

# UNIT 1

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 3 nuclear vowels: **i, ê, e,**
- 4 initial consonants: **m, n, b, đ**
- 2 tones: **mid-level tone** (dấu ngang) and **low-falling tone** (dấu huyền)

## PART 01 NUCLEAR VOWELS: i ê e

**i, ê, e** are all front and unrounded vowels but the difference here is the elevation of the tongue – the height of the tongue

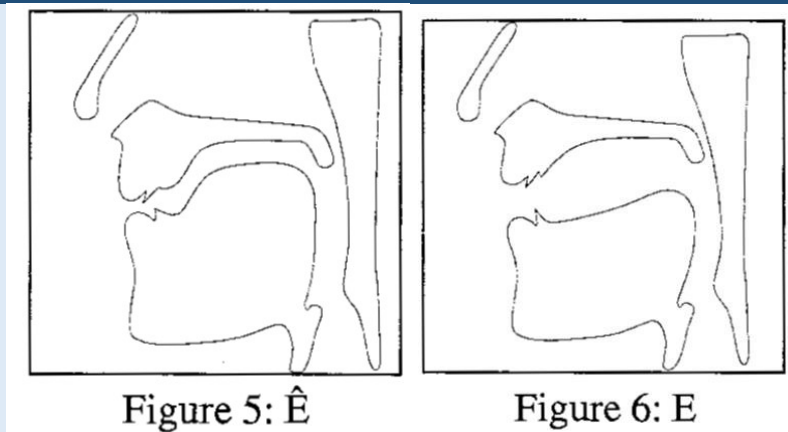
### 1. Vowel: i

**i** is a high front and unrounded vowel. The lips are spread, the tongue tip is in a high position and the front of the tongue is rising towards the hard palate. The vowel is almost like the English vowel [i:] as in **field, team, key**. However, /i/ sounds a bit shorter in Southern accent.

*e.g*    i    mi    ni    bi    ði

Spelling: The vowel **i** is represented mostly by the character “**i**”. However, in some cases it is indicated by the letter “**y**”

### 2. Vowel: ê - e



When you pronounce **e**, you should widen your mouth. Your tongue moves forwards. The tip of the tongue touches the lower teeth

**Ê** is similar to **e**. When **ê** is pronounced, your mouth is less widened and your jaw is in lower position.

The difference between **ê** and **e** in the Vietnamese language is based on the elevation of the tongue and the opening of the mouth.

In other words, when **ê** is pronounced, the tongue is in higher position and the mouth is less open than when **e** is pronounced

**e.g**

<i>e</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>de</i>
<i>ê</i>	<i>mê</i>	<i>bê</i>	<i>nê</i>	<i>dê</i>

**Note:** In Southern accent, when **ê** stands alone, without any final consonant followed, **ê** has a little **/i/** at the end

**e.g**

<i>ê</i>	<i>mê</i>	<i>bê</i>	<i>nê</i>	<i>dê</i>
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### 3. Practice

Choose the sound you hear

<b>1</b>	<i>e</i>	<i>ê</i>	<i>i</i>
<b>2</b>	<i>e</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ê</i>
<b>3</b>	<i>ê</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ê</i>

## PART 02 INITIAL CONSONANTS: m, n, b, đ

### 1. Initial consonants: m, n, b,

These are similar to the English consonant sounds **m, n, b**

e.g

<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>b</i>
<i>me</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>be</i>
<i>mê</i>	<i>nê</i>	<i>bê</i>
<i>mi</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>bi</i>

### 2. Initial consonant : đ

**đ** in the Vietnamese language are preglottalized consonant therefore than are similar to /d/ in the English language.

e.g

*đi*                      *đe*                      *đê*

### 3. Practice

- **Listen and repeat**
  - Mi mê bê ê đê đi!
  - Mi Ni mê bi
- **Multiple choice questions:**

Choose the sound you hear – Chọn âm bạn nghe được

1	me	be	ne	đe
2	ni	đi	mi	bi
3	đê	nê	mê	bê
4	mi	be	đê	ne
5	mi	ne	đi	me

## PART 03: 2 TONES: Ngang – Huyền

- Tones are very important in Vietnamese. In Southern accent, there are 5 tones while in Northern accent, there are 6.
- In spelling, except “thanh ngang” (mid-level tone), each tone is symbolized by a small diacritic above the word.
- Different tones can bring about different meanings.

