

Hey, wait for me!

Strong and weak forms 1: Pronouns

A

Some words have two different pronunciations – a strong form and a weak form. Normally we use the weak form, but if the word is stressed because it is especially important, or because we want to show a contrast, we use the strong form. Most pronouns have strong and weak forms.

	weak	strong
you	/jə/	/ju:/
me	/mi/	/mi:/
he	/ɪ/	/hi:/
she	/ʃɪ/	/ʃi:/
him	/ɪm/	/hɪm/
her	/ə/ or /hə/	/hɜ:/
we	/wi/	/wi:/
us	/əs/	/ʌs/
them	/ðəm/	/ðem/

* The r at the end of *her* is pronounced before a vowel (see Unit 22).
Give her_a chance.

B



Listen to the difference, and repeat.

A: Will you be at the meeting on Friday? (you is weak)

B: Yes. Will you be there? (you is strong)

Can you help me carry this suitcase? (me is weak)

Hey, wait for me! (me is strong)

A: Is he there? (he is weak)

B: Who?

A: The boss.

B: No. Everybody else is working, but he's gone home! (he is strong)

A: She doesn't smoke or drink! (she is strong)

B: Ah, that's what she told you! (she is weak)

A: Look – it's him! (him is strong)

B: Where? I can't see him. (him is weak)

A: Do you know that woman?

B: Her? No, I don't recognise her. (first her is strong, second her is weak)

A: I'm afraid we can't stay any longer. (we is weak)

B: What do you mean, 'we'? I've got plenty of time. (we is strong)

A: They told us to go this way. (us is weak)

B: Well, they didn't tell us! (us is strong)

When I said, 'Give them a drink' I didn't mean them, I meant the people. (first them is weak, second them is strong)



She doesn't smoke or drink.



They told us to go this way.



When I said, 'Give them a drink', I didn't mean them, I meant the people.

Exercises

37.1 Listen and mark the underlined words w (weak) or s (strong).

CS1

- 1 A: Are you going to talk to him? B: No, I think he should talk to me first.
- 2 A: Shall I phone her? B: Yes, I think you should.
- 3 A: You see those people over there? Do you know them? B: I know her, but I don't know him.
- 4 A: What are you going to give him? B: I think I'll give him a shirt. What about you?
- 5 Let him come in and ask him what he wants.
- 6 She says she'll bring her money tomorrow.
- 7 I'm tired ... shall we go now?
- 8 Everybody's leaving. What about us? Shall we go, too?
- 9 Tell us when you're ready.
- 10 A: Who broke that window? B: He did! C: No, I didn't, she did!

Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

37.2 Listen and complete the sentences.

CS2

EXAMPLE

What did she say?

- 1 What _____ think about it?
- 2 Where _____ tonight?
- 3 _____ ready _____ now.
- 4 Where _____?
- 5 _____ come in.
- 6 _____ feeling all right?
- 7 Tell _____.
- 8 I _____ phone number but not _____.

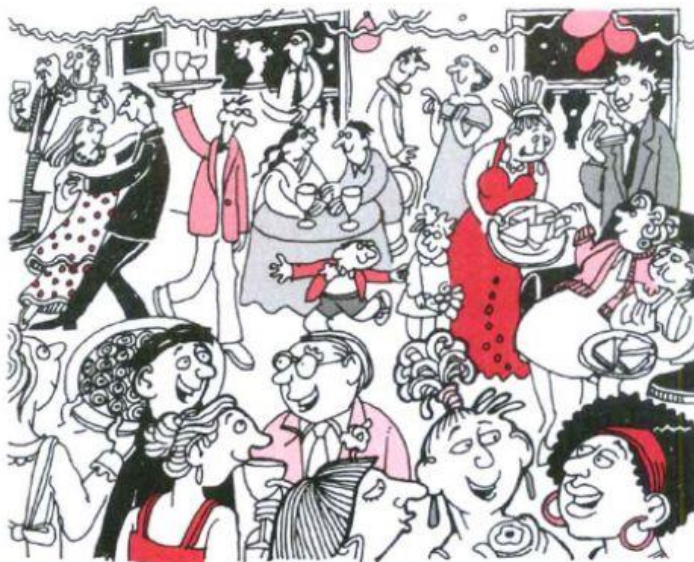
Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

37.3 Listen and repeat this poem. Be careful to speak with the correct rhythm. Stress the words in bold, and use weak forms of the pronouns between them.

