



THE SPEAK CLEARLY METHOD

FREE 5-MINUTE SELF-CHECK

Find Your 3 Problem Sounds

Diagnose them in 5 minutes — then fix each one.

1 Diagnose

2 Fix

3 Practise

You don't have to lose your accent. You have to be understood.

by Evangeline Smith & Miriam Smith · authors of Speak Clearly

How this works

Most learners waste months practising sounds they already say well — and never touch the two or three that are actually costing them. This guide fixes that. In five minutes you'll know exactly which sounds to work on, and you'll have the fix for each.

1 Diagnose

Two ways to find your three problem sounds — a shortcut by your first language, and a 9-point self-test. Use either, or both.

2 Fix

A one-page fix card for each common sound: where your tongue goes, and a check you can feel. Turn to the three that are yours.

3 Practise

A simple 7-day plan to lock in your three — ten minutes a day.

One promise before you start

This is not about erasing your accent. Only about 1 in 4 English speakers learned it as a first language — you're the majority, not the exception. We fix only the handful of sounds that make a listener work to understand you. Everything else stays yours.

Shortcut: by your first language

Your accent isn't random — it's your first language showing through. Find yours below for the sounds it most often affects. Note the three that ring true for you.

FIRST LANGUAGE	SOUNDS IT MOST AFFECTS
Spanish	ship/sheep · TH · B vs V · adding 'e' before s-clusters (eschool)
Portuguese	final NG · TH · dark L → 'w' · extra vowels on word endings
French	TH · the H ('appy → happy) · word stress · the English R
German	W vs V · final consonant voicing (dog→dok) · J vs Y · TH
Mandarin	final consonants · R vs L · TH · dropped -ED / -S · vowel length
Arabic	P vs B · short vowels (bit/bet/bat) · CH vs SH · clusters

Not sure, or your language isn't listed?

No problem — use the 9-point self-test on the next page. It works for everyone and takes about three minutes.

The 9-point self-test

Say each word or pair out loud — ideally into your phone's voice recorder, or in front of a mirror. Tick the box if the answer is YES. Your ticked boxes are your problem sounds.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---|
| ☐ | TH | Say “think.” Does it come out as “sink” or “tink”? (tongue not between teeth) |
| ☐ | The R | Say “red.” Does your tongue tap or roll, like a Spanish/Italian R? |
| ☐ | Ship / sheep | Say “ship” then “sheep.” Do they sound the same? |
| ☐ | W vs V | Say “wine” then “vine.” Do they sound the same? |
| ☐ | -ED endings | Say “walked.” Do you add a syllable — “walk-ed”? |
| ☐ | NG | Say “sing.” Is there a hard G on the end — “sing-guh”? |
| ☐ | L vs R | Say “light” then “right.” Do they sound the same? |
| ☐ | Word endings | Say “book.” Do you add a vowel (“book-uh”) or drop the k? |
| ☐ | Word stress | Do you say every syllable flat and equal, with no strong beat? |

YOUR RESULT

Your 3 problem sounds

Pick the three that stood out most — the ones that showed up in your first-language row, or that you ticked in the self-test. Write them here. These are your whole focus.

1

my sound #1

2

my sound #2

3

my sound #3

Now turn to your fixes

The next three pages have a fix card for every common sound. Find your three, read the fix, and do the test-yourself check. Ignore the rest — they're not your problem.

Fix cards · 1 of 3

TH

/θ ð/

The TH sound

FIX Put your tongue tip gently between your top and bottom teeth, then push air.

TEST In a mirror, you should see your tongue tip. “think” = air; “this” = a throat buzz.

think

three

this

father

R

/r/

The English R

FIX Curl your tongue up and back — touching nothing — and round your lips slightly.

TEST Your tongue must never tap the roof of your mouth. Watch: right, red, around.

right

red

around

i:

/ɪ i:/

Ship vs Sheep

FIX Short /ɪ/: mouth relaxed, quick. Long /i:/: lips spread like a smile, and hold it.

TEST Say “sheep” — can you see your teeth? Say “ship” — does your face relax?

ship/sheep

live/leave

fill/feel

Fix cards · 2 of 3

WV

/w v/

W vs V

FIX W = lips only (round them, no teeth). V = top teeth touching your bottom lip.

TEST “wine” uses lips; “vine” uses teeth-on-lip. Feel the difference.

wine/vine

west/vest

-ED

/t d ɪd/

The -ED ending

FIX Three sounds, never ‘e-d’: /t/ after air (kissed), /d/ after a buzz (loved), /ɪd/ after T or D (wanted).

TEST Say the verb, hand on throat. Buzz → /d/. Air → /t/. Ends in T/D → /ɪd/.

kissed

loved

wanted

NG

/ŋ/

The NG sound

FIX The back of your tongue lifts and air goes out through your nose. There is no hard G.

TEST Pinch your nose and “sing” stops. Say “sing,” not “sing-guh.”

sing

sink

singer

Fix cards · 3 of 3

LR

/l r/

L vs R

FIX L: tongue tip touches behind your top teeth. R: tongue floats, touching nothing.

TEST For L you feel contact; for R you feel none. light vs right.

light/right

lice/rice

C

end

Word endings

FIX Don't drop the final consonant — and don't add a vowel after it. “book,” not “book-uh.”

TEST Say the ending crisply and stop. book, help, first, asked.

book

help

asked

..

beat

Word stress

FIX English hammers ONE syllable per word and relaxes the rest. Put the beat in the wrong place and clear sounds still get misheard.

TEST a PREsent (gift) vs to preSENT (to give). Nouns: stress the first; verbs: the second.

PREsent

preSENT

PRACTISE

Your 7-day plan (your 3 sounds only)

Ten minutes a day. You're not learning nine sounds — just your three. Record yourself on day 1 and day 7; hearing the change is the most motivating thing you'll do.

DAY
1

Meet sound #1

Read its fix card. Do the test 10× slowly in the mirror.

DAY
2

Sound #1 in words

Say its example words, then find 5 more. Record 3 sentences — keep them.

DAY
3

Meet sound #2

Fix card + mirror test. Then contrast it with a similar sound.

DAY
4

Sound #2 in words

Example words + 5 of your own. Slow and clear beats fast.

DAY
5

Meet sound #3

Fix card + test. Notice where your old habit tries to sneak back.

DAY
6

All three together

Rotate through your three. Say a short paragraph focusing on them.

DAY
7

Re-record & compare

Read your day-1 sentences again. Hear the difference. Pick #1 to keep polishing.

WHEN YOU'VE FIXED YOUR THREE

Ready for the rest?

This guide helps you find and fix your top three. Speak Clearly — the full book — covers all 22 sounds and speech patterns, with minimal pairs and tongue twisters for each, a dedicated guide for six first languages, and a complete 30-day plan.

Speak Clearly

A Practical Guide to English Pronunciation

All 22 sounds, first-language guides for six languages, self-assessment and a 30-day plan.

Buy on Amazon → amazon.com/dp/B0H7NHTLKV

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THE SPEAK CLEARLY METHOD

**Three sounds.
A clearer you.**

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