

# *Linking*

At its simplest, linking is the merging of multiple words together until they sound as if they are only one word. Native speakers of English all do this naturally.

Linking is an advanced topic for non-native speakers, but learning to correctly link words can result in significantly more fluid and fluent sounding English speech.

Failing to link words naturally results in spoken English which may have awkward pauses, extra, unnecessary sounds, and which will sound very foreign to native speakers.

Techniques used for linking words depend on specific adjacent sounds where the words meet in the sentence.

## **1. Double sounds**

Identical double continuous consonants link by pronouncing one, single sound for an extended period of time.

In the phrase "social life," the [l] is produced longer than if the sound occurred alone.

"social life" → "socialfe"

Other examples:

"pet turtle" → "peturtle"

"read daily" → "readily"

"scrap paper" → "scrapper"

Exception:

In a sequence of identical [dʒ] or [tʃ] sounds, no special linking occurs. Therefore, in the phrase "orange juice," the [dʒ] should be pronounced twice.

"orange juice" → "orange juice" (no linking)

## 2. Omitting sounds

A sound is sometimes removed from a word in linking. For example, when a [t] or [d] is between two other consonants, the [t] or [d] can be omitted.

In the phrase, "kept going," the [t] is between two consonants, [p] and [g]; so it can be omitted.

"kept going" → "kepgoing"

In the phrase, "diamond ring," the [d] is between two consonants, [n] and [r]; so it can be omitted.

"diamond ring" → "diamonring"

## 3. Changing sounds (assimilation)

Here, linking results in an entirely different sound.

For example, when the [t] and [j] sounds assimilate, they merge into a [tʃ].

"don't you" → "donchou"

When the [d] and [j] sounds assimilate, they merge into a [dʒ].

"did you" → "dijou"

## 4. Blending sounds

Blending refers to smooth transition from one sound into the next.

In the phrase "this month," the [s] blends smoothly into the [m].

"this month" → "thismonth"

Blending can also be used to link continuous consonants and vowels, as in the phrase "this afternoon." Here the [s] is shared between both words.

"this afternoon" → "thisafternoon"