**Pr Z SEBANE PHONETICS COURSE NO 3 L1 STUDENTS grs C/D/E/F/G/H/H**

**THE SYLLABLE STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH**

Syllables include a vowel sound that is peak . We call it the nucleus because it is the core of the syllable. ( The most important unit)

**The syllable is the division of the word**

. Syllables may also have one or more consonants before and after the vowel

sound. Ex :  *is* and *this*  both have one vowel sound and one syllable. *Thirty*  has two vowel sounds and two syllables, and  *mythical* has three.

**How do we divide words into syllables?**

Dictionaries and linguists argue about how to divide syllables. If possible, syllables begin with a consonant sound (be.gin), but some consonants seem to be the end of one syllable and the beginning of another. (fi.nish or break ). It doesn't really matter which system we use in teaching pronunciation.

**The key is to know how many vowels sound are in a word. The number of syllables is determined by the number of vowel sounds in a word.**

**How to count syllables**

. If learners do not recognize how many syllables a word has, they will not make sense of word stress. Syllables are measured by the beats created by vowel sounds.

The number of syllables is rarely equal to the number of vowel letters.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Vowels you see | Vowels you hear |
| Race 2  Replied 3  Finished 3  Answered 3  Laughed 2  Arranged 3 | Race 1 / reis /  Replied 2 / riplaid /  Finished 2 // / fini**ʃ**t /  Answered 2 / ænsəd /  Laughed 1 / la:ft /  arranged 2 / əreindʒd / |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 syll | 2 syll | 3syll | 4 syll | 5syll |
| Laughed  Joke  Stretched  Booked  Quick  quiet | A bout  Fo rest  Quick ly  Moun tain  De cide  An swered | De ci ded  Pro fe ssor  Po lite ly  Go vern ment  U sual ly  E xa mine | Par ti cu lar  In ven to ry  Im po ssi ble  A ccep ta ble  Re me di ate  I mme dia tly | O bli ga to ry  Re me di a tion  Sa tis fac to ry  in te lli gent ly |

A word can be divided into a limited number of syllables ( 9 to 10 ) if you add affixes .

Remember that only a vowel can make a syllable in English .

The syllable structure is as follows : ( V means vowel , C, means consonant

V : or, a / o: / / ei / or / ə /

VC : at , in ; if , / æt / / in/, / if /

CV: no , pour , hire / nəu / , / po: /; / haiə /

VCC: ink , apt / ink / , / æpt /

CCV : blue , cry / blu: / , / krai /

CVC: hell , sit / hel / , / sit /

CVCC : hoped , laughed / həupt / , / la:ft /

CCVC: trick , brain / trik / , / brein /

CCVCC: stoned , flights / stəund / , / flaits /

CVCCC : hints , pinked , launched , / hints /, / pinkt /, / lont**ʃt**/

CCCV : spray , square / sprei / , skweə /

CCCVCC: strikes / straiks /

CCCVCCC: stretched / s t r e t**ʃ** t /

**Pr Z SEBANE L1 Phonetics course**

**CONSONANT CLUSTERS COURSE NO 4**

**When 2 or more consonants precede or follow a vowel in the same syllable as in stretched / s t r e tʃ t / : CCC VCCC , CCVCC: stoned,/ st ou nd / , quiet / kw aiə t /,** **we call this group of consonants : a consonant cluster . When the group of consonants occurs before the vowel, it is initial consonant cluster, when it occurs after the vowel, in the end of the word , it is final consonant cluster.**

What is a Consonant Cluster in English? A consonant cluster is 2, 3 or 4 consonant sounds following one another in the same syllable. Examples of consonants clusters with 2 consonant sounds are /bl/ in ‘black’, /sk/ in ‘desk’ and the /pt/ at the end of ‘helped’. Examples of clusters with 3 consonant sounds are /str/ in ‘string’, /sks/ in ‘tasks’ and the /kst/ in ‘sixty’. Examples of clusters with 4 consonant sounds in a row are /ksts/ in ‘texts’ and /mpst/ in ‘glimpsed’.

Consonant clusters appear in many languages. In French , both initial and final consonant clusters exist : ex ; CCV prix , / pr i /, VCC axe , / a ks / , CCVCCC spectre / sp e ktr / .

