

Pronunciation

First-year Syllabus of Pronunciation – First Course

Dept. of Translation, College of Arts, University of Anbar

Subject: Pronunciation

Book: *Better English Pronunciation* By J. D. O'Connor

Lecturer: Lect. Assist. Huda Abdulhakeem Hussein

Date: Oct 1, 2023

Unit One \ Speech Organs

How the Speech Organs Work in English

Defining Phonetics:

It is the scientific study of human speech sounds. It is subdivided into three branches:

- 1. Articulatory Phonetics:** it is a branch of linguistics which studies how speech sounds are made.
- 2. Auditory Phonetics:** it studies how sounds are perceived by the human ear and brain.
- 3. Acoustic Phonetics:** it studies the sound waves and their properties and how they are transmitted.
- 4. Experimental/Instrumental Phonetics:** it adopts instrumental techniques and devices in order to analyze some aspects of sound making, transmission, and perception.

BBC English is the standard pronunciation of southern British English that is traditionally used by announcers on the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation).

RP is an abbreviation for the phrase Received Pronunciation is a way of pronouncing British English which is often considered to be the standard accent.

Dialect refers to a variety of a language that contains distinctive variations in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Accent refers to the variations in the pronunciation only.

Phonemic Transcription is a system used for using letters or symbols to represent sounds in speech, such as 'feel' /fi:l/, change /tʃeɪndʒ/.

Minimal Pair means two words that are the same, but they differ only in one sound initially or medially or finally, such as 'fan' /fæn/ , 'van' /væn/, 'fast' /fɑ:st/, 'past' /pɑ:st/, 'seat' /si:t/ and 'sit' /sɪt/.

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is an alphabet developed in the 19th century to accurately represent the pronunciation of languages. The (IPA) aims at providing a unique symbol for each distinctive sound in a language.

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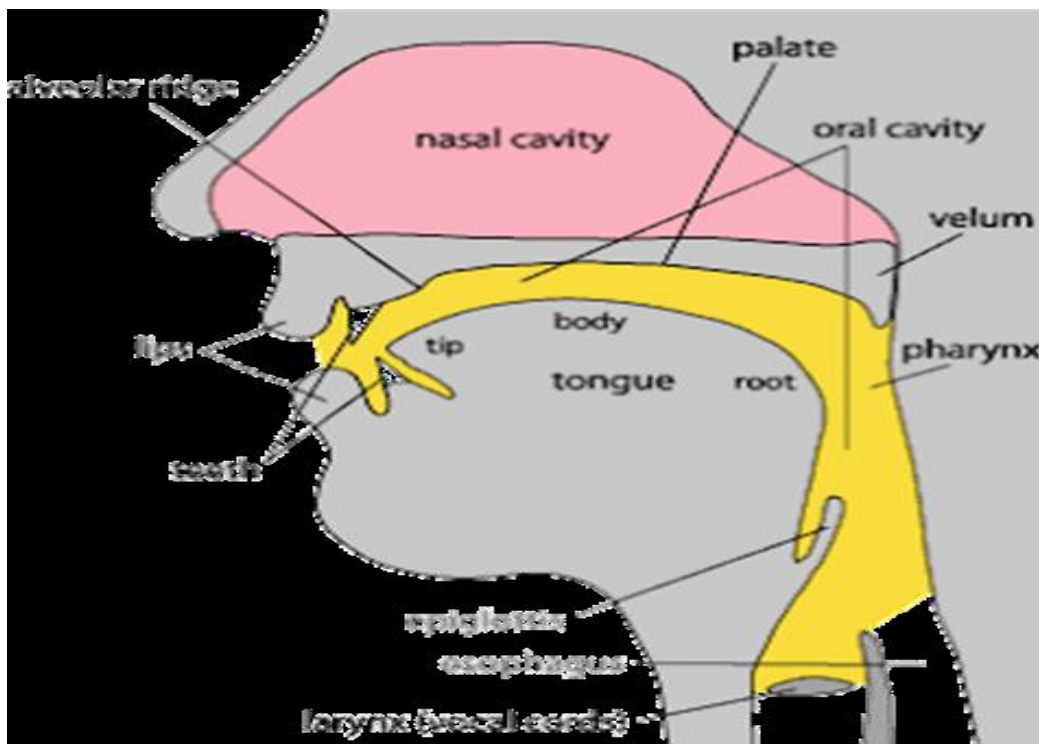
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Unit Two: How the Speech Organs Work in English

Human Organs of Speech are divided into:

A. Movable Organs: they make movements when they produce certain sounds, upper lip, lower lip, and tongue.

B. Unmovable Organs: they don't make any movements when they produce certain sounds, they include the upper teeth, lower teeth, and palate.

