

e.g., iə, eə, uə.

Consonant Sounds and Their Phonetic Symbols

P. Christopherson¹ has defined a consonant as "A consonant may thus be defined as a sound in which the movement of air from the lungs is obstructed by narrowing or a complete closure of the air passage." There are two types of consonant sounds :

- (i) Consonant sounds and (ii) Consonant clusters.
- (i) **Consonant sounds.** Here are the consonant sounds which are 24 in number.

S. No.	Phonetic Symbol	Word Example	Phonetic Transcription
1.	(p)	put, pay	put, pei
2.	(b)	but, boy	b ^ t, bɔi
3.	(t)	tea	ti:
4.	(d)	day	dei.
5.	(k)	call, came	k ɔ:I, k ^ m
6.	(g)	go	gou
7.	(f)	fate, foot	feit, fut
8.	(v)	voice	vois
9.	(θ)	thin	θin
10.	(ð)	then	ə n
11.	(s)	sit, sun	sit, s ^ n
12.	(z)	zeal	zi :l
13.	(ʃ)	show, ship	ʃou, ʃip
14.	(ʒ)	measure	meʒə

1 P. Christopherson : *An English Phonetics Course*, p. 25.

15.	(t)	chalk, choose	
16.	(dʒ)	jug, gem	tʃo:k, tʃu:z
17.	(m)	makes, men	dʒʌk, dʒem
18.	(n)	no	meɪks, men
19.	(ŋ)	song, sing	nou
20.	(l)	lake	sɒŋ, sɪŋ
21.	(r)	read, rate	leɪk
22.	(h)	hen, hate	red, reɪt
23.	(w)	water, wine	hen, heɪt
24.	(j)	yet	wɔ: tə, weɪn
			jes

The 'r' sound is silent when it is followed by a consonant e.g., in bargain, garlic, short.

The final 's', after all the alphabets except 'f', 'k', 'p', 't'; is sounded as 'z' e.g., chairs (z), this (z). It will be the sound 's' in its caps.

The position of speech organs in pronouncing some of the consonants is illustrated in Fig 7.8 through 7.20

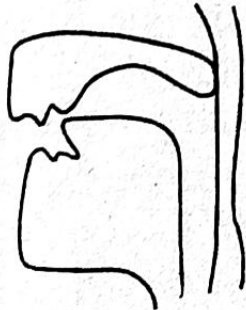


Fig. 7.8. h



Fig. 7.9. r

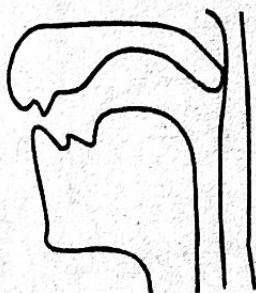


Fig. 7.10. s and z

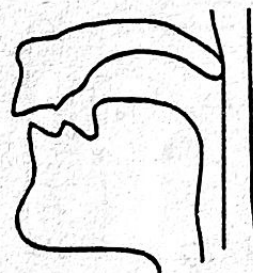


Fig. 7.11. θ and θ

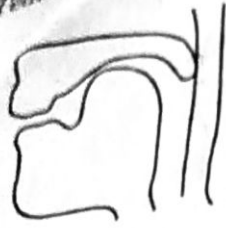


Fig. 7.12. p and b

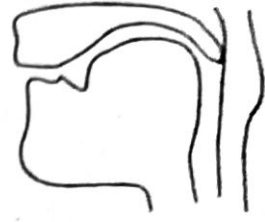


Fig. 7.13. t and d



Fig. 7.14. k and g

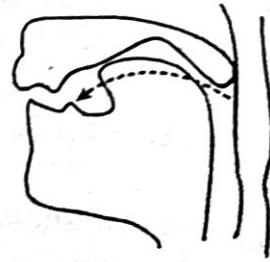


Fig. 7.15. t and d

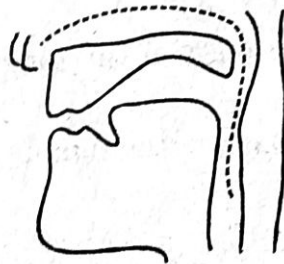


Fig. 7.16. m

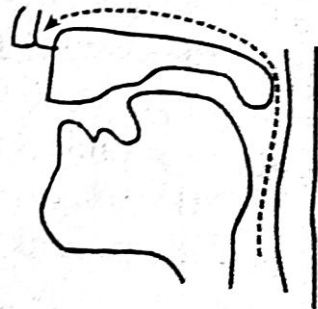


Fig. 7.17.

