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## Sound Recognition OR English Sound System

Letters and sound must not be mixed up. Sounds are spoken and letters are written. Although letters remind us of corresponding sound, but they can not make us pronounce sounds which we do not know. In English there are 26 letters but 45 sounds. As a result spelling of words does not guide pronunciations, e.g. the letters i, u, o, e and a in city, busy, women, pretty, village stand for same vowel sound which is in 'sit'. Moreover, in English there are some silent letters. Therefore, there is an alphabet or symbol for each 45 sounds of 26 letters. These alphabets or symbols are called 'Phonetic alphabets' or 'Phonetic symbols'. These symbols alone present exact sound for pronunciation. The International Phonetic Association (IPA) has given these symbols.

### Sounds of English and Phonetic Symbols

The sounds of English can be divided into two:

1. Vowel sound.
2. Consonant sound.

## Vowel sounds:

defined vowels as — P. Christopherson has

then may be defined as voiced sounds in the production of which there is no obstruction whether partial or complete of the air passage.

It means when there is no closure of the ~~air~~ air passage by various speech organs partial or complete, the result will be a vowel sound.

Although there are only 5 vowels viz: a, e, i, o, u there are 21 vowel sounds. These vowel sounds are divided into two —

1. Pure Vowel sound or Voids
2. Diphthongs or Conoids

### 1. Pure Vowel sounds:

When the sound consists of a single vowel sound, it is called pure vowel sound. They are 12 in number.

### 2. Diphthongs:

The word diphthongs came from Greek and means double sounds. It is combination of two vowel sounds pronounced as a single syllable. Each

Sound starts on one of the vowel sound and finishes on another. It is a glide from one vowel to another. Diphthongs are also called impure vowel sounds because they do not have the purity of one sound only. They are 9 in number.

Diphthongs are of two types:

- (i) Closing Diphthongs.
- (ii) Centring Diphthongs.

(i) Closing Diphthongs:

A diphthong is called a closing diphthong when the movement is towards the closer position of the tongue e.g. *ei, ou, au* etc.

(ii) Centring Diphthongs:

A centring diphthong is when the movement is towards the centre of the tongue e.g. *ia, ea, ua* etc.