R Sound Word List



There are two good ways to make /r/. Bunched R: hump the back of the tongue up toward the roof of the mouth and pull the sides tight against the back teeth. Retroflex R: curl the tongue tip up and back without touching anything. Either one works - pick whichever the child stumbles into first.

SOUND	TYPICAL AGE	TYPE
/r/	By age 5	Voiced Alveolar/palatal liquid

PRACTICE TIP

The tongue tip must NOT touch the roof of the mouth, and a little lip rounding is fine and normal - do not fight it. Cue "pull your tongue back and make your cheeks tight."

Word-final R is really vocalic R (the /er/ and /ar/ family). The final list below is a starting point - see the Vocalic R page for the full set organized by r-controlled vowel.

Initial Position (118 words)

The sound is at the beginning of the word.


red


run


rain


ring


road


rock


rope


race

These and 61 more pictured words are in the R Sound picture cards.

1 Syllable

57 words

red	rack	real	ripe	row
run	raft	rest	rise	rub
rain	rag	rhyme	roam	rush
ring	rail	rib	roar	rust
road	raise	rice	roast	wrist
rock	rake	rich	rod	ran
rope	ram	ride	roll	write
race	ramp	ridge	root	rip
rug	ranch	right	rot	wrap
roof	rat	rim	rough	
room	ray	rind	round	
rose	reach	rinse	route	

2 Syllables

48 words

rabbit	railroad	relax	rhythm	rubber
robot	raisin	remind	riddle	ruby
rainbow	random	remote	rider	rumble
raccoon	rapid	remove	robin	runner
ribbon	rattle	repair	rocket	rusty
river	raven	repeat	roller	rolling
ruler	ready	reptile	rooftop	running
racket	reason	rescue	rooster	rainy
radar	recess	return	rowboat	
radish	reindeer	reward	royal	

3 Syllables

11 words

radio	recover	referee	restaurant
raspberry	rectangle	regular	rodeo
recipe	recycle	remember	

4 Syllables

1 word

rhinoceros

5 Syllables

1 word

refrigerator

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.

really, wrong, remember, run, write, ride, wrote, writing, ringing, runs, remembered, writes, remembers, reads

Medial Position (57 words)

The sound is in the middle of the word.



These and 24 more pictured words are in the R Sound picture cards.

2 Syllables

42 words

carrot	mirror	coral	iris	tourist
orange	borrow	erase	merry	very
parrot	barrel	erupt	narrow	hearing
cherry	forest	fairy	parent	sharing
zero	pirate	ferret	patrol	earring
berry	agree	florist	porridge	walrus
marry	carriage	herring	prairie	
sorry	carry	hero	sheriff	
ferry	chorus	heron	story	

3 Syllables

15 words

tomorrow	carousel	marathon	pirate ship	terrible
library	cherry pie	orange peel	safari	terrier
barrier	curious	parrot cage	serious	cereal

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.

very, sorry, everything, already, tomorrow, everyone, everybody, afraid, children, across, hungry, everywhere, several, carrying, carried, sharing, carries, pouring

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

Rocket launch

Count down and launch a toy rocket, a paper plane or a balloon. Say the countdown together - joining in is easier than starting.

Words that come up: rocket, ready, run, red, up, go, round, roar, right, rise, again, rush, race, wrong

Racing cars

Race cars down a ramp. Announce the racers, call the winner, run it again.

Words that come up: race, racing, ready, run, red, roll, round, rush, right, wrong, again, ramp, road, rear

Roaring animals

Lions, bears and dinosaurs that roar. The roar itself is a sustained /r/, which is a useful warm-up.

Words that come up: roar, run, red, rabbit, rhino, right, round, rough, really, run away, ready, rock, roll, rest

Conversation and verbal games for older kids

Rank and rate

Rate things out of ten and justify. "Rate," "rank," "really" and "right" repeat constantly.

Rules of the game

Explain the rules of a sport or board game. "Rules," "right," "run" and "round" are unavoidable.

Right or wrong

Debate whether something was the right call. Both key words are /r/.