

Irish orthography

Irish orthography is very etymological, which allows the same written form to represent all dialects of Irish and remain regular. For example, *crann* ("tree") is read /kɾʲaɲˠ/ in Mayo and Ulster, /kɾʲaːɲˠ/ in Galway, or /kɾʲəuɲˠ/ in Munster. A spelling reform in the mid-20th century lead to *An Caighdeán Oifigiúil*, the modern standard written form used by the Government of Ireland, which regulates both spelling and grammar.^[1] The reform removed inter-dialectal silent letters, simplified some letter sequences, and modernised archaic spellings to reflect modern pronunciation but it also removed letters pronounced in one dialect but not in another. Some words may have dialectal pronunciations not reflected by their standard spelling, they may have dialectal spellings to reflect this.

Alphabet

Latin script has been the writing system used to write Irish since the 5th century, when it replaced Ogham which was used to write Primitive Irish and Old Irish.^[2] Prior the mid-20th century Gaelic type (*cló Gaelach*) was the main typeface used to write Irish, now it is usually replaced by Roman type (*cló Rómhánach*). The use of Ogham and Gaelic type today is restricted to decorative or self-consciously traditional contexts. The dot above a lenited letter in Gaelic type is usually replaced by a following (h) in Roman type (e.g. ⟨c̃⟩ → ⟨ch⟩).

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

Lenited consonants

Ḃ Ḅ Ḇ Ḉ Ṁ Ṃ Ṅ Ṇ Ṗ Ṙ Ṛ Ṝ Ṣ Ṥ Ṧ Ṩ

bh ch dh fh gh mh ph sh th

Gaelic type with Roman type
equivalents and the additional lenited
letters.

Letters and letter names

The traditional Irish alphabet (*áibítir*) consists of 18 letters: ⟨a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, u⟩. It does not contain ⟨j, k, q, v, w, x, y, z⟩, although they are used in scientific terminology and modern loanwords/words of foreign origin. ⟨v⟩ occurs in a small number of (mainly onomatopoeic) native words (e.g. *vácarnach* "to quack" and *vrác* "caw") and colloquialisms (e.g. *víog* for *bíog* "chirp" and *vís* for *bís* "screw").^[3] ⟨h⟩, when not prefixed to a word initial vowel to show aspiration or after a consonant to show lenition, primarily occurs word initially in loanwords, e.g. *hata* "hat". ⟨k⟩ is the only letter not listed by Ó Dónaill.

Vowels may be accented with an acute accent (⟨á, é, í, ó, ú⟩; see below).^[4] Accented letters are considered variants of their unaccented equivalent so they are ignored for purposes of alphabetisation, they follow their unaccented equivalents in dictionaries (i.e. *a, á...abhac, ábhacht, abhaile...*).



The traditional Irish alphabet carved in Gaelic type on a building in Dublin, with each type of diacritic (*síneadh fada* and *ponc séimhithe*) as well as the Tironian et.

English letter names are generally used in colloquial and formal speech but there are modern Irish letter names (based on the original Latin names), similar to other languages that use a Latin script alphabet. Tree names were historically used to name the letters. Tradition taught that they all derived from the names of Ogham letters, though it is now known that only some of the earliest were named after trees.

Letter	Name [5][6]	Name (IPA)	Tree Name (<i>Bríatharogam</i>)	Ogham equivalent	Notes	
<u>Aa</u>	á ^a	/a:/	<i>ailm</i> (pine)	+		
<u>Bb</u>	bé	/bʲe:/	<i>beith</i> (birch)	ᚃ		
<u>Cc</u>	cé	/ce:/	<i>coll</i> (hazel)	ᚱ		
<u>Dd</u>	dé	/dʲe:/	<i>dair</i> (oak)	ᚲ		
<u>Ee</u>	é ^a	/e:/	<i>eadhadh</i> (poplar)	ᚹ		
<u>Ff</u>	ef	/ɛfʲ/	<i>fearn</i> (alder)	ᚻ		
<u>Gg</u>	gé	/ʝe:/	<i>gort</i> (ivy)	ᚾ		
<u>Hh</u>	héis	/he:ʃ/	<i>uath</i> (hawthorn)	ᚿ		
<u>Ii</u>	í ^a	/i:/	<i>iodhadh</i> (yew)	ᚠ	[dʒ] is a foreign sound.	
<u>Jj</u>	jé	/dʒe:/				
<u>Kk</u>	cá	/ka:/				
<u>Ll</u>	eil	/ɛlʲ/	<i>luis</i> (rowan)	ᚡ		
<u>Mm</u>	eim	/ɛmʲ/	<i>muin</i> (vine)	ᚣ		
<u>Nn</u>	ein	/ɛnʲ/	<i>nion</i> (ash)	ᚤ		
<u>Oo</u>	ó ^a	/o:/	<i>onn</i> (gorse)	ᚥ	See <i>forfeda</i> .	
<u>Pp</u>	pé	/pʲe:/	<i>ifín</i> (gooseberry or thorn) <i>peith</i> (dwarf alder)	ᚦ =		
<u>Qq</u>	cú	/ku:/		ᚧ	⟨Q⟩ is used to transliterate <i>ceirt</i> (apple).	
<u>Rr</u>	ear	/aɾˠ/	<i>ruis</i> (elder)	ᚨ		
<u>Ss</u>	eas	/asˠ/	<i>sail</i> (willow)	ᚢ		
<u>Tt</u>	té	/tʲe:/	<i>tinne</i> (holly)	ᚷ		
<u>Uu</u>	ú ^a	/u:/	<i>úr</i> (heather)	ᚹ		
<u>Vv</u>	vé	/vʲe:/				
<u>Ww</u>	wae	/we:/				
<u>Xx</u>	eacs	/ɛksˠ/				
<u>Yy</u>	yé	/ʝe:/				
<u>Zz</u>	zae	/zˠe:/		ᚫ	⟨Z⟩ is used to transliterate <i>straif</i> (blackthorn); [zˠ] is a	

					foreign sound.
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Grapheme to phoneme correspondence

Example grapheme to phoneme correspondence table

Letter(s)			Phoneme(s)			Examples(s)
			<u>U</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>M</u>	
a	2	before syllable-final ⟨nn⟩	/a/	/aː/	/əu/	<i>crann</i> /kɾˠaːn̪ˠ/ "tree"

Grapheme to phoneme correspondence tables on this page follow the layout shown above, on this layout ⟨U⟩ stands for Mayo and Ulster Irish, ⟨C⟩ for southern Connacht Irish and ⟨M⟩ for Munster Irish. In the consonant table, 1 and 2 stand for broad and slender, respectively, while in the vowel tables they stand for stressed and unstressed. Initially and finally mean word initial or final unless stated otherwise. The IPA transcriptions of examples on this page are in Connacht Irish.

Consonants

The consonant letters generally correspond to the consonant phonemes as shown in this table. See Irish phonology for an explanation of the symbols used and Irish initial mutations for an explanation of eclipsis and lenition. In most cases, consonants are "broad" (velarised) when beside ⟨a, á, o, ó, u, ú⟩ and "slender" (palatalised) when beside ⟨e, é, i, í⟩.

