

Chapter 7
Strong and Weak
Forms

Warm-Up

If You're Happy

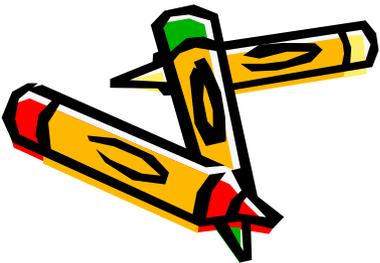
If you're happy and you know it **clap your hands**

If you're happy and you know it **clap your hands**

If you're happy and you know it
never be afraid to show it

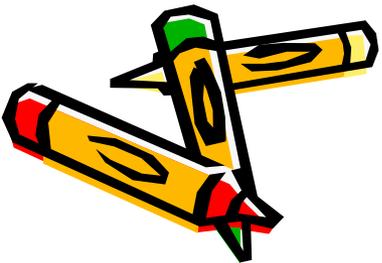
If you're happy and you know it **clap your hands**

stomp your feet/wink your eye



Brief Introduction

In this session, we will learn **strong forms & weak forms** – two different ways of pronouncing a word.

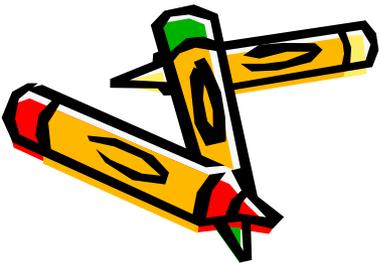


- Many common English words have two or more pronunciations in speech, depending on their **positions** in a sentence --- **a strong form** and **one or more weak forms**.
These words include **form words** and the following pronouns: **personal, possessive, relative** and the indefinite pronoun “**some**”, denoting **indefinite quantity**.

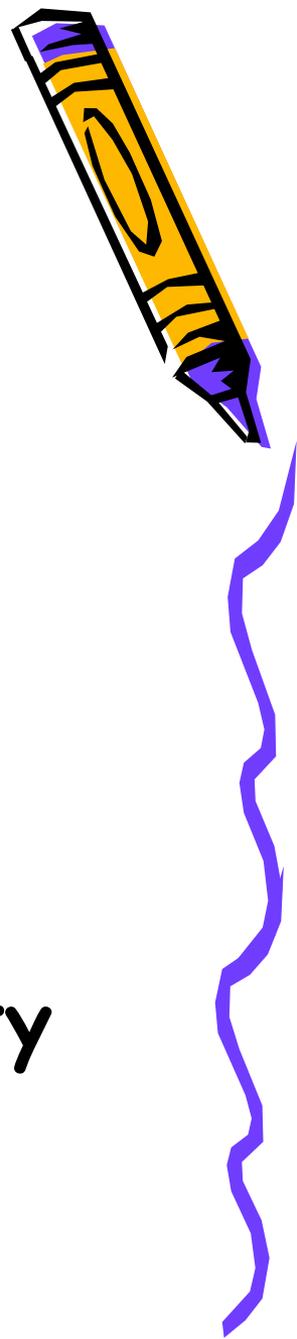




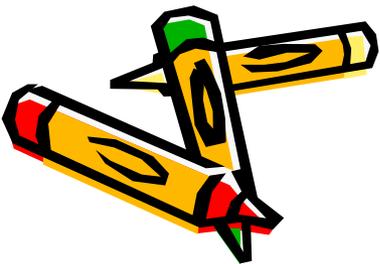
- **The strong form** of a word is used when the word is said **in isolation**, or in connected speech in which the word should be **stressed**; it is also used in certain cases where the word is in unstressed positions. **The weak form or forms of a word** are used only in **unstressed positions**. And the weak forms of the words are of much more frequent occurrence than their strong forms.



The Importance of Learning Weak Forms

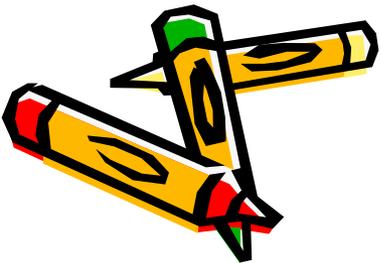


- Two reasons:
- Firstly, most native speakers of English find an “all-strong form” pronunciation very unpleasant.
- Secondly, learners who are not familiar with the use of weak forms are likely to have difficulty understanding native speakers.





