Luxembourgish sounds Lëtzebuergesch

1 · read it out loud

The trick: Luxembourgish is written much as it sounds. A doubled vowel is long, as in Waasser and Strooss, and three vowels carry a mark: ä, é and ë. Nouns take a capital, as in German.

Letters	Sounds like	Example
ä	the a in cat	**Äddi / Täsch** bye / bag
é	the e in French café, short and clear	**gréng / Bréck** green / bridge
éi	close to the ay in day	**wéi / schéin** how / beautiful
ë	the u in but, said short	**Lëtzebuerg / Fësch** Luxembourg / fish
ou	the o in British go, never the ou in out	**grouss / wou** big / where
äi, ei	close to the eye in my	**Zäit / Leit** time / people
au	the ow in cow	**Haus / Auto** house / car
ie	ee, then a quick uh, as in British ear	**iessen / Liewen** eat / life
ue	oo, then a quick uh	**Duechter / fueren** daughter / drive
aa, ee, oo, uu	a doubled vowel is long	**Waasser / Duuscht** water / thirst
ch	after a, o, u: the ch in Scottish loch	**aacht / Kuch** eight / cake
ch	after other letters: a soft hiss, close to sh	**ech / Mëllech** I / milk
-eg, g	-eg at the end is like -esh; g between i and a vowel, like the s in measure	**zwanzeg / Fliger** twenty / plane
w	v in van; after sch, z or k, nearer the w in we	**Wäin / zwee** wine / two
v	f in Luxembourgish words; v in words from French	**vill / Vëlo** a lot / bike
j, z	j is the y in yes; z is the ts in cats	**Joer / Zopp** year / soup
s	before a vowel, the z in zoo	**sinn / sechs** be / six
sch, st, sp	sch is sh; st and sp at the start are sht and shp	**Schoul / Strooss** school / street
stress	on the first syllable, nearly always	**Lëtzebuerg / Gromper** LË-tze-buerg / GROM-per

the n rule

a final n drops before most consonants

de Kaffi but **den Téi**

Gudde Moien but **Gudden Owend**

ä · é · ë

three marked vowels, each its own sound

Äddi · **gréng** · **Lëtzebuerg**

The n rule (the Eifel rule): a word ending in n or nn drops it when the next word starts with most consonants. The n stays before a vowel, before n, d, t, z and h, and at the end of a sentence: Ech léiere Lëtzebuergesch, but Ech léieren Englesch. It's written as well as said, and this sheet follows it everywhere.

Two kinds of ch, and v said f: ch is rough after a, o and u, as in aacht, and soft, almost sh, after other letters, as in ech. V is f in old Luxembourgish words like vill, but v in words from French like Vëlo. French words such as Merci and Pardon keep their French sound.

How words work Grammatik

The: den for masculine nouns, or de before most consonants; d' for feminine, neuter and every plural, joined to the noun. **A:** en, or e before most consonants, for masculine and neuter; eng for feminine: e Mann, en Apel, eng Fra, e Kand. Dat is the stressed form: dat Kand, that child.

de Mann	den Apel	d'Fra	d'Kand	d'Kanner	dat Kand
the man	the apple: n before a vowel	the woman	the child	the children	that child: the stressed form

Three genders, three colours

masculine

den or de, en or e

de Papp, the dad
den Dag, the day
en Apel, an apple

feminine

d', eng

d'Mamm, the mum
d'Stad, the town
eng Fra, a woman

neuter

d', en or e

d'Haus, the house
e Kand, a child
en Haus, a house

Every noun takes a capital, as in German, and has a gender you learn with it. On the next pages each noun wears its colour: blue masculine, pink feminine, green neuter. Plurals are simple: every plural takes d', and the noun adds an ending or changes a vowel: d'Stonn, d'Stonnen; d'Kand, d'Kanner; den Dag, d'Deeg.

Sinn, hunn and schaffen: be, have and work

	sinn, be	hunn, have	schaffen, work
ech	sinn	hunn	schaffen
du	bass	hues	schaffs
hien, si, hatt	ass	huet	schafft
mir	sinn	hunn	schaffen
dir, Dir	sidd	hutt	schafft
si	sinn	hunn	schaffen

Du or Dir: du is you to a friend, a child or family. Dir, with a capital, is you to one person politely, and dir is you to more than one. Si is she and they; hatt is she for a girl, or a woman you call by her first name. Hien drops its n too: hie schafft, but hien ass.

Not, no and questions

Ech sinn net midd.	Ech hu keng Zäit.	Bass du midd?
I'm not tired	I've got no time	are you tired?

Net, keen and the verb first: net, not, comes after the verb. Keen goes with a noun, keng with feminine and plural nouns, kee by the n rule: Ech hu keen Auto, I haven't got a car. To ask, put the verb first: Dir schwätzt Englesch. Schwätzt Dir Englesch?

Three languages: most people in Luxembourg also speak French and German, and you'll often hear all three in one day.

The first 288 words Déi éischt Wierder

How: learn five a day, then listen for them in Luxembourgish films and series. Nouns come with de, d' or d' in their gender colour. *Pink italics* say how a word is used, not what it means.