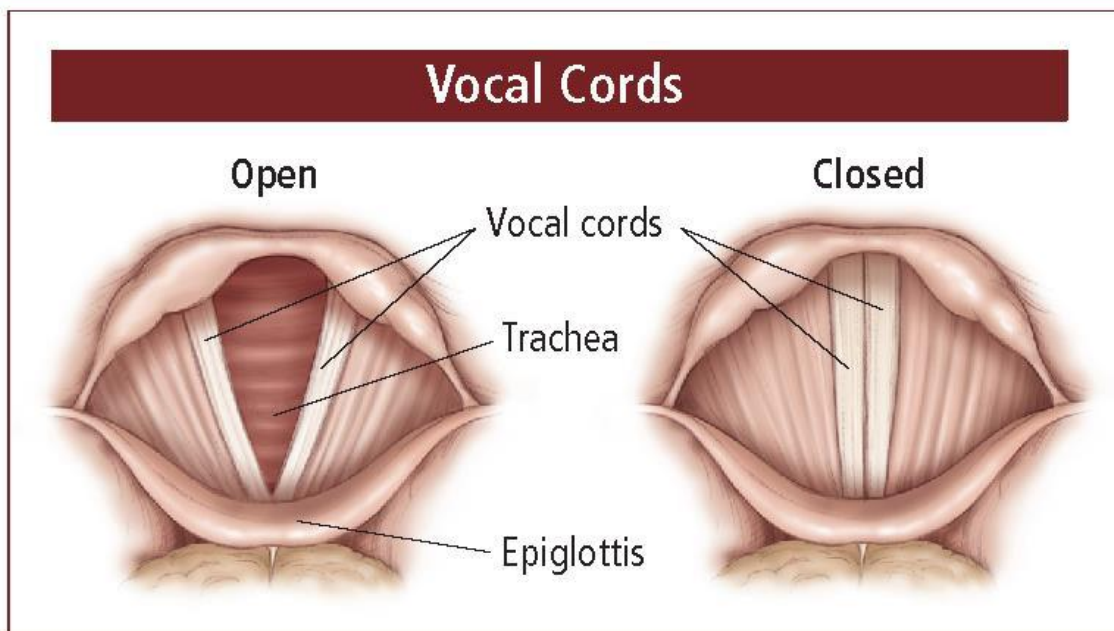


Definitions of Organs of Speech

1. Vocal Cords

They are two small bands of elastic tissues placed in the larynx, which lies opposite to each other across of the air passage; they are also called (vocal folds). The inner edges of the vocal cords can be moved towards each other so that they meet each and completely cover the top of the wind pipe or can be drawn apart so that there is a gap between them known as the glottis through which the air can pass freely.

When the vocal cords are brought together tightly no air can pass through them and if the lungs are pushing air from below, this air is compressed. If the vocal cords are then opened suddenly the compressed air bursts out with a sort of coughing noise. So holding back of the compressed air followed by a sudden release is called the glottal stop.



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The difference between voiced consonant sounds and voiceless consonant sounds.

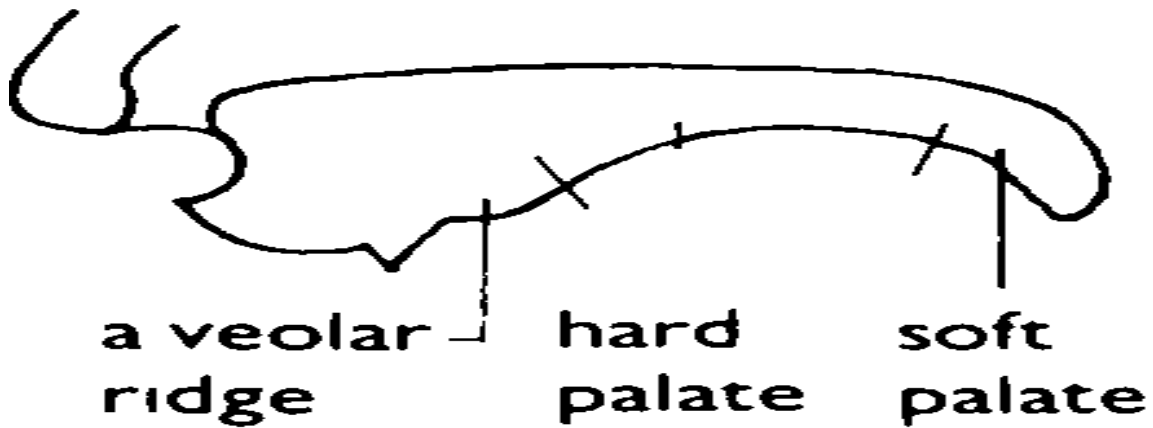
A. Voiced Sounds are made with the vibration of the vocal cords, producing consonants like (b,d,g,v,z, ð, dʒ, l,m,n, ŋ,r,w,y)

B. Voiceless Sounds are made without the vibration of the vocal cords, producing the consonants (p, t, k, f, θ, s, ʃ, tʃ, h)

2. Larynx is the area of the throat containing the vocal cords and used for breathing, swallowing, and talking. It is also called voice box.

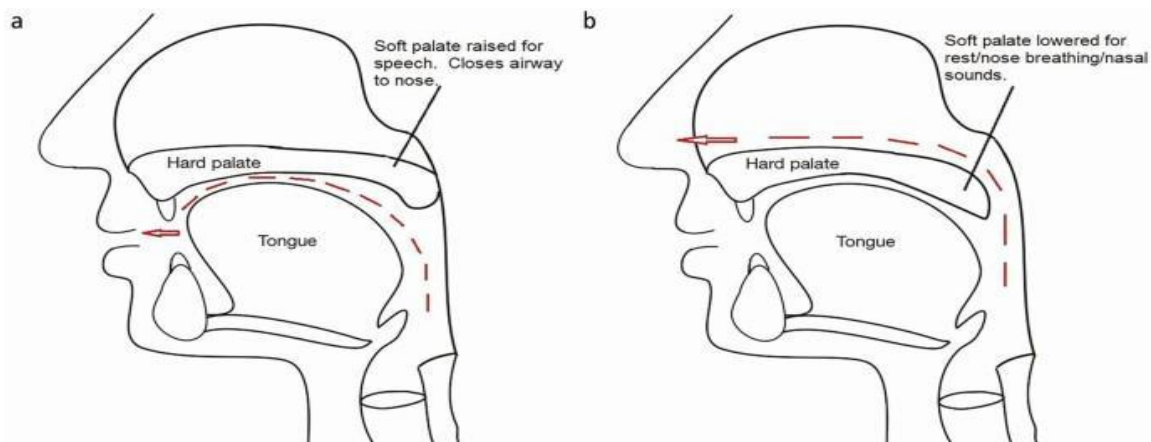
3. The Palate

The palate forms the roof of the mouth and separates the oral cavity from the nasal cavity. The palate basically consists of two sections: the hard section and soft section (soft palate) or sometimes called velum /'vi:ləm/. The hard palate is an unmovable part which consists of two parts too, the alveolar ridge which lies behind the upper teeth immediately, and the hard palate which is the highest part that lies between the alveolar ridge and the beginning of the soft palate. The alveolar ridge is especially important in English because many of the consonant sounds such as / t, d, n, l, r, s, z, ʃ, dʒ, ʒ, tʃ/ are produced by the tongue touching or close to the alveolar ridge.



