

DIGITAL NUTRIENTS

ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

MASTERY GUIDE

A2 -> B1 -> B2

Clearer speaking. Stronger listening. Better self-correction.

30-DAY PROGRAM

Major sound contrasts | vowel contrasts | consonant clusters | final -S and -ED | linking | reductions | silent letters | integrated speaking

A practical pronunciation workbook for adult multilingual English learners and teachers.

Core method: HEAR IT -> SAY IT -> USE IT -> REPAIR IT

American English is used as the main pronunciation reference unless variation is noted. The goal is intelligibility, not accent elimination.

How to Use This Guide

A speaking-first pronunciation system for adult multilingual learners

THE HONEST TARGET

Thirty days will not erase an accent, and that is not the goal. The goal is to make important sound contrasts clearer, protect meaningful word endings, understand common connected speech, and improve self-correction.

The five-step pronunciation loop

Step	What to do	What success looks like
1. Hear	Listen for the target contrast before speaking.	You can usually identify the intended word.
2. Shape	Use the correct mouth position, voicing, and airflow.	You can produce the target sound deliberately.
3. Say	Practice the sound in words and short phrases.	You keep the sound when the word becomes longer.
4. Use	Put the target into a sentence or spontaneous answer.	The pronunciation survives real speaking.
5. Repair	Notice one repeated problem and try again.	You can improve the second attempt.

Best daily routine

- 5 minutes: listen and identify target sounds.
- 5 minutes: practice mouth position and isolated words.
- 10 minutes: contrast words and short phrases.
- 10 minutes: read or speak in complete sentences.
- 5 minutes: record one short answer and note one repeated problem.

TEACHER PRINCIPLE

Do not correct every pronunciation difference. Focus on errors that repeatedly reduce intelligibility, change meaning, or hide grammar.

30-Day Pronunciation Roadmap

Six stages from sound discrimination to connected speech

Days	Stage	Main focus	Performance result
Days 1-7	Major consonant contrasts	P/B, F/V, W/V, TH, R/L, S/Z, SH/CH/J/zh	Hear and produce high-value consonant contrasts.
Days 8-14	Vowel contrasts	/I/ vs /i:/, /e/ vs /ae/, /U/ vs /u:/, neighboring vowels, diphthongs	Protect meaning through clearer vowel quality.
Days 15-21	Clusters and endings	Initial/final clusters, -S, -ED, added vowels, dropped endings	Keep meaningful consonants without adding extra syllables.
Days 22-26	Connected speech	Linking, thought groups, schwa, weak forms, informal reductions	Understand natural speech and connect words smoothly.
Days 27-28	Silent letters	KN, WR, MB, silent L/T/H, GH patterns	Pronounce common spelling patterns more reliably.
Days 29-30	Integrated performance	Reading, spontaneous speaking, final diagnostic	Apply pronunciation in real communication and self-repair.

Level adjustment

- A2 learners: use shorter words and sentences; focus on one contrast at a time.
- B1 learners: maintain the target sound in connected sentences and short stories.
- B2 learners: maintain clarity during spontaneous answers, faster speech, and self-correction.

IMPORTANT

CEFR describes communicative ability; it does not prescribe one official pronunciation syllabus. The A2-B2 labels in this guide are instructional estimates based on communicative demands and complexity.

Pronunciation Principles

What this guide will - and will not - train

1. Intelligibility comes first

A learner does not need to sound like a native speaker. The practical goal is to make meaning easy to understand, especially when a sound difference changes a word, tense, number, or grammatical ending.

2. Hearing and speaking are different skills

Some learners can hear a contrast but cannot produce it. Others can produce it slowly but lose it during conversation. The exercises therefore move from listening to controlled production to spontaneous speech.

3. Vowels are more than "short" and "long"

English vowel contrasts often involve tongue position, mouth shape, and vowel quality as well as duration. Do not teach ship/sheep as "same vowel, different length."

4. Connected speech is partly a listening skill

Learners should understand common linking, weak forms, and reductions. They do not need to force highly informal reductions into every sentence.

