PAGE 1 · A1-A2 · pairs or alone · 10 min

# Short Twisters: the Speed Ladder

Ten short twisters for a first try. Speed always comes last.

**1** Learn the ladder. Climb one rung at a time, and only go faster when the slow version is clean.

**1 · Slow**
Word by word. Every sound clear.

**2 · Normal**
Like you are talking to a friend.

**3 · Fast**
Three times without a break.

**2** Partner A says a twister. Partner B follows the line with a finger, ticks each rung that is clean and counts slips on rung 3. Then swap. On your own, record rung 3 and listen.

| # | TWISTER | SLOW | NORMAL | 3 TIMES FAST | SLIPS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Toy boat, toy boat, toy boat.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 2 | **Red leather, yellow leather.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 3 | **Unique New York, you know you need unique New York.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 4 | **Fresh fried fish.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 5 | **A big black bug bit a big black bear.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 6 | **Kate's cat can't catch Carl's cap.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 7 | **Pink pigs prefer purple pancakes.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 8 | **Bob's blue bike broke by the bakery.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 9 | **Mom made Max make more muffins.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 10 | **Greg grabbed a green grape.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |

**3** Circle the twister that was hardest for you. Which sound broke? Write it here, then find its page in this pack.

My hardest twister was number _____. The sound that broke was _____.

**4** Make one twister yours. Change one or two words in twister 6, 7 or 9 and keep the sound. Then teach it to your partner.

Model: **M**om **m**ade **M**ax **m**ake **m**ore **m**ango **m**uffins.

PAGE 2 | All levels | pairs or alone · 15 min

# TH: three, not tree

Soft th in think, buzzing th in this. Both need the tongue between the teeth.

**TH**

MOUTH CHECK

Put the tip of your tongue lightly between your teeth and blow. Hold a finger in front of your lips: on th, your tongue should touch it lightly. If it doesn't, your tongue is too far back.

**1** **Minimal-pair race.** Partner A chooses one word from pair 1 and says it. Partner B points to the word they heard. Partner A says *yes* or *no*. Go through all eight pairs, then swap. Three rounds, faster each time.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 three / tree | 2 think / sink | 3 thin / tin | 4 thank / tank |
| 5 path / pass | 6 mouth / mouse | 7 they / day | 8 those / doze |

| ROUND | PARTNER A HEARD RIGHT | PARTNER B HEARD RIGHT |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 2 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 3 | / 8 | / 8 |

**On your own?**
Record yourself on your phone. Say one word from each pair, in any order, and write the words you said on the back of this page. Tomorrow, play the recording, circle what you hear and check with the back.

**2** **Speed ladder.** Partner B ticks each rung that is clean and counts slips on rung 3. Then swap.

| # | TWISTER | SLOW | NORMAL | 3 TIMES FAST | SLIPS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Thirty-three thieves thought that they thrilled the throne throughout Thursday. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 2 | Three free throws. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 3 | This thin thing is thinner than that thick thing. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 4 | Theo thinks the theater is thirty-three degrees. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 5 | Mother and father gather together with the other brothers. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 6 | Seth's thirteenth birthday is on the fourth Thursday. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 7 | Thelma thanked Thad for three thick bath towels. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 8 | Those three think that these thirty thank them. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |

PAGE 3 | All levels | pairs or alone · 15 min

# R and L: right, not light

Two sounds that many languages treat as one.

**R · L**

MOUTH CHECK

For r, pull your tongue back. It never touches the roof of your mouth. For l, touch the ridge just behind your top teeth with the tip of your tongue. Say the r slowly and make it too long at first.

**1** **Minimal-pair race.** Partner A chooses one word from pair 1 and says it. Partner B points to the word they heard. Partner A says *yes* or *no*. Go through all eight pairs, then swap. Three rounds, faster each time.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 right / light | 2 read / lead | 3 rock / lock | 4 grass / glass |
| 5 fry / fly | 6 pray / play | 7 correct / collect | 8 rake / lake |

| ROUND | PARTNER A HEARD RIGHT | PARTNER B HEARD RIGHT |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 2 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 3 | / 8 | / 8 |

**On your own?**
Record yourself on your phone. Say one word from each pair, in any order, and write the words you said on the back of this page. Tomorrow, play the recording, circle what you hear and check with the back.

