

HEARING THERAPY DEPARTMENT

Communication Pack

**Lipreading Information
& Material for Home Practise**

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Introduction

Anyone who can see is likely to do at least some lipreading. This ability naturally becomes stronger when there are problems with our hearing.

Even a very good lipreader cannot 'read' every word or sound on the lips. In fact only 40% of speech sounds are visible on the lips. A good lipreader is someone who reads what they can on the lips & combines this with clues given by facial expression, body language & the context in which the conversation takes place in order to understand a message.

By practising the exercises in this pack we are improving both our ability to recognise lipshapes & our ability to use contextual clues in order to understand a message.

We practise with a communication partner who presents the lipreading exercises without sound (mouthing the words). This stretches & strengthens our existing lipreading ability.

If the speaker finds it difficult to mouth the words without making sound, you may want to turn on some low level background noise to cover their unintentional speech sounds. Practising with background noise is also a good way of making the exercises more challenging if you are finding them too easy. It's more difficult to concentrate when there is background noise; practising in this way is good preparation for using your lipreading skills in a social situation (e.g. conversation in a cafe).

Before starting it's worth considering your eyesight - Have you had your eyes tested recently? Is the prescription for your glasses up to date? If not, a visit to the optician is recommended!

Who will read the lipreading material to you? It's best to start with someone you can see for practise regularly. Pick someone you feel comfortable with. Once you have built up some confidence in your lipreading ability you may want to experiment with other people. It's good to see how the same lipshapes, words & phrases look different with other people. If there is someone in particular that you really struggle to understand, you could aim to involve them as a speaker when you are more familiar with the exercises. Often communication partners can learn as much as the lipreaders, sometimes more!

Confidence in our communication ability

Often people are unsure of how to communicate with someone with a hearing impairment. They may shout & sometimes become frustrated. They may feel self-conscious at having to repeat themselves & unintentionally speed up or perhaps even obscure their mouth with their hands.

People with a hearing impairment will often have lost confidence as a result of repeated communication breakdowns causing embarrassment & frustration. This lack of confidence makes them more likely to bluff their way through conversations as it avoids more embarrassment in the short term.

By rebuilding some confidence in our own communication ability, we may find ourselves more inclined to risk occasional embarrassment. Indeed, guesses are encouraged in lipreading; even 'wrong' answers provide a valuable learning opportunity!

We can aim to reach a stage that we feel:

“If the person speaks clearly & faces me, I am confident that I will understand the majority of what they say”.

Then we can look at how to obtain better communication in difficult listening environments & from people who tend to communicate poorly.

Remember that people will often not know that you have a hearing impairment. Even if they do know, they may not be sure of what to do to make themselves understood.

Familiarise yourself with the communication dos & don'ts listed over the page...

Dos & Don'ts for the communication partner

- Do get the lipreaders attention before you start to speak
- Do face the lipreader when you speak to them so they can see your mouth & facial expressions.
- Do speak clearly & pronounce every word.
- Don't exaggerate or slow down too much.
- Don't shout - this will distort your lipshapes.
- Don't obscure your face - with hands, pens, papers etc.
- Do use gesture & facial expressions.
- Don't stand with your back to the light - this will silhouette your face.
- Do choose a quiet corner if possible - noise is distracting for lipreaders.
- Don't sit somewhere that is too 'visually busy' either.
- Do listen to the lipreader when they tell you what you can do to help them understand.
- Don't speak to the lipreader from another room, come closer & face them.

Dos & Don'ts for the lipreader

- Do be open about your hearing impairment when you feel able to.
- Don't bluff too much! It's ok occasionally, we all do it! Bluffing can give you chance to catch up, but if you completely lose the thread of a conversation it's probably better to admit it!
- Do tell the person what they can do to help - slow down, face me, rephrase etc.
- Do tell the person *why* you need them to communicate differently. They may not know you have a hearing impairment. So don't just say "can you face me when you speak", why not say "I can't hear very well. It'll help me a lot if you could face me when you speak. I'm learning to lipread" Give them a *reason* to adapt.
- Do try to anticipate when you can. If you are going to the shoe shop think about the words & phrases you are likely to hear (shoes, what size, what colour, leather, polish, pay by card etc..). Narrowing the context in this way helps you to lipread more effectively when you go in to the situation.
- Do respond with what you did hear; then they only need to fill the gaps.
- Do take regular breaks, lipreading is tiring!
- Do have regular sight tests.
- Do remind people regularly, even if things are going well - people need reminders to stop them reverting to bad habits.
- Don't only remind people when they do something wrong. Give positive reinforcement too - If they are doing something that helps, they may not know it's helping unless you tell them so. We don't want them to give up their new communication skills, so give them feedback:

