

Place of Articulation

The International Phonetic Alphabet recognises the following places of articulation (among others):

Bilabial	The point of maximum constriction is made by the coming together of the two lips.
Labiodental	The lower lip articulates with the upper teeth.
Dental	The tip of the tongue articulates with the back or bottom of the top teeth.
Alveolar	The tip or the blade of the tongue articulates with the forward part of the alveolar ridge. A sound made with the tip of the tongue here is an apico-alveolar sound; one made with the blade, a lamino-alveolar.
Postalveolar	The tip or the blade of the tongue articulates with the <i>back</i> area of the alveolar ridge.
Palatal	The front of the tongue articulates with the domed part of the hard palate.
Velar	The back of the tongue articulates with the soft palate.
Uvular	The back of the tongue articulates with the very back of the soft palate, including the uvula.
Pharyngeal	The pharynx is constricted by the faucal pillars moving together (lateral compression) and, possibly, by the larynx being raised. "It is largely a sphincteric semi-closure of the oro-pharynx, and it can be learned by tickling the back of the throat, provoking retching" (Catford 1978:163).
Glottal	The vocal folds are brought together; in some cases, the function of the vocal folds can be part of articulation as well as phonation, as in the case of [ʔ] and [h] in many languages.

The possible places of articulation form a continuum along the upper surface of the vocal tract; therefore the places listed above should be seen as arbitrary (but conventional) divisions which can be modified if necessary through the use of additional categories, e.g., "interdental", "alveolo-palatal" or "prevelar". English exemplifies several places of articulation: **bilabial** [p], [b] and [m]; **labiodental** [f], [v] and [ɱ] (the "m" in "triumph" is labiodental, in harmony with the following [f] sound); **dental** [θ] and [ð]; **alveolar** [t], [d], [n], [s], [z], [l], [ʃ] and [ʒ]; **palatal** [j]; and **velar** [k], [g] and [ŋ]. **Uvular** place of articulation is illustrated by the formal pronunciation of "r" in French or German (a uvular trill [ʀ], or, often, a voiced fricative), as heard, for example, in classical singing. **Pharyngeal** place of articulation will probably take considerably more practice for you to perfect, partly because until you can produce and identify the other fricatives formed in the back of the mouth (i.e. [x], [χ], [ħ] and [ʕ]), you will not be confident that you are *not* forming any of these when you are attempting to produce pharyngeal friction. Friction in the pharynx is created by drawing the root of the tongue backwards, almost as if being strangled, though not quite as extreme. Once you can control the distinction between

velar, uvular and glottal friction, the ability to regulate pharyngeal friction will develop with practice.

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