

Consonants: V/W

Lesson: V & W Consonants Sounds

Trainer:

Emphasis: Consonants

Duration: 2 hours

Sequence: Day 2, Module 1

Objectives

- Trainees should correctly identify the difference between the sounds of /v/ and /w/.
- Trainees should be able to pronounce the /v/ and /w/ sounds.
- Trainees should correctly pronounce common business terms with /v/ and /w/ sounds.
- Trainees should correctly pronounce words with /v/ and /w/ sounds under time pressure.

Lesson Design



Base Camp

Live calls with Customer Panel

← Give two or three trainees a questionnaire (Appendix 3) that they have to complete with a member of the panel over the telephone. The questionnaire highlights words with /v/ & /w/ sounds.

← Give the trainee the phone number to call. Please place the call on speakerphone and record it. Listen for common mistakes and pronounced customer confusion.

Doing it wrong

The consonant sounds /v/ & /w/ are very important. They are difficult to hear and there is a tendency to switch them. However, switching these sounds is very confusing to a native speaker's ears. The listener may not be able to distinguish the speaker's meaning. There are several words that change meaning entirely when the v and w sounds are switched (minimal pairs).

V and W: Minimal Pairs

Verse / Worse, Vest / West, Visor / Wiser, Very / Wary, Vet / Wet

Even words that do not change meaning, may still be misunderstood by a native English speaker. A **native speaker** does not even have a **frame of reference** for the word **vegetable** or **victory**.



The Ascent

Demonstrate how the /w/ sound is made.

- Form a tight O shape with your mouth, like you would make the suck in a deep breath.
- There should be NO contact between the teeth and the lips in forming the /w/ sound.
- Think of the /w/ as a "single u" sound, only held longer; so in place of the w in want, pronounce it oo-änt.

Demonstrate how the /v/ sound is made.

- Touch your upper teeth to your lower lip.
- Force your lower lip out from under you teeth (almost like biting your lower lip).

To practice making the /v/ sound, you can substitute *ferry* for *very* so that it won't come out as *wary*. Because the consonants are produced in a similar place in the mouth, /f/ and /v/ are frequently interchanged in English (belief/believe, wolf/wolves). *It was ferry difficult* is easier to understand than *It was wary difficult*.

Pass around mirrors, so they can see how their mouths take on different shapes when saying the different sounds.



The Alpine Start

Have students practice saying a list of /v/ & /w/ words in pairs.

Word List is attached as Appendix 1.

Another exercise for checking pronunciation of /v/ and /w/ is to have trainees read the following passages:

Reading Passage 1

When **w**e **w**ork **w**e **w**ill **q**uietly see that **W**endy **w**ants **w**hole sets of **w**ide **w**indows to **w**ash. **W**hile **W**esterford is **w**onderful for **w**orking **w**ith, **w**indow **w**ashers are **w**idely **w**ished for by **w**omen **w**ith dirty **w**indows and **w**ashing machines. This **w**onderful experience left **W**endy **w**ondering **w**hether she **w**ould ever **w**ash those **w**indows again. **O**nce **w**inter **W**endy **w**ed **W**illiam and got a **w**ashing machine for the **w**edding.

Reading Passage 2

In Wahoo, Wisconsin, wage insurance had become a big Wafters issue. Wahoo was a walker's world. Whenever Wendy walked, she wondered if she could wait for Walter to buy the wage insurance. What Walter wasn't aware of was that, the market was like volleyball. What goes over the net will return. Wage insurance is not some wistful thought. From Waltham to Washington and even in Wallingford State, people waltz themselves to the wall without wage insurance.



Conquering the Summit

News Bulletin Role Play

← This activity is a role-play of a live television broadcast. Have the trainees read a news bulletin from a “teleprompter” (PPT with scrolling text). The news bulletin contains multiple /v/ & /w/ sounds.

Have one trainee start reading, and switch out readers as often as you wish. This exercises can also be done in pairs. One student reads the news. Their partner has a buzzer that they can use if the other student mispronounces the word.



The Descent

Refocus the class after the activity and emphasize the importance of correctly pronouncing /v/ and /w/.



Gathering Your Gear

- PPT with teleprompter version of v/w sound text
- Printout of the teleprompter text from PPT
- Buzzer
- Small mirrors
- Printout of reading passages OR Power point with them

Extra Resources:

Quotes with v/w

Life is complicated and not for the timid. It's an experience that when it's done, it will take us a while to get over it. We'll look back on all the good things we surrendered in favor of deadly trash and wish we had returned and reclaimed them. Garrison Keillor

“Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the grey twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.” Theodore Roosevelt