



INTRODUCTION

The phonetic spelling here is not an absolute; there are differences in dialects, accents and local nuances that are not included.

A list of links at the end of this PDF have further resources for learning and at least one of them is a route to learning local pronunciations.

I am not a teacher. However, I hope that this serves as a useful document for learners.

Languages are created by people and they evolve with people. Gaelic and Scots languages are both native tongues of Scotland. Both have been banned and had to fight for recognition as being 'equal to' English.

Speaking Gaelic or Scots is a political act.

Huge thanks to my native Gaelic speaking co-conspirators for their help creating this document.

You know who you are.

Welcome to the revolution.

CONTENTS

General chat

(Introductions)

What's it like Outside?

(Weather)

What and when is it?

(Days of the week and times of the day)

What are we eating?

(Food)

Fk this!**

Swearing: One of the fun things about learning a language is discovering how to swear in new ways. However, most of the Gaelic lessons don't cover this, so here are some of my favourites

Sounds like...

Guide to letters and their pronunciation in Gaelic, a bit more technical.

Sense of Place

Place names in Gaelic and Scots

Further Reading

List of resources for Gaelic language

List of resources for Scots language

General Chat

Hello
Halo (Ha-low)

Good morning
Madainn mhath (Matin vah)

Good day
Latha Math (Lah mah)

Good day to you
Deagh latha dhut! (joe lah ghoocht!)

Good Afternoon/Evening
Feasgar Math (Feskir mah)

My name is
Is mise (Iss mish-uh)

Whats your name?
De an t-ainm a th'ort? (Jay an tenim a horsht?)

How are you?
Ciamar a tha thu? (Kimmer a ha oo?)

I'm fine
Tha gu math (Ha goo mah / Ha mi goo mah)

Thanks
tapadh leat/leibh (tap-a lay / lyve)

You're welcome
Se do bheatha (Sheh daw veh-huh!)

And yourself?
Thu fhèin? (Oo hayn?)

Where are you from?
Co as a tha thu? (Ko ass a ha oo?)

I'm from
S'ann a a tha mi (Sown a a ha me)

I live in (insert town)
Tha mi a fuireach ann an..... (Ha me a forr-awch own an....)

Good night
Oidhche Mhath (Eye-chuh Vah!)

Sleep Well
Caidil gu math (Cachill koo mah)

Good evening everyone
Feasgar math a h-uile duine (Feskir ma uh hool-uh doonya)

Goodbye
Tioraidh! (Chee-u-ree!)

Bye for now
Tioraidh an drast! (Chee-u-ree an drast)
or
An drast!.

See you again
Chi mi a rithist thu (Ch-ee me a reeisht oo)

Well done!
'S math rinn thu! (Smah rhine oo!)

Very Good
Glè mhath! (Glay vah!)

Excellent!
Math dha rìreabh! (Mah gha reer-iv!)

What are you doing just now?
De tha thu a dèanamh an dràsta? (Jay ha oo a jee-aniv un dràsta?)

What you up to today?
De do chor an diugh? (Jay daw kh awr un joo?)

I don't know
Chan eil fhios agam (chahn-yel iss ah-kum)

I'm not doing anything
Chan eil mi a' dèanamh càil (chahn-yel mee uh jee-ah-nuv kahl)

Where's the bathroom?
Càit a bheil an taigh beag? (Kahtch uh vehl un tye bek?)

I love you
Tha gaol agam ort (Hah geul ah-kum orsht)

I love you too
Tha gaol agam ort-fhèin (Hah geul ah-kum orsht-heh-eeen)

Do you speak Gaelic?
A bheil Gàidhlig agaibh? (uh vil gah-lik ah-kiv)

Yes, a little
Tha, beagan. (hah, beck-un)

What did you say?
Dè thuirt thu? (jeh hoorsht oo)

Say that again?
Can a-rithist sin? (kahn uh-ree-isht shin)

I don't understand
Chan eil mi a' tuigsinn (chan-yel mi uh-took-shin)

I'm sorry
Tha mi duilich. (hah mee dooh-lich)

Excuse me
Gabhaibh mo leisgeul. (gahv-iv moe lesh-kul)

Okay / Right enough
"Ceart gu leòr." (kyarsht guh lywar)

That's very good
Tha sin glè mhath! (hah shin gleh vah)

Please
Ma 'se ur toil e. (mah sheh oor tul-leh)

Many thanks
Mòran taing. (maw-run tah-eeng)

You're welcome
Se do bheatha. (sheh doe veh-huh)

Bye for now
Mar sin leibh an dràsda. (mahr shin leh-eev un drahss-tuh)

What's it like outside?

