


/ə/ a(gain)

Some words and syllables are pronounced more strongly than others: they are **stressed**. (In this unit, stressed syllables are marked in **bold type**.) In unstressed words and syllables, the sound /ə/ is often used.


T A S K 1 Say /ə/ in unstressed syllables

-  **1.1a Listen, and repeat. Make the stressed syllables strong, and the unstressed syllables weak and quick.**

Try again. Come along.
Paul's a **p**ostman. **M**artha's a **t**eacher.
Michael's a **p**oliceman. **B**arbara's a **p**ilot.
 A **c**oloured **p**icture.

In all the unstressed syllables above, the sound /ə/ is used. Notice that /ə/ can be spelled in many ways.


- 1.1b Look again at the phrases in 1.1a. Find words where /ə/ is spelled a, e, o, u.**

-  **1.2 Listen to these phrases, and mark the stressed syllables. Then practise the phrases; be careful to use /ə/ in the unstressed syllables.**

Go away. Come again.
 Susan's a singer. Jill's a photographer.
 John and Michael are policemen. Brian's a bus conductor.
 A big adventure.

T A S K 2 Say /ə/ in weak forms

Many common words have a weak form, with /ə/, when unstressed:

-  **2.1 'and'** The following words often appear in a phrase with 'and'. For each word, say a phrase.

e.g. **knife** and **fork**

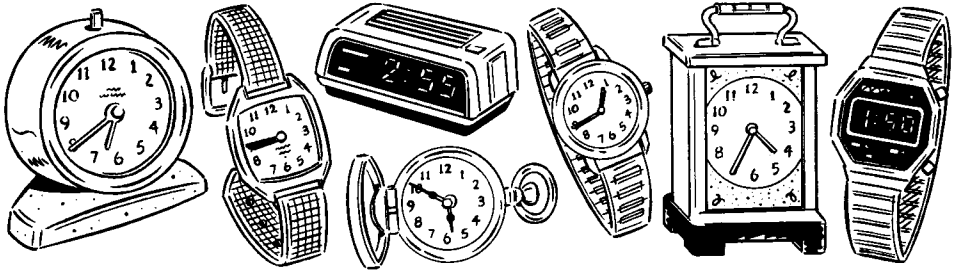
1 knife 2 black 3 ladies 4 fish 5 bacon 6 here 7 up

Now listen to the phrases on the cassette to check. Can you think of some more phrases with 'and'?

-  **2.2 'to'** Listen, and repeat.

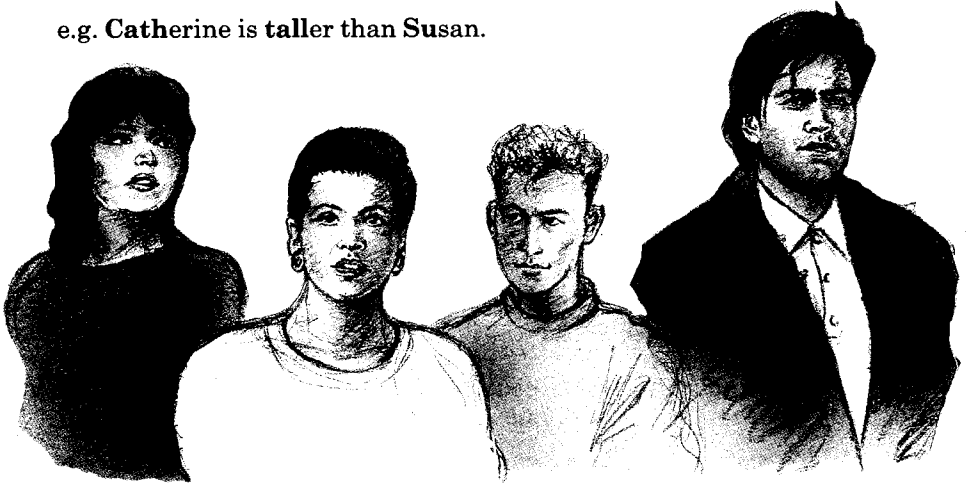
11.50 'It's ten to twelve.' 3.45 'It's quarter to four.'

Now say the times shown below.



2.3a 'than' Compare the people shown below. How many true things can you say?

e.g. Catherine is taller than Susan.



Catherine, 22 yrs,
175 cm, 63 kilos

Susan, 24 yrs,
160 cm, 70 kilos

Alan, 20 yrs,
163 cm, 60 kilos

Brian, 28 yrs,
183 cm, 90 kilos

2.3b Make similar sentences about people in your class, or in your family.

2.4a 'of' Listen, and repeat.

a bottle of wine a cup of tea a glass of wine,
a bag of potatoes a tin of beans a packet of sweets
a box of chocolates a jug of water

2.4b Make similar phrases using these words.

beer sugar coffee matches tomatoes milk chocolate

2.5a 'can' Listen, and repeat.

I can swim quite well.
I can speak French and German.
I can swim but I can't play tennis.

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2.5b In pairs, say which of these things you can do.

type speak Chinese/German/French, etc. play chess
 play tennis/football, etc. play the guitar/piano, etc.
 drive ride a bicycle ride a horse ski cook
 (think of other things too)

2.5c Tell other students about your partner.

e.g. **Jean** can speak French and German.
 Maria can swim very well but she **can't** play tennis.

T A S K 3 Say /ə/ in weak forms and unstressed syllables**3.1** Listen, and notice the words with the sound /ə/ marked in *italics*. Practise the conversation.

- A: **What shall we have for supper?**
 B: **Would you like bacon and eggs?**
 A: **No, not bacon and eggs tonight. What else have we got?**
 B: **There are some potatoes, and lots of tomatoes. We could have baked potatoes, and a tomato salad.**
 A: **I had a baked potato yesterday.**
 B: **Well then, you can buy some fish and chips, from the shop at the end of the road.**
 A: **OK. Shall we have a bottle of wine?**
 B: **No, just a jug of water.**

**3.2** Listen, and notice the words with the sound /ə/ marked in *italics*. Mark other words which contain the sound /ə/.

- A: **My sister is coming to see me tomorrow. I'd like to take her to the theatre. I wonder what's on.**
 B: **Look in the newspaper. In the section called Entertainments.**
 A: **Oh, yes. Look, at the Players Theatre. There's a comedy, with Amanda Morgan, and Michael Allen.**
 B: **I've heard of Amanda Morgan, but who's Michael Allen?**
 A: **He was in that television series about a hospital. He played the doctor who came from Canada.**
 B: **Oh yes, I remember. Tomorrow is a good night to go to the theatre. On Mondays, you can get two seats for the price of one.**
 A: **That's good. Usually, when I go to the theatre, I sit at the back. It's not as comfortable, but it's cheaper. But tomorrow we can afford better seats, at the front.**

Now practise the conversation.