

Q211. What would Sir Roy say? – Solution

1. eng-game
2. las(s) chance
3. sip back
4. soung great
5. sam pit
6. wile party
7. heag gear (heg gear)
8. woob pile

Strategy:

This problem deals mainly with a phenomenon called *assimilation*, which occurs very often in informal speech. In this case, Sir Roy assimilates many of his final consonants to the *place of articulation* (the part of the mouth where the tongue or lips produce the sound) of the consonant in the following word.

In terms of the place of articulation, there are three main groups of consonants in English: the “labials” (p, b and m) articulated using the lips, “alveolars” (t, d, n, s and z), articulated by the tip of the tongue at the upper front end of the oral cavity, and “velars” (k, g and the “ng” sound in “bring”) articulated by the back of the tongue at the upper back end of the oral cavity.

Here, if the first word ends with a consonant in a different place of articulation, Sir Roy “assimilates” it to the second word; hence “not bad” (first word ending in an alveolar sound) becomes “nop bad” (first word ending in a labial sound, to match the “b” of the next word). Similarly with “thack girl” and “im particular”.

Importantly, the final consonant of the first word only changes its place of articulation, not its *manner* of articulation; that is, if it was originally unvoiced (“not bad”, instead of “nod bad”) it stays unvoiced (“nop bad”, rather than “nob bad”). If it is voiced, it stays voiced, and if it is nasal (m, n, “ng”) it stays nasal (“im particular”).

But this is not all: sometimes the final consonant is omitted altogether (“blime man”, “moce people”) before the assimilation, if it follows another consonant with what is called *higher sonority*. In practice, this means that stops (t, d, p, b, g, k) disappear at the end of the first word if they follow a fricative, liquid or nasal (here, s, l, and n).