Letter(s)			Phoneme(s)			Example(s)
			U	C	M	
b	1		/bˠ/			bain /bˠanʲ/ "take" (imper.), scuab /sˠkuəbˠ/ "broom"
	2		/bʲ/			béal /bʲeːlˠ/ "mouth", cnáib /knˠaːbʲ/ "hemp"
bh	1		/w/			bhain /wanʲ/ "took", ábhar /ˈaːwəɾˠ/ "material", dubhaigh /ˈd̪ˠʷiː/ "blacken" (imper.), taobh /t̪ˠiːw/ "side", dubh /d̪ˠʷ/ "black"
	2		/vʲ/			bhéal /vʲeːlˠ/ "mouth" (lenited), cuibhreann /ˈkʲiːvʲr̪ˠənnˠ/ "common table", aibhneacha /ˈavʲnʲəxə/ "rivers", sibh /ʃiːvʲ/ "you" (pl.)
	See below for ⟨(e)abh, (e)obh, (i)ubh⟩					
bhf (eclipsis of ⟨f⟩)	1		/w/			bhfuinneog /ˈwʲiːnʲiːoːg/ "window" (eclipsed)
	2		/vʲ/			bhfíon /vʲiːnˠ/ "wine" (eclipsed)
bp (eclipsis of ⟨p⟩)	1		/bˠ/			bpoll /bˠoːlˠ/ "hole" (eclipsed)
	2		/bʲ/			bpríosún /ˈbʲr̪ʲiːsˠuːnˠ/ "prison" (eclipsed)
c	1		/k/			cáis /kaːʃ/ "cheese", mac /mˠak/ "son"
	2		/c/			ceist /cɛʃtʲ/ "question", mic /mʲiːc/ "sons"
ch	1		/x/			cháis /xaːʃ/ "cheese" (lenited), taoiseach /ˈt̪ˠiːʃəx/ "chieftain, Prime Minister of Ireland"
	2	before ⟨t⟩				boichte /bˠɔxtʲə/ "poorer"
		usually		/ç/	cheist /çɛʃtʲ/ "question" (lenited), deich /dʲeːç/ "ten", oíche /ˈiːçə/ "night"	
d	1		/d̪ˠ/			dorn /d̪ˠoːɾˠnˠ/ "fist", nead /nʲeːd̪ˠ/ "nest"
	2		/dʲ/			dearg /dʲaːɾˠəg/ "red", cuid /kʲiːdʲ/ "part"
dh	1	initially	/ɣ/			dhorn /ɣoːɾˠnˠ/ "fist" (lenited)
		after long vowels	silent			ádh /aː/ "luck"
	2	usually	/j/		/j/	dhearg /ˈjaːɾˠəg/ "red" (lenited), fáidh /fˠaːj/ "prophet"
		finally				
	See below for ⟨(e)adh, (a)idh, eidh, odh, oidh⟩. See <u>Exceptions in verb forms</u> for -(dh) at the end of verbs.					
dt	1	eclipsis of ⟨t⟩	/d̪ˠ/			dtaisce /ˈd̪ˠaʃcə/ "treasure" (eclipsed)
		elsewhere	/t̪ˠ/			troidte /ˈt̪ˠr̪ˠɛtʲə/ "fought"
	2	eclipsis of ⟨t⟩	/dʲ/			dtír /dʲiːɾʲ/ "country" (eclipsed)
		elsewhere	/tʲ/			goidte /ˈgɛtʲə/ "stolen"
f	1		/fˠ/			fós /fˠoːsˠ/ "still", graf /gɾˠafˠ/ "graph"
	2		/fʲ/			fíon /fʲiːnˠ/ "wine", stuif /sˠt̪ˠʲɪfʲ/ "stuff"
	See <u>Exceptions in verb forms</u> for -⟨f⟩- in future and conditional personal verb endings.					
fh			silent			fhuinneog /ˈʲiːnʲiːoːg/ "window" (lenited), fhíon /iːnˠ/ "wine" (lenited)
g	1		/g/			gasúr /ˈgasˠuːɾˠ/ "boy", bog /bˠɔg/ "soft"

	2			/ɣ/		geata /ˈj̥at̪ʰə/ "gate", carraig /ˈkar̪ʰə/ "rock"	
gc (eclipsis of ⟨c⟩)	1			/g/		gcáis /gaːʃ/ "cheese" (eclipsed)	
	2			/ɣ/		gceist /ɣɛʃtʲ/ "question" (eclipsed)	
gh	1	initially		/ɣ/		ghasúr /ˈɣas̪uːɾ̪ʰ/ "boy" (lenited)	
		after long vowels		silent		Eoghan /ˈoːə̃n̪ʰ/ (male name)	
	2	usually		/j/	/j̥/	gheata /ˈj̥at̪ʰə/ "gate" (lenited), dóigh /d̪ʰoːj/ "way, manner"	
		finally					
	See <u>below</u> for ⟨(e)agh, (a)igh, eigh, ogh, oigh⟩. See <u>Exceptions in verb forms</u> for -(a)igh at the end of verbs.						
h				/h/		hata /ˈh̥at̪ʰə/ "hat", na héisc /nə heːʃc/ "the fish" (plural)	
j (loan consonant)				/dʒ/		jab /ˈdʒab̪ʰ/ "job", jíp /dʒiːpʲ/ "jeep"	
l	1	initially	usually	/l̪ʰ/		luí /l̪ʰiː/ "lying (down)"	
			lenited	/l̪ʰ/		lann /l̪ʰaːn̪ʰ/ "blade" (lenited)	
		elsewhere		/l̪ʰ/ or /l̪ʰ/		béal /b̪eːl̪ʰ/ "mouth"	
	2	initially	usually	/l̪ʲ/		leisciúil /ˈl̪ʲɛʃcuːl̪ʲ/ "lazy"	
			lenited	/l̪ʲ/		leanbh /ˈl̪an̪ʰəw/ "baby" (lenited)	
		elsewhere		/l̪ʲ/ or /l̪ʲ/		siúil /ˈʃuːl̪ʲ/ "walk"	
ll	1			/l̪ʰ/		poll /poːl̪ʰ/ "hole"	
	2			/l̪ʲ/		coill /k̪əɪl̪ʲ/ "woods"	
m	1			/m̪ʰ/		mór /m̪ʰoːɾ̪ʰ/ "big", am /aːm̪ʰ/ "time"	
	2			/m̪ʲ/		milis /ˈm̪ʲɪl̪ʰəʃ/ "sweet", im /iːm̪ʲ/ "butter"	
mb (eclipsis of ⟨b⟩)	1			/m̪ʰ/		mbaineann /ˈm̪ʰan̪ʰə̃n̪ʰ/ "takes" (eclipsed)	
	2			/m̪ʲ/		mbéal /m̪ʲeːl̪ʰ/ "mouth" (eclipsed)	
mh	1			/w/		mhór /woːɾ̪ʰ/ "big" (lenited), lámha /ˈl̪ʰaːwə/ "hands", léamh /l̪ʲeːw/ "reading"	
	2			/v/		mhilis /ˈv̪ʲɪl̪ʰəʃ/ "sweet" (lenited), uimhir /ˈɪv̪ʰɪɾ̪ʲ/ "number", nimh /n̪ʲɪv̪ʰ/ "poison"	
	See <u>below</u> for ⟨(e)amh, (e)omh, (i)umh⟩. See <u>Exceptions in verb forms</u> for -(e)amh in verbal nouns.						
n	1	initially	usually	/n̪ʰ/		naoi /n̪ʰiː/ "nine"	
			lenited	/n̪ʰ/		nótaí /n̪ʰoːt̪ʰiː/ "notes" (lenited)	
		usually		/n̪ʰ/ or /n̪ʰ/		bean /b̪an̪ʰ/ "woman"	
		after (non ⟨s(h)⟩) initial cons.		/ɾ̪ʰ/	/n̪ʰ/	mná /m̪ʰɾ̪ʰaː/ "women", cnaipe /ˈkr̪ʰap̪ʰə/ "press"	
	2	initially	usually	/n̪ʲ/		neart /n̪ʲar̪ʰt̪ʰ/ "strength"	
			lenited	/n̪ʲ/		mo neart /n̪ʲar̪ʰt̪ʰ/ "strength" (lenited)	
		usually		/n̪ʲ/ or /n̪ʲ/		Eoin /oːn̪ʲ/ (male name)	
after (non ⟨s(h)⟩) initial cons.		/ɾ̪ʲ/	/n̪ʲ/	gnéas /ɣɾ̪ʲeːs̪ʰ/ "sex", cníopaire /ˈcr̪ʲiːp̪ʰəɾ̪ʲə/ "skinflint"			