Me and you

ech
I

du
you, to a friend, a child or family

Dir / dir
you: politely to one person, with a capital / to more than one

hien
he *(hie before most consonants)*

si
she; also they

hatt
she, for a girl or a woman you call by her first name *(it means it)*

et
it

mir
we

mäin / meng
my *(mäin for masculine and neuter, mäi before most consonants; meng for feminine and plural)*

däin / deng
your, to a friend

Question words

wien
who

wat
what

wou
where *(Wou wunns du? where do you live?)*

wéini
when

firwat
why

wéi
how

wéivill
how much, how many

Vu wou kommt Dir?
where are you from? *(politely)*

Little words

an
and; also in *(a before most consonants: Kaffi a Kuch)*

awer
but

oder
or

och
also, too

net
not *(after the verb)*

keen / keng
no, not a *(keng for feminine and plural)*

ganz
very, quite *(ganz kal, very cold)*

vill
a lot, much, many *(vill Leit, lots of people)*

e bëssen
a bit, a little

nëmmen
only

nach
still, yet

schonn
already

hei / do
here / there

mat
with

ouni
without

fir
for

vun
from, of *(vu before most consonants)*

zu
in, at, for towns and countries *(zu Lëtzebuerg)*

well
because

vläicht
maybe

jo / nee
yes / no

Family

d'Mamm
mum, mother

de Papp
dad, father

de Brudder
brother

d'Schwëster
sister

de Jong
son; also boy

d'Duechter
daughter

d'Bomi
grandma

de Bopi
grandpa

de Monni
uncle

d'Tatta
aunt

d'Elteren
parents *(plural)*

d'Famill
family

d'Kand
child *(d'Kanner, children)*

People

de Mann
man; also husband

d'Fra
woman; also wife

d'Meedchen
girl *(neuter, like hatt)*

de Frënd
friend, a man

d'Frëndin
friend, a woman

de Mënsch
person

d'Leit
people *(plural)*

den Noper
neighbour, a man

d'Nopesch
neighbour, a woman

den Dokter
doctor

Dir and du: say Dir, with a capital, to anyone you don't know, in shops and at work; du is for friends, children and family. Mäin turns into mäi before most consonants, by the n rule from page 1: mäi Schatz.

Time and things Wéini a wou

When

haut
today

muer
tomorrow

gëschter
yesterday

elo
now

spéider
later

ëmmer
always

dacks
often

ni
never

de Mëtteg
midday, early afternoon

den Owend
evening

d'Nuecht
night

den Dag
day *(d'Deeg, days)*

d'Zäit
time

d'Stonn
hour

d'Woch
week

de Weekend
weekend

de Mount
month

d'Joer
year

Days of the week

de Méindeg
Monday

den Dënschdeg
Tuesday

de Mëttwoch
Wednesday

den Donneschdeg
Thursday

de Freideg
Friday

de Samschdeg
Saturday

de Sonndeg
Sunday

Weather

d'Wieder
weather

d'Sonn
sun

de Reen
rain

de Wand
wind

Things

de Schlëssel
key

d'Buch
book *(d'Bicher, books)*

d'Suen
money *(plural)*

d'Täsch
bag

d'Dier
door

d'Fënster
window

d'Zeitung
newspaper

Getting around

den Auto
car *(masculine, unlike German)*

de Bus
bus

den Zuch
train

de Fliger
plane

de Vëlo
bike

d'Gare
station

d'Vakanz
holiday

lénks / riets
left / right

riichtaus
straight on

Describing words

gutt / schlecht
good / bad

grouss / kleng
big / small

waarm / kal
warm / cold

nei / al
new / old

séier / lues
fast / slow

deier / bëlleg
expensive / cheap

einfach / schwéier
easy / hard *(schwéier also means heavy)*

frou / traureg
glad / sad

schéin
beautiful, nice

midd
tired

rout / blo / gréng
red / blue / green

wäiss / schwaarz
white / black

Numbers

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	20
null	eent	zwee	dräi	véier	fënnef	sechs	siwen	aacht	néng	zéng	eelef	zwielef	zwanzeg

21	30	40	50	100	1,000
eenanzwanzeg	drësseg	véierzeg	fofzeg	honnert	dausend

Numbers read backwards: 21 is eenanzwanzeg, one-and-twenty, just as in German. One is eent when you count, but een or eng before a noun.

Days are masculine: de Méindeg, den Dënschdeg, den Donneschdeg: the n stays before D, as page 1 says.

