

The IPA Vowel Chart in Features

		Front		Central		Back	
		unrounded	rounded	unrounded	rounded	unrounded	rounded
Close (high)	(upper)	i	y	ɨ	ɥ	ɯ	u
	(lower)	ɪ	ʏ				ʊ
Mid	(upper)	e	ø	ɘ	ɵ	ɤ	o
	(lower)	ɛ	œ	ɜ	ɞ	ʌ	ɔ
Open (low)	(upper)	æ		ɐ			
	(lower)	a	ɶ	(a) ¹		ɑ	ɒ

Plus: ə, a central vowel. Placed on the IPA chart between Upper and Lower Mid; normally used to show that a vowel is stressless and very short.

Sounds shown in italics will not appear in dictation exams.

IPA has different labels, with gaps. Rogers says “higher” for my “upper”; my usage is more common.

Here	IPA
upper high	close
lower high	(no official label)
upper mid	close-mid
lower mid	open-mid
upper low	(no official label)
lower low	open

Some IPA Diacritics Relevant to Vowels

ː	long	+	<i>advanced</i>	+	<i>advanced tongue root</i>
ˑ	<i>half long</i>	-	<i>retracted</i>	ˑ	creaky voiced
˘	<i>extra short</i>	◌	<i>less rounded</i>	ˑ	breathy voiced
◌	voiceless	◌	<i>more rounded</i>	ˑ	nasalized
ˑ	<i>raised</i>	ˑ	<i>retracted tongue root</i>		
ˑ	<i>lowered</i>				

¹ No symbol is available. However, the symbol [a] is customarily used, without IPA sanction, for this very common vowel. It is recommended that use of [a] should be accompanied by an indication of whether a front or central vowel is meant, wherever the distinction is important.

Official IPA Version

