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English Pronunciation for Brazilians

/ˈɪŋɡlɪʃ prəˌnʌnsɪˈeɪʃən fər brəˈzɪliənz/

The Sounds of American English

UNIT 3 – Sample



Foreword

Dr. H. Douglas Brown, Ph.D. — Professor of English, San Francisco State University

It gives me great pleasure to offer this foreword to *English Pronunciation for Brazilians*. I have known the lead author, Sonia Godoy, since her student days at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where she was a student in the Master of Arts program and I was her professor. I'm gratified to see that my own encouragement and Sonia's creativity have, with her co-authors Cris Gontow and Marcello Marcelino, given birth to this practical manual for students of English in Brazil. I'm very proud to see this accomplishment!

There are a number of characteristics of this book that I'm pleased to see. First, the book is for Brazilians and speaks directly to predictable phonological issues for Brazilian learners. There are many (maybe too many?) books in print that provide generic instruction in oral communication, not necessarily directed to any one group of native speakers. This book is appropriately targeted and speaks directly to its specified audience.

Second, the book is highly practical. Directions are easy to follow; exercises are clearly spelled out and are of interest and relevance to students. The material is simple and direct, and therefore does not risk going "over the heads" of students. And there is an ample amount of practice. In an era when some pedagogical trends incorrectly play down the importance of practice, this book stands out in its emphasis on practice for the psychomotor process of improving pronunciation.

Third, the material is student-centered and student-friendly. It forces students to take responsibility for their own learning with appropriate pair and group work activity — all of which is supported by an audio component that gives students an opportunity to hear models. The authors encourage students to self-monitor, which is a key strategic approach to the acquisition of phonological accuracy. And I like the student-friendly, humorous approach that enlivens what might otherwise be tedious practice.

Finally, I applaud the authors for their pedagogical approach to phonological acquisition. I have often used the analogy of "zooming in" as a strategy for all aspects of language learning — the occasional need to take a very close look at a language form. The authors effectively guide students to view broader contexts, to have a "close up" look, and to zoom in on details.

Congratulations to Sonia, Cris, and Marcello for an excellent achievement!

Preface

Welcome to *English Pronunciation for Brazilians – The Sounds of American English*. Unlike most books in the area, this pronunciation text does not aim at a worldwide market. It was **especially designed for speakers of Brazilian Portuguese**, and it relies on the authors' vast experience in teaching in Brazil to address all the areas of difficulty pertaining to this particular language group. Throughout the book, **English and Portuguese are contrasted**, guiding the students in transferring pronunciation habits. The body of the text focuses on the sounds of American English (vowels and consonants), and this variety was chosen as it is most commonly the one Brazilian students are interested in learning. This book was written for **intermediate to advanced** learners and although the focus is on general English, the abilities here acquired can easily be transferred to other settings to suit students' academic and/or professional needs. This textbook can be used with a **variety of learning formats**: large groups, small groups, private teaching and independent learning.

As discussed further in the book, **Brazilians in general have good pronunciation** when learning a foreign language. However, according to our personality or characteristics, we want to go **beyond intelligibility**, as most people want to sound as native-like as possible. This book provides enough practice **in foreign accent reduction**, introducing students to the pronunciation of English in North America as it is spoken by educated native speakers in fluent speech. Students are led to discover the principles of articulatory phonetics through experimenting with their own vocal tract. Theory is introduced and reinforced by numerous practice exercises working up from individual sounds and phrases to dialogs, meaningful guided practice and contextualized reading passages. A lot of the activities come in the form of **games and fun activities**. The idea is to ensure the carryover of pronunciation skills into real communication. Students will improve their ability to communicate in English, increasing substantially their **listening comprehension skills**.

The student-centered approach encourages peer and especially **self-monitoring**, an important element for self-improvement. The teacher will be a facilitator, encouraging learners to be active participants in changing their

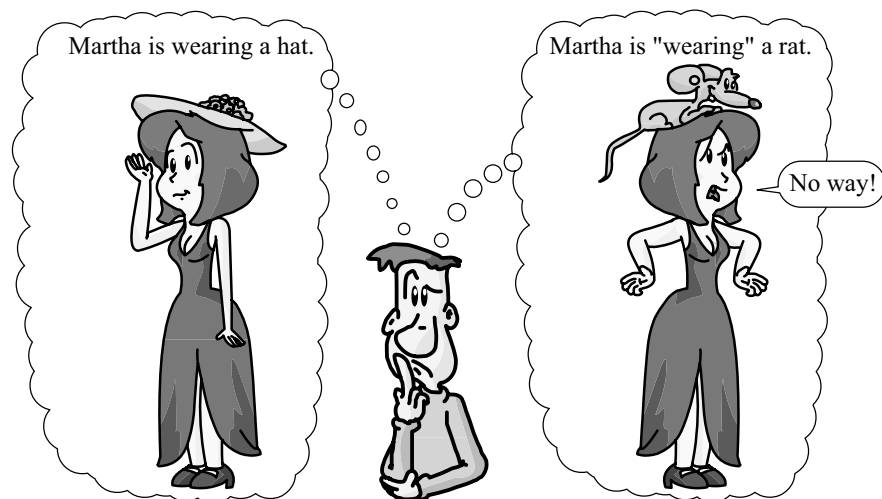
pronunciation habits. **Phonetic symbols** are taught in a light and fun fashion to enable students to check pronunciation in the dictionary, thus promoting **learner's independence**. The symbols are also important in demonstrating the difference between sounds and letters. Common spelling patterns are included, always having Brazilian Portuguese differences and interference in mind.

