

ProTalk

Discussion Files

C1. Different accents of the English language

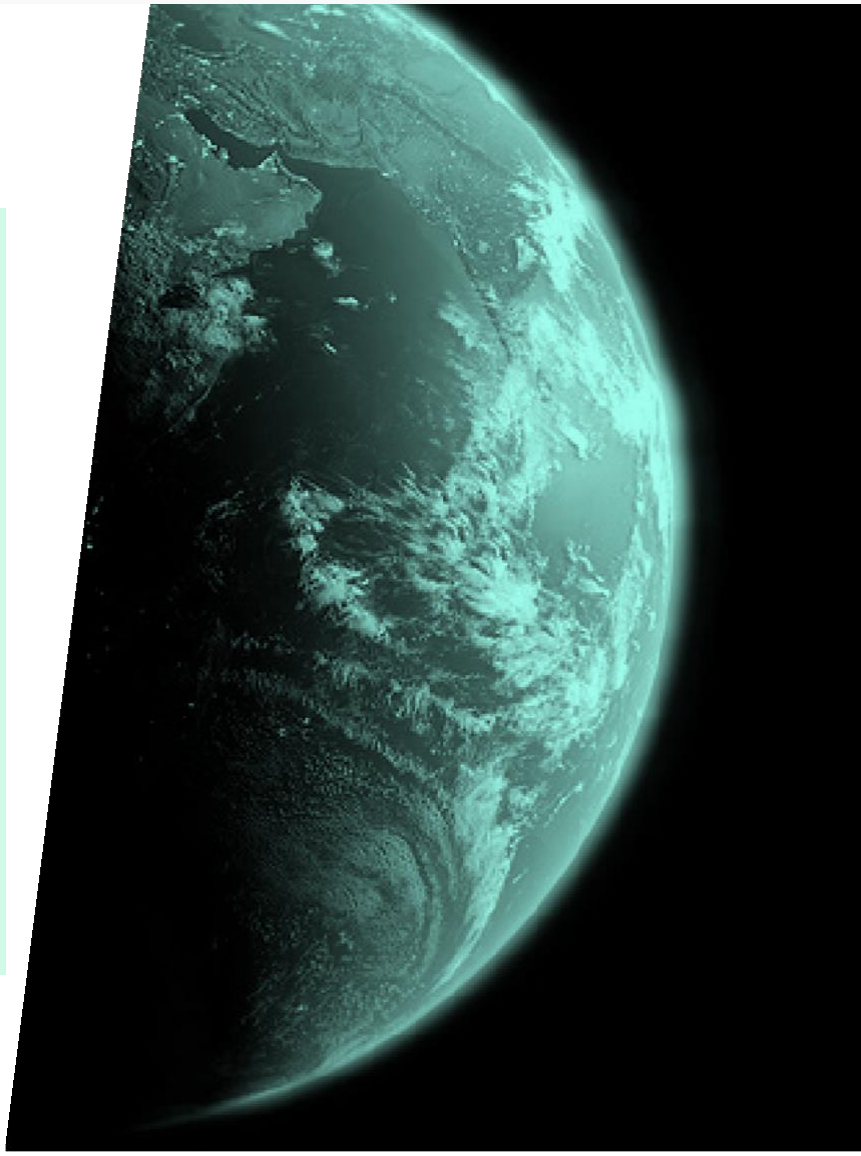
Afaq Language Center

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www. afaq-lc.com 021-5148 afaq.lc

Goals

- Can identify and explain the reasons behind the differences in accent of the English language.
- Can present my own experiences and ideas about different accents in depth.



Have you ever travelled to an English speaking country before? How did you find the people's accent there? Or maybe you use English at work with non-native speakers. Is it difficult to understand the different accents amongst your colleagues? Everyone has an accent when they speak English, in this lesson you'll find out more about accents!

English speaking countries

How many different English speaking countries can you name? Which have you visited? Where would you most like to visit, and why?

