Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland

Believe in the power of connected speech!

A new 8-part pronunciation course

by Matt Purland

Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Contents:

This course may be adapted and used with students at any level.

This document is a slightly updated version of Lesson 8 of the online course.

The online course features **downloadable PowerPoint slides**, **interactive quizzes**, and **audio recordings** of each unit, as well as **discussion questions**, **practice activities**, and **links** to relevant additional information.

It is free and in the public domain.

You can access it here.

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Unit 8.1 Introduction

As we have seen during this course, we need to do different actions in bad connections to get a VC or friendly consonant connection.

The actions are: move forward, delete, add and change.

We have to do them quickly in every sentence that we say.

For example:

train at	we move forward n to leave a VC connection:	trai nat
hard time	we delete d when it meets t, to leave a VC connection:	har time
bound to	we delete d in a blend to leave a friendly connection:	boun to
go out	we add w in a VV connection to leave a VC connection:	go wout

These are single actions and form most of the actions that we do in connected speech.

While in VV connections there is always only one action to fix the problem – adding a consonant sound w, y, or r – in CV and CC connections we may need to use multiple actions.

CV connections are fairly straightforward. We move forward the consonant sound, which hopefully leaves a VC or friendly connection:

eat a we move forward t to leave a VC connection: ea ta

lamp is we move forward p to leave a friendly connection: lam pis

If there is still a consonant sound remaining, we move forward again to get a VC connection:

gift is   >>   gif tis   >>   gi ftis

This is relatively rare, and the middle connection is now CC, not CV.

So, multiple actions are necessary from time to time, but mainly in CC connections.

As we will see, the number of actions can be as many as five.

The principle remains the same: we need to get a VC or friendly connection between every syllable that we say.

We cannot leave a connection non-VC or friendly, no matter how many consonant sounds gather at the end of the syllable.

We will battle through them to get to the necessary vowel or friendly consonant sound that makes a good connection.

For example, in the following CC connection we have to move forward a consonant sound, change it to unvoiced, delete a consonant sound, then move forward again:

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

'facts were'

1. mf z   fac**t z**were

2. z changes to s   fac**t s**were

3. delete t in CC   fa**c s**were

4. mf k   f**a c**swere

We get to the all-important vowel sound a in four actions, although as we speak naturally, we jump straight to the good connection, without uttering any of the interim stages.

We know how to do this from our long experience of English:

'The facts were very clear...'

Nothing gets in the way of the VC or friendly connection. The most important sounds in the sentence are the stressed vowel sounds – the sound spine *(Lesson 1)*. The sound spine must be predominant.

Consonant sounds are happily sacrificed in order to get to a clearer sound spine.

When using multiple actions, we simply do what we normally do, but combine the actions: move forward, delete, and add consonant sounds, and change voiced consonant sounds into unvoiced.

These four actions that we began with are all we have. There are no amazing new actions to bring out in the final lesson of this course!

Quiz

#1. True or false? Most of the time we use single actions to create good sound connections between syllables.

- a) True
- b) False

#2. If we move forward a consonant sound and there is still a bad connection, we may be able to _____.

- a) leave it
- b) move forward again
- c) delete the previous friendly consonant sound
- d) add a consonant sound

#3. Our goal is to have _____ in every sound connection.

- a) a VC connection
- b) a bad connection
- c) a VC or friendly connection
- d) a friendly connection

#4. Consonant sounds can be easily _____ in order to get a clearer sound spine.

- a) sacrificed
- b) added
- c) preserved
- d) emphasised

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

#5. True or false? As well as the four actions we have used during this course, there are plenty more remarkable actions in connected speech.

    a) True
    b) False

Discussion

1. As we draw nearer to the end of the course, how has your understanding of and use of connected speech improved since the beginning?

2. How do you feel about your mastery of the four actions of connected speech – moving forward, deleting, adding, and changing consonant sounds? a) Very confident, b) Getting the hang of them, c) Having problems. Why? How do you plan to improve, if necessary?

Practice

1. Give examples of when we move forward, delete, add, and change consonant sounds in spoken English. Practice your phrases out loud.

2. Practice the phrases at the top of p.2, moving from bad connection to good connection. Does the good connection feel easier to you?

3. Give examples of changing bad VV connections into good connections using w, y, and r.

4. Practice the phrases 'eat a' and 'lamp is' on p.2, moving from bad connection to good connection. How does making the connections feel to you?

5. Practice the process of moving forward twice in the phrase 'gift is' on p.2 out loud. Put it into a short sentence, e.g., 'The gift is very nice.' Focus on finding the vowel sound in 'gift' and moving the rest of the word forward.

6. Look at the phrase 'facts were' on p.3. Practice the process of changing 'facts were' from a CC connection to a VC connection, i.e. resting on the vowel sound a of 'facts' and deleting or moving forward the rest of the word. Notice again that t causes a problem and has to be deleted.

7. Write a short sentence and identify the stressed syllables and the vowel sound on each one. This is the sound spine. Explain how you would emphasise the sound spine by using connected speech: moving forward, deleting, adding, and changing consonant sounds.

Further Study

- The Sound Spine

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Unit 8.2 Why multiple actions?

Why do we need multiple actions?

The problem which forces us to use multiple actions is simple: too many consonant sounds gathering at the end of the first syllable in a pair, making it harder to get to the necessary vowel sound or friendly consonant sound that makes a good connection.

