

Consonant clusters

Instructions

How this activity supports learning

Consonant clusters (groups of two or more consonant sounds) can often cause pronunciation difficulties for learners of English. However, consonant clusters at the beginning of words can affect international intelligibility and are therefore a priority pronunciation feature for all learners.

This activity practises frequent initial two-consonant clusters using words that students already know. It is suitable for students of different levels and age groups, from upper-primary to adult.



For more on **priority pronunciation features**, see page 15 of *English Pronunciation for a Global World*: www.oup.com/elt/expert

Classroom instructions

Before the lesson:

Decide whether you want to do this activity using all 20 consonant clusters or cut up the worksheet and focus on five or ten clusters at a time. You could also use the blank worksheet and create your own activity to practise other consonant clusters or sounds.

During the lesson:

- 1 Hand out the worksheet and ask students to suggest words that begin with the consonant clusters on the sheet. Correct and drill students' pronunciation, if necessary.
- 2 In pairs or groups, students complete the worksheet with example words. You could ask them to think of one word per cluster or more than one, depending on the time available.
- 3 Take feedback from the whole class, drilling and correcting students' pronunciation as necessary.

Variations

To make this activity a competitive game, put students into teams, set a time limit, and challenge them to think of as many example words as possible. Award one point for each correct word or for each correct word that no other team has thought of.

You could make the activity more challenging for higher-level students by asking them to think of words related to a broad topic or theme, for example, food, fashion, or nature.

