# Transcribing English Phrases

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# Transcribing English Phrases

*Transcribing English Phrases* is a sequel to *Transcribing English Words,* which is a practical guide to the pronunciation, and transcription, of individual words in English. *Transcribing English Phrases* is designed as a practical guide to matters of pronunciation when words come together in phrases and clauses. It provides explanations for the kinds of variation to word pronunciation that happen in ordinary, typical, informal colloquial speech in English. The specific phonological features are the processes of **simplification** – assimilation (anticipatory / coalescent / perseverative; phonemic / allophonic), elision, epenthesis and liaison – and the effect of **rhythm**, particularly in the matter of strong and weak forms.

The term *phrase* is taken liberally to include those elements of clause structure that are larger than single words: nominal, verbal, adjectival, adverbial phrases (or, groups) and prepositional phrases. For the sake of convenience, *Transcribing English Phrases* also includes instances where unstressed items are closely attached to stressed items even if they belong syntactically to separate phrases; eg *I'll get them*, where the subject *I* is fused phonologically with the verb phrase *'ll get*, and the object *them* (unstressed) cannot stand alone.

Like its companion course, the aim of *Transcribing English Phrases* is to develop your powers of observation in matters of English pronunciation; it starts off gently with plenty of examples and exercises in order to build up your confidence. Part 1 deals with all the processes of simplification and concludes with an elementary test; a key is provided for this test, but not for all the other exercises because you can't go wrong with them! Part 2 deals with rhythm and all the cases of strong and weak forms. Again the idea is to start off gently and work up to the complications of the *n't* forms. Part 3 consists of genuine monologues for transcription; the first one is accompanied by a good deal of guidance, the second one with less, and the third one with none at all. A key is provided to the transcription of these three texts.




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**Introduction**

Talk does not normally consist of single words. Sometimes it does, but much more often, talk consists of a vast number of words connected together in phrases, clauses, sentences, phonological paragraphs – in whole texts of discourse. An utterance that consists of a single word is usually a response like *Yes, No, Well, Maybe, OK, Certainly, Absolutely,* or *Tench, Paul, Cardiff, British, Male .....* But in most talk, words pile upon each other and they affect each other's pronunciation.

Take a simple example like *Ten green bottles*. Most people would recognize this phrase as the title of an old song and would probably say it quickly and without any hesitation. As they did so, they probably would not notice that the pronunciation of *ten* and *green* changes because of the contact each has with adjacent words. In this case, *ten* would probably be pronounced with its / n / changing to / ŋ / in anticipation of its contact with the / g / of *green*; and *green* would probably be pronounced with its / n / changing to / m / in anticipation of its contact with the / b / of *bottles*. These kinds of change reflect a process known as simplification, which is the equivalent in pronunciation to processes like economy of effort, or 'cutting corners', in other spheres of life.

There is another kind of effect when words come together in phrases and clauses. Just as words have a stress pattern, phrases and clauses do too. Think again of the old song:

**Ten green bott**les
**Hang**ing **on** the **wall**
And if **one green bott**le
Should **ac**ci**den**tally **fall**
There'd be **nine green bott**les
**Hang**ing **on** the **wall**

Each line has three beats, or stresses – printed in bold - which means that certain words and syllables are pronounced *without* stress - printed plain. In order to say these unstressed words quickly enough not to spoil the rhythm, they are usually pronounced with a weak vowel. And this means that certain words have at least two possible pronunciations - a strong form with a strong vowel, and a weak form with a weak vowel. Take the word *and* for example. Taken by itself, it is pronounced as / ˈænd /; this is its strong form. And it is sometimes pronounced like that in talk, for emphasis or contrast. But much more often, it is pronounced in a different way, as in this song, as / ən /; this is its weak form. The choice between its strong or weak form depends upon its role in a phrase or clause; if it is just connecting words or clauses, it is usually pronounced in its weak form, but if someone wants to draw attention to the connection itself, it would be pronounced in its strong form. This is a choice at the level of discourse which is then reflected in the degree of prominence that a person gives a word within a phrase or clause. As a general rule, lexical (or 'content') words like nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are made prominent because of their importance in a message, whereas grammatical (or 'structure') words like conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns and determiners are usually pronounced without any prominence because their role is basically to provide structure to phrases and clauses. English rhythm, then, relates to the way in which unstressed syllables are integrated with the strong syllables of prominent words in discoursse, to produce the pronunciation of phrases and clauses.

Most talk is conducted in an informal, rather rapid, colloquial style. Occasionally, talk is slow and formal, in which case the processes of simplification would not necessarily operate. Sometimes, the pace of talk is reduced to dictation speed when even rhythm choices do not

operate. If you had to dictate the *Ten Green Bottles* song, you would probably articulate all the words in their full forms. (The dots (.) indicate pausing.)

ˈtɛn . ˈgriːn . ˈbɒtl̩z
ˈhæŋɪŋ . ˈɒn . ˈðə . ˈwɔːl
ˈænd . ɪf . ˈwʌn . ˈgriːn . ˈbɒtl̩
ˈʃʊd . ˈæksi . ˈdɛntəli . ˈfɔːl
ˈðɛə . ˈwʊd . ˈbiː . ˈnaɪn . ˈgriːn . ˈbɒtl̩ z
ˈhæŋɪŋ . ˈɒn . ˈðə . ˈwɔːl

Contrast this pronunciation with the way you would probably sing it!

ˈtɛŋ ˈgriːm ˈbɒtl̩ z
ˈhæŋɪŋ ˈɒn ðə ˈwɔːl
ən ɪf ˈwʌŋ ˈgriːm ˈbɒtl̩
ʃəd ˈæksɪˈdɛntli ˈfɔːl
ðə b bi ˈnaɪŋ ˈgrɪːm ˈbɒtl̩ z
ˈhæŋɪŋ ˈɒn ðə ˈwɔːl

Obviously, normal, ordinary, informal, colloquial talk is not like singing with its carefully measured beat, but it is nevertheless marked by rhythm choices and simplification processes as illustrated in the song.

We will consider the simplification processes first.

## PART 1: Simplification

### Assimilation

The adjustment of the articulation of words as a consequence of their immediate spoken environment can happen in various ways. When an adjustment is made to accommodate an actual phonetic feature in the immediate environment, that process of simplification is known as assimilation. The adjustment makes the phoneme more similar to its environment. The adjustment of the / n / in *ten* to the velar articulation of the / g / in *green* is a case of assimilation: the / n / becomes velar / ŋ / which shares an identical feature with the velar articulation of / g /. Similarly, the / n / of *green* becomes bilabial / m / in anticipation of the bilabial articulation of / b / in *bottles*.

**/ n / in word-final position** regularly adjusts itself in English to the anticipated point of articulation of the consonant at the beginning of the next word. You might have noticed what also happens to the / n / of *one* and *nine* in the song. Think of common phrases with the prepositions *on* and *in* which are followed by words beginning with bilabial / p, b, m / and you will notice that the / n / easily adjusts itself to / m / in anticipation.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| on purpose | ɒm ˈpɜːpəs | in person | ɪm ˈpɜːsn |

Now listen to and transcribe

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| on paper | _____ | in print | _____ |
| on principle | _____ | in prison | _____ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| on behalf | _____ | in between | _____ |
| on balance | _____ | in Bristol | _____ |
| | | | |
| on Monday | _____ | in March | _____ |
| on my behalf | _____ | in medicine | _____ |

Notice that in cases like *on Monday* and *in March*, there is a 'double' / m / - a single articulation of double length to account for the final / m / of *on* and *in* and the initial / m / of the following word. Otherwise it would sound like

om unday im arch

which does not sound typical of native English speech.

In a parallel way, word-final / n / easily adjusts to a velar / ŋ / in anticipation of following velar consonants / k, g /.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| on call | ɒŋ ˈkɔːl | in case | ɪŋ ˈkeɪs |

Listen and transcribe

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| on course | _____ | in keeping | _____ |
| on guard | _____ | in Gloucester | _____ |
| on grass | _____ | in goal | _____ |

An identical case of assimilation occurs in the prefixes *un-* and *in-* (whether it means 'in' or negative). Listen and transcribe.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| unpleasant | ʌmˈplɛzn̩t | input | ˈɪmpʊt |
| unbalanced | _____ | inbuilt | _____ |
| unmade | _____ | inmate | _____ |
| unkind | _____ | incorrect | _____ |
| ungrateful | _____ | ingratitude | _____ |

Now consider these phrases and note the assimilation process:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10p | ˈtɛm ˈpiː | 10 quid | ˈtɛŋ ˈkwɪd |
| £1 | _____ | one go | _____ |
| fine mess | _____ | fine grain | _____ |
| gun boat | _____ | gun carrier | _____ |
| hen party | _____ | hen coop | _____ |
| ten pin bowling | _____ | 7 cases | _____ |

All these cases of / n / assimilation involve adjustments from one phoneme, / n /, to another /m, ŋ /. These are instances of *phonemic* assimilation. But the same kind of assimilation occurs in

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| in fun | ten things | sun rise | in waves |
| in fact | one thought | on show | on Wednesday |
| on vacation | in there | John Jones | runway |
| in verse | in theory | in use | ten weeks |

But the resulting articulation from the assimilation process is not identical to an existing phoneme: there is a labio-dental nasal [ɱ] before the labio-dental / f, v /, a dental nasal [n̪] before the dental / θ, ð /, and either a post-alveolar or palatal nasal [ɲ] before / r, ʃ, tʃ, dʒ, j /. These are instances of *allophonic* assimilation, since the adjustments do not coincide with other identifiable phonemes, and so are not recorded in a *phonemic* transcription.

Assimilation of final / n / is common in many other languages, including Latin, where the bilabial assimilation was actually expressed in the orthography: *in* + *possibilis* > *impossibilis*. As a result we have spellings like *impossible, improper, impress, imbalance, imbecile, immense, immeasurable* in English. And *impromptu* from Italian.

*

Assimilation of **final / d /** in English is almost parallel to that of / n /, but this is not matched in many other languages. The / d / becomes bilabial / b / - retaining its voicing – before bilabial / p, b, m /, and becomes velar / g / before velar / k, g /. (This is true of most English accents, though West Walian English is an exception.) Notice the process in

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| bad penny | ˈbæb ˈpɛni | red kite | ˈrɛg ˈkaɪt |
| good boy | _____ | bad girl | _____ |
| red meat | _____ | good gracious | _____ |

Notice it too in the greetings:

good morning ˈgʊb ˈmɔːnɪŋ goodbye ˈgʊb ˈbaɪ

Notice that in cases like *good boy*, *goodbye*, there is a 'double' / b / - a single articulation of double length to account for the final / b / in / gʊb / and the initial / b / of the following word, likewise, a 'double' / g / in *bad girl.*

But final / d / also becomes post-alveolar / dʒ / before palatal / j /.
Notice the process in

a bad year ə ˈbædʒ ˈjɜː good use ˈgʊdʒ ˈjuːs

Note the subtle difference in articulation between *good use* and *good juice* /ˈgʊd dʒuːs/.

Historically, this post-alveolar assimilation of / d / before / j / accounts for the / dʒ / in words like *grandeur, verdure, soldier* and, more recently, in *educate, gradual*. (Standard South Walian English keeps the / dj / sequence in *soldier*: / ˈsəʊldjə /.) Many transfer this process also to the beginnings of words as in *due, duty* /ˈdʒuː, ˈdʒuːti/.

The same kind of allophonic assimilation occurs in phrases like

good fun a bad thing a red shirt

which we noted with /n/ above.

*

Assimilation of **final / t /** in English used to be exactly parallel to assimilation of final / d /, producing / p / and / k / - retaining voicelessness – before bilabial / b, d, m / and velar / k, g /. Thus *hot potato* would be / ˈhɒp pəˈteɪtəʊ / and *white cross* / ˈwaik ˈkrɒs /. But a new tendency has developed and that is to articulate final / t / as a glottal stop [ ʔ ]. This produces *hot* as [ ˈhɒʔ ] and *white* as [ ˈwaɪʔ ], which eliminates any possibility of assimilation. Listen to the two possibilities in the following phrases:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| hot [ ʔ ] potato | hot / p / potato | white [ ʔ ] cross | white / k / cross |
| not [ ʔ ] bad | not / p / bad | eight [ ʔ ] goals | eight / k / goals |
| right [ ʔ ] mess | right / p / mess | | |

Similarly, two possibilities before / j /, where the / t / could assimilate to post-alveolar / tʔ/ or not

right [ ʔ ] use right / tʔ/ use

Historically, this post-alveolar assimilation to / tʔ/ before / j / accounts for the / tʔ/ in words like *venture, picture, question* and, more recently, in *situation, actual.* Many transfer this process – as for / d / + / j / - to the beginnings of words like *tune, Tuesday.* (One chocolate firm recently ran a series of adverts relying on the popular perception of this tendency: *Every day is Chooseday!*)

Listen also for the distinction between words like *light* (with glottal stop) and *lie, right* (with glottal stop) and *rye,* etc, in these phrases

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| light detector | lie detector | Great Britain | grey Britain |
| right bread | rye bread | hurt feelings | her feelings |
| short line | shore line | tart manufacturer | tar manufacturer |
| boat man | bowman | | |

and the subtle difference in articulation between

white shoes ˈwaɪʔ ˈʃuːz why choose ˈwaɪ ˈtʃuːz

Historically, the older tendency to assimilate may well account for the frequent mis-spelling of *utmost* as **upmost*. No doubt, the sense of the word and the analogy with *uppermost* also contributed. (West Walian English is again an exception, where a fully articulated / t / is usual in all these contexts).

*

**Final / s / and / z /** assimilate to post-alveolar / ʔ / and / ʒ / in the face of post-alveolar / ʔ, tʔ, dʒ / and palatal / j /, Consider phrases with *this* / ðɪs / and *these* / ðiːz /

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| this shop | ðɪʃ ˈʃɒp | these shops | ðiːʒ ˈʃɒps |
| this chair | _____ | these chairs | _____ |
| this job | _____ | these jobs | _____ |
| this year | _____ | these years | _____ |

Notice that in cases like *this shop, bus shelter,* there is a 'double' / ʔ / to account for the /ʔ/ assimilation at the end of the first word and the /ʔ/ at the beginning of the following word.

