Pronunciation Practice

Games, activities, curriculum suggestions, and word lists to improve pronunciation

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Introduction

When asked which area of English they would most like to improve, the majority of students will answer “pronunciation”. While it is nearly impossible to completely eliminate an accent, it is possible to reduce it and increase understandability. Doing so takes practice, practice, and more practice. Imagine a runner, a sprinter. They may be an elite athlete who has trained for years to run 200 meters as fast as possible. However, if you ask that same athlete to run a marathon, they would need to re-train their muscles to handle the endurance, the different type challenge. It is the same process language learners go through to train their facial muscles to handle and new sounds.

When an infant acquires their first language, their facial muscles are trained in a particular way to produce the specific sounds for their language. As an adult, this language learner must re-train and manipulate their facial muscles to generate new sounds. Depending on the student’s native language, exposure to the new language, listening capability and determination, this training can go smoothly and lead to understandability or be extremely difficult and lead to massive amounts of frustration.

It is important for ESL teachers to assist their students with pronunciation practice, but books can often be difficult to decipher and cause confusion. I strove to create a fun, interesting and practical curriculum for my students to become engaged in their own learning. I have studied some aspects of linguistics, but I am not a linguist. I am a teacher. I have witnessed my students struggle with the challenges of English pronunciation and I sought out fun, non-tedious ways to help them become more understandable in their daily lives. This mini-grant is a collection of the lessons I have used with great success. It is my hope that they can be incorporated into other classrooms to aid students in their trek up the mountain to fluency and accuracy.
Curriculum Suggestions

English teachers and students alike know pronunciation is an essential part of English language study for non-native speakers. Pronunciation instruction can be incorporated into a regular class or taught as a separate class. Although there are lessons in each of our textbooks as well as specific books about the topic, the best practice for our students is real conversation and focused oral pronunciation practice.

It is impossible to develop accurate English pronunciation without speaking. In one lesson, students will speak and repeat for about 90% of the time. Often, multiple students are talking at the same time as they practice in groups or with a pronunciation pipe or mirror. When the lesson is finished, they are encouraged to go home and continue practicing. The lesson is just the beginning of mastering a particular sound. By making them aware of the sounds in class and offering them a model, they have all the tools they need to continue training their mouth to make the correct sound.

Whether developing a curriculum for a pronunciation class, workshop, or as an addition to a regular class, focusing on the students’ needs and native language is key. Although there is some overlap, different language groups have different problem areas. There is a chart in the “Additional Photocopiables” section detailing the issues of different language groups. This can be used to aid in planning a pronunciation class or set of lessons, but the best resource is your own observations of your students’ difficulties with pronunciation. The chart corresponds to the popular program called “Pronunciation Power” that can be purchased online.

When learning or teaching pronunciation, some students and teachers use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) or other accepted phonetic alphabets to describe the sounds that are being presented. While this can sometimes be a great equalizer, I have made a conscious choice not to follow this route. Although some students may be aware of the symbols, others are completely lost. I feel it is futile to teach students a new alphabet just so they can learn to pronounce words they already recognize. It has proven to be more useful to teach students to recognize sounds as they hear them as well as understanding which patterns of letters produce the sounds.

I recommend that the time of each lesson be limited to no more than ninety minutes, due to the intense training of a pronunciation lesson. Ideally, the time would not exceed sixty minutes, but if it is a separate class, it can be difficult to get students to come to school for just sixty minutes. The class I teach at the Adult Learning Center in Nashua is ninety minutes, twice a week. Each session runs for six weeks. The length of the sessions is determined more by funding and high demand than anything else. Shorter sessions means the class is more accessible to students who want to take it because we can offer more sessions throughout the year. The classes are mixed language groups, so I tend to focus instruction on the major problem areas: vowel sounds, “th”, difficult consonant pairs, intonation and linking.
On the following page, you will find a copy of my curriculum for this six week pronunciation class. I include a schedule of the sounds we will cover, leaving two lessons open for the class to choose consonant pairings that are difficult for them. If I notice an issue in the class, or if the majority are from a particular language group, I will suggest a topic. I also set some guidelines for the class. I find that having the guidelines established up front sets the tone I want for the class, which is a safe and fun environment to begin practicing proper pronunciation.

The main guideline or principle of the class is to focus on speaking. I do not allow students to have translators or multi-lingual dictionaries in class because I do not want a student to attempt to sit and translate every word the class brings up. With such a short amount of time to spend in class, it is vital that this time is spent speaking as opposed to writing. I do allow students to have notebooks in class, but discourage them from taking too much time to take notes. I give students a word list to introduce the target sounds with a mirror or pronunciation pipe, directed by the teacher, in pairs, etc. (See the “Word List” section for more information.) The class was designed to be fun, not simple repetition. Many games and activities are included in the class to engage students and keep them involved. (See the “Games and Activities” section for specific activities and photocopiables.)
Curriculum Outline
6-week Pronunciation Class
(12 90-minute sessions)

General Principles

• You will get a word list for each lesson with 10 pairs of words. Usually these will be words that you already know, not new vocabulary.
• The purpose of the class is not writing; it is speaking. You should practice speaking during the class rather than writing everything in your notebook.
• No dictionaries/translators may be used to look up words.
• We will use pronunciation pipes, mirrors and other items to “show” pronunciation.
• We will use games, tongue twisters, rhyming and other fun activities to practice.

