

# English Pronunciation Cheat Sheet

Sound more natural — common mistakes, minimal pairs, stress patterns, and silent letters.

Pronunciation isn't about a perfect accent — it's about being understood. These four lists fix the patterns that trip up almost every learner.

## 01 · COMMONLY MISPRONOUNCED WORDS

*Word — how to say it — common mistake.*

<b>comfortable</b>	KUM-fter-bul	<i>not COM-for-TAY-bul</i>
<b>vegetable</b>	VEJ-tuh-bul	<i>not VEJ-eh-TAY-bul</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>	WENZ-day	<i>not WED-nez-day</i>
<b>February</b>	FEB-yoo-air-ee	<i>not FEB-roo-air-ee</i>
<b>library</b>	LY-brer-ee	<i>not LY-bear-ee</i>
<b>entrepreneur</b>	on-truh-pruh-NUR	<i>French origin — last syllable stress</i>
<b>colleague</b>	KOL-eeeg	<i>stress on first syllable</i>
<b>schedule</b>	SKED-yool / SHED-yool	<i>US vs UK — both correct</i>
<b>receipt</b>	rih-SEET	<i>the P is silent</i>
<b>hierarchy</b>	HY-uh-rah-kee	<i>four syllables, not three</i>
<b>specifically</b>	spuh-SIF-ik-lee	<i>not 'puh-SIFF-ik-lee'</i>
<b>determine</b>	dih-TUR-min	<i>not 'DEE-ter-mine'</i>
<b>genuine</b>	JEN-yoo-in	<i>not 'jen-yoo-EEN'</i>
<b>pronunciation</b>	pruh-NUN-see-AY-shun	<i>no 'noun' sound inside</i>
<b>clothes</b>	kloh-z	<i>the TH almost disappears</i>

## 02 · MINIMAL PAIRS (ONE SOUND = DIFFERENT WORD)

*Practice hearing the difference. If you can't hear it, you can't say it.*

<b>ship / sheep</b>	/I/ vs /i:/	<i>short vs long vowel</i>
<b>bit / beat</b>	/I/ vs /i:/	<i>same distinction, different word</i>
<b>cat / cut</b>	/ae/ vs /uh/	<i>front vs central vowel</i>
<b>bed / bad</b>	/e/ vs /ae/	<i>mid vs low front</i>
<b>light / right</b>	/I/ vs /r/	<i>tongue forward vs back</i>
<b>think / sink</b>	/th/ vs /s/	<i>tongue between teeth vs behind</i>
<b>vest / best</b>	/v/ vs /b/	<i>lip-teeth vs both lips</i>
<b>fan / van</b>	/f/ vs /v/	<i>voiceless vs voiced</i>
<b>pull / pool</b>	/U/ vs /u:/	<i>short vs long back vowel</i>
<b>heart / hurt</b>	/ah/ vs /er/	<i>open vs r-colored vowel</i>

## 03 · WORD STRESS RULES

*Stressing the wrong syllable changes the meaning of the word — or makes it unrecognizable.*

**Two-syllable nouns: stress the FIRST syllable.**

*RE-cord, PRE-sent, OB-ject, IN-crease*

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**Two-syllable verbs: stress the SECOND syllable.**

*re-CORD, pre-SENT, ob-JECT, in-CREASE*

**Words ending in -tion / -sion: stress the syllable BEFORE the ending.**

*in-for-MA-tion, de-Cl-sion, e-DU-ca-tion*

**Words ending in -ic / -ical: stress the syllable BEFORE the ending.**

*dra-MA-tic, op-ti-MIS-tic, e-CO-no-mic*

**Compound nouns: stress the FIRST word.**

*BOOK-store, AIR-port, TOOTH-paste, GREEN-house*

**Compound verbs / phrasal verbs: stress the SECOND word.**

*give UP, take OFF, look UP*

## 04 · SILENT LETTER PATTERNS

<b>Silent K</b>	knife, know, knee, knock, knit, knight
<b>Silent P</b>	psychology, pneumonia, receipt, pseudonym
<b>Silent B</b>	doubt, debt, subtle, climb, lamb, thumb
<b>Silent W</b>	write, wrong, wrap, wrist, answer, sword
<b>Silent G</b>	sign, design, foreign, gnaw, champagne
<b>Silent H</b>	hour, honest, honor, ghost, rhythm
<b>Silent L</b>	walk, talk, half, calm, salmon, could
<b>Silent T</b>	listen, castle, often, whistle, mortgage

### HOW TO ACTUALLY FIX YOUR PRONUNCIATION

Record yourself reading these aloud, then compare to a native speaker ([YouGlish.com](https://www.youglish.com) is great for this). The gap between what you think you said and what you actually said is where the real practice lives.