Historically, this post-alveolar assimilation of / s, z / before / j / accounts for the /ʔ, ʒ / in words like *pressure, mission* and *pleasure, vision* and, more recently, in *issue, usual.* It also accounts for the /ʔ/ at the beginning of words like *sure, sugar.* Notice also how / s / readily assimilates to /ʔ/ before the / tʔ / in words like *mischief* / ˈmɪʃtʃɪf/, *question* / ˈkwɛʃtʃən/, *Christian* / ˈkrɪʃtʃən/.

You will have noticed how / t, d, s, z / all yield to the post-alveolar assimilation process before / j /. This is particularly noticeable when the following word is *you* or *your*, and is easily demonstrated in the following phrases

did you?
you had your chance!

If the word *you* or *your* is unstressed not only does the assimilation process adjust the pronunciation of / d / to / dʒ / in anticipation of the / j /, but the / d / and / j / actually coalesce: / ˈdidʒ u /, / ju ˈhædʒ ɔː ˈtʃɑːns /. However if the word *you* or *your* is stressed, as, for example, in emphasis or contrast, the / j / is retained: / ˈdidʒ ˈjuː /, / ˈjuː ˈhædʒ ˈjɔː ˈtʃɑːns /.

Notice, then, these cases where *you/your* is unstressed

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I need you | ai ˈniːdʒ u | I'll hide your money | ai l ˈhaɪdʒ ɔː ˈmʌni |
| She loved you | _____ | I've sorted your car out | _____ |
| we'll miss you | _____ | cross your arms | _____ |
| it wakes you up | _____ | he likes your sister | _____ |
| we'll lose you | _____ | use your head | _____ |
| cocoa warms you up | _____ | he sees your problem | _____ |
| as you know | _____ | This is your life | _____ |
| as you like it | _____ | does your wife know | _____ |
| it does you good | _____ | where's your money | _____ |
| he has you in mind | _____ | what was your job | _____ |

Remember that there are two possibilities when /t/ is followed by /j/

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| he'll meet you | hi l ˈmiːʔ/tʃ u | he'll meet your friend | …ˈmiːʔ/tʃ ɔː |
| it won't hurt you | _____ | I hate your guts! | _____ |

*

All the cases of assimilation we have considered so far involve an adjustment in the place of articulation in anticipation of (or in coalescence with) an immediately following consonant. The words have to belong to a phrase or a close knit syntactic structure within a clause. Assimilation often operates when a pause of hesitation interrupts the pronunciation of a phrase, like *he's gone . by bus /...*ˈgɒm . baɪ... / . But it does not operate when the pause realizes the boundary between two clauses: *how has he gone? By bus? /…*ˈgɒn . baɪ.../..

*

A quite different case of assimilation involves an adjustment in **voicing**. A voiced fricative in word final position often loses its voicing, either partially or fully, if the next word begins with a voiceless consonant. For instance, final / v / in *have* may weaken to a partially devoiced [ v̥ ] before a voiceless consonant in a phrase like *have to,* or it may weaken with full devoicing and become identical to / f /. Listen to the two possibilities:

ˈɦæv̥ tu ˈɦæf tu

Similarly, final /z/, eg *has to*

ˈhæz̥ tu ˈhæs tu

The partial devoicing process is a case of *allophonic* assimilation, but the full devoicing process amounts to *phonemic* assimilation. Notice that the / v / of *of*, the / ð / of *with,* the / z / of *is, was* can all be affected.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| of course | with care | he's too bad |
| | with support | she's fine |

In the following cases, note once again the tendency for a single articulation of 'double' length to account for the assimilated consonant at the end of one word and an identical consonant at the beginning of the following word.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| full of fun | with thanks | that was so nice |

This devoicing tendency often occurs within a word, at the juncture of two morphemes, in parallel situations. Thus *withstand* / wɪðˈstænd / becomes [wɪð̥ˈstænd] or / wɪθˈstænd /, and *absent* / ˈæbsn̩t / becomes either [ˈæb̥sn̩t ] or / ˈæpsn̩t /. Likewise *subsist, absolutely, obscene, newspaper.* In the word *absurd*, two alternative assimilation processes may be heard: either the / b / becoming [b̥] or / p /; or the / s / becoming / z /: /æpˈsɜːd/ or / æbˈzɜːd /.

*

That second alternative – the voicing option – is frequently heard in other cases where a voiceless fricative, particularly / s, ʔ / between voiced sounds becomes voiced itself. A well known example is the change that has happened to the name *Asia*, where / ʃ / has begun to give way to / ʒ /: /ˈeɪʒə/; and *version* / ˈvɜːʃən / to / ˈvɜːʒən /, *resource* / rɪˈsɔːs / to / rɪˈzɔːs /, *transit* / ˈtrænsɪt / to / ˈtrænzɪt / and *Muslim* / ˈmʊslɪm / to / ˈmʊzlɪm /.

*

These are the main cases of assimilation in English. Assimilation – phonemic or allophonic – is usually anticipatory, but occasionally coalescent. It involves either the adjustment in the place of articulation of final / n, d, t, s, z / before certain consonants, or the adjustment of the voicing of fricatives (and occasionally, plosives) according to their environment. But there is one other instance of assimilation in English where an adjustment is made that retains the place of articulation of a *preceding* consonant. This happens regularly in the word *happen*! If no vowel follows, the final / n / becomes syllabic and adjusts to the bilabial articulation of / p /: / ˈhæpm̩ /; also: *happens* / ˈhæpm̩z /, *happened* / ˈhæpm̩d /, but not in *happening*, where the / n / is not syllabic: / ˈhæpnɪŋ /. This kind of assimilation is called **retentive** or **perseverative**, and is relatively rare in English – although it is common in other languages. Other occasional instances in English include the possibility of *open* / ˈəʊpən / becoming / ˈəʊpm̩ /; *opens* / ˈəʊpənz / becoming / ˈəʊpm̩z / and *opened* / ˈəʊpənd / becoming / ˈəʊpm̩d /; but *opening* / “əʊpnɪŋ / keeps the non-syllabic / n /.

**Elision**

A second type of simplification involves not an adjustment to a sound, but its complete removal. This is known as elision; the missing sound is said to have been elided. Take the name *Christmas* as an example; it used to be a compound consisting of *Christ* and *mass*, but in the course of time, the / t / of the first word has been elided, and nowadays nobody would normally pronounce the name with a / t /. Similarly, the word *handkerchief* used to be a compound consisting of *hand* and *kerchief*, but again in the course of time the / d / of the first word has been elided.

As it happens, elision mainly affects final / t, d / if they are preceded by a consonant – as in the cases above – and also followed by a word beginning with a consonant – again, as in the cases above.

First of all, we will consider the **elision of final /d/**. Notice what has happened to the / d / in these other (formerly compound) words: *handsome, sandwich, grandfather, grandchildren*. Notice too that as / d / is elided in *grandparents*, the preceding / n / is adjacent to a bilabial consonant and assimilates to / p / by becoming / m /: /ˈgræm˛pɛərənts /. Try and transcribe:

grandpa _____

and also

grandmother _____

grandma _____

keeping a ‘double’ / m / for the assimilating / n / and the / m / of the second part of the compound. Transcribe, likewise:

handbag ˈhæm˛bæg

windbag _____

windmill _____

Transcribe

handset ˈhænˌsɛt
landscape _____
bandstand _____
friendship _____
bend them _____

Now cases where / d / is preceded by / l /

wild beasts ˈwaɪl ˈbiːsts
old men _____
child protection_____
goldfish _____
fold them _____

The fact that the elision of / d / makes some of these words identical to others (*while, goal, foal*) does not seem to trouble native English speakers, as the context usually makes it quite clear which word is intended. Occasionally, there is potential ambiguity as in *cold shed/ coal shed*, but again, usually the context is clear. Elision is sometimes expressed in 'popular' spelling, eg *Ol' King Cole, Ole Man River.*

Elision, however, does not take place if the following consonant is / h /, such as in

hand held ˈhænd ˌhɛld
grand house _____
wild horse _____
old hand _____

and is optional if the approximants / r, w / or / l / follow

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| hand rail | _____/_____ | hand luggage | _____/_____ |
| Grand Rapids | _____/_____ | landlocked | _____/_____ |
| old rope | _____/_____ | old lady | _____/_____ |
| wild west | _____/_____ | wild lily | _____/_____ |

If / j / follows, assimilation to / dʒ / usually takes place

land use ˈlændʒ ˈjuːs
old year _____

Thus, / d / elision takes place if it is word-final, preceded by a consonant and followed immediately by a word beginning with a consonant (but with the above exceptions). It also takes place if a suffix follows which begins with the right kind of consonant. Thus / d / is elided in *friends*, and may optionally be elided in *friendly*. What about these words?

friendship _____
blindness _____
childless _____
worldly _____
handful _____
child's play _____

The past-tense suffix < -ed > is pronounced / d / after voiced consonants other than / d / itself (see *Transcribing English Words*, p 40). If the immediately following word begins with a consonant that causes elision, then the past tense suffix itself is elided. This means that the

verb actually loses its tense marker; again, native English speakers do not appear to be particularly bothered by this, since there will probably be enough in the context to indicate which tense is intended. So, for example, in *I warned them*, the conditions are right for elision to take place, leaving the spoken equivalent of *I warn them*. Naturally, a person may decide to make the suffix noticeable by articulating the / d / in an exaggerated way, but this is not normal in most ordinary, typical, informal colloquial speech. Transcribe the following as in this informal colloquial style:

I warned them _____
and called them _____
and told them off _____

*

Now, **the elision of / t /.** Just as / t / has been elided in *Christmas,* and also in words like *castle, listen, whistle, wrestle, soften,* it is also elided in *postman, facts, vastness.* Some people, but not all, elide the / t / in *often:* / ˈɒftən, ˈɒfən /. Otherwise, it appears to parallel the case of / d / elision, but the preceding consonant must be *voiceless* in the case of / t / elision. Thus, / t / is elided in

*facts* / ˈfæks / but not in *faults*
*instincts* / ˈɪnstɪŋks / but not in *intends*
*vastness* / ˈvɑːsnəs / but not in *pleasantness*

Transcribe

soft spot ˈsɒf ˈspɒt
lost cause _____
left foot _____
vast spaces _____
apt remarks _____
Act Three _____
just now _____
best thing _____

As with / d /, elision does not occur if the following consonant is / h /. Note the difference between *West Bromwich* and *West Ham*. Elision does not take place in

gift horse ˈgɪft ˌhɔːs
guest house _____
left hand _____

and is optional if the approximants / r, w /, or / l / follow

last rites _____/_____ soft landing _____/_____
left wing _____/_____ gift wrap _____/_____
guest list _____/_____ wrist watch _____/_____

If / j / follows, either elision takes place, or assimilation to / tʃ /

last year ˈlɑːʃ jɜː or ˈlɑːʃtʃ jɜː
cost unit _____/_____
lost youth _____/_____
West Yorkshire_____/_____

If a suffix follows which begins with the right kind of consonant, then / t / is elided/ Thus / t / is elided in *swiftness* and may, optionally, be elided in *swiftly*. What about these words?

rafts _____
ghostly _____
listless _____
softness _____
gift's value _____

The past tense suffix < -ed > is pronounced / t / after voiceless consonants other than / t / itself (see *Transcribing English Words*, p 40). If the immediately following word begins with a consonant that causes elision, then – just like the case of / d / - the / t / suffix is elided. This means that in a case with past tense, like *I washed them*, where the conditions are right for elision, then it will sound exactly like the spoken equivalent of the present tense, *I wash them.* Transcribe the following in an informal colloquial style:

I left my friends _____
crossed the street _____
and passed the shops _____
but then lost my way _____

Notice that / t / does not readily get elided if it would otherwise bring two / s /s together at the end of a word:

boasts ˈbəʊsts
costs _____
feasts _____

Nevertheless, / t / is elided in these cases:

first serve ˈfɜːs ˈsɜːv
most surprising_____
lost soul _____

*

Elision, in English, mainly involves final / t, d / when preceded by a consonant (a voiceless one in the case of / t /) and followed immediately by a word beginning with certain consonants. It also happens regularly to the **/ k / of *ask*** when followed immediately by any elision-inducing consonants. All the features of / t / elision apply:

Ask me a question
He'll ask them each a question
They asked a question

Note the double elsion that takes place in

They asked me a question

but / k / is not elided if it would bring two / s /s together:

She always asks many questions

and may happen in

She'll ask loads of questions

/ k / elision is restricted to the verb *ask*, no doubt because it is used so frequently. It does not happen in words like *risk*, eg *risked*, or *task*, eg *task force*.

There are certain other cases of elision as a consequence of rhythm, but they will be dealt with in Part 2.

## Epenthesis

Having considered elision – the loss of a sound – as a process of simplification, it might seem strange to consider the addition of a sound as another way of simplifying pronunciation. But there are some such cases in English.

Consider the word *young*. Its final consonant is a voiced velar nasal / ŋ /. Now consider the derived form *youngster*. You will notice that the ending begins with / s /, a voiceless alveolar fricative. In every respect, the / s / articulation is different from the / ŋ / articulation. / s / is voiceless, / ŋ / is voiced; / s / is oral, in the sense that the soft palate is raised, / ŋ / is nasal, with the soft palate lowered; / s / is fricative, with a partial closure in the mouth, / ŋ / requires complete closure; and / s / is alveolar, with the blade of the tongue against the teeth ridge, / ŋ / is velar, with the back of the tongue against the soft palate. Thus, the transition to / s / from / ŋ / involves four changes: at the vocal folds, with the soft palate, with a different degree of closure with a different part of the tongue. In careful speech, it is quite possible to synchronize all these movements, but many people in ordinary, typical, informal colloquial speech do not. What happens in their case is that the changes at the vocal folds and with the soft palate are engaged first, and then the tongue 'catches up' afterwards. In other words, the transition from / ŋ / to / s / is staggered, with the result that an extra – transitional – sound is produced. That transitional sound has the voicelessness and 'orality' of / s / but the tongue position of the / ŋ /, and is thus identical to the articulation of the English consonant / k /.

| ŋ | k | s |
|---|---|---|
| voiced | ←--- | voiceless |
| Nasal | ←--- | oral |
| Closed | ---→ | fricative |
| Velar | ---→ | alveolar |

This explains why many people, who do not synchronize all four changes, insert an additional, transitional, / k /: / ˈjʌŋkstə /. This process of adding, or inserting, an extra transitional sound is known as epenthesis.