Class 1: Introduction
Class 2: Short a and long a
Class 3: Short e and long e
Class 4: Short i and long i
Class 5: Short o and long o
Class 6: Short u and long u
Class 7: S and Sh
Class 8: Th sounds
Class 9: Consonant pairs
Class 10: Consonant pairs
Class 11: D and T – especially past tense
Class 12: Intonation and Linking
Word Lists

Although the focus of the pronunciation practice should be games and activities to engage students, word lists can be used at the start of class to focus students’ attention on the target sounds and establish a base for the class. The important thing is to get students to pay attention to the sound as opposed to the meaning. I typically have copies of the word list available for students as soon as they come in the room, so if they arrive early, they have time to look up words they don’t understand and begin practicing.

There are a variety of ways to use a word list for pronunciation practice. Using a word list to begin a class introduces students to the sounds they will be practicing during the class. The teacher can model the correct way to say the words, then students listen and repeat the words. I like to use visual aids so students can “see” the sounds as they practice. Some possible tools are mirrors for students to watch themselves repeat the list of words, rubber bands or Slinkys that can be stretched to illustrate a long vowel and contracted to show short ones, pronunciation pipes (half-moon shaped PVC piping found at any home improvement store) that can be held like telephones and direct a student’s voice directly into their own ear, or bouncy balls that can show syllables or stress. Repeating the words from the word list while engaging other senses creates a more productive learning environment. Practice using the word lists can be teacher or student directed. I typically start with the class as a whole repeating the words, then allow pairs or students to work together and help correct each other.

Pronunciation practice can be done with low level students. Rather than using word lists that can be confusing to these students, you can use the letter “m” before vowels and the long “e” sound after consonants to practice target sounds. These sounds exist in most languages and are easy for the mouth to make; therefore, it is a way of simplifying normal pronunciation lessons and engaging low level or literacy students. These students will begin training their facial muscles to make correct English sounds early on to avoid fossilized errors later on.

The following pages contain word lists that can be photocopied and used in class. Most words will be familiar to students, as they are small, one syllable words. Some words are names while others are small, possibly obscure words that may be unfamiliar yet are effective for practicing sounds.
Pronunciation Word List

Short and long “a”

1. cat – Kate
2. hat – hate
3. tap – tape
4. am – aim
5. plan – plane
6. cap – cape
7. back – bake
8. ran – rain
9. can – cane
10. pad – paid
Pronunciation Word List

Short and long “e”

1. fell – feel
2. pet – Pete
3. met – meet
4. Jen – jean
5. sell – seal
6. set – seat
7. wet – wheat
8. sweat – sweet
9. red – read
10. Ben – bean
Pronunciation Word List

Short and long “i”

1. bit – bite
2. mitt – might
3. Tim – time
4. lick – like
5. fill – file
6. writ – right
7. pill – pile
8. will – while
9. sit – sight
10. sick – psych
Pronunciation Word List

Short and long “o”

1. cop – cope
2. mop – mope
3. cot – coat
4. on – own
5. jock – joke
6. hop – hope
7. not – note
8. got – goat
9. odd – ode
10. pop – pope
Pronunciation Word List

Short and long “u”

1. hut – hoot
2. shut – shoot
3. look – Luke
4. fuss – fuse
5. pull – pool
6. full – fool
7. Rudd – rude
8. mud – mood
9. dud – dude
10. Mon. – moon
Pronunciation Word List

“b” and “p” sounds

1. bull – pull
2. bat – pat
3. bun – pun
4. bail – pail
5. lube – loop
6. big – pig
7. lab – lap
8. ban – pan
9. mob – mop
10. bam – Pam
Pronunciation Word List

“b” and “v” sounds

1. berry – very
2. bat – vat
3. bet – vet
4. boat – vote
5. bowel – vowel
6. ban – van
7. lob – love
8. bow – vow
9. bent – vent
10. best – vest
Pronunciation Word List

“f” and “v” sounds

1. face – vase
2. fine – vine
3. life – live
4. fan – van
5. file – vile
6. ferry – very
7. fast – vast
8. foul – vowel
9. safe – save
10. belief – believe
Pronunciation Word List

“l” and “r” sounds

1. blew – brew
2. light – right
3. still – stir
4. well – were
5. all – are
6. lake – rake
7. late – rate
8. fly – fry
9. glass – grass
10. lead – read
Pronunciation Word List

“s” and “z” sounds

1. sip – zip
2. see – zee
3. Miss – Ms.
4. bus – buzz
5. cloths – clothes
6. ice – eyes
7. sink – zinc
8. niece – knees
9. price – prize
10. seal – zeal
Pronunciation Word List

