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 <u>for</u>?" (for) or, "Who are you writing <u>to</u>?" (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