5. Correction should be selective

During a reading or 60-second answer, listen without interrupting. Choose one or two repeated problems, give one correction, and ask the learner to try again.

BASELINE RECORDING

Record 60 seconds: Why are you learning English, where do you want to use it, and what is difficult about speaking?

Save the recording. Repeat the same task on Day 30.

Do not score your accent. Note only repeated intelligibility problems.

**DAY
1**

P vs B

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Hear and produce /p/ and /b/ without confusing meaning.

Mouth and voice check

- Both sounds close the lips before release.
- /p/: no vocal-cord vibration; usually a stronger puff of air.
- /b/: vocal cords vibrate. Put two fingers on your throat to feel the difference.

/p/	/b/
pack	back
park	bark
cap	cab
rope	robe
pride	bride
simple	symbol

CHOOSE -> SAY -> USE

Teacher says one word from each pair. Choose A or B.

Say BOTH words clearly.

Use one word in a new sentence.

SENTENCE CHALLENGE

Peter bought a blue backpack before boarding the bus.

SPEAK: Describe something you recently bought, packed, or prepared. Try to keep P and B clear while speaking.

**DAY
2**

F vs V

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Use the same lip-and-teeth position while changing voicing.

- Lower lip lightly touches the upper teeth.
- /f/: air passes through without vocal-cord vibration.
- /v/: same position, but the vocal cords vibrate.

/f/	/v/
fan	van
fine	vine
safe	save
ferry	very
leaf	leave
proof	prove

VOICE TEST

Hold your fingers on your throat. Say fffff, then vvvvv.
Repeat safe/save and leaf/leave without moving the lip position.
Use one pair in two different sentences.

SENTENCE CHALLENGE

Five visitors arrived very early for the festival.

SPEAK: Describe a favorite vacation, event, or place you have visited.

**DAY
3**

W vs V

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Separate rounded-lip /w/ from lip-and-teeth /v/.

Sound	Mouth cue	Examples
/w/	Round the lips; no teeth contact.	west, wet, wow, wine
/v/	Lower lip touches upper teeth; voiced.	vest, vet, vow, vine
/w/	/v/	
west	vest	
wine	vine	
wet	vet	
wow	vow	
worse	verse	

SPEED DRILL

We visited Virginia very early Wednesday.

PERSONAL PRACTICE

Say: very well | visit every week | we were waiting.
Record yourself once slowly and once at natural speed.
Listen: Did W become V, or did V become W?

**DAY
4**

The Two TH Sounds

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Produce both voiceless /theta/ and voiced /eth/ TH sounds clearly.

Type	Voicing	Examples
/theta/	No vibration	think, three, healthy, something, month
/eth/	Vibration	this, that, those, weather, together

Common substitutions to diagnose

Target	Common substitute
think	tink / sink
three	tree
this	dis
then	den

SENTENCE CHALLENGE

Three brothers thought the weather would improve Thursday.

SPEAK: Tell us three things you think make someone trustworthy.

**DAY
5**

R vs L

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Separate American English R from L without adding extra vowels.

For /l/, the tongue tip usually touches the ridge behind the upper teeth. For American /r/, avoid that front contact; keep the tongue shaped back or bunched without touching the front ridge.

R	L
right	light
road	load
read	lead
grass	glass
correct	collect
fry	fly

SENTENCE CHALLENGE

Laura rarely rides the red train after lunch.

WORD RESCUE

Teacher intentionally changes R to L or L to R.

Learner repairs the word.

Learner uses the corrected word in a new sentence.

**DAY
6**

S vs Z

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Hear and control voicing in /s/ and /z/, preparing for plural and verb endings.

/s/	/z/
sip	zip
bus	buzz
rice	rise
face	phase
loose	lose

- /s/: no vibration.
- /z/: same general tongue position, with vocal-cord vibration.
- Do not add a vowel after the sound.

MEANING CHECK

rice / rise and loose / lose change meaning. Clear voicing matters.

LISTENING DRILL

Teacher says one word from each pair.

Learner chooses, then repeats both.

Learner makes one sentence using the voiced word.

