



## TH Voiced and Voiceless

### IPA Symbols

Voiced: /ð/

Voiceless: /θ/

### How to Pronounce

Place your tongue tip between your front teeth. Avoid any hard contact with the upper front teeth.

Leave a space so when you blow air, the air escapes over the tongue.

**Voiced:** The voiced version of “TH” involves turning your voice on. Feel the vibration of your vocal folds on your throat as you make the sound loud.

**Voiceless:** The voiceless version of “TH” just involves a quiet blowing.

### Spelling

Both voiced and voiceless “TH” sounds are spelled with the letters “th.” Unfortunately, there is no way to tell from English spelling if a “th” word is pronounced as a voiced or voiceless “TH.” The good news is that ESL speakers very typically produce the correct voicing type, but rather it’s the tongue position that is the problem. Memorizing the Voiced “TH” list, as it is far shorter, is the a good way to differentiate between voiced and voiceless “TH.”

Spelling Exceptions: A few English words are spelled with a “th” but pronounced as a /t/ sound and even deleted at times. Here is the list of exception words to be aware of:

Thomas	“TAH mus”
Theresa	“tuh REE suh”
Esther	“ES ter”
Thai	“TY”
Thyme	“TIME”
Asthma	“AZ muh”

### Common Errors

The voiced "TH" is generally replaced with a /d/.

The voiceless “TH” is generally replaced with a /t/ or an /s/

To fix these issues, protrude the tongue further out and blow a longer airflow.

### Minimal Pairs

The term “minimal pair” refers to one change in sound that changes the entire meaning of a word.

Choose the sound substitution that you struggle with below. As you say the second “TH” version, put your tongue tip between your teeth, blow longer.

**/d/**    **Voiced “TH”**



# PROactive

## PRONUNCIATION

Dan than  
day they  
den then  
D's these  
dare there  
dough though

laid lathe  
tide tithe  
ride writhe  
she'd sheathe  
breed breathe  
load loathe  
sued soothe

udder other  
bladder blather  
header Heather  
wordy worthy

### **/t/** Voiceless "TH"

tank thank  
taught thought  
team theme  
tick thick  
tie thigh  
tong thong  
torn thorn  
trash thrash  
tread thread  
trill thrill  
true through  
tug thug

boat both  
fate faith  
fort fourth  
got goth  
mat math  
oat oath  
root Ruth  
tent tenth



**/s/    Voiceless "TH"**

seem    theme  
sink    think  
sum    thumb  
sick    thick  
sing    thing

face    faith  
miss    myth  
mass    math

**/s/    Voiced "TH"**

so    though

**/z/    Voiceless "TH"**

Zen    then

bays    bathe  
lays    lathe  
breeze    breathe