

Speech Rhythm and Word Linking in English

(by Jane Lawson at DailyStep.com)

Take a look at this limerick by Edward Lear, a famous British writer. Limericks are 5-line nonsense poems that always have the same rhythm, so they are a great way to learn natural English. Listen to this limerick:

There **was** an **old man** called **Greg**

Who **tried** to **break open** an **egg**

He **kicked** it around

But **fell** on the **ground**

And **found** that he'd **broken** a **leg**.

You can see that all the **stressed syllables** are in **bold blue** font. The other syllables are unstressed – in other words, we say them more quickly and more quietly. Try repeating this poem several times until you can say with the right rhythm. Limericks are a great way to learn word linking, because if you say them with the correct rhythm, the word linking comes naturally.

Can you hear these pronunciation mistakes?

If I say this limerick without linking the words together, it does not sound like natural English, as you can hear: (*listen as Jane says the limerick without linking the words*).

There was an old man called Greg
Who tried to break open an egg
He kicked it around
But fell on the ground
And found that he'd broken a leg

Now listen to it with the words linked properly: (*listen as Jane says the limerick with the correct word linking*)

How does word linking work in English?

Word linking works like this: where one word ends with a consonant sound and the next word begins with a vowel sound, the words are linked together. You can see this marked in the picture with **red arrows**. So we say, for example "break-**o**pen-**a**n-**e**gg", instead of "break open an egg".

Linking consonant sounds

You can also see in the picture that I have **highlighted in yellow** the places where the consonant sound at the end of one word links to the consonant sound at the beginning of the next word. We link consonant sounds when the mouth position of the two sounds is similar, because if we did not link the sounds, it would be difficult to say them quickly. Listen to these words from the limerick, first separated and then linked, and then try saying them yourself: **found that, found that, tried to, tried to**

Now, listen to the whole limerick again, and speak along with me to make sure you get the correct rhythm and word linking. (*listen as Jane repeats the limerick*)

Download this lesson: If you are a subscriber to my DailyStep Audio Lessons, you can download this audio file at the bottom of the page (at the link below). There is also a **FREE PDF download** for everyone!

To download this free PDF and to hear and download the audio blog, please visit: <https://www.dailystep.com/en/blog/word-linking-and-speech-rhythm-better-english-pronunciation>

Register for a free trial of DailyStep Audio Lessons: <https://www.dailystep.com/en/user/register>

Subscribe to regular DailyStep Audio Lessons (22 lessons per month to download or use online): <https://www.dailystep.com/en/purchase-plans>

For self-study tips, please visit this page: <http://www.dailystep.com/en/content/self-study-tips>

DailyStep English

www.DailyStep.com

Speak Good English!

How to use DailyStep Audio Lessons:

<http://www.dailystep.com/en/content/how-use-dailystep>

Read testimonials from DailyStep students:

<http://www.dailystep.com/en/content/testimonials-0>

How to use DailyStep in other languages:

Please change from the English website www.dailystep.com/en to these pages:

Español: www.dailystep.com/es

Français: www.dailystep.com/fr

한국어: www.dailystep.com/ko

Italiano: www.dailystep.com/it

日本語: www.dailystep.com/ja

Thank you for trying DailyStep Audio Lessons from [DailyStep.com](http://www.dailystep.com). If you have any questions at all, please email me at jane@dailystep.com