

# Speak, Read, & Spell



ACCENT  
MODIFICATION

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**SRS**  
Speak, Read, & Spell

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# Articulation

This section begins with practice of the English consonants, followed by vowels. The pronunciation exercises will begin with a description of the sound's features, followed by discrimination exercises, practice words, and sentences.

## Introduction to Articulation

Table 1 lists 23 consonant sounds or phonemes, and 13 vowels. A phoneme is a distinct sound unit in a specified language that distinguishes one word from another (Oxford University Press, 2014). Phonemes are categorized by manner; that is, how the sound is produced and the way the airstream is modified as it passes through the vocal tract.

### Articulation Exercises

As an introduction to each exercise, the target sound is described by voice (whether the vocal folds are vibrating when producing the sound) and place (which articulators are involved when producing the sound).

Discrimination practice begins each exercise and consists of pairing the target sound with another sound that non-native English speakers often substitute for the target sound. For example, the target sound /b/ is discriminated with /p/, since this is the most common substitution for that sound. When possible, the words chosen for discrimination exercises contain vowels that are most commonly mispronounced. This allows for high frequency of occurrence of typical erred sounds in each session.

The practice words are displayed with the phoneme at the beginning, middle, or end of the word, depending on where the non-native English speaker normally exhibits difficulty. For example, some speakers of a foreign language leave off the final /t/ in a word so that a word like 'date' will sound like 'day'. For this reason, the phoneme is not practiced at the beginning of the word, such as 'ten', because a foreign speaker normally has little trouble pronouncing the /t/ in this position.

Students are encouraged to read the introduction to each Articulation Exercise before attempting it.

**Note:** Not all consonants listed in Table 1 have practice exercises (for example, many of the voiceless stops do not have practice exercises). This is because most non-native English speakers do not have difficulty with the feature characteristics of these sounds. You will also find that the sentences can sometimes be nonsensical; this is to allow for high frequency of target sound practice. Nonsense words are indicated with an asterisk (\*).

Audio for all Articulation pronunciation exercises is available at [www.speakreadspell.com](http://www.speakreadspell.com).

Table 1: Sounds by Manner, Place, and Voice

Consonants		Vowels	
Sound	Sample Word	Sound	Sample Word
/p/	pie	Short i /ɪ/	kiss, busy
/b/	ball	Long i /aɪ/	bride, try
/t/	two	Long e /i/	queen, meat
/d/	dad	Short e /ɛ/	sell, health
/k/	kite	Short o /ɑ/ or /ɔ/	fond, hall
/g/	gate	Long o /O/ or /OU/	know, toast
/f/	full	Short u /ʌ/	duck, enough
/v/	van	Long u /u/	zoo, two
/ð/	the	Hooked u /ʊ/	would, pull
/θ/	thank	Short a /æ/	fat, pack
/s/	some	Long a /ei/	base, great
/z/	zest		
/ʃ/	shell	Diphthongs	
/h/	hill	Sound	Sample Word
/w/	went	'ou' /aʊ/	house, how
/j/	yellow	/oi/ or /ɔɪ/	toy, boil
/tʃ/	chair	Post Vocalic /r/	
/dʒ/	jump	Sound	Sample Word
/m/	mom	'or' /ɔr/	roar, door
/n/	no	'ear' /ɪər/	hear, here
/ŋ/	sing	'are' /ər/	heart, car
/l/	love	'er' /ɜr/	word, perfect
/r/	run	'air' /ɛr/	fair, there

Note: Source: International Phonetic Chart for English Dialects (2014).

## Articulation

# Plosive Stops

A plosive stop sound is produced when air is released from behind an oral closure. Air pressure is built up in the oral cavity at the point of obstruction. When the air is released, a phoneme is produced.

Voiced stop consonants are difficult to produce for non-native speakers of English. Vocal cords are adducted (closed) when producing a voiced stop consonant.

For a visual presentation of this, see the *Helpful Links* page, where you will find an interactive tool provided by the University of Iowa for identifying the phonemes of American English.

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## b

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The /b/ is a voiced stop consonant. Its voiceless pair is /p/. The two phonemes are produced in the same manner, except that one is voiced and one is not.

In the exercises below, contrast /b/ with /p/, followed by /v/.

