

7 PROVEN STEPS

TO **MASTERING** THE
ALL AMERICAN ACCENT
SO YOU CAN **BOOK THE ROLE**



1 PREPARATION

Preparing the body and the voice not only makes a difference in the authenticity of your All American accent but can transform your own speaking voice in a positive way.

When we first learn to speak we are influenced by the sounds we hear from our environment. We also form habits in speech which shapes the way we sound.

To fully embody a new accent you need to adjust your old habits of speaking with new habits of speaking. That doesn't mean you have to lose your accent. Ideally you will become an accent chameleon, able to switch from your accent to an All American accent effortlessly.

Americans create a lot of space in the mouth and tend to be more active with their articulators(the lips, the tongue, the jaw).

Therefore, your two goals with accent preparation are:

- To release tension
- To create space

You should include a warm up exercise for the following areas:

- The lips
- The tongue
- The lower jaw
- The soft palate
- Chest resonance

Other beneficial exercises to include in your warm-up would involve:

- The body
- The breath
- The voice

2 PLACEMENT

Accent placement is where and how the sounds of the accent are formed.

The areas of placement in your natural accent may be pretty different to that of the

All American accent. Adapting subtle and precise changes in how you form sounds can take your accent from ok to flawless.

YOUR ACCENT PLACEMENT

First, start by exploring the placement of your natural accent.

How do you form sounds? Start by vocalising a short sentence.

Look in the mirror. Repeat the short sentence. What can you notice about how you use your articulators: the tongue, the lips, the lower jaw, the soft palate?

What can you feel? Repeat the short sentence and see if you can feel any tension in your articulators.

AMERICAN ACCENT PLACEMENT

Look at the placement for the All American accent.

The Lips are active. Whether they are relaxed or rounded, they are always ready to shape sounds.

The Lower Jaw opening can be small or large.

The Tongue is active with the tongue tip more forward in the mouth. This creates more space in the back of the mouth.

The Soft palate is raised. A raised soft palate also creates more space in the back of the mouth.

With all this creation of space in the back of the mouth, the sound tends to resonate into the chest.

3 PRONUNCIATION

Every day you should incorporate some form of pronunciation exploration into your practice.

Don't feel like you need to learn all the sounds all at once. That would be too overwhelming!

Take your time working through each sound. Gradually incorporate the sound into words. Once that starts to sound right you can move on to phrases and finally sentences.

Some sounds may be easier to achieve than others.

And remember to be consciously aware of your All American placement. Make sure you don't revert back to your natural habits of speech.

- Close your eyes and explore the sound sensorially.
- Open your eyes and check your placement in the mirror.
- Record yourself and playback to check accuracy.

4 PRESENTATION

Presentation will help you identify the way Americans express themselves in the delivery of their thoughts, questions and feelings. The points of focus for presentation are intonation, rhythm and stress.

INTONATION

Intonation is the changes of pitch or the pattern of rises and falls that are characteristic to a dialect. Intonations can help introduce new information or significant actions.

It can also help to convey your intentions, your opinions, your emotions and your attitudes. A change in tone can directly affect the intention of the line and directly affect how the other person perceives you. The American intonation is energised and dynamic.

STRESS

If all the words in a sentence were equally stressed it would sound incredibly boring or borderline robotic...and really, who wants to sound like a robot??

Stressed words are key information that is important to stress to your audience.

Unstressed words are used to form a complete sentence. While they are important they do not need to be stressed as much as the key information in the sentence.

Projection: Get louder on the stressed words and softer on the unstressed words to help emphasise your point of view.

RHYTHM

Identifying the rhythm will help to unlock clues about your character. How does your rhythm change moment by moment? Notice the patterns of rhythm of stressed to unstressed words in each sentence.

Enjoy the delivery of the descriptive words and pace through the non-descriptive words so that the length of time is not equal between stressed/unstressed words.

It's also important to remember to keep the momentum going all the way to the end of the sentence.

THE CULTURE OF AMERICAN SPEECH

How can your culture affect how you speak? Think about your own accent and your culture, how you grew up, the environment in which you live. How has that shaped the way you speak?

Now think about American speech. How do Americans present their thoughts, ideas, statements or questions? Take a moment to consider how Americans speak differently to you and implement these changes into your American accent.

5 PRACTICE

Daily practice is a must! It will help performing in the accent to be more enjoyable and effortless and isn't that what we all want?! Follow these guidelines to feel more confident with your General American accent speaking skills.

- You should be practicing everyday. I repeat, EVERY DAY. It doesn't matter if it's 5 minutes or 1 hour of practice.
- It doesn't matter if it sounds good, bad or ugly. Be open to making mistakes because that's all a part of learning. In getting it wrong you can then get it right!
- Keep it interesting. Mix up your practice so you're not always doing the same things for practice everyday. Have a conversation in the accent, cold read out loud, record yourself and listen back, practice your pronunciation, intonation, rhythm and stress or do 5 minutes of accent preparation.
- Give yourself enough time to work on your accent so that it can start to feel effortless. As everyone works differently and at varying speeds, the amount of time it takes to feel confident speaking in the accent varies from person to person.
- There's no excuse NOT to practice. If you really want to achieve your goal then you need to put in the time to work.

