

## Speak Easy #003 – Linking

### Episode description

In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne teach you a connected speech feature called linking, or connecting one word to the other, in order to sound more fluent.

### Fun fact

Linking can be found in many languages. In French, it is called using the liaison.

### What's included in the study guide

- Transcript
- Pronunciation exercises
- Bonus listening downloads



## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

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Andrew: Hey, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Hello, Suzanne.

Suzanne: Hello, Andrew. How are you?

Andrew: I'm good. How are you?

Suzanne: I'm pretty good. I'm pretty good. A little sleepy today, but doing pretty good.

Andrew: A little sleepy. Did you have a long day?

Suzanne: Today was a long day.

Andrew: We're recording this mid-week, Suzanne. It's Tuesday, so that means it's almost hump day. Right?

Suzanne: Yes.

Andrew: And we call Wednesday hump day, because, well, it's all downhill after Wednesday. Right? The weekend is in sight, so this is good news, right?

Suzanne: Yeah, it kind of reminds me of our Speak Easy episode. Wednesday kind of links the beginning of the week to the end of the week and the weekend.

Andrew: Oh yeah. Very good connection, very good segue, Suzanne! I'm impressed! And, yeah, guys, so like Suzanne just mentioned, today we are doing a Speak Easy episode. And Speak Easy is our pronunciation series where Suzanne teaches us how to improve our accents and speak English really, really naturally, to sound natural when we speak.

Just before we get started, I want to let everybody know that the study guide for this episode is available for download on Culips.com, our website. C-U-L-I-P-S.com. So if you want to study along with the study guide, visit the website and give it a download.

OK, Suzanne. So what are we going to be studying today?

- Suzanne: Well, Andrew, whenever you hear English spoken, like, you know, from your friends or fluent second-language speakers, you may notice, and tell me if I'm wrong, but you may notice that a lot of the times the words blend together.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's true. Sometimes, it's always, like, I don't know where one word ends and another word begins. It's like a steady stream of words.
- Suzanne: Yeah, like sometimes it sounds like one big word instead of many words making one thought. And that is because most of the time they're using a form of connected speech called linking.
- Andrew: Linking, OK. So this is actually kind of a pronunciation feature, linking.
- Suzanne: Yeah. So today we're going to look at some of the ways that we can make our speech more fluent by linking words.
- Andrew: OK, very good. So we'll study how to link words together to make our speech sound more fluent.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: So how do native speakers link words? How do they link words together?
- Suzanne: Well, one of the ways that they link words together is that they take the end of one word, so the last sound of one word, like a consonant, for example, and they link it or carry it over to the beginning sound of the next word. Usually, let's say in this episode, it's going to be a vowel. So linking a consonant at the end of one word to the vowel sound in the next word.
- Andrew: OK, very good. You know, Suzanne, I think here an example could be very useful.
- Suzanne: Totally.
- Andrew: Could you give us a concrete example of what this looks like or what this sounds like in speech?
- Suzanne: Sure. So, say we have the word "pot," right? Like you're cooking in a pot.
- Andrew: OK, pot.
- Suzanne: Or, "cap," like you're wearing your baseball cap. Or, "book," right? You're reading a book. So, those end with a "T," a /t/ sound, a /p/, or a "P" sound, and a /k/, a "K" sound, right?
- Andrew: Yeah.

- Suzanne: Let's look at the phrase "put the pot on the stove," right? Put the pot on the stove. Put the pot on the stove. We're taking the "T" from pot and we're carrying it over and we're bringing that sound into the word "on."  
Pot \_on. Pot \_on. Pot \_on the stove.
- Andrew: Ah, I see. So we actually carry the pronunciation of that "T" over to the start of the word "on." So it's not "pot. on." but "pot \_on."
- Suzanne: Yeah, pot \_on, exactly.
- Andrew: OK, pot \_on.
- Suzanne: You wanna try that phrase?
- Andrew: OK. So, put the pot \_on the stove.
- Suzanne: Exactly, exactly.
- Andrew: How did that sound? Did I do a good job?
- Suzanne: You were fantastic. That's why they pay you the big bucks, Andrew.
- Andrew: That's why I'm making the big bucks, yeah.
- Suzanne: So let's look at the next word, "cap." Right? Like your hat, your cap. So, in the phrase "took my cap out of the box," you might carry that "P" in "cap" over to the word "out." Like, cap \_out. Took my cap \_out of the box. You wanna try it?
- Andrew: All right, yeah. Took my cap \_out of the box.
- Suzanne: Yeah. It almost sounds like the, like the word is pronounced "capout," right?
- Andrew: Yeah. Now what about this, Suzanne? In this phrase, we have "cap out of." The word "out" is followed by "of" which also starts with a vowel. So do we have two instances of this happening in the same phrase?
- Suzanne: Exactly. You're exactly right. We do.
- Andrew: OK.
- Suzanne: So we have the "P" going over to the /aʊ/ sound in "out" and the "T" in "out" going over to the /ʌ/ sound of "of." Cap \_out \_of the box. Cap \_out \_of the box.
- Andrew: Very nice. OK, and you have another example here with that word "book," right?

