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# Guidebook for ESL Teachers of Chinese Students

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University of San Francisco

# **Guidebook for ESL Teachers of Chinese Students**

A Field Project Presented to  
The Faculty of the School of Education  
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language

By  
John Tubbs  
May 2016

# Guidebook for ESL Teachers of Chinese Students

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

by

John Tubbs

May 2016

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

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Dr. Luz Garcia  
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May 7, 2016

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Date

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## ABSTRACT

There are currently many Chinese speakers studying and working in the United States. Some of them find English pronunciation to be very challenging. The Guidebook is meant to be a tool for the teachers of Chinese speaking ESL students. English language instruction in China is often teacher centered, with the instructor lecturing and students taking notes. Most classes do not focus on communicative skills. Different language groups often vary in terms of which English sounds they find difficult to pronounce. Vowel sounds have been identified as a particular challenge for Chinese speaking students. The front-vowels in English are the focus of the guidebook. The lessons are designed with common errors of Chinese speakers in mind. Each target sound is compared and contrasted with another sound. The two sounds are sounds that are often confused by Chinese speakers. The lessons are meant to be taught in a communicative format. Interaction of students and use of the target sounds are emphasized throughout the Guidebook.

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### **Statement of the Problem**

We live in an increasingly globalized world in which China has become a very important player in international trade. It has become an exporter of goods to the world, especially to the United States. According to the Office of the United States Trade representative, 2012 trade between the USA and China totaled \$579 billion, and this dollar amount continues to rise every year. An increase in trade has also led to an increase in cultural exchanges. The number of Chinese students at American universities has increased, and they now make up the largest group of foreign graduate students (Gorsuch, 2011, p.2).

Many universities rely on graduate students to help teach undergraduate courses. In most American universities, foreign graduate students make up the majority of the graduate student teaching force in subjects like chemistry, biology, physics and math (Gorsuch, 2011, p.2). Because many Chinese graduate students will be teaching undergraduates, their English language intelligibility is an important issue.

For a variety of reasons, many Chinese graduate students arrive in the United States without the English communication skills needed for graduate school or for the teaching of undergraduates. One challenge for these students is that English education in China places almost no emphasis on spoken intelligibility (Yang & Yuen, 2014).

Chinese students often arrive in the United States overestimating their English language abilities. Carey, Mannell and Dunn (2011, p.203) found that people rate the proficiency of English language learners higher if they are familiar with their accent.

Chinese students speaking English understand each other well and get a false sense of their own intelligibility. Harding (2014, p.165) found that speakers of Chinese were more able to understand Chinese accented English than other accents.

People who are rating English accents have a bias for accents they are familiar with. Winke, Gass & Myford (2013, p.248) found that Chinese students were more likely to rate Chinese accented English as better than accented English from other groups. Gui (2012, p.200) had a similar finding. She found that Chinese students rated Chinese accented English as better than did American native speakers of English. Overestimating the intelligibility of one's English can be dangerous for students coming to study in the United States. Many students who study abroad find, upon arrival, that the language is more of a challenge than they anticipated.

The research is clear that students often overestimate their English abilities. This happens because Chinese accented English is the norm in China, so many people do not consider deviations from standard English to be errors, especially if they are errors that other Chinese often make. Although "China English" is the form most used in China, He and Li (2009, p. 74) found that there is a strong preference in China for Standard English as the norm, whether it be a British or American standard. Although there is a strong preference for standard English as the norm in China, the teachers and other models often speak Chinese accented English. For these and other reasons, many Chinese graduate students arrive in the United States unprepared for the enormity of the task of teaching undergraduates in English.

ESL education in China has been characterized by rote learning of vocabulary and grammar with very little emphasis on spoken English (Yang & Yuen, 2014). For this

reason, many Chinese graduate students are unprepared for the English difficulties they face when studying and teaching in the United States. Chinese students often lack the fluency and intelligibility needed to converse comfortably in English. Research has shown that vowel sounds, voiced fricatives and the final /l/ sound are areas of English pronunciation in which Chinese students are most in need of improvement (Jin & Liu, 2014). Chinese students would benefit from more targeted oral English practice to improve their communicative competence.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this field project is to create a guidebook that can be used as a resource for teachers of Chinese students who intend to pursue graduate study or teach in the United States. The guidebook will focus on improving communication skills by teaching English pronunciation to speakers of Chinese. The researcher identified the English sounds which are most difficult for Chinese students to pronounce. Lessons were created targeting the pronunciation of each of these sounds. Special attention was paid to sounds that do not exist in Mandarin Chinese.

There are many forms of English spoken around the world. The form of English spoken in China is often referred to as “China English.” In addition to focusing on the English sounds that do not exist in Mandarin, attention will be paid to fossilized errors that are common for speakers of “China English.”

Many Chinese students face an enormous task when they come to study in the USA. They are often insufficiently prepared for the task at hand. This can be a very frustrating and demoralizing state of affairs. The goal of this project is to provide a



resource that can smooth the transition of Chinese graduate students to American universities and improve the intelligibility of their spoken English.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Communicative Language Teaching is an important theory that provides the framework for this project. Teachers using this approach believe that learners learn a language through communicating in it. Earlier views of language teaching often focused on grammatical competence and vocabulary (Yang & Yuen, 2014). Students produced correct sentences and focused on not making mistakes. In this kind of classroom, learning is seen as under the control of the teacher. With Communicative Language Teaching, teachers began to move away from the mastery of grammar through the memorization of dialogues and drills. Teachers with a Communicative Language Teaching focus use pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and projects to improve the communicative competence of their students. Learners need to participate in classroom activities based on cooperation rather than an individualistic approach to learning. Students need to be comfortable listening to one another. The teacher is more of a facilitator and monitor than a model for correct speech (Zhou & Niu, 2015).

The main focus of this project is pronunciation. It is hoped that in addition to improving the pronunciation of difficult sounds, the guidebook will facilitate real communicative practice on the part of the students. Lessons will begin with direct instruction on the formation of sounds, but the practice will be done in a communicative format with students interacting with one another.

The communicative language teaching principles outlined by Richards (2006) are followed in the lessons. Real communication is the focus. Students are provided

opportunities to experiment and try out what they know. The teacher should be tolerant of errors. Opportunities to develop accuracy and fluency are provided. The skills of listening and speaking are linked as they are in normal conversation.

Communicative Language Teaching has a focus on BICS, or Basic Interpersonal Language Skills. This concept is often attributed to Jim Cummins. BICS are the basic language skills that one needs to communicate in social situations. These are skills that one might use to talk on the telephone and chat with a friend. The term BICS is often used together with CALP or Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, which includes reading, writing, listening and speaking about subject area content material.

In addition to its primary focus on pronunciation, the guidebook will concentrate on the basic interpersonal communication skills needed to converse comfortably in English. Lessons will include an element of conversation that will give students the practice they need to improve their communicative competence.

As most students in China have not experienced a class with Communicative Language Teaching as the framework, it is hoped that students will enjoy a different approach and will find it useful in not only improving their pronunciation but also their overall communicative competence.

### **Significance of the Project**

The number of students from China studying in the United States is increasing. Chinese students are now the largest group of foreign students at American universities. Many Chinese students arriving in the United States do not have the English language skills they will need to be successful (Gorsuch, 2011, p. 2). Many of these students would benefit from some basic training that would help their pronunciation and

communicative competence. This would allow them to interact with native English speakers more successfully and improve their overall experience in the United States. Ideally, students would have a course before leaving China that would help to better prepare them for success at American universities. The handbook should be a good resource in this preparation.

Zhou (2012) explains that English teaching in China has been guided by the “three old centers”. These are teacher-centeredness, grammar centeredness and test centeredness. This system, in which spoken intelligibility is deemphasized, has led to unsatisfactory results. Students in China can get good grades in English courses without having much communicative competence.

The focus of the guidebook will be on pronunciation and communicative competence. Sounds that are particularly challenging for Chinese students are emphasized and these sounds will be practiced in a communicative format. By focusing on basic pronunciation and communication skills, students will be better understood and their educational and personal outcomes in the United States will improve.

### **Limitations of the Project**

A complete examination of the forty phonemes that make up the English language is beyond the scope of this project. An examination of all of the sounds that are challenging for Chinese speakers is also too much to cover here. The front-vowels are a great place to start as many Chinese students struggle to pronounce these sounds correctly. There are a number of other areas that are important to cover. One such area is final stops like /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /p/, and /b/. Many Chinese speakers do not make the distinction between the voiced stops (d,g,b) and the voiceless stops (t,k,p). The /l/ sound

also poses difficulty for many Chinese speakers. This is especially true when the /l/ is in the final position. The “th” sound is an additional area of concern. The difference between the voiced “th” in “those” and the unvoiced “th” in “both” is a challenge. Finally, nasals are a good area to focus on. The /m/ and /n/ sounds are difficult to pronounce for many Chinese speakers. These sounds are especially challenging when they are found in the word final position.

### **Definition of Terms**

The source for these definitions is the International Encyclopedia of Linguistics (Frawley, 2003).

aspiration – a strong burst of breath after a consonant sound

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) – language skills needed to interact in social situations.

Classical method – See grammar translation method

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) – language needed for formal academic learning.

consonant clusters – a group of consonants that have no intervening vowel.

front-vowels – vowel sounds that are made in the front of the mouth.

Grammar translation method – a teaching method derived from the classical method of teaching Greek and Latin. The focus is on translating sentences with little to no emphasis on communicative competence.

manner of articulation – the position of the tongue, lips and palate when making a speech sound.

minimal pairs – pairs of words which differ in only one sound. ie bet-bat

place of articulation – the point of contact where airflow is obscured in the formation of a consonant sound.

nasals – sounds that are made through the nose.

phoneme – a unit of sound that distinguishes one word from another.

voiced – refers to a sound that is made with vibration of the vocal cords.

voiceless – refers to sounds that are made without the vibration of the vocal cords.

## CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### **Introduction**

China is currently undergoing explosive growth in the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language. According to Crystal (2008), there are now more people learning English in China than anywhere else in the world. In 2010, China Daily reported more than 400 million English learners in China (Bolton & Graddol, 2012).

Li and Yunming (2013) outlines three main reasons for the growth of English language education in China. First, without knowledge of the English language, China would lose out on economic and political opportunities in the international arena.

Secondly, China has recently seen an increase in the hosting of international events. The 2008 Olympics, Shanghai Expo 2010, and the Asian games are examples of international events that have increased the demand for foreign language translation services. Finally, many Chinese people go abroad to work or to study. English is often the language that Chinese use when interacting abroad. These factors have led to the explosive growth of English language learning in China.