“s” “sh” and “ch” sounds

1. sip – ship – chip
2. see – she – chi
3. seat – sheet – cheat
4. was – wash – watch
5. sock – shock – chalk
7. seep – sheep – cheap
8. Sue – shoe – chew
9. mass – mash – match
10. sore – shore – chore
Pronunciation Word List

“j” and “y” sounds

1. Jew – you
2. Jay – yay
3. jam – yam
4. Joe – yo
5. jewel – yule
6. jail – Yale
7. Jello – yellow
8. jarred – yard
9. Jess – yes
10. jeer – year
Pronunciation Word List

“th” sounds

1. three  
2. thirty  
3. there  
4. this  
5. that  
6. bath  
7. with  
8. thank  
9. other  
10. father  
11. mother  
12. weather  
13. another  
14. mouth  
15. think  
16. both  
17. thought  
18. nothing  
19. thirsty  
20. Thursday
Pronunciation Word List

“s” and “th” sounds

1. closing – clothing
2. tease – teeth
3. sues – soothe
4. bays – bathe
5. lows – loathe
6. she’s – sheathe
7. lies – lithe
8. mass – math
9. sigh – thigh
10. face – faith
Pronunciation Word List

“t” and “th” sounds

1. tin – thin
2. tat – that
3. tick – thick
4. pat – path
5. true – through
6. tree – three
7. tear – there
8. Mott – moth
9. heat – heath
10. bat – bath
Pronunciation Word List

“d” and “t” sounds

1. had – hat
2. send – sent
3. hard – heart
4. hid – hit
5. said – set
6. bud – but
7. and – ant
8. card – cart
9. side – sight
10. add – at
Pronunciation Word List

“d” and “t” sounds (past tense)

1. wanted 11. watched
2. needed 12. waited
3. worked 13. answered
4. washed 14. remembered
5. cleaned 15. added
6. mopped 16. helped
7. studied 17. kissed
8. played 18. hugged
9. sailed 19. lived
10. faxed 20. questioned
Pronunciation Word List

“m” and “n” sounds

1. Mon. – none
2. maim – name
3. them – then
4. am – an
5. sum – sun
6. beam – bean
7. comb – cone
8. foam – phone
9. team – teen
10. spam – span
Pronunciation Word List

Intonation and Stress

“I didn’t say she took my money.”

Do you understand the meaning of the sentence? The meaning can change depending on which word is stressed.

“I didn’t say she took my money.”
• I am not the one who said this.

“I didn’t say she took my money.”
• I strongly deny saying this.

“I didn’t say she took my money.”
• I did not say anything about her taking my money, even though I may have thought this.

“I didn’t say she took my money.”
• I said someone took my money, but not her.

“I didn’t say she took my money.”
• I said she did something with my money, but not that she took it.

“I didn’t say she took my money.”
• I said she took someone’s money, but it was not mine.

“I didn’t say she took my money.”
• I said she took something of mine, but it was not my money.

What’s the difference between...
• It’s raining.
• It’s raining?
Pronunciation Word List

Linking

***Linking means that two words are said as one.***

Hints for linking:

- In a sentence, when a word ends in a consonant sound and the next words begins with a vowel sound, the words are put together and said as one. (Ex. “It’s upstairs.” -> “Itsupstairs.”, “I found it.” -> “I foundit.”, “That’s a lot of money.” -> “Thatsa lotof money.”)
- Prepositions and other small words are usually pronounced as part of the word that comes before it in the sentence. This is especially true for phrasal verbs and other expressions with prepositions. (Ex. “Take off your jacket.” -> “Takeoff your jacket.”, “Fill out the form.” -> “Fillout the form.”)
- Some common expressions that are linked get shortened in speech with the “ah” sound taking the place of the shorter word. (Ex. “would have” -> “wouldah,” “should have” -> “shouldah,” “want to” -> “wannah,” “have to” -> “haftah” or “gottah”)
- Expressions in which the first word ends in a consonant and the second word begins with a consonant are often pushed together and said quickly because they are so common. It can be difficult to tell what the words really are. (Ex. “last Friday” -> “lastfriday,” “they’ll be” -> “theyllbe,” “dish towel” -> “dishtowel”)
- The “h” sound at the beginning of short words disappears and the other sounds get added to the word before it. (Ex. “Does he like it?” -> “Doessee like it?”, “What’s her name?” -> “Whatser name?”)
- When a word ends with a vowel sound and the next word begins with a vowel sound, they are sometimes combined using a “w” or “y” sound. (Ex. “Let’s do it.” -> “Let’s dowit.”, “It’s too expensive.” -> “It’s tooowexpensive.”, “I’m free on Saturday.” -> “I’m freeyon Saturday.”, “Did you see it?” -> “Did you seeeyit?”)
Games and Activities
Circle the Picture

Materials:
- Photocopiable – “Circle the Picture” (one copy per student)

Procedure:
1. Give each student a copy of “Circle the Picture”. The sample photocopiable provided is for short and long “o”, but you could create a picture page for any target sound using clip art or Google images.
2. Have students circle the pictures on the paper that have the target sound. Remind students that they should focus on the sound, not the letter. Note: This could also be done with syllables.
3. Once all students are finished circling, use a transparency or large pictures to illicit the words and correct their papers.

