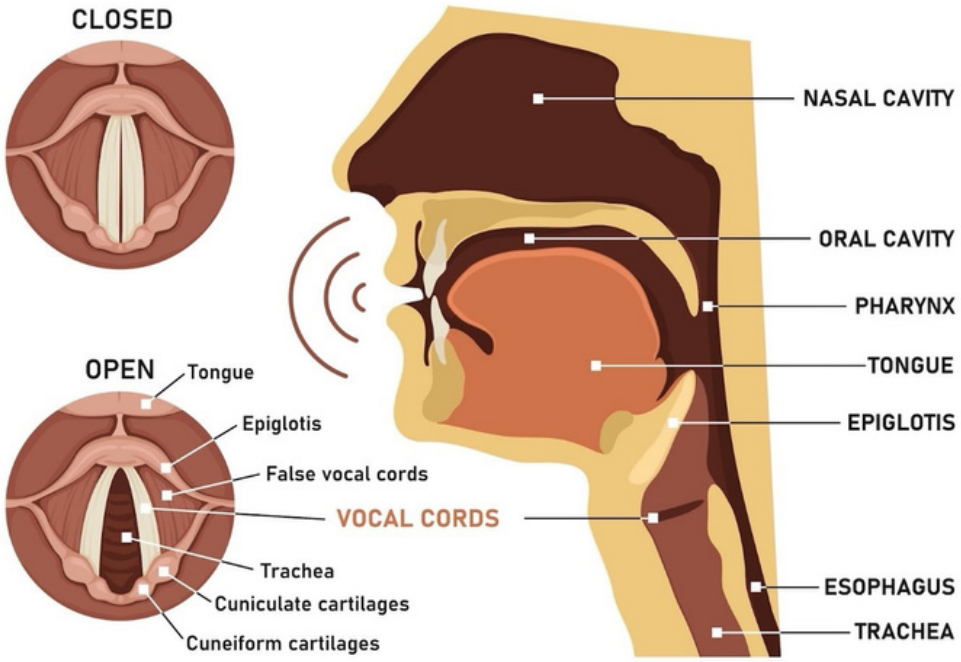

# DAY 19 - TOUR GUIDE TIPS

This section brings together various strands of this course aimed specifically at people who use their voice with the public in physical situations. In other words, we're not talking about voice actors in whisper quiet recording studios behind sensitive microphones, or even presenters in nice acoustically designed lecture theatres.

Maybe you take tourists on a historical trail round a busy city centre, or you're a server in an often loud restaurant, a teacher or trainer having to work outside or in poorly designed echoey classrooms or at a busy customer service desk talking to people all day - you get the idea.
I'm sure there are two main concerns you have.

Firstly, you want your voice to be loud enough and clear enough so what you say can be heard by others without them asking you to repeat what you're saying or them giving up on listening to you.

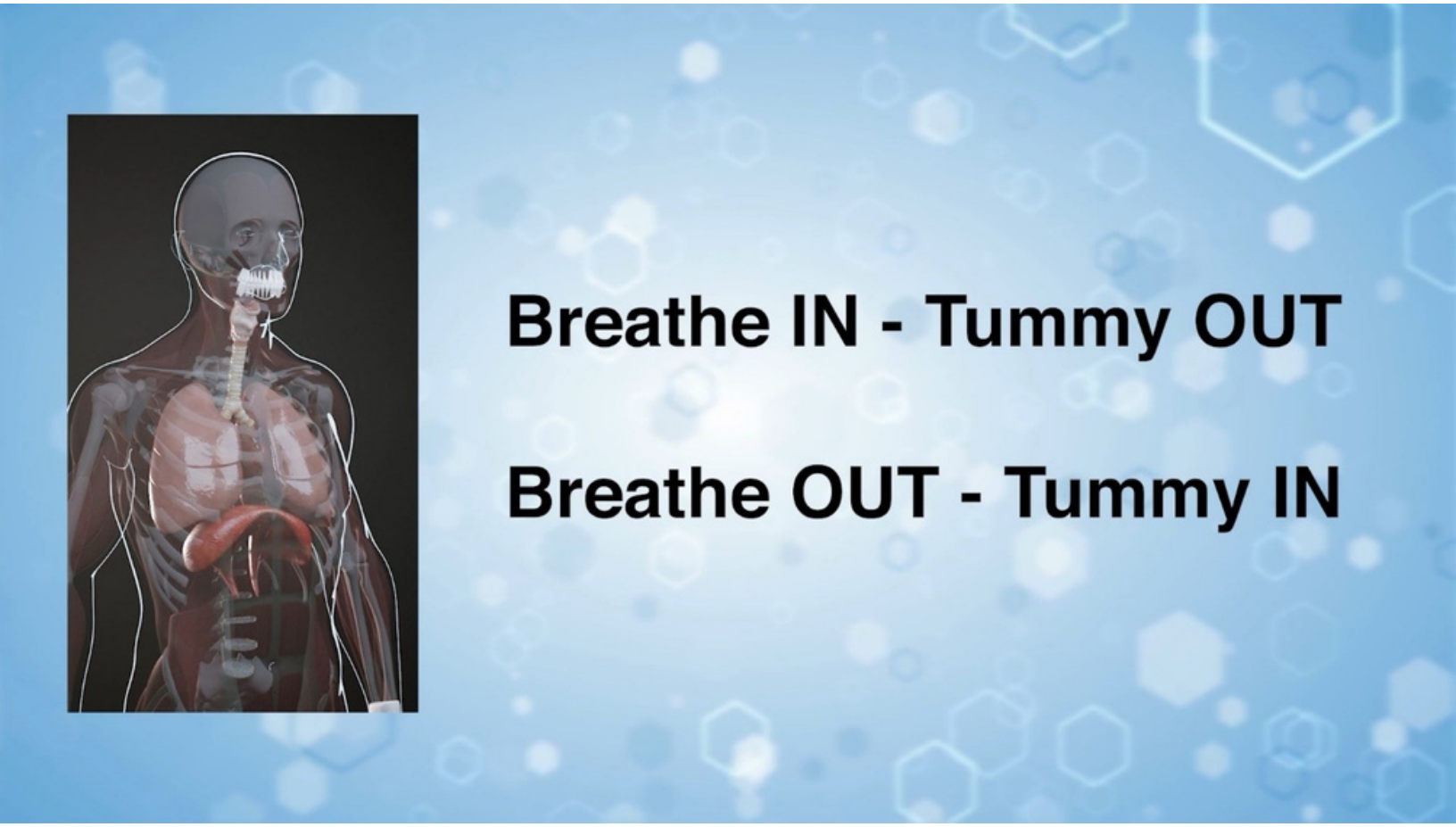
Secondly, you're aware of the constant strain on your voice in the working day, and you don't want to end up with constant sore throats that will make it even harder to communicate in your work.




Let's start with volume and power, and briefly remind ourselves of how the voice is created. Once you breathe out and engage your vocal cords, little muscular lips will come together and they move in and out at an incredible speed and that creates vibrations, and those vibrations get amplified by the pharynx. This is a tube that starts behind the nose and goes down the neck and ends at the top of the trachea and oesophagus. As well as the pharynx tube that amplifies the vibrations, the sound's quality will be changed by other resonating chambers, such as those in your nose and your mouth and your upper chest cavities.

All these amplify those initial vibrations. We articulate these vibrations to make words and song by the use of our tongue, teeth and lips.
So how can we get a more powerful voice?

It's using a combination of all the techniques we have learnt in the many voice exercise courses at Voiceover Masterclass.




DEEP BREATHING You need to be able to get out of bad habits of shallow breathing using only the upper chest. You need to learn to take in deep breaths that completely fill your lungs using the power of the often under-used but powerful diaphragm. This will give you much more "air power" to give your voice strength and power. If you inhale in front of a mirror, looking carefully at your shoulders, and they rise as you inhale, you are probably shallowly chest breathing, and not deep breathing and using the full capacity of the lungs.

Do you pull your tummy IN as your breathe IN, a habit you've may have got into to disguise your putting on some weight? That's the wrong way round! As you breathe IN, the tummy needs to goes OUT. As you breathe OUT, that's when you can pull the tummy muscles IN to help expel the air with more force. All bad habits can be broken, so start to improve your breathing today!