E.g. *"I can follow you a lot better since you started getting my attention before you start to speak. It's really helping me to understand more of what you say"*

- Don't set your expectations unrealistically high. Remember even those with 'perfect' hearing do not hear everything all the time, especially when in a noisy environment. They too will bluff occasionally.
- Don't be disheartened when you encounter someone who just doesn't want to know. This is rare - try not to take it personally, some people are just rude! For every one person like that, there will be many other people who are keen to learn how they can communicate more effectively with you.

Hearing Impairment – Filling the gaps with lipreading

The vast majority of hearing impairments cause people difficulty in distinguishing high-pitched tones. In speech the high-pitched tones are the consonants – the quiet breathy sounds such as *sh ch & j* in *shop, chop & job*. Even when hearing aids are fitted the consonants can remain unclear & difficult to distinguish from one another.

Fortunately the sounds we struggle to hear the most are also the sounds that are most visible on the lips. Many of the consonants are formed on or near the front of the lips making it possible for them to be recognised visually. For this reason the bulk of the exercises in this pack concentrate on recognition of those consonant lipshapes.

The consonant lipshapes can be divided in to groups according to how they are formed on the lips. Each group contains sounds that are produced with a similar lip movement. Effectively they look identical on the lips (e.g. *p, b & m*). We do not need to differentiate between the lipshapes within a group (they look too similar). We are simply looking to recognize which group the lipshape is from.

Combining this with other contextual clues is, more often than not, enough for us to be able to pick the right words. E.g. *putter, butter & mutter* look the same on the lips; however, if the context is *food* or *breakfast time*, we will reject *putter & mutter* in favour of the word that fits that context – *butter*.

This is how lipreading works, we use the context to help narrow the possibilities given to us by the lipshapes we have been able to pick up. The more practise we get, the better we get at using the clues & filling the gaps.

Over the page is a list of the consonant lipshape groups. It's a good idea to refer back to this sheet while practising – It will help you to understand why you may have guessed wrong. Words that don't sound alike can still look alike on the lips.

Consonant Lipshape Groups – easy to hard

Easiest to recognise:

p b m

f v

w qu

sh ch j

Can be tricky to spot:

l

r

s z

Almost Invisible!

t d n

k g ng

Consonant Lipshape Groups – examples in words

<u>p</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>m</u>	<u>l</u>
pat	bat	mat	lock
push	bush	much	light
pill	bill	mill	will
<u>f</u>	<u>v</u>		<u>r</u>
ref	rev		rock
fine	vine		railway
fast	vast		green
<u>w</u>	<u>qu</u>		
will	quill		
whack	quack		
white	quite		
<u>sh</u>	<u>ch</u>	<u>j</u>	
shop	chop	job	
shoe	chew	jew	
ship	chip	gym	
<u>s</u>	<u>z</u>		
seal	zeal		
sewn	zone		
sip	zip		
<u>t</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>n</u>	
sit	sid	sin	
took	duck	nook	
white	wide	wine	
<u>k</u>	<u>g</u>	<u>ng</u>	
sick	cig	sing	
coal	goal		
pick	pig	ping	

