**MINIMAL PAIRS**

Study the pairs of words below carefully.

Fit – feet

Let – late

Van – fan

Pun – pan

* What do you notice? You realize that only one sound makes the pronunciation of one word distinct from the other. Each pair is called a ***minimal pair****.*
* **A** minimal pair is therefore a pair of words that vary by only one sound especially those that usually confuse learners, such as /**l**/ and /**r**/, /**b**/ and /**p**/, and many others.

**Minimal Pairs of Vowel Sounds**

**Sound /i/ and /i:/**

1. Bid – bead
2. Bit – beat
3. Bitch – beach
4. Bin – bean/ been
5. Chip – cheap
6. Fit – feat/ feet
7. Fist – feast
8. Fizz – fees
9. Gin – gene
10. Sin – seen/ scene
11. Still – steal/ steel
12. Sick – seek
13. Is – ease
14. Itch – each
15. Risen – reason
16. Piss – piece/ peace
17. Pick – peak/ peek
18. Mill – meal

**Exercise**

**Write another word in which either sound /i/ and /i:/ will make it vary from the one given.**

1. Hit
2. Sheet
3. Tin
4. Peach
5. Lip
6. Neat
7. Kip
8. Eel
9. Greed
10. Pill
11. Skied
12. Skim

**Sounds /i/ and /e/**

1. Did – dead
2. Disk – desk
3. Built – belt
4. Bit – bet
5. Lipped – leapt
6. Middle – meddle
7. Fill – fell
8. Bid – bed
9. Bill – bell
10. Lit – let
11. List – lest
12. Clinch – clench

**Exercise**

**Complete the table below with a word in which either the sound /e/ or /i/ brings the difference in pronunciation.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **/e/** | **/i/** |
| **1** | Head |  |
| **2** |  | Miss |
| **3** |  | Hymn |
| **4** | Led |  |
| **5** | Fen |  |
| **6** |  | Lid |
| **7** | Den |  |
| **8** | Peg |  |

**Sounds /e/ and /ei/**

The following words vary by one having the vowel sound /e/ and the other a diphthong /ei/

1. Wet – wait
2. Bread – braid
3. Fen – feign
4. Bed – bade
5. Get – gate/ gait
6. Let – late
7. Met – mate
8. Lest – laced
9. Tech – take
10. West – waste/ waist
11. When – wane
12. Edge – age
13. Gel – jail
14. Lens – lanes
15. Breast – braced
16. Sent – saint
17. Test – taste
18. Best – based
19. Wren – rain/ reign
20. Led – laid
21. Bled – blade
22. Fed – fade

**Exercise**

**Each word below has another word in which either the sound /e/ or /ei/ will bring the distinction in pronunciation. Write that word.**

1. Fell
2. Pain
3. Hail
4. Sell
5. Well
6. Mate
7. Raid
8. Date
9. Men
10. Stayed
11. Bet
12. Jail

**Sounds /ᵆ/ and /ᶺ/**

1. Batter – butter
2. Cap – cup
3. Cat – cut
4. Back – buck
5. Brash – brush
6. Dabble – double
7. Rang – rung
8. Track – truck
9. Bad – bud
10. Began – begun
11. Bag – bug
12. Pan – pun
13. Drank – drunk
14. Fan – fun
15. Hat – hut
16. Badge – budge
17. Hang – hung
18. Massed – must
19. Rash – rush
20. Sank – sunk
21. Ran – run
22. Swam – swum
23. Ban – bun
24. Ham – hum

**Exercise**

**Complete the table below with the minimal pair of the word. Consider the sound indicated in each column.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **/ᵆ/** | **/ᶺ/** |
| (a) |  | But |
| (b) | Match |  |
| (c) | Mad |  |
| (d) |  | Flush |
| (e) | Cam |  |
| (f) |  | Dumb |
| (g) | Sang |  |
| (h) |  | Uncle |
| (i) | Crash |  |
| (j) | Sack |  |
| (k) |  | Dump |
| (l) |  | Tug |

**Sounds /ᵆ/ and /e/**

look at the list below.

1. Bad – bed
2. And – end
3. Had – head
4. Jam – gem
5. Pat – pet
6. Sat – set
7. Shall – shell
8. Man –men
9. Bag – beg
10. Ham – hem
11. Pan – pen
12. Sad – said
13. Manned – mend
14. Land – lend

**Exercise**

**Complete the table with appropriate word that vary with the sound indicated in the column.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **/ᵆ/** | **/ᵉ/** |
| (a) | Marry |  |
| (b) |  | Blend |
| (c) | Cattle |  |
| (d) | Vat |  |
| (e) | Sacks |  |
| (f) |  | Trek |
| (g) | Trad |  |
| (h) |  | met |

**Minimal Pairs of /ɑ˸/ and /ᵌ˸/**

1. fast – first
2. bath – berth/birth
3. heart – hurt
4. bard – bird
5. car – cur
6. card – curd
7. guard – gird
8. pa – per
9. bar – bur
10. barn – burn
11. carve – curve
12. dart – dirt
13. par – purr
14. park – perk
15. star – stir
16. arc – irk

