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Pronunciation – Word Groups

200 Common Minimal Pairs in English

The term **minimal pair** describes two words that have the same sounds apart from one sound

The different sound can be a **vowel** sound (middle) or a **consonant** sound in the initial (first), middle, or final position:

Different Vowel Sound (Middle)	
bald	bold
ball	bowl
boat	bite
cane	keen
cap	cup
cheers	cheese
crate	Crete
crime	chrome
curse	course
dead	did
deep	dip
dig	dog
fail	fall
flag	flog
flight	float
gate	goat
get	got
guess	goose
hat	hate
heat	heart
height	hit
jam	gem
joke	Jack
lamp	limp
make	mark
mat	met
mate	might
neat	note
nice	niece
nine	none
noon	nun
plain	plan
pool	pull
pot	pit
queen	Quorn
rate	right
seek	soak
ship	shop
smell	smile
soon	sun
spin	spine
start	state
take	tech
through	throw
tide	towed
veal	vole
watt	wet
whale	while
will	wool
yarn	yawn

Different Initial Consonant Sound:	
baby	maybe
bean	mean
beat	heat
bed	head
bees	knees
bell	well
bend	mend
boat	coat
book	look
bull	wool
cat	hat
clock	flock
coin	join
couple	supple
crack	track
curls	girls
daily	Haley
dear	peer
drone	prone
face	base
fail	tale
fan	man
feel	real
feet	meat
fill	hill
finger	linger
food	rude
fun	done
games	James
gate	wait
good	wood
half	laugh
hard	guard
heard	third
heart	part
heat	seat
him	gym
king	ring
knife	life
learn	burn
lose	zoos
lung	young
made	laid
meant	rent
meek	weak
moon	June
nose	rose
pillar	villa
rock	wok
rose	toes

Different Middle Consonant Sound:	
Adam	Alan
alive	arrive
baker	bather
Benny	berry
bobble	bottle
body	bossy
boogie	booty
carbon	Carmen
colour	cutter
cycle	sidle
darling	darning
decree	degree
eaten	even
feature	feeler
feeding	feeling
hammer	hanger
heady	heavy
healing	heating
hobby	hockey
ladder	lacquer
leather	letter
loser	looser
maiden	mason
marker	martyr
meadow	mellow
meaning	meeting
measure	mega
medal	metal
melon	Megan
miner	miser
mugger	mother
mummy	money
nature	neighbour
omen	open
pager	paper
pedal	petal
precedent	president
rabbit	racquet
rabid	rapid
renew	review
Santa	sander
shadow	shallow
shocking	shopping
silly	ciggie
simmer	singer
simple	symbol
soggy	sorry
swigging	swimming
wader	whaler
wedding	webbing

Different Final Consonant Sound:	
boom	boot
cap	cash
card	cars
cared	cares
cheap	cheat
close	clothes
drape	drip
fad	fed
gate	gave
guild	guilt
ham	have
home	hone
juice	jute
knife	nice
large	laugh
light	like
load	loaf
made	make
married	marries
might	mile
mouse	mouth
nail	name
nice	night
north	Norse
page	pain
pain	pays
peas	peep
quick	quiz
rain	raise
ran	rap
receipt	receive
refuse	refute
rice	right
roof	root
scene	seem
side	sign
slim	slip
some	son
tail	take
teach	team
thick	thin
touch	tongue
tried	trite
vague	vain
verb	verse
walk	warn
wash	watch
weed	wheel
wrote	rogue
yes	yet