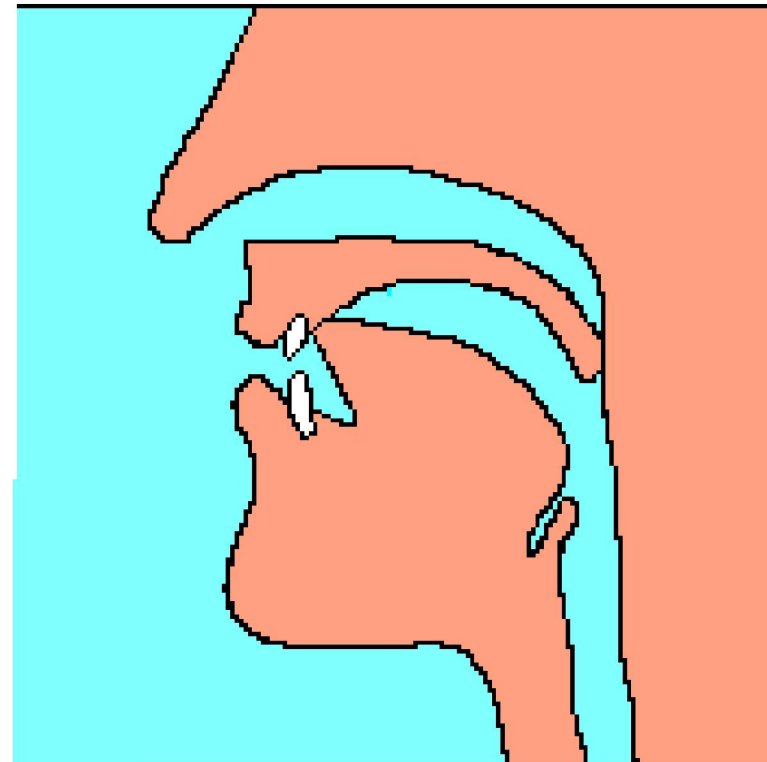
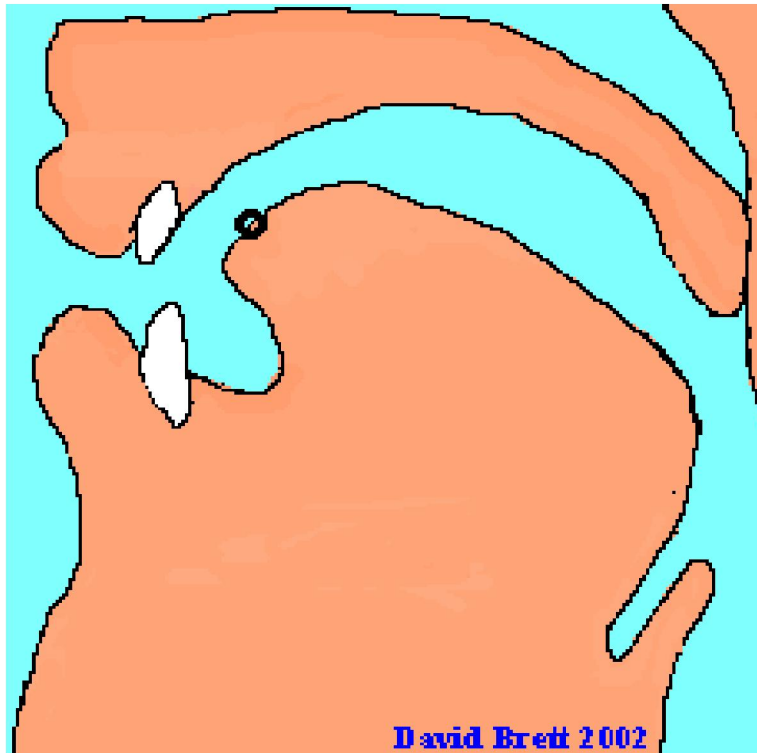


Describing Vowels & Diphtongs

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What differ vowels from consonants?



VOWELS VS CONSONANTS

VOWELS	CONSONANTS
Produced with no oral obstruction	produced with a narrow or complete closure in the vocal tract
More sonorous	Less sonorous
syllabic	Non-syllabic

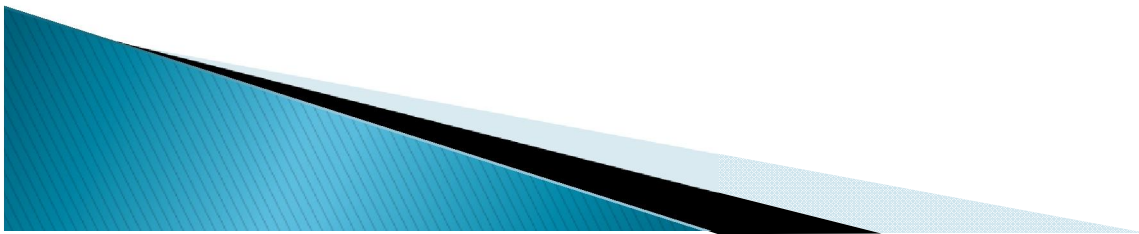
VOWELS

Vowels

are made by shaping the column of air rather than by obstructing it

Organs involved:

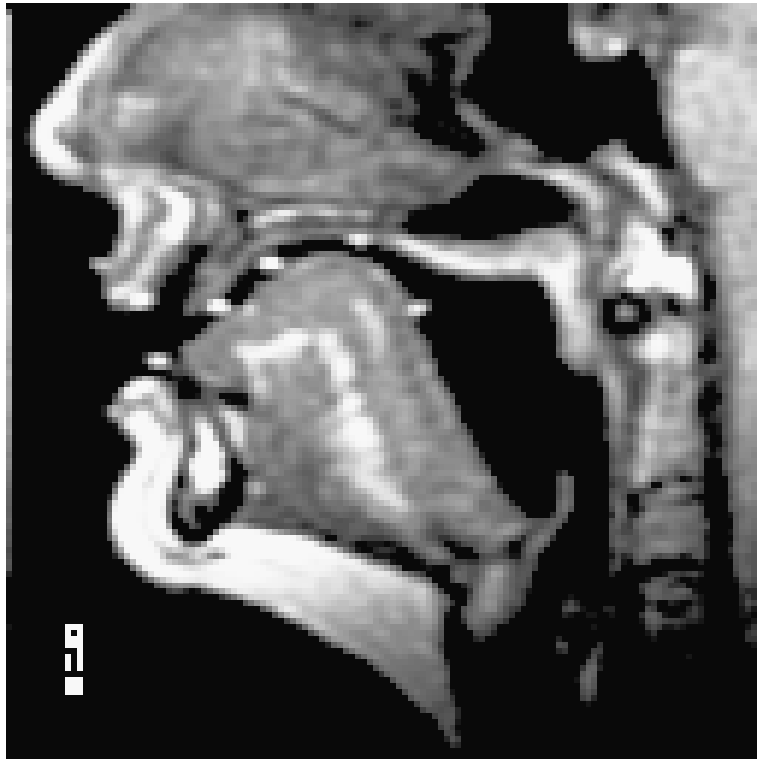
1. Tongue (forward, backward, up, and down)
2. Jaw (raised, lowered)
3. Lips (spread, rounded)

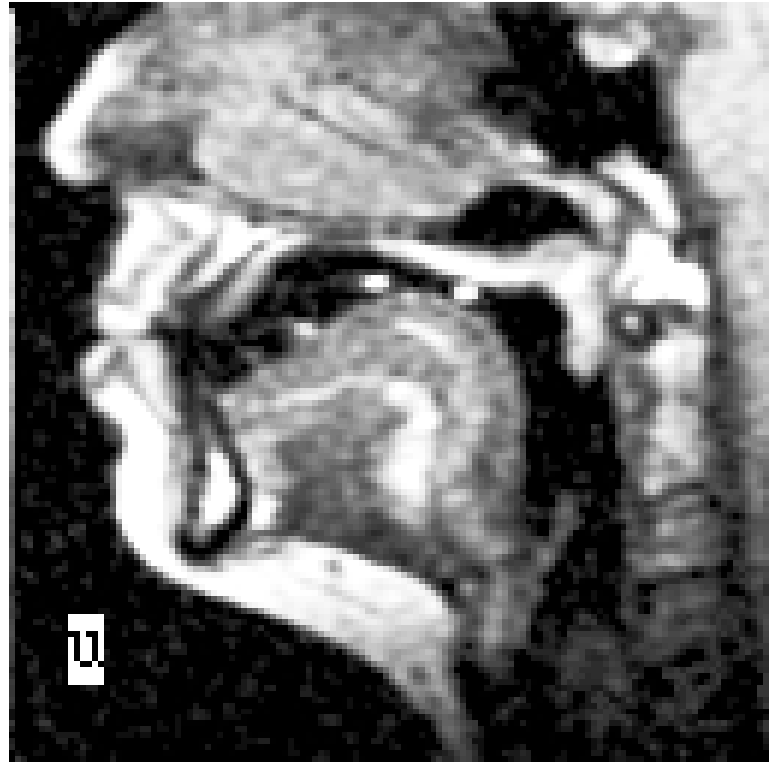
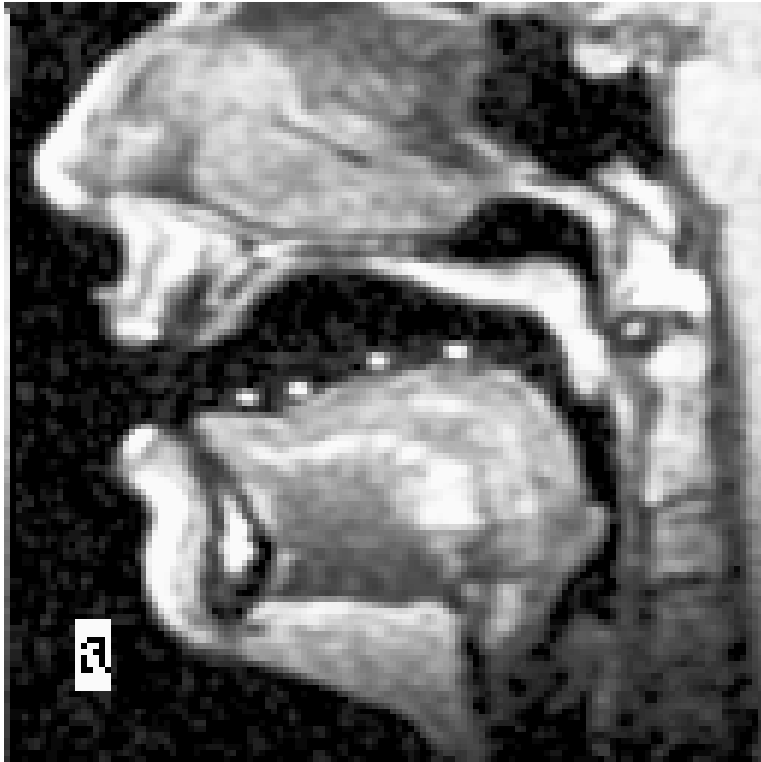


