

## **Basics of Grammar**

1. **NOUN:** The name of a person, place, or thing.

- The cat has sharp claws. · The baby has small fingers.

2. **PRONOUN:** A word used to refer to a noun, usually used to avoid repetition.

- When my dog was hungry, she would bark. · My roommate knew he forgot his keys.

*There are seven categories of pronouns.*

**A) Demonstrative Pronoun:** A pronoun used to identify or point to a noun.

- This, That, These, Those. · Those are the best dressers.

**B) Indefinite Pronoun:** A pronoun that refers to a nonspecific person or thing.

All, Another, Any, Anybody, Anyone, Both, Each, Either, Everybody, Everyone, Everything, Few, Many, Neither, Nobody, None, No One, Nothing, One, Some, Somebody, Someone, Something.

- Anyone who gambles is crazy. · Everybody dance now.

**C) Intensive or Reflexive Pronoun:** A pronoun ending in -self, myself, yourself, himself, herself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves. It often names the receiver of an action.

- Did you hurt yourself? · She calls herself a singer, but she cannot carry a tune.

**D) Interrogative Pronoun:** A pronoun used to begin a question. Who, Whom, Whose, Which, What.

- What happened at work today? · Which film did you see?

**E) Personal Pronoun:** Pronouns used to refer to a specific person or thing.

I, Me, You, She, Her, Me, Mine, Your, Yours, Her, Hers, His, Its, Our, Ours, Their, Theirs.

- She bores me with her tedious childhood stories. · Theirs is a life of luxury.

**F) Possessive Pronoun:** A pronoun used to indicate ownership.

My, Mine, Your, Yours, Her, Hers, His, Its, Our, Ours, Your, Yours, Their, Theirs.

- She took a great interest in her career. · Their car is parked too close to ours.

**G) Relative Pronoun:** One of the following, when used to introduce an adjective clause.

Who, Whom, Whose, Which, That.

- A lie is a remark that always leads to trouble. • She is someone who adores opera.

3. **VERB:** A word that expresses action (verb **tenses** treated later).

- They went to the store.
- Many people do not know how to read.

4. **ADJECTIVE:** A word used to modify (describe) a noun or pronoun. Adjectives usually answer one of these questions: Which one? What kind of? How many or how much?

- The old dog was barking.
- Her sable coat was on the floor.

5. **ADVERB:** A word used to modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs usually answer the questions: When? Where? How? Why? Under what conditions? To what degree?

- This car rides smoothly.
- He is an unusually good writer.
- She speaks very loudly.

6. **PREPOSITION:** A word placed before a noun to form a phrase modifying (describing) another word in the sentence. The preposition indicates the relationship between the noun and the word the phrase modifies.

about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beside, besides, between, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, next, of, off, on, onto, out, outside, over, past, since, than, through, to, toward, under, unlike, until, up, with, and without.

- Let's put our ideas on the table. Come and sit beside me.

A **prepositional phrase** begins with a preposition which introduces a noun form.

- After the movie, we went home. • Besides being lazy, he is a fool.

7. **CONJUNCTION:** A joining word.

A) **Correlative Conjunction:** A pair of conjunctions connecting grammatically equal elements. Either... or, Neither... nor, Whether... or, Not only... but also, and both... and.

- Either pay me what you owe me or leave. • Whether you pay me now or later is up to you.
- Not only does she have a job, but she also tutors on weekends.

B) **Coordinating Conjunction:** Connects two words or parts of a sentence. And, Or, But.

- It wasn't late, but it was starting to rain. Give me liberty or death.

C) **Subordinating Conjunction:** A word that introduces a subordinate clause and indicates its relation to the rest of the sentence.

After, Although, As, As if, Because, Before, Even Though, If, Since, So That, Than, That, Though, Unless, Until, When, Where, Whether, and While.

- She went into the bank while I waited in the car. • He told me his life story as if he cared.

## COMMON ENGLISH GRAMMAR MISTAKES

### 1) Present and Past Tense

Present tenses in English are used to talk about the present, the future and to summarise a book, film or play when telling a story in the present tense.

There are four present tense forms in the English language.

**Present Simple:** *I Work*

**Present Continuous:** *I am Working*

**Present Perfect:** *I have worked*

**Present perfect continuous:** *I have been working*

**Rules:**

You can use the past tense to talk about events or situations that have finished. You can also use past tense in English to talk about long-standing events and situations that have already happened in the past.

**For example:** *When I was a young child, I lived in the countryside.*

Here are some frequently used examples of verbs in past simple: **are, was, were and went.**

### 2) How To Avoid the Overuse of Adverbs

Adverbs are a varied class of words that work in many different ways to express many different kinds of meaning.

This can make adverbs a useful word group. You should, however, avoid overusing these words to describe actions and events.

The most commonly overused adverbs are manner adverbs, this particular type of adverb modifies the verb.

**For example:**

Emily Scott shook her head **vigorously**.

He was in a good mood now, smiling **broadly** as he grabbed his mug of tea.

A common issue in story writing occurs when you rely too heavily on manner adverbs in your stories.

**For example:**

The curtain opened quickly, and Ben came slowly into the room. He saw Emma looking flirtatiously with Jack and walked over to her aggressively. 'Why are you here?' he screamed angrily.