POSTURE Your body posture is very important. You won't be able to create a strong voice if your body is not in alignment. If you're twisted or slumped it makes it hard for your voice to come out directly and loud. Even turning your head a little can reduce the strength of your voice. Your vocal tract need to be totally in alignment so you are projecting your voice exactly in the direction you want it to go, and you're not twisting the vocal tract in any way. So think tall and turn your whole body when you need to aim your voice at different places.

PROJECTION There are two sides to this "projection", mental and physical. The mental side to it is basically imagining that your voice is "laser targeted" and it's coming out of your mouth at speed and power. Your imaginary "laser voice" is being effectively projected to your audience. That's the MENTAL attitude if you want to speak loudly.

The PHYSICAL attitude to speaking loud means that as well as not twisting the vocal tract, you need to use more air "fuel" to help the vibrations become more powerful, that's why deeper breathing is important, and also optimising your resonance using the various exercises we have on our courses. Also, many people using their voice with the public are actually more stressed than they think, and these stresses affect the voice's power badly. You may have a job that you like, but the concerns about doing it right, wanting to please, or pressure from a boss will all create strains and

tensions in the neck and shoulders. Before you know it, you're shallow breathing and the tensions and stresses will reduce your voice's power. You can try this for yourself right now if you like if you're alone ! Tense yourself deliberately. Crush in your shoulders and grit your teeth. Imagine your under enormous pressure. Now breathe in and give out a big AAAAHH as loud as you can.

OK, now really mellow out, shake out the arms. Roll the shoulders, really try to go to your happy place for a few seconds – smile – relax! Now, you'll be able to take in a huge diaphragmatic breath – and project a much more powerful AAAAHH!

What a difference! So regularly, you must check yourself to ensure that you are as relaxed as possible while staying focused and professional of course! This will help your voice power and the stamina of maintaining a good strong voice throughout your working day.

WARM-UP. Before you start any extensive use of your voice in difficult physical environments, it's essential to at least do a basic warm up. At least stretches, shoulder rolls and some deep breathing, low humming and mouth trills to get the voice clarity optimised.

So what are the practicalities when using your voice in public? If you're taking a group round on a tour, there's no point leading the group walking along and talking with everyone following, as you're not directing your voice at anyone. The ones at the back in particular are going to annoyed as they won't hear you well! Stop and face the group when you're ready to talk about the next stage of your presentation; encourage them to get closer before you start and make sure they can see you clearly.

In fact, the visual aspect of talking shouldn't be underestimated. It's human nature to "tune into" voices far better when you can see the speaker; where the expressions on the face and arm gestures can all help to make the communication stronger. What's more, YOU need to see your audience as well! Try and make eye contact with everyone as you "work the group" and get feedback as to whether you feel they are taking in what you're saying.

You'll always get some who won't return your eye contact, but you need to know if people are gaining understanding, a few regular nods as you speak can do wonders for your confidence as well. Do some look confused or or a little bored? Maybe you need to perk up the presentation somehow!

Other aspects that you need to think about when talking to the public are: USE OF LANGUAGE – Do people in your group have English as a second language? Maybe it's best to use simpler forms of words to keep everybody happy? Do you need to explain acronyms or phrases that are common in your native country but not to your trainee or visitor?

COLOUR YOUR SPEECH - Pay attention to the section we have in our voice training courses on making your voice more interesting, because the more melody add to your voice, in other words you change the frequency of the notes, and you emphasise certain words the ones that are important to your listeners, that way you're using different parts of your vocal apparatus. If you speak on the same note all the time, you're going to wear that particular part out like banging one key on a piano all day! Your listeners get a more interesting delivery from you that is full of passion, melody and colour, and you also won't get a sore throat because you're using different muscles and alternative parts of your voice.

SPEED OF YOUR SPEECH – This is another aspect to consider especially with people who are not native but everyone will appreciate a pace of speech that isn't so slow that is boring and tedious but also not so fast that you lose people. It can be hard when you're very enthusiastic about a subject to slow down, but you must think of your audience!

THE POWER OF THE PAUSE – Another issue people who can gabble away too fast is to forget to leave decent pauses in between thoughts or sentences. Pauses are so important after specific learning points, as it gives valuable seconds for that information to sink in to your listeners and also it gives you an opportunity to look at faces to see if indeed, understanding has sunk in!

DON'T READ OUT LONG NOTES – Bullet points or facts written down are fine to refer to, but don't just read out material in a live presentation. Don't rely on your notes too much. Nothing is worse than people looking at you slumped down reading pre-prepared scripts, word for word.
The way you can find out if you have any or all these issues discussed so far is to get yourself recorded. Seeing a video or audio recording will give you the opportunity to give yourself honest feedback as to what aspects you can improve.

So what about stamina and maintaining the health of your vocal equipment? We assume you're in good general health anyway, that you don't smoke and you keep your precious voice away from dusty and polluted air.

The number one easily fixable thing anybody can do to help their voice sound better for longer and in the long-term to maintain the quality so it doesn't sound "old" and "croaky" is to hydrate the vocal folds.

This doesn’t mean just downing a glass of water before giving a talk. Water you ingest today will be able to hydrate the vocal folds about a full day later, so drinking regularly is something you need to do every day.

You wouldn’t drive a car without oil in the engine would you?

Talking a lot without hydrated vocal folds can do incredible long-term damage to the voice and its quality, especially as you get older.

Drink a small glass of water every hour. Don’t go mad though, you don’t want to dilute your vital electrolytes balance as that can be dangerous.

The U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has determined that an adequate daily fluid intake for an average, healthy adult living in a temperate climate is:

| |
|---|
| About 15.5 cups (3.7 litres) of fluids a day for men<br>About 11.5 cups (2.7 litres) of fluids a day for women |

You don’t have to drink expensive bottled water, just normal tap water is fine. Get into the habit of drinking a small glass of water every hour. You can tell when you are fully hydrated, when your urine goes clear.

Also, you can tell when your vocal folds are hydrated when you discover you can speak all day with ease, and as long as you are sensible with other aspects of using your voice, you don't get a sore throat anymore.

Another tip to save your voice is not to go outside your natural tonal range of your voice.

As we learnt before, if you're surrounded by background noise that is low frequency such as traffic noise or industrial machinery, you can make your voice heard better by speaking in a higher frequency.

However, if you're doing this a lot and that pitch is way outside your natural voice you will strain it. So that's why you shouldn't do this "voice raising" for too long and use other techniques like projection and eye contact to compensate.





# DAY 20 - PRESENTING TO PEOPLE

At VoiceoverMasterclass.com, we do have complete courses on creating presentations for business and also how to make the most of talking to people in groups and on video camera, but here are some handy tips as part of this course.

When you're with a group of people and you are giving a presentation, confidence is everything. Don't feel that everyone is looking at you and wanting you to fail.

Don't also think that people are there because they are forced to, somehow you've got to convince yourself that everybody desperately wants to hear what you have to say, and they will respect you.

Just focus - blank out fears and try to relax and enjoy the experience.

Feel honoured that you have been asked to present.

Manage the situation, just be in charge and encourage people to sit closer to you and that will save your voice as well. If you really feel that you hate talking to other people, remember our breathing exercises, because as we mentioned, deep and slow breathing counteracts any anxiety's it means your heart rate can beat had a normal pattern, it allows your muscles to relax, and also deep breathing obviously brings oxygen helping you to relax further.

Don't rely on your reference notes too much. Nothing is worse than people looking at you slumped down reading pre-prepared scripts, word for word. Body language of a positive kind and regular eye contact is so important. When you're talking to one person you regularly meet their eyes don't you?

So with a group of people, you have to “work the room”. If you can't meet individual eyes as you could in a small group, you have to chunk out the room and move a group at a time.

Don't bother focusing on individual eyes, just keep your audience blurred and know your head is going in the general direction of these chunks of the gathering, and to the listeners, they will feel that you are speaking directly to them, and will carry on giving you the courtesy of attention, and hopefully listening attentively!

So if you really have to refer to notes, or even a dreaded PowerPoint, how can you not look down? For one thing is to make sure your notes are at a high level, and a lectern or a simple music stand can be extremely useful to ensure your notes or laptop are at almost eye level to you.

Apart from maybe important parts of your speech that have to be word perfect, try and make your notes just that, just bullet points of subjects that you want to talk about, and then ad-lib around them. This will make sure your presentation is much more natural.

