

S Sound Word List

Teeth closed gently, tongue tip pointed up behind the top teeth (or down behind the bottom teeth - both work), sides of the tongue sealed against the back teeth. Blow a thin, steady stream down the middle.

SOUND

/s/

TYPICAL AGE

By age 4

TYPE

Voiceless Alveolar fricative

PRACTICE TIP

A lispy /s/ usually means the tongue is sticking out or the air is escaping sideways. Cue "keep your teeth closed like a fence and let the air sneak through."

Initial Position (108 words)

The sound is at the beginning of the word.

1 Syllable

60 words

sun	sad	seat	silk	some
sock	safe	seed	sink	son
soap	sag	seek	sip	song
sit	said	seem	sir	soon
see	salt	sell	size	sort
six	same	send	so	sound
sand	sat	serve	soak	south
soup	sauce	set	soar	soy
seal	save	sew	soft	suit
sing	say	side	soil	sum
saw	scene	sight	sold	surf
sail	sea	sign	solve	sack

2 Syllables

43 words

seven	sandwich	seagull	simple	supper
salad	saddle	season	siren	surprise
sister	sailor	second	sixteen	soapy
circle	sample	secret	soccer	sunny
sofa	sandal	seesaw	solid	sailboat
silly	sardine	sentence	sorry	sandals
city	sausage	settle	sunset	sour
summer	science	sidewalk	sunshine	
suitcase	scissors	silver	super	

3 Syllables

5 words

cereal

celery

safari

September

seventy

High-frequency initial words

Everyday words rather than picture-card words - which is why most lists leave them out. A child already says these hundreds of times a day, so they carry more carryover value than any noun above. Target them in conversation, not in drill.

so, some, something, sorry, someone, saw, since, saying, says, soon, somebody, sister, supposed, seems, send, sometimes, sort, sent, seem, somewhere, seeing, suppose, certainly, seven, sitting, sad, singing, silly, seemed, several

Medial Position (81 words)

The sound is in the middle of the word.

2 Syllables

57 words

pencil	glasses	decide	princess	racecar
castle	dressing	fussy	racing	spacesuit
whisper	tasty	guessing	rescue	icing
faucet	absent	insect	sausage	dresser
muscle	aside	inside	seesaw	sunset
recess	asleep	kissing	tassel	pieces
ice cream	bassoon	lasso	thirsty	baseball
messy	basket	listen	tossing	dancer
lesson	beside	missing	useful	fossil
bracelet	blossom	mustard	wrestle	
whistle	classic	outside	classroom	
racer	dancing	passing	ice skate	

3 Syllables

19 words

bicycle	grocery	passenger	tissue box	sunset time
dinosaur	gasoline	pencil case	castle wall	whistle blow
eraser	fantasy	possible	glasses case	listening
popsicle	grasshopper	recipe	messy room	

4 Syllables

5 words

dinosaur bone	eraser cap	popsicle stick	pacifier	motorcycle
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High-frequency medial words

Everyday words rather than picture-card words - which is why most lists leave them out. A child already says these hundreds of times a day, so they carry more carryover value than any noun above. Target them in conversation, not in drill.

understand, yourself, also, myself, inside, sister, outside, himself, asking, absolutely, yesterday, instead, especially, listening, themselves, herself, ourselves, upstairs, itself, understood, dancing, downstairs, chasing, kissing, uses, beside, listened, thirsty, guessing, understands

Final Position (95 words)

The sound is at the end of the word.

1 Syllable

71 words

bus	purse	fence	moss	spruce
house	rice	floss	niece	this
mouse	gas	fox	nurse	toss
ice	pass	fuss	pants	twice
juice	dice	geese	peace	us
nice	kiss	grease	piece	vase
dress	base	guess	place	voice
glass	bless	hiss	plus	yes
grass	boss	lace	price	bounce
horse	brass	less	race	chance
class	case	loose	rinse	lips
face	chess	mess	sauce	
box	cross	mice	six	
moose	cups	miss	slice	
goose	dance	mix	space	

2 Syllables

19 words

princess	circus	promise	entrance	recess
police	mattress	walrus	necklace	erase
address	office	balance	staircase	lettuce
cactus	palace	distance	suitcase	

3 Syllables

4 words

octopus	ambulance	fireplace	orange juice
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4 Syllables

1 words

pineapple juice

High-frequency final words

Everyday words rather than picture-card words - which is why most lists leave them out. A child already says these hundreds of times a day, so they carry more carryover value than any noun above. Target them in conversation, not in drill.

this, yes, us, thanks, once, use, since, looks, wants, its, makes, gets, perhaps, piece, worse, unless, thinks, across, twice, starts, keeps, drinks, talks, helps, puts, lets, asks, breaks, tastes, fits

Generalization

Word lists get a sound into a child's mouth. Generalization is what gets it into their life. These are activities where the target words come up on their own, so nobody has to be talked into practicing.

Play-based ideas for young children

Snake in the sand

A toy snake that slithers through sand, rice or a sensory bin. Make it hiss - the hiss IS the sound.

Words that come up: snake, sand, sss, silly, see, sit, stop, slow, soft, inside, hiss, this, yes, bus

Bus stop

A toy bus that picks up passengers. Say where each one is going as it climbs aboard.

Words that come up: bus, stop, sit, seat, so, see, six, yes, us, this, please, off, outside, house

Silly soup

Put ridiculous things into a pretend soup pot - a sock, a spoon, a star. The sillier the better.

Words that come up: soup, sock, spoon, sun, star, silly, some, stir, see, yes, this, gross, mess, taste

Conversation and verbal games for older kids

Same and different

Compare two things in three ways. "Same," "similar" and "different" are all /s/, and so is most of the comparison language.

Story starters

Draw a random object and start a story with it. "So," "said," "suddenly" and "someone" run through every story.

Sports scores

Talk through a game, real or invented. Score, save, pass, season, start and stats are all targets.