

عنوان المحاضرة: Vowels & Their Types

المادة الدراسية: Pronunciation

المرحلة الدراسية: First Stage/ Morning Studies

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العام الدراسي: 2025-2026



جامعة الموصل

كلية الآداب

القسم: الترجمة

Lecture: Vowels and Their Types

What are Vowels?

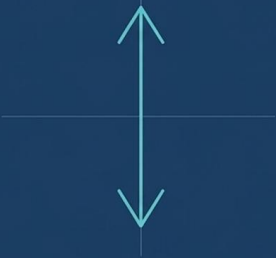
Vowels are speech sounds produced without any significant obstruction of the airflow in the vocal tract. During the production of vowels, the air flows freely through the mouth, and the vocal cords vibrate, making all English vowels voiced.

Examples: /i:/, /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɑ:/, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /ə/



Classification of Vowels

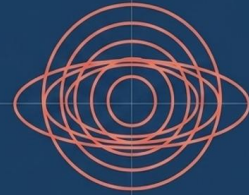
English vowels are classified according to three main criteria:



Tongue Height



Tongue Position



Lip Shape

1. Tongue Height

This refers to how high or low the tongue is in the mouth.

High (Close) Vowels

The tongue is raised close to the roof of the mouth.

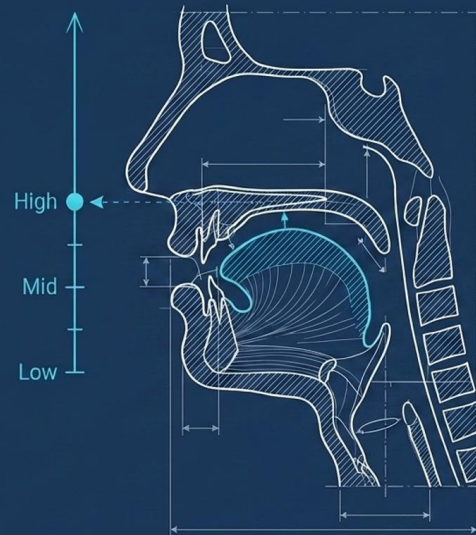
Examples:

/i:/ as in see

/u:/ as in food

/ɪ/ as in sit

/ʊ/ as in book

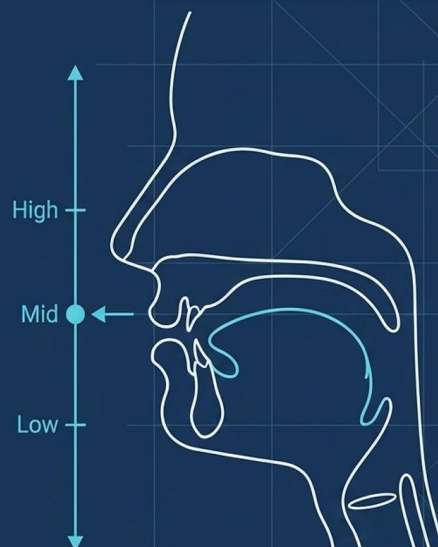


Mid Vowels

The tongue is positioned midway between high and low.

Examples:

/e/ as in bed	/ʌ/ as in cup
/ə/ as in about	/ɔ:/ as in thought
/ɜ:/ as in bird	

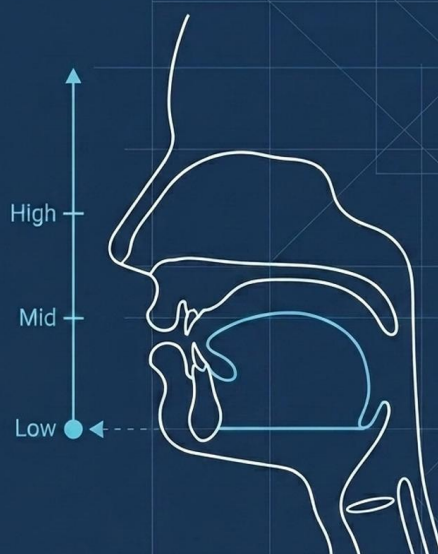


Low (Open) Vowels

The tongue is positioned low in the mouth.