On the other hand, the soft palate is a movable part that contains the uvula /'ju:vjələ/, which is the hanging part of the soft palate.

When the soft palate is raised, it closes the way to the nasal cavity, hence the air stream passes through the mouth only and producing all the consonant sounds except /m,n, ŋ/. But if the soft palate is lowered, the airstream will be allowed to pass through the nasal cavity, making the air come out from the nose. In this lowered position of the soft palate, three sounds are produced only through the nose /m,n, ŋ/, which are called nasal sounds or nasals.



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4. The Teeth

The teeth are subdivided into two parts; the upper teeth and lower teeth. The upper front teeth are used in the production of certain sounds. The consonant sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are produced when the tip of the tongue comes very close to the edge of both upper and lower teeth as seen practically in the word 'thin' /θɪn/ and /ðɪs/. /f/ and /v/ are produced when the lower lip contacts with the upper teeth as in the words 'fox' /fɒks/ and the word 'van' /væn/.

5. The Tongue

The tongue is the most important speech organ because it performs the greatest variety of movements. It is divided into four parts: tip, blade, front, and back. The back of the tongue lies under the soft palate, the front lies under the hard palate, while both the tip and the blade lie under the alveolar ridge. The tip and blade are particularly mobile as such they can touch the whole of the lips, the teeth, the alveolar ridge and the hard palate.

6. The Lips

The lips are movable organs of speech that can take up various different shapes when producing certain speech sounds.

7. Pharynx is a five-inch long tube that starts near nose and ends at windpipe.

8. Esophagus is a muscular tube connecting the throat (pharynx) with the stomach.

9. Wind pipe is the tube for breathing which connects the larynx to the lungs.

10. Epiglottis is the flap that covers the trachea during swallowing, so that food does not enter the lungs.

11. Glottis is the opening between the vocal cords at the upper part of the larynx.

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Unit Three: The Consonants of English

English consonants are classified according to three dimensions:

A. Place of Articulation

B. Manner of Articulation

C. Voicing

Place of Articulation

The place at which two speech organs approach or come together when producing a given sound as in the contact of the lower lip with the upper teeth to form a labio-dental sound like /v/. English consonants can be categorized to this feature, as shown below:

1. Bilabial means the upper lip contacts with the lower lip, forming a closure and producing three consonants /p, b, m/.

/p/ as in purse /pɜ:s/

/b/ as in back /bæk/

/m/ as in mad /mæd/

2. Labio-dental involves the contact of lower lip with upper teeth to produce the consonants /f/ and /v/. /f/ as in calf /kɑ:f/ /v/ as in vine /vaɪn/

3. Dental (Interdental) means the sounds that are produced due to the contact of the tip of the tongue with the upper teeth, making the two sounds /θ/ and /ð/.

/θ/ as in thick /θɪk/

/ð/ as in they /ðeɪ/

4. Alveolar refers to the sounds which are produced when the tip and blade of the tongue raise to contact the alveolar ridge to constrict the airflow and produce the sounds /t, d, s, z, l, n/.

/n/ as in man /mæn/

/t/ as in tip /tɪp/

/d/ as in bad /bæd/

/s/ as in bus /bʌs/

/z/ as in jazz /dʒæz/

/l/ as in luck /lʌk/

5. Post-alveolar means the consonants that are produced when the tongue blocks or constricts airflow at the point just beyond the alveolar ridge. English post-alveolar consonants include /ʃ, tʃ, ʒ, dʒ, r/.

/ʃ/ as in shot /ʃɒt/

/ʒ/ as in measure /'meʒə(r)/

/tʃ/ as in chick /tʃɪk/

/dʒ/ as in jam /dʒæm/

/r/ as in right /raɪt/

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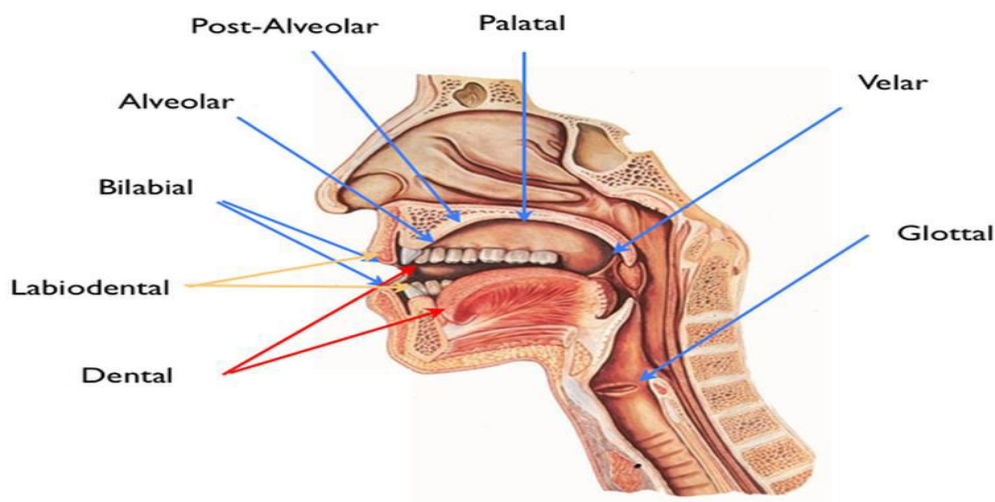
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6. Palatal refers to the contact of the tongue with the hard palate in order to produce the palatal consonant /j/.

/j/ as in yes /jes/

7. Velar is the production of the velar consonants / k, g, ŋ, w/ which are performed through raising the back of the tongue with the soft palate (velum) firmly. /k/ as in back /bæk/ /g/ as in bag /bæg/ /w/ as in wet /wet

8. Glottal means consonants are produced when the stream of air passing through the glottis is obstructed by the closed or narrowed vocal cords and then released. They include /h/ and /ʔ/. /h/ as in high /ʔ/ in the phrase wha (t) time is it? the /t/ in what is dropped and the vowel sound before it is closed at the glottis.



Classification of English Consonants

The description of the English consonant is to give the place, manner of articulation and voicing of the sound in question. For example, describe the following consonants:

P

Place: Bilabial

Manner: Stop

Voicing: Voiceless (V-)

V

Place: Labio-dental

Manner: Fricative

Voicing: Voiced (V+)

Aspiration is the strong burst of air that accompanies the release of some stop consonants /p,t,k/ that occur at the beginning of the words or stressed syllables. It is represented by /h/ sound like whispering.

1. pin, /pɪn/ → /p^hɪn/, /p/ is aspirated, but if /p/ is preceded by an initial /s/ like spin → /spɪn/, the /p/ sound is called unaspirated.
2. kin /kɪn/ → /k^hɪn/, /k/ is aspirated, but if /k/ is preceded by an initial /s/ like skin → /skɪn/, the /k/ sound is called unaspirated.
3. top /tɒp/ → [t^hɒp], /t/ is aspirated, but if /t/ is preceded by an initial /s/ like stop → /stɒp/, the /t/ sound is called unaspirated.

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B. Manner of Articulation

Manner of articulation refers to the type of closure made by the different organs of speech, namely it is the way the airstream is affected as it flows from the lungs and goes out from the nose or mouth. The manners of the English consonants are explained below:

1. Stops (plosives) are produced by means of a complete closure of the air passage, but after a while is released with an explosion of the air outside the mouth. The stops are /p, b, t, d, k, and g/.

2. Fricatives are produced with audible friction by letting the airstream pass through a narrow opening where it causes friction of various kinds between the articulators involved in the production of such sounds. They are nine /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/

3. Affricates are the sounds that begin like stops and end like fricatives. The English affricates are /tʃ, dʒ/.

4. Nasals are sounds which are produced when the soft palate is lowered, the airflow goes through the nose because the oral cavity is blocked to produce three nasal sounds / m, n, ŋ/. So, in all the nasal consonants, the soft palate is lowered.

Syllabic consonant is the syllable that contains only consonant without a vowel in between. Syllabic consonants are / m, n, ŋ, l/, and phonetically they are represented by a small dot / . / under the consonant.

Syllabic / ŋ/, button /'bʌtən/ → /'bʌtŋ/

Syllabic / m/, blossom /'blɒsəm/ → /'blɒsm/

Syllabic / ŋ /, broken /'brəʊkən/ → /'b.ɪəʊkŋ/

Syllabic /l/, bottle /'bɒtəl/ → /'bɒtɫ/

Syllabic /r/ veteran /'vetərən/ → /vɛtrŋ/

5. Lateral (Liquid) is produced when the tongue blocks the middle of the mouth, thus the airstream is able to escape between both sides of the tongue and palate and outside the mouth. There is only one lateral consonant /l/. This lateral sound is often syllabic as in travel → /'trævəl/ → /'trævɫ/, which is usually dark.

Show the difference between the **light** /l/ and the **dark** /l/ :

(a). The light (clear) /l/ appears before the vowel sound (L + Vowel), as in 'light' /laɪt/, like /laɪk/, please /pli:z/

(b). The dark /l/ comes after the vowel sound in final positions, as in 'field' /fi:ld/, small /smɔ:l/, call /kɔ:l/.

6. Gliding Consonants (Approximants)

There are three consonants which are called gliding or semi vowels or (Approximants) because they quickly and smoothly glide towards a following vowel sound. They are:

/j/ glides from the position of the vowel /i:/ or /ɪ/ to any vowel. We usually transcribe the word 'yes' as /jes/, but we might easily transcribe it as /i:es/ or /es/ because the sound /i:/ or /ɪ/ is very short and that we move smoothly and quickly to the following vowel /e/.

/w/ is difficult for Germans, Dutch and many Indians who pronounce it /v/ not /w/. Those people tend to replace /w/ by /v/.

In RP, /r/ occurs before vowels and never comes before consonants, thus words like 'learn', 'sort' and 'farm' do not contain /r/ /lɜ:n/, /sɔ:t/, /fɑ:m/, but other varieties of English pronounce /r/ in these words, such as American, Scottish, and Irish varieties). Linking /r/ means the gliding consonant which is placed between two words where the first word ends with a vowel and the beginning of the second word starts with a vowel sound, too, such as the phrase 'never again' /nevə r əgen/. Other examples which have no original /r/, but it is inserted between them:

Africa and Asia /æfrɪkə r ən eɪʃə/, **Linda and Ann** /lɪndə r ən æn/

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C. Voicing

The vocal cords may be held against each other at just the right tension so that the air flowing past them from the lungs will cause them to vibrate against each other. We call this process voicing. Sounds which are made with the vibration of the vocal cords are voiced, whereas the sounds made without the vibration of the vocal cords are voiceless.

