

A Practical Course in Gaelic

This course is intended to provide an adequately graded series of lessons in Gaelic grammar and usage, and should be of considerable value to students who have studied the language before now, and who wish to revise and continue this study. Beginners will also find it useful as a form of introduction to our language.

It is the aim of *Gairm*, not merely to reach the native speaker only, but also to serve that vast body of learners who have so diligently applied themselves to the study of Gaelic language, literature, and music.

The lessons given here are designed to encourage the **speaking** of Gaelic, but, obviously, it is difficult at times to convey inflection and accent through the medium of the written word. Rather than risk the tedium of providing phonetic spellings throughout the series, we are giving here a pronunciation chart which learners should study carefully before proceeding to the actual lessons. In addition to this, we strongly recommend that the advice of a native speaker—and there are few areas without one—should be sought whenever doubts as to pronunciation arise.

One further word of advice. Please do not attempt to master a language in a few sittings. These lessons are sufficient for three months' study, and any spare time you may have should be occupied in reading as much material as possible on Highland history and literature. These are the essential backgrounds to any language.

There are eighteen letters in the Gaelic Alphabet, viz.:—

Five vowels—**a, o, u** (the broad vowels).

e, i (the thin vowels).

Twelve consonants—**b, c, d, f, g, l, m, n, p, r, s, t**.

The letter **h** which is the spirant.

PRONUNCIATION CHART.

a as in cap.

à as in bar.

ò pronounced awe.

ó as in bore.

o as in or; also as in lope.

u as in loop.

ù as in moor.

d, t, l, n, nn, and ll (When these are preceded or followed by a broad vowel, place the tip of the tongue between the teeth.)

e as in err.

i as in hit.

ì as in me.

eu } as in 'hay.'

éi }

Practise these consonants in the following typical words:—**Dol** (Going); **Tunnag** (Duck); **Null** (Over); **Là** (Day).

c as in cat.

g as in get.

s followed by **e** or **i** is pronounced **sh** as in she.

mh and **bh** are pronounced **v**.

th at the beginning of word is pronounced **h** or else is silent, e.g., silent in **thu** (oo) you.

ch as in the Scots loch.

This chart is designed to meet the requirements of the following lesson. Difficulties arising from the combination of vowel sounds will be dealt with in the next issue of *Gairm*.

You are now ready to start the lesson. Let us stress, once again, the importance of being guided by a Gaelic speaker wherever possible.