



TESOL Connections

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21 Online Pronunciation Resources for Teaching and Learning

by [Lynn Henrichsen](#)

A growing number of English language learners are turning to online resources to improve their pronunciation, and a large number of websites and mobile applications have been developed for this purpose. Nevertheless, not all of these resources are created equal. They address a wide range of pronunciation skills, they take a variety of instructional approaches, and their quality varies considerably.

Pronunciation Resources: An Expansive Variety

Computer-assisted pronunciation teaching (CAPT) websites and apps for ESL learners (and teachers) differ in a number of ways. Some provide articulatory explanations but offer few, if any, practice activities. Some seem designed to be used with a teacher or textbook; they provide practice but do not explain underlying pronunciation principles or rules. Some are offered free of charge, some require payment, and others charge users a membership or subscription fee. Some focus only on vowels and/or consonants, others on suprasegmentals like stress and intonation, and a few provide instruction and practice with both segmentals and suprasegmentals. Some employ helpful graphics, others offer only text, and a few provide video. Some pronunciation websites and apps allow for a more flexible, individualized approach; others expect every user to follow the same learning path. In sum, the variety in purposes, instructional approaches, quality, and cost of these apps and websites is great. As potential users try to find the right one for their needs, some may even find this variety daunting!

Selecting Resources Carefully

Rather than adopting CAPT programs based simply on whatever is readily available, English language teaching professionals need to be analytical and particular. As Navarro (1999, as cited in Martins, Levis, & Borges, 2016) explained, “There is an unquestionable need to analyze these programs from a critical perspective using pedagogically coherent and technically elaborated criteria” (p. 142). In this spirit and to help the students in my graduate-level Teaching Listening, Speaking, and Pronunciation course learn to make informed decisions about which websites and mobile apps might best meet their future instructional needs, I had them each select and then review a mobile app or website designed to help English language learners improve their pronunciation.

I provided my students with a list of criteria to use in their reviews and a template to follow. Impressed by the quality and the value of many of these reviews, I decided to compile and then share them with a wider audience. Together, we created a collection of brief (300- to 900-word) reviews of 21 websites and apps for helping English language learners improve their pronunciation. In 2017 and 2018, I presented this collection at various conferences (Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching, Intermountain-TESOL, and the TESOL International Convention), where people expressed considerable interest in the reviews. They asked how they could get copies and read them. Therefore, my coauthors and I prepared a manuscript containing these reviews, which was recently published in the *TESL Reporter* (Henrichsen et al., 2018).

Pronunciation Resources: The List

I've listed and briefly described 10 of the 21 resources reviewed in the [TESL Reporter article](#) (Henrichsen et al., 2018) below, in no particular order. View the article for a full review of all 21 resources, each of which gives information on the software's sponsor/author, type, source, cost, instructional type, intended audience, objectives, major features, pros, and cons. Each review ends with a "verdict" (general conclusion) regarding the app or website's overall value.

Here, following the title and hyperlink to each of the 10 resources, I include a brief explanation of the resource "from the source" (the resource's website) and an excerpt of the reviewer's verdict. Later, the other 11 resources are listed with links.

1. [American English Pronunciation Card and American English Pronunciation Tutor](#) (website and mobile app)

Cost: Free for basic app

From the Source: "The American English Pronunciation Card provides a compact, inexpensive overview of American English pronunciation."

Reviewer Verdict: "Although the free app is limited, the content is clear and concise. It is a much-needed resource for pronunciation practice, especially for students at the higher levels who can practice more on their own...I strongly recommend these resources for teachers who would like to incorporate pronunciation more into their instruction."

2. [Rachel's English](#) (website)

Cost: Free; additional "English Academy" subscription for US\$14 per month

From the Source: "Rachel's English provides over 500 free videos...to help non-native speakers improve their spoken English and listening comprehension. Videos focus on a variety of topics from the correct mouth position of sounds to words that reduce and real English conversation study."

Reviewer Verdict: "*Rachel's English* has a great deal to offer and gives a very thorough treatment of many different aspects of pronunciation. It provides very specific, helpful pronunciation instruction and practice for those who have achieved at least a low-intermediate level of proficiency....Despite some organizational flaws, the site is an excellent resource with a wealth of information overall."

3. [Pronunciation Doctor](#) (YouTube channel)

Cost: Free

From the Source: “I’m here to give you a prescription for speaking more clearly. I’m going to give you expert guidance and extensive practice in refining your oral production and listening skills.”

Reviewer Verdict: “*Pronunciation Doctor* is a ‘treasure trove’ of ideas, activities, and information for instructors seeking to improve their ability to teach English pronunciation (and other language skills). It is also a resource not to be overlooked by ESL learners who wish to improve their intelligibility or reduce their foreign accent in English.”

