

Minimal Pairs

A minimal pair is a pair of words that only differ by one sound. They can be used in therapy to help children learn that swapping one sound can change the meaning of a word.

It may be easier for the child if minimal pair pictures are presented to them, so that the meaning of the word is clear.

Below is a list of minimal pair words:

Final Consonant Deletion:

bee/beach pie/pipe Sue/suit "C"/seat bee/beak cow/couch why/white lay/lake
lay/late lay/lane lie/like lie/light lie/line tea/team tray/train four/fork scar/scarf

Initial Consonant Deletion:

ape/cape, shape, tape age/cage, stage, page ache/make, break, lake, cake,
snake arm/farm, palm calm ouch/couch eye/pie, guy, high, tie, fly, bye egg/leg,
peg eat/feet, seat itch/witch, rich in/win, pin bin up/cup us/bus at/cat, hat, mat
oil/foil, soil ice/rice, nice eel/wheel, seal, heel

Cluster Reduction:

sew, /snow, sack/snack, sore/snore, sail/snail, sip/snip, soup/snoop

Fronting/Backing (voiceless):

key/tea, cap/tap, call/tall, cool/tool, cape/tape, coast/toast, kite/tight,
coffee/toffee, pack/pat, ache/eight, like/light, wake/wait, neck/net, bike/bite,
lick/lit, Coke/coat

Fronting/Backing (voiced):

go/dough, gate/date, gust/dust, guide/died, gig/dig, big/bid, bag/bad, bug/bud,
beg/bed, mug/mud, leg/lead, dig/did

Stopping f→b:

bus/fuss, bin/fin, bite/fight, bun/fun, bowl/foal, ball/fall, bone/phone, box/fox,
bat/fat, tub/tough, rub/rough

Stopping s→t:

tip/sip, toe/sew, tick/sick, tail/sail, tore/sore, tea/sea, tell/sell, toot/suit, eight/ace
plate/place, court/course, right/rice, sort/sauce, yet/yes

Stopping sh→d:

door/shore, dip/ship, dot/shot, dark/shark, dock/shock, dough/show, dye/shy,
dirt/shirt, deep/sheep, mad/mash, sad/sash, blood/blush

Stopping j→d:

jeep/deep, jive/dive, jaw/door, jam/dam, jog/dog, just/dust, ledge/lead,
page/paid, hedge/head, wedge/wed, badge/bad

Gliding l/w:

lead/weed, lick/wick, light/white, lake/wake, link/wink, let/wet, late/wait,
leap/weep, life/wife, lip/whip, line/wine, leak/week, lay/weigh

Gliding l/n:

light/night, lock/knock, line/nine, lap/nap, low/no, lot/knot, let/net, low/know,
life/knife, lice/nice

Gliding l/y:

lamb/yam, lawn/yawn, less/yes, lot/yacht, let/yet, lap/yap