

## SPEAK EASILY - ACCENT REDUCTION EVENING CLASS

### Speakers from West and Central Africa

#### Suitability

This course is suitable for Advanced Speakers of English who wish to reduce their accent towards Standard English or RP (Received Pronunciation) who have an accent from West or Central Africa.



#### Duration

8 week Course starts	Weekdays	6.30-9pm
	Saturdays	10-12.30 or 1-3.30

**Cost** £375

#### Location

32 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QJ

**Call** 0207 717 9649 to book – or use our online booking form

#### Requirements

Please download and fill in the [Booking Form](#) and either return this to us by post, or email us the relevant information. You will also need to pay the a deposit of £95 to reserve your place. The balance of the fee is due a minimum of one week before the course starts. All monies are refundable (minus a £15 administration fee) if cancelled at least one week before the course start date. After that there can be no refund.

#### Certificate of Elocution and Accent Training

We cannot provide you with an official qualification, but we do give you a Certificate to prove that you have undertaken this training.

### COURSE SYLLABUS

**The 20 hours of training takes you through a 4-part process:**

1. We retrain your speech muscles to be able to easily adapt to the sounds of RP English.
2. We train you to accurately hear and use the Stress and Intonation of English.
3. We train any difficult consonant sounds.
4. We train any difficult vowel sounds.

**You will easily absorb skills and information that will help you work on your accent for years to come:**

1. The **Phonetic Alphabet** - the symbols that represent the 20 vowel sounds and 24 consonant sounds of RP English. This allows you to overcome any habitual, incorrect responses to our spelling. (For example confusing *walk* and *work*).
2. Our **Unique Vowel Star® Movement System** for the Vowels. At Speak Easily we teach the 20 vowels in families of movements. This trains your muscles more effectively and makes the vowels much easier to remember.
3. The **4 Levels of Stress** which make up the Stress, Emphasis and Intonation system. Again, our simple system allows rapid absorption and application of RP's complex rhythm and emphasis patterns.
4. The **rules of spelling** you can trust and the lists of 'exceptions' you have to memorise. Our materials are based on lists of the most common 500, 1000 and 7000 words in English. We familiarise you with the most common vocabulary and also the most unusual spellings.

## West and Central Africa Accent Features

**Default Posture** - All these accents hold a much wider and more open mouth position – more smiley if you like! This changes all the vowel sounds and makes lip rounding less common, making it harder to differentiate all 20 vowel sounds of RP English. The tongue also tends to be higher in the mouth and the jaw will open to find Vertical space at the front of the mouth, but not in the middle, which means comparisons of Front, Middle and Back vowels can be blurred. Our Voice training Articulation Exercises will help the speech muscles accommodate to the different movement pattern of English. A great many speakers, especially from Nigeria, will use a very strong throat resonance – a big, low, rich sound. It helps to balance this with head resonance (higher, thinner tones) both to make the 'tone' of the voice more RP, but also to make the vowels more distinct. Full throat resonance can sound very loud to European ears.

**Intonation Patterns** – Many of these accents have very strong stress and intonation patterns, carried over from the original mother-tongue (even if the speaker has never spoken it) which are completely different to those of RP English. As RP English uses intonation and rhythm to communicate meanings, this can cause considerable confusion, when a different but still very strong rhythmic pattern is imposed on top of the phrases in unexpected places. Intonation and Stress are the main causes of the difficulty some African speakers have in making themselves understood in Britain and amongst non-native speakers of English.

**Specific Consonant Differences** - The main points of work are: to adopt TH accurately; differentiate adopt H if necessary; adopt NG (ie in **sing**); change R and L if required; strengthen the W; and possibly slightly alter the placement of T and D. Some speakers need work on clusters (groups of consonants) like at the end of 'ask' to ensure they come out in the right order.

**Specific Vowel Differences** - In general all of these accents need to address the differences between the long and short vowel pairs - in particular the Horizontal pair **sit** and **seat**. The short Neutral vowel, 'the schwa' tends to be over-pronounced, following the spelling. Other vowels are effected strongly by the different Default Position of the muscles, with a lack of Verticality in the sounds and not strong enough lip rounding for words like **you** and **your**, **pot** and **put**.

These are just some of the specific issues we will focus on in your lessons and homework.

To give you some idea of **Lesson Structure**, here is a possible outline of the first lesson. As each of our expert coaches has the skill to respond to each group and their questions in a fluid manner, this may differ from what happens in your actual class. But it gives you some idea.

## LESSON ONE

### Part 1 – How to Study an Accent

An overview of the process of how to train your accent. We will initially focus on retraining you muscle groups and introduce you to all the movement patterns you need to master with the speech muscles. We include filming your own accent movement patterns, comparing with a native RP speakers (the teacher) and learning to adopt the RP Default Setting for the speech muscles, or 'Neutral'.

Tea and coffee

### Part 2 – Physical Practice

We continue by introducing you to the six Strong/Long Vowels and their families of movement groups. Like this, you begin to master the muscle shaping of the mouth space which will allow you to sound truly British. We start to use Phonetic Symbols to understand the difference between sound and spelling and to unlock your instinctive urge to 'say what you see'.

### Rest of Course

In the rest of the course you will study in further detail;

1. The whole of the 6 vowel families, including 12 basic vowels and 8 diphthongs.
2. Further specific spelling rules, particularly dealing with end of word accuracy.
3. Accurate movement and pronunciation of any errant consonants – focusing on the hardest for your accent group.
4. The 4 Levels of stress which give you the word stress accuracy, sentence clarity and intonation patterns for meaning.

5. How to link words together into fluid units of sound with a wide tune that accurately expresses your opinion.
6. Lots of drills and practice work to help build muscle memory and drive the new words in habit.

The course is very intensive and a great deal of new information will come to you each session. There is homework and daily practice is required to make good progress.

A DVD of MP3 recordings of from the course book, by native RP speaking trained actors (including our coaches Morwenna and Leslie) will be given to you at the start of the course. We recommend you transfer this material to your MP3 player or phone and listen every day. There are additional audio and video materials on your course webpage.

It is unlikely that you will be completely 'cured' of your original accent in English in just 8 weeks. But you should be well on your way to making mastering the necessary changes. We make sure our online audio and visual materials are available to you for a further three months to ensure you continue to practice and gain confidence after the course. And like this, you will make permanent, natural progress towards the accent you want.

If you have any further questions call us on: 0207 717 9649 or email us on [info@speak-easily.com](mailto:info@speak-easily.com) and we'll do our best to help.