**Exercise 6**

**Considering the sounds /ɑ˸/ and /ᵌ˸/, write the minimal pair of:**

1. far
2. heard/herd
3. pass
4. farm
5. shark
6. curt

**Minimal Pairs of /b/ and /v/**

1. bat – vat
2. beer – veer
3. bowl – vole
4. bow – vow
5. gibbon – given
6. bale – veil
7. bane – vein
8. curb – curve
9. bolt – volt
10. bowl – vole
11. broom – vroom
12. dribble – drivel
13. dub – dove
14. jibe – jive
15. rebel – revel

**Exercise 7**

**There is another word that will vary with the one written below with just one sound. Depending on the sounds /b/ and /v/, write that word.**

1. van
2. boat
3. Vest
4. Vowels
5. Vent
6. Bury
7. Loaves
8. Verve

**Minimal pairs of /f/ and /v/**

* Fan – van
* Off – of
* Fat – vat
* Fee – v
* Foul – vowel
* Fender – vendor
* Serf/Surf – serve
* Duff – dove
* Fie – vie
* Foal – vole
* Guff – guv
* Waif – waive
* Gif – give
* Life – live
* Safe – save
* Belief – believe
* Feel – veal
* Staff – starve
* Feign – vain/ vein
* Foist – voiced
* Fox – vox
* Reef – reeve

**Exercise 8**

**Write the minimal pair of the word below with consideration being either the sound /f/ or /v/.**

1. Ferry
2. Leaf
3. Vast
4. Fine
5. Half
6. Proof
7. Veil
8. Grief
9. Calf
10. Fault
11. Vile
12. Strive

**Minimal Pairs of Sounds/s/ and /ᶿ/**

* Mouse – mouth
* Sing – thing
* Face – faith
* Force – fourth
* Sick – thick
* Sink – think
* Sort – thought
* Tense – tenth
* Mass – math
* Miss – myth
* Pass – path
* Saw – thaw
* Seem – theme
* Some – thumb
* Song – thong
* Worse – worth
* Gross – growth
* Sigh – thigh
* Sin – thin
* Sum – thumb
* Piss – pith
* Sawn – thorn
* Symbol – thimble
* Sore – thaw
* Truce – truth
* Suds – thuds
* Sought – thought
* Moss – moth
* Sank – thank
* Sump – thump

**Sounds /t/ and /d/**

* Town – down
* Touch – Dutch
* Tear – dare
* Ten – den
* Tongue – dung
* Tart – dart
* Tech – deck
* Tin – din
* Toe – doe
* Tough – duff
* Tuck – duck
* Tab – dab
* Tank – dank
* Tick – dick
* Tine – dine
* Hat – had
* Spent – spend
* Too/ to/two – do
* Train – drain
* Tide – dyed/died
* Torn – dawn
* Teal – deal
* Teen – dean
* Tyre/tire – dire
* Toes – doze
* Tout – doubt
* Tug – dug
* Tale/ tail – dale
* Teed – deed
* Tier – deer
* Tint – dint
* Sheet – she’d
* Wait – weighed
* Tie – die
* Try – dry
* Tear – dear
* Tip – dip
* Tame – dame
* Team – deem
* Tent – dent
* Toast – dosed
* Tomb – doom
* Tower – dour
* Tux – ducks
* Tamp – damp
* Tell – dell
* Till – dill
* Tusk – dusk
* Sight – side
* Beat – bead

**Exercise 9**

**Each word below has another word in which all the sounds are the same except either the sound /t/ or /d/ is different. Write that word.**

1. Bat
2. God
3. Write
4. And
5. At
6. Bed
7. Bored
8. Eight
9. Bet
10. Feet
11. Hit
12. Hurt
13. Mat
14. Mend
15. Neat
16. Nod
17. Set
18. Played
19. Sat
20. Dead

**Minimal Pairs of /k/ and /g/**

**Initial**

* Came – game
* Card – guard
* Cold – gold
* Clean – glean
* Crate – great
* Cap – gap
* Coast – ghost
* Kale – gale
* Can – gone
* Course – gorse
* Cram – gram
* Crepe – grape
* Crew – grew
* Croup – group
* Crow – grow
* Key – ghee
* K – gay
* Clamour – glamour
* Clad – glad
* Crane – grain
* Creed – greed
* Krill – grill
* Cunning – gunning
* Cab – gab
* Cape – gape
* Clam – glam
* Cord – gored
* Coup – goo
* Crate – grate
* Cuff – guff

**Final**

* Clock – clog
* Dock – dog
* Frock – frog
* Muck – mug
* Brick – brig
* Broke – brogue
* Crack – crag
* Prick – prig
* Puck – pug
* Shack – shag
* Slack – slag
* Snuck – snug
* Stack – stag
* Whack – wag
* Wick – wig
* Jock – jog
* Lack – lag
* Luck – lug
* Beck – beg
* Cock – cog
* Hack – hag
* Pick – pig

**Exercise 10**

**Complete the table with appropriate word that only differs with one sound with the one given. Consider the sounds in the columns.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **/k/** | **/g/** |
| (a) | Tack |  |
| (b) |  | Flog |
| (c) | Tuck |  |
| (d) |  | Gum |
| (e) |  | Gash |
| (f) | Jack |  |
| (g) | Cave |  |
| (h) |  | Sag |
| (i) | Leak |  |
| (j) | Crab |  |
| (k) | Class |  |
| (l) |  | Good |
| (m) |  | Goat |
| (n) |  | Blog |
| (o) | Kill |  |
| (p) |  | Dug |
| (q) |  | Gut |
| (r) |  | Log |
| (s) | Rack |  |
| (t) | Cot |  |