No.	Voiceless	Voiced
1	p	b
2	t	d
3	k	g
4	f	v
5	θ	ð
6	s	z
7	ʃ	ʒ
8	tʃ	dʒ
9	h	m
10		n
11		ŋ
12		l
13		r
14		w
15		j

The table below explains the phonetic differences between each pair of consonant. Some consonants make frictions when producing them, i.e., they have strong friction or weak friction with long or short length of producing the sound. It is known that the lip and teeth are causing the friction.

Sound	Voicing		Friction
		Strength	Length
/f/	Voiceless	Strong	Long
/v/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/θ/	Voiceless	Strong	Long
/ð/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/s/	Voiceless	Strong	Long
/z/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/ʃ/	Voiceless	Strong	Long
/ʒ/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/p/	Voiceless	Strong	Long
/b/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/t/	Voiceless	Strong	Long
/d/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/k/	Voiceless	Strong	Long
/g/	Voiced	Weak	Short

/tʃ/	Voiceless	Strong	Long
/dʒ/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/m/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/n/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/ŋ/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/l/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/r/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/j/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/w/	Voiced	Weak	Short
/h/	Voiceless	Strong	Long

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Unit Four: Consonant Sequences

Consonant Sequence means a set of consonants which have no vowel between them. The consonant sequence or consonant cluster has different forms which are explained below:

4.1 Initial Sequences

1. Sequences of Two Consonants Initially

They are of two kinds:

- (a). /s/ is followed by one of /p, t, k, f, m, n, l, w, j/, such as (spy, stay, sky, sphere, small, snow, sleep, swear, suit).
- (b). When one of /p, t, k, b, d, g, f, θ, ʃ, v, m, n, h/ is followed by one of /l, r, w, j/, it forms a sequence of two consonants, such as (play, try, twice, tune).

2. Sequences of Three Consonants Initially

These sequences have three initial consonants which are started with /s/ sound, such as:

Spread /spred/

Straight /streit/

Screw /skru:/

4.2. Final Sequences

In such kinds of final sequences, the word consists of two final consonants without being intervened by any vowel sound, such as:

1. Two Consonants:

Slept /slept/

Fact fækt/

Breadth /bredθ/

Kept (**stop+stop**) /kept/

Act (**stop+stop**) /ækt/

2. Three Consonants:

Best man /best mæn/ help me /help mi:./

Fix this /fiks ðis/ tall tree /tɔ:l tri:./

3. Four Consonants

Big splash /big splæʃ/

Twelfth night /twelfθ naɪt/

4. Five Consonants

Prompt start /prɒmpt stɑ:t/

Bent spring /bent sprɪŋ/

5. Six Consonants

Next spring /nekst sprɪŋ/

Twelfth street /twelfθ stri:t/

6. Seven Consonants

The text's stupid / ði teksts stju:pid/

She tempts strangers /ʃi: tempts streɪndʒəz/

Transcribe the following words phonemically:

Growth, breath, breathe, bath, bathe, puffing, thirst, veal, rough, prove, save, refuse, view, file, fat, riding, tune, town, brought, cave, chain, badges, major, measure, occasion, lamb, fellow, beauty, value, quite, neighbour, wood, queen, half, sofa, reviews, refuse, over, first, these, wreath, knees, raising, racing, rouge, beige, vision, closure, baby.

Transcribing the above words phonemically reveals a set of the following phonetic issues:

1. The consonant combination letters (th) sound in the words 'breath' and 'breathe' are not identical because the noun 'breath' is transcribed /breθ/, whereas the verb 'breathe' is transcribed /bri:ð/. So, the combination (th) is pronounced /θ/ in the case of noun, but it is pronounced /ð/ in the case of verb. The same process occurs in the words bath /bɑ:θ/, bathe /beɪð/.

2. Some words contain silent consonant sounds, which are written , but not pronounced, such as: **lamb** /læm/, **brought** /brɔ:t/, **neighbour** /'neɪbə(r)/, **half** /hɑ:f/, **wreath** /ri:θ/, and **knees** /ni:z/

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Unit Five: The Vowels of English

Definition of a Vowel Sound:

A vowel is a speech sound, which is produced by comparatively open configuration of the vocal tract, with vibration of the vocal cords but without audible friction, and which is a unit of the sound system of a language that forms the nucleus of a syllable.

Vowels are produced by air passing through different mouth-shapes; the differences in the shape of the mouth are caused by different positions of the tongue and the lips. It is easy to see and feel the tongue differences.

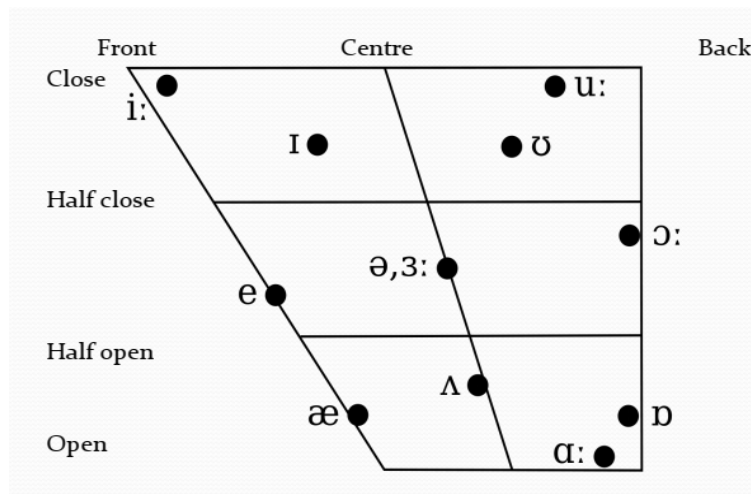
Vowels must be learned by listening and imitating, for instance, the vowel sound /ɔ:/ in the word 'saw' /sɔ:/ is produced, while the forms of the lips are round, and the back of the tongue is in a position mid-way between the highest and lowest position. To pronounce this long vowel, you need to listen to the native speaker how he produces it focussing on the shapes of the lips and the position of the tongue when producing it. The other matter is that the listener should listen to the speaker while producing this long vowel and imitates the way he produces the sound different times. However, all vowels are considered voiced and oral because in their production, the vocal cords are vibrating and the soft palate

(velum) is raised. These sounds make no obstruction to the flow of air when it passes from the larynx to the lips.

