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Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Get to Know Your Speech Sounds: "th"

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How is the Sound Produced?

"th" is a linguadental (made with the tongue and teeth) fricative sound, meaning there is a continuous flow of air. It can be a voiced sound, where the vocal folds are vibrating, or a voiceless sound, where the vocal folds are not vibrating.



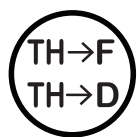
1. Place the tip of the tongue slightly between the teeth.
2. Blow air between the teeth to produce "th".
3. For voiceless "th" words, (e.g. teeth), the voice is off. To produce voiced "th" words (e.g. brother), turn the voice on (or hum) as you blow air.

When Does the Sound Develop?*



- 50% of children produce voiced and voiceless "th" by age 4. This is when the sound is emerging.
- 90% of children produce voiceless "th" by age 7 and voiced "th" 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



- Voiceless "th" is commonly replaced with /f/ (e.g. "baf" for "bath").
- Voiced "th" is commonly replaced with /d/ (e.g. "dis" for "this") or /v/ (e.g. "brover" for "brother").

Tips for Cueing**

1. Verbal



- "Put your tongue between your teeth."
- "Blow air."



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 "th" and the error sound. For example, if the child is producing /f/ for "th", point out how the lower lip touches the teeth and the tongue is not between the teeth.

3. Tactile



- Have the child place his or her hand in front of the mouth to feel the air as it blows out.

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Practice***

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

-Phonemic Awareness

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



-Syllable



- tho-tho-tho-tho-tho
- thay-thay-thay-thay-thay
- ooth-ooth-ooth-ooth-ooth
- ith-ith-ith-ith-ith
- thee-tho-thay-thee-tho-thay

-Word

Initial	Final	Medial
<u>th</u> umb	bat <u>th</u> tub	mat <u>h</u>
<u>th</u> irsty	pat <u>h</u> way	toot <u>h</u>
<u>th</u> is	mo <u>th</u> er	breath <u>e</u>
<u>th</u> ere	weath <u>e</u> r	smoo <u>th</u>



-Isolation

- Practice "th" while tracing each letter. Practice first with your voice off and then practice with your voice on.

th th th th th

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-Phrase



- picking them up
- in third place
- a chocolate smoothie
- a new toothbrush
- a smooth road
- a bath on Saturday

-Sentence



- I like this cake.
- Thank you for the present.
- I bathe every night.
- I put a wreathth on my door.
- My grandmotherth is visiting.
- Her birthday is on Monday.

-Structured Language



- Describe how you get ready for school. Use the words "toothbrush, bathroom, clothes."
- Talk about a trip to the dentist using the words "mouth, toothpaste, teeth, toothbrush, toothache."
- Pick out a page in a book and mark the words with the "th" sound with sticky notes. Read the page with your best "th" sound.

-Unstructured Language



- Tell how to play your favorite game using your best "th" sound.
- Talk about your favorite summer activity using your best "th" sound.
- Describe your family using your best "th" sound.



*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.

† "thumb", "feather," and "Earth" contain the "th" 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/

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/

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