

Assimilation of /d/ and /j/

About this activity

This is a fun bit of assimilation to play with in the classroom and the correct production of this type of assimilation can go a long way to helping students sound more fluent and natural. *Would you rather speak naturally? Would you rather understand assimilation? Would you like to know what I'm talking about?*

As you're reading those questions, what is happening to the words 'would' and 'you'? When we have /d/ and /j/ sounds next to each other, we produce a type of assimilation which changes /wʊd jʊ/ to /wʊdʒə/, with the schwa sound /ə/ replacing the final /ʊ/.

This is a common form of assimilation, especially when we're asking questions using modal verbs or past simple questions using the auxiliary 'did'. It's an relatively easy sound to produce making it a great focus in classes of all levels.

Here's an exercise to help you practice it in the classroom:

- Tell your students you did something exciting over the weekend.
- Students work in pairs to think of yes/no questions in the past simple to ask to find out more information. (record the questions on their phones if possible)
E.g, *Did you go to the cinema?*
- Write up some of the questions on the board (2 is enough)
- Read the questions to the class using the assimilation to model the sound and elicit the difference between what the students said and what you say (use the phone recordings if possible)
- Highlight the /dʒ/ sound and drill with students
- Students now ask their questions to find out what you did over the weekend focusing on their pronunciation

Author: Anna Phillips