

British English: Listening Comprehension 7

New Neighbor



(5: 48)

Here is the next video. Again, there isn't an accompanying lesson, but since many cities are mentioned in this video, I would like to comment on the pronunciation of the names of several cities. British towns and cities are a pronunciation nightmare... but don't panic! By mastering common suffixes like “-shire” and “-ton”, you will know exactly how to say them! A chart summarizing patterns follows the comprehension questions. (There is also a video with a woman explaining and pronouncing the names. That video is optional; I include it is another sample of British pronunciation, specifically the accent found in London.)

Answer the comprehension questions.

- 1) What is the neighbor's name? _____ What does he do? _____
- 2) Why time does the movie start? _____
- 3) What is a synonym for “good-looking”? _____
- 4) What is the American word for “biscuits”? _____
- 5) What was Simon doing when the girls said “hello”? (Answer in a complete sentence.)

- 6) Does David like Simon? Why or why not? (Answer in a complete sentence.)

- 7) Why is David embarrassed at the end of the video? (Answer in a complete sentence.)

- 8) Below is a transcript of the video. Listen again—just the audio below—and fill in the blanks.

Helen (voice over): It's a big day today. We have a new neighbor, and we're all very excited. ... Well, Jane and I _____ are.

David: You ready? It's quarter to seven.

Helen: What time does the film start?

David: Half past seven.

Helen: Okay.

Jane: He's nice.

Helen: He's very nice.

David: But not good-looking.

Jane: He is good-looking.

Helen: Mm.

Matt: It's nearly ten to seven. ... Who's that?

David: The new neighbor.

Matt: That's a nice car.

Jane: I bet it's _____.

David: That thing? That's slow.

Helen: It's very expensive.

David: It's cheap.

Matt: Is it? [David nudges Matt.] Oh yeah, and it's horrible.

Helen: Let's say hello.

David: _____?

Jane: Yes.

[The girls go outside.]

Helen: Hello.

Simon: Hi.

Helen: I'm Helen.

Simon: I'm Simon.

Jane: And I'm Jane.

Simon: Hi Jane.

Helen: Come in and _____ the others.

Simon: Okay.

[They go inside.]

Helen: This is Matt.

Simon: Hi, I'm Simon.

Matt: Hello.

David: And I'm David.

Simon: Hi.

Helen: Would you like _____ tea or coffee?

Simon: Oh. Oh, yes. Coffee, please.

Helen: Matt, can you ... ?

Matt: What? Oh yeah. Sure.

Simon: Milk. No _____.

Matt: Right.

David: Let me give you a _____.

Jane: Have a seat.

David: Thanks.

Helen: So, where are you from Simon?

Simon: _____.

Jane: David's from Manchester.

Simon: Oh.

Helen: I'm from London.

Jane: I'm from Brighton.

Helen: And Matt comes from _____.

Simon: What do you do?

Helen: I'm a marketing assistant for McDougall's, the Publishing Company.

Jane: I'm a Drama teacher.

Helen: David's a lawyer.

Jane: And Matt _____ a computer game shop.

Helen: What about you?

Simon: I'm a _____.

Helen: Really? Where do you work?

Simon: I work in London for a Sports magazine. Do you know "Workout"?

Helen: Know it? I buy it.

Simon: Really?

Helen: Sometimes.

[The boys are in the kitchen.]

David: I hate being late for films.

Matt: Biscuits?

David: No!

[Back to the girls in the living room.]

Simon: I go to the office most days but on Wednesdays and Fridays I work from home.

Matt: Here's your coffee.

Simon: Oh, thank you.

David: The film starts at 7 30.

Simon: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't _____.

Helen: Don't worry. The cinema is only 10 minutes away.

David: Come on, Matt. Let's wait in the car. Bye.

Matt: Bye.

Simon: Bye. Nice to meet you.

Jane: Tell us about your _____, Simon.

Simon: Okay.

[The boys are in the car.]

Matt: The film starts in quarter of an hour.

David: Where are they?

[Back to the girls in the living room.]

