

‘Ducks that write books’

Pronunciation activities for words ending /sk/, /ks/, /sks/ for Pre-Intermediate (A2) classes and above



Purple Hippo

Purple Hippo

/sk/,/ks/,/sks/ Ducks that write books

Teachers' Notes

Below is a suggested guide for using the materials, with timings. Teachers should feel free to adapt the materials and plan according to the needs of the class.

Phase 1 (15 minutes)

Introduce the phonemes that being studied. Using a set of four words such as, 'Buck', 'Bucks', 'Busk' and 'Busks', drill pronunciation with the class. You may choose to drill the difference between /sk/ and /ks/ first, before moving on to /sks/.

Phase 2 (15 minutes)

Teacher dictation phase – a very important phase, in my experience, as students often have profound difficulty in accurately distinguishing similar sounds, even when carefully formed by a native speaker. Project the table of words being studied onto the whiteboard (see PowerPoint). The teacher can then quickly model the words before dictating a random ten of them, which the students write in their books. Check answers – an easy way is for the students to number the words 1-10 on the whiteboard, using board pens.

Phase 3 (15 minutes)

Teacher dictation 2 - Phase 2 can be followed up with a board race game of two teams, each with a differently coloured marker pen. One player from each team approaches the board. The aim is to circle the word that the teacher says.

To familiarise the sts with the words, play a board race game – divide class into two teams, giving each a different colour board pen. A player from each team has to race to the board and circle the actual word that the teacher says.

Finish with *Group drilling practice* – the whole class says each word as the teacher points to it on the WB.

Phase 4 (15 minutes)

Student-student dictation

Another very valuable phase. In groups of 4, students write down, then dictate, a list of six words that they choose from those on the board. The other students write down these on mini-whiteboards or on paper. The students then compare the results – pronunciation errors are often revealed at this stage. It is much better to use groups of 4 – if done in pairs, there is a chance that the listening student will make a correct guess on a badly pronounced item – this is far less likely in a group of

four.

Phase 5 (15 minutes)

Student-student dictation mingle

Each student forms a single 'nonsense sentence', using prepositions to link the words together, for example, 'Buck on desk on sharks on busks'. The nonsense element means that mispronounced words cannot be guessed correctly from context, while it gives practice in using the words as part of a longer chunk, rather than in isolation.

Students mingle and exchange sentences. Final results could be checked by having the students write their own sentences in large letters on A4, and sticking these to the wall/whiteboard.

Phase 6 (15 minutes)

Meaning of vocabulary

An activity to attach meaning to the vocabulary items already covered. Students work with the definition sheets, and are either 'Partner 1' or 'Partner 2'. Students can spend a few minutes guessing the likely answers for their missing items, before working in pairs to dictate the correct answers to each other.

Phase 7 (30 minutes)

Student-student information exchange

Students complete the poem. This can be done as a running dictation, or by cutting up the complete poem. Students can work in groups of 2 – 4, taking turns to dictate a verse of the poem, or it can be done in a mingle of 8 students, with one student having one verse each.

Phase 8 (15 minutes)

Students match the pictures to words or lines from the poem. The pictures could also be shown in earlier phases (at the start of the class or before the poem gapfill, for students to guess the words for the images).

Phase 9 (30 minutes)

Free writing and information exchange

Students write a short story, using as many of the words as possible. They should underline the target words that are used. Students then dictate the stories to each other (in pairs or groups of 4). The listening students write down the target words in the order that they are dictated. Students can then check against the original text.

Alternatively, the text could be generated by students working in groups – after writing a sentence, the students exchange papers and continue the stories.

1) /k/	/ks/	/sk/	/sks/
-	axe	ask	asks
buck	bucks	busk	busks
back	backs	bask	basks
deck	decks	desk	desks
Dick	Dick's	disk	disks
duck	ducks	dusk	dusks
Mac	Macs	mask	masks
Rick	Rick's	risk	risks
tack	tax	task	tasks
tuck	tucks	tusk	tusks

2)

Ducks that write books – useful words (complete)

1) axe	A sharp tool for cutting down trees. 'To face the _____' is the strong possibility of losing your job.
2) tusk	A special long tooth, as seen on elephants and walruses.
3) buck	A common term for a US Dollar. Also a male deer.
4) Mick	A short form of 'Michael'.
5) duck	An aquatic bird that goes, 'Quack'.
6) busk	To play music on the street, normally for money.
7) disk	A flat round thing that you put into your computer.
8) bask	To lie in the sun. A _____ing shark is the second biggest fish in the world.
9) Mac	A common abbreviation of 'Apple Macintosh'. Also, a name for a rain coat in the UK.
10) desk	A table for writing or working at.
11) risk	The possibility that something bad will happen.
12) Dick	A short form of 'Richard'.
13) tack	A small pin or nail, with a big, wide head.
14) dusk	When day turns to night; the opposite of dawn.
15) task	A job or a piece of work.
16) mask	Something to hide or protect your face.
17) Rick	Another short form of 'Richard'.
18) tax	Money that you must pay to the government.
19) tuck	To put or tidy something away, normally behind something else. For example, to _____ your shirt into your trousers.
20) deck	The floor of a ship.
21) shark	The biggest kind of fish.
22) lake *	An area of fresh water – bigger than a pond.
23) break *	A rest period.
24) walrus *	It's like a big seal that has tusks.
25) folk *	Another term for 'People'.
26) swell *	It's like a big wave at sea.

