

Sound clearer in three habits

You do not need an accent course. You need these.

WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

Not about vowel sounds or phonetics.

Just three habits that make you easier to understand immediately — with no extra studying.

THE REAL PROBLEM

Most learners think pronunciation problems come from their accent. They do not.

They come from speaking too fast, using sentences that are too long, and not pausing where pauses belong.

Native speakers make these same mistakes when they are nervous or rushing. The difference is they have habits that slow them down.

You can build the same habits today.

KEY IDEA

You do not need to sound like a native speaker. You need to be understood. These three habits do that.

HABIT 1 — SLOW DOWN

When you speak English, you feel like you are speaking slowly. You are not.

Learners almost always speak faster than they think they do — especially when nervous.

The fix: record yourself for 30 seconds. Play it back. You will hear it immediately.

Then try again — and aim to sound almost uncomfortably slow to yourself. That is usually the right pace for your listener.

LISTEN AND REPEAT

"I am going to speak. More slowly. Than feels normal to me."

[PAUSE]

"Every word. Matters."

[PAUSE]

"I do not need to rush."

[PAUSE]

HABIT 2 — USE SHORTER SENTENCES

Long sentences collapse under their own weight. You lose the thread. Your listener loses the thread. One idea per sentence. Then stop. Then start the next one.

Compare: 'I wanted to tell you that because I moved here two years ago and I have been learning Dutch since then because I want to integrate better I think it is really important.'

Better: 'I moved here two years ago. I have been learning Dutch since then. I want to integrate better. That is why it matters to me.'

Same information. Four times clearer.

LISTEN AND REPEAT

"One idea. Then stop."

[PAUSE]

"I moved here two years ago."

[PAUSE]

"I have been learning Dutch since then."

[PAUSE]

"That is why it matters to me."

[PAUSE]

HABIT 3 — PAUSE BEFORE THE NEXT THOUGHT

A pause before a new idea gives your listener time to absorb what you just said.

It also gives you time to find the next word. This is not weakness. It is control.

The speakers who sound the most confident are often the ones who pause the most.

Try this: breathe before each new sentence. The breath forces the pause. The pause creates clarity.

LISTEN AND REPEAT

"I have something to say. [breathe] It is about the project. [breathe] I think we need more time."

[PAUSE]

PRACTICE

Read each sentence below. First read it fast. Then read it again — slowly, with pauses. Notice the difference.

#	Sentence	Answer
1	I have been here for two years and I am still learning and I think my Dutch is getting better slowly.	<i>I have been here for two years. I am still learning. My Dutch is getting better.</i>
2	Can you tell me where the station is because I need to get there before three o'clock?	<i>Where is the station? I need to be there before three.</i>

3	I wanted to ask you something about the homework because I did not understand the last part.	<i>I have a question. About the homework. I did not understand the last part.</i>
4	The reason I think this is important is that without practice you will never really improve.	<i>This is important. Without practice, you do not improve.</i>
5	I moved here because of my job but I also wanted a new challenge and I wanted to learn Dutch.	<i>I moved here for my job. I also wanted a new challenge. And to learn Dutch.</i>

TODAY'S SMALL ACTION

Record yourself speaking for 30 seconds. Play it back. Are you going faster than you thought? Say the same thing again — slowly. That is the habit.

Want more practice? The members edition has 20 sentence pairs (long vs short), 10 error corrections, and a self-check quiz.