Helen: What do you do at weekends?

Simon: Uh.. I play tennis, watch football. I go to the cinema, go to clubs.

Jane: Do you have a girlfriend?

Helen: Jane!

Simon: It's okay. No, I don't _____.

Helen: More coffee? Jane...

[To the boys in the car.]

David: I've got an idea.

[Back to the girls in the living room.]

Jane: He doesn't have a girlfriend.

Helen: He likes tennis.

Jane: But he also likes football.

Helen: And going to the cinema.

[To the boys in the car.]

David: It's David. The film starts in 10 minutes. Say goodbye to your big, _____ boyfriend, and hurry up.

Simon: Just a moment. ... Hello. It's David.

Helen (voice over): I really like Simon. Unfortunately, Jane likes him too, but I'm not sure if David does.

On the following page, you will find a chart with several cities in England and their pronunciations, but more importantly, the pronunciation of the suffix used in each city's name (so that you can apply it to other names). And below is the video in which a British woman pronounces each.

Pronounce British Towns & Cities Correctly (Modern RP Accent)



To spell the words phonetically, I am using the symbols used in most dictionaries.

ā as in <i>make</i>	ē as in <i>heat</i>	ī as in <i>bike</i>	ō as in <i>boat</i>	ū as in <i>flute</i>
ă as in <i>cat</i>	ĕ as in <i>bed</i>	ĭ as in <i>hit</i>	ö as in <i>top</i>	ŭ as in <i>cut</i>
ä as in the first syllable in <i>father</i>	ə (schwa) = uh		ɔ: as in <i>walk</i>	ʊ as in <i>foot</i>
	ø as in the <i>hurt</i> or <i>word</i> or <i>bird</i>			

CITY	SUFFIX	NOTES
Loughborough /lŭf brə/ Scarborough /scä brə/ Peterborough /pētə brə/	• -borough pronounced /brə/ or /bərə/ • means “a fortified settlement”	The Scottish version of this suffix is -burgh, as in Edinburgh.
Derby /dä bē/	• -by pronounced /bē/	
Leicester /lēs tə/ Bicester /bīs tə/ Gloucester /glä stə/	• -cester pronounced /stə/ • = comes from Latin <i>castra</i>; towns with -cester were originally Roman military sites in Britain	There is an exception: Cirencester /sī rən sēs tə/.
Hertford /hät fəd/ Bradford /bräd fəd/ Chelmsford /chēlmz fəd/	• -ford pronounced /fəd/ • means “a place where a river is shallow enough to cross”	
Durham /də əm/ Birmingham /bə ming əm/ Buckingham /bŭk ing əm/	• -ham pronounced /əm/ with a silent H • = originally meant “home”	If there is an S before -ham, the S is pronounced SH, as in Lewisham pronounced /lu i sham/
Teignmouth /ten mæth/ Plymouth /plī mæth/ Bournemouth /bə-n mæth/	• -mouth pronounced /mæth/ • = means “where the river meets the sea”	
Worcestershire /wʊ stə shə/ Yorkshire /yo:k shə/ Lancashire /län kə shə/	• -shire /shə/ or /shīə/ • = means “district”	These aren’t cities, but counties in England. (Counties are “partidos” in Spanish.)
Luton /lū tən/ Preston /prēs tən/ Eton /ē tən/	• -ton pronounced /tən/ • = means “town”	
Woolwich /wʊl ich/ or /wʊl ij/ Greenwich /grēn ich/ or /grēn ij/ Norwich /nōr ich/ or /nōr ij/	• -wich pronounced /ich/ or /ij/ • = comes from Latin <i>vicus</i>, which means <i>village</i>	There are many exceptions with this suffix. For example, the /w/ in Ipswich is pronounced: /īps wīch/.
Wadsworth /wōds wəth/ Wandsworth /wōndz wəth/ Letchworth /lēch wəth/	• -worth • = means “a protected or enclosed area of land”	

One last pronunciation detail: The River Thames that flows through London is pronounced /tēmz/, not /thāmz/.

This is the end of the document.

