

CHAPTER 3

ENGLISH CONSONANT SOUNDS

In the description and the classification of the English consonant sounds, we shall follow the classificatory system as explained in chapter 2. Therefore, the English consonant sounds will be described in terms of 1) voice or voicelessness, 2) the place of articulation, and 3) the manner of articulation. Such a description will be assigned to a three-term label for each consonant sound, such as the label *voiceless alveolar plosive* for the initial consonant sound in English word *talk*.

Consonant sounds

In English there are 24 consonant sounds listed below along with the examples that show their occurrence in the initial, medial, and final positions. A blank space in the table indicates the non-occurrence of a consonant sound in that position.

| No. | Consonant | Initial | Medial | Final |
|-----|-----------|---------|---------|-------|
| 1. | p | pen | spend | step |
| 2. | b | back | rabbit | rub |
| 3. | t | ten | stone | let |
| 4. | d | day | under | head |
| 5. | k | key | sky | talk |
| 6. | g | go | forget | bag |
| 7. | tʃ | chain | watches | teach |
| 8. | dʒ | job | enjoy | large |
| 9. | m | man | small | sum |
| 10. | n | no | snake | run |
| 11. | ŋ | - | link | sing |
| 12. | l | late | slay | ball |
| 13. | f | fan | refill | half |
| 14. | v | van | review | live |

| No. | Consonant | Initial | Medial | Final |
|-----|-----------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| 15. | θ | think | months | both |
| 16. | ð | then | weather | clothe |
| 17. | s | so | taste | bus |
| 18. | z | zoo | amazing | is |
| 19. | ʃ | shop | washes | fresh |
| 20. | ʒ | - | vision | rouge |
| 21. | h | hat | behind | - |
| 22. | r | red | tree | car (<i>AmE</i>) |
| 23. | w | win | swim | - |
| 24. | j | yes | new | - |

Figure 3.1 Phonetic symbols of English Consonant sounds

Producing consonant sounds

In this section the English consonant sounds will be described in terms of 1) voice or voicelessness, 2) the place of articulation, and 3) the manner of articulation as follows:

1.1 Bilabial plosives /p/, /b/

1.1.1 Voiceless bilabial plosive /p/

In producing the sounds /p/, the soft palate is raised to close off the nasal tract. The airstream moving out from the lungs is blocked by the closure of the lips. There is a small explosion of the air when the lips open quickly. In the sound /p/, there is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords are kept wide apart.

1) Practice the sound /p/



Close your lips tight.
 Push air forward in your mouth.
 Then open your lips quickly.
 Do not use your voice.

Figure 3.2 The diagram for the sound /p/

/p/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| /p-/ | /-p-/ | /-p/ |
| pick | apple | tip |
| pill | supper | hip |
| pen | speak | top |
| park | appear | help |
| piece | sport | tap |

“Pat put purple paint in the pool”.

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /p/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) **Please help!**

2.2) **Please pass the pepper.**

2.3) **Stop pushing!**

2.4) **Pick it up.**

2.5) **Pretty important**

2.6) on **purpose**

3) Spelling

The sound /p/ is spelled with the letter *p*:

p = pen, paper, people, stamp

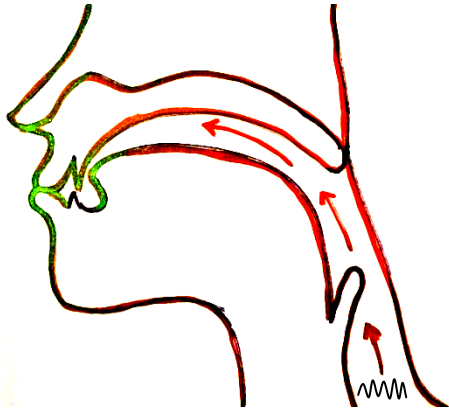
pp = happy, shopping, pepper, stopped

The letter p is silent in these words: **psychology, receipt, pneumonia, and cupboard.**

1.1.2 Voiced bilabial plosive /b/

Producing the sound /b/ differs from /p/ only with regard to voicing: for /p/ there is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords do not vibrate, but for /b/, there is voice from the throat, that is, they vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /b/



First practice /p/.

Then use your voice to say /b/

Figure 3.3 The diagram for the sound /b/

/b/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|---------|-------|
| /b-/ | /-b-/ | /-b/ |
| bag | about | job |
| bill | rabbit | rob |
| bad | forbid | mob |
| book | library | cab |
| boss | abbot | knob |

“Bernie brought a big breakfast back to bed”.

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /b/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) I **b**ought a **b**ook.

2.2) It's a **b**ig **j**ob.

2.3) I'll **b**e right **b**ack.

2.4) I've **b**een **b**usy.

2.5) **B**obby's **b**irthday.

2.6) Is there a **b**aby **b**ird here?

3) Spelling

The sound /b/ is spelled with the letter *b*:

b = bad, about, table, job

bb = rabbit, robber, rubber, mobbed

The letter **b** is silent in these words: climb**b**, lamb**b**, comb**b**, doubt, and debt.

4) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /p/ and /b/ in contrast.

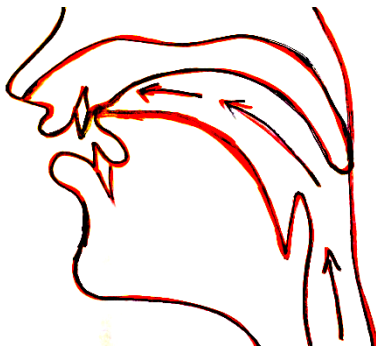
| Sound 1: /p/ | Sound 2: /b/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| pie | buy |
| pear | bear |
| pill | bill |
| cap | cab |
| rope | robe |

1.2 Alveolar plosives /t/, /d/

1.2.1 Voiceless alveolar plosive /t/

In producing the sound /t/, the soft palate is raised to close off the nasal tract. The airstream moving out from the lungs is blocked by the closure made between the tip of the tongue and the teeth ridge. There is a small explosion of the air when the closure is released quickly. In the sound /t/, there is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords are kept wide apart.

1) Practice the sound /t/



Put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth ridge.

Push air forward in your mouth.

Then move your tongue away.

Do not use your voice.

