

[r]

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!

Definition

Consonantal [r] (hereafter called simply [r]) is the consonant counterpart of schwa [ɹ]. [r] occurs before vowels in such words as *read*, *red*, and *thread*, and after vowels in such words as *beard*, *hear*, *far*, and *four*. In common with schwa [ɹ], [r] has two varieties, the first (called bunched) in which the lips are rounded slightly, the tongue tip is lowered, and the tongue body is bunched up near the area of the palate, and the second (called retroflex) in which the lips are rounded slightly and tongue tip is raised and curled back toward the alveolar ridge. Both bunched and retroflex types of production can result in a good sounding [r], though my clinical experience is that more students find it somewhat easier to learn the bunched variety. For both types of [r], the vocal folds are vibrating and the tongue root is retracted, creating a contraction in the pharynx. The technical definition of [r] is a palatal central liquid consonant. Differing from schwa [ɹ], consonantal [r] is transcribed similarly in both stressed and unstressed syllables.

Acquisition

[r] is acquired by 50% of children by 5;0 and 75% of children by 6;0.

Errors

The most common error is Gliding—that is, [w] for [r], and deletion of [r] after vowels and in consonant clusters also is a common occurrence.

Possible metaphors

The metaphors for [r] are the same as for schwa [ɹ].

Tongue placement: Tongue flat sound, back of tongue up sound
Vowel closure: Mad dog or growling tiger sound (grr), arm wrestling sound (rrr), pirate sound (aar)
Voicing: Motor on, buzzing sound, voice box on
Word initial: Starting sounds
Word final: End sounds
Consonant clusters: Sound friends

Touch Cue

TO DO

Stimulability Tests for [r]

Imitation

1. rain _____
2. road _____
3. ber _____
4. der _____

Best Bet Environments

1. Before a high front vowel, as in *read* [rid].
 1. read
 2. reek
2. Between vowels, as in *eery* [iri].
 1. ery
 2. teary
3. In a syllable-initial consonant velar cluster, as in *creek*.
 1. Creek
 2. Gray

Favorite Words

Names of family members: _____

Favorite people, heroes, and activities: _____

Phonetic Placement

Instruct the child to make a sound like a motor starting up, [ruh].

Shaping [r] from [er]

1. Ask the child to say [er].
2. Next, ask the child to say [er] followed by [i] or some other vowel.
3. Instruct the child to say [ei] several times as quickly as possible, resulting in [eri]. .

Demonstrations, Phonetic Placement Exercises, and Shaping Exercises

The demonstrations for [r] are the same as for schwa [r].

Place (Alveolar for retroflex)

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.

Place (Palatal for bunched schwa [r])

Place (Sides of tongue for bunched and retroflex varieties)

Place (Lip rounding for both bunched and retroflex varieties)

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.

Phonetic Placement Exercises for [r]

First Method

Objects: None

Instructions:

Instruct the student to make a sound like a motor starting up ([ruh]).

Second Method

Objects: Tongue depressor (optional)

Instructions:

1. Ask the student to place his or her tongue tip behind the upper front teeth. (If needed, place the student's tongue tip on a shelf made with a tongue depressor.)
2. Next, ask the student to curl the tongue backward without touching the roof of the mouth until it cannot go back farther.
3. Lower the student's jaw slightly and instruct the student to say [ru].

Shaping Exercises for [r]

[r] from [er]

These two methods are for a student who has mastered schwa [r]. They are the methods we use most frequently to teach consonantal [r].

First Method

Objects: None

Instructions:

1. Ask the student to say [er].
2. Next, ask the student to say [er] before a word beginning with [r]. For example, say *read* as [er] [rid].
3. After the student pronounces the words with [er] followed by consonantal [r], instruct him or her to say the [er] silently, resulting in initial [r].

Second Method

This method relies on the fact that a syllable that ends in [er] and is followed by a syllable beginning with a vowel will often result in a syllable initial [r] as a type of transition between [er] and the vowel that follows.

Objects: None

Instructions:

1. Ask the student to say [er].
2. Next, ask the student to say [er] followed by [i] or some other vowel.
3. Instruct the student to say [i] several times as quickly as possible, resulting in [er-ri]. After [ri] is established, instruct the student to say [er] silently, resulting in [ri].