Transcribe the word *gangster* in two ways: ______________ ______________

A parallel process of epenthesis happens in *hamster:*

| M | p | s |
|---|---|---|
| Voiced | ←-- | voiceless |
| Nasal | ←-- | oral |
| closed | ---→ | fricative |
| Bilabial | ---→ | alveolar |

Try and pronounce *hamster* in these two ways, and transcribe each: ______________ ______________ . (Epenthesis explains why *hamster* is sometimes mis-spelt as *hampster*!)

A third parallel case of epenthesis happens in *monster*. Although / n / and / s / share an alveolar point of articulation, the tongue changes from a flat 'broad' contact to a grooved

shape. As in the other transitions, the tongue movement may lag behind, leaving the flat 'broad' contact fractionally longer; this helps to produce a transitional /t/.

| N | t | s |
|---|---|---|
| Voiced | ←-- | voiceless |
| Hard | ←-- | oral |
| Closed | ---→ | fricative |
| Flat | ---→ | grooved |

Try and pronounce *monster* in these two ways, and transcribe each: _____ _____ .

This process of epenthesis in English happens whenever a nasal sound is followed by a voiceless fricative, as long as the voiceless fricative is not part of a stressed syllable.

Consider the sequence of nasal + / θ /; transcribe these words with and without appropriate epenthetic consonants:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| warmth | _____ | _____ |
| tenth | _____ | _____ |
| millionths | _____ | _____ |
| length | _____ | _____ |
| strength | _____ | _____ |

In the case of *length* and *strength,* an alternative process of simplification is possible for some speakers, the process of assimilating the / n / to / ŋ /: / ˈlɛnθ /, / ˈstrɛnθ /. But then the conditions are right again for epenthesis: / ˈlɛntθ /, / ˈstrɛntθ /!

Consider also the sequence of / n / + / s /; transcribe these words with and without epenthetic / t /:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| dense | _____ | _____ |
| chance | _____ | _____ |
| prince | _____ | _____ |
| once | _____ | _____ |
| patience | _____ | _____ |

Notice then that the pronunciation with epenthetic / t / becomes a homophone with the plural forms:

dents
chants
prints
wants
patients

a point which is not lost in jokes, eg about the doctor who lost his *patience / patients*!
Try *triumph, triumphal, triumphant* without, and with, epenthetic / p /. What about *circumference?*

Finally, consider the sequence of nasal + voiceless fricatives in names. The son of *Sam* is either *Samson,* or *Sampson* - with epenthetic / p /; similarly *Simson* and *Simpson, Thomson* and *Thompson.* Epenthetic / p / has been realized historically in the place names *Hampstead,*

*Hampton, Hampshire, Kempton.* Epenthetic / t / and / k / is often pronounced (but not spelt) in names like *Benson, Hanson, Johnson, Langton, Langford.*

**Liaison**

Liaison is another process which involves the addition of a sound. In this case, a speaker inserts a sound in order to ease the link between vowels at the end of one word and at the beginning of an immediately following word.

The most well known case involves a historical < r > at the end of a word. In most British accents, the < r > in a word like *here* is not pronounced if there is either a consonant following in the next word, or silence. But if the immediately following word begins with a vowel, the < r > does get pronounced: *here in Britain* / ˈhɪər ɪm ˈbrɪtn̩ /. Such an / r / is traditionally known as a **'linking / r /'**, as speakers use it to *link up* the end of one word with the beginning of the next. Here are some more examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| far | ˈfɑː | far away | ˈfɑːr əˈweɪ |
| near | _____ | near enough | _____ |
| there | _____ | there on the floor | _____ |
| floor | _____ | next floor up | _____ |
| stir | _____ | stir in | _____ |
| ever | _____ | ever after | _____ |
| more | _____ | more examples | _____ |

Notice the kind of vowel that occurs in the first column: / ɑː, ɪə, ɛə, ɔə, ɜː, ə /, all relatively open or mid, and back or central/centring. It is now very common for native English speakers to add / r / to any word ending in these vowels when the immediately following word begins with a vowel – even if there is no 'historical' / r / in the spelling. There was, in the 1960s and 70s, a fierce controversy as to whether this 'non-historical' / r / liaison was acceptable in contemporary Received Pronunciation, but it is now widely heard and accepted as a current form, based on the analogy of the 'linking / r /. But because of that controversy, this 'non-historical' case is usually referred to as the **'intrusive / r /'**. Here are some examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| spa | ˈspɑː | the spa is open | ðə ˈspɑːr ɪz ˈəʊpən |
| media | _____ | media operation | _____ |
| law | _____ | law in Scotland | _____ |
| milieu | _____ | milieu in society | _____ |
| Laura | _____ | Laura Ashley | _____ |

Although the 'intrusive / r /' is added on the analogy of the 'linking / r /', it is basically an identical process of liaison, easing the link between two vowels across a word boundary.

*

If a word ends in the vowels / iː, i, eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ /, some speakers use / j / to link them to a vowel at the beginning of an immediately following vowel. And if a word ends in the vowels / uː, u, aʊ, əʊ /, a / w / is often used to produce a similar link. Here are some examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| see | siː | see off | ˈsiːj ˈɒf |
| stay | _____ | stay out | _____ |
| high | _____ | high over | _____ |
| toy | _____ | toy animals | _____ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | the end | _____ |
| new | _____ | new information | _____ |
| no | _____ | no idea | _____ |
| how | _____ | how about | _____ |
| | | to end | _____ |

Liaison with / r, j, w / - the three approximants – eases the link between any final vowel and any vowel at the beginning of an immediately following word. It is thus another type of simplification process.

*

We have now covered all four of the processes of simplification that native speakers of English employ in ordinary, typical, informal colloquial speech. And we have transcribed plenty of examples of each type. But it must also be emphasized that this survey of simplification processes applies to English, and not necessarily to other languages. Other languages may have processes that are parallel to the English ones, but they may very likely employ fewer, or different, or more processes than English does.

Remember too, native speakers have the option of **not** employing these simplification processes, especially in a slow, deliberate style. Imagine, for instance, the opening announcement at a seminar.

Today our subject is Anne Boleyn /…ˈæn bʊˈlɪn /

and compare it with a less formal style in a following statement of explanation

As you know Anne Boleyn / ˈæm bʊˈlɪn / was Henry VIII's second wife

Transcribe these names and places in this less formal style

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| John Bull | Raymond Baxter | African Queen |
| John Paul | Chris Jones | American Beauty |
| John Milton | Liz Yates | Shakespeare in Love |
| John Calvin | Leeds United | Grand Canyon |
| Ben Gunn | Arthur Askey | Rift Valley |
| Gordon Brown | Roger Ellis | Amazon Basin |
| Robin Cook | Barbara Edwards | East Timor |
| Colin Powell | Sarah Armstrong | West Virginia |
| Martin Bell | | Old Trafford |
| Ann Clwyd | | Ironbridge |
| Republican Party | | River Avon |
| Republican Guard | | Avon Gorge |
| Don Quixote | | |
| Catherine Cookson | | |
| Don Bradman | | |
| Colin Cowdrey | | |
| Ian Botham | | |
| Ryan Giggs | | |
| David Beckham | | |
| Richard Burton | | |
| Bernard Matthews | | |
| Ronald Reagan | | |
| Bertrand Russell | | |

(*see Key*)

# Part 2: Rhythm

Just as words have stress patterns, so do phrases. Indeed, some words and phrases have identical patterns, for instance, *inaction* and *in action* /ɪnˈækʃən /, even *indeed* and *in deed* /ɪnˈdiːd /.

In ordinary, typical, informal colloquial speech, it is usually the lexical items – the nouns, verbs, adjectives and most adverbs – that are given prominence by assigning them their full stress pattern. On the other hand, the grammatical items – prepositions, conjunctions, determiners, pronouns and auxiliary and modal verbs – are 'de-stressed' unless they become important in a given message. Many of these grammatical items are short monosyllabic words which can be said quickly in any case. For instance, the word *in* is said just as quickly in the phrases *in action* and *in deed* as the prefix *in-* in the words *inaction* and *indeed*. In the case of *in* as a whole word, it is not only short and monosyllabic, but it also contains a vowel that is potentially weak.

In our practice of the effects of rhythm in the pronunciation of phrases in English, we will concentrate on the grammatical items and begin with the prepositions.

**Prepositions**

Prepositions have full forms and weak forms. Strong forms are used for emphasis or contrast and when they occur at the ends of clauses:

Where are you flying to / tuː /
And travelling from / frɒm /
Which hotel are you staying at / æt /
How long are you going for / fɔː /

But in ordinary prepositional phrases, they are usually unstressed.

I'm flying to / tə / Glasgow
on / ɒm / Monday
from / frəm / Gatwick
with / wɪð / a budget airline
staying at / ət / the 'Old Barn'
in / ɪn / the city centre
for / fə / the weekend

Notice that the vowel in some prepositions changes to a weak vowel, like *from* / frəm / and *at* / ət /, but in others like *on, with, in* it does not. In the case of *to,* the vowel changes to the neutral vowel if a consonant follows immediately, or to the weak vowel / tu / before a vowel. In the case of *for*, the vowel changes to the neutral vowel, but a 'linking / r /' is added as liaison before a following vowel. Now try these examples

Flying to _____ San Fransisco
from _____ Birmingham
staying at _____ the 'Old Castle'
for _____ two weeks

Flying to _____ LA (/ ˈɛl ˈeɪ /)
from _____ Manchester

staying at _______ the ‘Old Lodge’
for ________ a few days

The preposition *of* has a strong form: / ɒv / for emphasis, contrast and the end position of a clause, eg.

What’s he thinking of / ɒv /

and a weak form when unstressed / əv /

Thinking of / əv / his holidays

Transcribe:

What does his plan consist of ______

A week of _____ sun in the south of ______ Spain, then climb to the top of ____ the Rock of _____ Gibraltar then a month of _____ hiking along the coast of ____ North Africa.

The weak form is also often pronounced with / v / elided, reducing it to / ə /. Historically, this is what has happened in telling the time, eg *2 o’clock /* ˈtuː ə ˈklɒk */* for the older *2 of (the) clock*. It is also what has happened in phrases like *a cup of tea* becoming *a cuppa* /ˈkʌpə /. An old advert to encourage the drinking of milk was

Drinka
Pinta (= a pint of)
Milka
Day

Popular spellings of *kind of* and *sort of* as *kinda, sorta* display the same observation.

You sort of / ˈsɔːt ə / try
It’s kind of / ˈkaind ə / nice

Transcribe the following in two ways

a cup of ________ / ________ coffee at 11 o’_____ clock
a cup of ________ / ________ tea at 4 o’_____ clock
a pint of ________ / ________ beer at 8 o’ _____ clock
a packet of ______ / ________ crisps at the end of _____ / _____ the day

None of the other prepositions have special weak forms with a change of vowel, they are transcribed with a stress mark if stressed, and without it if unstressed.

We’re going through / θruː / France. I said We’re going *through* / ˈθruː / France, not *to /* ˈtuː */* France

and we’re going for */* fə */* two weeks, not *in /* ˈɪn */* two weeks.

And you need to check your passport *before /* bɪˈfɔː */*, not *after /* ˈɑːftə */*.

Transcribe:

single to ______ Liverpool please
The 8.25 for ______ Manchester will be leaving from ______ Platform 1
Change at _____ Crewe for _____ all stations to _____ Liverpool Lime Street
We apologize that there’ll be a delay of _____ ten minutes.

## Conjunctions

The most common conjunction is *and*. As we have already noted, its full form is / ˈænd / and its most frequent weak form is / ən /. The / n / of its weak form is vulnerable to the process

of assimilation, as in *bed and breakfast* / ˈbɛb m̩ ˈbrɛkfəst /. Transcribe these orders for breakfast:

fruit and _____ breakfast cereals
muesli and _____ cornflakes
eggs and _____ bacon
toast and _____ marmalade
tea and _____ coffee

If the conditions are right, the / n / may give way to a syllabic / n̩ / (or / m̩ /, as in *bed and breakfast*, or / ŋ̍ /). Transcribe these suggestions for lunch:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| bread and cheese | _____ | soup and bread | _____ |
| omelette and chips | _____ | roast pork and gravy | _____ |
| | | cake and cream | _____ |

*

The conjunction *or* usually remains unchanged when unstressed, except in a few set phrases. When a genuine choice or alternative is being offered, the conjunction remains as / ɔː / with the possibility of / r / liaison as in

choice or / ɔːr / alternative

Notice the full form in:

brown bread or _____ white
tea or _____ coffee
with or _____ without

but in set phrases like *one or two*, the conjunction may be reduced to / ə /. Compare

How long are you staying? Two or / ə / three days
Well, is it two *or* / ɔː / three days.
Well, when we've more or / ə / less finished.

Similarly, with *nor*.

He's not staying, and nor / nɔːr / are you
A day or / ə / two is neither here nor / nə / there

*

The conjunction *but* / bʌt / is weakened to / bət / when unstressed. In these it is unstressed:

The weather will be dry but / bət / cold
wet but ____ mild
warm at first, but ____ cold later
You should be all right, but ____ take an umbrella just in case

*

The conjunction *as* / æz / is weakened to / əz / when unstressed

They were as /əz / snug as ____ a bug in a rug
as ____ warm as ____ toast
as ____ dry as ____ possible

The / z / is susceptible to the process of assimilation

Take as ____ much as ____ you like

(If *you* in this context is unstressed, the / j / will be elided: / əʒ u /: but if *you* is stressed, the / j / is retained: ..... as *you* /… əʒ ˈjuː / think best.)

