

DIAGNOSTIC ACTIVITY

Your Voice Studio: Train Your Clarity · Identifying Pronunciation Needs

Purpose

This activity helps you identify which of the six target sound contrasts your students find difficult when reading aloud. It is **not a formal test**. It is a structured observation tool that gives you a starting point for deciding which sections and activities of the webpage to assign to each student.

How to Use This Activity

Ask each student to read the twelve sentences on the following page aloud, one at a time, at a natural pace. The student receives the sentences **without any highlighting**. Your copy (this page) shows the target words underlined and in bold, so you know exactly what to listen for.

As the student reads, use the Observation Checklist to note whether you observe difficulty with each contrast. You do not need phonetic training to do this. Simply listen for whether the student makes the target words sound clearly different from each other. For example, in sentence 1, does the student pronounce *brother* and *very* with clearly different initial sounds, or do they sound the same?

If you are not sure what you heard, it is perfectly fine to ask the student to read the sentence again. You can also spread the activity across several classes rather than doing it all at once.

For each contrast, mark one of three options on the checklist: **ND** (no difficulty observed), **SD** (some difficulty) or **CD** (consistent difficulty). Students who show consistent difficulty with a contrast should be directed to the corresponding unit in Sounds That Matter and the related activities across the other sections of the webpage.

If you wish, you can use the notes space under each student to write down concrete examples of what you heard, such as a word the student found difficult or a sound they replaced with another. These examples are optional, but they can help you remember each case and decide what to assign.

When to use this activity: This diagnostic can be used at the beginning of the school year as a general screening, or at any point during the year when you notice that a student struggles with pronunciation during regular classroom activities such as reading aloud. It can also be repeated later in the year to observe progress.

Sentences — Teacher Version

Target words are shown in **bold and underlined**. Listen carefully for each contrast.

Contrast	#	Sentence
/b/ vs /v/	1	My <u>brother</u> has a <u>very</u> big <u>van</u> .
	2	The <u>vet</u> put the <u>baby bird</u> in a <u>box</u> .
/s/ vs /z/	3	His <u>sister</u> plays music on <u>Sundays</u> .
	4	These <u>dogs</u> and <u>cats</u> are always <u>busy</u> .
/ʃ/ vs /tʃ/	5	<u>She chose cheap shoes</u> for school.
	6	The <u>children</u> finished <u>washing</u> the <u>dishes</u> .
/i:/ vs /ɪ/	7	We <u>sit</u> on the <u>beach</u> and <u>eat fish</u> .
	8	His <u>team</u> will swim <u>in</u> the <u>big</u> green pool.
/æ/ vs /e/	9	The <u>man</u> in the <u>red</u> <u>hat</u> <u>sat</u> on the <u>bed</u> .
	10	My <u>best</u> friend has a <u>black</u> <u>cat</u> and a <u>pet</u> <u>hen</u> .
/æ/ vs /ʌ/	11	My <u>mum</u> has a <u>black</u> <u>cup</u> and a <u>fun</u> <u>bag</u> .
	12	The <u>bus</u> <u>ran</u> fast <u>but</u> the <u>sun</u> was hot.

Observation Checklist

For each student, mark: **ND** = no difficulty observed · **SD** = some difficulty · **CD** = consistent difficulty

Student	/b/ vs /v/	/s/ vs /z/	/ʃ/ vs /tʃ/	/i:/ vs /ɪ/	/æ/ vs /e/	/æ/ vs /ʌ/
Notes / examples (optional):						
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