**These words do not appear in Table 1*

3)

Ducks that write books – useful words (Partner 1)

1) axe	A sharp tool for cutting down trees. 'To face the _____' is the strong possibility of losing your job.
2)	A special long tooth, as seen on elephants and walruses.
3) buck	A common term for a US Dollar. Also a male deer.
4)	A short form of 'Michael'.
5) duck	An aquatic bird that goes, 'Quack'.
6)	To play music on the street, normally for money.
7) disk	A flat round thing that you put into your computer.
8)	To lie in the sun. A _____ing shark is the second biggest fish in the world.
9) Mac	A common abbreviation of 'Apple Macintosh'. Also, a name for a rain coat in the UK.
10)	A table for writing or working at.
11) risk	The possibility that something bad will happen.
12)	A short form of 'Richard'.
13) tack	A small pin or nail, with a big, wide head.
14)	When day turns to night; the opposite of dawn.
15) task	A job or a piece of work.
16)	Something to hide or protect your face.
17) Rick	Another short form of 'Richard'.
18)	Money that you must pay to the government.
19) tuck	To put or tidy something away, normally behind something else. For example, to _____ your shirt into your trousers'.
20)	The floor of a ship.
21) shark	The biggest kind of fish.
22) *	An area of fresh water – bigger than a pond.
23) break *	A rest period.
24) *	It's like a big seal that has tusks.
25) folk *	Another term for 'People'.
26) *	It's like a big wave at sea.

** These words do not appear in Table 1*

4)

Ducks that write books – useful words (Partner 2)

1)	A sharp tool for cutting down trees. 'To face to _____' is the strong possibility of losing your job.
2) tusk	A special long tooth, as seen on elephants and walruses.
3)	A common term for a US Dollar. Also a male deer.
4) Mick	A short form of 'Michael'.
5)	An aquatic bird that goes, 'Quack'.
6) busk	To play music on the street, normally for money.
7)	A flat round thing that you put into your computer.
8) bask	To lie in the sun. A _____ing shark is the second biggest fish in the world.
9)	A common abbreviation of 'Apple Macintosh'. Also, a name for a rain coat in the UK.
10) desk	A table for writing or working at.
11)	The possibility that something bad will happen.
12) Dick	A short form of 'Richard'.
13)	A small pin or nail, with a big, wide head.
14) dusk	When day turns to night; the opposite of dawn.
15)	A job or a piece of work.
16) mask	Something to hide or protect your face.
17)	Another short form of 'Richard'.
18) tax	Money that you must pay to the government.
19)	To put or tidy something away, normally behind something else. For example, to _____ your shirt into your trousers'.
20) deck	The floor of a ship.
21)	The biggest kind of fish.
22) lake *	An area of fresh water – bigger than a pond.
23) *	A rest period.
24) walrus *	It's like a big seal that has tusks.
25) *	Another term for 'People'.
26) swell *	It's like a big wave at sea.

* These words do not appear in Table 1

5)

Ducks that write books – complete version

1.

Decks of ships at sea have desks of Macs and lots of books, and ducks with masks write new books upon these Macs for lots of bucks.

2.

Why do the ducks write their books upon a ship, away from park lakes where they live? Rick asks the question, he asks it well, he says that he will never tell.

3.

Dick Duck backs up his writing task and looks at the one who dared to ask. (Ducks prefer to work to dusk, they don't take breaks unless they must).

4.

'The answer to the thing you ask, is we are at sea avoiding tax, for on the land the taxman's take from the books that we make is like an axe upon our backs.'

5.

And so to sea we must go, away from lakes and folks we know, and here we must face the risks, from sharks that bask and walrus tusks, to complete our writing tasks.

6.

But writing books at sea is grand, says Dick, it's better than to busk on land. My friend, Mick, he busks on streets, he hears bad words from folks he meets, for they don't like unlucky ducks to busk on streets and ask for bucks.

7.

Ducks that busk have such a task, they wait till dusk and wear a mask, but still they hear the people say, 'Ducks with masks just cannot play'.

8.

So, all in all, my life is well, despite the ocean's mighty swell, I make my bucks and don't pay tax, I never busk or face the axe and I hope that now you know why off to sea we ducks do go.

5)

Ducks that write books –target words gapfill

1.

_____ of ships at sea have _____ of _____ and lots of _____, and _____ with _____ write new _____ upon these _____ for lots of _____.

2.

Why do the _____ write their _____ upon a ship, away from park _____ where they live? _____ the question, he _____ it well, he says that he will never tell.

3.

_____ _____ up his writing _____ and _____ at the one who dared to _____. (_____ prefer to work to _____, they don't take _____ unless they must).

4.

'The answer to the thing you _____, is we are at sea avoiding _____, for on the land the taxman's take from the _____ that we make is like an _____ upon our _____.'

5.

And so to sea we must go, away from _____ and _____ we know, and here we must face the _____, from _____ that _____ and walrus _____, to complete our writing _____.

6.

But writing _____ at sea is grand, says _____, it's better than to _____ on land. My friend, _____, he _____ on streets, he hears bad words from _____ he meets, for they don't like unlucky _____ to _____ on streets and _____ for _____.

7.

_____ that _____ have such a _____, they wait till _____ and wear a _____, but still they hear the people say, '_____ with _____ just cannot play'.

8.

So, all in all, my life is well, despite the ocean's mighty swell, I make my _____ and don't pay _____, I never _____ or face the _____ and I hope that now you know why off to sea we _____ do go.

6)

Ducks that write books

1.

2.

3.

4. Useful words - taxman

5.

6. Useful words - grand

7.

8. Useful words – mighty, ocean
