

Introduction

You are going to listen to Jane talking to Sheila about a sailing trip that went horribly wrong. Jane comes from Worthing on the south coast of England and she speaks with a neutral English accent. The conversation features a number of lexical items to do with the sea and sailing and it took place in Sheila's kitchen.

Stage 1 Pre-listening – activating schema

A Vocabulary building: sailing words

Give your students these definitions and ask them to supply the lexical item, using their dictionaries if necessary.

1. the long metal object on a strong rope or chain which is dropped from a boat into water to keep it in the same position **(the anchor)**
2. a piece of land surrounded by water **(an island)**
3. the movement of water, electricity and air **(the current)**
4. part of the coast where the land curves so the sea is surrounded by land on three sides **(a bay)**
5. an accident where two or more things hit each other (e.g. two ships, two cars, etc.) **(a collision)**
6. to control the direction of a boat, car, etc. **(to steer)**
7. the flat piece of wood at the back of a boat which is moved from side-to-side to control the direction the boat is going in **(the rudder)**
8. a small, open boat **(a dinghy)**
9. a piece of material attached to a pole on a boat which catches the wind and makes the boat move **(a sail pl. sails)**
10. a boat or ship which takes passengers (and often vehicles as well) across a stretch of water, generally as a regular service, e.g. the service between Dover and Calais **(a ferry)**
11. a raised line of water which move across the surface of the sea **(a wave)**

Key lexis

(These are key lexical items which you need to be sure your students know before they hear the recording. Try to elicit the meanings as far as possible rather than just giving the items and explanations.)

a near-death experience – a situation where someone nearly died

it wasn't anywhere spectacular – it wasn't anywhere exciting or exotic

all these boats joined together in a daisy chain – the boats were in a line because they had pulled each other's anchors out and they were connected by their anchor lines

we were ricocheting around the bay – we were all colliding with each other in the bay

the anchor winch – the machine which raises and lowers the anchor (See Exercise A above)

scary – frightening

B Prediction

Which eight of the following lexical items do your students expect to hear in the recording?

(Having been pre-taught the key lexis, they will already have formed some idea of what they expect to hear.)

a horse	the night	the seabed	a pineapple	the current
a finger	a shop	a hole	pepper	blood
a pencil	the wheel	a cushion	the wind	gravy

Answers: **the night, the seabed, the current, a finger, a hole, blood, the wheel, the wind**

C Discussion questions

1. Have you ever been sailing? If yes, did you enjoy it?
If not, why not?
2. Have you ever been in a dangerous situation? If yes, what happened?
3. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of owning a boat?

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 3

D Normalisation



Track 1

This exercise gives your students a chance to get used to the voices of Jane and Sheila. It is suitable for students at all levels:

Jane had a bad sailing experience once in the Isles of Scilly. She and her husband had

(1) _____ anchor at a place called Grimsby (2) _____, near the (3) _____ of

Tresco. Tresco has tropical (4) _____ because it's on the Gulf Stream. The weather

suddenly turned rough, or bad, during the (5) _____.

Stage 2 Natural listening comprehension practice



Track 2

In contrast to traditional listening comprehension practice, this activity reflects what we all do in the real world when we are confronted with people speaking in another language. Unlike the recordings found in ELT coursebooks, this recording can be used with students of all levels. *(Remember that in real life we cannot select who we listen to on the basis of difficulty!)*

First ask your students to listen to the entire recording and tell you how much they understand as a percentage. Then ask them to tell you what they heard. Remember to be non-committal at this point. Just listen to what they say and do not react. You can write key points on the board.

Stage 3: Decoding and building meaning



Track 2

Ask your students to listen to the recording again and to write down as many words as they can and compare their lists with other students, in pairs or in groups. How much more of the recording can they understand now? Can they use these words to build meaning? Add more key points to the board.

Stage 4: Traditional listening comprehension practice: Parts 1, 2 and 3

You can now use traditional listening comprehension practice to check how much your students have understood and identify places in the recording where comprehension broke down. Unlike traditional listening comprehension tasks where the recording is graded, in this approach it is the tasks which are graded. This makes these materials ideal for mixed ability classes.

Give your students sufficient time to look at the task for their level and predict their answers before they listen. The answers are given here to make your life easier and save you having to work them out.