Consonant clusters

Example

gr

green
grapes

dr

draw
dry

st

stay
story

cr

cry
creature

pr

present
princess

sw

swim
sweets

sm

smile
small

bl

blue
blog

tr

trousers
try

fl

fly
flower

cl

clear
cloud

sc

scared
scarf

tw

twenty
twins

br

brave
brother

sl

sleep
slice

pl

play
please

sp

spoon
space

gl

glass
glove

fr

friend
French

sn

snow
snake

gr

dr

st

cr

pr

sw

sm

bl

tr

fl

cl

sc

tw

br

sl

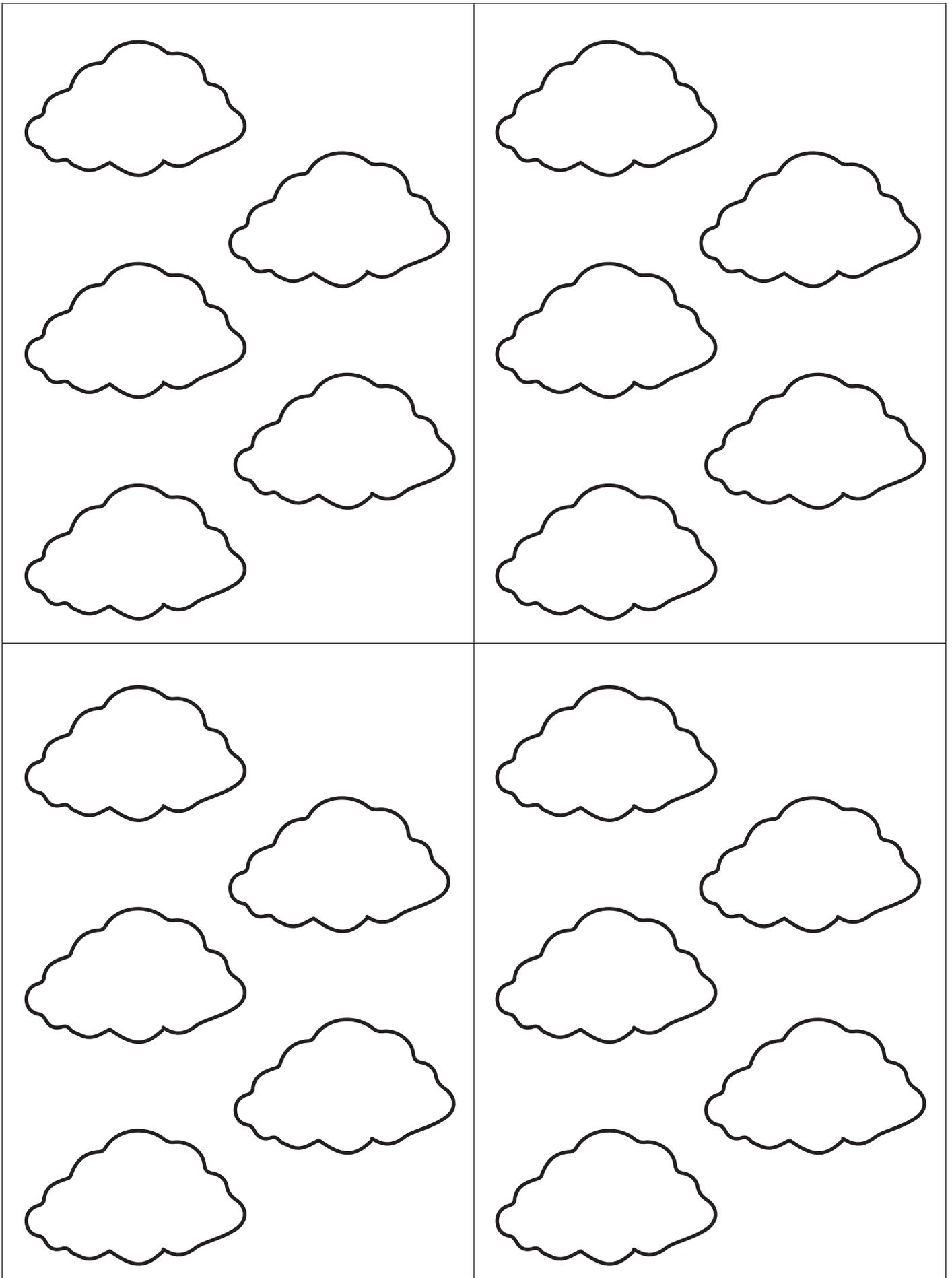
pl

sp

gl

fr

sn



Pronunciation and vocabulary

Instructions

How this activity supports learning

Pronunciation is integral to vocabulary learning. As well as knowing the meaning and written form of a word or phrase, students need to be able to recognize and produce its spoken form. Good pronunciation can also help students retain vocabulary more effectively.

This activity guides students through the process of recording the pronunciation of new vocabulary. It is suitable for students of different levels and age groups, from upper-primary to adult.



For more on **vocabulary learning**, see page 11 of *English Pronunciation for a Global World*: www.oup.com/elt/expert

Classroom instructions

Use this activity after you have introduced some new vocabulary and students have had an opportunity to hear and practise its spoken form.

- 1 Ask students what they need to know about a word to be able to use it correctly. Remind them why pronunciation is important.
- 2 Choose a word that they have met recently and complete an example word card on the board. With younger students or beginners, you could use Version A. With older or higher-level students, you could use Version B and add more detailed information.
- 3 Ask students what aspects of the word's pronunciation are important to learn, such as its stress pattern and any difficult sounds. Explore different ways to remember this information, for example:
 - Dividing words into syllables *use / ful*
 - Drawing circles to show word stress *useful Oo*
 - Adding notes about difficult sounds. If students are not familiar with IPA symbols, they can do this by making links with similar-sounding words and syllables in their first language, English, or another language.
 'climb' /klaɪm/
 'climb' – rhymes with 'time'
 'climb' ≈ 'Jaime'
- 4 Hand out the worksheet and ask students to complete cards for two more words, working individually, in pairs, or in groups.

Variations

You could follow this activity with a class discussion about the way students record vocabulary. They could consider the pros and cons of using a notebook, word cards, or digital methods, and suggest what kind of information is important to include.

It can be useful to build up a class set of vocabulary cards. When students encounter a new word or phrase, complete a word card with the class or nominate a student to do so. Use these cards for quick revision and consolidation activities at the beginning or end of a lesson.

Word / phrase:	
Meaning:	Pronunciation:

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Meaning:	Pronunciation:

Word / phrase:	
Meaning: Definition / synonym / translation:	Pronunciation: Syllables and stress:
Example sentence:	
Collocations:	Sounds:

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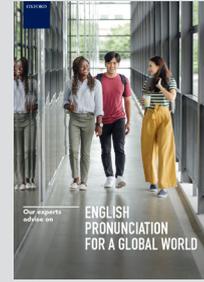
Exploring connected speech

Instructions

How this activity supports learning

Connected speech refers to the way that fluent speakers produce speech sounds as a continuous stream. It often results in changes to pronunciation, with sounds modified, omitted, or added, and can make it difficult for learners of English to recognize words they know.