Examples:

/æ/ as in cat
/ɑ:/ as in father
/ɒ/ as in hot (British English)



2. Tongue Position

This refers to the part of the tongue that is raised.

Front Vowels

The front of the tongue is raised.

Examples:

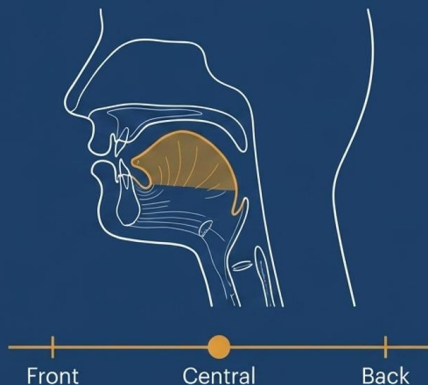
/i:/, /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/



Central Vowels

The middle of the tongue is raised.

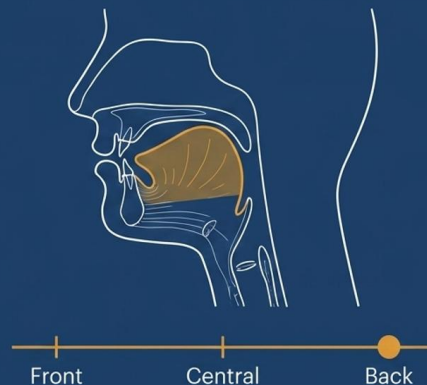
Examples: /ə/, /ɜ:/, /ʌ/



Back Vowels

The back of the tongue is raised.

Examples: /u:/, /ʊ/, /ɔ:/, /ɒ/, /ɑ:/



3. Lip Shape



Rounded Vowels

The lips are rounded.

Examples: /u:/, /ʊ/, /ɔ:/, /ɒ/



Unrounded Vowels

The lips are spread or neutral.

Examples: /i:/, /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɜ:/, /ə/, /ɑ:/

Classification Criteria

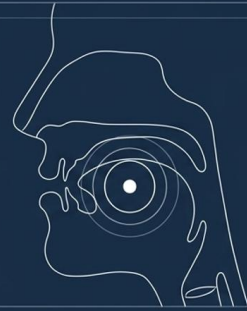
	Front	Central	Back
High (Close)	/i:/, /ɪ/		/u:/ ● /ʊ/ ●
Mid	/e/	/ə/, /ɜ:/, /ʌ/	/ɔ:/ ●
Low (Open)	/æ/		/ɑ:/ /ɒ/ ●

Types of Vowels

1. Monophthongs (Pure Vowels)

These are vowels produced with one steady tongue position throughout their pronunciation.

English has 12 monophthongs (in Received Pronunciation):



/i:/	/ɪ/	/e/	/æ/	/ʌ/	/ɑ:/
/ɒ/	/ɔ:/	/ʊ/	/u:/	/ɜ:/	/ə/

2. Diphthongs

A diphthong is a vowel sound that begins in one position and glides toward another within the same syllable.

The 8 English diphthongs are:



/eɪ/ as in day

/əʊ/ (or /oʊ/ in American English) as in go

/aɪ/ as in my

/ɪə/ as in near (RP)

/ɔɪ/ as in boy

/eə/ as in hair (RP)

/aʊ/ as in now

/ʊə/ as in tour (RP, less common in modern English)

Summary

English vowels are classified according to:



Tongue Height: High, Mid, Low



Tongue Position: Front, Central, Back



Lip Shape: Rounded, Unrounded

They are also divided into:



Monophthongs (Pure Vowels):
12 vowel sounds



Diphthongs (Gliding Vowels):
8 vowel sounds



These classifications help learners understand how English vowel sounds are produced and distinguished.