

English Pronunciation Fundamentals:

Why It Matters and What You Will Learn



- **Clear communication:** link pronunciation to confidence and better listening comprehension



- **Course journey:** sounds, word stress, rhythm, linking, intonation, self-correction



- **Realistic goal:** intelligibility and comprehensibility, not accent elimination



- **Pronunciation is a physical skill:** ear training, mouth awareness, focused practice



- **Research evidence:** explicit pronunciation instruction brings meaningful gains for adults





What Pronunciation Actually Is: Sounds, Stress, and the Music of Speech



- Pronunciation combines individual sounds, stress, rhythm, linking, and intonation



- Intelligibility and comprehensibility are more realistic goals than accent-free speech



- Stress and rhythm often affect clarity more than individual sounds



- Observe your own speech and target changes for the greatest impact

Emphasis on “really”



I **really** enjoyed the presentation today.

Emphasis on “enjoyed”



I really **enjoyed** the presentation today.

Smooth, even rhythm



I really enjoyed the presentation today.



How We Produce Speech:

A Quick Tour of the Vocal Tract



- Key articulators: lips, teeth, tongue, alveolar ridge, hard/soft palate, vocal cords



- Voiced vs. voiceless: feel the vibration in your throat



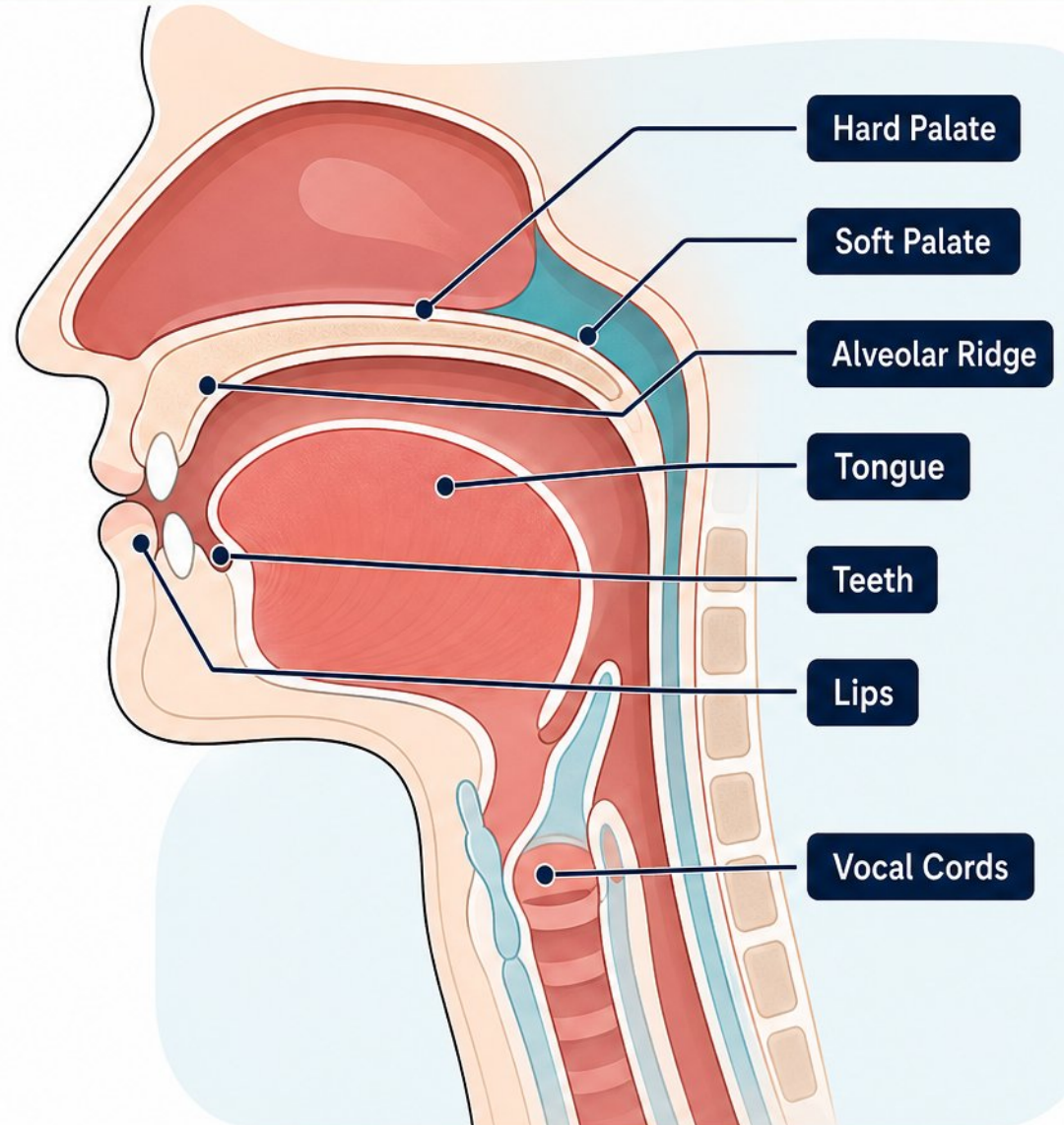
- Airflow and mouth shape create different sounds