Humor, which is much in accordance with the personality of Brazilians in general, is a recurrent element that permeates the whole book. We believe that the use of humor helps students retain the sounds because they will tend to remember the tips and the conversations better.

Have fun! We know we did while writing this!

Sonia, Cris and Marcello

Unit 3 - /r/ and /h/



Think about it

Compare:

Case 1:

Portuguese	English
humor	humor
herói	hero
helicóptero	helicopter
horrível	horrible
hilário	hilarious

What about...

Case 2:

Portuguese	English
honesto	honest
hora	hour

What happens to the “h” in Portuguese? What conclusions can you reach regarding the pronunciation of “h” in English? Which case is more frequent?

Close up

Close your nose and breathe out: /h.../. That’s the /h/ sound. For some Brazilians, depending on the idiolect, these words may sound the same:

English	Portuguese
hey/hay	rei
he	ri

Because of this similarity, a lot of Brazilians have problems differentiating /h/ and /r/ in English. The initial /h/ in Portuguese is silent, whereas in English it is usually pronounced.

Zoom in

🕒 Exercise 1: Repeat these words:

hi – house – hill – hair – heaven – hello
unhappy – overhead – inhabitant – inherit

🕒 Exercise 2: Repeat these sentences:

The **h**appy **h**ippie **h**ad **h**orrible **h**air.
The **h**abitant of New **H**ampshire **h**ad never **h**ad **h**am and eggs before.
There’s a **h**orrid **h**aunted **h**ouse on the **h**ill.
In **H**artford, **H**ereford and **H**ampshire, **h**urricanes **h**ardly ever **h**appen².

2. From *My Fair Lady*

🔊 The Silent Corner

The “h” is silent in the following words. Listen and repeat:

hour – heir – honor – honest – exhibit – exhibition – vehicle

Possible pronunciation for:
herb /ɜrb/ or /hɜrb/
human /'yu:mən/ or /'hyu:mən/

🔊 Exercise 2: Repeat these sentences:

An honest man waited for an hour.

An heir is an honorable guest.

Before these words, use the article “an.” Compare:
a helicopter
an hour

Get your tongue around it

Compare these words:

ear – **hear/here**
 ill – **hill**
 it – **hit**
 am – **ham**
 eye/I – **hi**
 eight/ate – **hate**

🔊 Repeat the pairs of words above.

/fə'netɪk fər fə'netɪks/

🔊 Match the words and the transcriptions.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 1. honest | a. ___/əg'zɪbɪt/ |
| 2. homeless | b. ___/vɪ'hɪkyələər/ |
| 3. exhibit | c. ___/'ənəst/ |
| 4. exhale | d. ___/'hʌni/ |
| 5. honorable | e. ___/ɛr/ |
| 6. honey | f. ___/'ənərəbl/ |
| 7. vehicle | g. ___/hɛr/ |
| 8. vehicular | h. ___/'houmləs/ |
| 9. heir | i. ___/'vi:əkəl/ |
| 10. hair | j. ___/'ɛkʃeɪl/ |

In context

🔊 Repeat the paragraph after the model, and then practice it in pairs.

Hugh and **H**arry are **h**umorists from **H**olland. **H**ugh is **h**ighly skilled at **h**at tricks, while **H**arry can tell **h**ilarious jokes. Once during a show in **H**awaii, **H**arry **h**it **H**ugh on the fore**h**ead with a **h**ot dog. **H**ugh **h**id the **h**ot dog under his **h**at and danced the **h**ula. It was a **h**uge success!

Think about it

Think about the “r” in Portuguese. Is it always the same sound? What about in English? Is there any variant of the “r” in Portuguese that is similar to /r/ in English?

Pronounce these words slowly and pay attention to the way you articulate the /r/.

rose	arrive	garden	four
red	correct	free	car

Close up

The /r/ in English is pronounced like in some places in the countryside of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, for example. Say *porta aberta* very slowly like people from these places. Can you feel your tongue curving backwards? Now use the same sound to say *ar...* Keep the /r/ and say *ar...rose, ar...red*. That's the English /r/.

Zoom in

🕒 Exercise 1: Pronounce these words curving back your tongue:

deer – care – sir – fire
card – heart – certain
road – real – repeat – red
brown – green – front – truck
practice – three

🕒 Exercise 2: Repeat these sentences.

The road to Rome is dangerous in the winter.
December, January and February are summer months in the northern hemisphere.
Ricky Ricardo was a character in a popular American TV program.
Rock'n'Roll Party Queen is a song from *Grease*.