*As* at the beginning of an utterance is usually strong: *As* / æz / *I came to work today*

*

The conjunction *because* has a strong form / bɪˈkɒz / and a weak form when unstressed: / bɪkəz /. At the beginning of an utterance, it is usually strong:

Because / bɪˈkɒz / it's raining, we'll stay inside

We can go out now, because / bɪkəz / it's stopped

The weak form can be further weakened to a single syllable: / kəz /, popularly spelt as *cos*:

Let's go out, cos / kəz / it's stopped raining

The final / z / is susceptible to the process of assimilation

We're going out, cos / kəʒ / you said we could

(The / j / of *you* would be elided if unstressed.)

The weak forms of *because* are valid too in the phrasal preposition *because of*.

We stayed in because / bɪkəz / of / əv / the rain

We stayed in cos / kəz / of / əv / the rain

*

The word *that* is usually pronounced in a weak form / ðət / when it operates as a relative pronoun or conjunction, as in

The weather that / ðət / was forecast

They said that _____ it would be wet

Now that _____ it's stopped .....

The word *that* is usually pronounced in its strong form / ðæt / as a demonstrative adjective or pronoun

It rained throughout that / ˈðæt / day

So that / ˈðæt / was that / ˈðæt /

It was that / ˈðæt / wet

Transcribe

That _____ man said that _____ all that _____ rain that _____ fell yesterday

was enough to fill that _____ reservoir that _____ we saw.

*

Finally, the conjunction *than* is usually pronounced in its weak form / ðən /

Wetter than / ðən / yesterday

More rain than _____ ever

Rather go abroad than _____ stay here

*

None of the other conjunctions have special weak forms with a change of vowel; they are transcribed with a stress mark if they are stressed, and without it if unstressed:

I said *if* / ˈɪf /

if / ɪf / you like

*While* / ˈwaɪl / it's raining let's play Monopoly

Let's play Monopoly while / waɪl / it's raining

## Determiners

The determiners that have special weak forms are the definite and indefinite articles and the possessive adjectives.

**The definite article** ***the*** has a special strong form: / ˈðiː /, as in

Spain is the / ˈðiː / place for sun

It also has an ordinary strong form: / ˈðə / as in

The definite article is *the / ˈðə /*

(This is one of only two occasions in Southern English Standard Pronunciation (‘RP’) when the neutral vowel is stressed.)

It also has two weak forms: / ðə / before consonants, / ði / before vowels, as in

The / ðə / definite article

The / ði / articles

Transcribe the following:

The weather __________
The rain __________
The morning __________
The night __________
The hotel __________
The usual __________

The umbrella __________
The ice __________
The afternoon __________
The evening __________
The hour __________
The unusual __________

*

**The indefinite articles** have strong forms: / eɪ / before consonants, / æn / before vowels.

I said *an / ˈæn /* egg, not half a dozen

At least you’ve *a* / ˈeɪ / drink, even if it’s not what you ordered

The corresponding weak forms are / ə / and / ən /

Transcribe

a coffee __________
a banana __________
a hostel __________
a useful thing __________

an ice-cream __________
an apple __________
an inn __________
an ugly scene __________

*

The word ***some*** is used for indefiniteness with mass nouns like *milk*. Its strong form is / sʌm / and its weak form is / səm /.

At least you’ve got *some* / ˈsʌm / milk

I need some / səm / more milk

Transcribe these phrases with both the strong and the weak forms

Some sugar _____ / _____ ________
Some money _____ / _____ ________
Some change _____ / _____ ________
Some time _____ / _____ ________

*

***Any* and *many*** have the same form in both stressed and unstressed situations:

I haven't had *any* / ˈɛni / sugar
I haven't had any / ɛni / *sugar*
They've been *many* / ˈmɛni / times
I don't have many / mɛni / *ideas*

But there is the possibility of weak forms in common phrases: / əni / and / məni / as in

I haven't any / əni / left
How many / məni / do you need

*

The demonstrative adjectives are *this* / ðɪs /, *that* / ðæt /, *these* / ðiːz /, and *those* / ðəʊz /. They do not change in unstressed positions: it is in this respect that it is important to distinguish between *that* as a conjunction which regularly weakens to / ðət / and *that* as a determiner that remains in its strong form.

Notice how the final / s / of *this*, and the final / z / of *these* and *those* are susceptible to the process of assimilation.

What are you going to do with all these euros? / ðiːʒ / _____
this cheque? _____
those shorts? _____

*

The possessive adjectives are *my* / maɪ /, *your* / jɔː /, *his* / hɪz /, *her* / hɜː /, *its* / ɪts /, *our* / aʊə /, *their* / ðɛə / and *whose* / huːz /. Strong forms are used for emphasis or contrast.

*My* and *their* do not normally have a weak form:

Hey, that's *my* / ˈmaɪ / sun cream, *my* _____ towel, *my* _____ place
Now, let me think. I've got my / maɪ / *wallet*, my _____ *passport*, my _____ *ticket* and my _____ *insurance.*

*Our* is often weakened to / ɑː /, with / r / liaison:

We're off on our / ɑː / holidays
Our / ɑː / Father

*Your* is often weakened to / jə /, with / r / liaison – hence its popular spelling as *yer*

Off on your / jə / holidays, are you?
On your / jə / bike? On your / jər / own?

*His, her* and *whose* have weak forms with / h / elision if immediately preceded by a word

What's his / ɪz / name? I don't know his / ɪz / name
What's her / ɜː / name? I don't know her / ɜː / name
The couple whose / uz / names I've forgotten
I don't know whose / uz / tickets these are

If they begin a new utterance, the / h / is usually pronounced.

Whose / huːz / tickets are these?
His / hɪz / name is Paolo
Her / hɜː / name is Michaela

*

Most **titles** are stressed:

Mr / ˈmɪstə / Smith  Mr / ˈmɪstər / Evans
Mrs / ˈmɪsɪz / Smith  Mrs / ˈmɪsɪʒ / Jones
Miss / ˈmɪs / Smith  Miss / ˈmɪʒ / Jones
Ms / ˈməz / Smith  Ms / ˈməʒ / Jones  (NB the only other occasion for / ˈə /.)
Master / ˈmæstə / Tom Master / mæstər / Edward
Baroness / ˈbærənəʃ / Young
President / ˈprɛzɪdn̩t / Eisenhower
Queen / ˈkwiːn / Elizabeth
Prince / ˈprɪns, ˈprɪnts / Philip

but some other monosyllabic titles are often unstressed:

St / sənt / Andrew
Sir / sə / Winston  Sir / sər / Anthony

**Pronouns**

The subject pronouns are *I* / aɪ /, *you* / juː /, *he* / hiː /, *she* / ʃiː /, *it* / ɪt /, *we* / wiː / and *they* / ðeɪ /; the object pronouns, where different, are *me* / miː /, *him* / hɪm /, *her* / hɜː /, *us* / ʌs / and *them* / ðɛm /. The relative pronouns are *who* / huː /, and, possibly, *whom* / huːm /; and the possessive pronouns are *mine* / maɪn /, *yours* / jɔːz /, *his* / hɪz /, *hers* / hɜːz /, *ours* / aʊəz / (or / ɑːz /), *theirs* / ðɛəz / and *whose* / huːz /. These strong forms are used for emphasis or contrast; there are weak forms for many of them in unstressed positions. However, the possessive pronouns are not normally used in unstressed positions.

The weak forms of *he, she, we, me* all take a weak vowel

He / hi / told me / mi /, so we / wi / know she / ʃi / *is* going to Spain

The weak forms of *us* and *them* take the neutral vowel

They told us / əs / that you saw them / ðəm / on their way

A special case arises with *let's* / lɛts / as distinct from *let us* /lɛt əs /. Compare *let's go* and *let us go.*

The weak forms of *he, him, her* and *who* tend to 'suffer' / h /-elision unless they begin a new utterance.

he / hi / has heard, but does he / i / understand
Well, I told him / ɪm /
Will he / i / let her / ɜː / know
She's the one who / u / will understand

*You,* is weakened to / ju / or even – like *your* - to / jə /, especially in comment phrases like *you know, you see*; but also consider

Are you / jə / going today
We'll see you / jə / there

The / j / is susceptible to coalescence immediately after / t, d /

We'll meet / ˈmiːtʃ ə / you there
We'll need you / ˈniːdʒ ə / there
Did you / ˈdɪdʒ ə / go
Must you / ˈmʌʃtʃ u /

*

Finally, there is the pronoun *one* / wʌn, wɒn /. In an unstressed position, it generally keeps its strong form:

One /wʌn, wɒn / must not lose one's / wʌnz, wɒnz / head, must one / wʌn, wɒn /
I'd like one / wʌn, wɒn / of the red ones

There is a weak form that is occasionally used: / ən /, popularly spelled as *'un*

The little 'uns / ənz /

**Auxiliary verbs**

The auxiliary verbs *be, have* and *do* and their various forms are used in verb phrases to indicate aspect, emphasis and contrast, and to operate negative and interrogative functions. There are strong forms and weak forms for each verb. Each of these verbs also acts as a full, lexical verb, in which case, they will normally be pronounced in their strong forms, eg

To be / ˈbiː / or not to be / ˈbiː /
To have / ˈhæv / and to hold
To do / ˈduː / or die

As auxiliary verbs, they are stressed for emphasis or contrast, but are unstressed otherwise:

| | |
|---|---|
| To see and *be* / ˈbiː / seen | You *won't* be / bi / seen |
| To fight and to *have* / ˈhæv / fought | You *must* have / əv / fought |
| *Do* / ˈduː / take a seat | *Where* do / du / I sit? |

*

***Be***

I *am* / ˈæm / going

*Am* is weakened to / əm / after a consonant, eg Where am / əm / I staying?
and to / m / after a vowel, eg I'm / m / staying here

You *are* / ɑː / going; with / r / liaison: You *are* / ˈɑːr / invited

*Are* is weakened to / ə /, eg *All* the boys are / ə / going
with / r / liaison, eg *All* the boys are / ər / invited
*Are* may be weakened to / r / following a vowel:

You're invited / jɔː r, jə r /
They're invited / ðeɪ r, ðɛə r /

He *is* / ˈɪz / going

*Is* is weakened in a way parallel to the morphological variations of the < -es > inflection (*Transcribing English Words,* p 41)

James is / ɪz / going, and Janice is / ɪz / too (/ ɪz, əz / after sibilants)
John's / z / going, and Claire's / z / thinking about it (/ z / after other voiced sounds)
Jack's / s / going, but Elizabeth's / s / not (/ s / after voiceless sounds)

He *was* / ˈwɒz / going

*Was* is weakened to / wəz /

Sarah was / wəz / going too, and so was / wəʒ / Judith

They *were* / ˈwɜː / going

*Were* is weakened to / wə /, with possible / r / liaison

None of them were / wə / going, even though they were / wər / all invited

I've *been* / ˈbiːn / invited already

*Been* is weakened to / bɪn /

Just think, we've *all* been / bɪn / invited

*

***Have***

I *have* / ˈhæv / seen it

She *has* / ˈhæz / seen it

They *had* / ˈhæd / seen it

*Have, has, had* 'suffer' / h / elision in their weak forms unless they begin new utterances:

Have / həv / *you* seen it

Has / həz / *he* seen it

Had / həd / *they* seen it

Otherwise the weak forms retain the neutral vowel after a consonant, but lose it after a vowel:

Yes, I've / v / seen it, and the boys've / əv / seen it too

Yes, he's / z / seen it, and Janice's / əz / seen it too

Yes, they'd / d / seen it, and the girls'd / əd / seen it too

*Has* also follows the morphological variations of the < -es > inflection, like *is:*

James's gone / əz /

John's gone / z /

Jack's gone / s /

*

***Do***

I *do* / ˈduː / believe in God

*Do* is weakened to / du / or / də /:

Do / du, də / *they* believe in God

Do / du, də / *you* believe too

She *does* / ˈdʌz / believe in God

*Does* is weakened to / dəz /:

Does / dəz / *he* believe too

Note that in *do you* / də ju /, the neutral vowel is often elided, allowing a process of coalescent assimilation to take place: / dju / becomes / ʤu / (or / ʤə /).

How do you do? / ˈhaʊ ʤə ˈduː /

What do you think? / ˈwɒʔ ʤə ˈθɪŋk /

Do you *really* believe / ʤu ˈrɪəli bəˈliːv /

**Modal verbs**

Modal verbs add degrees of a sense of likelihood, necessity and possibility to the verb phrase. They include

can / kæn / and could / kʊd /

may / meɪ / and might / maɪt /
shall / ʃæl / and should / ʃʊd /
will / wɪl / and would / wʊd /
must / mʌst / and ought / ɔːt /

They are pronounced in these full forms when stressed, especially for emphasis or contrast:

Can / ˈkæn / you speak Spanish? I can / ˈkæn / and I will / ˈwɪl /
But what about Catalan? I would / ˈwʊd / if I could / ˈkʊd /

*May, might* and *ought* do not have special weak forms when unstressed, but the other modal verbs do.

She can / kən / speak Spanish quite well.
She could / kəd / have said that in Spanish for you.
We shall / ʃəl / see if she can / ˈkæn /
They should / ʃəd / tell her to come
How will / wəl / they know you're going
We would / wəd / have to tell them
She must / məst / at least be given a chance
Yes, she must / məs / be given the chance at least

*Will* and *shall* are both regularly reduced to / l / or / əl /; and *would* and *should* to / d / or / əd /; thus the semantic differences between them are lost.

We'll / l / see tonight
If she'd / d / talk in Spanish, that'd / əd / help us a lot
Otherwise, Paul'll / əl / try

Final / d / of *could, should, would* and *had,* like *did,* is susceptible to the processes of assimilation.

