

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

by Matt Purland

Learn how to Pronounce English like a Native Speaker

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syllables syllables syllables

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Level: Easy

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Page 25 Blank Template – for use with any sentence

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Instructions

Thank you for downloading this free material.

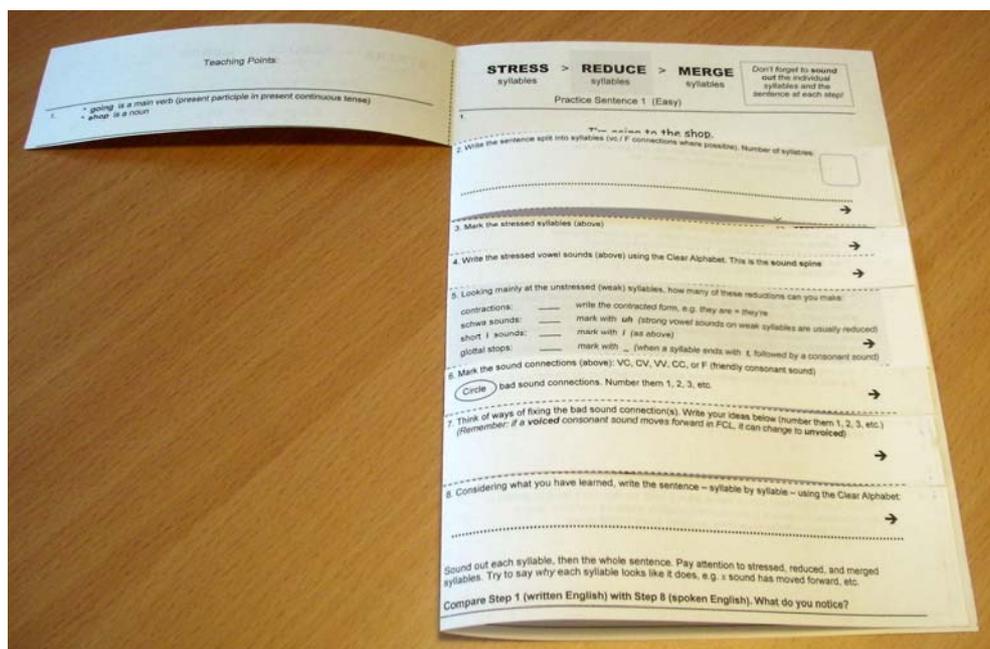
The aim of this pronunciation material is to give students an opportunity to practise working with connected speech in spoken English in a self-study environment. Students should work through each handout systematically, checking their answers at each step. Students will benefit because they will begin to see the patterns that repeat in this method time after time.

If you have any questions or comments, we'd love to hear from you! Please feel free to contact us here: <https://purlandtraining.com/>

The level of this material is: **Elementary** to **Pre-Intermediate**.

Method:

1. Print both pages of a set (e.g. Practice Sentence 1, pages 1 and 2) back to back, so that they are on either side of the same piece of paper.
2. Hold the page landscape way up and fold it in half in the middle.
3. Hold the page so that the blank page is facing you, then cut along the dotted lines on the right-hand side of the page (see picture below).



4. Follow the instructions from step 1 to step 8. At the end of each step, turn over the flap to check your answers and read the accompanying notes.
5. Try to work methodically, completing one step at a time. Try not to read ahead! If you can't think of what to do, then turn over the flap to reveal the answer.

Notes for Teachers:

1. While the aim of this material is for students to work on their own and practise using connected speech away from the classroom, you could of course work through the different practice sentences *with* your student(s), guiding them through each point. This might be especially relevant if your students are new to connected speech and phonics. It could also be beneficial if you yourself are not familiar with this method of teaching pronunciation.
2. You could encourage your students to do follow-up activities linked to the different steps, e.g. after step 4. you could ask them to think of more content words that have the same stressed vowel sounds as in the practice sentence, and make a new sentence – or encourage them to think of (or find) another sentence that has the same stress pattern... and so on.
3. Another option is to use the 8-step process with your own sentence, using the blank template on page 25. Try to elicit all the answers and explanations from the student(s), while guiding them as necessary.
4. At the end of step 8 students are directed to compare the original written English version of the sentence with the spoken English version in Clear Alphabet. The question “What do you notice?” is intended to provoke discussion around the differences between the two forms, for example, which written letters are not pronounced. Or, are there any silent letters in the original spelling which are visible in the Clear Alphabet version? And so on.
5. On the back of each handout there are links to several free downloadable resources that might be useful to students who want to study this method further. *Talk a Lot Foundation Course*, in particular, will be helpful because it expands on this method in far more detail than the handouts can.

Final Note:

Enjoy working with stress, sounds, and connected speech! After a little practice you will soon find yourself unexpectedly hearing and noticing linking, elision, glottal stops, schwa sounds, and so on, in the normal everyday speech patterns of native English speakers – and then begin adding these features to *your* spoken English too!

Matt Purland

Ostróda, Poland, 22nd October 2012

Fold →

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Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 1 (Easy)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

I'm going to the shop.



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're

schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)

short i sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)

glottal stops: _____ mark with **ʔ** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. x sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

1. * **going** is a main verb (present participle in present continuous tense)
* **shop** is a noun

2. * Only **going** has more than one syllable
* The word is broken between the verb **go** and the suffix **ing**
* **I'm** is pronounced as one syllable, *not* as **I am**

3. * **go** is stressed because it is a main verb
* suffixes are not usually stressed in English; **ing** is never stressed
* **shop** is a one-syllable noun, so the whole word is stressed

4. * **eu** is a diphthong; **o** is a short vowel sound
* The stress pattern in this sentence is: o O o o o O

5. * **I'm** is already a contraction
* The words **I'm**, **to**, and **the** all have their vowel sounds changed (reduced) to a schwa sound. If we pronounce these words with strong vowel sounds, i.e. **Aim**, **Too**, and **Thu**, these syllables become too strong and the stress pattern doesn't work. For stressed syllables to stand out, the other syllables must be weaker – there are no mountains without valleys!
* There is one short **i** sound, but no glottal stops, because no syllables end with **t**

6. * The only bad connection is the vv connection between **go** and **ing**
* The rest of the sound connections are either vc or with friendly consonant sounds (F)

7. * We always use intrusion with vv sound connections
* In this case **w** is the sound that occurs naturally when you finish saying **go**

8. * **shop** is a phonetic word – it looks like it sounds
* There is an embedded schwa sound after **t** and **th**. We don't need to write it in Clear Alphabet, because it is pronounced naturally when we say each sound
* Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying every sound slowly

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syllables syllables syllables

Practice Sentence 1 (Easy)

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

1. I'm going to the shop.

2. I'm go ing to the shop.

6

3. I'm / go ing to the shop.

4. I'm eu go ing to the o shop.

5. contractions: 0 I'm go ing to the shop.
schwa sounds: 3 uh uh uh
short i sounds: 1 i
glottal stops: 0

6. I'm go ing to the shop.
F 1 (vv) F vc vc

7. I'm go ing to the shop.
I (w)

8. uhm Geu wing t th Shop.

Fold →

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 2 (Easy)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

We wanted to see some gorillas.



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're

schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)

short **i** sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)

glottal stops: _____ mark with **_** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. *x* sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

1.
 - * **wanted** is a main verb (past simple)
 - * **see** is a main verb (infinitive)
 - * **gorillas** is a noun

2.
 - * **wanted** is split after the **n** sound, because it is a friendly consonant sound. This means that we can 'rest' on the **n** sound before moving to the next syllable
 - * **gorillas** is split twice, both times after a vowel sound, to give two easy vc sound connections

3.
 - * **wanted** is stressed on the verb part not the suffix
 - * **see** is a one-syllable verb, so the whole word is stressed
 - * **gorillas** is stressed on the middle syllable

4.
 - * **o** and **i** are short vowel sounds; **ee** is a long vowel sound
 - * The stress pattern in this sentence is quite regular: o O o o O o o O o

