

强读和弱读

强读和弱读是英语中独特的，具有鲜明色彩的特点之一。英语中大约有50个最常用的单音节词，如 a, of, from, as, and 等，它们每个词都有两种不同形式的读音。一种形式叫强读，另一种形式叫弱读。例如，from 的强读形式是 /frɒm/，弱读形式是 /frəm/，as 的强读形式是 /æz/，弱读形式是 /əz/。

当读单词时，或者在连贯语句中重读时用强读形式。弱读形式只用于非重读的情况下。关于弱读，以下有四点是要特别提到的：

1. 具有强读和弱读两种形式的单词出现在非重读音节中的次数要比在重读音节中出现的次数多得多。
2. 弱读音节出现的频率远远大于强读音节。也可以这样说，在连贯语句中（不是在读单个词的时候），弱读是比强读更正常的现象。
3. 弱读形式是中国人学习英语的又一难点。因为我们更习惯于读单词的强读形式，而不是弱读形式，如人们更喜欢把 from, of, as, and 读成 /frɒm/, /ɒv/, /æz/, /ænd/, 而不是 /frəm/, /əv/, /əz/, /ənd/。
4. 把弱读形式读成强读形式会影响说话的流利程度，会使说话听起来没有节奏，像是读单词，使应该重读的音节不能突出，因而会造成交际时对方的误解。有些人常常抱怨外国人说话太快听不懂，实际上并不是听不懂单词，而是不熟悉英语的语流、节奏——在相当程度上是因为不熟悉英语弱读形式而造成的。因此，中国人学英语时，怎样强调弱读形式的重要性都不会为之过分的。

由于上述情况，我们将把重点和更多的篇幅用在连贯语句中单词的弱读形式上。以下几点是学习弱读形式时要记住的：

1. 弱读形式不同于强读形式，因为 1) 弱读形式和强读形式各自的元音不同；2) 弱读音节中常常省略了某一个音。
2. 大多数有弱读形式的单词中，元音都变成了 /ə/。例如：

at	/ət/
as	/əz/
had	/həd/
must	/məst/

3. 有少数几个单词的弱读形式变成了 /ɪ/。例如：

be	/bɪ/
been	/biːn/
me	/mi/

the /ðɪ/ (在元音前, 如 the other /ðɪ 'ʌðə/)

4. 有时, 一些常用词的弱读形式中省略了一个元音。例如:

am /m/

has /z/

have /v/

is /z/

5. 有时, 一些常用的弱读形式中省略了一个辅音。例如:

and /ən/

have /əv/

would /əd/

her /ɜ:/

要在连贯说话中应用弱读形式, 不是懂得了道理就能学会的, 也不是一朝一夕就能掌握的。需要通过大量的模仿和练习才能学好。

下面所列的是常用单词的弱读形式和例子:

单词 弱读形式

例子

a /ə/

in a minute

am /əm/

What am I to do?

I'm /m/

I'm coming.

an /ən/

an apple

and /ənd/

He had an apple.

and /ən/

in and out

and /nd/

in and out

and /n/

He sat and ate.

are /ə/

bread and butter

are /ə/

The days are shorter.

are /ə/

The men are away.

as /əz/

as old as you

at /ət/

all at once

be /bi/

I ought to be going.

been /biːn/

She has been out.

but /bət/

He does but I don't.

can /kən/

It can stand there.

can /kən/

We can take it.

can /kən/

You can go now.