nc	1		/ŋk/	<i>ancaire</i> /ˈaŋkəɾˠə/ "anchor"
	2		/ŋc/	<i>rinc</i> /ɾˠɪŋc/ "dance"
nd (eclipsis of ⟨d⟩)	1		/ŋˠˠ/	<i>ndorn</i> /ŋˠˠoːɾˠˠə/ "fist" (eclipsed)
	2		/ŋˠ/	<i>ndearg</i> /ˈŋˠiəɾˠəɡ/ "red" (eclipsed)
ng	1	eclipsis of ⟨g⟩	/ŋ/	<i>ngasúr</i> /ˈŋasˠuːɾˠ/ "boy" (eclipsed)
		elsewhere	/ŋ(g)/	<i>long</i> /lˠˠuːŋɡ/ "ship", <i>teanga</i> /ˈtʲaŋɡə/ "tongue"
	2	eclipsis of ⟨g⟩	/ɲ/	<i>ngeata</i> /ˈɲatˠə/ "gate" (eclipsed)
		elsewhere	/ɲ(ɟ)/	<i>cuing</i> /kɪɲɟ/ "yoke", <i>ingear</i> /ˈɪɲɟəɾˠ/ "vertical"
nn	1		/ŋˠˠ/	<i>ceann</i> /caːŋˠˠ/ "head"
	2		/ŋˠ/	<i>tinneas</i> /ˈtʲɪŋˠəsˠ/ "illness"
p	1		/pˠ/	<i>poll</i> /pˠoːlˠˠ/ "hole", <i>stop</i> /sˠtˠəɟpˠ/ "stop"
	2		/pʲ/	<i>príosún</i> /ˈpʲɾiːsˠuːnˠ/ "prison", <i>truip</i> /tˠɾˠɪpʲ/ "trip"
ph	1		/fˠ/	<i>pholl</i> /fˠoːlˠˠ/ "hole" (lenited)
	2		/fʲ/	<i>phríosún</i> /ˈfʲɾiːsˠuːnˠ/ "prison" (lenited)
r	1		/ɾˠˠ/	<i>ruán</i> /ˈɾˠˠuːaːnˠˠ/ "buckwheat", <i>cumhra</i> /kuːɾˠˠə/ "fragrant", <i>fuair</i> /fˠuəɾˠˠ/ "cold"
	2	initially		<i>rí</i> /ɾˠˠiː/ "king"
		before ⟨d, l, n, r, s, t, th⟩		<i>airde</i> /aːɾˠˠdʲə/ "height", <i>duirling</i> /ˈdˠˠuːɾˠˠlʲənʲ/ "stony beach", <i>coirméal</i> /ˈkoːɾˠˠnʲeːlˠˠ/ "corner", <i>cuairt</i> /kuəɾˠˠtʲ/ "visit", <i>oirtheas</i> /ˈɔːɾˠˠhəɾˠˠ/ "east"
		after ⟨s⟩		<i>sreang</i> /sˠɾˠˠəŋɡ/ "string"
	usually		/ɾʲ/	<i>tirim</i> /ˈtʲɪɾʲəmə/ "dry", <i>fuair</i> /fˠuəɾʲ/ "got"
rr			/ɾˠˠ/	<i>carr</i> /kaːɾˠˠ/ "car, cart"
s	1		/sˠˠ/	<i>Sasana</i> /ˈsˠˠasˠənˠə/ "England", <i>tús</i> /tˠˠuːsˠˠ/ "beginning"
	2	initially before ⟨f, m, p, r⟩		<i>sféar</i> /sˠˠfʲeːɾˠˠ/ "sphere", <i>speal</i> /sˠˠpʲalˠˠ/ "scythe", <i>sméar</i> /sˠˠmʲeːɾˠˠ/ "blackberry", <i>sreang</i> /sˠˠɾˠˠəŋɡ/ "string"
		usually		/ʃ/
sh			/h/	<i>Shasana</i> /ˈhasˠənˠə/ "England" (lenited), <i>shiúil</i> /huːlʲ/ "walked"
t	1		/tˠˠ/	<i>taisce</i> /ˈtˠˠaʃcə/ "treasure", <i>ceart</i> /caɾˠˠtˠˠ/ "correct"
	2		/tʲ/	<i>tír</i> /tʲiːɾʲ/ "country", <i>beirt</i> /bʲeːɾˠtʲ/ "two (people)"
th	usually		/h/	<i>thaisce</i> /ˈhaʃcə/ "treasure" (lenited), <i>theocht</i> /hoːxtˠˠ/ "heat" (lenited), <i>athair</i> /ˈahəɾʲ/ "father"
			silent	<i>bláth</i> /bˠˠlˠˠaː/ "blossom", <i>cith</i> /ci/ "shower", <i>cothrom</i> /ˈkɔːɾˠəmˠˠ/ "equal"
	See Exceptions in verb forms for -(th)- in verbal adjectives.			
ts (mutation of ⟨s⟩- after <i>an</i> "the")	1		/tˠˠˠ/	<i>an tsolais</i> /əŋˠˠ tˠˠˠɔːlˠˠəʃ/ "of the light"
	2		/tʲ/	<i>an tSín</i> /əŋʲ tʲiːnʲ/ "China"
v (loan consonant)	1		/w/	<i>vóta</i> /ˈwoːtˠˠə/ "vote"

	2	/vʲ/	<i>veidhlín</i> /'vʲəilʲiːnʲ/ "violin"
z (loan consonant)	1	/zʲ/	<i>zú</i> /zʲuː/ "zoo"
	2	/ʒ/	<i>Zen</i> /ʒɛnʲ/ "Zen"

Vowels

Sequences of vowels are common in Irish spelling due to the "*caol le caol agus leathan le leathan*" ("slender with slender and broad with broad") rule. This rule states that the vowels on either side of any consonant must be both slender (⟨e, é, i, í⟩) or both broad (⟨a, á, o, ó, u, ú⟩), to unambiguously determine if the consonant(s) are broad or slender. An apparent exception is ⟨ae⟩, which is followed by a broad consonant despite the ⟨e⟩.

