Weak and Strong Forms:

1. The indefinite article: <a>/<an>

   a) strong forms: /ɛt/ and /æn/
   The strong form is used exclusively in the context of quotation and receives stress in this context:


   b) weak forms /a/ and /ən/
   The weak form is used elsewhere.

   [ə] boy was bitten by [ən] alligator.

2. The conjunction <and>:

   a) strong form: /ænd/
   Used in the context of quotation, for emphasis and in impatient usually impolite answers where it receives stress and question-like intonation:

   - I love you!
   - [ænd]...?? (meaning: ‘So what?!?!’)

   - Do you have anything apart from cosmetics in your purse?
   - Hmmm...I’ve got cosmetics [ænd] cosmetics...

   b) weak forms: 1) /ən/ or 2) /n/

   1) is used in normal speech:

   You will read this again [ən] again [ən] again until you remember it!

   You use 2) in fast speech before a CONSONANT:

   Dumb [n] dumber.

3. Comparative particle <as>:

   a) strong form: /æz/
   The strong form is used sentence finally and optionally between two unstressed syllables. It is stressed only in the former case:

   Such [æz]?

   I hate it when he uses her [æz] his cook and waitress!
b) weak form: /ɔz/

Weak forms are used elsewhere.

[ɔz] drunk [ɔz] a lord...

Hard [ɔz] I tried, I could not keep up with her.

4. Prepositions: <at, of, for, from>

a) strong forms: /æt, ɔv, ɔf(r), ɔf(r)/
   Used sentence finally, for emphasis, quoting, and optionally between two unstressed syllables. In the first three contexts receive stress.

   What are you staring [æt]?

b) Weak forms: /ət, ə(v), ə(ɔ)(r), əf(r)/

   Used elsewhere.


   I’ll stay [wɪð] you [fr] a week.

   That is not my cup [ə] tea.

THE PREPOSITION LIKE <by, in, with, out, up etc.> THAT CONTAIN (AT LEAST) ETYMOLOGICALLY HIGH VOWELS DO NOT HAVE SEPARATE WEAK FORMS IN STANDARD BRITISH ENGLISH!!!

<on> DOES NOT HAVE A WEAK FORM REDUCED TO SHWA!

5. The verb ‘to be’<be, am, are, is, was, were, been>:

a) strong forms: /bi, æm, æ(r), ɪz, wʊz, wə(r), bɪn/
   Used sentence initially in questions, sentence finally, in question tags, for emphasis, quoting.

   - [æ:] they playing our favourite song?
   - Yes, they [æ:].

   He isn’t too eager to help you, [ɪz] he?

b) weak forms: /bi, (ə)m, ə(r), (ɪ)z, wəz, wə(r), bɪn/

   Used in other positions, as an operator in wh-questions.

I’ve never [bʌn] to Ukraine.

6. The verb ‘to have’ <have, has, had>

a) strong forms: /hæv/, /hæz/ and /hæd/

Used sentence finally, in question tags, sentence medially as a lexical verb (meaning ‘to possess sth.’)

- Have you seen his newest movie?
- Yes, I [hæv].

He [hæz] three flats in Manhattan and two in Hollywood.

I [hæv] to stay longer at work.

b) Weak forms: 1) /hɔv/ or 2) /ɔv/ or 3) /ʌv/ and 1) /hɔz/ or 2) /ɔz/ or 3) /z/ and 1) /hæd/ or 2) /ɔd/ or 3) /d/

Used as an auxiliary verb. 1) are used sentence initially or after a word ending in /ɔ/. 3) are used after a vowel and 2) are used elsewhere.

She [z] made a complaint against you.

John and Peter [ɔv] done something terrible.

[hæd–hɔd] you been there before that day?

7. The verb <do, does>

a) strong forms: /dəu/ and /dʌz/

Sentence finally, as a lexical verb.

- Yes, I am sure he [dʌz].

- We’ll [də:] plenty of exercises!

b) weak forms: 1) /də/ 2) /dʌ/ and 1) /dʌz/ or 3) /dz/

Used as an auxiliary verb 2) used before vowels, 3) in very fast speech

[ðz] he know what to do?

[du] I look as if I was your twin brother?
8. Conjunction <but>

a) strong form: /bæt/
   Sentence finally, metaphorically meaning ‘doubts’

   There are still some ifs and [bæts].

   I think you are right [bæt]...

b) weak form: /bɒt/
   Used elsewhere.

   I could have tried to help her [bɒt] did not have knowledge enough to do that.

9. Modal verbs <must, can, could, shall, should, will, would>:

   a) strong forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERB/FORMS</th>
<th>STRONG FORMS</th>
<th>WHERE USED:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>/mʌst/</td>
<td>Sentence initially, sentence finally, in question tags, in the meaning of logical assumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>/kæn/</td>
<td>Sentence initially, sentence finally and in question tags.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could</td>
<td>/kʊd/</td>
<td>as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shall</td>
<td>/ʃæl/</td>
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<tr>
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<td>/wʊd/</td>
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   IN NEGATIVE FORMS ALL AUXILIARY VERBS (ALL MODALS + NON-MODAL AUXILIARIES i.e. ALL MENTIONED IN 9 + DO, BE AND HAVE) RETAIN THEIR STRONG FORMS!