### Discrimination Exercises

1	hob – hop	15	tab – tap
2	cub – cup	16	stable – staple
3	nab – nap	17	rumble – rumple
4	abs – apps	18	sob – sop
5	cobber – copper	19	curb – curve
6	disburse – disperse	20	hobble – hovel
7	lib – lip	21	cupboard – covered
8	harbour – harper	22	lobes – loaves
9	nibble – nipple	23	marble – marvel
10	abreast – oppressed	24	robe – rove
11	Mabel – maple	25	verb – verve
12	base – pace	26	TB (tuberculosis) – TV (television)
13	bail – pail	27	rebel – revel
14	back – pack	28	sabre – savour

### Practice Words

1	Abe	babe	Gabe	
2	crib	fib	jib	rib
3	cobweb	ebb	Jeb	web

4	blab	cab	crab	dab
5	gab	grab	jab	lab
6	blurb	nab	Pedi cab	prefab
7	scab	stab	tab	taxicab
8	blob	Bob	cob	key fob
9	daub	doorknob	glob	hobnob
10	Kabob	knob	lob	mob
11	bathrobe	lobe	probe	strobe
12	corncob	job	rob	sob

**Practice Sentences**

1	The sign read, 'Do Not Disturb.'
2	The rib was broken at the sternum.
3	A doorknob can be made of glass.
4	To transcribe and describe the language is an arduous task.
5	Crab is a common dish of the indigenous tribe.
6	Club rules do not jibe with reality.
7	The mob began to rob the burger bar.
8	Grab a cube and put it in the tube.
9	Don't grab a crab or you may disturb him.
10	Describe how a tribe can absorb their intruders.

**/b/ Tongue Twisters for Fun...**

1	A big, blue, badly bleeding blister.
2	Betty bought a bit of butter.
3	Buy Bridge's British brushes.

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**p**

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The /p/ is a voiceless plosive stop consonant. Its voiced pair is /b/.

**Discrimination Exercises**

1	pea – bee	11	pug – bug
2	pin – bin	12	pie – bye
3	peg – beg	13	rope – robe
4	peep – beep	14	cup – cub



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## /au/

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The diphthong /au/ is represented in English print as 'ou' and 'ow'.

### Practice Words

1	prowl	power	about
2	doubt	down	couch
3	lounge	rebound	louse
4	found	house	mouse
5	how	surround	down
6	crowded	cloudy	flower
7	proud	shower	

The following sentences contain the two diphthongs:

/oɪ/ or /ɔɪ/ (such as in 'toy')

'ou' or /au/ (such as in 'lounge')

### Practice Sentences

1	Maya enjoyed lounging on the couch and eating pie with her peers.
2	Joey found an authentic coin in the flower garden, next to the house.
3	On a cloudy day in May, the lawyer was found spending time downtown, sight-seeing and taking in the day's events, including the featured parade.
4	Baby Desiree enjoys playing in her supersized, noisy toy outside the house, near the towering flowers.
5	The Canadian First Nation people are referred to as American Indians if residing in the United States and are well-liked for their Pow Wows.
6	Americans are often criticized for loving a beer with their supersized burger and oily fries.
7	Do you enjoy lounging on the couch, downing a beer while listening to noisy boys howling in your ear?
8	May recoiled in fear while fighting off tears while staring at the fierce, bearded, weird creature.
9	Raymond was poised while proudly looking at his pierced ear in the mirror, avoiding his annoying and domineering mother's criticizing glares.
10	Some Canadians are proud to be associated with the Royal family, while other Canadians avoid and despise the spoiled crowd.



# Speech

The following three sections—*Speech*, *Voice*, and *Prosody*—are written for the student and are self-guided. Portions of the exercises are recorded and available as part of the online program at [www.speakreadspell.com](http://www.speakreadspell.com).

**Note to Students:** Audio files are available for certain speech exercises. If this book is used as part of the online program and your instructor has assigned the exercises to you, you will be able to access the speech audio files at [www.speakreadspell.com](http://www.speakreadspell.com).

## Relaxation to Relieve Tension

Tension while speaking is more common than you may think. Most people think of tension in relation to speaking in front of a crowd, but it can happen in everyday speech. To obtain optimal speech patterns and voice, you need to be relaxed. If you are not relaxed, you will not be able to obtain proper breath support and optimal pitch.

The purpose of the following exercises is to release tension. When standing, always check your posture by aligning your ears with your shoulders, hips, and ankles. Let your arms hang at your hips, releasing tension in your neck and shoulders.