WAYS TO DESCRIBE VOWELS

- ▶ **Quality** > determined by the particular configuration of the vocal tract (lips and tongue)
 - the height of the tongue → high/mid/low
 - the part of the tongue → front/central/back
 - the position of the lips → rounded/spread
lips rounding
- ▶ **Oral or nasal production**
- ▶ **Length: long vs short; tense vs lax**

These are x-rays of a person producing different vowels

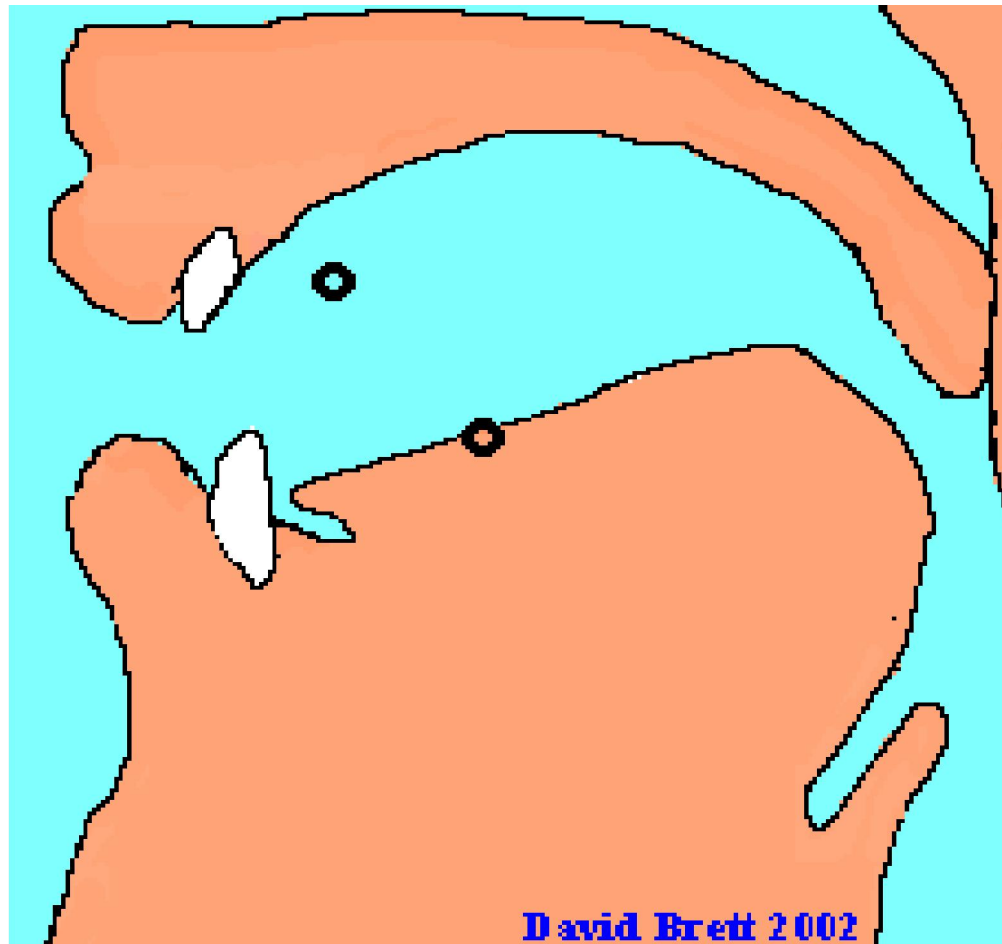




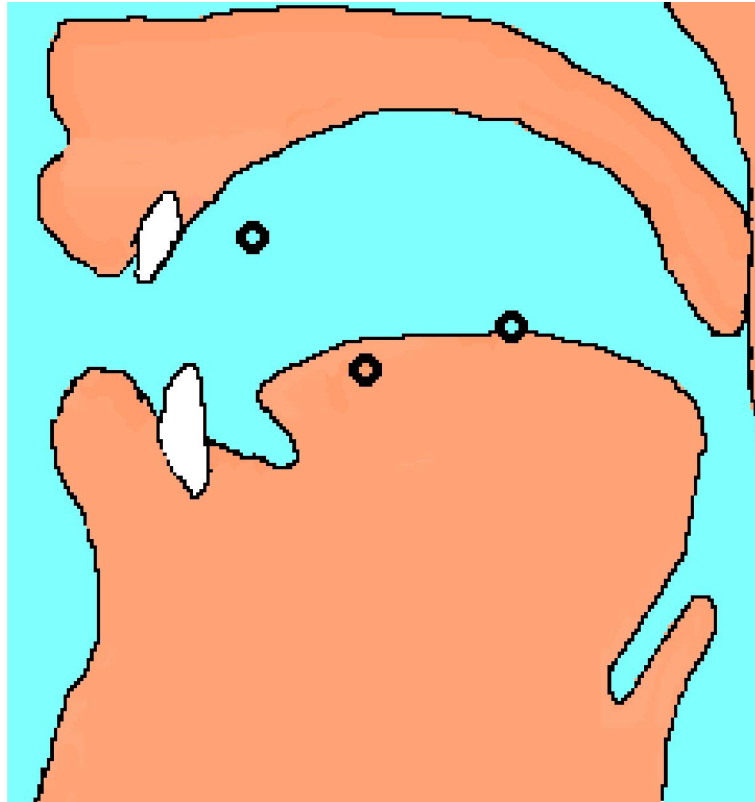
In the close front position (unrounded)
we produce /i/



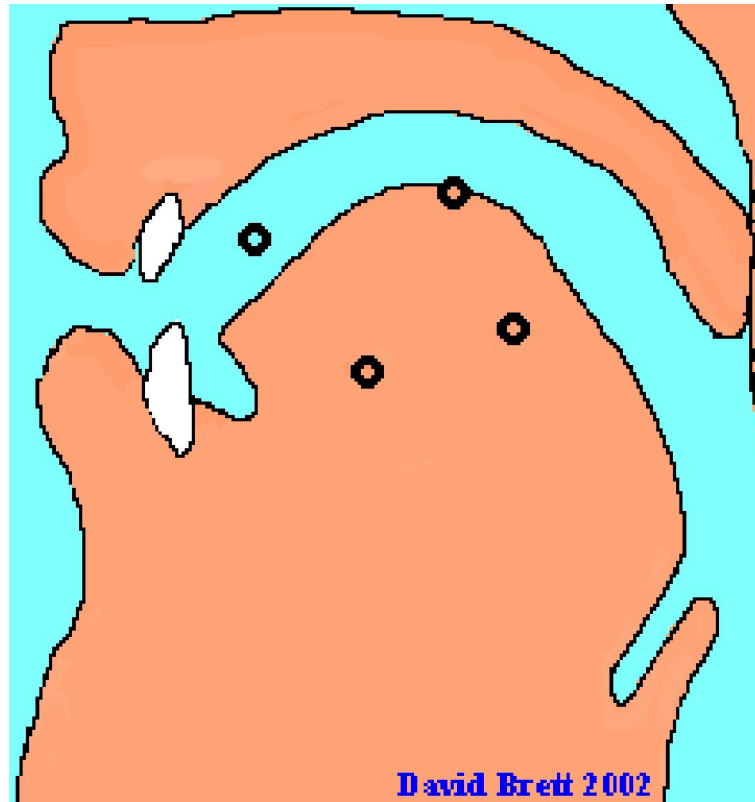
In the open front position (unrounded)
we produce /ʌ/