They *could* / ˈkʊg / go, if they could / kəb / manage *without* her
They *should* / ˈʃʊb / be able to manage
They *would* / ˈwʊb / be able to manage if she went with them
She'd / g / go *with* them, but *would* you / ˈwʊdʒ u / let her
Had you / ˈhædʒ u / thought of going yourself
How would you / wədʒ ə / feel about that

**Just, Not, So, There**

The first three of these words figure regularly in all kinds of phrases and idioms, and no doubt it is because of their frequency that they have acquired weak forms, in addition to their strong forms

They've ***just*** / ˈdʒʌst / arrived, ***just*** /ˈdʒʌs / this minute
***Not*** / ˈnɒʔ / bad, but they'll be ***so*** / ˈsəʊ / tired

Oh, we're not *so* / sə / bad, thank you. We were*n't* / ˈwɜːnt / held up anywhere; *just* / dʒəs / glad to be back

*There* has a special weak form in existential clauses, in contrast to locative senses:

It was nice being *there* / ˈðɛə /, but *there*'s / ðə z / no place like home

There is a further complication in the pronunciation of *n't*. We have already noted that final / t / is now often articulated as a glottal stop [ ʔ ] before any immediately following consonant (except / h /). This would account for

I don't know / aɪ ˈdəʊnt ˈnəʊ / or / aɪ ˈdəʊnʔ ˈnəʊ /

The [ ʔ ] would, however, not prevent the processes of assimilation operating in informal colloquial speech, so these alternatives exist:

I don't believe it /aɪ ˈdəʊnt bəˈliːv ɪt / or / aɪ ˈdəʊmp bəˈliːv ɪt /
I don't get it / aɪ ˈdəʊnt ˈgɛt ɪt / or / aɪ ˈdəʊŋk ˈgɛt ɪt /
Why don't you / waɪ ˈdəʊnt ju / or / waɪ ˈdəʊntʃ u /

The same kind of alternative pronunciations operate with

*aren't*: we aren't going / wi ˈɑːnt gəʊɪŋ / or / wi ˈɑːŋk gəʊɪŋ /
*isn't*: it isn't possible / ɪt ˈɪzənt ˈpɒsɪbəl / or / ɪt ˈɪzəmp ˈpɒsɪbəl /
*wasn't*: he wasn't paying / hi ˈwɒzn̩t ˈpeɪɪŋ / or / hi wɒzəmp ˈpeɪɪŋ /
*weren't*: we weren't kept / wi ˈwɜːnt kɛpt / or / wi ˈwɜːŋk kɛpt /
*haven't*: I haven't said / aɪ ˈhævənt ˈsɛd / or / aɪ ˈhævənʔ ˈsɛd /
*hasn't*: she hasn't complained / ʃi ˈhæzn̩t kəmˈpleɪnd /or / ʃi ˈhæzəŋk k... /
*hadn't*: it hadn't come / ɪt ˈhædn̩t kʌm / or / ɪt hægŋk kʌm /
*doesn't*: he doesn't know / hi ˈdʌzn̩t nəʊ / or / hi ˈdʌznʔ nəʊ /
*didn't*: they didn't believe him /ðeɪ ˈdɪdn̩t bəˈliːv ɪm / or / ðeɪ ˈdɪbm̩p bəˈliːv ɪm /

*can't*: I can't be bothered / aɪ ˈkɑːmp bi ˈbɒðəd / or / aɪ ˈkɑːmʔ bi ˈbɒðəd /
*couldn't*: he couldn't be /hi ˈkʊdn̩t bi / or / hi ˈkʊbm̩p bi /
*shan't*: we shan't go / wi ˈʃɑːnt gəʊ / or / wi ˈʃɑːŋk gəʊ /
*shouldn't*: you shouldn't go / ju ˈʃʊdn̩t gəʊ / or / ju ˈʃʊgŋk gəʊ /
*won't*: you won't make it / ju ˈwəʊnt ˈmeɪk ɪt / or / ju ˈwəʊmp ˈmeɪk ɪt /
*wouldn't*: they wouldn't mind /ðeɪ ˈwʊdn̩t ˈmeɪk ɪt / or / ðeɪ ˈwʊbm̩p ˈmeɪk ɪt /
*mustn't*: you mustn't come / ju ˈmʌsn̩t ˈkʌm / or / ju ˈmʌsəŋk ˈkʌm /
*mightn't*: he mightn't think / hi ˈmɑitn̩t θɪŋk / or / hi ˈmɑitnʔ θɪŋk /
*oughtn't*: they oughtn't to / ðeɪ ˈɔːtn̩t tu / or / ðeɪ ˈɔːtnʔ tu /
*needn't*: you needn't bother / ju ˈniːdn̩t ˈbɒðə / or / ju ˈniːbm̩p ˈbɒðə /
*daren't*: she daren't move / ʃi ˈdɛənt ˈmuːv / or / ʃi ˈdɛəmp ˈmuːv /

If this wasn't complicated enough, it is also observable how people are simplifying some of these phrases even further. If the *n't* follows a vowel, the / n / can change to a nasalization of that vowel and the / t / to a glottal stop.

I don't [ ˈdə̃ʊ̃ʔ ] know
I can't [ ˈkɑ̃ːʔ ] believe it
They aren't [ ˈɑ̃ːʔ ] going
We weren't [ ˈwɜ̃ːʔ ] kept
We shan't [ ˈʃɑ̃ːʔ ] go
You won't [ ˈwə̃ʊ̃ʔ ] make it
She daren't [ ˈdɛ̃ə̃ʔ ] move

Finally, to add yet further to these complications, people very often simplify in another way by eliding the / t / of *n't,* even though it is preceded by a voiced sound / n /:

I don't know / aɪ ˈdəʊn ˈnəʊ / or even / aɪ də ˈnəʊ / (= I 'dunno')
I don't care / aɪ ˈdəʊŋ ˈkɛə /
we won't bother / wi ˈwəʊm ˈbɒðə /
you didn't say / ju ˈdɪdn̩ ˈseɪ /
etc

A similar process of elision explains how *want to* and *going to* get pronounced

I want to go (I 'wanna' go) / aɪ ˈwɒnə ˈgəʊ /
I'm going to go (I'm gonna go) / aɪm ˈgɒnə ˈgəʊ /

To summarize this complex range of possibilities, cases of *n't* immediately after a vowel (as in *aren't, weren't, don't, can't, won't, shan't, daren't)* can be pronounced as follows:

Don't talk: / ˈdəʊnt /, / ˈdəʊnʔ /, [ ˈdə̃ʊ̃ʔ ], / ˈdəʊn /
Don't push / ˈdəʊnt /, / ˈdəʊmp /, [ ˈdə̃ʊ̃ʔ ], / ˈdəʊm /
Don't go / ˈdəʊnt /, / ˈdəʊŋk /, [ ˈdə̃ʊ̃ʔ ], / ˈdəʊŋ /

Most of these possibilities are also valid for other words ending in / -nt /: however, the / t / element is usually retained whether it is realized as [ t ] or [ ʔ ] or assimilated:

pleasantness / ˈplɛzn̩tnəs, ˈplɛzənʔnəs /
resentment / rɪˈzɛntmənt, riˈzɛmpmənt /
pleasant places / ˈplɛzn̩t, ˈplɛzəmp ˈpleɪsəz /
recent case / ˈriːsn̩t, ˈriːsəŋk ˈkeɪsəz /
front page / ˈfrʌnt, ˈfrʌmp / or [ ˈfrɐ̃ʔ ] / ˈpeɪdʒ /
front cover / ˈfrʌnt, ˈfrʌŋk / or [ ˈfrɐ̃ʔ ] / ˈkʌvə /

In all these cases of *n't* and final *–nt*, you have to listen carefully to what is actually said; and being aware of the various possibilities will help to discern that. In such cases, it seems worth while transcribing a glottal stop as such, [ ʔ ], even though strictly speaking, it does not belong to phonemic transcriptions.

**Syllable elision in lexical items and phrases**

The pressure from rhythm accounts not only for the proliferation of special weak forms of many grammatical items but also for the elimination of whole syllables, especially in verb phrases with auxiliary and modal verbs. Thus in

I don't know if he's coming

the two syllables of *do not* are reduced to one, *don't,* and also the two syllables of *he is* to one, *he's.*

There has been a similar strong tendency to eliminate syllables in lexical items too, specially where there is a succession of unstressed syllables separated by /r, l, n /. Typically, the unstressed vowel is elided before such a consonant; in this way the syllable sequence is reduced. Thus historically, *history* has changed from / ˈhɪstəri / to / ˈhɪstri / in most – but not all – British accents, and *secretary* from / ˈsɛkrətəri /, or / ˈsɛkrətɛəri /, to / ˈsɛkrətri /.

Here is a sample list of ordinary words with unstressed < -ar- >, <-er->, <-or->, <-our-> and <-ur-> which gets eliminated before another unstressed syllable.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| stationary | stationery | category | natural |
| / ˈsteɪʃənri / | / ˈsteɪʃənri / | / ˈkætəgri / | / ˈnætʃrəl / |
| secretary | every | factory | century |
| primary | grocery | sensory | luxury |
| secondary | delivery | memory | |
| tertiary | | advisory | |
| quandary | Everest | | |
| ordinary | interest | temporal | neighbouring |
| | | doctoral | flavouring |
| estuary | average | | |
| sanctuary | coverage | | favourable |
| January | camera | motoring | favourite |
| | opera | monitoring | |
| | general | glamorous | |
| | generous | humorous | |
| | generative | | |
| | delivering | | |
| | suffering | | |

Notice how the four syllables of *February* / ˈfɛbruəri / get reduced to three: / ˈfɛbrəri, ˈfɛbjəri /, and even to two / ˈfɛbri /. Similarly, *library, literary, temporary* are sometimes reduced with the loss of one / r /: / ˈlaɪbri /, / ˈlɪtri /, / ˈtɛmpri /.

There is, however, usually no reduction in those words where otherwise / l / and / r / would come together: *salary* / ˈsæləri /, *celery* / ˈsɛləri /, *calorie* / ˈkæləri /, *colouring* / ˈkʌlərɪŋ /, not */ ˈsælri /, etc.

American practice is to give a secondary stress to the < a > in words like *primary, secondary*; and primary stress in derived adverbs; many British follow this pattern in the adverbs: thus *primarily* is either / ˈpraɪmərəli / or / praɪˈmɛrəli / or / praɪˈmɛərəli /, or / praɪˈmærəli /. Transcribe the word *secondarily* in these ways

_____ _____ _____ _____

Similarly, *temporarily*

_____ _____ _____ _____

A similar kind of reduction takes place where two unstressed syllables are separated by / l /. Thus, older *historically* / hɪsˈtɒrɪkəli / loses the syllable before / l /: / hɪsˈtɒrɪkli /. Transcribe

technically _____
scientifically _____
economically _____
politically _____
musically _____

A similar loss happens in words like this: *carefully* / ˈkɛəfəli / becomes / ˈkɛəfli /.
Transcribe

hopefully _____
helpfully _____
joyfully _____
usefully _____
woefully _____

It also happens in this word: *easily* / ˈiːzili / becomes / ˈiːzli /, and also in words like this: *usually* / ˈjuːʒuəli / becomes /ˈjuːʒəli / or even /ˈjuːʒli /. Transcribe in these two colloquial styles:

actually _____ _____
casually _____ _____

The words *chocolate* and *family* are both regularly reduced to two syllables: / ˈtʃɒklət /; / ˈfæmli /, and verbs with an unstressed syllable with / l / in final position, followed by the –*ing* suffix: *travelling* / ˈtrævəlɪŋ / becomes / ˈtrævlɪŋ / (see also *Transcribing English Words* p 39 for similar cases with syllabic / l /.)

A similar reduction happens when two unstressed syllables are separated by / n /. For instance, *happening* / ˈhæpənɪŋ / becomes / ˈhæpnɪŋ /. Historically, this is what has happened to *evening* / ˈiːvnɪŋ /. Transcribe the more colloquial style of these words

opening _____
widening _____
mentioning _____
functioning _____
bargaining _____

Notice also how the three syllables of *national* and *company* / ˈnæʃənəl /, / ˈkʌmpəni / become two / ˈnæʃnəl /, / ˈkʌmpni / and how the four syllables of *reasonable* / ˈriːzənəbəl / become three / ˈriːznəbəl /, through the loss of the unstressed syllable before / n /. (In a similar way the four syllables of *comfortable* / ˈkʌmfətəbəl / become three / ˈkʌmftəbəl /.)

The elimination of a weak syllable in a sequence of weak syllables also takes place across word boundaries, ie in phrases. Consider the phrase *matter of fact* / ˈmætər əv ˈfækt /; there is a sequence of two unstressed syllables separated by / r / in a way that is exactly parallel in the case of lexical items like *mystery* and *interest.* What regularly happens is that the unstressed syllable before / r / will disappear: / ˈmætr əv ˈfækt /. Consider these phrases and transcribe them in the same colloquial style:

after a while _____
brother in law _____
mother and toddlers _____
doctor in the house _____
offer advice _____

and also

travel at night _____
open at nine _____

Finally, it is worth noting that some speakers eliminate an unstressed vowel at the beginning of certain words before / r, l /, as in *correct* / kəˈrɛkt / becoming / ˈkrɛkt / and *collect* / kəˈlɛkt / becoming / ˈklɛkt /. Consider these words and transcribe them in this colloquial style:

terrific _____
police _____
eleven _____
parade _____
verandah _____

Notice how *perhaps* / pəˈhæps / alternates with / pəˈræps / and then also, more colloquially, with / ˈpræps /. And the verb *suppose* / səˈpəʊz / is reduced to / ˈspəʊz /, especially in the phrase *suppose so*; a popular spelling, *s'pose so,* reflects this.

Similarly, in phrases with unstressed *for* and / r / liaison, the neutral vowel before / r / may disappear; for example, *for instance* may reduce to two syllables / ˈfrɪnstənts / from three / fər ˈɪnstənts /. Transcribe in this same colloquial style

for example _____
for everyone _____
for £8 _____
for a minute _____

**Phrases and compounds**

There are two final matters to consider in the transcription of phrases. One is the contrast that exists in English between certain phrases and compounds 'made up' of the same words. An easy example to consider is the contrast between a *black bird* and a *blackbird*; another is the contrast between *cross words* and *crosswords*. It is worth noting that the adjective-noun phrases consist of separate semantic entities, that the grammar of the adjective can easily change (eg *blackest birds*, or *black and white birds*), and that they are always spelt as separate words; in pronunciation, each word in these phrases is then given a primary stress:

/ˈblæk ˈbɜːd/, /ˈkrɒs ˈwɜːdz/.

