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## Guide to gaelic pronunciation

Scottish Gaelic is spoken in Scotland (Alba), mainly in the Highlands (a' Ghaidhealtachd) and in the Western Isles (Na h-Eileanan an Iar), but also in Glasgow (Glaschu), Edinburgh (Dùn Èideann) and Inverness (Inbhir Nis). There are also small Gaelic-speaking communities in Canada, particularly in Nova Scotia (Alba Nuadh) and Prince Edward Island. Other speakers can be found in Australia (Astràilia), New Zealand (Sealainn Nuadh) and the USA (Na Stàitean Aonaichte). According to the 2011 UK census, 87,100 people in Scotland reported having some knowledge of Scottish Gaelic. 32,400 could understand, speak, read and write Gaelic, 57,600 could speak Gaelic, 6,100 could read and/or write Gaelic, but not speak it, and 23,400 could understand Gaelic, but not speak, read or write it. The areas with the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers (48.9%) were Highland, Eilean Siar (Western Isles) and Glasgow City. Overall 1.7% of the population of Scotland has some Gaelic [source]. In Canada, according to the 2016 census, Scottish Gaelic is a mother tongue, or the language spoken most often at home for 1,545 people [source]. Scottish Gaelic is classified as an indigenous language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which has been ratified by the UK government. The body in charge of the development of Gaelic in Scotland is the Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which was set up in 2005. Scottish Gaelic at a glance Native name: Gàidhlig [ˈka:lɪk] Language family: Indo-European, Celtic, Insular Celtic, Goidelic Number of speakers: c.



88,645 Spoken in: Scotland and Canada First written: c. 12th century Writing system: Latin alphabet Status: classified as an indigenous language in Scotland It is thought that Scottish Gaelic developed from the Old Irish brought to Scotland in the 4th century AD by people known as Scotti from Ireland. They settled in what is now the west of Argyll and set up the Kingdom of Dál Riata. By the 9th century Scottish Gaelic had replaced the Pictish and Brythonic languages in much of Scotland, and by the early 11th century Gaelic was spoken throughout Scotland, apart from in small areas in the southeast and northeast. From the late 11th century in eastern parts of Scotland Gaelic was gradually replaced by the English of Northumbria, which was known as Inglis, and by Norman French. The nobility adopted Norman French, while the ordinary people spoke Inglis. In the mid-14th century Inglis, which by then was known as Scots, became the official language of government and law in Scotland. From the 18th century children were punished for speaking Gaelic in schools set up by the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. However, the Gaelic Schools Society, which was established in 1811, taught Gaelic speakers to read their own language so that they could read the Bible in Gaelic. The full translation of the Bible into Gaelic was published in 1801, and became the standard for the written language. The number of Gaelic speakers increased between 1755 and 1800 from 289,798 to 297,823, however since then there has been a steady decline. The number of Gaelic speakers declined during the 18th and 19th centuries, when many were evicted from their land to make way for sheep farms. Many migrated to other parts of Scotland, to North America, and to Australia and New Zealand. Gaelic speakers from Scotland began emigrating to Canada in 1773, and continued to do so until the 1850s. They settled mainly in Nova Scotia, mainly on Cape Breton Island and the northeast of the mainland of Nova Scotia. There were about 200,000 Gaelic speakers in Canada in 1850.

Gàidhlig	Beurla	Èisimpleir agus Nòta
b (initial)	bat	baic, boag
b (final)	lag	When not aspirated with h (bh)
c (initial)	caid	ceat
c (final)	caic	baic, casan – small aspiration at end of sound
d (initial)	dag	dona
d (final)	top/bhop	fada, bonaid
f	fad	fada
g	good	grìan, agus
h	million	hean
m	mad	seòlach
n	name	na
p	peav	plàn
p	wrap	small aspiration at end of sound
r		rolled r as in the Spanish 'perro'
s	sing	sa, soc, sibh
s	shine	sinne, seac – where d or se
t (initial)	top	tac, toradh, tunn
t	chess	tinn, teth - when ti or te

