

# Introduction

**Pronunciation Games** is a resource book for teachers containing photocopiable materials for use in the classroom. Each unit consists of a game designed to raise learners' awareness of an aspect of English pronunciation. The various activities are suitable for a wide range of levels and cover pronunciation points ranging from individual sounds and word stress to sentence stress and intonation.

Pronunciation is often taught through the teacher providing a model for learners to listen to and repeat. This is a valuable way of teaching pronunciation, but it neglects a need many learners feel to understand what they are doing. The activities in this book are intended to lead learners towards insights that will help them in their future learning career and reduce their dependence on the teacher as a model.

The pronunciation points in the book are presented in the form of games. There are a great variety of activities, from competitive games to problem-solving puzzles, from activities involving learners working individually to group and whole-class activities. What the games have in common, though, is that they engage learners in a challenge and, at the same time, highlight an aspect of pronunciation.

For convenience, the phonetic transcriptions of words provided in this book are as given in British-published dictionaries. These represent the accent called Received Pronunciation or RP. There is no implication that other accents are in any way wrong. Phonetic transcriptions are shown using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Where this is used, example words containing the sound are given so that the activity can be used whether or not learners know the IPA.

# How to use this book

<b>Point:</b>	<b>1</b> the pronunciation point covered by the game
<b>Minimum level:</b>	<b>2</b> the minimum level of English required to play the game
<b>Game type:</b>	<b>3</b> the type of game it is
<b>Approximate time:</b>	<b>4</b> the approximate time the game takes

## Rules

For most games the rules are given in both the teacher's notes and on the accompanying game page(s). The rules can be copied and given out to the class with the game.

The information above is provided just below the title of each game:

- 1** For an explanation of phonological terms that appear in the pronunciation point, refer to **Glossary of phonological terms** on pages 4-6.
- 2** The level given should be regarded as minimum; in other words, if the level indicated is elementary, the game may equally well be used at intermediate or advanced level if the class is unfamiliar with the pronunciation point.
- 3** For an explanation of the different types of games, refer to the section entitled **Game types and associated vocabulary** on page 7. Here, archetypes of the various games are briefly described, along with some of the particular vocabulary that a participant would need to play the game in English.
- 4** The time given is approximate in that it depends a lot on the class. Also, it is noticeable that as students play more pronunciation games, they tend to catch on much more quickly to the way the game works so that explanation time is significantly reduced.

The information provided for each game is divided into sections:

## Preparation

This section explains the preparations that you will need to make before the lesson. In many cases this involves photocopying the game. Explanations of games, or checking answers at the end, can be made easier if you can also make a copy onto an OHP transparency or A3 size paper so that the whole class can see. It is also an advantage if you can copy boards or cards onto cardboard so that they can be re-used more often.

## Presentation

For many games there is a section which suggests how to present the pronunciation point before the game.

## Conducting the game

Guidelines are given for conducting the game.

## Key

Keys are provided where appropriate.

## Follow-up

In some instances suggestions for follow-up work or making other versions of the game are also provided.



# Key

## Consonants

/p/	<u>p</u> ark, soap	/b/	be, r <u>b</u>		
/f/	face, la <u>gh</u>	/v/	ve <u>r</u> y, sa <u>v</u> e		
/t/	t <u>i</u> me, w <u>r</u> ite	/d/	d <u>o</u> g, r <u>o</u> ad		
/θ/	t <u>h</u> ing, healt <u>h</u>	/ð/	t <u>h</u> ese, breathe		
/tʃ/	ch <u>ur</u> ch, quest <u>io</u> n	/dʒ/	ju <u>i</u> ce, pag <u>e</u>		
/s/	s <u>e</u> e, r <u>i</u> ce	/z/	z <u>o</u> o, r <u>i</u> se		
/ʃ/	sh <u>o</u> e, act <u>io</u> n	/ʒ/	vis <u>i</u> on, usu <u>a</u> l		
/k/	cat, bl <u>ac</u> k	/g/	g <u>o</u> , bag		
/m/	m <u>a</u> ke, sam <u>e</u>	/n/	n <u>a</u> me, r <u>a</u> in	/ŋ/	s <u>ing</u> , th <u>ink</u>
/h/	h <u>e</u> re, b <u>eh</u> ind	/l/	l <u>i</u> ve, fee <u>l</u>	/r/	r <u>i</u> de, ar <u>r</u> ive
/w/	w <u>e</u> nt, aw <u>a</u> y	/j/	y <u>e</u> llow, <u>u</u> se		