On the other hand, compounds are single semantic entities; they are single lexical items (eg a *blackbird* is a single specific kind of bird, and a *crossword* is a single specific kind of word puzzle), and the first element of the compound is unchangeable.In pronunciation, these factors are recognized by there being only one primary word stress:

/ˈblækˌbɜːd/, /ˈkrɒsˌwɜːdz/.

However, there is an inconsistency in English about the way in which compounds can be spelt: they can be spelt either as a single word, or hyphenated, or with a word space: eg *teatime, tea-time*, or *tea time.* Of course, the pronunciation is the same: /ˈtiːˌtaɪm/. But spelling can be very deceptive: there is a difference, for instance, between a teacher who happens to be English and a teacher who teaches English, but both cases would be spelt as an

*English teacher*. The first case is a phrase and the second a compound, and although they are not distinguished in spelling, they are in pronunciation:

as a phrase: /ˈɪŋglɪʃ ˈtiːtʃə/; and as a compound: /ˈɪŋglɪʃˌtiːtʃə/.

The phrase is parallel to others like an *English family*, an *American preacher*, the *Black Prince*, etc, each word in each phrase having a primary stress. The compound, on the other hand, is parallel to other ‘professionals’, like a *music teacher*, a *sports master*, a *tennis player*, etc; each of these compounds are treated as single entities, and are pronounced with only one primary stress despite being spelt as if they were two words:

/ˈmjuːzikˌtiːtʃə/, /ˈspɔːtsˌmɑːstə/, /ˈtɛnisˌpleɪə/.

Here is another case of a contrast which is awkward to discern; the difference between saying “*uu*” (ie *double <u>)* and “*w*”.

as a phrase (two semantic entities): /ˈdʌbəl ˈjuː/
as a compound (one semantic entity): /ˈdʌbəlˌjuː/

Transcribe the differences between the following pairs:

dark room / darkroom ____________________
green house / greenhouse ____________________
white board / whiteboard ____________________
no body / nobody ____________________
heavy weight / heavyweight ____________________
brother in law / brother-in-law____________________

and these verb phrases / compound nouns

to take away / a take-away ____________________
to pull over / a pullover ____________________
to come back / a come back ____________________
to walk about / a walk about ____________________
to pay off / the payoff ____________________
to look out / a lookout ____________________

This contrast is similar, of course, to the basis of the old jokes involving compounds and noun-verb sequences, like *What made the cow slip? She saw the bull rush!* Similarly, the children’s song *When I see an elephant fly*:

*I’ve seen a horse/dragon/house fly; ..a peanut stand / a baseball bat; I’ve heard a diamond ring / a fireside chat*

**Stress shift in phrases**

The final matter to consider in the transcription of phrases is the phenomenon known as stress shift. This concerns those words that have a secondary stress preceding the primary stress, in

words like *fundamental*: /ˌfʌndəˈmɛntˌl/, *university*: /ˌjuːnɪˈvɜːsəti/, and adjectival compounds like *brand new*: /ˌbrænˈnjuː/, and *easy-going*: /ˌiːziˈgəʊɪŋ/. In *Transcribing English Words*, p 43,we mentioned that such words generally change their stress pattern in certain kinds of phrases. If such a word occurs in a phrase with another stressed word following, the sequence of secondary – primary stress is changed to primary – secondary.

Take the word *fundamental* again. If it occurs in a phrase with no stressed word following, like *These ideas appear quite fundamental to us*, the stress pattern is that given in the previous paragraph, with the sequence secondary – primary. But if in a different context it occurs in a phrase which contains a following stressed word, the sequence will be generally reversed: *To us these are fundamental principles*, primary – secondary: /ˈfʌndəˌmɛntˌl ˈprinsəpəlz/.

Or take the word *university.* In the phrase *Cardiff University*, the stress pattern of *university* is secondary – primary, as given above. But in *University of Cardiff*, with a stressed word following within the phrase, the stress pattern is reversed: primary – secondary, /ˈjuːnɪˌvɜːsəti əv *ˈkɑːdɪf/.

Similarly with the adjectival compounds:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Their car is brand new*: /ˌbrænˈnjuː/ | *It's a brand new car*: /ˈbrænˌnjuː ˈkaː/ |
| *He's pretty easy-going*: /ˌiːziˈgəʊɪŋ/ | *He needs an easy-going friend* /ˈiːziˌgəʊɪŋ ˈfrɛnd/ |

The 'teen' numbers provide another good case of potential stress shift. *Thirteen* said at the end of a phrase has the stress pattern secondary – primary: /ˌθɜːˈtiːn/, but when a stressed word follows in the phrase, the pattern changes:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *He's now 13*: | /ˌθɜːˈtiːn/ | *He's now 13 years old*: | /ˈθɜːˌtiːn ˌjɜːz ˈəʊld/ |

And all the other 'teen' numbers likewise. Consider dates like *1919*; the first 'teen' number is followed by a stressed word and so has the pattern secondary – primary, but the second 'teen' number is final, and so has the pattern secondary – primary: /ˈnaɪnˌtiːn ˌnaɪnˈtiːn/.

And finally, when compound adverbs like *downstairs* are used as an adjective with a noun following, the stress pattern changes too.:

| | |
|---|---|
| *They have a bedroom downstairs*: | /ˌdaʊnˈstɛəz/ |
| *A downstairs bedroom*: | /ˈdaʊnˌstɛəz ˈbɛdˌruːm/ |

| | |
|---|---|
| *They don't have a toilet inside*: | /ˌɪnˈsaɪd/ |
| *An outside toilet*: | /ˈaʊtsaid ˈtɔɪlət/ |

## Part 3: Whole texts

We have now covered all the processes of simplification and the effects of rhythm that affect the pronunciation of phrases in English, and you should now be able to transcribe whole texts in a typical colloquial style.

First of all, you could try to transcribe the story of *Goldilocks* in a typical, careful reading style, as if reading the story to a child. Guidance is given for each line.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 Once upon a time | epenthesis between /n/ and /s/. Weak form of *a* |
| 2 there was a little girl | *there*: existential (weak) or locative (strongl)? *was* is weak |
| 3 called Goldilocks. | look for a case of elision |
| 4 One day | both words are stressed |
| 5 she went for a walk in the woods | Why is /t/ not elided? Notice /r/ liaison. What else happens to *for*? |
| 6 all by herself. | *her* is unstressed, so loses /h/ |
| 7 And as she walked down one path | *And*: weak? What happens to the <s> of *as* ? One case of elision, another of assimilation |
| 8 she saw a nice house. | NB Intrusive /r/ |
| 9 Since she was full of curiosity | What happens to final /s/ of *since*? *Was* and *of* are weak |
| 10 she walked close by | Do you notice another case of elision? |
| 11 and noticed that the door | And yet another case of elision? Is *that* weak or strong? |
| 12 was a little ajar. | Only one stress in this line |
| 13 She knocked but there was no reply | And yet another case of elision? Four weak words in this line |
| 14 She called and there was still no reply | Is the <ed> of *called* elided? |
| 15 And because she was so curious | What happens to /n/ of *and*, /z/ of *because*? Is *so* weak or strong? |
| 16 she decided to peep inside. | Why is the final /d/ of *decided* not elided? |
| 17 There she saw a table | *There*: weak or strong? Intrusive /r/? |
| 18 and on the table | Is *on* stressed on this occasion? |
| 19 there were three bowls of | *There*: weak or strong? *Were* is weak |

porridge –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 20 | a big one, a middle-sized one, and a little one.... | Note the compound word stress; and a case of elision? |
| 21 | Again because she was so curious | The /n/ of *again* does not assimilate because of the pause; but there *is* a case of assimilation elsewhere |
| 22 | she actually took a spoonful from the big one | Note the pronunciation of *actually* |
| 23 | but it was too hot | *But*: weak or strong? |
| 24 | So she took a spoonful from the middle-sized one | *So*: weak or strong? *Spoonful* is a compound<br>See line 20 |
| 25 | but it was too cold | First three words all weak |
| 26 | and then she took a spoonful | *Then* is stressed |
| 27 | from the little bowl | |
| 28 | and that was just right | *That*: weak or strong? *Just*: weak or strong? Any elision? |
| 29 | and she took another spoonful | |
| 30 | before she realized it | *Before* is stressed. Is the <ed> of *realized* elided? |
| 31 | she had eaten it all up. | What happens to *had* ? NB Syllabic /n/ |
| 32 | She felt quite full | Why is /t/ not elided in *felt*? |
| 33 | and decided to sit in one of the easy chairs | How is *the* pronounced in this line? |
| 34 | There was a big chair | *There*: weak or strong? |
| 35 | but it was too hard | See line 25 |
| 36 | There was a middle-sized chair | See line 20 again |
| 37 | but that was too soft | *That*: weak or strong? Why? |
| 38 | And then there was a little chair | *Then* is stressed |
| 39 | and that felt just right | See lines 37 and 32, and then 28 |
| 40 | But she leaned right back | A case of elision? /t/ of *right* is [?] here |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 41 | and it collapsed | How is *–ed* pronounced here? |
| 42 | As she picked herself up from the floor | See line 7, then 41, then 6 |
| 43 | she noticed the stairs | A case of elision? |
| 44 | And being a very curious little girl | What happens to *and* here? |
| 45 | she went up | *Up* is not a preposition here; it is stressed |
| 46 | and there she found three beds | Is *there* weak or strong? And a case of elision? |
| 47 | a big one but it felt too hard | |
| 48 | a middle-sized one, | See line 20 again, if you really need to |
| 49 | but it felt too soft | |
| 50 | and a little one that suited her nicely | *her*: weak or strong? |
| 51 | and because she felt so comfortable | See line 15. *So*: weak or strong? Notice how *comfortable* is pronounced |
| 52 | she fell asleep. | |
| 53 | In the meantime, | |
| 54 | the three bears returned to their home | Elision? |
| 55 | and were surprised to find | Another case of elision? What happens to /d/ of *find*? |
| 56 | the front door wide open | Is /t/ elided, in *front*? Is <en> in *open* pronounced as a syllabic /n/ ? |
| 57 | Father Bear was even more surprised | A case of assimilation. Is the <ed> of *surprised* elided in this case? |
| 58 | to find that somebody had taken | *That*: weak or strong? |
| 59 | a spoonful of his porridge | *His*: is /h/ pronounced here? |
| 60 | "Someone's been eating my porridge", he called | How is *'s* pronounced here? *Been* is weak |
| 61 | "And someone's been eating <u>my</u> porridge", said Mother Bear | *My* is strong here; so don't forget the stress mark<br>*said* does not have a stress mark here, but assimilation? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 62 | "And someone's been eating my porridge | |
| 63 | and eaten it all up", said Baby Bear | Assimilation? |
| 64 | "And someone's been sitting in my chair", said Father Bear | Assimilation? |
| 65 | "And someone's been sitting in my chair", said Mother Bear | See line 61 |
| 66 | "And someone sat on my chair | Assimilation? |
| 67 | and broke it", cried Baby Bear | Two cases of assimilation |
| 68 | "Well, who's been in our house, | How is '*s* pronounced here? *Our*: weak or full? |
| 69 | while we were all out?" they asked | *while* has a stress here, possibly because it is followed by a series of weak syllables. NB 'linking /r/' What happens in *asked?* |
| 70 | "I'm going to look upstairs", said Father Bear | Is *going to* pronounced stressed? Note the stress pattern of *upstairs* |
| 71 | "Hey, someone's been lying on my bed", he called | Assimilation. Is the /h/ of *he* pronounced? |
| 72 | "And someone's been lying on my bed", said Mother Bear | See line 61 again, if you must |
| 73 | "And someone's been lying on my bed | |
| 74 | and she's still there, | *There* ? |
| 75 | fast asleep", said Baby Bear | |
| 76 | His voice woke her up | What two things happen to *her* here? |
| 77 | She sat up in bed | Assimilation? |
| 78 | and frightened by the sight of the bears, | The <ed> of *frightened* is elided, but what happens as a resul? |
| 79 | she jumped down | Another case of elision |
| 80 | ran past them | The /n/ of *ran* is kept, but what happens to the /t/ of *past* ? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 81 | down the stairs | *down* is a preposition here, but is stressed |
| 82 | out of the house, | *out* is stressed |
| 83 | back into the woods | *back* is stressed, but *into* is not |
| 84 | and all the way home | |