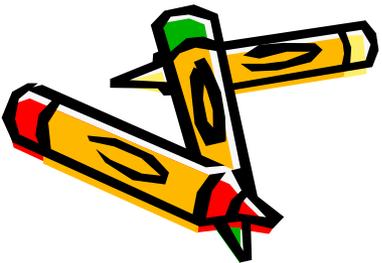
- The average foreigner uses far too many strong forms; it is impossible to speak English fluently unless the phenomenon of weak forms is properly understood and their use acquired, preferably from the earliest stage.



Strong Forms



- The strong forms are used in the following cases:
- a) When the word is **stressed**, e.g.
- They don't believe, do they?
/ðei 'dəunt bi'li:v 'du:ðei/
- You must choose *us* or *them*.
/ju: məst 'tʃu:z 'ʌs ɔ: 'ðem/



- b) When the word is **at the end of a sense group or a sentence**, even when they are unstressed, e.g.

- Who is on duty today?

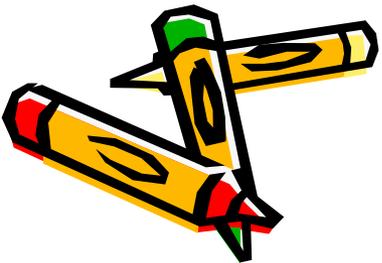
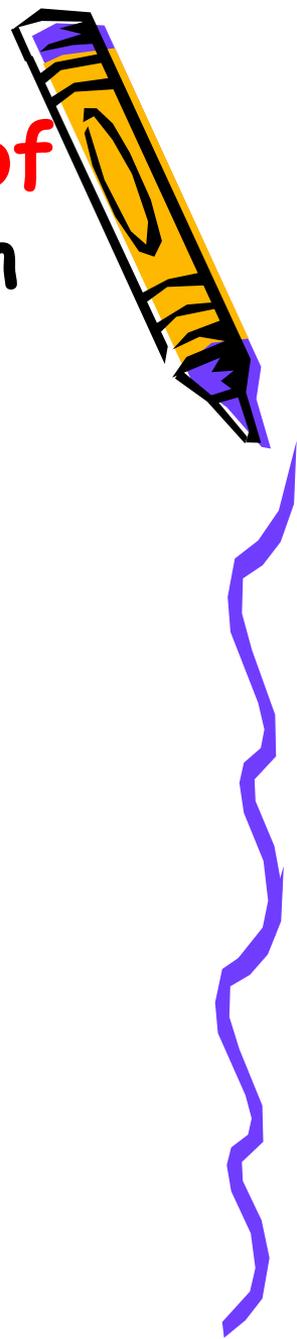
I am. /'ai æm/

- Who's got?

Jane has. /'dʒein hæz/

- Who is a teacher?

You are. /'ju: a: /



- What are you looking at?

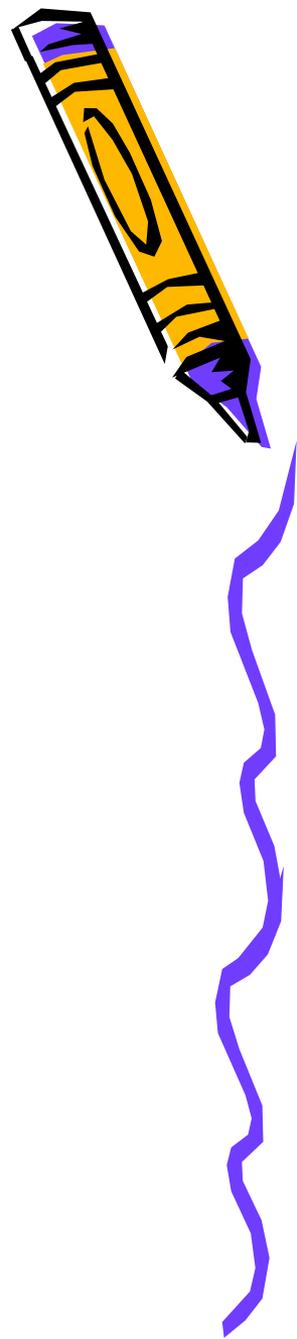
/'wɒt ə ju: 'lʊkɪŋ æt/

- What is he waiting for?

