

Worksheets for Irish Language Pronunciation

Test yourself and learn.



Copyright © 2021 Bitesize Irish Ltd. All rights reserved.

bitesize.irish

Worksheet 1

For “The Pronunciation Method”

For Pronunciation Cheat Sheets

Tip: Open the file “2.Pronunciation-Method.pdf” to follow this worksheet.

Exercise 1

Divide the words in the left column by rewriting them in **groups of consonants** and **groups of vowels**. We’ll put them together later using the cheat sheets.

Tip: We have already divided the first two words as examples of what you should do.

Word	Groups of Vowels	Groups of Consonants
sciorta	io, a	sc, rt
ainmfhocail	ai, o, ai	nmfh, c, l
inniu		
eile		
raibh		
cúpla		
maith		
nois		
ndiaidh		
geinideach		
bhreacadh		

chomhartha		
scriobhfaí		
tosaíodh		
réamhfhocail		
baininscneach		
chríochnaíonn		

Worksheet 2

For Cheat Sheet 1

Vowels

Tip: For each worksheet, check here to know which cheat sheet to refer to for these exercises.

Exercise 1

For this exercise, put down your pen! Focusing on the shape of your mouth, **say the letter “a” out loud.**

Continue to focus on the shape of your mouth and **say the letter “m” out loud.**

Now **say the letter “k” out loud.**

Notice that when you say “a” out loud, your mouth **remains open.**

This means that “a” is a **vowel.**

And when you say a **consonant** like “m” or “k”, your mouth closes either through your lips or your tongue. When you speak a consonant, your lips may come together or your tongue presses against your teeth, the front top of your mouth or the back of your mouth near your throat.

Exercise 2

Say the following Irish alphabet out loud while focusing on the formation of your mouth, lips and tongue.

a b c d e f g h i l m n o p r s t u

(the letter A is pronounced like the word AH, the rest are pronounced like English letters when reciting the alphabet)

Exercise 3

Identify the vowel(s) as broad or slender in the following word list:

Word	“Broad” or “Slender”?
bád	broad
eilifint	
ag	
idir	
ocras	
imigh	
agus	
eile	

For Cheat Sheet 2

Tip: This is a new worksheet for the next cheat sheet, so go find Cheat Sheet 2 and have it ready to refer to.

Exercise 1

Classify each of the groups of vowels in the following words as short or long. If a word has more than one group, then do the same for each of its groups. Remember, a group of vowels containing an accented vowel will be considered to be a “long” group of vowels.

Word	Short vowels	Long vowels
eitleán	ei	eá
ársa		
dainséar		
deoch		
radaíocht		
taespúnóg		

Exercise 2

In this exercise, you will practice identifying the short and long vowels. Write the vowel in the middle column and the pronunciation of the vowel in the right column.

Word	Vowel	Vowel pronunciation
blas	a	ah
donn		
lus		
rinc		
ag		
bád	á	aw
póg		
cúng		
bí		
sé		

For Cheat Sheet 3

Exercise 1

Draw a line from the word on the left to the correct vowel pair sound on the right.

There is a sound listed for each word option.

Hint to get you started: draw a line between "beilt" and an "eh".

Word	Vowel pair sounds like?
<u>b</u> eilt	uh
<u>f</u> ead	ah
<u>d</u> air	eh
<u>f</u> ear	ah
<u>o</u> ifig	uh
<u>d</u> uine	ih
<u>s</u> coile	eh
<u>c</u> eird	ah
<u>i</u> oncam	ih
<u>i</u> nniu	ih
<u>r</u> aibh	ah
<u>i</u> ontach	eh

Exercise 2

In the sentences below, circle the vowel pairs that produce the following sound: AH.

If you're not sure, you'll need to refer to **Cheat Sheet 3**.

Féach! Tá fear ag teacht isteach. M'athair, is dócha, agus tá mo mháthair ansin, freisin.

Nach bhfuil siad fliuch?

Tá, go cinnte.

For Cheat Sheet 4

Exercise 1

Draw a line from the word on the left to the vowel pair sound on the right.

There is a sound listed for each word option.

Hint to get you started: draw a line between “*nuair*” and “*oo*”.