- Suzanne: Yeah, exactly. So say we have the phrase “put the book back on the shelf.” So here, we’re going to carry the /k/ sound in “book” over to the /ʌ/ sound in “up,” and I bet you probably noticed that the “P” in “up” is also going to be carried over to the /ɑ:/ sound in “on.” So, put the book up on the shelf. Put the book up on the shelf.
- Andrew: Put the book up on the shelf. Put the book up on the shelf. Put the book up on the shelf.
- Suzanne: Exactly. So you don’t want to stress it so much so that it you’re saying “book up,” so it’s book up, book up on the shelf. So it’s a more delicate connection. You don’t want to stress it too hard, otherwise it doesn’t sound like the words you want to communicate. So you just want to make sure that it’s a delicate connection.
- Andrew: Right. They are linked. There is a connection there.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: And I think, you know, maybe this is not totally new to a lot of our listeners. I know, in the Korean language, this kind of connected speech happens. It also happens in French, right? So it’s very likely, in our listeners’ native languages, that this kind of linking happens.
- Suzanne: I do know that, a lot of times, when you’re learning a new language, we don’t expect it to be like ours. So we sometimes ignore the similarities and we don’t realize that in our language, there might also be linking and maybe in the language we’re learning, there could be linking as well. So it’s just a nice reminder that it’s there and you can use those skills from your first language into your second language.
- Andrew: Now one thing I noticed with all of these examples that you provided, Suzanne, is that they all occur with prepositions, right?
- Suzanne: Yes.
- Andrew: On, out, up. And, actually, prepositions in English start with vowels, right? In, on, up, under. There’s a couple that don’t, like down.
- Suzanne: Yeah, yeah, or from.
- Andrew: But most of them start with vowels. So I think when you’re saying a prepositional phrase or using a phrasal verb, you’re gonna have this connected speech occurring almost all the time.
- Suzanne: Absolutely. Like “pick up” or “put on,” right?

Andrew: "Pick up."

Suzanne: "Back out." That's something you definitely will hear in a lot of phrasal verbs because, yeah, those phrasal verbs start with an action and then include a direction. And usually in English the directions start with a vowel, right?

Andrew: Yeah, exactly. So this is just another thing that makes phrasal verbs difficult to learn. Sorry, guys.

Suzanne: Yeah. But this can maybe help you sound a little more fluent when you do it.

Hey, Andrew, do you want to listen to some dialogues with some examples of linking in them?

Andrew: Yeah, let's do that right now.

Husband: Can you pick up the dry cleaning on your way home?

Wife: Oh, I wish I could, but I have a late meeting on the other end of town.

Husband: No problem. I'm just in the middle of a huge deadline and it's already 5:00.

Wife: OK. Let me see if I can arrange something. Is it open until 6? If so, I think I can pop on over.

Husband: That's amazing if you can swing it. I know it's tight, but I need those shirts over the weekend.

Wife: No worries, I'm on it.

Suzanne: OK, Andrew. Let's listen to the dialogue again, but this time a little bit slower. And see if you can notice the linking happening, and maybe you can also notice that the words that usually link are articles or prepositions or things that we don't normally stress very often and can sometimes blend together so quickly that we don't even notice that we're linking them. So let's listen to that a bit slower.

Andrew: OK.

Husband: Can you pick up the dry cleaning on your way home?

Wife: Oh, I wish I could, but I have a late meeting on the other end of town.

Husband: No problem. I'm just in the middle of a huge deadline and it's already 5:00.

Wife: OK. Let me see if I can arrange something. Is it open until 6? If so, I think I can pop on over.

Husband: That's amazing if you can swing it. I know it's tight, but I need those shirts over the weekend.

Wife: No worries, I'm on it.

Andrew: So Suzanne, there were tons of examples of connected speech and linking in that dialogue example. Unfortunately, we don't have time to pick out each one and describe them to all of the listeners. But, guys, once again, the study guide is on Culips.com, and we will make sure to illustrate in the study guide the examples of linking. So you can check that out in the study guide.

For now, Suzanne, let's listen to one more dialogue example. Again, we'll play it at regular speed and we'll read it slowed down so that everyone can hear the examples of linking that are in this dialogue. So, yeah. How about we listen to that right now?

Suzanne: Sounds good.

Friend 1: Hey! Didn't you run in the marathon this weekend?

Friend 2: Yeah! It was an amazing experience but at times I felt like I couldn't keep up.

Friend 1: Wow, that's pretty impressive, though. How did it feel finishing such a feat?

Friend 2: Honestly, by the end of the day, I was worn out and I trouble walking up the stairs to my apartment.

Friend 1: Did you guys celebrate?

Friend 2: Yeah! We joined Dan and Jane over at their place. We cooked up a big meal and put on some relaxing music.

Friend 1: Oh, so it ended up being a great day. Congrats!

Friend 2: Yeah! Next time it's your turn to join in on the run.