It's a lovely day

Se lath brèagh a th'ann (Sheh la bree-uh a hown)

It's a nice day today

Ha e brèagha an diugh (Ha e bree-a un joo)

Its windy / Its really blowing today

Tha n gaoth a seidadh an diugh (Ha un gi-i a shay-ch ug un joo)

It's a wet day

Se latha fliuch a th'ann (sheh la flookh a hown)

It's a cold day

Se latha fuar/teth a th'ann (sheh la foor a hown)

It's a hot day

Se latha fuar/teth a th'ann (sheh la chay a hown)

Its raining

Tha an t-uisg ann (Ha an tooshg ow-n)

Its cloudy today

Tha e sgòthach an diugh (Ha e skaw-uch un joo)

Its raining

Tha an t-uisg ann (Ha un tooshk ow-n)

It is wet and cold today

Tha e fliuch is fuar an diugh (Ha e flooch iss foo-ar un joo)

The sun is shining today

Tha an grian a dearrsadh an diugh (Ha an gee-un a jarrsug un joo)

Its frosty today

Se latha reothtach a th'ann an diugh (sheh la raw-chuch a hown un joo)

What and When is it?

What day is it today?

De latha a th'ann an diugh? (Jay la a how-n un joo?)

What day is it tomorrow?

De latha a bhios ann a màireach? (Jay la viss ow-n a marrach?)

Monday

Diluain (Jil-oo-eyen)

Tuesday

Dimairt (Jimarsht)

Wednesday

Diciadaoin (Jikee-adinn)

Thursday

Diardaoin (Jirrdinn)

Friday

Dihaoine (Jihnn-yuh)

Saturday

Disathairne (Jissah-urm-yuh)

Sunday

Didomhnaich (Jidawn – eech)

It was a long day today

Se latha fada bh'ann (se la fata a vow-n un joo)

What time is it?

De an uair a tha e? (Jay an oor a ha e?)

It's 3 o'clock

Tha e tri uair (ha e tree oo-irr)

or

1 – Aon (inn)

2 – Da (da)

3 – Tri (tree)

4 – Ceithir (kayhir)

5 – Coig (koe-ick)

6 – Sia (shee-ah)

7 – Seachd (shach-kh)

8 – Ochd (aw-chk)

9 – Naoi (nye)

10 – Deich (jaych)

11 – Aon uair deug (inn oor jee-ig)

12 – Da uair dheug (da oor jee-ig)

Half past

Leth uair as dèid (jay oor as jay)

What are we eating?

Mealtime

Am biadh (Ow-m beeug)

What time are we having a meal?

De an uair a tha sinn a gabhail biadh? (Jay an oor a ha shin a gaal beeug?)

I'm eating

Tha mi ag ithe (Ha me ak eech-uh)

Food

Biadh (bee-ug)

What do you want?

Dè tha thu ag iarraidh? (jeh HAH oo ug EE-uh-ree)

I want a cookie!

Tha mi ag iarraidh briosgaid! (hah mi ug-ee-uh-ree briss-kahtch)

I want a cup of coffee

Tha mi ag iarraidh cupa cofaidh (Ha me ak ee-ar-ee coopa coffee)

I want a cup of tea

Tha mi ag iarraidh cupa ti (Ha me ak ee-ar-ee coopa tea)

I'm hungry

Tha an t-acras orm (Ha un tak-rus orom)

Are you hungry?

A bheil an t-acras ort? (A veil an takras orsht?)

You bet I'm hungry

Ceart gu leòr, tha an t-acras orm (Kyarsh t guh lyawr. Hahn tah-krus aw-rum)

I'd like to have breakfast

Bu toigh leam bracaist a ghabhail (Boo tuh LUH-oom braah-kawsht uh gah-ull)

Can I have a sandwich?

