

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FL 8201

Dominando el Inglés

MASTERING
ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION:

A GUIDE FOR
SPANISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

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2 LPs
1 text (12 p.)

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By Abraham H. Lass, Robert Cabat, Louis Cabat, Marjorie L. Dycke
Narrated by Abraham H. Lass

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FOLKWAYS RECORDS FL 8201

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By Abraham H. Lass,
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COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FL 8201

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HOW TO USE THE PRACTICE EXERCISES

After each band in the script which you are reading from as you listen to the record, we have provided additional practice exercises. Here are some suggestions for using these exercise materials most effectively.

1. Play the recorded material over as many times as you need to - until you feel you have mastered the sound you are practicing. Then start working on the additional practice exercises.
2. If possible, use a tape recorder to record yourself as you go over the practice exercises. Listen to yourself carefully. Have someone who speaks English well listen to you and help you pick out and correct any errors you may have.
3. Each section of practice exercises begins with individual words. Pronounce these words slowly at first, giving special attention and emphasis to the underlined portions. After repeating the words slowly several times, begin to practice them a bit more rapidly. Keep increasing your speed until you can say these words at the normal conversational speed.
4. The next two sections consist of sentences. The sentences in the first group contain ONE example of the sound we're concentrating on. The sentence in the second group contain TWO examples of the sound we're concentrating on. Master the first group of sentences - and then go on to the second group. Say each sentence slowly at first. Gradually increase your speed until you can say each sentence correctly comfortably, and intelligibly at a normal conversational rate.
5. The last section contains 5 words. Make up a sentence with each word as you would use it in your everyday conversation. Write down these sentences and practice using the same techniques suggested for the sentences in Section 1 and Section 2. If you feel you need more practice, make up more sentences based on the words in the first exercise or on other words which contain the sound or sounds you are trying to master.
6. Listen carefully and frequently to speakers on radio and TV for the way they pronounce the words you have been practicing. This will make you more aware of these sounds and make it easier for you to master them.
7. And FINALLY - PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE - as often as you can. Nothing can take the place of YOUR practicing. Practice on your family or your best friends. At first, you'll probably feel a bit self-conscious. But in a very short time, you'll be saying these words naturally and correctly all the time.

SOMETHING TO KEEP IN MIND ALWAYS. When you're talking to anyone, concentrate on WHAT you want to say and on the PERSON you are talking to. Don't worry too much about any errors you may be making in individual words or sounds. You won't get rid of these errors all at once. But you will be doing better all the time. The practicing you are doing in private will soon show up in the improvement of your public speaking. Meanwhile, keep talking as much and as freely as you can. The more you talk the easier you'll find it to talk to anyone about anything correctly - the way you want to.

Band 1 Introduction

If you want to speak any language correctly there are a number of things you have to do. First, you have to WANT to learn to speak correctly. Second, you have to understand what you are doing. And, finally, and perhaps most important, you've got to PRACTICE CORRECTLY AND OFTEN until the language you are trying to master becomes a real part of you. And once it does, you will be speaking it the way you want to - correctly, all the time - and without having to think about it.

Put this way it all sounds very simple, doesn't it? Actually, it IS simple - much simpler than you think. Naturally - as with everything else you do - the harder you work at it, the sooner you will be able to do it well.

We've put this program together to make it easy and pleasant for Spanish-speaking people to learn to speak English correctly. But before we get under way, here are a few simple things for you to keep in mind.

Practically everyone who wants to learn to speak English correctly has some kind of difficulty - in the beginning. That's perfectly natural and normal. English-speaking people trying to learn Spanish have their problems too, very much like those you run into with English. But, as we have just said, not all at once -- just better -- much, much better -- and pretty quickly, too.

You are probably having some problems pronouncing certain English words correctly, simply because 1) you really can't hear yourself when you are speaking; 2) you probably don't know exactly what mistakes you are making, and why; and 3) lastly, you, may not have anyone around to listen to you who can point out your errors and show you how to correct them.

This program is divided into 18 lessons. Each lesson deals with one particular pronunciation problem that most Spanish-speaking people have with English. Now when you have completed and mastered each of these lessons, you will feel more at home with English -- and you'll be speaking it more correctly, more easily.

Now as we work through each lesson in the special booklet you are now holding, you will see and hear the letters, combinations of letters, and words that are likely to give you some trouble and you will also learn why. You will hear them correctly pronounced. Then you will pronounce them yourself - and then you will hear the correct pronunciation again so you can check your own pronunciation.

And that's all there is to it. There is nothing mysterious or difficult about learning to speak English correctly. But, don't expect any overnight miracles. You won't learn to speak correctly just by playing these records through once. It takes time and patience to learn a language. You will have to practice, practice, and practice -- with us as we go through each lesson together, and by yourself with the special additional exercises we have provided for each lesson. You'll find these practice exercises in your booklet after the script of each recorded band.

If you don't understand a point, or if you can't quite make the correct sound, stop the record. Don't go on. Go back over the section until you have mastered it. Re-play each lesson a few times until you feel sure and confident with the specific words and sounds. If possible, have someone who speaks English well listen to you and correct you while you practice. You'll find this extremely helpful. And, finally, if you can manage it, buy yourself an inexpensive tape recorder and a few cassettes. Record yourself as you practice the exercises. Then play back the recordings. Listen to yourself and then listen to this record. You will be surprised the first time you hear your own voice. Practically everyone is. But you'll also be pleased to hear yourself improving.

