Skill-check HW #1 | Vowels in Inuktitut

For this assignment, your goal is to demonstrate your understanding of:
- predictable and unpredictable distribution (environments) of segments
- the implications of distribution for determining the phonemes of a language

This data set is from Inuktitut (an Eskimo-Aleut language spoken in Greenland).

Some notes:
- The same data set is used for Skill Check HW #2.
- These IPA symbols may be unfamiliar to you: [q ʀ]. Use the IPA chart linked from the LING 200 course page to see how these consonants are described in terms of their phonetic properties. (For their features, see Skill Check HW #2.)

[ivnaq]	'bluff'	[qasaloq]	'bark'
[ipeʀaq]	'harpoon strap'	[ikusik]	'elbow'
[imaq]	'sea'	[qilaluvaq]	'white whale'
[tuluvaq]	'raven'	[qatigak]	'back'
[itumaq]	'palm of hand'	[sakiak]	'rib'
[sava]	'sheep'	[ugsik]	'cow'
[nuna]	'land'	[oʀpik]	'tree'
[nanoq]	'bear'	[neʀdloq]	'goose'
[iseʀaq]	'ankle'	[maʀʀaq]	'clay'
[seʀmeq]	'glacier'	[iga]	'pot'

(1) **Make a vowel chart** that presents all **five** of the vowels that appear in **surface forms** in Inuktitut (as seen in this data set), **organized** according to their phonetic properties. (Using features is optional.)

(2) Phonologists have proposed that Inuktitut has only **three** vowel **phonemes**. (That is, two of the vowels seen in surface forms are **allophones** of some other vowel phoneme.) **Describe the phoneme/allophone status of the vowels in this data set.** That is, make a statement like this: "One phoneme has a single allophone J. One phoneme has the two allophones K and L. One phoneme has the two allophones M and N," where "J K L M N" stand for the five vowels seen in surface forms.

(3) Present **evidence** from the data set to support your proposals about allophones. For this assignment, you may describe any relevant segment classes or differences between segments in terms of "traditional" phonetic properties (as we did for the phonetics review quiz, with the addition of new useful terms such as "coronal" or "obstruent/sonorant"); use of features is optional—and may be difficult (see Skill Check HW #2).