

Lesson Plan Template

- **Title:** Four Steps in Learning to Pronounce the Stops

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- **Proficiency level**

_____ Beginning Intermediate _____ Advanced

- **Grade level**

College level

- **Skills**

Please check all that apply and mention related subskills (e.g., Speaking/pronunciation, or Reading/scanning):

_____ Reading	Related subskills _____
_____ Writing	Related subskills _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Speaking	Related subskills <u>Pronunciation</u> _____
_____ Listening	Related subskills _____
_____ Grammar	Related subskills _____
_____ Vocabulary	Related subskills _____

- **Objectives**

- To help students aurally discern and orally produce the six oral stops, or plosives, in English: /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, and /g/

- **Duration**

50 minutes for the first three activities and 30+ minutes for the last activity

- **Procedure**

Descriptions of each consonant consist of reference to three features: voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation. The phonemes /p/ and /b/, for instance, differ in voicing (/p/ being voiceless and /b/ being voiced) while sharing the same place of articulation (bilabial) and manner of articulation (stop). There are six oral stops, or plosives, in English altogether: /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, and /g/. While we should not expect our students to know the three features associated with each consonant, explaining how consonants are different from one another does sometimes help students to produce the targeted sounds. For example, most of my students have found it helpful to know that the only difference between /Σ/ (as in *shoe*) and /Z/ (as in *usual*) is the voicing.

I have used this lesson mostly with intermediate-level students, and it usually takes about 50 minutes to do the first three activities. Teachers should decide how much time they want to spend on the Communicative Activity, but should allow at least 30 minutes

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for the activity. A common mistake that I see in many ESL/EFL classes is that students are asked to engage in a communicative activity before they have a chance to do more manageable activities. The four activities shown below follow a format presented in *Teaching Pronunciation* by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996, p. 36): (1) listening discrimination, (2) controlled practice, e.g. minimal pair sentences, (3) guided practice, e.g. structured communication exercises such as cued dialogues, and (4) communicative practice, e.g. less structured activities such as role plays.

Listening Discrimination

The teacher reads each pair of words, and the students respond by saying either “same” or “different.” Arrange the pairs of words into two different categories, word-initial and word-final, as below.

word-initial

1. bear/pear
2. ban/ban
3. park/bark
4. pen/pen
5. big/pig

word-final

1. tap/tab
2. cap/cab
3. lab/lap
4. crab/crab
5. slap/slap

Then, the teacher asks the students how they can distinguish /p/ and /b/ occurring word-finally. If no one gives a satisfactory explanation, the teacher should explain that the vowel is lengthened before a voiced consonant and that it can be used as an effective strategy in distinguishing /p/ and /b/ when they occur word-finally.

Controlled Activity

Divide the class into groups of four, and distribute the Information Gap Exercise sheets below. In each group, two students, as a team, should have Sheet A; and the other two, also as a team, should have Sheet B. Everyone takes turns asking and answering questions (e.g., What is the word in Box A2?). This particular format is to ensure against any possible conflict over whether it was the hearer or the answerer that made the mistake when there is a discrepancy.

- For those who have difficulty producing the word-initial voiced stops, especially Korean learners, lowering the pitch of the voiced stops can help producing them.

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Sheet A

	1	2	3	4
A	pan		ban	cap
B			park	
C	bark	pear		cab
D		bear		

Sheet B

	1	2	3	4
A		tap		
B	pride	slab		tab
C			bride	
D	belt		slap	pelt

Guided Activity

Divide the class into groups of nine. Give each student a sentence from the Strip Story below. Ask students to memorize their sentences and give them back to you. Have each group figure out the correct order of the sentences.

Strip Story

- My best friend from high school is a guy named Ben.
- Ben married his wife Pat when he was twenty years old.
- He met her when he was working part-time as a bartender at a bar near the beach.
- Both Ben and Pat are very nice people.
- But once they got bored with each other, they both wanted to have a pet.
- So they bought a dog and named him Bart because Ben loves Bart Simpson.

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- Bart's favorite toy is a little bat that Pat bought him about a year ago.
- Bart is very big, but he is also very friendly.
- And that's why Ben and Pat love Bart so much.

Communicative Activity

Divide the class into groups of three or four so that there are at least three separate groups, and have each group create a story like the one that they were given for the Guided Activity. They should try to use as many words as possible that contain stop consonants. Ask each group to share its story with the class, and have the remaining groups write down the words that contain stop consonants. As a follow-up activity, have each group retell a story of another group. This will give the students an opportunity for self-assessing whether they were able to attend to the meaning as well as to the form. Moreover, this can help to find out how correctly or intelligibly each group pronounced the words in its story.

• References

Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. M. (1996). *Teaching pronunciation: A reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.