

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Get to Know Your Speech Sounds: R

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### How is the Sound Produced?



- R is a palatal (tongue is raised against the hard palate) liquid sound, meaning the tongue forms a partial obstruction in the mouth and creates a vowel-like sound. R is a voiced sound, where the vocal folds are vibrating. R can be produced two ways: retroflexed or bunched.

#### Retroflex R:

1. Touch the sides of the tongue against the upper back teeth.
2. Curl the tip of the tongue back.
3. Keeping the tongue tense, turn the voice on to say R.

#### Bunched R:

1. Touch the sides of the tongue against the upper back teeth.
2. Pull the tongue back in the mouth to form a "bunched" shape or bowl shape with the tongue.
3. Keeping the tongue tense, turn the voice on to say R.

### Types of R

**Prevocalic R** occurs before the vowel in the word (e.g. rose).

**Vocalic R** occurs after the vowel in the word (i.e. bear). The vowel can change how the R sounds. Vocalic R includes "ar, er, or, air, ear, ire."

**R clusters** occur when R follows another consonant (e.g. bread, friend).

### When Does the Sound Develop?\*



- 50% of children produce R by age 3. This is when the sound is emerging.
- 90% of children produce R by age 5. This is when the sound should be acquired. If the child is not producing

the sound by this point, speak with a speech-language pathologist.

### Common Errors



- **Gliding**— Prevocalic R is commonly affected by the phonological process of gliding, or replacing a liquid R with a glide sound /w, y/ (e.g. "wed" for "red"). This process is typically eliminated by age 6-7.



- **Vowelization**— Vocalic R is commonly affected by the phonological process of vowelization, or replacing a liquid sound R with a vowel sound (e.g. "fuh" for "four"). This process is typically eliminated by age 6.



### Tips for Cueing\*\*

#### 1. Verbal



- "Pull your tongue up and back."
- "Make a growling sound."

(\*Tips for Cueing" continued on page 2)

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## 2. Visual



- Show the student the picture above. Ask the child to describe how the teeth and lips look.
- Use a mirror to have the child see the difference between R and /w/.
- Because the tongue position is difficult to see, it is helpful to use a mouth model to demonstrate the position of the tongue when saying R.

## 3. Tactile



- Rub a lollipop against the sides of the back molars to help the student learn where to place the sides of the tongue.
- Have the child place his/her hands on the sides of the his/her chair he/she is sitting on. Pull up on the chair to help create tension in the body/tongue while saying R.
- Have the child slide the tongue tip along the roof of the mouth to practice curling the tongue for retroflex R.

## Practice\*\*\*



Note: Even though a word may end with another letter, if the R sound is pronounced last, it is considered a R final word (e.g., fire).

### -Phonemic Awareness

- Name each picture. Point to the pictures with the R sound.†



### -Isolation

- Practice R while tracing each letter.



### -Syllable

- ro-ro-ro-ro-ro
- ray-ray-ray-ray-ray
- ar-ar-ar-ar-ar
- er-er-er-er-er
- ree-rid-ray-ree-rie-ray

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<b>-Word</b>	<b>Prevocalic R</b>	<b>Vocalic R</b>	<b>R blends</b>
	<u>run</u>	teacher	break
	<u>rain</u>	barn	crab
	<u>ring</u>	corn	drip
	<u>raisin</u>	chair	grass
	<u>reef</u>	fire	present
	<u>rope</u>	deer	train

**-Phrase**

- a small rat
- read a book
- the soft rabbit
- bow and arrow
- a huge dinosaur
- in the backyard
- use a crayon
- grab an apple

**-Sentence**

- The baby has a rattle.
- Melissa loves to go to recess.
- The rocket shot into space.
- The scissors are in the desk.
- Did you listen to the story?
- Mom bought new earrings.
- It is breezy outside.
- We take a trip each fall.

**-Structured Language**

- Sing the song "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Have the child fill in the words "row, your, merrily, dream" or sing the song him/herself using his/her best R sound.
- Arr! Talk like a pirate! Use the words: pirate, parrot, treasure, desert island
- Pick out a page in a book and mark the words with the R sound with sticky notes. Read the page with your best R sound.

**-Unstructured Language**

- Tell how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich using your best R sound.
- Talk about your favorite winter activity using your best R sound.
- Talk about your favorite restaurant using your best R sound.

Related Handy Handouts®:  
[201 – Types of Articulation Errors – A Simple Guide](#)  
[640 – Get to Know Your Speech Sounds: Introduction \(Part 1\)](#)  
[102 – Why is "R" So Hard to Say?](#)

\*These milestones are based on monolingual, native English speakers. If a child speaks more than one language, acquisition of English sounds can be influenced by the other language(s). These differences do not necessarily indicate a speech sound disorder. Please consult with a speech-language pathologist.

\*\*Not all cues are appropriate in all cases. Please consult with a speech-language pathologist before cueing.

\*\*\*Ask your child's speech-language pathologist which targets are appropriate to practice.

<sup>1</sup>"rose", "cherry", and "hammer" contain the R sound.

**Resources:**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (n.d.) Age of Customary Consonant Production. (Practice Portal). Retrieved June 21, 2023 from [www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Articulation-and-Phonology/](http://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Articulation-and-Phonology/)

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (n.d.) Selected Phonological Processes. (Practice Portal). Retrieved June 21, 2023, from [www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Articulation-and-Phonology/](http://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Articulation-and-Phonology/)

Playing with Words. (n.d.) Common Phonological Processes. Retrieved June 6, 2024, from <https://www.playingwithwords365.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Common-Phonological-Processes-Chart.pdf>

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