This activity raises students' awareness of connected speech. It is most suitable for learners at intermediate level and above.



For more on **connected speech**, see pages 11 and 16 of *English Pronunciation for a Global World*: www.oup.com/elt/expert

Classroom instructions

Use this worksheet after students have listened to a recording with a focus on meaning. Choose an extract of up to 15 seconds from the recording that students found challenging.

- 1 Play the extract several times and ask students to transcribe it in pairs or small groups.
- 2 Give students the worksheet and hand out or display a written transcript of the recorded extract. Ask them to compare it with their transcriptions.
- 3 Ask students to identify words or phrases that they know in their written form but found it difficult to recognize when spoken. Students complete Part 1 of the worksheet in their pairs or groups.
- 4 Now ask students to consider why the words and phrases were difficult to recognize. Show them the reasons in Part 2 of the worksheet and ask for examples. Then play the extract again several times. Students identify one or more reasons for each example. They could also add notes about what they thought they heard, either in English or in their first language.
- 5 Finally, look at words and phrases that students found difficult. Ask what they heard and how this was different from the pronunciation they expected to hear. For example:

Word / phrase	Students expect to hear ...	Students hear ...
actually	/'æktjuəli/	/'ækʃli/

Variations

If you have the technology to do so, you could slow down the recording. This can help students to discover whether they found the recording challenging due to its speed, the quality of the sounds, or both.

Transcript for example worksheet:

Well, you know, there had been a few books written on this subject before, but I thought this new book was very interesting and actually quite original because of the way it made you think about the subject from the point of view of lots of different people.

1 Look at the transcript. Which words or phrases were difficult to recognize when you heard them spoken? Write some examples in the boxes below.

1 *you know*

Reason(s): *A*

4 *actually*

Reason(s): *A, D*

2 *there had been*

Reason(s): *C, D*
It sounds like 'the red bin'

5 *because*

Reason(s): *D*
It sounds like 'cuz'

3 *very interesting*

Reason(s): *A, B*
Really fast

6 *lots of*

Reason(s): *C, D*
It sounds like 'lotsa'

2 Why was each word or phrase difficult to recognize? Choose one or more reasons for each one.

- A** It was very fast and I didn't hear it clearly.
- B** I couldn't separate the sounds into words.
- C** I thought I heard a different word or phrase.
- D** I didn't recognize the sounds in the word.
- E** Other reason.

- 1 Look at the transcript. Which words or phrases were difficult to recognize when you heard them spoken? Write some examples in the boxes below.

1

Reason(s):

4

Reason(s):

2

Reason(s):

5

Reason(s):

3

Reason(s):

6

Reason(s):

- 2 Why was each word or phrase difficult to recognize? Choose one or more reasons for each one.

A It was very fast and I didn't hear it clearly.
B I couldn't separate the sounds into words.
C I thought I heard a different word or phrase.
D I didn't recognize the sounds in the word.
E Other reason.

Group pronunciation practice

Instructions

How this activity supports learning

Working in groups can be an effective, engaging, and non-threatening way for students to practise pronunciation. It also offers an opportunity for students to give each other feedback and for you to gather useful diagnostic information.

In this activity, students rehearse a short extract together, thinking about different aspects of pronunciation, including nuclear (sentence) stress, word stress, and difficult words and sounds. It is suitable for students of different levels and age groups, from upper-primary to adult.



For more on **diagnostic testing** and **peer and self-assessment**, see page 23 of *English Pronunciation for a Global World*: www.oup.com/elt/expert

Classroom instructions

Before the lesson:

Choose two to three sentences—preferably complex sentences—from a text that your students are already familiar with. Graded readers are often suitable for this purpose. Insert your extract into the box at the top of the worksheet and make a copy for each student.