Am faigh mi ceapaire? (Am fye me cep-ir-uh?)

I'm thirsty

Tha am pathadh orm (Ha um pah-hug orom)

What will you have?

De ghabhas tu? (jay ga-as too?)

Give me a glass of wine

Thoir dhomh glainne fion (Hawr gong glann-yuh fee-on)

Give me a red wine please

Thoir dhomh fion dearg ma s'e do thoil e (Hawr ghong feeun jerak ma se daw hawl eh.)

Red/white wine
Fìon dearg/geal (Fee-on jerak/gyal)

Orange Juice
Sùgh orainds (soo orange)

I'm eating just now
Tha mi ag ithe an dràsta (Ha me ak eech-uh un dràsta)

I'm drinking water
Tha mi ag òl uisge (Ha me ak awl oosh-kuh)

I'd like a pint of beer, please
Bu toigh leam pinnt leann, mas e do thoil e (boo till loom peench l-yoon, mas eh daw hawl eh)

I'd like please
Bu toigh leam ma s'e do thoil e? (Boo till loom, mas e daw hawl eh)

Things to put in place of the dots above:

Soup
Brot (Brawt)

Apple
Ubhal (oo-ul)

Biscuit
Briosgaid (brisk-itch)

Cheese
Caise (Cash-uh)

Bread
Aran (Arran)

Butter
Im (eem)

Ham
Hama (hama)

Egg
Uigh (oo)

Potato
Buntata (boon tata)

Roll
Rola (Rawluh)

Fruit
Measan (messun)

Vegetables
Glasraichean (Glass-reechun)

Honey
Mil (meal)

Chicken
Cearc (cerk)

Thanks for that!
Tapadh leat airson sin! (Tap-ah lacht air son shin!)

That was tasty
Bha sin blasta! (Vah shin blast-uh!)

Cheers / Good health!
Slàinte (Slanchuh)

F*ck This!!

Total C*nt
Criochnaich Fhaighean

F**king idiot
Amadan na galla

C*nt / Pussy
Baltan

Like hell I will
Cha dèan mo chas

F*ck Off
Taigh Nam Gasta Ort

Get the F* out of my craft room
Mach às mo sheòmar-cheàirde

Bellend
Clag Deireadh

F* off reality
Biodh taigh na galla air fìorachd

Fanny baws
Fanaidh Balaichean

F* the truth (of the matter)
Biodh taigh na galla air an fhirinn

Prick
Trealaich

Fart
Tùd

Enormous Prick
Ruinnse

Crabbit
Craibte

Tit
Cioch / Glagan

Hell yeah!
Gu dearbh fhèin!

Pish
Fual

Bawbag
Magairle

Go F*ck Yourself
Falbh dairich fhein

Shut the f*ck up
Duin d ghob / Dùin do chab

Get it right up ye
Faigh E Deas Suas Fhein

Away and take your face for a sh*te
Falbh a ghabhail d ghnuis airson cac

Arsehole
Tolla Thon

Wee sh*t
Cacan

Dickhead
Bod Ceann

Sounds Like...

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE TO SCOTTISH GAELIC

Gaelic has only eighteen letters in its alphabet. There is no J, K, Q, V, W, X, Y or Z. A consonant + H creates a completely different sound to the same consonant without an H following it. Back vowels are those vowels that sound in the back of the throat ('aw', 'ur', 'oo', 'ow', 'aa', 'o', 'u', 'a') The rest are 'front vowels'.

VOWELS

Gaelic words are stressed on the first syllable.

The guide to vowels only applies in stressed (or initial) syllables.