Part 1



Track 3

Elementary Level: Gap-fill

- 1 There were lots of other **boats** near Jane and Tim's boat.
- 2 Jane says they were 'dragging **their** anchors', which means they were not staying in one **place**.
- 3 The other boats were pulling the anchors across the **seabed**.
- 4 This was because the current was so **strong**.
- 5 As one boat came near to another boat, its anchor pulled the other boat's anchor **out**.
- 6 Jane says all the boats were 'ricocheting **around** the bay'.
- 7 She says the boats were 'joined **together** like a daisy chain'.
- 8 Jane and Tim had to 'fend off', or 'push away' a **French** boat.
- 9 In doing this, Jane nearly lost her **finger**.
- 10 The anchor winch is in the **front** of the boat.
- 11 A collision at sea can result in a **hole** in both boats.

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 5

Intermediate Level: Questions

(Sometimes part of the answer is given in italics to help the students.)

1. What did lots of other boats start doing when the weather turned bad? *They started 'dragging their anchors'.*
2. What were their anchors dragging across? *the seabed*
3. Why was this? *Because the current was so strong.*
4. What happened to the anchor on Jane and Tim's boat? *'Another boat hoicked it out.'*
5. What nearly collided with Jane and Tim's boat? *a French boat*
6. What did Jane nearly lose? *her finger*
7. What can a collision at sea result in? *a hole in either boat*

Advanced Level: True/False

Ask your students to give reasons for their answers.

- 1 Jane says there were a large number of boats in the bay.
T 'and lots of other boats were there'
- 2 She says they were changing their anchors.
F 'they were dragging their anchors'
- 3 A lot of the boats began pulling their anchors up.
F They were dragging/pulling them 'across the seabed'.
- 4 Another boat pulled Jane and Tim's anchor out by mistake.
T 'And if they come across your anchor with their anchor, they can hoick it out, which they did.'
- 5 Jane says 'We were ricocheting around the harbour – all these boats joined together in a kind of daisy chain.'
F 'around the bay'
- 6 Jane and Tim nearly hit another boat.
T 'we had to fend off from one boat which was French... push it away'

7 Jane's finger got caught underneath the anchor.

F 'it got caught underneath the anchor er, anchor winch'

8 Tim was also hurt.

F 'So it was just my finger that suffered.'

Part 2



Track 4

Elementary Level: Questions

(Sometimes part of the answer is given in italics to help the students.)

1. What did Jane use to stop her injury bleeding? *'a little handkerchief'*
2. Why couldn't Jane and Tim steer their boat? *Because the rudder wasn't working properly.*
3. What controlled the boat's direction at that point? *the wind*
4. Why did none of the sailors put their boats' sails up? *Because it was far too windy.*
5. Where did Jane and Tim keep their dinghy? *at the back of the boat*
6. Which two things are normally connected on a boat? *the rudder and the wheel*
7. What type of boat did Jane and Tim manage to get hold of? *a ferry*
8. Who were 'tiny' at the time? *Sue and Tim's children*
9. What did they do during all this excitement? *They were asleep.*
10. Have Jane and Tim been back to the Scilly Isles since? *No. (It's put me off the Scilly Isles, which is... we've never gone back to!)*

Intermediate Level: Correct the mistake in each sentence

1. Jane used a towel to stop her finger bleeding. *'my little handkerchief'*

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 7

2. Jane and Tim couldn't steer the boat because the engine wasn't working properly. **the rudder**
3. They had to go wherever the current took them. **the wind**
4. Luckily they could see because it was a full moon. **It was pitch black.**
5. The dingy at the front of the boat had knocked into the anchor. **at the back of the boat**
6. Eventually Jane and Tim bought tickets for a ferry. **They caught hold of the ferry and hung onto it for a while.**
7. Their friends were also on the boat at the time. **Jane and Tim's children**
8. Since then Jane and Tim have sailed round the Scilly Isles several times. **'It's put me off the Scilly Isles which is... we've never gone back to!'**

Advanced Level: Gap-fill

1. Jane and Tim managed to **survive** the near-collision, except for Jane's finger gushing **blood**.
2. She had tied up the injury with a small **handkerchief**.
3. Jane and Tim couldn't **steer** the boat because of a problem with the **rudder**.
4. When they turned the **wheel**, nothing happened.
5. They just had to go where the **wind** blew them.
6. It was pitch **black** and they couldn't use their sails because it was too **windy**.
7. The dinghy had **knocked** the rudder so it wasn't working **properly**.
8. The rudder was no longer **connected** to the **wheel**.
9. In the end Jane and Tim **caught** hold of a **ferry** and stayed there until they had **worked out** what to do.
10. Jane and Tim's **children** were on board the boat as well, but luckily they were **asleep**.
11. Sue says it was all very **scary**.
12. She says the experience has **put** her off the Scilly Isles, which is why they've **never** gone **back** there.