Pronunciation of vowels in Irish is mostly predictable from a few simple rules:

- Accented vowels (⟨á, é, í, ó, ú⟩) are always long vowels and in digraphs and trigraphs containing them, surrounding unaccented vowels tend to be silent, but there are several exceptions, e.g. when preceded by two unaccented vowels.
- Accented vowels in succession are both pronounced, e.g. *séú* /'ʃeːuː/ "sixth", *ríúil* /'ɾʲiːuːlʲ/ "royal, kingly, majestic", *báíocht* /'bʲaːiːx̪t̪ʲ/ "sympathy", etc.
- Unstressed short vowels are reduced to /ə/.
- ⟨i⟩ is silent before ⟨u, ú⟩ and after a vowel (except sometimes in ⟨ei, oi, ui⟩).
- ⟨e⟩ is silent before a broad vowel.
- ⟨io, oi, ui⟩ have multiple pronunciations that depend on adjacent consonants.
- A following ⟨rd, rl, rn, rr⟩ lengthens some vowels and in Munster and Connacht a following syllable-final ⟨ll, nn⟩ or word-final ⟨m, ng⟩ may lengthen or diphthongise some vowels depending on dialect.

Letter(s)			Phoneme(s)			Example(s)
			<u>U</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>M</u>	
a	1	usually	/a/			<i>fan</i> /fʲanʲ/ "stay" (imper.)
		before ⟨rd, rl, m, rr⟩	/a:/			<i>garda</i> /'ga:rʲdʲə/ "policeman", <i>tarlú</i> /'tʲa:rʲlʲu:/ "happening", <i>camán</i> /'ka:rʲnʲa:nʲ/ "(small) heap", <i>barr</i> /bʲa:rʲ/ "tip, point"
		before syllable-final ⟨ll, nn⟩ and -(m)	/a/	/a:/	/əu/	<i>mall</i> /mʲa:lʲ/ "slow, late", <i>ann</i> /a:nʲ/ "there", <i>am</i> /a:mʲ/ "time"
	2		/ə/			<i>ólann</i> /'o:lʲənʲ/ "drink" (present), <i>mála</i> /'mʲa:lʲə/ "bag"
á, aí			/a:/			<i>bán</i> /bʲa:nʲ/ "white", <i>dáil</i> /dʲa:lʲ/ "assembly", <i>gabháil</i> /'gawa:lʲ/ "taking"
ae, aei			/e:/			<i>Gaelach</i> /'ge:lʲəx/ "Gaelic", <i>Gaeilge</i> /'ge:lʲə/ "Irish (language)"
ai	1	usually	/a/			<i>baile</i> /'bʲalʲə/ "home"
		before ⟨rd, rl, m, rr⟩	/a:/			<i>airne</i> /a:rʲnʲə/ "sloe", <i>airde</i> /a:rʲdʲə/ "height"
		before syllable-final ⟨ll, nn⟩	/a/	/a:/	/əi/	<i>caillte</i> /'ka:lʲtʲə/ "lost, ruined", <i>crainn</i> /k'rʲa:nʲ/ "trees"
	2		/ə/			<i>eolais</i> /'o:lʲəʃ/ "knowledge" (genitive)
aí, aío			/i:/			<i>maígh</i> /mʲi:j/ "claim" (imper.), <i>gutaí</i> /'gu:tʲi:/ "vowels", <i>naíonán</i> /'nʲi:nʲa:nʲ/ "infant", <i>beannaíonn</i> /'bʲa'nʲi:nʲ/ "blesses"
ao			/i:/		/e:/	<i>saol</i> /sʲi:lʲ/ "life"
aoi			/i:/			<i>gaois</i> /gi:j/ "shrewdness", <i>naoi</i> /'nʲi:/ "nine"
e, ei	1	usually	/ɛ/			<i>te</i> /tʲɛ/ "hot", <i>ceist</i> /cɛʃtʲ/ "question"
		before ⟨rd, rl, m⟩	/e:/			<i>eirleach</i> /'e:rʲlʲəx/ "destruction", <i>ceimín</i> /'ce:rʲnʲi:nʲ/ "record album", <i>ceird</i> /ce:rʲdʲ/ "trade, craft"
		before ⟨m, mh, n⟩	/ɪ/			<i>creimeadh</i> /'crʲimʲə/ "corrosion, erosion", <i>sceimhle</i> /'ʃcɪvʲlʲə/ "eroded", <i>seinm</i> /'ʃɪnʲəmʲ/ "playing"
		before syllable-final ⟨nn⟩ and -(m)	/ɪ/	/i:/	/əi/	<i>greim</i> /ɟrʲi:mʲ/ "grip"
	2		/ə/			<i>míle</i> /'mʲi:lʲə/ "thousand"
é, éa, éi			/e:/			<i>sé</i> /ʃe:/ "he", <i>déanamh</i> /'dʲe:nʲəwʲ/ "doing", <i>buidéal</i> /'bʲuɪdʲe:lʲ/ "bottle", <i>scéimh</i> /ʃce:vʲ/ "beauty", <i>páipéir</i> /'pʲa:pʲe:rʲ/ "papers"
ea, eai	1	usually	/a/			<i>bean</i> /bʲianʲ/ "woman", <i>veain</i> /vʲianʲ/ "van"
		before ⟨rd, rl, m, rr⟩	/a:/			<i>ceardaí</i> /ca:rʲdʲi:/ "craftsman", <i>bearna</i> /'bʲia:rʲnʲə/ "gap", <i>fearr</i> /fʲia:rʲ/ "better"
		before syllable-final ⟨ll, nn⟩	/a/	/a:/	/əu/	<i>feall</i> /fʲia:lʲ/ "treachery", <i>feanntach</i> /'fʲa:nʲtʲəx/ "severe"
	2		/ə/			<i>seisean</i> /'ʃɛʃənʲ/ "he" (emphatic)
eá, eái			/a:/			<i>Seán</i> /ʃa:nʲ/ "John", <i>caisleán</i> /'kaʃlʲia:nʲ/ "castle", <i>meáin</i> /mʲia:nʲ/ "middles", <i>caisleáin</i> /'kaʃlʲia:nʲ/ "castles"
eo, eoi	usually		/o:/			<i>ceol</i> /co:lʲ/ "music", <i>dreoilín</i> /'dʲrʲio:lʲi:nʲ/ "wren"
	in four words		/ɔ/			<i>anseo</i> /ənʲʃɔ/ "here", <i>deoch</i> /dʲɔx/ "drink", <i>eochair</i> /'ɔxəɾʲ/ "key", <i>seo</i> /'ʃɔ/ "this"