/'wɒts i: 'weɪtɪŋ fɔ:/

- Where did you get it from?

/'wɛə dɪd ju: 'ɡet ɪt frɒm/





- c) **Prepositions** may have their strong forms when they are followed by an unstressed personal pronoun at the end of a sense group or a sentence. However, in this position the weak form may also be used. For example:

- I am waiting *for* you.

/aim 'weitiŋ **fɔ:** ju: /

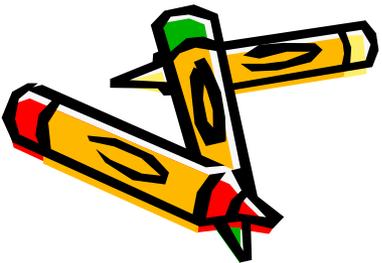
or /aim 'weitiŋ **fə** ju: /

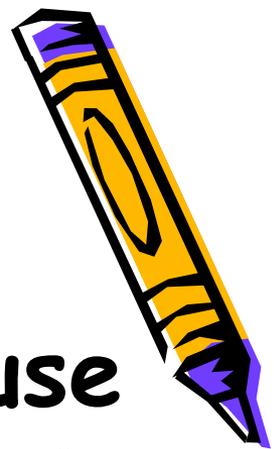




- d) The **indefinite pronoun** “some” in the meaning of “**a certain quantity**” is always stressed and therefore pronounced as **/sʌm/**. For example:

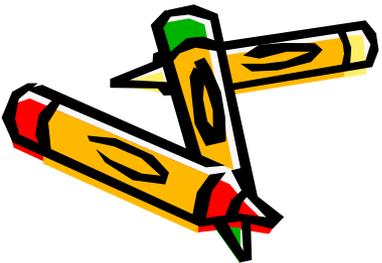
- **some of us** / ' **sʌm** əv əs/





- The **adjective** “some” in the meaning of “**certain**” always use its strong form, even when it is unstressed. For example:
- For **some** reason she is absent today.

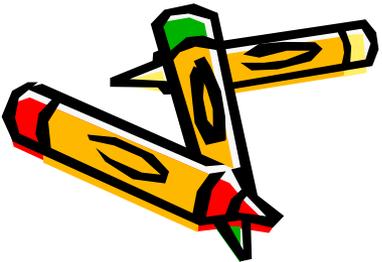
/ 'fɔ: **sʌm** 'ri:zn ʃiz 'æbsnət
tə'dei/



- As an adjective in contrast to “others” it is always stressed and therefore pronounced as /sʌm/. For example:

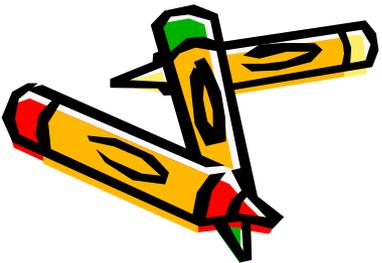
- Some people like it, but others don't.

/ 'sʌm pi:pl 'laik it bət 'ʌðəz 'dɒnt/



Weak Forms

- *A weak form of a word is generally distinguished from a strong form*
- a) by the difference in vowel-sounds,
- b) by the absence of a sound (vowel or consonant),
- c) by the difference in the length of a vowel.



• For example:

• are /ɑ:/ /ə/

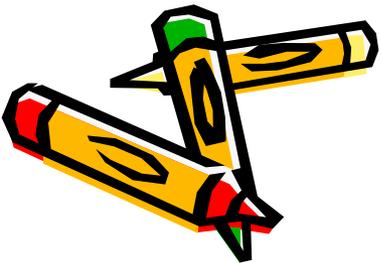
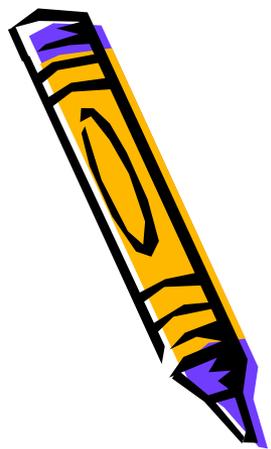
them /ðem/ /ðəm/