During the lesson:

- 1 Ask students to look at the extract and say what they remember about the context. Check their understanding of any difficult words.
- 2 In pairs or small groups, students work through stages 1–4 of the activity, thinking about where to pause, which words and syllables to stress, and how to pronounce difficult words.
- 3 Students rehearse the text quietly by themselves. They then take turns practising it in their pairs or small groups.

Ask the students who are listening to give feedback to the student who is speaking. For example, they could give feedback on one good point about the student's pronunciation and one area for improvement.

During this stage, move around the class, helping students as required. You can also listen to individual students and note down your observations.

- 4 If the technology is available, ask students to record themselves. Use this recording to assess your students or ask them to use it to self-assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Variations

The activity could be carried out using a variety of text types, both dialogues and monologues. These might be drawn from authentic sources such as weather forecasts, taken from coursebooks, or written by students.

If the text you have used has been transcribed from a recording, students could listen to the recording after the activity and compare the speaker's pronunciation to their own.

With higher-level students, you could discuss the intonation they use for each group of words.

You are going to practise this extract in pairs or small groups. Read the extract. Then follow the steps below.

The Mole worked very hard all morning, / cleaning his little home. // He brushed, /
and he washed; // he cleaned the floors and the walls, // he stood on chairs to
wash the tops of cupboards, // he got under the beds, // he took up the carpets. //
He cleaned and he cleaned, / until his arms and his back ached with tiredness. //

- 1 Where will you pause? Mark the places in the text. Use / for a short pause and // for a long pause.
- 2 Look at each group of words. Which syllables will carry the main stress? Underline them.
- 3 What words and sounds in the text are difficult to pronounce? Practise saying them separately.
brushed cupboards ached tiredness
- 4 Practise the text by yourself. Then practise it in your pair or group.

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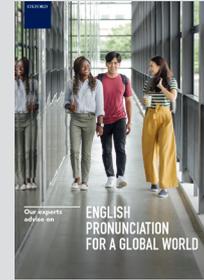


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- 2 Look at each group of words. Which syllables will carry the main stress? Underline them.
- 3 What words and sounds in the text are difficult to pronounce? Practise saying them separately.
- 4 Practise the text by yourself. Then practise it in your pair or group.

How this activity supports learning

This activity is designed to make learners aware of their pronunciation goals and their strengths and weaknesses in pronunciation. It can be included in a learner portfolio, as a way for students to reflect on pronunciation work and record feedback.

The worksheet can be adapted for students of different ages, from secondary to adult. It is most suitable for students at intermediate level and above.



For more on **feedback and correction** and **learner portfolios**, see page 24 of *English Pronunciation for a Global World*: www.oup.com/elt/expert

Classroom instructions

Sections 1–3 of the worksheet:

Students could complete this part of the worksheet near the start of a course.

Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions before completing these three sections individually.

With higher-level classes, you could introduce the concepts of 'international intelligibility' and 'a specific accent of English' as possible pronunciation goals in section 3, asking students why they might choose one goal over another.

Sections 4 and 5:

Students can complete these sections over the rest of the course, as they become aware of specific strengths and weaknesses and build up their learner portfolio.

You could set aside time for students to add to these sections at the end of a lesson in which they have received feedback on their pronunciation.

Variations

Use the worksheet as the basis for a class discussion about activities and resources that students can use to address specific pronunciation problems. Students then try out these activities and resources and report back to the class on whether they found them useful.

Students could revisit the worksheet at the end of a course and see if their goals and learning priorities have changed.

1 Why am I learning English?



I want to work for an international company.

2 Who will I use English with?



Work colleagues and clients from different countries

- Native speakers
- Non-native speakers
- Both

3 My pronunciation goal



To be internationally intelligible

4 My strengths



/b/ and /p/ sounds (e.g. 'bet' / 'pet')

Long and short vowel sounds (e.g. 'ship' / 'sheep')

Consonant clusters (e.g. 'screen')

5 Areas to work on



/æ/ and /ʌ/ sounds (e.g. 'cap' / 'cup')

Word stress in long words (e.g. 'profitable')

1 Why am I learning English?



4 My strengths



2 Who will I use English with?



- Native speakers
- Non-native speakers
- Both

3 My pronunciation goal



5 Areas to work on

