

Reduction of *to*

The word *to* is usually pronounced very quickly, with a /tə/ sound. For example:
She decided to leave college. /tə/

In some common expressions, *to* links to the previous word and the /t/ sound is not pronounced. For example:
She is going to stay with friends. /gənə/

However, when *to* begins or ends a sentence, or when the speaker wants to emphasize it, *to* has a long vowel /tu/ sound. For example:
She says she doesn't know how to. /tu/

Listen

Circle the word *to* in these sentences, play the audio file, and listen to the pronunciation.

1. The king told all the people to use paper money.
2. People began to use coins a long time ago.
3. I try to learn five English words every day.
4. I like to find a bargain when I go to the store.
5. He sent an e-mail to his parents to ask them for money.
6. We go to the library after class.

After you listen

Now, read the sentences out loud or to a partner. Pay attention to the pronunciation of *to*.