



# Vowels and Consonants: An Introduction to the Sounds of Languages

*Peter Ladefoged*

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## **Vowels and Consonants: An Introduction to the Sounds of Languages** Peter Ladefoged

This superb introduction to phonetics, with its accompanying CD, is perfect for anyone who wants to learn about the sounds of languages. Peter Ladefoged, one of the world's leading phoneticians, describes how languages use a variety of different sounds, many of them quite unlike any that occur in well-known languages. People trill their lips and click their tongues when talking in ways that are amazing to English speakers. Several of these unusual sounds are reproduced on the CD. The book opens with a brief introduction to the main forces working on the sounds of languages. Using basic terms, Ladefoged outlines the acoustic components of speech and demonstrates speech synthesis. Subsequent chapters on computers and speech describe text-to-speech systems, and show how speech recognition systems work. The last part of the book describes the sounds of a wide variety of languages, introducing them to readers largely by means of the CD that accompanies the book, and by reference to the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet. The contents of the CD are available on Peter Ladefoged's phonetics site, which includes an online version of the CD as well as other useful phonetics links. This is an introductory book on phonetics that will enable readers to go on to read *The Sounds of the World's Languages* (Blackwell 1996) by Peter Ladefoged and Ian Maddieson, and other more advanced books on phonetics and phonology. With its lucid prose and accompanying CD, it is also a book to be enjoyed in its own right.

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