The purpose of this field project is to create a resource that can be used by the teachers of Chinese speaking, English language learners. The goal of the project is to provide a series of lessons highlighting areas of particular difficulty for Chinese students with a focus on pronunciation.

### **Review of the Literature**

This literature review is divided into three sections. First, the nature and history of English education in China is explored. Education in China has traditionally been

teacher-centered. English instruction was taught through the grammar-translation method and focused on grammar and vocabulary acquisition with little emphasis on communicative competence. The second section explores the specific difficulties that Chinese students have with English pronunciation with an emphasis placed on the most challenging vowel sounds. Finally, the third section is concerned with teaching pedagogy. The grammar-translation method and the Communicative Language Teaching approach are compared and contrasted. Due to their emphasis on different aspects of language learning, a hybrid approach was used that can capitalize on the advantages of each method.

### **The Nature and History of English Education in China**

Traditionally, education in China has been very teacher-centered. Classes were based on lectures by the instructor. Students passively took notes and did not participate in classroom activities. Teachers were accustomed to lecturing in detail while students recorded and recited the information presented. The focus of foreign language education was on grammar and vocabulary (Yang & Yuen, 2014).

After the second World War, due to important political and economic ties with the Soviet Union, Russian was the primary foreign language taught in China (Yang & Yuen, 2014). When the Cultural Revolution began in 1966, the learning of anything foreign was seen as unpatriotic and anti-revolutionary (Lam, 2002). From 1966 to 1976, university education in China was halted and all universities stopped recruiting new students. There was no English education in China from 1966 until the educational reforms of 1978 (Li & Yunming, 2013).

Current language policy in the People's Republic of China emphasizes consolidating Mandarin as the common language and spreading its use among minority populations. Traditionally, very little planning has been done around the teaching of foreign languages in China (Li & Yunming, 2013). This began to change in 1978. In that year, the Ministry of Education convened a national conference on foreign language education. At this conference, national leaders declared that English language education at public universities would become an educational priority in China (Yang & Yuen, 2014).

Beginning in 1979, foreign language exam results became part of the total score in China's all-important college entrance exams. This was the true beginning of English being taken seriously as an academic subject in China (Yang & Yuen, 2014). The College English Test (CET) was developed. This test is seen by Chinese students as the key to success (Cheng, 2008). Non-English majors must now pass the CET 4 test in order to graduate from Chinese universities.

There is much criticism of the CET 4 and other similar tests and the effect they have on the Chinese Education system because they test reading skills at the expense of communicative competence. Questions that test reading ability comprise 45% of the questions on the CET 4. (Cheng, 2008) An over reliance on these tests has also been criticized for leading to exam oriented learning and teaching (Li, 2014).

In 1999, the Education Ministry introduced a new college English curriculum. Authorities decided on a comprehensive teaching model that would combine classroom lectures with student-centered activities. The purpose of this reform was to emphasize communication skills (Li, 2014). Although this approach was more effective for building



listening and speaking skills, it was largely abandoned as impractical for non-major English courses because of the large classes at Chinese public universities (Yang & Yuen, 2014). For example, at the Universities in Hefei, Anhui province, studied by Yang and Yuan (2014), average class sizes ranged from 60 to 80 students. These classes focused on textbook learning for the purpose of passing English exams. Large class sizes were not the only obstacle in the implementation of reforms in foreign language teaching. A more interactive approach to language teaching also requires a greater command of English by the instructor. China's lack of qualified English instructors has also made wider reform difficult (Yang & Yuen, 2014).

The effect of this partial reform was that classes for English majors tended toward an interactive approach that was more effective in building listening and speaking skills. Non-English majors, however, usually had classes that clung to the old teacher lecture model of English language education. English education for English majors improved, while English courses for non-English majors have remained inadequate. This has remained true even as college English has become compulsory, even for non-English majors (Yang & Yuen, 2014).

Lecture based courses have remained the norm for most Chinese college students even though both students and teachers believe that lecture based courses are good for improving scores on exams, but do not improve English communication skills (Yang & Yuen, 2014).

The emphasis on a more communicative teaching style in China has not always been well-received. Rao (2002) points out that Chinese students prefer traditional classroom work and often have a negative view of communicative activities. Rao (2002)

also explains that teachers often do not like communicative strategies because of negative student responses, a lack of training and low English proficiency on the part of the teachers. Liu (2015) highlights the perception among Chinese students that a Communicative Language Teaching approach does not provide students with enough grammar knowledge to perform well on grammar based standardized tests.

Although a communicative approach should be best for teaching Chinese students interpersonal communication skills in English, importance should be placed on explaining and justifying the approach to students. If students accept the approach and believe in its utility, student outcomes will improve.

Currently, the Chinese Ministry of Education requires that students begin to learn English in the third year of primary school. They are also required to take English through middle school and high school. University students are also required to take English for three years. A typical Chinese student has had 12 years of English education by the time that they complete their undergraduate education (Li, 2014).

Chinese students coming to study in the United States typically have had many years of instruction in English as a Second Language. Their knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary is often strong. What students are often lacking is communicative competence in English. An emphasis on English pronunciation and Communicative Language Teaching should help to better prepare Chinese students for studying in the United States.

### **Specific English Language Difficulties of Chinese Students**

The Chinese language is a collection of eight dialect groups. These groups are sometimes referred to as separate languages as they are not mutually intelligible.

Mandarin, sometimes referred to as the northern Dialect, is the basis for Modern standard Chinese. The various Chinese dialects share many important structural features. The English pronunciation issues that Chinese speakers have are similar across dialects (Swan & Smith, 1999). Therefore, the term Chinese will be used in this project to include all Chinese speakers, regardless of their dialect.

Generally, speakers of Chinese find English difficult to pronounce. Vowels in English are closer to one another in terms of position of articulation (Swan & Smith, 1999). This makes vowel sounds a particularly difficult area for Chinese speakers. They need to understand and reproduce distinctions that do not exist in their own language.

Jin and Liu (2014) found that vowel sounds pose the greatest difficulty for Chinese-speaking English language learners. Their research shows that native English speakers have less difficulty understanding Chinese speakers' use of consonant sounds. This difficulty with vowel sounds increases as students age. As students grow older, first language vowel categories are more likely to perceptually encompass second language vowels, making understanding and producing the sounds more difficult (Baker, Trofimovich, Flege, Mack & Halter, 2008). For this reason, students should receive instruction in English pronunciation at an early age if at all possible.

Avery and Ehrlich (2012) created a detailed list of the English language sounds that Chinese speakers find difficult to produce. They point out that there is no distinction between tense and lax vowels in Chinese. This distinction between English vowels is sometimes referred to as the short vowel-long vowel distinction. Because Chinese does not have this difference, speakers often produce vowel sounds that are between the short and long sounds in English. This has the effect of making short vowels sound too long

and long vowels sound too short (Avery & Ehrlich, 2012). This problem is seen in the distinction between /i/(eat) and /I/(it).

In addition to problems with the short vowel-long vowel distinction, Avery and Ehrlich (2012) found a problem with /æ/ bat and /e/ (bet). They found that this problem is especially strong before a nasal sound such as in ‘tan’ or ‘ten.’

Swan and Smith (1999) explain that /æ/(cat) does not occur in Chinese. There is a tendency to nasalize this unfamiliar sound. It is often confused with /ɑ/(father), /ʌ/(cup/ or /e/(met). They also found that there is no Chinese equivalent for /ɒ/(hot). Chinese speakers often confuse this sound with /ɔ/(call), /ɑʊ/(out) or /ʊ/(put).

The distinction between /u/(fool) and /ʊ/(full) is another issue outlined by Swan and Smith (1999). Additionally, Chinese speakers often replace /ʌ/(cup) with /ɑ/(father), which is very close to a sound from Chinese.

As vowel sounds are often a problem for Chinese learners of English, it should come as no surprise that diphthongs, sounds made by the blending of two vowels, are particularly challenging. Chinese diphthongs are produced with quicker and smaller movements of the tongue and lips. For this reason, Chinese speakers often make these sounds too short, without enough difference between the two sounds (Swan & Smith, 1999).

In addition to difficulties with vowels, Chinese speakers of English sometimes encounter problems with consonant sounds. One area of consonant sound difficulty outlined by Avery and Ehrlich (2012) is with consonants in the word-final position. A particular challenge is word-final voiceless stop consonants such as /b/, /d/ and /g/.

Although Chinese has these sounds in the final position, they are not aspirated and are

much shorter than the equivalent sounds in English. Due to a lack of voiced stops in the final position in Chinese, students often can not distinguish between final /b/ and final /p/, final /d/ and final /k/ or between /g/ and /k/ in the final position. Word final nasals are also a challenge. These sounds are much shorter in Chinese than they are in English. When Chinese speakers use the sounds /m/, /n/ or /ŋ/(sing) in the final position, English speakers often have difficulty distinguishing which of these sounds was used.

Other areas of concern involving consonants outlined by Avery and Ehrlich (2012) are /r/ vs. /w/, /w/ vs. /v/ and the difference between the voiced ‘th’ sound /θ/(both) and the unvoiced ‘th’ sound /ð/ as in ‘mother.’ Finally, consonant clusters were identified as a concern. Chinese does not have consonant clusters in word-initial or in word-final position.

Although there are many areas of English pronunciation that Chinese speakers find difficult, vowel sounds are an excellent area of focus. The English and Chinese vowel systems are very different. Tongue and lip movements that are necessary for correct pronunciation of English are unfamiliar to many Chinese students. A systematic treatment of the vowels should be of great benefit in helping students to be better understood.

### **Teaching Models and Suggestions**

Prevailing theories on how best to teach a foreign language have evolved over time. Different approaches to language teaching are characterized by an emphasis on certain design features (Zhou & Niu, 2015). These researchers explain that the grammar-translation method of second language teaching was developed in Germany in the 18th and 19th centuries. Zhou and Niu (2015) refer to as the ‘classical method’ in which a

language is taught by the reading and translating of texts. Most instruction is delivered in the students' native language. This approach is characterized by rote memorization of vocabulary and the study of explicit grammar rules. Although effective for teaching grammar and vocabulary, the result of this approach is the inability of the students to use the language for communication (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

The grammar-translation approach often leads to students knowing about a language, but not being able to do anything with the language (Zhou & Niu, 2015).