What causes multiple consonant sounds to gather at the end of the first syllable? In general: consonant blends and the letter 's', which is usually pronounced z. *(Lesson 4.)*

Consonant blends like nd in 'friend', followed by 's', create a 3-letter consonant blend: 'nds' – pronounced ndz – which is difficult to pronounce – especially next to a following consonant sound, e.g. 'friends that…' = frendz that.

This is unhelpful for us, because it is harder to get to the friendly consonant sound n, which is necessary to make a good connection.

The cause for the prevalence of z at the end of the first syllable *(Lesson 4)* can be summarised as follows:

1. Apart from common words ending in z, this is caused by the word being plural, in a contraction (with 'is' or 'has'), possessive 's', or s form in present simple:

the friends were	's' is plural
her friend's quite nice	's' is in a contraction with 'is' ('friend is')
her friend's gone	's' is in a contraction with 'has' ('friend has')
her friend's book was	's' shows possession
he befriends them	's' is s form in present simple

2. Blend + 's' gives us multiple consonant sounds at the end of a syllable, which have to be dealt with by multiple actions. For example:

the friends were	}	1. mf z	the frien swere
her friend's quite nice	}	2. change z to s	her frien squite
her friend's gone	}	3. del d in a blend	her frien sgone
her friend's book was	}	4. rest on n	her frien sbook
he befriends them	}		he befrien sthem

With blends we will look at three different situations:

1. blends with a friendly consonant sound – with and without 's'
2. blends without a friendly consonant sound – with and without 's'
3. blends caused by regular verbs ending in '-ed'

But let's back up a bit and start with sound connections which don't need *any* actions.

0 Actions:

VC and friendly connections are already good – no action required!

1 Action:

These are the actions we mentioned in Unit 8.1:

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

train at	we move forward n to leave a VC connection:	trai nat
hard time	we delete d when it meets t, to leave a VC connection:	har time
bound to	we delete d in a blend to leave a friendly connection:	boun to
go out	we add w in a VV connection to leave a VC connection:	go wout

These are single actions and form most of the actions that we do in connected speech.

2+ Actions:

These are actions that we have studied in Lessons 3-7. They are not based on blend + 's'.
For example:

track's been	mf z, change to s, mf k	tra cksbeen
get the	del t, add glottal stop	ge_ the
last night	del t, mf s	la snight
must send	del t, del s (duplicate)	mu send
get him	del h, mf t	ge tim
see him*	del h, add y	see yim

Although this is a good VC connection, we often delete h from the beginning of 'him', 'her', 'his' in fast speech to get an easier to pronounce VC connection (Lesson 6).

Note that we are dealing with mainly unvoiced consonant sounds – f, k, p, s, t, tt – which move forward without changing. Voiced consonant sounds change to unvoiced in CC connections. For example, v changes to f in the phrase 'have some': ha fsome, and z changes to s in 'likes them': lai ksthm.

In addition, note that the actions we use are the same as always. We follow the patterns as discussed in previous lessons:

- move forward (most of the actions)
- delete t, d, h, and duplicate sounds, when necessary
- add w, y, and r in VV connections, when necessary
- add glottal stops. We add a glottal stop when t is deleted next to a vowel sound or friendly consonant sound. In other words, when we can no longer move forward or delete another consonant sound
- change voiced consonant sounds to unvoiced, when necessary

Quiz

#1. Why do we sometimes need to use multiple actions to get a good connection?

a) because too many consonant sounds gather at the end of the first syllable in a pair
b) because not enough consonant sounds gather at the end of the first syllable in a pair
c) because too many consonant sounds gather at the beginning of the second syllable in a pair
d) because too many vowel sounds gather at the end of the first syllable in a pair

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

#2. What normally causes multiple consonant sounds to gather at the end of the first syllable?

   a) consonant blends and friendly consonant sounds
   b) consonant blends and the letter 'w'
   c) there is no particular reason
   d) consonant blends and the letter 's'

#3. _____ at the end of a syllable prevent us from getting to the _____ or _____ that we need to make a good _____.

   a) Consonants, friendly consonant sound, connection, vowel sound
   b) Consonants, vowel sound, friendly consonant sound, connection
   c) vowel sound, Consonants, connection, friendly consonant sound
   d) Vowels, consonant sound, friendly consonant sound, connection

#4. The letter 's' is usually pronounced as z; for example, when the following conditions apply: (Choose up to four.)

   a) when 's' is a capital letter
   b) when 's' is plural
   c) when 's' is in a contraction
   d) when 's' meets another consonant sound
   e) when 's' shows possession
   f) when 's' is s form in present simple

#5. In the phrase 'must send' we use _____ actions to get a good connection.

   a) one
   b) two
   c) three
   d) four

Practice

1. Look at the Common Consonant Blends in English worksheet. Learn the final consonant blends with 'ld' and 'nd'.

2. Consonant blends like nd in 'friend', followed by 's', are unhelpful for us because they create a consonant blend: 'ds', that we have to remove before the friendly consonant sound n can be at the end of the syllable, which we require for a good connection. Write five more words with 3-letter consonant blends, put them into phrases, practice saying them out loud, and focus on the actions of connected speech.

3. Look at the five phrases with 'friends' on p.5. Memorise the main reasons for the letter 's' being pronounced as z at the end of a syllable: plural, contraction, possessive 's', or s form in present simple.

4. Practice the phrases out loud once again, going from bad connection to good connection. Record yourself, slow it down, and then listen back. Check that you make the four necessary actions. How did you do?

5. Write five phrases with VC connections and five with friendly connections. Notice that no actions are necessary. Try to write longer phrases or sentences with only good VC or friendly connections and practice them out loud. How many good connections can you get before you have to use a bad connection?