   REMEMBER THAT SOME OF THE VOWELS IN CONTRACTED NEGATIVE FORMS ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN NON-NEGATED FORMS!!!

   CONTRACTED NEGATIVE FORMS LOSE ‘T’ BEFORE A CONSONANT:

   You [mæsn] smoke here!
b) weak forms:

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<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>1) /mʌst/ or 2) /mʊst/</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shall</td>
<td>1) /ʃəl/ 2) /ʃl/ or /ʃl/</td>
<td>Elsewhere. 2) used before consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should</td>
<td>/ʃʊd/ or /ʃd/</td>
<td>Elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>1) /wʊl/ 2) /l/</td>
<td>As above. 2) used after a pronoun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would</td>
<td>/wʊd/ or /wʊd/ or 3) /d/</td>
<td>Elsewhere. 3) after pronouns except for ‘it’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Pronouns in nominative <you, he, she, we>

a) strong forms: /juː, hɪ, ʃi, wi/  
In emphatic contexts, sentence finally.

- So it was really [juː]!?  
- If [ʃiː] can’t, nobody can!

b) weak forms: /ju, 1) hi or 2) i , ʃi, wi/  
Elsewhere. 1) used sentence initially, 2) used elsewhere.

I bet [i] can’t count to 8723680276350287436.  
[ʃiː] was so excited that [ʃiː] forgot to put on her clothes.

11. Pronouns in accusative <me, you, him, her, us, them>

a) strong forms /mɪː, juː, hɪm, hɜː, əs, ʌm/  
Emphatic context, quoting...

It is [hɜː] to whom I wrote the letter....

b) weak forms: /mɪ, ju, (h)ɪm, (h)ə, (ə)s, ʌm /  
Elsewhere, sentence initially only the forms with /h/ are attested. They are not stressed.

I hate [ɪm]!

12. Pronouns in genitive <your, his, her, their>

a) strong forms /jʊə(r), hɪz, hɜː, əz(ə)/  
Sentence finally, for emphasis.

Is this car [hɪz]?
b) weak forms: /jǝ(r)/, (h)iz / (h)ǝ/

Elsewhere. /h/-initial forms are used sentence initially and after shwa.

He was doing [iz] best not to disappoint her but she did not care.

<their> is not reduced to shwa!

13. Pronoun/subject filler <there>

a) strong form: /ðǝǝ(r)/

As a pronoun...

He has hidden it [ðǝǝ].

b) weak forms: /ðǝ(r)/

Elsewhere: as a subject position filler (dummy subject):

[ðǝr] has been a terrible misunderstanding.

14. Modifier <some>:

a) strong form: /sǝm/

before nouns, meaning an unidentified object/person, in the environment of weak syllables, sentence finally:

[sǝm] Mr Smith is waiting for you outside the building.

[sǝm] of them may be dangerous.

My mother made a delicious cheesecake, would you like to have [sǝm]?

b) weak form: /ǝǝm/

Before mass nouns to mean an unidentified amount of sth. before a count nouns meaning several:

I found [ǝǝm] coins.

I need [ǝǝm] water.

15. Conjunction <or>:

a) strong forms: /ɔ(ɾ)/

Two /ɔ/ three people in the company speak French.
b) weak forms (only in fixed phrases) : /ə(r)/

   More /ə/ less one big mess.

16. Pronoun <who>:
   a) strong form (as an interrogative pronoun): /hu:/

   /hu:/ is she?

   Do you know /hu:/ she is?

   b) weak form (relative pronoun): /u/

   People /u/ are absent will have to make up for it.

17. Comparative particle <than>:
   a) strong form (sentence finally, emphasis): /ðæn/

   What is he bigger than?

   b) weak form (elsewhere): /ðən/

   I’m better [ðən] you.

18. Preposition/particle <to>
   a) strong forms /tu/: sentence finally

   Where are you going [tu:]?

   b) weak forms 1) /tə/ 2) /tu/

   1) before consonants, 2) before vowels

   I’m going [tə] Japan.

   I want [tu] open a shop.

19. Demonstrative/ relative pronoun <that>:
   a) strong form /ðæt/: as a demonstrative pronoun

   Why did you do [ðæt]?
b) weak form /ðət/: as a relative pronoun

I told you [ðət] I didn’t like you.

20. Pronoun <any>

a) strong form /eni/: when emphasised, used sentence initially, sentence finally, in complex pronouns like anyone, anyhow, anything etc.

She was surprised because she did not expect anyone.

b) weak form /əni/: used elsewhere

I didn’t expect you to do /əni/ better.