Despite these shortcomings, the grammar-translation method is still popular in many parts of the world. Zhou and Niu (2015) attribute this to the fact that the grammar-translation method does not require great skill on the part of the teacher.

Since the 1970s, Communicative Language Teaching or CLT, has been seen as the most effective model in English language teaching (Zhou & Niu, 2015). Daisy (2012) states that CLT is an approach to the teaching of foreign languages that emphasizes interaction as the means and ultimate goal of language learning. In this approach, both instructional and learning goals are aimed at communication. Teachers using a CLT approach should provide authentic language materials to their students. Students should use meaningful exchanges of language beyond the word and sentence level (Avery & Ehrlich, 2012).

Historically, pronunciation learning has involved the practice of isolated sounds without the context in which these sounds occur. Pronunciation has lagged behind other ESL aspects in its communicative approach (Avery & Ehrlich, 2012).

Techniques for teaching the pronunciation of vowels and consonants in a communicative format were identified by Avery and Ehrlich (2012). First, information

gap activities are a good way to practice sound contrasts. For example, if students are having problems with /b/ vs. /v/, they might brainstorm lists of foods that include these sounds. Then they might produce a dialogue using the brainstormed words. Matching exercises are another effective technique for highlighting sound contrasts. For example, one group receives descriptions of people that use the emphasized words. The other group receives pictures of the people. Students must match the sentences with the pictures, using the appropriate sounds (Avery & Ehrlich, 2012). Finally, dialogues and role plays can be effective formats for the teaching of English pronunciation. These can be written to emphasize a particular sound contrast. Students can practice the original dialogue and create role plays that incorporate the highlighted sounds.

Although Communicative Language Teaching has been seen as the most effective language teaching model since the 1970s, the approach is not ideal in all situations (Zhou & Niu, 2015). One drawback is that more emphasis is placed on fluency than on accuracy. CLT suggests that teachers avoid correcting errors if the correction interferes with the concentration on communication. Saito and Lyster (2012) outlined ways to effectively correct student errors. They found that teacher reformulations of student errors are an effective way to improve pronunciation. Teacher 'recasts' are particularly effective because they draw students' attention to accurate pronunciation without disrupting the flow of the class.

Zhou and Niu (2015) point out that approaches to language teaching are characterized by an emphasis on certain design features. They highlight that Communicative Language Teaching is a grammar-neglected approach. Students who are

accustomed to the grammar-translation method can feel frustrated that they are not learning enough grammar and vocabulary.

Grammar-translation focuses on form with an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. Communicative Language Teaching focuses on function, with use of the language in realistic situations. Either method, used in isolation, is unlikely to function effectively in every teaching situation. Ideally, CLT and the grammar-translation method should be integrated because they compliment one another and emphasis different aspects of language (Zhou & Niu, 2015).

### **Summary**

English language education in China has steadily increased in importance over the last three decades. Chinese students are now required to study the English language beginning in the third grade. The traditional teacher-centered, lecture-based education system in China has not always been ideal for the teaching of communicative competence in English. Many students who come to study in the United States need to improve their communicative competence in order to be successful.

Although Chinese students find many aspects of English pronunciation challenging, vowel sounds account for the greatest difficulty. A systematic approach to learning the front-vowels should be useful to people coming to work or study in the United States. Lessons will use the Communicative Language Teaching approach which will afford students the opportunity to practice their pronunciation while improving their communication skills.



## CHAPTER III THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

### **Brief Description of the Project**

This project focuses on the teaching of English sounds that Chinese students and professionals find difficult to pronounce. Specifically, the guidebook takes a systematic approach to the teaching of the English “front-vowels.” These sounds, all produced in the front of the mouth, have very subtle differences between them. The Chinese language does not have as many vowels sounds as English. There is a tendency for Chinese-speaking students to pronounce each vowel sound like one of the Chinese vowels, failing to distinguish between similar sounding English vowels.

Each lesson in the guidebook begins with the teacher producing the targeted sound in isolation. Students just listen at first. The teacher then says the sound in words and then the words in sentences. Students repeat and receive immediate feedback. The teacher then explains how the target sound is made. Attention is drawn to the shape of the lips, the position of the teeth and the place and manner of articulation, or where and how the sound is made.

The next step in each lesson is that the teacher contrasts the target phoneme with another sound. The two sounds are sounds that Chinese students tend to confuse. Minimal pairs of words representing the two sounds are displayed on the board. The teacher covers their face or faces the wall as they say the sounds. This way, the students can not rely on visual cues to distinguish the sounds. The students indicate which sound they hear. The teacher then shows pictures of the minimal pairs. The students say what they see. If the two sounds are confused, the teacher shows the picture of what they said. This gives immediate feedback.

Students then brainstorm words that contain the target sounds and take turns saying them. The teacher circulates and gives immediate feedback. The students then take turns reading and responding to minimal pair sentences. Partners give feedback. Students then take turns reading passages that contain the targeted sounds. The lesson ends with more independent practice. Students brainstorm words containing the target sounds or write short dialogues that they practice with a partner. Teacher gives immediate feedback during the listen-and-repeat phase. Feedback concerning the communicative activities is done afterwards.

### **Development of the Project**

A series of pronunciation lessons was planned focusing on the English front-vowels. They are taught in their logical order from the top of the mouth to the bottom. The first lesson concerns the /i/ sound heard in the word “eat.” This word is made in the front part of the mouth. It is the highest front vowel. From there the lessons are taught in descending order. The next highest sound is the /ɪ/ sound heard in the word “it.” The lessons continue in order, from top to bottom, depending on where in the mouth they are made. This helps student to understand the front vowels as one connected group rather than various sounds in isolation, making the sounds easier to recognize and differentiate.

Three texts were the primary resources used to determine which English sounds to focus on. *Learner English* by Swan and Smith (1987), *Teaching American English Pronunciation* by Avery and Ehrlich (1992) and *Mastering the American Accent* by Mojsin (2009) each have a section on difficult sounds for selected language groups. Although there was some disagreement on which sounds are the most difficult for Chinese speakers, all three sources are in agreement that vowel sounds pose a particular

challenge. By February of 2016, front-vowels had been identified as the focus of the Guidebook.

Information on the formation of particular sounds was gathered from several sources including *Accurate English* by Rebecca Dauer (1993), *English Pronunciation Made Simple* by Paulette Dale and Lillian Poms (2005) and *Mastering the American Accent* by Lisa Mojsin (2009).

The course reader for a class called “Teaching Pronunciation,” taught by Ilze Duarte at U.C. Berkeley Extension, was used to plan the basic format and structure of the lessons. Google images was the source used for the pictures that appear in the lessons, with care taken to select only pictures that are “marked for reuse.”

“The Guidebook for ESL Teachers of Chinese Students,” in its entirety, can be found in the appendix of this document.

## CHAPTER IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Conclusions**

Since the 1970s, ties between China and the United States have been steadily increasing. Whether in politics, business or academia, more people are coming from China to live and work in the United States (Gorsuch, 2011). Most Chinese coming to live and work in the United States have studied English for many years. Often, they have extensive knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. English pronunciation, however, is an area that many Chinese find very challenging. Most English courses in China are not taught using a communicative format. Chinese students and scholars studying in the United States often would benefit from more communicative practice and a review of the basics of English language pronunciation (Yang & Yuen, 2014).

The vowel sounds of English are particularly challenging for Chinese speakers (Jin & Liu, 2014). There are fewer vowel sounds in Chinese than in English. This means that English sounds are closer together in terms of place and manner of articulation. Chinese students tend to use the Chinese vowel sounds when speaking English. They often assign a given English vowel sound to a vowel sound from their existing schema. Often, two or more English vowels are pronounced in the same way, creating confusion for the listener.

This project teaches the front-vowels of English in a systematic way, starting with /i/, the front-vowel that is made at the highest point in the mouth. The lessons continue from top to bottom in terms of point of articulation and end with /æ/, which is formed at the bottom of the mouth.

This project focuses on the front-vowels as they are particularly challenging for Chinese students. When producing front-vowels in Chinese, lip and tongue movements are very different than in English. This makes production of these sounds very difficult. Another challenge is that there are many front-vowels in English and the difference between them is subtle. Chinese speakers often find these differences difficult to hear and pronounce. Although there are other English phonemes that Chinese students find challenging, the front-vowels are a great place to start when working toward better English pronunciation (Jin & Liu, 2014).

The Guidebook for ESL Teachers of Chinese Students presents the front-vowels in a systematic way, from the top of the mouth to the bottom. Care is taken to present vowels together with the sounds that Chinese speakers often confuse them with. In this way, it is really a set of related sounds that is being learned, rather than individual sounds in isolation.

### **Recommendations**

The International Phonetic Alphabet, known as the I.P.A., is used throughout this guidebook. Many international students are familiar with the I.P.A. If your students are familiar with the I.P.A., it may be helpful to use it when describing vowel sounds.

Each lesson has a communicative element in which students can interact with one another while focusing on the targeted sound. It is important that students are given ample opportunity to talk with one another and practice what they have learned.

It is suggested that the sounds be taught in a systematic way. It is a mistake to teach the different sounds in isolation. Similar sounds should be compared and contrasted with one another. The guidebook focuses on the front vowels. If other vowels

are taught, they should also be taught systematically. A group of lessons on the mid-vowels or the back-vowels would be good, logical, next step.

The guidebook is meant to be used to teach an intensive course in English Pronunciation. Lessons should last about 45 minutes each.

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## APPENDIX

### Guidebook for ESL Teachers of Chinese Students

**Guidebook for ESL  
Teachers  
of Chinese Students**

**Help Your Students Improve their  
Pronunciation**

**By John Tubbs**

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## **Introduction**

Many people come to the United States from China to study or work. Chinese students and professionals who come to the United States often arrive with solid grammar and vocabulary skills. English pronunciation, however, can be very challenging. Chinese and English are unrelated languages with very different phonological systems. The pronunciation of English vowels is especially challenging.

This guidebook focuses on English vowel sounds that are produced in the front of the mouth. These are referred to as front-vowels. There are more front-vowels in English than in Chinese and the difference between them is subtler. Chinese students often use the same vowel sounds that they are familiar with from the Chinese language. There is a tendency to use fewer discrete sounds and to pronounce some English vowels in the same way, failing to note the subtle differences between English front-vowels.

This guidebook aims to provide a resource for ESL teachers of Chinese students. The front vowels in English are taught systematically, always highlighting differences between two commonly confused sounds.

Each lesson teaches a specific vowel sound. This sound is compared and contrasted with another sound that Chinese students tend to confuse with it.