How to present the lipreading exercises

- Find an environment suitable for lipreading (see the dos & don'ts)
- Sit facing each other.
- The communication partner should read though the exercise to familiarise themselves with its content.
- The communication partner then gives the lipreader a brief summary of the context (e.g. *"this one is about the weather"*, or *"each sentence starts 'what's your favourite _____' - can you fill the gap?"*).
- Write up the context or clues on a board or paper if you prefer.
- The communication partner then presents each line without voice (i.e. they mouth the words).
- The lipreader should repeat back what they have understood.
- The communication partner should repeat back the line several times (if necessary) to give the lipreader a chance to pick up on the lipshapes. Don't rephrase until there have been a few attempts with the original wording.
- Remember 'wrong' answers are still valuable for your learning. The answer that springs to mind may not make any sense sometimes, but if you note it down & look for similar lipshapes between that & the 'right' answer, you may find you were closer than you thought!
- E.g. if you saw *'chamber pot'* but the answer was actually *'James Bond'* you might think you were a long way off. But look more closely at the lipshapes in each phrase & there are many similarities... the **'ch'** in **'chamber'** looks like the **'j'** in **'James'**, the **'amber P'** in **chamber Pot** looks like the **'ames B'** in **'James Bond'** etc.
- Turn the wrong answers in to an exercise in themselves by trying to spot when the communication partner changes from one phrase to another. E.g. *"I will repeat 'James Bond' several times, tell me when I change to 'Chamber pot'."*
- The lipreader should give feedback to the communication partner during the exercises so that they can improve their own communication ability along the way. E.g. *"I can follow you better when you go just a little slower... I'm not getting that, could you rephrase it another way...etc"*
- Take regular breaks, lipreading is tiring. Regular 15-20 minute blocks of lipreading practise is a good guide to start with.
- Adapt the exercises in this pack & make up similar exercises of your own.
- Be patient & have fun!

Part One: Looking for words in sentences

1) Please Pass Me:

With breakfast time in mind...

Please pass me the _____. E.g. 'marmalade'

Butter Milk Toast Cornflakes Sugar

2) Would You Prefer:

Would you Prefer _____ or _____?

Marmalade or jam?
Toast or a bread roll?
Coffee or tea?

Butter or margarine?
Cornflakes or weetabix?
Fruit or yoghurt?

3) Eggs:

Would you like a _____ egg?

Boiled Poached Fried Scrambled Easter

Note: boiled vs. poached – look very similar,
 can you see the 'ch' shape in poached?

4) Can you see the Change?

Start mouthing 'Scrambled' several times, do they notice when you change it to 'Fried'? Do the same for all combinations:

Scrambled vs. Fried
Scrambled vs. Boiled
Fried vs. Boiled

Scrambled vs. Poached
Fried vs. Poached
Poached vs. Boiled

More like this? Try the same with types of potato:
Mashed, Baked, Boiled etc.

5) Days, Meals & People:

Last _____ I went to have _____ with my _____

Monday	breakfast	friend
Tuesday	lunch	son
Wednesday	tea	daughter
Thursday	supper	father
Friday	dinner	mother
Saturday	coffee	neighbour
Sunday	supper	boss

If it's too easy - Try mixing up the days of the week.

6) Favourites:

What's your favourite _____?

Food	Fruit	Fish	Vegetable	Flower
Perfume	Film	DVD	Aftershave	TV programme

If it's too easy – see if you can lip-read the speaker's favourites for each of the above.

7) A Footballer's Bag:

In my bag I have _____?

My Football boots	A Pair of shorts	A Pair of socks
My Shin Pads	My Football jersey	My deodorant
A Bottle of Water	A pair of gloves (I'm the goalkeeper)	

8) How are you Feeling?

I feel fine – I've just had a holiday.

I feel awful – I think I'm getting a cold.

I feel great – I've just won the lottery.

I feel stiff – I went to the gym last night.

I feel tired – I stayed up late last night.

Just present the first part of the sentence on its own to begin with (e.g. 'I feel fine'). Add the second part (e.g. 'I've just had a holiday') to add more context. The lipreader may get the second part & then be able to identify the first part from the additional context.

9) Local place names:

How do I get to _____ ?

Blackpool	Fleetwood	Lytham St Annes
Bispham	Kirkham	Thornton-Cleveleys
Singleton	Marton	South Shore
Wrea Green	Freckleton	Poulton-le-Fylde

If it's too easy - Try throwing in some places from further away:

Preston	Manchester	Burnley
Lancaster	Morecambe	Blackburn

Can you see the difference? Blackpool vs. Blackburn?

10) Why is it Closed?

The _____ is closed due to _____

Kitchen	a power cut.
Bridge	repair work.
Shop	a fire.
Road	an accident.
Café	a health & safety check.
Park	vandalism.
Station	bomb scare.

11) Where are you going?

I'm going to the _____ I've got to _____

Station	book a ticket.
Bank	cash a cheque.
Church	do the flowers.
Leisure Centre	get some exercise.
Garage	get some petrol.
Library	change my books.