Here is the same extract with the manner verbs highlighted:

The curtain opened **quickly**, and Ben came slowly into the room. He saw Emma looking **flirtatiously** with Jack and walked over to her **aggressively**. 'Why are you here?' he screamed **angrily**.

The correct use of adverbs is to show not tell the reader what is happening in the story.

### 3) Your/You're

These words are also troublesome homophones that cause many problems.

**Rules:**

"*Your*" indicates a possession – and defines that something belongs to you.

"*You're*" is short for "*You are*".

Here is how **not** to use these words:

**Your** beautiful.

Do you know when **your** going?

Can I have **you're** coat?

How to get it right:

**You're** beautiful.

Do you know when **you're** going?

Can I have **your** coat?

### 4) Misplacing Apostrophes

You find apostrophes a little tricky, but once you follow the rules, it will become easy. Putting an apostrophe in the wrong place is a common mistake.

**Rules:**

Apostrophes indicate something belongs to something or is owned by someone else.

To show that something belongs to one person, place the apostrophe before the letter 'S.'

**For example** – "*The girl's sheep*".

To show that something belongs to more than one person, you need to place the apostrophe after the letter 'S'.

**For example** – "*The girls' sheep*".

Apostrophes are also used in contracted words such as "*Can't*" to indicate that the 'O' is missing from "*Cannot*."

Apostrophes should never be used to make a word plural.

### 5) There / Their /They're

You may find that these pesky homophones, a little bit of a headache.

**Rules:**

Use "There" to refer to a place that isn't here, for example, "Over there."

Use "Their" to refer to how owns something – showing that something belongs to that person.

Use "They're" is a shortened version of "They are".

Here is how not to use these words:

**Their** going to be here soon.

We should contact **they're** friend.

Can we use **there** house?

**They're** is is an argument that says.

Here is how you use these words correctly:

**They're** going to be here soon.

We should contact **their** friend.

Can we use **their** house?

**There** is an argument that says.

## 6) Confusing similar spellings and words

The English language is quite rich in words which sound similar, or are spelled similarly, but which have different meanings and need to be used in different contexts.

Perhaps the most common stumbling block experienced by people who are learning English as a second language is making sure to use the right word in the right context, rather than a similar but improper one.

The only way to avoid this issue is to learn which words fit in which context, on a case-by-case basis.

Here are some words people often mix up:

**“Two,” “too,” and “to”**

**“Here” and “hear”**

**“Your” and “you’re”**

**“Weather” and “whether”**

## 7) Using incomplete comparisons

Many words in the English language imply a comparison – and using them without “completing the comparison” is a common grammatical mistake.

Here’s an example of an incomplete comparison:

**“It was much hotter today.”**

To make this example grammatically correct, you would need to complete this comparison. Here’s one way you could do that:

**“It was much hotter today than yesterday.”**

## 8) Getting adjectives and adverbs confused

Confusing your adjectives and adverbs often results in speech or writing that comes off as very informal, and even uneducated – and it’s a great way of infuriating many English teachers.

Often, you’ll notice this issue happening with words that end in “-ly.”

Here are a couple of grammatically incorrect examples:

**“It was a real nice day today.”**

**“I ran quick to the bus stop.”**

And here’s how these two examples would look if they were made grammatically correct:

**“It was a really nice day today.”**

**“I ran quickly to the bus stop.”**

## **9) Misplacing your modifiers**

Language would be pretty dull without words to add a bit of extra flavour to sentences and descriptive speech.

This is exactly where modifiers come in.

With modifiers, **“the tiger”** can become **“the fearsome tiger,”** **“the sunrise,”** can become **“the beautiful sunrise,”** and so on.

The issue is that these modifiers need to be placed very close to the word they’re modifying, or else the meaning falls apart.

“Misplacing your modifiers” means that you are putting these modifiers too far away from the terms they are meant to be modifying, in your sentence.

The result is confusion.

In fact, misplaced modifiers can even completely change the meaning of your sentence in unintended ways.

Here’s an example of a misplaced modifier:

***“He almost walked for the entire day.”***

And here’s how this example would read with the modifier in the right place:

***“He walked for almost the entire day.”***

In the example with the misplaced modifier, it is not clear if he “crawled”, “ran slowly”, or simply “thought about walking” for the entire day.

In the correct example, the meaning is clear.

## 10) Falling into pronoun disagreement

A common grammatical mistake for English learners is for their pronouns and nouns to disagree, when dealing with singular and plural examples.

The straightforward rule is that singular pronouns must go with singular nouns, and plural pronouns must go with plural nouns.

So, for example:

***“Every boy must sign in when they arrive”*** is incorrect. “Boy” is singular, and “they” is plural.

The correct phrasing here would be:

***“Every boy must sign in when he arrives.”***

Grammar and punctuation are essential in the English language and gaining confidence in how to avoid any grammatical errors is a valuable part of your learning journey.

You should practice developing your grammar daily; it will help you to become a confident writer with a firm grasp on the English language.

**Use of double negative=** Since most of the us try to translate a sentence to English from our **native language**, thus, we end up adding *double negative* while speaking out. This is wrong.

