



Sensations *monthly* Webinars
E N G L I S H for teachers

June 2022



Fran Watkins

Teacher trainer,
teacher, exam
and materials
writer

Integrating phonology into your English language classes

All attendees will receive a certificate of attendance and slides via email link 24 hours after the webinar.









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Sensations *monthly* Webinars E N G L I S H for teachers

June



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Integrating phonology into your English language classes

We will explore how to:

- raise learners' awareness of phonological features
- enhance learners' spoken fluency and confidence
- improve learners' ability to listen and comprehend spoken language effectively

30th June • 2pm UK time



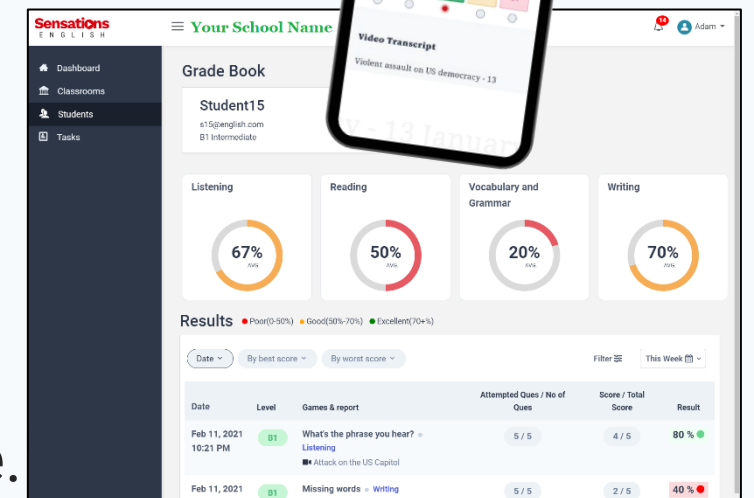
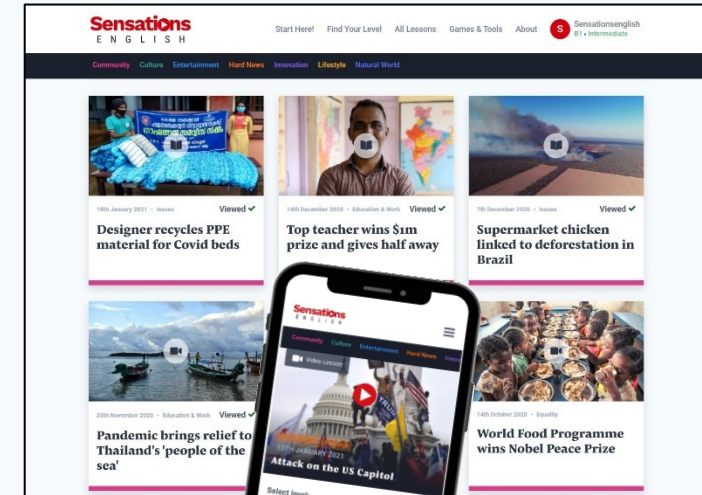
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Aims of our session today

- to show the shift in phonological focus in relation to ELF
- to illustrate where 'sentence stress' fits in
- to provide you with the capabilities to focus on certain aspects of pronunciation
- to suggest practical ideas for integrating pronunciation work in skills lessons and beyond, on:

tone units, prominent words and the nuclear stress



Pronunciation

- Hewings reflects my own feelings about pronunciation:
- “Pronunciation is something that students often feel is important to them in their language learning. Most want their pronunciation to be easily understandable and are often prepared to work hard to achieve this. Sometimes, however, teaching doesn’t always reflect their wish, and pronunciation is treated as a low priority area of study.” Hewings (2004, p 11)



