

Trainyouraccent.com: Pronunciation Activities for English Learners

By *ESL-LAB.COM*

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In addition to his main site, Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab (www.esl-lab.com), Randall Davis has developed www.trainyouraccent.com, a pronunciation Website for ESL/EFL students who want to improve their fluency in English.

American Fork, Utah - Learning how to communicate effectively is the goal of all language students, and improving your pronunciation is an important key to the language puzzle. However, for many students, a lack of training in this area keeps them from reaching their goals. Thus, Randall created this site, <http://www.trainyouraccent.com>, to help ESL/EFL students in two ways: (1) improve students' understanding of relaxed speech, (2) reduce their accents to improve comprehensibility, and (3) learn how relaxed speech is used with vocabulary and expressions in everyday language.

Keep in mind that everyone has an accent, and having one isn't necessarily bad. In fact, your accent identifies you to your particular language, and it can be a positive thing. Imagine if Arnold Schwarzenegger (famous actor and current Governor of California) lost his accent, he would no longer be a novelty; in part, it is his accent that endears him to his audience. However, if our accent makes it difficult for others to understand us, then we should seek ways to improve our pronunciation. Accent elimination is not possible for most people, but improving our comprehensibility is.

What Makes Up Our Accent?

Asking a native speaker to help us correct our accents might not be a very useful way because most people (even native speakers) can't really identify what elements affect the way we speak. However, to keep things basic, our accents are composed of a number of features including:

- * phonological characteristics of individual sounds
- * intonation
- * word and sentence stress
- * rhythm
- * pausing and linking of sounds and phrases
- * word reductions

Now, one of the major challenges that students face is English ISN'T a very phonetic language, that is, spelling often does not equal pronunciation. Imagine someone, completely new to English, trying to pronounce the words *ate* and *eight*. Unless you have memorized these words, you wouldn't have any idea on how to pronounce them.

Keeping all of this in mind, ESL/EFL teachers and students do the listening and discussion activities to help them become aware of English pronunciation and then improve fluency in English. The site is completely free, and students can also visit Randall's other Websites, <http://www.esl-lab.com> and <http://www.dailyesl.com>, for additional language practice.

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About ESL-LAB.COM: Since 1998, Randall Davis has been developing free multimedia Websites for ESL/EFL students. In addition to <http://www.esl-lab.com>, Randall has created several others including

<http://www.dailyesl.com> and <http://www.ezslang.com>. Randall has also given presentations on educational technology, specifically helping teachers learn how to use technology in pedagogically-sound ways.

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