**For example:**

TONE	WORD	MEANING
<i>ngang</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>ghost</i>
<i>sắc</i>	<i>má</i>	<i>mother</i>
<i>nặng</i>	<i>mạ</i>	<i>young rice</i>
<i>hỏi</i>	<i>mả</i>	<i>grave</i>
<i>huyền</i>	<i>mà</i>	<i>but</i>
<i>ngã</i> <i>(This tone only exists in Northern accent.)</i>	<i>mã</i>	<i>horse</i>

- English speakers usually change the intonation while speaking. This can be a mistake in pronouncing Vietnamese and may lead to misunderstanding.

### 1. THANH NGANG (MID-LEVEL TONE)

**Mid-level tone** means no tones. It is call “**thanh ngang**” in Vietnamese.

The mid-level tone has a pitch starting at the midpoint of the normal speaking voice range and remaining stable during the pronunciation of the syllable. It is very

important to keep the mid-level tone at the same pitch level in the flow of speech, without any fluctuation when pronouncing word with this tone.

e.g

*mi ni bi đi*  
*mê nê bê đê*  
*me ne be đe*

Spelling: The tone does NOT have its own diacritic

## 2. THANH HUYỀN (LOW-FALLING TONE)

**Low-falling** tone, which is called in Vietnamese: **thanh huyền**, starts just slightly lower than the midpoint of the normal voice range and trails downward toward to the bottom of the voice range

Spelling: It is symbolized by the **grave accent**

e.g

*mì nì bì đi*  
*mề nề bề đề*  
*mè nè bè đè*

## 3. PRACTICE

### ➤ Listen and repeat

Compare thanh ngang and thanh huyền

mi	mì
ni	nì
bi	bì
đi	đì

mê	mề
nê	nề
bê	bề
đê	đề

me	mè
ne	nè
be	bè
đe	đe

### ➤ Multiple choice questions:

Choose the sound you hear

1	bi	bì
2	i	ì
3	mi	mì
4	ni	nì
5	đi	đì

## UNIT 1 REVIEW

➤ Listen and repeat:

a. Part 1

i	bi	mi	ni	đi
ê	bê	mê	nê	đê
e	be	me	ne	đe

b. Part 2

i - ì	bi - bì	mi - mì	ni - nì	đi - ðì
ê - ề	bê - bề	mê - mẽ	nê - nề	đê - đề
e - è	be - bè	me - mè	ne - nè	đe - ðè

➤ Sentence Practice

- Mì mê đi bè.
- Bi mê ðề nè.

## UNIT 1 TEST

I. Listen and choose the sound you hear

1	đi	bì	mi	mì
2	bi	mê	ðề	ni
3	be	mè	bè	đe
4	me	nì	đê	mì
5	đi	bè	mê	đe

II. Listen and choose the sound you hear

6. Tôi \_\_\_\_\_ ăn gà.

- A. bề                      B. mẽ                      C. mê

7. Em hay chơi bắn \_\_\_\_\_

- A. bi                      B. bì                      C. đi

8. Cô giáo đang soạn \_\_\_\_\_ thi.



- A. dê                      B. đê                      C. bê
9. Chị \_\_\_\_\_ đi bè.
- A. Mi                      B. Bi                      C. Ni
10. Cây \_\_\_\_\_ này nhiều trái lắm.
- A. mè                      B. me                      C. be

**III. Listen and choose True/ False.**

<b>11</b>	Mi thích ăn mê.	<input type="checkbox"/> T	<input type="checkbox"/> F
<b>12</b>	Em đi bè.	<input type="checkbox"/> T	<input type="checkbox"/> F
<b>13</b>	Nhà chú có nuôi 1 con be.	<input type="checkbox"/> T	<input type="checkbox"/> F
<b>14</b>	Mì nhà bà Kì ăn ngon lắm.	<input type="checkbox"/> T	<input type="checkbox"/> F
<b>15</b>	Anh đi đâu đó?	<input type="checkbox"/> T	<input type="checkbox"/> F