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Tongue Twisters as a Therapy Tool

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What Are Tongue Twisters?

Tongue twisters are words, phrases, or sentences that are difficult to say because of a varying combination of similar sounds. They can be very challenging as well as motivating and fun to learn. People want to repeat tongue twisters. This makes them ideal for reinforcing newly acquired articulation skills, increasing mean length of utterance, and improving self-monitoring skills.

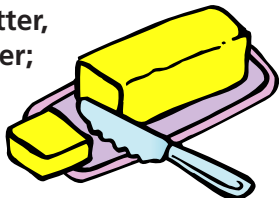
What Are Some Examples of Tongue Twisters?



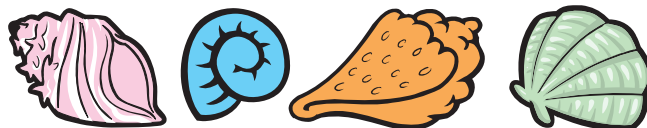
Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
How many pickled peppers did Peter Piper pick?

Betty Botter bought some butter,
But, she said, the butter's bitter;
If I put it in my batter
It will make my batter bitter.
But, a bit of better butter
Will make my batter better.

So, she bought a bit of butter
Better than her bitter butter,
And she put it in her batter
And the batter was not bitter.
So, 'twas better Betty Botter
Bought a bit of better butter.



She sells seashells by the sea shore.
The shells she sells are surely seashells.
So, if she sells shells on the seashore,
I'm sure she sells seashore shells.



How Do I Use Tongue Twisters in Speech Therapy?

The speech-language pathologist (SLP) begins by saying the tongue twister completely so as to emphasize the targeted sound. Next, he/she identifies the target sound words with the child. The child says the words, producing the target sound correctly. Then the child says the tongue twister by either repeating after the SLP, one line or phrase at a time, or by choral reading (reading the same thing at the same time). When accuracy improves, you can encourage the child to read a little faster. Each repetition of a complete tongue twister is a little faster than the one before. The child tries to keep the words from becoming "twisted."



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Do Tongue Twisters Help with other Communication Skills?

Tongue twisters can provide a variety of opportunities to practice speech/language goals. You can use tongue twisters in the following ways.

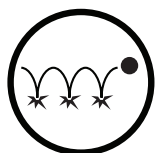


- **Auditory Discrimination:**

The SLP purposefully misarticulates a word(s) while saying the tongue twister. The child listens and identifies the incorrect productions.



- **Language:** Have the child complete sentences, answer "Wh" questions, and identify regular and irregular past tense verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. You can also use the target words to teach or reinforce rhyming, synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms.



- **Fluency:** Have the child practice a smooth rate and rhythm of speech.



- **Voice:** Have the child practice using proper breath support and vocal hygiene.



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