

## Optimise your pronunciation

- This symbol is called the schwa: /ə/
- It is the most common vowel sound in spoken English.
- The schwa sound is a weak vowel sound used in unstressed syllables in words and unstressed words in sentences.
- The schwa sound can represent a letter, a group of letters or a complete syllable.

### 1 1.01 Listen and circle the correct stress pattern.

- |                      |      |      |
|----------------------|------|------|
| 1 curious            | Ooo  | ooO  |
| 2 dependable         | ooOo | oOoo |
| 3 polite             | Oo   | oO   |
| 4 generous           | OoO  | Ooo  |
| 5 Where do you live? | OoOo | OooO |
| 6 Do you like it?    | OoOo | ooOo |

### 2 1.02 Listen again and repeat. Focus on the way the unstressed syllables are pronounced. Underline the schwa sound /ə/ each time.

### 3 1.03 Listen and mark the unstressed syllables with /ə/.

Example: 1 popular<sup>/ə/</sup>

- serious
- unreliable
- asleep
- What do you do in your free time?
- Tell me about your best friend.

### 4 1.04 Listen and repeat.

### 5 Write a mini conversation using words and questions from exercises 1 and 3. Practise saying your dialogue, using /ə/ on the unstressed syllables. Work with a partner if possible. Record yourself if you can.

A: Tell me about your best friend.

B: She's usually quite generous with her friends and she's dependable, so she's very popular!

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