

Dictation computer

Point:	weak forms (puzzle 1); assimilation (puzzle 2)
Minimum level:	intermediate
Game type:	a look and find puzzle for students working individually (or in pairs)
Approximate time:	25 minutes

Preparation

Make a copy of the puzzle for each member of the class.

Presentation

1 Write the following phrases on the board. Ask students to pay special attention to the words that are written in small letters as you read out each phrase in turn. Make sure that you use the weak form of each word that is written in small letters.

WHAT'S her NAME? /'wɒts ə 'neɪm/

WHAT'S your NUMBER? /'wɒts jə 'nʌmbə/

JOHN can SWIM /'dʒɒn kən 'swɪm/

TEA for TWO /'ti: fə 'tu:/

the PRICE has FALLEN /ðə 'praɪs əz 'fɔ:lən/

FISH and CHIPS /'fɪʃ ən 'tʃɪps/

GO to BED /'gəʊ tə 'bed/

DOGS are FRIENDLY /'dɒgz ə 'frendli/

HAVE a DRINK /'hæv ə 'drɪnk/

WHAT does SARAH DO? /'wɒt dəz 'særə du:/

2 Elicit or explain that the weak form words are grammatical words rather than items of vocabulary. Ask students to try and pronounce the phrases with the weak forms.

3 Write up the following phrases on the board:

a major decision **b** made your decision

Explain that these could both be pronounced exactly the same when the weak form is used - /'meɪdʒə'dɪ'sɪʒən/.

4 Naturally, the context would clarify which of the two messages was meant. However, on sound alone, they could not be distinguished. Consequently, if a computer were designed that could write down everything that it heard, it might write *Buying a house is always a made your decision* instead of *Buying a house is always a major decision*.

5 Write the following phrase on the board and explain that it is something the dictation computer wrote that contains a mistake:

Don't lighter your mother!

Ask the class to try to identify the error. As a clue, you could give the reply:

Why not? She always lies to me!

Conducting the game

Give each student a puzzle. (The puzzle could also be done in pairs.) Leave students to find the errors and solve the puzzle.

Dictation computer

Key Puzzle 1

The dictation computer should have written:

- 1 I'll ask her if ... (c)
- 2 I compose music ... (e)
- 3 The officers changed ... (a)
- 4 Did you see the waiter go ... (b)
- 5 ... is on the centre page. (d)
- 6 I picked your book ... (h)
- 7 Will you ever forgive me? (f)
- 8 ... shows all the cities and railways ... (j)
- 9 Spiders are not really insects ... (g)
- 10 ... are rival companies. (i)

Follow-up

A second version of the puzzle is similar, but focuses on assimilation. Here, the dictation computer makes mistakes like this:

shop people instead of *shot people*
knock quickly instead of *not quickly*
dig carefully instead of *did carefully*

The reason for these mistakes is that the final consonant sound in each of the first words is changed by the initial consonant sound in each of the second words.

Key Puzzle 2

The dictation computer should have written:

- 1 I don't like green. (c)
- 2 You should wipe plates ... (a)
- 3 ... I ran quickly ... (d)
- 4 We ate quite badly ... (e)
- 5 ... go to the gym ... (b)
- 6 ... unless I warn my parents ... (f)
- 7 ... the term before last. (g)
- 8 This lead covering ... (i)
- 9 ... the family of the bride ... (j)
- 10 ... told us to wait quietly ... (h)

Dictation computer Puzzle 1 (weak forms)

Alaska if she wants to come with us. **1**

I can pose music for TV programmes. **2**

The office has changed into civilian clothes. **3**

Did you see the way to go? He was at the next table a minute ago. **4**

In this newspaper, the TV guide is on the sent a page. **5**

I picture book off the floor. **6**

Will you ever for give me? **7**

This map shows all the citizen railways in the country. **8**

Spy does are not really insects you know. **9**

Coke and Pepsi arrival companies. **10**

a Who changed into civilian clothes?

b Yes; I saw him going into the kitchen.

c You'll ask who?

d Really? It used to be on the back page.

e I didn't know you were a composer.

f Only if you promise never to do it again.

g They look like insects to me!

h Oh thanks! I didn't realise I'd dropped it.

i Do you think so? I think they work together, myself.

j It doesn't show the smaller places then?

The dictation computer prints exactly what it hears. Sometimes, however, there is more than one possibility and the computer makes a mistake.

Find the errors in the computer's work in the left hand column. Then match the sentences with their responses in the right hand column.

Use the responses as clues if you have difficulty finding the mistakes.

1 I don't light green.

2 You should white plates to get the dust off before serving the food.

3 Being late for work, I rang quickly out of the house.

4 We ache quite badly when we were on holiday because we didn't like the local food.

5 I always go to the gin before work in the morning.

6 I'm not allowed to have a party unless I warm my parents a week in advance.

7 I failed my maths exam the turn before last.

8 This leg covering is for protection against radiation.

9 Traditionally, the family of the bribe paid for the wedding.

10 The teacher told us to wake quietly until the bell rang.

a Yes, but not if you're using them every day.

b So that's how you manage to stay so fit!

c Well, do you like blue?

d I suppose that's why you forgot to take your keys.

e Yes, you seem to have lost weight.

f I'm glad my parents are more easy going than yours.

g Is that why you had to do it again last term?

h And I suppose you all made a lot of noise, as usual?

i Well, if they drop the bomb, I'd rather die than have to stay in there!

j Nowadays, both families tend to split the costs.

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