Word	Vowel pair sounds like?
nu<u>air</u>	ee
lu<u>as</u>	ee
bl<u>ia</u>in	oo
ta<u>o</u>bh	oo
gl<u>ua</u>is	ee
si<u>a</u>d	wee
tr<u>ia</u>il	oo
sa<u>o</u>r	wee

Exercise 2

In the sentences below, circle the vowel pairs that produce the following sounds: WEE and OO.

Ní bhfuair mé aon rud on siopa sin, ach chonaic Máire cúpla rudaí a bhí ag teastáil uaithi le fada anois.

Exercise 3

Finish spelling the following words based on the sound their vowel pair makes.

Starting hint: We have already filled in “oi” in “oifig” for you.

Q I F I G (eh)

T ■ ■ B H (ee)

B ■ ■ L T (eh)

D ■ ■ N E (ih)

For Cheat Sheets 3 & 4

Exercise 1

Multiple choice practice.

Choose the correct *vowel* pronunciation from the choices given. Choose from a, b, c or d by circling the correct answer.

1. sin	1. cás
a. suhn	a. cohss
b. sehn	b. cayss
c. shin	c. cawss
d. sheen	d. cehss
3. ceist	4. fíos
a. kee-sht	a. fehss
b. keh-sht	b. fihss
c. kah-sht	c. fuhss
d. kuh-sht	d. fahss
5. bia	6. maol
a. bwee-ah	a. mehl
b. boo-ah	b. muhl
c. beh-ah	c. mweel
d. bee-ah	d. mahl
7. bean	
a. been	
b. bayn	
c. bahn	
d. buhn	

For Cheat Sheets 5, 6 & 7

Exercise 1

There are 13 consonants in the Irish alphabet. Consonants are formed when the mouth or throat closes fully or partially when forming the sound, in contrast to vowels where the mouth *remains open*. Practice saying the consonants once through while concentrating on the formation of your mouth and tongue:

b c d f g h l m n p r s t

Remember how you learned that some vowels are broad: **a, o, u**, and some vowels are slender: **i, e**. (see Cheat Sheet 1).

Pronunciation rule: When you see single consonants as listed above surrounded by broad vowels, the sound of the consonant is usually made by pressing the tongue against the upper teeth.

Practice saying the consonants while focusing on placing the tongue against the upper teeth and comparing it to where you might normally pronounce the letter. Some letters may be formed in the same way you currently form them in English:

b c d f g h l m n p r s t

Pronunciation rule: When you see single consonants surrounded by slender vowels, the sound of the consonant is often made by pressing the tongue against the gum behind the upper teeth.

Practice saying the consonants while focusing on placing the tongue against the gum behind the upper teeth and comparing it to where you might normally pronounce the letter. Some letters may be formed in the same way you currently form them in English. There's a rule about an *R* at the beginning of the word: it's always broad!

b c d f g h l m n p r s t

Sometimes consonants appear in groups, such as *mh*. We'll cover those soon. Let's focus on single consonants first.

Exercise 2

In the following exercise, **put a check mark** in the column to note whether the chosen consonant is broad or slender.

Hint to get you started: we have already filled in that for the consonant “d” in the word “fada” is broad. This is because it is surrounded by broad vowels. Don’t forget to check Cheat Sheet 1 again to see which are the broad vowels, and which are the slender vowels.

Consonant: d	Broad	Slender
f <u>a</u> da	✓	
<u>d</u> ána		
mai <u>d</u> in		
so <u>d</u> ar		
<u>d</u> éanta		
Consonant: t	Broad	Slender
<u>t</u> ú		
<u>t</u> áim		
bo <u>t</u> ún		
sláin <u>t</u> e		
Consonant: l	Broad	Slender
co <u>l</u> ún		
a <u>l</u> t		
bhfui <u>l</u>		
gl <u>l</u> uais		

Consonant: n	Broad	Slender
cion<u>n</u>tach		
s<u>n</u>asta		
sne<u>n</u>achta		
du<u>n</u>e		

Consonant: s	Broad	Slender
s<u>s</u>íl		
an<u>s</u>in		
s<u>s</u>uas		
an<u>s</u>ois		

Consonant: r	Broad	Slender
tr<u>r</u>		
ro<u>r</u>gha		
ri<u>r</u>th		
scr<u>r</u>íobh		

Exercise 3

Match the consonant with the sound it makes when broad or slender.