Figure 3.4 The diagram for the sound /t/

/t/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|----------|-------|
| /t-/ | /-t-/ | /-t/ |
| tick | maintain | wet |
| top | stop | lot |
| take | attend | bat |
| talk | doctor | sit |
| true | bottle | late |

“Betty bought a tub of butter”.

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /t/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) What **time** is it?

2.2) What **about** you?

2.3) Just a **moment**. -

2.4) **Take it** easy!

2.5) Thanks! It's no **trouble at** all.

2.6) What's the **matter**?

3) Spelling

The sound /t/ is spelled with the letter *t*:

t = ten, time, try, twenty

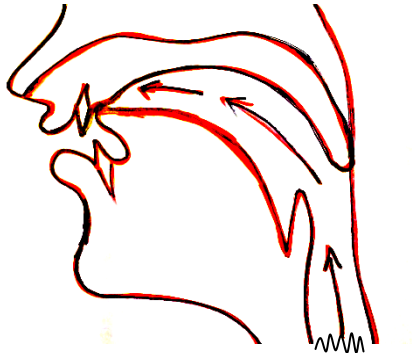
tt = better, letter, little, getting

The letter t is silent in these words: **often**, **listen**, **whistle**, **castle**, **ballet**, and **Christmas**.

1.2.1 Voiced alveolar plosive /d/

Producing the sound /d/ differs from /t/ only with regard to voicing: for /t/, there is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords do not vibrate, but for /d/, there is voice from the throat, that is, they vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /d/



First practice /t/.

Then use your voice to say /d/.

Figure 3.5 The diagram for the sound /d/

/d/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| /d-/ | /-d-/ | /-d/ |
| day | body | mad |
| dish | ladder | head |
| dry | sadly | bride |
| door | predict | card |
| date | candle | end |

“David’s daughter didn’t dance but David’s dad did”.

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /d/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) That’s a good **idea**!

2.2) What’s the **date** **today**?

2.3) I **don**’t **understand**. -

2.4) How **do** you **do**?

2.5) I **didn**’t **do** it.

2.6) What’s her **address**?

3) Spelling

The sound /d/ is spelled with the letter *d*:

d = day, date, door, dick

dd = add, address, middle, sudden

4) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /t/ and /d/ in contrast.

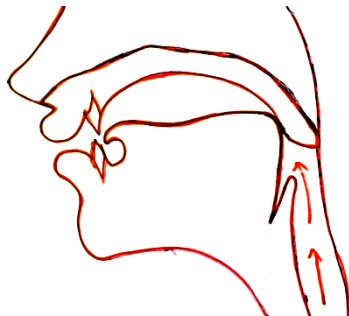
| Sound1: /t/ | Sound 2: /d/ |
|-------------|--------------|
| time | dime |
| tore | door |
| try | dry |
| write | ride |
| cart | card |

1.3 Velar plosives /k/, /g/

1.3.1 Voiceless velar plosive /k/

In producing the sound /k/, the airstream moving out from the lungs is blocked by touching the soft palate, which is raised to close off the nasal tract, with the back of the tongue. There is a small explosion of the air when the closure is released quickly. In the sound /k/, there is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords are kept wide apart.

1) Practice the sound /k/



Touch the soft palate with the back of your tongue.
Push air forward in your mouth.
Then move your tongue away.
Do not use your voice.

Figure 3.6 The diagram for the sound /k/

/k/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|---------|---------|
| /k-/ | /-k-/ | /-k/ |
| king | sky | back |
| cook | occur | lick |
| cat | speaker | peak |
| chemist | school | stomach |
| keen | become | sick |

“The king cooked the carrots and the queen cut the cake”.

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /k/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) **C**ome in.

2.2) **E**xcuse me.

2.3) **C**an I **c**all you **b**ack?

2.4) **T**hanks for **c**oming.

2.5) **C**ould you **k**ee**p** a **s**ecret?

2.6) **C**an I **a**sk a **q**uest**i**on?

3) Spelling

The sound /k/ is usually spelled with the letter *k*, *c* or *ck*:

k = king, key, walk, like

c = cat, call, correct, electric

ck = lack, back, clock, jacket

ch = school, chemistry, headache, stomach

x, xc = pronounced /ks/: six, next, extra,

excellent, excited

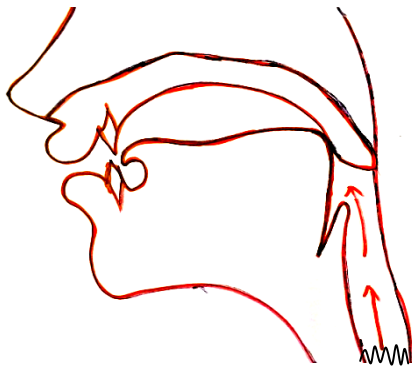
qu = usually pronounced /kw/: question,

quick, quiet, request

1.3.2 Voiced velar plosive /g/

The sound /g/ is produced in the same way as /k/. However, /g/ differs from /k/ only with regard to voicing: for /k/, there is no voice from the throat, that is, they do not vibrate, but for /g/, there is voice from the throat, that is, they vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /g/



First practice /k/

Then use your voice.

Figure 3.7 The diagram for the sound /g/

/k/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| /g-/ | /-g-/ | /-g/ |
| game | bigger | bag |
| get | again | dog |
| gap | cigar | fag |
| grain | begin | log |
| give | ago | egg |

“Grandma gave the guests eggs and frog’s legs”.

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /g/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) Let’s play a **game**.

2.4) **Good** to you **again**.

2.2) **Great**!

2.5) I’ve **got** to **go**.

2.3) Let’s **get** together.

2.6) **Give** me a call.

3) Spelling

The sound /g/ is usually spelled with the letter g:

g = go, garden, again, dog

gg = bigger, egg, jogging, begged

gu = guess, guest, guitar

gh = ghost, spaghetti

x = pronounced /gz/: example, exactly,

4) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /k/ and /g/ in contrast.