do	/dʊ/	So do I.
	/də/	So do they.
	/d/	How do you do?
does	/dəz/	What does that mean?
for	/fə/	That is for me.
		Let's go for a walk.
from	/frəm/	It comes from there.
had	/həd/	Had anyone left?
	/əd/	The man had left.
	/d/	They'd had already left.
has	/həz/	Has everyone gone?
	/əz/	Lunch has begun.
	/z/	He has just arrived.
	/s/	It has just come.
have	/həv/	Have any been lost?
	/əv/	What have you done?
	/v/	I have never been there.
he	/hi/	But he said he would.
her	/ɜ:/	She had her hair done.
	/hə/	Her dress looks nice.
	/ə/	Then I told her.
him, his	/ɪm/ /ɪz/	Give him his money.
is	/z/	The table is laid.
	/s/	He is here.
		My hat is there.
me	/mi/	Could you tell me the time?
must	/məst/	You must ask again.
	/məs/	I must go soon.
not	/nt/	aren't
	/n/	It doesn't matter.
of	/əv/	one of each
or	/ə/	two or three days
shall	/ʃəl/	Shall I do it?
		What shall we do?

should	/ʃəd/ /ʃd/	We should have told you.
sir	/sə/	No, sir.
		Sir James
some	/səm/ /sm/	Have you had some bread?
than	/ðən/ /ðn/	better than that
that	/ðət/	I saw that it was useless.
		on the day that I left
the	/ðɪ/	the other day
	/ðə/	What is the time?
them	/ðəm/ /ðm/	Tell them what to do.
there	/ðə/	There is nothing left.
		There are not enough.
till	/tɪ/	not till tomorrow
to	/tu/	I want to ask you.
		They hope to win.
		I am going to London.
	/tə/	They want to leave today.
us	/əs/	Tell us at once.
	/s/	Let's go now.
was	/wəz/	That was a mistake.
were	/wə/	They were very pleased.
		We were all here.
will	/ɪ/	That will be enough.
would	/əd/	What would you do?
	/d/	I'd like to tell him.
you	/ju/	I can still see you.

除此以外,日常口语中通常用的缩略形式也可以看成是一种弱读形式。以下所列的是我们最常见的:

原来形式	弱读形式	拼法
we are	/wiə/	we're
you are	/juə/	you're
they are	/ðeɪə/	they're
cannot	/kɑːnt/	can't

do not	/dəʊnt/	don't
will not	/wəʊnt/	won't
shall not	/ʃɑːnt/	shan't
must not	/məʊnt/	mustn't

当然，也有少数情况需要用强读形式（尽管在句中没有重音）。遇到以下这些情况时，一般不用弱读形式而用强读形式：

助动词：

am	/æm/	Who is coming? — 'I 'am.
can	/kæn/	Can anyone here speak French? — Yes, 'I 'can.
has	/hæz/	They have not gone, but 'he 'has.
will	/wɪl/	Will you go or shall I? — 'I 'will.

（注意：只有在用简略回答的时候，助动词才用强读形式。如果把句子说完整了，这些助动词仍然需用弱读形式，例如，Who is coming? — I am coming. /aɪm 'kʌmɪŋ/）

介词：

at	/æt/	What are you looking 'at?
for	/fɔː/	What is he waiting 'for?
from	/frɒm/	Where did you get it 'from?
of	/ɒv/	What was she thinking 'of?

（注意：一般来说，所有的介词（除to外）在句尾的时候要用强读形式。此外，如果介词后面跟着一个不重读的人称代词，这些介词也要用强读形式，如I've been waiting for you. /aɪv biːn 'weɪtɪŋ 'fɔː juː/ I'm expecting to hear from him. /aɪm ɪks'pektɪŋ tə 'hiːə 'frɒm hɪm/）

/ə/ 音的重要性

在英语所有的48个音素中最引人注目的应该算是/ə/音了。在讨论弱读形式的时候我们已经注意到/ə/音的重要性。几乎绝大多数的弱读都变成了/ə/。如果请你回答以下几个问题，相信你不会感到困难的：

什么音几乎在英语所有两个音节以上词中都出现？

什么是英语中出现频率最高的音？

什么是英语中最重要的音？

回答只有一个，是这个虽不起眼但用途最大的/ə/音。看看以下这篇短文，并数一数出现了多少个/ə/的音？