

CLASSIFICATION OF LETTERS.¹I. *Vowels.*

7. Vowels are produced when the vocal organs are open, so as to allow an uninterrupted flow of vocal sound; when the vocal sound is interrupted, consonants are produced, but no sharp line separates the least open vowels from the most open consonants.

8. The vowels may be divided according to their quality into —

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| 1. Open | a |
| 2. Medial | e o |
| 3. Close | i y u |

9. The open vowel is pronounced like *a* in *father*, the mouth being fully open. Starting with this sound, and by gradually contracting the vocal organs, the medial vowels, the close vowels, and the more open consonants (like *i* or *j* = *y*, *v* = *w*) are produced; and at last the closure of the vocal organs becomes complete when the mutes are uttered.

10. *e* is a medial vowel between open *a* and close *i*; *o* is medial between open *a* and close *u*; *y* occurs in Greek words only.

OBSERVATION 1. The vowel *i* and the consonant *i* (often written *j*) were not distinguished in form by the Romans. But *i*, combined with a vowel in the same syllable, was a consonant, and was sounded like *y*; as, *mājor* (*mā-yor*). It is now usually written *j*.

Obs. 2. The vowel *u* and the consonant *u* = *v*, are often interchanged; as: *mōn-ui*, *I have admonished*; *amā-vi*, *I have loved*; the ending *-ui* in *mōnuī* becomes *-vi* in *amāvi*.

II. *Consonants.*

11. Consonants are divided, according to the organs of speech by which they are chiefly uttered, into —

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| 1. Labials | (or lip-letters) | p, b, m, f, v. |
| 2. Dentals | (or teeth-letters) | t, d, n, s. |
| 3. Linguals | (or tongue-letters) | r, l. |
| 4. Palatals | (or palate-letters) | i, or j = y. |
| 5. Gutturals | (or throat-letters) | c k q, g, n, h. |