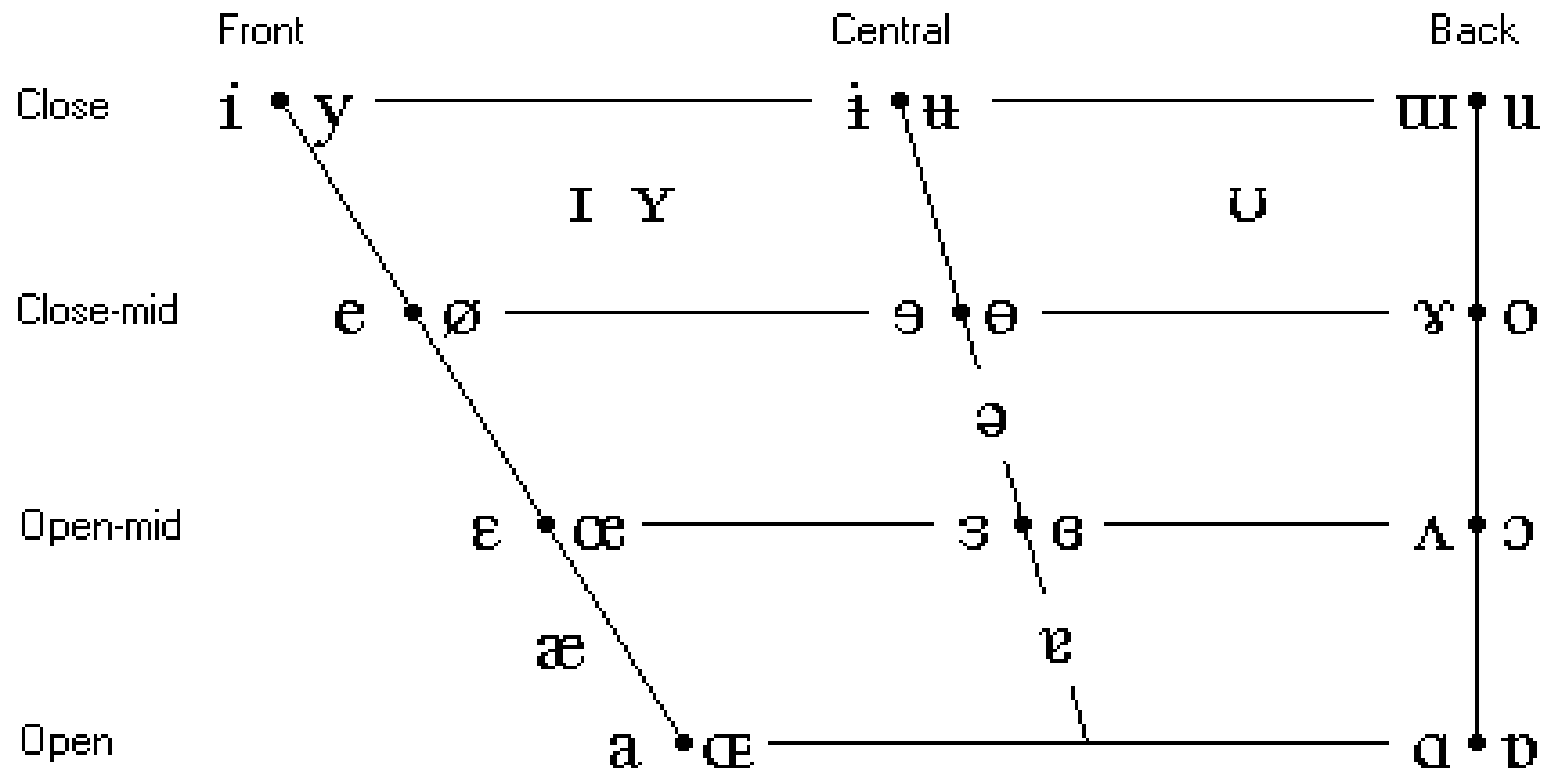
Back open (unrounded) : /ɑ:/



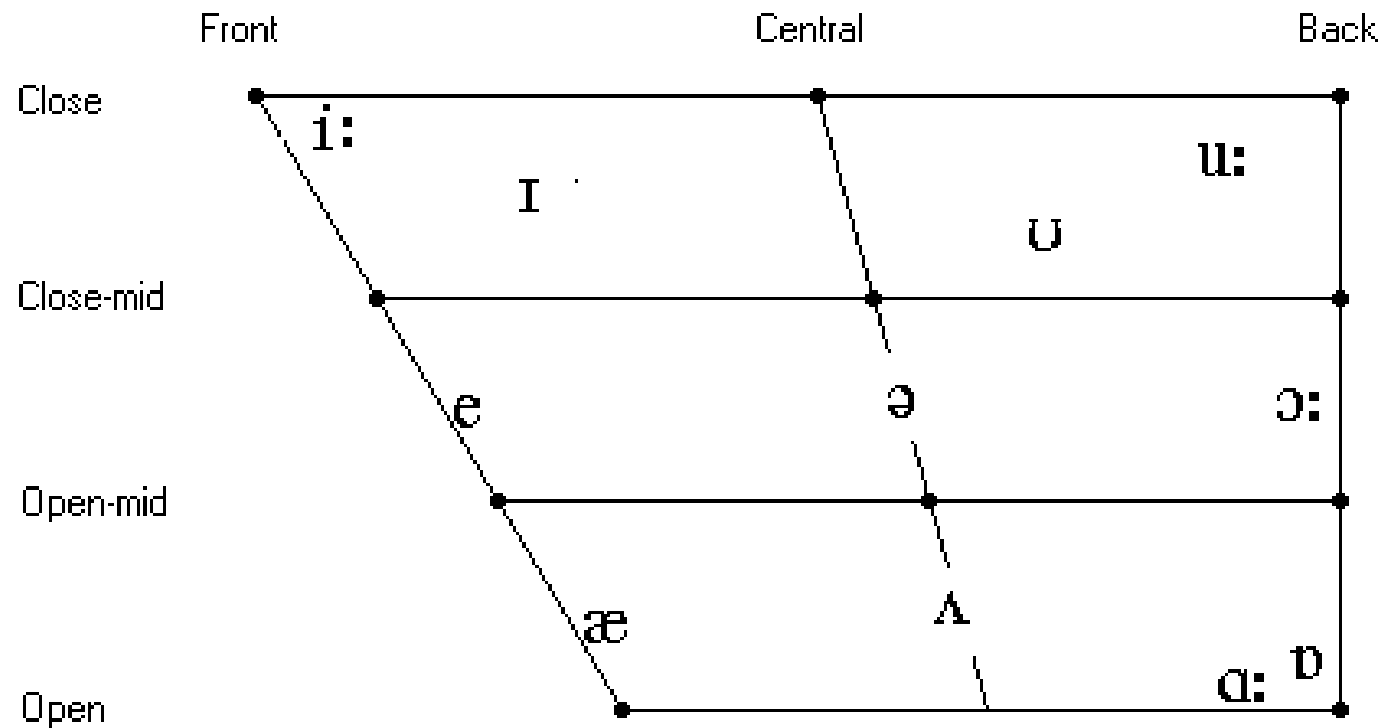
Back close (rounded): /u/



This is the full set:



These are the places of articulation of English short and long pure vowels

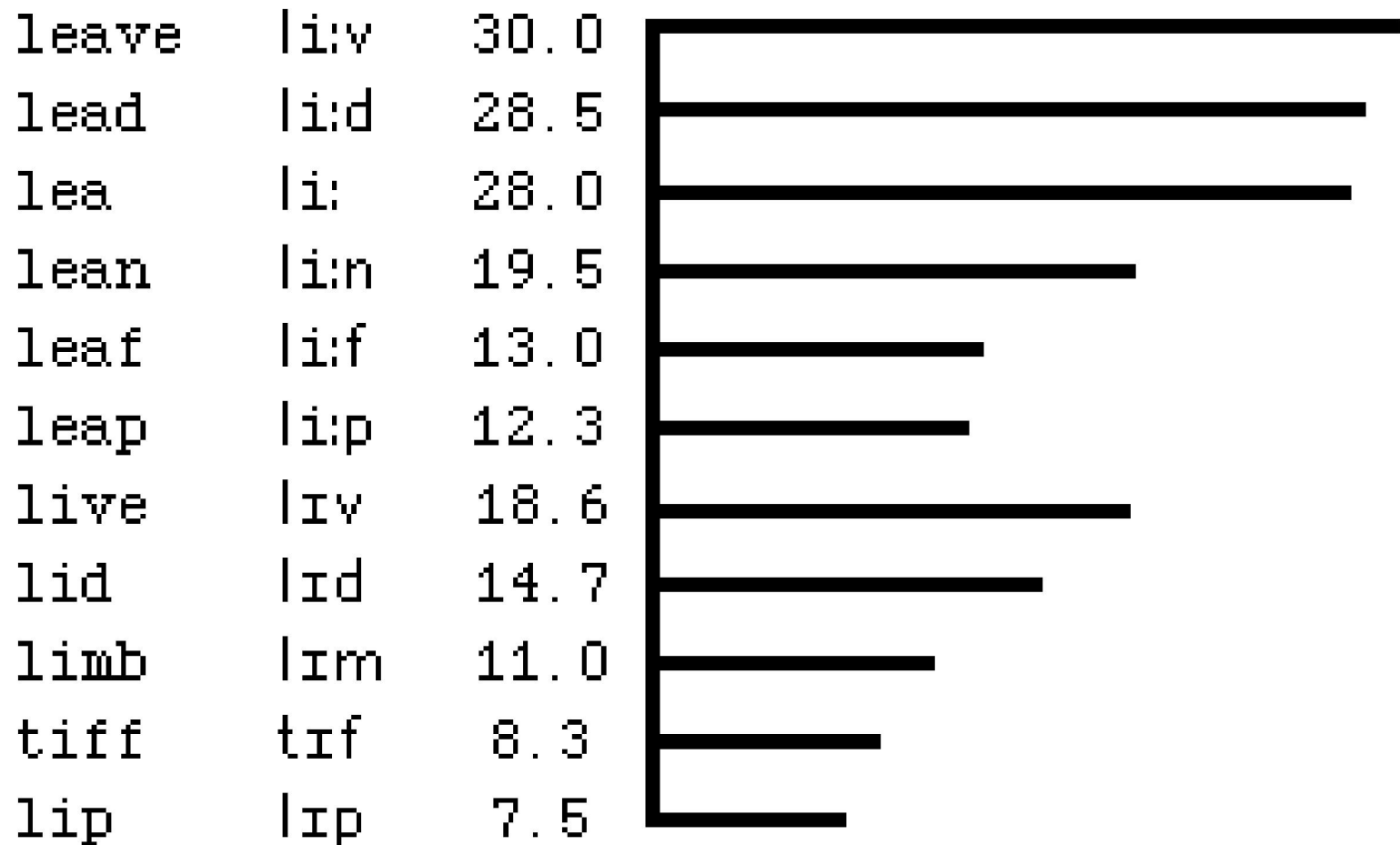


Length

- ▶ English vowels differ in length as well as in quality
- ▶ These differences are as important to perception as quality
- ▶ English long vowels are far longer than Italian equivalents (e.g. /i:/, /u:/)

Pure Vowels	
Short	Long
ɪ	i:
ə	ɜ:
ʊ	u:
ʌ	ɑ:
ɒ / ɔ	ɒ: / ɔ:
e	
æ	

Vowel length in centiseconds:



DIPHTHONGS

*** While the position of the tongue is more or less stable for a pure vowel, a diphthong is characterised by a graceful movement from one point to another.**

*** For this reason they are also sometimes known as glides.**

Technically, English diphthongs are divided into two groups:

- ▶ There two types of diphthongs:

1. centring diphthongs → the tongue moves quickly toward the center of the mouth (the final phase of the articulation)

e.g. **iə, eə, uə**

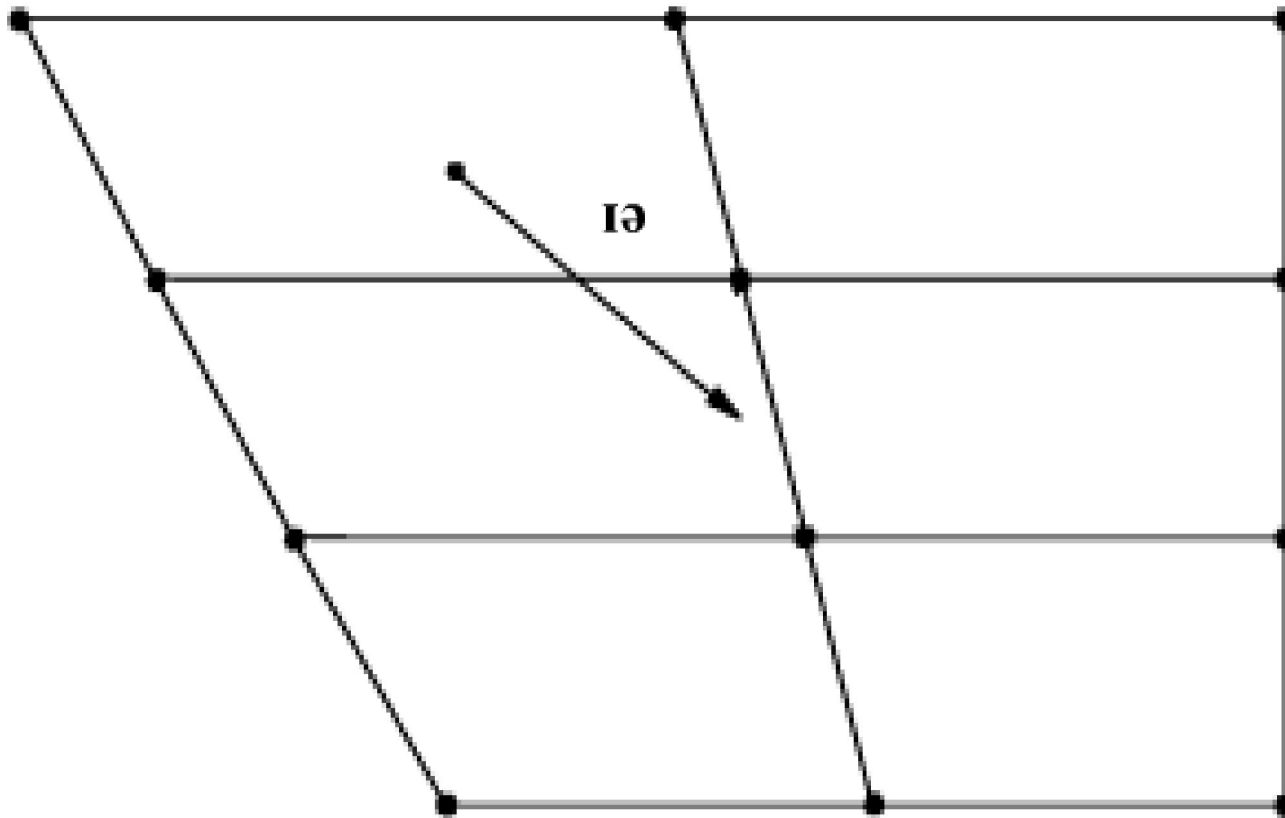
2. closing diphthongs → the tongue starts in a relatively low position and ends up in a high position either in palatal area at the mouth or in the velar – the back part of the mouth

