

Pronunciation Guide

Vowel Sounds

Short Vowels			Long Vowels		
	Gàidhlig Samples	Nearest English Imitation		Gàidhlig Samples	Nearest English Imitation
a	fad ball, bann § lagh ‡ adhbhar ‡ sabhal ‡ balla †	bat cow burn burn saw father	a	bàn	far
e	dheth teth baile †	set rate father	e	dè fèath	fame shed
i	sir tinn, till §	feet king	i	sìn	me
o	bog orra tonn, toll, tom§	bowl modest cow	o	òr bò	fawn bold
u	guth	full	u	ùr	poor

† these are indistinct obscure vowels as found in English

§ short vowels are nasalised before terminal **nn**, **ll** & **m**

‡ **bh**, **gh** and **dh** alter preceding short vowel sound

Diphthongs

Based on Short Vowels			Based on Long Vowels		
	Gàidhlig Samples	Nearest English Imitation		Gàidhlig Samples	Nearest English Imitation
ai	tais tairbh -aidh (terminal)	bat hit see	ai	fàilte ‡ dàimh	far eye
			ao	daor	burn but longer, like French fleur
ea	* lean, beatha ** dealt, eala § ceann, geall	set yak yowl (ok so its not a real word)	ea	ceàrr	yard
ei	deich	rate	ei	cèile	fame
eo	deoch	yonder	eo	eòlas	yawl
eu	† feur ceum	seer fame	eu		
ia	ciall	seer	ia		
io	ciont iomlan	yucca sit	io	fior	seer
iu	diugh	yule	iu	iùl	you
oi	cois cloimh	modest boy	oi	tòisich clòimh	fawn cloister
ua	fuair	fluent	ua		
ui	sluig tuinn, tuill	full suing	ui	dùil	poor

‡ diphthong **ai** has this value only immediately before consonant groups **dh, mh & gh**

† predominant pronunciation

** this sound (**yak**) is dominant or becoming so in nearly all other cases including where it precedes the consonant **l**

* this sound (**set**) is only found preceding a single consonant (or its lenited equivalent)

§ short vowels are nasalised before terminal **nn & ll**

Consonants

Broad Consonants			Slender Consonants		
<p>A, O, & U have similar influences on consonants.</p> <p>Further Gàidhlig Samples indicate where the non-initial consonant is different</p>			<p>Two Gàidhlig Samples are given where E & I have distinct influences on preceding consonants.</p> <p>Further Gàidhlig Samples indicate where the non-initial consonant is different Gàidhlig</p>		
	Gàidhlig Samples	Nearest English Imitation		Gàidhlig Samples	Nearest English Imitation
b	bàn obair	bar top	b	beò bith	beauty bee
bh	bhàn § sabhal	van saw	bh	bheò bhith	view via
c	cat bac	cot loch+k sound	c	ceò cìr taic	kew key like German I ch+k
ch	chat	loch as spoken by a Scot	ch	cheò chìr	like German I ch
chd	bochd	loch+k			
d	dà sad	door softer d but no real equivalent	d	deàrrs dith	jew jig
dh	dhà § adhbhar	guttural g but no real equivalent silent but af- fects preceding vowel	dh †	dheth	yes
f	fàn	fan	f	feàrr fion	few feel
fh	fhàn	silent	fh	fhìon	silent except in fhèin, fhathast and fhuair

	Gàidhlig Samples	Nearest English Imitation		Gàidhlig Samples	Nearest English Imitation
g	gon sgar, rag	got scar, rack	g	geàrr gin sgeul, gèig	ague give scale, tick
gh	ghon	guttural g but no equivalent	gh †	ghin	yes
l †	là	close to ball	l †	lìon	lure
ll	toll	weak l preceded by a nasal ow but no real equivalent	ll	till	million
m	mòr	mop	m	meall mìn	mew meal
mh	mhòr § samhradh	vole how	mh	mheall mhìn	view veal
n †	na	close to nap	n †	nigh	new
nn	tonn	weak n preceded by a nasal ow but no real equivalent	nn	tinn	pinion
ng	trang	longitude			
p	pos	pan	p	peann	pew
ph	phos	fan		pheann	few
r †	rag	trilled r but no real equivalent	r †	ris	soft r but no real equivalent
s	son	so	s	sìn	she
sh	shon	hoe	sh	sheall	hew
t	tum	toe	t	tìr	chew
th	thum	hoe	th	thìr	hew

† medial and terminal **dh** and **gh** preceded by a slender vowel can be regarded as silent
 † **l**, **n** & **r** are not lenited in writing although they are subtle changes in their pronunciation in lenited positions in spoken Gàidhlig

§ **bh**, **dh**, **gh** & **mh** very often lose their consonant qualities when preceded by an unaccented **a** or **o**