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

6. Practice the four phrases beginning with 'train at' on p.6, moving from bad connection to good connection. How do the actions feel to you? Do you agree that they sound… a) better in English, b) more like how a native speaker talks, c) strange and unnatural to your ears? Why?

7. Practice the phrases beginning with 'track's been' on p.6, moving from bad connection to good connection. Write down the interim stages of each transition, e.g., 'last night' >> 'las night' >> 'la snight'. Practice saying them out loud, then practice them in your own sentences, trying to get the final stage first time.

8. Read the note about unvoiced consonant sounds on p.6. Write 10 phrases with words ending in unvoiced consonant sounds f, k, p, s, t, and tt meeting consonant sounds in CC connections. Each sound has to move forward without changing. Practice the phrases out loud, then put them into short sentences and say them. Ask a partner or your teacher to check your pronunciation.

9. Learn the information about the actions that we use at the bottom of p.6, and make sure that you understand it. These are the actions we use to achieve fluency in connected speech.

Further Study

*   [Common Consonant Blends in English](#)
*   [Practice Final Consonant Blends](#)

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – [Lesson 8: Multiple Actions](#)

Unit 8.3 Blends with a friendly consonant sound – without 's'

Let's look at consonant blends which include a friendly consonant sound, but without 's'.
These blends require 1 or 2 actions.

For example: 'hold on' (1 action)

Goal: nearest vowel or friendly consonant sound:

Problem – CV connection:

ho l d CV on

Action 1 – Move forward d:

ho l d CV on

Result – We can rest on friendly consonant sound l:

ho l F don

Blends with friendly consonant sound l [no 's']

	ACTIONS:	1	2	3	Result:
CV	hold on	mf d			hol don
CC	hold me	del d			hol me
CV	gulf of	mf f			gul fof
CC	gulf can	mf f			gul fcan
CV	silk is	mf k			sil kis
CC	silk which	mf k			sil kwich
CV	help it	mf p			hel pit
CC	help me	mf p			hel pme
CV	belt is	mf t			bel tis
CC	belt was	del t	add GS		bel_ was
CV	valve is	mf v			val vis
CC	valve was	mf v	change to f		val fwas

l

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Here is an example with friendly consonant sound m:

For example: 'jump with' (1 action)

Goal: nearest vowel or friendly consonant sound

Problem – CC connection:

ju m p CC with

Action 1: move forward p:

ju m p CC with

Result – We can rest on friendly consonant sound m:

ju m F pwith

Blends with friendly consonant sounds m, n, ng [no 's']

	ACTIONS:	1	2	3	Result:
CV	jump in	mf p			jum pin
CC	jump with	mf p			jum pwith
CV	attempt a	mf t	mf p		attem pta
CC	attempt the	del t	mf p		attem pthe
CV	ground is	mf d			groun dis
CC	ground was	del d			groun was
CV	plant is	mf t			plan tis
CC	plant was	del t	add GS		plan_ was
CV	month is	mf tt			mon this
CC	month was	mf tt			mon thwas
CV	bank is	mf k			bang kis
CC	bank was	mf k			bang kwas

m   n   ng

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Summary of actions:

- In each connection we can rest on the friendly consonant sound

- The most common action in both CV and CC connections is to move forward a consonant sound: hold on > hol don

- If d is part of a blend in a CC connection, we delete it: hold me > hol me

- If t is at the end of the first syllable in a CC connection, we delete it and usually add a glottal stop: belt was > bel_ was

- However, if there is another consonant sound to move forward, we don't need to add a glottal stop: attempt the > attemp the > attem pthe

- If a voiced consonant moves forward in a CC connection, it changes to unvoiced: valve was > val fwas

Quiz

#1. To correct the problem in 'hold on' we _____ d then _____ a friendly consonant sound.

    a) delete, rest on
    b) move forward, delete
    c) move forward, rest on
    d) add, rest on

#2. In the phrase 'jump with' we move forward the unvoiced consonant sound p because it is _____ to pronounce at the _____ of a syllable than at the _____.

    a) more difficult, beginning, end
    b) easier, beginning, end
    c) easier, end, beginning
    d) harder, end, middle

#3. In the phrase 'ground was', we _____ the d, rather than moving it forward, because it is in a _____.

    a) delete, phrase
    b) move forward, blend
    c) add, blend
    d) delete, blend

#4. True or false? If we delete the t at the end of the first word in this phrase, we need to add a glottal stop: 'attempt the'.

    a) True
    b) False

#5. The most common action in both CV and CC connections is to _____ a _____.

    a) move forward, vowel sound
    b) move forward, consonant sound
    c) delete, consonant sound
    d) pronounce, consonant sound

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Practice

1. Practice following and saying out loud the transition with 'hold on' on p.9. Say each stage out loud. Finally, rest on the friendly consonant sound l. Make sure you understand what is happening and why. Listen to the recording on the online course page if you have any doubts.

2. Practice saying the phrases in the table on p.9 out loud, going from bad connection to good. Notice the actions and practice the interim stages. Practice resting on the friendly consonant sound l in each phrase. When do we move forward and when do we delete? Add the phrases to your own sentences; practice them out loud. Record them, slow them down, and listen to your sound connections – then get a partner or teacher to check your pronunciation.

3. Practice following and saying out loud the transition with 'jump with' on p.10. Say each stage out loud. Finally, rest on the friendly consonant sound m. Make sure you understand what is happening and why. Listen to the recording if you have any doubts.

