

## Revision of Place and Manner of Articulation of English Consonants

A **consonant** is a speech sound produced by a partial or complete obstruction of the air stream by a constriction of the speech organs.

24 consonants both in terms of their function and phonetic nature have been identified. They are classified according to: manner of articulation, place of articulation and voicing.

The chart below shows how they are classified and the place of articulation of each one:

Manner of Articulation	bilabial	Labio dental	dental	alveolar	Post alveolar	Palatal	velar	Glottal
<b>plosives</b>	<b>p b</b>			<b>t d</b>			<b>k g</b>	
<b>fricatives</b>		<b>f v</b>	<b>θ ð</b>	<b>s z</b>	<b>ʃ ʒ</b>			<b>h</b>
<b>affricates</b>					<b>tʃ dʒ</b>			
<b>lateral</b>				<b>l</b>				
<b>nasals</b>	<b>m</b>			<b>n</b>			<b>ŋ</b>	
<b>Semi-vowels/ approximants</b>	<b>w</b>				<b>r</b>	<b>j</b>		

Chart of English Consonants (Roach, 1993, p.62)

### I. Manner of articulation

The manner of articulation shows how narrow the constriction is and whether the air stream is flowing through the nose or the oral cavity

- 1. Plosives:** Plosives involves a total closure. Their articulation consists of three stages: the closing stage, the compression stage and the release stage during which a plosion occurs.
- 2. Fricatives:** Fricatives are sounds produced with a partial closure producing friction because of the narrow passage left to the air stream by the organs involved in their articulation.

3. **Affricates:** Affricates involve a complete closure like plosives, but the release of the air is with friction (of a short duration)
4. **Laterals:** Laterals are sound articulated by means of a partial closure with the air escaping through both sides of the mouth.
5. **Nasals:** Nasals are produced with the passage of the air through the nasal cavity.
6. **Semi-vowels:** Semi-vowels are in phonetic terms vocalic (produced like vowels), but treated like consonants because their function is consonantal.

## II. Place of articulation

The place of articulation specifies where in the vocal tract the closure or the narrowing is made and which organs are involved in their articulation.

1. **Bilabial:** the lower lip and the upper lip approach or touch each other /p, b, m, w/
2. **dental:** the tip or the blade of the tongue approach or touch the upper teeth / θ ð /
3. **Labio-dental:** The lower lip approach or touches the upper teeth / f, v /
4. **alveolar:** The tip of the tongue approaches or touches the alveolar ridge /t, d, n, s, z//
5. **post-alveolar:** The constriction is made just after the alveolar ridge / ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ, r/  
**retroflex:** /ɻ/ is said to be retroflex because the tip of the tongue is curled up backward in the mouth towards the post-alveolar ridge.
6. **Palatal:** The body of the tongue approaches or touches the hard palate /j/
7. **velar:** The body of the tongue approaches or touches the soft palate, or the velum. / k, g, ŋ /
7. **glottal:** In the production of /h/, the glottis is narrow enough to create turbulence in the air stream while flowing through the vocal cords.

## III. Voicing specifies whether the vocal cords are vibrating

Several sounds in English differ voicing - the two sounds have the same place of articulation but differ in voicing.

Voiceless	voiced
/p/	/b/
/t/	/d/
/k/	/g/
/f/	/v/
/θ/	/ð/
/s/	/z/

/ʃ/	/ʒ/
/tʃ/	/dʒ/