	GAELIC	SOUNDS LIKE	EXCEPT...
SIMPLE VOWEL (Use of accent signifies a longer version of vowel.)	A	like in <i>cat</i> , or the first part of the vowel in <i>cow</i> .	
	À	as in <i>father</i> .	
	E	short version of the sound in <i>bay</i> before the Y sets in; like French <i>é</i> .	
	È	longer version of the above.	
	I	short version of the sound in <i>see</i> .	
	Ì	as in <i>see</i> .	
	O	as in <i>cot</i> usually	before B, BH, G, GH, M and MH it sounds more like the French <i>au</i> in <i>jaune</i> .
	Ò	as in <i>law</i> .	
	U	short version of the sound in <i>food</i> ; like French <i>ou</i> .	
	Ù	as in <i>food</i> .	
SLENDER VOWELS	E, I		
BROAD VOWELS	A, O, U		
Combinations of Vowels	AI, EI, ÒI	Generally, an I following a vowel does not change its pronunciation, so AI, EI and ÒI are pronounced the same as A, E and Ò	

	AO	the OO sound in English "food", but with the <i>lips unrounded</i> , and sounded further back in the throat.	
	EA	just like a Gaelic E before the letters D, G and S	Elsewhere, it mostly has the sound of the English E in "bed".
	EO and EÒ	sound just like the Gaelic O and Ò, except that a Y sound is added before them when they come at the start of a word.	
	EU, IA and Ì O	like a Gaelic I and A run together, that is, like the English word "ear" (without the R)	
	IO	just sounds like I	
	IU, IÙ and I ÙÌ	like the Gaelic U and Ù	a Y sound is added before them when they come at the start of a word.
	UA and UAI	as in English <i>pure</i> or Northern <i>tour</i> .	
	UI	just sounds like U	If its before M, N, NG and S it sounds like the Gaelic AO instead.
Vowels in unstressed syllables	A, E, EA	make an 'uh' sound as in the second syllable of <i>butter</i> .	
	AI, EI, I, OI, UI make	a short 'i' sound as in <i>pin</i> .	
Vowels before LL, M and NN in stressed syllables	A and EA	make the ow sound of English <i>cow</i> .	In the case of EA, a Y sound is added before it when it starts a word, and it doesn't change before M.
	AI	Aye, or in English <i>sky</i>	
	EI		
	I and U	simply get lengthened	
	IO	becomes the long OO sound	Not before M Gets a Y in front of it if a word starts with this set of vowels (eg <i>fionn</i> becomes <i>fyoon</i>)
	O	is lengthened to a sound similar to that in English <i>home</i> .	

	OI	a sound formed by running together a short 'uh' and an 'ee'.	
	UI	sound formed by running together the back-of-the-throat Gaelic AO sound and an 'ee'	
Vowels after LL/NN /M generally do not change apart from the following exceptions	EA	becomes a Gaelic short A, but still has a Y preceding it if it starts a word off.	
	IO	becomes a Gaelic short U. It also still has a Y preceding it if it starts a word off.	
Vowels before RR/RN/RD	A, AI and E A	lengthen to make a long À sound	
	O and U	lengthen to sound like Ò and Ù	this lengthening does not happen if a vowel follows the RR it <i>does</i> happen if a vowel follows an RN or an RD. In these circumstances an EA ends up sounding like a short A
Vowels in front of BH, DH, GH and MH		These tend to disappear when they come after a vowel. If you see them after a vowel, its safe to assume they are silent. However, they can change the sound of the preceding vowel	DH almost always disappears. MH rarely does
	A/EA before DH/GH	the DH/GH is not silent, the A/EA become like the <i>ur</i> in English <i>burn</i> but further back in throat and shorter.	
	AI before B H/DH/MH;	lengthens to the sound of English <i>sky</i>	

	AIGH and OIGH	make the sound of OI before LL , that is, 'uh' and 'ee' run together.	
	AOI plus BH/DH/GH/MH	like an AO and an 'ee' run together	

CONSONANTS

	GAELIC	SOUNDS LIKE	EXCEPTIONS
SLENDER CONSONANT		<p>A group of consonants will only ever have broad vowels on both sides.</p> <p>When many consonants are surrounded by slender vowels (called a slender consonant), they change their sounds to sound as though they have a Y following them.</p> <p>Consonants do exactly the same in English when followed by a U. Thus the initial sounds of the words ceann, dearg are the same as the initial sounds of <i>cure</i>, <i>dune</i>.</p>	
BROAD CONSONANTS (consonants surrounded by broad vowels)	F, L, LL, M, N, NN and S	All sound as they do in English	Slender S is pronounced as the English SH.
	H	as in English, but only when it's found in isolation (rare)	If it comes after a consonant, it alters the sound of the preceding consonant instead of having its own sound

