Central Vowels

- produced at point midway between front and back vowels and high and low
- considerable variation in production of all central vowels
- difficult for students to discern since several differ only by stress
- basic to identification is consideration of syllable and stress

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- unique IPA symbol
- key word: cut, sung
- height: low-mid
- advancement: back-central
- lip rounding: retracted
- tense/lax: lax

Orthography

- most common: u - cut, judge
- o - some, other
- oe - does
- ou - country
- oo - blood

Characteristics

- only occurs in stressed syllables
- does not occur in final positions
least frequent of central vowels
12th in frequency for all vowels
90% of kids master by 2 years

5 /ɪə/ 
key word: about, alone
unique symbol - upsidedown e
height: mid
advancement: central
liprounding: retracted
tense/lax: lax

6 Characteristics
only occurs in unstressed syllable
referred to as “schwa”
43 different spelling; letters not as important as stress
most frequently occurring vowel; 2nd in frequency of all phonemes
serves as “reduced vowel in unstressed syllables