

TOEFL Speaking 26

Hacking Intonation

Part I: Popular Phrases

Below, you will find a list of phrases that you will use in your speaking responses. Different expressions will be used more often in different question types.

Popular Phrases for Pronunciation: Questions 1 and 2			
	Usage	Pronunciation	Examples
tons of	This is a less common way to say “a lot of”.	<u>TONZA</u>	<i>There are tons of reasons why I feel this way, but the most important is that...</i>
a lot of	A common phrase for “many”. Can be used to talk about numbers of reasons.	<u>ALOTTA</u>	<i>There are a lot of reasons why I feel this way, but the most important is that...</i>
when I was	Used when introducing personal examples for independent questions.	<u>WHE NAI WUZ</u>	<i>When I was in high school, we didn’t have to wear school uniforms.</i>
to be honest	Phrase to emphasize that an opinion is true, similar to the adverb <i>honestly</i>	<u>TABE ONEST</u>	<i>To be honest, I really do think that uniforms are much better for high school students.</i>
that’s why	This expression will be used to introduce your conclusion.	<u>THA TSWY</u>	<i>That’s why I think all high school students should wear school uniforms.</i>
to me/ for me	Usually used to begin your speaking response or opinion.	<u>TA ME</u> <u>Fr ME</u>	<i>To me/For me all high school students should wear school uniforms.</i>
one of the	When introducing the reasons for your opinion, use this popular phrase.	<u>WUNoFDA</u>	<i>One of the reasons why I think high school students should wear school uniforms is...</i>

Popular Phrases for Pronunciation: Questions 3-6

	Usage	Pronunciation	Examples
talks about	Often used when responding to questions with a listening passage.	<u>TALK SBOUT</u>	<i>The professor in the lecture talks about the problems with school uniforms.</i>
types of	Usually placed before a noun, indicating differences within the noun.	<u>TYPSA</u>	<i>They are a little ugly, okay, but, there are many types of uniforms.</i>
in the	These two words will come before you mention something from the listening or reading.	<u>INDA</u>	<i>In the conversation... In the lecture... In the reading passage...</i>
to start	Sometimes used to begin reporting on one of the passages or on your opinion.	<u>TA START</u>	<i>To start, the student in the conversation explains that...</i>
goes on to	This phrase is used to report on a second point from a conversation or lecture.	<u>GOZ ONDA</u>	<i>The professor goes on to say that school uniforms are more comfortable,</i>
examples of	Specifically for question #4, when the professor in the listening provides examples of the reading.	<u>EXAMPLE-ZOF</u>	<i>In the lecture, the professor provides two examples of school uniforms.</i>

Part 2: Words to Reduce

There is a difference between content words and function words. Content words are verbs, nouns and adjectives that carry important information. Function words are articles, prepositions, and other words that are included for grammatical purposes. This is important because when you speak, you should try to stress content words and minimize your pronunciation of function words. Here are a few popular words that you will reduce, combine, or omit when you speak.

You can learn more about function and content words [at this article](#).

Words to Reduce			
	Usage	Examples	Pronunciation
it	When not located at the end of the sentence, <i>it</i> is often reduced to a <i>d</i> sound.	<i>He did <u>it</u> in the library.</i>	He did IDINDA library.
for	The <i>o</i> in <i>for</i> is usually not pronounced and combined with the words around it.	<i>For the man, he thinks...</i>	FRDAMAN, he thinks...
in	Usually the <i>i</i> is reduced and it just sounds like a <i>n</i> .	<i>In the lecture...</i>	INDA the lecture...
and	In many instances, it is completely reduced to an <i>n</i> sound that could link two words together.	<i>I slept for hours and hours...</i>	<i>I slept for OWRS-N-OWRS...</i>
one	In many instances, <i>one</i> is used within a phrase, like <i>one of</i> , where it is almost always reduced to <i>wun</i> .	<i>One of the students...</i>	WUNoFDA students...
the	This word is very common, but in many instances it's reduced to a <i>da</i> or <i>d</i> sound.	<i>Out of all the students....</i>	OUDDA ALLDA students...
of	Often used with other phrases, this word is often reduced to an "uh" or schwa sound	<i>I agree that all of the students...</i>	I agree that ALLuhDA
some	This is hardly ever stressed, but instead to just an <i>s'm</i> sound.	<i>It's better to some help when you move.</i>	It's better to have S'M help when you move.
a/an	The pronunciation depends on the context, but in many cases, <i>a/an</i> are combined with the word that follows or precedes.	<i>He went to a school...</i>	He want TOA school...