

English Speech Sounds

We are all familiar with proper conversation, but in informal conversation, many informal terms are used. Some can be short sounds such as "er", some can be slang terms such as "whatevs" (whatever, I don't care.) Being aware of these are useful because they can help you to understand hidden meanings that may come about in conversation. (Usually some physical action, such as rolling one's eyes, accompanies these informal terms and are mentioned below.)

Sounds in English speech that signify another meaning:

- er-r → I don't know, I'm not sure... (hesitation to answer a question)
- a-ah → Now I understand (alert, looking directly at the speaker & nods head)
- Mm → Yes, I agree (nods head)
- Oh? → I'm surprised (Raises eyebrows or tilts head)
- tch tch! → What a pity
- huh!/hm.. → I don't believe you (Tilt of the head)
- huh? → What? I don't understand/Can you repeat that? (Head comes forward)
- mmhm! → Yeah, that's right! (Dare to challenge me...)
- mm...mmm... → Well, perhaps (pursing of the lips, maybe looking to the side)
- psh → Yeah, whatever, I don't really believe you (Head moves backward)
- uh-huh → Yes, I see, I'm listening to you

Conversational slang:

- Riiight/Riiite → Yeah, right. I don't completely believe you.
- Whatevs → Whatever, I don't really care.
- Yupyup → Yes, that's right.
- Yeah, yeah, yeah → Ok, ok, I got it, leave me alone
- Fasho → Yes, for certain.
- Alright, alright! → Ok, I got it! Stop telling me over and over again.

Examples:

- Donna, did you finish your homework last night? Er...
- I can't believe you really told him that! Psh, whatevs.
- Do you really think she's pregnant? Mmm...
- I'm going to become the Queen of Spain! Riiiiight.