4. Practice saying the phrases in the table on p.10 out loud, going from bad connection to good. Notice the actions. Practice resting on the friendly consonant sounds m, n, and ng in each phrase. When do we move forward and when do we delete?

5. Focus on the summary of actions on p.11. Make sure that you understand these important rules. Learn the facts of connected speech so well that you remember them and implement them while you are speaking – even without thinking about them. For example, 'If d is part of a blend in a CC connection, we delete it' and 'If t is at the end of the first syllable in a CC connection, we delete it and usually add a glottal stop'.

Unit 8.4 Blends with a friendly consonant sound – with 's'

Now let's look at blends which include a friendly consonant sound, with 's' at the end. These blends require 2-4 actions.

For example: 'helps it' (2 actions)

Goal: nearest vowel or friendly consonant sound

Problem – CV connection:

he l p s CV it

Action 1: move forward z (the sound made by the letter 's' here)

he l p s CV it

Problem – CC connection:

he l p CC zit

Action 2: move forward p:

he l p CC zit

Result – We can rest on friendly consonant sound l:

he l F pzit

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Blends with friendly consonant sound l [+ 's']

	ACTIONS:	1	2	3	4	Result:
CV	holds on	mf z	del d			hol zon
CC	holds me	mf z	change to s	del d		hol sme
CV	gulfs of	mf z	mf f			gul fzof
CC	gulfs can	mf z	change to s	mf f		gul fscan
CV	silks are	mf z	mf k			sil kzare
CC	silks which	mf z	change to s	mf k		sil kswich
CV	helps it	mf z	mf p			hel pzit
CC	helps me	mf z	change to s	mf p		hel psme
CV	belts are	mf z	del t	add GS		bel_ zare
CC	belts were	mf z	change to s	del t	add GS	bel_ swere
CV	valves are	mf z	mf v	change to f		val fzare
CC	valves were	mf z	change to s	mf v	change to f	val fswere

l

Here is an example with friendly consonant sound n:

For example: 'plants were' (4 actions)

Goal: nearest vowel or friendly consonant sound

Problem – CC connection:

pla n t s CC were

Action 1: move forward z:

pla n t s CC were

Problem – CC connection:

pla n t CC zwere

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Action 2: voiced consonant z changes to unvoiced consonant s in a CC connection:

pla n t CC swere

Problem – CC connection.

Action 3: delete t in a CC connection:

pla n F swere

Problem: glottal stop is required because t was deleted next to a friendly consonant sound.

Action 4: add a glottal stop:

pla n_ F swere

Result – We can rest on friendly consonant sound n.

Blends with friendly consonant sounds m, n, ng [+ 's']

	ACTIONS:	1	2	3	4	Result:
CV	jumps in	mf z	mf p			jum pzin
CC	jumps with	mf z	change to s	mf p		jum pswith
CV	attempts a	mf z	del t	mf p		attem pza
CC	attempts the	mf z	change to s	del t	mf p	attem psthe
CV	grounds are	mf z	del d			groun zare
CC	grounds were	mf z	change to s	del d		groun swere
CV	plants are	mf z	del t	add GS		plan_ zare
CC	plants were	mf z	change to s	del t	add GS	plan_ swere
CV	months are	mf z	mf tt			mon thzare
CC	months were	mf z	change to s	mf tt		mon thswere
CV	banks are	mf z	mf k			bang kzare
CC	banks were	mf z	change to s	mf k		bang kswere

m

n

ng

Summary of actions:

• In each connection we can rest on the friendly consonant sound

• The first action in each connection is to move forward z

• The most common solution in both CV and CC connections is to move forward two consonant sounds: gulfs of > gul fzof

• If d is part of a blend in a CC connection, we delete it: grounds were > groun swere

• If t is at the end of the first syllable in a CC connection, we delete it and add a glottal stop, if there is no sound remaining to move forward: belts were > bel_ swere

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

- However, if there is another consonant sound to move forward, e.g., p, we don't need to add a glottal stop: <mark>attempts the</mark> becomes <mark>attem psthe</mark> after 4 actions (p.15)

- If a voiced consonant moves forward in a CC connection, it changes to unvoiced: <mark>valves were</mark> becomes <mark>val fswere</mark> after 4 actions (p.14). Note that this does not happen very often, because, with the exception of d, we usually find unvoiced consonant sounds at the end of a syllable in blends, like:

  f, k, p, s, t, and tt

  (See Common Consonant Blends in English.)

Quiz

#1. To get a good connection in the phrase 'helps it', we need to _____ two consonant sounds: _____ and _____.

- a) move forward, s, p
- b) delete, z, p
- c) add, z, p
- d) move forward, z, p

#2. To correct the problem in 'belts were', we need to: _____.

- a) move forward s, change to z, delete t, and add a glottal stop
- b) move forward z, change to s, delete t, and add a glottal stop
- c) move forward z, change to s, delete t, and add w, y, or r
- d) move forward z, change to t, delete t, and add a glottal stop

#3. The first action in each connection is to move forward _____.

- a) t
- b) s
- c) z
- d) d

#4. In the CV connection 'months are', we are _____ actions away from the friendly consonant sound, while in the CC connection 'months were' we are _____ actions away.

- a) two, three
- b) three, two
- c) two, four
- d) three, four

#5. We usually find _____ consonant sounds at the end of a syllable in blends.