In standard Arabic, only final consonant clusters are possible :VCC / a kl / ( food ) , CVCC / ke lb/ dog , /qa Sr / castle , / u xt / sister etc ……….so, we can state that the standard Arabic syllable structure is CVCC

However the different regional Algerian Arabic varieties do allow both initial and final consonant clusters / **ʃ**r a bt / I drank.

Berber , German and many other languages practice both types of consonant clusters.

In this post we’ll cover why pronouncing consonant clusters clearly is important for speaking clear English, we’ll talk about which consonant clusters are difficult for non-native English speakers and ESL students and how you can improve your consonant clusters.

There are a 3 main reasons why pronouncing consonant clusters correctly is so important for speaking clear English that people can understand easily.

1. **Consonant Clusters Are Everywhere**  
The first reason is simply that consonant clusters are in so many English words. If you mispronounce them, you’ll be mispronouncing many, many words in English.

2. **Consonant Clusters Distinguish Between Words**  
The second reason is that if you mispronounce a consonant cluster, it can mean another word, and this is confusing to listeners. For example, if you leave the /l/ out in ‘black’ it sounds like ‘back’ and ‘click’ becomes ‘kick’. If you leave the /r/ out in ‘free’ it’s ‘fee’ and ‘trip’ it becomes ‘trip’. As you can see consonant clusters are essential in telling one word from another in English. Mispronouncing them causes confusion.

3. **Consonant Clusters Are Needed For Grammar**Correct consonant clusters are essential for pronouncing grammar markers in English. Important grammatical markers such as past tense endings and plurals require the pronunciation of consonant clusters.

For example, if a speaker leaves the /t/ sound off the end of ‘helped’ it becomes ‘help’ which means the listener doesn’t know that it happened in the past. This is confusing to listeners and can be an obvious grammar mistake.

Leaving the /s/ sound off when there is more than one of something, such as ‘I have 3 meeting’ which should be ‘I have 3 meetings’ or ‘The client are waiting ‘ instead of ‘The clients are waiting’.  These are obvious grammar mistakes.

Pronouncing consonant clusters clearly is very important for pronouncing English clearly.

To give you an idea of how common consonant clusters are, take a look at this sentence.

“Access to the road was blocked from traffic yesterday because of the accident”.

How many consonant clusters can you find in the sentence above?

Let’s look at them more closely.

Consonant Clusters That Are Obvious: /bl/ in blocked, /fr/ in from, /tr/ in traffic, /st/ in yesterday, /nt/ in accident.

Consonant Clusters That Are Less Obvious: /ks/ in access, /kt/ in blocked,  /ks/ in accident.

So there are 8 consonant clusters in that sentence. Would you have missed any of those out? Are they easy for you to make?

Maybe you got the obvious ones but not some of the less obvious ones.

You can see that consonant clusters are very common in English words. This means that pronouncing consonant clusters and blends clearly is very important for speaking clear English that other people can understand easily.

You’ll practice consonant clusters below! To improve consonant clusters you need to listen carefully and feel each consonant in the cluster. You’ll practise consonant clusters further down the page – make sure you don’t miss it!

**Common Consonant Clusters Problems**

What Are Common Consonant Clusters Problems?

The most common problems with pronunciation of consonant clusters is that speakers leave a sound out in a cluster, for example when pronouncing the word ‘six’ they might say ‘sik’ instead of six /sɪk

The word ‘success’ they might say ‘suses’ instead of ‘success’/səkˈses/. This process of leaving out a sound when pronouncing clusters and consonant blends is called **consonant cluster reduction.**

Another common problem is that speakers might add a vowel in between the consonants. For example, they might say ‘puh-lease’ instead of ‘please’ or they might pronounce the word ‘desks’ like ‘de-suh-kus’. This is something that speakers of Arabic s and speakers of Chinese should check that they aren’t doing.

Less common problems for pronouncing consonant clusters includes changing the order of the consonant sounds, for example when pronouncing the word ‘six’ they might say ‘sisk’ for ‘six’.

Another less common problem for pronouncing clusters is adding an extra sound into the cluster, for example.  ‘sikst’ for ‘six’.

Let’s look at difficulties that non-native English speakers have with pronouncing consonant clusters in more detail.

