

Highway Code: Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation

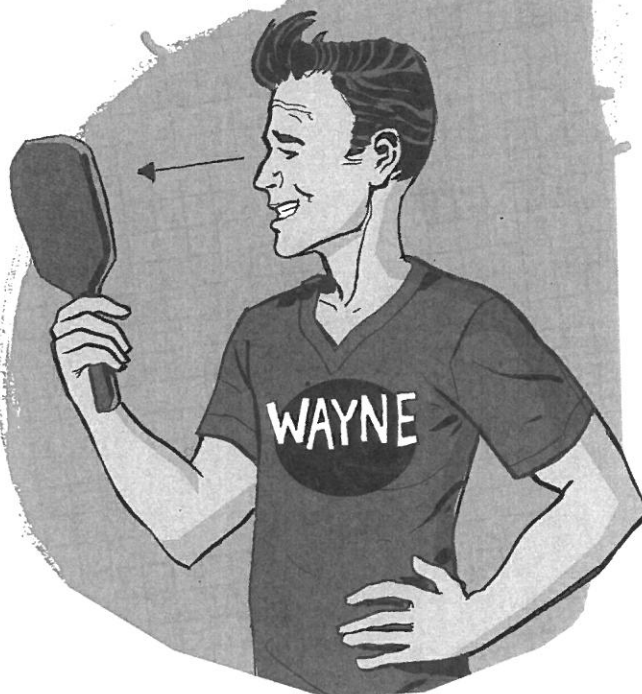
A. Phonemes I



Exercise 1

Listen to these words being read out and repeat them.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. viper
kyykäärme | wiper
tuulilasinpyyhin |
| 2. veil
huntu | whale
valas |
| 3. vain
turhamainen | Wayne
(henkilön nimi) |
| 4. vet
eläinlääkäri | wet
märkä |
| 5. vine
viiniköynnös | wine
viini |
| 6. vent
tuuletusaukko | went
meni |
| 7. vile
ilkeä | while
kun taas |
| 8. vest
aluspaita | west
länsi |
| 9. veal
vasikanliha | wheel
pyörä |



The [v] sound in words like *van* and *vivacity* is a sound that many Finns find difficult. Although a similar sound exists in Finnish, the English [v] is considerably stronger. When Finns speak English, *vet* often sounds like *wet*, and *verse* like *worse*. It's important to pronounce the [v] sound clearly and strongly, by placing your upper teeth against your lower lip and making a sound that's a bit like a motorbike revving its engine.

Exercise 2

Listen to these words being read out and repeat them.

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. goat
vuohi | coat
takki | 4. girl
tyttö | curl
kihara | 7. cup
kuppi | cub
pentu |
| 2. dime
kymmenen sentin kolikko | time
aika | 5. best
paras | pest
maanvaiva | 8. back
selkä | bag
laukku |
| 3. beach
ranta | peach
persikka | 6. lock
lukko | log
tukki | 9. bat
lepakko | bad
huono |

An important feature of English pronunciation is aspiration – a rush of breath after a consonant, this basically means adding an [h] after a voiceless consonant sound). It is one of the main differences between pairs of similar sounds, like [p] and [b], [t] and [d], [k] and [g]. The voiceless consonants [p], [t] and [k] are followed by aspiration, especially at the beginning of a word.

Exercise 3

You'll hear some of the words from the previous exercises used in sentences. Listen to the sentences and choose the response that best fits.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. girl/curl
a) Yeah, they look great – he should have had that perm ages ago.
b) Yeah, he's a regular ladies' man. | 5. log/lock
a) Too damp – it won't light.
b) Frozen solid – it won't open. |
| 2. veil/whale
a) When do they wear them?
b) How do they cook them? | 6. beach/peach
a) It's juicy.
b) Too many people. |
| 3. best/pest
a) Is it cockroaches?
b) Going for quality is more expensive. | 7. cub/cup
a) I took it back to the zoo.
b) I put it in the dishwasher. |
| 4. goat/coat
a) Do you fancy making your own cheese?
b) Yep, winter's setting in. | 8. dime/time
a) Nope, I spent it already.
b) Sure, it's twenty to seven. |