- Active parts (tongue, lips) move toward stationary points



- /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/
/b/, /d/, /g/ each use specific articulators



English Vowels: Long, Short, and Everything In Between



- More vowel sounds than most languages—a major challenge for learners



- Short vs. long vowels change meaning: *ship* vs. *sheep*, *full* vs. *fool*



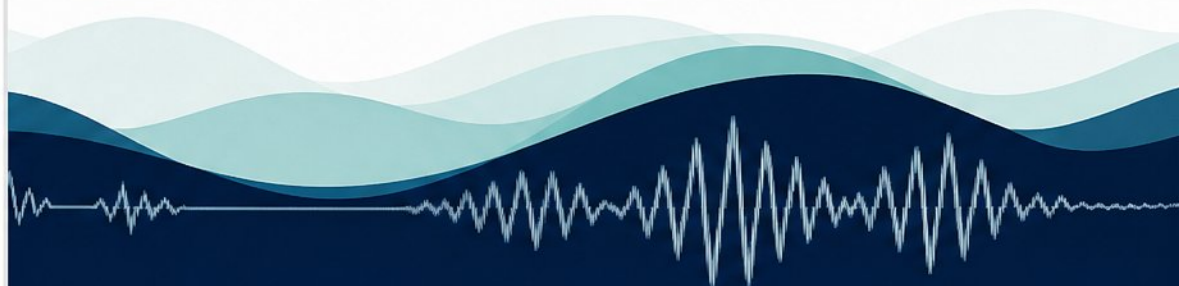
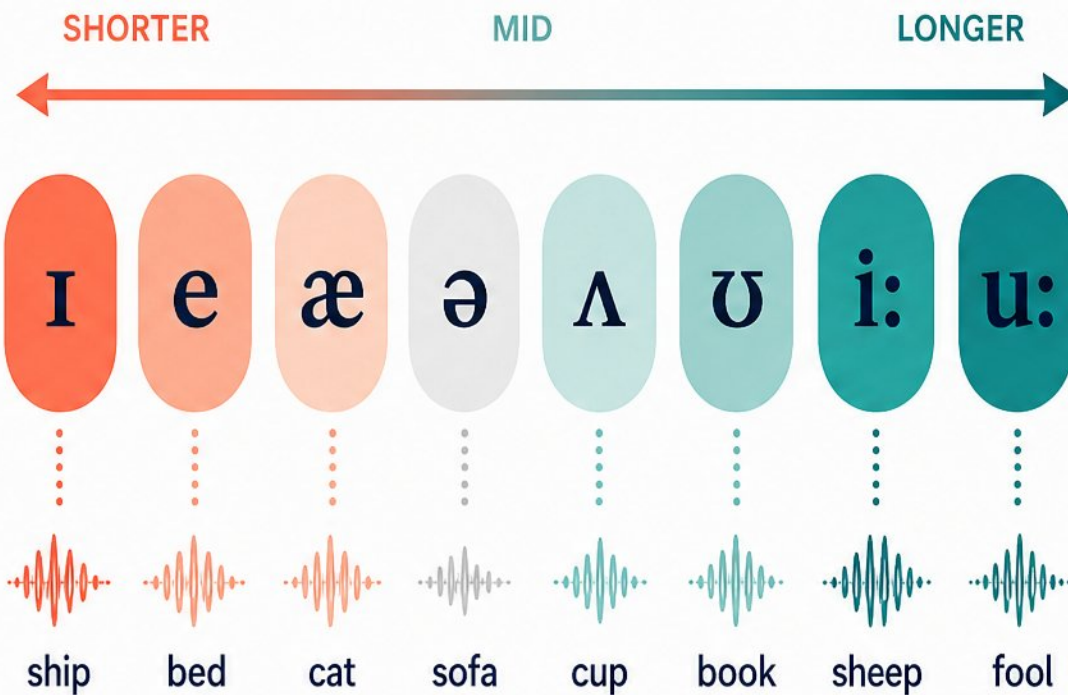
- The schwa /ə/: most common English vowel, found in unstressed syllables