The purpose of this project is to provide a resource highlighting specific pronunciation difficulties faced by Chinese students. By learning the front-vowels in a systematic way, always highlighting the specific areas of confusion for Chinese speakers, this guidebook aims to help prepare Chinese students and scholars for the always challenging task of communicating clearly and effectively in English.

Each lesson in the guidebook begins with the teacher producing the targeted sound in isolation. Students just listen at first. The teacher then says the sound in words and then the words in sentences. Students repeat and receive immediate feedback. The teacher then explains how the target sound is made. Attention is drawn to the shape of the lips, the position of the teeth and the place and manner of articulation, or where and how the sound is made.

The next step in each lesson is that the teacher contrasts the target phoneme with another sound. The two sounds are sounds that Chinese students tend to confuse. Minimal pairs of words representing the two sounds are displayed on the board. The teacher covers their face or faces the wall as they say the sounds. This way, the students can not rely on visual

cues to distinguish the sounds. The students indicate which sound they hear. The teacher then shows pictures of the minimal pairs. The students say what they see. If the two sounds are confused, the teacher shows the picture of what they said. This gives immediate feedback.

Students then brainstorm words that contain the target sounds and take turns saying them. The teacher circulates and gives immediate feedback. The students then take turns reading and responding to minimal pair sentences. Partners give feedback. Students then take turns reading passages that contain the targeted sounds. The lesson ends with more independent practice. Students brainstorm words containing the target sounds or write short dialogues that they practice with a partner. Teacher gives immediate feedback during the listen-and-repeat phase. Feedback concerning the communicative activities is done afterwards.

Before using the guidebook, teachers should be familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.). It is referenced throughout the guidebook and is a handy tool for clarifying the pronunciation of challenging sounds.

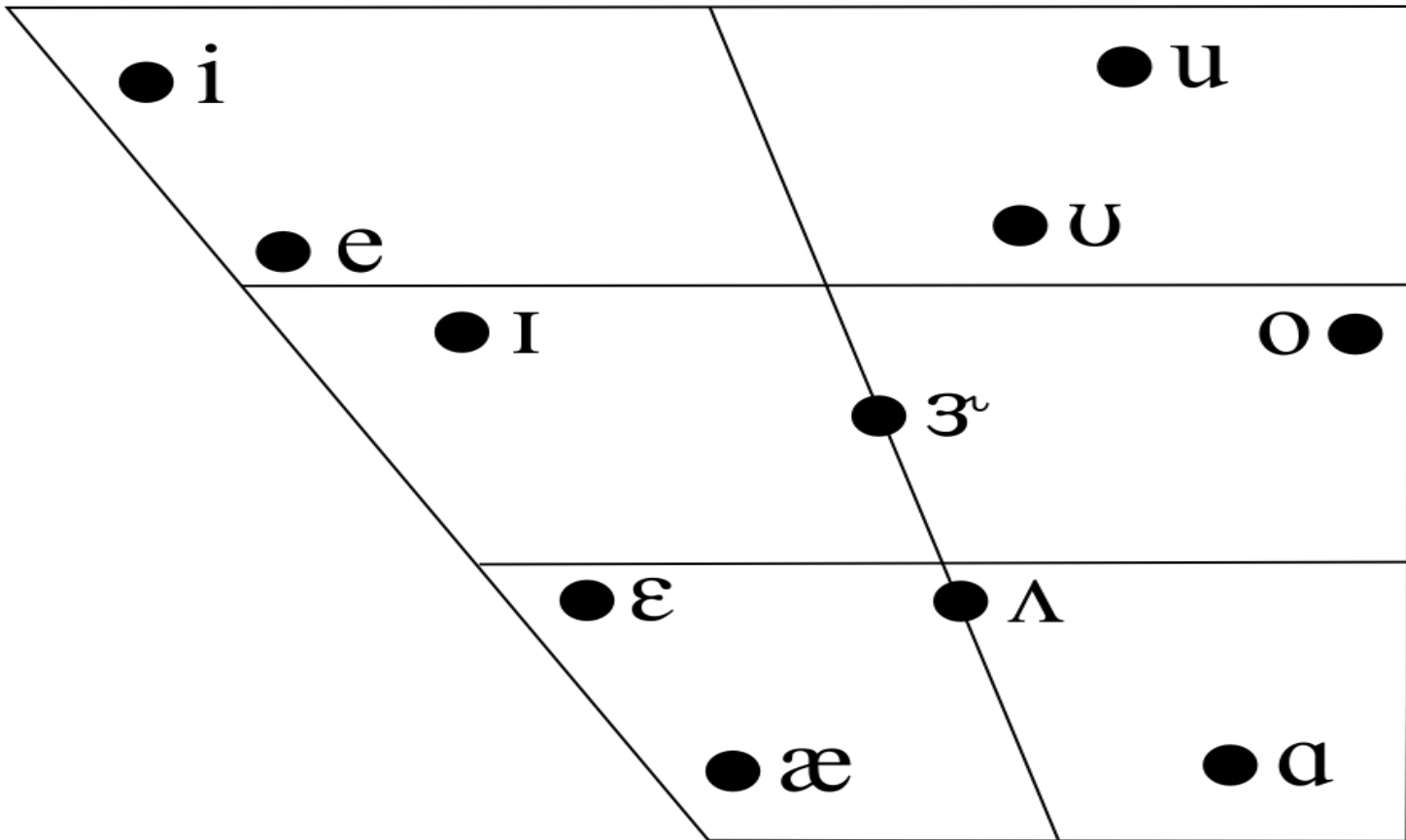
# International Phonetic Alphabet for English Vowels

## Sym. English Equivalent

i	The “ <b>ee</b> ” in “ <b>Fleece</b> ” in most varieties of English.
ɪ	The “ <b>i</b> ” in “ <b>Kit</b> ” in American & most British dialects
e	The “ <b>e</b> ” in “ <b>Bet</b> ”. Also, the first vowel in the diphthong “ <b>face</b> ” in American English.
ɛ	The “ <b>e</b> ” in “ <b>Dress</b> ” in most American and British dialects.
æ	The “ <b>a</b> ” in “ <b>Cat</b> ” in American English.
ɑ	“ <b>a</b> ” in Scottish English “ <b>father</b> ” or “ <b>a</b> ” in Italian and Spanish. The first sound in the American English diphthong “ <b>kite</b> ”
ə	This is the lax, neutral sound in American and British “ <b>comma</b> ” or “ <b>afraid</b> .” It is called the <b>Schwa</b> .
ɑ	The “ <b>a</b> ” in “ <b>father</b> ” in most American and British accents. The “ <b>o</b> ” in “ <b>not</b> ” in American English
ɒ	The “ <b>o</b> ” in “ <b>lot</b> ” in most British dialects. The “ <b>ough</b> ” in “ <b>thought</b> ” in Standard American English
ɔ	The “ <b>ough</b> ” in “ <b>Thought</b> ” in Standard British and some American accents.
ʌ	The “ <b>u</b> ” in “ <b>Strut</b> ” in American English.
o	The “ <b>oa</b> ” in “ <b>Goat</b> ”
ʊ	The vowel in “ <b>Foot</b> ” or “ <b>could</b> ” in American English and Standard British English.
u	The vowel in “ <b>goose</b> ” in American English.



# American English Vowel Chart



## Lesson 1: /i/ as in “eat”

**Goal:** to introduce the /i/ sound as in “eat” and contrast it with the /ɪ/ sound as in “it.”

**Objectives:** By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

Recognize /i/ and /ɪ/ as distinct phonemes (sounds).

Produce /i/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

Produce /ɪ/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

**Activity #1:** Consciousness raising and modeling of /i/ and /ɪ/.

- a. The /i/ sound can be a challenge. Often, /i/ as in “eat”, is confused with /ɪ/, as in “it.”
- b. Teacher models /i/ in isolation several times, exaggerating the spread lips and the smile. Students listen and repeat. Teacher says the words from a prepared word list on the board. Students listen.

**sleep**

**cheap**

**feet**

**sheep**

**beat**

- c. Teacher says the words and students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

- d. Teacher reads sentences from a prepared list on the board: Students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

**Each employee has agreed to meet at eight fifteen.**

**Don't leave the TV near the heater.**

**Please speak to Katy about the employee meeting.**

**Peter will reread the email before he leaves.**

*(Adapted from Mastering the American accent)*

- e. Teacher models pronunciation of /i/. This is the highest of the front vowels. The tongue position is high, near the roof of the mouth. The jaw is almost completely raised. The tongue should be tense and far forward. The lips are spread slightly, smiling. This is a long vowel. Teacher says /i/, exaggerating the length of the vowel and the smiling mouth shape.
- f. Teacher models the /i/ sound again, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback.
- g. Teacher models the /ɪ/ sound. Teacher points out that with /ɪ/, the tongue is slightly lower in the mouth. Tongue is more relaxed. Teacher models, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback.

**Activity #2:** Recognition of /i/ and /ɪ/ as distinct phonemes.

- a. Teacher models /i/ and /ɪ/, exaggerating the difference slightly. Teacher references prepared minimal pair list on the board. Teacher says words from the list, asking students to recognize the difference in the sounds and point in one direction or another to indicate which sound they hear. Teacher covers mouth and repeats the exercise. Students differentiate the sounds without visual cues, indicating which sounds they hear.

b.

<b>sleep</b>	<b>slip</b>
<b>cheap</b>	<b>chip</b>
<b>feet</b>	<b>fit</b>
<b>sheep</b>	<b>ship</b>
<b>beat</b>	<b>bit</b>

- c. Teacher shows pictures of minimal pairs. Teacher models words. Students listen first, then repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback. If the wrong sound is used, teacher shows picture of the sound that was heard.
- d. In pairs, students list words containing the /i/ and /ɪ/ sounds. Students share lists, teacher gives immediate feedback.

### **Activity #3: Controlled Practice.**

- a. Hand out sheets with fill-in-the-blank, minimal pair exercises. Make sure students understand the pictures so they can complete the sentences with the words in the box. Students fill them out in writing first, then work in pairs, taking turns reading the sentences to each other. See worksheet part 1.
- b. Students work independently to say the words and underline the /i/ sound in each word. When finished, students compare their work. See worksheet part 2.
- c. Students work independently to read the paragraph and underline the /i/ sound in each word. When finished, students compare their work. See worksheet part 3.

- d. Teacher says the words aloud. Students follow along, concentrating on which words have the /i/ sound. Students circle the words that do not contain /i/. Teacher gives feedback afterwards. See worksheet part 4.