Draw a line from the consonant to the sound it makes.

Hint to get you started: draw a line between “broad d” and “d”.

Consonant	Sounds like?
broad d	d
slender t	ch
broad l	j
slender n	n
broad r	ñ
slender s	sh
slender d	l
broad t	r
slender l	ss
broad n	t
slender r	l
broad s	r

Exercise 4

For the following list of words, indicate whether the *s* is pronounced using *sh* or *ss*.
Circle the correct response.

Hint to get you started: since the “s” in “árásán” is broad, *Cheat Sheet 7* tells us it is pronounced like “ss”. Therefore, circle “ss” for “árásán”.

Word	“s” sounds like?
<u>s</u> céal	ss or sh
<u>s</u> cian	ss or sh
i <u>s</u>	ss or sh
<u>s</u> úil	ss or sh

For Cheat Sheet 8

Exercise 1: Groups of consonants

The first group of consonants consists of the letters *ph, th, ch, fh, sh* and *bhf*. The addition of the letter *h* tells you that the first consonant is softened. The initial consonant is the one being softened by the addition of the second letter, which is always an *h*. Try this exercise:

Say out loud the letters P, T, C (hard, like a *K*), F, S, B. Do it again until you notice the amount of air you're pushing out of your mouth or through your teeth. When the letter *h* is added, you will soften the amount of air that you push out of your mouth. You are *softening* the consonant.

Now say out loud the letter followed by the sound indicated. That is that sound created when the consonant is accompanied by a "h". Notice the change in the amount of air between the corresponding letters.

This letter...	...when appearing as	...sounds like
p	ph	F
t	th	H
c	ch	KH
f	fh	(silent)
s	sh	H (hard H)
f	bhf	V (slender) W (broad)

Exercise 2

Remember that the letter *h* softens the initial consonant. **Circle** the consonant pairs that illustrate the softening of the initial consonant:

ph mbbf mh gcl k sh dr th ch dt bhf fh wt

Exercise 3

Recall the broad and slender vowels and fill in the blank below.

When a consonant is slender, it is next to the vowels: _____.

When a consonant is broad, it is next to the vowels: _____.

Exercise 4

What's the silent letter in the words, due to the appearance of its accompanying "h"?

1. láthair	<u> t </u>
2. athair	<u> </u>
3. dúshlán	<u> </u>
4. fhios	<u> </u>
5. fheara	<u> </u>
6. shásta	<u> </u>

Exercise 5

Cheat Sheet 7: There's a funny group of consonants you'll encounter in Irish: bhf. The "bhf" combination appears when a word beginning with "f" is eclipsed. You'll learn more about eclipsis in the next worksheet. In the meantime, let's learn about how to pronounce "bhf" here.

When bhf is next to a slender vowel, it's pronounced as a "v".

When bhf is next to a broad vowel, it's pronounced as a "w".

So the word "bhfeirm," which means farm, is pronounced, it's spoken with a v: vehrm. That's because the letter *e* is a slender vowel.

Circle the appropriate sound of the bhf consonant group in the following words:
Hint to get you started: the "bhf" in "bhfuil" is broad because of the "u" following it. Therefore, Cheat Sheet 7 tells us to pronounce it like "w". Circle "w" beside "bhfuil".

WORD	PRONOUNCE LIKE		
1. bhfuil	w	or	v
2. bhfear	w	or	v
3. bhfaca	w	or	v
4. bhfad	w	or	v

Exercise 6

The words below are written phonetically. Spell the words correctly in Irish from the phonetic description.

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| 1. MAW-her | <u>máthair</u> |
| 2. FIKH-ha | _____ |
| 3. flyukh | _____ |
| 4. FOH-kah | _____ |
| 5. SUR-kha | _____ |
| 6. oor | _____ |

For Cheat Sheet 9

Exercise 1

Eclipsis happens to consonants, but only a handful of them. The following consonants may be eclipsed: b, c, d, f, g, p, t. The remaining consonants are never eclipsed. If you see these strange combinations of consonants at the beginning of a word, you'll know the first letter is eclipsed.