Part 3



Track 5

Elementary Level: Gap-fill

1. Sheila and her friend met another couple on **holiday** who also go sailing a lot.
2. They have a boat **near** Poole.
3. One **afternoon** they set off for a sail around the **bay**.
4. Suddenly the **wind** came up and the **waves** came up.
5. In the **end** they had to sail all the way to Devon.
6. The waves were **100** feet high.
7. The couple thought they were going to **die**.
8. The rest of the **holiday** this other couple kept telling Sheila and her friend about people they knew who'd **died** in sailing **accidents**.
9. Sue says accidents do happen, but then points out that you can get **knocked over** by a van on dry land.

Intermediate Level: Questions

(Sometimes part of the answer is given in italics to help the students.)

1. Where did Sheila and her friend meet another couple who go sailing a lot? **on holiday**
2. What were this couple planning one afternoon? *a sail round the bay*
3. Which two things 'came up'? (i.e. became stronger and more dangerous?) **the wind and the waves**
4. Where did the couple have to sail to in the end? **Devon**
5. How high were the waves? **100 feet**
6. What did the couple think they were going to do? *They thought they were going to die.*

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 9

7. What did they talk to Sheila and her friend about for the rest of the holiday? *People they knew who'd died in sailing accidents.*
8. What can happen to you on dry land, according to Sue? *You can get knocked over by a van.*

Advanced Level: True/False

Ask your students to give reasons for their answers.

1. Sheila and her friends met a couple on holiday with a boat near Boole.
F a boat near Poole
2. One afternoon this couple decided to sail over to France.
F 'they were just going to have a sail round the bay'
3. Suddenly the conditions became very bad.
T 'the wind came up and the waves came up'
4. Eventually they had to sail further down the coast to Cornwall.
F 'they had to go all the way down to Devon'
5. The waves were about 20 metres high.
F 'there were hundred-foot waves'
6. Luckily the couple were prepared for bad weather.
F S: But because they were only going round the bay then they didn't have the weather gear. They weren't prepared for this.'
7. The rest of the holiday this couple kept talking to Jill and Sheila about their wonderful sailing experiences.
F 'they just kept talking to us about people they knew who'd died in sailing accidents'
8. Sue points out that accidents can also happen on dry land.
T 'Yes, well, it does happen, but then you can get knocked over by a Dynarod van.'

Stage 5: Interesting language points

A Colloquial language 1

Some useful colloquial expressions appeared in context in the conversation. Here they are again, with explanations and examples. The first example each time is taken from the recording; the rest are scripted.

to manage to do something

explanation to succeed in doing something eventually, despite difficult circumstances

examples *And then we managed to survive that.* / I managed to pass my driving test the fourth time I took it. / Did you manage to get the tickets? / She's managed to persuade Tony to get his hair cut.

to get caught in something

explanation when something is trapped

examples *I nearly lost my finger because it got caught underneath the anchor winch.* / I love these shoes, but I keep getting the heel caught in the floorboards at my parents' house. / I was having a lovely time until my hair got caught in the zip of my jacket and when I pulled it half my hair came out.

to not work properly

explanation when something isn't working correctly

examples *The rudder wasn't working properly.* / Can you come over tomorrow and have a look at my computer? It isn't working properly. / I don't know what's wrong with this television. It hasn't worked properly for months.

to not make any difference

explanation when nothing you do is effective

examples *The rudder wasn't working properly, so when we turned the wheel it didn't make any difference.* / I've said I'm sorry, but it doesn't make any difference. She still won't speak to me. / I've been studying really hard, but it doesn't seem to make any difference. / I've been trying to save money, but it doesn't make any difference. I'm still broke at the end of each month.

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 11

to be pitch black

explanation when it is very dark

examples *It was pitch black. (i.e. It was at night and there was no moon or stars./I'd forgotten how dark it gets in the country. We went for a walk into the village one evening and it was pitch black because there were no streetlights on the way there./Suddenly all the lights went out and it was pitch black. I've never been so scared in all my life!*

Now ask your students to write personal statements using these colloquial expressions.

B Soundshapes in the stream of speech 1: The word cluster 'in the'

A considerable proportion of the stream of speech is made up of word-clusters – groups of two or more words which are run together in ways which make them very unlike their individual dictionary pronunciations. The two words 'in the' make up the fourth most common word cluster in speech (according to Ron Carter and Michael McCarthy's 'Cambridge Grammar of English' published in 2006). The words 'in the' often sound like 'innee' or 'inner'. Listen to the following excerpts, where you will hear the original and slowed down versions of the full excerpt, followed by original and slow versions of 'in the'.

