



# How to Pronounce Words Correctly in Foreign Languages

KS3 MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 4 min read

## Why Pronunciation Matters

When you're learning a **foreign language**, pronunciation is just as important as spelling or grammar. Saying words correctly helps people understand you, builds your confidence, and shows respect for the language and culture. The good news? Pronunciation is a skill you can definitely improve with practice.

## Listen to Native Speakers

The best way to learn how words should sound is by listening to people who speak the language as their first language. These are called **native speakers**. You can find them on **language learning apps** like Duolingo, YouTube channels, podcasts, or even ask your teacher to play audio recordings. When you listen, try to notice the exact sounds, not just guess from reading.

Think of it like learning to play a song on an instrument. You wouldn't just read the sheet music—you'd listen to how it actually sounds first!

## Learn the Sound Patterns

Every language has its own set of sounds. In **Spanish**, the letter 'j' sounds like the 'ch' in the Scottish word 'loch'. In **French**, the 'r' sound comes from the back of your throat differently than in **English**. Learning these **sound patterns** means you can apply them to new words you haven't heard before.

## Slow Down and Repeat

Don't try to speak at full speed right away. Use language apps that let you slow down audio, or ask native speakers to speak slowly. Then **repeat the words out loud**—this is crucial. Speaking helps your mouth learn the muscle movements needed. Record yourself and compare your version to the original. Yes, it might feel silly, but it really works!

Think of it like learning to throw a basketball. You wouldn't expect to make the shot perfectly the first time. You'd practice over and over until your body remembers the movement.

## Use Your Mouth and Tongue

Pay attention to where your mouth and tongue should be. Some languages use different **mouth positions** than English. Watch videos of native speakers and notice their lips and tongue. You can even practice in front of a mirror. This **physical awareness** helps you train your mouth to make the correct sounds.

## Don't Fear Making Mistakes

Everyone mispronounces words when learning a language—even language teachers! The more you practice speaking, the better you'll get. Most native speakers are patient and happy to help if you ask.