**Activity #4: Freer Practice.**

- a. Have students write sentences using the minimal pairs list. Then students read their sentences to each other. Teacher moves around the room and listens. Teacher corrects pronunciation if necessary when pairs are done. See worksheet part 5.

# Lesson 1 Student Worksheets

## /i/ as in “eat”

### Part 1

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** sleep, slip, feet, fit, ship, sheep, sleep, slip, bit, beat

1. The woman likes to \_\_\_\_\_ on the sofa.



2. Be careful not to \_\_\_\_\_ and fall.



3. We went to the island on a \_\_\_\_\_.



4. \_\_\_\_\_ like to eat grass.



5. That music has a very good \_\_\_\_\_.



6. She \_\_\_\_\_ the apple and found half a word.



7. When I feel hungry, I eat a \_\_\_\_\_.



8. The price is very good. It is so \_\_\_\_\_.



9. He exercises every day. He is very \_\_\_\_\_.



10. I walked so much. My \_\_\_\_\_ are tired.



## **Part 2**

**Directions:** Say the following words and underline the /i/ sound.

**believe**

**feed**

**green**

**guarantee**

**increase**

**jeans**

**please**

**really**

**season**

**teeth**

**weak**

**screen**

**teach**



### **Part 3**

**Directions:** Read the paragraph and underline the /i/ sound each time you find it. When finished, compare your work with another student.

#### **The Beatles**

What is a Beatle? You may think of a real creature who creeps and leaps about. But most people think of four English teens called the Beatles, who appeared as a rock group in the nineteen sixties. Leaving bebop behind, the Beatles created a unique beat that appealed to many people. Seen on American TV, they were often greeted by screams and cheers. “Please Please Me” and “She Loves You” were among their many hit songs. They even received an award from the queen of England. The team broke up as they reached their peak, but each member continued his own career. The world grieved the loss of their leader, John Lennon, who died in December, 1980. Although only briefly on the scene, the Beatles created meaningful music that will be here for an eternity.  
*(adapted from English Pronunciation made simple)*

## Part 4

**Directions:** As the teacher reads the words aloud, follow along, listening for the /i/ sound. Circle the words that do not have /i/. Then take turns reading the words with your partner.

1. eagle great feast geese
2. eight equal read repeat
3. scream women real eat
4. achieve beach feel even
5. grease wheat sweet vision
6. pretty police their cream
7. flee bread teen deal
8. tin people green receive
9. leave live freeze meet
10. steep Katy east still

## Part 5

**Directions:** Write sentences using the minimal pairs list. When you are finished, read your sentences to your partner.

For example, “Each day I try to exercise. I scratch my arm if I feel an itch.”

**/i/**

**/ɪ/**

each

itch

feel

fill

heat

hit

green

grin

he’s

his

steal

still

leak

lick

## Lesson 2: /ɪ/ as in “hit”

**Goal:** to introduce the /ɪ/ sound as in hit and contrast it with the /i/ sound as in heat.

**Objectives:** By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

Recognize /ɪ/ and /i/ as distinct phonemes (sounds).

Produce /ɪ/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

Produce /i/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

**Activity #1:** Consciousness raising and modeling of /ɪ/ and /i/.

- a. The /ɪ/ sound is often difficult. This is a sound that does not occur in Chinese. Often, /ɪ/ as in “hit,” is confused with /i/, as in “heat.”
- b. Teacher models /ɪ/ in isolation several times. Students listen and repeat. Teacher says the words from a prepared word list on the board. Students listen.

**hit**

**ill**

**lip**

**pitch**

**chick**

- c. Teacher says the words and students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

d Teacher reads sentences from a prepared list on the board: Students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

**The Smith sisters will visit their big sister in Virginia.**

**Kim invited him to an informal dinner.**

**Bill thinks this city has an interesting history.**

**When did Jim visit the Middle East?**

*(Adapted from Mastering the American accent)*

e. Teacher models pronunciation of /ɪ/. This is a high, front vowel. The tongue is high in the mouth, but not as high as in /i/. The tip of the tongue rests against the lower teeth. The sides of the tongue touch the upper back teeth. The lips are slightly parted and in the neutral position (relaxed). First make an /i/. Can you feel the arch in your tongue? Move that arch slightly back. That is the position of /ɪ/. Teacher models several times. Students listen.

f. Teacher models the /ɪ/ sound again, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback.

g. Teacher models the /i/ sound. Teacher points out that with /i/, the tongue is arched, high and forward. With /ɪ/ the tongue is slightly less high and less forward. When moving from /i/ to /ɪ/, the tongue drops down and back just slightly. One eighth of an inch is enough. Teacher models, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback.

**Activity #2:** Recognition of //ɪ/ and /i/ as distinct phonemes.

a. Teacher models /ɪ/ and /i/ exaggerating the difference slightly. Teacher references prepared minimal pair list on the board. Teacher says words from the list, asking students to recognize the difference in the sounds and point in one direction or another to indicate which sound they hear. Teacher covers mouth and repeats the exercise. Students differentiate the sounds without visual cues, indicating which sounds they hear.

<b>hit</b>	<b>heat</b>
<b>ill</b>	<b>eel</b>
<b>lip</b>	<b>leap</b>
<b>pitch</b>	<b>peach</b>
<b>chick</b>	<b>cheek</b>

b. Teacher shows pictures of minimal pairs. Teacher models words. Students listen first, then repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback. If the wrong sound is used, teacher shows picture of what was said. For example, Teacher shows hit, student says heat, teacher shows picture of heat.

c. In pairs, students list words containing /ɪ/ and /i/ sounds. Students share lists, teacher gives immediate feedback.

### **Activity #3: Controlled Practice.**

a. Hand out sheets with fill-in-the-blank, minimal pair exercises. Make sure students understand the pictures so they can complete the sentences with the words in the box. Students fill them out in writing first, then work in pairs, taking turns reading the sentences to each other. See worksheet part 1.

b. Students work independently to say the words and underline the /ɪ/sound in each word. When finished, students compare their work. See worksheet part 2.

c. Students work independently to say the sentences and underline the /ɪ/ sound in each word. When finished, students compare their work. See worksheet part 3.

d. Teacher reads sentences aloud slowly, exaggerating the difference in the sounds slightly. Students follow along, concentrating on the difference between /ɪ/ and /i/. Students then take turns reading the sentences to each other. Teacher gives feedback afterwards. See worksheet part 4.

**Activity #4:** Freer Practice.

a. Have students write sentences using the minimal pairs list. Then students read their sentences to each other. Teacher moves around the room and listens. Teacher corrects pronunciation if necessary when pairs are done. See worksheet part 5.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 2 Student Worksheets

### /ɪ/ as in “hit”

#### Part 1

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** ill, eel, hit, heat, leaps, lips, chick, cheek, peach, pitch.

1. The man was \_\_\_\_\_ with the ball.



2. I can feel the \_\_\_\_\_ from the fire.



3. The mother kissed her baby on the \_\_\_\_\_.



4. I love baby chickens. The \_\_\_\_\_ is so cute.

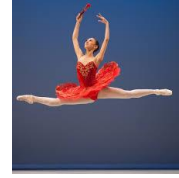


5. She put lipstick on her \_\_\_\_\_.

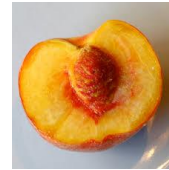




6. The dancer \_\_\_\_\_ into the air.



7. The \_\_\_\_\_ is so sweet.



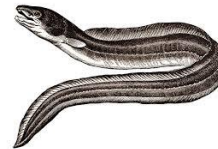
8. The baseball player will \_\_\_\_\_ the ball.



9. I have been feeling \_\_\_\_\_.



10. I went fishing and caught an \_\_\_\_\_.



## **Part 2**

**Directions:** Say the following words and underline the /I/ sound.

**gift**

**if**

**sick**

**active**

**basis**

**cousin**

**insist**

**minute**

**predict**

**benefit**

**impossible**

**difficult**

**politics**

### Part 3

**Directions:** Say the sentences and underline the /ɪ/ sound in each word. When finished, compare your work with another student.

1. Bill showed Nick the video images and still pictures.
2. The kid rapidly fingered the guitar strings, producing beautiful music.
3. The administration did stress the importance of interviews to the six candidates.
4. In Jill's opinion, physical activity is important.
5. The restaurant's menu consists mainly of squid and is quite limited.
6. It is silly to begin dinner when Jill is still missing.
7. The police wanted the evidence to convict the man of the vicious assault.
8. We think Jim should reconsider the situation and admit his guilt.
9. My little sister has been persistent in interfering in my business.
10. The office did have a policy of nondiscrimination for women.

## Part 4

**Directions:** As the teacher reads the sentences aloud, follow along, concentrating on the difference between /ɪ/ and /i/. Mark the sounds where you hear them. Then take turns reading the sentences with your partner.

/ɪ/ = hit

/i/ = heat

1. Christie feels she has not fulfilled her obligation in a meaningful way.
2. The insight of each member inspired the artistic productivity of everyone.
3. He agreed instantly that his team's mistakes created the conflict.
4. Lee needs clarification before proceeding because the instructions were misleading.
5. We should keep believing that consistent practice always leads to dramatic improvement.
6. Deep breathing increases circulation and improves overall health.

7. Gina wants to pick a tin of pickled beets to bring to the picnic.
8. Did you eat the beef sandwiches that I was saving for dinner?

## **Part 5**

**Directions:** Write sentences using the minimal pairs list. When you are finished, read your sentences to your partner.

For example, “I grin when I see my friend. I love the color green.”

**/ɪ/**

**/i/**

grin

green

is

ease

still

steal

hill

he'll

sick

seek

dip

deep

pill

peel

### **Lesson 3: /e/ as in “play”**

**Goal:** to introduce the /e/ sound as in play and contrast it with the /ɛ/ sound as in bet.

**Objectives:** By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

Recognize /e/ and /ɛ/ as distinct phonemes (sounds).

Produce /e/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

Produce /ɛ/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

**Activity #1:** Consciousness raising and modeling of /e/ and /ɛ/.

a. The /e/ sound causes some students problems. Often, /e/ as in “play,” is confused with /ɛ/, as in “bet.”

b. Teacher models /e/ in isolation several times, emphasizing the change from the beginning of the sound to the end. Students listen and repeat. Teacher says the words from a prepared word list on the board. Students listen.