i	1	usually	/ɪ/		<i>pic</i> /pʲɪc/ "pitch", <i>ifreann</i> /'ɪfʲɪɾʲəŋˠs/ "hell"
		before syllable-final (ll, nn) and -(m)	/ɪ/	/i:/	<i>cill</i> /ci:lʲ/ "church", <i>cinnte</i> /'ci:ŋtʲə/ "sure", <i>im</i> /i:mʲ/ "butter"
	2	usually	/ə/		<i>faoistin</i> /'fʲɔ:ʲtʲən/ "confession"
		finally	/ɪ/		<i>aici</i> /'ɛcɪ/ "at her"
í, ío			/i:/		<i>gnímh</i> /ʒnʲi:vʲ/ "act, deed" (gen.), <i>cailín</i> /'kalʲi:nʲ/ "girl", <i>síol</i> /ʃi:lʲs/ "seed"
ia, iai			/iə/		<i>Diarmaid</i> /dʲiərmədʲ/ "Dermot", <i>bliain</i> /bʲliəni/ "year"
iá, iái			/i:.a:/		<i>bián</i> /'bʲi:a:nˠs/ "size", <i>liáin</i> /'lʲi:a:nʲ/ "trowel" (gen.)
io	before (d, n, r, s, t, th)		/ɪ/		<i>fios</i> /fʲɪsˠ/ "knowledge", <i>bior</i> /bʲɪɾˠs/ "spit, spike", <i>cion</i> /cʲɪnˠs/ "affection", <i>giota</i> /'ʒɪtˠsə/ "bit, piece", <i>giodam</i> /'ʒɪdˠsəmˠs/ "restlessness", <i>friotháil</i> /'fʲɪɾʲiθa:lʲ/ "attention"
	before (b, c, g, m, ng, p)		/ɪ/	/ʊ/	<i>siopa</i> /'ʃɒpˠsə/ "shop", <i>liom</i> /lʲiʊmˠs/ "with me", <i>tiocfaidh</i> /'tʲɔki:/ "will come", <i>Siobhán</i> /'ʃɔwa:nˠs/ "Joan", <i>briogáid</i> /'bʲɪɾˠsɔga:dʲ/ "brigade", <i>tiomáin</i> /'tʲɔma:nʲ/ "drive" (imper.), <i>ionga</i> /'ɪŋɔə/ "(finger)nail"
	before syllable-final (nn)			/ʊ/	/u:/
ió, íoi			/i:.o:/		<i>sióg</i> /'ʃi:ɔ:g/ "fairy", <i>pióg</i> /'pʲi:ɔ:g/ "pie", <i>gríoir</i> /'ʒɾʲi:ɔ:ɾʲ/ "weakling"
iu			/ʊ/		<i>fliuch</i> /fʲliʊx/ "wet"
iú, iúi			/u:/		<i>siúl</i> /ʃu:lʲs/ "walk", <i>bailiú</i> /'bˠalʲu:/ "gathering", <i>ciúin</i> /cu:nʲ/ "quiet", <i>inniúil</i> /'ɪŋʲu:lʲ/ "able, fit"
o	1	usually	/ɔ/		<i>post</i> /pˠɔsˠsˠtˠs/ "post"
		before (rd, rl, m)	/o:/		<i>bord</i> /bˠo:ɾˠsˠdˠs/ "table", <i>orlach</i> /'o:ɾˠlˠsəx/ "inch"
		before (n, m)	/ɔ/	/ʊ/	<i>conradh</i> /'kʊnˠɾˠsə/ "agreement", <i>cromóg</i> /'krˠsʊmˠo:g/ "hooked nose"
		before syllable-final (nn) and -(m, ng)		/u:/	/əu/
	2	/ə/		<i>mo</i> /mˠsə/ "my", <i>cothrom</i> /'kʊɾˠsəmˠs/ "equal"	
ó, ói			/o:/		<i>póg</i> /pˠo:g/ "kiss", <i>armónach</i> /'aɾˠsəmˠo:nəx/ "harmonic", <i>móin</i> /mˠo:nʲ/ "sod, turf", <i>bádóir</i> /'bˠa:dˠo:ɾʲ/ "boatman"
oi	1	usually	/ɛ/		<i>scoil</i> /sˠkɛlʲ/ "school", <i>troid</i> /tˠɾˠɛdʲ/ "fight" (imper.), <i>toitín</i> /'tʲɛtʲi:nʲ/ "cigarette", <i>oibre</i> /'ɛbʲɾʲə/ "work" (gen.), <i>thoir</i> /hɛɾʲ/ "in the east", <i>cloiche</i> /'klʲɛçə/ "stone" (gen.)
		before (cht, rs, rt, rth, s)	/ɔ/		<i>cois</i> /kɔʃ/ "foot" (dat.), <i>cloisfidh</i> /'klʲɔʃi:/ "will hear", <i>boicht</i> /bˠɔxtʲ/ "poor" (gen. sg. masc.), <i>doirse</i> /'dˠɔɾˠsʲə/ "doors", <i>goirt</i> /gɔɾˠtʲ/ "salty", <i>oirthear</i> /'ɔɾˠhəɾˠs/ "east"
		before (rd, rl, m)	/o:/		<i>coirnéal</i> /'ko:ɾˠŋʲe:lʲs/ "corner", <i>oird</i> /o:ɾˠdʲ/ "sledgehammers"
		next to (n, m, mh)	/ɪ/		<i>anois</i> /ə'nˠɪʃ/ "now", <i>gloine</i> /'glʲɪnʲə/ "glass", <i>cnoic</i> /knˠɪc/ "hills", <i>roimh</i> /ɾˠɪvʲ/ "before", <i>coimeád</i> /'kʲimʲa:dˠs/ "keep" (imper.), <i>loinge</i> /'lʲɪŋʲə/ "ship" (gen.)
		before syllable-final (nn) and -(m)	/ɪ/	/i:/	

oí, oío	2	before syllable-final (ll)	/əi/ /i:/	<i>goill</i> /gəiʲ/ "grieve, hurt", <i>coillte</i> /'kəiʲtʲə/ "forests"
			/ə/	<i>éadroime</i> /eːd̪ˠəɾəmʲə/ "lightness"
			/i:/	<i>croíleacán</i> /'kr̪ˠiːl̪əkɑːn̪ˠ/ "core", <i>croíonna</i> /'kr̪ˠiːn̪ˠə/ "hearts"
		usually	/ʊ/	<i>dubh</i> /d̪ˠʊw/ "black"
	1	before ⟨rd, rl, rn⟩	/u:/	<i>burla</i> /'b̪ˠuːr̪ˠl̪ˠə/ "bundle", <i>murnán</i> /'m̪ˠuːr̪ˠn̪ˠɑːn̪ˠ/ "ankle"
u		in English loanwords	/ɔ/ or /ʊ/	<i>bus</i> /b̪ˠɔs̪ˠ/, <i>club</i> /kl̪ˠɔb̪ˠ/
ú, úi	2	usually	/ə/	<i>agus</i> /'agəs̪ˠ/ "and"
		finally	/ʊ/	<i>orthu</i> /'ɔr̪ˠh̪ˠʊ/ "on them"
			/u:/	<i>tús</i> /t̪ˠuːs̪ˠ/ "beginning", <i>súil</i> /suːl̪/ "eye", <i>cosúil</i> /'kɔs̪ˠuːl̪/ "like, resembling"
ua, uai			/uə/	<i>fuair</i> /f̪ˠuəɾ̪ˠ/ "cold", <i>fuair</i> /f̪ˠuəɾ̪ˠ/ "got"
uá, uái			/uː.ɑː/	<i>ruán</i> /'r̪ˠuː.ɑːn̪ˠ/ "buckwheat", <i>duán</i> /'d̪ˠuː.ɑːn̪ˠ/ "kidney, fishhook", <i>fuáil</i> /'f̪ˠuː.ɑːl̪/ "sewing, stitching"
		usually	/ɪ/	<i>duine</i> /'d̪ˠiːn̪ˠə/ "person"
ui	1	before ⟨rd, rl, rn⟩	/u:/	<i>duirling</i> /'d̪ˠuːr̪ˠl̪ˠən̪ˠ/ "stony beach", <i>tuirne</i> /'t̪ˠuːr̪ˠn̪ˠə/ "spinning wheel"
		before syllable-final (ll, nn) and -(m)	/i:/	<i>tuillteanach</i> /'t̪ˠiːl̪ˠt̪ˠən̪ˠəx̪ˠ/ "deserving", <i>puinn</i> /p̪ˠiːn̪ˠ/ "much", <i>suim</i> /s̪ˠiːm̪ˠ/ "interest"
uí, uío	2		/ə/	<i>aguisín</i> /'agəʃiːn̪ˠ/ "addition"
			/i:/	<i>buígh</i> /b̪ˠiːj̪/ "turn yellow" (imper.), <i>buíon</i> /b̪ˠiːn̪ˠ/ "band, troop"
			/uː.ɔː/	<i>cruóg</i> /'kr̪ˠuː.ɔːg̪/ "urgent need", <i>luóige</i> /'l̪ˠuː.ɔːʒ̪ə/ "pollock" (gen.)