-  **Track 6** It was **in the** Isles of Scilly. *(The words 'in the' sound very close to 'innee'.)*
-  **Track 7** it came up rough **in the** night, again *(The words 'in the' sound very close to 'inner'.)*
-  **Track 8** which is **in the** front of the boat *(The words 'in the' sound very close to 'inner'.)*
-  **Track 9** To avoid making a hole **in the** other boat... *(The words 'in the' sound very close to 'innee'.)*
-  **Track 10** And **in the** end they had to go all the way down to Devon. *(The words 'in the end they had to go' sound close to 'innee yen they hatter go'.)*

C The past simple and the past continuous in spoken English

We use the past continuous to indicate that an action occurred for a period of time in the past. We often use the past continuous and the simple past together, when a longer action is interrupted by a shorter one, as in this classic example:

I **was eating** dinner when she arrived.

Look at these examples of the past continuous from the recording. You can see there is the idea of things happening over a period of time.

they **were** dragging their anchors.

We **were ricocheting** around the bay...

And I **was gushing** blood....

The rudder **wasn't working** properly.

Now look at these examples of the simple past from the recording. Here there is the idea of one thing happening after another.

We **dropped** the anchor.

But it **came up** rough in the night.

I nearly **lost** my finger...

And we **managed** to survive that.

Now look at this example from the recording of the simple past and the past continuous together. This has the idea of a longer action (the ship moving) and a shorter action (each time they turned the wheel).

When we **turned** the wheel it **didn't make** any difference. We **were** just **going** wherever the wind **was** happening to blow us.

D British understatement and negative sentences

British people have a reputation for being very reserved and unemotional. There is a wonderful example of this in the recording. Jane has just been talking about her terrible experiences on a boat one night, with her two small children on board. Sheila says at the end of Jane's story: **How awful!** Jane then replies: It **wasn't very nice**.

British people often use negative statements when people from other countries would use a positive one. It seems more polite to phrase things this way. Look at these examples:

I need to get to the doctor. I'm **not very well**. (*i.e. I am very ill.*)

Our new teacher **isn't very good**. (*i.e. He's useless.*)

Our new neighbours **aren't very friendly**. (*i.e. They haven't even said hello.*)

Her new job **doesn't pay very well**. (*i.e. She gets the minimum wage.*)

We **didn't have a very good** view of the sea. (*i.e. We could only see the sea if we stood on the bed.*)

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 13

E Soundshapes in the stream of speech 2: Words ending in -ly

Words which end '-ly' often have interesting soundshapes. Listen to the following excerpts, where you will hear the original and slowed down versions of the full excerpt, followed by the original and slow versions of the underlined words.



Track 11

because they were only going round the bay

The word 'only' sounds close to 'ernie'.



Track 12

and they're actually pulling the anchors across the, across the seabed

The word 'actually' which can have four, three, or two syllables, has only one syllable here: it sounds close to 'aksh'.



Track 13

And eventually we caught a ferry.

The words 'and eventually' sound close to 'annvenchly' – the first syllable of 'eventually' is almost completely absent.



Track 14

literally caught hold of a ferry that was tied up

The word 'literally' in its full form can have four syllables, 'li.te.ra.lly' but here it has three, and sounds close to 'litch-ruh-lee'.



Track 15

The rudder wasn't working properly.

The word 'properly' in its full form can have three syllables 'pro.per.ly' but here it has two, and sounds close to 'prop.ly'

F Colloquial language 2

Here are some more colloquial expressions, with explanations and examples. The first example each time is taken from the recording; the rest are scripted.

to be far too * to do something

explanation a way of strengthening an adjective or adverb

examples *There were no sails up. It was far too windy to have sails up./I can't eat another thing. I'm far too full./She's far too young to wear clothes like that!/It's far too wet to cut the grass.*

to catch hold of something

explanation to grab hold of, or seize, something quickly

examples *And eventually we caught a ferry – literally caught hold of a ferry.../I tripped and nearly went flying, but then Richard caught hold of my arm and stopped me falling./Can you catch hold of the door before it slams?/Luckily I caught hold of her shopping before she dropped it.*

But someone was saying...

explanation a way of a) reporting speech and b) introducing a subject into a conversation

examples *But the guy was saying there were hundred-foot waves./I was saying to Valerie you seem happier lately./Your mother was saying you haven't been well lately./Peter was saying he's going to look for another job.*

to keep doing something (annoying)

explanation when someone (or something) does something all the time that you find annoying

examples *And then the rest of the holiday they just kept talking to us about people they knew who'd died in sailing accidents./My mother keeps telling me to get my hair cut, but I like it like this./She keeps sending me texts all the time./The teacher keeps giving us tests every week.*

rough (adjective)

explanation the opposite of smooth, gentle, pleasant, undisturbed, etc.

examples *But it came up rough in the night. (Here Jane is talking about the wind and the waves. We often talk about a rough sea (with large waves) and a smooth sea (with small waves).)/Other common uses of rough: I can't go out. I'm feeling a bit rough. I think I'm going down with a cold./I had a rough night – I didn't get to sleep until 5./You're looking rough. Are you feeling OK?*

Now ask your students to write personal statements using these colloquial expressions.