- Practice key contrasts:
/ɪ/ vs. /i:/, /æ/ vs. /ɛ/,
/ʊ/ vs. /u:/



- Learn IPA symbols gradually with clear examples



English Consonants: Places and Manners of Articulation



- Consonants grouped by place and manner of articulation



- Voiced vs. voiceless pairs:
/p/ vs /b/, /f/ vs /v/,
/s/ vs /z/



- Articulation points:
bilabial, dental, alveolar,
palatal, velar



- Challenging sounds:
/θ/, /ð/, /l/ vs /r/, and
/v/ vs /w/



- Feel the difference with
your lips, tongue, and teeth



	PLACE OF ARTICULATION				
	Bilabial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
MANNER OF ARTICULATION					
 Plosive (Stop)	 /p/ /b/		 /t/ /d/		 /k/ /g/
 Fricative	 /f/ /v/	 /θ/ /ð/	 /s/ /z/	 /ʃ/ /ʒ/	 /h/
 Affricate	—	—	 /tʃ/ /dʒ/	—	—
 Nasal	 /m/	—	 /n/	 /ɲ/	 /ŋ/
 Liquid	—	—	 /l/  /r/	—	—
 Glide	—	—	—	 /j/	 /w/

Confusing Sound Pairs: Practical Contrasts That Matter



- Focus on one high-impact contrast at a time



- Minimal pairs: words differing by one sound



- Drill listening and speaking with minimal pairs



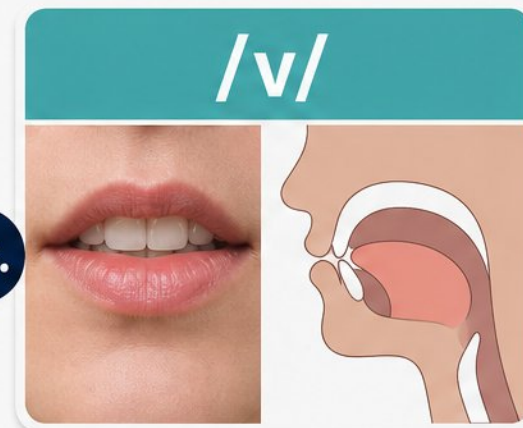
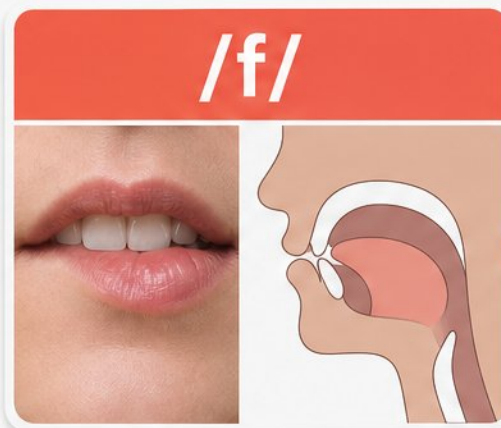
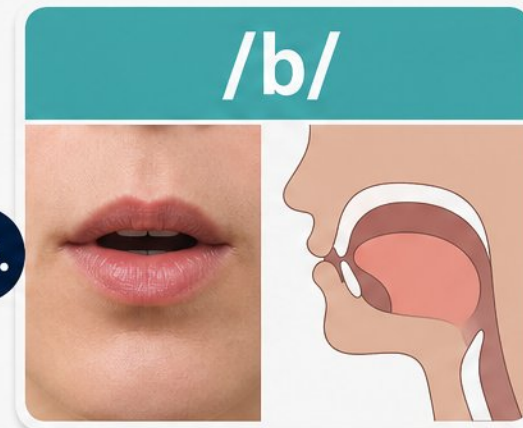
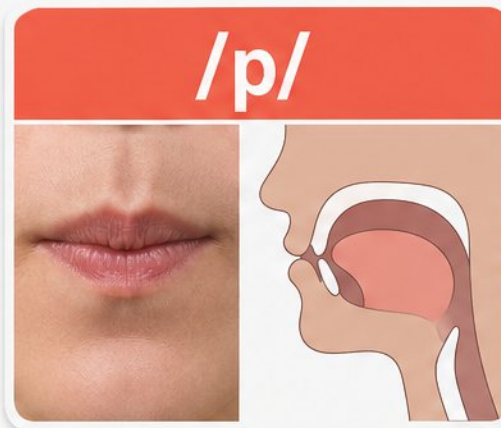
- Feel physical differences: /p/, /b/ vs. /f/, /v/