The consonant groups of eclipsis do not change. They are as follows:

bp dt gc mb nd ng bhf

We work on *bhf* sounds in another exercise.

Keeping in mind that only the new, added letter is pronounced, fill in the blank with the correct pronunciation of the vowel group below.

bp	=	<u> b </u>
dt	=	<u> </u>
gc	=	<u> </u>
mb	=	<u> </u>
nd	=	<u> </u>
ng	=	<u> </u>

Exercise 2

Place a checkmark next to the words that are eclipsed:

Word	Eclipsed?
mbun	<u> ✓ </u>
gceannas	<u> </u>
smaoinigh	<u> </u>
dtí	<u> </u>
chapaill	<u> </u>
ngeit	<u> </u>
spraioi	<u> </u>

Exercise 3

To pronounce eclipsed words, you will *pronounce the first letter and leave the second letter silent*. This may seem a little confusing at first, but it's one of the easiest pronunciation rules to remember! In the next exercise, you'll pronounce these words. Remember when pronouncing the words below, you pronounce the first consonant, with the second consonant falling silent.

Say out loud the pronunciation of the word as indicated by the "Pronunciation" column.

Original word	Eclipsed spelling	Pronunciation	Meaning
bád	<u>m</u> bád	<u>m</u> awd	boat
duille	<u>n</u> duille	<u>n</u> ill-eh	leaf
bean	<u>m</u> bean	<u>m</u> an	woman
peann	<u>b</u> peann	<u>b</u> an	pen
teanga	<u>d</u> teanga	<u>d</u> jang-a	tongue
ceann	<u>g</u> ceann	<u>g</u> yuhn	head
freagra	<u>bh</u> freagra	<u>y</u> rahgra	answer
droim	<u>n</u> droim	<u>n</u> rim	back

Familiarize yourself with the changes in the eclipsed spelling and how the words are pronounced. Use this example list of three words with their eclipsed pronunciations as a guide:

Word	Eclipsed	Pronounced	Meaning
bord	b <u>h</u> ord	<u>v</u> ohrd	to be
mór	m <u>h</u> ór	<u>v</u> ohr	big
beag	b <u>h</u> eag	<u>v</u> yuhg	little

Exercise 4

Complete the words below by writing one of the consonants in each blank:

nduille
b_eann
g_eannas
n_athanna
m_láthanna
d_aga
b_ianóan
n_íotár

Exercise 5

To pronounce eclipsed words, you will pronounce the first letter and leave the second letter silent. We're "*eclipsing*" the second consonant. Remember this is one of the easiest pronunciation rules! Practice what you are learning by writing in the correct eclipsed spelling below. Remember to *pronounce just the first consonant out loud, skipping over the second*. For example, the word "*mbád*" is pronounced "*mawd*."

Write the correct spelling of the eclipsed words below:

Original word	Eclipsed Spelling	Pronunciation	Meaning
bád	mbád	mawd	boat
duille		nill-eh	leaf
bean		man	woman
peann		ban	pen
teanga		djang-a	tongue
ceann		gyuhn	head
freagra		vrahgra	answer
droim		nrim	back

For Cheat Sheet 10

Exercise 1

We've talked a lot about broad and slender vowels and what they do to the surrounding consonants. Next we tackle the consonant groups "mh" and "bh" whether it appears in the beginning, middle or end of a word.

Both "mh" and "bh" are affected by their closest vowels and the same rules apply for both.

Practice identifying the letters and sounds.

In this exercise, *circle* the correct pronunciation.

Word	Underlined text is pronounced as v or w or ow?				
<u>bh</u>í	v	or	w	or	ow
com<u>hr</u>á	v	or	w	or	ow
téa<u>m</u>h	v	or	w	or	ow
ta<u>b</u>hair	v	or	w	or	ow
<u>m</u>haith	v	or	w	or	ow
shá<u>i</u>mhín	v	or	w	or	ow
an <u>b</u>hainisteora	v	or	w	or	ow

For Cheat Sheet 11

Exercise 1

When “dh” is at the end of a word, it produces a different sound, so that is covered in a later cheat sheet.