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Monkeys take over Thai city

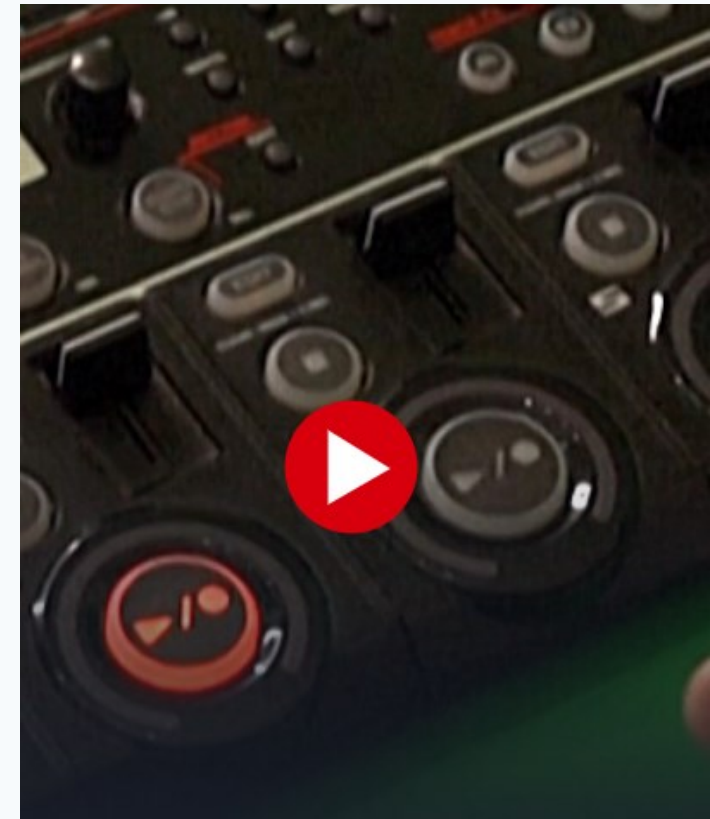


1st June 2020 • Natural Disasters

Super-cyclone Amphan hits the Bay of Bengal

ELF

English as a Lingua Franca



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The most important features key to mutual phonological intelligibility are:

- Most consonant sounds
- Appropriate consonant cluster simplification
- Vowel length distinctions (**quantity**)
- Nuclear stress

Jennifer Jenkins (2000, p 13)





And perhaps more importantly ...

What's NOT in it

- The **two 'th' sounds** plus **dark 'l'** [ɫ]
- **Exact vowel quality**
- **Pitch movement** (tone) *Given and new* etc
- **Word stress**
- **Stress-timing**
- **Vowel reduction**, schwa and weak forms
- Certain **features of connected speech** – linking, assimilation, coalescence





EFL and ELF pronunciation targets: the non-core features

Jenkins (2007, p 24)

	EFL target / traditional syllabus	ELF target Lingua Franca Core
Vowel Quality	Close to RP/GA	L2 (consistent) regional qualities
Weak forms	essential	Unhelpful to intelligibility
Features of connected speech	all	Inconsequential and may be unhelpful
Stress-timed rhythm	important	unnecessary
Word stress	critical	Can reduce flexibility / unteachable
Pitch movement	Essential for indicating attitudes and grammar	Unnecessary / unteachable

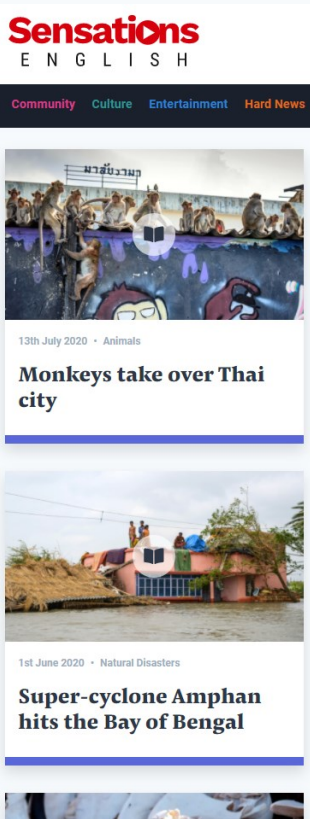


Just a reminder ...

By far the majority of conversations nowadays in English are not between speakers who have English as their mother tongue.

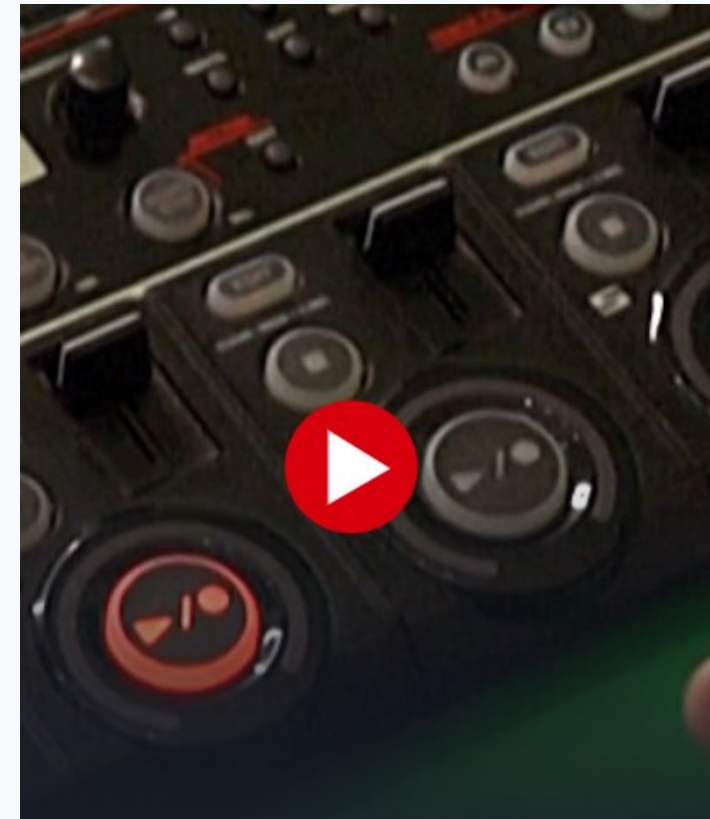
ELF is all about learners using English as a lingua franca. Some learners – perhaps your own – may have different needs or motivations.