**DAY
7**
SH, CH, J, and ZH

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Distinguish common postalveolar sounds in words and endings.

Sound	Examples	Quick cue
/sh/	ship, share, wash	Long air; no stop at the beginning.
/ch/	chip, chair, watch	Brief stop + release.
/j/	jeep, job, bridge	Voiced stop + release.
/zh/	vision, decision, measure	Voiced fricative; common inside words.

A	B
ship	chip
share	chair
cheap	jeep

DISCOVERY

The word decision contains /zh/. The spelling does not show the sound directly.

WEEK 1 CHECK: Which two consonant contrasts are hardest for you to hear? Which are hardest to produce?

**DAY
8****/I/ vs /i:/ - SHIP or SHEEP?**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Hear and produce the vowel contrast without relying only on vowel length.

IMPORTANT

The difference is vowel QUALITY as well as duration. Do not solve the contrast simply by holding one vowel longer.

/I/	/i:/
ship	sheep
sit	seat
live	leave
fill	feel
bit	beat
lick	leak

SENTENCE CHALLENGE

The ship carried three sheep across the sea.

HEAR -> SAY -> USE

Teacher says one word. Choose A or B.

Say both words.

Use the chosen word in a new sentence.

**DAY
9****/e/ vs /ae/ - BED or BAD?**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Separate the more closed /e/ vowel from the more open /ae/ vowel.

/e/	/ae/
bed	bad
men	man
pen	pan
said	sad
head	had

SENTENCE CHALLENGE

The man had ten red bags beside his bed.

MOUTH CHECK

Say bed -> bad slowly. Notice the larger jaw opening for /ae/.

Do not add an extra glide after the vowel.

Record three pairs and compare them.

**DAY
10****/U/ vs /u:/ - FULL or FOOL?**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Hear and produce a relaxed /U/ versus a tenser /u:/ vowel.

/U/	/u:/
full	fool
pull	pool
look	Luke
foot	food

PRACTICE SENTENCE

Luke looked at the full pool before he ordered food.

SPEAK: Describe a meal, a room, or a place using at least two target words.

**DAY
11****Central vs Back Vowels**

Approximate level: B1

LEARNING TARGET

Notice differences among words such as cut, cot, luck, and lock in American English.

ACCENT NOTE

Vowel realizations vary across English accents. Use this page as an American-English reference, not as proof that other standard accents are wrong.

Central /ʌ/	Back /ɑ/
cut	cot
luck	lock
hut	hot

CONTRAST DRILL

Listen before reading the spelling.

Say each pair slowly, then in short phrases.

Create one sentence containing both words from a pair if possible.

**DAY
12****Three-Way Vowel Listening**

Approximate level: B1

LEARNING TARGET

Distinguish neighboring vowels instead of memorizing spelling rules.

Word	Target vowel	Practice phrase
cat	/ae/	a black cat
cut	/uh/	cut the paper
cot	/ah/	a small cot

LISTENING FIRST

Ask the teacher to say cat, cut, or cot without showing the word. Identify it before reading.

PRODUCTION LADDER

word -> short phrase -> sentence -> spontaneous answer

Keep the vowel difference when the word moves into a longer sentence.

**DAY
13****Diphthongs - Moving Vowels**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Produce common English diphthongs as smooth vowel movements.

Sound	Examples	Practice phrase
/eɪ/	day, make, wait	wait all day
/aɪ/	time, light, drive	drive at night
/oʊ/	go, home, road	go home slowly
/aʊ/	now, house, sound	outside the house
/ɔɪ/	boy, choice, point	make a choice

TECHNIQUE

Do not split the diphthong into two separate syllables. Let the mouth move smoothly during one syllable.

SPEAK: Tell a short story containing at least three diphthong words.

**DAY
14****Vowel Championship**

Approximate level: Mixed review

LEARNING TARGET

Move from recognition to spontaneous use across the week's vowel contrasts.

