



Phonological Intervention:
It's About Time

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This is a work in progress. Any suggestions, comments, and recommendations are welcome. My email address is ken.bleile@uni.edu. Thank you!

The Consonant

[l] is made with the tongue tip raised and touching the mouth roof. Air flows over the sides of the tongue, and the larynx vibrates. The technical definition of [l] is voiced alveolar lateral. Two varieties of [l] exist in English: “light [l],” which occurs at the beginning of syllables, as in *leak* [lik], and “dark [l],” which occurs at the end of syllables, as in *cool* [kul]. In “dark [l]” the back of the tongue is raised in the velar region.

Acquisition

50% of children acquire [l] by 3;6 and 75% of children acquire [l] by 6;0.

Errors

A common error affecting [l] is Gliding—that is, [w] or, less commonly, [j] for [l]. Another common error is an [l] that sounds “wet” or “slushy.”

Possible Metaphors

Select metaphors based on the aspect of speech that is the focus of therapy.

Tongue placement:

Singing sound (la-la-la), pointy sound (tongue tip pointing to alveolar ridge, bump sound, little hill

Lateral:

Side sound

Liquid:

Flowing sound

Voicing:

Motor on sound, voice box on, voice on sound, or a buzzing sound

Word position:

Starting sound (beginning of word), end sound (end of word), or sound friends (consonant cluster)

Touch Cue

Tip of finger on the middle of the upper lip.

Instruction:

Place the student's finger on the middle of the upper lip.

Stimulability Tests for [l]

Imitation

1. lie _____
2. low _____
3. all _____
4. ill _____

Best Bet Environments

1. *Light [j]*: Before a high front vowel, as in *bee*.

1. leaf _____
2. leap _____

2. *Dark [j]*: After a high back vowel at the end of a syllable, as in *call*

1. cool _____
2. bull _____

Favorite Words

Names of family members: _____

Favorite people, heroes, and activities: _____

Phonetic Placement

1. Touch the student's alveolar ridge with a tongue depressor, peanut butter, or lollipop to indicate the place of production for [j]
2. Ask the student to place his or her tongue tip in the place indicated, to relax, and to let air flow out from the sides of the tongue. The resulting sound is voiceless [j].
3. Instruct the student to turn on the voice box, resulting in [j].

Shaping [j] from Interdental [t]

1. Ask the student to place the tongue tip between the teeth as for an interdental [t].
2. Lower the child's jaw.
3. Ask the student to slowly draw the tongue tip backward but to keep the tongue tip in contact with the back of the teeth and the ridge behind the two front teeth.
4. Ask the student to say [j], being sure that contact between the tongue and the roof of the mouth is maintained.

Demonstrations, Phonetic Placement Exercises, and Shaping Exercises

Demonstrations for [j]

Place (Alveolar)

These two methods demonstrate place of production (alveolar).

First Method

Object: None

Instructions:

1. Instruct the student, "Please stick out your tongue."
2. Once the tongue is out, for [s] with the tongue tip raised ask the student to pull the tongue back to feel bump on the roof of the mouth behind the two front teeth.
3. For [s] with the tongue tip down, ask the student to pull the tongue back to feel the little bump behind the two lower teeth.

Second Method

Objects: Q-tip, peanut butter or other favored food.

Instructions:

1. Instruct the student, "Please open your mouth."
2. One the mouth is open, with Q-tip dab a little peanut butter or other favorite food on alveolar ridge (for tongue tip raised [s]) or behind lower front teeth (for tongue tip lowered [s]).
3. Ask the student to touch the food with the tongue tip.

Manner (Approximant)

First Method

Objects: None

Instructions:

Run your or the student's finger down the student's arm while making several long glides or liquids to demonstrate the "flowing" quality and length of this sound.

Second Method

Objects: Strip of paper, a feather, or a small paper flower taped on the end of a pencil

Instructions:

Use a strip of paper, a feather, or the hand held in front of the student's mouth while you produce several glides or liquids to draw attention to the "flowing" quality and continuous nature of the sounds. Alternately, tape a small paper flower on the end of a pencil and encourage the student to move the flower in the wind.