*

And now try this conversational monologue in a fairly colloquial style, with less guidance.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | We've been to Italy a couple of times | Is *been* stressed here? Watch out for *to*, and *of* |
| 2 | We've driven both times | Watch out for a case of assimilation |
| 3 | I don't mind driving | Remember the problem of *n't* (and elision!) |
| 4 | I really quite enjoy it | |
| 5 | But in <u>those</u> days | *Those* takes a strong stress here |
| 6 | you had all different currencies | Remember the problem of *–nt* |
| 7 | We stayed overnight in Dunkirk | *Overnight* is a compound adverb here. Don't forget what happens to /n/ before /k/ |
| 8 | and paid for bed and breakfast | Cases of assimilation |
| 9 | in French francs | /n/ before /k/ again |
| 10 | Then we drove to Belgium | |
| 11 | and paid for mid-morning coffee | How many cases of assimilation in this line? *Mid-morning* is a compound adverb turned adjective followed by a stressed word; get its stress right! |
| 12 | in Belgian francs | And in this? |
| 13 | and then on into Luxembourg | |
| 14 | We bought petrol there | Why is /t/ not elided? *There*: weak or strong? |
| 15 | because it was cheaper | Is *because* stressed or not ? |
| 16 | and so we used their currency | Elision? *Their* takes a strong stress here |
| 17 | and we stopped for a picnic there too | Elision? What happens to *for* ? *There* ? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 18 | And then in the afternoon, | NB *The* before a vowel. *Afternoon* is a compound, but which part has primary stress? |
| 19 | we drove on into Germany | NB *on* is not a preposition here |
| 20 | had some food | *Some*: weak or strong? |
| 21 | and of course | Remember what can happen to *of* in this phrase |
| 22 | we had to pay for that in marks | *Had*: weak or strong? And *that* ? Assimilation? |
| 23 | Four different currencies by tea-time | |
| 24 | We stayed with a friend's family | Elision? |
| 25 | in Southern Germany | |
| 26 | And the following day | |
| 27 | crossed the border into Switzerland | Elision? Liaison? |
| 28 | And there of course we used Swiss francs | *There*: weak? Liaison? We would normally expect elision of /d/ in *used* in a case like this one, but the speaker appears to stumble, and does not elide . |
| 29 | Then over into Italy | Liaison? Look at line 1 again |
| 30 | where we had to start using | Work out what happens to /t/ + /j/ here |
| 31 | Italian lira | |
| 32 | Six currencies in two days | |
| 33 | We knew of course before we started | *before* is not strong here |
| 34 | that we would need all this | *Would*: weak? |
| 35 | so we had bought a bit of each | *Had*: weak? And what else happens? |
| 36 | but on the way back | NB *on* is stressed here |
| 37 | we converted bit by bit | Assimilation? |
| 38 | all the currency that we wouldn't need again | Work out the *n't* here |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 39 | changing all our lira into Swiss francs | Liaison? |
| 40 | and then all that into German marks. | Assimilation? |
| 41 | Quite crazy | |
| 42 | and we probably lost quite a bit that way | Elision? |
| 43 | But now, they use euros all the way | The /z/ of *use* is retained here, although it could have easily become /ʒ/ |
| 44 | except Switzerland | Elision? |
| 45 | it's so much easier | *So*: weak or strong? |
| 46 | and so you don't lose so much | *So* twice: weak or strong in each case? |

*

And finally this conversational monologue with no guidance.

we were actually in America at the time . uh we'll always remember the eleventh of September of course . we were staying with friends in San Francisco . we'd put our Jonathan . on a plane back to LA . uh . because he had to get . back for his classes . but we couldn't help but think then . at the time . how lax their idea of security was . you know he actually offered his coat to them and opened his bag and so on . but they just waved him through . as if he was . catching a bus . and I remember thinking then . that wouldn't happen in Britain . not even in Cardiff . you know just like . you know . our little airport like Cardiff . that was the . that was the Monday morning . and then on the . that was the Monday evening . then on the Tuesday morning . I got up . and went to make a cup of tea . you know . to get going in the morning . Karen our friend . was already up . and was about to go off jogging . when there was a phone call . and *as* she was talking on the phone . she switched the television on . and I thought that was strange . you don't normally turn the . TV on . when you're talking to somebody on the phone . well it was her husband Jim . *he'd* heard . of a disaster in New York on his way to work . not knowing quite what was happening . and there on the screen . we saw one of the towers . blazing away . and there was a strong suspicion . that this was no accident . and then on the screen . came this second plane . looking as if it was heading deliberately . at the at the other tower . and there before my very eyes . the most appalling disaster was unfolding . I called Charlotte . my wife . to come and see . she'd still been in bed . waiting for that cup of tea . you've got to remember . that San Francisco's about . three hours behind New York . so when it was ten over in New York . it was only uh it was only seven where *we* were . so there we were . the three of us . watching this horrible disaster unfolding on TV . Charlotte and me and Karen . as I said Jim had gone off to work early that morning . well it was incredible . we were just stunned by it all . we just couldn't believe what we were watching . it was more of a horror film than reality . and then the first tower crumbled . this was . more than a bad movie . and then unbelievably the second tower as well . I still remember the horror . of watching it all happen *as* it happened . and the great .

billowing of dust and smoke . pouring down the streets at a frightening speed . and then of course there was the Pentagon plane too . and the terrific devastation there too . there was a fourth hijacked plane . and we learned of the heroic efforts of the . passengers . knowing that they were going to die for a . for certain . but they seized the hijackers . and rammed the plane . into the ground . but off target . people assumed that it was heading towards Washington . we sat there . bewildered . stunned . overcome with the power of it all . so much to take in . all of it staggering . we sat there silent . open-mouthed . shocked . we remained quiet all morning . and then the first fatalities were being named . those planes . had been on their way to LA . and San Francisco . so the majority of the dead . were . local men and women . their names were appearing on a moving line at the bottom of the screen . practically all of them local people . it was just so dreadful . Karen had had the day off . but she decided to go into school later on . she's a school counsellor . and felt that she should be there to help . *we* left in the afternoon . I got petrol in their local garage . there was just this awful eerie silence among the people . it was as if the whole city had gone quiet . oh what a day *that* was

*

**You have now completed the most thorough and comprehensive introduction to the transcription of phrases in English that is available anywhere. There will not be an English phrase now that you will not be able to transcribe, in either an informal or a more formal style!**

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## Key

ˈdʒɒm ˈbʊl ˈdʒɒm ˈpɔːl ˈdʒɒm ˈmɪltn̩ ˈdʒɒŋ ˈkælvɪn ˈbɛŋ ˈgʌn ˈgɔːdəm ˈbraʊn ˈrɒbɪŋ ˈkʊk ˈkəʊlɪm ˈpauəl ˈmɑːtɪm ˈbɛl ˈæŋ ˈkluːɪd rɪˈpʌblɪkəm ˌpɑːti rɪˈpʌblɪkəŋ ˈgɑːd ˈdɒŋ ˈkwɪksət ˈkæθrŋ ˈkʊksən ˈdɒm ˈbræbmən ˈkɒlɪŋ ˈkaʊdri ˈɪəm ˈbəʊθəm ˈraɪəŋ ˈgɪgz ˈdeɪvɪb ˈbɛkəm ˈrɪtʃəb ˈbɜːtn̩ ˈbɜːnəb ˈmæθjuːz ˈrɒnl̩ ˈreɪgən ˈbɜːtrən ˈrʌsl̩ ˈreɪməm ˈbækstə ˈkrɪʃ ˈdʒəʊnz ˈlɪʒ ˈjeɪts ˈliːdʒ juˈnaɪtəd ˈɑːθər ˈæski ˈrɒdʒər ˈɛlɪs ˈbɑːbrər ˈɛdwədz ˈsɛərər ˈɑːmstrɒŋ ˈæfrɪkəŋ ˈkwiːn əˈmɛrɪkəm ˈbjuːti ˈʃeɪkspɪər ɪn ˈlʌv ˈgræŋ ˈkænjən ˈrɪf ˈvæli ˈæməzəm ˈbeɪsn̩ ˈiːs ˈtiːmɔː ˈwɛs vəˈdʒɪnɪə ˈəʊl ˈtræfəd ˈaɪəmbrɪdʒ ˈrɪvər ˈeɪvən ˈeɪvəŋ ˈgɔːdʒ

*Goldilocks*

(# = Transcribed as in the accompanying recording; other, RP/SESP, speakers may well use a different form in these words.)

ˈwɒnts# əpɒn ə ˈtaɪm ðə wəz ə ˈlɪtḷ ˈgɜːl ˈkɔːl ˈgəʊldɪlɒks ˈwɒn ˈdeɪ ʃi ˈwɛnt fr ə ˈwɔːk ɪn ðə ˈwʊdz ˈɔːl baɪ əˈsɛlf ən ˈæʒ ʃi ˈwɔːk daʊn #ˈwɒm ˈpæθ ʃi ˈsɔːr ə ˈnaɪs ˈhaʊs ˈsɪntʃ ʃi wəz ˈfʊl əv kjʊəriˈɒsəti ʃi ˈwɔːk kləʊs ˈbaɪ ən ˈnəʊtɪs ðət ðə ˈdɔː wəz ə lɪtḷ əˈdʒɑː ʃi ˈnɒk bət ðə wəz nəʊ rɪˈplaɪ ʃi ˈkɔːld ən ðə wəz ˈstɪl nəʊ rɪˈplaɪ əm bɪˈkɒʒ ʃi wəz səʊ ˈkjʊəriəs ʃi dɪˈsaɪdəd tə ˈpiːp ɪnˈsaɪd ˈðɛə ʃi ˈsɔː ə ˈteɪbəl ən ˈɒn ðə ˈteɪbəl ðə wə ˈθriː ˈbəʊlz əv ˈpɒrɪdʒ ə ˈbɪg #wɒn ə ˈmɪdḷsaɪz #wɒn ən ə ˈlɪtḷ #wɒn əˈgeɪm bɪkɒʒ ʃi wəz səʊ ˈkjʊəriəs ʃi ˈæktʃəli ˈtʊk ə ˈspuːnfʊl frəm ðə ˈbɪg #wɒn bət ɪt wəz ˈtuː ˈhɒt ˈsəʊ ʃi ˈtʊk ə ˈspuːnfʊl frəm ðə ˈmɪdḷsaɪz #wɒn bət ɪt wəz ˈtuː ˈkəʊld ən ˈðɛn ʃi ˈtʊk ə ˈspuːnfʊl frəm ðə ˈlɪtḷ ˈbəʊl ən ˈðæt wəz ˈdʒʌs ˈraɪt ən ʃi ˈtʊk əˈnʌðə ˈspuːnfʊl bɪˈfɔː ʃi ˈrɪəlaɪzd ɪt ʃi d ˈiːtn̩ ɪt ˈɔːl ˈʌp ʃi ˈfɛlt kwaɪt ˈfʊl ən dɪˈsaɪdəd tə ˈsɪt ɪn #ˈwɒn əv ðɪ ˈiːzi ˈtʃɛəz ðə wəz ə ˈbɪg ˈtʃɛə bət ɪt wəz ˈtuː ˈhɑːd ðə wəz ə ˈmɪdḷsaɪz ˈtʃɛə bət ˈðæt wəz ˈtuː ˈsɒft ən ˈðɛn ðə wəz ə ˈlɪtḷ ˈtʃɛə ən ˈðæt ˈfɛlt ˈdʒʌs ˈraɪt bət ʃi ˈliːn ˈraɪt ˈbæk ən ɪt kəˈlæpst ˈæʒ ʃi ˈpɪkt əˈsɛlf ˈʌp frəm ðə ˈflɔː ʃi ˈnəʊtɪs ðə ˈsteəz əm ˈbiːɪŋ ə vɛri ˈkjʊəriəs ˈlɪtḷ ˈgɜːl ʃi ˈwɛnt ˈʌp ən ˈðɛə ʃi ˈfaʊn ˈθriː ˈbɛdz ə ˈbɪg #wɒn bət ɪt ˈfɛlt ˈtuː ˈhɑːd ə ˈmɪdḷsaɪz #wɒn bət ɪt ˈfɛlt ˈtuː ˈsɒft ən ə ˈlɪtḷ #wɒn ðət ˈsuːtəd hə ˈnaɪsli əm bɪˈkɒʒ ʃi ˈfɛlt səʊ ˈkʌmftəbəl ʃi ˈfɛl əˈsliːp ɪn ðə ˈmiːntaɪm ðə ˈθriː ˈbɛəz rɪˈtɜːn tə ðɛə ˈhəʊm ən wə səˈpraɪz tə ˈfɑɪn ðə ˈfrʌnt ˈdɔː ˈwaɪd ˈəʊpən ˈfɑːðə ˈbɛə wəz iːvəm ˈmɔː səˈpraɪz tə ˈfaɪn ðət ˈsʌmbədi əd ˈteɪkən ə ˈspuːnfʊl əv ɪz ˈpɒrɪdʒ #ˈsʌmwɒnz bin ˈiːtɪŋ mai ˈpɒrɪdʒ i ˈkɔːld ən #ˈsʌmwɒnz bin ˈiːtɪŋ ˈmai ˈpɒrɪdʒ sɛb ˈmʌðə ˈbɛə ən ˈsʌmwɒnz bin ˈiːtɪŋ ˈmai ˈpɒrɪdʒ ən ˈiːtən ɪt ɔːl ˈʌp sɛb ˈbeɪbi ˈbɛə ən #ˈsʌmwɒnz bin ˈsɪtɪŋ ɪm maɪ ˈtʃɛə sɛd ˈfɑːðə ˈbɛə ən #ˈsʌmwɒnz bin ˈsɪtɪŋ ɪm ˈmaɪ ˈtʃɛə sɛb ˈmʌðə ˈbɛə ən #ˈsʌmwɒn ˈsæt ɒm ˈmaɪ ˈtʃɛə əm ˈbrəʊk ɪt ˈkraɪb ˈbeɪbi ˈbɛə wɛl ˈhuːz bin ɪn ɑː ˈhaʊs wɑil wi wər ˈɔːl ˈaʊt ðeɪ ɑːst aɪm ˈgəʊɪŋ tə ˈlʊk ʌpˈsteəz sɛd ˈfɑːðə ˈbɛə ˈheɪ #ˈsʌmwɒnz bin ˈlaɪɪŋ ɒm maɪ ˈbɛd i ˈkɔːld ən #ˈsʌmwɒnz bin ˈlaɪɪŋ ɒm ˈmaɪ ˈbɛd sɛb ˈmʌðə ˈbɛə ən #ˈsʌmwɒnz bin ˈlaɪɪŋ ɒm ˈmaɪ ˈbɛd ən ʃiz ˈstɪl ˈðɛə ˈfæst əˈsliːp sɛb ˈbeɪbi ˈbɛə hɪz ˈvɔɪs ˈwəʊk ər ˈʌp ʃi ˈsæt ˈʌp ɪm ˈbɛd ən ˈfraɪtəm baɪ ðə ˈsaɪt əv ðə ˈbɛəz ʃi ˈdʒʌmp ˈdaʊn ˈræm* #ˈpæs ðəm ˈdaʊn ðə ˈsteəz ˈaʊt əv ðə ˈhaʊs ˈbæk ɪntə ðə ˈwʊdz ən ˈɔːl ðə ˈweɪ ˈhəʊm

(* In the accompanying recording, the speaker does not in fact change /n/ to /m/ because of a slight hesitation.)