Topics:
- Vowel sound
- Number of syllables
Circle the pictures that have a short o sound.
Dominoes

Materials:
- Index cards
- Pictures (optional)

Procedure:
1. Before class, make index cards into dominoes by drawing a line down the middle. On each side, write a word or put a picture. Choose a variety of sounds to allow for a variety of ways of assembling. This step could also be completed by students.
2. To play the game, give each group or pair of students a set of domino cards.
3. Students should each choose five domino cards to play. The rest of the domino cards should be stacked face down in the center of the table.
4. The top card is flipped over and put in the middle of the table as the starting point.
5. The first student attempts to match the vowel sound from one of their cards to one of the sounds on the starting point domino card. If they do not have a match, they can choose a new card from the stack and try to play that domino card.
6. Students continue taking turns, drawing cards as needed, until all domino cards are flipped over on the table.

Topics:
- Vowel sounds
- Number of syllables
- Word stress


**Drawing Dictation**

**Materials:**
- Blank paper
- Pencils

**Procedure:**
1. Before class, come up with a set of instructions to have students draw a picture. Use similar words so students need to listen carefully in order to draw a correct picture. For example, a good instruction would be, “There is a cup on the desk.” The students may hear the word “cup” or “cap”. The instructions will depend on the level of your students.
2. In class, be sure each student has a pencil and a blank sheet of paper.
3. Tell students that you will tell them what to draw on their paper to make a picture. They should only draw what you tell them and nothing more or less.
4. To begin, have students draw something in the center of the paper to serve as the starting point. If you prefer to give students a head start, you can find simple pictures of parks, classrooms, airports, or other scenes on the internet to print out and give to students to complete with your instructions.
5. Once you have given all the instructions, have students compare pictures with their neighbor to see if they match.
6. Have students read the instructions back to you based on their pictures while you draw what they say on the board or on a transparency copy.
7. See if all students’ pictures match what you have on the board.

**Topics:**
- Vowel sounds
- Minimal pairs
Intonation Dialogue

Materials:
- Photocopiable – “Intonation Dialogue” (one copy per student)
- Photocopiable – “Intonation Situations” (one copy cut into strips)

Procedure:
1. Give each student a copy of the “Intonation Dialogue”. Have them read the dialogue, then check for understanding.
2. Put students into pairs.
3. Give each pair a strip cut from “Intonation Situations”. They should not show the paper to any other students.
4. The pairs need to read the same simple dialogue aloud in front of the class but change their intonation and inflection to match their unique situation. Give the pairs time to prepare their presentation and discuss how they will change their voices to convey the situation.
5. One by one, have the pairs come to the front of the class and read the dialogue, expressing their unique situation or relationship. They should not tell the class what their situation is.
6. When the pair is finished, the class should guess what the situation or relationship is.
7. Each pair takes a turn in front of the class with their version of the dialogue.

Topics:
- Intonation
Intonation Dialogue

A: Hi, how are you?

B: Fine, thank you. And you?

A: Just great. What have you been doing lately?

B: Oh, not much. But I've been keeping busy.

A: Well...it's been good to see you.

B: Yes, it has...well, bye!

A: Goodbye.
Intonation Situations

A person in the hospital and a friend who is visiting them.

Two sports rivals who will compete in a game against each other tonight.

A recently divorced couple.

Two old friends who run into each other on the street.

A police officer and a person he pulled over.

An employee and their supervisor.

Two people who have met before but can’t remember where they met.
Magazine Search

Materials:
- Old magazines
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Blank paper

Procedure:
1. Give each table of students scissors, glue or tape, paper and old magazines that can be cut up.
2. Instruct students to search for and cut out pictures that fit into particular categories. For example, students could search for pictures of one, two and three syllable words. Alternatively, students could search for pictures containing long and short “e” sounds.
3. Have students divide the pictures into categories and use the glue or tape to stick the pictures to the blank paper in the appropriate category. Depending on how many pictures you ask the students to cut out, you may want to have them use a different sheet of paper for each category.

Topics:
- Syllables
- Long/Short Vowel pairs
- Minimal Consonant pairs
Matching

Materials:
- Index cards with pictures or words

Procedure:
1. Before class, write words or glue pictures on index cards for each group. Be sure that each word has a match, a word with the same target sound. For lower levels, you can use words and underline the letter or letters that are producing the target sound. Note: You could have students produce the cards from a word list.
2. Give each group of students (no more than 4) a set of cards.
3. Have students spread all cards out, face down, on the table.
4. Students should take turns selecting two cards, saying the words on the cards aloud, and deciding whether the sounds match or not. If the cards match, the student can keep the match. If the cards do not match, they should be returned to the table, face down, and the next student takes their turn.
5. Once all cards have been matched, the student with the most cards is the winner.
6. For higher level students, you can have students write the matches they have on the board.