- a) voiced
- b) unvoiced
- c) weak
- d) friendly

Practice

1. Practice following and saying out loud the transition with 'helps it' on p.13. Say each stage out loud. Finally, rest on the friendly consonant sound l. Make sure you understand what is happening and why. Listen to the recording on the online course page if you have any doubts.

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

2. Practice saying the phrases in the table on p.14 out loud, going from bad connection to good. Notice the actions and practice the interim stages. Pay attention to when z changes to s (in CC connections), and when it remains as z (in CV connections). Practice resting on the friendly consonant sound l in each phrase. When do we move forward and when do we delete? Add the phrases to your own sentences; practice them out loud. Record them, slow them down, and listen to your sound connections – then get a partner or teacher to check your pronunciation.

3. Practice following and saying out loud the transition with 'plants were' on pp.14-15. Say each stage out loud. Finally, rest on the friendly consonant sound n followed by a glottal stop. Make sure you understand what is happening and why. Listen to the recording, if you have any doubts.

4. Practice saying the phrases in the table on p.15 out loud, going from bad connection to good. Notice the actions and practice the interim stages. Practice resting on the friendly consonant sounds m, n, and ng in each phrase. When do we move forward and when do we delete?

5. Focus on the summary of actions on pp.15-16. Make sure that you understand these important rules. Again, learn the facts of connected speech so well that you remember them and are able to implement them naturally – and, ultimately, unconsciously – while you are speaking.

6. Practice 'frontloading' consonant sounds onto the beginning of syllables, as in the phrases: 'bang kswere' (3 consonant sounds together) and 'attem psthe' (3 consonant sounds together). How easy do you find this? Is there anything equivalent in your L1? Write five of your own phrases which 'frontload' three or more consonant sounds onto the next syllable. Remember that however hard – or just plain eccentric – this may seem to you, it is much, much easier for native speakers of English to make a VC or friendly connection while frontloading multiple consonant sounds, than to pronounce a CV or CC connection.

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Unit 8.5 Blends without a friendly consonant sound – without 's'

In this unit we will look at blends which do not include a friendly consonant sound and are without 's'. These blends require 2-3 actions.

For example: 'text is' (3 actions)

Goal: nearest vowel or friendly consonant sound

Problem – CV connection:

te k s t CV is

(Remember – the consonant sounds of 'x' are k and s)

Action 1: move forward t:

te k s t CV is

Problem – CC connection:

te k s CC tis

Action 2: move forward s:

te k s CC tis

Problem - CC connection:

te k CC stis

Action 3: move forward k:

te k CC stis

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Result: VC connection:

te VC kstis

Blends with no friendly consonant sounds [no s]

	ACTIONS:	1	2	3	4	Result:
CV	gift is	mf t	mf f			gi ftis
CC	gift was	del t	mf f			gi fwas
CV	fact is	mf t	mf k			fa ctis
CC	fact was	del t	mf k			fa kwas
CV	text* is	mf t	mf s	mf k		te kstis
CC	text was	del t	mf s	mf k		te kswas
CV	adapt a	mf t	mf p			a da pta
CC	adapt the	del t	mf p			a da pthe
CV	desk is	mf k	mf s			de skis
CC	desk was	mf k	mf s			de skwas
CV	crisp is	mf p	mf s			cri spis
CC	crisp was	mf p	mf s			cri spwas
CV	last is	mf t	mf s			la stis
CC	last was	del t	mf s			la swas
	[*te kst]					

Summary of actions:

- The most common action in both CV and CC connections is to move forward two consonant sounds: gift is > gi ftis

- If t is at the end of the first syllable in a CC connection, we delete it, but do not need to add a glottal stop because another consonant sound will move forward: gift was > gi fwas

- Reminder: it is much easier for native speakers of English to pronounce several consonants at the beginning of a syllable than at the end, for example: text was > te kswas

Quiz

#1. The letter 'x' usually represents two consonant sounds: _____ and _____.

   a) x, y
   b) c, s
   c) k, z
   d) k, s

#2. In the phrases 'desk is' and 'desk was' we _____ twice to get good _____ connections.

   a) move forward, VC
   b) move forward, friendly
   c) delete, VC
   d) move forward, VV

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

#3. True or false? It is much easier for a native speaker to say 'te kswas' than 'text was'.

- a) True
- b) False

#4. By moving forward the hard consonant sounds t and k we change 'fact is' to 'fa ctis' – thereby emphasising the _____ in the _____.

- a) consonant sound, sound spine
- b) vowel sound, sound spine
- c) vowel sound, word 'is'
- d) word, sound spine

#5. What are the steps for changing 'last was' from a bad CC connection into a good VC connection?

- a) delete t then move forward a
- b) delete s then move forward t
- c) delete t then move forward s
- d) delete t then add s

Practice

1. Practice following and saying out loud the transition with 'text is' on pp.18-19. Say each stage out loud. Make sure you understand what is happening and why. Listen to the recording on the online course page if you have any doubts.

2. Practice saying the phrases in the table on p.19 out loud, going from bad connection to good. Notice the actions and practice the interim stages. When do we move forward and when do we delete? Note that in this table we move forward thirty times, but delete only five times. Add the phrases to your own sentences; practice them out loud. Record them, slow them down, and listen to your sound connections – then get a partner or teacher to check your pronunciation. How did you do?

3. Focus on the summary of actions on p.19. Make sure that you understand these important rules. Learn the facts of connected speech so well that you remember them and are able to implement them naturally – and, ultimately, without thinking about them – while you are speaking.