There are two main problems that learners have. These are:

### ****1. Common Consonant Clusters Problems – A Spelling Problem****

The most common pronunciation problem of consonant clusters occurs because English is not a phonetic language. Many ESL speakers mispronounce some consonant clusters in some words, because the consonant cluster is not made clear by the spelling of the word.

This is the most common problem with consonant clusters, as it affects almost all learners of English. Let’s call this – Consonant Clusters – Spelling Problem.

# Pronunciation - Practice Material for Consonant Clusters

# Practice Materials for Consonant Clusters

These materials can be used as additional phonetic exercises for practicing typical initial and final consonant clusters in short frequently used words. Be careful not to insert the neutral sound [ə] between the consonant sounds of the clusters. Note on transcription symbols: [θ] as in the word THIN; [ð] as in THIS; [sh] as in SHE; [zh] as in MIRAGE; [ch] as in CHEESE; [j] as in JANE; [ŋ] as in LONG.

## Initial consonant clusters

### [pl], [pr], [bl], [br]

plead – please – pleasant – plenty – plan – plastic – platter – plaza – plot – plural – plume – plug – pluck – plum – plump – plus – play – place – plain – plane – plague – plywood – plight – plow – plosive;

preach – priest – pretty – prepare – prefer – print – prison – press – present – pregnant – practice – practical – prank – problem – product – profit – proof – prove – prune – prude – professor – promote – praise – pray – prayer – price – pride – prime – private – prize – pry – proud – prowl – prose – probe – prone – program;

bleed – bleak – blink – bliss – bless – blend – black – blank – blast – block – blond – blue – bloom – blur – blood – blame – blaze – blind – blow – bloat;

breed – breeze – breathe – brief – bring – brick – brim – bread – breast – brand – bracket – bra – broad – broth – brood – broom – brook – brother – brush – brain – break – brace – bright – brow – brown – browser – broil – broken;

### [tr], [dr]

tree – treat – trim – trip – trick – trend – tread – track – trap – travel – tram – trauma – true – troop – trust – truck – trunk – tray – trace – train – trail – try – tribe – trout – troll;

dream – drill – drink – drip – draft – drama – draw – drop – droop – drew – drum – drunk – drain – drape – dry – drive – drown – drone – drove;

### [kl], [kr], [gl], [gr]

clean – clear – click – cling – clever – cleft – clan – class – clasp – clue – clerk – club – claim – clay – climb – cloud – clown – close – clone;

cream – creed – critical – crib – credit – crest – crack – crash – crawl – cross – crop – crew – cruise – crude – crook – crush – crust – crazy – crane – cry – crime – crisis – crowd – crown – crow;

glee – glib – glimpse – glare – glad – glamor – glance – glue – gloomy – glum – glide – globe – global;

green – Greek – grief – grease – grip – grim – grin – grab – gram – grand – grasp – grew – groom – group – great – grade – grave – grime – grind – ground – grow – grown – growth – gross;

### [fl], [fr]

flee – fleece – flick – flint – flip – flesh – flex – flare – flap – flax – floor – flock – floss – flew – flu – flirt – flame – flake – fly – flight – Floyd – flow – flown;

free – freeze – freak – frequent – frisk – frigid – Fred – friend – fresh – Frank – fraction – fragment – fragile – fraud – frog – frost – fruit – frame – fragrant – phrase – freight – fry – fright – frown – froze;

### [θr], / ʃr /

three – thrifty – thrill – thread – threat – threshold – thrash – throng – throb – through – threw – thrush – thrust – thrice – thrive – throat – throw – thrown – throne,

shriek – shrimp – shrink – shred – shredder – shrewd – shrug – shrine; ʒ **ʃ**

### [sk], [skr]

ski – skin – skip – skim – scare – scan – scatter – scar – score – scoff – school – scuba – skirt – skunk – skull – sculpture – skate – scale – sky – scout – scoundrel – scope – scold;

scream – screen – screech – scribble – scrimp – script – scrap – scratch – scramble – scrawl – screw – scrooge – scruple – scrutiny – scrub – scrape – scroll;