5.
 - * Past simple positive verbs can't be contracted, because there is no auxiliary verb
 - * The words **to** and **some** have their vowel sounds reduced to a schwa sound. The suffix **ed** contains a schwa sound. The weak syllables on either side of the stressed syllable in **gorillas** have schwa sounds, rather than the strong **o** and **a**
 - * The vowel sound in **We** is reduced to a short **i** sound, making the weak form **wi**
 - * We don't need glottal stops, because no syllable ends with **t** followed by a consonant sound

6.
 - * The only bad sound connection is the cc connection between **wanted** and **to**
 - * The rest of the sound connections are either vc or with friendly consonant sounds (2nd and 6th)

7.
 - * We use elision to remove the first consonant sound: **d**
 - * By changing the cc connection to a vc connection, we make the phrase much easier to pronounce
 - * There is no need to put a glottal stop, because the sound before **d** is a vowel sound (schwa), so a vc sound connection remains after elision

8.
 - * Stressed syllables always begin with a capital letter in the Clear Alphabet
 - * The "s" of plural nouns is always pronounced **z** in Clear Alphabet
 - * Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying every sound slowly
 - * Enjoy saying the weak syllables together: **t t** and **sm g**. They all have an embedded schwa sound, as does **lz**

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 syllables syllables syllables

Practice Sentence 2 (Easy)

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

1. We wanted to see some gori llas.

2. We wan ted to see some go ri llas.

9

3. We wan ted to see some go ri llas.

4. We wan ted to see some go ri llas.

5.

contractions:	0	We	<u>wan</u>	ted	to	<u>see</u>	some	go	<u>ri</u>	llas.
schwa sounds:	5			uh	uh		uh	uh	uh	
short i sounds:	1	i								
glottal stops:	0									

6. We wan ted to see some go ri llas.

7. We wan ted to see some go ri llas.

8. wi Won t t See sm g Ri lz.

Fold →

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syllables syllables syllables

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 3 (Easy)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

I do not like wasting time.



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're

schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)

short **i** sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)

glottal stops: _____ mark with **_** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. *x* sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

1.
 - * **do not** is stressed because it's a negative form
 - * **like** is a main verb (present simple)
 - * **wasting** is a gerund and **time** is a noun; together they form a noun phrase

2.
 - * Only **wasting** has more than one syllable
 - * The word is broken after the first vowel sound, to make a vc connection

3.
 - * The three stresses together on **do not like** make a strong emphatic statement
 - * **wasting** is stressed on the first syllable, because **ing** is a suffix
 - * The stress pattern is: o O O O o o

4.
 - * Say only the stressed vowel sounds in order: **oo, o, ai, ei, ai**
 - * The mix of long vowels, short vowels, and diphthongs in this sentence means your mouth has to move around a lot!

5.
 - * Although they are stressed syllables, **do not** would normally be contracted to **don't**
 - * There are no schwa sounds, perhaps due to the large number of stressed syllables (although in very fast speech the first word **I** could be reduced to a schwa)
 - * There is one short **i** sound – on the suffix **ing**
 - * A glottal stop replaces **t** at the end of the second syllable

6.
 - * There are two bad cc sound connections, which we need to change to vc or friendly connections (F)

7.
 1. We delete the problematic **t** sound (elision) and replace it with a glottal stop, which leaves a friendly sound connection. We add a glottal stop to give this important keyword a stronger emphasis
 2. We can't delete the **k** sound, so we move it forward (FCL). It's already an unvoiced consonant sound, so we don't need to change it

8.
 - * **sting** is a phonetic syllable – it looks the same in both normal and CA spelling
 - * Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying every sound slowly
 - * Practise saying the sentence with the first syllable reduced: **uh** instead of **ai**

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
 syllables syllables syllables

Practice Sentence 3 (Easy)

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

1.

I do not like wasting time.

2.

I do not like wa sting time.

7

3.

I / / / / /
 do not like wa sting time.

4.

I oo o ai ei ai
 do not like wa sting time.

5.

contractions: 1 I don't like wa sting time.

schwa sounds: 0

short i sounds: 1 i

glottal stops: 1 -

6.

I don't like wa sting time.

vc 1 (cc) 2 (cc) vc F

7.

I don't like wa sting time.

