UNIT 49 /r/ rain

– Would you like to come rowing with me and Caroline on Friday?
– Yes, but I'm terribly busy writing, Rachel …
– Oh come on, Blake, take a break! You need to relax. Remember the last time we went rowing. 'Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.'
– Oh, all right. 'Row, row, row your …'



1 Target sound /r/

D73 To make the target sound /r/, turn the tip of your tongue up as in the picture. *Do not* touch the roof of your mouth with your tongue. The sides of your tongue should touch your top back teeth. Listen and repeat: /r/.



2 Minimal pairs

	Sound 1 /l/	Sound 2 /r/	
	**long** It's the long road.	**wrong** It's the wrong road.	
	**light** Is it light?	**right** Is it right?	
	**load** It's a long load.	**road** It's a long road.	
	**jelly** Do you like jelly?	**Jerry** Do you like Jerry?	
	**fly** I'd like to fly it.	**fry** I'd like to fry it.	
	**glass** There's some glass.	**grass** There's some grass.	

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Minimal pair words

D74a **a** Listen and repeat the words.

D74b **b** You will hear five words from each minimal pair. For each word, write *1* for /l/ (sound 1) or *2* for /r/ (sound 2).

EXAMPLE Pair 1: 1, 1, 2, 2, 2

Minimal pair sentences

D75a **c** Listen to the minimal pair sentences.

D75b **d** Listen to six of the sentences and write *1* for /l/ (sound 1) or *2* for /r/ (sound 2)

D75a **e** Sentence stress

Listen to the minimal pair sentences again and match each pair with one of the stress patterns (a–f) below. The big circles are the strongly stressed words in the sentence and the small circles are the weakly stressed words (or syllables).

EXAMPLE a) **ooOO** (Pair 1) It's the long road. / It's the wrong road.

a) **ooOO** b) **OoO** c) **ooO** d) **ooOO** e) **oOoOo** f) **oooOo**

Notice that the weakly stressed words are said more quickly, and this changes the pronunciation, e.g. *to* and *do* are pronounced /tə/ and /də/.

D76 **f** Tick the words a) or b) that you hear in the sentences.

1 a) long	☐	b) wrong	☐
2 a) jelly	☐	b) Jerry	☐
3 a) glass	☐	b) grass	☐
4 a) collect	☐	b) correct	☐
5 a) lane	☐	b) rain	☐
6 a) flea	☐	b) free	☐

3 Dialogue

a First practise the target sound /r/ in words from the dialogue. Read the words aloud or visit the website to practise.

Rose Ruth **R**uby **really** **R**ussia **railway** **R**oland **very** **J**erry **parent** Lara **l**orry **married** **E**urope **cleverest** **A**merica proud **pretty** library **l**ibrarian **wai**tress **cen**tral **res**taurant **coun**tries **Aus**tria Australia **in**teresting elec**tri**cian **chil**dren drive **sec**retary grown **up** Greece France **e**verywhere

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D77 **b** Listen to the dialogue, paying attention to the target sound.

A proud parent

LARA: Are all the children grown up now, Ruth?

RUTH: Oh, yes, Lara. Ruby is the cleverest one. She's a librarian in the public library.

LARA: Very interesting. And what about Laura?

RUTH: She's a secretary at the central railway station.

LARA: And what about Rose? She was always a very pretty child.

RUTH: Rose is a waitress in a restaurant in Paris. She's married to an electrician.

LARA: And what about Jerry and Roland?

RUTH: Jerry drives a lorry. He drives everywhere in Europe.

LARA: Really? Which countries does he drive to?

RUTH: France and Austria and Greece and Russia.

LARA: And does Roland drive a lorry too?

RUTH: Oh, no. Roland is a pilot, Lara.

LARA: Really? Which countries does he fly to?

RUTH: Australia and America.

c Practise reading the dialogue aloud. Record your voice to compare your production of the target sound with the recording.

4 Intonation

D78 **a** Finish these sentences about Mrs Reed's children. Find the answers in the dialogue above. Practise intonation going up in the unfinished part of the sentence, and down when the sentence finishes.

EXAMPLE Ruby isn't a train driver – she's a librarian.

1 Jerry isn't an electrician – _____
2 Rose isn't a secretary – _____
3 Roland isn't a photographer – _____
4 Laura isn't a waitress – _____
5 Ruby isn't a lorry driver – _____

b **Silent /r/**

When there is no vowel following it, /r/ is silent. This 'rule' only applies to some speakers of English, e.g. in south-east England, South Africa, Australia. But many native speakers always pronounce /r/, e.g. in south-west England, Scotland, America. So you may choose to omit this exercise if you are learning a variety of English where /r/ is always pronounced.

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D79 Listen to this conversation while reading it silently. Notice that every letter 'r' is silent. Then practise reading the conversation aloud.

In the airport

ANNOUNCER: R.T. Airways flight number four four seven to New York will depart later this afternoon at 16.40 hours.

DR DARLING: Wonderful! I'm going to the bar to order some more German beer.

MR MARTIN: Where's the bar?

DR DARLING: It's upstairs. There's a bookshop too. And a supermarket. This is a marvellous airport!

MR MARTIN: Oh dear! I wanted to get to New York earlier.
Ah! Here's an air hostess.
Excuse me. I don't understand. Has there been an emergency?

AIR HOSTESS: Oh, no, sir. There's just a storm, and the weather forecast says it will get worse. So the plane will leave a little later this afternoon.

MR MARTIN: Are you sure?

AIR HOSTESS: Oh, yes, sir. Our departure time is at 4.40 this afternoon.

5 Spelling

Look back over this unit at words with the target sound, and write what you noticed about how to spell the sound /r/.

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