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Unit 8.6 Blends without a friendly consonant sound – with 's'

Let's look at blends which do not include a friendly consonant sound but do have 's' at the end. These blends require 3-5 actions.

For example: 'lasts for' (4 actions)

Goal: nearest vowel or friendly consonant sound

Problem – CC connection:

la s t s CC for

Action 1: move forward z:

la s t s CC for

Result:

la s t CC zfor

Action 2: voiced consonant z changes to unvoiced consonant s in a CC connection:

la s t CC sfor

Problem – CC connection.

Action 3: delete t in a CC connection:

la s CC sfor

Problem – CC connection with duplicate s sounds.

Action 4: delete the first s. Result: VC connection:

la VC sfor

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Blends with no friendly consonant sounds [+ 's']

	ACTIONS:	1	2	3	4	5	Result:
CV	gifts are	mf z	del t	mf f			gi fzare
CC	gifts were	mf z	change to s	del t	mf f		gi fswere
CV	facts are	mf z	del t	mf k			fa kzare
CC	facts were	mf z	change to s	del t	mf k		fa kswere
CV	texts* are	mf z	del t	del s (near duplicate)	mf k		te kzare
CC	texts* were	mf z	change to s	del t	del s (duplicate)	mf k	te kswere
CV	adapts a	mf z	del t	mf p			a da pza
CC	adapts the	mf z	change to s	del t	mf p		a da psthe
CV	desks are	mf z	mf k	mf s			de skzare
CC	desks were	mf z	change to s	mf k	mf s		de skswere
CV	crisps are	mf z	mf p	mf s			cri spzare
CC	crisps were	mf z	change to s	mf p	mf s		cri spswere
CV	lasts about	mf z	del t	del s (near duplicate)			la zabout
CC	lasts for	mf z	change to s	del t	del s (duplicate)		la sfor
	[*te ksts]						

Summary of actions:

- The first action in each connection is to move forward z

- A common action in both CV and CC connections is to move forward three consonant sounds: desks are becomes de skzare after 3 actions (see above)

- If t appears, we delete it and continue moving forward without adding a glottal stop

- Reminder: it is much easier for native speakers of English to pronounce several consonants at the beginning of a syllable than at the end – even FOUR consonant sounds. For example: crisps were > cri SPSWere

- If there is a duplicate sound at the end of the first syllable, delete it: lasts for > last zfor > last sfor > las sfor > la sfor

Quiz

#1. Blends without a friendly consonant sound, but with 's', may require as many as _____ actions to correct.

    a) two
    b) three
    c) four
    d) five

#2. To correct 'lasts for', the first action is _____, the second action is _____, the third action is _____, and the final action is _____ because it is a _____ sound.

    a) change z to s, delete t, move forward z, delete s, duplicate
    b) move forward z, change z to s, delete t, delete s, duplicate
    c) move forward z, change z to s, delete s, duplicate, delete t
    d) change z to s, move forward z, delete t, delete s, duplicate

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

#3. The words 'gifts', 'facts', 'desks', and 'lasts' all have _____ consonant sounds blocking the vowel from the end of the syllable, while 'texts' has _____.

    a) three, four
    b) three, two
    c) two, four
    d) two, three

#4. Why do we delete the t in five of the seven phrases?

    a) Because native speakers do not like the letter 't'
    b) Because it is difficult to pronounce t next to another vowel sound
    c) Because it is easy to pronounce t next to another consonant sound
    d) Because it is difficult to pronounce t next to another consonant sound

#5. Why do we move forward three sounds – z, p, and s – in the sound connection 'crisps are'?

    a) Because we want a VC connection to make the phrase more interesting
    b) Because we want a VC connection to make the phrase easier to pronounce
    c) Because we want a CV connection to make the phrase easier to pronounce
    d) Because we enjoy moving forward consonant sounds when we speak

<div align="center">Practice</div>

1. Practice following and saying out loud the transition with 'lasts for' on p.21. Say each stage out loud. Make sure you understand what is happening and why. Listen to the recording on the online course page if you have any doubts.

2. Practice saying the phrases in the table on p.22 out loud, going from bad connection to good. Notice the actions and practice the interim stages. When does z change to s – and why? When do we delete t – and why? Notice how often we perform each action: moving forward (58%), deleting (28%), changing (14%), adding (0%). Add the phrases to your own sentences; practice them out loud. Record them, slow them down, and listen to your sound connections – then get a partner or teacher to check your pronunciation.

3. Focus on the summary of actions on p.22. Make sure that you understand these important rules. Learn the facts of connected speech so well that you remember them and are able to implement them naturally, and – after practice – unconsciously, while you are speaking.

4. Look again at the phrases in the table on p.22. Practice 'frontloading' consonant sounds onto the beginning of syllables, as in the phrases: 'de skswere' (4 consonants sounds) and 'cri spswere' (4 consonant sounds). How easy do you find this? Is there anything equivalent in your L1? Write five of your own phrases which 'frontload' three or more consonant sounds onto the next syllable. Remember that however hard – or just plain eccentric – this may seem to you, it is far easier for native speakers of English to make a VC or friendly connection while frontloading multiple consonant sounds, than to pronounce a CV or CC connection.

<div align="center">*Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions*</div>

Unit 8.7 Blends caused by regular verbs ending in '-ed'

Finally, let's look at blends which are caused by regular verbs ending in '-ed'. These blends require 2-3 actions. Note: it is impossible to add the letter 's' at the end of these words, for example: 'askeds' and 'passeds'.

