

Vowels in English

All first year students should know that the main focus during the second semester will be devoted to vowels, diphthongs and triphthongs in English.

Vowels can be defined as the sounds produced with a free passage of air. They fall into two main types:

A. Long vowels.

B. Short vowels.

There are 12 short and long vowels in English. There are 8 diphthongs and triphthongs.

The diphthong is a combination of 2 vowels but the triphthong is a combination of 3 vowels.

You need to go to the book (Phonetics and Phonology by Peter Roach) and have a look at the diagrams of short and long vowels and see their location on the diagram.

Please, try to visit the Google virtual classroom and see if any new material has been added.

Cardinal Vowels

Definition of Cardinal Vowels:

A standard reference system. They refer to the range of vowels that human vocal apparatus can make.

Characteristics of the Cardinal Vowels

1. They are used as reference points to describe the English vowels and the vowels of many European languages.
2. They do not belong to any particular language.
3. They are characterized with extreme vowel quality.
4. They were first devised by Daniel Johns.
5. They are peripheral (located on the edges) (ends) of the quadrilateral (diagram).
6. They are eight cardinal vowels.
7. They are enclosed between square brackets. [].

Q: Are the Cardinal Vowels English vowels?

No. They aren't because they do not belong to any language in the world

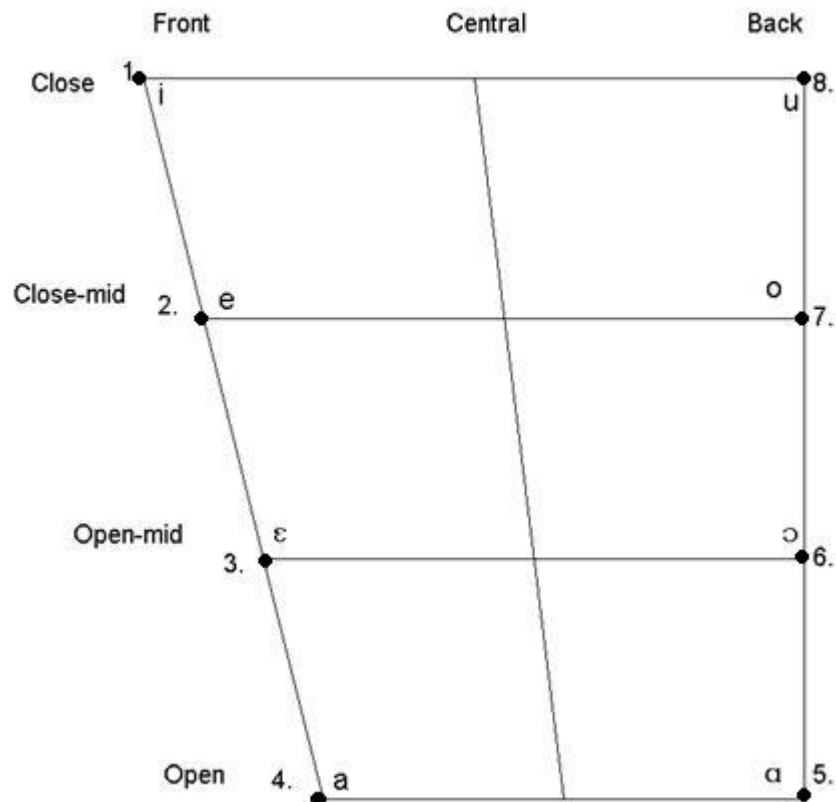


Diagram of Cardinal Vowels