But this is not what the LFC is about... English is an international language, and that means “no nation can have custody over it” .



Rhythm and sentence stress

English: a supposedly stress-timed language





Rhythm and sentence stress in English



TASK

English was considered to be a “stress-timed” language. What does that mean?

Write a brief response in the CHAT.



Sentence stress and rhythm

- the way that some words are emphasised so as to give the effect of regular beats..... This regularity is achieved by stressing some syllables, and by lengthening or shortening intervening syllables.

If I'd KNOWN / you were COMing / I'd have BAKED / a CAKE

- In normal fluid speech, the rhythm is less regular, but it is still there.
- Rhythm helps listeners to process the message more easily.

Thornbury (2006 p 200)

- When we listen to a stretch of spoken English discourse, we often feel that there is a rhythm or regularity to it... The impression of rhythm may arise out of a feeling of alternation between strong and weak 'beats'.



McCarthy also talks of 'silent beats'

There's a house over there, _ isn't there?



Typical exercises

1

ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR
ONE and	TWO and	THREE and	FOUR
ONE and a	TWO and a	THREE and a	FOUR
ONE and a big	TWO and a big	THREE and a big	FOUR

2

A Where are Anne and Alan?

B Anne's out and Alan's away.

A When do you think Anne'll be in again?

B Not till eleven I'm afraid.

Intonation in Context by Barbara Bradford

3

Jazz Chants, by Caroline Graham

4 Limericks

There was an Old Man with a beard

Who said, "It is just as I feared!"

Two Owls and a Hen,

Four Larks and a Wren,

Have all built their nests in my beard!" E Lear



McCarthy goes on to state ...

“Natural conversation certainly does not lend itself to regular rhythm-tapping, even though the flow of talk is punctuated (often regularly) with perceived stresses”

Forcing learners to indulge in artificially ‘cramming’ stressed and unstressed syllables into a regular rhythm may take their attention away from the genuinely interactive aspects of stress, not least the speaker’s choice as to what is to be stressed and what not.

McCarthy (1991 p 94)





Roach on rhythm ...

“It is widely claimed that English speech tends towards a regular alternation between stronger and weaker.”

He cites **stress-shift** cases to prove this:

compact
thirteen

but
but

compact disk
thirteenth place

... “it seems that **stresses are altered according to context...**

An additional factor is that **in speaking English we vary how rhythmically we speak.....**

Roach (2007, pp 109 – 110)



To sum up - Roach on rhythm ...

“the evidence for the existence of truly stress-timed rhythm is not strong”

“What, then, is the practical value of the traditional “rhythm exercises” for foreign learners? **The argument about rhythm should not make us forget the very important difference in English between strong and weak syllables.** Some languages do not have such a noticeable difference.”

His conclusion: for some learners - whose L1 does not have this feature - focal exercises may well have value.



Conclusion so far on stress-timing

- A general movement away from artifice, from a focus on rigid stress-timing in speech
- An acknowledgement, however, that there is a clear, perceived alternation in English between strong and weak syllables - a perceived rhythm
- The regular, rhythmic qualities of spoken English are more evident in **careful** spoken English
- There's been a shift from the emphasis on a strict, regular rhythm per se to the focus on words which are given prominence/stress.

