

PG-1: EF-E1

PRACTICE CUEING VOWELS OF GENERAL AMERICAN ENGLISH

Some people find the vowels of spoken English difficult to cue accurately. If you are still having problems, there may be a number of different reasons for this:

1. Additional practice is needed for cueing vowels correctly and automatically.
2. English spelling of vowels may still be misleading if you think of *spelled* words rather than *spoken* words.
3. A regional dialect -- which always affects vowels more than consonants -- may require some slight modifications in your cueing.

This lesson will deal with the first two problems; dialect variations will be dealt with [elsewhere](#).

You may either practice the entire lesson or work just on those cue positions of vowels which are still confusing at times.

Vowels Cued at the Mouth

If you need to reinforce the two vowels made at the mouth (the /ee/ sound as in "fee" and the /ur/ sound as in "fur"), work on these words and phrases. Some consonants may be cued at the side, but all vowels will be at the mouth.

Before beginning, consider the problem of English spelling. The /ee/ sound is actually spelled many different ways: me

, machine, seen, yield, receive, eat, theme, s (Spanish), clique. The /ur/ sound also has many different spellings. Included here are those which are *stressed* in a syllable and those which occur in an *unstressed* syllable: fern, sir, turn, word, Myrtle, courteous, heard, connoisseur, father, affirmation, doctor, surprise, martyr.

"tee" "were" "he" "her" "bee" "burr" "she" "shirt" "Dee" "dirt" "Pete" "pert"
 "beat" "Burt" "fleet" "flirt" "niece" "nurse" "he's" "hers" "key" "Kurt" "quiche"
 "Hirsh" "beast" "burst" "teen" "turn" "bean" "burn" "lean" "learn" "peace"
 "purse" "wheel" "whirl" "bead" "bird" "heed" "heard"

The vowels in these two syllable words and short phrases are all cued at the mouth, though some consonants will be cued at the side:

"deep earth" "real worth" "Peter" "meter" "seater" "beater" "perceive" "Burmese"
 "Bernice" "murder" "merger" "teacher" "preacher" "bleachers" "leisure"
 "seizure" "please her" "world peace" "herb tea"

Vowels Cued at the Chin

If you need to reinforce the three vowels made at the chin (/e/ as in "less," /aw/ as in "loss," and /ue/ as in "blue"), practice these words and phrases. Some consonants may be cued at the side, but all vowels will be cued at the chin.

Before beginning, consider the problem of English spelling. The /e/ sound is actually spelled many different ways: *red, deaf, says, leopard, said, bury, Thames* [Temz]. The /aw/ sound is also spelled many different ways: *short, fall, sauce, thought, thaw, George, broad*. The /ue/ sound can be spelled as in *rule, pool, do, soup, blue, Reuben, juice, flew, shoe*.

"bet" "bought" "boot" "best" "bossed" "boost" "pet" "paw" "Poo" "test" "tossed"
 "tooth" "den" "dawn" "dune" "fled" "flaw" "flew" "vet" "Vaughn" "view" "mess"
 "moss" "moose" "Les" "loss" "loose" "Jeff" "joss" "juice" "net" "gnaw" "new"
 "red" "raw" "rude" "said" "sawed" "sued" "set" "sought" "suit" "shed" "Shaw"
 "shoe" "bend" "bond" "boom" "get" "gone" "goon" "Get your wet shoes off!"

In the above practice list we have avoided words which might be said differently in some dialects. For words such as "John," "hot," "not" etc., see practice for vowels at the side or the section on [regional dialects](#). Now try these:

"red shoes" "all gone" "you said" "fruit juice" "too loose" "loose tooth" "when you saw Ted" "all you do" "call you soon" "wet paws" "new laws" "Fred knew Paul well." "You saw Ed?" "Beth bought two eggs." "You said four booths?" "Ruth Shaw weds Norm Boone."

Vowels Cued at the Throat

If you need to reinforce the three vowels made at the throat (the /a/ sound as in "cat," the /i/ as in "kit," and the /oo/ as in "good"), work on these words and phrases. Some consonants may be cued at the side, but all vowels will be at the throat.

Before beginning, consider the problems of English spelling. Believe it or not, the /a/ is always spelled with the letter "a." We are not quite so lucky with the spelling of the sound /i/: *it, myth, busy, behind, fountain, daisies, plumage*. The /oo/ sound is also spelled in a variety of ways: *pull, book, wolf, could*.

"pal" "pull" "pill" "pat" "put" "pit" "cad" "could" "kid" "bat" "bull" "bill"
 "tack" "took" "tick" "back" "book" "Bic" "knack" "nook" "Nick" "lack" "look"
 "lick" "had" "hood" "hid" "shack" "shook" "Shick" "wax" [waks], "wool" "will"
 "mix" "Max" "full" "fill" "rack" "rook" "Rick"

The vowels in these short phrases are all cued at the throat, though some consonants will be cued at the side:

"pussy cat" "good kid" "good looking man" "pitty-pat" "full tank" "mad bull"
 "Give that book back!" "Jill took this pill." "Is that good?" "Look at that rabbit."
 "last class" "Tim took Ann's Bic." "Is Bill at bat?" "This good looking man is Randy Brooks."

Vowels Cued at the Side

If you need to reinforce the three vowels cued at the side (the /oh/ sound as in "toe," the /ah/ as in "Shah," and the /uh/ as in "huh?") work on these words and phrases. Remember that the /oh/ is always cued *side/forward*, the /ah/ is generally cued *side/forward*, and the /uh/ is cued *side/down*. More about that in the next lesson.

Before beginning, consider the problem of English spelling. The /oh/ sound is actually spelled many different ways: *go, slow, soul, goat, and beau*. The /ah/ also has numerous spellings: *far, sergeant, memoir, hearth*, (and in General American Dialect) *John*, and *not*. The /uh/ has many spellings, especially when it occurs in an unstressed syllable: *much, come, trouble, flood, does, bove, final, sofa, national, porous, and porpoise*.

"Ha!" "Ho!" "Huh!" "Pa" "Poe" "puff" "bah" "bow" "buff" "tar" "toe" "tough"
 "fudge" "dark" "dough" "duffle" "Ma" "mow" "muff" "la" "low" "luff" "star"
 "stow" "stuff" "car" "Coke" "cuff"

All vowels and consonants in these two and three syllable words and phrases are cued at the side:

"ago" "above" "soda" "Rhoda" "Coca-cola" "mocha" "go slow" "slow up" "Sha-na-na"
 "go cart" "Margo" "Columbus" "Don't budge!" "The car won't start." "The car won't go far."

For additional practice cueing the vowels at the side, turn to the next lesson. The following phrases and sentences include all four vowel positions:

"Eat it all up!" "When will he come home?" "Would you hurt the puppy?" "Don't tease your sister."
 "Be home at noon, please." "Start moving, please!" "Don't shoot that seagull."
 "He's you Uncle Sam." "Doris will see us." "Shall we tell her folks?"

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