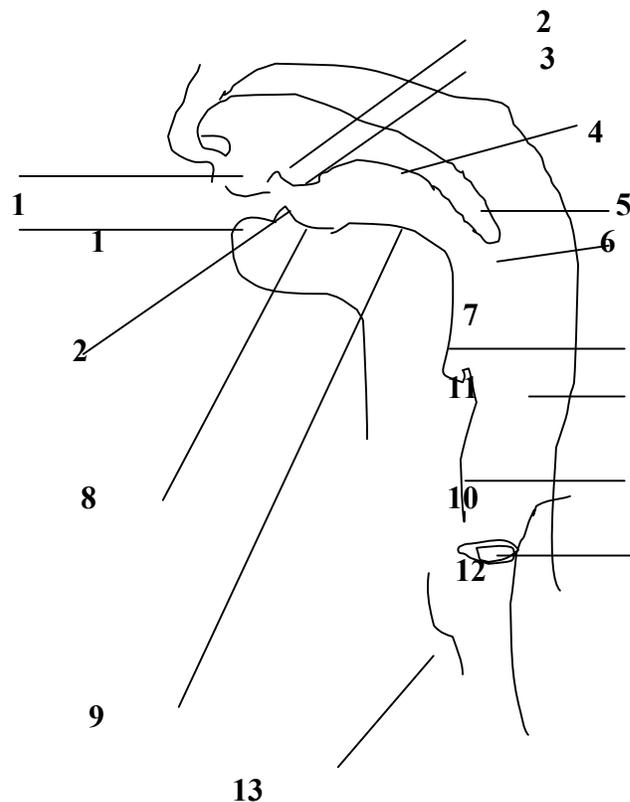


SPEECH ORGANS:

Knowledge of the speech organs and their descriptions will make Tamil learning easy. This will also help to understand sound values of Tamil letters, their writing, and reading. It is necessary that the learners of Tamil are familiar with some basic understanding of terminology used for the description of Tamil sounds. It is suggested to the learners to go through the profile given here for the organs of speech before beginning to learn Tamil.



1. Lips

2. Teeth

The roof of the mouth: The roof of the mouth is divided into teeth ridge, hard palate and soft palate.

3. Teeth ridge: It is a convex part of the roof of the mouth. It is immediately behind the teeth.

4. Hard palate: It is a concave part of the roof of the mouth. It is in the central part of the roof of the mouth.
5. Soft palate: This is situated in the back part of the roof of the mouth. It can be lowered or raised. When it is lowered, the air stream from the lungs has access to the nasal cavity. When it is raised the passage to the nasal cavity is closed.
6. Uvula: It is the ending part of the soft palate.
7. Pharynx: It is situated in the throat. The surface of the tongue is divided into three parts namely the blade of the tongue, the front of the tongue, and the back of the tongue.
8. Blade of the tongue: it lies opposite to the teeth ridge. It includes the tip of the tongue.
9. Front of the tongue: It lies opposite to the hard palate.
10. Back of the tongue: It lies opposite to the palate.
11. Epiglottis: This is drawn over the windpipe when swallowing.
12. Vocal cords: The larynx contains two lip-like elastic membranes that are physiologically called vocal cords. When these two are brought close together during the sound production, they vibrate and produce a buzzing noise. This is called voice and the particular sound produced at this time is termed voiced sound or soft sound. A sound produced without such vibrations in the vocal cords is a voiceless sound or simply hard sound.
13. Larynx: It is the upper part of the windpipe. It protects the vocal cords. The speech sounds are produced mainly based on articulators and points of articulation. The articulators are movable and points of articulation are stationary. The articulators are lower lip, tip of the tongue, and blade of the tongue, front of the tongue and back of the tongue. The points of articulation are upper lip, teeth, teeth ridge, hard palate and soft palate.

Tamil speech sounds are generally divided into vowels and consonants. Vowels are voiced sounds. In their production the air passes through the mouth in a continuous stream without any obstruction in the mouth. In the production process of the vowels, the soft palate is in its raised position and vocal cords are in vibration. The consonants are produced with obstructions and are many. These details are found in the place where they are introduced in the following Frames.

It is to be observed here the difference between the letters and their sound values. In Tamil some letters are used for different sound values. That is, one particular letter will be used for different sounds. The different sound values of some consonants and their distributions are given as and when they are introduced. The

production of particular sound is given in each Frame and the script or letter introduced there represents the respective sound. The exercise part following the introduction of the sound and letter, allows the learners to practice the introduced sound and letter in each Frame.