However since then, the number has declined for a variety of reasons. During the early 20th century, for example, pupils in Nova Scotia were forbidden from speaking Gaelic in schools. This led many Gaelic speaking parents to stop passing on Gaelic to their children as they believed fluency in English was more important. Use of Scottish Gaelic or broad consonants are those preceded or followed by a, o or u. Connragan caola or slender consonants are those preceded or followed by i or e. Scottish Gaelic can be heard on the BBC radio station Radio nan Gàidheal and on the television channel BBC Alba. There are also some Gaelic programmes on other channels. Gaelic is taught as a subject in some schools, and used as a medium of instruction in others. It also possible to study degrees through Gaelic as Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, a part of the University of the Highlands and Islands on the Isle of Skye. Literature in Scottish Gaelic The earliest identifiably texts in Scottish Gaelic are notes in the Book of Deer written in north eastern Scotland in the 12th century, although the existence of a common written Classical Gaelic concealed the extent of the divergence between Irish and Scottish Gaelic. There is very little early literature in Scottish Gaelic as it was mainly an oral culture. A collection of poetry in Scottish Gaelic, The Book of the Dean of Lismore (Leabhar Dèathan Lios Mòir), was compiled in manuscript form in the early 16th century. A Gaelic translation of the Book of Common Order was published in 1567, and is considered the first printed book in the language. During the early 20th century only a few books in Scottish Gaelic were published each year. However, since the 1970s the number has increased to over 40 new books per year. Gaelic publications include novels, collections of poetry, biographies, and other books [source]. Relationship to other languages Scottish Gaelic is closely related to Manx and Irish. It is also more distantly related to Welsh (Cymraeg), Cornish (Kernewek) and Breton (Brezhoneg), which form the Brythonic branch of the Celtic languages, also known as P-Celtic. The Celtic languages all have a similar grammatical structure, but have less vocabulary in common. The Scottish Gaelic alphabet Scottish Gaelic is written with 18 letters of the Latin alphabet. Traditionally each letter is named after a tree or shrub, however the names are no longer used.