Air Flow (Lateral)

First Method

Objects: Drinking straw

Instructions:

Place a straw on the groove of the tongue and blow out to demonstrate central emission of air.

Second Method

Objects: Drinking straw

Instructions:

Ask the student to breathe in with the tongue as for [s]. Cool air is felt at the central groove. Alternately, perform the straw technique above, remove the straw, and ask the student to breathe in with the tongue in position for [l]. Cool air should be felt on the sides of the tongue over which the air was emitted. An alternate method is to perform the straw technique above, remove the straws, and ask the student to breathe in.

Phonetic Placement Exercises for [l]

Most often, the challenge with [l] is to help the child direct the airflow over the sides of the tongue. These four methods each focus on helping the student achieve lateral airflow. The first three methods focus on [l] in isolation and the fourth focuses on [l] in consonant clusters.

First Method

Objects: Tongue depressor

Instructions:

1. Place a tongue depressor under the student's tongue tip and raise the tongue tip behind the upper front teeth.
2. Ask the student to say // while maintaining contact between the tongue tip and the roof of the mouth. The resulting sound is //.

Second Method

Objects: Tongue depressor, small dab of peanut butter, or lollipop

Instructions:

1. Touch the student's alveolar ridge with a tongue depressor, peanut butter, or lollipop to indicate the place of production for [l].
2. Ask the student to place his or her tongue tip in the place indicated, to relax, and to let air flow out from the sides of the tongue. The resulting sound is voiceless [l].
3. Instruct the student to turn on the voice box, resulting in [l].

Third Method

This method works, though the number of steps limits its effectiveness, unless the student has good motivation and attention.

Objects: Small piece of paper, two drinking straws

Instructions:

1. Place a straw midline on the student's tongue groove to demonstrate central air emission. Ask the student to blow out onto an open hand or piece of paper. An alternative (or additional) demonstration of central air emission is to ask the student to prepare his or her mouth to say [s] but to breathe in. Cool air is felt midline on the upper tongue surface.

2. Next, place a straw in each corner of the student's mouth. Ask the student to breathe out into his or her open hand or on a piece of paper. If an additional demonstration is needed, remove the straws and ask the student to breathe in and to feel the cool air on the sides of the tongue over which the air is emitted. To demonstrate the feel of the air more vividly, ask the student to suck on a piece of peppermint candy for a few minutes before performing the demonstration.

3. After lateral emission of air is obtained, ask the student to place his or her tongue tip in contact with the roof of the mouth behind the upper front teeth and to blow out over the sides of the tongue. If needed, place straws in the side of the student's mouth while the tongue tip is held in contact with the roof of the mouth.

4. Then instruct the student to blow air out the side straws, which results in the voiceless [l].

5. Voicing is obtained by asking the student to turn on the voice box. The resulting sound is [l].

Fourth Method

This method is for a student who needs to learn to pronounce [l] in consonant clusters. The method works for consonant clusters in which the other consonant in the cluster is not alveolar—for example, a velar or labial stop.

Objects: None

Instructions:

1. Instruct the student to place the tongue in the position for //l.

2. Instruct the student to say "blue," resulting in a [bl] consonant cluster.

Shaping Exercises for [l]

//l from [θ] or [ð]

If a student's speech contains a well established interdental, this can be converted into [l]. Instead of an interdental, [s] or [z] can be used, though the task is more difficult for most students, because [s] and [z] are harder to see move than the interdental fricatives.

Objects: None

Instructions:

1. Instruct the student to place the tongue tip between the teeth as for [ð].

2. Lower the student's jaw.

3. Instruct the student to slowly draw the tongue tip backward but to keep the tongue tip in contact with the back of the teeth and the ridge behind the two front teeth.

4. Next, instruct the student to say //l, being sure that contact between the tongue and the roof of the mouth is maintained. If [θ] is used, instruct the student to turn on the voice box.

