Cluster Reduction Minimal Pairs

A two- or three-consonant blend gets squeezed down to a single consonant.



RESOLVES
Clusters without /s/ by 4;0 · Clusters with /s/ by 5;0

PAIRS
20

SOUNDS
All consonant blends

A blend asks a child to move from one consonant straight into another with no vowel to rest on. Early on, one of the two consonants wins and the other disappears. Which one survives is fairly predictable: in /s/ blends the /s/ usually goes ("spoon" becomes "soon"), and in liquid blends the /r/ or /l/ usually goes ("black" becomes "back").

Try this: Pull the blend apart and put it back together. Say the two sounds with a big gap - "sssss ... oon" - then shrink the gap a little each time until they collide. Children find this much easier than being told to "say it all together."

/bl/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **black**	>	 back

/br/ (2 pairs)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS	TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **bread**	>	 bed	 **brook**	>	 book

/cr/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **crab**	>	 cab

/cl/ (2 pairs)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS	TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **clap**	>	 cap	 **clown**	>	cown *

/dr/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 drive	>	 dive

/fr/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 frog	>	 fog

/fl/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 flower	>	fower *

/pl/ (2 pairs)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS	TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 plug	>	 pug	 plate	>	pate *

/tr/ (2 pairs)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS	TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 tree	>	 tea	 train	>	tain *

/st/ (2 pairs)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS	TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 stop	>	 top	 stir	>	tir *

/sn/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 snail	>	 nail

/sw/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **swing**	>	 wing

/sl/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **sled**	>	sed *

/sp/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **spin**	>	 pin

/sk/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **skate**	>	 Kate

* not a real word - written the way a child would say it