• and /ænd/ /ən/ & /n/

am /æm/ /m/

• been /bi:n/ /bin/

were /wə:/ /wə/

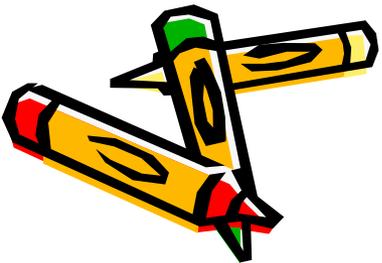




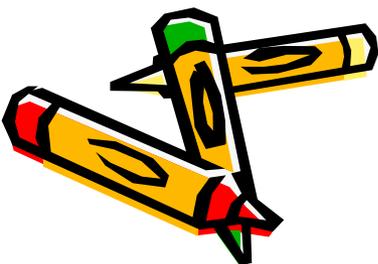
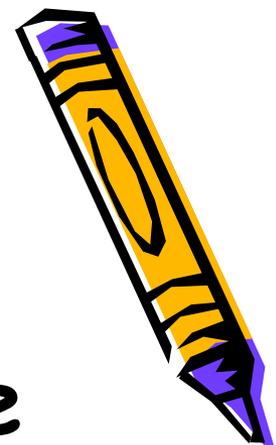
- Very often the weak form has /ə/ in it, whereas the strong form contains some other vowel, e.g. was /wɒz/, for /fɔː/, them /ðem/, to /tuː/,

- but “It **was** too difficult **for them** **to** read.”

/it wəz 'tuː 'dɪfɪkəlt fə ðəm tə 'riːd/



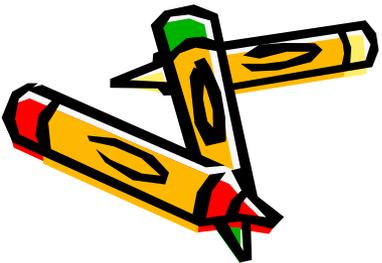
- A few words with /i:/ in the strong form have a weak form with /i/, e.g. the /ði:/, but “**the** other end” /ði 'ʌðər 'end/.

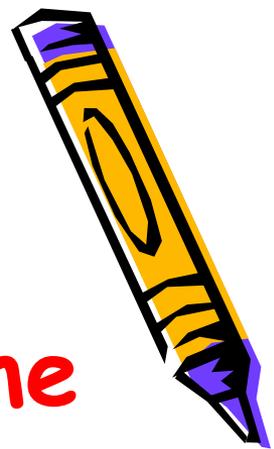


Exercise

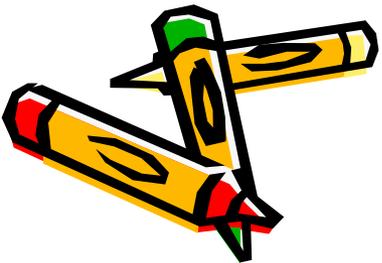


- Ladies and Gentlemen, I have some good news and some bad news. First, the good news. The dive that you just watched in Olympic Diving event was the winning dive. Now, the bad news. The swimming pool was empty.