### [sl], [sm], [sn]

sleep – sleet – sleeve – sleazy – sling – slick – slim – slip – slit – slender – sledge – slam – slap – slash – slack – slang – slot – slob – sloppy – sluice – slew – slur – slurp – slum – slug – slave – slay – sleigh – sly – slide – slight – slime – slouch – slow – slope – slogan;

smear – Smith – smell – smash – smack – smart – small – smog – smock – smooth – smooch – smother – smudge – smug – smile – smoke – smolder;

sneeze – sneak – sneer – sniff – snip – snare – snack – snap – snatch – snarl – snore – snort – snorkel – snob – snoop – snug – snake – snail – snipe – sniper – snout – snow;

### [sp], [spl], [spr]

speak – speed – spin – spit – spill – spirit – spend – special – speck – spell – spare – span – spam – spark – spa – sport – spot – sponsor – spoon – spool – spook – spur – sponge – Spain – space – spy – spice – spike – spine – spite – spout – spouse – spoil – spoke – spoken;

spleen – split – splint – splinter – splendid – splendor – splash – splotch – splurge – splay – splice;

spree – spring – sprint – sprinkle – spread – sprang – sprawl – spruce – sprung – spray – sprain – sprite – sprout;

### [st], [str]

steal – steam – steel – steep – steer – stick – still – stiff – step – stencil – sterile – stare – stair – stand – stamp – stab – statue – staff – star – stark – start – store – stork – storm – stop – stock – story – stew – stool – stoop – student – stir – sterling – stern – study – stuff – stub – stubborn – stun – stunt – stumble – stay – stake – state – stain – style – sty – stout – stone – stove – stow;

street – stream – streak – strict – string – strip – stress – stretch – strength – strand – strangle – strap – stratosphere – straw – strong – struck – structure – struggle – strange – strain – straight – stray – strike – stripe – strive – stride – stroke – stroll;

### [sw], [tw], [dw], [kw], [skw], [gw]

sweet – sweep – swim – swift – switch – swing – swindle – Swiss – swivel – swell – swept – sweat – swear – swore – sworn – swarm – swan – swallow – swamp – swab – swap – swung – sway – swine – swollen;

tweed – twin – twist – twig – twelve – twenty – twang – twice – twilight – twine;

dwarf – dwell – dwindle – Dwayne – Dwight;

queen – queer – quick – quit – question – quest – quarrel – quart – quarter – quite – quiet – quote – quotation;

squeeze – squeak – squeal – squid – square – squad – squander – squash – squat – squirrel – squirt;

Gwen – Gwendolen – Guatemala.

## Final consonant clusters

### [ft], [kt]

drift – gift – lift – sift – left – draft – shaft – loft – soft;

act – fact – tact – elect – affect – depict – deduct;

### [lt], [ld]

belt – dealt – felt – melt – built – guilt – kilt – tilt – halt – malt – fault – default – vault – bolt – colt – jolt;

old – bold – cold – fold – gold – hold – mold – scold – sold – told – child – mild – wild – field – build – held – bald – world;

### [lk], [lp], [lb]

milk – silk – elk – bulk – hulk – sulk;

help – yelp – palp – pulp – bulb;

### [lf], [lv]

self – elf – shelf – golf – gulf – wolf – Ralph – Rolph – Rudolph;

solve – involve – valve – delve;

### [mp], [mf]

limp – temp – camp – lamp – ramp – stamp – stomp – bump – dump – jump – plump – rump – stump;

lymph – nymph – triumph;

### [nt], [nd]

mint – lint – sent – spent – bent – tent – vent – moment – agreement – statement – pant – can't – haunt – want – hunt – paint – saint – pint – point – joint;

wind – send – spend – lend – friend – attend – band – land – hand – sand – bond – fond – pond – fund – find – kind – bind – mind – behind – rind – wind – found – round – sound – pound;

### [ntʃ], [ndʒ ]

finch – pinch – bench – French – branch – ranch – launch – crunch – hunch – lunch;

change – range – strange – binge – cringe – fringe – tinge – sponge – lunge – lounge;

### [ns], [nz]

rinse – since – mince – wince – dense – fence – sense – absence – license – science – chance – dance – fragrance – ounce;

cleanse [klenz] – lens [lenz];

### [ŋk]

pink [piŋk] – ink – drink – think – link – mink – sink – shrink – wink – bank – banker – sank – rank – frank – spank – tank – honk – monk – monkey – drunk – junk – punk – skunk – distinct – jinx – wrinkle – uncle – ankle – anchor – anxious – banquet ['bæŋkwit];

### [ŋg]

finger ['fiŋgər] – linger – hunger – hungry – anger – angry – longer – longest – stronger – strongest – younger – youngest – congress (n.) – mongrel – single – angle – strangle – tangle – language – lingo – linguist – distinguish;

**Note:** The sound combination [ŋg] does not occur at the end of English words. It is given here for comparison with [ŋk], which can be at the end and in the middle of words.