## Vowels

/ə/	arr <u>i</u> ve, doct <u>o</u> r, pict <u>u</u> re, Satur <u>u</u> day, sev <u>e</u> n	/ʌ/	c <u>u</u> t, <u>u</u> p	/ɑ:/	h <u>a</u> lf, <u>a</u> rm
/æ/	cat, <u>a</u> pple	/ɪ/	s <u>i</u> t, <u>i</u> n	/i:/	s <u>e</u> at, m <u>e</u>
/e/	m <u>e</u> n, <u>a</u> ny	/ɔ:/	s <u>po</u> rt, w <u>a</u> r	/ɜ:/	g <u>ir</u> l, <u>e</u> arly
/ɒ/	g <u>o</u> t, <u>o</u> n	/u:/	f <u>oo</u> d, y <u>ou</u>		
/ʊ/	sh <u>ou</u> ld, g <u>oo</u> d	/ʊə/	s <u>ur</u> e, t <u>ou</u> r	/eə/	<u>a</u> ir, <u>a</u> rea
/ɪə/	n <u>e</u> ar, b <u>ee</u> r	/ɔɪ/	<u>oi</u> l, b <u>oy</u>	/aɪ/	l <u>i</u> ne, <u>e</u> ye
/eɪ/	f <u>a</u> ce, r <u>a</u> in	/aʊ/	<u>ou</u> t, c <u>ow</u>		
/əʊ/	g <u>o</u> , <u>ov</u> er				

# Glossary

## Glossary of phonological terms

### Assimilation

Assimilation is when a **phoneme** in a word is altered by the phoneme next to it. This can happen whether this neighbouring phoneme is in the same word or in a separate word. For example, in the phrase *did carefully* the second /d/ in *did* may actually be pronounced as /g/. Consequently, the phrase would sound like *dig carefully* /dɪg'keəfəlɪ/.

### Consonant

Consonants are sounds made by blocking the flow of air coming out from the lungs. Sounds produced without this blockage are **vowels**. In the case of the sounds /j/ (as in *yellow*) and /w/ (as in *west*) the distinction is not very clear. These are called **semi-vowels**. The blockage of air may be accompanied by vibration of the vocal chords, in which case the consonant is **voiced**; if there is no vibration of the vocal chords, the consonant is **unvoiced**.

### Consonant cluster

A consonant cluster is two or more consonant sounds together, for example, the /spr/ at the beginning of the word *spring* /sprɪŋ/. There are many combinations of consonants that are not possible, such as /ptf/. These combinations are different in different languages.

### Contrastive stress

Contrastive stress is where we give emphasis to a word to contrast it with a word which has gone before. This happens for example when we correct someone, as in this exchange:

- A** My mother's name is John.  
**B** You mean your father's name is John!

### Diphthong

A diphthong is a complex **vowel**. It starts sounding like one vowel sound and then changes and ends sounding like another. An example is the vowel sound in *rain* /reɪn/.

### Inflections

The past tense inflection *ed* is pronounced in three different ways, depending on the last sound in the verb. If the main verb ends with the sounds /t/ or /d/, *ed* is pronounced /ɪd/. If the verb ends with a **voiceless** consonant other than /t/, *ed* is pronounced /t/. If the verb ends with any other sound, *ed* is pronounced /d/. Examples of these three inflections are:

- 1** wanted = /'wɒntɪd/      **2** walked = /wɔːkt/      **3** called = /kɔːld/

From the learner's point of view, the most important thing is that in 1 a syllable is added whereas in 2 and 3 no syllable is added.