**wait**  
**fail**  
**play**  
**raced**  
**tail**

c. Teacher says the words and students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

d. Teacher reads sentences from a prepared list on the board: Students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

**He complained about his weight, but still ate the cake.**

**Nate hates waiting for trains and planes.**

**It often rains and hails in April and May.**

**My neighbor from Spain moved away yesterday.**

*(Adapted from Mastering the American accent)*

e. Teacher models pronunciation of /e/. This is a front vowel. It is a diphthong, which is made as the tongue slides from the mid-level to up high near the roof of the mouth. It starts with /ε/ and glides to /ɪ/. The tongue is tense. Lips are spread and unrounded. The jaw rises with the tongue and closes slightly. Teacher says /e/, emphasizing the movement from /ε/ to /ɪ/. Students listen.

f. Teacher models the /e/ sound again, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback.

g. Teacher models the /ε/ sound. Teacher points out that /e/ and /ε/ are both front vowels, but /ε/ is lower in the mouth. It is a “pure” sound that does not change. Teacher models, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback.

**Activity #2:** Recognition of /e/ and /ε/ as distinct phonemes.

a. Teacher models /e/ and /ε/, exaggerating the difference slightly. Teacher references prepared minimal pair list on the board. Teacher says words from the list, asking students to recognize the difference in the sounds and point in one direction or another to indicate which sound they hear. Teacher covers mouth and repeats the exercise. Students differentiate the sounds without visual cues, indicating which sounds they hear.

<b>wait</b>	<b>wet</b>
<b>fail</b>	<b>fell</b>
<b>raced</b>	<b>rest</b>
<b>chase</b>	<b>chess</b>
<b>tail</b>	<b>tell</b>

b. Teacher shows pictures of minimal pairs. Teacher models words. Students listen first, then repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback. If the wrong sound is used, teacher shows picture of what was said. For example, Teacher shows wait, student says wet, teacher shows picture of wet.

c. In pairs, students list words containing /e/ and /ɛ/ sounds. Students share lists, teacher gives immediate feedback.

### **Activity #3: Controlled Practice.**

a. Hand out sheets with fill-in-the-blank, minimal pair exercises. Make sure students understand the pictures so they can complete the sentences with the words in the box. Students fill them out in writing first, then work in pairs, taking turns reading the sentences to each other. See worksheet part 1.

b. Students work with a partner to read the passage about Babe Ruth. They should focus on the /e/ words which are in bold. See worksheet part 2.

c. Students work independently to say the sentences and underline the /e/ sound in each sentence. When finished, students compare their work.  
See worksheet part 3.



d. Teacher reads sentences aloud. Students follow along, concentrating on the difference between /e/ sound. Students mark on their paper where they heard the /e/ sound. Students then take turns reading the sentences to each other. Teacher gives feedback afterwards. See worksheet part 4.

**Activity #4:** Freer Practice.

a. Have students write sentences using the minimal pairs list. Then students read their sentences to each other. Teacher moves around the room and listens. Teacher corrects pronunciation if necessary when pairs are done. See worksheet part 5.

## Lesson 3 Student Worksheets

### /e/ as in “play”

### Part 1

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** chase, chess, tail, tell, wet, wait, fell, fail, rest, raced.

1. We had to \_\_\_\_\_ a long time at the airport.



2. This bear is very \_\_\_\_\_.



3. She enjoys \_\_\_\_\_.



4. The cat likes to \_\_\_\_\_ the mouse.



5. The sisters like to \_\_\_\_\_ secrets.



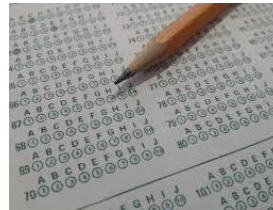
6. The cat has a long \_\_\_\_\_.



7. The skier \_\_\_\_\_ in the snow.



8. I hope that I do not \_\_\_\_\_ the test.



9. The cars \_\_\_\_\_ down the track.



10. The dog likes to \_\_\_\_\_ on the grass.



## **Part 2**

**Directions:** Say the following words and underline the /e/ sound.

**bake**      **skate**      **estimate**

**gain**      **explain**      **contain**

**pay**      **stay**      **essay**

**weight**      **eight**      **able**

**angel**

### Part 3

**Directions:** Take turns with your partner reading the passage about Babe Ruth, the famous baseball player. Be sure to pronounce the /e/ sound correctly. All the words in bold have an /e/ sound.

#### Babe Ruth

**Babe** Ruth was a **famous baseball player**. He was born in Baltimore and was **raised** there as an orphan. He first **played** for the Boston Red Socks but was **later traded** to the New York Yankees. He hit 714 home runs and **became a baseball legend**. He was **named** to the **baseball Hall of Fame**. The last team he **played** for was the Boston **Braves**. He died in **1948**. Many **say** he was the **greatest player** to ever **play** the **game**.

*(Adapted from English Pronunciation Made Simple)*

## Part 4

**Directions:** As the teacher reads the sentences aloud, follow along, concentrating on the /e/ sound. Mark it when you hear it. Then take turns reading the sentences to your partner.

1. He often takes his vacations in Texas.
2. You'll waste a lot of time by driving out West.
3. Don't let me be late, it starts at eight.
4. These lace curtains cost less than those other ones.
5. I'll try to read your letter later.
6. What is the age of the big house on the river?
7. Yesterday, he fell down and failed to finish the race.
8. They hope to sell everything that is still on sale.

## Part 5

**Directions:** Write sentences using the minimal pairs list. When you are finished, read your sentences to your partner.

For example, “I have to wait until I am dry. I got really wet.”

**/e/      /ɛ/**

wait      wet

paper      pepper

later      letter

pain      pen

fail      fell

gate      get

raced      rest

## Lesson 4: /ɛ/ as in “bet”

**Goal:** to introduce the /ɛ/ sound as in bet and contrast it with the /æ/ sound as in bat.

**Objectives:** By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

Recognize /ɛ/ and /æ/ as distinct phonemes (sounds).

Produce /ɛ/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

Produce /æ/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

**Activity #1:** Consciousness raising and modeling of /ɛ/ and /æ/.

a. The /ɛ/ sound can be a challenge to pronounce. This is a sound that does not occur in Chinese. Often, /ɛ/, as in “bet,” is confused with /æ/ as in “bat.” Review the front vowels, /i/, /ɪ/, /e/, /ɛ/ and /æ/. Point out that with each sound in the progression, the tongue and jaw drop farther down.

b. Teacher models /ɛ/ in isolation several times, exaggerating the dropping of the jaw and opening of the mouth. Students listen and repeat. Teacher says the words from a prepared word list on the board. Students listen.

**met**

**dead**

**gem**

**pen**

**guest**



c. Teacher says the words and students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

d. Teacher reads sentences from a prepared list on the board: Students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

**You will never excel without some extra effort.**

**Kendra and her friend had eggs for breakfast.**

**On the seventh of December the weather was wet.**

**I expect this session to end by ten.**

*(Adapted from Mastering the American accent)*

e. Teacher models pronunciation of /ɛ/. This is a mid-high, front vowel. The lips are spread, unrounded and relaxed. Tongue is relaxed, in the mid-high position. The tip of the tongue rests on the lower teeth. Jaw is lower than in /e/, but higher than /æ/. Go through the front vowel progression: /i/, /ɪ/, /e/, /ɛ/ and /æ/. Teacher says /ɛ/, contrasting it with /e/ and /æ/. Students listen.

f. Teacher models the /ɛ/ sound again, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback. Teacher goes through the front vowel progression again: /i/, /ɪ/, /e/, /ɛ/ and /æ/, highlighting the placement of /ɛ/.

g. Teacher models the /æ/ sound. Teacher points out that /æ/ is a low front vowel. It is made with a forward movement of the tongue from the rest position. Tongue is tense. Lips are unrounded. The tip of the tongue rests against the lower teeth. The front of the tongue is arched. Teacher says /æ/, exaggerating the dropping of the jaw and the opening of the mouth. Teacher models, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback.

**Activity #2:** Recognition of /ɛ/ and /æ/ as distinct phonemes.

a. Teacher models /ɛ/ and /æ/, exaggerating the difference slightly. Teacher references prepared minimal pair list on the board. Teacher says words from the list, asking students to recognize the difference in the sounds and point in one direction or another to indicate which sound they hear. Teacher covers mouth and repeats the exercise. Students differentiate the sounds without visual cues, indicating which sounds they hear.

<b>met</b>	<b>mat</b>
<b>dead</b>	<b>dad</b>
<b>gem</b>	<b>jam</b>
<b>pen</b>	<b>pan</b>
<b>guest</b>	<b>gassed</b>

b. Teacher shows pictures of minimal pairs. Teacher models words. Students listen first, then repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback. If the wrong sound is used, teacher shows picture of what was said. For example, Teacher shows a pen, student says “pan,” teacher shows picture of a pan.

c. In pairs, students list words containing /ɛ/ and /æ/ sounds. Students share lists, teacher gives immediate feedback.

**Activity #3:** Controlled Practice.

a. Hand out sheets with fill-in-the-blank, minimal pair exercises. Make sure students understand the pictures so they can complete the sentences with the words in the box. Students fill them out in writing first, then work in pairs, taking turns reading the sentences to each other. See worksheet part 1.

b. Students work independently to say the words and underline the /ε/ sound in each word. When finished, students compare their work. See worksheet part 2.

c. Students work independently to say the sentences and underline the /ε/ sound in each word. When finished, students compare their work. See worksheet part 3.

d. Teacher reads the passage aloud. Passage should be read slowly with extra emphasis on the /ε/ and /æ/ sounds. Students follow along, concentrating on the difference between /ε/ and /æ/. Students mark the appropriate sounds on the paper. Students then take turns reading the passage to each other. Teacher gives feedback afterwards. See worksheet part 4.

#### **Activity #4: Freer Practice.**

a. Have students write sentences using the minimal pairs list. Then students read their sentences to each other. Teacher moves around the room and listens. Teacher corrects pronunciation if necessary when pairs are done. See worksheet part 5.

## Lesson 4 Student Worksheets

### /ɛ/ as in “bet”

### Part 1

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** dead, dad, jam, gem, guest, gassed, mat, met, pen, pan.

