

22

Well, YOU do it then! Prominent function words

The function words listed in Unit 21A are not usually prominent. However, there are a number of exceptions.

A

B21 Function words are usually made prominent when a contrast is expressed or implied:

A: I'll leave it on the table, shall I? B: No, put it **UN**der the table.
A: That looks pretty easy. B: Well, **YOU** do it then! (because **I** can't)

B

B22 *It* is rarely prominent except at the end of a number of fixed phrases with *this* and *that*:

You know I was buying a new car? Well, **THIS** is **IT**. (= this is the one)
A: People are only interested in money these days. B: **THIS** is **IT**. (= I agree)
THIS is **IT**, then. (= it's time to do something I don't want to – leave, part, etc.)
I just signed my name, and **THAT** was **IT**. (= nothing more had to be done)
A: Here's your pocket money. B: Is **THAT** **IT**? (= is that all there is?)
A: Just swim across. B: **THAT'S** just **IT**. (= that's the problem) I can't swim.

C

B23 *Some* is often prominent (and pronounced /sʌm/) when –

- it means 'some people'
SOME consider him to be the best golfer in the world.
- it means a large number or amount
I didn't see her again for **SOME** YEARS.
- it means a particular person or thing, without saying exactly which
There must be **SOME** time we're all free for a meeting.

Any is often prominent (and pronounced /'eni/) when –

- it means 'it's not important which'
ANY of the camera shops in town will sell them.
- it is used for emphasis after a negative verb
Haven't you done **ANY** of your homework yet?

Somebody, anybody, etc. are often prominent when they are the subject of a sentence:

A: Apparently, there were no witnesses. B: But **SOME**body must have seen it.

D

B24 *The* is prominent (and pronounced /ði:/) when we say that something is the best, most important, etc. of its kind:

You should go to the Maldives. It's **THE** place to see coral.

E

B25 The auxiliary verbs *be, have* and *do* and the modal verbs are often prominent –

- in negative forms I **CAN'T** wait.
- for special emphasis I **SHOULD** have left earlier.
- in contradictions A: You **HAVEN'T** ironed your shirt. B: I **HAVE** ironed it.
- in time contrasts It **WAS** in the cupboard, but it **ISN'T** there now.

Do, did and *does* are often made prominent for emphasis with the present and past simple:

I **DO** like this cheese. We **DID** warn you.

F

B26 In a piece of new information or a question made up only of function words, the last function word is often made prominent:

There was nothing I could **DO**.
A: I've just finished a really good book. B: what was it **ABOUT**?

Exercises

- 2.1 Think about the words in **bold** in these dialogues and underline them if they are likely to be prominent. Then listen and check your answers.

B27

- 1 A: Do you know of **any** good restaurants in Brockhurst?
 B: Well, I haven't been for **some** years, but there used to be **some** very good ones.
The Oyster was **the** place to eat seafood.
 A: Mmm. I **do** like seafood.
 B: But I'm sure **any** of **the** restaurants there will be good.

- 2 A: Try turning the tap off.
 B: I **have** tried turning it, but it's stuck.
 A: **Did you** ask **anyone** for help?
 B: No. Look, why don't you try?
 A: Okay. Hmm. There must be some way of doing it.
 B: I **did** tell you it was stuck.
 A: There. It just needed **some** strength!
Anyone could have done it.



Now listen again. Press 'pause' before each B part and read it aloud. Then press 'play' again and compare your pronunciation with what follows. Then do the same for the A parts.

- 2.2 Play the recording. Press 'pause' before each B part and read it aloud. Then press 'play' again and compare your pronunciation with what follows. Did you put prominence in the same places?

B28

- 1 A: There you are. All finished. B: Is that it?
 2 A: You can't sit there, it's Kate's place. B: Oh, is it?
 3 A: Are we there yet? B: Yes, this is it.
 4 A: Have you finished? B: Yes, that's it.
 5 A: Which coat is yours? B: That's it.
 6 A: Your train's arriving. B: This is it, then.
 7 A: Do you like my painting? B: What is it?
 8 A: Come on, get up now. B: I can't. That's just it.

- 2.3 You will hear seven sentences. After each sentence, press 'pause' and say one of the responses in the box. (Make sure you make the last word prominent.) When you press 'play' again you will hear the correct answer.

B29

Who could it have been?
 There was nothing we could have done.
 How many is it for?
 Yes, but I don't know who she was.

Where was he from?
~~I wish I had.~~
 But isn't there anything I can do?

EXAMPLE *You hear* I thought you were going to sell your old car.
You say I wish I HAD.

Follow up: Try to use the phrase 'THIS is IT' (= I agree) in the next conversation you have in English. Make sure you pronounce it correctly.