Vowels are classified into simple vowels, diphthongs and triphthongs (Vowel Sequence).

A. Simple Vowels are single vowel sounds, which are also called pure vowels because in their production they remain constant and do not glide to other vowels. Simple vowels are subdivided into long vowel sounds and short vowel sounds. Long vowels are marked by two dots (:), and they are longer than short vowels in production.

The chart below illustrates the position of the tongue and shape of the lips when producing each vowel sound.



Vowels are generally described according to the following criteria:

1. The portion of the tongue that is involved in the articulation: front, central or back.
2. The tongue's position related to the palate: high, mid or low.
3. The shape of the lips: rounded or unrounded (spread).
4. The length or duration of vocalization: long or short.

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Description of English Short Vowels:

1. /ɪ/ it is a short, above the half-close position, front, unrounded vowel sound.

It can be represented in the following letters:

i bid /bɪd/

y city /'sɪti/

e pretty /'prɪti/

2. /e/ it is a short, between half-close and half-open positions, front and unrounded vowel sound.

It can be represented in the following letters:

e bed /bed/

ea head /hed/

a any /'eni/

It occurs in initial and medial positions only.

3. /æ/ it is a short, a little above the open position, front and unrounded vowel sound.

Bad /bæd/, lack /læk/, tan /tæn/, act /ækt/, apple /'æpl/.

This sound occurs in initial and medial positions of words as shown in the above words.

4. /ɒ/ it is a short, open, back and rounded vowel sound.

It can be represented in the following letters:

o lock /lɒk/

a want /wɒnt/

ou cough /kɒf/

ow knowledge /'nɒlɪdʒ/

au because /bɪ'kɒz/

Again, this sound occurs in initial and medial positions of words as shown in the above words.

5. /ʊ/ it is a short, above the half-close position, back, rounded vowel sound.

It can be represented in the following letters:

u should /ʃʊd/

o woman /'wʊmən/

oo foot /fʊt/

ou would /wʊd/

The sound /ʊ/ occurs only in medial positions.

6. /ʌ/ it is a short, a little below the half open-position, central, unrounded vowel sound.

u cut /kʌt/

o son /sʌn/

ou young /jʌŋ/

oo blood /blʌd/

oe does /dʌz/

It occurs only in initial and medial positions.

7. /ə/ it is a short, between half-close and half-open positions, central, unrounded vowel sound.

This is the shortest and weakest vowel among the pure English vowel sounds. It occurs in different positions as there are many letters from which this sound is produced.

B. Diphthongs are two vowel sounds combined together to form a new vowel sound within one syllable. Simply, a diphthong is a glide from one vowel to another, and the whole glide acts like one of the long or simple vowels. The diphthongs of English are divided into three groups:

- those which end in /ʊ/ as in /əʊ/ , /aʊ/

- those which end in /ɪ/ as in /aɪ/ , /eɪ/ /ɔɪ/

- those which end in /ə/ as in /eə/ , /ɪə/ , /ʊə/

Description of English Diphthongs:

1. /əʊ/ it is a closing diphthong that begins at a back position between half-close and open positions and moves towards /ʊ/.

both /bəʊθ/, so /səʊ/, boat /bəʊt/, low /ləʊ/, snow /snəʊ/ etc.

2. /aʊ/ it is a closing diphthong that begins at a point between the half-open and open back and central positions, and then moves towards /ʊ/.

Now /naʊ/, loud /laʊd/, found /faʊnd/, town /taʊn/, etc.

3. /eɪ/ it is a closing diphthong that begins at a point below the half-close front position and then moves towards /ɪ/.

Late /leɪt/, paper /'peɪpə(r)/, rake /reɪk/, play /pleɪ/, etc.

4. /aɪ/ it is a closing diphthong that begins at a point slightly behind the front open position and then moves in the direction of /ɪ/.

White /waɪt/, rice /raɪs/, like /laɪk/, etc.

5. /ɔɪ/ it is a closing diphthong that begins at a point between back half-open and open positions and moves towards /ɪ/.

Boy /bɔɪ/, oil /ɔɪl/, voice /vɔɪs/, annoy /ə'nɔɪ/, joint /dʒɔɪnt/, etc.

6. /ɪə/ it is a centering diphthong that begins at a centralized front half-close position and moves towards /ə/ which is more open.

Fear /fɪə(r)/, beard /bɪəd/, fierce /fɪəs/, etc.

7. /eə/ it is a centering diphthong that begins at a point in the half-close front position and moves in the direction of /ə/.

bare /beə(r)/, air /eə(r)/, hair /heə(r)/, rarely /'reəli/, etc.

8. /ʊə/ it is a centering diphthong that begins at a centralized front half-close position and then moves in the direction of /ə/.

Poor /pʊə(r)/, surely /'ʃʊəli/, furious /'fjʊəriəs/, etc.

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C. Vowel sequences (Triphthongs)

Vowel Sequence or Triphthong is a combination or sequence of three vowel sounds. The triphthongs include the following types:

1. aɪ + ə → aɪ ə

Tyre /'taɪə(r)/, trial /'traɪəl/, quiet /'kwaɪət/, buyer /'baɪə(r)/, flyer /'flaɪə(r)/

2. aʊ + ə → aʊ ə

Tower /'taʊə(r)/, powerful /'paʊəfl/, flower /'flaʊə(r)/, bower /'baʊə(r)/, ours /'aʊəz/, coward /'kaʊəd/

3. eɪ + ə → eɪ ə

Player /'pleɪə(r)/, greyer /greɪə/, betrayal /bɪ'treɪəl/, layer /'leɪə(r)/, stayer /'steɪə(r)/

4. əʊ + ə → əʊ ə

mower /'məʊə(r)/, rower /'rəʊə(r)/, lower /ləʊə(r)/, sower /'səʊə(r)/.