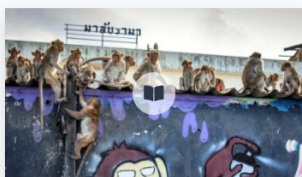


*So it's "sentence stress" * without the rigorous notion of stress-timing*



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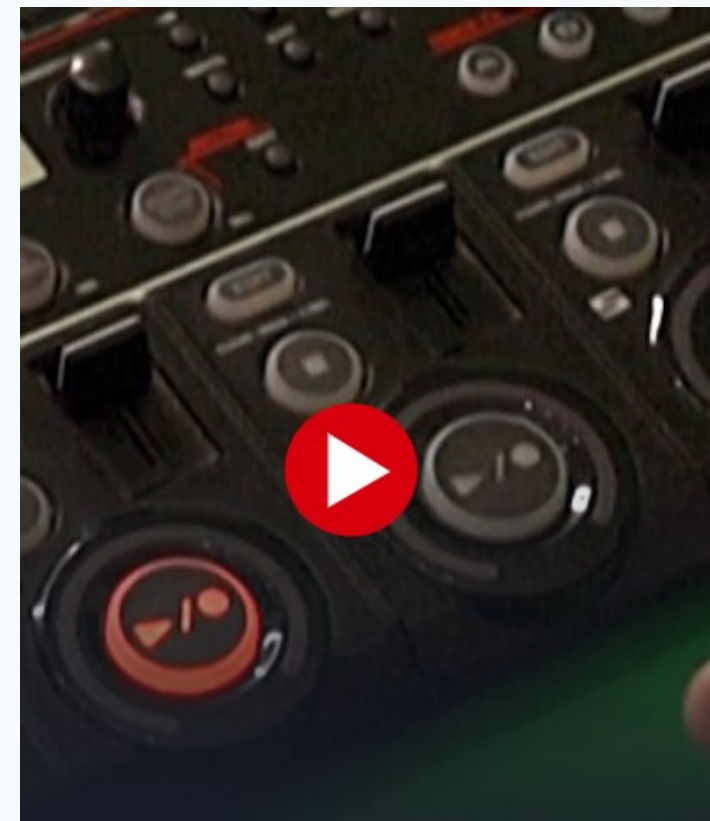
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Tone units and tonic/nuclear stress



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Nuclear stress was previously not prioritized

Jenkins discusses whether some aspects of intonation, namely discourse intonation are worth teaching or even teachable. However, she continues:

“Nuclear stress, however, is a completely different story and is crucial for intelligibility in interlanguage talk... Nuclear stress ... is the most important key to the speaker’s intended meaning.”

Jenkins (2000, p 153)



And surely, you can’t teach nuclear stress without touching on tone units too?



Jenkins on nuclear stress and tone units

- "It is the area of **nuclear placement** that seems to present the greatest suprasegmental threat to intelligibility"
- One reason that learners fail to place the **nuclear stress** correctly is probably that "they have problems in dividing the stream of speech into **word groups (or 'tone units')**". ...By grouping words thus, fluent speakers of English indicate to their listeners which words should be interpreted together."

"...failure to divide the speech stream into these units can result in grammatical ambiguity or misinterpretation." Jenkins (2000, p 45)



Tone units, prominence and nuclear stress

Have you tried that new café in town?

Tone units -minimum of one syllable, but usually more
yes // i went there last week // and had an amazing cake

Boundaries // between intonational phrases generally correspond syntactically with clause and major syntactic phrase boundaries Cruttenden (1994 p 231)

Brazil calls tone units "the basic building block of spoken English" (1994, p 7)

Prominence – some may be non-nuclear

yes // i **went** there **last week** // and had an amazing **cake**

The choice of the speaker to give to specific syllables (in **bold**). "It is principally pitch change which marks an accented syllable." Cruttenden (1994p 202)

Nucleus/tonic syllable

yes //i **went** there **last WEEK** // and had an amazing **CAKE**

What the speaker considers the most significant info in the tone unit (in CAPS) – most prominent, and typically most pitch movement



How do we make a syllable more prominent?

Stressed syllables are recognised as stressed because they are more prominent than unstressed syllables.

How?

- Loudness
- Length of syllable
- Quality of vowel – by contrast with the background against weak syllables
- Pitch - e.g. higher pitch. To place **movement** of pitch makes it even more prominent.

Roach (2009, pp 73-74)



Marking tone units

TASK Listen to Fran say the sentence below. Copy the sentence.

- a) Can you identify the **5 tone units**?
- b) What about the **prominent** syllables/words?
- c) And the nuclear stress?

I met this man at the party and he told me that we'd gone to the same school, but I had no recollection of him!

I met this man // at the party //and he told me // that we we'd gone to the same school // but I had no recollection of him

I met this man // at the party // and he told me // that we we'd gone to the same school// but I had no recollection of him//

I met this MAN // at the PARTY // and he TOLD me // that we we'd gone to the same SCHOOL// but I had NO recollection of him//



Misplaced prominence (the nuclear stress)

McCarthy

- My SIStEr HATES flying just as much as I DO
- Can I PAY by credit CARD ?

McCarthy (1991 p 98)

Jenkins

- There were Spanish, German, French and I could tell the difference between THEM." Jenkins (2000, p 43)

DIFference (?)

My SIStEr hates **FLY**ing // just as much as **I** do.

Can I PAY by **CRE**dit card?

If learners misplace prominence when speaking English, it can lead to confusion. Listeners may try to make sense of the prominence, to find coherence.