	P, T and C	as in English	if found in the middle or end of words you should add a very slight 'kh' sound before them, almost no more than a little extra breath.
	B, D and G	as in English <i>only</i> at the beginnings of words.	Elsewhere they sound like English P, T and C respectively.
	R and RR	Rolled and never left out	
	BH and MH	both pronounced as the English V	
	CH	as in <i>loch</i> or German <i>Bach</i> .	
	GH and DH	these are to CH as G is to C, i.e. with the mouth and tongue in the same place but with the vocal cords vibrating.	
	FH	Is silent	
	PH	As in English	
	SH and TH	As in the English H	
	RD and RT	Gaelic inserts a SH sound into the combinations RD and RT. Therefore aird 'aarsht'	
SLENDER CONSONANTS	Slender B	is like the BY in English <i>beauty</i> at the beginning of a word, and like the PY in English <i>puke</i> elsewhere.	
	Slender C	is just like the CY in English <i>cute</i> ,	CH is pronounced like the German <i>ich</i> ; that is to say, rather like an H and a Y run together and said with more force. Slender GH and DH are as above, but rather like a severely overdone Y
	slender SH	like HY in <i>hew</i> ,	

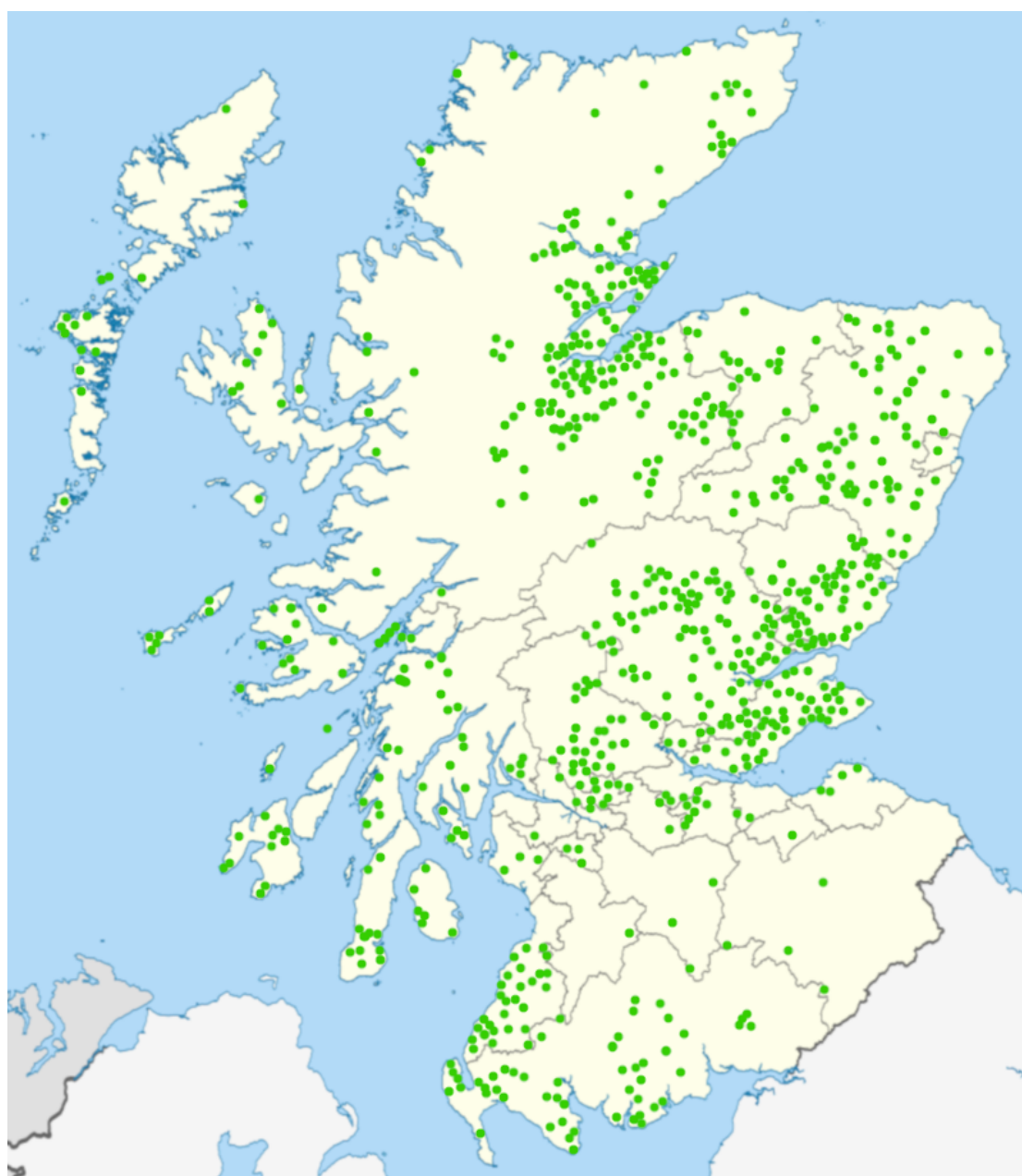
	slender L	is like the LY in <i>million</i>	L only slenderises at the beginning of a word.
	slender BH	is just like the VY in English <i>view</i> .	B, BH, M, MH, F, FH, P, PH, S H and TH only slenderise before a back vowel
	LL, NN and RR	slenderise as expected	N only slenderises initially or after a back vowel. R slenderises everywhere except at the beginning of a word.