Using a microphone? Don't get too close to it. You may “pop” the capsule maker sorts of horrible noises, and often it's not needed. If you are giving a talk in a formal lecture hall that you haven't used before, ask your friend to stand at the back before people come in, and cheque they can hear you OK at about four to five inches away from the centre of the microphone.

If you are a type of person who likes to stroll around the stage, first of all make sure this isn't going to be too distracting, but be aware of where the microphone is go back and if it's a high end conference you may have a radio microphone that goes around your head anyway which solves this problem straight away!




## DAY 21 - ACRONYMS

When you see a group of letters that don't make a word and you're a little confused by them, you are probably looking at an ACRONYM.

This is a group of letters that are the first letters of actual words. Saying or writing the acronym saves time.

Here are some of the best known acronyms in English.

BYOB – You'll likely see this acronym on an invitation card or in an email where you are invited to a party or social gathering. BYOB means Bring Your Own Bottle / Booze (slang for alcoholic drinks) Don't turn up to a party empty-handed when you've been told to BYOB – or Bring Your Own Bottle!

DOB – Date Of Birth, one of the most common English abbreviations found on official forms and documents.

AD/BC – You'll see AD and BC used with historical dates. The first stands for the Latin phrase Anno Domini (In the Year of Our Lord) and refers to dates after the birth of Christ, while the latter, self-evidently enough, is used for dates Before Christ. Recently, however, the secular equivalents CE (Common Era) and BCE (Before Common Era) are becoming increasingly popular.

AKA – also known as. This is used when referring to people who have a penname, a stage name, or some other type of alias, such as Reginald Dwight (AKA Elton John) - David Jones AKA David Bowie, and so on.

ASAP – As Soon As Possible, something your boss might add to the end of an email when your report needs to be finished fast!

AWOL – Absent WithOut Leave. Originally a military abbreviation used of soldiers or marines who had gone off somewhere without permission, 'to go AWOL' is now used casually about friends who have temporarily gone missing. It's pronounced Ay- WOL!

BO – Body Odour. If someone has BO, you'll be pinching your nose to avoid the smell.

BTW – By The Way. This is a common online abbreviation. 'By the way' is used to introduce a topic to the conversation that is not directly related to what is being said but which the speaker has just remembered. In better English, you could say: 'incidentally'.

DIY – Do-It-Yourself. This refers to decorating your home by yourself or doing your own refurbishments or repairs, rather than employing a professional.

BA, MA, BSC, MSC, PhD etc. – these are all academic abbreviations that describe the type of degree one is taking or has acquired. Respectively, they stand for Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy.

CC and BCC – These email abbreviations harken back to a time when copies of letters were made using carbon paper. CC means carbon copy and BCC means blind carbon copy, which in email terms means you are sending a copy to someone else as well, but the main recipient doesn't know.

ETA – Estimated Time of Arrival, used to let people know when you think you'll arrive. So you'd say something like, I'll be there, ETA 9 o'clock.

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions. A common abbreviation on company websites, and on promotional materials.

FOMO- Fear Of Missing Out, the feeling that everyone is having a better time of something than you are.

FYI – For Your Information. This is often used in work emails when forwarding relevant information that does not require a reply.

GSOH – Good Sense Of Humour. This is an abbreviation often used in the description of people on dating sites!

IMO – In My Opinion, another common internet abbreviation. You'll also see IMHO, which can mean either in my honest or in my humble opinion.

BLT – A well-known sandwich made up of bacon, lettuce and tomato, plus usually mayonnaise.

EDM – electronic dance music, such as house, trance and techno – the kind that has lots of BPM (beats per minute).

LOL – Laugh(ing) Out Loud. These days, LOL is one of the best-known and most useful English abbreviations, both online and in text messaging and in social media, so much so in fact that it has entered the spoken language as both a verb and a noun. Some people think it means Lots Of Love but that's not what most people think it stands for!

NEET – This is a type of person who is Not in Education, Employment or Training, and the term NEET is often used by Government departments.

OMG! – Oh My Gosh / God! An expression of surprise or disgust.

P.S. – Post Scriptum. Although seen less and less frequently now that we have email and editing, these two letters still constitute a widely understood abbreviation for adding something to a finished letter, as an afterthought.

P.T.O. – If you see this at the bottom of a document, make sure you follow the instruction to please turn over and read the other side.

R.I.P. – Rest In Peace. You'll find it on gravestones and tombstones.

RSVP – For the French Répondez S'il Vous Plait (or in English, please reply). If you receive an official invitation to an event that includes this abbreviation, make sure you let the organiser know whether you're going or not.

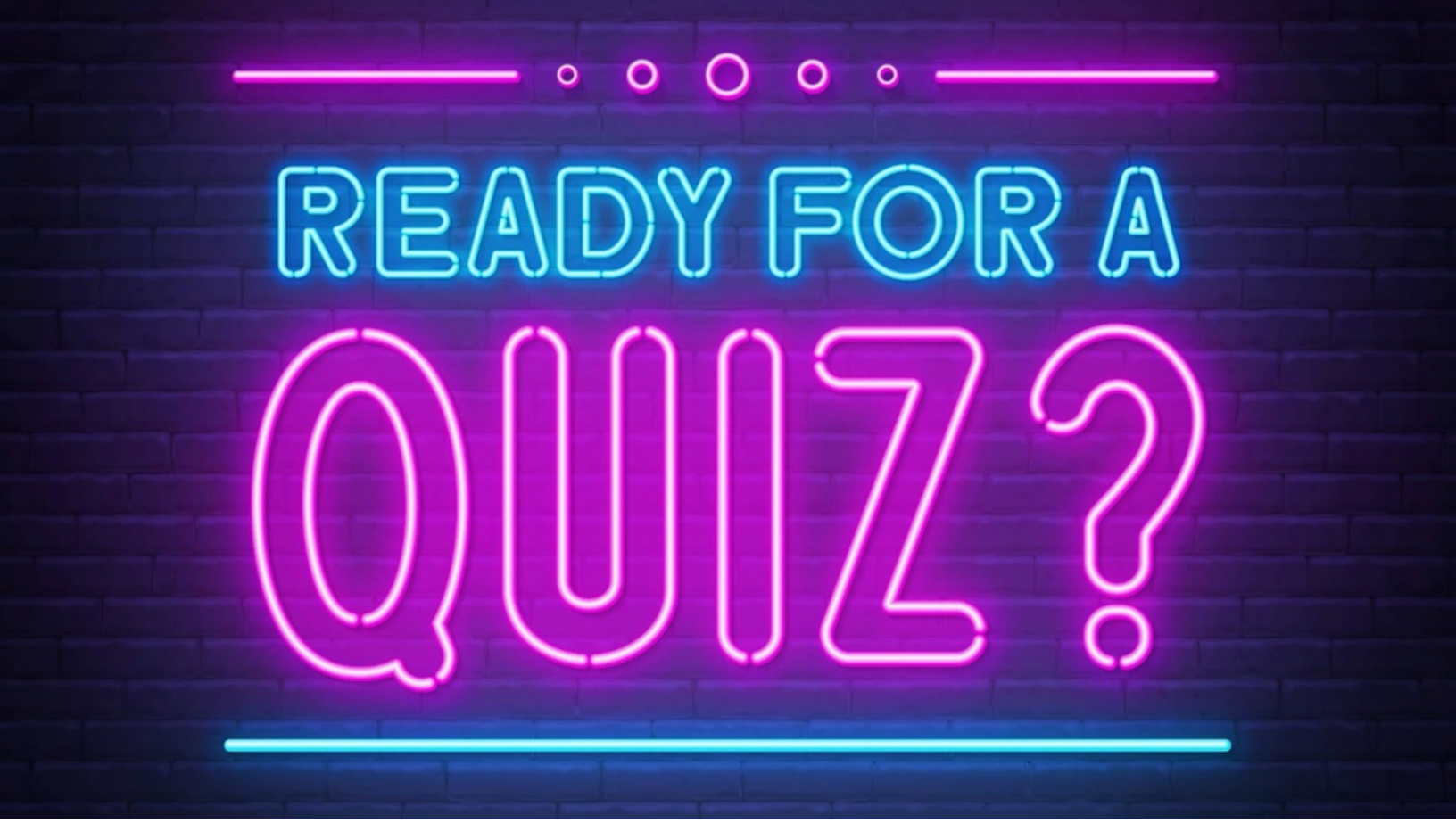
TBA – To Be Announced. If you're planning a get-together but haven't yet chosen the venue, this is the abbreviation to use. Also there is TBC – To Be Confirmed.

