Advanced Pronunciation Guide

AO3 FOCUS

The AO3 Assessment Principle

The AQA exam assesses **communicative competence** over a perfect native accent. Examiners must distinguish between errors that **impede understanding** (major errors) and those that are natural accent variations (minor errors). Your goal is to eliminate the major errors!

Major Pronunciation Traps (High Impact Errors)

Error Type	Example (Incorrect)	Correct Spanish Sound
Anglicised 'J'	*Jugar* as "joo-gar"	**H (Like the 'h' in *house*): "hoo-gar"**
Hard 'C' on CE/CI	*Cielo* as "see-elo"	**TH / S (Soft sound): "thieh-lo" / "sieh-lo"**
'QU' as 'KW'	*Que* as "kwe"	**K (Like the 'k' in *kit*): "ke"**
'CH' Mispronounced	*Chico* as "shiko"	**CH (Like the 'ch' in *chip*): "chee-ko"**
'Ñ' as English 'N'	*Año* as "ano"	**NY (Nasal sound): "ahn-yo"**
Meaning Change	*Pollo* (chicken) pronounced as *Polo* (ice cream)	**Focus on correct vowel/consonant distinction**

These errors should be clearly noted and may result in mark deductions that affect the overall fluency and pronunciation assessment.

Minor Accent Variations (Low Impact Errors)

Error Type	Example	Impact on Mark
Soft 'R' sounds	*Perro* with English-style 'r'	Generally **do not** impede communication or affect marks significantly.
Intervocalic 'D'	*Lado* with harder English 'd' sound	Natural learner variation. Note for improvement, but won't typically be penalized.
Aspirated 'H'	Pronouncing silent 'h' in *hora*	Minor error, focus on fluency instead.

> *"Focus on building confidence and fluency rather than eliminating all accent variations. These errors are part of the natural learning process."*