For example:

**We say -** *“I don’t know nothing.”*, this means that we know something, but the correct one is

**Correct -** *“I don’t know anything.”*

### **Mistake # 2**

**Use of the wrong tense.** Many of us have the tendency to use the wrong tense. For example:

**We say -** *“I didn’t cried when I saw the movie.”* Here the word didn’t is never followed by a past tense verb. So, the correct one is

**Correct -** *“I didn’t cry when I saw the movie.”*

### **Mistake # 3**

**Use of two comparatives/superlatives together.** A sentence must not have two superlatives or comparatives together. For example:

**We say** - *"This could never have turned out to be more better."* Here, better is the comparative of the adjective good and more is the comparative to the adjective much. Thus, the correct one is

**Correct** - *"This could never have turned out to be better."*

### **Mistake # 4**

**Me v/s I.** Clear it in your mind that "I" is the subject and "me" is the object. We usually confuse between the two.

**We say** - *"They are going to send my wife and I a package."* Here, if we remove the person and preceding the I. It would sound; "They are going to send I a package." This is wrong!

**Correct** - *"They are going to send me a package."*

Similarly, if we say *"Jim and me are going to the gym."* what's wrong here? When we remove Jim and. The sentence becomes "Me am going to the gym". This is also wrong. The correct one is

**Correct** - *"Jim and I are going to the gym."*

### **Mistake # 4**

**Say v/s tell.** While we speak in English, most of use make mistake differentiating between say and tell. For example:

First with "Say"

**We say** - *"Say me your name."* Here, "say" is not the appropriate word because it is basically used to express something in words. Whereas, the sentence demands to say something. The correction done is as follows:

**Correct** - *"Tell me your name."*



Now, with “Tell”

**We say** - *“So I told what a good idea.”* Told is the inappropriate word, because here, the sentence wants to express the phrase “what a good idea”. So, the correct one here is:

**Correct** - *“So I said what a good idea.”*

### **Mistake # 5**

**Fewer v/s less.** The word fewer is only used for items that can be counted, whereas less is used for the uncountable. For example:

**We say** - *“Today, the market has less people.”*

**Correct** - *“Today, the market has fewer people.”*

### **Mistake # 6**

**Using ‘s’ unnecessarily after every word.** This is a very common mistake we usually make. For example:

**We say** - *“Unless you gets your act right.”* This is wrong! Only if you is replaced by he/she and your is replaced by his/her. The correct sentence is:

**Correct** - *“Unless you get your act right.”*

### **Mistake # 7**

**Does v/s do.** “Does” is used for the singular form of the subject, while “do” is used to indicate the plural form of the subject.

**We say** - *“Why does they bother you a lot.”*

**Correct** - *“Why do they bother you a lot.”*

### **Mistake # 8**

**Blunder and mistake.** Another common mistake we make while speaking is mixing blunder and mistake. Blunder is the synonym for mistake, thus it cannot be used together. For example:

**We say** - *“It was a blunder mistake”*

**Correct** - *"It was a blunder", or "it was a mistake."*

### **Mistake # 9**

**Cope up v/s cope with.** It is a common mistake that people make while speaking. This is a common mistake that we usually make. We generally use both cope up and with together.

**We say-** *"let's cope up with the classmates."*

**Correct-** *"Cope with the classmates"*

### **Mistake # 10**

**Revert back/ reply back and revert/reply.** This mistake is mostly made by all of us. We always use 'revert back.' However, meaning of both the word are similar.

**We say-** "Please revert back or reply back to the mail."

**Correct-** "Please revert or reply to the mail."

## **Advanced Grammar**

Advanced grammar is the study of composition rules and techniques beyond the basic level. Success in studying grammar beyond the basics generally requires a solid foundation in the correct use of words, phrases, sentence clauses, and paragraphs. Students of advanced grammar are usually approaching the completion of their high school educations, and a working knowledge of language at this level is considered by some a requirement to do well at the university level. Second language learners who have mastered structural rules and syntax also study advanced grammar in preparation for language proficiency exams that are sometimes required to determine eligibility for citizenship, study abroad programs, or certain job roles.

A good working knowledge of advanced grammar is considered essential for writing proficiency regardless of the subject and purpose. College-level courses in this subject generally focus on the process of building consistent and clear written sentences that follow an established set of rules. The study of these types of structural rules often entails exercises in correct pronoun references, sentence variety, and word choices. Grammar students are also sometimes asked to

experiment with creating different emphases by first writing the same topic in the active versus the passive voice and then comparing the two choices.

Morphology is an additional area of focus in the study of advanced grammar; it relates to the sometimes significant changes in meaning that can happen to the same word when the tense or context is also changed. Second language learners can sometimes find this area of grammar challenging if the morphology rules are considerably different from those of their native language. An understanding of morphology is usually considered a prerequisite for studying phonology, which is an area of linguistics that is mainly concerned with the nuances and phonics of spoken language. The study of sound tied to grammar structure is one of the main ways to develop an in-depth understanding of a given language's subtle meanings.

