

[Click Here](#)



The English letter T has three different pronunciations: true T, D, and glottal stop (like in "uh-oh"). To sound like a native speaker, it's essential to know when to use the true T and when to use the D or glottal stop. This includes words like daughter, computer, and settle. There are four basic rules for the T sound: Rule 1: The true T sound is made when T or TT is at the beginning of a word or stressed syllable. Example words that demonstrate this rule include attack (a-tack), tattoo (ta-too), pretend (pre-tend), and italics (i-tal-ics). Rule 2: When T or TT comes between two vowel sounds, it's pronounced as a D sound. Examples of this rule in action are daughter (daugh-der) and computer (com-pu-der). Rule 3: The true T sound is also made when the T sound is part of a consonant cluster at the beginning of a word. Consonant clusters can be found in words like start (ST-star), staple (ST-able), and star (STR-star). Rule 4: In the past tense, D sounds like T when it comes after an unvoiced consonant sound. Examples of this rule include jumped (jumpt) and washed (washt). The pronunciation of sounds like D and T can vary greatly from person to person and region to region. Native speakers often don't even think about these rules because they're just a natural part of their speech. However, there are some general guidelines that might be helpful. A glottal stop occurs when the flow of air is blocked by the tongue or lips, causing a buildup of pressure before it's released as a small explosive sound. The P and B sounds, T and D sounds, and K and G sounds are all types of stop consonants. The T sound is particularly tricky because its pronunciation changes depending on its position in a word. When a vowel sound, n sound, or r sound precedes the T, it's pronounced as a glottal stop followed by an n, m, or l sound. For example, "vowel" becomes "voel", and "Tighten" becomes "light'n". However, sometimes the T is completely silent in certain words like "ballet" because of its origins from other languages. The use of a silent T can also depend on regional accents and speaking styles. Some native speakers may pronounce certain words without a T when speaking quickly or informally. The key takeaway is that there are no strict rules for the pronunciation of sounds, and even native speakers can have varying pronunciations. It's essential to practice and review to get a feel for these nuances. In terms of the "th" sounds, English has two distinct consonant sounds: voiced /ð/ (like in "mother") and unvoiced /θ/ (like in "moth"). Non-native speakers often replace these sounds with alternative pronunciations like v, d, or z. For example, "mother" might become "muh-ver", while "moth" becomes "muh-th". While there's no set rule for the pronunciation of the "th" sounds, being aware of these variations can help learners improve their accent and communication skills. The "th" sound, often tricky for non-native English speakers, can be replaced by various sounds such as 'f', 'm', and 's'. Noticeably, voiced 'th' is replaced with voiced consonants like 'v', 'd', or 'z', while unvoiced 'th' is replaced with unvoiced consonants 'f', 't', or 's'. To produce the correct 'th' sounds, it's essential to understand the difference between voiced and unvoiced 'th'. The trick lies in controlling the position of your tongue and teeth. For instance, pronouncing the word "in" and smoothly transitioning into "there" requires precise placement of the tongue tip. This exercise can be applied to various combinations of words containing the 'th' sound. Additionally, paying attention to how your vocal cords vibrate when producing these sounds is crucial for accurate pronunciation. Two distinct 'th' sounds exist: voiced and unvoiced (soft th). Mastering the correct production of each is vital for clear communication in English. Given article text here only passing air through your teeth If you speak Spanish, you may find the example of Spain's "theta" sound helpful. Beginning /θ/ thanks third End /θ/ breath bath Middle /θ/ nothin ether Let's try a voiceless th combination: Thanks for nothin, Heath! The "hard" th, whose phonetic symbol is /θ/, is the voiceless. You should keep that same mouth position as the "soft th," but now use your vocal cords to produce a sound that vibrates at the tip of your tongue and the front teeth. You want to use a bit more tension in your tongue muscle for this sound. Beginning /ð/ this that End /ð/ breathe bathe Middle /ð/ other weather Now let's try the voiced th combination: This, that and the other! Check out this video to hear these two sounds explained and distinguished. How do we know if the TH is voiced or voiceless? There are 5 rules that should help you determine whether a th should be voiced or voiceless. Between two vowels th is voiceless: moth, bother, weather, etc. at the end of the word or before a consonant, th is voiceless: myth, mouth, moufule, bath, truthful, throw, etc. when followed by a silent e, th is voiceless. Ex. bath (unvoiced); bathe (voiced). At the beginning of a functional word th is voiceless. Ex. in the article the and in the words this, that, these, those, then, than, they, them, their, there, therefore, at the beginning of most other words, th is voiceless: thunder, theatre, think, etc. Minimal Pairs - Common Confusions with TH: /d/ vs. /θ/ Breathe bathe Dale they'll Doe though Doze those Day they Dare their Den then Udder other Wordy worthy /l/ vs. /θ/ Boat both Tank thank Fate faith Fort forth Taught thought Team theme Tick thick True through Trash trash Sounds in the English language can be categorized as either voiced or unvoiced. Voiced sounds involve the vibration of the vocal cords, while unvoiced sounds rely on air flowing freely through the mouth. The difference between these two categories is crucial for accurate pronunciation, reading, and spelling. Despite its importance, many learners struggle to distinguish between voiced and unvoiced sounds. To address this issue, it's essential that teachers understand the distinction first. When air passes through the vocal tract, it must first move through the larynx or 'voice box'. Two folds of muscle and tendons project inwards from the sides of the larynx, creating a