Band 2 The Initial S Followed by a Consonant

SPANISH

Of course, you're quite familiar with this word. The correct pronunciation is Spanish. But how do you pronounce it? Many people whose first language is Spanish tend to say Spanish. And here's why. The word Spanish begins with a consonant S followed by another consonant P. Now practically no Spanish words begin with S followed by a consonant. So in Spanish most words which have S followed by a consonant are usually pronounced starting with an sp or sh sound, like this:

español

That's why so many Spanish speaking people tend to say spanish for Spanish or

espeak for speak

because what they are actually doing is pronouncing these English words (Spanish and speak) as if they were Spanish words.

Now let's take a look at some of the words that you may have trouble with. When I pronounce the word, I'll purposely emphasize the S. I'll do this only for the first few words. When you repeat the word after me, do the same. Then I'll pronounce each succeeding word at the normal speed, without emphasizing the S. You do the same. There will be a pause after I say each word. This will give you enough time to say the word correctly. Then I'll say the word again so you can check your pronunciation. So actually, you'll hear each word three times -- once when I pronounce it, once when I pause while you pronounce it, and then again when I pronounce it for the second time.

We'll be following this same procedure in each lesson.
Now we're ready to begin:

skate
state
stay
stick
small

And now a little faster:

Spanish
speak
snack
spend
stamp

And now we're ready to try some sentences. We'll do the same here as we did with the single words. I'll read the first few sentences slowly, the rest a little faster. After each sentence there will be a pause to allow you to repeat the sentence. Then I'll say the sentence again. You pay special attention to the words that begin with S followed by a consonant. In the booklet you are reading we've underlined these words. So listen carefully and look sharp.

1. The strict father believes in "Spare the rod and spoil the child."
2. Stop! Don't scratch the screen.
3. My boy studies hard at school.
4. Dogs snap at scraps of food.
5. A car smashed into a motor scooter on Spring Street.

Band 2 Practice Exercises

scan	scramble	skin	slump
scare	screen	sky	smart
skate	skate	slam	stuff
scout	sketch	slim	style
scope	ski	slot	sweep
score			

I have a new scarf.
He is riding on a scooter.
Careful or the car may skid.
There is space here for every car.
We like sponge cake.
The store is open until 9 o'clock.
He can snap his fingers.
The horse lives in a stable.
Go straight home.
Speak to me about your studies.
The slice that he wants is the small one.
Don't squeeze the strawberries.
The spoons are made of steel.
The spinach does not smell good.

Write five original sentences using the following words:

scarf, screen, slip, smoo'n, state

Band 3 The Sound of Y

In Spanish, the letters E and Y are pronounced the same. But in English, the E and Y are pronounced differently. The English E sounds very much like the Spanish E as in burro. So you'll have no difficulty with English words like Bob, butter, bill.

The English Y however has a different sound. And this Y sound doesn't exist in Spanish. So at first you may have a slight problem with Y. But once you know how to make the Y sound, you'll find it easy. And here's how. Just follow these few simple steps:

- 1) First open your mouth slightly.
- 2) Now bring your upper teeth down lightly on your lower lip and hold your teeth there.
- 3) Then -- still holding your upper teeth lightly on your lower lip, blow gently until you get a humming sound -- like this -- V-V-V. That's the way Y sounds. Say Y this way, making that humming sound V-V-V and then open your mouth and say E-E-E - like this - and you have Y-Y-Y. It's really very simple. So let's try it again.

Open your mouth slightly. Then bring your upper teeth down lightly on your lower lip, as if you were going to bite your lip -- and hold your teeth lightly in this position.

Now, still holding your upper teeth lightly on your lower lip, make a humming sound through your teeth and lips, like this -- V-V-V - and that's it. Then the sound of Yee - V-V-V.

Now for some words that contain the Y sound. In some, the Y will be at the beginning of the word. In others, you'll find the Y in the middle or near or at the end. But the Y sound is the same -- V-V-V wherever you find it.

In the first few words, I'll exaggerate the V-V-V sound and say it slowly. You do the same when you repeat the words after me. In the rest of the words, I'll also pronounce the Y at the normal speed. The Y's are underlined to make it easier for you to spot them. Ready?

veal
vacant
never
fever

And now a little faster

brave
favor
devil
vine
vest

Now go back to the beginning of this band. Play it over again a few times, follow the instructions, and keep making the Y sound until you feel comfortable saying it. As we told you at the beginning of this program, there are no short cuts to correct speech -- in any language. You and everyone else who wants to speak English correctly must tackle his speech problems as we are doing them now -- one at a time, intelligently, and with lots of practice.

Now some sentences. I'll read the first few sentences slowly, exaggerating the sound of V-V-V. In the pause that follows, repeat the sentence after me. Then I'll say the sentence again. I'll read the rest of the sentences faster. In your exercise book we've underlined the Y to make it easier for you to concentrate on the sound and pronounce it correctly.

1. Mary bought two loaves of bread.
2. Melba has a fine voice.
3. Victor plays the violin.

Now, a little faster, as you would say these sentences in normal conversation.

1. Every citizen should vote.
2. Today is even colder than yesterday.
3. It is easy to give good advice.
4. Victor is a very nervous man.

Band 3 Practice Exercises

vacuum	village	have	prove
various	vine	leave	survive
victor	vital	alive	strive
vent	volume	invest	lever
view	vulture	cover	verb

The vice president has an important job.
Jim is looking for a vacant apartment.
The plane flew over the ocean.
Walker has several friends in Spain.
Many people push and shove in the subway.
We will build the house on level ground.
This veal is delicious.
The needle must be in the groove of the record.
Jane wants to move to Florida.

The brave man received a medal.
 The value of the car is more than five thousand dollars.
 Virginia is a clever young lady.
 We love to eat vegetables.
 Henry is saving money for a voyage to Europe.
 The volunteer fireman arrived at the fire.

Make up sentences using the following words:

vacation, velvet, vitamin, alive, clever

Band 4 The Sound of Uh

A great many English words that are spelled quite differently have this one sound in common - uh.

