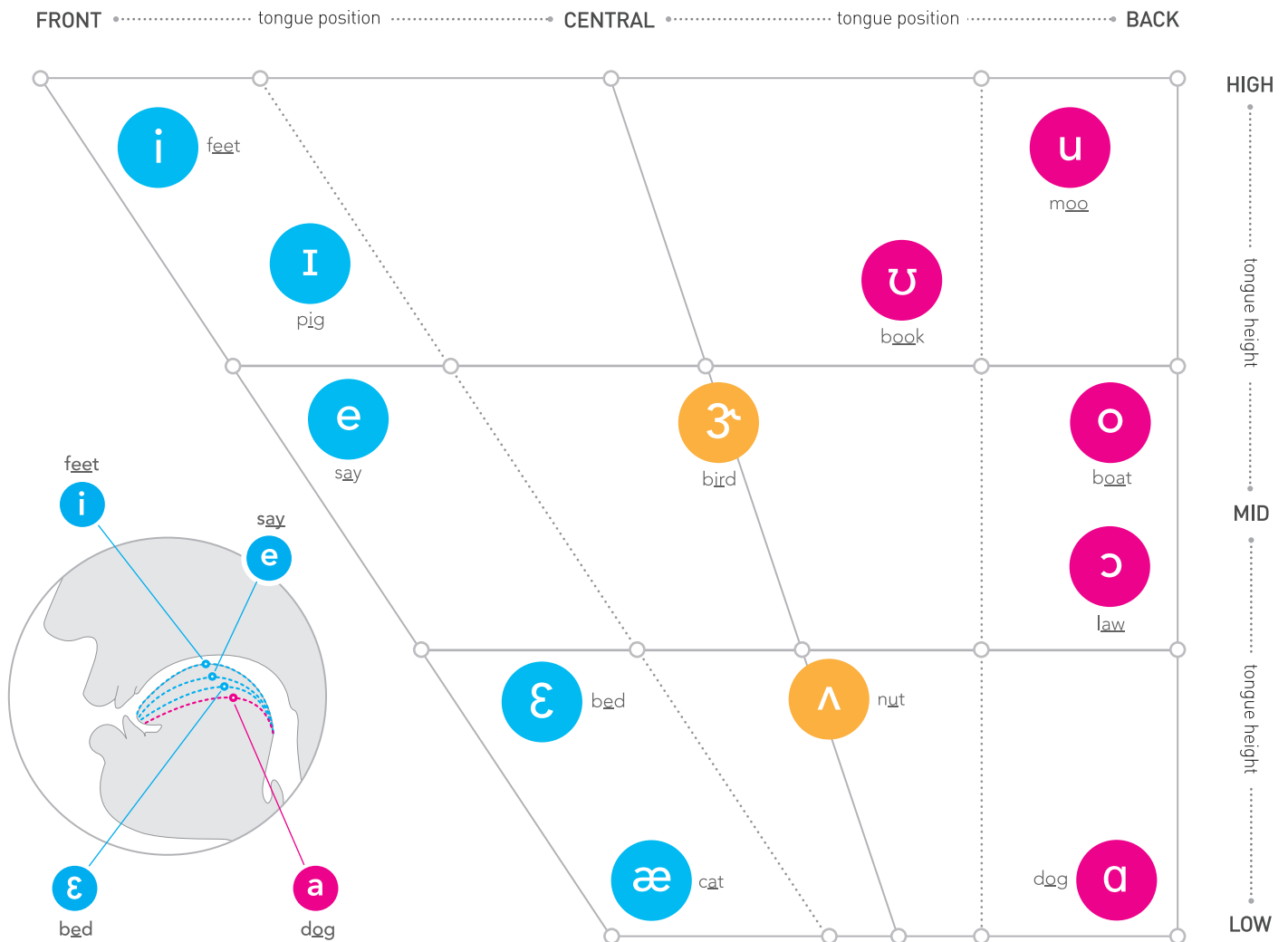


Vowel Diagram

Based on the North American English Vowels



Vowels Have Three Distinctive Features:

1. Tongue height: In this diagram the high vowels represent vowels made with the body of the tongue close to the roof of the mouth while the low vowels are made with the mouth open and the body of the tongue away from the roof of the mouth. Try saying "ee" then "a" (as in cat) repetitively. Feel your tongue move up for the "ee" and down for the "a" (as in cat). Notice the different tongue heights represented in the small diagram above.

2. Tongue position: The blue vowels represent vowels produced with the body of the tongue toward the front of the mouth. The pink vowels are produced with the body of the tongue toward the back of the mouth. The yellow vowels have a more neutral tongue placement. Try saying "ee" then "oo" repetitively and feel your tongue move from front to back.

3. Roundness: Another important difference among the vowels is whether the lips are rounded or unrounded. For example the "oo" has rounded lips while the "ee" has the lips spread apart. In North American English the high back vowels are rounded.