Topics:
- Vowel sounds
- Number of syllables
- Word stress
Pair Dictation

Materials:
- Photocopiable – “Pair Dictation A” (one copy per pair)
- Photocopiable – “Pair Dictation B” (one copy per pair)

Procedure:
1. Give each pair one copy of “Pair Dictation A” and one copy of “Pair Dictation B”. One student should take one paper and should not show their paper to their partner. (Note: You can photocopy the pair dictations included here or you can make up your own to focus on different target sounds.)
2. The student with “Pair Dictation A” should slowly read their paragraph to their partner as their partner writes down exactly what they say. They may ask their partner to speak slowly or repeat something, but they may not ask for spelling or clarification. The activity is designed to show pronunciation problem areas.
3. When the paragraph is finished, the student with “Pair Dictation B” should slowly read their paragraph to their partner as their partner writes down exactly what they say.
4. When both students are finished writing, the students should each read what they wrote down to their partner. The partner should correct what was written.
5. Students should chat about what the errors were and why they think they were made. Was it because the student said the word incorrectly or because the student did not understand the word that was said?

Topics:
- Consonant minimal pairs
- Long/short vowels
Pair Dictation A

Bud is my dog. He is a mutt. He puts his muddy paws on my mother’s new purple couch. Mum is in a bad mood. She yells at Bud, “Don’t put your muddy paws on the purple couch! That is very rude!” Bud looks at her and says, “Ruff! Ruff! Ruff!” He is so cute. Mum hugs him and says, “OK, you can snooze on the purple couch, but you must get clean.” So, Mum picks him up and throws him in the pool!

Pair Dictation B

Tonight is the full moon. Luke and Russ sleep outside on the ground under the moon. They lay next to Luke’s hut. Russ hears an animal say, “Hoot! Hoot! Hoot!” He says, “Dude! What is all the fuss? Who is hooting under the full moon?” Luke says, “It’s the owl. He looks for food and hoots at the moon every night.” Russ says, “Oh, I see. I thought it was your mum humming a new tune!”
**Picture Sorting**

**Materials:**
- Pictures of vocabulary words with target sounds

**Procedure:**
1. Before class, cut out pictures from old magazines or print out pictures from the internet that contain the target sounds. Alternatively, you could have students cut out the pictures. Be sure there are several pictures for each sound that is being practiced.
2. Give each group of students the same number of pictures. Have them put the pictures into groups, based on the target sound.
3. When students are finished, have them write the words on the board that correspond to the pictures in each category.

**Topics:**
- Vowel sounds
- Introductory activity
**Pronunciation Maze**

**Materials:**
- Photocopiable – “Pronunciation Maze” (one copy per student)

**Procedure:**
1. Before class, fill in the blank “Pronunciation Maze” with words that include the target sounds or areas for the class or copy the photocopiable provided that uses the long and short “e” sounds.
2. Give each student a copy of “Pronunciation Maze”.
3. For individual practice: Have students find the correct path through the maze by connecting words with a target sound. For example, if the target sound is long “e”, the maze can be filled with both long and short “e” sounds, with other sounds used as fillers, with only the long “e” sound leading from the starting point to the finish.
4. For class practice: The teacher says a word. Students must continue the path through the maze to that square and wait for the next word in order to find the complete correct path through the maze. The correct path can include just one target sound, for example, long “e”, or can include a mixture of long and short sounds.
5. When students reach the end of the maze, check to make sure that they have used the correct path and can recite the words of that path.

**Topics:**
- Long/short vowels
- Word stress
- Intonation
- Number of syllables
### Pronunciation Maze

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>open</th>
<th>meet</th>
<th>Jed</th>
<th>green</th>
<th>gem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>met</td>
<td>tell</td>
<td>dear</td>
<td>pet</td>
<td>pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teal</td>
<td>men</td>
<td>bet</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>beat</td>
<td>hell</td>
<td>Ned</td>
<td>let</td>
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<tr>
<td>deer</td>
<td>heal</td>
<td>need</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td>Ned</td>
<td>get</td>
<td>wet</td>
<td>yell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>greet</td>
<td>Jen</td>
<td>bean</td>
<td>wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>lean</td>
<td>deal</td>
<td>kept</td>
<td>Ben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Len</td>
<td>meat</td>
<td>jean</td>
<td>Dell</td>
<td>keep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pronunciation Maze
Same or Different

Materials:
- Index cards (2 per student) or thick paper
- Popsicle sticks or other sticks for holder (2 per student)
- Glue or tape

Procedure:
1. Give each student two index cards or two pieces of thick paper, such as cardstock, and two sticks. Give each table some glue or tape.
2. Have students write “same” on one paper or card and “different” on the other. Note: This game can also be played by writing specific sounds or number of syllables on the cards rather than the words “same” and “different”.
3. Once students have written on their paper or cards, they should glue or tape a stick to the back of it, so they have a sign that is easy to hold up.
4. Have students hold one sign in each hand as they listen to the teacher say a pair of words.
5. When the teacher says a pair of words, students should hold up the “same” sign if the target sound is the same and the “different” sign if the target sound is different. For example, if you are practicing the short and long “e” sound and the teacher says, “meet, met,” then students should hold up the different sign because the vowel sound is different.
6. For higher level students, after a couple rounds with the teacher speaking, have students come up with pairs of words. Go around the room and have one student speak while the other students listen for the sounds and hold up the appropriate sign.