But there is no sound like uh in Spanish. So it is very difficult to describe to you how to make the uh sound. We think the easier way for you to master it is to listen to the sound carefully, and then try to make it yourself. Re-play this section a few times until you can make the uh sound. Incidentally, this is precisely how people learn to speak any foreign language correctly -- lots of listening and lots of practice imitating what they hear. And it's exactly how you learned your own language.

So just keep on trying until you can uh correctly and confidently. Keep your mouth open -- just a little -- when you make the uh sound. First, we'll say the sound uh. Then you repeat it. We'll do this a few times.

uh
uh
uh
 Again
uh
uh
uh

Now for some words. Concentrate on the letter we've underlined in each word. That's where the uh sound comes. And to make it easier for you, we've put uh under the letter where the sound occurs.

luck
uh
thumb (the b is silent)
uh
button
uh
summer
uh
such
uh
much
uh

Notice that there is a u in each of these words. Usually the u in the middle of a word is pronounced uh, but not always. It is, however, a useful clue to follow.

Now here are some more words spelled quite differently, but all have the uh sound in them. Repeat them after me.

touch
uh
tough
uh
tongue
uh
rough
uh

Now let's put some of these uh words together in sentences. We've underlined the words containing the uh sound. In addition, we've placed uh where the sound occurs.

- You are pretty lucky to win all that money.
uh uh
- Some animals have tough hides.
uh uh
- Here are a dozen rugs, and we have others.
uh uh uh
- Put this cover on the butter dish, and the other on the mustard jar.
uh uh uh

5. Don't step in that puddle or you'll get stuck in the mud.
uh uh uh

As we have seen in previous sentences, the o has an uh sound, as in luck, puff, lump. Now pronounce them after me:

come
uh
love
uh
company
uh
cover
uh
nothing
uh
month
uh

Try for the uh sound in the following sentences. We've underlined the o and placed a uh underneath it.

- Shovel the dirt away.
uh
- Where is your mother?
uh
- Is your brother at school?
uh
- Don't worry.
uh
- Where is my other book?
uh

Band 4 Practice Exercises

drum	gull	bump	money
sum	dumb	dove	ton
hum	stump	love	monkey
spun	junk	none	cousin
fun	jump	honey	ugly

Please shut the door.
 What is he muttering about?
 John is passing the butter.
 They bought a cover for the books today.
 Why do you punish the child?
 We need more rubber bands.
 Stop rubbing your eyes.
 The children are blowing bubbles.
 This monkey is very cute.
 Where is your uncle now?
 Come with your gun.
 Mr. Gold doesn't see his son.
 How much money did you pay for that bunny?
 Let's present this map to the club.
 Ted's uncle drives a truck.

Make up original sentences using the following words:

cousin, puddle, lucky, compass, sun

Band 5 The Sound of Final M

Whenever you see m, it has the same sound, just like the m in mama.

or
me
 or
my
tomato
tomorrow
bump
martini

M presents no problem either at the beginning or in the middle of a word, because m appears in these same places in Spanish words.

a bit of a problem with English. At first, and only briefly, until you get into the habit of pronouncing the m at the end of a word. As usual, we're going to exaggerate the m sound to illustrate this point. In normal conversation, of course, you wouldn't speak like this. But it's quite all right for practice. Pronounce the m just as I do.

cream
home
some
rum
him
drum

Now, just a little faster, but still getting that mmm sound at the end.

firm
arm
swim
scream

In the following words, the b is not pronounced -- only the m.

comb
crumb
thumb

In these next words, the final e is not pronounced, but the m is.

lime
time
same
name

Now some sentences. The final m is underlined.

1. Please don't slam the door.
2. What kind of rum do you like?
3. Did you hear that scream?
4. We serve lunch from twelve to one on Monday.
5. Come to the museum with Tom and me.

Band 5 Practice Exercises

hem	him	comb	same
stem	tram	crumb	time
gem	term	bomb	arm
from	foam	limb	aim
medium	firm	climb	minimum

I want to rent a room.
Did you investigate our claim?
They arrived on time.
Let's go to the aquarium.
Please don't slam the door.
To what does he owe his fame?
How does this seem to him?
The children are crumbling the cookies.
What form are they using?
Tom can't climb the ladder.
She came and cleaned the room.
My arm is numb.
Sam's body is slim and firm.
What's the name of this brand of rum?
Miriam hurt her thumb.

Make up sentences using the following words:

Thomas, bomb, mutter, team, stem

Band 6 The Sound of A As in Rat

The letter a has several different sounds in English. The one that is likely to give you some difficulty occurs very often in such very common words as

The a in these words sounds like this

a
a
a

and it does not occur in Spanish at all.

The best and easiest way to get this sound correctly is listen carefully to it, and practice making it - again and again until you've got it.

First let's try the sound alone. Repeat it after me.

a
a
a

Again

a
a
a

Once more

a
a
a

Now try for the same sound in these words. We'll exaggerate the sound of the a the first time around. You do likewise.

add
past
had
mad

Now, a bit faster

fast
lack
rack
tack

Now for some sentences containing words with the a sound. We've underlined the a.

1. The cat caught a large rat.
2. Sally bought a hat to match her coat.
3. Harry is happy today.
4. Matthew is satisfied with his job.
5. The store will cash your check.

Band 6 Practice Exercises

add	rattle	math	bard
after	cash	sad	land
axe	mask	glad	pan
battle	flash	fat	panic
cattle	had	hand	van

How white the sand is!
I'll have ham and eggs.
He has two sisters.
Will you have some more lamb?
What is your plan?
Let's study the map.
The hunter set a trap for the wolf.
Ask me some more questions.
What is your plan?
Who is wearing a mask?
Am I to send a telegram?
He congratulated her on her travels.
Famine and panic are reported.
The child ran into the stand.
Dad told me the bad news.

