
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Tim's Pronunciation Workshop

Elision of /h/

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. Now, if you've been following my adventures in this workshop, you will know that I have had a bit of bad luck, now and then. But not half as much bad luck as this chap. Listen to what these people are saying about him.

Voxpops

He looks like he's had an accident.
He looks like he's had an accident.
He looks like he's had an accident.
He looks like he's had an accident.

Tim

Now, they all used the word 'he' twice. But there were two different pronunciations. Listen out for them both as you watch again.

Voxpops

He looks like **he's** had an accident.
He looks like **he's** had an accident.
He looks like **he's** had an accident.
He looks like **he's** had an accident.

Tim

In fluent speech, if the word 'he' comes at the beginning of a sentence or clause, then the 'h' sound /h/ is pronounced. But if it comes in the middle of a sentence or clause and after a consonant, then the 'h' sound is not usually pronounced. So /hi:/ becomes /i:/ and 'he looks like he's had an accident' becomes 'he looks like 'e's had an accident'. Not this change also happens with certain other words beginning with the 'h' sound, like **him**, **his** or **her**. Here are some more examples.

Examples

I really like **his** cooking.
We think **he's** left the country.
They let **him** leave early.
They offered **her** a promotion.

Tim

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

Examples

I really like **his** cooking.

We think **he's** left the country.

They let **him** leave early.

They offered **her** a promotion.

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. I'll see you soon. Bye bye! Now, that man in the photograph – his head looked a bit sore – which reminds me. Saw! I love DIY! Actually, I am a bit accident-prone. But my twin Tom is very good with his hands. I think I'll give him a ring and ask for his advice. Ow! Every time!