Topics:
- Long/short vowel sounds
- Minimal pair consonants
- Number of syllables
Shadow Reading

Materials:
- Photocopiable – “Shadow Reading”
- Pre-recorded reading of “Shadow Reading”

Procedure:
1. Before class, record a copy of “Shadow Reading” or another reading.
2. Give each student a copy of “Shadow Reading”. Alternatively, any reading with a corresponding recording could be used, as the point of the activity is following the speaker’s rhythm and intonation.
3. Allow students to read through briefly and ask questions if they do not understand a word.
4. Play the full recording of “Shadow Reading”, having students follow along.
5. Play the full recording again, having students read aloud along with the recording. They should pay attention to the recording and stay exactly with the recording.
6. Play the recording again, having students read aloud, but inform them that you will lower the volume of the recording at some point. When you do so, they should continue reading aloud. Raise the volume of the recording again and see if they stayed with the reading. Once it is finished, get their feedback.
7. Continue playing the recording from the beginning, adjusting the volume more frequently and for longer periods to see if the students can maintain the rhythm, pace and intonation.

Topics:
- Stress
- Intonation
- Rhythm
Shadow Reading

Directions: Follow along as you listen to the story. When the teacher tells you to do so, read the story out loud as you listen. The teacher will lower the volume, but you should keep reading out loud. Are you in the correct place when the volume is raised again?

Tonight is the full moon. Luke and Russ sleep outside on the ground under the moon. They lay next to Luke’s hut. Russ hears an animal say, “Hoot! Hoot! Hoot!” He says, “Dude! What is all the fuss? Who is hooting under the full moon?” Luke says, “It’s the owl. He looks for food and hoots at the moon every night.” Russ says, “Oh, I see. I thought it was your mum humming a new tune!”
**Slap and Clap**

**Materials:**
- none

**Procedure:**
1. Have students arrange their chairs in a circle.
2. Have each student choose a word, possibly a word from their word list, which includes one of the target sounds. Be sure there is some variety. Note: If the class is lower, you can assign words to each student.
3. Assign an action to each sound. For example, if the target sounds are short and long “e”, students who chose a word that has the short “e” sound will clap when they say the word and students who chose a word that has the long “e” sound will slap their legs when they say the word.
4. The first student says their word and performs the appropriate action simultaneously.
5. The second student repeats the word that the first student said (along with the action), then says their word and performs the appropriate action.
6. The game continues around the circle until you get to the last student. Once the last student has taken their turn, have all students repeat all words and actions in order.
7. Reverse direction and start again.

**Topics:**
- Long/short vowel sounds
- Minimal pair consonants
Stand up, Sit down

Materials:
• One chair per student

Procedure:
1. Have each student sit in their chair away from the table so they can quickly and easily stand up and sit down.
2. You will slowly read a list of words to the students. If the vowel sound in the word is short, the students should remain seated. If the vowel sound in the word is long, the students should stand up.
3. Say the first word. Give students a few moments to react by standing or sitting. Then, move on to the next word.
4. As students get better at deciphering between the short and long sounds, move through the list more quickly.

Topics:
• Long and short vowel sounds
• Minimal pairs of consonant sounds
Story Reading

Materials:
- Photocopiable – “Story”

Procedure:
1. Give each student a copy of the “Story” to read through and ask questions if there are words they do not understand. You can use the photocopiable provided here or any other story that contains an abundance of similar sounds can be used or created.
2. Depending on the level, give students a different action for different sounds. For example, if the class is a lower level, you could use just the short and long “e” sound. When students hear a word with the short “e” sound, they should clap. When students hear a word with the long “e” sound, they should stomp their feet.
3. As the teacher reads the story aloud, students should perform the action assigned to the sound when they hear a word with the sound. Students could also repeat the word as they perform the action.
4. Repeat the story with students reading along aloud, still performing the actions assigned to the sounds.

Topics:
- Vowel sounds
- Consonant minimal pairs
- Introductory activity
Story

Directions: Read the story with the class. Pay attention to the short and long vowel sounds. When you hear a word with the short vowel sound, clap your hands. When you hear a word with the long vowel sound, stomp your feet. You can also read out loud along with the teacher.

Tonight is the full moon. Luke and Russ sleep outside on the ground under the moon. They lay next to Luke’s hut. Russ hears an animal say, “Hoot! Hoot! Hoot!” He says, “Dude! What is all the fuss? Who is hooting under the full moon?” Luke says, “It’s the owl. He looks for food and hoots at the moon every night.” Russ says, “Oh, I see. I thought it was your mum humming a new tune!”
This and That

Materials:
- Photocopiable – “Th Sounds Word List” (one copy per student)
- Board
- Marker