- In this relaxation exercise, you are sitting down. I want you to breathe in through your mouth. Next, close and tense up; that is, tighten your jaw, neck, fists, arms, core, groin, and toes. Hold your breath for five seconds, release and repeat 10 times.
- Sitting down on the edge of your chair, drop your head forward between your legs, bending over at your torso and letting your arms hang down on either side of your body. Your knuckles should reach towards the floor. Think loose! Hold this for a count of 5 - eyes closed and relaxed. Then slowly sit up with eyes still closed and lean back in your chair, with your neck hanging over the back of the chair. Breathe through your mouth 5 times, maintaining a very relaxed position.
- To make sure your jaw is loose, place your forefingers on the hinge of your jaw or temporal mandibular joint (TMJ), just in front of your ears and at the top of your cheekbones. Drop your jaw by opening your mouth wide. This is what a relaxed jaw feels like. Open and close your mouth while holding your fingers at the TMJ to feel this sensation.

## Relaxation to Rid Mumbling

If you are frequently asked to repeat yourself, it is likely that you are not opening up your jaw enough to move your lips adequately. This will likewise affect your speech volume.

To determine whether you are a mumblor or soft-spoken, do the following:

1. Stand in front of a mirror and say something aloud that you know by heart, such as a nursery rhyme, a prayer, etc.
2. Look at your mouth. Did your lips and jaw move?



# Voice

The following pages describe how voice quality affects intelligibility as well as your presence. The *Voice* section highlights diaphragmatic breathing and includes the topics of nasality, volume, and pitch.

**Note:** Audio files are available for certain voice exercises. If this book is used as part of the online program and your instructor has assigned the exercises to you, you will be able to access the voice audio files at [www.speakreadspell.com](http://www.speakreadspell.com).

## Diaphragmatic Breathing 101

### Finding Your Diaphragm

Start by placing one hand over your diaphragm (by placing your thumb over your navel with your fingers resting below your thumb). Place the other hand on your lower (floating) ribs to the side of your rib cage. Now breathe in through your mouth (slow and easy to the count of three), hold, and then breathe out through your mouth. Notice the outward movement of the diaphragm and the upward and outward movement of the ribs. Do not to engage any shoulder movement. Repeat this several times to get a sense of how your rib cage and diaphragm move when breathing.

Alternatively, find your diaphragm by placing your fingers as described above and coughing. Move your fingers around slightly to feel your diaphragm kick out as it does when one coughs.

1. With your hands under your rib cage, inhale and feel your rib cage expand horizontally - like a balloon. You should also feel your diaphragm engage as you inhale. Now count out loud 1 to 5 in one breath (keeping the balloon inflated). Exhale (letting the air out of the balloon) and feel your diaphragm collapse or relax. Do this repeatedly, counting from 6 to 10, then 11 to 15, 16 to 20, and 21 to 25.
2. A second exercise is to count quickly from 1 to 10 over and over until you run out of air. Do it as fast as you can - remember, this is in one breath. You have to keep the balloon expanded as long as possible. Articulation is not as important as good rhythm and speed.

How many times were you able to do it? Practice this often to expand your lung capacity. The average number is approximately 12 to 20.

3. Four important points you need to remember:
  - Become aware of the movement of your diaphragm, when it is engaged, and when it is not.
  - Engage your diaphragm with every breath.
  - Speak on exhalation and in a controlled manner.
  - Incorporate your new breathing technique for small periods during your daily speaking opportunities, and then gradually build up to all day, everyday.



# Prosody

Prosody is a suprasegmental aspect of speech that is often undervalued; yet it is pivotal to acquiring the English accent.

Rules of stress patterns are reviewed in this section.

## Inflection

**Note to Students:** Audio files are available for certain prosody exercises. If this book is used as part of the online program and your instructor has assigned the exercises to you, you can access the prosody audio files at [www.speakreadspell.com](http://www.speakreadspell.com).

Using inflections will allow you to reflect a strong, powerful voice.

Lowering your inflection at the end of each sentence suggests you are a confident speaker. Using an upper inflection (as though every statement requires a yes/no response) infers the speaker is unsure, doubtful, lacking assertiveness, and to some listeners, immature.

Let's first start by varying inflection of some common words:

yes  
sure  
so  
wow

Now let's try some more multi-syllable words and short phrases

absolutely  
you did it  
I can help you  
no way  
he can go now

We use a term called *circumflex* that refers to the voice going up and down in the same word or breath group. Rising circumflex (up-down-up) is often used at the end of a phrase.

**Example:** So you are going home?

This pattern suggests to the listener that we are not finished speaking and there is more information coming. Rising and falling circumflex (down-up-down) can be used in presentations quite effectively. It is often used to refer to a contrast of sorts.