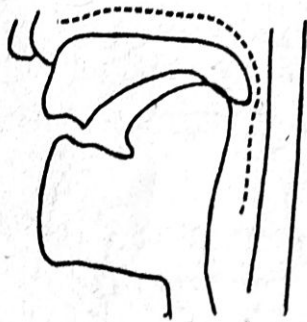


Fig. 7.18. n

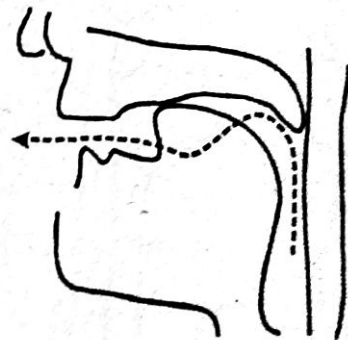


Fig. 7.19. l



Fig. 7.20. r

The classification of consonant sounds is as follows ;

1. According to Place of Obstruction

- (a) **Bi-labial**—sounds formed when two lips meet, *e.g.*, (p), (b).
- (b) **Labio-dental**—sounds formed by the lower lip and upper teeth, *e.g.*, (f), (v).
- (c) **Dental**—sounds formed by the tip of tongue and upper teeth, *e.g.*, (θ), (ð).
- (d) **Alveolar**—sounds formed by the tip of the tongue and the teeth ridge (t), (d), (n), (s), (r), (z).
- (e) **Palato Alveolar**—sounds formed by the blade of the tongue and the back of alveolar, *e.g.*, (ʃ), (dʒ).
- (f) **Palatal**—sounds formed by the back of the tongue and the hard palate, *e.g.*, (j).
- (g) **Velar**—sounds formed by the back of the tongue and the soft palate, *e.g.*, (k), (g), (ŋ).
- (h) **Glottal**—sounds formed at glottis, *e.g.*, (h).

2. According to the Nature of Obstruction

- (a) **Plosives**—sounds produced by the complete closure of the air passage and the sudden release of air, *e.g.*, (p), (b), (t), (k), (g).
- (b) **Nasals**—sounds formed by the complete closure of mouth while the nasal passage is open, *e.g.*, (m), (n).
- (c) **Fricatives**—sounds produced by closing the mouth passage partially while the air pushes through it with audible friction, *e.g.*, (f), (v), (θ), (ð), (r), (s), (ʃ), (ʒ).
- (d) **Affricates**—sounds formed by closing the air passage completely and releasing the air slowly, *e.g.*, (tʃ), (dʒ).
- (e) **Lateral**—sounds formed when the air passage is partially obstructed by the tongue at the centre of the mouth and the air is free to pass round one or both sides, *e.g.*, (L).

(f) **Semi-vowels**—sounds formed when the mouth is partially closed to let the air pass through it with very little audible friction, e.g., (w), (j).

3. According to the Position of Vocal-Cords

(a) **Voiced**—sounds produced by the vibration of vocal-cords e.g., (b), (d), (g), (v), (z), (ʒ), (dʒ), (m), (n), (ŋ), (ð), (L), (r), (w), (j).

(b) **Voiceless**—sounds produced by drawing the vocal cords across and letting the air pass freely without any vibration, e.g., (p), (t), (k), (f), (s), (ʃ), (tʃ), (h).

(ii) **Consonant Clusters.** Almost in every language there are consonant clusters. When one sound is given for two consonants it is a consonants cluster. In Hindi when we write पुष्पा, कक्षा, रक्षा the sounds of the half letter merges in the full sound of the other. In English, there are 38 consonant clusters which are as follows:

S.No.	Cluster-sound	Example
1.	pr	press, prose
2.	tr	tray, try
3.	fr	fry, free
4.	gr	ground, grew
5.	dr	draw, dry
6.	kr	crow, cry
7.	or	through, throw
8.	br	bread, brain
9.	sr	shrink, shriek
10.	st	still, stone
11.	sp	spoil, spin
12.	sm	small, smoke
13.	sk	skin, sky
14.	sn	snail, snow
15.	sl	slow, sleep
16.	pl	plea, play
17.	kl	close, clown
18.	bl	black, blue
19.	fl	fly, flow
20.	gl	glass, glow
21.	dw	dwel, dwarf
22.	kw	quick, quack
23.	tw	twin, twelve

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skr
spr
spl
skw

swish, swan
what, where
thwarts
few
cude, cue
mute
bureau
pure
view
human
stray
script
spray
split
squint

Pronouncing each sound correctly is not sufficient. When we speak, we do not speak in single word but in groups of words spoken continuously. This is called stream of speech. It includes :

- (i) Stress
- (ii) Rhythm
- (iii) Intonation
- (iv) Fluency and
- (v) Pause.

We shall come to know about pronunciation one by one.

STRESS