Procedure:
1. At the beginning of class, give each student a copy of the “Th Sounds Word List”.
2. Allow students to look through the words but not to practice too much before beginning the activity.
3. Have students choose a partner. They should sit directly facing each other with their copy of “Th Sounds Word List”.
4. Remind students that when they make the “Th” sound, their tongue should leave their mouth.
5. The first student should slowly read the list, in order, to their partner. The partner needs to watch the student’s mouth and put a check next to each word the student says that they see their tongue. If they do not see the tongue, they should allow the student to continue and not make a mark.
6. When the first partner is finished, the second one should slowly read the list, and the partner should check the words the student says that they can see their tongue.
7. Once both partners are finished, they should share the totals with each other, then with the class.
8. Make a chart on the board with one column for the students’ names, one for the time when the activity is first done, and one for the time when the activity is repeated.
9. Write the number of “tongue viewings” for each student next to their name, under the first time.
10. For at least 30 minutes, have students practice the words with their partner and individually while holding a mirror. They can also practice some “Th” tongue twisters. They should get comfortable with their tongue coming out of their mouth to make the proper “Th” sound.
11. Once the students have practiced, they should repeat the activity facing their partner and writing down the number of “tongue viewings”.
12. Once all students are finished, write the total number of “tongue viewings” for each student under the second time column.
13. Have students compare the numbers to judge their progress. Remind them that the progress was just in one short class. This will encourage them to keep practicing and getting more comfortable with the sound.

Topics:
- “Th” words
Tic Tac Toe

Materials:
- Photocopiable – “Tic Tac Toe” (one to two copies per pair)
- Pens – one per student

Procedure:
1. Give each pair of students one or more copies of “Tic Tac Toe”.
2. Rather than using traditional Tic Tac Toe markers, X and O, one student is assigned the short vowel sound and the other is assigned the long vowel sound.
3. The first student should choose a square and write a word containing their short vowel sound. For example, if the short “e” sound is being used, the student could write “met”.
4. Once the first student has written their word, the second student should choose a square and write a word containing their long vowel sound. For example, if the long “e” sound is being used, the student could write “meet”. Note: If the student writes an incorrect word on the board, the space belongs to the other student and the word cannot be changed. For example, if the student with the short vowel sound writes the word “meet”, they cannot change it and the student with the long vowel sound can use that square to get three words in a row.
5. Students alternate turns writing words until one student has three in a row. Because there are multiple game boards on one paper, the winning student should write their name next to their winning game.
6. When time is finished, the student with the most wins in the pair is the winner.

Topics:
- Long/short vowels
Pronunciation Tic Tac Toe
Vowel Smack Game

Materials:
- Board
- Marker
- List of words written on board (mat, mate, met, meet, mitt, might, mott, moat, mutt, mute)
- Two fly swatters (one per team)

Procedure:
1. Divide students into two teams.
2. Write all the words on two opposite sections of the board.
3. One student from each team comes to the board with the fly swatter. They should stand where the words are written in a on the board.
4. For the first few rounds, use the exact words that are on the board. Say a word. The first student to smack the correct word is the winner. Their team gets a point and a new student comes to the board and takes the fly swatter.
5. Once students understand the rules, use words that rhyme with the words on the board, but not the exact words. The student that smacks the correct word first gets a point for their team.
6. Students from each team take turns coming to the board and smacking the words.

Topics:
- Minimal pair consonants
- Short/long vowel sounds
- Different syllable counts
- Intonation
- Word Stress
- Regular past tense verb endings
Vowel Sound Scavenger Hunt

Materials:
• Photocopiable – “Vowel Sound Scavenger Hunt” (one copy per student or one copy per pair)

Procedure:
1. Give each student a copy of “Vowel Sound Scavenger Hunt”.
2. Instruct students to walk around the classroom or designated area and locate things that have the target sound.
3. When they find an appropriate object, they should write the word on the sheet. For example, if the target sound is long “e”, a student could write the word “seat” on their paper.
4. Be sure to specify which sounds they are looking for so they are not looking for items with any short of long vowel.
5. Give the students a set amount of time to find items.
6. The first one to fill their paper with correct words is the winner.
7. Go over all words that students found to check for accuracy.

Topics:
• Vowel sounds
### Vowel Sound Scavenger Hunt

Find things in the classroom that have the short or long vowel sound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short</th>
<th></th>
<th>Long</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which one doesn't belong?

Materials:
- Photocopiable – “Which one doesn’t belong?” (one copy per student)

Procedure:
1. Give each student a copy of “Which one doesn’t belong?”
2. Have students circle the word in each line that does not have the same sound as the other words.
3. Students can work together to say the words in the row and figure out which one is not the same as the others.
4. Use a transparency or write the words on the board and have students select which word does not belong.
5. Say the words to the students to be sure they can hear the difference between the two sounds.

Topics:
- Introductory activity
- Review
- Vowel sounds
Which one doesn’t belong???
Circle the word that is pronounced with a different vowel sound.

1. no     go     do     so
2. war    car    bar    far
3. does   goes   foes   toes
4. phone  bone   gone   cone
5. fork   work   stork  cork
6. dear   bear   wear   pear
7. food   book   foot   good
8. sew    new    few    knew
9. five   dive   give   hive
10. rose   pose   nose   lose
11. sweat  heat   meat   eat
12. rain   train  again  pain
13. cough  rough  tough  enough
14. clown  flown  town  down
15. plays  days   stays  says
Additional Photocopiables
5 Tips for Better English Pronunciation

1. **Stress the final consonant sound.** Don’t “drop” the end of the word. By focusing on the final consonant sound, you ensure proper pronunciation.

