

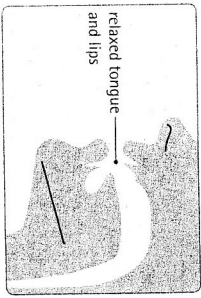
7 Carrot, cabbage

Unstressed vowels /ə/ and /ɪ/

A In words with two or more syllables, at least one syllable is weak (does not have stress).

- Listen to these words which have two syllables, and the second syllable is weak.
carrot cabbage
- In weak syllables, native speakers of English very often use the weak vowel sounds /ə/ and /ɪ/.
- Listen again to the two words above: the O in *carrot* is pronounced /ə/ and the A in *cabbage* is pronounced /ɪ/.

A29 Look at the mouth diagram to see how to make the sound /ə/.
• Listen to these examples and repeat them. The weak vowels in the unstressed syllables in bold are pronounced /ə/.



- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------|---------|-------|
| weak A: away | banana | woman | sugar |
| weak E: garden | paper | under | |
| weak O: police | doctor | correct | |
| weak U: support | figure | colour | |

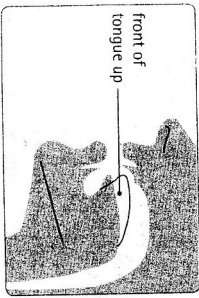


"I ate an apple and a banana in a cinema in Canada."

Important for listening

- In words like *paper*, *sugar*, *colour*, the final R is not pronounced in many accents, so *visit* /'vzɪt/ rhymes with *sister* /'sɪstə/, for example.
- Many speakers of English (especially non-native speakers) do not change vowels in weak syllables to /ə/.

C **A30** Look at the mouth diagram to see how to make the sound /ɪ/.
• Listen to these examples and repeat them. The weak vowels in the unstressed syllables in black are pronounced /ɪ/.



- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| weak A: orange | cabbage |
| weak E: dances | wanted |
| weak I: music | walking |
| weak U: lettuce | minute |



"Alex's lettuces tasted like cabbages."

D Spelling

Notice in the examples above that nearly any vowel spelling may be pronounced as a weak vowel.

! Note: Often, whole words are pronounced as weak syllables, with a weak vowel. For example: half an hour, going to work, Jim was late. See Unit 33.

Exercises

7.1 Listen to the poem. Circle the words which rhyme.



Mr Porter loves his pasta.
No one else can eat it faster.
Mr Porter's sister Rita,
Buys the pasta by the metre.
Mr Porter's older daughter,
Boils it all in tubs of water.

7.2 Listen. In each sentence or phrase there are two vowels which are not /ə/. Circle them.

A32 EXAMPLE an @pple and a ban@na

- 1 from Canada to China
- 2 The parrot was asleep.
- 3 The cinema was open.
- 4 the photographer's assistant
- 5 a question and an answer
- 6 a woman and her husband
- 7 a pasta salad

Write the words in the correct part of the table. Then listen and check.

vowel in weak syllable = /ə/	vowel in weak syllable = /ɪ/
orange salad	return needed
teaches	letter sofa
	market begin
	visit peaches
	quarter women
woman	orange

7.3 Listen and circle the word you hear.

- 1 Woman or women? What time did the *woman* / *women* arrive?
- 2 Dress or address? Where's Kate's *dress* / *address*?
- 3 Manager's or manages? The team *manager's* / *manages* well.
- 4 Teacher's or teaches? The German *teacher's* / *teaches* English.
- 5 Weight's or waiter's? The *weight's* / *waiter's* heavy.
- 6 Dancer's or dances? The woman *dancer's* / *dances* fast.
- 7 Officer's or offices? The *officer's* / *offices*' here.
- 8 Away or way? Take that *away* / *way*.
- 9 Driver or drive? What a nice *driver* / *drive*!
- 10 Racer's or races? The *racer's* / *races* finished.

Follow up: Record yourself saying the sentences in 7.4, choosing one of the two words. Make a note of which words you say. Then listen to your recording in about two weeks. Is it clear which words you said?

Now go to Unit 27