12) The Weather & What to Wear:

The weather's _____ I think I'll wear _____

Warm	a light-weight coat
Windy	a scarf
Wet	my waterproofs
Sunny	a hat
Cold	my thermal underwear

13) Weather Forecast:

The forecast is for _____

Scattered Showers	Patchy Rain	Drizzle
Freezing Fog	Snow Showers	Fog
Thunder & Lightning	Black Ice	Cold Snap
Gale Force Winds	Bright Sunshine	
Good Fishing Weather!		

14) How Did You Get Here?

How did you get here?

I came here by bus.
I rode in on my bike.
I caught the ferry.
I walked.

I came here on the train.
I drove here in my car.
I came on the tram.
I got a lift.

15) I Thought:

I thought you were _____ so I _____

Tired
Cold
Warm
Thirsty
Hungry

left you to sleep
turned up the central heating
opened the window
made us a cup of tea
made us some toast

16) I Like to Read:

I like to read _____

Historical novels
Romantic novels
Joke books
Controversial books
About Astrology

Travel books
Biographies
Cookery books
Ghost stories
Anything I can get my hands on!

True stories
Autobiographies
About Scientific research
About Astronomy

Part Two: Anticipating words, questions & phrases

No lipreading required for the first part of this exercise!

Think about words, questions & phrases you are likely to hear in the following places:

E.g. Shoe Shop

- *what size,*
- *what colour,*
- *leather,*
- *comfortable,*
- *how would you like to pay, etc...*

E.g. Supermarket

- *would you like any help with your packing,*
- *do you know your pin number,*
- *would you like cash-back, etc...*

Can you think of more to add? Write them down...

Do the same for the following places & any others you can think of:

Doctor's Surgery

Ticket Office at train station, bus station, cinema etc...

Petrol Station

Hairdressers / Barbers

Bank

Post Office

??

Once you have a list of likely words, questions & phrases for each place you can use these to practise your lipreading skills with.

E.g. *“here are some common phrases you might hear at the supermarket”* etc...

Also think about other things that would help you to cope in these challenging listening environments:

- Is there a loop system for hearing aid users?
- Will you tell the person you have a hearing loss?
- Will you anticipate the information they need from you & give it to them as soon as you meet them so that they will not need to ask as many questions?

E.g. – I have to go to the Doctor’s surgery. I find it difficult to hear the receptionist so I decide to anticipate her questions by saying something like:

“Hello my name is John Smith. I have an appointment with Doctor Jones at 2pm. I can’t hear very well so I might not hear you call when it’s my turn to go in – could you come over & tell me when it’s my turn?”

The above example is a positive way of getting across our communication needs. We can avoid a number of communication pitfalls by planning ahead in this way. Just think how many more questions we would’ve been asked if we had only said:

“Hello, I’ve got an appointment at 2pm”

Part Three: Reading short stories – a line at a time

To be read one line at a time, with plenty of repetition as required. At the very least give the title as context; these exercises can be very difficult so you might want to pick out some key words from the story beforehand. Read to the lipreader so they can get used to the lipshapes, then start the story.

Premiere League Football History

“Before the premier league English Football teams were banned from European matches.”

“This was due to problems with hooligans.”

“English clubs were short of money for the best players.”

“They could not afford to buy the best players in the transfer market.”

“The premier league was formed in 1992.”

“The first goal scored in a premiership match was by Brian Deane.”

“In 1995 the number of teams in the premiership was reduced to 20.”

“The premiership set up television broadcast deals.”

“These deals brought millions of pounds back in to the game.”

“Allowing English teams to again compete for the best players.”

Again it is a good idea to adapt some of your own material for further practise. Perhaps collect short cuttings / amusing stories from a newspaper. Rephrase them if you feel it will help, give them a title that indicates the context of the content & see how you get on!

Finally, don't get too bogged down with the theory of lipreading... You don't become a better lipreader by reading about theory; you become a better lipreader through practise!

Acknowledgement:

This pack contains excerpts of lipreading exercises provided by ATLA – The Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults.

Useful Contacts:

Lip-reading Group -

Bispham – Tuesdays 10am - 12noon, fortnightly term time only At St Bernadette's Community Centre, All Hallows Road, Bispham. FY2 0AS

For further details please contact:

Email – JuliaBarnes963@yahoo.co.uk

Online Lipreading practise -

www.lipreadingpractice.co.uk