Sound 1: /k/

Sound 2: /g/

coat

goat

curl

girl

class

glass

back

bag

clock

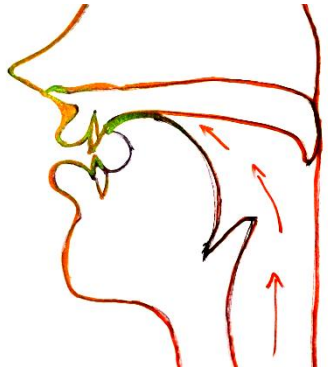
clog

1.4 Palato-alveolar affricates /tʃ/, /dʒ/

1.4.1 Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate /tʃ/

In producing the sound /tʃ/, the soft palate is raised to close off the nasal tract. The airstream moving out from the lungs is blocked by touching the teeth ridge with the tip and blade of the tongue. At the same time, the front of the tongue is also raised towards the hard palate. The closure is released slowly with the blocked airstream flowing out with friction. The vocal cords are drawn wide apart, that is, they do not vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /tʃ/



First practice /t/ and /ʃ/

Begin to make /tʃ/.

Then slowly move your tongue from the roof of your mouth.

Do not use your voice.

Figure 3.8 The diagram for the sound /tʃ/

/tʃ/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|----------|----------|-------|
| /tʃ-/ | /-tʃ-/ | /-tʃ/ |
| children | butcher | much |
| check | watching | which |
| cheap | reaches | catch |
| chain | picture | coach |
| choose | kitchen | beach |

“Which child put chalk on the teacher’s chair?”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /tʃ/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) **W**atch out!

2.2) How **m**uch is it?

2.3) I **c**hange my mind.

2.4) I'll have a **c**heese sandwich.

2.5) Any **q**uestions?

2.6) **W**hich one did you **c**hoose?

3) Spelling

The sound /tʃ/ is usually spelled with the letter *ch* or *tch*:

ch = chat, change, choose, teacher,

tch = watch, match, kitchen, catch

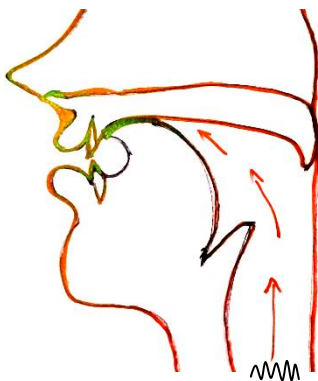
t = before *u*: nature, picture

ti = after *s*: suggestion, question

1.4.2 Voiced palato-alveolar affricate /dʒ/

The sound /dʒ/ is produced in the same way as /tʃ/. However, /dʒ/ differs from /tʃ/ only with regard to voicing: for /tʃ/, there is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords do not vibrate, but for /dʒ/, there is voice from the throat, that is, they vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /dʒ/



First practice /tʃ/

Then use your voice to make /dʒ/.

Figure 3.9 The diagram for the sound /dʒ/

/dʒ/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| /dʒ-/ | /-dʒ-/ | /-dʒ/ |
| gin | manager | bridge |
| jail | agency | edge |
| joke | passenger | large |
| jet | dangerous | village |
| just | injured | damage |

“Ginger spilt orange juice on George’s jacket.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /dʒ/.

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) I was **just** **j**oking.

2.2) The **judge** is crossing the **bridge**.

2.3) You don’t **change** a thing.

2.4) **George**’s in **j**ail.

2.5) I **enjoy** a new **j**ob.

2.6) I **graduated** from Technical **College**.

3) Spelling

The sound /dʒ/ is usually spelled with the letter *j*, *g* or *dge*:

j = joke, jail, job, enjoy

g = before *e*, *i*, or *y*: college, general,

original, phonology

dge = knowledge, bridge, judge

d = before *u*: individual, graduate, education

4) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ in contrast.

Sound 1: /tʃ/

Sound 2: /dʒ/

cheap

jeep

choke

joke

cheers

jeers

H

age

batch

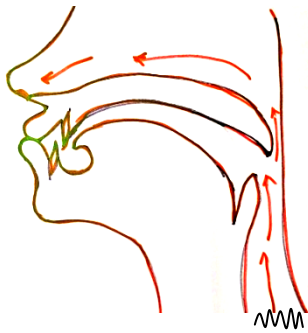
badge

1.5 Velar nasals /m/, /n/, /ŋ/

1.5.1 Voiced bilabial nasal /m/

In the production of the sound /m/, a closure is formed at the lips; the soft palate is lowered to allow the airstream from the lungs to pass freely through the nose. There is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /m/



Close your lips.

Use your voice.

The sound /m/ comes through your nose.

Figure 3.10 The diagram for the sound /m/

/m/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|----------|-------|
| /m-/ | /-m-/ | /-m/ |
| man | tomorrow | some |
| move | among | steam |
| make | remind | comb |
| mend | simple | room |
| match | remember | cream |

“Mum made me move my models.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /m/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) I change **my** mind.

2.2) **My** name is **Samson**.

2.3) I’**m** sorry.

2.4) **Sometimes**.

2.5) I don’t **remember**.

2.6) Is there a **swimming** pool near here?

3) Spelling

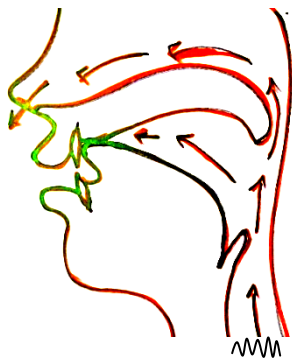
The sound /m/ is usually spelled with the letter *m*:

| | | |
|----|---|---------------------------------------|
| m | = | man, family, home, sum |
| mm | = | summer, swimming, yummy |
| mb | = | <i>b</i> is silent: comb, climb, lamb |
| mn | = | <i>n</i> is silent: column, autumn |

1.5.2 Voiced alveolar nasal /n/

In producing /n/, a closure is formed in the mouth between the tip of the tongue and the teeth ridge; the soft palate is lowered to allow the airstream from the lungs to escape freely through the nose. There is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /n/



Put the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth (teeth ridge) just behind your upper teeth.

Use your voice.

The sound /n/ comes through your nose.

Figure 3.11 The diagram for the sound /n/

/n/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|---------|---------|
| /n-/ | /-n-/ | /-n/ |
| name | month | garden |
| noise | morning | station |
| near | money | mean |
| knee | until | warn |
| no | evening | sun |

“There was no one on the moon on the ninth of June.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /n/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) Sorry. I **don't know**.

