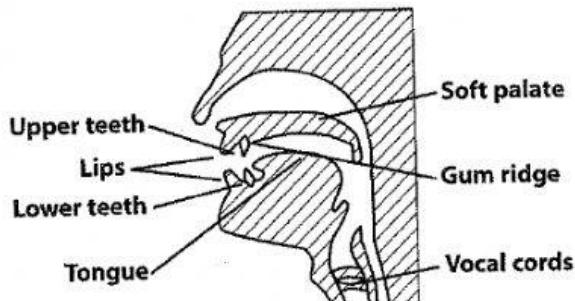


Definitions

As you progress through *English Pronunciation Made Simple*, you will frequently see the terms *articulators*, *vowels*, and *diphthongs*. We will now define these terms for you.

Articulators: The articulators are the different parts of the mouth area that we use when speaking, such as the lips, tongue, teeth, and jaw.



Vowel: A vowel is a speech sound produced with vibrating vocal cords and a continuous unrestricted flow of air coming from the mouth. The most well-known vowels in English are:

A E I O U

The various vowel sounds are affected by the changing shape and position of your articulators. The different vowels are created by:

1. **The position of your tongue in the mouth.** For example, the tongue is high in the mouth for the vowel [i] as in "see," but is low the mouth for the vowel [a] as in "hot."
2. **The shape of your lips.** For example, the lips are very rounded for the vowel [u] as in "new," but are spread for [i] as in "see."
3. **The size of your jaw opening.** For example, the jaw is open much wider for [a] as in "hot" than it is for the diphthong [eɪ] as in "pay."

Diphthong: A diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds. It begins as one vowel and ends as another. During the production of a diphthong, your articulators glide from the position of the first vowel to the position of the second. For example, when pronouncing [eɪ] as in "vein," your articulators glide from the vowel [e] to the vowel [ɪ]. In English, the most common diphthongs are [aʊ], [eɪ], [aɪ], [ɔɪ], and [oʊ].