Make up a sentence using the following words:

mat, feet, land, cattle, that

Sound of Sh

Now we come to an easy sound - sh. And here is how it's made. Start with ch as if you were going to say Chico. Now say ch once and hold it -- like this, Ch--sh-sp. Again. Ch--sh-sp. Notice that when you hold the ch, it turns into sh -- just the sound you want.

Now when you say sh, your upper and lower teeth are together. The sound sh is forced out like this sh-sh-sh.

That's the first sound in the following words. Repeat them after me.

sh-sh-shop
sh-sh-shock
sh-sh-short

sh is the last sound in the following words. But it's made the same way that you say sh at the beginning of a word. Repeat them after me.

push
wish
wash
hush
mesh

Now a few more sh words.

shake
ship
shell
crush
fresh
mash
splash

The sh occurs in the middle of words, too - like these. Say them after me.

marshall
wishing
brushing

But the sh sound isn't always spelled sh. Generally ti, ci, si are also pronounced like sh. And here are some common examples. We've underlined the letters that sound like sh. Repeat them after me.

motion
attention
ignition
permission
precious

Now for some sentences. We've underlined the sh sound in each word. Some sentences contain more than one sh word.

1. Do you have enough cash?
2. She is quite short.
3. What is the official position of your organization?
4. Sheila and Marshall went on a fishing expedition.
5. Let us know when your shop gets a shipment of new shoes.

Band 7 Practice Exercises

shade	shore	cash	sherry
shame	short	crash	insure
she	shot	ashes	attention
sheep	should	dishes	mission
	shoulder	shed	motion

Peter is very shy.
I want a sharp knife.
Why are they pushing each other?
Who crushed the package?
Bill bought another cushion.
The child is very cautious.
Mr. Childs set the wheels in motion.

There is something wrong with the car's ignition.
The firemen rushed to the fire.
They bought a pressure cooker.
Please don't shake the shellac.
I'm sure that the shed is locked.
That short boy never pays attention.
Fish is nourishing food.
Sally has a beautiful sash.

Make up five original sentences using the following words:

shout, shovel, assure, lotion, portion

Band 8 The Sound of Y at the Beginning of a Word

A y at the beginning of a word sounds like this:

young
yes
yellow

Now did you hear the sort of y (iu) sound of the y? Notice what happens to your tongue and lips when you make that y sound. Once more now - and repeat after me:

Using the y or juh sound instead of the y or yuh sound can sometimes be very embarrassing, if, for example, you say Jello when you mean yellow. Jello, as you know, is a popular dessert. Yellow is a color. So it's important for you to know the difference between the juh and yuh sound.

Repeat the following words after me:

yea
yeast
yesterday
yet
youthful

Now try the following sentences, which all contain words that begin with y. The y sound is underlined, so you can pay special attention to it.

1. You can be young only once, you know.
2. Did you see the yellow yarn?
3. Yesterday, your father was here.
4. Do your parents live in New York?
5. Be careful, or you'll hurt yourself.

There are different spellings for the sound of y at the beginning of a word. Here, for example, is a list of words that begin with the letter y, but they all sound as though they were spelled with a y before the u. Listen carefully - and repeat after me.

unit
union
university
useful
uniform

And here's still another list of words that begin with eu. These words also sound as though there is a y before the eu, like this:

Eugene
Europe
eulogy

So when you see a word that begins with eu, you're pretty safe if you pronounce it as if there is a y before the eu.

Band 8 Practice Exercises

yank	university	youngster	yolk
yanker	unions	youth	yesterday
yard	universal	yield	Eugenie
yawn	utility	yearly	euchre
united	use	yonder	

The United States is a wonderful country.
 He was born in Utah.
 This is a useful book.
 He had a feeling of euphoria.
 Was he found guilty of usury?
 What is the color of this yarn?
 Tell him to stop velling.
 These notes are very unusual.
 Barry works for a utility company.
 These people have been unified for centuries.
 Furice paid yearly visits to her birthplace.
 The youthful roleter entertained the crowd.
 The yarn was of a yellowish color.
 Eugenia has a youthful appearance.
 The Universal Company produces unusual movies.

Make up five original sentences using the following words:

useless, unify, usual, Uruguay, European

Band 9 The Sound of u as in Music

Like other English letters, the letter u isn't always pronounced the same way.

Sometimes it has the uh sound, as in words like pump, thumb, and luck. We've covered this sound on Band 4.

But sometimes the u sounds quite different, as in this very familiar word, MUSIC - Music. Here the u sounds exactly like the word you - Y-oo. So when you pronounce music, here's what you are actually doing. You are making the m sound, like this -- m-m-m-m and simply adding you-zik --music. Say it a few more times slowly so you get the feel of the way to make this combination of sounds -- how it sounds, and how it feels when you say it.

music (m-m-you-zik)
 music (m-m-you-zik)
 music (m-m-you-zik)

•And now a little faster

music
 music
 music

Here are some more words with u pronounced you. Repeat them after me:

community
 amuse
 huge
 pure

And a few more with the same you sound:

beauty
 beautiful
 museum
 bureau
 cure
 security

Now some sentences. The u sound is underlined, as usual.

1. Bill is a fine human being.
2. Eugene and Beulah are an amusing couple.
3. Fuel will be more expensive in the future.
4. Mildred has a cute child.
5. You can get ice cubes at the market.

Band 9 Practice Exercises

cure	futile	cupid	cue
pure	accuse	future	huge
fury	beauty	refuse	Eugenia
mute	abuse	accumulate	secure
few	amuse	sure	obscure

Some children are very insecure.
 Can he refuse to do it?
 The infant is in an incubator.
 The vat holds 15 cubic feet.
 They invested in mutual funds.
 Where is Muriel?

