



National Day Nurseries Association

***Brighter thinking
for early years**



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
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Help with Cymraeg

This factsheet will support you with the pronunciation of the Welsh Language, by having an understanding of the different letter sounds you will be able to construct words and sentences. Quite often Welsh learners lack confidence due to the concern that they are not pronouncing words correctly. The following exercise will support you with the pronunciation of the Welsh Language.

Read through the Welsh alphabet list and practice the sounds that each letter makes. When you are confident with the sounds, attempt to read the sentence in fig.1.

The sentence (fig.1) is not written in Welsh, however the aim of the activity is for you to be able to make the correct sounds when using/reading the Welsh Language.

After practicing the sentence a few times, have a look at fig.2 to see how close you were.

Pronunciation

Pronouncing words in Welsh is pretty easy really - Welsh is a phonetic language, so what you see is what you pronounce.

- a short, as in 'hat', never as in 'ball'
- b as in 'bag'
- c always hard as in 'cat', never an s as in 'precise'
- ch like the ch in the Scottish word 'loch'
- d as in 'dog'
- dd a buzzy 'th' sound, as in 'this'. Think angry bees with a lisp
- e short, as in pen
- f as in 'v'. A fery different way of saying it.

ff f. Equally, you can find yourself getting too used to ff.

g always hard as in 'get', never a 'j' sound as in the last g in garage

ng as in 'song', where the g isn't hard, like in 'gig', but a soft glottal stop made in your throat

h as in hat, always sounded and never silent

i as in 'pin'

j accepted now because of the loan words from English that use it, like 'garej'

l a 'luh' as in 'lava', but never an 'ul' sound as in 'milk'

ll not as hard a sound to make as some would have you think. Raise your tongue to the top of your mouth as if you were going to say 'el', then make the 'ell' sound by blowing air round the sides of your raised tongue, instead of by using your voice. You should sound like an annoyed cat

m as in 'mum'

n as in 'nanobot'

o short as in 'hot', not round as in 'hotel'

p Can I have a p please, Bob?

ph an English f, or Welsh ff sound, as in 'phase'

r rolled. Some people just can't get a rolled 'r' - their tongues are unable to vibrate in the right way. It's a genetic thing, apparently, similar to being able to roll your tongue into a tube, or turn the end upside down. Roll if you can, don't if you can't

rh hr. Make a huffy, breathy sound before your rolled 'r'

s always soft as in 'sit'

t as in 'top'

th as in 'think', softer and less buzzy than dd

u ee in the South, but not in the North. If you had stepped in something disgusting and made a kind of 'eugh' noise, the vowel 'eu' sound would approximate the Northern 'u'

w - oooooo

y y breaks the rule that Welsh is phonetic. As a single syllable word, y is like 'uh', on the last syllable of a multisyllabic word it's an 'ee', and anywhere else it's like the unstressed,

indeterminate noise of the final e in 'garden' or 'letter'. Ysbyty (hospital) is the perfect example.

Fig.1.

Ai hop ddat yw can ryd ddys and ddat yt meiks sens tw yw. Iff yw can ryd ddys, dden yw sawnd ryt and ar redi tw gow hycing in wals. Gwd lwc and Haf ffyn.

Did it sound like this?

Fig.2.

I hope that you can read this, and that it makes sense to you. If you can read this, then you sound right and are ready to go hiking in Wales. Good luck and have fun.

See - told you it was easy!

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