



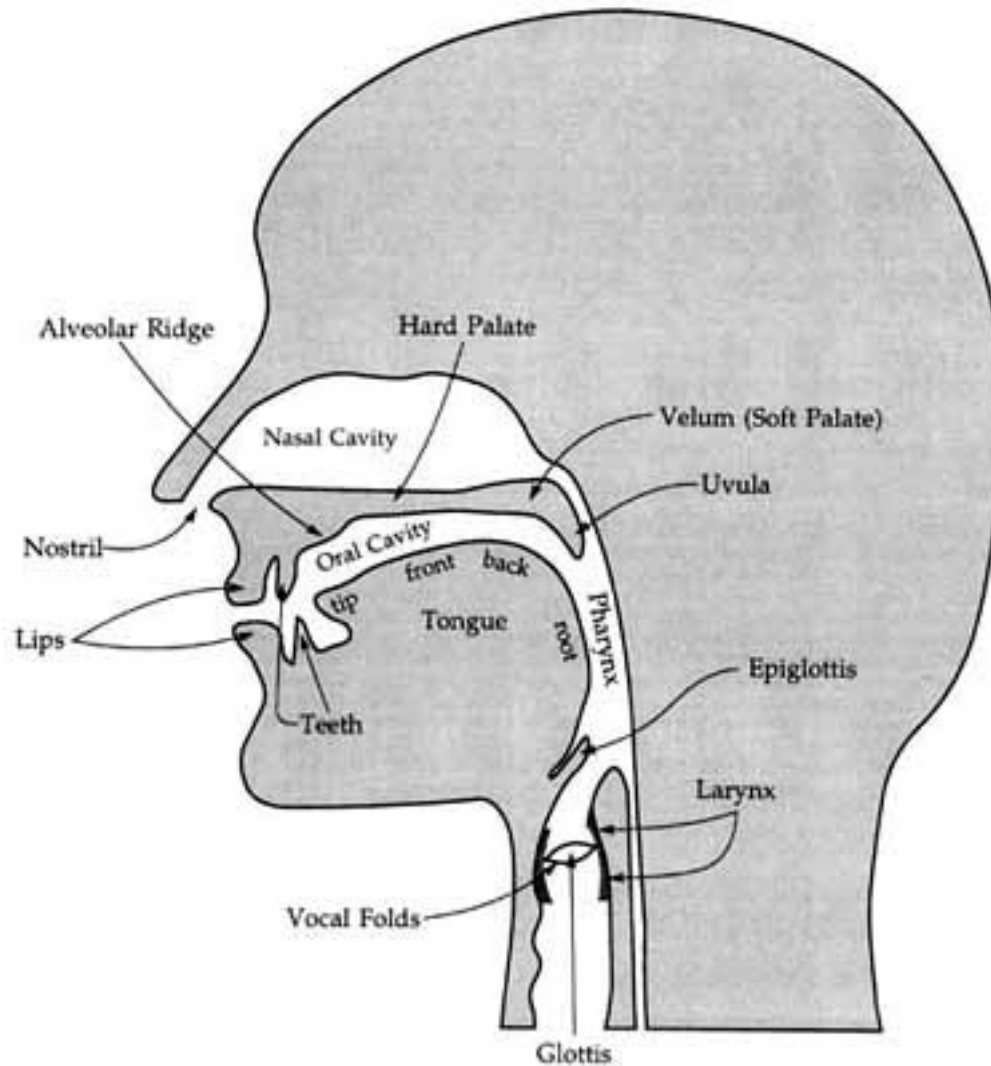
# **English Pronunciation**

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# **A Student's Guide to Consonant Sounds**



# The Vocal Tract



Source: <http://jcarreras.homestead.com/files/phoneticsvocaltract.jpg>

# Consonant Sounds

p

b

t

d

tʃ

dʒ

k

g

f

v

θ

ð

s

z

ʃ

ʒ

m

n

ŋ

h

l

r

w

j

# Consonant Sounds - Stops

p	b
t	d
k	g

# Consonant Sounds - Stops

What is the difference between...

the sounds in the 1<sup>st</sup> column /p t k/

and the sounds in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column /b d g/?

# Consonant Sounds - Stops

- The sounds in the 1<sup>st</sup> column appear quieter:
  - There is no vocal cord vibration or “voice”
  - They are called “voiceless” consonants
- The sounds in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column appear louder:
  - The vocal cords start vibrating
  - They are called “voiced” consonants

# Consonant Sounds - Stops

- The air stream is blocked (or 'stopped')
- Air builds up
- The air is released

**Note: These sounds are also called 'Plosives'**

# Consonant Sounds - Stops

How is the airstream blocked...

