

Pronunciation Tip: Avoid the Extra Syllable

I've been teaching English in Brazil now for over 6 years. During this time, I would say that at least 80% of my students make the same error in pronunciation. If you are someone who makes this error, this tip will help you in not only improving your pronunciation, but will also help your communication skills in general.

In a nutshell, the error is adding an extra syllable to the end of many words. This extra syllable spoken always has the sound of the letter "E". Examples are:

- Big
- Book
- Ship
- Wood
- Knife
- Live

In these examples, ALL of the words have just ONE syllable. They all end with a consonant sound at the end. In Portuguese, words don't end with these sounds, so the tendency for someone learning English is to simply ADD them! But this is a big error. Let's look at each of the words:

- Big (one syllable), not Big-EE (two syllables)
- Book, not Book-EE
- Ship, not Ship-EE
- Wood, not Wood-EE
- Knife (the K in the beginning and the E on the end are silent), not Knife-EE
- Live (again the E is silent), not Live-EE



You see, when you speak with a native speaker of English, pronouncing this extra syllable not only makes it hard for them to understand, but it also "hurts" their ears. It makes the listener "tired" of listening and can affect communication.

This gets a little more complicated with the use of the consonants T and D. Not only does the student pronounce the extra syllable, but they change the whole sound of the consonant! the D sound becomes a "dzh" sound, and the T sound becomes a "tsh" or "ch" sound. Examples are:

- Red
- Out
- Eat
- Linked

Let's go through these one by one:

» **Red** - is one syllable, not "Hedge-EE" The R sound we use is what some Brazilians call a "caipira R" (depending on what region they live in)

» **Out** - is one syllable with a stop consonant, not "Ouch-EE" (not only is this pronunciation wrong, it's also a different word. "Ouch" is the sound we make when something hurts. Similar to your "ai" exclamation sound. (Leia: [Sounds and Interjections in English](#)). Ouchie is a [baby] word that a child uses to refer to his wound.

» **Eat** - is one syllable with a stop consonant. Not Each or Each-EE. Again, the word EACH is a different word altogether, and can cause problems in communication.

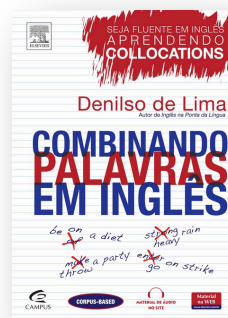
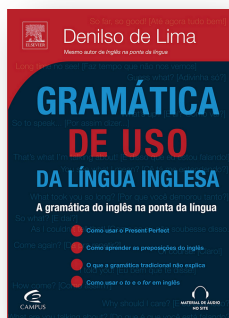
» And finally, **Linked** is also ONE syllable. The sound is /linkt/ (Leia: [Pronúncia de -ED em Inglês](#)) It is not pronounced "Link-edge". I can almost guarantee you that if you talk to a native speaker and say the name of the popular social network "LinkedIn" with the pronunciation of "link-edge-eem", they won't have any idea what you are talking about! It is pronounced, /linkt-in/

As a side note, if the person is already familiar with a Brazilian accent, you'll have a better chance at being understood.

Well, I hope this post helped clear things up! If you need more help with pronunciation or any other topic in English, I offer classes online. Feel free to contact me. Thanks!

Until next time!

» Saiba mais sobre a prof. Kristen Hammer, [clikando aqui](#)



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