The case is similar with the inflection *s* or *es* for plural forms, possessives or verbs in the present simple tense. If a verb, for example, ends with one of these sounds /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ or /dʒ/, the *s* is pronounced /ɪz/. If it ends with a voiceless consonant, the *s* is pronounced /s/. If the verb ends with any other sound, the *s* is pronounced /z/. Examples are:

- 1** washes = /'wɒʃɪz/      **2** drinks = /drɪŋks/      **3** drives = /draɪvz/

Again, a syllable is added in 1 but not in 2 or 3.

### Intonation

Intonation is the pattern of **prominence** and **tone** in speech. These can be compared to rhythm and melody in music. Intonation is used to convey extra meaning in speech beyond the meaning of the words. For example, intonation can be used to make *How nice!* sound enthusiastic or sarcastic.

### 'Intrusive r

The intrusive *r* is an /r/ sound introduced between words where the first word ends with a vowel sound and the second word begins with a vowel sound. The intrusive *r* is not evident in the spelling of the words. For example, *law and order* may be pronounced /'lɔːrən'ɔːdə/; the /r/ sound in the middle is an intrusive *r*.

# Glossary

## Linking sounds

A linking sound is a sound introduced between words where the first word ends with a vowel sound and the second word begins with a vowel sound. The linking sounds may be /j/ (as in *yellow*), /w/ (as in *wet*) or /r/ (as in *red*). Which of these sounds is inserted depends on the vowel that comes before it. Examples are:

me and you /'mi:jən'ju:/

go and see /'gəʊwən'si:/

far and wide /'fɑ:rən'waɪd/ (Note in RP, *far* on its own is pronounced /fɑ:./)

If an /r/ is introduced where it is not evident in the spelling, this is then called an **intrusive r**. Some speakers regard this as incorrect pronunciation.

## Minimal pair

A minimal pair is a pair of words that differ only in one **sound**, for example *flight* and *fright* or *cut* and *cat*. If the speaker fails to pronounce that one sound distinctly in one of the words, the listener could in theory think that the speaker had said the other word. For example, if a speaker fails to distinguish the sounds /r/ and /l/ in saying *I had a terrible flight*, he or she may be understood to have said *I had a terrible fright*. In practice, the context usually makes it obvious which word was meant. However, minimal pairs are useful in teaching because they focus attention clearly on individual sounds.

## Phoneme

A phoneme is a sound which is significant in a language. For example, in a **minimal pair**, the two words differ only in one phoneme. Different languages have different phonemes. For example, Portuguese does not contain the phonemes /ɪ/ (as in *fit* /fɪt/) or /i:/ (as in *feet* /fi:t/). Instead, it has a phoneme somewhere between the two. This may cause difficulty when the Portuguese learner of English tries to distinguish these phonemes. Another word for phoneme is **sound**.

## Phonetic script

A phonetic script is an alphabet in which there is one symbol to represent each **phoneme** in a language. The normal English alphabet is largely conventional, that is, words are spelt according to agreed convention rather than according to sound. A phonetic script is then needed to show how words are pronounced. It is a useful language learning tool because it enables the learner to analyse pronunciation more clearly and refer to the dictionary for pronunciation.

## Prominence

Prominence is emphasis given to particular words in speech to highlight them as important. For example, in **contrastive stress**, prominence is given to a word which contrasts with one that went before.

## Received pronunciation

This is a standard British English accent which shows no regional variation. It is sometimes called British English.

## Rhythm

Rhythm is the way a language sounds as a result of the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in speech. Rhythms are different between languages and contribute to the characteristic sound different languages have. A distinction can be made here between **stress-timed** languages and **syllable-timed** languages.

## Sound

A sound is a **phoneme**. In teaching pronunciation, it is often necessary to make it clear when you are talking about sounds and when you are talking about letters. For example, *MP* (*Member of Parliament*) begins with a consonant if we are talking about written letters, but if we pronounce it, it begins with a vowel sound /empi:/.