Followed by ⟨bh, dh, gh, mh⟩

When followed by ⟨bh, dh, gh, mh⟩, a stressed vowel usually forms a diphthong or lengthens. For ⟨(e)adh, (e)amh, (a)idh, (a)igh, (a)íodh, eodh, eoidh, ódh, óidh⟩, see also Exceptions in verb forms.

Letters		Phoneme(s)			Example(s)
		<u>U</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>M</u>	
(e)abh, (e)abha, (e)abhai		/o:/ or / əu/	/əu/		<i>Feabhra</i> /'fʲəuɾˠə/ "February", <i>leabhair</i> /lʲəuɾʲ/ "books", <i>sabhall</i> /'sˠəuɫˠ/ "barn"
(e)adh, (e)adha, (e)adhái, (e)agh, (e)agha, (e)aghái	1	/e:/ or / əi/	/əi/		<i>meadhg</i> /mʲəiɡ/ "whey", <i>adharc</i> /əɪɾˠk/ "horn", <i>adhairt</i> /əɪɾˠtʲ/ "pillow", <i>saghsanna</i> /'sˠəɪsˠəŋˠə/ "sorts, kinds", <i>deagha</i> /d̪ˠəi/ "century", <i>aghaidh</i> /əi/ "face"
	2	/u:/	/ə/		<i>margadh</i> /'mˠarˠəɡə/ "market", <i>briseadh</i> /'bʲɾʲɪʃə/ "breaking"
aidh, aidhe, aigh, aighe, aighea	1	/əi/			<i>aidhleann</i> /əiɫʲəŋˠ/ "rack", <i>aidhe</i> /əi/ "aye!", <i>aighneas</i> /əɪnʲəsˠ/ "argument, discussion", <i>aighe</i> /əi/ "cow, ox" (gen.), <i>caighean</i> /kəɪnˠ/ "cage"
	2	/i:/	/ə/	/əʃ/	<i>tuillidh</i> /'t̪ˠiɫʲi:/ "addition" (gen.), <i>cleachtaidh</i> /'cl̪ˠaxt̪ˠi:/ "practice" (gen.), <i>coiligh</i> /'k̪ˠeɫʲi:/ "rooster" (gen.), <i>bacai</i> /'bˠakʲi:/ "beggar" (gen.)
(e)amh, (e)amha, (e)amhái	1	/əu/			<i>ramhraigh</i> /'rˠəuɾˠi:/ "fattened", <i>amhantar</i> /'əuŋˠt̪ˠəɾˠ/ "venture", <i>Samhain</i> /sˠəuˠi/ "November"
	2	/u:/	/ə(w)/	/əw/	<i>acadamh</i> /'akəd̪ˠəw/ "academy", <i>creideamh</i> /'cɾʲeɪd̪ˠəw/ "belief, religion"
eidh, eidhea, eidhi		/e:/	/əi/		<i>feidhm</i> /fʲəimʲ/ "function", <i>eidheann</i> /əiŋˠ/ "ivy", <i>meidhir</i> /mʲəiɾʲ/ "mirth"
eigh, eighea, eighi					<i>feighlí</i> /'fʲəiɫʲi:/ "overseer", <i>leigheas</i> /lʲəisˠ/ "healing", <i>feighil</i> /fʲəiɫʲ/ "vigilance"
oidh, oidhea, oidhi		/əi/			<i>oidhre</i> /əiɾʲə/ "heir", <i>oidheanna</i> /əiŋˠə/ "tragedies"
oigh, oighea, oighi					<i>oighreach</i> /əiɾʲəx/ "glacial", <i>oigheann</i> /əiŋˠ/ "oven", <i>loighic</i> /l̪ˠəic/ "logic"
(e)obh, (e)obha, (e)obhái		/o:/	/əu/		<i>lobhra</i> /l̪ˠəuɾˠə/ "leprosy", <i>lobhar</i> /l̪ˠəuɾˠ/ "leper", <i>lobhair</i> /l̪ˠəuɾʲ/ "lepers"
(e)odh, (e)odha, (e)odhái					<i>bodhrán</i> /bˠəuɾˠəːnˠ/ "dun coloured animal", <i>bodhar</i> /bˠəuɾˠ/ "deaf", <i>bodhair</i> /bˠəuɾʲ/ "deaf people"
(e)ogh, (e)ogha, (e)oghái					<i>doghra</i> /'d̪ˠəuɾˠə/ "misery", <i>bogha</i> /bˠəu/ "bow", <i>broghais</i> /bˠɾˠəuʃ/ "afterbirth (of animal)"
(e)omh, (e)omha, (e)omhái		/o:/			<i>Domhnach</i> /'d̪ˠoːnˠəx/ "Sunday", <i>comhar</i> /koːɾˠ/ "partnership", <i>domhain</i> /d̪ˠoːnʲ/ "deep"
(i)ubh		/u:/	/ʊ(w)/	/ʊw/	<i>dubh</i> /d̪ˠʊw/ "black", <i>tiubh</i> /tʲʊw/ "dense"
(i)umh, (i)umha, (i)umhái		/u:/			<i>cumhra</i> /kuːɾˠə/ "fragrant", <i>Mumhan</i> /'mˠuːnˠ/ "Munster" (gen.), <i>ciumhais</i> /cuːʃ/ "edge"

Epenthesis

After a short vowel, an unwritten epenthetic /ə/ gets inserted between ⟨l, n, r⟩ + ⟨b, bh, ch, g, mh⟩ (as well as ⟨f, p⟩, when derived from devoiced ⟨b, bh, mh⟩), when within a morpheme boundary, e.g. *gorm* /'ɡɔɾˠəmˠ/ "blue", *dearg* /'d̪ˠarˠəɡ/ "red", *dorcha* /'d̪ˠɔɾˠəxə/ "dark", *ainm* /'anʲəmʲ/ "name", *deilgneach* /'d̪ˠeɫʲəŋˠəx/ "prickly, thorny", *leanbh* /'l̪ˠanˠəw/ "child", *airgead* /'arʲəjəd̪ˠə/ "silver, money". The main exception to this is ⟨ng⟩ which is mainly used for /ŋ/ or /ŋʲ/.