2.2) Wait a **minute**.

2.3) Give me your **new name**.

2.4) I'm **not** a student.

2.5) No. I **didn't**.

2.6) **Not now**.

3) Spelling

The sound /n/ is usually spelled with the letter *n*:

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------------------------|
| n | = | name, next, noise, downtown |
| nn | = | annoy, funny, dinner, beginning |
| kn | = | k is silent: know, knee, knock, knee |
| gn | = | g is silent: sign, foreign, design |

The letter *n* is silent in these words: **autumn, column**.

4) Word pairs

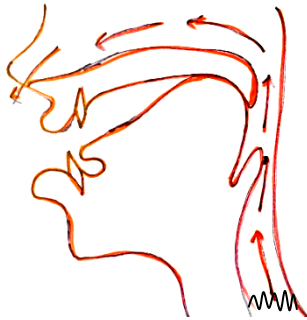
Practice saying the sounds: /m/ and /n/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /m/ | Sound 2: /n/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| me | knee |
| mail | nail |
| mine | nine |
| comb | cone |
| gum | gun |

1.5.3 Voiced velar nasal /ŋ/

In the production of /ŋ/, a closure is formed in the mouth between the back of the tongue and the soft palate; the soft palate is lowered to allow the airstream from the lungs to flow freely through the nose. There is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /ŋ/



Touch the back of the roof of your mouth (soft palate) with the back of your tongue.

Use your voice.

The sound /ŋ/ comes through your nose.

Figure 3.12 The diagram for the sound /ŋ/

/ŋ/ occurs only in the two positions in a word:

| Medial | Final |
|----------|-----------|
| /-ŋ-/ | /-ŋ/ |
| finger | sing |
| thank | strong |
| angry | something |
| function | along |
| think | wrong |

“Young King Kong was stronger than strong.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /ŋ/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

- 2.1) I'm **hungry**
- 2.2) Is **something** **wrong**?
- 2.3) I **think** Frank is **wrong**.
- 2.4) She was **angry** with me.
- 2.5) Good **morning**.
- 2.6) The phone is **ringing**.

3) Spelling

The sound /ŋ/ is usually spelled with the letter *ng*:

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| ng | = | something, morning, ring, wrong |
| n | = | before /k/: bank, think, uncle, function |
| | | before /g/: angry, hungry, English, single |

4) Word pairs 1

4.1) Practice saying the sounds: /n/ and /ŋ/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /n/ | Sound 2: /ŋ/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| thin | thing |
| ban | bang |
| ran | rang |
| fans | fangs |
| wins | wings |

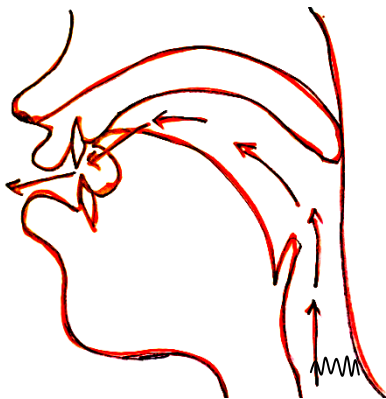
4.2) Practice the sounds: /ŋk/ and /ŋ/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /ŋk/ | Sound 2: /ŋ/ |
|---------------|--------------|
| think | thing |
| bank | bang |
| sink | sing |
| rink | ring |

1.6 Voiced alveolar lateral /l/

In the production of /l/, the soft palate is raised to shut off the nasal tract. The tip of the tongue moves towards the teeth ridge; one or both sides of the tongue are lowered so that the airstream from the lungs can escape freely without friction through the side(s). There is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1.6.1. Practice the sound /l/: Clear [l]

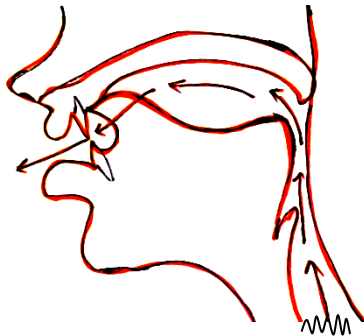


Put the tip of your tongue just behind your upper front teeth.

To make the sound /l/, the airstream from the lungs goes over the sides of your tongue and out of your mouth.

Figure 3.13 The diagram for the sound /l/: clear [l]

1.6.2 Practice the sound /l/: Dark [l]



The sound /l/ is a little different at the end of a word or before a consonant. To say /l/, raise the back of your tongue toward the roof of your mouth. (soft palate).

Figure 3.14 The diagram for the sound /l/: dark [l]

/l/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|---------|--------|
| /l-/ | /-l-/ | /-l/ |
| late | delay | ball |
| lock | replay | bell |
| love | allow | build |
| low | telling | cancel |
| lie | million | self |

“Clara’s really clever but Lilly’s a little silly.”

1.6.3 Practice the sound /l/

/l/ at the end of a word

bill
pill
ball
bowl
tall

/l/ before a consonant

help
milk
health
build
silk

1.6.4 Phrases and sentences with the sound /l/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

- 1) Please **te**ll us the truth.
- 2) I **fe**el asleep.
- 3) **Le**t’s **pl**ay football.
- 4) Would you **li**ke some **mi**lk or tea?

5) **L**ook out!

6) I'll call you back **l**ater.

1.6.5 Word pairs 1

Practice saying the sounds: /n/ and /l/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /n/ | Sound 2: /l/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| night | light |
| no | low |
| nine | line |
| connect | collect |
| snow | slow |

1.6.6 Word pairs 2

Practice saying the sounds: /n/ and /l/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /n/ | Sound 2: /l/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| ten | tell |
| pin | pill |
| bone | bowl |
| mine | mile |

1.6.7 Spelling

The sound /l/ is usually spelled with the letter /l/:

| | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|
| l | = | letter, late, sleep, trouble |
| ll | = | pillow, tell, sell, kill |

The letter *l* is sometimes silent when it comes before a consonant in these words: **t**alk, **w**alk, **h**alf, **c**ould, **y**olk, **c**alm, **p**alm.

1.7 Labio-dental fricatives /f/, /v/

1.7.1 Voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/

In producing /f/, the soft palate is raised to close off the nasal tract. The inner surface of the lower lip makes a light contact with the front upper teeth, leaving a narrow gap so that the airstream from the lungs can escape, making audible friction. There is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords are wide apart.