### Vocabulary

## **7 Ways to Improve Your Vocabulary**

Most of us have not spent much time learning new vocabulary since we were high school or college students. Thankfully you can always pick up where you left off. Here are some tips to help you start learning new vocabulary words:

1. **Develop a reading habit**= Vocabulary building is easiest when you encounter words in context. Seeing words appear in a novel or a newspaper article can be far more helpful than seeing them appear on vocabulary lists. Not only do you gain exposure to unfamiliar words; you also see how they're used.
2. **Use the dictionary and thesaurus**= Online dictionaries and thesauruses are helpful resources if used properly. They can jog your memory about synonyms that would actually be better words in the context of what you're writing. A full dictionary definition can also educate you about antonyms, root words, and related words, which is another way to learn vocabulary.
3. **Play word games**= Classic games like Scrabble and Boggle can function as a fun way to expand your English vocabulary. Crossword puzzles can as well. If you really want to be efficient, follow up rounds of these word games with a little

note-taking. Keep a list of the different words you learned while playing the game, and then study that list from time to time.

4. **Use flashcards**= A quick way to build a large vocabulary is to study a number of words via flashcards. In today's digital age, a wide array of smartphone apps make flashcards convenient and easy to organize. Aiming for one new word a day is reasonable. You can always go for more, but it may not be reasonable to assimilate dozens of English words every single day.
5. **Subscribe to “word of the day” feeds**= Some web platforms will provide you with a word a day—either on a website, an app, or via email—to help you expand your vocabulary. You can add these words to running word lists.
6. **Use mnemonics**= A mnemonic device is a form of word association that helps you remember words' definitions and proper uses. For instance think of the word *obsequious* which means “attempting to win favor from influential people by flattery.” Break down that word into components: “obse” is the beginning of “obsessed,” “qui” sounds like the French word for “yes” (oui), and “us” is like the word “us.” So you can think of that big word *obsequious* as “obsessed with saying yes to us”—which is kind of what it means!
7. **Practice using new words in conversation**= It's possible to amass a huge vocabulary without actually knowing how to use words. This means you have to take it upon yourself to put your personal dictionary into use. If you come across an interesting word in your reading, make a point of using it in conversation. By experimenting in low-stakes situations, you can practice the art of word choice and, with a little bit of trial and error, hone in on the right word for a particular context.

### **Pronunciation Etiquette**

*Vowels: How to know when they should be long or short*

In English, we generally have two types of vowel sounds which we call *long vowels* and *short vowels*. And usually we can look at the spelling of the word to help us figure out if a vowel should be long or short.

### ***Long vowel or short vowel?***

So, here's the general rule about long or short vowels:

1. If you have one vowel next to a consonant, it's usually a short vowel.
2. If you have one consonant between two vowels, you usually pronounce the first vowel as a long vowel.
3. If you put a vowel before a double consonant, two hard consonant sounds, or a consonant that sounds like two consonants (such as x), you'll pronounce it as a short vowel.

Let's take *a* as an example:

You can hear the *short a* sound in a word like *cap* or *apple*, and you can hear the *long a* sound in a word like *grape* or *cape*.

So, if you compare these words, you might notice a pattern. When we add an *e* to a word like *cap*, it becomes *cape*, and the sound of the *a* changes.

Here are some other words with a *long a* sound:

- *Shape*
- *Grape*
- *Able*
- *Cable*

Now, sometimes an English learner will look at a word like *able* or *cable* and make the mistake of pronouncing it with a *short a* sound, as in *apple*.

Remember that when you see a double consonant, as in the two *p*'s of *apple*, you usually pronounce that *a* sound as a *short a*. If the word has a single consonant, as in *cable*, you pronounce it with a *long a*.

This is also true of words with two hard consonants together, as in *tackle*. Or a consonant like *x*.

Look at these words and try pronouncing them. Which of them have a *long a* and a *short a*?

- *Tap*
- *Tape*
- *Table*
- *Able*
- *Tackle*
- *Cable*
- *Dabble*
- *Apple*
- *Giraffe*
- *Label*
- *Babble*

***But what about the “a” sound in a longer word like “relatable” or “relaxation”?***

When we separate two vowels with only one consonant, as in *relatable*, we use a *long a*. But what about *relaxation*?

Here, we have an *x* between two vowel sounds. But the thing is that *x* sounds like two hard consonant sounds together, *k* and *s*. Because of this, we pronounce the *a* in *relax* like the *a* in *cap*.

And when it comes to the ending *-ation*, we always pronounce the *a* as a *long a*, as in *nation* or *vacation*.

Once you’re comfortable with this basic pattern of how to pronounce vowels, you’ll understand the way other vowels work, too.

You'll hear the *short e* sound in a word like *egg* or *bed*, but you'll hear the *long e* sound in a word like *concrete*. You'll hear the *short o* in a word like *stop* and the *long o* in a word like *tote*.

Look at these other words to see what I mean. Try pronouncing them on your own:

- *Red*
- *Odd*
- *Ode*
- *Rid*
- *Ride*
- *But*
- *Flute*

**NOTE:** Most of the time you will hear the *long e* sound in diphthongs, which is when we put two vowels together. But don't worry, we're going to talk about that in a bit!

### ***What about "i" as in "kind"?***

Most of the time *i* follows the basic patterns that the other vowels do. **But there's one exception: "i" in *kind*, *blind*, or *find*.**

English learners make mistakes with these words all the time and try to pronounce the *i* as a short *i*. And that makes sense!

