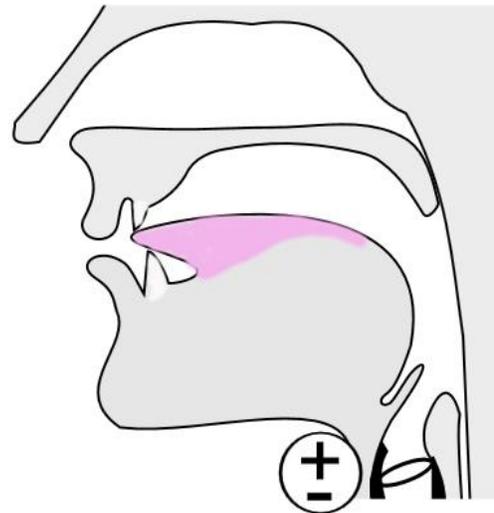**Producing "th" - /θ/ and /ð/**

The "th" sound presents challenges for non-native speakers, but you will also see that the features of this sound provide some advantages to help learn it as well. One of the problems is that this sound is both very common in English and very rare in the world's languages, so chances are good it is not something you learned as a child, but you will need to master it to speak clearly in English. The good news is that it is visible because it is in the front of your mouth, and this will help you use visual feedback to guide you as you practice.

As you can see from the title of this section, "th" refers to two sounds - /θ/ and /ð/, which represent a voiced and unvoiced pair of continuants. The good news and bad news is that this sound is always spelled with "th", so although you won't have to worry about other letters being used to spell this sound, you will still need to remember whether to use your voice when producing it. One other piece of good news is that there are very few minimal pairs where getting the voicing wrong will produce a different word.

A Visual Sound

You can use a mirror to help you practice this sound to make sure that your tongue is between your teeth as you make it. Native speakers do not always stick their tongue out very far, but they always touch their tongue to their teeth. As you practice, you can use visual feedback to get good placement of your tongue.

The unvoiced version is represented by the symbol /θ/ and some example words with this sound are *thin, through, Thursday, math , tooth*, etc. Here are some tips on making this sound:

- Your tongue is between your teeth or touching them.
- Let the air pass through continuously.
- This "th" is unvoiced.

This sound is number 20 out of 24 in terms of the frequency of consonants, but the voiced version is much more common, ranking ninth. It is represented by the symbol /ð/, and some example words with this sound are *the, them, either, mother, this*, etc. This sound is produced in the same way as /θ/, except the vocal cords *vibrate.*