1) Practice the sound /f/



Touch your upper teeth with your lower lip.
Blow out air between your lip and teeth.
Do not use your voice.

Figure 3.15 The diagram for the sound /f/

/f/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|----------|-------|
| /f-/ | /-f-/ | /-f/ |
| fast | offer | life |
| fee | affair | cough |
| photo | after | staff |
| fit | laughter | graph |
| friend | profile | stiff |

“Frank found four frogs laughing on the floor.

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /f/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

- 2.1) Have **fun**!
- 2.2) It's **five** after **four**.
- 2.3) Don't **forget**.
- 2.4) **Fill** out this **form**.
- 2.5) How do you **feel**?
- 2.6) Is it **far** from here?

3) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /p/ and /f/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /p/ | Sound 2: /f/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| pan | fan |
| pull | full |
| peel | feel |
| copy | coffee |
| cup | cuff |

4) Spelling

The sound /f/ is usually spelled with the letter *f*:

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------------------------|
| f | = | fix, first, funny, before |
| ff | = | staff, office, difficult, off |
| ph | = | phone, photograph, graphic, alphabet |
| gh | = | enough, laugh, rough, cough |

1.6.2 Voiced labio-dental fricative /v/

The sound /v/ is produced in the same way as /f/. However, /v/ differs from /f/ only with regard to voicing: for /f/, there is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords do not vibrate, but for /v/, there is voice from the throat, that is, they vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /v/



First practice the sound /f/.

Then use your voice to say /v/

Figure 3.16 The diagram for the sound /v/

/v/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|---------|-------|
| /v-/ | /-v-/ | /-v/ |
| van | leaving | love |
| village | lived | five |
| vote | cover | of |
| verb | oven | move |
| vine | every | give |

“Vera drove to Venice in a van.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /v/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) Thank you **very** much.

2.2) I don't believe it.

2.3) It's **very** expensive.

2.4) I've **never** been there.

2.5) **Have** a good time!

2.6) It's **over** now.

3) Word pairs 1

Practice saying the sounds: /b/ and /v/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /b/ | Sound 2: /v/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| ban | van |
| B | V |
| best | vest |
| boat | vote |
| cabs | calves |

4) Word pairs 2

Practice saying the sounds: /f/ and /v/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /f/ | Sound 2: /v/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| fan | van |
| fine | vine |
| few | view |
| leaf | leave |

5) Spelling

The sound /v/ is usually spelled with the letter v:

v = van, very, river, have, love

6) Unusual spellings: of

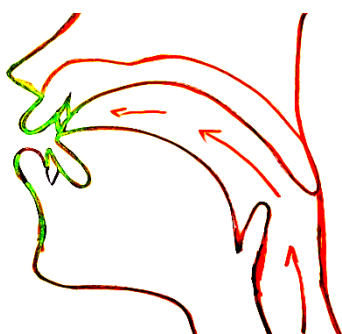
Words ending with the sound /v/ always add the letter e in the spelling. English words do not end in the letter v, such as *live*, *effective*, *receive*.

1.7 Dental fricatives /θ/, /ð/

1.7.1 Voiceless dental fricative /θ/

In the production of /θ/, the soft palate is raised to close off the nasal tract. The tip of the tongue makes a light contact with the inner surface of the upper front teeth, leaving a narrow gap so that the airstream from the lungs can escape, making audible friction. There is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords are wide apart.

1) Practice the sound /θ/



Touch inner surface of your upper front teeth with the tip of your tongue. (or Put the tip of your tongue between your front teeth.)

Blow out air between your tongue and upper teeth.

Do not use your voice.

Figure 3.17 The diagram for the sound /θ/

/θ/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|-----------|-------|
| /θ-/ | /-θ-/ | /-θ/ |
| think | nothing | south |
| thin | method | bath |
| three | something | death |
| theme | faithful | both |
| through | birthday | path |

“Martha Smith’s an author and an athlete.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /θ/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) Any**th**ing else?

2.2) No, **th**ank you.

2.3) I **th**ink so.

2.4) I’m **th**irsty.

2.5) Today is my **th**irthday.

2.6) I went there last **th**month.

3) Word pairs 1

Practice saying the sounds: /s/ and /θ/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /s/ | Sound 2: /θ/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| sick | thick |
| sum | thumb |
| sink | think |
| mouse | mouth |
| pass | path |

4) Word pairs 2

Practice saying the sounds: /t/ and /θ/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /t/ | Sound 2: /θ/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| tie | thigh |
| tree | three |
| tanks | thanks |
| bat | bath |

5) Spelling

The sound /θ/ is spelled with the letter *th*:

th = thin, thousand, something, north

1.7.2 Voiced dental fricative /ð/

The sound /ð/ is produced in the same way as /θ/, except that in the production of /ð/ there is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /ð/



First practice the sound /θ/.

Then use your voice to say /ð/.

Figure 3.18 The diagram for the sound /ð/

/ð/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|----------|---------|
| /ð-/ | /-ð-/ | /-ð/ |
| then | rather | bathe |
| they | father | breathe |
| that | another | clothe |
| though | together | loathe |
| there | smoothly | teethe |

“My father and mother live together with my other brother.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /ð/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

- 2.1) Who's **that** man?
- 2.2) What's **the** weather like?
- 2.3) Did **they** go **there** together?
- 2.4) **This** is brother, Dan.
- 2.5) My **father** and **mother**.
- 2.6) **They**'re over **there**.

3) Word pairs 1

Practice saying the sounds: /d/ and /ð/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /d/ | Sound 2: /ð/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| day | they |
| dare | there |
| doze | those |
| ladder | lather |
| breed | breathe |

4) Word pairs 2

Practice saying the sounds: /z/ and /ð/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /z/ | Sound 2: /ð/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| closing | clothing |
| bays | bathe |
| breeze | breathe |
| tease | teethe |

5) Spelling

The sound /ð/ is spelled with the letter *th*:

th = then, that, another, weather

1.8 Dental fricatives /s/, /z/

1.8.1 Voiceless alveolar fricative /s/

In the production of /s/, the soft palate is raised to close off the nasal tract. The tip and blade of the tongue makes a light contact with the teeth ridge, leaving a narrow groove so that the airstream from the lungs can escape, causing audible friction between the tongue and the teeth ridge. There is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords are wide apart.