## Stress

Stress is emphasis given to **syllables** in words. For example, in the word *television* /telə'vɪʒən/, the stress is on the third syllable. Often, words that look very similar in two languages actually have the stress in a different place, making them sound quite different. It is useful in teaching about stress to use symbols to represent stress patterns. For example, *television* could be represented as ●●●. Here, each circle represents a syllable and the bigger circle represents the stressed syllable. These symbols are used in this book. The stress patterns of words can change in the context of speech under the influence of surrounding words. For example, the stress on *teen* in *fourteen* /fɔ:'ti:n/ may be lost in the phrase *fourteen days*. This is called **stress shift**.

Stress may also move in words when suffixes are added. For example, look at the changed position of the stressed syllable (underlined) in these two words; *photograph*, *photography*. Changing the position of the stressed syllable in a word can change its meaning in some cases. For example, *export* (with the stress on the first syllable) is a noun while *export* (with the stress on the second syllable) is a verb.

# Glossary

## Stress-timed

A stress-timed language such as English has the stressed syllables in speech at more or less equal intervals. This happens **however** many unstressed syllables occur between the stressed syllables - if there are a lot of syllables, they **have** to be compressed. For example, these two phrases should take about the same time to say since each has three stressed syllables (underlined): *Ring Jack soon*, *Telephone Alison afterwards*.

## Syllable

A syllable is one vowel sound and any consonant sounds that are pronounced with it in a word. The vowel is the essential element except in the case of **syllabic consonants**. These are consonants that may form a syllable on their own, for example the /n/ sound in the word *cotton* /kɒtn/. The importance of the vowel in forming a syllable can be seen in the following example; *want* /wɒnt/ and *help* /help/ are both words of one syllable. In the past tense *wanted* /wɒntɪd/ has two syllables but *helped* /helpɪd/ still has only one. In the first case, both a vowel and a consonant are added, but in the second, only a consonant is added.

## Syllable-timed

We must distinguish the idea of a syllable in pronunciation from the idea of a syllable in writing. The written syllable is a grouping of letters which may not be split between lines when a word is split, but in pronunciation the syllable is defined by sounds rather than letters.

A syllable-timed language such as French gives more or less equal emphasis to each of the syllables in speech, in contrast to a **stress-timed** language such as English.

## Tone

Tone is the melody of speech, that is the rising and falling in pitch. Tone adds an extra level of meaning to what is said. For example, the tag question in *Madras is in India, isn't it?* may have a rising or a falling tone. A rising tone makes it sound as if the speaker is not very sure that Madras is in India, so that it is a genuine question. A falling tone makes it sound as if the speaker is fairly sure that Madras is in India and merely wants confirmation.

## Tone unit

A tone unit is a section of speech containing one distinct pitch movement or **tone**. Within the tone unit, one word is emphasised by the speaker, and the stressed syllable in this word is the **tonic syllable** in the tone unit. The pitch movement, or tone, begins on this tonic syllable and continues to the end of the tone unit.

## Tonic syllable

The tonic syllable is the stressed syllable in the word a speaker has chosen to emphasise. The speaker may choose to emphasise a word to indicate its importance. Consider this exchange:

**A** How long have you lived here?

**B** About two years. How long have you lived here?

Here, B emphasises *you* to signal a change in the subject of the conversation from B's personal history to A's personal history.

## Vowel

A vowel is a sound produced when the flow of air from the lungs is not blocked and the vocal chords are vibrating. Different vowels can be produced by changing the position of the tongue. Which vowel is produced depends on which part of the tongue is raised and how far it is raised. A sound which starts as one vowel sound and ends as another is called a **diphthong**. Vowels can vary in length and in the IPA phonetic script the longer vowels have two dots or small triangles after them.

## Weak form

A weak form is the way one of a number of common words in English is pronounced where it is not being emphasised for some reason. For example, the word *her* in *What's her name?* /'wɒts (h)ə 'neɪm/ will be pronounced with a short vowel sound and possibly without the /h/ sound. But, in *It's her that I saw*, /ɪts 'hɜː ðæt aɪ sɔː/, *her* is emphasised and so the vowel sound is longer and the /h/ is pronounced.