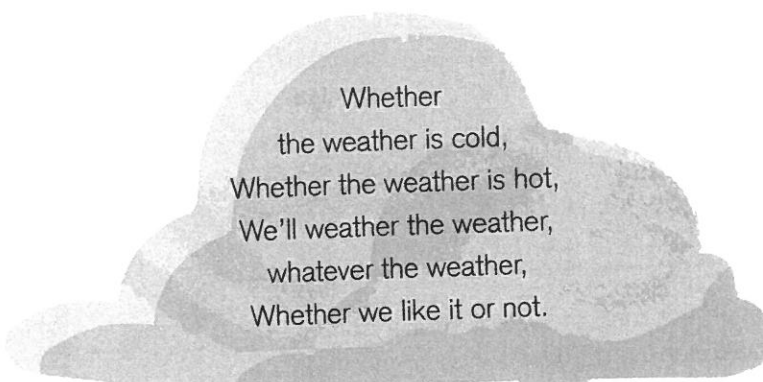
Exercise 4

Now work with a partner. Go back to Exercises 1 and 2. Choose one word from each pair and read it out loud. Your partner should point to the word you are saying.

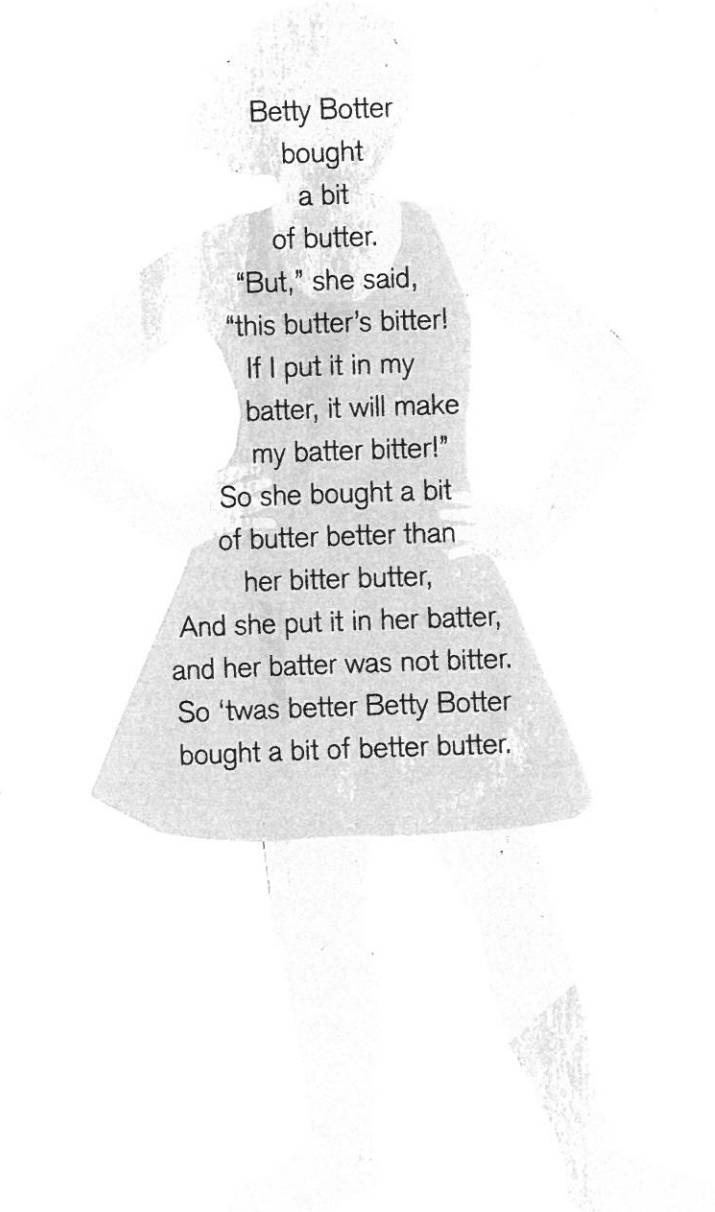


Exercise 5

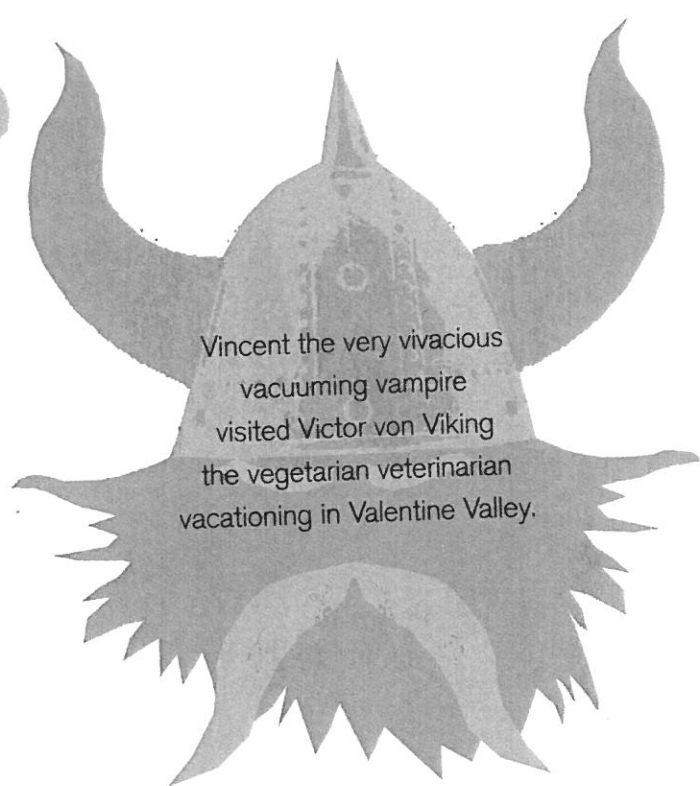
Practise reading the following tongue twisters with your partner.



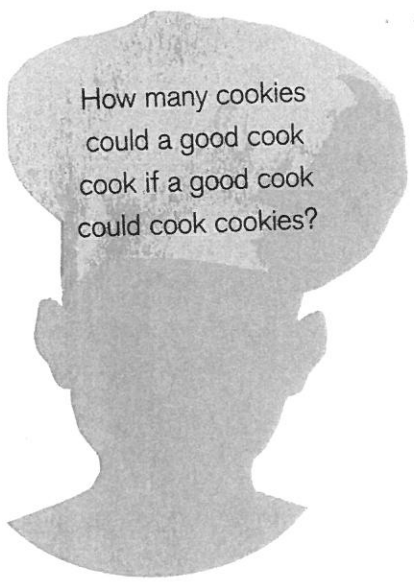
Whether
the weather is cold,
Whether the weather is hot,
We'll weather the weather,
whatever the weather,
Whether we like it or not.



Betty Botter
bought
a bit
of butter.
"But," she said,
"this butter's bitter!
If I put it in my
batter, it will make
my batter bitter!"
So she bought a bit
of butter better than
her bitter butter,
And she put it in her batter,
and her batter was not bitter.
So 'twas better Betty Botter
bought a bit of better butter.



Vincent the very vivacious
vacuuming vampire
visited Victor von Viking
the vegetarian veterinarian
vacationing in Valentine Valley.



How many cookies
could a good cook
cook if a good cook
could cook cookies?