Nuclear stress work: the classroom



- Jenkins states her data shows it does require overt teaching (for productive use) and that this will give a large “pay-off”.
- “Pedagogically, nuclear stress can **be easily integrated receptively and productively into almost all classroom work**”
Jenkins, J. (2000, p.155)
- Dalton and Seidlhofer on “**foregrounding**” (giving prominence) describe it as “maybe **the most important function of intonation** and **certainly the most teachable one.**” (1994, p 81)



Integrating work on nuclear stress

- For me, it's no massive change from a focus on content words in 'sentence stress':

When working with -

- Functional language

Can I try a larger size, please?

- Lexis (chunks)

A bottle of milk, a jar of honey

The day before yesterday

- Grammar

Where do you live? / I've never tasted snails





Integrating work on nuclear stress

When working with -

- **Functional language**

can I try a larger SIZE, // please?

- **Lexis** (chunks)

*A **bottle** of MILK, a jar of HONey
the day before YESTerday*

- **Grammar**

*Where do you LIVE? (context
dependent)*

I've never TASTed snails

In the classroom

- **Exaggerate** the prominence and the phrasing
- Use your **hands/arms** or other means:

Get your learners to clap, tap, stand up, use

ba BA ba ba **BA** or oOooO

- Expose/practise with learners little and often to **sensitize** them to the musicality
- Later, get learners to start predicting
- Pop in **contrastive** and **corrective** stress, where the prominence shifts, to show it's context-dependent:
"A CARton of milk?" "No, a BOTtle."
"Did you say TWO bottles?" No, just ONE."
- Bear in mind that it's for **receptive** as well as for **productive** purposes
- Incorporate lots of **drilling**





Make your drilling fun and engaging



Try something new! You could ...

- Choose a strong learner to drill, instead of you
- Change the pace/loudness/emotions
- Just pick out the key words
- Do transformation drills, e.g. *Can I have a **LAR**ger size?*
- Try backchaining


A bottle of milk and a piece of cake






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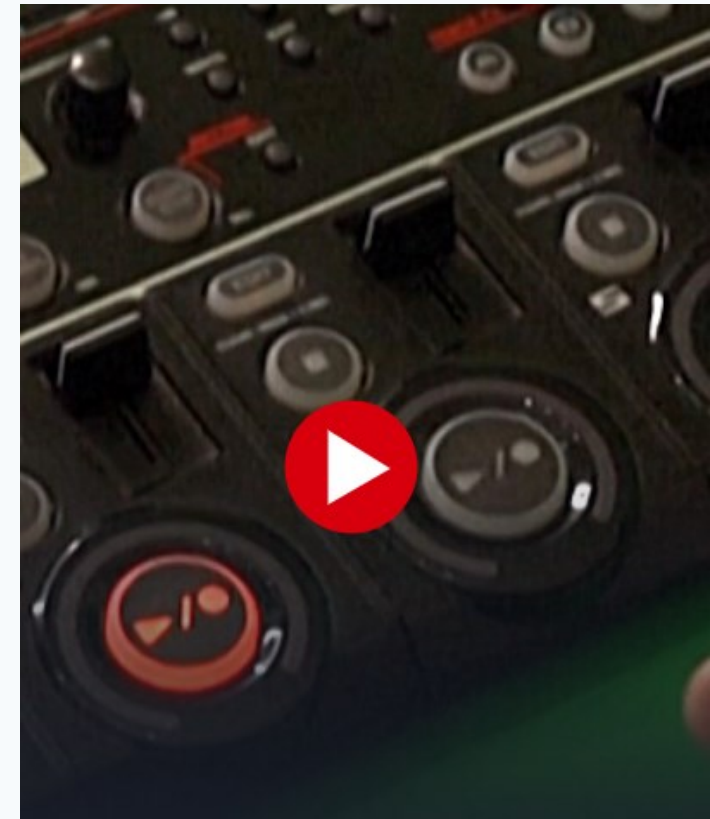


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A quick note on word stress





Jenkins doesn't view word stress as key

In contrast, Robin Walker says there are two reasons for giving attention to **word stress**, "even though our goal is ELF intelligibility":

1 Work on word stress in ELF is not yet fully understood, and some studies suggest that incorrect word stress could have a negative impact for both native and non-native speaker listeners (Field 2005; Rajadurai 2006)

2 **Work on word stress provides us with preparatory exercises for work on nuclear stress placement.**

Walker (2010 p 40)





ELT Position Paper: advice from a panel of ELT experts on English pron for a global world

This recent paper sees word stress as important, stating:

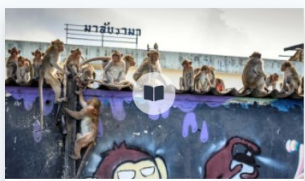
“Word stress needs to be correctly placed to achieve intelligibility, e.g. listeners may not recognise ‘balloon’ pronounced as ‘BALloon,’ ‘follow’ as ‘folLOW’ or ‘creation’ as CREation.”