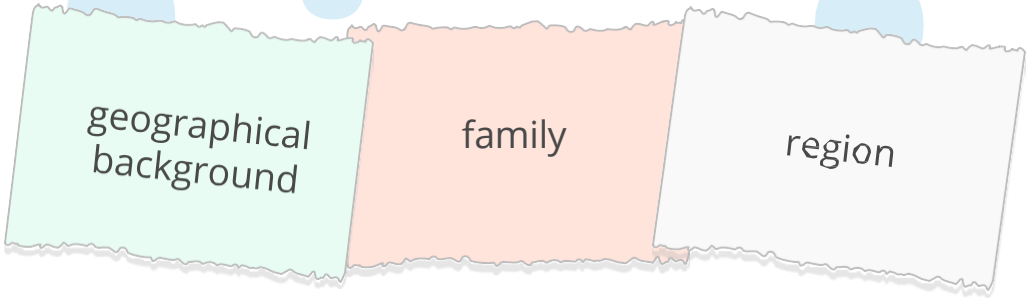


Film and television

Do you watch a lot of films or television programmes in English? Which are your favourites? How do you find the accents? Tell your teacher the story of your favourite film or TV programme.

Quiz time!

Listen to your teacher's accent. Can you guess where they come from? Ask questions to find out more about their accent!



Accents around the world

What's your mother tongue?
Tell your teacher about the different accents in your language.
Does social class, education or geographical location have a big impact on the various accents?



accent

voice

pronunciation

speech

Read the text and summarize it.

Different accents of the English language

Did you know that it's actually impossible to speak a language without an **accent**? When we talk about accents we are simply talking about the various ways in which different people pronounce words. So, actually, everyone has an accent when they speak a language. Some accents, however, may be stronger than others!

There is a great deal of variety when it comes to accents, and there are a lot of different factors that affect how your voice will sound when speaking. Accents can vary according to where you come from, how you learned the language, and can sometimes even cause listeners to make an **assumption** about your background and social class.

Read the text and summarize it.

Different accents of the English language

For non-native speakers of English struggling to **make sense** of the **plethora** of different English language accents, it can be one of the most challenging aspects of learning English. Perhaps it might be of some comfort to learn that you're not alone; even amongst native speakers of English some difficulties can **arise** when it comes to trying to make sense of different English accents.

Read the text and summarize it.

Different accents of the English language

When it's not your mother tongue it can be difficult to hear the difference between very specific **regional** accents but most people can hear a difference between, for example, an American and a British English accent.



Read the text and summarize it.

Different accents of the English language

Of course, even this **distinction** is quite hard to draw considering the vast quantity of more specific different regional accents within the British Isles and North America. One of the most noticeable general differences between the American and British accents is their **pronunciation** of the letter *r*. In American English, this letter tends to be pronounced in every word, but in British English it's mostly only pronounced when it's the first letter of a word. Practise saying *there* in both accents. Can you hear the difference?

Do you know these words from the text? Discuss the meanings with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

