

Unit II. SENTENCE STRESS

Lesson 08: Weak forms

Many words have two pronunciations called '**strong**' and '**weak forms**'. The weak forms show reduction or obscuration of vowels towards /ɪ/, /ʊ/ and in most cases /ə/.

Most of the words having weak forms belong to the grammatical category, called function words such as auxiliary verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, possessive adjectives and articles.

VOWEL CHANGES

Strong Vowel	Weak vowel	Examples
i:	ɪ	be
u:	ʊ/ə	Do
ʊ	ə	Could
e	ə	Them
æ	ə	And
ʌ	ə	But
ɑ:	ə	Are
ɒ	ə	Of
ɔ:	ə	For
ɜ:	ə	Her

Activity: In your copybook, Transcribe the following sentences using the weak forms when necessary.

- I went to the hotel and booked a room for two nights for my father and his best friend
- Give it to me!
- It takes three hours to get from here to London
- Could you give me the salt, please?
- What's that knife for?
- The book that she bought was more expensive than mine.
- They can walk to school tomorrow;
- they're old enough.
- He's as good as his brother at playing cards; you should watch him some day.
- These carrots are from Granny. She's fond of vegetables.
- That boy over there is very clever
- There's enough water in the glass
- How are you?
- She has gone very early
- They have three houses

Reference:

Roach, P. (2009). *English phonetics and phonology*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