*We've been to Italy a couple of times*

wiv ˈbiːn tu *ˈɪtəli ə ˈkʌpl əv ˈtaɪmz wiv ˈdrɪvəm ˈbəʊθ ˈtaɪmz aɪ dəʊnʔ ˈmaɪn ˈdraɪvɪŋ aɪ ˈrɪəli kwaɪt ɛnˈdʒɔɪ ɪt bət ɪn ˈðəʊz ˈdeɪz ju hæd ˈɔːl ˈdɪfrənʔ ˈkʌrəntsiz wi ˈsteɪd əʊvə ˈnaɪt ɪn *dʌŋˈkɜːk əm ˈpeɪd fə ˈbɛd əm ˈbrɛkfəst ɪn ˈfrɛntʃ ˈfræŋks ðɛn wi ˈdrəʊv tə *ˈbɛldʒəm əm ˈpeɪd fə ˈmɪbmɔːnɪŋ ˈkɒfi ɪm ˈbɛldʒən ˈfræŋks ən ðɛn ˈɒn ɪntə ˈlʌksəmbɜːg wi ˈbɔːʔ ˈpɛtrəl ˈðɛə bɪkəz ɪt wəz ˈtʃiːpə ən ˈsəʊ we ˈjuːz ˈðɛə ˈkʌrəntsi ən wi ˈstɒp fr ə ˈpɪknɪk ˈðɛə ˈtuː ən ˈðɛn ɪn ði ˈæftənuːn wi ˈdrəʊv ˈɒn ɪntə *ˈdʒɜːməni ˈhæd səm ˈfuːd ˈænd əf ˈkɔːs wi ˈhæd tə ˈpeɪ fə ˈðæt ɪm ˈmɑːks ˈfɔː ˈdɪfrənʔ ˈkʌrəntsiz baɪ ˈtiː taɪm wi ˈsteɪd wɪð a ˈfrɛnz ˈfæmli ɪn ˈsʌðən ˈdʒɜːməni ən ðə ˈfɒləʊɪŋ ˈdeɪ ˈkrɒs ðə ˈbɔːdər ɪntə *ˈswɪtsələnd ən ˈðɛər əf ˈkɔːs wi ˈjuːzd ˈswɪs ˈfræŋks ˈðɛn ˈəʊvər ɪntu ˈɪtəli wɛə wi ˈhæd tə ˈstɑːʔ ˈjuːzɪŋ ɪˈtælɪən ˈliːrə ˈsɪks ˈkʌrəntsiz ɪn ˈtuː ˈdeɪz wi ˈnjuː əf ˈkɔːs bɪˈfɔː wi ˈstɑːtəd ðət wi wəd ˈniːd ˈɔːl ˈðɪs ˈsəʊ wi b ˈbɔːt ə ˈbɪt əv ˈiːtʃ bət ˈɒn ðə ˈweɪ ˈbæk wi kənˈvɜːtəb ˈbɪʔ baɪ ˈbɪt ˈɔːl ðə ˈkʌrəntsi ðəʔ wi ˈwʊdn̩ʔ ˈniːd əˈgeɪn ˈtʃeɪndʒɪŋ ˈɔːl ɑː ˈliːrər ɪntə ˈswɪs ˈfræŋks ən ðɛn ˈɔːl ˈðæt ɪntə ˈdʒɜːməm ˈmɑːks ˈkwaɪʔ ˈkreɪzi ən wi ˈprɒbəbli ˈlɒs ˈkwaɪt ə ˈbiʔ ˈðæʔ ˈwei bəʔ ˈnaʊ ðeɪ ˈjuːz ˈjʊərəʊz ˈɔːl ðə ˈweɪ ɪkˈsɛp ˈswɪtsələnd ɪts ˈsəʊ mʌtʃ ˈiːziə ən səʊ jə ˈdəʊnʔ ˈluːz sə mʌtʃ

*We were actually in America at the time*

wi wər ˈaktʃəli ɪn əˈmɛrəkər ət ðə ˈtaɪm . ə wi l ˈɔːlweɪz rɪˈmɛmbə ði ɪˈlɛvənθ əv sɛpˈtɛmbər əv ˈkɔːs . wi wə ˈsteɪɪŋ wɪð ˈfrɛnz ɪn *ˈsæn frænˈsɪskəʊ . wi b ˈpʊt ɑː *ˈdʒɒnəθən . ɒn ə ˈpleɪm ˈbæk tu *ˈɛl ˈeɪ . ə . bɪkɒz #hi ˈhæd tə ˈgɛt . ˈbæk fə #hɪz #ˈklæsəz . bət wi ˈkʊdn̩ʔ ˈhɛlp bət ˈθɪŋk ˈðɛn. ət ðə ˈtaɪm . ˈhaʊ ˈlæks ðɛər aɪˈdɪər əv sɪˈkjʊərəti wɒz . jə ˈnəʊ hi ˈæktʃəli ˈɒfəd ɪz ˈkəʊt tə ðəm ən ˈəʊpənd ɪz ˈbæg ən ˈsəʊ ɒn . bət ðeɪ dʒəs ˈweɪvd ɪm ˈθruː . əz ɪf i wəz . ˈkætʃɪŋ ə ˈbʌs . ən aɪ rɪˈmembə ˈθɪŋkɪŋ ˈðɛn . ˈðæt ˈwʊdn̩ʔ ˈhæpən ɪm ˈbrɪtn̩ . ˈnɒt ˈiːvən ɪŋ ˈkɑːdɪf . jə ˈnəʊ ˈdʒʌs laɪk . jə ˈnəʊ . ɑː ˈlɪtl̩ ˈɛəpɔːt laik ˈkɑːdɪf . ˈðæt wəz ði . ˈðæt wəz ðə #ˈmʌndeɪ ˈmɔːnɪŋ . ən ðɛn ˈɒn ði . ˈðæt wəz ðə #ˈmʌndeɪ ˈɪːvnɪŋ . ˈðɛn ɒn ðə ˈtʃuːzdi ˈmɔːnɪŋ . aɪ ˈgɒt ˈʌp . ən ˈwɛnt tə ˈmeɪk ə ˈkʌp ə ˈtiː . jə ˈnəʊ . tə ˈgɛt ˈgəʊɪŋ ɪn ðə ˈmɔːnɪŋ . *ˈkærən ɑː ˈfrɛnd . wəz ɔːlˈrɛdi ˈʌp . ən wəz əbaʊt tə ˈgəʊ ɒf ˈdʒɒgɪŋ . ˈwɛn ðə wəz ə ˈfəʊŋ kɔːl . ən ˈæʒ ʃi wəz ˈtɔːkɪŋ ɒn ðə ˈfəʊn . ʃi ˈswɪtʃ ðə tɛləˈvɪʒən ɒn . ən ɑi ˈθɔːt ˈðæʔ wəz ˈstreɪndʒ . ju ˈdəʊnʔ ˈnɔːməli ˈtɜːn ðə . ˈtiːvɪ ˈɒn . wɛn jɔː ˈtɔːkɪŋ tə ˈsʌmbədi ɒn ðə ˈfəʊn . wɛl ɪt wəz hə ˈhʌzbən *ˈdʒɪm . ˈhiː d ˈhɜːd . əv ə #dɪˈzæstər ɪn *nju: ˈjɔːk ɒn ɪz ˈweɪ tə ˈwɜːk . ˈnɒʔ ˈnəʊɪŋ kwaɪʔ ˈwɒʔ wəz ˈhæpnɪŋ . ən ˈðɛər ɒn ðə ˈskriːn . wi ˈsɔː #ˈwɒn əv ðə ˈtaʊəz . ˈbleɪziŋ əˈweɪ . ən ðə wəz ə ˈstrɒŋ səˈspɪʃən . ðəʔ ˈðɪs wəz nəʊ ˈæksɪdn̩t . ən ðɛn ˈɒn ðə ˈskriːn . ˈkeɪm ðis ˈsɛkəm ˈpleɪn . ˈlʊkɪŋ əz ɪf ɪʔ wəz ˈhɛdɪŋ dɪˈlɪbrəʔli . #æʔ ði #æʔ ði ˈʌðə ˈtaʊə . ən ˈðɛə bɪˈfɔː maɪ ˈvɛri ˈaɪz . ðə məʊst əˈpɔːlɪŋ dɪˈzæstə wəz ʌnˈfəʊldɪŋ . aɪ ˈkɔːl *ˈʃɑːlət . maɪ ˈwaɪf . tə ˈkʌm ən ˈsiː . ʃi d ˈstɪl biːn ɪm ˈbɛd . ˈweɪtɪŋ fə ˈðæʔ ˈkʌp ə ˈtiː . jə v gɒt ə rɪˈmɛmbə . ðəʔ ˈsæn frænˈsɪskəʊ z əbaʊt . ˈθriː ˈaʊəz bɪˈhaɪn nju: ˈjɔːk . səʊ ˈwɛn ɪʔ wəz ˈtɛn əʊvər ɪn nju: ˈjɔːk . ɪt wəz ˈəʊnli ə ɪt wəz ˈəʊnli ˈsɛvən wɛə ˈwiː wɜː . səʊ ˈðɛə wi ˈwɜː . ðə ˈθriː əv #əz . ˈwɒtʃɪŋ ðɪs ˈhɒrəbəl #dɪˈzæstər ʌnˈfəʊldɪŋ ɒn tiːˈviː . ˈʃɑːlət əm mɪ əŋ ˈkærən . əz aɪ sɛd ˈdʒɪm əg ˈgɒn ɒf tə ˈwɜːk ˈɜːli ˈðæʔ ˈmɔːnɪŋ . wɛl ɪt wəz ɪŋˈkrɛdəbəl . wi wə dʒəs ˈstʌm baɪ ɪt ɔːl . wi dʒəs ˈkʊbm̩p bɪˈliːv wɒʔ wi wə ˈwɒtʃɪŋ . ɪt wəz ˈmɔːr əv ə ˈhɒrə fɪlm #ðæn riˈæləti . ən ˈðɛn ðə ˈfɜːs ˈtaʊə ˈkrʌmbəld . ˈðɪs wəz . ˈmɔː #ðæn ə ˈbæb ˈmuːvi . ən ˈðɛn ʌmbəˈliːvəbli ðə ˈsɛkən ˈtaʊər əz ˈwɛl . ai ˈstɪl rɪˈmɛmbə ðə ˈhɒrə . əv ˈwɒtʃɪŋ ɪt ˈɔːl ˈhæpən ˈæz ɪt ˈhæpənd . ən ðə ˈgreɪt . ˈbɪləʊɪŋ əv ˈdʌst ən ˈsməʊk . ˈpɔːrɪŋ daʊn ðə ˈstriːts ət ə ˈfraɪtnɪŋ ˈspiːd . ən ˈðɛn əv ˈkɔːs ðə wəz ðə ˈpɛntəgəm ˈpleɪn ˈtuː . ən ðə təˈrɪfɪk dɛvəˈsteɪʃən ˈðɛə ˈtuː . ðə wəz ə ˈfɔːθ ˈhaɪdʒæk ˈpleɪn . ən wi ˈlɜːnt əv ðə həˈrəʊɪk ˈɛfəts ɒv #ði . ˈpæsəndʒəz . ˈnəʊɪŋ ðəʔ ðeɪ wə gəʊɪŋ tə ˈdaɪ fər ə . fə ˈsɜːtn̩ . bət ðei ˈsiːz ðə ˈhaɪdʒækəz . ən ˈræm ðə ˈpleɪn . ɪntə ðə ˈgrɑʊnd . bət ˈɒf ˈtɑːgət . ˈpiːpəl #əˈsjuːm ðət ɪt wəz ˈhɛdɪŋ təwɔːdz *ˈwɒʃɪŋtən . wi ˈsæʔ ˈðɛə . bɪˈwɪldəd . ˈstʌnd . əʊvəˈkʌm wɪð ðə ˈpaʊər əv ɪt ɔːl . ˈsəʊ ˈmʌtʃ tə teɪk ˈɪn . ˈɔːl əv ɪʔ ˈstægərɪŋ . wi ˈsæt ðɛə ˈsaɪlənt . #əupəmˈmaʊðd . ˈʃɒkt . wi rɪˈmeɪŋ ˈkwaɪət ˈɔːl ˈmɔːnɪŋ . ən ˈðɛn ðə ˈfɜːs fəˈtælətiz wə biːɪŋ ˈneɪmd . ˈðəʊz ˈpleɪnz . əb biːn ɒn ðɛə ˈweɪ tu ˈɛl ˈeɪ . ən ˈsæn fræn ˈsɪskəʊ . səʊ ðə məˈdʒɒrəti əv ðə ˈdɛd . wə . ˈləʊkəl ˈmɛn ən ˈwɪmɪn . ðɛə ˈneɪmz wər əˈpɪərɪŋ ɒn ə ˈmuːvɪŋ ˈlaɪn əʔ ðə ˈbɒtəm əv ðə ˈskriːn . ˈpræktəkli ˈɔːl əv ðəm ˈləʊkəl ˈpiːpəl . ɪt wəz dʒəs ˈsəʊ ˈdrɛdfəl . ˈkærən #hæd ˈhæd ðə ˈdeɪ ˈɒf . bəʔ ʃi dɪˈsaɪdəd tə ˈgəʊ intə ˈskuːl ˈleɪtər ˈɒn . ʃi z ə ˈskuːl ˈkaʊnsələ . ən ˈfɛlʔ ðəʔ ʃi ˈʃʊb bi ˈðɛə tə ˈhɛlp . ˈwiː ˈlɛft in ði *æftəˈnuːn . aɪ ˈgɒʔ ˈpɛtrəl ɪn ðɛə ˈləʊkəl ˈgærɪdʒ . ðə wəʒ dʒəs ðɪs ˈɔːfəl ˈɪəri ˈsaɪlənts əmʌŋ ðə ˈpiːpəl . ɪt wəz əz ɪf ðə ˈhəʊl ˈsɪti əg ˈgɒŋ ˈkwaɪət . ˈəʊ ˈwɒt ə ˈdeɪ ˈðæʔ wɒz

# Transcribed as in the accompanying recording; other, RP/SESP, speakers may well use a different form in these words. In the final two texts, [ʔ] is used as an alternative to /t/ before an immediately following consonant (see pages 7 and 29).