



BLOOMSBURY INTERNATIONAL

How to understand English accents

Tips for understanding different English accents



How to understand different English accents

Did you know that English is one of the most common languages in the world? The language spoken by most countries is English and it has the second largest number of speakers in the world. (Mandarin has the most speakers!)

Therefore, it is easy to see how understanding different accents can be very difficult as there are so many English accents, not only from the UK, America and Australia, but from all over the world!

Most native English speakers speak very quickly and use expressions and slang so you may have problems understanding them. Here are some tips which may help:

1. Ask people to slow down

Many people might not realise that you don't understand and will continue to speak at their usual fast speed. Most people won't mind at all if you ask them to speak slower and it will be much easier to understand them!

3. Watch English TV and films

If you do not understand everything to begin with, put on English subtitles. Just remember to switch them off occasionally and see if you understand without them!

2. Expose yourself to many different accents

If you listen to more "real" English, your ear will soon adapt to hearing different accents.

4. Listen to the radio

You may not understand everything in the beginning but you will improve quickly if you listen regularly. You could start by listening to podcasts made for English language students if local radio is too difficult.

5. Listen to at least an hour of English a day

The more you listen, the easier it will be!

6. Go out and socialise

By going out and meeting people, you will hear a wide range of different accents (especially in London!). Even if you cannot join in the conversation at first, just listening to people will help!

7. Join an English language school

Join a school like Bloomsbury International. You will meet people from all over the world with many different accents and everyone is in the “same boat” as you (in the same situation so they understand how you feel).

8. Do some travelling

Travel to different areas in the UK (and around the world) where people have different English accents and try to listen and speak to them.

9. Don't worry if you can't understand everything

Often, even native English speakers cannot understand someone if their accent is very different! However, the more you listen to and speak English to people with different accents, the easier it will become to understand them!