For example: 'moved it' (2 actions)

[Note: we do not include regular verbs ending with 't' or 'd' here, because their endings have an extra syllable with a schwa sound, rather than forming blends. For example: 'added' – it is impossible for us to blend 'd' with 'd'. Similarly: 'wanted' – it is impossible for us to blend 't' with 'd'.]

Goal: nearest vowel or friendly con sound

Problem – CV connection:

mo v ed CV it

Action 1: move forward d:

mo v ed CV it
☞

Problem – CC connection:

mo v CC dit

('e' is a silent letter, so it does not concern us here)

Action 2: move forward v:

mo v CC dit
☞

Result:

mo VC vdit

Action 3: voiced consonant v changes to unvoiced consonant f in a CC connection:

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

mo VC fdit

Result: VC connection.

Examples of blends caused by regular verbs ending in '-ed'

	ACTIONS:	1	2	3	Result:
CV	asked it	mf d	mf k	mf s	a skdit
CC	asked the	del d	mf k	mf s	a skthe
CV	hoped a	mf d	mf p		ho pda
CC	hoped they	del d	mf p		ho pthey
CV	joined in	mf d			join din
CC	joined them	del d			join them
CV	looked at	mf d	mf k		loo kdat
CC	looked for	del d	mf k		loo kfor
CV	moved it	mf d	mf v	change to f	mo fdit
CC	moved to	del d	mf v	change to f	mo fto
CV	passed it	mf d	mf s		pa sdit
CC	passed the	del d	mf s		pa sthe

Summary of actions:

- The first action is to move forward d in a CV connection: joined in > join din and to delete d in a CC connection: joined them > join them. (Note: we rely on the context of the conversation to know the tense.)

- Then we move forward any remaining consonant sound(s). If we still have a CC connection, we keep moving forward: asked it > ask dit > as kdit > a skdit.

- If we move forward a voiced consonant sound in a CC connection, we change it to unvoiced: moved it > mo fdit

Quiz

#1. True or false? It is easy for us to pronounce the sounds t and d together in a blend: td.

    a) True
    b) False

#2. When I look at the phrase 'moved it' I immediately see a problem due to the _____ connection.

    a) CC
    b) VV
    c) CA
    d) CV

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

#3. In the phrase 'looked for', there are _____ unhelpful consonant sounds to deal with before I can get to the vowel sound – uu – that I need for a VC connection.

    a) three
    b) many
    c) two
    d) four

#4. In each phrase in this unit, the letter 'e' before 'd' is a _____ letter.

    a) singular
    b) silent
    c) friendly
    d) pronounced

#5. _____ verbs will always cause a problem in connected speech because they all end in a (non-friendly) _____ sound and we need a _____ sound – or friendly consonant sound – at the end of a syllable.

    a) Regular, vowel, consonant
    b) Irregular, consonant, vowel
    c) Regular, consonant, vowel
    d) A few, consonant, vowel

Practice

1. Try saying the regular verbs that end with t or d in the past form, without the schwa sound, so that you have to try to blend 'd' with 'd' – e.g., in 'added' – and blend 't' with 'd' – e.g., in 'wanted'. Listen to the recording to see how difficult it is.

2. Practice following and saying out loud the transition with 'moved it' on pp.24-25. Say each stage out loud. Make sure you understand what is happening and why. Listen to the recording if you have any doubts.

3. Practice saying the phrases in the table on p.25 out loud, going from bad connection to good. Notice the actions and practice the interim stages. Notice the relative frequency of each action, i.e., we move forward the most. Add the phrases to your own sentences; practice them out loud. Record them, slow them down, and listen to your sound connections – then get a partner or teacher to check your pronunciation.

4. Focus on the summary of actions on p.25. Make sure that you understand these important rules. Learn the facts of connected speech so well that you remember them and are able to implement them naturally, and, ultimately, automatically while you are speaking.

5. Find a list of regular verbs in English, choose five with blends – e.g., 'helped' – and five without – e.g., 'shared'. Put them into phrases with CC connections, e.g., 'helped me'. What actions do you have to take to get the necessary VC or friendly connection? Practice them out loud. Put them into sentences and practice saying them a few times. Regular verbs occur very often in English, so get used to dealing with the awkward connections that are made when they meet other consonant sounds, e.g., 'asked the' loses the d, then k and s move forward to result in the much easier to pronounce 'a skthe'.

Further Study

• Regular Verbs

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

Unit 8.8 Conclusion

When it comes to multiple actions, we must follow the conventions established by this course:

- move forward (most of the actions)

- delete t, d, h, and duplicate sounds, when necessary

- add w, y, and r in VV connections, when necessary

- add glottal stops. We add a glottal stop when t is deleted next to a vowel sound or friendly consonant sound. In other words, when we can no longer move forward or delete another sound

- change voiced consonant sounds to unvoiced, when necessary

There is nothing else. That is what we do. We are ruthless with consonant sounds. We delete them and move them forward to get to the next vowel or friendly consonant sound. Let's go back to our original example in Unit 8.1:

	'facts were'
1. mf z	fact zwere
2. z changes to s	fact swere
3. delete t in CC	fac swere
4. mf k	fa cswere

Don't forget that the word 'were' is reduced to its weak form: w, with an embedded schwa sound. So, the phrase sounds like this:

Fa ksw   The facts were clear. / th Fa ksw Kliy.

It does not look like English, and perhaps it does not sound like English to you, but that is how we pronounce it. The a of 'facts' is emphasised, isolated from the subsequent consonant sounds.

The vowel sound a is now clearer to the listener. It is an invaluable part of the sound spine:

a   iy
The facts were clear.