- Practice short example sentences in context



- L1 interference explains why some pairs are harder





Word Stress: Putting the Emphasis in the Right Place



- Stressed syllables: longer, louder, higher, clearer



- Place stress on vowels, not consonants



- 2-syllable nouns/adjectives: stress first (TAble)



- 2-syllable verbs: stress second (reLAX)



- Suffix pattern: -tion/-sion/-ic stress syllable before



- Dictionary mark: stress before syllable, e.g. 'apple



- REcord (noun) vs. reCORD (verb) change meaning



longer



louder



higher



clearer

'TAble

noun/adjective:
stress first

re'LAX

verb:
stress second

ac'TION

-tion/-sion/-ic:
stress syllable before

'apple

dictionary mark:
stress before syllable

'REcord ↔ re'CORD
(noun) (verb)

change
meaning

Rhythm and Linking:

Why English Sounds Connected



- English is stress-timed:
stressed syllables create rhythm



- Unstressed function words
reduce to weak forms



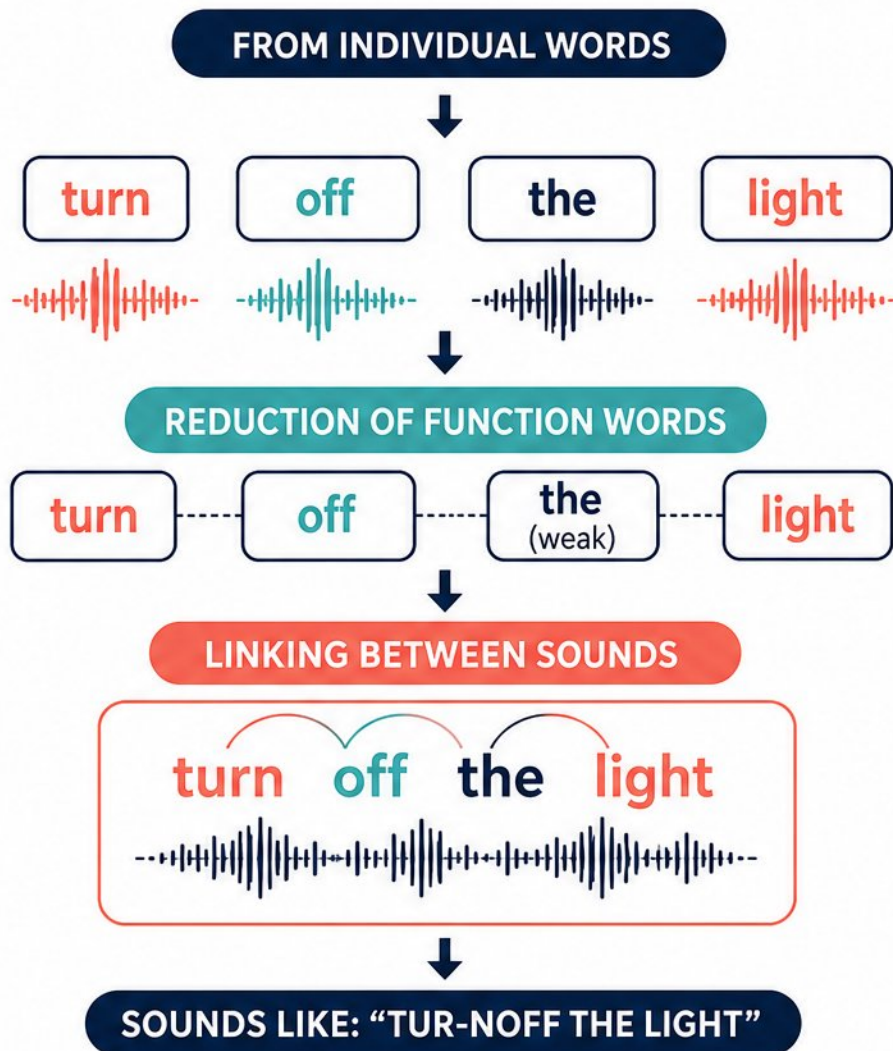
- Common weak forms:
of, and, to, can, have



