## **Assimilation: The Blending of Sounds**

Try it yourself. Hold your hand in front of your mouth. You should feel a slight burst of air for each of the highlighted letters in the sentence above. But be careful not to overdo it, like this...

"Project Gutenberg is the producer of the first and biggest collection of online books."

Even among broadcasters there is variation. Some prefer tight, crisp speech, while others prefer a more relaxed approach with some blending of sounds. Bottom line is that you don't want to draw attention. You just want to say it correctly; otherwise, you'll sound pedantic. How many plosives does the word "pedantic" have?

## Repeat, Repeat, Repeat

Practicing tongue twisters is another good way to improve.

For plosives try these:

"Good blood, bad blood. Good blood, bad blood."

"A big black bug bit a big black bear and made the big black bear bleed blood."

For sibilants (which are s's and f's),

- 3. Listen to yourself. Read a poem of a story narration and record it. Jot down errors and re-record again and again, comparing with each previous result.
- 4. Try Meditation and Deep Breathing Exercises. (From the diaphragm!)
- 5. Use a Mirror. Choose a piece of dialogue from one of your favorite movies and try to imitate the style in which it was delivered.
- 6. Listen to the Speeches of Great Orators and Imitate. Listen to them again and again. Pat attention to when and where they paused, what phrases or words did they emphasize or punch?

## A Practice Reading (from Aesop's Fable, "The Lion and the Mouse."

A mouse went into a lion's cave by mistake, and before he knew what he was doing, he ran over the nose of the sleeping lion. The lion reached out his paw and caught the mouse and was about to eat him when the mouse said, "Forgive me, King of the Beasts, I did not know where I was. I should never have been so proud as to come into this cave if I had known it was yours.

The lion smiled at the poor frightened little mouse and let him go. Not long after this, the lion fell into a rope net left for him by some hunters, and his roars filled the forest. The mouse recognized him and ran to see if he could help. He set to work nibbling the ropes, and soon the lion was free.

(The above excerpt is helpful because it uses "all of the American-English peech sounds in all positions." If there are any basic sounds or pronunciations you are doing incorrectly without realizing it, they will show up in this selection.)