VIP – Very Important Person. You'll hear this used of those rooms in clubs and boxes in stadiums that are reserved for the rich and famous. It's always pronounced fully as V.I.P. and never as one word, so never "Vipp"

TGIF – Thank God It's Friday.

YOLO – You Only Live Once. So enjoy your life!

We have some very strange acronyms in the English language don't we! So we hope when you see any of these on a poster or in a document, you will now know what they mean.




## DAY 22 - ENGLISH GRAMMAR

How is your English grammar? English has many grammar rules, and every rule has an annoying exception, or two! There are words that are spelled differently but are pronounced the same; words with multiple meanings are also common. How about letters in words that are silent? On top of that the use of the word "the" can be confusing and there are many languages that don't need the article word "the".

Now there is no way we can train you on every aspect of English grammar, as that is very much outside the scope of this course, and it would be a big course, indeed many courses on its own! But what we CAN do in this particular course aimed at making your English clearer, is to ensure that you are perfectly happy with the basics of English grammar.

So in this section, we'll give you some questions, call it a quiz, a test or exam if you wish, and if you don't do well, then maybe you do need to seek training elsewhere to improve your English grammar skills. You may have got your strong native accent reduced, the speed of your voice correct, your body language, you're emphasis words, and all other aspects that we have been talking about in this course all improved, however, if you get something basic wrong with your English grammar, that is really going to stick out like, as we say, a "sore thumb!"

So here are 50 questions on English Grammar.
No cheating please, the answers are after the questions.

First, some basic sentences that have to be completed. If you've been well trained in English grammar, you won't need to think hard about the various often complex English Grammar rules, but know that some options simply "don't sound right" in your head.

The first questions are based on a well-known British TV quiz show called "Blankety Blank"! You have to guess the blanks in sentences. Let's see how many you get right. The first 10 questions have a "blank" in them that need to use either: "IS", "ARE" or "AM". But which one would you use?

When I say "BLANK", you need to choose the correct word from "IS", "ARE" or "AM".
1 – BLANK we going to be on time to catch the train?
So is the sentence:
IS we going to be on time to catch the train?
ARE we going to be on time to catch the train?
Or AM we going to be on time to catch the train? Choose now!

2- BLANK I supposed to give you my ticket?

3 – Where BLANK the stairs please?

4 – Where BLANK the elevator please?

5 – I BLANK so annoyed with you!

6 – BLANK the whole family invited to the party?

7 – BLANK I the first one here?

8 – BLANK you new here?

9 – BLANK it time for the football kick-off yet?

10 – They BLANK never going to succeed without trying!

Great! That's the first 10. Next, I'm going to give you some simple statements. I want you to turn them into questions as if you were asking somebody else. As an example: *"I am producing a training course"* So the question would be: *"Are you producing a training course?"* Got the idea?

Here we go:
11 – You are eating pasta. So what would a question based on that sentence be please? Write it down.

12 – Katy is going to the Shaka Ponk concert. What would a question be based on that?

13 – I am taking the train.

14 – Harry is watching TV.

15 – My friend is baking a cake.

16 – They are solving today's crossword.

17 – Katy and her friend are out cycling.

18 – The dog is barking.

19 – I am wearing a new suit.

20 – They are taking the tram to Manchester.

Next, I'd like you to change the sentences that are in the PRESENT tense into the PAST CONTINUOUS tense, in other words, you need to change the sentences to relate to something that happened in the past. The past continuous tense shows an ongoing action that began in the past, such as *"I was driving for work all night."* As against *"I drove for work each night".* Write down what the verbs SHOULD be to make the sentences into the past continuous tense. Here we go!

21 – I am lucky and I am earning a lot of money.
So what would the two "AM" words change into to make it into the past tense?

22 – You are a very skilled ballet dancer.

23 – They are going to the concert.

24 – I am making myself a black coffee.

25 – You are getting yourself annoyed.

26 – They are driving too fast for the speed limit.

27 – I am just sitting in the coffee shop.

28 – You are driving the car to work.

29 – They are watching a Wes Anderson movie.

30 – They are persuading me not to go.

OK, very good! Things get a little harder now!

Here are some more sentences with a BLANK that needs replacing! Which one would be the best choice for each one to create a sentence that is good English grammar?

31 - I was BLANK to ask for your help with the exam.
So is the BLANK,
WANTING – GOING or NEEDING?

32 – Will you be BLANK me for the night shift tonight?

33 – Tom stayed silent, not BLANK to say anything.

34 – That's what I've been BLANK to say to you!

35 – I was BLANK to call the police.

36 – I walked away, not BLANK to deal with the situation anymore.

37 – I am BLANK to be a music performer!

38 – He held onto the key tight, not BLANK to give it to me.

39 – Tony closed his eyes, BLANK to concentrate.

40 – I cried, BLANK to turn back the clock to before the crash.

How are you getting on? Here are the final questions and then we'll go through the answers and you can see what your score is! These questions are about words to describe extremes, or superlative adjectives!

41 – That is the BLANK movie I've ever seen.
Violenter / most violent / violentest

42 – This test is the BLANK I have ever taken!
harder / most hard / hardest

43 – Steve is the BLANK runner in the sports team.
Faster / most fast / fastest

44 – This computer is the BLANK machine ever!
unreliabler / most unreliable / unreliablest

45 - Mr Baker is the BLANK trainer I know!
stricter / most strict / strictest

46 – He is the BLANK comedian in the whole show.
funnier / most funny / funniest

47 – He was our BLANK vice-president.
famouser / most famous / famousest

48 – That's the BLANK party I've ever been to!
boringer / most boring / boringest

49 – That wine is the BLANK of the lot!
sweeter / most sweet / sweetest

50 – It's the BLANK hire car they have.
cheaper / most cheap / cheapest

Right, let's have a look at the answers now and see how you did.

1 – ARE we going to be on time to catch the train?
2- AM I supposed to give you my ticket?
3 – Where ARE the stairs please?
4 – Where IS the elevator please?
5 – I AM so annoyed with you!
6 – ARE the whole family invited to the party?
7 – AM I the first one here?
8 – ARE you new here?
9 – IS it time for the football kick-off yet?
10 – They ARE never going to succeed without trying!

Next we asked you to turn statements into questions.
11 – You are eating pasta. The question - Are you eating pasta?
12 – Katy is going to the Shaka Ponk concert. Is Katy going to the Shaka Ponk concert?
13 – I am taking the train. Are you taking the train?
14 – Harry is watching TV. Is Harry watching TV?
15 – My friend is baking a cake. Is your friend baking a cake?
16 – They are solving today's crossword. Are they solving today's crossword?
17 – Katy and her friend are out cycling. Are Katy and her friend out cycling?
18 – The dog is barking. Is the dog barking?
19 – I am wearing a new suit. Are you wearing a new suit?
20 – They are taking the tram to Manchester. Are they taking the tram to Manchester?

Next, changing the sentences in the PRESENT tense into the PAST CONTINUOUS tense.

21 – I am lucky and I am earning a lot of money.
This should change to: I was lucky and was earning a lot of money.
22 – You are a very skilled ballet dancer. You were a very skilled ballet dancer.
23 – They are going to the concert. They were going to the concert.
24 – I am making myself a black coffee. I was making myself a black coffee.
25 – You are getting yourself annoyed. You were getting yourself annoyed.
26 – They are driving too fast for the speed limit. They were driving too fast for the speed limit.
27 – I am just sitting in the coffee shop. I was just sitting in the coffee shop.
28 – You are driving the car to work. You were driving the car to work.
29 – They are watching a Wes Anderson movie. They were watching a Wes Anderson movie.
30 – They are persuading me not to go. They were persuading me not to go.

Now, what about the choices of WANTING, GOING or NEEDING?

