

Sharing Your Worst Trip Experience: Practicing the Sounds of Past Tense *-ed* Ending

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*This activity practices past tense *-ed* endings in their natural speech, using students' own experiences, and encouraging humour.*

Level	<i>Beginning to intermediate</i>
Aims	<i>To produce past tense <i>-ed</i> sounds correctly</i>
Class Time	<i>30 minutes</i>
Preparation Time	<i>15–30 minutes</i>



Although many commercial materials teach pronunciation effectively, using students' own experiences provides more practice time. It relates to experiential strategy, or, as Stern (1992) said, learning “to use language for a purpose, and to focus on the message rather than any specific aspect of the code” (p. 301) is part of communicative approaches to language learning.

PROCEDURE

1. Demonstrate the three different pronunciation patterns of the regular past tense *-ed*: depending on the ending sounds, past tense *-ed* can be pronounced as *\t*, *\d*, or *\id*. For example, when the verb ends in *d* or *t*, the ending is pronounced as *\id*: *wanted*, *visited*.
2. When demonstrating voiced and voiceless sounds, show students how those sounds are produced in their oral cavity using the website at www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/english/frameset.html
3. Divide the class into small groups. Tell the students to write their worst trip experience using the verbs *travel*, *visit*, *watch*, *walk*, *taste*, *wait*, *stay*, *talk*, *ask*, *end*, and *return*. They don't have to use every verb listed.
4. After 4 or 5 minutes, group members share their experience and pick the most striking/funniest story to present in front of the whole class.

5. Go over the pronunciation of sample verbs and make sure that everyone understands the pronunciation rule.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Because voiced sound is marked, to show dramatic differences between voiced and voiceless sounds, it is important to introduce the rule of voiced sounds first, modeling vocal cord vibration, then the rule of voiceless sounds.
2. Students should pronounce *-ed* endings clearly, but not in unnatural exaggerated sounds.
3. Another similar pronunciation activity could be paired with this one, focusing on different plural *s* sound endings.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. M. (1996). *Teaching pronunciation: A reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Stern, H. H. (1992). *Issues and options in language teaching*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

The University of Iowa. (n.d.). Phonetics: The sounds of American English. Retrieved from <http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/english/frameset.html>

APPENDIX: *Handout Sample*

The Worst Trip in My Life

Where: I travelled to _____

When: _____

With whom: _____

Describe what happened using the verbs provided:
