

The V and W sounds /v/ /w/

Printable practice pack · free from onlinetonguetwister.com

V is made with the lip and teeth; W is made with the lips alone. Confusing them turns 'vest' into 'west' and 'wine' into 'vine' — one of the most noticeable accent markers in English.

Who this helps: Speakers of German, Dutch, Hindi, Tagalog, Russian, Korean and Chinese languages.

How to make the sound

- 1 For /v/: rest the top teeth lightly on the inside of the bottom lip, then push voiced air through. You should feel a buzz in the lip.
- 2 Hold /v/ for two seconds. It is a continuous sound, not a quick tap.
- 3 For /w/: round both lips into a tight circle, as if starting 'oo', then glide immediately into the vowel.
- 4 The teeth never touch the lip for /w/. Put a finger on your lip to check.
- 5 For /f/, keep the /v/ position but turn the voice off.

Common mistakes

- Using a /w/ where a /v/ belongs: 'very' becoming 'wery'.
- Using a /v/ where a /w/ belongs: 'water' becoming 'vater'.
- Hardening /v/ into /b/: 'vote' becoming 'boat' (common for Spanish speakers).
- Devoicing final /v/: 'love' becoming 'loff'.

A ten-minute daily routine

- 1 **Warm up (1 min).** Hum, then stretch the jaw and lips. Cold mouths slur.
- 2 **Isolate (2 min).** Make the target sound on its own, held long, ten times.
- 3 **Words (3 min).** Work one block of the word list on page 2, slowly, from the respelling.
- 4 **Contrast (2 min).** Run the minimal pairs on page 3 and listen for the difference.
- 5 **Speed (2 min).** Finish with a twister from page 4 — slow first, then fast.

Tip: record yourself on a phone before and after a week of practice. People rarely hear their own errors live, but almost always hear them in a recording. The microphone practice mode at onlinetonguetwister.com transcribes what you actually said and scores it against the target.

Word list

Word · IPA · say it (CAPITALS = stressed syllable)

V sound

very	/ˈvɛr.i/	VAIR-ee
vowel	/ˈvaʊ.əl/	VOW-uhl
village	/ˈvɪl.ɪdʒ/	VIL-ij
vehicle	/ˈviː.ə.kəl/	VEE-uh-kuhl
visible	/ˈvɪz.ə.bəl/	VIZ-uh-buhl
available	/əˈveɪ.lə.bəl/	uh-VAY-luh-buhl
survive	/səˈvaɪv/	sur-VIVE
develop	/dɪˈvɛl.əp/	dih-VEL-uhp
of	/ʌv/	UV
love	/lʌv/	LUV

W sound

water	/ˈwɑː.tər/	WAH-tur
world	/wɜːrld/	WORLD
wonderful	/ˈwʌn.də.fəl/	WUN-dur-fuhl
women	/ˈwɪm.ɪn/	WIM-in
would	/wʊd/	WOOD
wolf	/wʊlf/	WULF
awkward	/ˈɔːk.wəd/	AWK-wurd
language	/ˈlæŋ.gwɪdʒ/	LANG-gwij
quality	/ˈkwɑː.lə.ti/	KWAH-luh-tee
squirrel	/ˈskwɜːr.əl/	SKWUR-uhl

F sound (same lip position, no voice)

fifth	/fɪfθ/	FIFTH
photograph	/ˈfoʊ.tə.græf/	FOH-tuh-graf
comfortable	/ˈkʌmf.tə.bəl/	KUMF-tur-buhl
enough	/ɪˈnʌf/	ih-NUF
difficult	/ˈdɪf.ə.kəlt/	DIF-uh-kult
laugh	/læf/	LAF
often	/ˈɔː.fən/	AW-fuhn
half	/hæf/	HAF

Silent W and tricky spellings

answer	/ˈæn.sər/	AN-sur (no W)
sword	/sɔːrd/	SORD (no W)
two	/tuː/	TOO (no W)
wrist	/rɪst/	RIST (no W)
write	/raɪt/	RITE (no W)
whether	/ˈwɛð.ə/	WETH-ur
whole	/hoʊl/	HOLE (no W)
Wednesday	/ˈwenz.deɪ/	WENZ-day

Minimal pairs

Say each pair aloud. If they sound identical, slow down and exaggerate.

A	B	What to listen for
vest	west	the definitive V/W test
vine	wine	teeth on lip vs lips only
veal	wheel	hold the /v/ buzz
very	wary	in running speech
ferry	very	unvoiced /f/ vs voiced /v/
leaf	leave	final voicing

Sentence ladders

Build up: single word, then phrase, then full sentence. Three times each.

1	very
2	very valuable
3	Vivian's very valuable violin vanished.

1	water
2	warm water
3	We watched warm water wash over the wall.

1	vowel
2	every vowel
3	Every vowel in the village was voiced well.

1	whether
2	whether or not
3	Whether the weather is wet, we will wait.

Twisters for this sound

Slow and clear first. Speed is the last step, never the first.

A very vain vulture voiced a vivid verse.

MEDIUM · sound focus: v

Wobble the waffles while the water warms.

MEDIUM · sound focus: w

Four furious friends fought for the phone.

MEDIUM · sound focus: f

The fickle finger of fate flicks fiercely.

HARD · sound focus: f

A wacky woodchuck whittled a wooden whistle.

HARD · sound focus: w

Four fresh fried fish fingers for Fatty Finn.

EASY · sound focus: f

Five-day tracker

Practice task	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Read the word list aloud					
Minimal pairs, 3× each					
Sentence ladders					
Twisters, slow					
Twisters, fast					
Record yourself and listen back					

Free to print, copy and share for classroom, therapy and personal use. Practise with a microphone and instant accuracy scoring at onlinetonguetwister.com/pronunciation/v-w-sounds