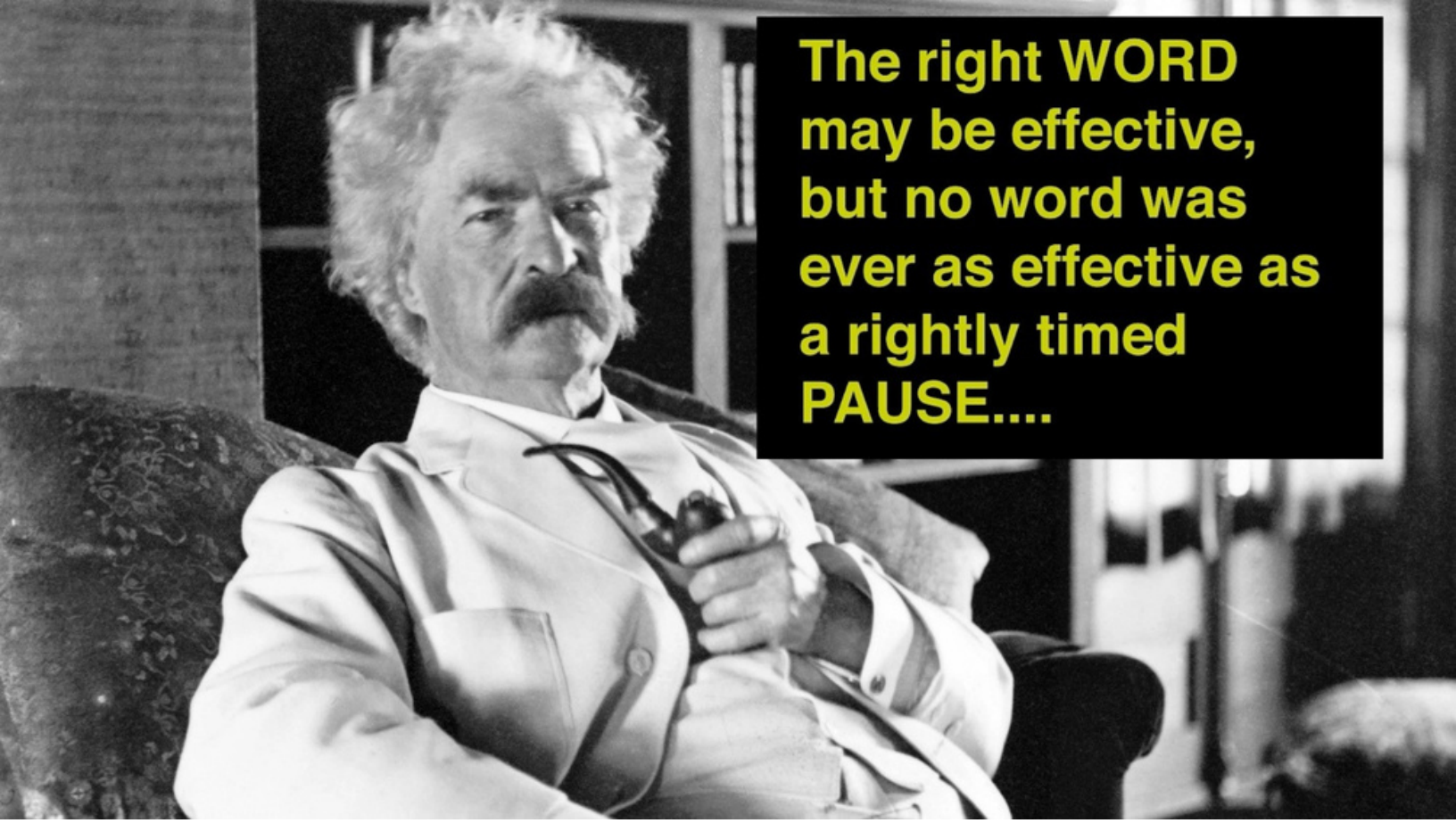
31 - I was GOING to ask for your help with the exam.
32 – Will you be NEEDING me for the night shift tonight?
33 – Tom stayed silent, not WANTING to say anything.
34 – That's what I've been WANTING to say to you!
35 – I was GOING to call the police.
36 – I walked away, not WANTING to deal with the situation anymore.
37 – I am GOING to be a music performer!
38 – He held onto the key tight, not WANTING to give it to me.

39 – Tony closed his eyes, NEEDING to concentrate.
40 – I cried, WANTING to turn back the clock to before the crash.

Finally, the section on superlative adjectives!
41 – That is the MOST VIOLENT movie I've ever seen.
42 – This test is the HARDEST I have ever taken!
43 – Steve is the FASTEST runner in the sports team.
It would only be "FASTER" if we were comparing him with someone else, so the answer is FASTEST, if I didn't tell you about anyone else!
44 – This computer is the MOST UNRELIABLE machine ever!
45 - Mr Baker is the STRICTEST trainer I know!
46 – He is the FUNNIEST comedian in the whole show.
47 – He was our MOST FAMOUS vice-president.
48 – That's the MOST BORING party I've ever been to!
49 – That wine is the SWEETEST of the lot!
(Yes, we ARE comparing this time, but it's not SWEETER, it should be SWEETEST!)
50 – It's the CHEAPEST hire car they have.

So count up your score out of 50. What did you get?

If you are disappointed to find you didn't score as well as you thought you would, it's really worthwhile to as we say "brush up" on your English grammar as it will help you a lot in your communications.




# DAY 23 - USING PAUSES

Mark Twain said " The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed PAUSE".

If you have the confidence when you're speaking to someone or giving a presentation to leave a pause of just the right duration, this will intrigue your listeners to know what is going to come after the pause.

And they will be absolutely anticipating it, and should give it their utmost attention.

Leaving a pause before something important can be as effective sometimes as emphasising what you were going to say in the first place.

Obviously, we all have to breathe, so there needs to be gaps in your speech anyway, but you need to try to creatively put pauses in to help people to take in new, important information and to assimilate it.

Pauses can add important structure to whatever you're saying and make it far more memorable.

You must have the confidence that other people aren't going to butt in. Keep eye contact on the pause, and make it look like you're about to say something else.

The way you do this on a pause, is to make sure that you have got some inhaled breath, and it's obviously you have inhaled breath ready to say something!

So you hold your breath while it's inside you, and your body language is such so that when you stop, your audience will know that you're about to say something again!

# Tone of voice
# Appearance
# Attitude
# Emotions
# Voice



## DAY 24 - WORD EMPHASIS

Communication is a multi-faceted thing. When it comes to speech, it's not just the words that you are saying that is the message, the overall communication includes the tone of voice, the way you look, your appearance and attitude, your emotions, as well as all the attributes we've been working so hard on this course; speaking in a nice resonant and clear voice. Body language and posture also comes into how successful you'll be as a communicator, and if you're giving a speech, a presentation, or teaching something, the structure of what you're saying – the order of facts and information - can also be important to how well the listeners take it in and remember it.

But one easy way to make any kind of communication easier to understand by the other person and truly engaging with them, is by understanding and using EMPHASIS or STRESS. Human beings like variety and surprises in speech as they do in music.

Contrast is always important in the arts, think of the best pieces of music both from classical days where things go from very quiet to full orchestra, and rock groups like the UK's Muse or France's Shaka Ponk who can go from desperately quiet to all out extreme ultra heavy rock throughout their music.

In speech, by stressing the right words, and by truly trying to understand how your listeners are understanding you at every moment you're talking, in other words getting feedback, this can help your communication enormously. Pitch and volume variety and also stressing certain important words makes speech more interesting, and particularly if you're talking about something that the other person has to remember, to put a bit more emphasis on the important words will help that information get into their heads much easier. Plus, anything is better than hearing a speaker drone on and on where every word and sentence seems to be on the same note and nothing varies.

Of course some broadcasters can emphasise the wrong words, and it sometimes sounds plain annoying when newsreaders go into a "sing song" autopilot delivery and emphasise the LINK words rather than the IMPORTANT words in their bulletin - a typical rookie broadcaster mistake.

When voice over artists or actors first start out, they are often told to simply underline the words in the script that should be emphasised, but after a while you get to understand how to do this automatically. Of course, it's not just individual words in whole sentences, but every word has its own internal stressed syllables, and these have to be addressed well in order to pronounce them properly.
Pro-TEC- ting EX-ercise MIKE-rophone and so on!

Emphasis doesn't just mean making syllables louder where they have to be, but you'll probably notice that it sounds good often to raise the pitch up on a word as WELL - do YOU do this?

Go to YouTube and find a Ted or a Ted-X presentation on a subject you're interested in and hear how some of the world's top speakers present. You won't hear many monotone speakers on stage at these events. They know their subjects well, but it's how the information is got across that makes all the difference.