1. That \_\_\_\_\_ is very valuable.



2. I like \_\_\_\_\_ on my bread.



3. We went to a funeral. Our friend is \_\_\_\_\_.



4. He really enjoys being a \_\_\_\_\_.



5. I visited my friend. I was a \_\_\_\_\_ in her house.



6. We \_\_\_\_\_ up the car before we left.



7. I wrote the letter with a \_\_\_\_\_.



8. I cooked dinner with a \_\_\_\_\_.



9. The men \_\_\_\_\_ at the White House.



10. I wiped my feet on the \_\_\_\_\_.



## **Part 2**

**Directions:** Say the following words and underline the /ε/ sound.

**fresh**

**get**

**melt**

**them**

**any**

**belly**

**connect**

**essay**

**heavy**

**festival**

**reception together**

**umbrella**

### Part 3

**Directions:** Say the sentences and underline the /ε/ sound in each word. When finished, compare your work with another student.

1. When you are stressed, you should stretch, rest and exercise.
2. The expert has expressed an intense desire to win the contest.
3. When can Ken collect his well-earned pension?
4. Members of the press have speculated about the presidential election.
5. He said that every member of the family is left handed.
6. My best friend Frank wants to be a successful dentist.
7. Jenny's bad headache had lasted several days.
8. Ben drank eleven glasses of fresh lemonade.
9. Everyone should be happy that he was elected president.

## Part 4

**Directions:** As the teacher reads the passage aloud, follow along, concentrating on the difference between /ɛ/ and /æ/. Mark the sounds with /ɛ/ or /æ/. Then take turns reading the passage with your partner.

/ɛ/ = set

/æ/ = sat

Next January, I'm planning to visit my friend in France. Last time I went there, I was only ten years old. I would love to go back again. I have been taking a class called "French for Travelers." We've been memorizing vocabulary and learning the present and past tenses. I want my French accent to get better and I am practicing every chance I get. Yesterday, I rented a French film and I felt very bad because I didn't understand a word they said. I guess I need to make extra effort. I really want to learn the language and have to speak better so that people can understand me when I am asking for directions and ordering in restaurants. (*adapted from Mastering the American Accent*)



## Part 5

**Directions:** Write sentences using the minimal pairs list. When you are finished, read your sentences to your partner.

For example, “I slept in my bed. I carried a bag of books.

/ɛ/      /æ/

bed      bag

end      and

ex      axe

spend      spanned

trek      track

blend      bland

left      laughed

## Lesson 5: /æ/ as in “bat”

**Goal:** to introduce the /æ/ sound as in “bat” and contrast it with the /ɛ/ sound as in “bet.”

**Objectives:** By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

Recognize /æ/ and /ɛ/ as distinct phonemes (sounds).

Produce /æ/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

Produce /ɛ/ in words correctly most or all of the time (reminders may be necessary).

**Activity #1:** Consciousness raising and modeling of /æ/ and /ɛ/.

a. The /æ/ sound can be difficult to pronounce. This is a sound that does not occur in Chinese. Often, /æ/ as in “bat,” is confused with /ɛ/, as in “bet.”

b. Teacher models /æ/ in isolation several times, exaggerating the dropping of the jaw and opening of the mouth. Students listen and repeat. Teacher says the words from a prepared word list on the board. Students listen.

**man**

**bat**

**gas**

**slapped**

**sat**

c. Teacher says the words and students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

d. Teacher reads sentences from a prepared list on the board: Students repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback.

**Sam had sat in the back of the math class.**

**Danny had an egg salad sandwich in the cafeteria.**

**Nancy often had a bad attitude in her Spanish class.**

**Kathy would have rather study acting.**

*(Adapted from Mastering the American accent)*

e. Teacher models pronunciation of /æ/. This is a low, front vowel. It is made with a forward movement of the tongue from the rest position. Tongue is tense. Lips are unrounded. The tip of the tongue rests against the lower teeth. The front of the tongue is arched. Teacher says /æ/, exaggerating the dropping of the jaw and opening of the mouth. Students listen.

f. Teacher models the /æ/ sound again, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback.

g. Teacher models the /ɛ/ sound. Teacher points out that with /ɛ/, the jaw does not lower as much, mouth is less open, tongue is not arched. Teacher models, students repeat, teacher gives immediate feedback.

**Activity #2:** Recognition of /æ/ and /ɛ/ as distinct phonemes.

a. Teacher models /æ/ and /ɛ/, exaggerating the difference slightly. Teacher references prepared minimal pair list on the board. Teacher says words from the list, asking students to recognize the difference in the sounds and point in one direction or another to indicate which sound they hear. Teacher covers mouth and repeats the exercise. Students differentiate the sounds without visual cues, indicating which sounds they hear.

<b>man</b>	<b>men</b>
<b>bat</b>	<b>bet</b>
<b>gas</b>	<b>guess</b>
<b>slapped</b>	<b>slept</b>
<b>sat</b>	<b>set</b>

b. Teacher shows pictures of minimal pairs. Teacher models words. Students listen first, then repeat. Teacher gives immediate feedback. If the wrong sound is used, teacher shows picture of what was said. For example, Teacher shows man, student says men, teacher shows picture of men.

c. In pairs, students list words containing /æ/ and /ɛ/ sounds. Students share lists, teacher gives immediate feedback.

### **Activity #3: Controlled Practice.**

a. Hand out sheets with fill-in-the-blank, minimal pair exercises. Make sure students understand the pictures so they can complete the sentences with the words in the box. Students fill them out in writing first, then work in pairs, taking turns reading the sentences to each other. See worksheet part 1.

b. Students work independently to say the words and underline the /æ/ sound in each word. When finished, students compare their work. See worksheet part 2.

c. Students work independently to say the sentences and underline the /æ/ sound each time they find it.. The number in parentheses shows the number of /æ/ words in each sentence. When finished, students compare their work. See worksheet part 3.

d. Teacher reads sentences aloud. Students follow along, concentrating on the difference between /æ/ and /ɛ/. Students then take turns reading the sentences to each other. Teacher gives feedback afterwards. See worksheet part 4.

**Activity #4:** Freer Practice.

a. Have students write sentences using the minimal pairs list. Then students read their sentences to each other. Teacher moves around the room and listens. Teacher corrects pronunciation if necessary when pairs are done. See worksheet part 5.

## Lesson 5 Student Worksheets

### /æ/ as in “bat”

### Part 1

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** sat, set, man, men, gas, guess, slapped, slept, bat, bet.

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ helped me carry the boxes.



2. Three \_\_\_\_\_ helped me carry the boxes.



3. The baseball player has a \_\_\_\_\_.



4. In Las Vegas, people often \_\_\_\_\_.



5. I \_\_\_\_\_ on the chair yesterday.



6. I \_\_\_\_\_ the book on the table.



7. She needs to put \_\_\_\_\_ in her car.



8. Can you \_\_\_\_\_ the answer?



9. He was \_\_\_\_\_ across the face.



10. She was so tired that she \_\_\_\_\_ early.



## **Part 2**

**Directions:** Say the following words and underline the /æ/ sound.

**sample**

**Africa**

**candy**

**fascinate**

**magic**

**Canada**

**traffic**

**exact**

**California**

**chapter**

**package**

**attack**

**animal**



## Part 3

**Directions:** Say the sentences and underline the /æ/ sound in each word. The number in parentheses shows the number of /æ/ sounds in each sentence. When finished, compare your work with another student.

1. The Titanic traveled to New York across the Atlantic in 1912. (4)
2. The grand and elaborate ship had over 2,000 passengers. (4)
3. It crashed into an iceberg and then sank in about two and a half hours.  
(5)
4. Telegraph warnings reached the Titanic too late to help. (2)
5. After the crash, many upper and lower class passengers ran about in a panic. (6)
6. Some women and children had a chance to cram into small boats at the last minute. (5)
7. The captain and other passengers were not able to abandon the ship.  
(3)
8. Actors and actresses reenacted the terrible accident in an academy award movie. (6)
9. The story of the Titanic is a sad and tragic chapter in our past. (5)

*(adapted from Pronunciation Made Simple)*

## Part 4

**Directions:** As the teacher reads the sentences aloud, follow along, concentrating on the difference between /æ/ and /ɛ/. Then take turns reading the sentences to your partner.

/æ/ = bat

/ɛ/ = bet

- /ɛ/ /æ/ /ɛ/ /ɛ/ /ɛ/ /æ/ /ɛ/ /æ/ /æ/
1. **Ben** is **apprehensive when addressing his **accent, yet tackles practice with  
/æ/  
vitality.****
  2. The **accident aggravated Jen's intense **abdominal cramps.****
  3. The **weather forecaster predicted cold **afternoons and patchy fog patterns  
/ɛ/ /ɛ/  
in **February.******
  4. The **tennis match with **Eric and Mathew was **challenging.******
  5. **Sam** worked **absolute magic in the kitchen, **yet everything appeared  
/ɛ/  
**effortless.******

## Part 5

**Directions:** Write sentences using the minimal pairs list. When you are finished, read your sentences to your partner.

For example, “The baseball player has a bat. I made a bet in Las Vegas.”

**/æ/      /ɛ/**

bag      beg

sat      set

had      head

pan      pen

land      lend

sad      said

band      bend

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Keys

### Lesson 1: /i/ as in “eat”

#### Part 1

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** sleep, slip, feet, fit, ship, sheep, sleep, slip, bit, beat

1. The woman likes to \_\_\_\_\_ **sleep** \_\_\_\_\_ on the sofa.



2. Be careful not to \_\_\_\_\_ **slip** \_\_\_\_\_ and fall.



3. We went to the island on a \_\_\_\_\_ **ship** \_\_\_\_\_.



4. \_\_\_\_\_ **Sheep** \_\_\_\_\_ like to eat grass.



5. That music has a very good \_\_\_\_\_ **beat** \_\_\_\_\_.



6. She \_\_\_\_ **bit** \_\_\_\_ the apple and found half a worm.



7. When I feel hungry, I eat a \_\_\_\_ **chip** \_\_\_\_.



8. The price is very good. It is so \_\_\_\_ **cheap** \_\_\_\_.



9. He exercises every day. He is very \_\_\_\_ **fit** \_\_\_\_.



10. I walked so much. My \_\_\_\_ **feet** \_\_\_\_ are tired.



## Answer Key Lesson 1, Part 2

Directions: Say the following words and underline the /i/ sound.

**believe**

**feed**

**green**

**guarantee**

**increase**

**jeans**

**please**

**really**

**season**

**teeth**

**weak**

**screen**

**teach**

## Answer Key Lesson 1, Part 3

**Directions:** Read the paragraph and underline the /i/ sound each time you find it. When finished, compare your work with another student.

