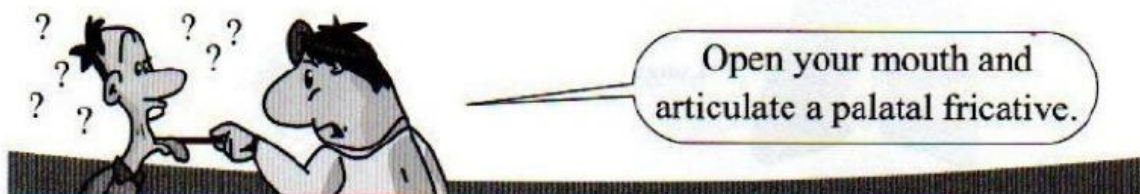


# Intro – The Organs of Speech and the English Consonants



## Think about it!

✎ Mark the correct answers.

1. We use the \_\_\_\_\_ air stream to speak.  
☐ ingressive (in-coming)  
☐ egressive (outgoing)
2. These are the organs of speech.  

<input type="checkbox"/> stomach	<input type="checkbox"/> pharynx	<input type="checkbox"/> nose
<input type="checkbox"/> lungs	<input type="checkbox"/> larynx	<input type="checkbox"/> ear
<input type="checkbox"/> trachea	<input type="checkbox"/> mouth	
3. When we breathe in, our vocal folds<sup>1</sup> are  
☐ completely open  
☐ half open  
☐ completely closed

✎ Write *True* or *False*.

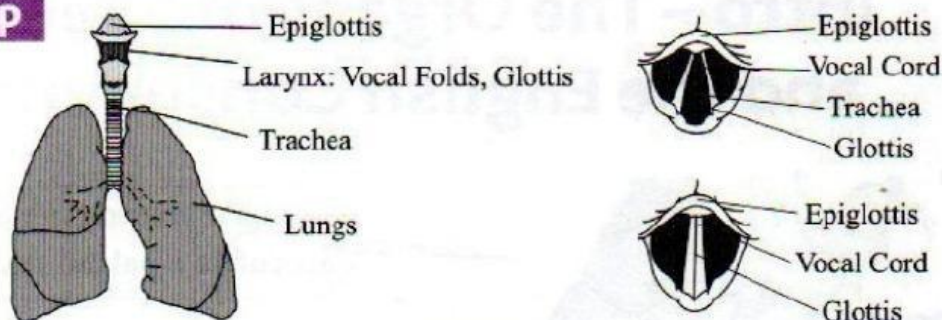
1. All vowels are produced with the vibration of our vocal folds, that is, all vowels are voiced. ☐
2. All consonants are produced with the vibration of our vocal folds. ☐
3. Most English sounds are voiceless (produced without the vibration of the vocal folds). ☐

Don't look at the **Answer Key** now! Study the unit to the end and then check your answers.

1. Some phoneticians still refer to them as "vocal cords."

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**Close up**



The air leaving the lungs will go through the trachea (wind pipe) and vibrate or not the vocal folds located in the larynx (voice box). Then it will leave through your mouth and/or nose.

The vocal folds open completely to allow the air in when we breathe in. When we breathe out, two things can happen:

- If we're not speaking, our glottis (the space between our vocal folds) will be open and the air flows freely.
- If we're speaking, our vocal folds come together allowing a narrow passage for the air to go out.

If the vocal folds vibrate when the air leaves, we produce a **voiced** sound. If they don't, we produce a **voiceless** sound. It's the case of the consonants: some are voiceless while some are voiced. However, all vowels are voiced, that is, the vocal folds always vibrate when we produce a vowel sound. Most consonants are voiced: English has only nine voiceless sounds.

To feel this vibration, put your fingertips against your Adam's apple (i.e., larynx) or on the top of your head and alternate these sounds:

SSSS – ZZZZ – SSSS – ZZZZ

You can feel the voicing turn **on** and **off**: /s/ is voiceless and /z/ is voiced.

**Zoom in**

Touch your larynx or put your hand on top of your head and pronounce the following sounds. Circle VL if the sound is voiceless (no vibration) or VD if the sound is voiced (vibration).