[r] from [w]

This method is for a student who substitutes [w] for [r] (Gliding), but whose tongue is in the correct position for [r]. Such a student may need to be taught to reduce lip rounding.

Objects: Tongue depressor (optional)

Instructions:

1. Lower the student's jaw slightly.
2. Ask the student to say [w] but to "let the lips go to sleep." An alternate method is to tell the student, "No kissing frogs" to prompt an unrounded lip position. If needed, push the student's lips back with a tongue depressor to an unrounded lip position.

[r] from [ah]

This and the following method is for students for whom you wish to establish [r] at the end of syllables. The methods show the technique for [ahr] as in car and [ir] as in hear. The same technique works for all other vowels. To illustrate, to teach [or] as in core simply replace [ah] or [i] with [o]. For all [r] in this position, one trick is to have the student keep contact between the sides of the tongue and the inner teeth.

Objects: None

Instructions:

1. Instruct the student to say "ah".
2. Next, ask the student to raise his or her tongue slightly toward the roof of the mouth and say [ahr]. (If needed, instruct the student to raise the tongue tip or to raise his her tongue slightly and to say [ah] forcibly.) The resulting sound is [ahr].

[r] from [i]

Objects: None

Instructions:

1. Instruct the student to say [i].
2. While the student is saying [i], ask him or her to lift the tongue and curl back the tongue tip to say [ir].

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. *Sun. Light.* That's correct: *write* begins with our sound."

Words

Rain ____

Dog

Jump

Root ____

Peach

Rat ____

Rug ____

Hi

Roast ____

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. *Write. Light.* That's right: *write* begins with our sound."

Words

Rock ____

Kite

Whip

Red ____

Reach ____

Toast

Rose ____

Knock

Door

Ring ____

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. *Write. Light.* That's right: *write* begins with our sound."

Words

First

Second

Rain

Rain ____

Mane

Root

Root ____

Boot

Rat

Mat

Rat ____

Rug

Rug ____

Bug

Roast

Toast

Roast ____

Rock

Sock

Rock ____

Red

Red ____

Bed

Reach

Beach

Reach ____

Rose

Rose ____

Toes

Ring

Wing ____

Ring ____

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. *Write. Light.* That's right: *write* begins with our sound."

Words	First	Second
Rice	Rice ___	Lice
Rope	Soap ___	Rope ___
Row	Row ___	No
Run	Run ___	Sun
Rink	Sink ___	Rink ___
Room	Room ___	Tomb
Race	Race ___	Lace
Roll	Coal ___	Roll ___
Roar	Soar ___	Roar ___
Rip	Sip ___	Rip ___

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 every time you hear the word that begins with our sound. *Write. Light.* That's right: *write* begins with our sound."

Words
Rat ___
Sat
Rat ___
Bat
Cat
Rat ___
Rat ___
Hat
Rat ___
Mat

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 every time you hear the word that begins with our sound. *Write. Light.* That's right: *write* begins with our sound."

Words

Row ____

No

Row ____

Mow

Go

Toe

Row ____

Bow

Row ____

Row ____

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
Rain	Rain	Rain ____
Root	Root	Root ____
Rat	Rat	Rat ____
Rug	Rug	Rug ____
Roast	Roast	Roast ____
Rock	Rock	Rock ____
Red	Red	Red ____
Reach	Reach	Reach ____
Rose	Rose	Rose ____
Ring	Ring	Ring ____

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
Rice	Rice	Rice ____
Rope	Rope	Rope ____
Row	Row	Row ____
Run	Run	Run ____
Rink	Rink	Rink ____
Room	Room	Room ____
Race	Race	Race ____
Roll	Roll	Roll ____
Roar	Roar	Roar ____
Rip	Rip	Rip ____

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
Rain	Rain ___	Rain ___	Rain ___
Root	Root ___	Root ___	Root ___
Rat	Rat ___	Rat ___	Rat ___
Rug	Rug ___	Rug ___	Rug ___
Roast	Roast ___	Roast ___	Roast ___
Rock	Rock ___	Rock ___	Rock ___
Red	Red ___	Red ___	Red ___
Reach	Reach ___	Reach ___	Reach ___
Rose	Rose ___	Rose ___	Rose ___
Ring	Ring ___	Ring ___	Ring ___