5. /ɔɪ + ə → ɔɪ ə

Lawyer /'ləɪə(r)/, employer /ɪm'plɔɪə(r)/, royal /'rɔɪəl/, annoyance /ə'nɔɪəns/

Unit Six: Words in Company

6.1. Word groups and Stress

When the speaker talks, he does not use a single word, rather he uses groups of words in a continuous way. The system of speaking is governed by a pause (break), but pausing, which means stopping for a while, is not used during the talk instead it is used after a group of words. These groups are divided into three forms:

1. Long Group consists of a compound or complex sentence.

How did you manage to do it so neatly and tidily?

2. Intermediate Group consists of a simple sentence or phrase.

Come over here a minute.

3. Short Group consists of one word only.

Yes

No

When there are longer elements in an utterance, the speaker must break them up into connected groups as shown in the example below:

**Last Wednesday I wanted to get up to London early so I caught a train
about half an hour before my usual one and I got to work about half past eight**

When one group is very closely connected grammatically to the next, there is a very slight pause, which is marked by the two brackets (). But when two groups are not so closely connected grammatically, there should be a longer pause, which is marked by the brackets (). Also, this double bar (brackets) is used to mark the end of a complete sentence.

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6.2. Stressed and Unstressed Syllables

Definition of Syllable:

A syllable is a unit of speech which is single and has a sound. It may have a vowel sound or one or more consonants surrounding it.

A **stressed syllable** is the part of a word, which is said with greater force and greater emphasis than the other syllables. Conversely, an **unstressed syllable** is a part of a word, which is uttered with less force and emphasis than the stressed syllable. Consider the following example:

I could hardly believe my eyes / **aɪ** **kɒd** ***hɑːdli** **bɪ*****liːv** **maɪ** ***aɪz** /

The words hardly, believe, and eyes are stressed. The mark of stress is the asterisk (*) placed over the stressed syllable.

The difference between stressed syllable and unstressed syllables:

1. All words of more than one syllable are stressed.
2. Words of one syllable are generally not stressed if they are purely grammatical words like personal pronouns, (I, me, she, he, they, them, etc.), prepositions (to, at, in, on, etc.), articles (the, a, an). Other words are stressed like lexical verbs (eat, drink, take, love, try, etc.), adjectives such as (good, blue, long, cold, etc.), adverbs like (well, just, quite) and so forth. These are the open-class words that give full meanings and provide us with basic information.
3. Syllables which are not stressed often contain the vowel / ə/ because this vowel occurs in unstressed syllables, and it does not occur in stressed syllables. For instance, the word (verb) 'contain' has two syllables: /kən***teɪ**n/, the first one is unstressed because it has the vowel / ə/, whereas the second one is stressed. On the other hand, the word (noun) 'contents' /***kɒ**ntent/ has two syllables, the first one is stressed because it has the clearer vowel sound /ɒ/.

Word	Transcription	Word	Transcription
Permit (v.)	/pə*mit/	Perfect (Adj)	/*pɜ:fɪkt/
Provide (v.)	/prə*vaid/	Progress (n.)	/*prəʊgres/
Photograph (n.)	/*fəʊtə*grɑ:f/	Photography (n.)	/fə*təgrəfi/
Prepare (v.)	/prɪ*peə(r)/	Preparation (n.)	/*prepə*reɪʃn/
Combine (v.)	/kəm*baɪn/	Combination (n.)	/*kɒmbɪ*neɪʃn/
Convent (n.)	/*kɒnvənt/	Invent (v.)	/ɪn*vent/

6.3. Weak Forms of Words

Weak forms are those function (grammatical) words that are used in full sentences. Weak forms consist of articles, auxiliary verbs, pronouns, possessives, prepositions, and conjunctions. The weak forms usually contain the vowel sound /ə/.

Word and	Type of Word	Weak Form	Example
	Conjunction	ən	Black and white /*blæk ən *waɪt/
Had=d	Auxiliary Verb	d (Used after I, he, she, we you, they)	They'd left home /ðeɪd *left *həʊm/
can	Auxiliary Verb	/kən/	How can I help? /*haʊ kən aɪ *help/
some	Quantifier	/sʌm/	I need some paper. /aɪ *ni:d sʌm *peɪpə/
at	Preposition	/ət/	Come at once. /*kʌm ət *wʌns/
For	Preposition	/fər/ before consonants	Come for tea. /*kʌm fər *ti:/
For	Preposition	fər/ before vowel	Come for a meal. /*kʌm fər ə *mi:l/
to	Preposition	/tə/ before consonants	To stay or to go. /tə *steɪ ɔ: tə *gəʊ/
to	Preposition	/tu:/ before vowels (strong form)	I wanted to ask you. / aɪ *wɒntɪd tu: *ɑ:sk ju:/
a	Article	/ə/ before consonants	/ ə *paʊnd ə *deɪ/
an	Article	/ən/ before vowels	/*hæv ən *æpl/