After all, when we put other vowels before -nd, we pronounce them in their short form, as in:

- *Sand*
- *Hand*
- *Under*
- *Fund*
- *Pond*

- *Bond*
- *Lend*
- *Bend*

And there is one case when *i* follows this rule, too, as in the word *wind*.

But most of the time *i* breaks that rule, as in:

- *Wind up (the phrasal verb)*
- *Kind*
- *Find*
- *Bind*
- *Blind*
- *Behind*

### ***What is the schwa sound?***

If you know how to pronounce the *u* in *but* or *up*, you know how to make the *schwa sound*, which is also just the *short u* sound. The *schwa sound* can be hard for learners to pronounce, which is why, when you first start, it might be easier to pronounce it like a *long o*, as in *dog*.

The word *the* or the article *a* can also have a schwa sound sometimes if you put it before a word beginning with a consonant, such as in:

- *The dog*
- *A cat*

The other thing about the *schwa sound* is that, if a word has multiple syllables, the *unstressed* vowels can have the schwa sound, too. Can you hear the schwa sounds in these words?

- *About*
- *Ago*
- *Silent*



- *Harmony*
- *Brilliant*
- *Easily*
- *Problem*
- *Syringe*

## ***R-controlled vowels***

In North American pronunciation, we use the *rhotic r*, which means we pronounce the *r* after vowels and at the end of words. This is different from the English that is spoken in the UK or in Australia, for example.

So, in North American English, the *r* sound can have an affect on the vowels next to it.

An r-controlled vowel is a vowel that comes before the letter *r*, and the *r sound* changes the way the vowel sounds. In some cases, you can almost hear more than one vowel sound. Try pronouncing these words (Do you hear the *long o* and the *short u* before the *r*?):

- *Car*
- *Star*
- *Her*
- *Stir*
- *Or*

When we add an *e* after the *r*, watch the way it changes the vowel sound:

- *Care*
- *Stare*
- *Here*
- *Before*

In a word with more than one syllable, the r-controlled vowels in the unstressed syllable can often sound similar to a schwa. Try pronouncing the r-controlled vowels in these words:

- *Around*
- *Surround*
- *Original*
- *Cracker*
- *Bigger*

## ***Diphthongs: What they are, and how to use them***

I mentioned it briefly before, but diphthongs are the sounds that you get when you put two vowels together. And, actually, you've already heard similar sounds when you pronounce words with long vowels, like the *a* in *grape*, the *o* in *phone*, the *i* in *time*.

Of course, there are diphthongs in English that are easy to remember, such as:

- *Ee*, which almost always sounds like a long *e*,
- *Oi*, which almost always sounds like the *oi* in *noise*

But some of them are not so easy, and this is one of the most confusing areas for learners, which is why we're going to look at some of the common patterns you'll find with diphthongs.

### ***Words with ei: neighbor vs. receive***

Most of the time, when you see *ei* in a word, it will have a *long a* sound, as in *cape*:

- *Neighbor*
- *Weigh*
- *Reign*
- *Reindeer*

But, when an *ei* comes after a *c* in a *stressed* syllable, it will have a *long e* sound, as in:

- *Perceive*
- *Receive*
- *Deceive*
- *Receipt*

### ***Words with ou: about, soup, and through***

Usually, when you see the *ou* vowel combination, it will follow this pattern (au):

- *About*
- *Sound*
- *Round*
- *Shout*
- *Proud*
- *Flour*

However, words with an *oup* combination have a *long u* sound, as in:

- *Soup*
- *Group*
- *Croup*

Words with a *ould* combination, which come from Old English and Germanic languages, have more of a *schwa* sound, as in *put* (remember the “l” here is silent”):

- *Would*
- *Could*
- *Should*

How about words like *cough* or *tough*? These words also come from old Germanic languages, and we pronounce them with an *f* sound at the end:

- *Cough*
- *Tough*
- *Rough*
- *Slough*

And then, there are words with an *ough* or an *ought* combination. With these combinations, you pronounce the ending as a *long o*:

- *Though*
- *Thorough*

And if there is a *t*, it sounds like the *ot* in *hot*:

- *Thought*
- *Ought*
- *Bought*

### ***Words with oo: Pool vs. cook***

Words with *oo* also present a challenge to English learners, because the *oo* sound can either sound like the *u* in *put* or the *u* in *flute*. Here are some general patterns that might help you.

When we combine *oo* with an *l*, we usually get a *long u* sound as in *flute*:

- *Pool*
- *Fool*
- *Drool*
- *Stool*

Words with an *oon* follow the same pattern:

- *Soon*

- *Moon*
- *Swoon*
- *Spoon*

When we combine an *oo* with a *k*, we usually get a *short u* sound as in *put*:

- *Cook*
- *Look*
- *Crook*
- *Hook*
- *Book*

But, as always, we have those words in English that you just need to memorize, as in these *ood* and *oot* words. Do you know the differences in these words?

- *Good*
- *Food*
- *Hood*
- *Boot*
- *Foot*
- *Root*

## ***Consonants: How to know when to pronounce them differently***

In the same way that vowels might be giving you trouble, consonant sounds can be confusing, too. So, let's take a look at some common pronunciation tendencies with consonant sounds in English:

### ***Words with c: Cat vs. city***

It's sometimes hard to know when to use a soft *c*, which sounds like an *s*, or a hard *c*, which sounds like a *k*.