CS3

Comings and goings

Don't	What	did she	say?
	send	her	away
	Give	her a	chance
	Ask	her to	dance
	Give	us a	drink
	What	do you	think?
	Ask	them to	wait
	Tell	them it's	late
	What	shall we	do?
Shall we	wait	here for	you?
	Please	don't	delay
Tell me,	what	do you	say?



And what's his name?

Strong and weak forms 2:

Possessives, conjunctions, prepositions

A

Many possessives, conjunctions and prepositions have two different pronunciations – a strong form and a weak form. Normally we use the weak form, but if the word is stressed because it is especially important, or because we want to show a contrast, we use the strong form.

	weak	strong
your	/jə/ *	/jɔ:/ *
his	/ɪz/	/hɪz/
their	/ðə/ *	/ðeə/ *
and	/ən/ or /ənd/	/ænd/
but	/bət/	/bʌt/
some	/səm/	/sʌm/
that	/ðət/	/ðæt/
at	/ət/	/æt/
for	/fə/ *	/fɔ:/ *
from	/frəm/	/frɒm/
of	/ɒv/	/ɒv/
to **	/tə/	/tu/

* The r at the end of these words is pronounced before a vowel (see Unit 22).

What's your address?

What was their answer?

Come in for a minute.

**to is pronounced /tu:/ before a vowel sound.

to a party

B



Listen to the difference, and repeat.

Give me your hand! (your is weak)

A: Your turn! (your is strong)

B: No, it's your turn! (your is strong)

A: That's our new neighbour.

B: And what's his name? (and and his are weak)

A: No, her! (her is strong)

B: Oh, sorry. What's her name? (her is strong)

A: She must be rich – look at her car! (her is weak)

B: I think that's his car, actually! (his is strong)

A: They've sold their old house, I see. (their is weak)

B: They've sold their house, yes, but they haven't bought another one yet. (their is strong)

A: Would you like some ice cream or some cake? (some is weak)

B: I'd like some ice cream and some cake, please! (and is strong, some is weak)

A: Do you like those sweets? (do and you are weak)

B: Well, some of them are good. (some is strong, of and them are weak)

The shop's closed from one to two. (from and to are weak)

There's a bus to the village at six, but there's no bus back from there tonight. (to and from are strong, at is weak)



She must be rich – look at her car!

Exercises

38.1 Listen and mark the underlined words w (weak) or s (strong).

C55

- 1 They went out and left their children at home.
- 2 Don't sit there – that's his seat.
- 3 Is this the train to London or from London?
- 4 I didn't say at five o'clock, I said about five o'clock.
- 5 What are you going to do?
- 6 His first name's Jack, but I don't know his second name.
- 7 Would you like some more tea?
- 8 Bring your umbrella – it's going to rain.
- 9 Excuse me – is this your umbrella?
- 10 Can you go and buy some bread and milk, please?
- 11 You've bought some flowers – who are they for?
- 12 I bought them for you!

Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

38.2 Read and listen to these poems. Then listen again and repeat. Be careful to speak with the correct rhythm.

Use the weak form of *and*.

C56a

You and me
 you and me
 cake and tea
 bread and cheese
 twos and threes
 this and that
 thin and fat
 left and right
 day and night
 now and then
 where and when

Use the weak form of *of*.

C56b

Relaxing
 a cup of tea
 a new CD
 a bottle of wine
 and plenty of time

Use the weak form of *but*.

C56c

Making plans
 A walk? But it's too late.
 To the town? But it's too far.
 Some sightseeing? But it's too dark.
 A restaurant? But it's too expensive.
 A game of chess? But it's so boring.
 Read a book? But my eyes are so tired.
 Study some English? But it's so difficult.
 But let's do something. OK, what?

Use the weak form of *at*.

C56d

I remember it well
 We met at a conference.
 Or maybe at a party.
 A party at a hotel.
 Or perhaps at someone's house.
 It was at lunchtime.
 No, it was late at night.
 Yes, and you were sitting at a table.
 Or maybe standing at a window.
 You looked at me and smiled.
 No, you looked at me and laughed at me.
 Yes, I remember it well.