G Intonation—recognising unmarked and contrastive stress

Fluent English speakers group words together in 'tone units' with a brief pause between each tone unit. The pause gives the listener time to process meaning.

The speaker generally emphasises the last content word in a tone unit by saying it in a different way to the other words in the group – either saying it louder, (or sometimes softer), and/or making it longer and by changing the pitch, or tune. This helps the listener know which words to concentrate on.

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 15

Listen to these extracts from the recording which are all said with unmarked stress:



Track 16

But it wasn't anywhere **spectacular**.

We dropped the **anchor**.

It was pitch **black**. There were no **sails**.

Note that the unmarked stress on the words with more than two syllables (*spectacular* and *anchor*) follows the word stress for these two words, i.e. **an-chor** and **spec-tac-u-lar**.

Fluent English speakers also use something called **contrastive stress** to highlight an earlier word in a tone unit which they want to emphasise. Ask your students to look at the following sentence. Can they understand how the meaning changes as the contrastive stress changes?

I don't want mayonnaise on my **salad**.

Unmarked stress: The person doesn't want mayonnaise on her salad.

Contrastive stress:

I don't want mayonnaise on my **salad**.

(She doesn't, but other people probably do.)

I don't want **mayonnaise** on my salad.

(She wants something else.)

I don't want mayonnaise on my **salad**.

(She wants mayonnaise, but not on her salad.)

I don't want mayonnaise **on** my salad.

(She wants it next to her salad.)

(NB There is an exercise on unmarked and contrastive stress in Stage 6.)

H The past perfect simple

We often use the past perfect when we are telling a story about something that happened. We use it to show that happened in a period of time before something else. Look at these examples from the recording:

Jane: There were no sails. It was far too windy to have sails up. And what **had happened** was the dinghy, which was at the back of the boat, **had** somehow **managed** to knock the rudder so that it wasn't working properly.

Sheila: And then the rest of the holiday they just kept talking about people they knew **who'd died** in sailing accidents.

I Phrasal verbs in spoken English

There are a number of useful phrasal verbs in the recording. Here they are, together with explanations and examples. The first example each time is taken from the recording; the rest are scripted.

to come across something

explanation to find or encounter something by chance or by accident

examples *And if they come across your anchor with their anchor, they can hoick it out.* / I came across all my old love letters when I was clearing out the loft. / Dad came across this photo in a charity shop. Isn't it wonderful?

to work something out

explanation to find the answer to something by thinking about it

examples *And just hung onto that for a bit until we worked out what to do.* / Have you worked out what to say to Mike yet? / I can't work out how to turn my new washing machine on. Perhaps I should read the manual.

to put the brakes on

explanation to apply the brakes

examples *You can't put the brakes on, can you?* / I put the brakes on, but nothing happened for a few seconds. It was really scary. / If you're driving in snow you should put the brakes on slowly.

to get off something

explanation to step off a boat, bus, train

examples *...and you can't get off...* / As he was getting off the boat, it rocked and he fell in the water. / The kids were playing really loud music, but then the bus driver came up and told them to get off. / Will passengers please check they have all their belongings with them before getting off the train?

to put somebody off (doing) something

explanation to discourage somebody from doing something

examples *Sheila: Isn't that enough to put you off sailing? Jane: It's put me off the Scilly Isles...* / I wanted to go to Australia, but Sarah's put me off going with all that talk of spiders. / My sister's friends put her off learning German because they kept saying how difficult the grammar was. / His parents' accident put Peter off learning to drive for years.

to set off

explanation to begin a journey

examples *And they set off one afternoon – they were just going to have a sail round the bay.* / What time do we need to set off for the airport? / We set off at 10, but there was so much traffic we didn't get home till 6. / We're going to set off at 11, so can you be here by quarter to?

Now ask your students to write personal statements using these phrasal verbs.

Stage 6 Further listening practice

Exercise 1 Dictation

First ask your students in pairs or groups to decide how many words they hear in each track. Then ask them to listen again and write down the words they hear.