B. Phonemes II



Exercise 1

Listen to these words being read out and repeat them.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sue
(henkilön nimi) | shoe
kenkä | 9. bits
palat | bitch
narttu |
| 2. same
sama | shame
häpeä | 10. mats
matot | match
ottelu |
| 3. seal
hylje | zeal
into | 11. cats
kissat | catch
saalis |
| 4. sip
siemällä | zip
vetoketju | 12. asses
aasit | ashes
tuhkat |
| 5. chunk
möhkäle | junk
romu | 13. kisses
suudelmät | quiches
piirakat |
| 6. chain
ketju | Jane
(henkilön nimi) | 14. dish
astia | ditch
oja |
| 7. chips
ranskalaiset | ships
laivat | 15. March
maaliskuu | Marge
(henkilön nimi) |
| 8. cheat
huijata | sheet
lakana | 16. bars
tangot | barge
proomu |

While Finnish seems perfectly able to cope with just [s], English has a variety of similar sounds in addition to [s]: [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ]. As can be seen from the table, there are three pairs of sounds that are made in an identical way, apart from one being voiced and the other voiceless.

basic 's' sound

long, like the "be quiet" sound

as above, but short and sharp

voiceless

[s]

[ʃ]

[tʃ]

voiced

[z]

[ʒ]

[dʒ]



Exercise 2

You'll hear some of the words from the previous exercise used in sentences. Listen to the sentences and choose the response that best fits.

1. Sue/shoe

- a) No, she's at a different school.
- b) No, mine's blue.

2. same/shame

- a) What, as you?
- b) I know, it would be so embarrassing.

3. seal/zeal

- a) Yes, he was unusually lame.
- b) Yes, but the dolphin made up for it, didn't it?

4. bits/bitch

- a) They could be dangerous.
- b) She can be nasty sometimes.

5. mats/match

- a) It was cancelled.
- b) Somebody stole them.

6. ships/chips

- a) Yeah, they can get caught in the propellers.
- b) Problem? It's the world's best meal!

7. dish/ditch

- a) Chicken soup, I'd say.
- b) Looks like a rusty old shopping trolley.

8. March/Marge

- a) Unless you'd prefer to do it in the autumn.
- b) She would?

Exercise 3

Now work with a partner. Go back to Exercise 1. Choose one word from each pair and read it out loud. Your partner should point to the word you are saying.



Exercise 4

Practise reading the following tongue twisters with your partner.

She sells sea shells by the seashore.
The shells she sells are surely seashells.
So if she sells shells on the seashore,
I'm sure she sells seashore shells.

The sailor thought
his ship was sinking,
such thoughts no sailor
should be thinking.

C. Word stress

When we speak a language, some of the syllables are stressed and some are unstressed. In English, stressed syllables are louder and longer than unstressed syllables. In Finnish, the stress is always on the first syllable of a word, but in English it can be on any syllable.

Exercise 1

On the right is a list of words in Dinky, a relatively simple language unknown to most researchers. Read them out, paying attention to their stress pattern.

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| 1. dinky | ● ● |
| 2. tadoo | ● ● |
| 3. tadinky | ● ● ● |
| 4. doopety | ● ● ● |
| 5. ippydoo | ● ● ● |

Work in pairs for the next two exercises.
Student B should turn to page 142.

Exercise 2

Work with your partner using the lists of English words below. Take it in turns to read out an English word from your list. Your partner will then tell you which Dinky word has the same stress pattern. Check your partner's answer.

Student A

1. potential
2. strategy
3. pretend
4. prosecute
5. purchase

tadinky
doopety
tadoo
doopety
dinky

6. assignment
7. disagree
8. divide
9. difference
10. conclude

tadinky
ippydoo
tadoo
dinky
tadoo

Exercise 3

This exercise deals with pairs of words that have different stress patterns. Work with your partner and read out your words. Your partner should check whether you're placing the stress on the right syllable.

