Third Person -s



Ideas for

Intervention

Here you will find resource materials for intervention. These are not programs or recommended methods but are meant to aid you by providing myriad resources and techniques for intervention. We’ve taken the time to research available resources and to offer them for you to consider.

Prior to learning third person /-s/, children should have awareness of singular and plural differences, subject-verb agreement, and plural /-s/ (Owens, 2014).

* Developmentally, children first acquire present progressive /-ing/ (e.g., 19-28 months), then regular /-s/ (24-33 months), followed by possessive /-s/ (e.g., 26-40 months), regular past tense */*ed/(e.g., 26-48 months), and finally regular third person /s/ (e.g., 26-46 months).
* Here’s an example of the third person /-s/ in action: “he drink**s** and she eat**s**”.
* In consideration of children who are of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, clinicians must be mindful of the distinctions between language differences and disorders.

Owens (2014) found that children who are English Language Learners (ELLs), often omit or overgeneralize third person -s. A skilled speech-language pathologist will recognize that the root of these errors could be attributed to carry-over from the child’s first language, and not necessarily indicative of a language disorder.

Methods



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Instructional Teaching

Ellis, Loewen, Elder, Erlam, Philp, and Reinders (2009) described the value of implicit and explicit knowledge in second language learning.

* The authors suggest using explicit instruction to explain the circumstances in which third person /s/ can and cannot be used (Ellis et al., 2009).
* Moreover, a facilitator can then ask students to work within structured activities, to identify whether or not sentences are grammatically correct (e.g., “a good teacher will make students laugh, is this correct or incorrect?”) (Ellis et al., 2009).

It has also been found that in explicit instruction, providing mixed corrective feedback improves student’s learning of the third person /s/ (Sarandi, 2020).

* Utilizing a combination of prompting and recasting significantly improves student’s accuracy on the oral use of the third person /s/ (Sarandi, 2020).
* This study also recommends that clinicians repeat the student’s incorrect use of the third person /s/ and provide an expectant pause. This must be done using a mixed approach, where prompting and recasting are also utilized (Sarandi, 2020).

Resources



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Books

Leonard, Camarata, Pawlowska, Brown, and Camarata (2008), suggested reading a story aloud to the child, while simultaneously acting out the events in the story with the support of manipulatives (i.e., using toys and props). Then, during play, the clinician will provide conversational recasts that includes third person singular /–s/ of the child’s utterances.

We recommend the following children’s books, as they contain a heavy emphasis on third person singular /-s/:

[*Mama Cat Has Three Cookies*](https://www.amazon.com/Mama-Cat-Has-Three-Kittens/dp/0805071628/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1547516882&sr=8-1&keywords=mama+cat+has+three)*,* by Denise Flemming

[*Bear Wants More*](https://www.amazon.com/Bear-Wants-More-Books/dp/1416949224/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1547516919&sr=8-1&keywords=bear+wants+more)*,* by Karma Wilson

[*The Cow Loves Cookies*](https://www.amazon.com/Cow-Loves-Cookies-Karma-Wilson/dp/1416942068/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1547517243&sr=8-1&keywords=The+cow+loves+cookies)*,* by Karma Wilson

[*Bear Snores on*](https://www.amazon.com/Bear-Snores-Books-Karma-Wilson/dp/1416902724/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1547517158&sr=8-1&keywords=bear+snores+on)*,* by Karma Wilson

[*Bear in Sunshine,*](https://www.amazon.com/Bear-Sunshine-Stella-Blackstone/dp/1841489239/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1547517059&sr=8-1&keywords=bear+in+sunshine)by Stella Blackstone

[*Bear About Town,*](https://www.amazon.com/Bear-About-Town-Barefoot-Board/dp/1841483737/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1547517099&sr=8-1&keywords=bear+about+town)byStella Blackstone

[*The House in the Night*](https://www.amazon.com/House-Night-Susan-Marie-Swanson/dp/0547577699/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1547517215&sr=8-1&keywords=The+house+in+the+night)*,* by Susan Marie Swanson

Resources

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Games and Activities

* Jin, Odabasi, and Kim (2014) provided the following lesson plans as suggestions for teaching simple present tense in third-person singular:

Activating Schema:

* Activate the student’s schema and review simple present tense using the subject pronoun “I”.
1. Teacher writes six simple, present sentences on the board with the picture card in the blank spaces to represent each verb.
2. Teacher places the verb cards beside corresponding sentences.



