

Talk a Lot

Foundation Course

List of Common Weak Forms in Spoken English

- In spoken English we often use the **weak forms of function words** instead of the strong forms to make the sound spine stand out more clearly. This is true of Standard Pronunciation, dialects, and accents
- The weak form is often made by replacing the vowel sound in the strong form with a **Schwa sound: uh**
- Most function words that have weak forms are **monosyllabic** – they have only one syllable
- If we use strong forms when we should use weak forms, we sound **too formal** and it is more difficult for people to understand us, because the sentence stress is incorrect. Communication is reduced
- If a function word comes **at the end of a sentence** we usually use its strong form, rather than its weak form, e.g. "What are you looking for?" (for) or, "Who are you writing to?" (too)
- If we want to show emphasis or contrast, we can vary the **intonation** by using strong forms where we would normally use weak forms, e.g. "What did *you* think of the book?" (yoo)

articles & determiners	weak	strong
a	uh	ei
an	uhn	an
any	uh nii	e nii
some	sm	sum
such	sch	such
that	th_	that
the	thi or th	thee

verb "be" & auxiliary verbs	weak	strong
am	uhm	am
are	uh	ar
be	bi	bee
been	bin or bn	been
is	uhz	iz
was	wz	woz
were	w	wer
do	duu or d	doo
does	dz	duz
had	hd or uhd	had
has	hz or uhz	haz
have	hv or uhv	hav
can	kn	kan
could	kd	kuud
must	mst or ms	must
shall	shl	shal
should	shd	shuud
will	uhl	wil
would	wd	wuud

conjunctions	weak	strong
and	uhn	and
because	b kz	bi koz
but	b_	but
if	uhf	if
or	uh	or
than	thn	than

prepositions	weak	strong
about	uh bau_	uh baut
as	uhz	az
at	uh_	at
by	b	bai
for	f	for
from	frm	from
of	uhv	ov
out	au_	aut
to	t	too
with	w	with

pronouns	weak	strong
he	hi or i	hee
her	h or uh	her
him	im	him
his	iz	hiz
I	uh	ai
it	i_	it
its	uh_s	its
me	mi	mee
my	m	mai
our	ar	auw
she	sh	shee
their	th	their
them	thm	them
there	th	their
they	th	thei
us	uhz	us
we	wi or w	wee
you	y	yoo
your	y	yor