Inscriptions in Ogham have been found in Scotland, however it is not certain what language they are in. Some may be in Gaelic, others in Pictish. The Ogham equivalents of the Latin letters are shown below. The Gaelic Script is also shown, as it was used in Scotland, and is still used as a decorative script. Pronunciation Notes The connragan leathann or broad consonants are those preceded or followed by a, o or u. Connragan caola or slender consonants are those preceded or followed by i or e. Most consonants have different pronunciations depending on whether they appear at the beginning of a word or elsewhere. In the chart above the broad pronunciations of the consonants are given in the first line below them, and the slender pronunciations in the second line. C, p and t are pre-aspirated between vowels, and unaspirated at the end of words. The initial consonants of Gaelic words can change in various contexts. This process is known as "lenition" and involves the addition of an h after the initial letter. The resulting letters are suthaich or fricatives. Source: Hear how to pronounce Scottish Gaelic Sample text Rugadh na h-uile duine saor agus co-ionann nan urram 's nan còirichean. Tha iad reusanta is cogaiseach, agus bu chòir dhaibh a ghlùilain ris a chèile ann an spiorad bràthaireil. Hear a recording of this text by Frederic (Calum) Bayer Translation All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. (Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) Sample videos in Scottish Gaelic Information about Scottish Gaelic | Phrases | Numbers | Family words | Terms of endearment | Colours | Time | Dates | Comparison of Celtic languages | Celtic cognates | Celtiadur | Tower of Babel | Songs | Links | My podcast about Scottish Gaelic | Learning materials Links Information about Scottish Gaelic Online Scottish Gaelic lessons More Scottish Gaelic links Celtic languages Breton, Celtiberian, Cornish, Cumbric, Gaulish, Irish, Lepontic, Lusitanian, Manx, Scottish Gaelic, Tartessian, Welsh Languages written with the Latin alphabet Page last modified: 26.09.21 [top] Why not share this page: If you like this site and find it useful, you can support it by making a donation via PayPal or Patreon, or by contributing in other ways. Omniglot is how I make my living. Note: all links on this site to Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk and Amazon.fr are affiliate links. This means I earn a commission if you click on any of them and buy something. So by clicking on these links you can help to support this site. If you're looking for home or car insurance in the UK, why not try Policy Expert? [top] The Scottish Gaelic language (called Gàidhlig in Gaelic) has 18 letters. The Latin/English letter set is used, but Gàidhlig assigns its own sounds and usages to the letters. It is this difference that confuses English speakers when they see "impossible" combinations like raon, dealbh, and cridhe. Fortunately, the pronunciation of Gaelic words is fairly regular and it is usually possible to predict the pronunciation from the spelling. The letters J, K, Q, V, W, X, Y, and Z are not included in the Gaelic alphabet, but are sometimes found in borrowed words. When present, these letters have their English sounds. There are regional differences in Scottish Gaelic pronunciation, but standard Scottish Gaelic is understood by Scottish Gaelic speakers everywhere. The pronunciation guide below approximates the Gaelic letter sounds by using standard British English examples. Vowels[edit] Gaelic vowels have a grave accent, with the letters à, è, ì, ò, ù. Traditional spelling also uses the acute accent on the letters á, é and ó, but texts which follow the spelling reform only use the grave. A table of vowels with pronunciations in IPA Spelling Pronunciation English equivalent As in a, á [a], [a] cat bata, lochán à [aː] cad bàta e [e], [e] let, late le, teth è, é [eː], [eː] led, lade sèimh, fhéin í [i], [iː] tin, sweet sin, ith ì [iː] evil min o [ɔ], [o] top, boat poca, bog ò, ó [ɔː], [oː] jaw, door pòcaid, mòr u [u] brood tur ù [uː] brewed tìr Vowel digraphs[edit] A table of digraphs with pronunciations in IPA Spelling Pronunciation As in English equivalent ai [aɪ], [aɪ], [eɪ], [i] caileag, iuchair, gearmail, dùthaich wall, answer, air, pick ài [aɪ], [aɪ] aite, bara-laimhe father, kite ao(1) [uː], [uɪ] caol, gaol, laoidh no true equivalent; try saying "cool" without rounding the lips, wheel ea [eə], [e], [e] eile, deas, bean y'all, great, hen ea [eə] ceàrr y'all ea [eː] neamh ever ea [eː] ceithich ever ei [eɪ] thèin rain eo [eɔ] deoch jock eo(1) [eː] còil, feòil lock eu [eː], [iə] ceum, feur became, Maria ia [iə], [iə] biadh, dian Maria io [i], [i] fìos, fionn fit, young io [iː], [iə] sgriobh, mìos sheet, Camille iu [iu] puithar you iù(1) [iə] diùt, diùid few oi [ɔː], [ɔː] boireannach, goirid top, ughy òi [ɔː] foill lost ói [eɔ] còig alone uui(1) [uə], [uə] ruadh, uabhasach, duais wash, squash ui [uɪ], [uɪ] muir, uighean, tuinn to, we iu [iu] diùin two Consonants[edit] Many consonants come in plain and lenited varieties, and also in slender (palatalized) and broad (non-palatalized or velarized) varieties, giving four combinations. Lenition is denoted with a h following the letter. A consonant or group of consonants is slender when they are next to e or i, broad when next to a, o or u. A consonant is never preceded by one kind of vowel and followed by the other kind at the same time, to avoid ambiguity. However, this does often lead to extra "silent" vowels being added to adhere to this rule. A table of consonants with pronunciations in IPA. Based on Gillies (1993). Plain Lenited Orthography Broad Slender English equivalent Orthography Broad Slender English (or other language) equivalent b (initial) /p/\* /pj/\* span bh /v/ /vj/ veil b (final) /p/ /pj/ lap bh /v/ /vj/ give c (initial) /k/ /kʰ/ or /c/ cold, cute ch /x/ /ç/ loch, German ich c (final) /xk/ /çk/ or /çc/ rack, pick ch /x/ /ç/ loch, German ich d /ɲ/\* /r/\* stare, itch dh /s/ /j/ Spanish lago, Spanish hierba f (initial) /f/ /fj/ fall, fear fh silent silent f (final) /f/ /fj/ laugh, grief fh silent silent g /k/\* /kʰ/ or /c/\* scuba, skew gh /x/ /ç/ Spanish lago, Spanish hierba t (initial) /t/ /tʰ/ or /tʰ/ millinn 1 /tʰ/ or /tʰ/ m /m/ /mj/ mad, mean mh /v/ /vj/ vain n (initial) /n/ /nʰ/ or /h/ /j/ name, annual n /n/ /nʰ/ annual, name p (initial) /p/ /pʰ/ passion, pew ph /f/ /fj/ fashion, few p (final) /hp/ /hjp/ wrap, cape ph /f/ /fj/ roof, reef r (initial) /r/ /rʰ/ or /r/ /rʰ/ or /r/ (no difference) Spanish perro r /r/ /rʰ/ Spanish pero s /s/ /sʰ/ sing, shine sh /h/ /hʰ/ hang, Hugh t (initial) /tʰ/ /tʰʰ/ tread, check th /h/ /hʰ/ hang, Hugh t (final) /ht/ /htʰ/ hat, hatch th /h/ or silent /jh/ or /j/ raw \*An unaspirated voiceless stop, as in English spot, stick, or skate.