Use the weak form of *your*.

C56e

A change of plan
 Eat your sandwich.
 Drink your tea.
 Comb your hair.
 Brush your teeth.
 Put your shoes on.
 Pack your bag.
 Get your keys.
 Ready?
 What do you mean, you've changed your mind?



Making plans

There's a spider

Strong and weak forms 3: Articles, comparatives, 'there'

A



Some words have two different pronunciations – a strong form and a weak form. We normally use the weak forms of the words *a* and *an*. We say /ə/ before consonant sounds and /ən/ before vowel sounds. Listen and repeat.

a cup of coffee, please
a piece of cake, please
a lot of visitors
a Thursday morning in November
an invitation to a party
an umbrella in the rain



Notice that some words begin with the vowel letter u but the consonant sound /j/, so we say *a* before them. Listen and repeat.

a university
a useful present

B



In comparatives, we use the weak forms of *than* /ðən/ and *as* /əz/, and we pronounce the ending -er as the weak vowel /ə/. Listen and repeat.

The new computer's better than the old one.
The old computer wasn't as good as the new one.

C



In the expressions *there's* and *there are* we normally use the weak form /ðə/. We pronounce *there's* as /ðəz/ and *there are* as /ðərə/. Listen and repeat.

There's a bridge over the river.
There are ten millimetres in a centimetre.



But when we use the word *there* to talk about a place, we use the strong form /ðeə/. Listen and repeat.

A: Where are my glasses? B: Over there!



Over there!

Exercises

- 39.1 Listen and circle the mistakes in the picture (there are five mistakes).

C60a

C60b

Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.



- 39.2 Listen and circle all the /ə/ sounds.

C61

There's a cat on the mat.
There's a fish in a dish.
There's a dog in the fog,
and a mouse in the house.

There's a film on TV.
You can sit on my knee.
There are two cups of tea.
One for you, one for me.

Check with the Key.
Then listen again and repeat.

- 39.3 Complete the sentences using the words in the box. You will need to use some of them more than once.

tall there there's there are older longer as than

- 1 Tessa's taller than Terry, but she isn't _____ Ted.
Ted's _____ Tessa, but he isn't _____ old _____ Terry.
- 2 A: What's the longest tunnel in the world?
B: The Channel Tunnel, between England and France?
- A: No, _____ a _____ one
_____ that.
- B: Is _____, really?
- A: Yes, _____ is, in Japan.
- 3 A: How many dollars are _____ in a pound?
B: I think _____ about one
and a half ... or maybe _____
_____ one and a half pounds in a dollar?



C62

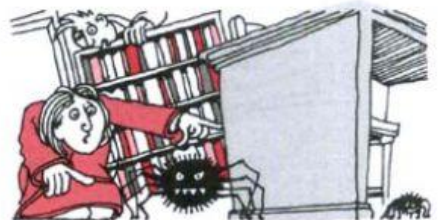
Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

- 39.4 Listen and mark the underlined words w (weak) or s (strong).

C63

A: What are you doing there?
B: There's a spider in the room.
A: Is there? Where?
B: There, look!
A: No, there isn't!
B: Yes, there is!
A: Well, actually, there are two – one there and one there!

Check with the Key. Then listen and repeat.



Who was that?

Strong and weak forms 4: Auxiliary verbs

A

We often use the weak forms of these verbs:

am is are was were have has do does can could



Listen and repeat.

- 1 I^w'm ready.
- 2 It^w's raining again.
- 3 ^wAre you coming?
- 4 You^w're coming, aren't you?
- 5 Who ^wwas that?
- 6 The shops ^wwere all closed.
- 7 What ^whave you got in your hand?
- 8 ^wHas the programme started?
- 9 What ^wdo you want for Christmas?
- 10 Where ^wdoes your sister live?
- 11 You ^wcan stay here if you like.
- 12 ^wCould you spell your name for me, please?