Track 17

1. Lots of other boats were there and they were dragging their anchors.



Track 18

2. I nearly lost my finger because it got caught underneath the anchor.



Track 19

3. We managed to survive that.



Track 20

4. So when we turned the wheel it didn't make any difference.



Track 21

5. So all we could do was just keep going where the boat wanted to go and just hope.



Track 22

6. They were just going to have a sail round the bay.



Track 23

7. They really thought they were going to die.

Exercise 2 Contractions

We use contracted verb forms a great deal in spoken English, but often students tend to avoid them because they feel they are not 'proper' English. This exercise will a) raise your students' awareness of the frequency of contractions and b) give them practice in identifying contractions which are often difficult to hear in a stream of speech.

Part 1 Contracted verb forms

With elementary and intermediate students, it might be a good idea to ask them first for the contracted forms of:

cannot, could not, did not, it has, they are, was not, we have, who had, you have

Part 2 Recognising contractions in the stream of speech

Now ask your students to look at the following excerpts from the recording and try to guess the missing contractions. Then ask them to listen and check their answers.



Track 24

1. Have you ever had a near-death experience when **you've** been sailing...
2. Yes. But it **wasn't** anywhere spectacular.
3. And **they're** actually pulling the anchors across the... across the seabed.
4. We **couldn't** steer.
5. The rudder **wasn't** working properly.
6. So when we turned the wheel it **didn't** make any difference.
7. It **wasn't** very nice.
8. You **can't** put the brakes on, can you?
9. **It's** put me off the Scilly Isles, which is... **we've** never gone back to!
10. And then the rest of the holiday they just kept talking to us about people they knew **who'd** died in sailing accidents.

Exercise 3 The changing soundscapes of words in the stream of speech 1

Listen to the excerpts below. They all contain the word 'going'. But 'going' has many different soundshapes, depending on its position in a stream of speech. Ask your students to listen to each excerpt and grade each one **clear** or **unclear**. They will first hear each excerpt at the original speed, then the word 'going' at the original speed and then slowed down.



Track 25 We were just **going** wherever the wind was happening to blow us. **Clear**



Track 26 So all we could do was just keep **going** where the boat wanted to go... **Clear**



Track 27 and they were just **going** to have a sail round the bay **unclear**

(The word 'going' sounds close to 'gurn'.)

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 19



Track 28

They really thought they were going to die. **unclear**

(The word 'going' sounds like 'gun', and the word 'to' is dropped, so the words 'they were going to die' sound close to 'they wuh gun die'.)



Track 29

because they were only going round the bay. **unclear**

(The word 'going' sounds close to 'go'.)

Now ask your students to listen to the five different soundshapes for 'going', and repeat them. They will hear all five at their original speed, and then all five slowed down.



Track 30

going going going going going

Exercise 4 Linking

Linking occurs when the end of one word runs into the start of the next word. It is very common in informal spoken English. It occurs if a word ends in a consonant and the next word starts with a vowel, or if one word ends with the same letter as at the beginning of the next word. However, it also occurs frequently with the final letter -s of one word linking with a consonant at the start of the next word. Linking makes it difficult for students to distinguish individual words in the stream of speech.

Ask your students to guess which words will be linked in the following extracts by saying them quietly to themselves. Then let them listen and check their answers.



Track 31

1. It was_in the Isles_of Scilly.
2. But it came_up rough_in the night...
3. lots_of_other boats were there
4. Push_it* away, yes. *(*unfortunate combination!)*
5. It didn't make_any difference.
6. Did you have your sails_up?
7. It was_all very scary.
8. And they set_off one_afternoon.
9. They just kept talking to us_about people they knew who'd_died in sailing accidents.

Exercise 5 Phonology – Identifying stressed words

In Stage 5 we looked at unmarked and contrastive stress. Many learners are unaware of this important feature of English intonation, but students will quickly learn how to identify the words the speaker stresses, and which therefore carry the most meaning, with regular exposure to stretches of authentic speech.

The speaker stresses one word in a tone group by saying it in a different way to the other words in a group – either saying it louder, (and sometimes softer), and/or making it longer and by changing the pitch, or tune. With unmarked stress, the speaker stresses the last content word in the tone unit. With contrastive stress the speaker stresses an earlier word in the tone unit.

Ask your students to look at the following short extracts from the recording and identify the word in each phrase or tone group which receives the most stress. Then ask them to decide whether the word carries unmarked stress (U), or contrastive stress (C). The longer stretches of speech have been divided into tone groups. Students identify one stressed word per tone group.