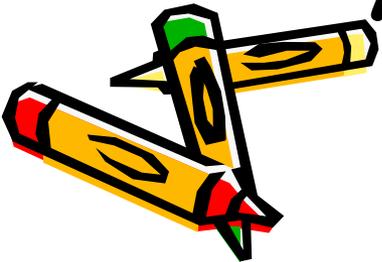


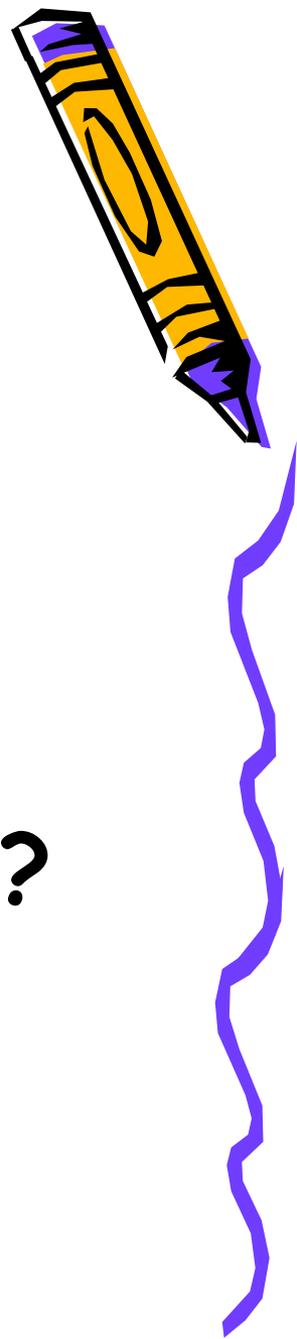
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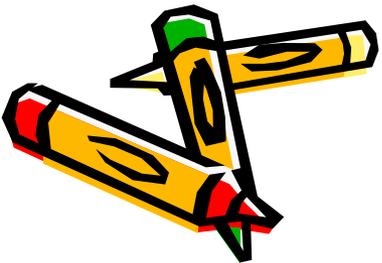
Comparison

- I saw **them**, not you.
I don't like **th(e)m**.
- Yes, I **can**.
I **c(a)n** tell you an interesting story.
- I **have** obeyed you, I swear.
Have you met my wife?
They'**ve** left.





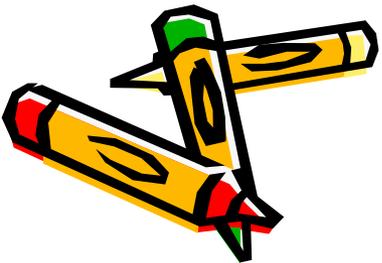
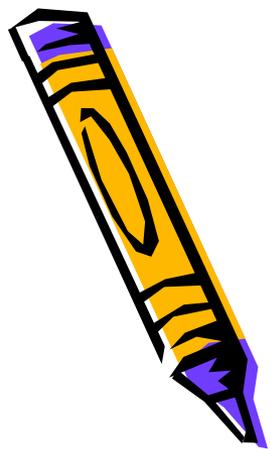
- Where are you going **to**?
I'm going **to** London.
- Who are you waiting **for**?
I'm waiting **for** John.
- **Are** you taking me for a fool?
They'**re** trying to help.



Joke

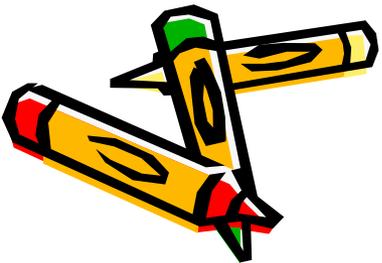
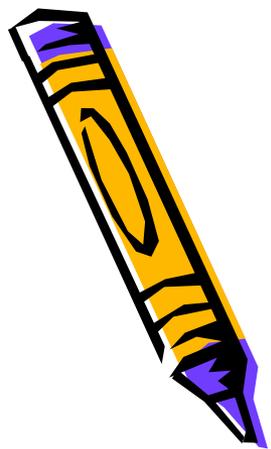
Homework

- Teacher: I'm able to read one of the essays you did for homework, but the other is very poor.
- Student: Yes, my mother is a much better writer than my father.



Dictation

- **Not for Jazz**
- clavichord n. 古钢琴
- string n. (乐器的) 弦



- We have an old musical instrument. It is called a clavichord. It was made in Germany in 1681. Our clavichord is kept in the living room. It has belonged to our family for a long time. The instrument was bought by my grandfather many years ago. Recently it was damaged by a visitor. She tried to play jazz on it! She struck the keys too hard and two of the strings were broken. My father was shocked. Now we are not allowed to touch it. It is being repaired by a friend of my father's.

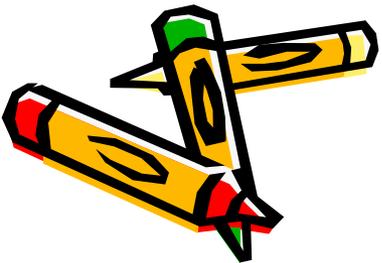


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The dean's words

- Student A: If the dean doesn't take back what he said to me this morning, I am going to leave college.
- Student B: what did he say?
- Student A: He told me to leave college.



Thank you!

