



## **How To Make Baseline Accent Recordings** *(It's Easy!)*

Before starting work with a dialect coach on any new accent, it's very helpful to find a quiet place and take ten minutes to use your cell phone to record samples of your own daily accent and samples of your best attempt at the accent you are setting out to acquire, master and integrate into performance. *(We call this new accent a 'target accent', by the way.)*

Once you finish and label your recordings, you'll send a copy of these recordings to your DCC registered dialect coach, or to [pamela@dialectcoaches.com](mailto:pamela@dialectcoaches.com), and you'll keep a copy for yourself as well.

### ***Why make these recordings?***

These recordings help Pamela (and eventually the key dialect coach she helps you select) get to know your normal accent as well as start to get a picture of your brain's current understanding of the 'target' accent.

*Don't worry one bit about how far off you think you are with your target accent, by the way!*

*These recordings will help your dialect coach to start tailoring your lessons even before your first one begins!*

### **How is that possible?**

Pamela and your dialect coach will be able to listen carefully to the individual sounds in that recording and recognize which ones WILL be useful to you – even if you happened to use them in the wrong spots on the recording. They will also be able to hear when you are very close with

certain accent elements, as well as efficiently determine where you will need to do the most work. Making these recordings will save you time, effort, and money in the long run.

### ***Why keep a copy for yourself?***

1) You will be able to easily compare this early attempt at the target accent with your work as you go along. We bet you'll be surprised at your progress, even after only a short time!

2) If for any reason during your accent acquisition project your brain decides it wants you to start speaking some exotic hybrid of your own daily accent and your target accent, you won't have to feel unnerved about it. You can simply refer to your baseline recording, and voila! Your normal accent will be as good as new. (Brains are great this way. Give them a target, a reason to reach that target, and the tools to get there -- and they will respond brilliantly!)

### ***How should I label my recordings so my coach can know what's what, and so I can find them later when I need them?***

*Great question! That said, these instructions might get a teensy bit confusing at first. Don't let them overwhelm you. By the time you read to the bottom of this document you'll feel confident about this!*

*In a nutshell, we want to make sure that the name of each recording has all of the following information:*

- 1) ***Your first name and last initial*** (Such as *Pamela\_V* to indicate Pamela Vanderway)
  
- 2) ***The name of the recording's content*** (Such as *DIAG* for Diagnostic passages, or *QUEST* for free response questions)

- 3) **Which accent you are using in that particular recording** (Such as **Norm** for your 'normal' everyday accent, or something like **GenAm** for a General American accent or **RPBrit** for a Received Pronunciation British accent)
- 4) **The approximate date the recording was made** (This is important. You'll thank yourself later for including this information.) We find that listing the year as 4 digits (such as 2016) and a two digit month (such as 06 for June) is usually sufficient. If you really want to add the day of the month be sure to add it as two digits (Such as 04 for the fourth of the month).

**You'll list the 4-digit year first and the two-digit month second.**

For instance, adding the label **2016\_09** would indicate 2016 is the year, and September is the month that the recording was made. (If you really want to include the day of the month, **2016\_09\_01** Would indicate September 1, 2016.)

The reason for listing the date like this is that in the future if you make more recordings of your progress, your computer will easily put your files in chronological order. It will be very convenient when you want to review your progress.

**When you put all of the elements above together, the Template for labeling your sound files goes like this:**

**YourActualFirstName\_YourActualLastInitial\_ContentOfRecording\_AccentName\_4DigitYear\_2DigitMonth**

**Here are a few examples of what file names look like**

**Pamela\_V\_Diag\_Norm\_2016\_06**

(If Pamela Vanderway were recording the diagnostic passages in her normal accent June of 2016)

**Pamela\_V\_Diag\_GenAm\_2016\_06**

(If Pamela Vanderway were recording the diagnostic passages in her best shot at a General American accent in June of 2016. )

**Pamela\_V\_Quest\_Norm\_2016\_06**

(If Pamela Vanderway were recording the free response questions in her normal accent in June of 2016)

**Pamela\_V\_Quest\_GenAm\_2016\_06**

(For Pamela's recording of the free response questions in her best shot at a General American accent in June of 2016)

Making sense? If not, first read through the rest of the instructions. Things will probably click once you see them in context. If after you read them you have any further doubts, please email Pamela at [Pamela@DialectCoaches.com](mailto:Pamela@DialectCoaches.com) or phone her at 323-251-1944 and she'll help you!

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**DIAGNOSTIC PASSAGES**

***First, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with these two texts. The first is called 'The Rainbow Passage' and the second is entitled 'All About Foxes.'***

***Read them both aloud to yourself in your own accent until they feel easy to read. Then, turn your recording device on and record them in a single recording in your normal accent.***

## **THE RAINBOW PASSAGE**

Throughout the centuries people have explained the rainbow in various ways.

Some have accepted it as a miracle without physical explanation.

To the Hebrews, it was a token that there would be no more universal floods.

The Greeks used to imagine it was a sign from the gods to foretell war or heavy rain.