Usually, when *c* comes before the vowels *a*, *o*, or *u*, we pronounce it as a hard *c*:

- *Cut*
- *Cat*
- *Cop*
- *Coin*
- *Cover*

However, when a *c* comes before an *i*, *e*, or a *y*, it sounds like an *s*:

- *Civil*
- *Cent*
- *Cycle*
- *Cinch*
- *Cinnamon*

### ***Words with a g: Bag vs. magic***

When we put *g* before an *i*, *e*, or *y*, we usually pronounce it as a *soft g*, like the *j* in *jam*.

- *Gentle*
- *Germ*
- *Ginger*
- *Allergy*
- *Energy*
- *Stingy*
- *Magic*
- *Logic*
- *Rigid*
- *Agile*

When we put *g* at the end of the word, we usually pronounce it as a hard *g*. But when we add an *e* to the ending, as in words that end in *-ge*, we also have the same soft *g* sound.

- *Age*
- *Cage*
- *Garage*
- *Garbage*
- *Sponge*
- *Emerge*
- *Stage*
- *Page*

And, usually, when you put *g* before *a*, *o*, or *u*, we pronounce it like a hard *g*, which sounds like a voiced *k* sound.

- *Gun*
- *Gallop*
- *Garbage*
- *Goat*
- *Gone*

When we put other consonants after *g*, like *l* or *r*, we also use a hard *g*:

- *Glow*
- *Grow*
- *Glamour*
- *Grammar*

Of course, there are a few exceptions in which a word with a *gi* or *ge* combination has a hard *g* sound:

- *Gig*

- *Giggle*
- *Gift*
- *Get*

### ***Words with a th: Other vs. thick***

We actually have two kinds of *th* sounds in English: one unvoiced and one voiced.

To make a voiced *th* sound, put your tongue between your teeth and let your vocal chords vibrate.

To make an unvoiced *th* sound, put your tongue between your teeth, and blow out. You should feel air moving from your mouth if you put your hand in front of your face.

You can hear the voiced *th* sound in words like:

- *Mother*
- *Other*
- *Bother*
- *Together*
- *Gather*

Sometimes, we put a voiced *th* at the beginning of words that we use all the time, like:

- *The*
- *Than*
- *Their*
- *They*
- *Them*
- *Though*
- *Those*



- *This*
- *That*

We put a voiced *th* sound at the ends of words with a *-the*

- *Bathe*
- *Clothe*
- *Breathe*
- *Soothe*

You hear the unvoiced *th* sound at the beginning and ends of words like:

- *Thick*
- *Thin*
- *Path*
- *Death*
- *Both*
- *Math*
- *Thanks*
- *Thigh*
- *Thief*

### ***Words with an h: honest vs. hug***

Most of the time we pronounce the *h* at the beginning of words, which means we should feel air moving out of our lungs:

- *Him*
- *Her*
- *Hug*
- *Hook*
- *Hurt*

- *Hard*
- *Hush*
- *Hill*

However, when it comes to certain English words that have a Latin or Romance origin, we don't pronounce the *h*:

- *Honor*
- *Honest*
- *Heir*
- *Hour*

### ***Words with an sh and zh sound: Mission and efficient***

You might have noticed words in English have an *sh* sound even though they don't have a *sh*. They might also have heard a voiced *sh* sound as well.

We create an unvoiced *sh* sound by putting our teeth together gently and pushing air through our mouth. We create a voiced *zh* sound by putting our teeth together, vibrating our vocal chords, and allowing a gentle push of air through our teeth.

I'm talking about words like:

- *Vacation*
- *Mission*
- *Initiate*
- *Machine*

These words typically have Romance or Latin roots, so keep your eyes out for letter combinations like:

- *- tion*
- *- ission*
- *- chine*

- - *iti* -
- - *ici* -

And sometimes we use a *zh* sound, which you can also think of as a voiced *sh* sound. This is the sound you hear in words like:

- *Casual*
- *Usual*
- *Leisure*
- *Measure*
- *Seizure*
- *Illusion*
- *Division*
- *Occasion*

These also have their origin in Latin and Romance languages, so you can look for words with letter combinations:

- - *sure*
- - *sual*
- - *zure*
- - *sion*

### ***Different pronunciations of -ed after different consonants***

Another really difficult aspect of English pronunciation is the different ways in which we pronounce the ending sound *-ed*.

Thankfully, there are some general rules you can follow here!

If the *-ed* comes after a *t* or *d*, it sounds like an *id* or *ed* as in:

- *Planted*
- *Stranded*

If the *-ed* comes after *p, k, f, gh, sh, ch, ss, c,* and *x* sounds, the *-ed* sounds more like a *t*:

- *Hoped*
- *Liked*
- *Sniffed*
- *Washed*
- *Hatched*
- *Missed*
- *Danced*
- *Fixed*

With words that end in *l, n, r, g, v, s, z, b,* and *m* sounds, the *-ed* ending sounds more like a *d* sound:

- *Filled*
- *Cleaned*
- *Toured*
- *Managed*
- *Lived*
- *Amazed*
- *Used*
- *Grabbed*
- *Climbed*

I know that seems like a lot to remember, but it just takes a bit of practice with words that have *-ed* endings.

