

The Clarity Check

A ten minute recording exercise that shows you which of the four things is costing you the most. Print this sheet, do the recording, then score yourself on the next page.



How to do it

- 1 Record yourself reading the passage below.** Read it once, at your normal speaking speed. Do not practice first and do not start again if you stumble.
- 2 Then record one minute with no script.** Describe what you did at work yesterday. This recording matters more than the first one.
- 3 Wait an hour before you listen.** Straight away you hear what you meant to say. An hour later you hear what you actually said.
- 4 Listen four times, once for each question on page 2.** Give each pass one job and you will catch far more.

Read this aloud and record it

Last Thursday I presented our quarterly report to the leadership team. We had analyzed the numbers for three weeks, and the results surprised almost everyone. Our largest customer increased their orders by forty percent, mostly because we improved the delivery process in September. I asked the project manager to follow up with the vendors, and she promised to send an update before the end of the month. It was a good meeting. People asked real questions, and I answered all of them without notes.



Hear me read it

Before you listen, write down what you expect to hear

Do this now, before the recording tells you anything. Comparing your guess with what you actually find is often the most useful part of the exercise.

If you can, ask one person

Send the one minute recording to a colleague who speaks English as a first language and ask this exact question:

"were there any moments where you had to work to follow me?"

That question gets you a useful answer. Asking someone how your accent sounds gets you a polite one.

Your four scores

Listen to both recordings once for each question. Score 1 if it is not happening at all and 5 if it is happening clearly and consistently. The number matters much less than which one is lowest.

1

The word that carries the sentence

Can you hear one word rising above the others in each sentence? Check your statement endings too: do they fall, or drift upward?

Listen for: the sentence "the results surprised almost everyone". One word should be clearly higher and longer than the rest.

All words equal

1

2

3

4

5

One clear peak

2

The shape of the words

There are two things to check: whether each longer word has one clear strong beat, and whether the weak beats shrink or every syllable comes out the same length.

Listen for: presented, quarterly, leadership, analyzed, surprised, customer, increased, delivery, September, project manager

Every syllable full

1

2

3

4

5

Weak beats shrink

3

Where you stopped

Count the small breaks in the first sentence. Two or three is comfortable. Six or more means you are chopping. None means your listener is doing the sorting.

Write your count here: _____ breaks in sentence one

Chopped or unbroken

1

2

3

4

5

Sensible groups



4

The ends of the words

Can you hear the ending on every past tense verb, and the S on every plural? Listen for these specific words rather than a general impression.

Listen for: presented, analyzed, surprised, increased, asked, answered | numbers, results, orders, vendors, notes

Endings go missing

1

2

3

4

5

All arrive

My lowest score, and what I do next

My lowest score is number

For the next two weeks I will work on



Not sure which one it is?

Send me the one minute recording and within a week I will tell you which of the four is costing you most, with a practice pack for it. Send it at theaccentcoach.com/clarity-check. There is nothing to book and nothing to pay.



Passages for your next check

When you repeat the Clarity Check in a few weeks, use a passage you have not read before, so you hear your habits rather than your memory. Choose the one closest to the conversations you have at work, and use the word lists below in place of the ones on page 2.

So you hear your habits rather than your memory.

The status update

For anyone who runs projects or reports to a team

Here is where the project stands this week. We finished the testing phase on Friday, and the results were better than we expected. The client asked for several changes to the contract, so we decided to give the design work a separate budget. That pushed the launch date back by two weeks. I have already called the vendors, and they agreed to the new schedule. The only real risk now is cost, and I will follow up on that before the end of the month.



Listen

Shape of the words	project, testing phase, several, contract, separate, launch date, schedule, follow up
Endings	finished, expected, asked, decided, pushed, called, agreed, results, changes, weeks, vendors

The question from leadership

For answering questions from senior people

That is a fair question, and the short answer is yes. We looked at three different options last quarter. The first two would have increased our headcount, so we rejected them. The third was more comfortable for the team, and it actually reduced the time we needed for each review. We presented the numbers to the finance committee in March, and they approved the plan. If it helps, I can send you the full analysis by the end of the day.



Listen

Shape of the words different, options, increased, headcount, comfortable, actually, presented, finance committee, analysis

Endings looked, increased, rejected, reduced, needed, presented, approved, options, numbers

The camera-off call

For calls where nobody can see your face

Can everyone hear me clearly? I wanted to walk you through the changes to the delivery schedule. Two of our suppliers missed their deadlines in August, which delayed the first shipment. We have since added a second warehouse, and that should increase our capacity by about thirty percent. I will record this call and send the summary to the whole group. If anything is unclear, please stop me and ask, because I cannot see your faces today.



Listen

Shape of the words delivery, suppliers, deadlines, warehouse, increase, capacity, thirty percent, record, summary

Endings wanted, missed, delayed, added, changes, suppliers, deadlines, faces