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1. The teacher asks the students to come to the board and replace the flash card with an appropriate verb card.

Ball Game:

* This activity provides students with the opportunity to practice asking and answering “wh-questions” using the simple present tense.
1. Each student is provided a strip with a “wh-question” in simple present tense.
2. Students memorize the question in 30 seconds.
3. The students then make a circle around the teacher.
4. In this teacher-initiated activity, each student is provided with the opportunity to toss the ball to another student and answer his/her question.

Reading Passage:

* The purpose of a reading passage is to introduce sentences with verbs that take “s” in the third-person singular present tense form. The structure of a reading passage will allow students recognize the structure of third-person present tense form.
1. Students read the passage silently and independently.
2. The teacher writes six simple present sentences (taken from the passage), leaving a blank space where the verbs belong. The teacher has the verb cards beside the sentences.
3. The teacher asks comprehension questions and elicits answers from the students.



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1. Teacher calls on students to come to the board and place the correct verb carb in the blank spaces.

Comprehension Check: Fill-in-the-Blanks Sentences:

* This activity tests the students’ understanding of the simple present verbs that take “s” in the third-person singular and verbs in base form in the first-person singular form.
1. Students work individually and complete 10 fill-in-the-blanks sentences.

Domino Game:

* This domino game helps students practice creating simple present tense using first-person singular and third person singular subject pronouns.



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1. Students work in groups of four and receive one set of cards.
2. The teacher places subject pronoun “*I”* card on each group’s table to start the game.
3. Through turn taking, a student picks a card in the deck to form simple present tense. If the student doesn’t pick an appropriate card to match the pronoun “*I,”* he/she waits for his/her next turn.
4. When the student produces a complete sentence, he/she reads the sentence aloud and places matching picture flash card beside the sentence.

Student Interview:

* This activity provides students with the opportunity to use speech and converse with each other while practicing use of simple present forms with second person singular and third person singular forms. Also, students will practice asking “yes-no” questions in simple present.
1. The teacher distributes folded interview worksheets to the students.
2. Students walk around the class, ask each other the questions on the worksheet, and return to their seats once they obtain one classmates’ name to fit each question (i.e., Find a student who…)
3. Students unfold the worksheet and write sentences about their classmates’ routine(s).

Extension Activity, Writing a Postcard:

* This personalized writing activity provides students the opportunity to practice simple present tense with third-person singular verbs during a writing activity.
1. Students write a postcard to their parents describing one of their friend’s daily activities by using third person singular verbs



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Websites

[*Teaching Present Tense in Third-Person Singular*](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjenke%5CDesktop%5CDr%20Bob%20GA%5CIntervention%20Sugar%20Website%5C%20http%5Cwww.catesolnews.org%5C2014%5C12%5Cteaching-simple-present-in-third-singular%5C)

[*A blog with thorough explanations and suggested activities*](https://ricardobarroselt.wordpress.com/2016/05/03/teaching-grammar-without-a-book-third-person-singular/)

[*How to Teach the Present Simple Tense*](http://busyteacher.org/3560-how-to-teach-the-present-simple.html)

[*Guessing Games for Third-Person S*](https://www.englishclub.com/efl/tefl-articles/third-person-s/)

[*Sixteen Free ESL Third Person Singular Worksheets*](https://en.islcollective.com/resources/search_result?Tags=third%20person%20singular&searchworksheet=GO&type=Printables)

Please visit [our Pinterest page](https://www.pinterest.com/sugarlanguage/demonstratives/) for additional resources and activities:

Pinterest Q&A:

What is Pinterest? Pinterest is a social media platform that serves as an electronic bulletin board. Many SLPs use it as a way to electronically “bookmark” (i.e., save) activities for future sessions.

How much does it cost? It’s free! However, you must create an account in order to access the SUGAR Language boards or use the website in general.

How do I use it? Please check-out the following link for an in-depth explanation of all things [Pinterest.](https://www.lifewire.com/how-to-use-pinterest-3486578)

**References**

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Owens, R. E. (2014). *Language disorders: A functional approach to assessment and intervention* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

*Sarandi, H. (2020). Mixed Corrective Feedback and the Acquisition of Third Person “-s.” Language Learning Journal, 48(4), 402–413.*