E/GS FCL

8.

ai Deun_ Lai Kwei sting Taim.

Fold →

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Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 4 (Easy)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

We had a great weekend.



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're

schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)

short **i** sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)

glottal stops: _____ mark with **ʔ** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. *x* sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

1.
 - * **had** is a main verb (past simple)
 - * **great** is an adjective
 - * **weekend** is a noun

2.
 - * Only **weekend** has more than one syllable
 - * The word is broken after the first vowel sound to make a vc connection
 - * It's surprising how many common English words have only one syllable!

3.
 - * **weekend** is stressed on the second syllable
 - * **had** and **great** are one-syllable words, so the stress is on the whole word
 - * The stress pattern is regular: o O o O o O

4.
 - * **a** and **e** are short vowel sounds
 - * **ei** is a diphthong

5.
 - * **had** cannot be contracted as a main verb, only as an auxiliary verb
 - * The article **a** is usually pronounced as a schwa sound: **uh**
 - * We can reduce the vowel sound **ee** in **We** to a short **i** sound
 - * A glottal stop replaces **t** in **great** because the next sound is a consonant: **w**
 - * **wee** is not reduced because it's part of a 2-syllable compound noun, which usually keep the strong vowel sound on their weak syllable, e.g. daytime / **Dei taim**

6.
 - * There are two bad cc sound connections – a cv and a cc
 - * We need to change both of them to either vc or friendly connections (F)

7.
 1. We usually use FCL to change a difficult cv sound connection into an easy vc connection. In this case the **d** sound moves forward
 2. Because **t** is at the end of the syllable and the next sound is a consonant, we automatically delete the **t** (elision) and replace it with a glottal stop. Without the glottal stop the phrase would sound like “grey weekend” – **Grei wee Kend**

8.
 - * Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying every sound slowly
 - * The main keyword in this sentence is **great**, so you could put extra stress (emphasis) on this word

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
 syllables syllables syllables

Practice Sentence 4 (Easy)

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

1. We had a great weekend.

2. We had a great wee kend.

6

3. We / had a / great wee / kend.

4. We a ei e
had a great wee kend.

5.

contractions:	0	We	<u>had</u>	a	<u>great</u>	wee	<u>kend</u> .
schwa sounds:	1			uh			
short i sounds:	1	i					
glottal stops:	1				-		

6. We had a great wee kend.
 vc 1 (CV) vc 2 (CC) vc

7. We had a great wee kend.
 FCL E/GS

8. wi Ha d Grei_ wee Kend.

Fold →

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Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 5 (Easy)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

I will pick up something for dinner.



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're

schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)

short i sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)

glottal stops: _____ mark with **ʔ** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. *x* sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

1. * **pick up** is a phrasal verb, meaning “get” or “buy”
* **dinner** is a noun
* **something** is a pronoun, so not a content word and not normally stressed

2. * **something** is broken between the two words of the compound pronoun, to make a friendly (F) connection
* **dinner** is broken after the first vowel sound to make a vc connection

3. * **pick up** is a phrasal verb, so it’s stressed on both parts
* **dinner** is a two-syllable noun with a suffix, so it must be stressed on the first syllable
* The stress pattern is: o o O O o o O o

4. * The three stressed syllables are all short crisp vowel sounds

5. * In normal speech **I will** is usually contracted to **I’ll**
* The vowel sound **ai** in **I’ll** can be reduced to a schwa sound; the vowel sounds in the function words **some** and **for** are schwas – we want to be able to say them as quickly as possible; the suffix **er** is always pronounced as a schwa sound
* There is one short **i** sound on **thing**
* We don’t need glottal stops, because no syllable ends with **t** followed by a consonant sound

6. * There are two bad sound connections – 1 x cv and 1 x cc
* There are three friendly (F) connections thanks to the syllables that end with **l**, **m**, and **ng**

7. 1. We move the **k** sound forward (FCL) so that it begins the next syllable and a vc connection is made, which is much easier to pronounce than a cv connection
2. We can’t delete the **p** sound, so we have to move it forward to make the syllable: **psm**. It’s better for us to “front-load” consonant sounds at the beginning of a syllable than to have them at the end – unless they are friendly: **l**, **m**, **n**, or **ng**

