

Differences between Consonants and Vowels

1. Consonants are the sounds produced with the passage of air impeded at different points in the vocal tract. Vowels are sounds produced with a free passage of air.
2. Consonants are classified into voiced and voiceless. Vowels are classified into long and short.
3. Vowels are described according to:
 - a. Length of the vowel (Long or short).
 - b. The vertical distance between the roof of the tongue and the roof of the mouth.(Close, close mid open mid and open).
 - c. The part of the tongue which is raised against the roof of the mouth.(front, central, back).
 - d. The shape of the lips (spread, neutral, or rounded).
4. Languages do not have the same number of consonants and vowels.
5. The distribution of these sounds is not the same in all languages.
6. What is a phoneme in one language can be realized into different allophones in another.
7. Languages do not show the same distribution of consonants and vowels. The sequence of consonant clusters in English is different from Arabic, for example.
8. What is a consonant in one language can be a vowel in another.