Words which tend to have weak forms are grammatical words such as pronouns, eg, *her*, *him*, auxiliary verbs, eg, *can*, *are*, *does*, *has*, *was*, prepositions, eg, *to*, *at*, *for*, *from* and connectives, eg, *but*, *and*.

The short vowel sound in weak forms is always the **weak vowel** /ə/, except when the original vowel was /ɪ/, in which case it stays the same.

# Game types

## Game types and associated vocabulary

### Battleships

Battleships is a guessing game for two players. Each player has a map of an area of sea with a grid of coordinates formed by, for example, letters across the top of the map and numbers down the side. Players draw ships on the map. They then must guess where the other player has placed his or her ships. To do this, players take turns to name one of the squares in the grid; their partner must say if a ship or part of a ship is in that square by saying *hit* or *miss*. The winner is the first player to find all the other player's ships.

### Bingo

Bingo is a listen and find game for a large number of players. Each player has a grid on which are written different numbers. The person conducting the game calls out numbers. Players must look for and cross out the numbers as they are called out on the grid they have in front of them. A player can win at any point during the game by calling out *Bingo!* when they have crossed out every number in a line in the grid, but the final winner is the first player to cross out every number in the grid.

### Happy families

Happy families is a collecting game for a small number of players. One of the players shuffles the pack of cards and deals cards to each player. On the cards are pictures of members of families with their names below; each family has four members. The object of the game is for players to collect families. To do this, they take turns to ask other players for particular cards, and if the player asked has the card, he or she must give it to the person who asked for it. The player who has collected the most families at the end of the game is the winner.

### Ludo

Ludo is a racing game. A small number of players sit around a board on which there is a path of squares from a start to a finish. Players place their counters on the start and take turns to throw the dice and move according to the number they have thrown. They then race along the path and the first player to reach the finish is the winner.

### Mazes

A maze is a path-finding puzzle for one player. It consists of a map of a system of pathways with only one entrance and exit. The object is to find a route between these.

### Noughts and crosses

Noughts and crosses is a blocking game for two players. Each player draws a square grid of nine squares. One player has the symbol X and the other player has the symbol O. The players take turns to draw their symbol in the squares. The winner is the first player to form a line of three squares in either a horizontal, vertical or diagonal direction. One of the main strategies in the game is to try to block the other player by occupying a square which he or she needs to form a line.

### Snap

Snap is a matching game for two players. One of the players shuffles the pack of cards and deals cards to each player. Players then take turns to place cards face up in a pile on the table. If the design on one card is the same as on the card which has just been played, the first player to notice that the cards are the same can win all the cards on the table by calling *Snap!* When players no longer have any cards in their hands, one player shuffles and deals the cards from the pile again. The player with most cards when all the cards have been paired off is the winner.

### Spot the differences

Spot the differences is a look and find puzzle. Players must spot differences between two almost identical pictures.

# Making tracks

# A

**Point:** counting syllables  
**Minimum level:** elementary  
**Game type:** a dice and board blocking game for two players  
**Approximate time:** 20 minutes

## Rules

**1** Play this game in pairs. To win the game, you must get more points than the other player.

**2** To win points, you must make a 'track'. A track is a straight line of four or more squares. The track can be horizontal →, vertical ↓ or diagonal ↘.

**3** To make a track, you must win squares which are next to each other. You can win a square by throwing the dice. If the dice shows 1 or 4, you can win any square with a one-syllable word in it. If the dice shows 2 or 5, you can win any square with a two-syllable word in it. If the dice shows 3 or 6, you can win any square with a three-syllable word in it.

 1 syllable	 1 syllable
 2 syllables	 2 syllables
 3 syllables	 3 syllables

**4** Players take turns to throw the dice and win squares. When you win a square, draw your symbol in it. One player can use the symbol X and the other player can use the symbol O.

**5** When all the squares are full, count your points; four points for every track of four squares, five points for every track of five squares and six points for every track of six squares.

## Preparation

Make a copy of the board and provide a dice for each pair of students in the class.

## Presentation

**1** Write the following words on the board:

train blouse eight coat

Point out that although these words all contain more than one written vowel, they only contain one vowel sound. They are therefore one-syllable words.