e.g. ending in ɪ : **eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ**

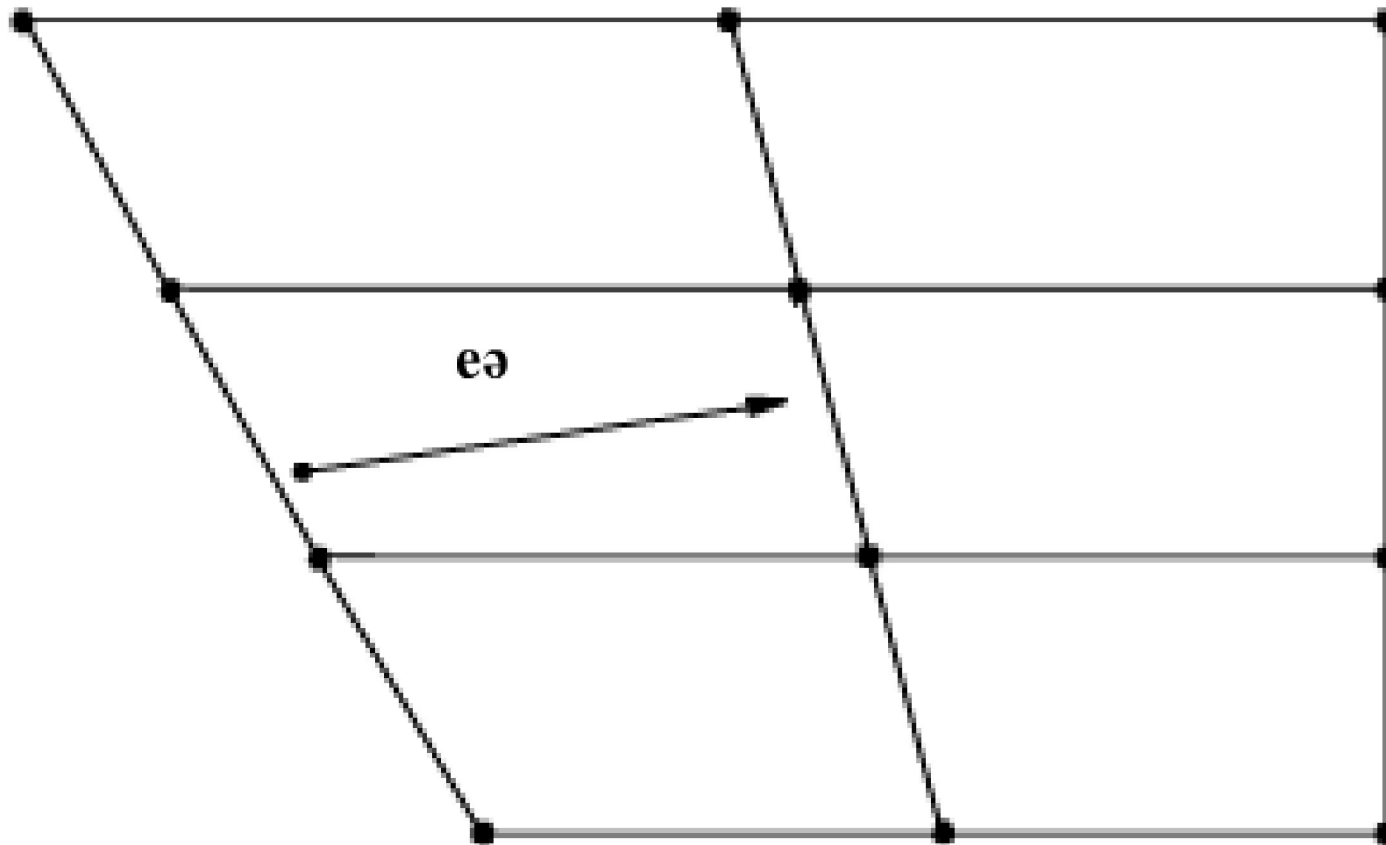
▶ ending in u : **əʊ, aʊ**

CENTRING GROUP

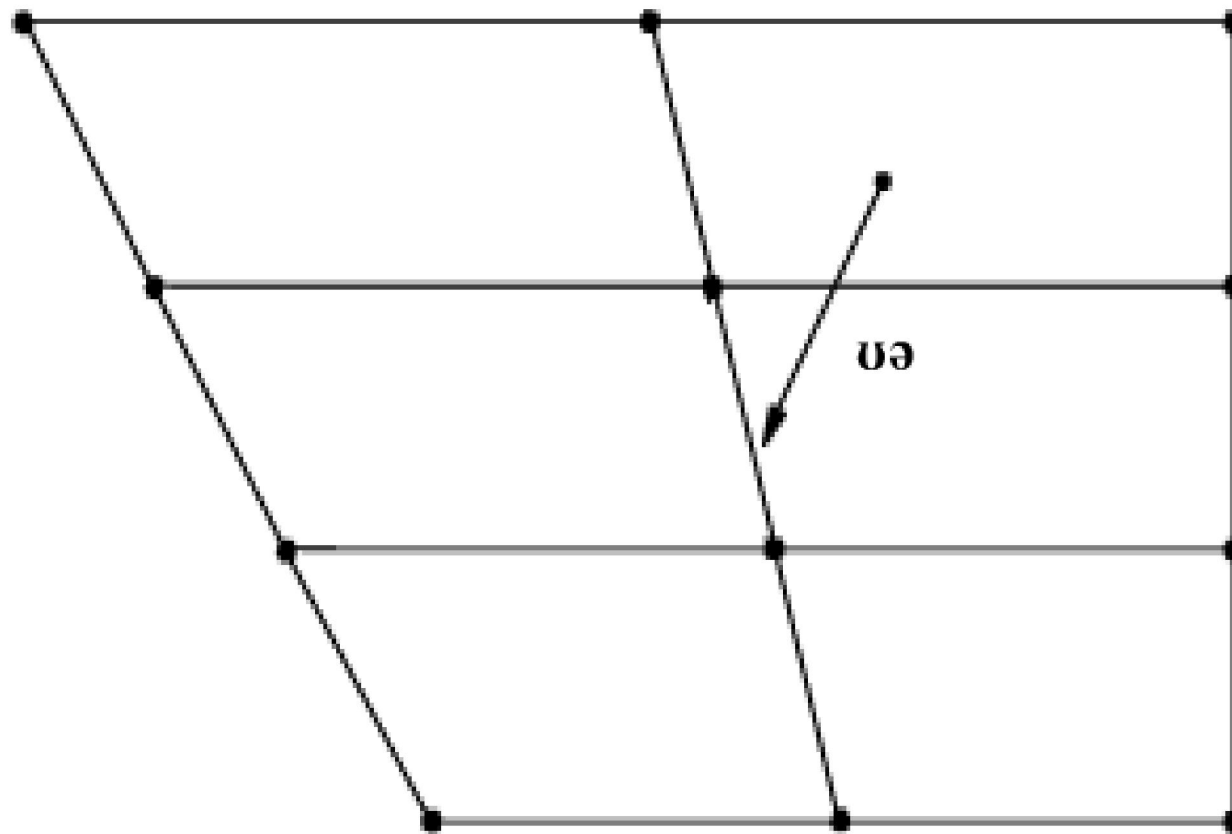
To start with the centring group, we have the most common, that of 'clear', 'deer', 'here', 'wierd':



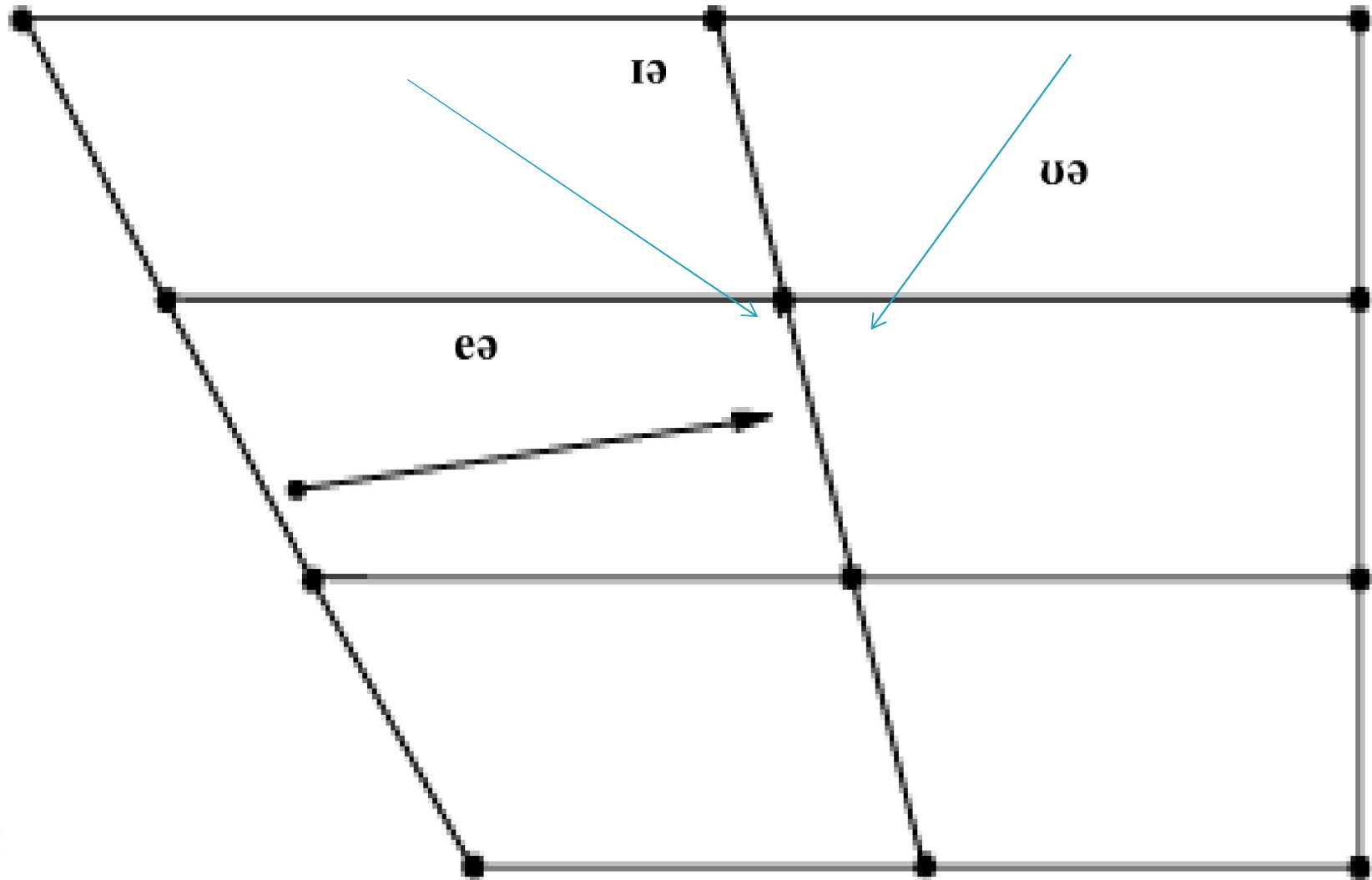
Then 'air', 'where', 'wear', 'care', 'heir':



Finally, there is a diphthong which is quite rare and is often realised as /uə/ - 'tour', 'poor':