## **Syllables**

A syllable is one unit of sound in English. Syllables join consonants and vowels to form words.

Syllables can have more than one letter; however, a syllable cannot have more than one sound.

Syllables can have more than one consonant and more than one vowel, as well.

However, the consonant(s) and vowel(s) that create the syllable cannot make more than one sound.

## Examples of Syllables in English

Syllables are formed when a **vowel** pairs with a **consonant** to create a unit of sound.

Some words have one syllable (monosyllabic), and some words have many syllables (polysyllabic).

New vowels sounds create new syllables.

- long
  - This word has one syllable. There is only one vowel sound, created by the “o.”
- shame
  - This word has one syllable. Even though there are two vowels, only one vowel makes a sound. The long “a” sound is the vowel sound; the “e” is a silent “e.”
- silent
  - This word has two vowels sounds; therefore it has two syllables. The first syllable is “si” with the long “i” sound. The second syllable includes the letters “lent.”

## Open Syllable vs. Closed Syllable

There are two ways that syllables formed in English words: open and closed syllables. Here is a brief discussion of both of those topics.

**What is an open syllable?** An open syllable is a syllable that has only one vowel and only one vowel sound. The single vowel in the open syllable occurs at the end of the word.

**Examples of Open Syllables:**

- wry
- try
- no
- go

- a
- chew
- brew

**What is a closed syllable?** A closed syllable is a syllable that has only one vowel and only one vowel sound. A closed syllable ends in a consonant.

**Examples of Closed Syllables:**

- clock
- truck
- ask
- bin
- trim
- gym
- neck
- if

## **Tone**

We've all heard the saying, 'It's not what you say, but how you say it.' Every word we use, the pitch and volume of our voice, even how fast or slow we speak, affects our tone and how our audience interprets what we have said. We might recall being told when we were very young, 'Don't use that tone of voice with me!' We learned to adjust our tone to accommodate our audience and the situation. What we say and how we say it is different when the audience and the situation are different. And that difference is not just in our words, but in our tone, or how we convey words. Likewise, tone in writing adapts and changes to suit the audience and the situation. The choice of words and the way sentences are put together convey tone. The tone can be formal or informal, logical or emotional, intimate or distant, serious or humorous. Tone can consist mostly of long, complex words or short, simple ones or of both. It can consist mostly of long, complex sentences; of short, simple ones; or of something in between. Tone is not just what we write but how we write it.

## **Rising Tone**

A rising intonation pattern would simply be a rise in the human voice; it would be a change in pitch; a glide in the pitch of our voice upwards. Listen to the video.

## **Examples of Rising Intonation: #1 Questions**

We tend to use this rising intonation pattern when we're asking questions. So the pitch of our voice tends to go up. So for instance:

'when does the meeting start?' - '...start?' rises up, it comes up in the voice  
'would you like a cup of tea?' - '...tea?' rises up

## **Examples of Rising Intonation: #2 Lists**

Another instance in which we would use this upward or rising inflection would be on lists. So if I'm saying:

'I'd like some eggs, some milk, some cheese and some bread.'

Each item is spoken with a rising intonation, and we would use a falling intonation on 'bread' to say that we've finished the list.

On lists and most questions we would use this rising intonation pattern.

## **Examples of Falling Intonation: #1 Statements and Exclamations**

A falling intonation or downward intonation pattern, would simply mean that the pitch of the voice drops down. Listen to the video. So I would say, for instance, if I'm making a **statement** or **exclamation**:

- 'that's wonderful'

...that's one instance in which I would use a falling intonation.

## **Examples of Falling Intonation: #2 Commands**

Commands is another situation, so I would say:

'put that down!'

'go over there'

'stand against the wall'

'put that over there'

...all of which would have falling intonation.

Statements, commands and exclamations, those are the three instances in which we use this falling intonation.

## **Examples of Falling Intonation: #3 Ends of Sentences**

And we also tend to use this downward inflection (as I said with lists) at the end of our sentences, at the end of our content.

When we're indicating that we've finished what it is that we want to say, again we tend to use this falling intonation.

## **Flow in Speaking**

“Smooth Speech” is also referred to as Fluency, but what exactly does that mean? It's a term used in Speech Pathology that means smoothness or flow in which sounds, syllables, words and phrases are joined together. While there are many types of fluency — including language fluency, reading fluency, or fluency in reference to speaking a foreign language — speech fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly and easily.

Speech fluency disorders are conditions such as stammering or stuttering, cluttering or even mumbling. While fluency tends to be an issue for kids who are just learning to speak, fluency can also be a factor in determining how well an adult speaks. Do you struggle to get your words out when trying to explain something? Do you become nervous or tense when you are asked to speak in front of others? If so, relax! There are simple steps that you can follow, or your child can follow to get on the path to smooth speech. And NO, I'm not talking about “smooth talking” as in “schmooze talking.” Follow these simple steps to smooth speech fluency!