They went to the funeral.
 These murals are colorful.
 All my efforts are futile.
 I am curious about the future.
 The mutiny caused great confusion.
 They have mutual friends who are amusing.
 A few of the children are cute.
 The pupils accumulated many books.

Make up sentences using the following words:

cube, tube, pewter, incurable, mutiny

Band 10 The Sound of W as in Water

When you say agua, you've made the sound of w. W sounds just about the same as the u in agua - agua - and it's a very simple sound to make.

Just say agua slowly. Accent the u - slowly and listen for the w sound. It's agua. There it is - just before the a.

Here it is exaggerated.

agua
agua
agua

Now drop the ag and just say ua as if it were spelled w-ah ua as if it were spelled w-ah

All clear? Ready now for some common words that begin with w?

want
wait
warm
wake
wife
wire

Now for some sentences. Pay particular attention to the words where the w sound is underlined.

1. The war is over.
2. You can get quite wet in warm humid weather.
3. Walter went swimming with his watch on.
4. The wind is from the west.
5. Bill was too weak to come to work.
6. Next week the men's wages will be higher.

Band 10 Practice Exercises

wage	waste	welcome	aware
wagon	watch	away	waltz
walk	water	awake	weed
war	would	award	welfare
wash	wonder	web	west

Do you like your work?
 The ring is worth a great deal.
 That word is new to me.
 She prefers wool to cotton.
 This woman is Spanish.
 We need more wood for the fire.
 Did you see the wolf in the zoo?
 They wish to leave now.
 Peter is quite witty.
 Winter is my favorite season.
With whom will she go?
 They would welcome them here.
 John wonders why he feels so weak.
 Mary is wearing a wig.
 Jack is waiting for his award.

Make up sentences using the following words:

wave, wax, aware, wagon, awake

Every time you see the letter o in a word, you expect it to have the same sound. As you've learned by now it just doesn't happen all the time this way in English. And, as you have discovered that, of course, is what makes English pronunciation so confusing for most foreign students.

In a way, you know, it's easier for an American to learn to pronounce Spanish words correctly than it is for a Spanish person to pronounce English words correctly, in Spanish, because in Spanish, the words sound pretty much as they are spelled. In English, they don't always sound as they are spelled.

The letter o is a perfect case in point. It has at least three different sounds: uh as in Love, ah as in Hot, and o as in Cold. The o in Cold sounds very much like the o in Foot. With a slight difference - only slight. The English o is made with the lips a bit more rounded and the sound of o is a bit more drawn out - like this o-o-o. It's very easy to make the o sound correctly. Here's how. Draw your lips into a circle as you naturally do when you start to say o in Foot. Now continue to make the sound of o - like this - o-o-o - and as you are making the sound, make the circle of your lips grow smaller - like this - o o o. And here's what happens. You start out saying o and you end up stretching it into oo like this:

O-ooo
o-ooo
O-ooo

Now try it with me. Make a circle with your lips. Now say o. And continue to say o but now make the circle of your lips smaller and listen carefully and repeat after me:

O-oo
O-oo
O-oo

Say the following words after me. And don't forget to STRETCH out the o sound as you narrow the circle of your lips:

go
home
rope
slow
rose
Joe

Now a little faster

load
hope
alone
grocery
home

And now the sentences.

1. The farmer dug a hole in the snow.
2. The miner spoke slowly.
3. When is Joan going home?
4. I've told you over and over that I don't know.
5. Hold the toast over the stove, Sophie.

Band 11 Practice Exercises

globe	loan	joke	frozen
grocery	coast	rosy	ghost
ocean	roast	host	bone
alone	toast	stove	hope
home	boast	most	both

Father says that his throat hurts.
I like your coat.
Please stop rocking the boat.
How long have you had that mole?
She has high cheek bones.
We need some more rope.
I can't stand the cold weather.
Children like to play in the snow.
Let's go home now.

Where do these bones and stones come from?

Smoke can choke you.

He knows how to throw the discus.

They also need soap and towels.

I wish you could go with Joe.

Make up original sentences using the following words:

frozen, most, moan, Ramona, boat

Band 12 The Sound of Z as in Zero

Z sounds the same as the s in mismo.

Starting with this z-z-z sound, say after me:

zero
zoo
zebra
zeal
zinc

The z sound occurs at the end of some words too, like this. Repeat them after me:

haze
maze
doze
jazz

Z sounds occur in the middle of words too. So when you see z, of course, you know what to do. Pronounce it z-- like this:

crazy
hazy
lazy
dizzy
jazzy

You'll have no difficulty with words where you can see the z. There are, however, some words that are not spelled with a z, but they contain a z sound. This may throw you off at first. It confuses most students. But there's no fool-proof rule that you can follow here. You'll just have to learn these words as you come across them.

You may find it handy to keep a little notebook and write down each word you come across that has a z sound but is spelled without a z. In the following words we've underlined the syllables or combinations of letters that are given the z sound. Repeat them after me.

goes (sounds as though it were spelled goez)
stars (sounds as though it were spelled starz)
loge (sounds as though it were spelled looze)
lambs (sounds as though it were spelled lamz. The b is silent)
loves (sounds as though it were spelled lovz)
rubs (sounds as though it were spelled rubz)

And here are a few more common words with the z sound. We've underlined the part of the word that sounds like z.

cousin
(z)
position
(z)
deserve
(z)
desert
(z)
design
(z)
miserable
(z)

flows	has	razor	is	habit	hear	hold	hundred
rise	does	easy	freeze	had	heart	holiday	husband
prize	says	praise	zero	hammer	heavy	horse	hungry
dries	as	amaze	result	hand	high	hearse	hunter
tries	boys	his	wise	handkerchief	hut	hungry	humble

He gave me a present.
 John is in a bad position.
 What have you in reserve?
 The statue is made of bronze.
 What is the price of a dozen eggs?
 Hattie is gazing at the moon.
 Here are some more hazelnuts.
 The store is ablaze with Christmas lights.
 Don't you recognize them?
 The tide is rising.
 Her wisdom fairly dazzles me.
 This magazine has many interesting articles.
 The water in the hose will freeze.
 I generally sneeze when it drizzles.