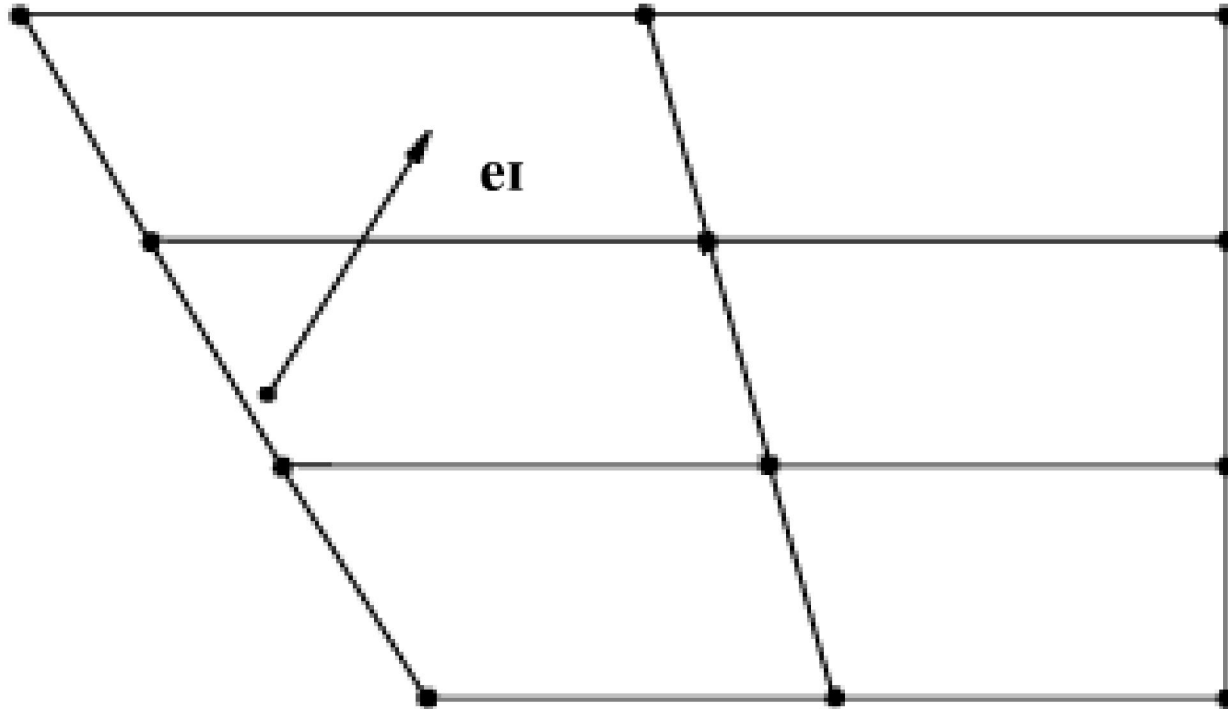


CENTRING DIPHTHONGS

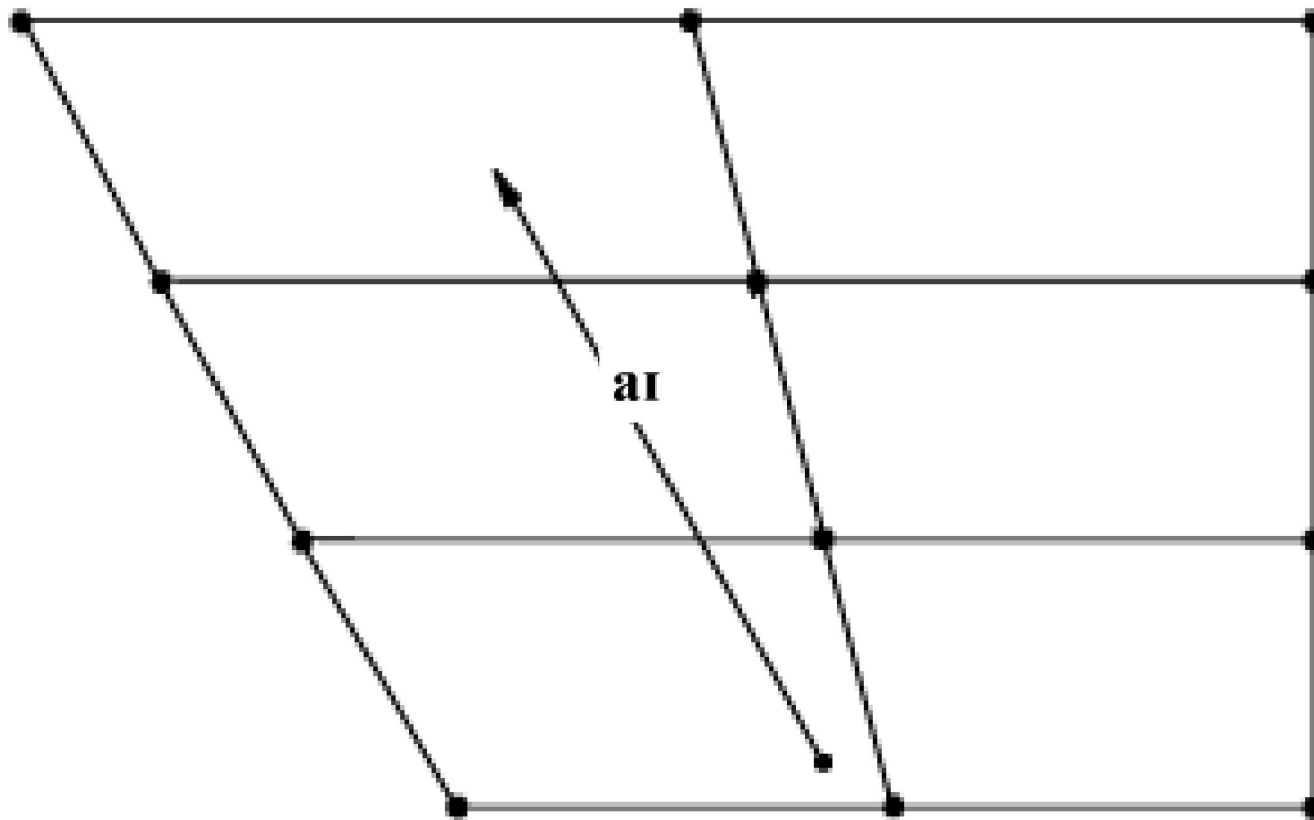


Closing Group

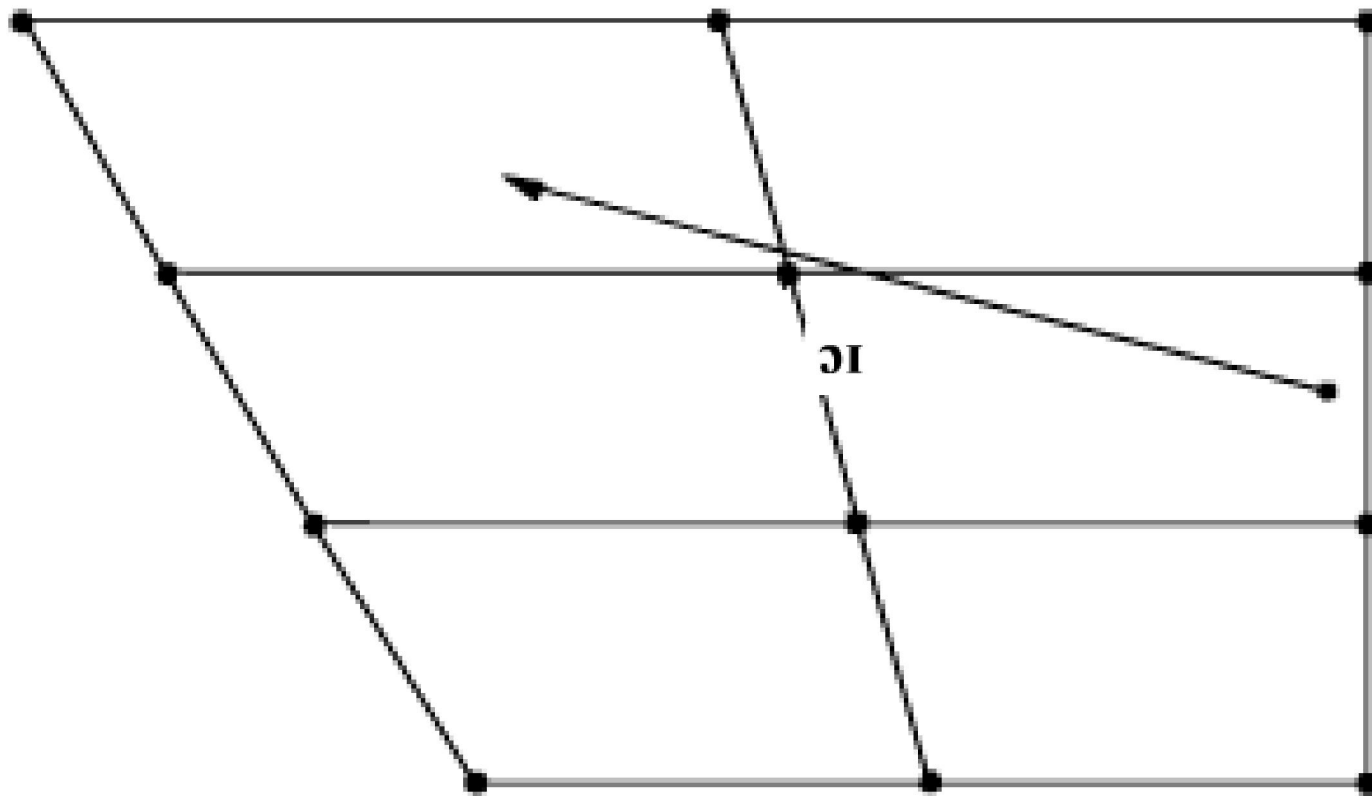
... the 'pay', 'made', 'maid', 'reign', 'obey', sound:



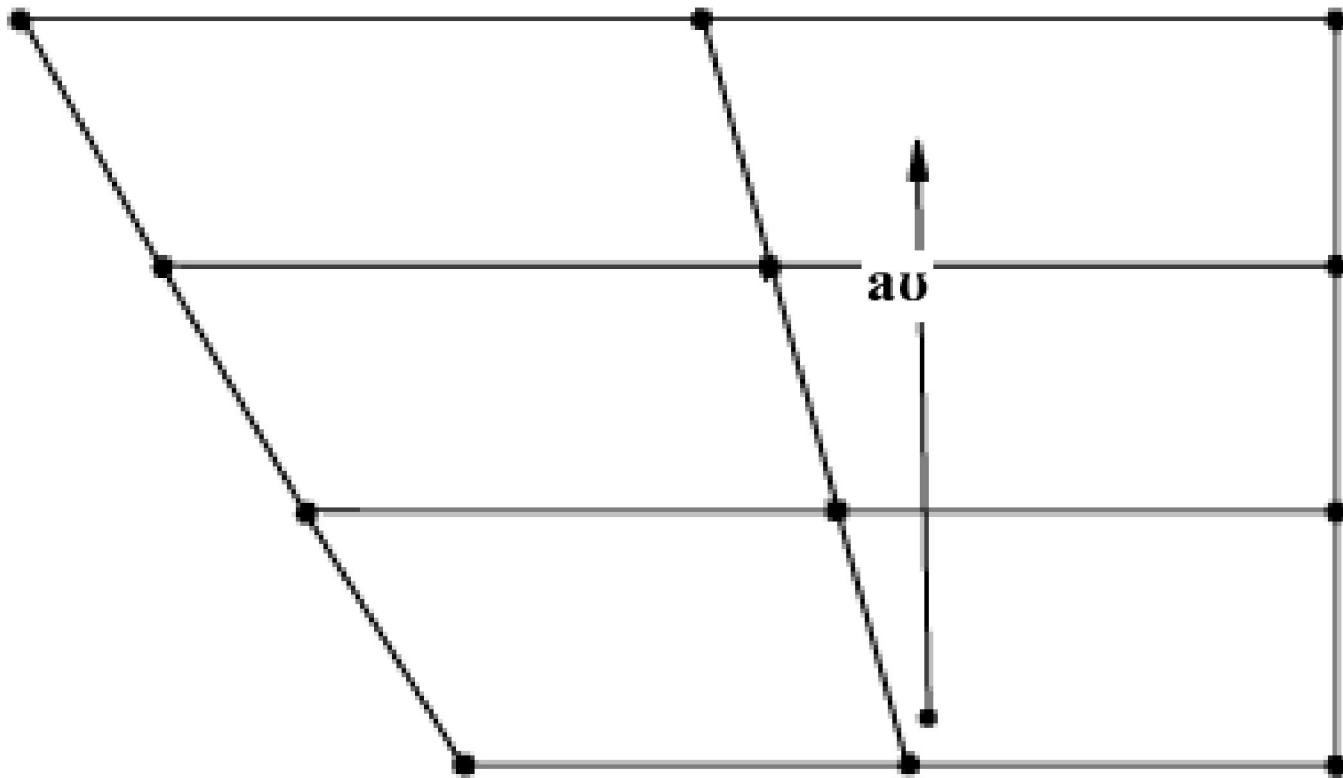
Then we have the 'I', 'my', 'tie', 'sigh', 'either',
'eye', 'Thai', sound:



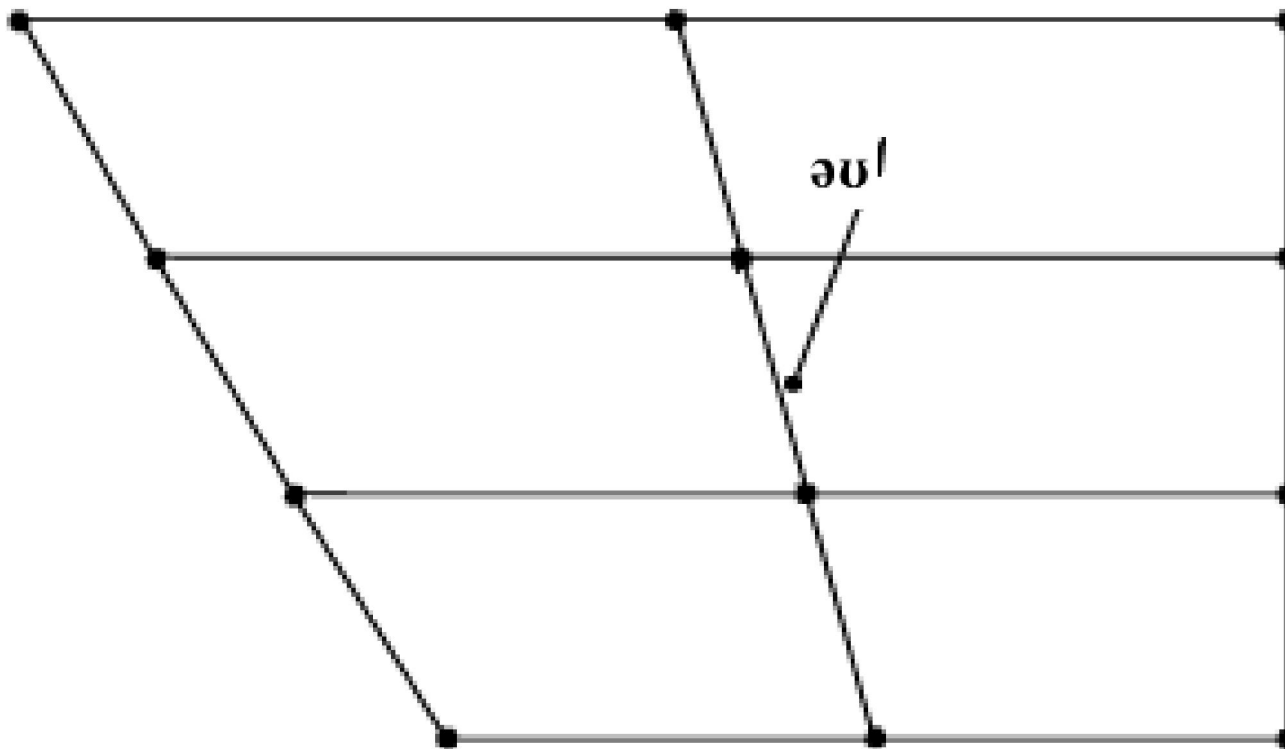
Then there is 'boy', 'joy', 'choice':



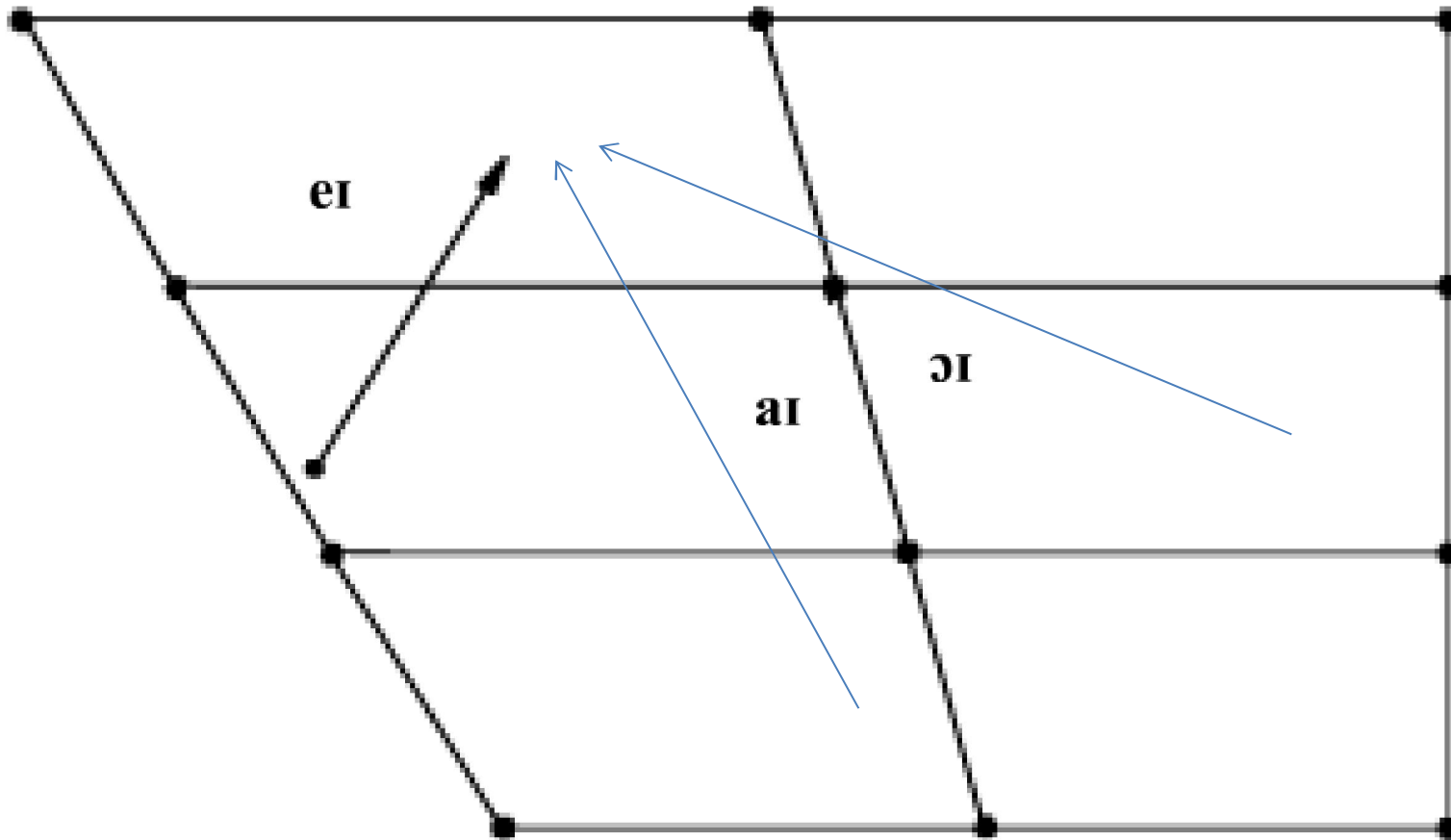
Then 'down', 'loud':



