

Introduction

Pronunciation Practice is a workbook/CD set for teachers and students of English as a second or foreign language. It is intended for high-beginning to advanced students. It is a photocopyable book. Although the book can be used without the CDs, the accompanying CDs feature the sounds of North American English presented in authentic, natural pronunciation. The vocabulary is modeled in a clear, standard North American accent. The conversations include all the features of genuine connected speech. Therefore, the student has the opportunity to listen to and practice the individual sounds and the musical patterns of sentences (intonation and rhythm), the connections between words in a sentence (blending and linking), and the idiomatic shortcuts (reductions) of authentic North American speech. Although North American English refers to a variety of dialects spoken in the United States and Canada, there is a significant common core of pronunciation that distinguishes it from other varieties of English spoken around the world. This common core is reflected in this book and accompanying CDs. For purposes of consistency, the voices on the CDs speak a single widespread dialect of North American English: West Coast, USA.

This book with its CDs will help beginning students get the right start in pronunciation in the early stages of learning English. Intermediate and advanced students can improve the accuracy of their pronunciation and perfect their North American accent.

The complete package of five CDs is available as two different sets: three CDs for the Basic Lessons and two CDs for the listening component of the Appendix II activities – distinguishing and pronouncing contrasting pairs (often called minimal pairs).

Although the book may be used without the CDs, the Basic Lesson set includes conversations, which are more effective for the learner when spoken by different voices. Each of the Basic Lessons has two tracks. The “v track” includes the words (vocabulary) in the boxes. The “c track” is the conversation. On the second set of CDs, Contrasting Pairs, there is one track for each of the 24 one-page sets of activities – pages 84 to 107. Each page has five activities working with contrasting pairs.

This book and five CDs can be used for self-study. The book with or without the CDs can be used as the primary pronunciation tool in an ESL multi-skills class. It is also appropriate as a supplementary text in a conversation, speaking, or oral communication class. It is ideally used as an extension and additional practice of the concepts introduced in *Teaching North American English Pronunciation* by Raymond C. Clark and Richard Yorkey (2011 Pro Lingua Associates).

Features of This Book

- **The lessons are organized alphabetically.** This is the most sensible order for the majority of ESL learners and teachers. However, users of this text should feel free to reorder the lessons according to personal learning or teaching style.
- **The heading for each lesson includes the usual public school name for the target sound, a simplified International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbol, and the Pro Lingua Associates (PLA) Phonetic Alphabet symbol.** Some students have experience, possibly through their children, with the language of phonics taught in American schools. But many students are more familiar with the IPA symbols that they may have studied in their own countries. The Pro Lingua Associates Phonetic Alphabet is used in *Teaching North American English Pronunciation*. It was developed to avoid diacritic marks and unfamiliar symbols. Accordingly, all of the sounds of English are represented with familiar alphabet letters. (See p. iii for a list and explanation of symbols.)
- **The choice of words with target sounds for each letter of the alphabet is based on lists of the most common words in English.** The 25 words (or fewer) at the top of each page come from frequency lists of both written and spoken English. Not all words in the English language are equally useful. By focusing on those words that students are most likely to use in normal conversation, students will quickly improve their overall oral intelligibility.
- **Each lesson includes target sounds in isolated words as well as in connected speech.** The vocabulary section of each lesson includes the target sound at the beginning, middle, and end positions within words. The conversation in each lesson allows further practice of the target sounds, using a sampling of the vocabulary words in connected speech.
- **Three appendices include interactive activities to reinforce the target sounds and words presented in each lesson.** They are *Expansion Activities*, *Contrasting Pairs*, and *Syllable Stress Flash Cards*.
- **There is a Glossary of pronunciation terms at the end of this book.**