



How to produce the “th” sound

If you listen closely, the /th/ sound in the English language is really used in two distinct ways, creating two separate sounds. Even though both versions of the /th/ sound are produced with the same mouth position, the voiced /th/ uses the vocal cords to amplify the sound, such as in “this”, “then”, and “though”. The unvoiced /th/ sound relies only on the air passing through the mouth and the teeth, resulting in softer /th/ sound in words like “theater”, “thought”, and “thank”.

To make either sound, place the very tip of your tongue lightly between your teeth and blow air through. This naturally makes the unvoiced /th/ sound. Add your voice, the vibration of your vocal cords, to create the voiced /th/ sound.

- **Verbal Cues**

Begin practicing a single sound with your child by saying it slowly and clearly a few times. This helps your child understand what sound to focus on and gives them a correct example to imitate. Practice the sound by itself with your little one until they are able to master it. Then, gradually add vowels to form simple syllables: “the, the, the”, “tho, tho, tho”, “thu, thu, thu”.

- **Visual Cues**

The way we position our mouths to make the /th/ sound is completely visible, which really helps kids to understand what is happening to produce the sound. Without making the sound, place the tip of your tongue between your teeth and show your child. Have her do the same with her mouth. A mirror is great for this activity, so she can check her reflection to make sure she looks like you. Then, simply encourage her to blow through her teeth! This creates the unvoiced /th/sound.