

**buy - the - to - went - store - I - to - milk - some**

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**I went to the store to buy some milk**

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Think about how an English speaker might read the following words in a list:

buy, the, to, went, store, I, to, milk, some

We could represent it like this:

buy the to went store I to milk some

Each word would have about the same stress, and it would sound somewhat choppy.

Now, if we rearrange the words into a sentence and have the native speaker read it aloud, it would probably look more like this:

I went to the store to buy some milk.

If you become aware of the differences between the way native speakers say isolated words and the way they say them in sentences, you will learn a great deal about how English works. Here are some important points to keep in mind:

- the sentence would come out faster, taking about half the time to say
- there is a big difference between the stress placed on different words in a sentence

Practice reading the following sentences, paying attention to reduce the function words.

1. Can you COME for DINner?
2. Do you NEED to SEE JOHN or JERry?
3. KARen and SUSie WANT to GO to the Llibrary.
4. She could have CALLED him, but she DIDn't HAVE his NUMber.
5. You should have CALLED your MOTHER or FATHER.
6. I have LIVED in this CITY for FOUR YEARS.
7. When you GO to the STORE, try to LOOK for some GOOD CHEESE.
8. TRY to FIND OUT if she TALKED to him.
9. I would have inVited him for LUNCH, but he WOULDn't have acCEPTed.
10. Do you THINK I should have TALKED to MARTa or CONNie?

## Pronoun reduction

Pronoun	Clear	Natural	Example Sentence	Pronunciation
he	[hi]	[i]	What did he want?	What did "e" want? [wɛrɪwʌnt]
him	[hɪm]	[əm]	I told him.	I told "im". [aɪtɔldəm]
her	[hɜː]	[ə]	He likes her.	He likes "er". [hɪlaɪksə]
them	[ðeɪm]	[əm]	She likes them.	She likes "em". [ʃɪlaɪksəm]

Note that the only subject pronoun in the table is "he" and that is only reduced when it is not at the beginning of a phrase, so we would never delete the "h" in a sentence like "He is eating lunch", but we would delete it in a sentence like "Why is (h)e eating lunch?" if the word preceding it is in the same phrase. Also notice that the reduced forms for "him" and "them" are basically the same, so we use context to determine the meaning.

## Reduction of Auxiliary "have"

The Auxiliary "have" is also usually reduced. For example, you will sometimes hear native speakers use the expression "coulda, woulda, shoulda" which they say when they are talking about hypotheticals. They are referring to the way that phrases such as "I could have done it" sound like "I coulda done it" in spoken English.

Modal + have	Clear	Natural	Example Sentence	Pronunciation
could have	[kʊdhæv]	[kʊrə]	I could have gone.	I "coulda" gone. [aɪkʊrəɡən]
should have	[ʃʊdhæv]	[ʃʊrə]	I should have gone.	I "shoulda" gone. [aɪʃʊrəɡən]
would have	[wʊdhæv]	[wʊrə]	I would have gone.	I "woulda" gone. [aɪwʊrəɡən]

I'D LIKE YOU TO BUY ME A NICE BOX OF CHOCOLATES

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‘Well—I have it on pretty good authority—in fact, on old Catherine’s herself—that the family reduced Countess Olenska’s allowance considerably when she definitely refused to go back to her husband; and as, by this refusal, she also forfeits the money settled on her when she married—which Olenski was ready to make over to her if she returned—why, what the devil do *you* mean, my dear boy, by asking me what *I* mean?’ Mr Jackson good-humouredly retorted.

Archer moved toward the mantelpiece and bent over to knock his ashes into the grate.

‘I don’t know anything of Madame Olenska’s private affairs; but I don’t need to, to be certain that what you insinuate—’

‘Oh, *I* don’t: it’s Lefferts, for one,’ Mr Jackson interposed.

‘Lefferts—who made love to her and got snubbed for it!’ Archer broke out contemptuously.

‘Ah—*did* he?’ snapped the other, as if this were exactly the fact he had been laying a trap for. He still sat sideways from the fire, so that his hard old gaze held Archer’s face as if in a spring of steel.

‘Well, well: it’s a pity she didn’t go back before Beaufort’s cropper,’ he repeated. ‘If she goes *now*, and if he fails, it will only confirm the general impression: which isn’t by any means peculiar to Lefferts, by the way.’

He had stopped and faced her in the excitement of their discussion, and her eyes rested on him with a bright unclouded admiration.

‘Mercy—shall we elope?’ she laughed.

‘If you would—’

‘You *do* love me, Newland! I’m so happy.’

‘But then—why not be happier?’

‘We can’t behave like people in novels, though, can we?’

‘Why not—why not—why not?’

‘But I hope you *had* finished your reading, Henry?’ his wife interposed.

‘Quite—quite,’ he reassured her.

‘Then I should like Adeline to tell you—’

‘Oh, it’s really Newland’s story,’ said his mother smiling; and proceeded to rehearse once more the monstrous tale of the affront inflicted on Mrs Lovell Mingott.