

Pronunciation: The schwa /ə/

Exam tip: The schwa is the most common sound in English. It cannot appear in a stressed syllable. In writing, any vowel can be used to represent it and it can be represented by more than one letter (including *r*).



05
CD2

- 13** Listen to the schwa sound and repeat it. Remember that to pronounce it you just relax your mouth.



06
CD2

- 14** 1 Listen to the following words being said. For each word, underline the stressed syllable.

author	yoga
today	England
summer	Internet
collection	suppose
person	gardening
leisure	photography
famous	opinion

- 2 Listen to the words again. Underline in a different colour any letters that are pronounced as a schwa.
- 3 Check your answers, then practise saying the words. Remember not to stress the schwas.

- 15** Listen to the recording of your Part 3 answers. Did you use any of the words from Exercise 14? If so, did you pronounce them using the schwa? Write down ten key content words you used that you want to check the pronunciation of. Mark the stressed syllables and any schwas. Practise saying the words. Then re-record your answer, focusing on word stress and the schwa. Remember that schwas also appear in the weak forms of certain function words.