Epenthesis does not occur after long vowels and diphthongs, e.g. *téarma* /tʲeːɾˠmˠə/ "term" or *dualgas* /ˠd̪ˠuəlˠgəsˠ/ "duty", or across morpheme boundaries (i.e. after prefixes and in compound words), e.g. *garmhac* /ˠgɑɾˠwɑk/ "grandson" (from *gar*- "close, near" + *mac* "son"), *an-chiúin* /ˠaɲˠt̪ˠcuːnʲ/ "very quiet" (from *an*- "very" + *ciúin* "quiet"), *carrbhealach* /ˠkaːɾˠvʲalˠəx/ "carriageway, roadway" (from *carr* "car" + *bealach* "way, road").

In Munster, epenthesis also occurs across morpheme boundaries, when ⟨l, n, r⟩ follow ⟨b, bh, ch, g, mh⟩ (after any vowel) or ⟨th⟩ (after short vowels), and when ⟨n⟩ follows ⟨c, g, m, r⟩.

Exceptions in verb forms

In verb forms, some letters and letter combinations are pronounced differently from elsewhere.

Letter(s)			Phoneme(s)			Example(s)
			U	C	M	
-(e)adh	preterite		/u:/	/əw/	/əg/	<i>moladh é</i> /'mˠɔlˠəw e:/ "he was praised"
	elsewhere	usually		/əx/		<i>mholadh mé</i> /'wɔlˠəx mʲe:/ "I used to praise"
		before (s) initial pronouns		/ətʲ/		/əx/
-ea-	in forms of <i>bí</i> "be"		/ɛ/			<i>bheadh sé</i> /'vʲɛtʲ ʃe:/ "he would be"
-eo(i), ó(i)-	verb endings		/oːxə/	/oː/		<i>bheannóinn</i> /'vʲaɲˠoːɲʲ/ "I would bless"
-eodh, ódh		usually	/oːxuː/	/oːx/		<i>bheannódh mé</i> /'vʲaɲˠoːx mʲe:/ "I would bless"
		before (s) initial pronouns	/oːxətʲ/	/oːtʲ/	/oːx/	<i>bheannódh sibh</i> /'vʲaɲˠoːtʲ ʃɪvʲ/ "you (pl.) would bless",
-eoidh, óidh		usually	/oːxiː/	/oː(j)/	/oːj/	<i>beannóidh</i> /'bʲaɲˠoː/ "will bless"
		before subject pronouns	/oːxə/	/oː/		
-f-	personal verb endings	usually	/h/			<i>dhófadh</i> /'ɣoːhəx/ "would burn, <i>déarfaidh</i> /'dʲeːrˠhiː/ "will say"
		after (b(h), d, c(h), g, mh, p, s, t)	silent, devoices preceding (b(h), d, g, mh)			<i>brisfidh</i> /'bʲrʲɪʃʲ/ "will break", <i>scuabfadh</i> /'sˠkuəpəx/ "would sweep"
-(a)im			/əmˠ/	/əmʲ/		<i>molaim</i> /'mˠɔlˠəməʲ/ "I praise"
- (a)idh	before subject pronouns		/ə/			<i>molfaidh mé</i> /'mˠɔlˠəhə mʲe:/ "I will praise"
- (a)igh						<i>bheannaigh mé</i> /'vʲaɲˠə mʲe:/ "I blessed"
-(a)íodh	preterite		/iːw/		/iːg/	<i>osclaíodh</i> /'ɔsˠklˠiːw/ "one opened"
	elsewhere	usually	/iːw/	/iːx/		<i>osclaíodh Siobhán</i> /'ɔsˠklˠiːx 'ʃɔwaːnˠ/ "let Siobhán open"
		before (s) initial pronouns	/iːtʲ/		/iːx/	
-th- ^b	verbal adjective endings	after (b, c, f, g, p)	silent, devoices preceding (b, g)			<i>coinnithe</i> /'kʲɪɲʲihə/ "kept", <i>foghlamtha</i> /'fˠoːlˠəməhə/ "learned", <i>ruaigthe</i> /'rˠuəcə/ "chased", <i>scuabtha</i> /'sˠkuəpˠə/ "swept"

Diacritics

An Caighdeán Oifigiúil currently uses one diacritic, the acute accent, though traditionally a second was used, the overdot. If diacritics are unavailable, e.g. on a computer using ASCII, the overdot is replaced by a following ⟨h⟩, e.g. *B́í sé* → *Bhí sé* "He/It was" and there is no standard for replacing an acute accent,

though sometimes it is indicated by a following slash, e.g. *fírinne* → *fí/rinne* "truth".^[7]

The acute accent (◌́); *agúid* or (*síneadh*) *fada* "long (sign)"^a is used to indicate a long vowel, as in *bád* /b̪ˠaːd̪ˠ/ "boat". However, there are other conventions to indicate a long vowel, such as:

- A following ⟨rd, rl, rn, rr⟩, e.g. *ard* /aːr̪ˠd̪ˠ/ "high", *eirleach* /eːr̪ˠl̪ˠəx/ "destruction", *dorn* /d̪ˠoːr̪ˠn̪ˠ/ "fist", and, in Connacht, a word-final ⟨m⟩, e.g. *am* /aːm̪ˠ/ "time".
- The digraphs ⟨ae, ao, eo⟩, e.g. *aerach* /eːr̪ˠəx/ "gay", *maol* /m̪ˠiːl̪ˠ/ "bare", *ceol* /coːl̪ˠ/ "music".
- The tri/tetragraphs ⟨omh(a), umh(a)⟩, e.g. *comharsa* /'koːr̪ˠs̪ˠə/ "neighbour", *Mumhain* /m̪ˠuːn̪ˠ/ "Munster".
- ⟨i⟩ and ⟨u⟩ before ⟨á⟩ or ⟨ó⟩, e.g. *fiáin* /'fiːaːn̪ˠ/ "wild", *ruóg* /'r̪ˠuːoːg/ "twine".



An Irish road sign with a dotless i in *Comhairle*, *obair*, *maoiniú*, *Roinn*, *Oidhreacht* and *Oileán*.

The overdot (◌̇); *ponc séimhithe* "dot of lenition", *buaile* "struck", or *séimhiú* "lenition") was traditionally used to indicate lenition, though *An Caighdeán* uses a following ⟨h⟩ for this purpose. In Old Irish, it was only used for ⟨f̊, s̊⟩, while the following ⟨h⟩ was used for ⟨ch, ph, th⟩ and the lenition of other letters was not indicated. Later the two methods were used in parallel to represent the lenition of any consonant and competed with each other until the standard practice became to use the overdot in Gaelic type and the following ⟨h⟩ in Roman type. Thus ⟨b̊, c̊, d̊, f̊, g̊, m̊, p̊, s̊, t̊⟩ are equivalent to ⟨bh, ch, dh, fh, gh, mh, ph, sh, th⟩.

Lowercase ⟨i⟩ has no title in Gaelic type, and road signs in the Republic of Ireland. However, as printed and electronic material like books, newspapers and web pages use Roman type almost invariably, the title is generally shown. Irish does not graphemically distinguish dotted i and dotless i, i.e. they are not different letters as they are in, e.g. Turkish and Azeri.