1. Round 1 - Hear: Teacher says one word from a pair; learner chooses A or B.
2. Round 2 - Say: Learner produces both words.
3. Round 3 - Use: Learner uses one word in a new sentence.
4. Round 4 - Repair: Teacher gives one correction; learner tries again.
5. Round 5 - Speak: 45-second answer without a word list.

NON-NEGOTIABLE RULE

A correct multiple-choice answer is not the finish. Every item follows CHOOSE -> SAY -> USE.

REVIEW WORDS

ship/sheep | bed/bad | full/fool | cut/cot | day/time/go/now/choice

**DAY
15****Initial Consonant Clusters**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Keep two- and three-consonant beginnings without dropping or adding sounds.

Cluster	Examples	Say it in a phrase
sp	speak, spend	speak slowly
st	stop, study	study today
sk	school, skill	school skills
pl	plan, please	please plan
pr	practice, problem	practice pronunciation
tr	train, travel	travel by train
dr	drive, dream	drive downtown
br	bring, brother	bring bread
gr	great, green	great group
str	street, strong	strong student
spr	spring, spread	spring break
spl	split, splash	split screen

COMMON REPAIR

If a cluster is difficult, slow it down. Do not automatically insert an extra vowel before or inside the cluster.

SENTENCE CHALLENGE

Strong students practice speaking every spring.

**DAY
16****Final Consonant Clusters**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Keep final consonants that carry meaning, even when several sounds occur together.

Ending	Examples
-st	best, first
-nd	friend, planned
-mp	jump, camp
-sk	ask, task
-kt	worked
-ld	world, cold
-lp	help
-ft	left
-nts	students
-ks	books

BUILD THE PHRASE

work -> worked -> worked late -> worked late yesterday

ask -> asked -> asked twice -> asked twice today

student -> students -> strong students

TEACHER LISTENS FOR

Dropped final consonants, added vowels, or extra syllables.

**DAY
17****Final -S / -ES**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Use the three common pronunciations of plural and third-person -S endings.

Sound	Examples	Cue
/s/	works, stops, books	After many voiceless sounds.
/z/	lives, plays, learns	After many voiced sounds and vowels.
/lʒ/	watches, changes, uses	After sibilant sounds; forms an extra syllable.

MEANING LINK

These endings can mark plural nouns or third-person singular verbs. If the ending disappears, grammar may disappear too.

SORT THE WORDS

cats | dogs | buses | works | lives | watches | books | changes
Say each word, then place it under /s/, /z/, or /lʒ/.

**DAY
18****Past-Tense -ED**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Use /t/, /d/, or /ld/ without adding an unnecessary syllable.

Sound	Examples	Syllable note
/t/	worked, helped, watched	Usually no extra syllable.
/d/	played, called, learned	Usually no extra syllable.
/ld/	wanted, needed, decided	Adds a syllable.

COMMON MISTAKE

worked is normally one syllable. Avoid "work-ed" unless the word naturally requires /ld/.

SPEAK: Tell a five-sentence story about yesterday using at least five regular past-tense verbs.

**DAY
19****Do Not Add a Vowel**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Maintain difficult clusters without inserting a new syllable.

Target	Possible added-vowel error	Repair idea
school	e-school	Begin directly with /sk/.
street	suh-treet	Hold the cluster slowly, then speed up.
speak	suh-peak	Keep /sp/ together.
worked	work-ed	Finish with /kt/.
asked	ask-ed	Finish with the cluster.
world	wor-uld	Keep one syllable if your accent allows.
texts	tex-uts	Practice /ksts/ carefully and slowly.

RULE

Slow speech is better than adding a new vowel that changes the word shape.

**DAY
20****Do Not Lose the Ending**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Protect endings that change tense, number, or word identity.

Base	Meaning changes
work	worked
play	plays
cat	cats
ask	asked

Read each pair aloud. Then explain what grammatical information the ending adds.

REALITY CHECK

Pronunciation is not separate from grammar. When a final sound disappears, tense or number may become unclear.

SENTENCE PAIRS

I work every day. / I worked yesterday.

They play here. / She plays here.

I see one cat. / I see two cats.