8. * There is an embedded schwa sound between the **ps** and **m** sounds in **psm**. Practise saying this syllable a few times
* Focus on practising the weak syllables that have embedded schwa sounds: **psm**, **f**, **n**
* Make the stressed vowel sounds very short, crisp and loud: **Pi**, **Ku**, **Di**
* Some native speakers would stress the first syllable in something – **Sum tting** – either for emphasis, or to make the rhythm of the sentence more regular
* Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying every sound slowly

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Practice Sentence 5 (Easy)

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

1. I will pick up something for dinner.

2. I will pick up some thing for di nner.

9

3. I will pick up some thing for di nner.

4. I will pick up some thing for di nner.

5. contractions: 1 I'll pick up some thing for di nner.
schwa sounds: 4 uh uh uh uh
short i sounds: 1 i
glottal stops: 0

6. I'll pick up some thing for di nner.
F (1 cv) (2 cc) F F vc vc

7. I'll pick up some thing for di nner.
FCL FCL

8. uhl Pi Ku psm tting f Di n.

Fold →

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Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 6 (Easy)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

I passed my exam yesterday!



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're

schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)

short i sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)

glottal stops: _____ mark with **_** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. x sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

- * **passed** is a main verb (past simple)
 - * **exam** is a noun
 - * **yesterday** is an adverb
- * **passed** is pronounced as one syllable: **Parst**. The sound at the end is **t** not **d**
 - * **exam** is broken after the first vowel sound **e** to make a vc connection
 - * **yesterday** is broken after the first two vowel sounds, to make vc connections
- * The whole word **passed** is stressed; **exam** is stressed on the second syllable
 - * **yesterday** is usually stressed on the first syllable, but here it is stressed on the last
 - * By doing this, the stress pattern becomes nice and even: o O o o O o o O
- * There is a mix of stressed vowel sounds: **ar** is long, **a** is short, and **ei** is a diphthong
- * We can't contract verbs in past simple positive, because there is no auxiliary verb
 - * The weak syllable **e** in **exam** should be reduced to a schwa sound; the spelling **er** in a word, e.g. in **yesterday**, is always a schwa sound
 - * There are no short **i** sounds in the weak syllables
 - * Although the spelling is "ed" we know the sound is **t**, so there could potentially be a glottal stop here
- * There are two bad sound connections that we need to change: cc and vv
 - * The rest are easy vc or friendly (F) connections
1. We delete the **t** sound (elision) – the normal way out of this cc connection. We don't need to add a glottal stop because another consonant sound remains – **s** – which we need to move forward, leaving a vc connection. This makes **ai Par smai**, which is the same as **I pass my** (present simple). However, because we know the context – **yesterday** – our brain 'hears' and understands past simple: **I passed my**
 2. We use intrusion in vv connections; the sound at the end of **my** is **y**
- * Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying every sound slowly
 - * **I** could be pronounced as a schwa sound – **uh** – rather than the fuller form **ai**. Practise the sentence both ways
 - * The letter **x** is normally represented by the sounds: **ks**
 - * There are two embedded schwa sounds: **y** and **st**
 - * There isn't a weak form of the function word **my** in Standard Pronunciation, although in some regional accents, e.g. Midlands, it will be reduced to **mi**

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
 syllables syllables syllables

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 6 (Easy)

- I passed my exam yesterday!

- I passed my e xam ye ster day!

8

- I / passed my e / xam ye ster / day!

- I ar passed my e a xam ye ei ster day!

- contractions: 0 I passed my e xam ye ster day!

schwa sounds: 2 uh uh

short i sounds: 0

glottal stops: 1

- I passed my e xam ye ster day!

vc 1 (cc) 2 (vv) vc F vc vc

- I passed my e xam ye ster day!

E/FCL I(y)

- ai Par smai y Ksam ye st Dei!

Fold →

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 7 (Medium)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

The appointment was at eight o'clock.