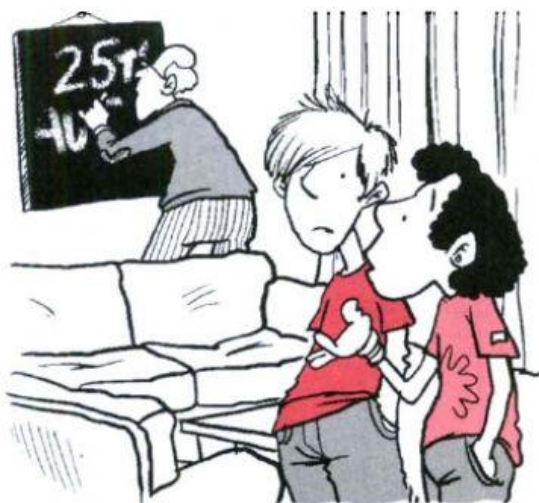
B



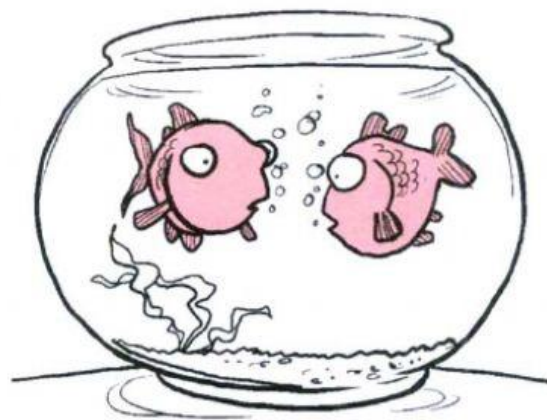
But if one of these verbs is stressed because it is especially important, or because we want to show a contrast, we use the strong form. Listen and repeat.

- 1 A: Are you ready? B: Yes, I ^sam.
- 2 A: It isn't raining, is it? B: Yes, it ^sis.
- 3 A: I'm not very good at English. B: Of course you ^sare!
- 4 A: Is your father a teacher? B: He ^swas, but he's retired now.
- 5 A: How many people are there in your class ... ten? B: There ^swere ten, but one left last week.
- 6 A: Have we met before? B: I don't think we ^shave.
- 7 A: Has it started? B: Yes, come on, it ^shas!
- 8 A: I don't like this music. B: Oh, I ^sdo.
- 9 A: Does the supermarket open on Sundays? B: I think it ^sdoes.
- 10 A: I can't open this door. B: Let me try. Maybe I ^scan.
- 11 A: Can you play tennis? B: Not now. I ^scould when I was younger.

For more about I'm, you're and it's, see Unit 41.



Is your father a teacher?



Have we met before?

Exercises

40.1

C66a

Listen, and notice the weak forms underlined.

It was winter. It was late. It was dark. It was snowing. I was walking along a street. There was nobody else in the town. I could see a light in a window. I could hear someone shouting, 'You're too late! We were here, all the time. We were waiting for you, but now it's too late!' Then I woke up. It was a dream!



C66b

Listen again and repeat.

40.2

C67

Listen and mark the underlined words w (weak) or s (strong).

A: I'm better than you!

B: No, you aren't!

A: I am. I've got more toys than you!

B: No, you haven't!

A: Yes, I have! And I can speak twenty languages!

B: You can't! Nobody can speak twenty languages!

A: I can. And I could walk when I was three weeks old!

B: You couldn't! That's impossible!

A: I could! You don't know – you weren't there!

B: I was! I'm older than you!

A: No, you aren't!

B: Yes, I am! I'm eight. How old are you?

A: I'm eight hundred.

B: What do you mean? Nobody can be eight hundred years old!

A: Don't argue!

B: I'm not arguing!

A: Yes, you are!



Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

40.3

Mark the underlined words w if you think they will be weak and s if you think they will be strong.

1 I could speak English when I was twelve.2 I wasn't very well yesterday, but I am today.3 A: Are these your gloves? B: Yes, they are. Thanks!4 A: I don't think you were at the lesson last week, were you? B: I was!5 A: I didn't think the singers in the band were very good. B: Oh, I thought they were!6 A: Have you got a pen? B: Just a minute, I think I have, somewhere.7 A: Has the lesson started? B: Yes, it has, but you can go in.8 A: Where does he live? B: Near the old town hall. Do you know where that is? A: Yes, I do.

C68

Listen and check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.