the	Article	/ðə/ Weak Form Before consonant	The picture / ðə *pɪktʃə(r)/
the	Article	/ði:/ Strong Form	The answer /ði:*ɑ:nsə(r)/
he	Pronoun	/hi:/	Did he win? /*dɪd hi: *wɪn? /
him	Pronoun	/ɪm/	Give him to /*gɪv ɪm *tu: /
his	Pronoun	/ɪz/	I like his tie /aɪ *laɪk ɪz *taɪ /
do	Auxiliary	/də/ weak Form Before consonant	How do they know? /*haʊ də ðeɪ *nəʊ ?/
do	Auxiliary	/du:/ strong Form Before vowel	How do I know? /*haʊ du: aɪ *nəʊ ?/
does	Auxiliary	/dəz/	When does the train leave? /*wen dəz ðə *treɪn *li:v ?/
am	Auxiliary	m (after I)	I am tired. /aɪ m *taɪəd /
am	Auxiliary	/əm/ used elsewhere	When am I to be there? /*wen əm aɪ tə *bi: *ðeə ? /
was	Auxiliary	/wəz/	The weather was terrible! /ðə *weðər wəz *terəbl /
have	Auxiliary	V after I, we, you, they,	You've broken it. /ju:v *brəʊkən it/
have	Auxiliary	/əv/ used elsewhere	The men have gone. /ðə *men əv *gɒn/

These function words are weak forms in these contexts, but they also have strong forms when they are used in the following cases:

1. Whenever the word is stressed, it can be strong, such as can I? /*kæn aɪ /
do they? /du: ðeɪ/

2. Whenever the word is final in the group, it should be strong, such as you
are I don't /aɪ *dəʊnt/

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6.5. Rhythm Units

Rhythm means that stressed syllables tend to occur at relatively regular intervals whether they are separated by unstressed syllables or not. There is at least one stressed syllable in every word group in English. This stressed syllable sounds stronger and louder than the other unstressed syllables in the word group.

Within the word group there is at least one stressed syllable (//**wen?//*, //**su:n *naʊ? *jes*).

aim **gəʊɪŋ *həʊm tə*deɪ*

aim **gəʊɪŋ *həʊm fə *krɪsməs*

In this way of arrangement any unstressed syllable before the stressed syllable is said very quickly and does not affect the length of syllables before it. Any unstressed syllable after the stress is considered as part of the stress group. However, a unit of this kind, with a stressed syllable as its center and any unstressed syllables which may come before it and after it, is called a rhythm unit. Thus, aim **gəʊɪŋ* is a rhythm unit, and so is **həʊm* and so is *fə *krɪsməs*.

How do you decide what words or syllables go together in a rhythm unit? The following rules decide whether the words or syllables are rhythm units or not:

1. Any unstressed syllables at the beginning of a word group must go together with the following stress group:

/aɪ wəz ɪn *lʌndən /

2. If the unstressed syllable(s) is part of the same word as the stress syllable they belong to the same rhythm group:

/*tʃi:p ə *feəz/

3. If unstressed syllable(s) is closely connected grammatically to the stressed word, although not a part of that word, they belong to the same rhythm unit:

/*grɪv ɪt tə*dʒʊn /

4. If you doubt as to which rhythm unit unstressed syllables belong to, put them after a stress rather than before it. Thus, in *He was older than me*, if you doubt about /ðən/, put it with /əʊldə/ /mi:/:

/hi:wəz *əʊld θən *mi: /

6.6. Fluency

To pronounce words in a group, the speaker must pay attention to the following cases:

1. The speaker must utter the words in a group fluently without hesitation or gaps between the words and without stumbling. The speaker should divide the sentence into groups, as shown in the example below:

I went home on the Sunday morning train.

2. The speaker must go smoothly and continuously when uttering two words where the first ends with a vowel and the second starts with a vowel, the speaker must glide from one vowel to another without break, e.g.:

He's always asking awkward questions. /hi:z *ɔ:lweɪz *ɑ:skɪŋ *ɔ:kwəd *kwɛstʃən/

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6.7. Changing Word Shapes

Alteration

One sound may be altered to another sound due to the effect of the following sound, and in phonetics this process is called fusion or coalescence, as shown in the following cases:

1. /p/ replaces /t/ as in right **p**lace = /raɪ**p** pleɪs/

2. /b/ replaces /d/ as in hard **p**ath /hɑː**b** pɑːθ/

3. /m/ replaces /n/ as in ten **m**en /te**m** men /

4. /k/ replaces /t/ before (k or g) as in white **k**oat /waɪ**k** kəʊt/
that **g**irl /ðæ**g** ɡɜːl /

5. /g/ replaces /d/ as in red **g**ate /re**g** geɪt/

6. /ŋ/ replaces /n/ as in one **ŋ**cup /wʌ**ŋ** kʌp/

7. /ʃ/ replaces /s/ (before f or j)

as in nice **sh**oes /naɪ **ʃ**ʃuːz/

as in this **y**ear /ðɪ **ʃ**jiə(r)/

8. /ʒ/ replaces /z/ as in those **sh**ops /ðəʊ**ʒ** ʃɒps/

However, these alterations are used in connected speech when the speakers speak quickly. In another kind of alteration, the strong consonant replaces a weak consonant in a compound word: fivepence /,faɪ**f** pens/ and newspaper /'njuːspeɪ**p**ə(r)/

Disappearance

It means the omission of sounds in certain contexts. To omit sounds, the following rules must be followed:

1. /-st/ + stop: last time: /lɑ:s taɪm /

a. /-st/ + nasal: best man /**b**es mæn/

b. /-st/ + friction: west side /**w**es saɪd/

2. /-ft/ + stop: lift boy /lɪf bɔɪ/

a. /-ft / + nasal: left knee /**l**ef ni:/

b. /-ft / + friction: soft snow /**s**ɒf snəʊ /

3. /-nd / + nasal: blind man /blaɪn mæn/

a. /-nd / + weak stop: tinned beans /tɪn bi:nz/

4. /-md / + nasal: skimmed milk /skɪm mɪlk/

a. /-nd / + weak stop: it seemed good /ɪt si:m gʊd/