Punctuation

Irish punctuation is similar to English. An apparent exception is the Tironian et (⟨ʽ⟩; *agus*) which abbreviates the word *agus* "and", like the ampersand (⟨&⟩) abbreviates "and" in English. It is generally substituted by a seven (⟨7⟩) in texts.

A hyphen (*fleiscín*) is used in Irish after ⟨t, n⟩ when prefixed to a masculine vowel-initial word as an initial mutation, e.g. *an t-arán* "the bread", *a n-iníon* "their daughter". However, it is omitted when the vowel is capitalised, e.g. *an tAlbanach* "the Scotsman", *Ár nAthair* "Our Father". No hyphen is used when ⟨h⟩ is prefixed to a vowel-initial word, e.g. *a hiníon* "her daughter".

A hyphen is also used in compound words under certain circumstances:

- between two vowels, e.g. *mí-ádh* "misfortune"
- between two similar consonants, e.g. *droch-chaint* "bad language", *grad-díol* "prompt payment"
- in a three-part compound, e.g. *buan-chomhchoiste* "permanent joint committee"
- after the prefixes *do-*, *fo-*, *so-* before a word beginning with ⟨bha, bhla, bhra, dha, gha, ghla, ghra, mha⟩, e.g. *do-bhlasta* "bad tasting", *fo-ghlac* "subsume", *so-mharfach* "mortality"
- in capitalised titles, e.g. *An Príomh-Bhreitheamh* "the Chief Justice"

- after *an-* "very" and *dea-* "good", e.g. *an-mhór* "very big", *dea-mhéin* "goodwill"

An apostrophe (*uaschamóg*) is used to indicate an omitted vowel in the following cases:

- the prepositions *de* "from" and *do* "to" both become *d'* before a vowel or ⟨fh⟩ + vowel, as in *Thit sí d'each* "She fell from a horse" and *Tabhair d'fhear an tí é* "Give it to the landlord"
- the possessive pronouns *mo* "my" and *do* "your (singular)" become *m'* and *d'* before a vowel or ⟨fh⟩ + vowel, as in *m'óige* "my youth", *d'fhiacail* "your tooth"
- the preverbal particle *do* becomes *d'* before a vowel or ⟨fh⟩ + vowel, as in *d'ardaigh mé* "I raised", *d'fhanfadh sé* "he would wait"
- the copular particle *ba* becomes *b'* before a vowel or ⟨fh⟩ + vowel, as in *B'ait liom é sin* "I found that odd" and *b'fhéidir* "maybe". However, *ba* is used before the pronouns *é*, *í*, *iad*, as in *Ba iad na ginearáil a choinnigh an chumhacht* "It was the generals who kept the power"

Capitalisation

Capitalisation rules are similar to English. However, a prefixed letter remains in lowercase when the base initial is capitalised (*an tSín* "China"). For text written in all caps, the prefixed letter is kept in lowercase, or small caps (*STAIR NA hÉIREANN* "THE HISTORY OF IRELAND").^[8] An initial capital is used for:^[9]

- Start of sentences
- Names of people, places (except the words *an*, *na*, *de*),^[10] languages, and adjectives of people and places (*Micheál Ó Murchú* "Michael Murphy"; *Máire Mhac an tSaoi* "Mary McEntee"; *de Búrca* "Burke"; *Sliabh na mBan* "Slievenamon"; *Fraincis* "French"; *bia Iodálach* "Italian food")
- Names of months, weeks and feast-days (*Meán Fómhair* "September"; *an Luan* "Monday"; *Oíche Nollag* "Christmas Eve")
- *Dé* "day" (*Dé Luain* "on Monday")
- Definite titles^[11]

Abbreviations



Íoc 7 Taispeáin ("Pay & Display") sign in Dublin with the Tironian *et* for *agus* "and".



Bilingual sign in Ireland. The eclipsis of ⟨P⟩ to ⟨bP⟩ uses lowercase in an otherwise all-caps text.

Most Irish abbreviations in are straightforward, e.g. *leathanach* → *lch.* ("page → p.") and *mar shampla* → *m.sh.* ("*exempli gratia* (for example) → e.g."), but two that require explanation are: *eadhon* → *.i.* ("that is → i.e.") and *agus araile* → *7rl./srl.* ("*et cetera* (and so forth) → &c./etc."). Like ⟨th⟩ in English, ⟨ú⟩ follows an ordinal numeral, e.g. *Is é Lá Fheile Phádraig an 17ú lá den Márta* "St. Patrick's day is the 17th [day] of March".

Spelling reform

The literary Classical Irish which survived till the 17th century was archaic; the first attempt at simplification was not until 1639.^[12] The spelling represented a dialect continuum including distinctions lost in all surviving dialects by the Gaelic revival of the late 19th century.

The idea of a spelling reform, linked to the use of Roman or Gaelic type, was controversial in the early decades of the 20th century.^[13] The Irish Texts Society's 1904 Irish-English dictionary by Patrick S. Dinneen used traditional spellings.^[13] After the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, all Acts of the Oireachtas were translated into Irish, initially using Dinneen's spellings, with a list of simplifications accumulating over the years.^[13] When Éamon de Valera became President of the Executive Council after the 1932 election, policy reverted to older spellings, which were used in the enrolled text of the 1937 Constitution.^[13] In 1941, de Valera decided to publish a "popular edition" of the Constitution with simplified spelling and established a committee of experts, which failed to agree on recommendations.^{[13][14]} Instead, the Oireachtas' own translation service prepared a booklet, *Litriú na Gaeilge: Lámhleabhar an Chaighdeáin Oifigiúil*, published in 1945.^[14]

Some pre-reform spellings criticised by T. F. O'Rahilly and their modern forms include:^[13] *beirbhiughadh* → *beiriú*, *imthighthe* → *imithe*, *faghbháil* → *fáil*, *urradhas* → *urrús*, *filidheacht* → *filíocht*.

The booklet was expanded in 1947,^[15] and republished as *An Caighdeán Oifigiúil* "The Official Standard" in 1958, combined with the standard grammar of 1953.^[16] It attracted initial criticism as unhistorical and artificial; some spellings fail to represent the pronunciation of some dialects, while others preserve letters unpronounced in any dialect.^[16] Its status was reinforced by use in the civil service and as a guide for Tomás de Bhaldraithe's 1959 English–Irish dictionary and Niall Ó Dónaill's 1977 Irish–English dictionary.^[16] A review of the written standard, including spelling, was announced in 2010, aiming to improve "simplicity, internal consistency, and logic".^[17] The result was the 2017 update of *An Caighdeán Oifigiúil*.^[18]

See also

- Irish Braille
- Irish manual alphabet
- Gaelic type
- Roman type
- Scottish Gaelic orthography

Notes

- **^a** Vowels with an acute accent are read as [á/é/í/ó/ú] *fada* "long [á/é/í/ó/ú]".

- **^b** -(th)- is ⟨t⟩ after ⟨d, gh, l, n, s, t, th⟩ (⟨gh, th⟩ are deleted before it is added). It is ⟨f⟩ after ⟨bh, mh⟩ which are deleted before it is added.

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9. Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí, §3.1
10. Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí, §§ 3.1, 7.6, 10.2-10.3
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