1) Practice the sound /s/



Touch your teeth ridge with the tip and blade of your tongue.

Put your tongue forward, behind your upper teeth.

Force air out over the tip of your tongue.

Do not use your voice.

Figure 3.19 The diagram for the sound /s/

/s/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| /s-/ | /-s-/ | /-s/ |
| sit | master | false |
| seat | research | pass |
| sigh | hospital | since |
| seem | excite | purpose |
| same | absent | focus |

“It’s six or seven years since Sydney’s sister sang that song.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /s/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) Sit down.

2.2) See you soon.

2.3) Let's see.

2.4) Speak slowly.

2.5) That's rather expensive.

2.6) I promise to be good.

3) Practice reading aloud:

The Smile of s Snake

“She speaks slowly and smokes special, expensive cigarettes. As she steps upstairs, her long skirt sweeps over her silver slippers. She is small and smart and sweet-looking. Her skin is like snow. “You have stolen my heart!” I once said stupidly, and she smiled. But when she smiled, she smiled the smile of a snake.”

(Baker, 1977: 100)

4) Spelling

The sound /s/ is usually spelled with the letter *s* or *c*:

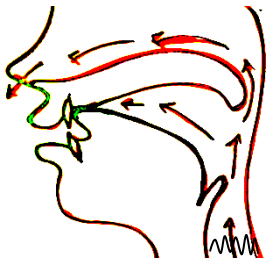
| | | |
|-------|---|--|
| s | = | son, soft, stop, yes |
| ss | = | pass, class, kiss, possible |
| c | = | before <i>e</i> , <i>i</i> , or <i>y</i> : nice, cent, city, bicycle |
| se | = | horse, house, promise, close (adjective) |
| sc | = | scene, science, scissors, muscle |
| x, xc | = | pronounced /k s/: six, next, excellent |

The letter *s* is silent in these words: island, aisle.

1.8.1 Voiced alveolar fricative /z/

The sound /z/ is produced in the same way as /s/, except that in the production of /z/ there is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /z/



First practice the sound /s/.

Then use your voice to say /z/.

Figure 3.20 The diagram for the sound /z/

/z/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|----------|--------|
| /z-/ | /-z-/ | /-z/ |
| zoo | busy | is |
| zip | cousin | prize |
| zone | hesitate | please |
| zebra | reason | close |
| zinc | dozen | buzz |

“Zebras in zoos are like dolphins in pools.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /z/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) Whose is it?

2.2) Help, please!

2.3) It wasn't easy.

2.4) This is my dogs.

2.5) I was surprised.

2.6) He's got the first prize.

3) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /s/ and /z/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /s/ | Sound 2: /z/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| Sue | zoo |
| sip | zip |
| bus | buzz |
| price | prize |
| lacy | lazy |

4) Spelling

The sound /z/ is usually spelled with the letter *z* or *s*:

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| z, zz, ze | = | zoo, amazing, buzz, prize |
| s | = | easy, always, does, dogs |
| se | = | close (verb), please, these, rose |
| ss | = | dessert, possess, scissors |
| x | = | pronounced /gz/: example, exist, |

1.9 palato-alveolar fricatives /ʃ/

1.9.1 Voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/

The production of /ʃ/ resembles that of /s/: for both, the soft palate is raised to close off the nasal tract; the tip and blade of the tongue makes a light contact with the teeth ridge, leaving a narrow gap so that the airstream from the lungs can escape, causing audible friction between the tongue and the teeth ridge. But for /ʃ/, the front of the tongue is also raised at the same time in the direction of the hard palate. There is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords are wide apart.

Some RP speakers use a slight lip-rounding for /ʃ, ʒ/ in all positions; other do so only when a rounded vowel precedes or follows them.

1) Practice the sound /ʃ/



First practice the sound /s/.

Then put the tip of your tongue up and back a little to make /ʃ/.

Figure 3.21 The diagram for the sound /ʃ/

/ʃ/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|---------|---------|
| /ʃ-/ | /-ʃ-/ | /-ʃ/ |
| shop | fashion | wash |
| show | ashore | push |
| sure | fishing | cash |
| sheet | nation | English |
| shout | special | finish |

“Sharon shouldn’t wash her shoes in the shower!”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /ʃ/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

- 2.1) I'm not **sure**.
- 2.2) Let's go **shopping**.
- 2.3) What **sh**ould I do?
- 2.4) I **washed** my car.
- 2.5) I need some **information**.
- 2.6) I have a **sh**ower at six o'clock.

3) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /s/ and /ʃ/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /s/ | Sound 2: /ʃ/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| Sue | shoe |
| seats | sheets |
| sell | shell |
| sign | shine |
| lease | leash |

4) Spelling

The sound /ʃ/ is usually spelled with the letter *sh*:

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| sh | = | sheep, finish, show, English |
| ti | = | nation, conversation, initial, information |
| ci | = | special, delicious, musician, especially |
| ssi | = | profession, discussion, Russia |

5) Unusual spellings:

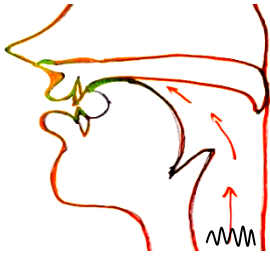
sure, tissue, **sugar**, **machine**, pressure, **champagne**,

Chicago, **ocean**

1.9.1 Voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/

The sound /ʃ/ is produced in the same way as /f/, except that in the production of /ʃ/ there is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /ʒ/



First practice the sound /ʃ/.

Then use your voice to say /ʒ/.

Figure 3.22 The diagram for the sound /ʒ/

/ʒ/ occurs only in all the two positions in a word:

Initial

Medial

/-ʒ-/

/-ʒ/

television

garage

pleasure

rouge

treasure

beige

collision

prestige

casual

potage

“She had a great vision of treasure in Malaysia.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /ʒ/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) What's your decision?

2.2) Thank you for lending me your measuring tape.

2.3) What's on television?

2.4) Is it a special occasion?

