The Seven-Word Dictation

Ten minutes, no preparation. Seven words to say out loud, what most first languages produce in each one, and a grid for marking who hears which.

Before the bell

Write these three lines in the corner of the board and leave them there for the whole lesson. Students look at them far more often than they admit.

Keep the key. He went to bed. We will survive.

The ten minutes

Min	Game	You	The class
0–2	**The demo round**	Read the three lines. Say one word wrong on purpose.	Writes all three. Finds the wrong word.
2–6	**The seven**	Say each word once, at normal speed. No repeats.	Writes the word as heard, 1 to 7.
6–7	**Swap and read**	Papers go one seat to the left.	Reads a neighbour's seven out loud, as written.
7–9	**The count**	Say each word again and spell it. Count hands.	A hand for each word the paper got wrong.
9–10	**Two for the term**	Mark the top two on the grid overleaf.	Keeps the paper. Nothing is graded.

The seven words, and what the mouth does instead

Say the word, never the wrong form. The italic form is what a first language commonly produces.

- seat — *sit*
- men — *man*
- bed — *bet*
- thin — *tin*
- west — *vest*
- spring — *siprink*
- photographer — *PHOtographer*

When to stop

All seven right	Say them faster, inside a sentence.
Nobody wrote anything	Spell the first word once, then go on.
One student got none	Not a result. Sit with that paper later.
They correct each other	Let it run a minute.

> Seven is the whole test.

Make It Your Own

Two of the seven will be yours, and they will be the same two all year. Mark them here, then fill one row a week with what you heard.

Your rules

The sound	Hands up, out of the room	Heard again in week

Four things worth copying

- Count hands, never names. The number is the result; the name is not.
- Two minutes at the start of every lesson beats half an hour once a week.
- Two sounds per term. A list of seven is a list nobody works on.
- Run it again in week six with the same seven words. The two that drop are the proof, and they are the only proof your class will give you.

Why hearing comes before saying

A sound the student cannot hear is a sound they cannot aim at. Repeating the correct form at them changes nothing while the two words still arrive as one. So the order is fixed: tell the pair apart by ear first, in dictation, where being wrong costs nothing — and only then say it, slowly, often, and inside short sentences rather than on its own.

This sheet is free. Download it, print it, copy it for your colleagues. No sign-up, no email, no licence to read.

Soon you will make these yourself. We are building a page on yakki.app where you choose the rule and the games and get a sheet like this one as a PDF, in your own language.

Need one before then? Write to admin@yakki.app with the rule and the level, and we will make the sheet for you.

YAKKI