Walker, Low, Setter (2021 p 15)



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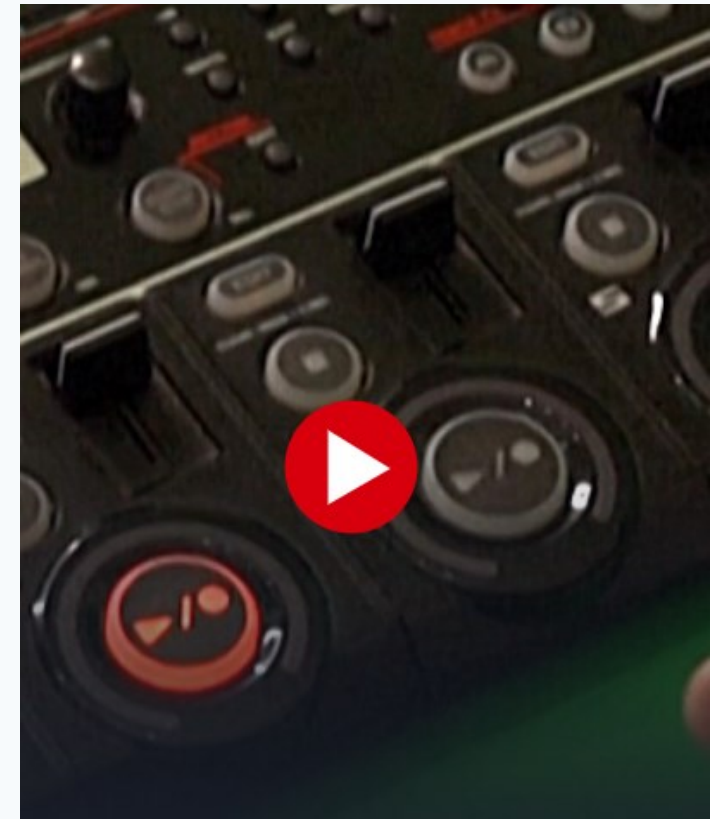
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Skills work



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Integrating pronunciation into a skills lesson

- Generally speaking, as with *any* specific language focus, always allow learners to digest the meaning/content of the text before any pronunciation focus.



TASK

Why is this approach so important?

- *Write a brief response in the CHAT.*



A rather unusual story...

- Sensations Parents sue son over no grandchildren



In a real class, you'd spend much more time on processing the text for meaning, e.g. more in-depth reading, retelling, etc.

To access this audio visit:

<https://www.sensationsenglish.com/article/uvJt7l/4>

TASK Did anybody hear/read this story? What was it about?
If you didn't read it, can you predict from the headline?

TASK Listen and answer

- *The couple feels very upset. Why? How does society make them feel?*
- *What are the couple's demands, if no grandchild?*
- *How surprising is this step, according to Prof Vasavi?*



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Article Lesson



LIFESTYLE · Family
6TH JUNE 2022

Indian couple sue son over no grandchildren

Sad parents fight son with the law

6th June 2022

B1 Pre intermediate level

It can be a good idea to go down a level with this focus

You can even just work with the heading alone!



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Article Lesson



LIFESTYLE • Family
6TH JUNE 2022

Indian couple sue son over no grandchildren

Sad PARENTS // fight SON // with the LAW

6th June 2022

B1 Pre intermediate level



If new for your learners, start with examples

TASK

Read, listen, read,
listen, read



Sad parents fight son with the law - 6th June 2022



To access this audio visit: <https://www.sensationsenglish.com/article/uvJt7l/2>

A couple in **INDIA** // are taking **serious STEPS** // to change their **SITUATION**. // **Sanjeev** and **Sadhana PRASAD**, // who are **61** and **57**, // are **TIRED** // of having **NO** grandchildren.



A possible pron focus



A **couple** in **INDIA** // are taking **serious STEPS** // to **change** their **SITUATION**. // **Sanjeev** and **Sadhana PRASAD**, // who are **61** and **57**, // are **TIRED** // of having **NO grandchildren**.

- Note I've bolded and capitalized the whole words
- Slow it down (if poss), but keep it natural if you are the model



Sensations site – you can slow it down!



Indian couple sue son over no grandchildren

LIFESTYLE - Family
6TH JUNE 2022

Select level:
A2 **B1 - Pre-Intermediate** B1+ B2 C1 Levels









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Sad parents fight son with the law - 6th June 2022

A couple in India are taking serious steps to change their situation. Sanjeev and Sadhana Prasad, who are 61 and 57, are tired of having no grandchildren.