/l/ from /i/ or /u/

This method sounds tricky. It works, though, with selected students.

Objects: None

Instructions:

1. Instruct the student to open his or her mouth as wide as for /a/ but to raise the tongue tip as for /l/.
2. Ask the student to keep the tongue up as for /i/ but to say /a/, resulting in a light (alveolar) /l/. (Note: For a dark (velar) /l/, follow the same steps but ask the student to say /u/ instead of /i/.

Identification Exercises

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice identifying words with our sound when all the words have the same number of syllables.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "Listen closely. I am going to say some words. Some of the words begin with our sound; the other words begin with another sound. After you hear a word, raise your hand if it begins with our sound. Keep your hand down if it doesn't begin with our sound."

Example: "Raise your hand if the word begins with our sound. *Dog. Late.* That's correct: *late* begins with our sound."

Words

Log ____

Cat

Jump

Lick ____

Peach

Look ____

Sing ____

Hi

Lip ____

Big

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice distinguishing between words beginning with our sound and words beginning with other sounds.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "Listen closely. I am going to say some words. Some of the words begin with our sound, the other words begin with another sound. After you hear a word, raise your hand if it begins with our sound. Keep your hand down if it doesn't begin with our sound."

Example: "Raise your hand if the word begins with our sound. *Cat. Look.* That's correct: *look* begins with our sound."

Words

Line ____

Kite

Whip

Long ____

Late ____

Toast

Lawn ____

Knock

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice identifying words with our sound when two words rhyme.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "Listen closely. I am going to say two words. One of the words begins with our sound, and the other word begins with another sound. After you hear a word, raise your hand if it begins with our sound. Keep your hand down if it doesn't begin with our sound."

Example: "Raise your hand if the word begins with our sound. *Long. Song.* That's correct: *long* begins with our sound."

Words	First	Second
Log	Log ___	Dog
Leather	Leather ___	Feather
Lick	Pick ___	Lick ___
Lock	Lock ___	Rock
Lake	Cake ___	Lake ___
Look	Book ___	Look ___
Low	Mow ___	Low ___
Lip	Lip ___	Ship
Lamp	Camp ___	Lamp ___
Light	Light ___	Night

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice identifying words with our sound when two words rhyme.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "Listen closely. I am going to say two words. One of the words begins with our sound, the other word begins with another sound. After you hear a word, raise your hand if it begins with our sound. Keep your hand down if it doesn't begin with our sound."

Example: "Raise your hand if the word begins with our sound. *Rock. Lock.* That's correct: *lock* begins with our sound."

Words	First	Second
Line	Line ___	Sign
Long	Long ___	Song
Late	Wait ___	Late ___
Lawn	Lawn ___	Yawn
Leap	Leap ___	Deep
Laugh	Half ___	Laugh ___
Limb	Limb ___	Gym
Life	Wife ___	Life ___
Leaf	Leaf ___	Chief
Lamb	Ham ___	Lamb ___

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides more practice identifying words with our sound when all the words rhyme.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "Listen closely. I am going to say some words that all sound almost the same. Sometimes a word will begin with our sound, and other times a word will begin with another sound. Raise your hand when you hear a word that begins with our sound. Keep your hand down if it doesn't begin with our sound."

Example: "Raise your hand if the word begins with our sound. *Dog. Log.* That's correct: *log* begins with our sound."

Words

Lip ___

Ship

Lip ___

Hip

Whip

Lip ___

Lip ___

Sip

Lip ___

Dip

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice distinguishing between our sound in rhyming words.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "Listen closely. I am going to say some words that all sound almost the same. Sometimes a word will begin with our sound, and other times a word will begin with another sound. Raise your hand when you hear a word that begins with our sound. Keep your hand down if it doesn't begin with our sound."

Example: "Raise your hand if the word begins with our sound. *Leaf. Chief.* That's correct: *leaf* begins with our sound."

Words

Line ___

Shine

Line ___

Sign

Nine

Whine

Line ___

Mine

Line ___

Line ___

Speech Exercises

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice in imitation.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word. Please say it after me."