6 PERFORMANCE PREP

Having a process for your performance preparation can be really useful when layering in an accent into your performance. This process can be used to prep for auditions or a role in an American accent.

- **Read the text**
- **Analyse the text**
- **Road map the accent changes into the text**
- **Record/Listen to your accent**
- **Memorise the text**
- **Accent exploration through exercises will help you feel more confident performing in the accent.**
- **Rehearse the text**
- **Perform in the accent**

7 PERFORMANCE

WALK THE WALK

Performing with an accent is really no different to performing in your own accent.

You might be worrying about how others will judge you. Will they think your accent is dreadful?

What if I lose the accent? Our minds are our worst enemy sometimes. We can set ourselves up for failure if we walk into the room with hesitation, negativity or fear. Instead, try the opposite.

Walk into the room with a positive state of mind. If you are fully connected in the performance we will forgive a slight pronunciation hiccup. If we truly believe you as the character we may not even hear it. Prepare for the audition as if it's your first day on set.

TALK THE TALK

Lots of actors feel like their voice changes or doesn't feel natural when speaking in another accent. So, how do you connect your voice, your body and your intentions to the accent so that it feels like it is a part of you?

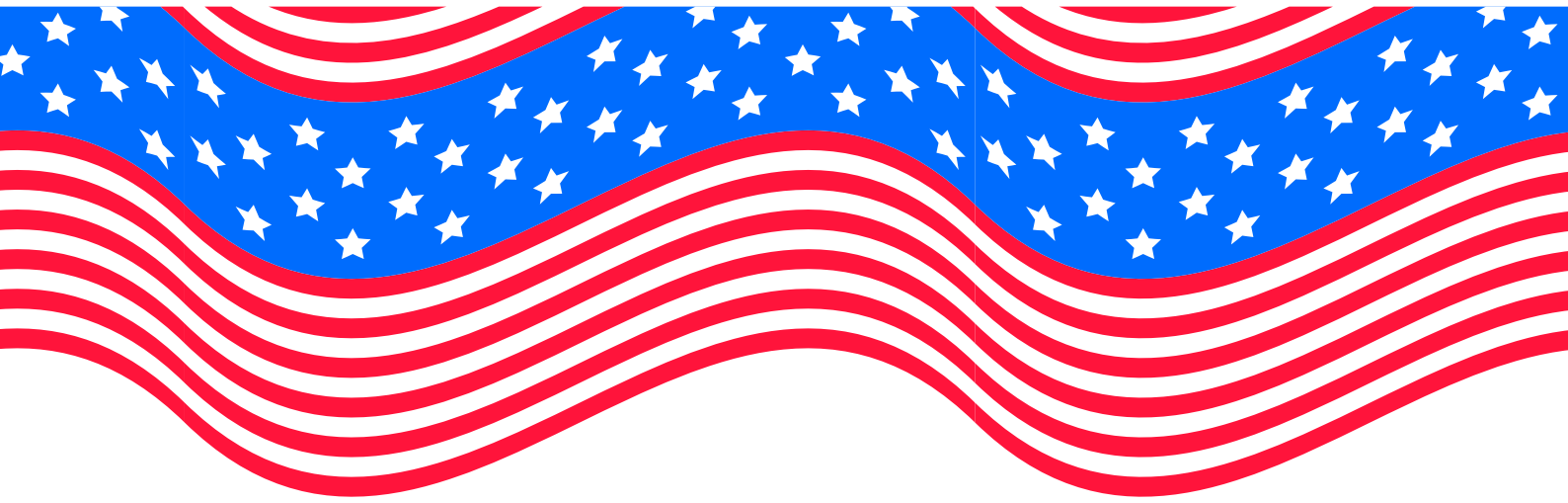
The more you speak freely in the accent the more it will feel like your own. So go out and speak in the accent everyday. In performance don't get upset if you start to hear the accent as you speak. Let that be a part of your reality. Every day I notice things about my voice, my body, my thoughts. Why should that be any different when you are playing another character?

BE EMOTIONAL

Maintaining the accent when emotions run high can be tricky.

Focus on your breath. Releasing tension in the body and the breath can help to keep the accent consistent in an emotional state.

TIME TO SHINE



Hope you enjoyed the **7 Proven Steps to Confidently Performing with an All American Accent so you can Book the Role!**

This is meant to be a quick information 'go-to' guide (a refresher for some of you and insightful tips for others).

Don't worry if not everything is making sense.

I'll be back soon to help answer those questions and give you some more great tools to add to your actor's toolkit!

Now it's your time to shine.

