



The Midland Hotel (Pronunciation and listening)

- Description:** Listening for the sound [ə]
- Use with or after:** *English Network 3 (New Edition)*, Unit 3, Step 1.
- Skill:** Pronunciation and listening
- Focus:** Trying to hear the very common but unstressed sound [ə] in a standard British English recording.
- Time:** 15 minutes
- Preparation:**
- Print out all three pages of this file. Make a copy of the third page for each student, and cut on the dotted line to remove the key.
 - Bring the first learner-CD with you to the lesson.
- Procedure:**
- Write [ə] on the board and ask the students to find it in the listing of the phonetic alphabet on page 144 of *English Network 3 (New Edition)*. Explain that [ə] is the most common sound in the English language, and that it is always unstressed.
 - Ask the students to look at the text about the Midland Hotel on page 42. Play the recording from the second learner-CD, track 29, while they follow along in their books.
 - Give each student a copy of the worksheet, without the key, and point out the list of twenty-four words from the brochure about the Midland Hotel. Working in pairs, the students should find and mark these words in the text. To make this easier, the words are listed in the same order as they appear in the text.
 - Point out the question below the list, and make sure everyone understands that all twenty-four words contain the [ə] sound.
 - With their partners, the students should go through the list of words and underline the part(s) of the words that they think are pronounced [ə].
 - Play the recording again and ask them to listen for the sound [ə] in these words. Remind them that the sound [ə] is always unstressed.

- Distribute the key so they can make sure they have underlined the right parts of the words, and then play the recording once again. You may wish to push the pause button occasionally, since some of the words come close together.
- If the question comes up, you can explain that the one-syllable words in the list (*a, and, at, can, for, from, the, to*) also have a "strong pronunciation" which is used with the word is stressed or spoken in isolation.
- If by any chance anyone should ask why the sounds [əʊ] in *moment* and [ʊə] in *luxurious* are not underlined in the key, explain that these are diphthongs (combined vowel sounds) and point out that both of these are listed separately in the phonetic alphabet on page 144. (But don't mention this if nobody asks.)
- If time permits, the pairs should look at the *Dictionary* section of the coursebook (pages 160-185), find four more words that contain the sound [ə] and practice pronouncing these words.

The Midland Hotel

Here is a list of twenty-four words from the brochure about the Midland Hotel. With a partner, find and mark these words in the text on page 42 of *English Network 3 (New Edition)*, Unit 3, Step 1.

the	to	about
moment	for	and
arrive	can	comfortable
at	afterwards	facilities
Midland	luxurious	after
arrange	treatment	newspaper
a	dinner	delivered
from	restaurants	breakfast

How many of these words have the sound [ə] in them?

Underline the part(s) of the words that are pronounced [ə]. Then listen to the recording and try to hear the sound [ə] in these words. Remember that the sound [ə] is always unstressed.

Your teacher will give you the key. Check your answers, and then listen to the recording again. Concentrate on hearing the sound [ə] in these words!

With your partner, look at the *Dictionary* section of your coursebook (pages 160-185) and find four more words that contain the sound [ə]. Practice pronouncing these words.

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Key:

All twenty-four words have the sound [ə] in them.

the [ðə]	to [tə]	about [ə' aʊt]
moment [' məʊmənt]	for [fə]	and [ænd]
arrive [ə' raɪv]	can [kən]	comfortable [' kʌmfətəbl]
at [ət]	afterwards [' a:ftəwədz]	facilities [fə' sɪlətɪz]
Midland [' mɪdlənd]	luxurious [lʌk' zʊəriəs]	after [' a:ftə]
arrange [ə' reɪndʒ]	treatment [' tri:tmənt]	newspaper [' nju:s , peɪpə]
a [ə]	dinner [' dɪnə]	delivered [dɪ' lɪvəd]
from [frəm]	restaurants [' restərɒnts]	breakfast [' brekfəst]