



# The Fundamentals of Applied Linguistics: Communication through Language

## **Chapter 5 Phonology**

*Preparing the Way: Teaching ELs in the PreK-12 Classroom*

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## **Part III. The Vowel System of English**

ESOL in Higher Ed  
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# Visualization

A tropical beach scene with turquoise water, white sand, and palm trees under a blue sky. The word "Visualization" is written in a large, bold, blue serif font in the upper left corner. In the lower right, three lines of text in a smaller, italicized blue serif font are displayed on the sand.

*Linguistics is easy.*

*Linguistics is fun.*

*Linguistics is logical.*

## Essential Question:

What should you know about the **Vowel System of English** in order to effectively serve ELs?



MANNER	Place of Articulation							
		Labial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	<i>voiceless</i>	p pill			t till		k kill	ʔ uh-oh
	<i>voiced</i>	b bill			d dill		g gill	
Flap/Tap	<i>voiceless</i>				ɾ butter			
Fricative	<i>voiceless</i>		f fine	θ thin	s ship	ʃ / ʒ pressure		h hill
	<i>voiced</i>		v vine	ð then	z zip	ʒ / ʒ pleasure		
Affricate	<i>voiceless</i>					tʃ / tʃ choke		
	<i>voiced</i>					dʒ / dʒ joke		
Nasal	<i>voiced</i>	m simmer			n sinner		ŋ singer	
Glide	<i>voiced</i>	w wore				y your		
Liquid	<i>voiced</i>				l lore	r roar		

# The English VOWELS

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense	i (beat)		u (boot)
	Lax			ʊ (book)
Mid	Tense	e (bait)		o (boat)
	Lax		ʌ (but) ə (about)	ɔ (paw)*
Low		æ (bat)		ɑ (pot)

An English vowel can be either:

- front, central, or back
- high, mid, or low
- tense or lax

# The English VOWELS: HIGH

	Front	Central	Back
High Tense	i (beat)		u (boot)
Lax		ɪ (bit)	ʊ (book)

High vowels are articulated in the **top part** of the oral cavity. The tongue is often high as well.

The vowel in the word “feet” /i/ is tense.

High vowels can be either **tense** or **lax**. Say the word “fit,” then say “feet.” Which word is pronounced with greater constriction of the facial musculature?

# The English VOWELS: HIGH

	Front	Central	Back
High Tense	<b>i</b> (beat)		<b>u</b> (boot)
Lax	<b>ɪ</b> (bit)		<b>ʊ</b> (book)

Make a list of 6 words containing a high **tense** vowel.

field wheel chico fruit loops through

Make a list of 6 words containing a high **lax** vowel.

wind if miss foot full could

# The English Vowels: MID

	Front	Central	Back
High Tense	i (beat)		u (boot)
Lax			ʊ (book)
Mid Tense	e (bait)		o (boat)
Lax	ɛ (bet)	ʌ (but) ə (about)	ɔ (paw)*

Make a list of 6 words containing a mid **lax** vowel.

friend debt wonder hug log ball

Make a list of 6 words containing a mid **tense** vowel.

cane ate patient around most goal



# The English VOWELS: **LOW**

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense	i (beat)		u (boot)
	Lax		ɪ (bit)	ʊ (book)
Mid	Tense	e (bait)		o (boat)
	Lax		ʌ (but) ə (about)	ɔ (paw)*
Low		æ (bat)		ɑ (pot)

Make a list of 6 words containing a **low** vowel.  
 (Notice that there is not a tense and lax aspect of low vowels.)

ask    relax    mad                      hot    father    cot

# Review of Vowels

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense	i (beat)		u (boot)
	Lax		ɪ (bit)	ʊ (book)
Mid	Tense	e (bait)		o (boat)
	Lax		ʌ (but) ə (about)	ɔ (paw)*
Low		æ (bat)		ɑ (pot)

Which symbol corresponds to the **first sound** in each of the following words?

- |   |       |   |    |   |     |   |       |   |       |
|---|-------|---|----|---|-----|---|-------|---|-------|
| o | oat   | ɪ | it | i | eat | ʌ | other | ɛ | extra |
| ɔ | ought | æ | at | e | ate | ɑ | otter |   |       |

# Review of Vowels

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense	i (beat)		u (boot)
	Lax		ɪ (bit)	ʊ (book)
Mid	Tense	e (bait)		o (boat)
	Lax		ʌ (but) ə (about)	ɔ (paw)*
Low		æ (bat)		ɑ (pot)

Which symbol corresponds to the **middle sound** in each of the following words?

catch

poach

fetch

raunchy

peach

pitch

put

pooch

Rachel

touch

# Review of Vowels

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense	i (beat)		u (boot)
	Lax		ɪ (bit)	ʊ (book)
Mid	Tense	e (bait)		o (boat)
	Lax		ʌ (but) ə (about)	ɔ (paw)*
Low		æ (bat)		ɑ (pot)

Which symbol corresponds to the **middle sound** in each of the following words?

catch **æ**    poach **o**    fetch **ɛ**    raunchy **ɔ**    peach **i**  
 pitch **ɪ**    put **ʊ**    pooch **u**    Rachel **e**    touch **ʌ**

# Transcribe the following words:

hope	nick	ace	knee
act	help	dill	friend
goat	jump	meak	noon
ooze	pain	siege	many
rich	lash	these	ink

# Transcribe the following words

hope	Nick	ace	knee
<i>/hɒp/</i>	<i>/nɪk/</i>	<i>/es/</i>	<i>/ni/</i>
act	help	dill	friend
<i>/ækt/</i>	<i>/hɛlp/</i>	<i>/dɪl/</i>	<i>/frɛnd/</i>
goat	jump	meak	noon
<i>/gɒt/</i>	<i>/dʒʌmp/</i>	<i>/mi:k/</i>	<i>/nu:n/</i>
ooze	pain	siege	many
<i>/u:z/</i>	<i>/peɪn/</i>	<i>/si:ʒ/</i>	<i>/meni/</i>
rich	lash	these	ink
<i>/rɪtʃ/</i>	<i>/læʃ/</i>	<i>/ði:z/</i>	<i>/ɪŋk/</i>

# The English VOWELS: DIPHTHONGS

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense	i (beat)		u (boot)
	Lax		ɪ (bit)	ʊ (book)
Mid	Tense	e (bait)		o (boat)
	Lax		ʌ (but) ə (about)	ɔj or ɔy (boy) ɔ (paw)*
Low			aj or ay (bite)	aw (loud)
		æ (bat)		ɑ (pot)

Make a list of 3 words containing the diphthong /aj/, 3 words containing the diphthong /aw/, and 3 containing /ɔy/

hi sky height      crowd bough about      toil annoy oink

# Transcribe the following words:

<b>boil</b>	<b>couch</b>	<b>fright</b>	<b>kite</b>
<b>how</b>	<b>plough</b>	<b>oyster</b>	<b>blow</b>
<b>fly</b>	<b>vowel</b>	<b>blind</b>	<b>exploit</b>



## Transcribe the following words:

boil	couch	fright	kite
<i>/bɔɪl/</i>	<i>/kaʊtʃ/</i>	<i>/fraɪt/</i>	<i>/kaɪt/</i>
how	plough	oyster	blow
<i>/haʊ/</i>	<i>/plaw/</i>	<i>/ɔɪstər/</i>	<i>/blo/</i>
fly	vowel	blind	exploit
<i>/flaɪ/</i>	<i>/vəwəl/</i>	<i>/blaɪnd/</i>	<i>/eksplɔɪt/</i>

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