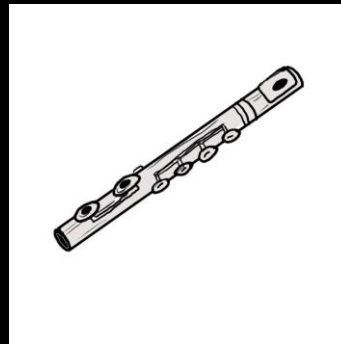
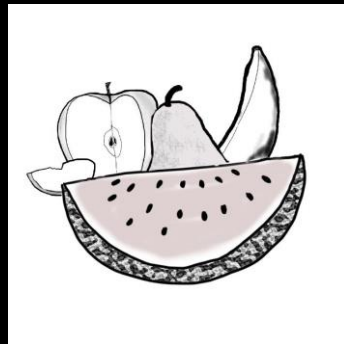


# MINIMAL PAIRS to the MAX<sup>®</sup>

## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE



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Pelican Talk Speech Therapy Resources

[www.pelicantalk.com](http://www.pelicantalk.com)

**Minimal pairs** are two words that differ by only one speech sound (phoneme). They are brilliant to use in a range of activities for speech and literacy intervention. Minimal pairs are a vital tool for speech pathologists and a resource that good teachers and aides are finding useful in literacy teaching and remediation. Minimal pairs highlight for speakers or writers the difference between a target word and the error they are making.

## HOW CAN THEY BE USED?

**Using them for Speech:** If a child is saying the sound /w/ for /r/ you would show them the **r vs w** pairs to highlight the difference between the target (“read”) and their error (“weed”). Speech sound discrimination is vital for errors to be corrected. Minimal Pairs to the Max © contain pairs that address common and not-so-common errors that may appear in children’s speech.

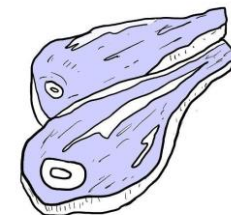
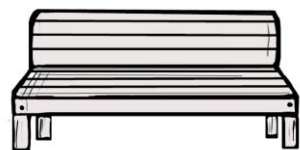


**Using them for Spelling:** Minimal pairs are extremely useful in spelling remediation, particularly when young learners are finding it hard to discriminate between similar vowel sounds (for example, the sounds in “hut vs heart”), between consonant pairs (for example, “cut vs gut”) and also when they are finding it difficult to perceive blends (for example, “net vs. nest”). For example, if a child is writing the letter “i” for the sound /ee/ (for example, “dip” for “deep”) show them the **i vs ee** pictures. These pictures can be listened to and sorted according to the vowel sound they contain. If you are using a program such as The Speech Vowel Set © (from Pelican Talk), you would contrast the Itchy Chimp sound and the Smiley Pete sound, then sort the



minimal pair pictures into piles according to the vowel sound. If the child cannot perceive the difference, the error may be due to auditory discrimination problems and more sorting activities (particularly between similar-sounding vowels) would be beneficial.

**Using them for Early Literacy:** Minimal pairs can be used when teaching first and last sound identification in the early days of literacy learning. In early literacy teaching, introduce two or three very different sounds using The Speech Sound Set © (for example Munching Mama /m/ and Sammy Snake /s/). I then show a set of picture pairs that contrast the /s/ versus /m/ in the initial position and get children to sort them into Munching Mama and Sammy Snake piles. At a later time, I show pairs of pictures that contrast /s/ and /m/ at the end of words and sort them by their last sound. These tasks are purely auditory, so cut the words from the top of each card. Of course many of the minimal pair sets rhyme so can be used in rhyming activities.



Rhyme awareness and generation are important phonological awareness skills that help build the foundation for good literacy.



**Using them for Auditory Discrimination Tasks:** Some children have auditory comprehension problems that are related to auditory discrimination. Listening to minimal pairs and sorting them can be a valuable exercise to hone listening skills. Try this first in a quiet room and then when the child is doing well, introduce some background noise. Examples of frequently confused words are “trees, cheese” (see **tr vs ch** in Part Two: Blends), “hut, heart” (see **u vs ar** in Part Three: Vowels ) and “ship, chip” (see **ch vs sh** in Part One: Consonants). The type of words that you use in therapy will depend on the types of errors the child is making.



**Using them for Accent Modification:** Some errors are common when people with English as a second language are pronouncing certain words. For example, I worked with an Indian man who had trouble saying the sound /or/ and instead pronounced it as an /ir/ sound. Initially he had trouble even perceiving the difference. The pictures in Part Three: Vowels, **ir vs or**, were very useful for building his perception of the difference, and then for practice. Apart from many of the vowel sets, other useful consonant pair sets include **v vs w** and **r vs l** and **r vs w**, depending on the speaker’s native language.

## HOW IS THE RESOURCE ARRANGED?

The resource is divided into three sections: consonants, blends and vowels. Each card is provided with the word written in a box above it. The word can easily be cut off if needed. Each part has a contents table on the second page. Originally each sound was written in the table and on each page heading using the phonetic alphabet, but this was found to be confusing for some. The sounds are therefore listed as their most regular letter-link. For some vowel sounds, a sample word is provided along with the letters (for example, **ow (clown)** ).

**PART ONE: CONSONANTS** This contains 109 pages of minimal pair pictures and words. Words differ by a single consonant phoneme. In some cases, this is the absence of a phoneme (for example, **eat** and **meat**). To find a minimal pair set, look at page 2. The same consonant phonemes are listed down as across. The \_ symbol, refers to the absence of the sound that is being contrasted (for example, “feet vs eat”). Where there are two page numbers listed, one page has contrast in the initial position and the other page has contrasts in the final position.

**PART TWO: BLENDS** This contains 42 pages of minimal pair pictures and words. Words contrast a single consonant phoneme with a blend. Some contrasts are initial and some final. To find a pair on page 2, locate the blend in the vertical column and then find its contrast in top row.

**PART THREE: VOWELS** This contains 46 pages of minimal pair pictures and words. Words differ by a single vowel phoneme. In the contents table (page 2), the same vowel phonemes are listed down as are written across.

**I HOPE YOU ENJOY MINIMAL PAIRS TO THE MAX ©. PLEASE CONTACT PELICAN TALK IF THERE ARE ANY REQUIRED SETS THAT ARE NOT IN THIS PROGRAM AND THESE MAY BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE VERSIONS AND EMAILED TO YOU DIRECTLY.**