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## TECHNOLOGY FOR PRONUNCIATION

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Receiving enough pronunciation practice is challenging for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students as the classroom often provides the only opportunity to practice and improve their pronunciation skills. Fortunately, a variety of new technology tools can provide our students with opportunities to practice pronunciation and receive feedback they need. In this week's Teacher's Corner, we highlight several tools students can use to practice their pronunciation skills outside of the classroom.

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### LEVEL

Beginner to Advanced

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### LANGUAGE FOCUS

Speaking (primary focus); reading (secondary focus)

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### GOALS

Teachers will learn about the following tools to support student's pronunciation practice:

- [Youghlish](#) for authentic pronunciation examples
- [The Color Vowel Chart](#) to hear proper vowel pronunciation
- [VowelCat](#) for practicing vowel pronunciation

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### MATERIALS

- Teacher: computer, speakers, a microphone, Internet connection, (projector)
  - **Note:** This week we focus on tools that students can use for self-study. However, if you would like to use these tools in class, the projector listed above will be needed.
- Students: computer, speakers, microphone, Internet connection
  - **Note:** These tools are needed if students will use these tools at home or in a computer lab setting.

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### PREPARATION

1. Read through all the materials carefully.
2. Look at the sites listed above: *Youghlish*, the *Color Vowel Chart*, and *VowelCat*. Take time to explore each of the tools to understand how they function.
3. Read the materials in the links found at the end of this week's Teacher's Corner; they provide excellent resources in using the Color Vowel Chart in class.

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### TECHNOLOGY TOOL 1: YOUGHISH

[Youghlish](#) – *Youghlish* is a unique search engine that scans online videos for specific words or phrases. For example, students can search the phrase "how's it going," and the website will return a variety of videos featuring that phrase spoken in authentic contexts. For teachers, the added bonus of *Youghlish* is it only searches speeches, interviews, news programs, and other informational videos, so the material is always classroom friendly.



*Figure 1: Youglish displays and highlights words or phrases as they are pronounced.*

A transcript, or the written script of the words, is displayed below each video so students can follow along with the audio. The transcript is interactive, and students can click on unfamiliar words. When they do, the website displays a definition of the word and provides example sentences of the word in use. Students looking to hear pronunciations in specific accents can narrow their search so that only American English pronunciation is displayed.

## TECHNOLOGY TOOL 2: THE COLOR VOWEL CHART

[The Color Vowel Chart](#) – The *Color Vowel Chart* is a web-based tool for students who wish to practice their English vowel pronunciation. Proper pronunciation of vowels is often indicated with the use of symbols in the [International Phonetic Alphabet](#). These symbols can be confusing to students, so the *Color Vowel Chart* replaces them with words and colors featuring a specific vowel pronunciation.



Figure 3. English vowel sounds in the Color Vowel Chart.

On the *Color Vowel Chart* page on the American English website, teachers can find [helpful guides](#) on using the chart in class. The website also features a [webinar](#) teachers can watch to learn more about using the *Color Vowel Chart* in their classroom practice.

TECHNOLOGY TOOL 3: VOWELCAT

**VowelCat** – Students looking to get more feedback on their vowel pronunciation can use the *VowelCat* vowel recognition software developed by Ohio University. By using *VowelCat*, students pronounce a vowel into their microphone and the software maps their vowel pronunciation to where in the mouth it is being pronounced.

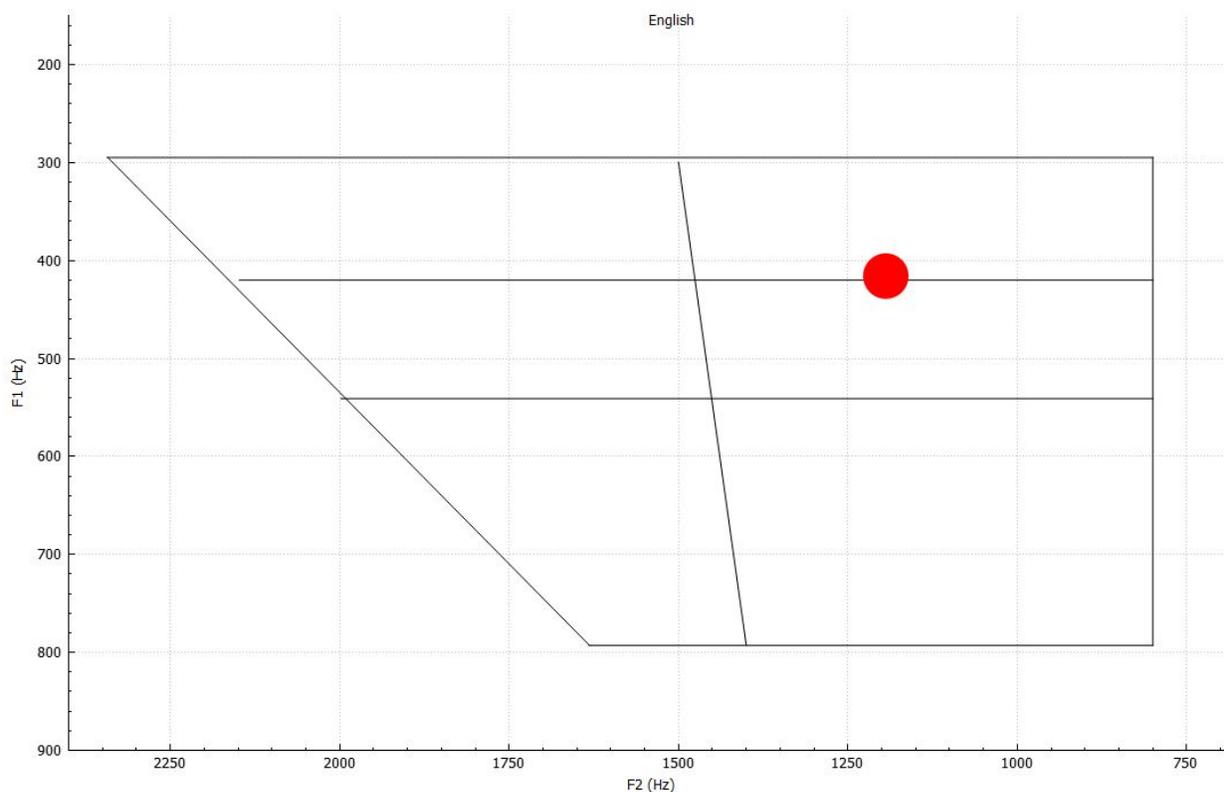


Figure 3. VowelCat helps students improve pronunciation by using visual feedback.

The top left of the chart is the upper, front part of the mouth. The lower right of the chart is the lower, back part of the mouth. As students pronounce a vowel, their pronunciation is mapped onto the chart with a red ball. The red ball moves around the chart as a student pronounces specific vowel sounds. Students can then compare their vowel sound placements in *VowelCat* to the placements in the *Color Vowel Chart*.



*Color Vowel Chart* and *VowelCat*, when used together, can provide students the proper pronunciation of a vowel and the opportunity to practice that pronunciation while receiving visual feedback on their performance.

For more on pronunciation in the classroom, check out:

[Integrating Pronunciation Across the Curriculum](#)

To learn more about the Color Vowel Chart, check out:

[Teaching Spoken English with the Color Vowel Chart](#)

[Welcome to the Color Vowel Chart](#)