## **10 Simple Steps for Smooth Speech Fluency**

1. Be a good **role model**. This is particularly important if the person trying to improve fluency is your child. Model the speech behavior you would like to see from your child.
2. **Speak slowly**. Don't rush to speech, it's difficult to do anything when you are in a hurry.
3. **Breathe** naturally. Breathe easily and naturally so that you do not run out of air when you talk.
4. Start slowly. The slower you begin to speak, the more relaxed your vocal chords become. You can **speed up gently** as you gain confidence.
5. **Practice public speaking**. The more experience you have speaking in front of others, the easier and more fluent your speech will become.
6. Keep your eyes and ears open. **Become aware** of how people are speaking around you may to help gauge whether your speech fluency is good, or may need a little work. Listen for differences in speaking patterns and rhythms.
7. **Articulate consonants**. Stop to articulate certain consonants such as “t” and “b”, and differentiate your vowel sounds clearly.



8. Practice, practice, practice. Yes, that old saying rings true! **Practice makes perfect**, or at least better.
9. **Sing!** No, you don't have to sing in front of anyone, the shower will do. Singing helps with proper voice utilization, and you will learn about using air, breath, articulation and speed of your speech.
10. **Be patient** with yourself or your child. You cannot expect to learn to speak fluently and easily in one day. Give yourself or your child space to experiment and improve without a timeline.

The best way to improve your speech fluency, or your child's fluency is to allow yourself time each day to practice a few steps. Be confident! If there are certain words that are tripping you up, practice only those words until you get them right. With practice and patience, yours or your child's speech fluency will be as smooth as silk.

## **Professional Personality Attributes**

Having these 12 professional qualities can help you succeed in your career:

### **1. Willingness to learn**

True professionals are always open to learning more and advancing their skill set. You can do this through continued education or self-learning. Rather than waiting for your manager to train you, you initiate the learning. A high-quality employee is eager to try new things and even learn from making mistakes along the way.

### **2. Positive attitude**

Having a positive attitude is an important professional quality because it's a key part of facilitating a good work environment. Your positive attitude can inspire others to feel the same way. By having a sense of optimism, you're more likely to work toward the solution rather than dwelling on the problem. Positive people tend to have a "can-do" attitude, which helps work toward the company's goals.

### **3. Conflict resolution**

When a conflict arises, a professional works to resolve the problem. They use productive communication to learn all sides of the story and work toward a compromise. It's important that during such situations you remain neutral and are careful of what you say to others. Professionals tend to be the bigger person and only speak kindly of their colleagues. It's professional to keep conflicts private and to follow company procedures to handle them.

### **4. Helpfulness**

Volunteering to take on extra tasks or to help out a coworker is a true sign of a professional. When you put in extra effort, it's likely that your team will notice and appreciate the value you add to the workplace. Showing that you are willing to take on new responsibilities can prove that you are ready for the next step in your career. Those who do more may be more qualified for a promotion or raise.

## **5. Integrity**

Integrity is an important trait for any person to have. It ensures that you are trustworthy and honest about your decisions. It means that you genuinely want to see your team succeed and will work toward the common goal. When you have integrity, people feel more secure about letting you work with private information or important tasks.

## **6. Calm under stress**

Remaining calm during stressful situations is how you can show your true professionalism. This is especially important when working with clients or customers. Rather than focusing on the chaos, you can take a moment to breathe and figure out a solution. Staying poised and confident can help you maintain healthy relationships even when situations become more intense.

## **7. Solution-oriented**

When a problem arises, a professional person instantly starts to create proactive solutions. Instead of just pointing out a problem you find, you share the problem and then offer a way to fix it. When you can contribute innovative or unique ideas to a brainstorming session, it shows that you have initiative. Always be thinking of ways you can make other people's jobs easier or prevent problems entirely.

## **8. Self-motivated**

Being able to motivate yourself shows that you have a sense of independence. Managers tend to appreciate employees who can figure out what they need to do with little direction. A self-motivated person can stay on task, maintain their energy and show their ambition. Finding ways to motivate yourself, such as maintaining healthy habits or creating a personal reward system, can help improve this quality.

## **9. Kind demeanor**

A professional always treats work colleagues with kindness. They try to be helpful, say nice things and uplift those around them. Likewise, they strive to make a good impression on behalf of the company. Whether this is through the way they dress or act, they are always remembering that they are a representative of where they work. It's important to be mindful of what you put out into the world since it can be a reflection of your company's employee standards.

## **10. Responsible**

Other employees and management can expect a professional-acting person to get their work done. If you say you're going to do something, you follow through on it. Using a calendar to keep track of commitments and always showing up on time are things professionals are sure to do. Likewise, if they find they cannot finish a task on time or make a meeting, they promptly communicate this and find a solution for such situations.

## **11. Collaborative**

Along with working well on their own, a professional employee can effectively collaborate with others. Having strong teamwork skills makes you pleasant to work with and may give you more opportunities to work on new projects. A key component of being collaborative is giving others the chance to share their opinions and insights. Giving your coworkers a chance to speak and building upon what they say is a part of being a team player.

## **12. Confidence**

Being confident in your role is one way to show that you are an effective employee. Volunteering to give the presentation or train a new team member communicates that you know how to do your job well. Standing up straight, dressing with a purpose and acknowledging your coworkers are all ways to show your confidence.