The pair say they have little money now. Bringing up their son wasn't cheap. They paid for him to become a pilot, and his wedding six years ago cost a large

Interactive Games

 What's the word you hear? Complete the sentences. Listen and write the missing word. There are up to 10 questions. LISTENING	 Prepositions Complete the sentences. Select the correct preposition. There are up to 4 questions. VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR	 What's the phrase you hear? Complete the sentences. Listen and write the missing phrase. There are up to 5 questions. LISTENING	 No s Read 1 There
 Sentence muddle Read the sentences. Put them in the same order as the	 Construct sentences Make sentences. Select each word in the correct order.	 Verbs Complete the sentences. Select the correct verb. There	 No c Read 1 The

 Listen at 3 different speeds Check how well you can understand spoken English. Choose a speed and listen to the report. Practise listening faster and slower to help you improve. LISTENING	 Shadowing the newsreader Listen to the newsreader read out each line and then practise saying it. Record your own voice line by line and submit your voiceover. SPEAKING
--	---



Sensations site – you can slow it down!



 **Listen at 3 different speeds**
 Check how well you can understand spoken English. Choose a speed and listen to the report. Practise listening faster and slower to help you improve.

LISTENING

 **Shadowing the newsreader**
 Listen to the newsreader read out each line and then practise saying it. Record your own voice line by line and submit your voiceover.




SPEAKING


LEVEL B1




Listen at 3 different speeds

Check how well you can understand spoken English. Choose a speed and listen to the report. Practise listening faster and slower to help you improve.

What do I learn? +

 **Slow**
90 WPM
  **Medium**
120 WPM
  **Quick**
150 WPM

00:02 

 **15 Secs**
Press left
  **Play**
Press space
  **15 Secs**
Press right

Sad parents fight son

A couple in India are t
their situation. Sanjee
are 61 and 57, are tire

The pair say they have
their son wasn't cheap
a pilot, and his weddir
amount.

Now, it's decision time
older couple would lik
months or their mone
rupees, or \$650,000.

The older and younger
relationship at the mo



Your turn

TASK

Before you listen, mentally **predict** where the tone units go.

I found 9!

The pair say they have little money now. Bringing up their son wasn't cheap. They paid for him to become a pilot, and his wedding six years ago cost a large amount.




To access this audio visit: <https://www.sensationsenglish.com/article/uvJt7l/2>



Your turn

TASK Now note down the syllables which are prominent.
And also the tonic in each tone unit

 The pair say // they have little money now. //

Bringing up their son (//) wasn't cheap. //They paid
for him // to become a pilot, // and his wedding // six
years ago // cost a large amount. 



To access this audio visit: <https://www.sensationsenglish.com/article/uvJt7l/2>



As a teacher of pronunciation, to help learners ...

Let them listen several times if they're interested

You give options -
the **PAIR** say /
the pair **SAY**

Encourage questions/comments

Admit it's not always easy, but be careful in your selection of text



Was yours (nearly) the same?

The **PAIR** say // they have **little MONEY** now. // **Bringing** up their **SON** (//) wasn't **cheap**. // They **PAID** for him //to become a **PILOT**,// and his **WEDDING** //six **YEARS** ago // cost a **LARGE amount**.

To access the audio for these sentences, visit: <https://www.sensationsenglish.com/article/uvJt7l/2>



Putting the two parts together

TASK First listen and read.



Then shadow read/ghost read with the recording.

A couple in **INDIA** // are taking **serious STEPS** // to change their **SITUATION**. // **Sanjeev** and **Sadhana PRASAD**,// who are **61** and **57**,// are **TIRED** // of having **NO grandchildren**.

The **PAIR** say // they have **little MONEY** now. // **Bringing** up their **SON** (//) wasn't **cheap**. //They **PAID** for him //to become a **PILOT**,// and his **WEDDING** //six **YEARS** ago // cost a **LARGE** amount.

To access this audio visit: <https://www.sensationsenglish.com/article/uvJt7l/2>



And on the Sensations site...

at 3 different speeds
How well you can understand spoken
Choose a speed and listen to the report.
listening faster and slower to help you
e.



Shadowing the newsreader

Listen to the newsreader read out each line and
then practise saying it. Record your own voice
line by line and submit your voiceover.

SPEAKING

LEVEL B1

Shadowing the newsreader

Listen to the newsreader read out each line and then practise saying it. Record your own voice line by line and submit your voiceover.

A couple in India are taking serious steps to change their situation.

▶ Newsreader



Submit

Sanjeev and Sadhana Prasad, who are 61 and 57, are tired of having no grandchildren.

The pair say they have little money now.

Bringing up their son wasn't cheap.