**2** Write the following words on the board:

sunny about later started

Elicit that these words all contain two vowel sounds and therefore two syllables.

**3** Write some three-syllable words from your course on the board. Elicit that these words all contain three vowel sounds and therefore three syllables. Then rub out all the words from the board. Call out the words in random order. Ask students to identify how many syllables each word contains.

**4** Write a few words from the game on the board. Ask students to say how many syllables each word contains.

## Conducting the game

**1** Divide the class into pairs and give each pair a board and a dice.

**2** Explain and/or give out the rules.

**3** When students have finished, quickly read out the words in the grid and ask students to say how many syllables each word has.

## Key

**one syllable** - car, cheese, jeans, bird, night, mouth, green, fruit, shoes, eight, school, blouse, train

**two syllables** - sunny, trousers, little, yellow, airport, tennis, bottles, morning, football, number, something

**three syllables** - bicycle, understand, aeroplane, newspaper, telephone, elephant, cinema, photograph, remember, banana, beautiful, somebody

## Making your own versions




You can make your own boards for this game using vocabulary from your course.



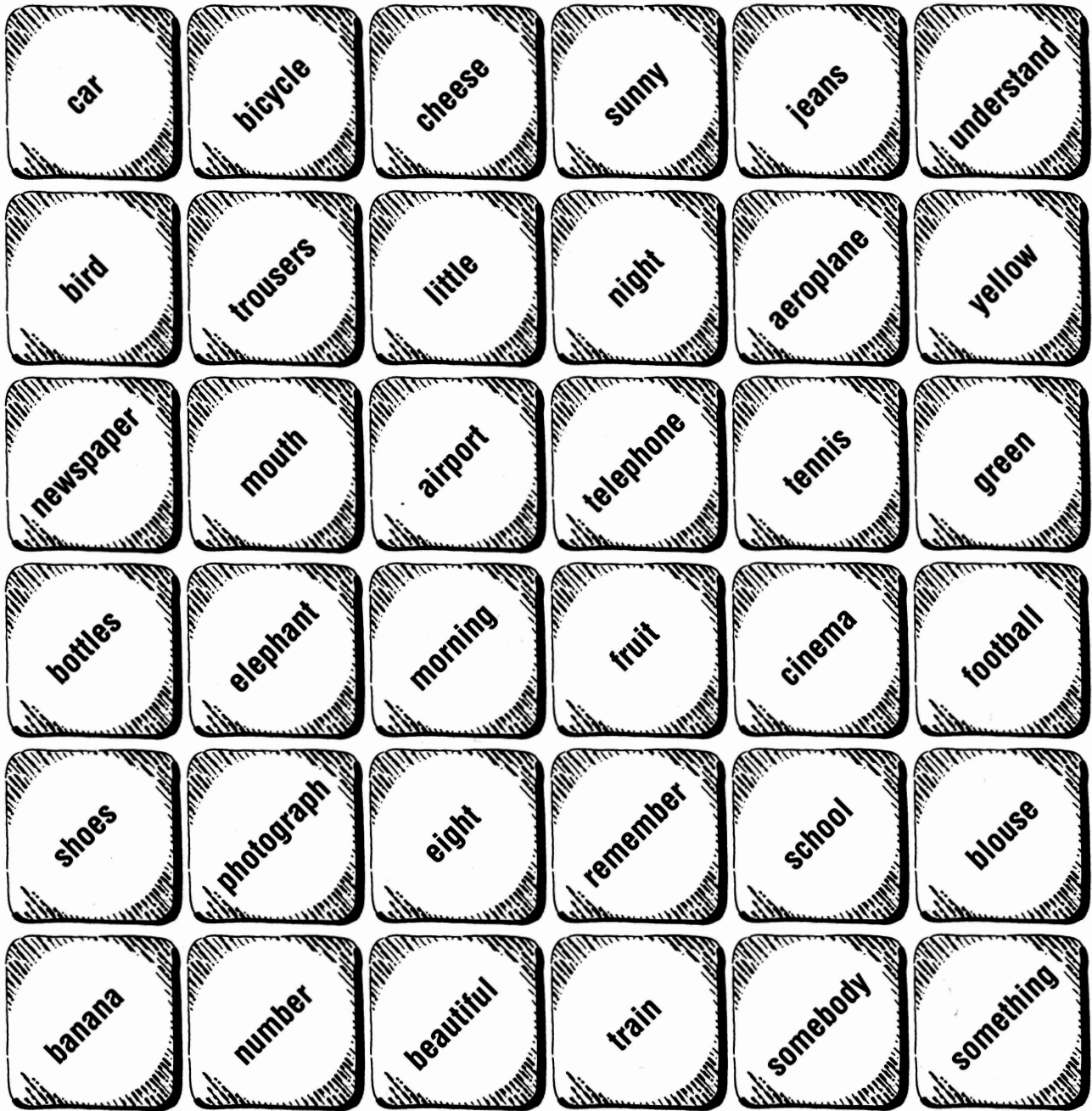
# Making tracks **A1**

## Rules

- 1 Play this game in pairs. To win the game, you must get more points than the other player.
- 2 To win points, you must make a 'track'. A track is a straight line of four or more squares. The track can be horizontal →, vertical ↓ or diagonal ↘.
- 3 To make a track, you must win squares which are next to each other. You can win a square by throwing the dice. If the dice shows 1 or 4, you can win any square with a one-syllable word in it. If the dice shows 2 or 5, you can win any square with a two-syllable word in it. If the dice shows 3 or 6, you can win any square with a three-syllable word in it.

- 1 syllable 
- 2 syllables 
- 3 syllables 

- 4 Players take turns to throw the dice and win squares. When you win a square, draw your symbol in it. One player can use the symbol X and the other player can use the symbol O.
- 5 When all the squares are full, count your points; four points for every track of four squares, five points for every track of five squares and six points for every track of six squares.