2.5) I usually wear casual clothes.

2.6) What is the cause of the explosion?

3) Practice saying the names of Television Tonight Show with the sound /ʒ/.

Television Tonight on the Leisure Channel

| | |
|----------|---|
| 6:00 PM | It's a pleasure Special guest: <i>the author of Decisions, Decisions</i> |
| 6:30 PM | What's the Occasion? |
| 7:00 PM | Movie: <i>Treasure Island</i> |
| 9:00 PM | News: <i>An unusual collision</i> |
| 9:30 PM | Casual Chic |
| 10:00 PM | Trash to Treasure |
| 10:30 PM | Measure Twice |
| 11:00 PM | Destination: <i>Asia</i> |
| 12:00 PM | Movie: <i>Invasion of the Martians</i> |

(Baker & Goldstein, 2008: 122)

4) Spelling

The sound /ʒ/ is usually spelled with the letter *s* or *ge*:

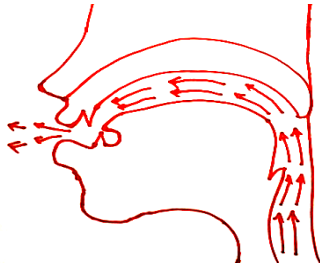
| | | |
|----|---|------------------------------------|
| s | = | vision, decision, usually, measure |
| ge | = | garage, beige, rouge, potage |

5) Unusual spelling: seizure

1.10 voiceless glottal fricative /h/

In the production of /h/, the soft palate is raised to shut off the nasal tract. The airstream from the lungs passes through a narrow glottis with audible friction. The positions of the tongue and the lips depend on the vowel following /h/. Thus, for /h/ as in *he/h i:/*, the front of the tongue is raised to the high position and the lips are spread. But for /h/ as in *who/hu:/*, the back of the tongue is raised to the high position and the lips are rounded. There is no voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords are wide apart.

1) Practice the sound /h/



Open your mouth.

Push out a lot of air very quickly.

Do not use your voice.

Do not touch the roof of your mouth with your tongue.

Figure 3.23 The diagram for the sound /h/

/h/ occurs only in all the two positions in a word:

Initial

Medial

/h-/

/-h-/

hit

behind

high

unhappy

husband

perhaps

heart

ahead

house

comprehend

“Harry had a habit of helping hitch-hikes.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /h/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) May I **h**elp you?

2.2) I **h**ope so.

2.3) **H**ello! **H**ow are you?

2.4) What's **h**appening?

2.5) **H**ow **h**igh it is!

2.6) **H**ave you **h**eard?

3) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: (no /h/) and /h/ in contrast.

Sound 1: (no /h/)

Sound 2: /h/

eat

heat

old

hold

eye

high

air

hair

earring

hearing

4) Spelling

The sound /h/ is usually spelled with the letter *h*:

h = hope, how, behind, ahead

wh = who, whose, whole

The letter *h* is silent in these words: **hour**, **honest**, **oh**, **vehicle**, **heir**, **exhibit**, **rhythm**

1.11 Voiced post-alveolar approximant or frictionless continuant /r/

In the production of /r/, the soft palate is raised to close off the nasal tract; the tip of the tongue is held close to the rear part of the teeth ridge, leaving a narrow gap so that it is wide enough for the airstream from the lungs to flow through freely without causing any audible friction. There is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1.11.1 Practice the sound /r/



Turn the tip of your tongue up as in the picture.
Do not touch the roof of your mouth with your tongue.
The sides of your tongue should touch your back teeth.
Use your voice.

Figure 3.24 The diagram for the sound /r/

/r/ occurs in all the three positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial | Final |
|---------|-----------|--------------------|
| /r-/ | /-r-/ | /-r ¹ / |
| red | lorry | clear |
| real | secretary | share |
| read | arrest | before |
| right | surround | sure |
| rock | foreign | fear |

“The rabbits raced right around the ring.”

¹ In British English accents, you only pronounce /r/ if there is a vowel sound after it, as in *far away* /fɑ: rəweɪ/, but not in *far* /fɑ:/ and *car* /kɑ:/. However, in American English accents, the /r/ is pronounced.

1.11.2 Phrases and sentences with the sound /r/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

- 1) Are you **ready**?
- 2) All **right**.
- 3) It's **very** interesting.
- 4) I'm **really** sorry.
- 5) Do you **remember** his **real** name?
- 6) **Great**!

1.11.3 Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /l/ and /r/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /l/ | Sound 2: /r/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| long | wrong |
| light | write |
| pilot | pirate |
| glass | grass |
| cloud | crowd |

1.11.4 Spelling

The sound /h/ is usually spelled with the letter *r*:

| | | |
|----|---|----------------------------------|
| r | = | ready, right, really, row |
| rr | = | sorrow, sorry, tomorrow, correct |

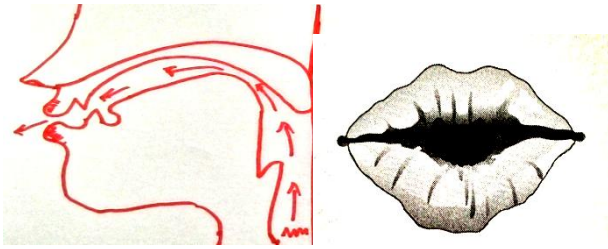
1.11.5 Other spellings: wrong, write, rhyme, rhythm

1.12 Semi-vowels /w/, /j/

1.12.1 Voiced labio-velar semi-vowel /w/

The production of /w/ is made by the back of the tongue assuming the position for the back high rounded vowel and then moving away immediately to the position of the following vowel sound. The lips are rounded when followed by a rounded vowel more than others. Thus, there is a much greater lip-rounding in words like *wool* and *war* than in words like *we* and *wait*. The soft palate is raised to shut off the nasal tract, and there is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /w/



First practice the sound /u:.

Make your lips round and hard for /w/.

Quickly relax your lips.

Use your voice.

Figure 3.25 The diagram for the sound /w/

/w/ occurs only in all the two positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial |
|---------|----------|
| /w-/ | /-w-/ |
| walk | twenty |
| why | sweat |
| wet | award |
| wild | question |
| wood | beware |

“Windy went away twice a week.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /w/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) **W**hat **w**ould you like?