/f/	VL	VD	/ʃ/	VL	VD
/v/	VL	VD	/ʒ/	VL	VD

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Close up

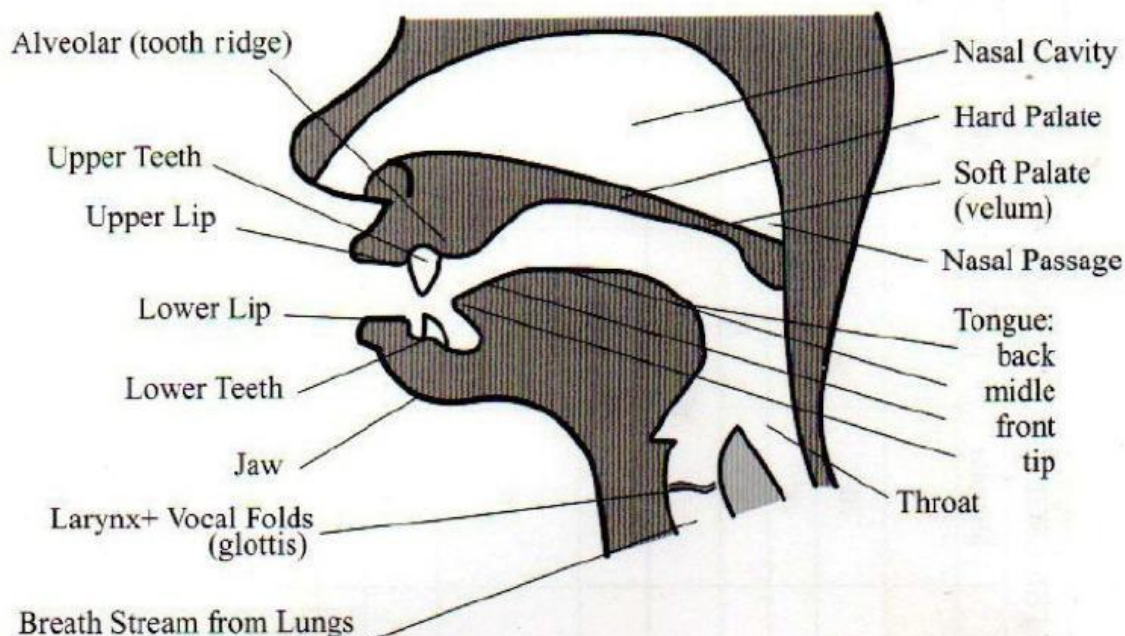
MANNER AND PLACE OF ARTICULATION OF THE ENGLISH CONSONANTS									
		bilabial	labiodental	dental	alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal	
<b>Stops:</b> breath is fully stopped and then released	Voiceless	/p/			/t/		/k/	[ʔ] <sup>1</sup>	
	Voiced	/b/			/d/		/g/		
<b>Fricatives:</b> breath causes friction	Voiceless		/f/	/θ/	/s/	/ʃ/		/h/	
	Voiced		/v/	/ð/	/z/	/ʒ/			
<b>Affricates:</b> breath is stopped and friction follows	Voiceless				/tʃ/				
	Voiced				/dʒ/				
<b>Nasals:</b> breath is released through the nose	Voiced	/m/			/n/		/ŋ/		
<b>Liquids:</b> breath does not cause friction	lateral				/l/				
	retroflex				/ɾ/				
	flap				[ɾ] <sup>2</sup>				
<b>Semivowels:</b> mouth moves from one position to another	Voiced	/w/				/y/			

1. The symbol [ʔ] refers to a sound that can sometimes replace /t/. Example: that you know /ðæt? ju: nou/.

2. When Americans say *water* and *lady*, the “r” and “d” are usually pronounced [ɾ]. Example: better /ˈberɾ/ - metal /ˈmeɾəl/

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## Zoom in



✎ Complete the statements below...

- analyzing the consonant chart;
- observing what you do with your mouth as you pronounce each sound;
- and looking at the illustration above.

1. **Bilabial** sounds are produced with both \_\_\_\_\_.
2. **Labiodental** sounds are produced with the upper \_\_\_\_\_ and lower \_\_\_\_\_.
3. **Dental** sounds are produced with the tip of your tongue between your \_\_\_\_\_.
4. **Alveolar** sounds are produced with the tip of your \_\_\_\_\_ approaching or touching the tooth ridge.
5. **Palatal** sounds are produced with your \_\_\_\_\_ near the hard palate.
6. **Velar** sounds are produced with your tongue near or on the soft \_\_\_\_\_, also called *velum*.
7. **Glottal** sounds are produced by \_\_\_\_\_ passing through or stopping at your vocal \_\_\_\_\_.