**2** **Speed ladder.** Partner B ticks each rung that is clean and counts slips on rung 3. Then swap.

| # | TWISTER | SLOW | NORMAL | 3 TIMES FAST | SLIPS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lesser leather never weathered wetter weather better. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 2 | Truly rural. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 3 | Rubber baby buggy bumpers. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 4 | Willy's real rear wheel. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 5 | Larry's red truck rolled really slowly along the rainy road. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 6 | Laura rarely reads real letters. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 7 | Ralph left the long rope and the loud radio in the library. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 8 | Rory's rabbit really loves lettuce rolls. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |

PAGE 4 | All levels | pairs or alone · 15 min

# V and W: very well, not wery vell

Teeth or no teeth: that is the whole difference.

**V · W**

MOUTH CHECK

For v, your top teeth touch your bottom lip. For w, round your lips and keep your teeth out of the way. Use a mirror or your phone camera: if you can see your teeth on w, you are saying v.

**1** **Minimal-pair race.** Partner A chooses one word from pair 1 and says it. Partner B points to the word they heard. Partner A says *yes* or *no*. Go through all eight pairs, then swap. Three rounds, faster each time.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 vest / west | 2 vet / wet | 3 vine / wine | 4 veil / whale |
| 5 vow / wow | 6 verse / worse | 7 vent / went | 8 viper / wiper |

| ROUND | PARTNER A HEARD RIGHT | PARTNER B HEARD RIGHT |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 2 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 3 | / 8 | / 8 |

**On your own?**
Record yourself on your phone. Say one word from each pair, in any order, and write the words you said on the back of this page. Tomorrow, play the recording, circle what you hear and check with the back.

**2** **Speed ladder.** Partner B ticks each rung that is clean and counts slips on rung 3. Then swap.

| # | TWISTER | SLOW | NORMAL | 3 TIMES FAST | SLIPS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Which witch is which? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 2 | Wayne went to Wales to watch walruses. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 3 | Vera's van went west while Will's wagon went to Venice. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 4 | Very well, Walter, we will wear warm velvet vests. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 5 | Vince wants weird violet wallpaper. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 6 | Seven waiters wave at eleven visitors. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |

PAGE 5 | All levels | pairs or alone · 15 min

# Short and long vowels: ship or sheep?

Short and long pairs, where meaning gets lost.

**i · ee**

MOUTH CHECK

For the long vowels in sheep and pool, hold the sound longer and make it too long at first. For ee, smile a little. For oo, push your lips forward. The short vowels in ship and pull are quick and relaxed.

**1** **Minimal-pair race.** Partner A chooses one word from pair 1 and says it. Partner B points to the word they heard. Partner A says *yes* or *no*. Go through all eight pairs, then swap. Three rounds, faster each time.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 ship / sheep | 2 live / leave | 3 fill / feel | 4 sit / seat |
| 5 bin / bean | 6 full / fool | 7 pull / pool | 8 look / Luke |

| ROUND | PARTNER A HEARD RIGHT | PARTNER B HEARD RIGHT |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 2 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 3 | / 8 | / 8 |

**On your own?**
Record yourself on your phone. Say one word from each pair, in any order, and write the words you said on the back of this page. Tomorrow, play the recording, circle what you hear and check with the back.

**2** **Speed ladder.** Partner B ticks each rung that is clean and counts slips on rung 3. Then swap.

| # | TWISTER | SLOW | NORMAL | 3 TIMES FAST | SLIPS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I wish to wish the wish you wish to wish. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 2 | Is this sheep's ship cheap, or is this ship's sheep cheaper? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 3 | Will Phil feel ill if he fills the pill box? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 4 | Look, Luke! The good cook took the food to the room. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 5 | Jim's green gym is full of keen kids. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 6 | The fool pulled the pool toy out of the full pool. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |

PAGE 6 | All levels | pairs or alone · 15 min

# S and SH: sip, not ship

The hiss and the hush.

**S · SH**

MOUTH CHECK

For s, keep your lips relaxed and your tongue close to the ridge behind your top teeth. For sh, push your lips forward and round them. Whisper the twisters: the hiss of s and the hush of sh are easier to hear without your voice.