Track 32 1. But it **wasn't** (C) anywhere spectacular.



Track 33 2. and they were dragging their **anchors** (U)



Track 34 3. And if they come across **your** (C) anchor // with **their** (C) anchor // they can hoick it **out...** (U)



Track 35 4. I nearly lost my **finger** (U) //because it got caught underneath the **anchor** (U) //er, anchor **winch** (C) // which is in the **front** (C) // of the **boat** (U).



Track 36 5. To avoid making a **hole** (U) // in the other **boat** (C) // or **ours** (C) // in **fact** (U).



Track 37 6. So it was just my **finger** (C) // that **suffered** (U).



Track 38 7. We couldn't **steer** (C + U).



Track 39 8. It **wasn't** (C) // very **nice** (U).



Track 40 9. It's put me off the **Scilly** (C) Isles // which is... we've never gone **back** (U) to!



Track 41 10. They **really** (C) thought // they were going to **die** (U).

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 21

(NB Stress is decided by the speaker and it is impossible for someone reading the words alone to know for sure where the stress will be placed. For example in Item 10 above, we would naturally expect 'never' to be stressed, but it isn't.)

Exercise 6 Weak forms

The expression 'weak forms' refers to the grammatical or function words between the stressed lexical, or content, words in an utterance which tend to be unstressed and assume a weak form. This makes it difficult for students to recognise them in a stream of speech.

Ask your students to fill in the missing words in the following extracts from the recording.



Track 42

1. Tropical gardens **and** things...
2. And they **were** dragging **their** anchors, which means **that** they're not staying in one place.
3. So **we were** ricocheting around **the** bay.
4. And er, we had **to** fend off **from** one boat which was French...
5. er, anchor winch, which is in the front **of** the boat
6. So it **was** just my finger **that** suffered.
7. And then we managed **to** survive that.
8. It wasn't connected **to** the wheel anymore.
9. And just hung onto that **for** a bit until we worked out what to do.
10. Isn't **that** enough **to** put you off sailing?
11. They weren't prepared **for** this.
12. Well, it does happen, but then **you can** get knocked over by a Dynarod van.

Exercise 7 Phonology – Identifying pauses in the stream of speech

Spontaneous speech is full of slight pauses, and changes of rhythm, even in the middle of noun groups and clauses. Ask your students to listen for changes in rhythm in the excerpts below and mark where they hear the pauses. They will hear each excerpt at the original speed, and then slowed down.

Remember that people's perception of pauses and changes of rhythm are subjective, so allow for discussion and 'maybe' answers. The pauses are marked with an asterisk (*)



Track 43

all these (*) boats joined together in like a daisy chain.



Track 44

we had to (* maybe) fend off from one (*) boat, which was French



Track 45

But (*) it came up (*) rough in the night (*), again...



Track 46

and they (*) er, (* maybe) had a boat (*) near Poole

Exercise 8 Elision – missing sounds in the stream of speech

Ask your students to look at the five excerpts below, and read them slowly to themselves (or out loud to a fellow student), taking great care over every vowel and consonant. Then ask them to listen to each excerpt in turn, and make notes of what sounds are missing or different in the recording. They will hear each excerpt at both the original speed, and then slowed down.



Track 47

It was far too windy to have sails up.

'Windy' does not get a full 'd' – but is not 'winny' it is something close to 'win yee'.

The words 'to have' reduce to one syllable and sound close to 'tav'.



Track 48

And just hung onto that for a bit until we worked out what to do.

The words 'for a' become one syllable, and sound close to 'fra'. The word 'until' ends with a vowel, not consonant 'l'. The words 'to do' at the end sounds close as though they consist of a repeated 't' followed by a reduced vowel – not the full vowel that one would expect.

Stage 7: Further language development

Exercise 1 Gap-fill

Ask your students to fill in the blanks in these new sentences with words which they heard during the recording. The words are listed in the box to help them.

bay	brakes	couple	current	experience	ferry	hole
island	steer	tiny	sails	spectacular	waves	wind

1. The hotel we stayed at was on an island. You could only get there by ferry.
2. It was a horrible experience driving there because the ice made it difficult to steer and there's a problem with the brakes as well.
3. We couldn't go swimming because the waves were too high and the current was very strong.
4. Oh, no! I've got a hole in my sock!
5. We know a nice couple who've got a cottage in the New Forest. It's only tiny, but it's in a really pretty area.
6. The view of the castle from our hotel window was spectacular.
7. It's usually safe to go sailing in the bay, but yesterday the wind was too strong. It would have torn our sails to pieces.