accent

pronunciation

distinction

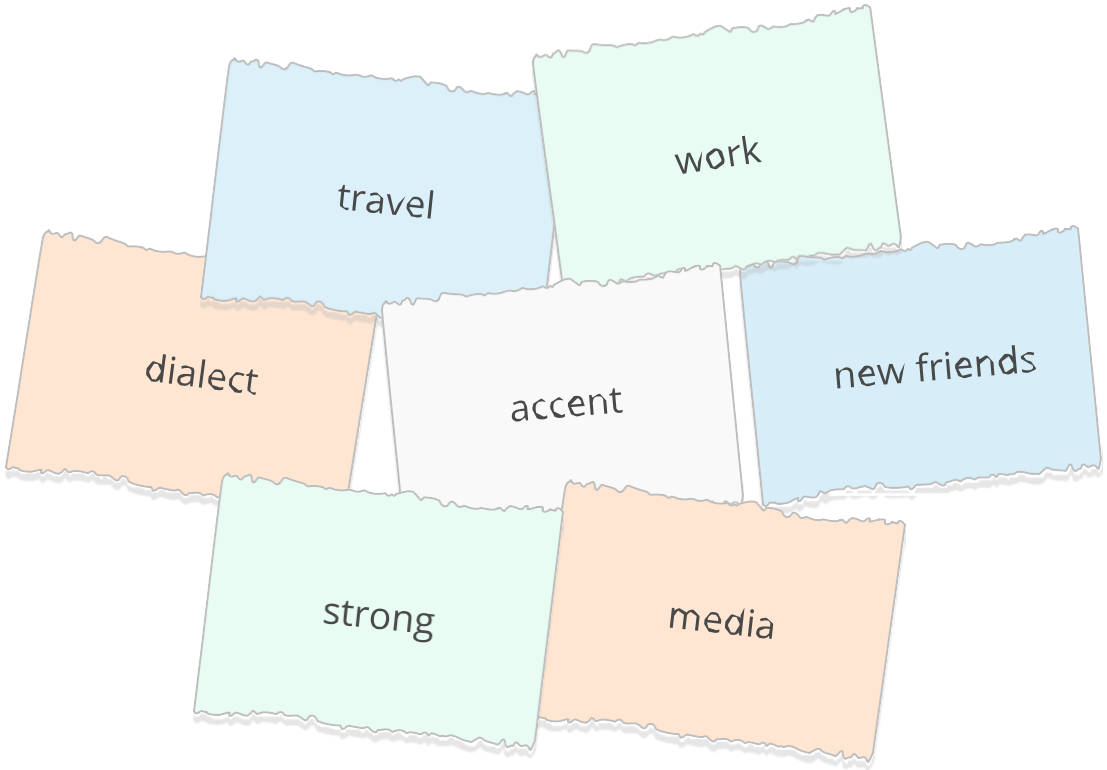
assumption

plethora

to arise

Understanding accents

Tell your teacher about your experience with different accents of the English language. Which accents are you familiar with? Are there some you find easier than others to understand? How often do you get the chance to speak English - is it with native or non-native speakers?



How important are accents?

Read the controversial statement below. Most English teachers would disagree with this statement. Can you think why? What do you think is most important when it comes to learning a foreign language? What is the purpose of language learning? Ask your teacher for their input too.

> If you don't have a good accent you may as well not say anything. Having a good accent is the most important thing when it comes to language learning.

What can you remember?

Imagine you have a friend who knows nothing about language learning or accents but is curious about finding out more. Explain to them what an accent is and tell them in your own words about the text you have just read and heard. Use the lists you made in the previous activity to help you!



English

accent

different

Discuss

Do you agree or disagree with the quote about Received Pronunciation below? Decide whether you are for or against this idea and debate your side with your teacher.

> Received Pronunciation is the way of the future. People who can't speak clearly and universally should have to take classes and shouldn't be let on TV unless they can make themselves understood by everyone.

Subtitles

Do you use subtitles when you watch films or television? How do you find them helpful for language learning? In your home country, are films dubbed or subtitled?
What do you prefer?



Communication is key

Imagine you are a teacher of your native language. Your student is very worried about their accent when they speak. How would you advise and reassure them? What do you think is most important when it comes to language learning?

accent

communication

understanding

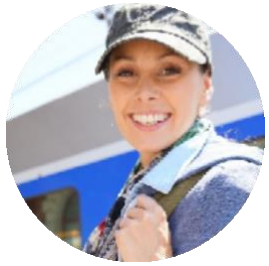
patience

Use your work from the last activity to complete the dialogue. Then read it out and continue it with your teacher.



I was so excited to learn Spanish at first, but I haven't been able to get the hang of rolling my tongue – I can't do it and it's the most important part of speaking the language!

Hey, you're forgetting that there's a lot more to any language than just one sound. It might be important, but so is vocabulary – and enthusiasm!





I know, but I'm feeling disheartened...I'm thinking of giving up Spanish and starting something else instead.

Don't say that! Have you tried...



Miscommunication



Misunderstanding someone's accent can sometimes lead to communication problems. Have you got any funny stories of times you misunderstood someone because of their pronunciation or accent? What is the best thing to do if you're finding it hard to understand someone's speech?

Presentation

The different accents of the English language can be hard to get used to. Are there many different accents in your native language? Talk about them here and give advice to someone trying to learn your mother tongue, what do you think is the best way to get familiar with different accents in a foreign language?

Prepare a two-minute presentation about it. Include several reasons to support your point of view.

Give your presentation to the class. Answer questions and get feedback.