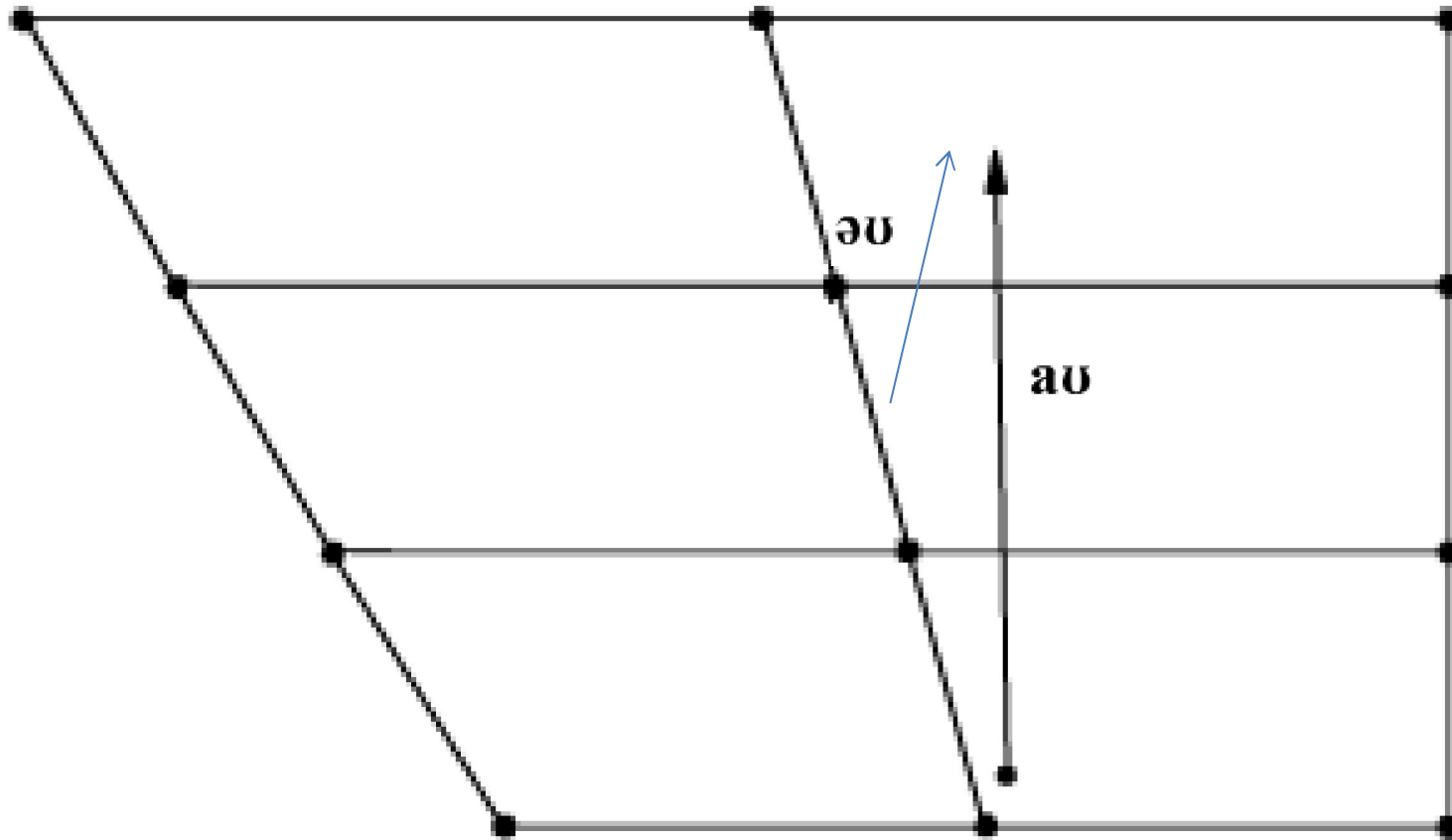
To end the closing group, the most common diphthong in English, that of 'no', 'know', 'bone', 'foam', 'though', 'don't', 'foe':

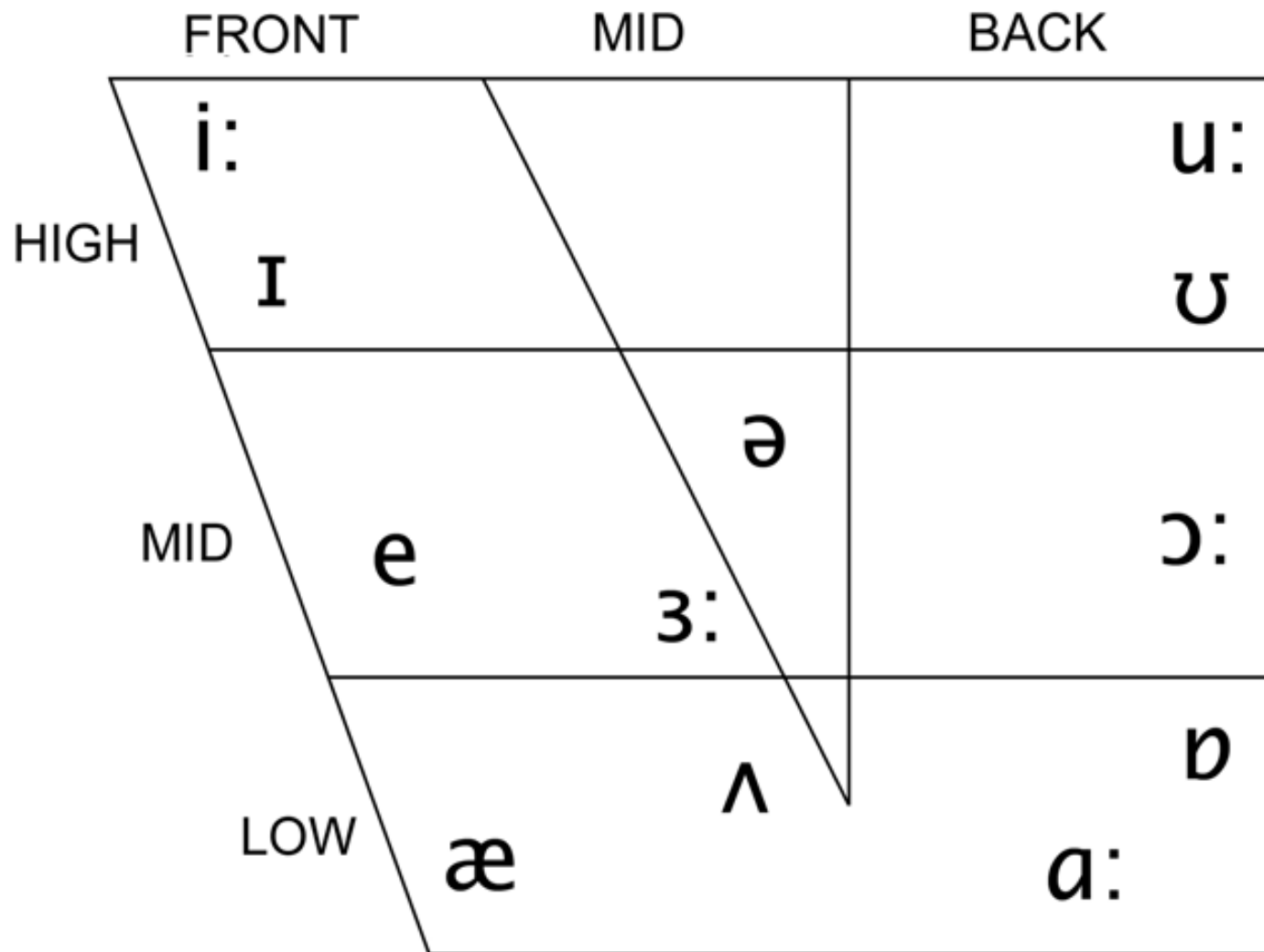


CLOSING DIPHTHONGS ENDING WITH /i/



CLOSING DIPHTHONGS ENDING WITH /u/





ENGLISH VOWEL CHART

VOWEL	NAME	VOWEL	NAME
/i:/	High front vowel	/ʌ/	Low mid vowel
/ɪ/	High-mid front vowel	/u:/	High back vowel
/e/	Mid front vowel	/ʊ/	High-mid back vowel
/æ/	Low front vowel	/ɔ:/	Mid back vowel
/ə/	Mid mid vowel	/ɒ/	Mid-low back vowel
/ɜ:/	Mid-low mid vowel	/ɑ:/	Low back vowel