Student A

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. politics | political |
| 2. photograph | photography |
| 3. strategy | strategic |
| 4. China | Chinese |
| 5. Japan | Japanese |
| 6. biology | biological |
| 7. economy | economical |
| 8. psychiatrist | psychiatric |
| 9. organise | organisation |
| 10. nonsense | nonsensical |

Key to your partner's words

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. [i:kwəl] | [i'kwɒliti] |
| 2. [histri] | [his'tɒrik] |
| 3. [æktiv] | [æk'tiviti] |
| 4. [dʒi'ɒgrəfi] | [dʒiə'græfɪkəl] |
| 5. [saɪ'kɒlədʒi] | [saɪkə'lɒdʒɪkəl] |
| 6. [di'mɒkrəsi] | [demə'krætɪk] |
| 7. [ɪg'zædʒəreɪt] | [ɪgzædʒə'reɪʃən] |
| 8. [ə'næləsis] | [ənə'lɪtɪkəl] |
| 9. [lʌkʃəri] | [læɡ'ʒuəriəs] |
| 10. [traɪəŋɡəl] | [traɪ'æŋɡjʊlə] |

D. Sentence stress

Exercise 1

Read out the following phrases with your partner. The stressed syllables have been indicated. Practise focusing your attention on the stressed syllables – you can say the other syllables less clearly.

1. It's not as easy as that.
2. What's the problem now?
3. Can you please reply to my email.
4. This is just what you expect from them.
5. That's quite a ridiculous suggestion.
6. Perhaps we could pretend to be finished.

English is a stress-timed language. That means that there is a tendency in English for speakers to place stressed syllables at regular intervals, and to say the unstressed syllables between them as slowly or quickly as is necessary to maintain the regular rhythm. Of course, this is only a tendency, not a precise rule. However, it's a powerful feature of English phonology, and it gave rise to rap.

Exercise 2

Now read these sentences. Do the same thing as in the last exercise, but this time the student who is not reading should tap out a regular rhythm on the table. The student who is reading should read a stressed syllable each time the other student taps the table.

1. Why can't we play that team for the rest of the season?
2. The best you could do was to try as hard as you possibly can.
3. It's easier said than done, but it's worth giving it a try.
4. Just forget that I mentioned it, and I promise you'll hear from me again.
5. I think it's the easiest option we've got, but I can't be sure it'll work.
6. You know what to do, but you can't decide if you'll do it alone.

Exercise 3

The following sentences are from the texts in the book. For each sentence, work with a partner and first mark all the syllables that you think are stressed (there are usually different possible answers for this). Then practise reading the sentences as you did in the two previous exercises.

1. I already know what I want to become and how to reach that goal.
2. This is a kind of placebo effect.
3. There are thousands of bicycles and pedestrians.
4. The intersection is utterly ambiguous.
5. The word has not only entered the English language but travelled as far as Japan.
6. Neither criminals nor victims were consciously aware of these cues.
7. I heard his chair on the painted floor. He stood there with his hands at his sides.
8. That's almost as good as a car that runs on water.

E. Intonation

Warm up

Work in groups of four and play the intonation drama game.

Instructions

Take it in turns. When it is your turn, choose a sentence from the list on the left. Then the student on your left will choose an emotion from the list on the right, write it on a piece of paper, and show it to you without revealing it to the other two members of the group. You then have to say your sentence with that emotion, and the other two students should say which emotion they think you were trying to act. You get one point for each student that gets it right. Keep playing until one of you wins by getting 6 points.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Chicken again? | A. enthusiastic |
| 2. Not now. | B. irritated |
| 3. Oh yes. | C. bored |
| 4. It's my sister. | D. confused |
| 5. I wish you'd let me know you were coming. | E. nervous/worried |
| 6. I'd love to hear about your holiday. | F. hesitant |
| 7. This is my only free day this week. | G. disbelieving |
| 8. You can't be serious! | |
| 9. Another one, please. | |
| 10. She's done it again! | |
| 11. I've told you already. | |
| 12. Thanks a lot. | |

Exercise 1

Read the following sentences. Which ones have a falling intonation and which ones have a rising intonation? When you've tried reading them, listen to the recording and repeat the sentences one more time.

