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PRONUNCIATION

German alphabets are very similar to English. However, two more alphabets are used in German. The followings are the German alphabets with their names in English in brackets:

A (ah) B (be) C (ce) D (de) E (eh) F (eff) G (ge)

H (hah) I (ee) J (yot) K (ka) L (ell) M (emm)

N (enn) O (oh) P (pe) Q (koo) R (err) S (ess) T (te)

U (oo) V (fow) W (ve) X (iks) Y (ipsilon) Z (tsett)

ß (esstsett) .. (umlauts)

Out of twenty eight alphabets five are the vowels and the rest are consonants. There are some basic rules regarding the pronunciation of vowels :

- 1. A vowel is short if followed by two consonants.**
- 2. A vowel is long if followed by single consonant, followed by 'h' or the same vowel coming twice.**
- 3. Unstressed vowels are usually short. In German generally the first syllable is stressed.**
- 4. H is not pronounced after a vowel and 't'. 'D' is silent before 't'. Examples: Theater, Methode, Stadt**
- 5. In German the first letter of all the nouns are written in capital.**

Simple Vowels

Vowels	Long/Short	English Examples	German Examples
a	short	b <u>u</u> t, c <u>u</u> t	Mann (man), lang (long), Pass (passport)
aa, ah	long	f <u>a</u> ther	Haar (hair), Bahn (path), war (was), klar (clear)
e	short	p <u>e</u> n, b <u>e</u> t	denn (then), Fest (festival) , lernen (to learn)
ee, eh	long	p <u>a</u> in, m <u>a</u> il	Meer (sea), leer (empty), sehen (to see), mehr (more), der (the)

'e' at the end of a word is usually pronounced like 'but'

i	short	b <u>i</u> t, f <u>i</u> t	Kind (child), Bild (picture), finden (to find), ist (is)
ii, ih	long	d <u>ee</u> p, s <u>ee</u>	variieren (to vary), ihm (to him), Paris, Mathematik
o	short	n <u>o</u> t, h <u>o</u> t	oft (often), kommen (to come), Post, offen (open)
oo, oh	long	t <u>o</u> ne, n <u>o</u> te	Boot (boat), Ton (tone), ohne (without), rot (red), Brot (bread)

u	short	put, <u>U</u>ma	Mutter (mother), Butter(butter) Grund (ground), und (and)
uu,u^h	long	<u>f</u>ood, <u>r</u>ule	Vakuum (vacuum), Uhr (watch), Stuhl (chair), Kuh (cow), gut (good)

Diphthongs (combination of vowels)

There are mainly five diphthongs in German language.

AI & EI, AU, EU, IE

Diphthongs	English Examples	German examples
AI & EI	m<u>i</u>ne, he<u>i</u>ght	klein (small), Mai (May), drei (three), Rhein, Mainz
AU	h<u>ou</u>se	Haus (house), Baum (tree), blau(blue), Frau(wife)
EU	bo<u>y</u>	neu (new), heute (today), neun (nine), Freund (friend)
IE	th<u>i</u>ef	die (the), wie (how), wieder (again), hier (here)

Modified Vowels

The followings are the modified vowels:

Ä (ae)
Ö (oe)
Ü (ue)
Äu

Vowels	English Examples	German Examples
ä	<u>c</u> are	spät(late), Lärm(noise), Qualität (quality)
ö	w <u>o</u> rth	öl (oil), können (can), schön(beautiful), Lösung (solution)
ü	ac <u>u</u> te	füllen (to fill), für (for), fünf (five), müssen (must)
äu	bo <u>y</u>	Häuser (houses), Fräulein (miss)

Consonants

- B** (i) At the beginning of a syllable, it is pronounced like ‘b’ in bread.
Examples: Brot (bread), Bruder (brother), Butter (butter)
- (ii) At the end of a syllable, it is pronounced like ‘p’ in pen. Examples:
halb (half), Kalb (calf), blieb (stayed).
- CH** (i) After a, o, u and au it is pronounced like kh .Examples:
Bach (stream), Loch (hole), Buch (book), auch (also).
- (ii) After i, e, eu, modified vowels and l, r it is pronounced like ‘sh’ as in
shot. Examples : ich (I), brechen (to break), euch (you), lächeln
(to smile), möchte (would like), Bücher(books), Milch(milk),
durch (through).
- D** (i) At the beginning of a syllable, it is pronounced like ‘d’ in did.
Examples: der(the), Drama, durch
- (ii) At the end of a syllable, it is pronounced lik ‘t’ in ten. Examples:
Hand, Bad (bath room), Kind (child), und (and), Freund (friend).

- G** (i) At the beginning of a syllable, it is pronounced like g in good.
Examples: gut(good), geben (to give), Geologie (Geology).
- (ii) At the end of a syllable, it is pronounced like k in king. Examples:
Tag (day), Zug (train), Weg (way), täglich (daily).
- (iii) 'ig' at the end of a word is pronounced like 'sh' in ich. Examples:
wenig (little), König (king), zwanzig (twenty).
- J** It is pronounced like 'y' in yes. Examples: ja (yes), Jahr (year), Juli (july), Japan
- S** (i) At the beginning of a syllable, it is pronounced like 'z' in zero.
Examples: sein (his), besuchen (to visit), sagen (to say), Rose (rose).
- (ii) At the end of a syllable, it is pronounced like 's' in sing. Examples:
das (the), was (what), Glas (glass), Haus (house).
- SCH/SP/ST** These all are pronounced like 'sh' in shoe. Examples :
Fisch (fish), Sprache (language), Student
- V** (i) At the beginning of a syllable, it is pronounced like 'f' in father.
Examples : Vater (father), verstehen (to understand), viel (much)
- (ii) It is pronounced like 'v' in very in the words of foreign origin.
Examples : Universität (university), November, Aktivität (activity)

- W** It is pronounced like v in very. Examples : Wetter (weather), wenn (when), Wasser (water), warten (to wait)
- X** It is pronounced like 'x' in fox. Examples : Taxi, Examen (examination), Axt (axe).
- Y** It is pronounced like 'ü' in für. Examples : Physik (physics) Lyrik (lyrics), typisch (typical).
- Z** It is pronounced like 'ts' in cats. Examples: zu (to), zehn (ten), zeigen (to show), Zigarette (cigarette).
- ß** It is pronounced like 'ss'. Examples: muß (must)

The following consonants are pronounced very similar to English.

- F** Frau (wife), frei (free), laufen (to run)
- H** Haus (house), haben (to have), Hammer
- K** klein (small), kommen, Kopie
- L** lachen (to laugh), Loch (hole), leben (to live)
- M** Mann (man/husband), mein (my), Mutter (mother)
- N** nein (no), neun (nine), Nacht (night)
- P** Post, Papier (paper), Prost (cheers)
- Q** Qualität, Quantität
- R** Haar (hair), rauchen (to smoke), Wasser (water)
- T** Tee (tea), trinken (to drink), Tochter (daughter)
