

TV TIME! WATCH REALITY SHOWS AND NEWS INTERVIEWS

The key to unlocking the secrets to the accent you're looking to achieve is right in the palm of your hands. That is, of course, if you're holding a TV remote.

Whether you're an actor looking to master a convincing regional accent, or someone who wants to sound more mainstream, there are few better places to turn to than TV (broadcast or streaming).

NEWSCASTERS AND WITNESSES AND HOUSEWIVES, OH MY!

When you search for a good *accent model* to follow, carefully select one or more archetypes—real life people who are natives of the dialect and also embody key characteristics. This could include region, age, gender, even industry.

For those seeking a neutral sound, newscasters on network broadcasts make great accent models. They are known for having “standard” accents and more formal speech patterns. So, if you're looking to achieve a calm and business-like authority to your speech, pay attention to whomever is sitting in the anchor chair on the evening news.

Conversely, witnesses who are being interviewed by local news field reporters are a veritable treasure trove for an actor looking to pick up a convincing local accent. And the best thing is, the “ordinary people” being interviewed come in a spectrum of ages, genders and national origins—just like characters in a movie.

And speaking of characters, although some might be cringeworthy at times, reality TV shows like *The Real Housewives of Wherever* can be a super-fun way to get real with your accent choices!





Finally, whether you're doing your TV accent research on CNN or Bravo!, enable closed captioning to make sure you understand a speaker's diction as accurately as possible. With some of the thicker or more regional accents, you might benefit from confirmation on the words these speakers are articulating.

If someone asks you to "do a British accent," you'd be justified to ask some questions. What region within the UK? What "class" or level of formality? What time period? You can likely hear the big difference between Shakespearean royalty vs. a Beatle. Or Adelle.

For example, if you're trying to cultivate an Irish accent from Dublin for a 30-50 year old man, you might watch interviews with Colin Farrell. Or watch the news from that specific region.

There's also a database called the [International Dialects of English Archive: IDEA](#), which hosts a great repository of speech clips from accents of English around the world. And of course, there's always YouTube videos with "Accent Tag" on them—sometimes "Accent Challenge." (But choose the ones of people doing their own accents, not attempting other accents.)

BONUS TIP

When you're asked to do an accent relating to a language, it's important to bear in mind that one size does not fit all. For example, Latino accents vary from country to country. Mexican Spanish, for example, may have a [b] vs. [v] distinction, while Castilian Spanish from Spain does not. Also, Castilian typically uses the voiceless th sound [θ] as in think for the letter "z" and sometimes "c" (depending on the following letter), but that also depends on the region. Speakers in some regions of Spain as well as parts of the Caribbean drop [s]'s at the end of syllables. And in the Caribbean, they may also change [n] endings to an "ng" or [ŋ] sound. And this just scratches the surface.

If you want to go above and beyond, you may want to dabble in learning the language itself. It would give you a great basis of words to get a feel for the sound system and a lot more. You can do this for free on an app like [DuoLingo](#) or, if your library subscribes, [Mango Languages](#).