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're

schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)

short i sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)

glottal stops: _____ mark with **_** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. *x* sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

1. * **appointment** is a noun
* **eight** is a number
* **clock** is a noun

2. * Only **appointment** has more than one syllable
* The word is broken after the first vowel sound to make a vc connection
* The second break is between the main word **appoint** and the suffix **ment**

3. * **appointment** is stressed on the middle syllable
* **eight** and **clock** are one-syllable words, so the stress is on the whole word
* The stress pattern is: o o O o o O o o

4. * **oy** and **ei** are diphthongs
* **o** is a short vowel sound

5. * The verb **was** cannot be contracted
* There are 5 schwa sounds: both unstressed syllables in **appointment**; **was** (main verb **be** is not usually stressed); the function word **at**, and **o'** in **o'clock**
* Because of the following vowel sound, the schwa in **the** changes to **ii** which can be reduced to **i**. * Glottal stops replace **t** at the end of three different syllables

6. * There are six bad cc sound connections – 1 x vv, 2 x cc, and 3 x cv. We need to change all of them to either vc or friendly connections (F)

7. 1. We add a **y** sound (intrusion) to make the connection vc; 2. & 3. We delete the **t** sound (elision) and add a glottal stop, to leave a friendly connection (F); 4. We change the **z** sound from **was** to **s** (assimilation) and move it forward to make a vc connection; 5. Here we *could* move the **t** sound forward: **uh Tei t Klok**, or use elision and a glottal stop: **w s_ Ei t Klok**; this second option feels more natural; 6. The **t** sound moves forward: **Ei t Klok**

8. * Five of the nine syllables have embedded schwa sounds – practise saying them:
y mn_ w s_ t
* Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying every sound slowly

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

Practice Sentence 7 (Medium)

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

1. The appointment was at eight o'clock.

2. The a ppoint ment was at eight o' clock.

9

3. The a ppoint ment was at eight o' clock.

4. The a ppoint ment was at eight o' clock.

5. contractions: 0 The a ppoint ment was at eight o' clock.
schwa sounds: 5 uh uh uh uh uh
short i sounds: 1 i
glottal stops: 3 - - -

6. The a ppoint ment was at eight o' clock.
1 (vv) vc 2 (cc) 3 (cc) 4 (cv) 5 (cv) 6 (cv) vc

7. The a ppoint ment was at eight o' clock.
l (y) E/GS E/GS FCL/A E/GS FCL

8. thi y Poy_n mn_ w s_ Ei t Klok.

Fold →

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 8 (Medium)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

He sent a present to his grandma.



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

- contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're
- schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)
- short **i** sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)
- glottal stops: _____ mark with **ʔ** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. *x* sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

1. * **sent** is a main verb (past simple)
* **present** and **grandma** are nouns

2. * **present** is broken after the first vowel sound **e** to make a vc connection
* **grandma** is a short version of the compound noun "grandmother". It is broken between the two parts **grand** and **ma**, which seems like a logical place for a syllable break

3. * **sent** is stressed on the whole word; **present** is stressed on the main part, rather than the suffix; **grandma** is stressed on the first syllable, which is normal for compound nouns * The stress pattern is: o O o O o o O o

4. * The stressed vowel sounds are all short, and two are the same, making a melodious assonance (repeating vowel sounds): **e e a**
* The final syllable keeps its long vowel sound **ar**; this is normal for compound words

5. * Verbs are not contracted in past simple positive, because there are no auxiliary verbs
* The article **a** is usually a schwa sound; the preposition **to** usually has a schwa, unless it's at the end of a clause; schwa sounds can often be heard in suffixes, for example **ent** in **present**
* There are two short **i** sounds: the vowel sound in **He** is reduced to **i** and the word **his** already has a short **i** sound
* There is one glottal stop – when we delete the **t** sound at the end of **present**

6. * There are four bad sound connections that we need to change: x1 cv and x3 cc connections

7. 1. The **t** sound moves forward, leaving a friendly (F) connection
2. We delete the **t** sound and replace it with a glottal stop **_**
3. The **z** from **his** moves forward and changes to its unvoiced form: **s** (assimilation)
4. We delete the **d** sound, leaving a friendly connection. It gets even easier if we change the **n** to **m**. *Extra change!* Although we can pronounce **t hi Sgram ma** with the vc connection, it's easier if we delete **h** from **his** and bridge the vv connection with **w**: **t wi Sgram ma**

8. * Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying every sound slowly
* When we move the **t** from **sent** forward, it includes the schwa sound from the word **a** as an embedded schwa sound
* It's far easier to pronounce a **w** sound after the embedded schwa in **t** than a **h** sound, which is why we delete the **h** in **his** and use intrusion
* Even though the two **m** sounds are the same in **Gram ma**, it's OK to pronounce both of them because the first is a friendly consonant sound

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 8 (Medium)

1. He sent a present to his grandma.

2. He sent a present to his grand ma.

9

3. He / sent a / pre sent to his / grand ma.

4. He e sent a e pre sent to his a grand ma.

5. contractions: 0 He sent a pre sent to his grand ma.
schwa sounds: 3 uh uh uh
short i sounds: 2 i i
glottal stops: 1 -

6. He sent a pre sent to his grand ma.
vc 1 (CV) vc vc 2 (CC) vc 3 (CC) 4 (CC)

7. He sent a pre sent to his grand ma.
FCL E/GS E/I (w) FCL/A E/A

8. hi Sen t Pre zn_ t wi Sgram mar.

Fold →

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 9 (Medium)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

Leave the car by the side of the road.



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

- contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're
- schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)
- short i sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)
- glottal stops: _____ mark with **ʔ** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. *x* sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

1. * **leave** is a main verb (imperative form)
* **car, side, and road** are nouns

2. * All of the words are one-syllable words

3. * The content words are all one-syllable words, so the stress is on the whole word
* The stress pattern is: O o O o o O o o O

4. * **ee** and **ar** are long vowel sounds, while **ai** and **eu** are diphthongs
* This is a nice selection of long vowel sounds, which will make your mouth work!

5. * There are no contractions in imperative form, because there isn't a subject – e.g. I, he, she, etc – or an auxiliary verb
* There are four schwa sounds; **the** usually has a schwa sound, as does **of**
* There are no short **i** sounds
* There are no glottal stops, because no syllables end with **t** with a following consonant sound

6. * There are three bad sound connections – 2 x cc and 1 x cv
* We need to change all of them to either vc or friendly connections (F)

7. 1. We can't delete the **v** sound, so we move it forward. However, because it's a voiced consonant moving forward in a cc connection, we must change it to its unvoiced form: **f** (assimilation). 2. This is a straightforward case of FCL – the **d** sound moves forward. 3. The **v** sound from **of** changes to unvoiced **f** (assim). We can't delete the **f** so we must move it forward to make a vc connection

8. * Read the sentence at normal speed. *Rest* on the stressed syllables, but try to pronounce the unstressed syllables as quickly as possible
* **by** is a function word that can't be reduced and is pronounced with a diphthong sound: **bai**
* **side of the** becomes **Sai d fth**. It's much easier to say it quickly like this. The **d** sound has an embedded schwa sound – the schwa sound from the word **of**
* Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying every sound slowly

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

Practice Sentence 9 (Medium)

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

1. Leave the car by the side of the road.

2. Leave the car by the side of the road.

9

3. / / / /
Leave the car by the side of the road.

4. ee ar ai eu
Leave the car by the side of the road.

5. contractions: 0 Leave the car by the side of the road.
schwa sounds: 4 uh uh uh uh
short i sounds: 0
glottal stops: 0

6. Leave the car by the side of the road.
1 (cc) vc vc vc vc 2 (cv) 3 (cc) vc

7. Leave the car by the side of the road.
FCL/A FCL FCL/A

8. Lee fth Kar bai th Sai d fth Reud.

Fold →

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practice Sentence 10 (Medium)

1. Read the sentence out loud. Underline the content words:

That's the nicest thing you've ever done.



2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

□

.....



3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)



4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**



5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

- contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're
- schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)
- short **i** sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)
- glottal stops: _____ mark with **ʔ** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a consonant sound)



6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)



Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.



7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)



Fold →

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:



.....

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. *x* sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?