### [ps], [pt]

perhaps – lapse – collapse – ellipse – glimpse – oops;

apt – rapt – crept – kept – accept – crypt – script – adopt – erupt – attempt – tempt;

### [sk], [sp], [st]

risk – flask – mask – task – desk – mosque – dusk – husk;

lisp – crisp – wisp – clasp – grasp – wasp;

least – feast – beast – mist – wrist – best – chest – test – fast – last – past – cost – lost – first – thirst – burst – dust – must – rust – paste – taste – waste – boast – coast – roast – most – post;

### Clusters with final [θ]

month – health – wealth – stealth – filth – warmth – strength – length – width – breadth – depth;

seventh – ninth – tenth – fifteenth – sixteenth – thirteenth – sixth – fifth – twelfth – eighth [eitθ] – hundredth – thousandth.

**Note:** length [leŋθ] or [leŋkθ]; strength [streŋθ] or [streŋkθ].

## Final consonant clusters with the ending S/ES

### [ps], [ts], [ks]

stops – lamps – helps – writes – tests – texts – links – thanks – sharks;

### [bz], [dz], [gz]

rubs – bulbs – needs – holds – worlds – thousands – pigs – legs;

### [fs], [θs]

beliefs – laughs – gulfs – cliffs – deaths – myths – births;

### [vz], [ðz]

leaves – knives – wolves – valves – saves – clothes – breathes – bathes;

**Note:** cloths [kloðz] or [kloθs]; clothes [klouðz] or [klouz]; oaths [ouðz]; BrE: baths [ba:ðz] or [ba:θs]; AmE: baths [bæðz] or [bæθs];

### [mz], [nz], [ŋz], [lz]

homes – storms – cleans – fans – lungs – rings – girls – thrills.

## Final consonant clusters with the ending ED ʒ

### [pt], [kt], [ft]

hoped – stopped – tipped – linked – locked – marked – sniffed – laughed – coughed;

### [st], [ʃt], [tʃt ]

missed – danced – mixed – washed – rushed – fished – watched – reached – searched;

### [bd], [gd]

robbed – stabbed – tubed – begged – lagged – logged – hugged;

### [vd], ], [zd]

lived – received – saved –– seized – raised – closed;

### , [ dʒ d]

rouged – charged – managed – paged;

### [md], [nd], [ŋd], [ld]

filmed – armed – planned – rained – hanged – banged – called – hurled – sealed.

**Note:** See pronunciation charts for the endings S/ES and ED in English Consonant Sounds in the section Phonetics. Rules for adding S/ES and ED are described in Adding the Ending s/es to Nouns and Verbs and Adding the Endings ed, ing to Verbs in the section Writing.

## Other final consonant combinations

Some final consonant combinations which do not have a vowel between the consonants in spelling can be pronounced with or without the neutral sound [ə] between the consonants: pl, bl, tl, dl, cl, gl, fl, thm, sm. Also, the neutral sound may or may not be pronounced in final unstressed suffixes which have a vowel or vowels between such consonants in spelling. Such consonant combinations may or may not be consonant clusters depending on whether the neutral sound is absent or present. Compare these examples:

apple ['æpəl] – ['æpl], table ['teibəl] – ['teibl];

little ['litəl] – ['litl], riddle ['ridəl] – ['ridl];

miracle ['mirəkəl] – ['mirəkl], eagle ['i:gəl] – ['i:gl];

rifle ['raifəl] – ['raifl], waffle ['wofəl] – ['wofl];

rhythm ['riðəm] – ['riðm], prism ['prizəm] – ['prizm];

kitten ['kitən] – ['kitn], hidden ['hidən] – ['hidn];

lesson ['lesən] – ['lesn], mention ['men**ʃ**ən] – ['men**ʃn**].