Make up sentences using the following words:

raisin, busy, cozy, visit, dizzy

In the following sentences, we've underlined the z's and the letters that sound like z.

- Your nose and toes will freeze in zero weather.
- It's easy to use a safety razor.
- Mel tries to please his boss.
- There's a prize zebra at the zoo.
- The boys were making a lot of noise.

Band 13 The Sound of H as in Hat

Now what happens when you walk or run up a flight of stairs? Your breathing sounds something like this: huh - huh - huh - huh. Right? That's simple the sound of h in words like:

how
house
hurry
hair

In normal speech, you just breathe in lightly and quickly, and then let your breath out quickly to produce the h sound. Actually, you can barely hear yourself breathe in words like:

heavy
harry
 and
heel

Now pronounce the following words after me. Listen carefully for the h sound at the beginning:

hero
heel
holy
hip
hit

Do the same with the h sound in these sentences.

- Hannah's hobby is sewing fancy handkerchiefs.
- Home is where he hangs his hat.
- Hardly anything ever happens in Hanover.
- I hope you haven't hurt yourself.
- Henry doesn't know how it happened.

The batter hit the ball into left field.
 John dug a hole to plant the tree.
 In the summer the weather is often humid.
 Mary has many friends.
 They ordered ham and eggs.
 The men are painting the hall.
 Yesterday they hired a car.
 These hens lay large eggs.
 Where is Catherine hiding?
 Sylvia bought half a dozen dresses.
 We hiked two miles to the hills.
 There is a hole in the heel of my sock.
 I hope that the harvest will be good.
Henry is a fine history student.
 The hero of the story is a holy man.

Make up sentences using the following words:

hint, have, help, honey, hurry

Band 14 Words Ending in ED

There are so many English words that end in ed that you can hardly speak without using at least one of them. But, unfortunately, there is not a single rule that will tell you how to pronounce all ed words correctly. We do, however, have a few guides which are helpful, even though they are not perfect.

In many ed words, the ed is usually pronounced as part of the sound that comes before it--not as a separate ed sound. Here are some examples:

love-loved

Notice what happens here. The v and the ed come together to produce the sound vd.

love - hear the v?
 loved - now the v and the ed have become vd as if the word were spelled lovd.

Now let's try a few more. Repeat after me:

tease-teased
 call-called
 own-owned
 hug-hugged
 stir-stirred
 hum-hummed
 buzz-buzzed

In the words we've just gone over, the sound before the ed is voiced. That means that you have to use your voice to produce that sound. Pronounce after me each of the sounds before the ed, and, while you're doing this, place your open hand lightly on your throat so that your thumb rests under your ear. As you say each of these voiced letters, you'll feel a vibration in your throat. And that's your voice producing the sound, and that's why these sounds you are about to make are called voiced sounds.

loved-the v is voiced, like this--v - loved
 hugged-the g is voiced, like this--gg - hugged
 stirred-the r is voiced, like this--r - stirred
 buzzed-the z is voiced, like this--z - buzzed

Now let's try a few sentences:

- Eddie leaned against the post.
- I like glazed ham.
- Bill answered the question correctly.

4. The doctor served in two wars.
5. The boy humed a tune.

Now there are some letters and sounds that are voiceless. You produce them with your tongue and lips. You don't use your voice. That's why they are called voiceless sounds. Repeat them after me, but first place your open hand lightly on your throat so your thumb rests under your ear. Ready?

Here's what f sounds like - f-f-f
Here's what k sounds like - k-k-k
Here's what s sounds like - s-s-s
Here's what sh sounds like - sh-sh-sh
Here's what p sounds like - p-p-p
Here's what ch sounds like - ch-ch-ch

Notice again. You felt no vibration in your throat when you made these voiceless sounds.

Now when these voiceless sounds come before ed, the ed is pronounced like a t - like this:

pass (which is voiceless) - add ed, and you get pass
s and ed = t.
wash (voiceless sh) - add ed, and you get wash.
sh plus ed = t.

Now repeat after me:

hop-hopped
face-faced
crush-crushed
talk-talked

hop-hopped
face-faced
crush-crushed
talk-talked

And a few sentences:

1. I walked two miles today.
2. Ralph asked too many questions.
3. We missed our train.
4. Who chopped down the tree?

Here is one rule you can safely follow because it has no exceptions. In some words ending in ed the ed makes a separate syllable, like this: Repeat them after me:

raid-raided
fold-folded
part-parted
heat-heated

Now did you notice that in these words, the sound before the ed is either d or t?

raid ends in d so it sounds raided
fold ends in d so the sound is folded
heat ends in t so the sound is heated
and
part ends in t so it sounds parted

Now whenever you add ed to a word that ends in d or t, the ed is pronounced as a separate syllable. The sound of ed in these words is not ed as you might think. It's id like this:

end -ended (not end ed - but end id) end-ended
seat-seated (not seat ed, but seat id) seat-seated

Now repeat after me:

raid-raided
fold-folded
start-started
bat-batted

raid-raided
fold-folded

start-started
bat-batted

Now try these sentences where we've underlined the ed which sounds like id.

1. He folded the paper and handed it to me.
2. The dancer excited the audience.
3. Lighted cigarettes are not permitted here.
4. The waiters folded the chairs and left.
5. The color of the suit was faded blue.