🕒 The Silent Corner

Attention to the silent “w” in these words. The first sound you hear is /r/!

wrong – write – wrap – wrist – wrinkle

Repeat these sentences.

She wrote that the wrist watch was wrong. Don't wrap it.

In context

🕒 Exercise 1: Repeat linking the sounds:

four Indians	dear Alice	for us
her umbrella	car engine	fire escape
wore a suit	our insurance	your Andy

🕒 Exercise 2: Listen to this letter. Pay attention to the linking sounds!

Dear Alice,

Yesterday I had a very strange dream. I met four Indians who had a problem with their car engine. One of them was trying to climb a fire escape to get to a person's apartment and use the phone. Another was sticking her umbrella in the engine to start it. The third wore a red dress and the fourth asked me, “Could you call our insurance company for us?” It was so weird!

Your Andy

Read the letter in pairs, checking each other's pronunciation. Then close your books and ask each other questions about the letter. How much can you remember?

Fun time

🕒 Sing the song along with the recording. Turn it off and sing it as a round song: one person starts, and then the second person starts singing the first line when the first person starts the second line and so on.

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream

Zoom in

🔊 Repeat these pairs of words contrasting /h/ and /r/.

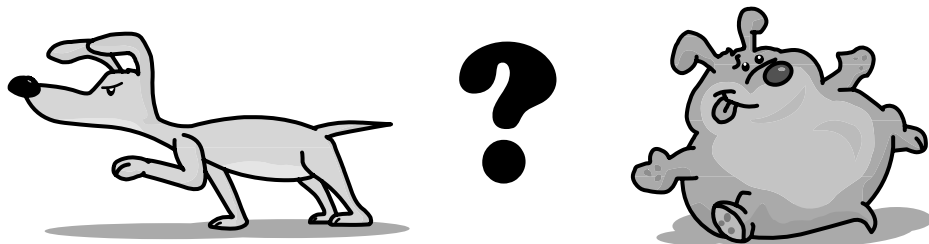
home – Rome
hose – rose
hat – rat
hole – role
habit – rabbit
hair – rare

hate – rate
head – red
hear – rear
height – right
hide – ride
hope – rope

Work in pairs. Choose five of the words above and dictate them to a classmate. Pronounce the words carefully so your friend won't mix them up!

Stay tuned

🔊 Circle the word you hear.



A hound dog or a round dog?

1. Look! There's a *hat* / *rat* under the bed.
2. *Hide* / *Ride* the bicycle.
3. How do you know *your height* / *you're right*?
4. Can you smell that old *hose* / *rose*?
5. This is a *hound* / *round* dog.
6. That's an old *habit* / *rabbit*.
7. *Home* / *Rome* is the best place to be at night.
8. I prefer the *head* / *red* post.
9. Wow! This is really *hair* / *rare*.
10. He *hated* / *rated* his performance.

In context

🔊 Listen to these names of songs.

House of the Rising Sun (The Animals)
A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall (Bob Dylan)
The Road to Hell (Chris Rea)
Here Comes the Rain Again (Eurythmics)
The Real Holy Place (Boogie Down Productions)
Home of the Range (Disney)
Raise Your Hands (Bon Jovi)
Hurry Home (Jon Anderson)
Red Hill Mining Town (U2)
Ready to Go Home (10 CC)

Conversation

🔊 Listen to the conversation and then read it in pairs.

Harry: Hi, Ruth. I have to deliver a report at Mr. Ron Howard's house, and I don't know how to get there.
Ruth: Well, Harry, do you have the address?
Harry: Yes, it's at the corner of Hudson Road and Harris Road.
Ruth: Oh, I know the way. It's near Richards Hill. Turn right on Hippy Avenue, then right again after Richards Hill. Then take another right and you are there!
Harry: Thanks for the hot tip, Ruth.

Fun time

Get into two groups. Write ten words with initial /h/ or /r/. When the two groups are ready, one volunteer from one group should choose a number, and a member of the opposite group should tell him the word secretly. The person then has 30 seconds to mouth the word silently for his group to guess. If the group can't guess the word, the person then has ten seconds to mime the word. The group scores a point for each word guessed – and pronounced – correctly. Then it's the other group's turn. Have fun!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

English Pronunciation for Brazilians

The Sounds of American English

- was especially designed for speakers of Brazilian Portuguese
- contrasts American English and Brazilian Portuguese phonological traits
- includes numerous practical exercises, games and fun activities
- exposes learners to phonetic symbols in a light, fun way
- focuses on high-frequency vocabulary appropriate for intermediate to advanced students
- helps you improve your listening comprehension skills
- comes with complete audio program on CD

"...[T]he material is student-centered and student-friendly. It forces students to take responsibility for their own learning, with appropriate pair and group work activity – all of which is supported by an audio component that gives students an opportunity to hear models. The authors encourage students to self-monitor, which is a key strategic approach to the acquisition of phonological accuracy. And I like the student-friendly, humorous approach that enlivens what might otherwise be tedious practice."

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