SL Blend Word List

Hold a long /s/ with the tongue tip near the ridge, then drop the sides of the tongue and turn the voice on for /l/. The tongue barely moves.



SOUND	TYPICAL AGE	TYPE
/sl/	By age 5-7	Voiceless Fricative + liquid cluster

PRACTICE TIP

SL is a great first S blend because the tongue is already in almost the right place - it only has to change shape, not location.

SL does not occur often in the middle or at the end of English words, so this page practices it at the beginning.

Initial Position (20 words)

The sound is at the beginning of the word.


sleep


slide


slow


sled


slice


slug


sleeve


sloth

These and 2 more pictured words are in the SL Blend picture cards.

1 Syllable

18 words

sleep	slice	sleet	slush	slip
slide	slug	slim	slate	slime
slow	sleeve	slope	slot	
sled	slant	sloth	sly	

2 Syllables

1 word

slipper

3 Syllables

1 word

slippery

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.

sleep, sleeping, slow, slowly, slept, sleepy, sleeps

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

Slide play

Slide toys or yourselves down a slide. Slow, then fast.

Words that come up: slide, slow, sled, slip, sleep, again, more, down, up, fast, my turn, whee, go, wait

Sleepy toys

Put toys to sleep in slippers and blankets.

Words that come up: sleep, sleepy, slipper, slow, slide, again, more, night night, quiet, shh, wake up, bed, soft, tired

Slow motion game

Do everything in slow motion, then at normal speed.

Words that come up: slow, slowly, slide, slip, sleep, again, more, fast, stop, go, my turn, funny, move, wait

Conversation and verbal games for older kids

Slow reveal

Describe something one detail at a time until it is guessed.

Sleep schedule

Compare bedtimes and morning routines.