



What is connected speech?

Although it is important to teach students isolated sounds in English which they may have difficulty with, the ultimate goal is that students achieve a certain level of fluency, with comprehensible pronunciation, as well as the ability to understand continuous speech.

When words are put together, they connect to each other in such a way that may sometimes change the way they sound. This is called **connected speech**. Two aspects of connected speech are **assimilation** and **elision**.

Assimilation is the term used to describe the effect of one sound on a neighbouring sound when they meet. When we prepare our articulation (mouth, tongue, lips, teeth, palate, glottis, etc) to transition from the last sound in one word to the first sound in another, some sounds are changed or absorbed.

Examples:

The fat boy over there is in my class. (/t/ assimilates to /p/)

The board is made up of ten men. (/n/ assimilates to /m/)

That girl in the green dress is the lead singer. (/t/ assimilates to /k/)

I went to a very good concert last night. (/d/ assimilates to /g/)



What is connected speech?

Elision is the term used to describe when a sound is omitted or disappears. This often (but not always) happens when a sound is followed by a similar sound, such as when two plosive sounds occur together.

Examples:

I love baked beans. (/t/ elided between /k/ and /b/)

The man kept talking for hours on end. (/t/ is elided between /p/ and /t/)

The first presenter at the conference was great. (/t/ is elided between /s/ and /p/)

The Nile is the longest river in the world. (/t/ is elided between /s/ and /r/)

Bibliography

Kelly, G (2000) How to Teach Pronunciation Longman

Thornbury, S (2006) An A-Z of ELT Macmillan

[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/connected-speech- 2](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/connected-speech-2)



Lesson Plan: Up, up, up - High in The Sky

Title: Up, up, up – high in the sky

Level: Pre-intermediate

Focus: This lesson focuses on practicing superlatives and connected speech (the pronunciation of the superlative and the elided /t/ sound when the superlative is in a sentence)

Pre-reading

- ☒ Ask students to look at the title of the text and the infographic. Ask them what they think the text is about.
- ☒ The text talks about the tallest buildings in the world.

Pronunciation

Before students read the text, focus on the pronunciation work, so that they will incorporate the correct pronunciation and connected speech when they discuss the text.

- ☒ In isolation the word tallest is pronounced **/tɔ:lɪst/** . Drill this briefly with students.
- ☒ When the superlative ending in –est is part of a sentence, the final /t/ sound is elided. Drill the example below and using the phonemic script to help students see what the correct pronunciation looks like.

Edificio Italia was once the tallest building in São Paulo.

/tɔ:lɪs bɪldɪŋ/

- ☒ Try making a few other similar sentences to practice the pronunciation and connected speech.



Lesson Plan: Up, up, up - High in The Sky

Reading

Ask students to read the text and infographic on their worksheet once.

Post-reading

Ask the following question:

Q: Which country has most of the top ten tallest buildings in the world?

A: *China*

Have students read the questions in **b** and scan the text for the answers. Have students work in pairs and discuss the answers among themselves. Have the pairs work together to ask and answer the questions to each other.

Q: Which building is the tallest building in the world?

A: *Burj Khalifa is the tallest building in the world.*

Q: Which building has the highest hotel in the world?

A: *The International Commerce Centre has the highest hotel in the world.*

Q: Which building has highest sky-bridge in the world?

A: *Petronas Twin Towers has the highest sky-bridge in the world.*

As a follow up, ask your students to do research on

<http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/2016> to find other world records (tallest man/woman; shortest man/woman; biggest country; fastest mammal; etc.)

Have students create a quiz and compete with their classmates to see who knows the most.