**1** **Minimal-pair race.** Partner A chooses one word from pair 1 and says it. Partner B points to the word they heard. Partner A says *yes* or *no*. Go through all eight pairs, then swap. Three rounds, faster each time.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 sip / ship | 2 see / she | 3 sort / short | 4 save / shave |
| 5 sell / shell | 6 seat / sheet | 7 sock / shock | 8 mass / mash |

| ROUND | PARTNER A HEARD RIGHT | PARTNER B HEARD RIGHT |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 2 | / 8 | / 8 |
| 3 | / 8 | / 8 |

**On your own?**
Record yourself on your phone. Say one word from each pair, in any order, and write the words you said on the back of this page. Tomorrow, play the recording, circle what you hear and check with the back.

**2** **Speed ladder.** Partner B ticks each rung that is clean and counts slips on rung 3. Then swap.

| # | TWISTER | SLOW | NORMAL | 3 TIMES FAST | SLIPS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | She sells seashells by the seashore. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 2 | Six slippery snails slid slowly seaward. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 3 | Irish wristwatch, Swiss wristwatch. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 4 | The seething sea ceaseth, and thus the seething sea sufficeth us. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 5 | Sally shared six short sushi rolls with Shawn. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 6 | Sasha's shop sells shiny silver shoes. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |

PAGE 7 · A1-A2 · pairs or alone · 15 min

# The -ed Ending: t, d or id?

Six twisters full of regular past verbs. Your ear learns the three endings before your mouth does.

**1** Read the rule. The spelling is always *-ed*, but the sound changes.

**t**
after p, k, s, sh, ch, f, x
*jumped · walked*

**d**
after other sounds and vowels
*played · cleaned*

**id**
after t and d: an extra syllable
*wanted · needed*

**2** Say each twister slowly. Count the syllables in every *-ed* verb: *wanted* has two, *jumped* has one.

1. **Ted wanted ten painted ducks for his bathtub.**
2. **Kate cooked, cleaned and counted the cookies.**
3. **Mike missed the bus, so he walked, jogged and waited.**
4. **Dan danced, Dean dreamed, and Dad just needed a nap.**
5. **Lisa laughed, played and planted pink tulips.**
6. **The cat jumped, landed and loved it.**

**3** Sort the 18 verbs into three columns. Then check the answers at the bottom of the page.

**cleaned · cooked · counted · danced · dreamed · jogged · jumped · landed · laughed · loved · missed · needed · painted · planted · played · waited · walked · wanted**

| t | d | id |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**4** **Speed ladder.** Your partner listens for every ending. Alone? Record rung 3.

| # | TWISTER | SLOW | NORMAL | 3 TIMES FAST |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ted wanted ten painted ducks for his bathtub. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 | Kate cooked, cleaned and counted the cookies. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 | Mike missed the bus, so he walked, jogged and waited. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4 | Dan danced, Dean dreamed, and Dad just needed a nap. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5 | Lisa laughed, played and planted pink tulips. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6 | The cat jumped, landed and loved it. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Answers** t: cooked, missed, walked, danced, laughed, jumped · d: cleaned, jogged, dreamed, played, loved · id: wanted, painted, counted, waited, needed, planted, landed

PAGE 8 · B2-C1 · pairs or teams · 20 min

# Twister Challenge

Five twisters that break even native speakers, a scoreboard and a frame for your own.

**1** **The hardest five.** Say each one three times fast. Tick a try when it is clean all the way through.

| # | TWISTER | TRY 1 | TRY 2 | TRY 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Pad kid poured curd pulled cod.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 | **The sixth sick sheikh's sixth sheep's sick.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 | **Eleven benevolent elephants.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4 | **Rural juror.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5 | **Sixty-six thistle sticks stuck in sixty-six thick stacks.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**2** **Team challenge.** For each round, a team chooses one speaker and one twister. Three times fast with no slips wins a point.

| TEAM | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

**3** **Write your own.** Choose a sound from this pack and build a twister with at least six words that use it.

Our sound: _____

| NAME | DOES WHAT | WHICH THING | WHERE |
|---|---|---|---|

Model: **Sh**y **Sh**awn **sh**ares **sh**iny **sh**ells at the **sh**ore.

☐ **Six or more words with the sound** ☐ **It fits in one breath** ☐ **It makes sense, more or less** ☐ **It is funny**

**4** Swap with another pair. Say their twister three times fast. Which twister in the class is the hardest?

The hardest twister in our class was written by _____. The sound was _____.