

Pronunciation ladder – instructions

Dan FROST

- *Task type: pronunciation groupwork*
- *Language point: Minimal pairs /I/ ~/i:/*
- *Level : All (if they're French !)*
- *Time : 20-25 minutes (10 – 15 minutes for the task + 10 minutes prep first)*
- *Prep: make the cards first (1 per student, groups of 3)*

1. Preparation:

- Elicit and practice the sounds /I/ and /i:/
 - /I/ is shorter, backer, closer, laxer, constant
 - /i:/ is longer, fronter, opener, tenser and almost a diphthong!
- Elicit / show all the different spellings of the 2 sounds (see example pairs below)
- Practice on some minimal pairs
- If access to a PC, try <http://www.shiporsheep.com/page1.html>

2. Task:

- Split class into teams of 3 (join a team if necessary).
- Give each student one card
- The student who has the word “START” says “start” and then the word in column B next to the word “START”
- The student who hears that word says the word next to it
- And so on until the student who has the word “FINISH!” in column B says “finish”
- It's a race – the first team to finish (without skipping any words, which they probably will) wins.
- Do it again, quicker!

Some minimal pairs with /i :/ & /I/

<i>/i:/</i>	<i>/I/</i>
SHEEP	SHIP
BEACH	BITCH
HEED	HID
LEAD	LID
MEAD	MID
EEL	ILL
PEEL	PILL
MEAL	MILL
SEAL	SILL
FEEL	FILL
PEAT	PIT
DEED	DID
KEYED	KID
LEAVE	LIVE
HEAT	HIT
WHEEL	WILL