1. Life has never been as safe as it is today.
2. But didn't you read yesterday's papers?
3. No, why do you ask?
4. There was a terrible murder in the city.
5. So what does that prove?
6. Well, doesn't it suggest that it's a dangerous world?
7. Or could it suggest that you read sensationalist newspapers?
8. What does that mean?

C. Word stress – Student B

Exercise 2

Work with your partner using the lists of English words below. Student A's words are on page 137. Take it in turns to read out an English word from your list. Your partner will then tell you which Dinky word has the same stress pattern. Check your partner's answer.

Student B

1. overwhelmed
2. fantastic
3. dialogue
4. prefer
5. tradition
6. reject (*verb*)
7. regional
8. extract (*noun*)
9. reluctant
10. apply

ippydoo
tadinky
doopety
tadoo
tadinky
tadoo
doopety
dinky
tadinky
tadoo

1. dinky
2. tadoo
3. tadinky
4. doopety
5. ippydoo



Exercise 3

This exercise deals with pairs of words that have different stress patterns. Work with your partner and read out your words. Student A's words are on page 137. Your partner should check whether you're placing the stress on the right syllable.

Student B

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. equal | equality |
| 2. history | historic |
| 3. active | activity |
| 4. geography | geographical |
| 5. psychology | psychological |
| 6. democracy | democratic |
| 7. exaggerate | exaggeration |
| 8. analysis | analytical |
| 9. luxury | luxurious |
| 10. triangle | triangular |

Key to your partner's words

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. [pɒlɪtɪks] | [pə'litɪkəl] |
| 2. [fəʊtəgrɑ:f] | [fə'tɒgrəfi] |
| 3. [strætədʒi] | [strə'ti:dʒɪk] |
| 4. [tʃaɪnə] | [tʃaɪ'ni:z] |
| 5. [dʒə'pæn] | [dʒæpə'ni:z] |
| 6. [baɪ'ɒlədʒi] | [baɪə'lɒdʒɪkəl] |
| 7. [i'kɒnəmi] | [i:kə'kɒmɪkəl] |
| 8. [saɪ'kaɪətrɪst] | [saɪki'ætrɪk] |
| 9. [ɔ:gənaɪz] | [ɔ:gənai'zeɪʃən] |
| 10. [kɒnsəns] | [kɒn'sensɪkəl] |



3 Economical stress

Listen to the sentences and mark the stressed syllables of the underlined words. Which seven of the ten underlined words change their stress pattern? Then practise reading the sentences aloud with your partner.

Shifting stress

Some two-syllable verb/noun pairs that look identical are pronounced differently. The stress is on the first syllable for the noun and the second syllable for the verb.

For example:

noun: a SURvey

verb: to surVEY

1. a) The export business is booming.
b) We need to export more to become profitable.
2. a) There's no market for it.
b) We ought to market aggressively.
3. a) This is the fourth price increase this year.
b) I wish my salary would increase that often!
4. a) The proceeds will be donated to charity.
b) The company's collapse proceeds unnoticed.
5. a) Don't forget that you'll have to pay import tax.
b) Our company will import products from the Middle East.
6. a) A decrease in market share is inevitable.
b) We need to decrease our marketing budget.
7. a) The shelves are stacked with fresh dairy produce.
b) My uncle's company doesn't produce electrical goods any more.
8. a) The country's unemployment rate is set to establish a new record.
b) Unemployment is likely to record an all-time high.
9. a) There's a problem with supply – we just can't fill the shelves!
b) Can you supply us with a temporary workforce?
10. a) There's not much demand for CD players since the advent of mp3.
b) Customers should demand an explanation for the quality problems.