Now here are a few words that don't fit any of the rules we've just discussed. You'll just have to memorize them, as you have done and are going to do with all the exceptions you come across.

rugged - pronounced rug-id - two syllables.
four-legged - pronounced four-leg-id - three syllables
ragged - pronounced rag-id - two syllables
naked - pronounced na-kid - two syllables
wicked - pronounced wick-id - two syllables

Band 14 Practice Exercises

Type I

pleased
frowned
shrugged
recalled
shoved
eased
towed
snowed
served
entered

Type II

dropped
stopped
laced
paced
crushed
pushed
touched
chalked
risked
mopped

Type III

traded
shaded
braided
faded
invaded
treated
elected
greeted
crated
fated

The boss swarmed through the room.
The workers picketed the factory.
Have you ever popped corn?
I turned the book over.
The man loaded the furniture on the truck.
Who missed the bus?
John played a pretty tune on the piano.
The queen kissed the prince goodnight.
The teacher rated the examination.
Let's have the piano tuned.
Jack was alarmed when he was attacked.
We helped our neighbors roast the chicken.
He stated that he was bored.
The general viewed the fort before his men attacked it.
We looked at them and ordered them to leave.

Make up sentences using the following words:

warmed, asked, traded, faced, settled

Band 15 The Sound of Th as in Bath

In this band and the next one we are going to take up two sounds that bother practically every foreign student, and some Americans as well: The th in words like think and bath and the th in words like this and bathe.

The th sound in think and bath you'll have no trouble with at all. It's pronounced the way the Spanish people in Madrid pronounce in words like:

cinco (thinko)
cena (thena)
or like the letter z in
zapato (thapato)

Now, concentrating on the th underlined, repeat these words after me:

thin
thimble
thick
thought
three
thanks
thumb

Now for some sentences:

1. Thelma is a thorough worker.
2. Mary needs some black thread.
3. Is Harry fourth or fifth on line?
4. Today is the third of November.
5. There's nothing wrong here.

Band 15 Practice Exercises

breath	nothing	thief	threat
death	path	thigh	throat
earth	sixth	thin	throne
fifth	seventh	third	through
mathematics	wrath	thirty	thunder

We thank you very much.

A moth can damage a garment.

This myth tells a beautiful story.

She hurt her finger on a thorn.

Ben injured his thumbs.

Throw him out.

About a thousand people were there.

John is a very thoughtful person.

Many authors receive little praise.

By whose authority do you enter this house?

Ruth wants to live north of the border.

He threw a cloth over the table.

Next month John will travel south.

I have such faith in Elizabeth.

The scientists think his theory is very interesting.

Make up sentences using the following words:

path, forth, thirst, thermometer, thread

Band 16 The Sound of TH as This

You're going to do a little experiment now. Place your open hand on your throat so that your thumb rests under your ear. The part of your neck that rests in your hand contains your larynx or voice box.

Now say the following words after me. And notice whether you feel anything in your throat when you pronounce the th sound.

thin
thick
thanks

You didn't feel anything at all, did you, when you said the th in thin? That's because you weren't using your voice or larynx at all. The th in words like thin, both, thanks, is soft or voiceless. You make this th sound th as in cinco (think) just by putting the tip of your tongue between your teeth and blowing air between your teeth, like this: th-th-th.

Now, again holding your open hand around your throat and placing your thumb under your ear, repeat after me:

this
that
those
them

Now did you hear the difference in sound between the th in thin and the th in this? Right. You get a kind of buzzing sound when you make the th in this. And at the same time you feel a vibration in your throat. You're making that vibration in your throat with your voice when you say this, that, those.

And now that you know that you are using your voice to make th as in this, let's see how your tongue, teeth, and lips work together with your voice. It's really very simple.

1. Put the tip of your tongue between your teeth.
2. Hold your tongue between your teeth lightly, but don't let it slip away from your teeth.
3. Now, pressing lightly on your tongue, use your voice to get this humming, vibrating sound of th-th-th.

Repeat the following words after me and they all start with the voiced th.

Get that th sound right at the beginning of the word and the rest is easy.

the (uh)
those
them
there

And here are some examples of words in which th comes in the middle. Do exactly what you did when th came at the beginning of a word. We've underlined the th sound in each word.

either
father
mother
feather
other

Now for some sentences:

1. Put all the papers on the other side.
2. They were all there.
3. Don't clean my leather boxes.
4. It will be good weather when we get together.
5. Your brother and father are waiting for you.

Band 16 Practice Exercises

than	tether	altogether	rhythmic
therefore	heather	slither	loathe
their	bathing	without	gathering
though	otherwise	breathing	leatherette
thus	smother	soothe	feather

You can have either chocolate or vanilla ice-cream.
Tell me another story.

Can John operate a lathe?

I can hardly breathe in this room.

Neither John nor Mary knows the answer.

I am going with my friends.

Don't bother him; he's busy.

The Northern lights are beautiful.

We will leave together.

Furthermore, he is right.

Today's weather is better than yesterday's.

Although he is here, he would rather be at home.

She must gather the clothing for the laundry.

He is looking for another can of leather.

The rhythm of the music is very soothing.

Make up sentences using the following words:

that, these, brother, together, although

Band 17 The Sound of Double O (oo) as in Book and Room

Now here are two words that you know very well.

book
room

Notice that they both contain a double o (oo). By now, of course, you won't be too surprised to find that the double o (oo) has two different pronunciations:

double (oo) sounds like oo in book.
double (oo) sounds like oo in room.

The double oo sound in book does not occur in Spanish. And this is how it sounds. Try it by itself, like this:

This rookie bats very well.
 Mother is a good cook.
 You need a good sweater made of wool.
 He pushed the cart with his foot.
 Look at the latest bulletin from the agriculture department.
 She put a spoonful of cereal into the bowl.

