

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Get to Know Your Speech Sounds: /l/

### How is the Sound Produced?



• /l/ is typically made with the tongue tip touching the alveolar ridge (the bony ridge behind the teeth). You can also touch the tongue tip to the bottom of the top front teeth or the outside of the top front teeth. The sides of the tongue are flat.

- Teeth are apart with the jaw dropped.
- The corners of the lips are pulled back slightly.
- Air flows around the sides of the tongue.
- The voice is on; the vocal cords are vibrating.

### When Does the Sound Develop?



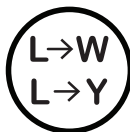
- 50% of children produce the /l/ sound by age 3. This is when the sound is emerging.
- 90% of children produce the /l/ sound by age 6. This is when the sound should be acquired. If the child is not producing the sound by this point, speak with a speech-language pathologist.

### Common Errors\*



- /l/ is a frequently misarticulated sound. It has similar properties to vowels and other consonants, which makes /l/ difficult for many children to perceive and produce.
  - /w/ is substituted for /l/ when the lips "round", like blowing a bubble (e.g., "loose" becomes "woose").
  - "y" is substituted for /l/ when the tongue tip is lowered (e.g., "lawn" becomes "yawn").
  - A vowel sound is substituted for /l/ when the tongue stays in a neutral position (e.g., "trouble" becomes "trouboh").

- /l/ is impacted by some Phonological Processes:



**Gliding**— liquid sounds /l/ and /r/ are substituted for glides /w/ and "y" (e.g., "lizard" becomes "wizard", "luck" becomes "yuck"). This process should be gone by ages 6-7.



**Cluster Reduction**— /l/ is often in consonant clusters, which is when two or more consonants are put together. The /l/ sound is taken away in the cluster during cluster reduction (e.g., "glue" becomes "gue"). This process should be gone by age 4.



### Tips for Cueing\*\*

#### 1. Verbal



- "Point your tongue behind your teeth!"
- "Lips back and mouth open."
- "Big smile!"
- "Make the singing noise. La la la!"

(*"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 tongue, lips, and jaw look.
- In front of a mirror, show the difference between how the error sound is made and how the /l/ is made. For example, if the child is substituting /w/ for /l/, point out how the lips are rounded during the /w/ sound and how the lips are stretched with the mouth open for the /l/ sound.
- Point up before a word with an /l/ sound to remind the child to keep their tongue tip at the top of their mouth.

## 3. Tactile



- Place an o-shaped piece of cereal on the bony ridge behind the teeth and ask the child to keep it there with the tip of their tongue. Try to make the /l/ sound while holding the cereal.

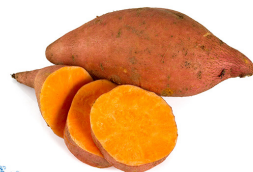
## Practice\*\*\*



- The /l/ sound can be spelled with both "l" and "ll". Even though a word may end with another letter, if /l/ sound is pronounced last, it is considered an /l/ final word (e.g., whale). The /l/ sound is underlined in these practice targets.

## -Phonemic Awareness

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



## -Isolation

- l-l-l
- llllllllll
- l-l-llllllll

## -Syllable

- la-la-la-la-la-la
- ill-ill-ill-ill-ill-ill
- ella-ella-ella-ella-ella
- lee-la-lee-la-lee-la
- lee-la-lay-lo-lee-la-lay-lo

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## -Word



Initial	Final	Medial	Recurring	Blend
love	bull	elbow	lullaby	blow
leaf	nail	balloon	little	fault
leopard	pencil	sailboat	lollipop	clarinet

## -Phrase



- a long book
- tell the truth
- peanut butter and jelly
- a small island
- level the label
- use blue cleaner

## -Sentence



- She took a lucky shot.
- A big smile grew upon his face.
- The elephant began to eat.
- Logan carries his umbrella in the fall.
- The frog lollygagged on the lily pads.
- Flowers bloom in the plains.

## -Structured Language



- Tell a story about lazy lizard in a lagoon with your best // sound.
- Draw a picture of a sailboat. Explain your picture using the words "sailboat", "lake", and "porthole" with your best // sound.
- Pick out a page in a book and mark the words with the // sound with sticky notes. Read the page with your best // sound.

## -Unstructured Language



- Talk about your favorite food and why you like it using your best // sound.
- Explain how to get to school using your best // sound.
- Read a page of a book with your best // sound (unmarked).



### Resources:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (n.d.) Age of Customary Consonant Production. (Practice Portal). Retrieved August, 16, 2022, 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 August, 16, 2022, from [www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Articulation-and-Phonology/](http://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Articulation-and-Phonology/).

\*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.

† "Lime", "ballerina", and "football" contain the // sound.

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