

# Phonetics

First year  
Department of English  
College of Education for Human Sciences  
University of Basra  
Instructor: **Dr. Wasan Alsiraih**

\*\*\*\*\*

## Consonant Sounds

**Consonant Sounds:** sounds produced with an obstruction to the air-flow.

**Features of Describing and Classifying** Consonant Sounds are:

1. **The Manner of Articulation:** the way consonant sounds are produced.
2. **The Place of Articulation:** the articulators (organs of speech) responsible for producing consonant sounds.
3. **Voicing:** whether or not there is voicing in the vocal cords.

**\*The Manner of Articulation:** according to this feature, consonant sounds are divided into:

1. **Fricatives (Friction Consonants):** /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/
2. **Plosives (Stop Consonants):** /p, b, t, d, k, g/
3. **Affricates:** /tʃ, dʒ/
4. **Nasals:** /m, n, ŋ/
5. **Lateral:** /l/
6. **Approximants:** which are divided into two types:
  - a- **Retroflex:** /r/
  - b- **Semi-Vowels:** /w, j/

**\*The Place of Articulation:** according to this feature, consonant sounds are divided into:

1. **Bilabial:** the two lips: /p, b, m, w/

2. **Dental:** the teeth + tongue: /θ, ð/
3. **Labiodental:** the teeth + lower lip: /f, v/
4. **Alveolar:** the alveolar ridge + tongue: /s, z, t, d, n, l/
5. **Palatal:** the hard-palate + tongue: /j/
6. **Post-Alveolar (Alveolar-Palatal / Palato-Alveolar):** the end of the alveolar-ridge + tongue: /ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ, r/
7. **Velar:** the velum (soft-palate) + tongue: /k, g, ŋ/
8. **Glottal:** the glottis (vocal cords): /h/

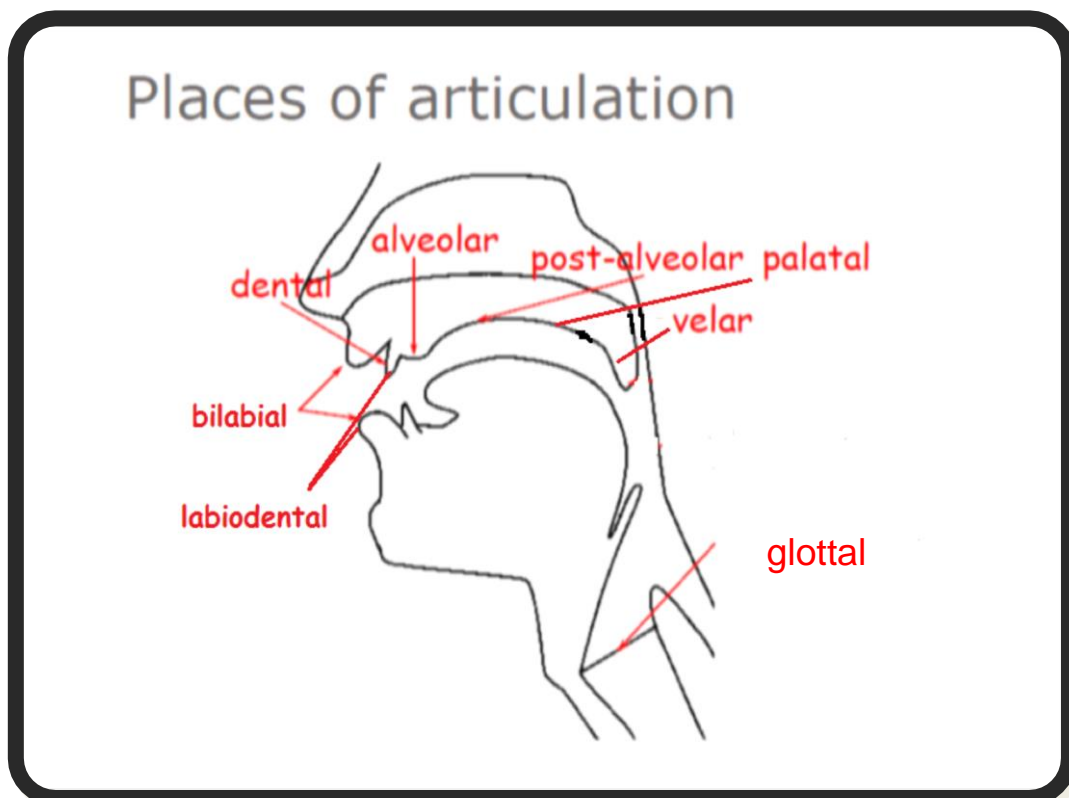


Figure showing the different places of articulation in the production of English Consonants

**\*Voicing:** according to this feature, consonant sounds are divided into:

1. **Voiced:** /v, ð, z, ʒ, b, d, g, dʒ, m, n, ŋ, l, r, w, j/
2. **Voiceless:** /f, θ, s, ʃ, h, p, t, k, tʃ/

In **Consonant Sounds** we have the following:

### 1- The Soft-Palate (Velum):

- It is raised in most consonants except THREE.

- This happens in the sounds /m, n, ŋ/, which is why they are called Nasal Consonants.
- In these nasal consonants, there is a closure somewhere in the mouth; so all the air comes out of the nasal cavity.

**2- Continuity:** Some consonants are continuous, some are not.

- When they are continuous they are produced until no air is left in the lungs.
- The air passes through the organs of speech and out of the mouth or nose (in nasals) without being stopped at any position.
- However, in plosives (stop) consonants, there is no continuity.

**3- Voicing:** Some consonants are voiced, others are voiceless. Accordingly:

**Voiced sounds:** are sounds produced by having vibration in the vocal cords.

**Voiceless sounds:** are sounds produced without vibration in the vocal cords.

**4-** And according to **voicing**, consonant sounds have another feature:

**Strength: Strong (Fortis) / Weak (Lenis)**

Accordingly:

**Voiced** → is **Weak (Lenis)**.

**Voiceless** → is **Strong (Fortis)**.

**5- Word Position:**

Consonants are also described according to their position in words. The three word positions consonants occupy are the following:

- **Initial**
- **Medial**
- **Final**

These positions are decided according to a unit called the **Syllable**.