

Lesson – How to Pronounce -ed

A common issue that students have is how to pronounce -ed correctly at the end of a word. The -ed in verbs like moved, passed, and proceeded are all pronounced differently. If you would like to fix this problem, you just need to know what sound comes **before** the -ed.

moved – a V sound comes before the -ed

passed – a SS sound comes before the -ed

proceeded – a D sound comes before the -ed

Remember that English has silent letters so sometimes the letter that comes before the -ed is not the same as the sound that comes before the -ed. For example, the ‘b’ is silent in the word **climbed** so:

climbed – an M sound comes before the -ed

1. D or T sound before the -ed

[id]

This is the easiest rule to learn and remember for -ed pronunciation.

Whenever a D or T sound comes before a -ed at the end of a word, the -ed is pronounced as [id]. It is important to keep in mind that the T or D sound will join with the [id] sound as a separate syllable. Here are some examples and how the syllables should be divided:

- proceeded [pro – cee – did]
- protected [pro – tec – tid]
- divided [de – vi – did]
- spotted [spot – tid]

As always, keep in mind that English has silent letters and this can also apply to the letter T. For example, the word ricochet ends in a silent T. Therefore, the final sound of the word is a vowel sound.

- ricocheted [rik – o – chayd] (see Section 3 for more information)

2. Voiceless Sound before the -ed

[t]

This is where the pronunciation of -ed starts to get a little more difficult. The first difficulty is identifying voiceless sounds. These are sounds that do not engage the vocal cords when said. An example of a voiceless sound would be the K sound. When you pronounce a K, you just use your mouth and not your throat or vocal cords. The second difficulty is that after a voiceless sound, the -ed will be pronounced as a T sound. Additionally, this T sound will join the syllable before it. It will not form a separate syllable like it did after a T or D sound. Here are some common voiceless sounds, example words and a guide to how they can be pronounced:

Voiceless Sound	Example Word	Pronunciation
• P	popped	[poppt]
• K	kicked	[kickt]
• F	overstaffed	[o – ver – stafft]
• S	kissed	[kisst]
• SH	fished	[fisht]
• CH	fetchd	[fetcht]

We must always keep in mind that it is the sound that comes before the -ed that determines the pronunciation, not the actual letter. To illustrate this, let's look at the F sound. It can be written as F, GH or PH, but all three of these are F sounds. Therefore:

Voiceless Sound	Example Word	Pronunciation
• F	stuffed	[stufft]
• F	laughed	[laft]
• F	photographed	[fo – to – graft]

3. Voiced Sound before the -ed

[d]

When the sound that comes before the -ed is voiced we pronounce it as a [d]. A voiced sound is one that uses your vocal cords and throat when it is pronounced. This is usually the sound that is the most difficult for students to make correctly. Again, the [d] sound that you make after a voiced sound joins the syllable that came before it. Here are some common voiced sounds with example words and pronunciation tips:

Voiceless Sound	Example Word	Pronunciation
• B	clubbed	[clubbd]
• G	tugged	[tuggd]
• V	moved	[moovd]
• Th	breathed	[breathd]
• Z	closed	[clozd]
• M	climbed	[climd]
• N	binned	[bind]
• NG	hanged	[hangd]
• L	lulled	[lulld]
• R	roared	[roard]
• Y	laid	[layd]
• W	allowed	[a – llowd]
• All vowel sounds	sawed	[sawd]
	agreed	[a – greed]
	hurried	[hur – reed]
	glued	[glood]
	ricocheted	[rik – o – chayd]

Activity 1

Instructions: Look at the words below. Circle the correct pronunciation of the -ed. When you are finished compare with a classmate.

1. edited	[id]	[t]	[d]
2. squealed	[id]	[t]	[d]
3. hissed	[id]	[t]	[d]
4. complained	[id]	[t]	[d]
5. whisked	[id]	[t]	[d]
6. endeavored	[id]	[t]	[d]
7. surprised	[id]	[t]	[d]
8. totaled	[id]	[t]	[d]
9. gifted	[id]	[t]	[d]
10. fancied	[id]	[t]	[d]

Activity 2

Instructions: Read this story that contains many -ed endings. Make notes for yourself about how to pronounce them. Practice reading the story with a classmate. Once you are done, try writing your own story that includes -ed endings. Give it to a classmate and see if they can read it with correct pronunciation.

I arrived at class late because I assumed that it would start at the same time as always. I realized too late that the clocks had been altered because of daylight saving. I felt frustrated and angered and asked everyone for the rest of the day why we still insisted on changing the time twice a year. No one provided me with an answer that satisfied me. I journeyed home to do my own research on the internet. I discovered that people wanted to take advantage of long summer days.