

## WEAK FORMS

1. 'THE'
  - Weak forms: ðə (before consonants)
    - 'Shut the door' 'ʃʌt ðə 'dɔː
  - ði (before vowels)
    - 'Wait for the end' 'weɪt fə ði 'end
2. 'A', 'AN'
  - Weak forms: ə (before consonants)
    - 'Read a book' 'riːd ə 'bʊk
  - ən (before vowels)
    - 'Eat an apple' 'iːt ən 'æpəl
3. 'AND'
  - Weak form: ən (sometimes ŋ after t, d, s, z, ʃ)
    - 'Come and see' 'kʌm ən 'siː
    - 'Fish and chips' 'fɪʃ ŋ 'tʃɪps
4. 'BUT'
  - Weak form: bət 'It's good but expensive' its 'ɡʊd bət ɪks'pensɪv
5. 'THAT' (This word only has a weak form when used in a relative clause; when used with a demonstrative sense it is always pronounced in its strong form.)
  - Weak form: ðət 'The price is the thing that annoys me' ðə 'praɪs ɪz ðə 'θɪŋ ðət ə'noɪz mi
6. 'THAN'
  - Weak form: ðən 'Better than ever' 'betə ðən 'evə
7. 'HIS' (when it occurs before a noun)
  - Weak form: ɪz (hɪz at the beginning of a sentence)
    - 'Take his name' 'teɪk ɪz 'neɪm
  - (Another sense of 'his', as in 'it was his', or 'his was late', always has the strong form.)
8. 'HER' (When used with possessive sense, preceding a noun; as an object pronoun, this can also occur at the end of a sentence.)
  - Weak forms: ə (before consonants)
    - 'Take her home' 'teɪk ə 'həʊm
  - ər (before vowels)
    - 'Take her out' 'teɪk ər 'aʊt
9. 'YOUR'
  - Weak forms: jə (before consonants)
    - 'Take your time' 'teɪk jə 'taɪm
  - jər (before vowels)
    - 'On your own' 'ɒn jər 'əʊn
10. 'SHE', 'HE', 'WE', 'YOU'
 

This group of pronouns has weak forms pronounced with weaker vowels than the iː and uː of their strong forms. I will use the symbols ɪ and u (in preference to ɪ and ʊ) to represent them. There is little difference in the pronunciation in different places in the sentence, except in the case of 'he'.

  - Weak forms:
    - 'SHE' ʃɪ
      - 'Why did she read it?' 'waɪ dɪd ʃɪ 'riːd ɪt
      - 'Who is she?' 'huː ɪz ʃɪ
    - 'HE' ɪ (the weak form is usually pronounced without h except at the beginning of a sentence)
      - 'Which did he choose?' 'wɪtʃ dɪd ɪ 'tʃuːz
      - 'He was late, wasn't he?' hi wəz 'leɪt 'wɒznt ɪ
    - 'WE' wi
      - 'How can we get there?' 'haʊ kən wi 'get ðə
      - 'We need that, don't we?' wi 'niːd ðæt 'dəʊnt wi
    - 'YOU' ju
      - 'What do you think?' 'wɒt də ju 'θɪŋk
      - 'You like it, do you?' ju 'laɪk ɪt 'duː ju

11. 'HIM'
    - Weak form: ɪm
      - 'Leave him alone' 'liːv ɪm ə'ləʊn
      - 'I've seen him' aɪv 'siːn ɪm
  12. 'HER'
    - Weak form: ə (hə when sentence-initial)
      - 'Ask her to come' 'ɑːsk ə tə 'kʌm
      - 'I've met her' aɪv 'met ə
  13. 'THEM'
    - Weak form: ðəm
      - 'Leave them here' 'liːv ðəm 'hɪə
      - 'Eat them' 'iːt ðəm
  14. 'US'
    - Weak form: əs
      - 'Write us a letter' 'raɪt əs ə 'letə
      - 'They invited all of us' ðeɪ ɪn'vaɪtɪd 'ɔːl əv əs
- The next group of words (some prepositions and other function words) occur in their strong forms when they are final in a sentence; examples of this are given. (19 is a partial exception.)
15. 'AT'
    - Weak form: ət
      - 'I'll see you at lunch' aɪl 'siː ju ət 'lʌŋʃ
    - In final position: æt
      - 'What's he shooting at?' 'wɒts ɪ 'ʃuːtɪŋ æt
  16. 'FOR'
    - Weak form: fə (before consonants)
      - 'Tea for two' 'tiː fə 'tuː
    - fər (before vowels)
      - 'Thanks for asking' 'θæŋks fər 'ɑːskɪŋ
    - In final position: fɔː
      - 'What's that for?' 'wɒts 'ðæt fɔː
  17. 'FROM'
    - Weak form: frəm
      - 'I'm home from work' aɪm 'həʊm frəm 'wɜːk
    - In final position: frɒm
      - 'Here's where it came from' 'hɪəz weə ɪt 'keɪm frɒm
  18. 'OF'
    - Weak form: əv
      - 'Most of all' 'məʊst əv 'ɔːl
    - In final position: ɒv
      - 'Someone I've heard of' 'sʌmwʌn aɪv 'hɜːd ɒv
  19. 'TO'
    - Weak forms: tə (before consonants)
      - 'Try to stop' 'traɪ tə 'stɒp
    - tu (before vowels)
      - 'Time to eat' 'taɪm tu 'iːt
    - In final position: tu (It is not usual to use the strong form tuː, and the pre-consonantal weak form tə is never used.)
      - 'I don't want to' aɪ 'dəʊnt 'wɒnt tu
  20. 'AS'
    - Weak form: əz
      - 'As much as possible' əz 'mʌtʃ əz 'pɒsɪbəl
    - In final position: æz
      - 'That's what it was sold as' 'ðætɪz 'wɒt ɪt wəz 'səʊld æz