4. [BBC Learning English](#) (website and mobile app)

Cost: Free

From the Source: “BBC Learning English has been teaching English to global audiences since 1943, offering free audio, video and text materials to learners around the world.”

Reviewer Verdict: “This resource is valuable as a supplement or review for advanced students seeking to achieve more comprehensible and native-like pronunciation.”

5. [English Accent Coach](#) (website and mobile app)

Cost: Free; additional games are US\$1.39 each

From the Source: “The interactive online game that improves your English pronunciation.”

Reviewer Verdict: “User friendly software that makes pronunciation learning enjoyable and rewarding is definitely welcome...It’s fortunate that the phonological scope of these programs is restricted to vowels (and consonants) only.”

6. [Sounds of Speech](#) (website and mobile app)

Cost: Free for the website, US\$3.99 for the mobile app

From the Source: “Sounds of Speech provides a comprehensive understanding of how each of the speech sounds of American English is formed. It includes animations, videos, and audio samples that describe the essential features of each of the consonants and vowels of American English.”

Reviewer Verdict: “All in all, the program is a very useful tool....While there is still some room for upgrades and development, even in its present incarnation *Sounds of Speech* is a solid professional instrument that can be called ‘a must’ for ESL teachers’ and students’ toolbox.”

7. [English Central](#) (website and mobile app)

Cost: US\$15–US\$130 per month

From the Source: “Learn English with the world’s best videos.”

Reviewer Verdict: “If learners are looking for a professional and fun site for general English learning, *English Central* is a solid paid option. The videos and activities are motivating, and learners’ progress can be seen and tracked. The opportunity to interact with live tutors also gives learners conversation practice...”

8. [Pronunciator](#) (website and mobile app)

Cost: Free

From the Source: “Pronunciator offers the largest ESL curriculum on the planet (50k+ instructional phrases), with courses taught in 59 non-English languages.”

Reviewer Verdict: “Overall, this software may be a great companion to learners’ language studies, both on their own as well as in a language course....As an instructor tool, *Pronunciator* will most likely be best used as a pronunciation practice supplement to class.”

9. [Juna: Your American Accent Coach](#) (mobile app)

Cost: free (limited), US\$4.99 for complete program

From the Source: “This App is a visual representation of what happens inside your mouth when you speak American English. You can learn the specific American sounds by seeing inside the mouth of our animated character, Mimo.”

Reviewer Verdict: “*Juna* is well worth the low \$4.99 purchase cost. It is quick and easy to use, can be pulled out in a classroom for quick review, and may even be given as homework.”

10. [Pronunciation for Teachers](#) (website)

Cost: Free

From the Source: “‘Pronunciation for Teachers’ is meant to provide professional help and resources for those interested in teaching pronunciation in all educational contexts. We started this site to provide teachers and researchers a place to find out what others are doing in this quickly growing area of language study.”

Reviewer Verdict: “Pronunciationforteachers.com shows great promise. With the passage of time and the addition of more resources, it will become increasingly valuable to teachers (and researchers) looking for information on the teaching of [second language] pronunciation.”

Here are the 11 other pronunciation resources (in alphabetical order) reviewed in the *TESL Reporter* article:

11. [AmEnglish Pronunciation in English](#) (cloud-based software; subscription costs beginning at US\$29.95)
12. [Fun Easy English: Pronunciation](#) (website; free)
13. [Mango Languages](#) (subscription database and mobile app; free at participating libraries, US\$20 per month for personal subscriptions)
14. [ManyThings.org English Pronunciation Practice](#) (website; free)
15. [One Stop English](#) (website; US\$68/year membership, free 30-day trial)
16. [Perception of Spoken English \(POSE\) Test](#) (website; free for students, cost variable for teachers, free 30-day trial)
17. [Pronuncian: American English Pronunciation](#) (website; free and paid membership options)
18. [Pronunciation Matters](#) (website; cost variable)
19. Reading Horizons English Sounds and Letters ([software](#); cost variable for individual or classroom subscriptions) or ([mobile app](#); \$0.99)
20. [Ship or Sheep](#) (website; free)
21. [Train Your Accent](#) (website; free)

Note that—despite the pronunciation-teaching/learning theme that all these websites and apps share—there is great variety in their objectives, procedures, quality, costs, and so on. Of course, that variety is good. For the wide range of learning purposes and learners that exist, no single instructional tool can be universally superior. Instead, teachers and learners must choose the

most appropriate website, app, or other tool for a particular instructional purpose or situation. Doing that is largely a matter of finding the right “fit” with learner’s needs, goals, level, learning style, and situation (Byrd & Schuermann, 2014, p. 383).

Given the intimidating array of websites and mobile apps dealing with a wide variety of aspects of English pronunciation, this collection of reviews is intended to help English pronunciation teachers find the software that best fits their (or their students’) particular teaching/learning circumstances, purpose, style, and budget.

References

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