
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Tim's Pronunciation Workshop

The gemination of /t/



Tim

Hi. I'm Tim and this is my Pronunciation workshop. Here I'm going to show you how English is really spoken. Come on, let's go inside. This week, I'm going to need some help from my favourite twin. Please welcome back Tom, who's going to help me present. Hi Tom!

Tom

Hi Tim! Now, are you a lover?

Tim

Or a fighter? Do you prefer to dance?

Tom

Or would you rather have an argument?

Tim

There's an expression we have in English that contains the name of a dance ...

Tom

... and means when two people get involved in a fight or argument, then in most cases both have to take some of the responsibility. Do you know the expression?

Tim

Well, let's ask the people of London.

Voxpops

It takes two to tango.

It takes two to tango.

It takes two to tango.

It takes two to tango.

Tim and Tom

It takes two to tango.

Tom

Lot of 't's in that, Tim.

Tim

Lot of 't's indeed, Tom. Five in fact. It takes two to Tango. But are all of these usually pronounced? Can you hear all of them? Listen again.

Voxpops

It **t**akes two to tango.

It **t**akes two to tango.

It **t**akes two to tango.

It **t**akes two to tango.

Tim

You might remember from a previous video that when the sound /t/ comes in between two consonants, we don't usually pronounce it.

Tom

But what happens if there is a vowel sound before the /t/? And the next word also begins with /t/?

Tim

Well, in this case the two /t/ sounds join together to create one slightly stronger /t/. So 'it takes two' becomes 'it **t**akes two' This is an example of twinning or gemination. Here are some more examples.

Examples

It **t**ook him twenty years to **t**o get to the top.

You don't have to **t**o cheat **t**o pass the test.

You were **t**o be right **t**o be upset.

We **t**ook the **t**o overnight **t**o train to Venice.

Tim

Right, so you've heard the examples, and now it's your turn. You know the drill. Listen and repeat.

Examples

It **t**ook him twenty years to **t**o get to the top.

You don't have to **t**o cheat **t**o pass the test.

You were **t**o be right **t**o be upset.

We **t**ook the **t**o overnight **t**o train to Venice.

Tim

Well done. Now remember, if you want to learn more about pronunciation, then please visit our website, bbclearningenglish.com. And that is about it from the pronunciation

workshop for this week. We'll see you soon. Bye bye! Ah, thank you for all your hard work, Tom.

Tom

Ah. No problem, you're the best Tim.

Tim

Hey, thanks, you're great too. Ah! That was weird! What was that all about?

Tom

Hey, you started it.

Tim

No I didn't.

Tom

Yes you did.

Tim

Well, maybe a little bit. I guess that just goes to prove it takes two to tango.