**DAY
21**

Cluster Story Challenge

Approximate level: B1

LEARNING TARGET

Maintain clusters and grammatical endings inside a connected paragraph.

READ TWICE

First reading: do not interrupt. Teacher notes two repeated problems. Second reading: focus only on those two.

READING PARAGRAPH

Last spring, my friends planned a short trip. We packed our bags, checked the weather, and left early. The streets were crowded, but we reached the first train on time. We asked several questions, found our seats, and talked until the train stopped.

SPEAK: Retell the story without reading. Keep the same target endings if possible.

**DAY
22****Consonant -> Vowel Linking**

Approximate level: B1

LEARNING TARGET

Connect a final consonant smoothly to the next vowel without creating a pause between every word.

Written words	Practice as one thought
pick it up	pick_it_up
turn it off	turn_it_off
take it	take_it
an apple	an_apple
stop at the store	stop_at_the_store

SLASH READING

I picked_it_up / after work. //

THREE SPEEDS

1. Read each word separately.
2. Link only the marked boundary.
3. Read the full phrase naturally without rushing.

**DAY
23**

Consonant -> Consonant Connections

Approximate level: B1

LEARNING TARGET

Reduce unnecessary pauses between neighboring consonants while keeping words understandable.

Phrase	Focus
big game	Connect the boundary smoothly.
black coffee	Avoid an extra vowel between words.
good day	Keep both words clear without a long pause.
best student	Keep the final cluster and the next consonant.

GOAL

Smooth does not mean fast. The listener should still hear the intended words.

SPEAK: Describe a busy day using at least two consonant-to-consonant connections.

**DAY
24****Vowel -> Vowel Connections**

Approximate level: B1-B2

LEARNING TARGET

Hear and produce smooth transitions between neighboring vowel sounds.

Phrase	Practice
go out	go_out
I agree	I_agree
she asked	she_asked
do it	do_it

TEACHING NOTE

English may use a slight glide between adjacent vowels. Learn the smooth transition through listening and repetition rather than forcing a new written consonant.

MINI CHALLENGE

Read each phrase slowly.
Repeat at natural speed.
Use one phrase in an original sentence.

**DAY
25**

Schwa and Weak Syllables

Approximate level: B1-B2

LEARNING TARGET

Recognize that unstressed syllables often use a reduced central vowel.

HIGH-VALUE IDEA

Not every syllable receives equal stress. English often weakens unstressed vowels toward schwa /ə/.

Word	Stress idea
about	Second syllable is stronger.
support	Second syllable is stronger.
banana	Middle syllable is usually strongest.
ago	Second syllable is stronger.
problem	First syllable is stronger; second is reduced.

STRESS CONTRAST

Say the word with every syllable equally strong.

Then say it again with one clear stressed syllable.

Which version sounds more natural and easier to understand?

**DAY
26**

Weak Forms and Informal Reductions

Approximate level: B1-B2

LEARNING TARGET

Understand common reduced speech without forcing informal forms into every sentence.

Common function words that may weaken

to | for | of | and | a | the | can

Casual reduction	Full form	Production advice
gonna	going to	Recognition is important; full form is always safe.
wanna	want to	Casual; avoid in formal speaking and writing.
gotta	got to / have got to	Highly informal; recognition first.
kinda	kind of	Common in casual speech; not required for fluency.

DO NOT FORCE IT

Clear, natural speech is more important than trying to imitate every casual reduction.

LISTENING QUESTION

Can you hear the full phrase inside the reduction?

Say the full form clearly first.

Use the reduction only if it matches the speaking situation and feels natural.

**DAY
27****Silent Letters - Common Patterns**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Recognize high-frequency spelling patterns where written letters are not pronounced.

Pattern	Examples	Memory cue
KN	know, knee, knife, knock	Initial K is silent.
WR	write, wrong, wrist, wrap	Initial W is silent.
MB	climb, comb, thumb, lamb	Final B is usually silent in this pattern.
L	walk, talk, calm, half	L is silent in many common words.
T	listen, castle, fasten	T is silent in these common words.
H	honest, hour, honor, heir	Initial H is silent in these words.

