

WHERE CLASSICAL WISDOM MEETS INTELLIGENT LEARNING

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/ ship, bit High front Relaxed /e/ bed, head Mid front Neutral /r/ cup, luck Mid central Neutral /ɑ:/ calm, arm Low back Open /p/ hot, clock Low back Rounded /ɔ:/ call, saw Mid back Rounded /u:/ food, blue High back Rounded /v/ good, put High back Less rounded	/i:/	sheep , beat	High front	Spread
/n/ cup, luck Mid central Neutral /ɑ:/ calm, arm Low back Open /p/ hot, clock Low back Rounded /ɔ:/ call, saw Mid back Rounded /u:/ food, blue High back Rounded	/1/	ship, bit	High front	Relaxed
/ɑ:/ calm, arm Low back Open /ɒ/ hot, clock Low back Rounded /ɔ:/ call, saw Mid back Rounded /u:/ food, blue High back Rounded	/e/	bed , head	Mid front	Neutral
/p/ hot, clock Low back Rounded /ɔ:/ call, saw Mid back Rounded /u:/ food, blue High back Rounded	/^/	cup, luck	Mid central	Neutral
/ɔ:/ call, saw Mid back Rounded /u:/ food, blue High back Rounded	/a:/	calm, arm	Low back	Open
/u:/ food , blue High back Rounded	/a/	hot, clock	Low back	Rounded
3	/ɔ:/	call, saw	Mid back	Rounded
$/\sigma/$ good , put High back Less rounded	/u:/	food , blue	High back	Rounded
	/ʊ/	good, put	High back	Less rounded

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2. Diphthongs (Gliding Vowels)

A vowel sound that **slides from one sound to another** within a single syllable. E.g., /aI/, /eI/, /OI/

Sound Example Words Description

/aɪ/	my, ride	From /a/ to /ɪ/
/eɪ/	day, say	From /e/ to /ɪ/
/כו/	boy, toy	From /ɔ/ to /ɪ/
/aʊ/	now, cow	From /a/ to /ʊ/
/əʊ/	go, no	From /ə/ to /ʊ/
/iə/	ear, idea	From /ɪ/ to /ə/
/eə/	care, where	From /e/ to /ə/
/ʊə/	pure, tour	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	/I/ VS /Iː/
full	fool	/ʊ/ vs /uː/
bad	bed	/æ/ vs /e/
cut	cart	/n/ vs /a:/
pull	pool	/ʊ/ vs /uː/

□ Practice Techniques for Students

1. Mirror Practice:

Say each vowel sound while watching your lips and tongue in the mirror.

2. Recording & Playback:

Record yourself reading minimal pairs. Listen back to notice differences.

3. Word Chains:

Say a chain like: bit - bet - bat - but - bought - boot - beat.

4. Tongue Position Awareness:

Visualize where your tongue sits: front, central, or back.

5. 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
/I/	Short I	sit
/e/	Short E	set
/æ/	Short A	sat
/^/	Short U	sun
/a:/	Long Aah	car

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Symbol Sound Description Example Word

/p/ 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.

□ 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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