

## MARK IT UP! FOR SCRIPTS OR SPEECHES

Whether you're making a business speech or delivering lines for an audition or film, you likely have some sort of script. Using your knowledge from the previous hacks, you can mark up your script with the notations to guide you on the features of all the skills and tricks you've picked up.

When you start marking up your script, pay particular attention to the trickier pronunciations and intonation patterns that contrast with your native accent or tongue.

For example, for Arabic speakers working on English—or English speakers working on an Arabic-style accent, you'd want to highlight syllables beginning with the "p" sound and potentially "r" in all locations.

And, for all speakers, native speakers included, make sure you use your intonation and syllable stress to drive your point home. Statements should have falling intonation to show confidence, and questions should follow their corresponding intonation patterns to create maximum engagement with your audience.

### SPEECHFOX'S FAMOUS HIGHLIGHT HACK

You can use a word processor like Microsoft Word to do *SpeechFox's Famous Highlight Hack!* Using the example above with Arabic-accented English, I will highlight syllables starting with "p" and all "r"s. To use this trick most effectively, I recommended clients do the following:

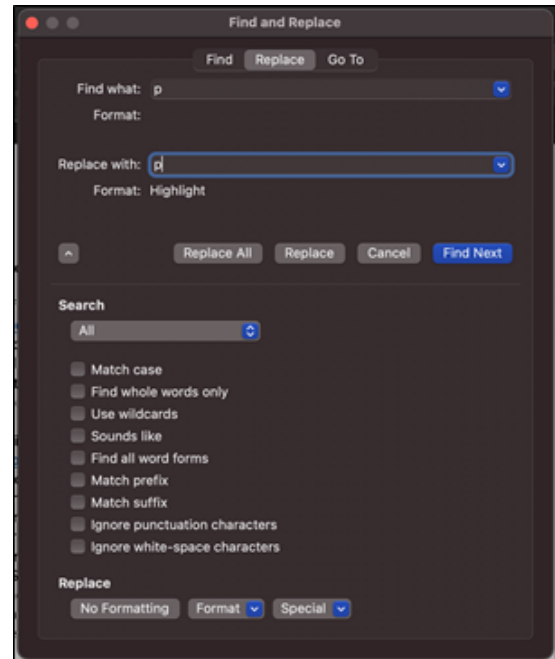
1) Paste your text into a Word doc (or other word processing software) in plain text. Double space to make the text easier to read.



2) Print a bunch of copies as is.

3) Choose a highlight color in your word processing tool. Set it to yellow for example.

4) Do an *Advanced Find and Replace*. Put in the letter (or common spelling of the sound) you want to practice. You should enter the same letter in the **Find** as in the **Replace** field. However, go to the **Replace** field and go to the **Advanced** menu—and select **Highlight**. The concept is to draw attention to the sounds you're likely to struggle with more than others. Then **Replace All**. This is a time-saver but it may highlight extraneous sounds. Spot-check and unhighlight as necessary. For example, if I were searching for “p,” the “p” it found in “phonetics” sounds like [f] so it doesn't apply to the sound pattern.



NOTE: This technique to work better for consonants in English as vowels tend to have more variation.

5) Print a bunch of these highlighted copies.

And now for the fun part!

6) Record your voice using a phone or other device and read from the plain copy printed in **Step 2**.

7) Take a highlighted copy printed in **Step 5**. Get a red pen. Play the audio while hovering your pen at the next highlighted areas. Listen critically to

those highlighted letters. If you pronounce it correctly, move on, and if you didn't hit it just right, give it a circle or an X. Continue through the end of the document.

8) Your document will now show both highlights of the key sound AND your markings of those that you missed. Use this marked up and highlighted document and repeat **Step 7**. This read should be much more precise when it comes to the key sound(s). Repeat the step as many times as needed.

9) When you're ready to uplevel, grab a clean copy of the highlighted document from **Step 5** and follow **Step 7** again. You should end up with fewer marks since you're starting to home in on the key sound(s).

10) When that gets too easy, try it with the plain printed in **Step 2** – record again – and grade again.

11) Once this gets too easy, ratchet the difficulty level up another notch. Change the highlight color (to green, for example), and pick another sound, in this case, "r" – and repeat from **Step 4** on. Rinse and repeat!

Your text will look something like this:

Phonetics  
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Phonetics is a branch of linguistics that studies how humans produce and perceive sounds, or in the case of sign languages, the equivalent aspects of sign. Linguists who specialize in studying the physical properties of speech are phoneticians. The field of phonetics is traditionally divided into three sub-disciplines based on the research questions involved such as how humans plan and execute movements to produce speech (articulatory phonetics), how various movements affect the properties of the resulting sound (acoustic phonetics), or how humans convert sound waves to linguistic information (auditory phonetics). Traditionally, the minimal linguistic unit of phonetics is the phone—a speech sound in a language which differs from the phonological unit of phoneme; the phoneme is an abstract categorization of phones. Phonetics deals with two aspects of human speech: production—the ways humans make sounds—and perception—the way speech is understood. The communicative modality of a language describes the method by which a language produces and perceives languages. Languages with oral-aural modalities such as English produce speech orally (using the mouth) and perceive speech aurally (using the ears). Sign languages, such as Australian Sign Language (Auslan) and American Sign Language (ASL), have a manual-visual modality, producing speech manually (using the hands) and perceiving speech visually (using the eyes). ASL and some other sign languages have in addition a manual-manual dialect for use in tactile signing by deafblind speakers where signs are produced with the hands and perceived with the hands as well.