CONTRAST

house, happy, and hotel normally pronounce H. Silent-letter learning is word-pattern learning, not one universal rule.

**DAY
28****Silent-Letter Detective + GH**

Approximate level: A2-B1

LEARNING TARGET

Use spelling as a clue without inventing a false rule for every word.

GH pattern	Examples	Pronunciation result
Silent	night, light, thought	GH is not pronounced.
/f/	laugh, enough, rough	GH contributes /f/.

SILENT-LETTER DETECTIVE

Which letter is silent? knife | write | climb | listen | honest | light | walk

Then pronounce the word.

Finally, use it in a new sentence.

RULE

Do not memorize "GH is silent." Learn word families and high-frequency patterns.

**DAY
29**

Integrated Pronunciation Challenge

Approximate level: B1-B2

LEARNING TARGET

Maintain target sounds, endings, and connected speech inside reading and spontaneous speaking.

TEACHER PROTOCOL

Listen through the full first attempt without interrupting. Choose only two recurring intelligibility problems. Give one focused correction, then ask for a second attempt.

INTEGRATED READING

Peter and Vanessa planned a short spring trip to a quiet village. They packed light bags, checked the weather, and left before sunrise. While they were driving, Peter thought he saw three sheep near the road. Vanessa laughed and said they were white rocks. They stopped at a small shop, asked for directions, and bought enough food for the afternoon. By evening, both friends were tired but pleased with the trip.

Teacher listens for: P/B | F/V | W/V | TH | R/L | vowel contrasts | clusters | -S/-ED | silent letters | linking | stress

SPEAK: Retell the trip in your own words for 60 seconds without reading.

**DAY
30**

Final Diagnostic and Next Plan

Approximate level: A2-B2

LEARNING TARGET

Compare listening, controlled production, reading, spontaneous speech, and self-repair with your Day 1 baseline.

Part A - Listening

Hear 10 contrasts. Identify the word or sound you heard.

Part B - Controlled production

Say 10 target words selected from your two hardest categories.

Part C - Reading

Read a B1 paragraph once. Teacher notes two repeated problems.

Part D - Spontaneous speaking

60-90 SECOND PROMPT

What has helped you improve your English, and what would you like to improve next?

Part E - Repair

Teacher gives one pronunciation correction. Repeat the sentence or answer and show the repair.

Skill	0	1	2
Sound contrasts	Often unclear	Sometimes clear	Usually clear
Vowel clarity	Frequent confusion	Some stable contrasts	Most targets clear
Endings & clusters	Often dropped/added	Partly controlled	Usually preserved
Stress & connected speech	Hard to follow	Some natural grouping	Generally clear and smooth
Self-correction	Needs full correction	Repairs with prompting	Often repairs independently

INTERPRETATION

8-10 = strong control | 6-7 = developing | 4-5 = needs focused practice | 0-3 = reduce difficulty and rebuild key targets

NEXT PLAN: Choose your two lowest-scoring categories and repeat those sections for 7-14 days before adding new targets.

Pronunciation Quick Reference

Use this page after Day 30 for continued review

Category	High-value targets	What to monitor
Consonants	P/B, F/V, W/V, TH, R/L, S/Z, SH/CH/J/ZH	Voicing, mouth position, substitutions
Vowels	ship/sheep, bed/bad, full/fool, central/back vowels, diphthongs	Vowel quality, jaw/tongue position, glides
Clusters	sp, st, sk, str, -st, -nd, -kt, -nts, -ks	Dropped consonants, added vowels
Endings	-S /s z Iz/; -ED /t d Id/	Grammar clarity and extra syllables
Connected speech	Consonant-vowel linking, consonant-consonant, vowel-vowel	Unnecessary pauses, loss of clarity
Reductions	Schwa, weak function words, casual reductions	Listening first; do not force casual speech
Silent letters	KN, WR, MB, silent L/T/H, GH families	Word-pattern recognition, not universal rules

FINAL REMINDER

Clearer speech is the goal. Keep your accent, protect meaning, and practice the two patterns that most affect your listener.