Now, slowly, in the following words - repeat after me:

book
 look
 shook
 foot

We get the same oo sound in book in other words that are spelled differently. Here are a few.

push
 pull
 put

And these very common words contain the oo sound too.
 The l is silent in all of these words.

would
 should
 could

Now for some sentences:

1. Mary is a good cook.
2. Hang the hat on the hook near the bookcase.
3. The butcher's shop is full of meat.
4. A woolen hood is good on cold days.
5. He pushed and pulled until he got the wooden free.

oo as in Room

The double oo in words like room should not be a problem to you. It sounds very much like the u sound in Spanish, but it is held just a bit longer, like this: oo-oo-oo oo-oo-oo oo-oo-oo.

Now try it and repeat after me:

room
 fool
 choose
 moon

The oo sound is produced by other combinations of letters like the following:

who
 whose
 tour
 poor

The oo sound is underlined in the following sentences.
 Repeat after me:

1. The company has boosted its rates.
2. It's quite cool today near the pool.
3. Don't be fooled, it's a simple problem.
4. Did you choose this room?

Band 17 Practice Exercises

cookie	output	goodness	couldn't
pudding	football	booklet	shouldn't
bull	bookie	footnote	input
pulley	stood	hood	withstood
woodwork	butcher	wouldn't	manhood

Jones used a hook to catch a fish.
Wood is becoming more expensive.
 The pail is full.
 The sheriff put the bullets into the gun.
 They never understood me.
 The horse hurt his hoof.
 We have to cross the brook.
 The police found the gun behind the bush.
 There is a lot of soot in the chimney.

Make up sentences using the following words:

took, good, wood, book, pull

Band 18 The Sound of J

The sound of the English j is entirely different from the sound of the Spanish j. In Spanish, as in the word junta, the j sounds very much like the English h. When you say the Spanish j in junta, you aren't using your voice. You're simply forcing your breath out, and the sound comes easily and naturally, like this:

h-h-h-junta.

The English j however, has a sort of humming, buzzing sound, like this: j-j-j. You make this j sound with your voice. When you say j-j-j you can actually feel what is happening in your voice box. Try it. Place your open hand around your throat, with your thumb resting under your ear. Notice what you feel when you say the j in the following words, after me:

Jim
 Jack
 joy
 just

That vibration you feel in your throat is what your voice did in pronouncing j.

Now you've got the sound of j when it appears at the beginning of a word or anywhere else.

But there are other combinations of letters like gi and ge, for example, that sound like j, too.

Here are some of these words with the j sound at the beginning. Repeat them after me:

germ
 gentle
 general

And here are some words with the j sound in the middle.
 Repeat them after me:

rigid
 aging
 budget

And, finally, here are some words with the j sound at the end.

page
 courage
 stage
 range

A bit confusing, isn't it? Yes, for everyone learning to pronounce English correctly. And this holds true for native-born Americans too. They all have problems of one kind or another with English pronunciation.

But once you see the word and once you hear the correct pronunciation and practice it (now that's important, the practicing of the correct pronunciation) then you'll find things aren't as confusing as they seemed at first.

Now try the following sentences after me. We've underlined the part of each word with a j sound.

1. General Jones is a man of courage.
2. The manager bought a refrigerator.
3. Joan and Jane loved George.
4. I like orange juice.
5. The weather will change tomorrow.

Band 18 Practice Exercises

James	Japan	pledge	range
jail	job	fudge	strange
jewel	jelly	ridge	rage
jest	gypsy	major	cage
jaw	badge	banjo	sponge

The cage is behind the house.
 Let's trim the hedges.
 The ledge is on the hill.
 Mae's wages are very high.
 Who is the manager of the store?
 John owns many gems.
 Did the company reject your offer?
 The Giants are a good team.
 Mark defends himself with judo.
 The President flew to Europe by jet.
 Mr. Aldrich is the junior member of the jury.
 The gentleman ordered orange juice.
 This refrigerator is huge.
 The gentle boy showed great courage.
 This jar is very fragile.

Make up sentences using the following words:

jewel, join, stranger, bridge, danger

Band 19 The Sound of i as in Bit

There is no sound in Spanish exactly like the i in bit. It is, however, a very common sound in English. Actually, you'll come across it very often. The last two sentences that we just said contain three words with this i sound, it, is, in. And the sentence beginning with Actually contains two more i sound words: with and this.

The i in bit is pronounced i-i-i-i.

Say it after me:

bit
 bit
 bit

The following words contain the same i sound. Say them after me:

Miss
 Mister
 sister
 rich
 big

Here are a few common words that contain the i sound, but they are spelled differently from words like bit, mill, will, and fill.

Repeat them after me:

system
 business
 women

We've underlined the words in the following sentences that contain the i sound. Repeat them after me:

1. Phil hurt his finger.
2. It is very misty today.
3. Little children often can't sit still.
4. I live in the city.
5. Richard saw Bishop Bissell today.

Band 19 Practice Exercises

wish	lip	tin	spill
did	dip	fin	until
sit	spit	fish	ink
if	omit	sing	misty
riddle	pin	fill	shin

It is very chilly today.
 Let's visit the house.
 You should sip the wine.
 The maid put out the kitchen light.
 We lit the lamp at five o'clock.
 Make a list of the new words.
 The idea seems very simple.
 I think you are right.
 Please don't spit on the floor.
 The faucet is dripping.
 They enjoyed the trip on the ship.
Lizy Brown sings very well.
Flip a coin if you wish.
 Please grip the rim of the wheel.
 The pin went through his skin.

Make up sentences using the following words:

sing, ring, fish, mistake, history

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ITHO IN U.S.A.