- Link consonants to vowels:
“turn off” → “tur-noff”



- Use reduced speech
when speaking,
not just listening



Intonation: Expressing Meaning Through Pitch



- Rising pitch signals yes/no questions and surprises, e.g., "Are you list[↑]ening?"



- Falling pitch is common in statements and wh-questions, e.g., "Where do you[↘]work?"



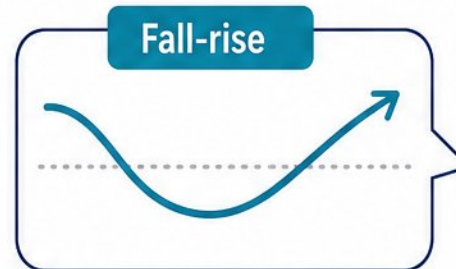
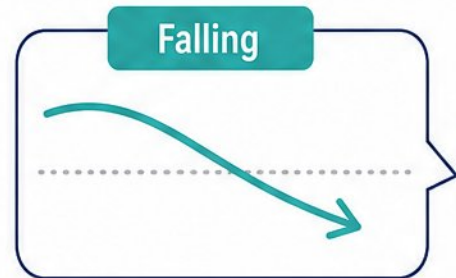
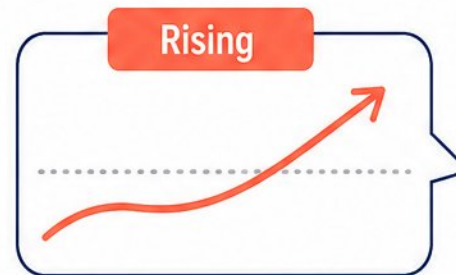
- Fall-rise pattern conveys politeness, uncertainty, or a hidden "but".



- Intonation can shift meaning — try "That's[↘] great" vs. "That's[↑] great."



- Practice with short dialogues, using your hands to trace pitch.



Common Pronunciation Challenges for Adult Learners



- Problem areas: final consonants, clusters, vowel length, stress



- First-language habits shape pronunciation errors



- Targeted self-monitoring strategies for improvement



- Example: Spanish, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese speakers



- Adults can improve intelligibility while keeping an accent



Self-Practice Toolkit: Techniques and Resources for Continued Improvement



- Practice daily with shadowing, recording, and minimal pairs



- Use free apps like Speakometer or ELSA Speak for feedback



- Shadow audio to improve stress, rhythm, and intonation



- Record yourself weekly to track progress and stay motivated



- Short, frequent sessions beat occasional long practice



Bringing It Together: Stress, Rhythm, and Sound in Real Speech



- All components blend in natural, connected speech



- Word stress anchors rhythm and clarity



- Linking smooths boundaries between words



- Intonation adds meaning and emotion

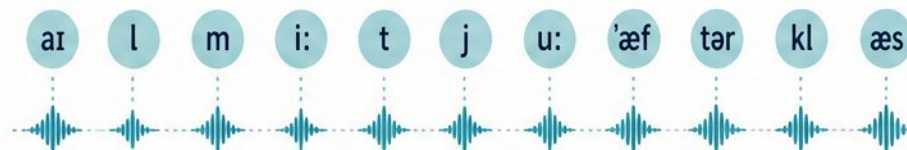


- Practice a short dialogue: listen, repeat, and record yourself

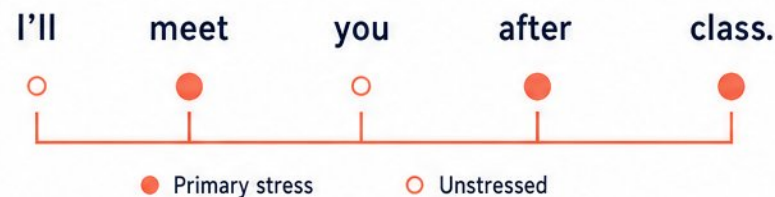
EXAMPLE DIALOGUE PHRASE

“I’ll meet you after class.”