narrow opening. A voiced sound is produced when air causes these folds to touch, close, and vibrate, resulting in a buzzing sensation in the throat. On the other hand, an unvoiced sound is made when air flows freely through the mouth, changing the sound with the action of the lips, tongue, and teeth. To determine whether a sound is voiced or not, you can perform the Voice Box check by placing your finger over your Adam's apple and feeling for vibrations as you pronounce a letter. If you feel a vibration, the sound is voiced; if not, it's unvoiced. One key aspect that distinguishes voiced from unvoiced sounds is aspiration. To illustrate this concept, ask students to hold their hand in front of their mouth while pronouncing /p/ and /b/, switching between the two sounds. The sound releasing more air onto the hand is typically the unvoiced sound. Another method involves placing a piece of paper in front of the mouth; voiced sounds won't move the paper, whereas unvoiced sounds will cause it to move slightly. All vowels are considered voiced sounds in English, except for the semi-vowel 'y' which is pronounced like a consonant. Producing vowel sounds requires minimal restriction on airflow. Diphthongs, which involve the transition from one vowel sound to another, are also classified as voiced sounds. Examples include 'ow', 'ou', 'aw', and 'au'. Consonants can be either voiced or unvoiced; examples of voiced consonants include b, d, g, j, l, m, n, r, v, w, y, and z. The digraph 'ng' is also considered voiced. In contrast, the sounds f, h, c/k/q (which share the same /k/ sound), p, s, t, x are typically unvoiced, along with the digraphs 'ch', 'sh', and 'wh'. Additionally, the digraph 'th' can be both voiced ('that') or unvoiced ('thing'). For determining whether a 'th' should be pronounced as voiced or voiceless in reading, five rules apply: between two vowels 'th' is voiced; when followed by a silent e, 'th' is voiced; at the beginning of function words, 'th' is voiced; at the end of a word or before a consonant, 'th' is unvoiced; and finally, at the beginning of most other words, 'th' is unvoiced. Understanding the difference between voiced and unvoiced sounds is crucial in discriminating between words containing sound pairs. For instance, 'pond' and 'bond' have letters that are articulated similarly but differ in voicing, with one making the vocal cords vibrate and the other not. Sound pairs like /p/ and /b/, where both plosives are made by pressing the lips together and releasing air from the mouth, demonstrate how changing the voicing can alter meaning. The challenge of pronouncing particular consonant pairs varies depending on a student's native language. Learning to distinguish between voiced and unvoiced consonants is essential for understanding spelling rules, plurals, and past tense. A student who recognizes how sounds feel is more likely to select correct spellings, such as "whent" versus "went," by considering the voicing of the sound. This skill is beneficial when dealing with plurals and past tense. Rule 1: Plural 's' at word endings Only one consonant can be either voiced or unvoiced - the plural ending 's'. If a word ends in an unvoiced consonant (like 't', 'k', 'p', or 't'), then 's' represents /s/, as seen in "books." However, if it's voiced or vowel-ended, 's' represents /z/ like in "chairs." Exception: When singular words end with sibilant 's', 'x', 'z', 'ch', or 'sh', add 'es' for the /z/ sound as in "foxes." It's better for students to use the Voice Box check rather than memorizing spelling rules by rote. Rule 2: Past tense suffix 'ed' The past tense suffix 'ed' can have different sounds depending on whether it follows a voiced or unvoiced consonant. After a voiced consonant (like 'b', 'v', or 'l'), 'd' usually is pronounced /d/ as in "robbed." If after a vowel, it's always pronounced /d/, like "fried." However, after an unvoiced consonant, 'ed' is usually pronounced /t/, as in "parked." There's an exception: if the 'e' of 'ed' is preceded by 't' or 'd', the 'ed' should be pronounced as 'id'. Examples include "rotted" and "needed." Teaching voiced and unvoiced sounds Start with /a/ and ask students to decide if each letter sound is voiced or unvoiced. Use a finger or palm on the Voice Box to help them feel the difference between voiced and unvoiced consonants. Teach phrases like "Make it buzz!" or "Turn your voice on" to prompt correct production of voiced consonants. Repeat a sound and ask students to repeat it, then give thumbs up for voiced sounds and thumbs down for unvoiced ones. Sort words into columns based on whether they're voiced or unvoiced, using picture cards if necessary. This helps develop the skill to accurately recognize and produce voiced consonants. Teaching students to distinguish between voiced and unvoiced sounds can be a valuable skill in phoneme knowledge. For instance, words containing /l/ and /d/, or those with different pronunciations of 'th', present opportunities for teaching this concept. Websites like Wordwall offer free online resources that include colour-coded sound charts and games to reinforce the learning process. Educators can create engaging activities such as modifying games like Metal Mike to focus on voiced sounds, where students decide whether to feed a creature with cards starting with voiced sounds. Alternatively, they can play Bingo emphasizing either Voiced or Unvoiced initial sounds. To solidify understanding, students can practice writing words that apply to the plural and past tense rules, incorporating both voiced and unvoiced sounds. While identifying voiced or unvoiced sounds might not be a common topic in teacher training, it is an essential aspect of phonics education. By teaching this skill systematically and to mastery, educators like Shirley Houston can empower students with greater accuracy in reading and spelling. With her 40 years of experience working with children and teachers in Australia, Shirley champions the importance of phonics instruction and offers her services as a literacy trainer for schools through info@phonicshero.com.

Voiceless th symbol. When th is voiced and voiceless. Voiced th voiceless th. How to differentiate voiced and voiceless th. Voiced and voiceless th sound.