The hard consonant sound t is removed, and k is separated from the a. Leaving these consonants in place as written distracts from the vowel sound a. The sound spine is: a, iy.

a   iy
The facts were clear.

We may understand the sentence simply from these vowel sounds plus the context. The consonant sounds are not superfluous to the meaning, but they are *far less important* than the vowel sounds.

Surrounding a with consonant sounds distracts us from the all-important a.

It gets lost in between various hard consonant sounds:

FACTSWERE

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

The a needs to have space to sing out loudly in the sound spine like a bright bell:

f A ksw   The facts were clear. / th Fa ksw Kliy.

Now imagine how it would sound if *every* stressed vowel sound that you said got lost between the unnecessary clutter of hard to pronounce consonant sounds:

DISASTER!

Do not underestimate what lengths we will go to in order to get to the vowel sound or friendly consonant sound that we need in order to make a VC or friendly connection. That is what this course is all about.

Remember that consonant sounds are expendable! They can be merged, squashed, reduced, and deleted in order to make the sound spine heard.

A clear correct sound spine is the most important part of speaking English, because without it your message could be lost.

So, learn how to move forward, delete, add, and change consonant sounds, while emphasising the sound spine, and you will speak English more like a native speaker!

Quiz

#1. It takes _____ actions to get from 'facts were' to a _____ connection.

   a) two, VC
   b) four, CV
   c) five, VC
   d) four, VC

#2. Leaving _____ sounds next to the _____ sound in a syllable _____ from the _____ sound.

   a) consonant, vowel, emphasises, vowel
   b) consonant, vowel, distracts, vowel
   c) consonant, consonant, distracts, vowel
   d) consonant, vowel, distracts, friendly

#3. It is possible to understand the _____ of a sentence simply by hearing the _____ and knowing the _____.

   a) meaning, sound spine, context
   b) context, meaning, sound spine
   c) length, sound spine, context
   d) meaning, weak forms, context

#4. It is easy to misunderstand somebody who does not use connected speech because _____.

   a) they do not pronounce the r sound correctly
   b) it is hard to hear the sound spine due to many unnecessary vowel sounds
   c) it is hard to hear the sound spine due to stress on the stressed syllables
   d) it is hard to hear the sound spine due to many unnecessary consonant sounds

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions

PurlandTraining.com   Photocopiable   Public Domain

#5. Native speakers will gladly move forward, delete, add, and change consonant sounds in order to _____, and, in consequence, _____ the sound spine.

    a) get CV or friendly connections, accentuate
    b) sound unnatural, accentuate
    c) get VC or friendly connections, accentuate
    d) get VC or friendly connections, diminish

Discussion

1. How do you feel about consonant sounds being 'expendable' in English? Are they expendable in your L1? Do you believe that vowel and consonant sounds should have equal status in English speech? Give reasons. If you still feel like that after completing this course, it may be worth going back to revise a few of the key points!

2. The course has almost finished. Has your spoken English improved by following this course? In what way(s)? What have you learned? What have you enjoyed doing the most? What do you need to go back and revise? Have you been surprised in any way? How much progress have you made? Has anybody commented on improvements in your spoken English? What has been the most difficult part of the course for you? What has been straightforward? Would you recommend this course? Would you consider repeating the course?

Practice

1. Read the list of actions at the top of p.27. Think of five new phrases for each action and practice them out loud, focusing on making the action seem as unobtrusive as possible – all the time emphasising the vowel sounds, rather than the consonant sounds. Put some of your phrases into sentences and practice them out loud. Record, slow down, and check your pronunciation. Ask a friend or teacher to listen to you and give you feedback. Add glottal stops when necessary and change consonant sounds moving forward when required.

2. Practice making the transitions in the phrase 'facts were' on p.27. Say each stage out loud. Make sure that you reduce the word 'were' to simply w + schwa sound. Find out what an embedded schwa sound[1] is.

3. Remind yourself about the schwa sound and why it is so important to English pronunciation.

4. Read the phrase 'facts were' at the top of p.28. Practice this phrase along with the whole sentence: 'The facts were clear'. Make sure 'were' is reduced to w + schwa sound. Try to make the a sound 'sing out loudly … like a bright bell'.

Further Study

- The Schwa Sound
- The Sound Spine
- Clear Alphabet

---

[1] *When pronounced on their own, all consonant sounds (including unvoiced) are followed by a schwa sound. This is called an embedded schwa sound. For example, the word doctor, which has a strong first syllable and a weak second syllable – with t + schwa sound – is represented like this: Do kt. [Lesson 1.6 Clear Alphabet - PurlandTraining.com]*

Answers to quizzes:

P.3   Unit 8.1   1. a)   2. b)   3. c)   4. a)   5. b)

P.6   Unit 8.2   1. a)   2. d)   3. b)   4.b), c), e), f)   5. b)

P.11   Unit 8.3   1. c)   2. b)   3. d)   4. b)   5. b)

P.16   Unit 8.4   1. d)   2. b)   3. c)   4. a)   5. b)

P.19   Unit 8.5   1. d)   2. a)   3. a)   4. b)   5. c)

P.22   Unit 8.6   1. d)   2. b)   3. a)   4. d)   5. b)

P.25   Unit 8.7   1. b)   2. d)   3. c)   4. b)   5. c)

P.28   Unit 8.8   1. d)   2. b)   3. a)   4. d)   5. c)

Learn Connected Speech with Matt Purland – Lesson 8: Multiple Actions