**Example:** Take THIS one, NOT that ONE.

Use the examples above to play around with inflection, and see how your message can be conveyed differently, depending on the pattern of inflection.

Try to listen to your outgoing messages before sending them. Notice how they change depending on the listener. Is it a customer service return call? An appointment at a doctor's office? Speaking with a spouse? A friend? A family member? A telemarketer?

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# Appendix A

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## Course Outlines

The following pages contain course outlines for seven foreign languages: Dutch, African (Igbo), Spanish, Korean, Hindi (Urdu), Filipino (Tagalog), and Chinese (Mandarin).

The outlines below contain error sounds, which are common for many native speakers of the particular foreign language when pronouncing English. This will serve as a typical course outline, with some changes made to customize your own pattern analysis.

### English and Dutch

#### *Difficult CONSONANTS Sounds*

Consonant sounds most commonly in error are /b/, /d/, and /g/.

*In the final position of the word:*

/b/ is often substituted with a /p/ "dib" becomes "dip."

/d/ is often substituted with a /t/ "did" becomes "dit."

/g/ is often substituted with a /k/ "dog" becomes "dok."

The "stressed r" as in the word BURN is dropped to sound like the word BUN.

The "unstressed r" as in the word BURNER is dropped as in the word BURN(EH).

#### *Difficult FRICATIVE Sounds*

Fricative sounds most commonly in error are voiced and voiceless 'th.'

'th' (voiceless) is often substituted with an /s/ or /t/ "thank you" becomes "sank you."

'th' (voiced) is often substituted with a /d/ "mother" becomes "mader."

#### *Difficult VOWEL Sounds*

Vowel sounds most commonly in error are:

The "hooked U" as in the word LOOK becomes a "long U" as in the word LUKE.

The "short A" as in the word ART becomes a "long O" as in the word OAT.

The "short I" as in the word IT becomes a "long E" as in the word EAT.





Luella Jonk was born in Manitoba, Canada, to a Dutch father and Canadian mother. She always had a passion to learn and study communication. She earned her Masters in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Missouri State University in 1995. After building a successful private practice in Speech Language Pathology, she returned back to the University of Manitoba in 2005 where she obtained an Interdisciplinary PhD in the fields of Education, Linguistics, Psychology and Nursing. She self-published her dissertation on the topic of First Nation language acquisition, before creating the Speak, Read, & Spell educational and treatment resources for teachers and speech language pathologists.

# Speak, Read, & Spell is an e-learning platform that enables speech language pathologists and educators to provide their services to students in a web-based learning environment.

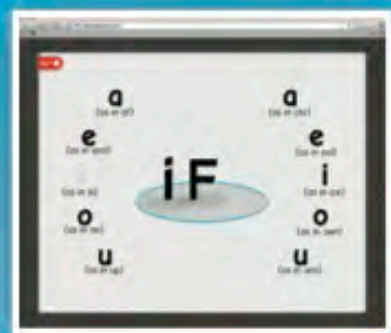
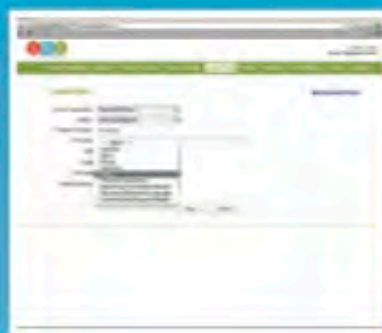
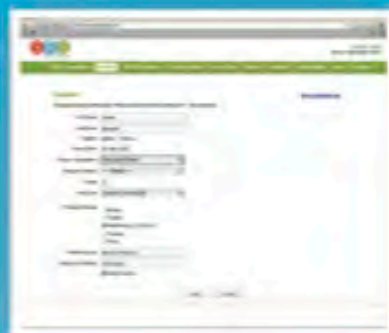
Screen-sharing and streamline video capabilities expand the educator's toolset, thereby enhancing the students' learning experience.

*Speak, Read, & Spell* has numerous online games, stories, and therapy tools, providing educators with multiple teaching resources. Easy-to-use scheduling, filing, billing, and report tools simplify day-to-day practice management so that more time can be spent working with students and less time on paperwork and preparation.



*Speak, Read, & Spell* makes it easy for teachers to augment their students' speech and language goals with in-class or homework assignments. Easy-to-use personalized lesson plans and visual feedback keep students motivated as they progress through their assignments and exercises.

Whether your students' goals are speech, literacy, or language enhancement, *SRS* will become the method by which you give them the motivation to practice and succeed.



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