



## 8. Vowels & Vowel Sounds Practice

### BVPT-104: English & Communication

#### Unit 2: Fundamentals of English Communication

#### Chapter: Vowels & Vowel Sounds Practice

#### Topic: Pronunciation and Differentiation of Vowel Sounds

### □ What Are Vowel Sounds?

Vowel sounds are produced when air flows freely through the vocal tract **without any obstruction** by the tongue, lips, or teeth.

In English, there are **5 main vowel letters** (A, E, I, O, U), but they produce **20+ distinct vowel sounds** depending on:

- Mouth shape
- Tongue position
- Length of the sound
- Lip rounding

### □ Why Vowel Sounds Matter in Communication

- **Mispronouncing vowel sounds can change word meaning.**  
E.g., “ship” vs “sheep”, “bat” vs “bet”
- In clinical settings, **clear pronunciation** ensures correct instructions and trust.  
Saying “sit” instead of “seat” could confuse or frustrate a patient.

### □ Classification of Vowel Sounds

#### 1. Monophthongs (Pure Vowels)

Single sound throughout pronunciation. E.g., /i:/, /ɪ/, /ʌ/

Sound	Example Words	Tongue Position	Lip Shape
/i:/	<b>sheep</b> , beat	High front	Spread
/ɪ/	<b>ship</b> , bit	High front	Relaxed
/e/	<b>bed</b> , head	Mid front	Neutral
/ʌ/	<b>cup</b> , luck	Mid central	Neutral
/ɑ:/	<b>calm</b> , arm	Low back	Open
/ɒ/	<b>hot</b> , clock	Low back	Rounded
/ɔ:/	<b>call</b> , saw	Mid back	Rounded
/u:/	<b>food</b> , blue	High back	Rounded
/ʊ/	<b>good</b> , put	High back	Less rounded



## 2. Diphthongs (Gliding Vowels)

A vowel sound that **slides from one sound to another** within a single syllable.

E.g., /aɪ/, /eɪ/, /ɔɪ/

Sound	Example Words	Description
/aɪ/	<b>my, ride</b>	From /a/ to /ɪ/
/eɪ/	<b>day, say</b>	From /e/ to /ɪ/
/ɔɪ/	<b>boy, toy</b>	From /ɔ/ to /ɪ/
/aʊ/	<b>now, cow</b>	From /a/ to /ʊ/
/əʊ/	<b>go, no</b>	From /ə/ to /ʊ/
/ɪə/	<b>ear, idea</b>	From /ɪ/ to /ə/
/eə/	<b>care, where</b>	From /e/ to /ə/
/ʊə/	<b>pure, tour</b>	From /ʊ/ to /ə/

### □ Minimal Pairs for Practice

These are pairs of words that **differ by only one vowel sound**. Practicing them improves both **listening and speaking**.

Word 1	Word 2	Sound Difference
ship	sheep	/ɪ/ vs /i:/
full	fool	/ʊ/ vs /u:/
bad	bed	/æ/ vs /e/
cut	cart	/ʌ/ vs /ɑ:/
pull	pool	/ʊ/ vs /u:/

### □ Practice Techniques for Students

- Mirror Practice:**  
Say each vowel sound while watching your lips and tongue in the mirror.
- Recording & Playback:**  
Record yourself reading minimal pairs. Listen back to notice differences.
- Word Chains:**  
Say a chain like: *bit - bet - bat - but - bought - boot - beat*.
- Tongue Position Awareness:**  
Visualize where your tongue sits: front, central, or back.
- Use IPA Symbols:**  
The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) helps you connect letters with exact sounds.

### □ Printable Quick Reference (Mini Chart)

Symbol	Sound	Description	Example Word
/i:/	Long E		seat
/ɪ/	Short I		sit
/e/	Short E		set
/æ/	Short A		sat
/ʌ/	Short U		sun
/ɑ:/	Long Aah		car



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**Symbol Sound Description Example Word**

/ɒ/	Short O	hot
/ɔ:/	Long Aw	saw
/u:/	Long U	food
/ʊ/	Short U	book

Let me know if you'd like this as a **PDF handout** or **wall poster** for classroom use.

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□ **Take-Home Summary**

- Vowel **letters** ≠ **vowel sounds** - English has over 20 vowel sounds.
  - Focus on **mouth shape**, **tongue position**, and **sound length** to master pronunciation.
  - Practise with **minimal pairs** to fine-tune your ear and speech clarity.
  - Correct vowel use leads to **clear communication**, essential for effective interaction with patients and peers.
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