2. **Over-exaggerate sounds during pronunciation practice.** If you stress the target sound when practicing at home or in class, your mouth will learn to produce the sound more naturally during normal speech.

3. **Don’t speak too slowly or too quickly.** There is no need to try to speak as fast as you possibly can. It is better to be understood than to speak as quickly as a native speaker.

4. **Open your mouth.** No sound can properly be formed if you don’t open your mouth to let the sound out. Don’t mumble.

5. **Don’t expect to completely lose your accent.** Every speaker has a slightly different accent. Although it is nearly impossible to erase your accent, you can work to make yourself easily understood.
10 Tips for Teachers
Help ESL Students Increase Phonetic Awareness and Improve Pronunciation

1. Establish a “Sound of the Week” or “Letter of the Week” in your classroom. Focus on vocabulary and words that use the sound or letter. Have students keep a record.

2. Have students create small cards with words which contain similar sounds written on them. Punch one hole in the cards and connect them on a ring so students have something to flip through and practice the sound when they have a free moment. Make different rings for different sounds.

3. To practice sight words, words that have no logical phonology, give students a list of sight words to practice throughout the week or month. At the end of the time, play Sight Word Bingo or have a Spelling Bee.

4. Do a short daily dictation with students so they become used to hearing words and associating them with the written form.

5. Read to your students frequently as they follow along in the text. This creates a model for them to work towards. Have them practice reading aloud once they have listened to you read once.

6. To practice homonyms, create a set of cards with pairs of homonyms and one set of three (for example, to, too and two). Play Old Maid, with the extra card from the set of three serving as the Old Maid card.

7. Use index cards to teach compound words or multi-syllabic words. Split the compound words onto different cards and have students match them up or break up a multi-syllabic word onto multiple cards and have students put them together.

8. To teach diphthongs, blends or other complicated sounds, have groups of students memorize a few words with the sound and become the experts. Then, they can teach what they have learned to the rest of the class.

9. When students learn a new sound, have them search for words that contain the sound with different combinations of letters. Keep a list so students learn to recognize patterns in the words.

10. For lower level students, use baskets or bins of objects that contain the same sound. Once they have learned how to properly say the name of the object, the actual words and letters can be introduced.
Tongue Twisters

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

I saw Susie sitting in a shoe shine shop.
Where she sits she shines, and where she shines she sits.

How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?

Denise sees the fleece,
Denise sees the fleas.
At least Denise could sneeze
and feed and freeze the fleas.

The thirty-three thieves thought that they thrilled the throne throughout Thursday.

Six sick hicks nick six slick bricks with picks and sticks.

I wish to wish the wish you wish to wish, but if you wish the wish the witch wishes, I won't wish the wish you wish to wish.

S, Sh and Ch Tongue Twisters

Sherman was shy about chips and sherbet in Chattanooga.

Charlie is sure sore about the chipped Tahitian fuchsia he purchased.

Shawn shuddered and stopped chopping his hashish.

Grecian TV stations sometimes sell such cheap chinchillas.

Insane Shane chained his catch close to his ketch.

The searchers for perch perished on the chilly seashore.

Sean Schick was seasick selling seashells in shallow shoals.

'Shush', said Sally as she shredded Charlotte's cheap shirts.

Check the sheep shippers for seeping chips.
Pronunciation of Regular Past Tense Verbs

There are three different pronunciations of the letters “ed” at the end of a word. The pronunciation depends on the sound before the “ed” ending. Look at the chart below for help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“d”</th>
<th>“t”</th>
<th>“id”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Does not add a syllable)</td>
<td>(Does not add a syllable)</td>
<td>(Adds a syllable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>ch</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>k</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>p</td>
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<td>n</td>
<td>s</td>
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<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>th (hard)</td>
<td>th (soft)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vowel sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do you pronounce it?

There are three different ways to pronounce the “ed” ending of a regular past tense verb. It can sound like “t”, “d” or “id”. Put the verbs from the box in the correct column that matches how the “ed” is pronounced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>acted</th>
<th>asked</th>
<th>walked</th>
<th>called</th>
<th>cared</th>
<th>cried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>crowded</td>
<td>ended</td>
<td>filled</td>
<td>floated</td>
<td>folded</td>
<td>melted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>missed</td>
<td>needed</td>
<td>laughed</td>
<td>planned</td>
<td>played</td>
<td>rested</td>
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<tr>
<td>buzzed</td>
<td>seemed</td>
<td>shipped</td>
<td>grabbed</td>
<td>faxed</td>
<td>stopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remembered</td>
<td>waited</td>
<td>wanted</td>
<td>watched</td>
<td>wished</td>
<td>wrapped</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>id</th>
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<td></td>
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***This series of charts is from www.englishlearning.com, which is the website that sells the “Pronunciation Power” program, an invaluable tool for pronunciation instruction.