Andrew: So, everyone, in this example, you may notice it doesn't make a lot of sense. It's kind of a silly conversational example, but it is a really great example for demonstrating the linking that we're talking about today. So, even if you're listening to it and you're like, "What are those guys talking about? It's kind of weird," don't worry, it's not a conversation example, it's a pronunciation example with the linked speech. And, Sue, in that example there were tons of instances of linked speech, weren't there?

Suzanne: Absolutely. Lots of examples of words ending in consonants that are linked over to the vowels of the next word.

Andrew: So just like we did for the first example, let's slow it down for everybody so that everyone can really, clearly hear the instances of linking that are in this example.

Friend 1: Hey! Didn't you run in the marathon this weekend?

Friend 2: Yeah! It was an amazing experience but at times I felt like I couldn't keep up.

Friend 1: Wow, that's pretty impressive, though. How did it feel finishing such a feat?

Friend 2: Honestly, by the end of the day, I was worn out and I trouble walking up the stairs to my apartment.

Friend 1: Did you guys celebrate?

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Friend 1: Oh, so it ended up being a great day. Congrats!

Friend 2: Yeah! Next time it's your turn to join in on the run.

Suzanne: Well, guys, today we learned a simple trick that helps our speech flow and sound a bit more fluent. It's called linking. So, remember, you can link word final consonants over to the vowel at the beginning of the following word and this will help your speech flow smoothly.

Andrew: Awesome! Thank you so much, pronunciation teacher Sue, for letting us all know about how to link our speech and make it sound more fluent and more natural.

Suzanne: My pleasure, Andrew.



Andrew: Just before we let you go, we're going to remind you to visit our website, Culips.com. And we're also on social media at Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast. If you want to get in touch with us, just send us an email. Our address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com). We're happy to answer any questions you may have. Or if you have a suggestion for a future episode, hey, that would be great. Let us know. We'd love to hear from you. We'll be back soon with another Culips episode. Bye, everybody!

Suzanne: Bye, guys!

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## Pronunciation exercises

1. Practice saying these linked phrasal verbs. Carry the final letter in the first word to the beginning of the second word. If you want, draw a small linking mark from the end of the first word to the beginning of the second word.

Download the audio file for this exercise here: <https://goo.gl/oGqfZ6>

Keep up	Reach out	Run away	Hold on
Get in	Take out	Pick up	Jump in
Break in	Turn off	Light up	Back up

2. Listen and repeat some challenging linking phrases.

Download the audio file for this exercise here: <https://goo.gl/teB2Bc>

Read another essay	Burned all the dinner	A cup of coffee	Make another plan, Adam
Speak about everything	Swam around a lake	Order another round	I hope I can ask another question
Laughed about a joke	Jump in again	Put all the cups up on the shelf	She drove over to the other end of town

## 3. Listen and repeat using the following dialogues.

Download the audio file for these exercises here: <https://goo.gl/2MCvs6>

- A: Oh man, did you answer any questions on part A?
- B: Ugh. Those were unusually hard ones, right? I think I got at least two wrong.
- A: Yeah, Mrs. Ames' tests are tough, I think. I just answered "C" for all of part A. Perhaps at least one of them will be right!
- B: Did you pick up on the trick question?
- A: Oh no! Which one are you talking about?
- B: I'm talking about the fifth one down on page 2. It asked us to fill in three examples of endangered animals. But I think Mrs. Ames meant endangered species, not animals.
- A: Oh, that is a tricky question. I think I got it wrong.

- A: Hey, can you pick up the takeout and put the kettle on for tea?
- B: Oh, sure! I'm heading home in a minute and can stop at the restaurant on the corner.
- A: Thanks so much. I had a crazy day and still have another proposal in the pipeline.
- B: Sounds exciting! I'm anxious to hear all about it over dinner!
- A: I guess it's exciting, but I think it's more stressful than anything else.

## Dialogue Answers

Husband:	Can you pick _up the dry cleaning on _your way home?
Wife:	Oh, I wish _I could, but I have _a late meeting _on the other _end _of town.
Husband:	No problem. I'm just _in the middle _of a huge deadline and it's _already 5:00.
Wife:	OK. Let me see if _I can _arrange something. Is _it open _until 6? If so, I think I can pop _on _over.
Husband:	That's _amazing if _you can swing it. I know it's tight, but I need those shirts _over the weekend.
Wife:	No worries, I'm _on _it.

Friend 1:	Hey! Didn't _you run _in the marathon this weekend?
Friend 2:	Yeah! It was _an _amazing experience but _at times I felt like _I couldn't keep _up.
Friend 1:	Wow, that's pretty _impressive, though. How did _it feel finishing such _a feat?
Friend 2:	Honestly, by the end _of the day, I was worn _out and I had trouble walking _up the stairs to my apartment.
Friend 1:	Did you guys celebrate?
Friend 2:	Yeah! We joined Dan _and Jane over _at their place. We cooked _up a big meal and put _on some relaxing music.
Friend 1:	Oh, so it ended _up being a great day. Congrats!
Friend 2:	Yeah! Next time it's _your turn to join _in _on the run.

## Episode credits

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