.....in these sounds?

p

b

.....in these sounds?

t

d

.....in these sounds?

k

g

# Consonant Sounds - Stops

..by bringing both lips together

p

b

..by touching the alveolar ridge with the front part of the tongue

t

d

..by touching the velum (soft palate) with the back of the tongue

k

g

# Consonant Sounds - Fricatives

f	v
θ	ð
s	z
ʃ	ʒ

# Consonant Sounds - Fricatives

What is the difference between...

the sounds in the 1<sup>st</sup> column /f θ s ʃ/

and the sounds in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column /v ð z ʒ/?

# Consonant Sounds - Fricatives

- The sounds in the 1<sup>st</sup> column appear quieter:
  - There is no vocal cord vibration or “voice”.
  - They are called “voiceless” consonants.
- The sounds in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column appear louder:
  - The vocal cords start vibrating
  - They are called “voiced” consonants.

# Consonant Sounds - Fricatives

- The air stream is partially blocked in some way
- Air is forced out of the mouth through a small gap
- This creates 'frication' or turbulence

# Consonant Sounds - Fricatives

How is the air partially blocked...

...in these sounds?

**f**

**v**

...in these sounds?

**θ**

**ð**

...in these sounds?

**s**

**z**

...in these sounds?

**ʃ**

**ʒ**

# Consonant Sounds - Fricatives

The bottom lip is pressed lightly against the edge of the top front teeth

**f**

**v**

The tip/blade of the tongue is pressed lightly against the inside edge of the top front teeth

**θ**

**ð**

The tip/blade of the tongue is pressed lightly against the alveolar ridge

**s**

**z**

The tip/blade of the tongue is pressed towards a point between the alveolar ridge and hard palate

**ʃ**

**ʒ**

# Consonant Sounds - Affricates

ʧ

ʤ

# Consonant Sounds - Affricates

What is the difference between...

the sound in the 1<sup>st</sup> column /tʃ/

and the sound in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column /dʒ/?

# Consonant Sounds - Affricates

- The sound in the 1<sup>st</sup> column is voiceless:
  - There is no vocal cord vibration or “voice”.
- The sound in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column is voiced:
  - The vocal cords start vibrating

# Consonant Sounds - Affricates

- Affricates are made up of two sounds:
  - A plosive /t/ or /d/
  - and a fricative /ʃ/ or /ʒ/
- In both affricate sounds /tʃ dʒ/ the blade of the tongue is pressed towards a point between the alveolar ridge and the hard palate
- First the air is stopped (plosive), then air is forced out of the mouth through a small gap (fricative)

# Consonant Sounds - Nasals

m

n

ŋ

# Consonant Sounds - Nasals

Are these sounds  
voiced or unvoiced?

# Consonant Sounds - Nasals

- Voiced: Nasal sounds are produced with vocal cord vibration
- Air flow is blocked in the mouth and diverted through the nose

# Consonant Sounds - Nasals

How is the air blocked and diverted through the nose....

...In this sound?

m

...In this sound?

n

...In this sound?

ŋ

# Consonant Sounds - Nasals

How is the air blocked and diverted through the nose....

...by bringing the lips together

...by touching the alveolar ridge with the tip/blade of the tongue

...by touching the soft palate with the back of the tongue

m

n

ŋ

# Consonants – Other Sounds

l	ɹ
w	j

# Consonants – Other Sounds

Are these sounds  
voiced or unvoiced?

# Consonant – Other Sounds

Voiced: /l r w j/ are all produced with vocal cord vibration?

# Consonants – /l/ and /ɹ/

The production of /l/

- The blade of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge
- Air escapes around the sides of the tongue

The production of /ɹ/

- The tip of the tongue is raised to the back part of the alveolar ridge
- The tongue does not touch the ridge

# Consonants – **/l/** and **/ɹ/**

The production of **/l/**

- The tip/blade of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge
- Air escapes around the sides of the tongue

The production of **/ɹ/** (written as **/r/** on some charts)

- The tip/blade of the tongue is raised to the back part of the alveolar ridge
- The tongue does not touch the ridge

# Consonants – /h/

## The production of /h/

- There is no vocal cord vibration; /h/ is voiceless
- There is no one tongue position for /h/!!!
- The position of the tongue, lips, and jaw for /h/ is the same as the following vowel sound.
- Air is forced through the mouth in a similar way to the fricative sounds.



## **References:**

Underhill, A. (1994). *Sound Foundations*. Heinemann

## **For further practice see:**

Hancock, M. (2003). *English Pronunciation in Use*. Cambridge University Press

## **Web-link to EFL Tutoring – Consonant Chart**

<http://www.efltutoring.com/>

