
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Tim's Pronunciation Workshop

Assimilation: /t/ and /p/



Tim

Hi. I'm Tim and this is my Pronunciation workshop. Here I'm going to show you how English is really spoken. It'll help you become a better listener and a more fluent speaker. Come on, let's go inside.

Here's a question for you: When is a tea not a tea? Well, this is the answer. What is it? And what colour is it? Let's go to the streets of London to find out.

Voxpops

It's a white piece of paper.

It's a white piece of paper.

That is a white piece of paper.

That's a white piece of paper.

That is a white piece of paper.

That is a white piece of paper.

Tim

Now the word **white** ends in the sound /t/, doesn't it? Or does it? Let's have another listen.

Voxpops

It's a white piece of paper.

It's a white piece of paper.

That is a white piece of paper.

That's a white piece of paper.

That is a white piece of paper.

That is a white piece of paper.

Tim

In fluent speech, if one word ends in a /t/ sound and the next word begins in a /p/ sound, the /t/ is pronounced slightly differently. In fact, we pronounce it as if it were almost a /p/ sound. So **white piece of paper** becomes **whi(te) piece of paper**. Let's take another look, this time in slow motion:

Voxpops

whi(te) piece

whi(te) piece

whi(te) piece

whi(te) piece

whi(te) piece

whi(te) piece of paper

Tim

Interesting, hey? This is an example of how sounds change in everyday speech. And it's called **assimilation**. Here are some more examples:

Examples

There are lots of grea(t) parks in London.

I love spli(t) pea soup.

I ha(te) potatoes.

My ma(te) picked us up from the airport.

Tim

Right, so, you've heard the examples, and now it's your turn. Are you ready to have a go? Listen and repeat.

Examples

There are lots of grea(t) parks in London.

I love spli(t) pea soup.

I ha(te) potatoes.

My ma(te) picked us up from the airport.

Tim

How did you get on? Great. If you want to hear more about this topic, please visit our website: bbclearningenglish.com. That's about it from the pronunciation workshop this week. Bye bye.

Did you just see...? I could have sworn it was... You know, sometimes I think I have a split personality!