

Report Satomi Ishihara

In the trial lesson, there were three major areas which were covered and here are some of the highlights that you can remember.

Pre – Introduction

When introducing yourself, you spoke clearly and you were easily understandable. In the future, try to incorporate more linking in your speech. Not only will linking make you sound more natural, but it will also make it easier for native speakers understand you better.

1. Minimal Pairs

/oʊ/ as in ‘low’ – during the trial lesson, you pronounced the vowel using two vowels but you need to exaggerate a bit more so we clearly can hear two sounds in /oʊ/.

/h/ as in ‘hood’ – in the trial lesson, you pronounced the /h/ as you do in Japanese where your lips are close together making it confusing for a native speaker because we will think you are pronouncing a /f/-like sound. In English, make sure that your lips are *not* together so that you don’t mix the two sounds together.

/p^h/ as in ‘pole’ and /t^h/ as in ‘tell’ – when pronouncing a /p/, /t/ or /k/ in English, there is an additional puff of air. This puff of air does not exist in Japanese nor in French. If you don’t add the puff of air, many native speakers may confuse the sound for /b/, /d/ or /g/ because in English, we heavily rely on the aspiration. A way you can make sure that you are correctly pronouncing the aspiration, you can put a piece of paper in front of your mouth. If aspiration is pronounced correctly, the piece of paper should move with the air you produce.

/yɪ:/ as in ‘year’ – When distinguishing ‘ear’ and ‘year,’ you did not pronounce the /y/ at first. When you were practicing the /yɪ:/ combination, you would pronounce the /y/ when you said /ya/, but then, when saying /i:/, the /y/ was dropped. Make sure you start in the back of your mouth and try to repeat saying /ya ya ya/ making the /y/ even stronger, then, hold the /y/ and make the /i:/ sound.

/dʒ/ as in ‘pledger’ – in the lesson, you didn’t know how to read this word. The ‘dg’ combination (also written as j or ge, gi, etc.) needs to be pronounced with a d creating a stop.

/w/ as in ‘woo’ – make sure that there is the /w/ sound in this word. The lips round right before pronouncing the vowel /u:/

2. *Hey Mike*

You did a great job with this part of the lesson and you asked many good questions!

Keep practicing your linking. At first, it may be a bit difficult and not natural for you to do; however, gradually, you will become accustomed to linking and will do it subconsciously. Practice linking consonants (子音) to vowels (母音) (ex: been enjoying) as well as vowels to other vowels (ex: hardly (y)anyone). When you use linking, your speech sounds much more natural and fluid.

3. Rhythm Training

You did a great job improving your rhythm distinguishing content and function words. During the trial lesson, your content words were slightly stronger than your function words but you should make sure that your content words are pronounced much stronger than your function words. This distinction will make you more easily understood. Additionally, do not forget about the reduced forms of specific function words (to, for, his, etc).