

1. *Consonants*. When we describe a consonant, we list its attributes in the following order:

1. Voicing (if relevant)
2. Aspiration (if relevant)
3. Place of articulation
4. Manner of articulation

So, [p] would be described as a ‘voiceless unaspirated bilabial stop.’ (In practice, we don’t usually say ‘unaspirated’ unless it’s important.) [b] would be described as a ‘voiced bilabial stop’.¹ Other examples:

[f] voiceless labiodental fricative	[v] voiced labiodental fricative
[t ^h] voiceless aspirated alveolar stop	[g] voiced velar stop
[ɹ] (voiced) alveolar approximant ²	[m̥] murmured bilabial nasal

2. *Vowels*. These are described with the following parameters:

1. Height
2. Backness
3. Rounding
4. Nasalization (if relevant)

So, [i] would be described as a ‘high front unrounded oral vowel’ (though we don’t have to say ‘oral’ unless we are contrasting it with nasalized vowels). [õ] would be ‘mid back rounded nasalized vowel.’³ For height, we may talk of high, mid, and low, though the IPA chart calls them ‘close’ and ‘open’. For backness, we speak of front, central, and back vowels.

3. Now, you do some:

[b] _____ [x] _____

[a] _____ [q] _____

[e] _____ [c] _____

[] voiced implosive bilabial stop [] voiceless aspirated alveolar stop

[] low back unrounded vowel [] high back nasalized vowel

[] palatal lateral approximant [] low front rounded vowel

¹Because the sentence began with the phonetic symbol [b], it didn’t start with a capital letter. This is OK, and much better than trying to capitalize phonetic symbols.

²Approximants are usually voiced, so we don’t have to say ‘voiced’ here. But if it were voiceless, like [ɹ̥], we would have to say so.

³As the textbook points out, to be accurate we should say ‘nasalized vowels,’ since only sounds in which *all* of the air goes out the nose are called ‘nasal.’ But many linguists, even phoneticians, say ‘nasal vowel’ without even blushing.