

**Classroom posters**  
**Tongue-twisters**  
Teacher's notes



# Tongue-twisters

Using tongue-twisters in class is a fun way to practise pronunciation and learn about this part of traditional English-speaking culture. Here are some ideas for using the tongue-twisters poster with your learners: <http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/tongue-twisters>

Tongue-twister	Pronunciation practice
Red lorry, yellow lorry	<p>The teacher can point back and forth at the two pictures of the red and yellow lorry at varying speeds, which is a fun and easy way of introducing tongue-twisters.</p> <p>Contrasting the consonants /r/ in <u>red</u> and <u>lorry</u> with /l/ in <u>lorry</u> and <u>yellow</u></p>
I scream you scream we all scream for ice cream.	<p>The rhythm of a sentence (sentence stress) The underlined parts are stressed: <u>I</u> scream <u>you</u> scream we <u>all</u> scream for <u>ice</u> cream.</p> <p>The consonant cluster in <u>scream</u></p> <p>The vowel sounds /aɪ/ in <u>ice</u> versus /i:/ in <u>scream</u> and <u>cream</u></p>
Three free throws	<p>Contrasting the consonant /θ/ in <u>three</u> and <u>throw</u> with /f/ in <u>free</u></p>
She sells seashells by the seashore.	<p>Contrasting the consonant /ʃ/ in <u>she</u>, <u>shells</u> and <u>shore</u> with /s/ in <u>sells</u> and <u>sea</u></p>
Fresh fried fish, fish fresh fried, fried fish fresh, fish fried fresh	<p>Contrasting the vowel sounds /e/ in <u>fresh</u>, /aɪ/ in <u>fried</u> and /ɪ/ in <u>fish</u></p> <p>Contrasting the /fr/ and /f/ sounds in <u>fresh</u> and <u>fish</u></p>
Give papa a cup of proper coffee in a copper coffee cup.	<p>The consonant /p/ in <u>papa</u>, <u>cup</u></p> <p>The consonant /k/ in <u>cup</u>, <u>coffee</u></p> <p>The neutral shwa sound /ə/ in <u>of</u>, <u>proper</u>, <u>copper</u></p>

All the tongue-twisters on the poster can be found and listened to on the LearnEnglish Kids website, and students can record themselves saying them.

## Listen and repeat

- Choose one of the tongue-twisters from the poster. Say the tongue-twister then tell your learners that they are going to repeat the sentence bit by bit after you.
- Start by asking your learners to repeat the last part of the sentence and building up to the full tongue-twister like this:
  - Teacher: seashore
  - Learners: seashore
  - Teacher: by the seashore
  - Learners: by the seashore
  - Teacher: seashells by the seashore
  - Learners: seashells by the seashore
  - Teacher: She sells seashells by the seashore
  - Learners: She sells seashells by the seashore
- Ask the class to repeat the whole tongue-twister slowly and then more quickly.
- Now learners work in pairs to take turns repeating the tongue-twister as fast as possible without mistakes. This isn't easy of course and you could demonstrate this to the class by trying to say it quickly and correctly yourself. Get the learners to count how many times you can repeat the sentence before you make a mistake.

## Order the words

- Practise some of the tongue-twisters with the class then cover the poster.
- Write a tongue-twister on the board with the words in the wrong order. Say the tongue-twister. Ask the learners to put the words in the correct order.

- Ask learners to identify which sounds are repeated in the tongue-twister. Can they tell you other words with the same sound? For example the 'sh' sound in 'she', 'shells' and 'shore' is also in 'shape', 'shoe' and 'sure'.
- You can explain any new words if learners insist. You can also say that, as tongue-twisters don't really make sense, they don't need to understand every word.

## Disappearing tongue-twister

- Choose a tongue-twister. You could show the poster to the class and ask a learner to select one. Practise the tongue-twister as a class then write up the sentence on the board, for example:
  - I scream you scream we all scream for ice cream.
- Now rub out two words and replace them with lines, for example:
  - I \_\_\_\_\_ you scream we all scream for \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ask the class to say the complete tongue-twister, then remove another word, for example:
  - I \_\_\_\_\_ you scream \_\_\_\_\_ all scream for \_\_\_\_\_.
- Continue like this until there are no words left! Your learners can now practise repeating the tongue-twister as quickly as possible.

## Make a tongue-twister

- Choose a tongue-twister from the poster to practise specific sounds.
- For example, use 'Red lorry, yellow lorry' to practise the /l/ and /r/ sounds.
- Practise the chosen tongue-twister then write up the sentence on the board and underline one example of the sound you want to focus on, for example Red lorry, yellow lorry. Have the learners identify other examples of the sound in the tongue-twister and underline them – Red lorry, yellow lorry.
- Learners think of more examples of words with the same sound – for example: ring, right, rude, rice, curry, sorry, worry – and make a list on the board. Now work as a class to substitute one or more of the original words with some from your list, for example 'Rice lorry, yellow curry'.
- Remember that tongue-twisters don't need to make sense – so be creative! Learners work in pairs to create different versions using the example on the board as a model. Ask the pairs to read out their new tongue-twisters for the class to practise.

You can download the Tongue-twisters poster from [www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk)  
You can find more activities to do with children at [www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglishkids](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglishkids)