

# *Artic - U - Checks*

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The *Artic-U-Checks* CD contains 125 data collection pages for 50 consonant singletons, blends, and clusters in the initial, medial, and final positions of one to three syllable words at the word and sentence levels. Each data page contains 10 target words and 10 sentences of four to eight words in length containing those target words, along with a grid for measuring baseline ability and progress over 5 progress monitoring sessions. These pages are designed for quick and easy data collection that can be summarized in Evaluation Reports, IEPs, and quarterly progress reports. *Artic-U-Checks* is NOT a standardized test and does not take the place of articulation tests, nor does it replace or recommend any therapy methods. Instead, *Artic-U-Checks* is used to supplement formal testing by probing each error sound 10 times in each position of a word. The results of the probes help the speech/language pathologist make informed decisions for therapy goals and intervention, and can be used to graphically communicate skill levels and progress to parents and students.

## **Using *Artic-U-Checks* for Baseline Data**

Once an articulation test has been used to determine the presence of error(s) in a student's speech production, use selected *Artic-U-Checks* pages to probe the student's error sound(s) at the word and sentence levels. For example, if a student makes errors on /f, v, l/ sounds on the GOLDMAN FRISTOE TEST OF ARTICULATION, print the initial, medial, and final position *Artic-U-Checks* pages for /f, v, l/ -- a total of 9 pages. Write the student's name on the top of each page, then write the date of baseline testing above the first three columns, titled "I, C, A." Say each word for the student to imitate. (Note: If you prefer, make a duplicate copy for the student to read, rather than imitate your production). Put a check mark in the appropriate column to indicate the quality of the student's production, according to the scoring instructions below. If a student produces an acceptable production in 6 of 10 words on a page, move on to the sentence level to establish baseline in connected speech. If the student produces less than 60% of the words in the acceptable range, end baseline measurement at the word level.

## **Scoring *Artic-U-Checks***

The scoring for *Artic-U-Checks* is as follows:

**I - Incorrect** The student's production is completely wrong -- a substitution, omission, or distortion that makes a noticeable impact on intelligibility. For example: for vocalic /r/, this would mean that the vowel is distorted and the /r/ is omitted or distorted. You will have already noted the type of error on the articulation test; you may also want to note specifics of the student's production on the target words on the *Artic-U-Checks* data form.

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**C - Close** The student's production is intelligible but still has errors that are noticeable to the untrained ear. Examples of "close" production : a barely interdental /s/, or a vocalic /r/ in which the vowel is intact and there is the beginning of /r/ that falls to neutral. This "close" scoring is especially useful for vocalic /r/ sounds, and for measuring progress over time as a student moves from very distorted (Incorrect) to less distorted but still needing some improvement (Close).

**A - Acceptable** The student's production is perfect or nearly so. An acceptable production does not affect intelligibility and does not draw attention to itself. In other words, in conversation the untrained ear would not pick up any speech difference, if any still exists.

Count up the number of check marks in each column and add a "0" as you write the totals in the Percentages row. For example, 3 checks in the I column means 30% of the productions were Incorrect., 4 checks in the C column means 40% were Close, and 3 checks in the A column means 30% were Acceptable.

It can be very helpful to SLPs, parents, and students to type these values into Excel or other graphing software to make current performance level very easy for all to see. SLPs can use this as a quick reference when planning therapy. Parents can see and understand the student's production level and progress towards goals. Students are very motivated to see the colored bars lengthening in the right direction, and can also see very clearly their own strengths and needs. Graphs can be stapled to reports, kept in the student's speech folder, and/or stored in the SLP's therapy log book or progress report folder. Directions for simple graphing can be found on page 4.

Traditional scoring of articulation is "incorrect" and "correct." This method doesn't provide a way of measuring movement towards correct production, and is not very motivating for students who are making some progress but have not yet achieved mastery. One advantage to using the "Incorrect, Close, Acceptable" scoring is that interim progress can be measured. Another advantage is the use of "Acceptable" rather than "correct." "Correct" implies perfect production, which is always our goal. Realistically, however, there are some students who will not achieve perfect articulation, but can achieve production that does not affect intelligibility or detract from the spoken message. Explaining this distinction to parents can be useful when a student has reached a point at which his speech is intelligible in all settings, even if not perfect, and further improvement is not likely.

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## **Making Therapy Decisions**

Once the probes are completed, view the student's scores to determine the student's strengths and needs. For instance, if a student is better able to produce /s/ in the final position, work on that first to reinforce and increase awareness of correct production, before moving to contexts that are more difficult for the student.

## **Progress Monitoring**

Once baseline has been established, proceed with therapy using materials and techniques according to your professional judgment. At the end of the marking period, pull out the data forms from your log book or progress report folder, and write the date over the next "I, C, A" columns. Then have the student read aloud or imitate your production. Score as above, graph if desired, then compare to baseline. Repeat each marking period, comparing results to the student's prior performance.

## **A Word About the Words**

The target words were selected according to the following criteria:

1. Target words only contain one occurrence of the target sound. Similarly, sentences were constructed to have minimum of occurrences of the target; the large majority have only one target sound occurrence per sentence.
2. While most of the target vocabulary will be familiar to all students, some target words may be unfamiliar to younger students or students with language deficits. This has three advantages. First, imitated articulation of unfamiliar words is sometimes a better indication of a student's ability to produce a speech sound in context. Students often revert to habitual errors on words they frequently use, even though they can correctly produce the target sound in isolation and other contexts. Second, these target words can become "teachable moments." Can the student determine the word's meaning from the sentence that contains that word? This can lead to a quick lesson on definitions, synonyms, and using contextual clues. Third, *Artic-U-Checks* can be used with students of all ages, so the more challenging vocabulary will be more appealing to older students.
3. Some words were selected simply because there just weren't many choices for a particular target sound in a particular position (example: medial /skr/).

*Artic-U-Checks* have made my caseload management so much easier. Use of these forms provides me with:

- quick and accurate baseline information which I include in IEP goals,
- solid data on which to make therapy decisions,
- quick and accurate progress monitoring which I report quarterly,
- the ability to reflect progress as getting "close," rather than scoring production only as correct or incorrect,
- the option of putting the collected data into graph form.

I hope *Artic-U-Checks* makes your life easier, too!

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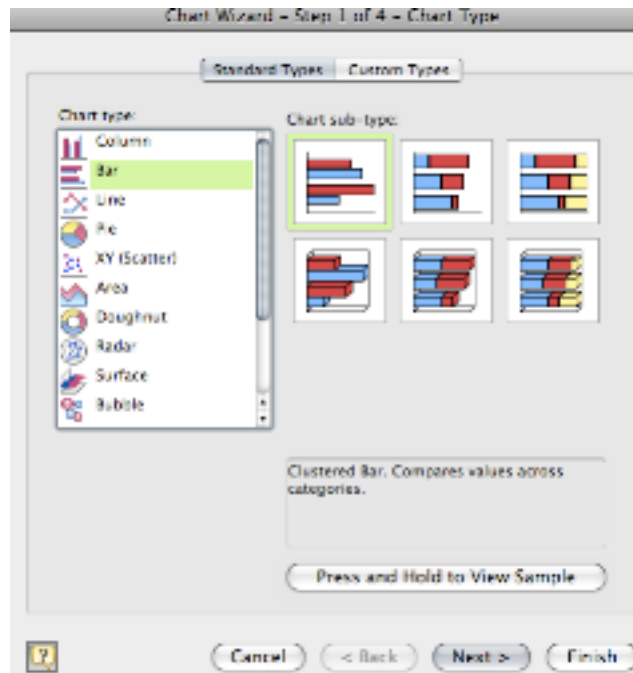
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### Simple Directions for Graphing Artic-U-Check results using Excel

1. Open Excel. On Sheet 1, skip Row 1/Column 1. Then type the headings “Incorrect,” “Close,” “Acceptable” in Row 1/Columns 2, 3, 4 as shown below. Beginning in Row 2 Column 1, list the target sounds and positions; if reporting both word and sentence levels, indicate the level in the list (as in “Initial /r/ Word” and “Initial /r/ Sentence”). If reporting only word or sentence level, indicate that in the chart’s title (see #4 below). Then fill in the percentages from the student’s Artic-U-Check pages.

	Incorrect	Close	Acceptable
Initial /r/	50	20	30
AIR Initial		50	50
AIR Medial		80	20
AIR Final	100		
AR Initial			100
AR Medial		40	60
AR Final	90	10	
EAR Initial	20	20	60
EAR Medial	30	40	30
EAR Final	100		
IRE Initial		10	90
IRE Medial		60	40
IRE Final	80	20	
OR Initial	10	20	70
OR Medial		50	50
OR Final	100		

2. Once you’ve entered the data, highlight the entire area (data and headings). Go to Insert on the top menu bar, pull down to Chart. Select “Bar” and the first choice, as shown:



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3. At the next screen, leave the Data Range alone (it will automatically be filled in with the coordinates of the area you highlighted). Click Next.



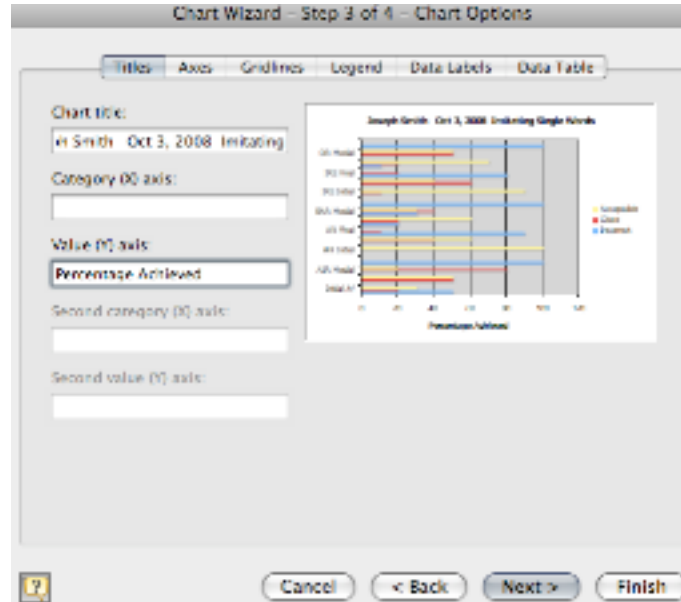
4. At the next screen, type a title for the chart, such as “(student name) (month/year) (level of performance).

Examples: “Joseph Smith October 3, 2008 Imitated Single Words” or  
 “Mary Jones January 30, 2009 Reading Sentences”  
 “Tim Harper Third Marking 2009 Repeating Words & Sentences”

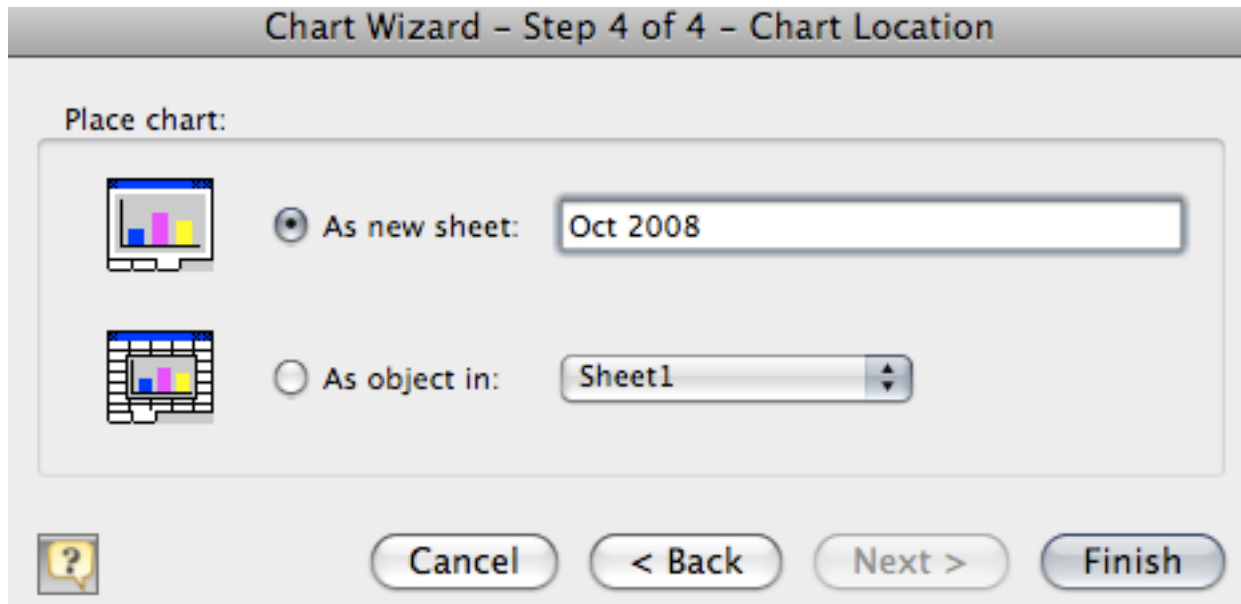
Leave the “Category X axis” field blank. In the “Value Y axis” field type: “Percentage Achieved.” (See example on next page). Click Next.

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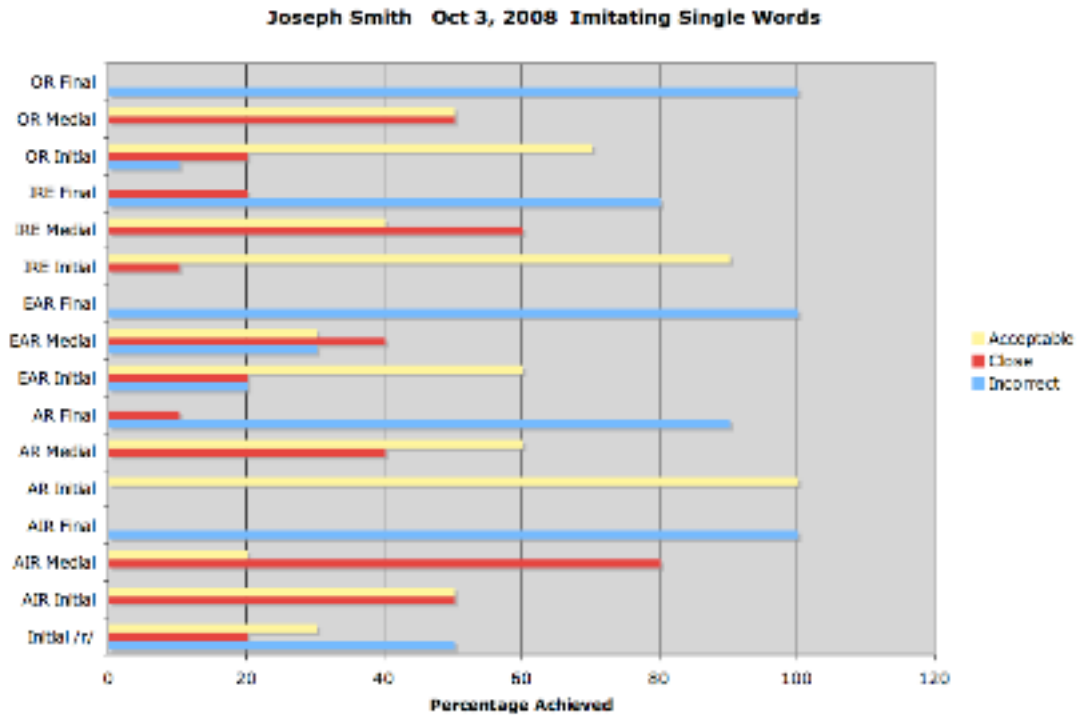
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5. Select “As new sheet” and name it with the date (as in “Oct 2008”). Click Finish. Save the file.



## Finished Sample Chart:



This chart can be sent home to parents, put into student folders, and/or attached to IEPs, evaluation reports, and quarterly progress reports.

Repeat this process each time you collect data on student performance. Save the charts to demonstrate growth over time and to help you make therapy decisions based on data.

Please note: these directions were developed using the Macintosh version of Excel. Other versions may vary in appearance from the screen shots I've provided but should operate similarly.