# Syllable soup

# A

**Point:** syllables and stress in words with three or four syllables  
**Minimum level:** intermediate  
**Game type:** a look and find puzzle for students working individually (or in pairs)  
**Approximate time:** 15 minutes

## Preparation

Make a copy of the puzzle for each member of the class. You may also want to make a copy on an OHP transparency or a large piece of paper.

## Presentation

**1** Write a word with its syllables separated in random order on the board. For example, write *tomorrow* like this:

mor to row

**2** Ask students to make the word out of these syllables.

**3** Pronounce the word several times and ask students to identify the strongest or stressed syllable.

**4** Write the word in the following grid to show the conventions used in the 'soup', that is, a circle around the first syllable and a square round the stressed syllable.

to	mor	row
----	-----	-----

## Conducting the game

**1** Give each student a puzzle. Explain that there are 14 words hidden in the grid. The words are horizontal → or vertical ↓. The stressed syllables have been removed from the words and placed outside the grid. All the first syllables are also outside the grid and begin with capital letters.

**2** Demonstrate the activity by making two or three of the words in the puzzle. (Use your OHP transparency or large piece of paper if you have copied the puzzle.) The words, once they are discovered, should be circled and the syllables outside the grid should be crossed out.

**3** If students have any difficulty getting started after this demonstration, give some or all of the words that they are looking for. They could also play the game in pairs.

**4** When students have finished, check answers together. (Again, you can use your OHP transparency or large piece of paper.) Drill the pronunciation of the words.

## Key

Tel	Cal	cu	la	tor	In
e	En	News	Re	Un	tel
vi	ter	pa	mem	der	li
sion	tain	per	ber	stand	gent
Ex	Pop	u	la	tion	In
pen	To	mor	row	In	vi
sive	Tel	e	phone	terest	ta
Con	ver	sa	tion	ing	tion

## Making your own versions

**1** Draw a grid. Fill the grid with words separated into syllables. Most dictionaries indicate how words are divided into syllables. The words may be written horizontally or vertically.

**2** Put a circle around all first syllables and a square around all stressed syllables.

**3** Finally, make a clean copy with the syllables in squares or circles removed from the grid and written outside it. Use an initial capital letter for the first syllable in each word.