

Pronunciation What sound is it? (Teacher training worksheet)

Read the descriptions of someone making English sounds and identify the sound or sounds in each sentence by writing the correct phonemic symbols:

1. Put your finger in front of your mouth as if you were asking someone to be quiet, then stick out your tongue until it touches that finger. Bite your tongue and blow air out of your mouth without using your voice.
2. Make a /p/ sound, but using your voice
3. Make a vowel sound like the /i/ in fish, but longer and with a wider mouth
4. The first sound is like a double sound with /er/ followed quickly by /u/, whereas the second sound is similar but is like a single longer /o/ sound.
5. It is like a voiced /sh/ or like the first sound in “jazz”, but a single smooth sound and without a puff of air
6. In the first sound you flap your tongue once, touching the top of the inside of your mouth quite far back. In the second sound, you should move your tongue as little as possible (it can help to bite your bottom lip with your top teeth)
7. You have exactly the same mouth position as /g/, but without using your voice.
8. It’s like /f/, but put your fingers on your voice box and make sure it vibrates.
9. These are the two most similar sounds in English. The first one is the middle sound in “cup”, and the second is pronounced a little bit further back in your mouth and with the sides of your mouth pulled a bit tighter.
10. It’s like a long version of the middle sound in “cat”, but with your mouth more open.

Without looking at the descriptions above, explain the same sounds to your partner and see if they make the sounds that you want them to produce.

Do the same with other sounds.

Are there any other typical pronunciation problems for your students? How could you explain?



Do you think the activities being explained by the teachers below would be useful for improving comprehension and production of individual sounds for your students? Could you use them in your classes?

1. (Minimal pairs stations) “Listen to me saying the two sounds. If I say /p/, everyone run and touch the “P” flashcard on the far wall. If I say /b/, everyone run and touch the “B”. The last person to touch the correct wall is out of the game. The last person standing is the winner”
2. “Hold a piece of paper in front of your mouth. Try to make the paper move when you say the /p/ words, but not when you say the /b/ words.”
3. “Cup your hands over your ears. When you say ‘judge’ you should hear a vibration, but when you say ‘church’ there shouldn’t be any”
4. “Put the mirror in front of your mouth. When you say ‘has’, the mirror should become steamed up, but when you say ‘as’ it shouldn’t”
5. (Word stress board race) “Team A, stand in a line in front of the left hand column on the whiteboard. Team B, stand in a line on the right. The first person in the line has to write one word with the number of syllables written in that column, pass the pen back to the next person in the line, and then go to the back of the queue. You can help the person at the front by shouting out answers, but they must write one word before they can go to the back. The team with most correct words in their column when I shout stop is the winner. 3 minutes starting... NOW!”
6. (Minimal pairs board race- same as Word Stress Board Race, but with the right column being words containing one sound and the left column being words containing a similar sound)

Do you think the teachers above explain the activities well, e.g. do they elicit and simplify their language enough? Can you improve the explanation and add instruction checking questions?

Do you know any other tips or games for pronunciation that you could explain to your partner?