



ul. Kuźnicza 22, 50-138 Wrocław, Poland, EU  
tel. +48 (71) 375 24 39, fax. +48 (71) 375 24 40, www.ifa.uni.wroc.pl

SAPERE ET FARI

## TASK 5

### MINIMAL PAIRS

#### PART 1

1. Read the introduction first.

#### Minimal pairs

These are pairs of words which are almost exactly the same. Only one sound differentiates them (e.g. *pin:bin* or *pin:pan*). Sometimes the difference between the words is so slight that you have to listen for the effect that change of consonants has on the rest of the utterance. A good example is “Batman” and “bad man” pair. Here, the difference is in the length of the vowel.

#### PART 2

2. Look at the following sentences.

They don't make much sense at the first glance but when you look closer, you will see that if you change just one sound in one word, they will be perfectly correct. Here, you'll work on the spelling, not on the phonetic transcription, so you actually have to change the spelling. You'll hear the difference when you pronounce the sentences out loud. Find the words which make the sentences meaningless, and change one sound in them. Sometimes it's more than one word in a sentence! Be careful with the spelling!

*Example: I can't turn my tap off. It keeps tripping. → dripping*

1. Tell Dora to harden her hard and turn the cat out. →
2. He's head over eels in love. →
3. I sad down on the seed that has just been painted and got my trousers covered in red stribes. →
4. We're going to live very soon. →
5. I ate the most delicious drought for dinner last night. →
6. Because the enemy left them unarmed they put down their weapons. →
7. The prince is hair to the throne. →

8. Shall we slip in here? →
9. Why aren't you wearing a gap? It's chilly today. →
10. Why don't you try it in the oil? →
11. Oh, look at this breath-taking few. →
12. Stop failing and get to work. →
13. She's feared. Nobody wants to spend time with her because of her strange and random opinions. →
14. Where are you? I'm on a peach. →
15. Have you taken your bills already? →
16. Where's the mob? I need to clean the floor, it's all in mug. →
17. Put your goat on and go, buy me some floor for the cake. →
18. Look into my ice and tell me you love me. →
19. I think he prices his workers too much. →
20. How many ship have you got in your herd? →

Task author: Magdalena Rościńska-Frankowska

Based on "How Now, Brown Cow" by Mimi Ponsonby

Answer key:

1. hard – heart
2. eels-heels
3. sad-sat; seed-seat, sribes-stripes
4. live-leave
5. drought-trout
6. unarmed-unharmed
7. hair-heir
8. slip-sleep
9. gap-cap
10. try-fry
11. few-view
12. failing-wailing
13. feared-weird
14. peach-beach
15. bills-pills
16. mob-mop, mug-mud
17. goat-coat, floor-flour
18. ice-eyes
19. prices-prizes
20. ship-sheep