

## Voicing

**A. Voicing:** In unstressed syllables, consonants are often reduced in clarity, just as vowels are reduced. However, in stressed syllables emphasized words, it is important to make the consonant sound clear.

One of the most basic distinctions between English sounds is voicing. To understand the meaning of this term, press your hands against your ears and make this sound:

ssssssssssssssssssss (unvoiced)

Now continuing to press your hands against your ears, make this sound:

zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz (voiced)

Another way is to test the difference is to put your hand on your throat. You should hear a vibration for "zzzz" but not for "ssss." Try them both again until you can feel the difference. The vibration is called voicing. All English vowels should be voiced.

## Voiced

- |            |            |         |
|------------|------------|---------|
| 1. zoo     | 4. van     | 7. game |
| 2. lazy    | 5. leaving | 8. bay  |
| 3. raising | 6. either  | 9. do   |

## Unvoiced

- |           |            |         |
|-----------|------------|---------|
| 1. sue    | 4. fan     | 7. came |
| 2. lacy   | 5. leafing | 8. pay  |
| 3. racing | 6. ether   | 9. to   |

## B. Practice saying the statements.

1. He raised a horse. (z)
2. He raced a horse. (s)
3. We need a good president. (z)
4. We need a good precedent. (s)
5. She prizes old books. (z)
6. She prices old books. (s)

C. Practice contrasting the following English sounds, voiced and unvoiced.

1. Where did she keep it?

1. buy

1. pie

2. Did it win?

2. they

2. think

3. Help elect one.

3. van

3. ban

4. Let's set one.

4. dime

4. time

5. Doesn't she like old ones?

5. zoo

5. sue

6. Is that her job?

6. measure

6. mesh

7. Jane

7. chain

**D:** Practice saying the following words and practice the contrast.

**Vowel Shorter Final consonant unvoiced**

1. half

2. safe

3. leaf

4. batch

5. rich

6. excuse (noun)

7. use (noun)

8. proof (noun)

9. rice

10. peace

11. lice

12. pace

13. bus

14. Miss

15. close (adjective)

16. loose (adjective)

**Vowel Longer - Final consonant voiced**

1. have

2. save

3. leave

4. badge

5. ridge

6. excuse (verb)

7. use (verb)

8. prove (verb)

9. rise

10. peas

11. lies

12. pays

13. buzz

14. Ms. (pronounced  
Mizz)

15. close (verb)

16. lose (verb)

E: Practice saying the statement and the correct response.

1. He wants peas.                      Not Carrots? (z)
2. He wants peace.                      Not war? (s)
3. There's something in my eyes.      Call a doctor. (z)
4. There's something in my ice.      Call a waiter. (s)

F. Americans don't fully pronounce the final sounds of

p/b, t/d and k/g. --- Voiced: d, g, and b ---- Unvoiced: t, k, and p

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. bet -- bed   | 6. rack -- rag  |
| 2. sat -- sad   | 7. cap -- cab   |
| 3. debt -- dead | 8. mop -- mob   |
| 4. feet -- feed | 9. rope -- robe |
| 5. back -- bag  |                 |

G. Check yourself for accuracy in distinguishing voicing and length of syllables.

1. She saw the place. (s)

2. She saw the plays. (z)

3. He wants peace. (s)

4. He wants peas. (z)

5. That book has no use. (s)

6. Use this book. (z)

7. Is that Miss Brown? (s)

8. Is that Ms. Brown? (z)