Sense of Place

Scottish Gaelic is not the only native language used in Scotland. There are far more Scots speakers and yet we do not have a Scots language TV channel and the idea of writing official documents in Scots hasn't happened since the 19th century, which is weird to me.

However, we can get a sense of both these languages and how they work alongside each other by looking at maps. The names of our hills and towns all give us a clue as to the use of our native tongues throughout our history.

Below is a map, which shows place names in Scotland that contain the element BAL, which is either from the Scottish Gaelic baile or bealach meaning Village or pass, farmstead, town or home. Giving some indication of the extent of medieval Gaelic settlement in Scotland.



This is a table of place names, which show some origins of other names in our landscapes:

Scots form and spelling	Origin Meaning(s) in English
Aiber	from Brittonic aber - Mouth
Ach	from Gaelic achadh - Field
Auchter	either from Gaelic achadh or uachdar Field or upland
Auld	from Anglo-Saxon ald Old
Bal	either from the Scottish Gaelic baile or bealach meaning Village or pass, farmstead, town or home.
Bey	from French baie and Middle English bay(e) - Bay
Boonds	variously from Latin bodina, French bonne and Middle English bound(e) - Boundary, limits
Brae	variously from Anglo-Saxon bru, Norse brá and Gaelic bràigh - Hillside
Braes (see above, means Foothills)	
Brig	from Anglo-Saxon brig Bridge
Burgh or Broch	variously from Anglo-Saxon burh, and Norse borg Borough
Burn	from Gaelic bùrn –‘water’ Stream
Cleuch / cleugh	from Middle English cloghe Gorge or ravine
Craig	from Gaelic creag Crag
Dal	from Gaelic dail Field
Drum	from Gaelic druim Ridge
Dum or Dun	from Gaelic dun Fort or hill

Further Reading

Learn Gaelic

www.learnghaelic.net

www.duolingo.com

www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/gaidhlig/ionnsachadh/

Learning for children aged 0-3: www.gaelic4parents.com/0-3-years

Learn Scots

It is another of our native tongues and it is spoken by far more people than Scottish Gaelic, yet there isn't a Scots language channel.

www.scotslanguage.com

www.dsl.ac.uk

www.cs.stir.ac.uk

Place names in Gaelic

This is a great site for searching for the Gaelic names you are familiar with and ones, which you need a Gaelic equivalent of:

www.ainmean-aite.scot

If you found some cool resources you'd like to include in any future versions of this, or you like the cover art, find me on Instagram and drop me a DM @eileenbudd