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Episode #159

How to pronounce
Difficult words in English?

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Hi, everybody! I am Georgiana, your English teacher and founder of SpeakEnglishPodcast.com. My mission is to help you speak English fluently.

Today we will practice some of the most difficult words to pronounce in English.

Words that start with "th" as in **this** or **that** and words that end in "ly" as in **constantly** or **definitely**." And with a mini-story, you will **improve your fluency**.

English pronunciation can be a big problem for some English students. And their native language determines, for the most part, what types of difficulties students will have.

However, most English students worldwide find it difficult to pronounce words that start with "**th**."

"**th**" is one of the hardest sounds to pronounce.

And we pronounce it in three different ways:

- as /ð/ as in **this, that, these, those, they** or **them**.
- As the voiceless /θ/ as in three, thing, thought. Some students often say "dat" instead of **that**.

- but we also pronounce it as a /t/ as in **Thai**.

I've asked my students what words they found difficult and many of them were words beginning with "**th**."

Thought, through, three, threaten, throughout, theft.

I will give an example for each word but first, let's pronounce them one by one.

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Listen and repeat.

Thought, through, three, threaten, throughout, theft.

Examples:

1. "I never **thought** my wish could one day come true."
2. "**Through** repetition, you will improve your English fluency."
3. "I had **three** exams last week and passed all of them."
4. "They tried to **threaten** to take away my scholarship, but in the end, they had a change of heart."
5. You have always been by my side, especially **throughout** the difficult times.
6. "They were put in prison for **theft**."

Ok, let's continue.

My students also find it hard to pronounce words that end in "**ly**."

Examples:

Independently / significantly
unfortunately / definitely
consciously
excitedly

You have difficulty pronouncing words ending in "ly" because it is often part of a consonant blend. You have to say two or even three consonants together.

If you want to pronounce words ending in 'ly,' you first need to know how to pronounce the consonant / l/ correctly in English.

1) In the words **Independently** and **Significantly**, we have consonants **n**, **t**, and **l**, one after the other. That's what makes these words difficult to pronounce.

Listen and repeat after me several times:

independently
significantly

Examples:

"The two sections operate **independently** of each other."

"Teens tend to like to act **independently**."

"You can reduce your health problems **significantly** if you have a healthy diet."

"American English is **significantly** different from British English."

2) **Unfortunately** and **Definitely**.

In **unfortunately**, and **definitely**, we have the consonant group **tl**.

Again, listen to the words **unfortunately** and **definitely** and repeat after me several times:

unfortunately
definitely

Examples:

"**Unfortunately**, I can't talk much. My time is limited."

"They thought I was exaggerating, but **unfortunately**, all the reports have turned out to be true."

"I'm **definitely** excited about our trip to New York."

"I'm **definitely** going to get in touch with the company."

3) **Consciously**

In the word **consciously**, we have the consonant cluster **sl**.

Listen to the word **consciously** and repeat after me several times: **consciously**.

Examples:

"You have made a decision, whether **consciously** or **unconsciously**."

"I would not think he is **consciously** rude to people; it's just his personality."

4) **Excitedly**:

In the word **excitedly**, we have the consonant group **dl**.

Listen to the word **excitedly** and repeat after me several times: **excitedly**.

Examples:

"People were gathering and talking **excitedly**."

"She waved **excitedly** as the car approached."

That's all for now; I hope you have practiced your English pronunciation with these exercises and examples. Now let's continue with a mini-story.

Mini-Story

(Improve your fluency)

A mini-story is very simple. I ask easy questions on purpose so that you can simulate a conversation in English. It's like talking with another person. Let's get started!

Tom was a chef, and he enjoyed cooking **continuously**.

Was Tom a lawyer?

No. No. Tom wasn't a lawyer. He was a chef.

Did he hate cooking?

No. No. He didn't hate cooking. He loved cooking.

Did he cook every day?

Yes, he cooked every day. He cooked **continuously**.

Every week he **excitedly** made a selection of ingredients for his delicious dishes.

When did he make a selection?

Every week. He made a selection of ingredients every week.

Did he make the selection excitedly?

Yes. He made the selection **excitedly**. He was excited about his work.

Were his dishes inedible?

No. No. His dishes were not inedible. His dishes were delicious.

Unfortunately, one day something terrible happened. Tom lost his inspiration.

Did something wonderful happen?

No. No. **Unfortunately**, something terrible happened.

Was Tom inspired to prepare new dishes?

No. No. Tom wasn't inspired. He lost his inspiration.

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Was he significantly inspired?

No. He wasn't **significantly** inspired. Tom lost his inspiration.

But **luckily**, Tom realized that what he needed was to operate more **independently**.

Was Tom able to realize something?

Yes. **Luckily**, Tom realized something.

Did Tom need more supervision?

No. No. Tom needed to become more independent. He needed to operate more **independently**.

So he **definitely** opened up his own restaurant and worked as a chef there.

What did Tom open? A bakery?

No. No. Tom didn't open a bakery. He opened a restaurant.

Was it his own restaurant?

Yes. Tom opened his own restaurant.

Did he work as a waiter there?

No. No. Tom worked as a chef in his own restaurant.

That's how he recovered his inspiration and worked **continuously** and **excitedly** for the rest of his life.

What did he recover? His dignity?

No. No. He didn't recover his dignity. He recovered his inspiration.

Did he work again continuously?

Yes. He worked again **continuously** and **excitedly**.

How long did he continue to work as a chef?

For the rest of his life. Tom continued to work as a chef for the rest of his life.

Perfect! It's the end of this mini-story. And as you can see, through questions and answers, you can practice and improve your speech just like in a **real conversation**.

This is one of the techniques that I use in my [premium courses](#). I recommend you to take a look

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Ok, this is the end of this episode. Remember to listen to it several times. It will help with your English. I want to invite you to follow me on Instagram. Go to instagram.com/speakenglishpodcast

I'll see you there!

Bye! Bye!



Georgiana

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