

Accents

WORKSHEET A

- Marina:** Oh, Dave, I wish I could speak like you.
- Dave:** Speak like me? What do you mean?
- Marina:** You know, the model British accent. I've lived in London six years and I still sound Brazilian. I open my mouth and everyone knows I'm a foreigner.
- Dave:** So what?
- Marina:** Well, I want to speak like a native speaker. It sounds nicer.
- Dave:** Does it? I think your accent's nice.
- Marina:** But-
- Dave:** No, honestly. I like foreign accents. I find them interesting. And anyway, what's a 'model British accent'? There are loads of different regional accents in Britain – you know that. Scottish, Welsh, Geordie, Liverpool, London, et cetera. And what about the differences between native speakers from other countries? Americans, South Africans, Australians – they all sound different. For me, when I listen to a non-native speaker, it's just another accent.
- Marina:** Ok, but I'd like to speak more like a TV or radio presenter – like on the BBC.
- Dave:** But which presenter do you mean? The BBC's a good example of where you can hear different regional accents. Sure, the accents are usually mild, but the presenters don't all sound like the Queen, do they? Maybe they did 50 years ago, but not anymore.
- Marina:** Hmm. Maybe in another six years I'll lose my accent.
- Dave:** If I were you I'd forget about losing your accent. The important thing is whether people can understand you or not – and I've always understood you perfectly.
- Marina:** But not everyone does. Sometimes when I'm talking, I'm sure the other person isn't finding it easy to understand.
- Dave:** You know what that probably is, though? There are some people who spend all their time with people who speak exactly the way they do, so anything even slightly different is a bit of a shock. You shouldn't think of it as your fault.

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WORKSHEET B

Exercise 1

Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F), or if the text doesn't say (D).

1. Marina wants to speak English more like a British person.
2. Dave likes Marina's accent.
3. Dave says that all British people speak with a similar accent.
4. Dave says that Australians and South Africans have the same accent.
5. Marina likes the way the Queen speaks English.
6. Dave wants to help Marina lose her Brazilian accent.
7. Dave says BBC presenters do not usually have strong regional accents.
8. When Dave first met Marina he found it difficult to understand what she said.
9. Marina believes that the people she speaks to sometimes find it difficult to understand her.
10. Marina believes that, because of her accent, the people she speaks to often think she is British.

Exercise 2

Answer the questions about the text on Worksheet A.

1. How long has Marina lived in London?
2. What does Dave say there are many of in Britain?
3. What is Dave's opinion about foreign accents?
4. Dave gives eight examples of different accents among native speakers of English. What are they?
5. What does Dave think is much more important than whether or not a foreigner has an accent?
6. What change does Dave suggest there has been in the accents of BBC presenters in the last 50 years?
7. When Marina says that sometimes people seem to find it difficult to understand her, what is Dave's explanation?
8. Early in the conversation Marina talks about something that Dave, later in the conversation, seems to think doesn't exist. What is it?

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WORKSHEET C

Exercise 3

Fill in the gaps to complete the text.

- Marina:** Oh, Dave, I (1) _ _ **sh** I could speak like you.
- Dave:** Speak like me? What do you (2) **m** _ _ _ ?
- Marina:** You know, the model British accent. I've lived in London six years and I still (3) **s** _ _ **n** _ Brazilian. I open my (4) _ _ **ut** _ and everyone knows I'm a foreigner.
- Dave:** So what?
- Marina:** Well, I want to speak like a (5) _ **at** _ _ _ speaker. It sounds nicer.
- Dave:** Does it? I think your accent's nice.
- Marina:** But-
- Dave:** No, (6) **h** _ _ _ _ **tly**, I like foreign accents. I find them interesting. And anyway, what's a 'model British accent'? There are (7) _ _ _ **ds** of different regional accents in Britain – you know that. Scottish, (8) **W** _ _ **sh**, Geordie, Liverpool, London, (9) **et** _ _ _ **era**. And what about the differences between native speakers from other countries? Americans, South Africans, Australians – they all sound different. For me, when I listen to a (10) **n** _ _ -native speaker, it's just another accent.
- Marina:** Ok, but I'd like to speak more like a TV or radio presenter – like on the BBC.
- Dave:** But which presenter do you mean? The BBC's a good example of where you can hear different regional accents. Sure, the accents are usually (11) _ **i** _ **d**, but the presenters don't all sound like the (12) **Q** _ _ _ _ , do they? Maybe they did 50 years ago, but not anymore.
- Marina:** Hmm. Maybe in another six years I'll lose my accent.
- Dave:** If I (13) **w** _ _ _ you I'd forget about losing your accent. The important (14) **t** _ _ _ **g** is whether people can understand you or not – and I've always understood you (15) **p** _ _ _ _ **c** _ **ly**.
- Marina:** But not everyone does. Sometimes when I'm talking, I'm sure the other (16) **p** _ _ _ _ **n** isn't finding it easy to understand.
- Dave:** You know what that probably is, though? There are some people who (17) **sp** _ _ _ all their time with people who speak (18) **e** _ _ _ _ **ly** the way they do, so anything even slightly different is a bit of a (19) _ **h** _ _ **k**. You shouldn't think of it as your (20) **fa** _ **I** _ .