Word	Teacher	Student
Log	Log	Log ___
Leather	Leather	Leather ___
Lick	Lick	Lick ___
Lock	Lock	Lock ___
Lake	Lake	Lake ___
Look	Look	Look ___
Low	Low	Low ___
Lip	Lip	Lip ___
Lamp	Lamp	Lamp ___
Light	Light	Light ___

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice in imitation.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word. Please say it after me."

Word	Teacher	Student
Line	Line	Line ___
Long	Long	Long ___
Late	Late	Late ___
Lawn	Lawn	Lawn ___
Leap	Leap	Leap ___
Laugh	Laugh	Laugh ___
Limb	Limb	Limb ___
Life	Life	Life ___
Leaf	Leaf	Leaf ___
Lamb	Lamb	Lamb ___

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice in self-correction.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word. After I say it, you say each word three times, listening to how you say the sound we're working on. Concentrate and try hard to say the sound the way we have been practicing it."

Word	Student	Student	Student
Log	Log ___	Log ___	Log ___
Leather	Leather ___	Leather ___	Leather ___
Lick	Lick ___	Lick ___	Lick ___
Lock	Lock ___	Lock ___	Lock ___
Lake	Lake ___	Lake ___	Lake ___
Look	Look ___	Look ___	Look ___
Low	Low ___	Look ___	Look ___
Lip	Lip ___	Lip ___	Lip ___
Lamp	Lamp ___	Lip ___	Lip ___
Light	Light ___	Light ___	Light ___

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice in self-correction.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word. After I say it, you say each word three times, listening to how you say the sound we're working on. Concentrate and try hard to say the sound the way we have been practicing it."

Word	Student	Student	Student
Line	Line ___	Line ___	Line ___
Long	Long ___	Long ___	Long ___
Late	Late ___	Late ___	Late ___
Lawn	Lawn ___	Lawn ___	Lawn ___
Leap	Leap ___	Leap ___	Leap ___
Laugh	Laugh ___	Laugh ___	Laugh ___
Limb	Limb ___	Limb ___	Limb ___
Life	Life ___	Life ___	Life ___
Leaf	Leaf ___	Leaf ___	Leaf ___
Lamb	Lamb ___	Lamb ___	Lamb ___

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice inserting a deleted sound.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word with the first sound missing. The sound is the one we have been working on. Please say the word after me twice, saying it first without the sound missing and then with the sound."

Example: "Like this: *ate, late.*"

Word	Teacher	Student
Log	og	Log ____
Leather	eather	Leather ____
Lick	ick	Lick ____
Lock	ock	Lock ____
Lake	ake	Lake ____
Look	ook	Look ____
Low	ow	Low ____
Lip	ip	Lip ____
Lamp	amp	Lamp ____
Light	ight	Light ____

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice inserting a deleted sound.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word with the first sound missing. The sound is the one we have been working on. Please say the word after me twice, saying it first without the sound missing and then with the sound."

Example: "Like this: *ow, low.*"

Word	Teacher	Student
Line	ine	Line ____
Long	ong	Long ____
Late	ate	Late ____
Lawn	awn	Lawn ____
Leap	eap	Leap ____
Laugh	augh	Laugh ____
Limb	imb	Limb ____
Life	ife	Life ____
Leaf	eaf	Leaf ____
Lamb	amb	Lamb ____

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice rhyming.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word that rhymes with a word that starts with our sound. Please say the word after me, making it a word that starts with the sound we have been working on."

Example: "Like this: I say sheep, and then you say *leap*. *Leap* is a word that starts with the sound we have been working on."

Word	Teacher	Student
Log	Dog	Log ____
Leather	Feather	Leather ____
Lick	Sick	Lick ____
Lock	Rock	Lock ____
Lake	Cake	Lake ____
Look	Book	Look ____
Low	Bow	Low ____
Lip	Ship	Lip ____
Lamp	Camp	Lamp ____
Light	Kite	Light ____

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice rhyming.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word that rhymes with a word that starts with our sound. Please say the word after me, making it a word that starts with the sound we have been working on."

