

What is good English pronunciation?

There are 3 levels of English pronunciations:-

- * Level 1: People do not understand what you want you want to say because you used the wrong sounds in words.
- * Level 2: People understand what you want to say, but it is unpleasant to listen to you.
- * Level 3: People understand you, and your English is pleasant to listen to.

Level 3 will be called good pronunciation. Notice that good pronunciation is not "perfect American or British accent". You didn't have to sound like the Queen of England or the President of the United States of America.

Why not? Because there are many regional kinds of English. In England, people from Newcastle speak English differently from people in London. In America, people from New York City, California and Texas each have their own pronunciation. So it is no problem if you have your own accent.

But your accent must be close to the standards (American & British English). What does it mean?

Turn on your TV and watch channels like CNN International, NBC, EuroNews, BBC or Skynews. You will hear many different people (news anchors, reporters, etc.) from Germany, France and other non-English speaking countries, they all have good accents - easy to understand & pleasant.

The rule is:

If you are close to the standard, you can always communicate, and your English will be pleasant.

If you are far from the standard, sometimes you won't communicate successfully.

Q.) Why should you study English pronunciation?

1. First Impression:

Pronunciation is definitely the biggest thing that people notice when you are speaking English.

When you meet a new person, and you just say a sentence or two, do you think they will notice your poor vocabulary or bad grammar?

Probably not, but they will notice if your pronunciation is good or bad. If your pronunciation is poor, they will immediately think about you as "the guy/girl who speaks bad English". Your pronunciation creates the first impression you make.

COMMUNICATION →

Good pronunciation should be one of the first things that you learn in English. You can live without advanced vocabulary, you can use simple words to say what you want to say.

You can live without advanced grammar, you can use simple grammar structures instead. But there is no such things as "simple pronunciation, you have ---- bad pronunciation".

And, the results of bad pronunciation are tragic. Even if you use great vocabulary and grammar, people may simply not understand you.

For example, if you pronounce, "sleep" like this and not like that, or if you pronounce "ghost" like this, instead of this, native speakers will have serious problems in understanding you! In your opinions, you like the "ee" in sleep and the "ō" in ghost, before you even learn these words.

Can you communicate in English?

Almost all English learners say "I don't need to study pronunciation, I just want to communicate in English." Many of them think that they can communicate in English because they can communicate with their teacher and other

students.

You should remember this:

Your teacher has been listening to bad English for years. He or she can understand it much more easily than the average person.

Other students are usually from the same country as you. Therefore, they speak English like you and they make the same mistakes. So, it is easy for them to understand you.

The only true test is:

Go to America or Britain and try to talk to normal people i.e. a clerk at a supermarket, a bus driver etc. If they can understand you, then you can say that you can communicate in English.

INTONATION

What is Intonation →

Intonation is the use of changing (rising or falling) vocal pitch to convey grammatical information or personal attitude. Intonation is particularly important in expressing questions in spoken English. For example, take the sentence, "When does the meeting start?" The word "start"- including the question mark - rises up or comes up in your voice when you utter the word.

Intonation is the melody or music of a language, says David Crystal, author of, "A Little Book of Language". Intonation refers the way your voice rises and falls as you speak as in,

"It's raining, isn't it? or ('in it, 'Perhaps').

In this sentence, you're not really asking a question: you're telling the listener that it's raining, so you give your speech a "telling" melody. The pitch-level of your voice falls and you sound as if you know what you're talking about, and of course, you do, so you're making statements. But now imagine that you don't know if it's raining, says Crystal, you think there might be a shower outside, but you're unsure, so you ask someone to check. You

use the same words, but the musicality of your voice makes a different point, as in,

"It's raining, isn't it?"

Now you're asking the person, so if you give your speech on 'asking' melody, says Crystal. The pitch level of your voice rises and you sound as if you're asking a question.

Types Of Intonation →

1. Falling Intonation:

Falling intonation describes how the voice falls on the final stressed syllable of a phrase or a group of words. A falling intonation is very common in wh-questions.

Where's the most nearest post office?

What time does the film finish?

We also use falling intonation when we say something definite, or when we want to be very clear about something.

I think we are completely lost.

OK, here's the magazine you wanted.

2. Rising Intonation :

Rising intonation describes how the voice rises at the end of a sentence. Rising intonation is common in yes-no & questions.

I hear the Health Centre is expanding. So, is that the new doctor?

Are you thirsty?

3. Fall-rise intonation:

Fall-rise intonation describes how the voice falls and then rises, we use fall-rise intonation at the end of statements when we want to say that we are not sure, ok when we may have more to add.

I don't support any football team at the moment (but I may change my mind in future).

It rained everyday in the first week (but things improved after that).

We use fall-rise intonation with questions, especially when we request information or invite somebody to do or to have something. The intonation pattern makes the questions sound more polite.

Is this your camera?

would you like another coffee?

RHYTHM

(Sound pattern achieved by using stress in words).

Rhythm refers to a pattern of sounds. Maintaining a rhythm in speech makes the speech sound natural and fluent. Rhythm is produced by stressed and unstressed words in a sentence, using only the stressed words in a sentence may make a speech sound dull and artificial. The listener may also not understand the intended emphasis or meaning in the speech.

Just as stress, speed is another very important factor in the fluency of English. When we speak, we do not speak words in isolation but group them and speak without any pause between them. To achieve good rhythm in speaking we should know which words to be stressed in a sentence and which are not to be stressed.

This leads to one or more of the following conclusions:

- Rhythm is not primarily expressed by patterns of duration.

The person-to-person and paragraph-to-paragraph variation within a language may be much larger than expected. Perhaps linguists may have idealized the form of each language, neglecting the variation.