2.2) **W**here do you **w**ork?

2.3) **W**hat **l**angu**ag**es do you speak?

2.4) I go to see a dentist **o**nce a **w**ee**k**.

2.5) **W**ould you like to come with us?

2.6) Don't **w**orry.

3) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /v/ and /w/ in contrast.

| Sound 1: /v/ | Sound 2: /w/ |
|--------------|--------------|
| V | we |
| vet | wet |
| vest | west |
| vine | wine |
| veil | whale |

4) Spelling

The sound /w/ is usually spelled with the letter *w*:

w = want, would, walk, war

wh = when, while, what, which

u = after the letter *q* and sometimes after the

letter *g* or *s*: question, quite, request, language, persuade

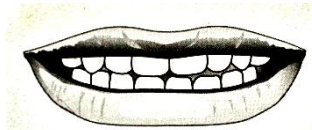
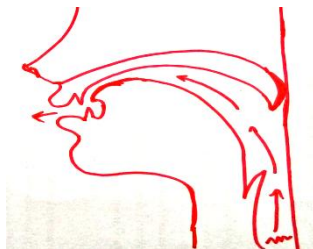
o = one, once, everyone

The letter *w* is silent in these words: write, wrong, wrist, answer, two, who, whole.

1.12.1 Voiced palatal semi-vowel /j/

The production of /j/ is made by the front of the tongue assuming the position for a front high vowel and then moving away immediately to the position of the following vowel sound. The lips are generally spread or neutral, but may become rounded if a rounded vowel follows as in *use* and *you*. The soft palate is raised to shut off the nasal tract, and there is voice from the throat, that is, the vocal cords vibrate.

1) Practice the sound /j/



First practice the sound /i:/.
To say /j/, begin to make /i:/,
but very quickly move your
tongue to make the next sound. Use your voice.

Figure 3.26 The diagram for the sound /j/

/j/ occurs only in all the two positions in a word:

| Initial | Medial |
|-----------|--------|
| /j-/ | /-j-/ |
| yellow | stupid |
| year | huge |
| yes | pure |
| union | tune |
| yesterday | few |

“We didn’t use Euros in Europe a few years ago.”

2) Phrases and sentences with the sound /j/

Practice saying these phrases and sentences below.

2.1) Can I **u**se your **co**mputer?

2.2) I've been here for a **fe**w years.

2.3) He was a **mu**sic **stu**dent.

2.4) Exc**u**se me!

2.5) Did **yo**u **u**se to live in **Ne**w **Yo**rk?

2.6) Do **yo**u listen to **po**pular **mu**sic?

3) Word pairs

Practice saying the sounds: /dʒ/ and /j²/ in contrast.

Sound 1: /dʒ/

Sound 2: /j/

Joke

yolk

Jam

yam

Jail

Yale

Jeers

years

Jess

yes

4) Spelling

The sound /j/ is usually spelled with the letter *y*: The sound /j/ is also often part of the pronunciation of the spelling *u*.

y = year, yellow, you, yet

u = pronounced /j u:/: use, usually, university,
union, student, future, huge

i = after *n* or *l*: million, opinion, California, familiar

ew, ieu, eu, eau = pronounced /j u:/: new, few, view, interview,
Europe, beautiful

²In RP, the symbol /j/ is used instead of /y/. (/y/ is mostly used in American phonetic symbol)

Summary

There are 24 English consonant sounds, described in terms of (i) voice or voicelessness, (ii) the place of articulation, and (iii) the manner of articulation. Such a description will be assigned to a three-term label for each consonant sound, such as the label *voiceless alveolar stop* (or *plosive*) for the initial consonant sound in English word *talk*.

Nine consonants are voiceless: /p, t, k, f, tʃ, ʃ, θ, s, h/, and the remaining fifteen voiced: /b, d, g, v, m, n, ŋ, dʒ, ʒ, ð, z, l, r, w, j/.

According to the place of articulation, the English consonant sounds fall into following groups:

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Bilabial (3) | /p, b, m/ |
| Labio-dental (2) | /f, v, / |
| Dental (Inter-dental) (2) | /θ, ð, / |
| Alveolar (6) | /t, d, n, l, s, z/ |
| Post-alveolar (1) | /r/ |
| Palato-alveolar (4) | /tʃ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ/ |
| Velar (3) | /j/ |
| Glottal (1) | /h/ |
| Labio-velar (1) | /w/ ³ |

According to the manner of articulation, the English consonant sounds fall into the following groups:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Stops (6) | /p, b, t, d, k, g/ |
| Affricates (2) | /tʃ, dʒ/ |
| Nasals (3) | /m, n, ŋ/ |
| Lateral (1) | /l/ |
| Fricatives (9) | /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/ |
| Approximant (Frictionless continuant) (1) | /r/ |
| Semi-vowels (2) | /w, j/ |

³ The consonant sound /w/ is produced under the *Velar* as well as *Bilabial*. Such production is called *Labio-velar*.

Question reviews

1. Describe the following English sounds given below by identifying (1) voiced or voiceless, (2) the place of articulation and (3) the manner of articulation.

1.1 /f/ as in **fan**

1.2 /θ/ as in **think**

1.3 /s/ as in **sun**

1.4 /tʃ/ as in **chop**

1.5 /m/ as **man**

2. Give two pairs of words between the following two pairs of consonant sounds in contrast:

2.1 /n/ - /ŋ/

2.2 /tʃ/ - /ʃ/

2.3 /s/ - /θ/

2.4 /dʒ/ - /j/

2.5 /f/ - /v/

3. What is the initial (first) sound in the word “**moon**” is called?

4. What is the difference between /p/ and /b/ sounds?

5. What consonant sound is described as *voiced labio-velar*?

6. Give the phonetic symbols of the initial (first) consonant sounds of words and identify the terms of the place of articulation in each sound.

6.1. **they**

6.2 **show**

6.3 **yellow**

7. Give five words that end with a *voiced alveolar nasal* consonant sound.

8. Give five words that begin with a *voiced bilabial plosive* consonant sound.

9. What consonant sound is represented by the letter ‘**ph**’ in the word **phone**?

10. What consonant sound is represented by the letter ‘**ch**’ in the word **school**?