Teaching Points:

1.
 - * **niciest** is a superlative adjective
 - * **thing** is a noun
 - * **ever** is an adverb
 - * **done** is a past participle verb

2.
 - * **niciest** and **ever** are both broken after the stressed vowel sound to give a vc sound connection
 - * **That's** and **you've** are contractions. Each is pronounced as one syllable

3.
 - * **niciest** and **ever** are both stressed on the first syllable, because we don't usually stress suffixes
 - * **thing** and **done** are one-syllable words, so the whole word is stressed

4.
 - * **ai** is a diphthong
 - * **i**, **e**, and **u** are short vowel sounds
 - * The stress pattern in this sentence is quite regular: o o O o O o O o O

5.
 - * **That's** and **you've** are already contractions (from "That is" and "you have")
 - * The function words **the** and **you've** have their vowel sounds reduced to a schwa sound, as do the suffixes **est** and **er**
 - * There are no short **i** sounds
 - * There are potentially two glottal stops – in **That's** and **est** because of **t** followed by a consonant sound

6.
 - * There are three bad sound connections out of a total of eight: 2 x cc and 1 x cv
 - * There are four good vc sound connections, and one with a friendly consonant sound: **ng**

7.
 1. **s** moves forward (FCL), but a cc connection remains, so we delete the **t** sound (elision) and replace it with a glottal stop, to make a vc connection
 2. We delete **t** (elision), but cc remains, so we move **s** forward (FCL), to make a vc connection. This makes a glottal stop unnecessary
 3. **v** can't be deleted, so it has to move forward, leaving a vc connection

8.
 - * Try saying each syllable separately, enjoying each sound slowly
 - * Try to say the stressed syllables more loudly and the unstressed syllables more softly
 - * Practise saying the syllables with embedded schwa sounds: **sth**, **s**, **y**, **v**

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
 syllables syllables syllables

Practice Sentence 10 (Medium)

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

1.

That's the niciest thing you've ever done.

2.

That's the ni cest thing you've e ver done.

9

3.

That's the / ni cest / thing you've / e ver / done.

4.

That's the ai ni cest i thing you've e ver u done.

5.

contractions:	0	That's	the	ni	cest	thing	you've	e	ver	done.
schwa sounds:	4		uh		uh		uh		uh	
short i sounds:	0									
glottal stops:	2		-							

6.

That's the ni cest thing you've e ver done.

1 (cc) vc vc 2 (cc) F 3 (cv) vc vc

7.

That's the ni cest thing you've e ver done.

FCL/E/GS E/FCL FCL

8.

tha_ sth Nai s Stting y Ve v Dun.

STRESS > REDUCE > MERGE
syllables syllables syllables

Don't forget to **sound out** the individual syllables and the sentence at each step!

Practise Stress and Connected Speech in English

1. Write a phrase or sentence (8-10 syllables maximum). Read it out loud. Underline the content words:

2. Write the sentence split into syllables (vc / F connections where possible). Number of syllables:

3. Mark the stressed syllables (above)

4. Write the stressed vowel sounds (above) using the Clear Alphabet. This is the **sound spine**

5. Looking mainly at the unstressed (weak) syllables, how many of these reductions can you make:

- contractions: _____ write the contracted form, e.g. they are = they're
- schwa sounds: _____ mark with **uh** (strong vowel sounds on weak syllables are usually reduced)
- short **i** sounds: _____ mark with **i** (as above)
- glottal stops: _____ mark with **_** (when a syllable ends with **t**, followed by a con. sound)

6. Mark the sound connections (above): VC, CV, VV, CC, or F (friendly consonant sound)

Circle bad sound connections. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.

7. Think of ways of fixing the bad sound connection(s). Write your ideas below (number them 1, 2, 3, etc.)
(Remember: if a **voiced** consonant sound moves forward in FCL, it can change to **unvoiced**)

8. Considering what you have learned, write the sentence – syllable by syllable – using the Clear Alphabet:

Sound out each syllable, then the whole sentence. Pay attention to stressed, reduced, and merged syllables. Try to say *why* each syllable looks like it does, e.g. *x* sound has moved forward, etc.

Compare Step 1 (written English) with Step 8 (spoken English). What do you notice?