A general rule of thumb when it comes to what words do you emphasise is that you put a bit more power under words that people may not have heard before, or it's an important part of what they are learning about, or you are negating what they think already.

The underlined word you should emphasise in order to get hopefully a more accurate reply!

Excuse me can you tell me where the furniture department is?

What word would you emphasise to highlight your sincere feelings?
You know, I've always loved you.

What two words would you emphasise here to suggest that the sale is over?
No, you're wrong. The sale ended last week.

What two words would you emphasise to say you definitely don't want to skydive tomorrow.
No, I definitely don't want to do that.

I'm sure you get the idea by now. The other thing to remember is that changing emphasis on some words in sentences changes completely the meaning. Take a look at this sentence:

Are you coming for dinner next Tuesday?
Emphasise ARE and it’s as if the person still hasn’t made their mind up yet.

ARE you coming for dinner next Tuesday?
Emphasise YOU and it’s as if you have already spoken to others in the group.

Are YOU coming for dinner next Tuesday?
And so on.



## DAY 25 - EMOTION IN SPEECH

Please put emotion, excitement and variety in your speech unless it’s a very solemn occasion. The problem with speaking on the same note all the time is that listeners can get extremely bored if there's no variety in pitch or tone.

When there’s no excitement or interest, it means it's extremely difficult to put any emphasis words in your delivery. Psychologically, if your listeners know how sentences are going to sound to finish and how the next one is going to sound like as well, they “zone out” of actually listening to the content of what you're saying no matter how important it is. There's no excitement, passion, structure to what you're saying. There's no signposting to some sort of conclusion or important information that you could be imparting.

So you need to add some sort of melody to your voice. Different cultures have different types of melodies and we have our own accepted melodies in the Western world and in the modern age. In an average small sentence, and this is very general, RAISING the pitch as you go through it often adds excitement and interest and LOWERING in pitch throughout a sentence shows seriousness or sadness.

There are two basic ways that people speak in a longer sentence. You'll find it a mixture of going up and going down depending on what is being said. But as well as the words you're conveying, you are also communicating emotion and that's why monotone delivery is such a killer of emotions.

You'll also find that if we have a rising inflection at the end of a sentence, it means we have a question or we're uncertain of what we're saying is true. If we come down at the end of a sentence, it shows that we've concluded what we wanted to say.

Try to add variety to the speed and variety to volume on different types of words as well, putting a little bit more force on the words that are important or on names or terms that may be new to listeners. This makes everything all the more listenable.

You need to also keep the volume consistently above a certain level. Many people tail off at the ends of their sentences into mumble and you can't really hear them anymore because they're down here like that. That will make it obviously extremely hard to get the full understanding of what they're saying. So do the “mumble test” again and check that you don't tail off at the end of your sentences.



## DAY 26 - THE ELEVATOR SPEECH

Today we’re going to help you introduce yourself to new people you meet. Have you heard of an “elevator speech”? It’s sometimes called the “elevator pitch”. Learning how to create one can help your career! An “elevator speech” is a quick summary of your background, experience, and purpose. The reason it's called an elevator speech is that it should be short enough to present during a brief elevator ride.

Imagine that you happened to be in the elevator with your boss and you rarely see them, so it's an opportunity to ask for a promotion or a pay rise! They may not even know who you are at all, so maybe your elevator pitch is a brief introduction before launching into asking for a raise! Whatever, it's a useful skill to learn especially if English is not your first language.

This speech is all about you: who you are, what you do, and what you want to do (if you're job hunting) or are doing. Your elevator pitch is a way to share your expertise and credentials quickly and effectively with people who don't know you. Done correctly, this short speech helps you introduce yourself to career and business connections in a compelling way. It can help you build your network, land a job, or connect with new colleagues on your first day of work.

Here are some top tips: Keep your elevator speech short and sweet, aiming to deliver your message in 45 seconds or less – probably closer to 30 seconds. Say who you are, what you do, and what you want to achieve. If what you want to explain or ask for is complex, you're asking to meet up when that person has more time to be with you. Your goal is to focus on the essentials. Be positive and persuasive with your limited time. Focus on what you want to do, not what you don't want to do.

Practise what you plan to say. Deliver your speech to a friend or record it, so that you can be sure that your message is clear. The more you practise, the better your elevator speech. So when and how should you use an elevator pitch? Well, if you're job searching, you can use your elevator pitch at job fairs and career expos, and online in your LinkedIn summary, for example. An elevator speech is a great way to gain confidence in introducing yourself to hiring managers and company representatives.

You can also use your elevator pitch to introduce yourself at networking events. If you're attending professional association programmes and activities, or any other type of gathering, have your pitch ready to share with those you meet.

By the way, your elevator pitch is just as useful in virtual networking events, interviews, and career fairs as it is during in-person gatherings. Your elevator pitch can be used during job interviews, especially when you're asked about yourself.

You need to be persuasive. Even though it's a short pitch, it should be compelling enough to spark the listener's interest in your idea, organisation, or background. Share your skills. Your elevator pitch should explain who you are and what qualifications and skills you have. Try to focus on assets that add value in many situations. This is your chance to show off a bit—avoid sounding boastful, but do share what you bring to the table.

As we've said, the best way to feel comfortable about giving an elevator speech is to practise it until the speed and "pitch" come naturally, without sounding robotic. You will get used to varying the conversation as you practise doing so. The more you practise, the easier it will be to deliver it when you're at a networking event or job interview.

A good tip is to record your elevator pitch... This will help you know whether you're keeping within the time limit and giving a clear message. Be positive and flexible, open-minded and flexible. This is your chance to make a great first impression with a potential contact. Don't waste it. Mention your goals. You don't need to get too specific.

Keep it simple and focused. If you have a business card, offer it at the end of the conversation as a way to continue the dialogue. If you don't, you could offer to use your phone to share your contact information.

Let’s consider a few things to avoid: Don't speak too fast. Yes, you only have a short time to convey a lot of information. But don't try to fix this dilemma by speaking quickly. This will only make it harder for listeners to absorb your message. Avoid rambling. This is why it's so important to practise your elevator speech. While you don't want to over-rehearse, and subsequently sound stilted, you also don't want to have unfocused or unclear sentences in your pitch, or get off-track. Give the person you’re talking to an opportunity to respond or interrupt. Keep your energy level high, confident, and enthusiastic. Vary your voice to keep listeners interested, keep your facial expression friendly, and smile.

Don't limit yourself to learning just a single elevator pitch. Be ready to tailor your pitch depending on who you are speaking to. You may also want to have a more casual, personal pitch prepared for social settings when you’re interested in meeting someone new, as we say in the UK “Chat up lines”.

So now, think of a few scenarios and pretend you only have 30 seconds or the duration of an elevator ride to do the following:

*a) Introduce yourself to the boss who doesn’t know you. Explain what you do and could you meet to discuss a few ideas you have.*

*b) Introduce yourself to a stranger who you are attracted to. Explain that you have seen them around and wondered where they work and if they’d like to meet after work?*

*c) Introduce yourself to someone from another company department and ask if they could assist with a project you have in your own area of work.*



## 27 - VOICE STRAIN

Here are some great tips to prevent you getting a sore throat simply by using your voice a lot during the day. Maybe you are a trainer, a teacher, or you are a professional voice over or actor. The first tip is as we've already said is to keep hydrated, regularly drink water throughout the day every day, whether you're working your voice that day or not. Your vocal folds need to be fully hydrated or they will become dry and brittle and can cause long term damage to your speaking voice.

Obviously, you should not smoke at all, and avoid all areas that have a lot of smoke or dust, make sure you are breathing as much as you can through your nose, and never through your mouth. You also need to not use your voice when you don't need to. If you know you have a big speech in the afternoon then take a rest in the morning, keep away from people and this will help you a lot.

Remember that vocal muscles are the same as any other muscles - as well as exercise, muscles need to rest to remain strong. Vocal fold tissues are very sensitive - they need to take occasional breaks from vibration in order to avoid inflaming.

When you use your voice in a loud situation, here's a handy tip that you may never have considered before. Instead of just speaking louder, speak smarter. For instance, if you're in a restaurant or an exhibition centre where there's some awful music playing on some tinny speakers above you, then fight the tinniness!