In the following words, is the “gh” broad or slender? Place a check mark in the correct column for each row.

Consonant: d	Broad	Slender
g<u>h</u>eobhaidh		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ar a lag<u>h</u>ad		
a g<u>h</u>lanadh		
slag<u>h</u>dán		
leig<u>h</u>eas		
prag<u>h</u>as		

Exercise 2

Practice identifying the letters and corresponding sounds. In this exercise, *circle* the correct answer.

Hint to get you started: for “*ar a laghad*”, circle that the pronunciation is like “*eye*”.

Word	Pronounced like?		
ar a lag <u>h</u> ad	ow	or	eye
slag <u>h</u> dán	ow	or	eye
togh <u>h</u> chán	ow	or	eye
leig <u>h</u> eas	ow	or	eye
g <u>h</u> eobhaidh	gh	or	y
feigh <u>h</u> lithe	gh	or	y
sa gh <u>h</u> luaisteán	gh	or	y
g <u>h</u> earr	gh	or	y

Exercise 3

Draw a line to the proper pronunciation for each of the following words:

Hint to get you started: drawn a line between “ghlan” and “gluhn”.

Word	Choose the matching pronunciation:
grá	TOW-chawn
ghairdín	Yahr
ghearr	ROW-nahk
rognach	GLUHN
toghchán	gaw
gá	GHOR-jeen

For Cheat Sheet 12

Exercise 1

Following the rules explained on Cheat Sheet 12, place a check mark in the correct column if the word follows the broad rule or the slender rule for “dh”.

Word	Broad	Slender
<u>dh</u>uit		
rad<u>h</u>arc		
<u>dh</u>éanamh		
gad<u>h</u>ar		
<u>dh</u>ruilire		
fad<u>h</u>b		

Exercise 2

In this exercise, circle the correct answer.

Word	Hint: word is pronounced like	“dh” pronounced like eye or y?		
gad<u>h</u>ar	GEYE-<u>uhr</u>	eye	or	y
fad<u>h</u>b	feyeb	eye	or	y
sé a <u>dh</u>ícheall	shay ah YEE-<u>hal</u>	eye	or	y
<u>dh</u>éanamh	YAYN-<u>uhv</u>	eye	or	y

For Cheat Sheet 13**Exercise 1**

The word ending *-adh* produces three sounds. Unlike other sounds in the Cheat Sheet series, this ending varies depending on whether the word is a noun, a verb or a past passive such as “*was married.*”

Are the following examples nouns or verbs? You can tell if a word is a verb when the word “*ag*” precedes it. You can tell if a word is a noun when it is followed by a personal pronoun.

Word	“Noun” or “Verb”?
bhriseadh sé	
pósadh	
samhradh	
síneadh	
ag bualadh	

Exercise 2

When you see words ending in the letters *-igh* or *-idh*, the pronunciation is limited to two options based on how many syllables are in each word. Circle the appropriate answer for the words listed below.

Word	“gh” pronounced like?		
aistrigh	iy	or	ig
éirigh	iy	or	ig
d’imigh	iy	or	ig

suigh	iy	or	ig
deisigh	iy	or	ig
chuaigh	iy	or	ig

Summary



Exercise 1

Using the cheat sheets and the method you've learned, find the rules for pronouncing each word. As you go through the cheat sheets, begin writing the word out as it sounds in the blanks below in the middle column. You may also then attempt to combine the sounds in the right column, but perhaps you will only be able to accomplish this after hearing the words spoken aloud "in the wild".

Word	How the entire word is pronounced	
	Initial break down	Combined sounds
sciorta	s-c-io-r-t-a	s-c-io(ih)-r-t-a(ah) = sk ihr tah = SKIHRTAH
inniu	i-n-n-iu	i(ih) n n iu(uh) = ih nn uh = IHNNUH
eile	ei-l-e	ei(eh) l e(eh) = eh l eh = EHLEH
raibh		
cúpla		
maith		
gadhar		
bhí		
mbun		

scéal

sneachta

bhfuil

sláinte

táim

maidin

fios

sin

se

sé

bliain

taobh

gluais

fead

dair

fear

oifig

duine

scoile

ceird

ioncam

raibh

iontach