### The Beatles

What is a Beat? You may think of a real creature who creeps and leaps about. But most people think of four English teens called the Beatles, who appeared as a rock group in the nineteen sixties. Leaving bebop behind, the Beatles created a unique beat that appealed to many people. Seen on American TV, they were often greeted by screams and cheers. “Please Please Me” and “She Loves You” were among their many hit songs. They even received an award from the queen of England. The team broke up as they reached their peak, but each member continued his own career. The world grieved the loss of their leader, John Lennon, who died in December, 1980. Although only briefly on the scene, the Beatles created meaningful music that will be here for an eternity.

*(adapted from English Pronunciation made simple)*

## Answer Key Lesson 1, Part 4

**Directions:** As the teacher reads the words aloud, follow along, listening for the /i/ sound. Circle the words that do not have /i/. Then take turns reading the words with your partner.

1. eagle      **great**      feast      geese
2. **eight**      equal      read      repeat
3. scream      **women**      real      eat
4. achieve      beach      **itch**      even
5. grease      wheat      sweet      **vision**
6. pretty      police      **their**      cream
7. flee      **bread**      teen      deal
8. **tin**      people      green      receive
9. leave      **live**      freeze      meet
10. steep      Katy      east      **still**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key

### Lesson 2: /ɪ/ as in “hit”

#### Part 1

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** ill, eel, hit, heat, leap, lip, chick, cheek, peach, pitch.

1. The man was \_\_\_\_\_ **hit** \_\_\_\_\_ with the ball.



2. I can feel the \_\_\_\_\_ **heat** \_\_\_\_\_ from the fire.



3. The mother kissed her baby on the \_\_\_\_\_ **cheek** \_\_\_\_\_.



4. I love baby chickens. The \_\_\_\_\_ **chick** \_\_\_\_\_ is so cute.



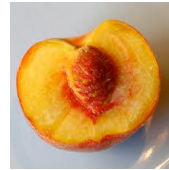
5. She put lipstick on her \_\_\_\_\_ **lips** \_\_\_\_\_.



6. The dancer \_\_\_\_\_ **leaps** \_\_\_\_\_ into the air.



7. The \_\_\_\_\_ **peach** \_\_\_\_\_ is so sweet.



8. The baseball player will **pitch** the ball.



9. I have been feeling \_\_\_\_\_ **ill** \_\_\_\_\_.



10. I went fishing and caught an \_\_\_\_\_ **eel** \_\_\_\_\_.



## Answer Key Lesson 2, Part 2

**Directions:** Say the following words and underline the /I/ sound.

**gift**

**if**

**sick**

**active**

**basis**

**cousin**

**insist**

**minute**

**predict**

**benefit**

**impossible**

**difficult**

**politics**

## Answer Key Lesson 2, Part 3

**Directions:** Say the sentences and underline the /ɪ/ sound in each word. When finished, compare your work with another student.

1. Bill showed Nick the video images and still pictures.
2. The kid rapidly fingered the guitar strings, producing beautiful music.
3. The administration did stress the importance of interviews to the six candidates.
4. In Jill's opinion, physical activity is important.
5. The restaurant's menu consists mainly of squid and is quite limited.
6. It is silly to begin dinner when Jill is still missing.
7. The police wanted the evidence to convict the man of the vicious assault.
8. We think Jim should reconsider the situation and admit his guilt.
9. My little sister has been persistent in interfering in my business.
10. The office did have a policy of nondiscrimination for women.

## Answer Key Lesson 2, Part 4

**Directions:** As the teacher reads the sentences aloud, follow along, concentrating on the difference between /ɪ/ and /i/. Mark the sounds where you hear them. Then take turns reading the sentences with your partner.

/ɪ/ = Underlined

/i/ = **Bold**

1. Christie feels she has not fulfilled her obligation in a **meaningful** way.
2. The insight of **each** member inspired the artistic productivity of everyone.
3. He **agreed** instantly that his team's mistakes created the conflict.
4. **Lee** needs clarification before **proceeding** because the instructions were misleading.
5. We should **keep believing** that consistent practice always **leads** to dramatic improvement.
6. **Deep breathing** increases circulation and improves overall health.
7. **Gina** wants to pick a tin of pickled **beets** to **bring** to the picnic.
8. Did you **eat** the **beef** sandwiches that I was **saving** for dinner?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer Key**  
**Lesson 3: /e/ as in “play”**

**Part 1**

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** chase, chess, tail, tell, wet, wait, fell, fail, rest, raced.

1. We had to \_\_\_**wait**\_\_\_ a long time at the airport.



2. This bear is very \_\_\_\_\_**wet**\_\_\_\_\_.



3. She enjoys \_\_\_\_\_**chess**\_\_\_\_\_.



4. The cat likes to \_\_\_\_\_**chase**\_\_\_\_\_ the mouse.



5. The sisters like to **tell** secrets.



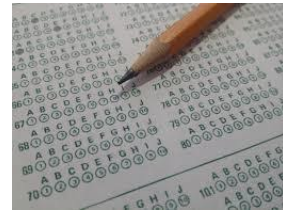
6. The cat has a long **tail**.



7. The skier **fell** in the snow.



8. I hope that I do not **fail** the test.



9. The cars **raced** down the track.



10. The dog likes to **rest** on the grass.



## Answer Key Lesson 3, Part 2

Directions: Say the following words and underline the /e/.

**bake**

**skate**

**estimate**

**gain**

**explain**

**contain**

**paya**

**staya**

**essay**

**weight**

**eight**

**able**

**angel**



## Answer Key Lesson 3, Part 4

**Directions:** As the teacher reads the sentences aloud, follow along, concentrating on the /e/ sound. Mark it when you hear it. Then take turns reading the sentences to your partner.

1. He often takes his vacations in Texas.
2. You'll waste a lot of time by driving out West.
3. Don't let me be late. It starts at eight.
4. These lace curtains cost less than those other ones.
5. I'll try to read your letter later.
6. What is the age of the big house on the river?
7. Yesterday, he fell down and failed to finish the race.
8. They hope to sell everything that is still on sale.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer Key**  
**Lesson 4: /ɛ/ as in “bet”**

**Part 1**

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** dead, dad, jam, gem, guest, gassed, mat, met, pen, pan.

1. That \_\_\_\_\_ **gem** \_\_\_\_\_ is very valuable.



2. I like \_\_\_\_\_ **jam** \_\_\_\_\_ on my bread.



3. We went to a funeral. Our friend is \_\_\_\_\_ **dead** \_\_\_\_\_.



4. He really enjoys being a \_\_\_\_\_ **dad** \_\_\_\_\_.



5. I visited my friend. I was a **guest** in her house.



6. We **gassed** up the car before we left.



7. I wrote the letter with a **pen**.



8. I cooked dinner with a **pan**.



9. The men **met** at the White House.



10. I wiped my feet on the **mat**.



## Answer Key Lesson 4, Part 2

**Directions:** Say the following words and underline the /ε/ sound.

**fresh**

**get**

**melt**

**them**

**any**

**belly**

**connect**

**essay**

**heavy**

**festival**

**reception**

**toegether**

**umbrella**

## Answer Key Lesson 4, Part 3

**Directions:** Say the sentences and underline the /ε/ sound in each word. When finished, compare your work with another student.

1. When you are stressed, you should stretch, rest and exercise.
2. The expert has expressed an intense desire to win the contest.
3. When can Ken collect his well-earned pension?
4. Members of the press have speculated about the presidential election.
5. He said that every member of the family is left handed.
6. My best friend Frank wants to be a successful dentist.
7. Jenny's bad headache had lasted several days.
8. Ben drank eleven glasses of fresh lemonade.
9. Everyone should be happy that he was elected president.

## Answer Key Lesson 4, Part 4

**Directions:** As the teacher reads the passage aloud, follow along, concentrating on the difference between /ɛ/ and /æ/. Mark the sounds with /ɛ/ or /æ/. Then take turns reading the passage with your partner.

/ɛ/ = Underlined

/æ/ = **Bold**

Next January, I'm planning to visit my friend in France.

Last time I went there, I was only ten years old. I would love to go **back** again. I **have** been taking a class called "French for Travelers." We've been memorizing vocabulary and learning the present and past tenses. I want my French accent to get better and I **am** practicing every chance I get.

Yesterday, I rented a French film and I felt very **bad** because I didn't understand a word they **said**. I guess I need to make extra effort. I really want to learn the language and **have** to speak better so that people **can** understand me when I **am** asking for directions and ordering in restaurants.

*(adapted from Mastering the American Accent)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer Key**  
**Lesson 5: /æ/ as in “bat”**

**Part 1**

**Directions:** Fill in the correct words from the word bank.

**Word Bank:** sat, set, man, men, gas, guess, slapped, slept, bat, bet.

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ **man** \_\_\_\_\_ helped me carry the boxes.



2. Three \_\_\_\_\_ **men** \_\_\_\_\_ helped me carry the boxes.



3. The baseball player has a \_\_\_\_\_ **bat** \_\_\_\_\_.



4. In Las Vegas, people often \_\_\_\_\_ **bet** \_\_\_\_\_.



5. I **sat** on the chair yesterday.



6. I **set** the book on the table.



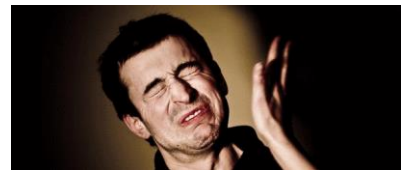
7. She needs to put **gas** in her car.



8. Can you **guess** the answer?



9. He was **slapped** across the face.



10. She was so tired that she **slept** early.





## Answer Key Lesson 5, Part 2

**Directions:** Say the following words and underline the /æ/ sound.

**sample**

**Africa**

**candy**

**fascinate**

**magic**

**Canada**

**traffic**

**exact**

**California**

**chapter**

**package**

**attack**

**animal**

## Answer Key Lesson 5, Part 3

**Directions:** Say the sentences and underline the /æ/ sound in each word. The number in parentheses shows the number of /æ/ sounds in each sentence. When finished, compare your work with another student.

1. The Titanic traveled to New York across the Atlantic in 1912. (4)
2. The grand and elaborate ship had over 2,000 passengers. (4)
3. It crashed into an iceberg and then sank in about two and a half hours. (5)
4. Telegraph warnings reached the Titanic too late to help. (2)
5. After the crash, many upper and lower class passengers ran about in a panic. (6)
6. Some women and children had a chance to cram into small boats at the last minute. (5)
7. The captain and other passengers were not able to abandon the ship. (3)
8. Actors and actresses reenacted the terrible accident in an academy award movie. (6)

9. The story of the Titanic is a sad and tragic chapter in our past. (5)

*(adapted from Pronunciation Made Simple)*