If you speak in a lower register, that'll be a different frequency range from the horrible high frequency music, and you should be clearer to your listener. Or if you're in a car or bus which has got an awful lot of low frequency background noise going on all the time, then a slightly raised pitch of voice will cut through cleaner. If you exaggerate your articulation as well and really move the mouth, this also helps for your speech to be understood better in a loud environment. Try it!

Check if you have a cough habit, this is another thing that some people may not be aware of, and if you clear your throat a lot, it could be more of a habit than a need to do so. If you have to clear your throat, try doing it very gently. So drink water, eat well, sleep well and be healthy - that's the first thing.

Pay attention to the section we have on making your voice interesting, because the more melody add to your voice, in other words you change the frequency of the notes, and you emphasise certain words the ones that are important to your listeners, that way you're using different parts of your vocal apparatus. If you speak on the same note all the time, you're going to

wear that particular part out. Just imagine if you played the same note on the piano all day and left the others alone, do you see what I mean? So that will be a win-win situation. You won't get a sore throat because you're using different muscles and parts of your voice creation equipment, and also a benefit is that your listeners get a more interesting delivery from you that is full of melody and colourful conversation.




And finally think about using technology if you use your voice a lot such as tour guide work, regular presentation work or teaching, think about buying one of the portable battery operated voice amplification systems. These things have a little headset microphone and there is a loudspeaker around the waist area that is strapped on with Velcro. Once you have it installed, you may feel rather self conscious to begin with, but you don't have to project as much and this will really look after your voice. We recommend the Chattervox system, check it out!



## 28 – CULTURE DIFFERENCES – THE UK

In this section we going to take a look at the culture and customs of the United Kingdom. This is only a very rough guide, but if you have never visited before, this may give you an essential head start so you get to understand the locals and you don’t get into embarrassing situations!

It's wrong to stereotype of course, and there will be plenty of people you meet who won't fit any of what we're about to say, but you've got to start somewhere haven’t you!

First of all, when you are meeting new people, it is polite to hold out a hand and expect the person to shake it up and down three or four times and then release it. It's acceptable to look into each other’s eyes and smile while you shake hands. After the meeting, or social event that you're at, it's also important to shake hands again as you say goodbye with a friendly greeting.



If you're meeting for a social event, maybe a dinner party in somebody's home, it is acceptable to take a small gift, usually flowers, a box of quality chocolates or a bottle of wine.

What do you wear? Well in the United Kingdom over the last 40 or 50 years there's been a gradual decline in formal wear both in business settings like in offices and in smart public places like restaurants, theatres and when travelling on airlines and cruise ships.

These days, casual wear can be fully acceptable in many situations, as long as it is smart. However, if you are going to a business meeting, and you don't know the people there, it's best to wear a suit and tie for a man or a smart business suit for a woman, at least for the first visit.



What about titles? How do you address new people in the UK? Well, in addition to formal professional titles, such as Reverend, Doctor or Professor, it is polite to refer to men with ‘Mister’ and women as ‘Mrs’ (if they are married) or ‘Miss’ (if unmarried) and then followed by their family name or “surname”. Only use a person’s first name when they invite you to do so, especially in a business setting.

The use of business cards is declining quite a lot in the United Kingdom, and there certainly is no ceremony when handing them over like you may find in Japan for example. Business cards are just used for practical purposes to carry information, and don't be surprised if you find the person you have given your business card writes some notes on it, which of course would not happen in a culture where business cards have much more importance.



When you are invited to a business meeting, make sure you are on time or even a little early. However, if you are invited to a social event, such as visiting someone at their home, it is socially acceptable to be about 10 or 15 minutes late, but never early as that could be embarrassing if your guests are not ready yet.

At someone’s home, as you enter the door, smile, shake hands, present your gift and ask if you should take your shoes off before going into the home.



Never smoke or vape in someone's home, and not either in business meetings. Most British companies will have a designated outdoor smoking area you will have to use.

So how do British people communicate? Quite often they are direct, however, before they get to know you, they may seem rather shy or reserved or may even appear a little distant or slightly rude.
There is a wide range of different types of communication style, and you will really have to listen carefully and try to read the mood of the people you are meeting, to find what "type" they are.



Some British people speak in an understated or deliberately downbeat or self-depreciating way, often "mock complaining" about everything, when they don't really mean it. Or they'll use condescending sarcasm, trying to be funny, whereas others are pretty straight talking.

But most people are very friendly, so make the effort to get to know new people, and keep that smile on your face and a big tip - always remember people’s names!



At the dinner table, table manners are “continental”, so the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right hand while eating.

If you are served your food before anybody else, make sure you don't start to eat until everyone on your table has been served their food.

At a formal meal, you may have to enter the room and stand at the table until you are invited to sit down by the host.



“Toasts” are given at formal meals when the host will raise a glass (usually wine but a soft drink is acceptable) and will invite the guests to honour a person or an event such as an anniversary. The guests then raise their glass and repeat the spoken toast before taking a sip of their drink.

Once you are sat at your table, make sure never to rest your elbows on table as this is seen as rude. If you want to take a break from eating during the meal, and you haven't finished your food, place your fork over the knife in a cross shape.

When you have completed eating and don't want any more food, put the fork to the left of the knife facing upwards on your plate.



If invited to a meal at a restaurant, the person who has asked you to come usually pays. Do not argue about the payment at the end; simply offer to buy them a meal at a later time.

With British people, in general friendly conversation, it’s best to avoid talking about religion, politics or to ask people too much about their job at a social event. It’s certainly taboo to ask someone what they earn. However, with sport if you are certain that you know the sports team or players that you new friend supports, it’s fine to ask them about their sporting heroes.

Finally, here’s a big tip for both business and leisure meetings with new people, do not be overly familiar with people you do not know well.

Good luck in the UK!



## 29 – CULTURE DIFFERENCES – THE US

Yesterday, we looked at the culture and customs of the people of the United Kingdom and how British people like to be addressed, and how to meet them, and things to avoid discussing when you are in their company. Today will look at the meeting of people from the United States.

In the United States, people use similar types of name titles as they do in the United Kingdom, but usually things are a little bit more informal. Men are still called “Mister”, married women are still “Mrs”, and unmarried women are misses, and when someone has a honorary title such as Professor, it's best to use it all the time, calling them “Professor Smith” or whatever every time you need to, and not just when you first meet them.



By the way, if you have a title yourself, it's best not to use this yourself when you are first introducing yourself to other people. It looks like you may be showing off. However, many people think that “showing off” is a definite American trait!

Many Americans tend to look you in the eye and tell you exactly what they think, without thinking about subtleties like your possibly hurt feelings. They are not often being deliberately rude though, it's just the American way of learning to be very open and transparent, without hiding anything. Its best therefore, for you to be direct and open as well in conversations with Americans. Particularly in a business negotiation, don't be vague or you look like you may be hiding something, and of course don’t lie or double cross people in any business deal. If you want them to know something, tell them the full facts and the details and be as open as they may well be with you.



At a business meeting, when you meet somebody, shake hands like you would in the United Kingdom, however instead of just smiling, you need to say some sort of pleasant and short greeting as well while shaking hands such as “pleased to meet you”, or “hi, how are you?”

By the way, if you’re asked a question like “How are you?”, it’s just an expression, you don’t need to answer every detail of your current medical condition! Just say, “Fine”, or ignore the question and just say “Hiya!”. After introductions, Americans will soon be calling you by your first name without any title, and if you are handing out your business card to people, don’t be offended if they shove it in their top pocket and don’t even look at it. Business card etiquette is a strong oriental custom but in the USA the cards are just a means to get information to someone else.



In a SOCIAL situation, it's usually best these days not to shake hands at all, but to simply nod, smile, and say “hello!” or “hi!” You might like to raise a hand while you say this. In fact, it's best not to have any physical contact at all, until you get to know people better. And try and keep your social distancing. Don’t “get in someone’s face” as it’s called!

When you are leaving a business situation, sometimes it's customary to shake hands again, sometimes it’s not, especially if the business meeting has not gone well. You really need to see what other people are doing. Interestingly, on departure, many Americans say things they don't mean in practical terms. Something like, “see you later!” And you may get confused by hearing this thinking that you do have an agreed timed appointment to meet them again later that day, but it's just an expression that does not mean anything has been arranged. They may also say something like “see you around!” or “Have a good day!” Your reply could be something like, “You as well!” or “Great! Be seeing you!”