Example: "Like this: I say *fake*, and then you say *lake*. *Lake* is a word that starts with the sound we have been working on."

Word	Teacher	Student
Line	Shine	Line ____
Long	Song	Long ____
Late	Wait	Late ____
Lawn	Yawn	Lawn ____
Leap	Sheep	Leap ____
Laugh	Calf	Laugh ____
Limb	Gym	Limb ____
Life	Wife	Life ____
Leaf	Chief	Leaf ____
Lamb	Jam	Lamb ____

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice contrasting old and new ways of saying a sound.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word that starts with the sound we have been working on. I'd like you to say the word the sound the old way you used to say it, and then say the word with the sound the new way you say it."

Example: "Like this: For *lawn*, first say it __awn, and then say it with the new way you're saying the sound—*lawn*."

Word	Old Way	New Way
Log	Log	Log ____
Leather	Leather	Leather ____
Lick	Lick	Lick ____
Lock	Lock	Lock ____
Lake	Lake	Lake ____
Look	Look	Look ____
Low	Low	Low ____
Lip	Lip	Lip ____
Lamp	Lamp	Lamp ____
Light	Light	Light ____

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice contrasting old and new ways of saying a sound.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word that starts with the sound we have been working on. I'd like you to say the word the sound the old way you used to say it, and then say the word with the sound the new way you say it."

Example: "Like this: For *lip*, first say it __ip, and then say it with the new way you're saying the sound—*lip*."

Word	Old Way	New Way
Line	Line	Line ____
Long	Long	Long ____
Late	Late	Late ____
Lawn	Lawn	Lawn ____
Leap	Leap	Leap ____
Laugh	Laugh	Laugh ____
Limb	Limb	Limb ____
Life	Life	Life ____
Leaf	Leaf	Leaf ____
Lamb	Lamb	Lamb ____

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice alternating between our sound and a similar sound.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word that starts with the sound we have been working on. I'd like you to say the word with our sound, then say the word again with a similar sound, and then say the word again with our sound." (Note: Useful similar sounds include [r] and [s].)

Example: "Like this: For *late*, first say *late*, and then say *sate*, and then say *late*. As you say it, notice the difference between our sound and [s]."

Word	[l]	Other Sound	[l]
Log	Log ____	_og ____	Log ____
Leather	Leather ____	_eather ____	Leather ____
Lick	Lick ____	_ick ____	Lick ____
Lock	Lock ____	_ock ____	Lock ____
Lake	Lake ____	_ake ____	Lake ____
Look	Look ____	_ook ____	Look ____
Low	Low ____	_ow ____	Low ____
Lip	Lip ____ip ____	Lip ____	
Lamp	Lamp ____	_amp ____	Lamp ____
Light	Light ____	_ight ____	Light ____

Beginning of Syllables

This exercise provides practice alternating between our sound and a similar sound.

Instructions:

Say to the student, "I am going to say a word that starts with the sound we have been working on. I'd like you to say the word with our sound, then say the word again with a similar sound, and then say the word again with our sound." (Note: Useful similar sounds include [r] and [s].)

Example: "Like this: For *sun*, first say *lake*, and then say *sake*, and then say *lake*. As you say it, notice the difference between our sound and [s]."

Word	[l]	Other Sound	[l]
Line	Line ___	Line ___	Line ___
Long	Long ___	Long ___	Long ___
Late	Late ___	Late ___	Late ___
Lawn	Lawn ___	Lawn ___	Lawn ___
Leap	Leap ___	Leap ___	Leap ___
Laugh	Laugh ___	Laugh ___	Laugh ___
Limb	Limb ___	Limb ___	Limb ___
Life	Life ___	Life ___	Life ___
Leaf	Leaf ___	Leaf ___	Leaf ___
Lamb	Lamb ___	Lamb ___	Lamb ___