

9. Consonants & Consonant Sounds Practice

BVPT-104: English & Communication

Unit 2: Fundamentals of English Communication

Chapter: Consonants & Consonant Sounds Practice

Topic: Practice in Articulating Consonant Sounds

1 What Are Consonant Sounds?

Consonant sounds are speech sounds made by **partially or completely blocking the airflow** through the mouth, throat, or nose using the **tongue, lips, teeth, or vocal cords**.

Unlike vowels (which flow freely), **consonants require contact or friction** between organs of speech.

There are **24 consonant sounds** in English, even though there are only **21 consonant letters** in the alphabet.

2 Classification of Consonants

Consonants are classified based on **three criteria**:

1. **Place of articulation** – where the sound is formed
2. **Manner of articulation** – how the airflow is affected
3. **Voicing** – whether the vocal cords vibrate

1 Place of Articulation

Place	Description	Example Sounds
Bilabial	Both lips touch	/p/, /b/, /m/
Labiodental	Bottom lip touches upper teeth	/f/, /v/
Dental	Tongue touches teeth	/θ/ (thin), /ð/ (this)
Alveolar	Tongue touches ridge behind teeth	/t/, /d/, /s/, /z/, /n/, /l/
Palatal	Tongue touches hard palate	/ʃ/ (she), /ʒ/ (vision), /tʃ/ (chip), /dʒ/ (jam), /j/ (yes)
Velar	Tongue touches soft palate (velum)	/k/, /g/, /ŋ/ (sing)
Glottal	Sound made in throat using vocal cords	/h/

2 Manner of Articulation

Manner	Description	Example Sounds
Plosives (Stops)	Complete stop and release of air	/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/
Fricatives	Continuous airflow with friction	/f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/
Affricates	Combination of stop + fricative	/tʃ/ (church), /dʒ/ (judge)
Nasals	Air flows through the nose	/m/, /n/, /ŋ/



Manner	Description	Example Sounds
Approximants	Narrow but no friction (smooth gliding) /l/, /r/, /j/, /w/	
Glottal	Air passes through glottis	/h/

3 Voicing

Voiced (vocal cords vibrate) /b/, /d/, /g/, /v/, /z/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, /r/, /w/, /j/
Voiceless (no vibration) /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /s/, /ʃ/, /θ/, /tʃ/, /h/

□ Pronunciation Practice: Minimal Pairs

Minimal pairs are word pairs that differ in only one sound—great for consonant sound practice.

Voiceless Voiced Example Words

/p/	/b/	pat - bat
/t/	/d/	ten - den
/k/	/g/	coat - goat
/f/	/v/	fan - van
/s/	/z/	sip - zip
/ʃ/	/ʒ/	she - genre

□ Consonant Sound Practice Table

Sound	Word Examples	Voicing	Place	Manner
/p/	pen, cap	voiceless	bilabial	plosive
/b/	bat, cab	voiced	bilabial	plosive
/t/	top, mat	voiceless	alveolar	plosive
/d/	dog, mad	voiced	alveolar	plosive
/k/	cat, back	voiceless	velar	plosive
/g/	go, bag	voiced	velar	plosive
/f/	fan, leaf	voiceless	labiodental	fricative
/v/	van, leave	voiced	labiodental	fricative
/s/	see, bus	voiceless	alveolar	fricative
/z/	zoo, buzz	voiced	alveolar	fricative
/ʃ/	ship, rush	voiceless	palatal	fricative
/ʒ/	measure, vision	voiced	palatal	fricative
/tʃ/	chair, catch	voiceless	palatal	affricate
/dʒ/	jump, badge	voiced	palatal	affricate
/m/	man, ham	voiced	bilabial	nasal
/n/	net, sun	voiced	alveolar	nasal
/ŋ/	sing, king	voiced	velar	nasal
/l/	lip, ball	voiced	alveolar	lateral
/r/	red, sorry	voiced	alveolar	approximant
/j/	yes, yellow	voiced	palatal	approximant
/w/	win, away	voiced	bilabial	approximant
/h/	hat, behind	voiceless	glottal	fricative



□ Self-Practice Exercises

1. Mirror Practice

Observe your **lip, tongue, and jaw** position while making sounds.

2. Read Minimal Pairs Aloud

Create lists like:

- pig - big
- tie - die
- fail - veil
- sip - zip

3. Voice-Test Trick

Put your fingers on your throat:

- If you feel vibration → the sound is **voiced**
- If not → it's **voiceless**

4. Record and Replay

Read a word list. Record yourself. Listen for:

- Clarity
- Voicing
- Accuracy of sound production

□ Take-Home Summary

- Consonants are sounds with **obstructed airflow**.
- They are classified by **where, how, and whether vocal cords vibrate**.
- Clear consonant articulation is vital for **professional speech clarity**.
- Practice using **minimal pairs, mirror work, and recordings**.