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Pronunciation for listeners 1

A Connected speech: weak forms of short grammar words


- 1  **1.10** You're going to hear six groups of phrases. All the phrases in each group have one word in common. What is it? (Clue: It's one of these short grammar words: *an, as, a, or, and, of.*)

Example:

- 1 going about in a T-shirt *a*
 We were up there for a week.
 Put them in a bowl.
 I'd booked a room.

It can be difficult to hear these short grammar words because, in conversation, they are usually pronounced very weakly.

- They all have the same weak vowel sound: /ə/.
- Consonant sounds may be cut, e.g. *and* may be pronounced the same as *an*.
- They may link to sounds before or after, e.g. *booked a room* sounds like *book ta room*.

- 2  **1.11** Listen to and read the phrases that go with these pictures. The phrases are written wrongly. Rewrite them correctly.

- 1 a cup a tea an a biscuit



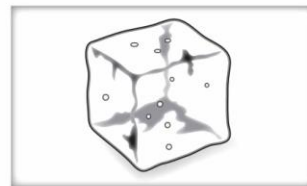
- 4 a pine to milk an a loafer bread



- 2 one a two bags are ice



- 5 as coal does a block a vice



- 3 try a neat a bitter fruit



- 6 a piece a cake an a nice cream



3 How would you explain the mistakes in Exercise 2?

Example:

- 1 *A cup of tea and a biscuit* sounds like *a cup a tea an a biscuit* because:
- the *f* is cut from the word *of* so it's pronounced like *a*
 - the *d* is cut from the word *and*.

B Spoken English: thinking time

Writers usually have time to plan what they're going to put next. Speakers usually don't. When speakers don't know what to say next, they often:

- insert a noise such as *um* or *er* *Fish and, um, chips!*
- stretch a word *Fish aaand chips!*
- repeat a word *Fish and, and chips!*

This is to give themselves thinking time.

4 1.12 Listen and show where the speaker inserts a noise using ▲.

- 1 ... and ▲ it's warm.
- 2 ... but when the sun's shining, excellent mood.
- 3 I thought I'd do a mushroom risotto.
- 4 ... and we were up there for a week ...
- 5 Indeed, yes, right, this is probably enough for two people.
- 6 ... one day, you want to send your, your daughter ...
- 7 ... and family's very important ...
- 8 ... the older I get as well, it obsesses me more and more.

5 1.13 Listen and underline the words which the speaker stretches. Notice there is often a pause after the stretched word.

- 1 ... and if you wanna go to an Italian deli, you'll find that ...
- 2 I guess you see, you know, there's all these, sort of ...
- 3 ... then put in the rice.
- 4 ... and I, I think it's, er, it's good for me ...
- 5 I think, yeah, I, I would like to have the lifestyle ...
- 6 ... and then, so that's how I knew that I absolutely loved it
- 7 'cause he was taking part in this, er, TV show
- 8 particularly in terms of the impacts of climate change and
- 9 so when the opportunity was presented to me
- 10 which is not that oil's going to run out
- 11 in our local community to become more resilient
- 12 I now have to learn to like

6 1.14 Listen and circle the words or phrases which the speaker repeats.

- 1 ... I think it's looking positive.
- 2 ... with, er, a load of Chelsea supporters.
- 3 ... I think it's eight and a half metres ...
- 4 ... and that should be warmed then in a saucepan ...
- 5 ... to add to the risotto.
- 6 ... and then just garnish it with, er, fresh parsley and then serve.
- 7 ... especially maybe if you had children as well ...
- 8 ... for example, um, if you're famous person ...
- 9 ... so that was incredible.
- 10 It's like adding spice to food.
- 11 ... the impact of increasing energy costs ...
- 12 ... and again how we depend on huge shopping centres ...
- 13 ... and begin to create that kind of, er, future for ourselves ...
- 14 ... and I think a lot of the ideas that are coming out of that ...

7 1.2-1.4, 1.8-1.9 Listen again to the audio extracts for Lessons 2 or 4. Try to identify where the speaker inserts a noise, stretches a word or repeats a word or phrase.