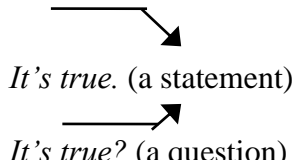


Pronunciation term	What it means
Vowels	<p>There are 19 English vowel sounds on the advice sheet <b>P5</b>. Vowel sounds are different to vowels in English spelling.. For example the word: ‘<b>feet</b>’ is spelt with the vowel ‘e’ but it is pronounced with the vowel sound /i/. Dictionaries will show you that although the spelling is ‘<b>feet</b>’, the pronunciation is /fi/. It’s a good to know this as it can help you learn how to pronounce new words more easily when you find them in a dictionary.</p> <p>Refer to <b>P5</b> for examples of consonant sounds. Check <b>P3</b> for materials on vowels.</p>
Consonants	<p>There are 24 English consonant sounds on the advice sheet <b>P5</b>. Again consonant sounds can be different to spelling. For example, we spell words with ‘<b>ch</b>’ but depending on the word we can pronounce it using very different consonant sounds. For example we use /tʃ/ for the word ‘<b>stitch</b>’ which is pronounced: /stitʃ/ but we use /k/ for the word ‘<b>stomach</b>’ which is pronounced: /stamək/. As with the vowel sounds, it’s good to know this as it can help you learn how to pronounce new words more easily when you find them in a dictionary.</p> <p>Refer to <b>P5</b> for examples of consonant sounds. Check <b>P3</b> for materials on consonants.</p>
Clusters	<p>These are groups of consonant sounds at the beginning, middle and ends of words.</p> <p>e.g. <u>pl</u>ay, <u>chil</u>dren, <u>best</u>, <u>spring</u>, <u>pr</u>actical etc.</p> <p>Check <b>P3</b> for materials on clusters.</p>
Syllables	<p>These are parts of words that contain at least one vowel sound.</p> <p>e.g. 2 syllables: simple = sim.ple  3 syllables: simplify = sim.pli.fy  5 syllables: simplification = sim.pli.fi.ca.tion</p> <p>Check <b>P3</b> for materials on syllables.</p>
Word stress	<p>This is the syllable (vowel sound) in a word that sounds stronger:</p>

	<p>‘stressed’. Dictionaries will show you where the stress falls on a word. They often use small marks to show which part of the word is stressed. For example the word ‘<b>simplify</b>’ will be shown thus: /<sup>1</sup><b>simplifai</b>/ This means that the first vowel sound /ɪ/ should be the most stressed. Sometimes if the vowel sound is not stressed it changes into a <b>SCHWA</b> /ə/ This sound can be used to replace all the alphabet vowels used in spelling: (a, e, i, o, u,) For example, in spelling, the word: ‘<b>woman</b>’ has two vowels: <b>o</b> and <b>a</b> which can be pronounced as: /ʊ/ and /æ/ but in the word: ‘<b>woman</b>’ the stress is on the <b>o</b> therefore the second vowel sound changes to a schwa and the word is pronounced: /<sup>1</sup><b>wʊmən</b>/ not /wʊmæn/</p> <p>Check <b>P3</b> for materials on Word stress.</p>
Sentence stress	<p>This is the word(s) in a sentence that sound(s) stronger. e.g. <i>Look. That’s RACHEL.</i> <i>Look. THAT’S Rachel.</i></p> <p>A change in the stress can change meaning. Check <b>P3</b> for materials on Sentence stress.</p>

Weak forms	<p>In connected speech common words like: <i>to an, and, the, of,</i> etc. often change their sound to a weak one. For example when we say: ‘<b>fish and chips</b>’ we often make the word: ‘<b>and</b>’ weak because it’s not so important to the meaning. The pronunciation thus changes to: ‘<b>fish n chips</b>’. These kinds of weak forms are also known as ‘reductions’. Check in a dictionary to see the way you can say these words in their Strong form compared to their Weak form. You’ll notice there is a big difference in the way they sound.</p> <p>Check <b>P3</b> for materials on Weak forms.</p>
Contractions	<p>Contractions are often made with a pronoun plus an apostrophe plus a reduced form of the auxiliary verb. e.g: I will → <i>I’ll</i></p>

	You are → <i>You're</i> She would <del>or</del> She had → <i>She'd</i> Check <b>P3</b> for materials on Contractions.
Linking	To speak fluently, it is important to link words together in a sentence. e.g. <b>Switch off the lights</b> sounds like: <b>Swi(t)choff the lights</b> and is pronounced: /swɪ'tʃɒf/ /ðə/ /laɪts/ There are a number of easy to remember rules about linking. Check <b>P3</b> for materials on Linking.
Intonation	If you change the way you say a word or sentence, you can change the meaning, e.g. <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><i>It's true.</i> (a statement)</p> <p><i>It's true?</i> (a question)</p> </div> Check <b>P3</b> for materials on Intonation.

## And now...

After reading this Advice Sheet, you should have an idea of what to do and how to do it. Improving pronunciation is a long-term process and requires constant practice. Sometimes you may feel bored or frustrated or think that you are not progressing at all. If you would like any help or advice, or just a chat about your progress, please get in touch - **we are here to support your independent learning!** To contact us:

- Make an appointment to see and adviser. For details of advisers and their availability, please go to <https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-adviser-timetable/>).
- E-mail your questions to **iLANG** ([lcilang@ust.hk](mailto:lcilang@ust.hk)).
- Ask at the reception counter of the Language Commons — if the receptionist cannot help you directly, s/he will pass your query on to one of the advisers.

## What else can you do?

- Browse the many physical (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-commons/#resources>) and online materials (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/resources-speaking/>) for Pronunciation.
- Join a Pronunciation activity or short course (<http://ilang.cle.ust.hk/speaking/>).

*Last updated: September 2017*