

19 Look at the table below. Listen and repeat the strong and weak prepositions. Note that *to* and *for* have different weak forms when they come before vowel sounds.

You will find a full guide to reading phonetic symbols at the back of this book.

Word	Strong form	Weak form(s)	Weak form before a vowel sound
1 to	/tu:/	/tə/	/tʊ/ e.g. I'm going to Egypt.
2 of	/ɒv/	/əv/, /ə/	—
3 at	/æt/	/ət/	—
4 from	/frɒm/	/frəm/	—
5 for	/fɔ:/	/fə/	/fər/ e.g. This is for Andy.

20 Sometimes, even in fast speech, we use the strong form of a word:

- a if we want to emphasise it, or contrast it with another word
- b if it comes before a pause
- c if it comes at the end of a sentence

Listen to sentences 1–4. Are the prepositions strong or weak? If they are strong, give a reason from the list a–c above.

- 1 Has she been waiting for long? _____
- 2 What are you looking at? _____
- 3 The present's not from Mark, it's for Mark. _____
- 4 I want to go! _____

Now check your answers. Then repeat the sentences.

Exam tip: Other function words (or grammatical words) also have weak forms. Some common ones are:

- positive auxiliary verbs (e.g. *can, must, do, shall, was, are*)
- pronouns (e.g. *her, you, them, your*)
- conjunctions (e.g. *and, but, because ('cos), than*)
- articles (*the, a, an*)

A good dictionary will give you guidance on strong and weak pronunciations.

Practise using weak forms by saying sentences that have prepositions in them.