Worksheet 11-07

Watch the video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihd7ofrwQX0 — the Australian Prime Minister's reply to the Leader of the Opposition's motion that the Speaker of the House of Representatives be dismissed.

Background:

- Australia has three main parties – a (social-democratic) Labor Party plus a (conservative) Liberal Party aligned with a (CSU-like) National Party.
- Julia Gillard was the leader of the Labor Party; her government had a majority of one, relying on an agreement with two independent Members for rural constituencies in a 'hung' Parliament.
- She had asked the Liberal-/National-aligned Member for the seat of Fisher, Peter Slipper, to be Speaker of the House of Representatives. Slipper was later accused of sexually molesting a (male) staffer, and not keeping proper records of his travel expenses; he was being represented by the Deputy Speaker at the time of the motion to dismiss him.
- The Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, had been engaging in a variety of measures designed to break Ms Gillard's will, including:
  - encouraging protesters to raise "Ditch the Witch!" banners outside the Parliament
  - allowing senior members of his shadow cabinet to attend a Young Liberals dinner where ultra-conservative talkback radio host Alan Jones said Gillard's newly deceased father had "died of shame" over his daughter's political actions
- Tony Abbott opposed any carbon-pricing scheme, saying it would increase electricity bills (for housewives doing the ironing)
- Tony Abbott, if German, would have been a hard-drinking 'Burschenschaftler' at university, who was also a champion boxer.
- Julia Gillard was Australia's first and, so far, only female Prime Minister.

1. What social class do you think Julia Gillard comes from?

2. What aspects of her pronunciation are similar to those of the course leader? (Be honest!)

3. What aspects of her pronunciation differ from those of the course leader?

4. What is the Speaker, Mr Slipper, alleged to have done?

5. Why does Julia Gillard consider it hypocritical to raise these allegations?