What did/can we do to help focus on the tone unit and nuclear stress?

CHOOSE SMALL AMOUNTS OF TEXT AND REPEAT AS NECESSARY

SELECT CLEAR EXAMPLE SENTENCES

PREDICT

INDICATE HOW MANY TONE UNITS THERE ARE

HIGHLIGHT AND DISCUSS ANOMALIES

SHOW OPTIONS/CONTRASTS TO HELP

ACKNOWLEDGE CHALLENGE/AMBIGUITY

BREAK IT DOWN, USE DRILLING – *RECALL THE HINTS*

CONTRAST WITH LEARNERS' FIRST (AND SECOND?) LANGS

SLOW IT DOWN, IF POSSIBLE

END WITH SHADOWING - MOTIVATING



At B2 level

HIGHLIGHT AND DISCUSS ANOMALIES

Sadhana Prasad, **57**,// and her husband Sanjeev, **61**,// complain//
that they've used **UP** // all their **SAV**ings //raising their **SON**, //having
to foot the **BILLS** // for his **Pilot's** training,// and his **WED**ding // **AND**
// **HON**eymoon.// **NOW**,// it's **PAY**back time //– either the son and
daughter-in-law produce a **GRAND**child //within a **YEAR**,// or they'll
need to **rePAY** // a grand **TOT**al of 50 million **RU**pees, // **WORTH** //
\$**650,000**.//



Typical staging for pron work in a skills lesson

Approach would be over one lesson or several. The approach would depend on learners' familiarity with text and task, level, preceding classes, needs, etc.

- Listen (ideally audio) and digest material for meaning/content
- Take out a short extract from the text for learners to work with– 1-3 sentences
- Learners first mark the *likely content* words in each sentence (help by indicating the likely number in each sentence) e.g. *A boy just jumped into the pond and started splashing. (4)*
The child was having fun.(2)
- Listen to the recording and check answers.
- [drill – just content/key words first?]
- You highlight/ elicit the pauses/tone units OR Learners mark the tone units (if familiar). Highlight any anomalies, e.g. marked, such as where grammar words are prominent.
- Learners listen and identify (possibly first predict) the nuclear stress in each tone unit. Usually there's just one.
- Check against the recording.
- Practice /ghost drill along with the recording



Any questions or comments?





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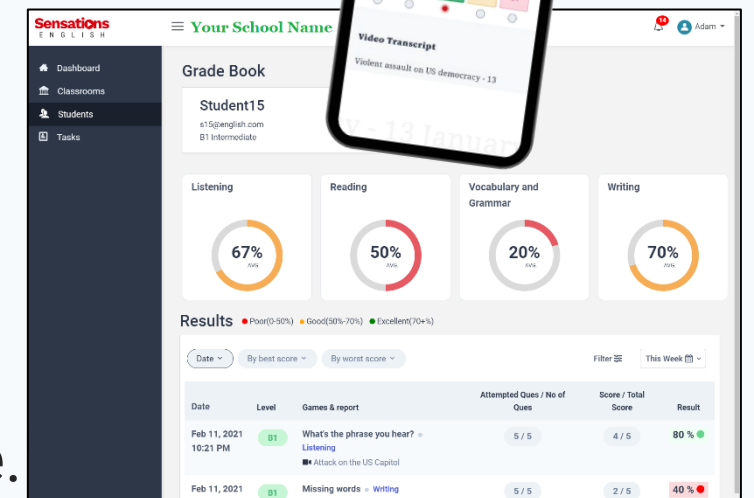
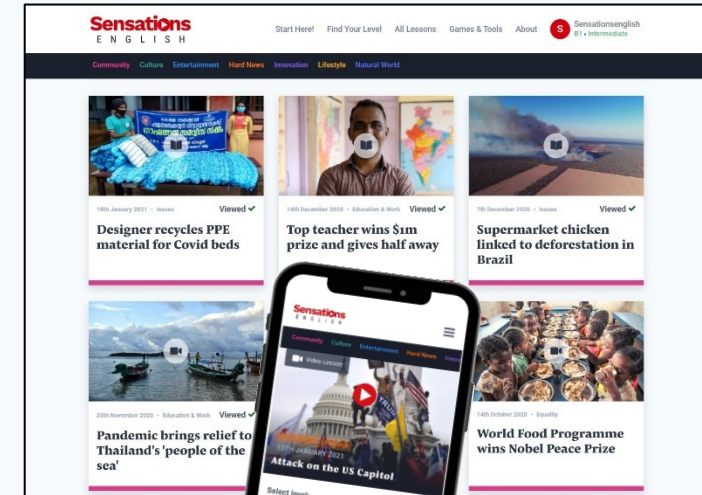
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