ISOLATED SOUNDS



STRESS PATTERN



INTONATION CONTOUR



FULLY CONNECTED WAVEFORM



A Guided Pronunciation Practice: Applying What You Have Learned



- Apply sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation to a real-world dialogue



- Listen, repeat, and self-record for self-monitoring



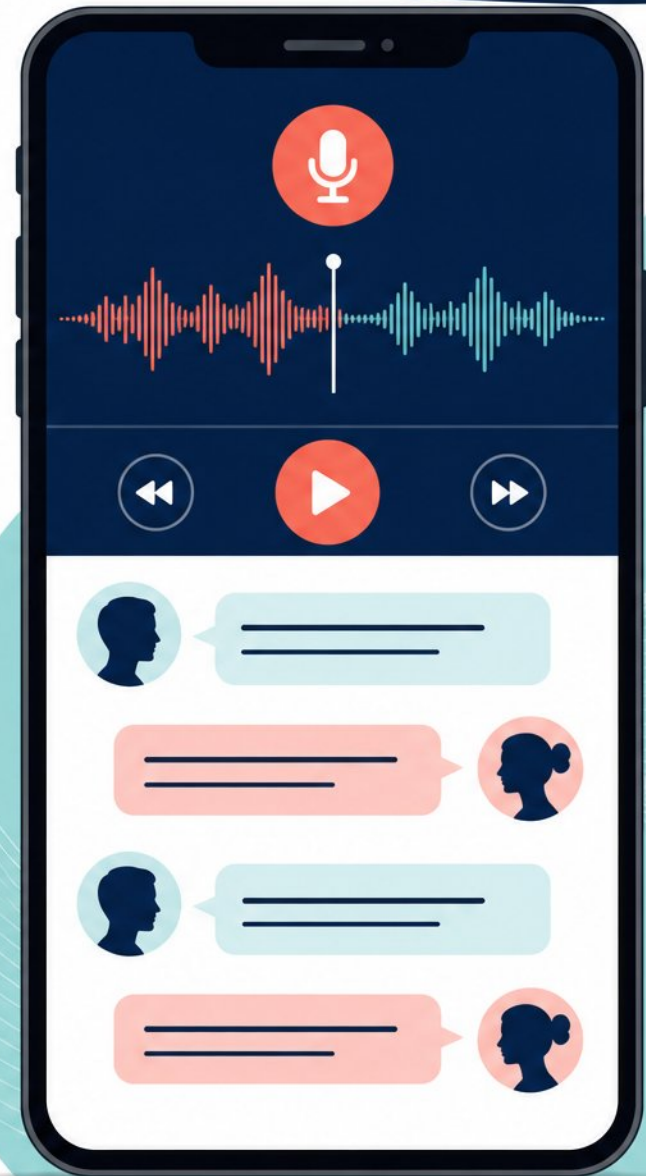
- Review key course concepts in one consolidated activity



- Set clear next steps for continued practice and instructor follow-up



- Use the toolkit to build a sustainable habit





Next Steps and Continued Improvement: Building a Pronunciation Habit



- Pronunciation is a physical skill; intelligibility is the goal



- Practice 10 minutes daily for lasting improvement



- Record yourself weekly to track your progress



- Seek instructor feedback for persistent problem areas



- Add pronunciation practice to your daily English use

WEEKLY PRACTICE CALENDAR



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Listen ↓ Practice ↓ Reflect	Listen ↓ Practice ↓ Reflect	Listen ↓ Practice ↓ Reflect	Listen ↓ Practice ↓ Reflect	Listen ↓ Practice ↓ Reflect	Listen ↓ Practice ↓ Reflect	Listen ↓ Practice ↓ Reflect



Key Takeaways and Review: English Pronunciation Fundamentals



- Five pillars: sounds, stress, rhythm, linking, intonation



- Goal: clarity, not accent-free speech



- Use mirror, hand, and recording techniques



- Practice daily with apps and minimal pairs



- Consistency beats intensity—keep it up



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