The Norsemen considered the rainbow as a bridge over which the gods passed from Earth to their home in the sky.

Others have tried to explain the phenomenon physically.

Aristotle thought that the rainbow was caused by reflection of the sun's rays by the rain.

Since then physicists have found that it is not reflection, but refraction by the raindrops which causes the rainbows.

When the sunlight strikes raindrops in the air, they act as a prism and form a rainbow.

A rainbow is a division of white light into many beautiful colors.

These take the shape of a long round arch with its path high above and its two ends apparently beyond the horizon.

There is according to legend, a boiling pot of gold at one end. People look, but no one ever finds it.

When a man looks for something beyond his reach, his friends say he is looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

*The Rainbow Passage, a public-domain text, can be found on page 127 of the 2nd edition of Grant Fairbanks' Voice and Articulation Drillbook. New York: Harper & Row.*

## **All About Foxes**

1. The quick brown fox took four small sips of strong coffee.
2. Oh boy, Kathy! Father is mad as heck! Why did you lie? You're not even sorry.
3. Carry these cheeses to the train before it's too late!
4. That fluffy little kitten *slashed* the cotton sofa apart! And now her poor paw is hurt!
5. Do you fear death, fair one?
6. Cut the flow! Now! The bathroom is flooding! Get the bags!
7. Where will you go, do you think, when the earth turns cold? Will you walk north?

8. Hurry it up! Sheesh. Does anybody take pride in their work anymore?
9. Two students planted big fir trees all around the zoo.
10. The abbot liked to fish without a lure.

*All About Foxes is Copyright © 2016 Erik Singer and Knight-Thompson Speechwork, All Rights Reserved, and may be used freely for any purpose without additional authorization, provided the present sentence accompanies the passage in print, if reproduced in print, and in audio format, in the case of a sound recording. In this version, sentence number 2 has been modified from “Father is mad as hell” to “Father is mad as heck” by permission of the author.*

**When you finish recording both passages in your own accent, Label the recorded mp3 file using the following pattern:**

***YourActualFirstName\_YourActualLastInitial\_Diag\_Norm\_4DigitYear\_TwoDigitMonth***

***Once you’ve finished labeling, go back and record the same two passages in a single recording using your very best shot at your target accent.***

***(Don’t be shy. Just go for it! It’s not about how good you are at the accent. It’s about your coach getting a clear idea of your starting point so they can customize your accent sessions!)***

**When you finish recording using your best attempt at the target accent, label the recorded mp3 file using the following pattern:**

***YourActualFirstName\_YourActualLastInitial\_Diag\_ActualTargetAccentsName\_4DigitYear\_TwoDigitMonth***

***\*Actual TargetAccentName = something like 'Brit' to indicate a British accent, 'GenAm' for General American, 'NYC' for New York, 'Germ' for German etc. You decide!***

***Now it's time for the free response section. It is important to record samples of yourself speaking spontaneously, because most of us speak a little bit differently when we are reading unfamiliar passages than we do when speaking our own thoughts.***

### **FREE RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

***RECORDING ONE- Record your unrehearsed answers using your own daily accent:***

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

Which languages do you speak?

Which ones are you so fluent in that you can 'think' in them?

What were some of your favorite things about growing up where you did?

What is something you really enjoy doing with your time?

(Feel free to talk about anything else you wish. The goal here is to collect a sample of your relaxed 'normal' communication! So keep talking until you lose self-consciousness, and then talk some more! Perhaps you've seen a performance or film that really interested you, moved you, or ticked you off? Talk about this or whatever else you are inspired to talk about!)



**Now end this recording and label this file using the following pattern:**

***YourActualFirstName\_YourActualLastInitial\_Quest\_Norm\_4DigitYear\_TwoDigitMonth***

**Now record your unrehearsed answers to the following questions using your best attempt at your target accent.**

**(Remember, don't be shy. Just go for it! You'll be glad you did!)**

What is the name of your target accent?

What is inspiring you to learn this new accent?

Have you ever acted in an accent other than your own before?

What was that experience like for you?

What do you enjoy doing with your free time?

(Feel free to talk about any additional topic you wish!)

**Now end this recording and label this file using the following pattern.**

***YourActualFirstName\_YourActualLastInitial\_Quest\_ActualTargetAccentName\_4DigitYear\_TwoDigitMonth***

**\*Actual TargetAccentName = Something like 'Brit' to indicate a British accent, 'GenAm' for General American, 'NYC' for New York, or 'Germ' for German etc.**

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**Whew! You did it!**

**Now pop your four labeled MP3 files into an email and send to your DCW Registered dialect coach or to [Pamela@DialectCoaches.com](mailto:Pamela@DialectCoaches.com).**

**If you don't have your coach referral yet, Pamela will give them a listen and get back to you quickly to connect you with the professional dialect coach who can help you reach your accent goals enjoyably and efficiently!**

***Have questions?***

**Don't hesitate to ask at [Pamela@DialectCoaches.com](mailto:Pamela@DialectCoaches.com)**



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