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
Rice	Rice ___	Rice ___	Rice ___
Rope	Rope ___	Rope ___	Rope ___
Row	Row ___	Row ___	Row ___
Run	Run ___	Run ___	Run ___
Rink	Rink ___	Rink ___	Rink ___
Room	Room ___	Room ___	Room ___
Race	Race ___	Race ___	Race ___
Roll	Roll ___	Roll ___	Roll ___
Roar	Roar ___	Roar ___	Roar ___
Rip	Rip ___	Rip ___	Rip ___

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: *ite, write.*"

Word	Teacher	Student
Rain	ain	Rain ___
Root	oot	Root ___
Rat	at	Rat ___
Roast	oast	Roast ___
Rock	ock	Rock ___
Red	ed	Red ___
Reach	each	Reach ___
Rose	ose	Rose ___
Ring	ing	Ring ___

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: *ite, write.*"

Word	Teacher	Student
Rice	ice	Rice ___
Rope	ope	Rope ___
Row	ow	Row ___
Run	un	Run ___
Rink	ink	Rink ___
Room	oom	Room ___
Race	ace	Race ___
Roll	oll	Roll ___
Roar	oar	Roar ___
Rip	ip	Rip ___

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 *light*, and then you say *write*. Thong is a word that starts with the sound we have been working on."

Word	Teacher	Student
Rain	Cane	Rain ___
Root	Boot	Root ___
Rat	Mat	Rat ___
Rug	Bug	Rug ___
Roast	Toast	Roast ___
Rock	Sock	Rock ___
Red	Bed	Red ___
Reach	Beach	Reach ___
Rose	Toes	Rose ___
Ring	Wing	Ring ___

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 *light*, and then you say *write*. Thong is a word that starts with the sound we have been working on."

Word	Teacher	Student
Rice	Nice	Rice ___
Rope	Soap	Rope ___
Row	Mow	Row ___
Run	Sun	Run ___
Rink	Sink	Rink ___
Room	Boom	Room ___
Race	Face	Race ___
Roll	Bowl	Roll ___
Roar	Soar	Roar ___
Rip	Sip	Rip ___

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 *write*, first say it __ite, and then say it with the new way you're saying the sound—*write*."

Word	Old Way	New Way
Rain	Rain	Rain ___
Root	Root	Root ___
Rat	Rat	Rat ___
Rug	Rug	Rug ___
Roast	Roast	Roast ___
Rock	Rock	Rock ___
Red	Red	Red ___
Reach	Reach	Reach ___
Rose	Rose	Rose ___
Ring	Ring	Ring ___

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 *write*, first say it __ite, and then say it with the new way you're saying the sound—*write*."

Word	Old Way	New Way
Ring	Ring	Ring ___
Row	Row	Row ___
Run	Run	Run ___
Rink	Rink	Rink ___
Room	Room	Room ___
Race	Race	Race ___
Roll	Roll	Roll ___
Roar	Roar	Roar ___
Rip	Rip	Rip ___

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 [l] and [w].)

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

Word	[r]	Other Sound	[r]
Rain	Rain ___	Rain ___	Rain ___
Root	Root ___	Root ___	Root ___
Rat	Rat ___	Rat ___	Rat ___
Rug	Rug ___	Rug ___	Rug ___
Roast	Roast ___	Roast ___	Roast ___
Rock	Rock ___	Rock ___	Rock ___
Red	Red ___	Red ___	Red ___
Reach	Reach ___	Red ___	Red ___
Rose	Rose ___	Rose ___	Rose ___
Ring	Ring ___	Ring ___	Ring ___

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 [w] and [l].)

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

Word	[r]	Other Sound	[r]
Ring	Ring ___	Ring ___	Ring ___
Row	Row ___	Row ___	Row ___
Run	Run ___	Run ___	Run ___
Rink	Rink ___	Rink ___	Run ___
Room	Room ___	Room ___	Room ___
Race	Race ___	Race ___	Race ___
Roll	Roll ___	Roll ___	Roll ___
Roar	Roar ___	Roar ___	Roar ___
Rip	Rip ___	Rip ___	Rip ___