When are you meeting businesspeople, do not take any gift with you, unless it is a genuine sample of the merchandise that you are trying to sell, as America has very strict anti-bribery laws.

However, if you are going to a social gathering, such as a party, or you are invited to somebody's house for a meal, it’s customary to take along wine, a pack of quality beers, flowers or chocolates or a small household object like an ornament.

At a meal, American food is generally served “family style” with big plates handed round the table for you to take what you like as it passes you, rather than everyone being given ready plated-up meals from the kitchen. This is a good system as you can avoid taking what you don’t like or food that you know you have a digestion problem with without upsetting the hosts. Just make sure you don’t take a portion of food too big without leaving enough for everybody else, and certainly don’t start eating your meal until everyone is ready.



As in the UK, it’s very rude to lean your elbows on the table and you mustn’t smoke or vape at somebody’s house without being offered the opportunity. In a restaurant, it is illegal to smoke inside in most US states as well as illegal to smoke in workplaces.

By the way, if you are invited to a restaurant, the person who invited you has therefore agreed to pay for you. It’s rude to argue to pay your share at the end of the meal; just say thank you and offer to pay next time.

If you're visiting someone’s home, always go to the front door and not to the side or garage door, which may not be tidy or clean, and make sure you are on time or no more than 10 minutes late.



If you are going to be later than this, it's good etiquette to call and apologise and say when you WILL be arriving. If on the invitation there is a finish time as well as a start time, make sure you observe this and leave by the time the event is meant to finish.

In conversation with people at a social event in America, do not discuss controversial subjects such as race, religion, politics and certainly not the rights and wrongs of abortion laws.

Be wary of using humour until you are sure you know the type of people you are meeting, and certainly don’t swear unless you’re sure it won’t cause offence. We hope this is useful to you! Good luck!



# 30 - SUMMARY

We hope you have found this course interesting and have got lots of ideas and exercises from it that you can use to improve your English to make it sound like you are more British and / or American, and make it easier for native English speaking people – or so-called “Anglophones” - to understand you and to empathise with you.

Remember, it's not just a matter of being clear in speech, you surely also want other people to relate to you and to like you, and if you are for example a tourism guide, the more people like you, the more likely you will get higher tips afterwards and get booked again! So think about the type of people you are dealing with - consider their own backgrounds, customs and etiquette. Mix into your prepared “script” on your tours some of the idioms and special phrases we have given to you and your tourists will love you all the more!



If you are working in a call centre and calling up native English speakers, we hope your English clarity has improved during the last 30 days. Once you have done the exercises and continue to do them so the “muscle memory” sticks, you be more easily understood by the callers.

You won’t be asked to keep on repeating things, and so you’ll increase your efficiency, but you will make a stronger relationship with your callers - you will sound friendlier and maybe even funny, especially if you get to use some of the strange colloquialisms that British and American people use everyday.

Although you may need to speak in English all day in your work, we strongly suggest that you do some formal practice every day, not just on our exercises but on specific English grammar skills as well, and do these on your own to improve the clarity and precision of your English.

Make sure you are breathing correctly, nice and deeply from the diaphragm. Read aloud for at least 10 minutes a day. Record yourself and play it back to check how it’s progressing. As well as important key phrases, may I suggest you also pick up an English book at random, or a news website, and then record yourself reading English text. Then, play back the recording without looking at the text, and see if you and ideally also a native English friend as well, can fully understand absolutely everything. They don't even have to physically live close to you, you may have a friend the other side of the world who is a native English speaker, and you can e-mail audio or video files to them to listen to and to give you feedback on. Is every syllable as good as you can get it?

When you play back your recording, be hard with yourself, do you still hear words you know don’t sound that “English”? Are you speaking slowly enough? Are you leaving the right pauses in between sentences to aid your listeners in understanding you better? Are you putting the emphasis on the right syllable on the words and on the right word in the sentence? Is your volume level high enough? Are you making sure your volume doesn’t trail off at the ends of sentences? You need to learn to speak with enthusiasm and confidence to an imaginary person the other side of the room, to ensure you don’t slip into “mumble mode”.

Remember when you are practising, to be very patient with yourself. Mental attitude is very important when it comes to learning any new skill, and remember when you first learnt your native language. That wasn't done in a matter of weeks was it?

One tip that will help you make your new improved English automatic, is to memorise key phrases that you use all the time, and get those to absolute perfection. The key phrases that you need to remember are those that you use every day, maybe in your work.

They could be phrases that are specific to what you do all day. Obviously, you would have the general greeting phrases, the hello's, and the goodbye's, and so on, but in your everyday life in your employment or in your leisure hours, there must be quite a few phrases that you need to say all the time. So, get those absolutely right and that will help enormously in making the rest of your speech flow automatically improve to that same standard. If there are long sections that you need to remember, split them up into sections.

Another very important tip is to try and train your "inner voice" to be "English". In other words, try your best to "think in English". Once you do this, you won't be tempted to think in your native language - then translate this literally into English. A literal word-for-word translation may be simply wrong or not exactly what you want to say.

One thing you may not think is important, is your name, because you have been saying it since you are a child, yet it may be a type of name that is difficult for native English people to understand straight away. Some non-native people even change their first name, to make it more native English friendly, maybe by using a nickname, or by shortening their main first name. Whatever you decide to do, make sure you say it slowly and clearly, so people know how to say your name, and also your title and your company name as well if that is relevant.

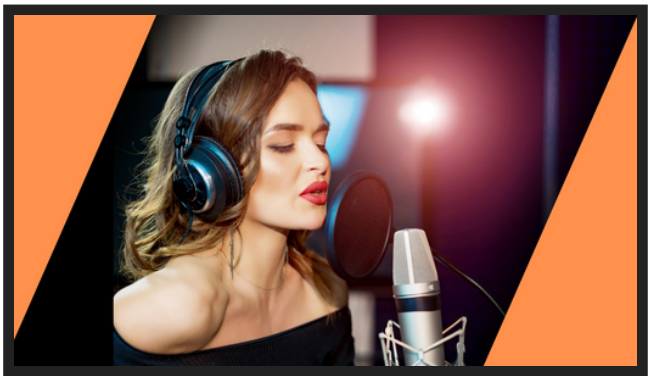
Another trick you can use is to imagine that you are someone else, and this is what actors do all the time.

Earlier on, we recommended that you find a speaker on the Ted Talk platform, or a YouTuber who has the voice style that you admire and has a voice type close to your own.

If you keep their face in your head when you're speaking, almost as if you were imitating them, that can help an awful lot in keeping you on track and remembering all the things that we've gone through in this course.

Thank you very much for taking this course and very good luck with everything.

The team at [VoiceoverMasterclass.com](VoiceoverMasterclass.com)



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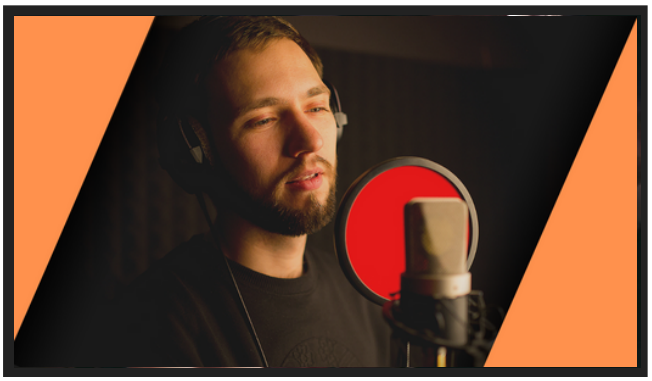
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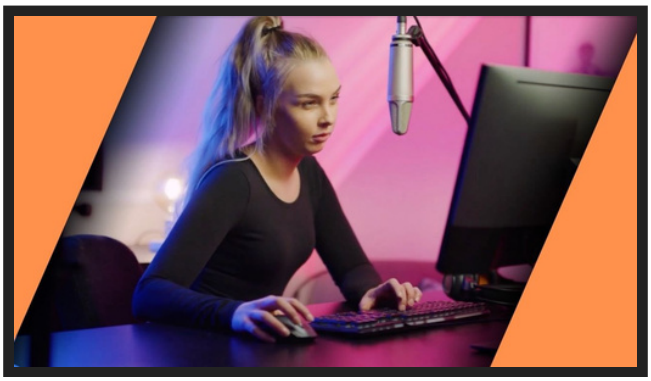


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