

# The Sounds of English

- ▶ It has been mentioned in the first lecture that **phonology** is the study of the **sound system** of a specific language.
- ▶ And the **sound system** consists of two components:
  - ▶ The **set of sounds** used by that language.
  - ▶ The **rules for putting these sounds together** to create words and larger units.
- ▶ Since our subject is the **English phonology**, we have to start with the **set of sounds** used by English.



# What is a speech sound?

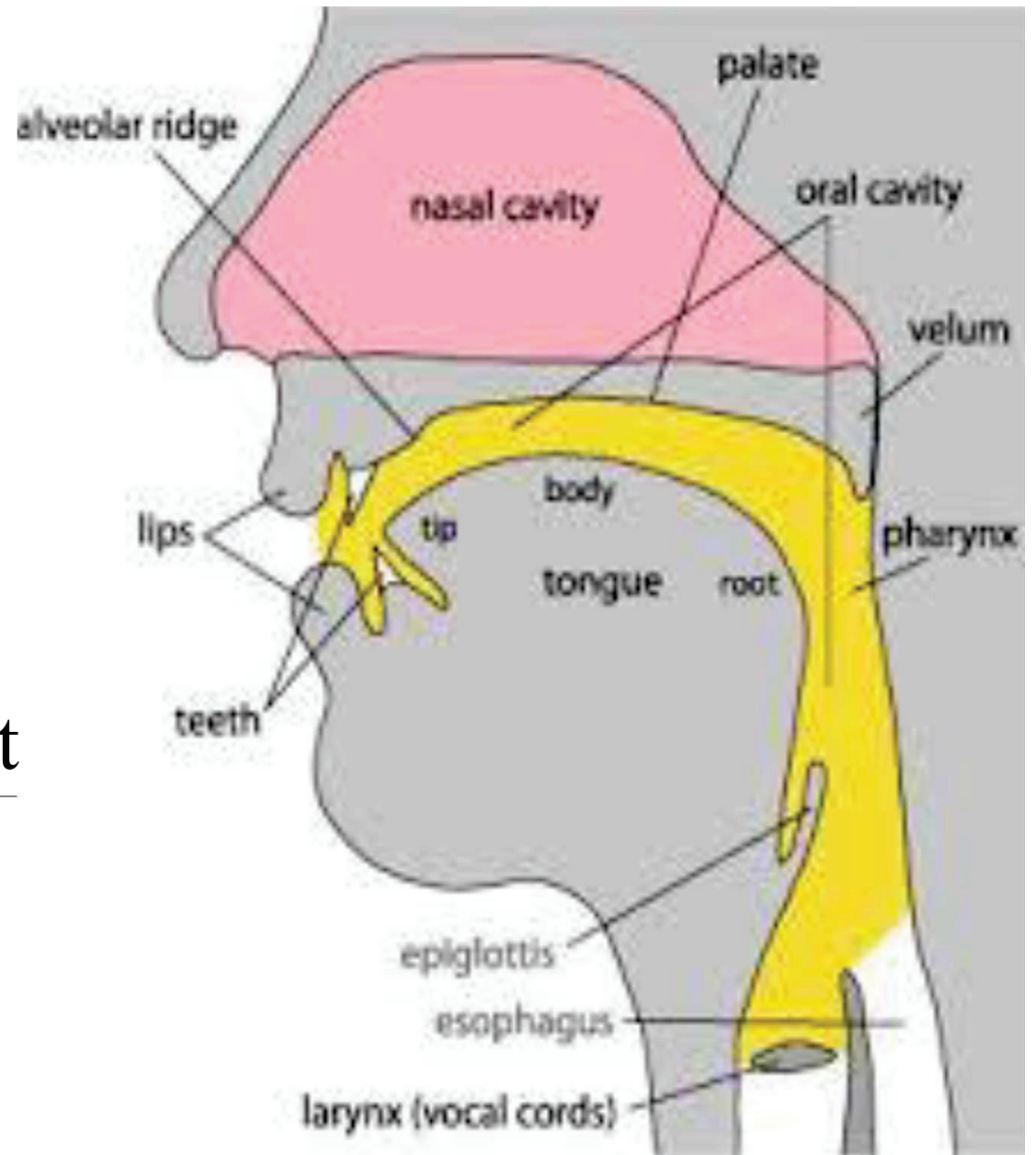
- ▶ Before describing the **sounds** of English, it is necessary to have an idea about the **speech sounds** in general.
- ▶ **All of the speech sounds** are originally **silent moving airstream**.
- ▶ The **source** of this airstream is the **two lungs** which push the air to leave the body through the **mouth** and the **nose**.
- ▶ It is the same air which is used for **breathing**, and it leaves the lungs **silently**, but it is **interrupted** in the **vocal tract** in order to convert it into sound.



- ▶ The **vocal tract** is the area between the **larynx** and the **lips**.
- ▶ It contain the organs of speech.
- ▶ In this area, the organs of speech take different positions to interrupt the airstream.
- ▶ Every sound is made by a specific position of the organs of speech in the vocal tract.



# The Vocal Tract



## Vowels and consonants

- ▶ In English, and any other human language, the **speech sounds** are divided into *two* main types: ***consonants*** and ***vowels***.
- ▶ What is (are) the difference(s) between ***consonants*** and ***vowels***?
- ▶ Please, **remember** that we are speaking about **sounds** not **letters**.



# The differences between *consonants* and *vowels*

- ▶ There are many differences between *consonants* and *vowels*, among them:
- ▶ A. *consonants* are the sounds which are produced by **making some kind of obstruction** in the vocal tract, while *vowels* are produced **without any kind of obstruction**.
- ▶ B. *consonants* are **usually** found in the **margins** of the syllable (**onset** or **coda**) while *vowels* are **always** found in the **centre** of the **syllable**.