Exercise 2 Transformations

Ask your students to change the word in each bracket that appeared in the recording to form a word that fits the gap. Let them use their dictionaries if necessary.

1. I'm going to bed. I'm (awful) awfully tired and I need to get a good night's (asleep) sleep.
2. Who does all the (gardens) gardening - you or your husband?
3. I was (hope) hopeless at cricket when I was at school because I could never (caught) catch the ball.
4. How are you (felt) feeling? Are you still (suffered) suffering? Come on now, tell me the (true) truth!
5. I'm sorry, I (accident) accidentally broke your chair when I (dragging) dragged it onto the terrace.
6. My little brother is so (scary) scared by the dark that he sleeps with the light on.
7. If your thumb's still (blood) bleeding then try putting it under the cold tap.

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong: transcript



Track 2

3 minutes, 26 seconds

S: Sheila

J: Jane

S: Have you ever had a near-death experience when you've been sailing, where...

J: Yes.

S: Really?

J: Well, not probably really, but it felt like it. Yes. But it wasn't anywhere spectacular. It was in the Isles of Scilly. And um... Yeah, we were tied, well, we were... We dropped the anchor...

S: Mmm, hmm.

J: ...in a place called the Tresco... No, the Grimsby Roads, it's called. It's in, off the island of Tresco, which is very pretty.

S: Mmm, hmm.

J: Tropical gardens and things 'cos it's on the Gulf Stream. But it came up rough in the night, again, and lots of other boats were there and they were dragging their anchors, which means that they're not staying in one place, and they're actually pulling the anchors across the... across the seabed.

S: Is that 'cos the current is so strong?

J: Yes.

S: Right.

J: Um, and if they come across your anchor with their anchor, they can hoick it out.

S: Right.

J: Which they did.

S: Oh, God!

J: So we were ricocheting around the bay – all these boats joined together in like a daisy chain.

S: Ah.

J: And er, we had to fend off from one boat which was French, and I managed to rip... I nearly lost my finger because it got caught underneath the anchor er, anchor winch, which is in the front of the boat.

S: Mmm, hmm. Sorry, you said 'fend off' – I've no idea. Trying to push....

J: Push, push it away. Yes, yes.

S: OK, to avoid a collision.

J: Exactly.

S: OK.

J: To avoid making a hole in the other boat or ours, in fact. So it was just my finger that suffered. And then we managed to survive that. And I was gushing blood but coping, tied up with my, my little handkerchief.

S: Mmm, hmm.

J: And um, we realised that we had no... We couldn't steer. The rudder wasn't working properly. So when we turned the wheel it didn't make any difference. We were just going wherever the wind was happening to blow us.

S: Did you have your sails up?

J: No. It was pitch black. There were no sails. It was far too windy to have sails up. And what had happened was the dinghy, which was at the boat of the boat, had somehow managed to knock the rudder so that it wasn't working properly – it wasn't connected to the wheel anymore.

S: Right.

J: So all we could do was just keep going where the boat wanted to go and just hope. And eventually we caught a ferry – literally caught hold of a ferry that was tied up in the middle of the...

1.10 A sailing trip that went horribly wrong

Page 25

S: Wow!

J: ...thing. And just hung onto that for a bit until we worked out what to do. So...

S: That's awful!

J: It wasn't, it wasn't very nice.

S: You can't put the brakes on, can you?

J: No, and you can't just get off because it's... The children were tiny and asleep and...

S: Mmm.

J: ...it was all very scary.

S: Isn't that enough to put you off sailing?

J: It's put me off the Scilly Isles, which is... we've never gone back to! *(laughs)*

S: We were talking to a couple on holiday and they er, had a boat near Poole, I think?

J: Uh, huh.

S: And they set off one afternoon – they were just going to have a sail round the bay.

J: Yeah.

S: And the wind came up and the waves came up. And in the end they had to go all the way down to Devon.

J: *(laughs)*

S: But the guy was saying there were hundred-foot waves.

J: I can believe that.

S: Hundred-foot waves! They really thought they were going to die.

J: Yes.

S: Just off the coast of England.

J: It's, it does happen! *(laughs)*

S: But because they were only going round the bay then they didn't have...

J: They weren't prepared.

S: ...the weather gear. They weren't prepared for this. Um... Just awful.

J: Yeah.

S: And then the rest of the holiday they just kept talking to us about people they knew who'd died in sailing accidents.

J: *(laughs)*

S: Really not pleasant.

J: Yes, well, it does happen, but then you can get knocked over by a Dynarod van. *(laughs)*

S: Yes, that's true. *(laughs)*