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**The Description of English Vowel sounds**

1. **Monophtongs:**

/i:/ The front of the tongue is raised to a height slightly below and behind the close front position. The lips are spread. The tongue is tense, with the side rims making a firm contact with the upper molars. For example: meet, speak, read, leave.

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/I / A part of the tongue nearer to center than to front is raised just above the half-close position. The lips are loosely spread. The tongue is lax, with the side rims making a light contact with the upper molars. For example: sit, stick, live, lip.

/e/ The front of the tongue is raised between the half-open and half-close positions. The lips are loosely spread and are slightly wider apart than for /I/. The tongue may have more tension than in the case of /I/, with the side rims making a light contact with the upper molars. For example: many, men, women, then.

/ æ/ (In RP) The front of the tongue is raised just below the half-open position. The side rims make a very light contact with the back upper molars; the mouth is slightly more open than for /e/.The lips are neutrally open. For example: man, that, cat, bat

/ʌ/ The center of the tongue (or a part slightly in advance of center) is raised just above the fully open position. No contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. The jaws are considerably separated and the lips are neutrally open. For example: cut, sun, son, up.

/a: / A part of the tongue between the center and the back is in the fully open position. No contact is made between the rims of the tongue and the upper molars. The jaws are considerably separated and the lips are neutrally open. For example: far, car, art.

/ / The back of the tongue is just below the half-open position. No contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. The jaws are wide open and there is slight, open lip rounding. For example: dog, hot, stop.

/ **ɔ**: /The back of the tongue is raised between the half-open and half-close positions. No contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. There is medium lip-rounding. For example: more, for, call, sport

/ **ʊ** / A part of the tongue nearer to center than to back is raised just above the half-close position. The tongue is laxly held. No firm contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. The lips are closely but loosely rounded. For example: full, pull, push , good, should.

/u: / The back of the tongue is raised relaxedly from the closest position and is somewhat advanced from the true back. Its articulation is tenser compared with that of //, though no firm contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. The lips tend to be closely rounded. For example: moon, cool, spoon.

/ **3:** / The center of the tongue is raised between the half-close and half-open positions. No firm contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. The lips are neutrally spread. For example: Learn, furniture

/ **ə** / In non-final word positions, the center of the tongue is raised between the half-open and half-close positions; in the vicinity of the velar consonants /k, g/ and /N/. The tongue may be slightly more raised and retracted; in word-final positions, the tongue is in the half-open central position or in the most open region of the central area. The lips have a neutral position (i.e., are unrounded). For example: along, ever, teacher.

1. **Diphtongs:**

A diphthong is a glide from on pure vowel (monophthong) to another pure vowel. There are eight, but the first five are traditionally called the closing diphthongs. There are also centering diphthongs.

**B.1.Closing Diphthongs: /eɪ əʊ ɑɪ ɑʊ ɔɪ/**

These diphthongs are initiated by five pure vowels, namely: /e ə æ ɑ ɔ/. They glide or move towards two hosting pure vowels, namely: /ɪ ʊ/, which happen to be closing vowels. This is why these two sets of pure vowels have given “birth” to these closing diphthongs.

**/eɪ/**

As the diphthong trapezium shows a glide that is initiated around the half-close region of the mouth ends up at a region around the close/back of the mouth. A glide such as this gives rise to the closing diphthong above. For instance: late, Kate, day , rain, fail, wait , eight, weight, rain, great, break steak.

**/əʊ/**

Like **/eɪ/**, this diphthong moves from the half-close position to the close and back region. For example: sow, oh, both, soap, road, toast, toe, soul, though, shoulder.

**/ɑɪ/**

This diphthong glides from a front open position near vowel No. 4, /æ/ to the front close region where we have the hosting pure vowel no. 2, /ɪ/. Some varieties of the diphthong extend till the front back of the mouth. For example: time, right, wide, dry, why, by, lie, die, fight, light, high, height , eye, buy, guy.

**/ɑʊ/**

This is a counterpart to **/ɑɪ/** but its host to which it glides resides at the back close region. For instance: house, sound, plough, bough , now, cow, how.

**/ɔɪ/**

This diphthong glides from the back open region to the front close region, such as: boy, noise, choice, point.

**B.2.The Centering Diphthongs: /ɪə ɛə ʊə/**.

**/ɪə/**

This is a centring diphthong initiated from the front close region. For instance: deer, dear, here, tear (Nn.) ,weird, fierce, idea, museum, theological.

**/ɛə/**

This centring diphthong is initiated at the half-close region. For instance: care, rare, share, air, fair, pair , bear, pear wear, tear (vb.) ,their, her, there, Mary

**/ʊə/**

This diphthong begins at the close back region of the mouth and goes on to meet the host at the centre of the mouth. For example: poor, pure, endure cure, sure, curious, spurious, during, tour.