Food, places, verbs Iessen, goen, maachen

Food and drink

d'Waasser
water

de Kaffi
coffee

den Téi
tea

d'Mëllech
milk

de Wäin
wine

d'Brout
bread

de Kéis
cheese

d'Fleesch
meat

de Fësch
fish

d'Ee
egg

d'Gromper
potato *(d'Gromperen, potatoes)*

den Apel
apple

de Kuch
cake

d'Zopp
soup

d'Iessen
food, a meal

den Zocker
sugar

d'Bouneschlupp
green bean soup

d'Gromperekichelcher
potato fritters

Judd mat Gaardebounen
smoked pork with broad beans

lecker
tasty

Ech hunn Honger
I'm hungry *(it means I have hunger)*

Ech hunn Duuscht
I'm thirsty

D'Rechnung, wann ech gelift
the bill, please

Places

d'Haus
house

heem / doheem
home, going home / at home

d'Schoul
school

d'Aarbecht
work

de Buttek
shop

de Maart
market

de Restaurant
restaurant

de Café
café, also a pub

d'Apdikt
chemist's

d'Bank
bank

d'Spidol
hospital

d'Toilette
toilet

d'Stad
town, city *(d'Stad is also Luxembourg City)*

d'Strooss
street

d'Bréck
bridge

de Bësch
wood, forest

de Bierg
hill, mountain

d'Land
country

Lëtzebuerg
Luxembourg

Lëtzebuergesch
Luxembourgish, the language

Verbs, in the dictionary form

sinn
be

hunn
have

goen
go

kommen
come

maachen
do, make

iessen
eat

drénken
drink

gesinn
see

kucken
look, watch

schaffen
work

schlofen
sleep

schwätzen
speak, talk

soen
say

verstoen
understand

kafen
buy

liesen
read

schreiwen
write

léieren
learn; also teach

wunnen
live *(somewhere)*

lauschteren
listen

waarden
wait

fueren
drive, go by car or bus

spillen
play

kachen
cook

hëllefen
help

gär hunn
like, love *(see page 7)*

wëssen
know a fact

kennen
know a person or place

brauchen
need

wëllen
want

kënnen
can

The dictionary form ends in -en or -n: schaffen, to work; sinn, to be. Most verbs follow schaffen on page 2. Before most consonants the n drops here too: Ech léiere Lëtzebuergesch, but Ech léieren Englesch.

Phrases and show words Moien an Äddi

Hello and goodbye

Moien
hello, hi, at any time of day; also the morning

Gudde Moien
good morning

Gudden Owend
good evening *(the n stays before O)*

Gutt Nuecht
good night

Äddi
bye *(from French adieu)*

Bis geschwënn
see you soon

Bis muer
see you tomorrow

Schéinen Dag!
have a nice day!

Schéine Weekend!
have a nice weekend! *(the n drops before W)*

Wéi geet et?
how are you? *(it means how goes it?)*

Et geet
OK, not bad *(it means it goes)*

Gutt, merci
fine, thanks

Please, thanks and help

Merci
thanks

Villmools merci
thank you very much *(it means many times thanks)*

Wann ech gelift
please

Gär geschitt
you're welcome *(it means gladly done)*

Pardon
sorry, excuse me

Entschëllegt
excuse me *(politely)*

Et deet mer leed
I'm sorry

Wéi heeschs du?
what's your name? *(to a friend)*

Ech heeschen ...
my name is ... *(before most consonants, heesche)*

Schwätzt Dir Englesch?
do you speak English? *(politely)*

Ech schwätzen e bësse Lëtzebuergesch
I speak a little Luxembourgish

Ech verstinn dat net
I don't understand

Ech weess et net
I don't know

Gudden Appetit!
enjoy your meal!

Prost!
cheers!

Gesondheet!
bless you! *(after a sneeze)*

Reactions

Wierklech?
really?

Super!
great!

Genau
exactly

Kloer
sure, of course *(it means clear)*

Oh nee!
oh no!

Kee Problem
no problem *(keen loses its n before P)*

Dat ass egal
never mind, it doesn't matter

Wat ass lass?
what's up? what's going on?

Allez!
come on! *(from French)*

Ech och
me too

Ech och net
me neither

Vill Gléck!
good luck!

Alles Guddes!
all the best! *(and on a birthday)*

The big scenes

Ech hunn dech gär
I love you *(it means I have you gladly)*

Pass op!
careful! watch out!

Hëllef!
help!

Wat ass geschitt?
what happened?

Maach der keng Suergen
don't worry *(to a friend)*

Et ass alles an der Rei
it's all fine

Komm!
come on! come here!

Maach séier!
hurry up! *(to a friend)*

Kuck emol!
look! have a look!

Looss mech a Rou!
leave me alone! *(an loses its n before R)*

Ech sinn doheem!
I'm home!

What to call people

Här
Mr, before a family name

Madame
Mrs or Ms, before a family name

Schatz
darling *(it means treasure: mäi Schatz)*

Kolleg
mate, a friend *(not only a colleague)*

Moien all day: Moien is the everyday hello from morning to night, and Äddi the goodbye. Merci and Pardon come from French and are as Luxembourgish as Moien.

Calling someone: Här and Madame go with the family name and Dir. Use a first name with du, and a man's or woman's first name often takes an article: de Marc, d'Anna. Ech heesche Marc, but Ech heeschen Anna.

Practice Liesen

How: cover the grey lines with a strip of paper. Read the Luxembourgish out loud, then slide it down to check. Can you read every line without peeking? You've got it.

The verb comes second: start with haut or muer and the verb jumps ahead of the person, as in German: Haut ass et kal. Muer gi mir an d'Stad.

Like it with gär: add gär, gladly: Ech hu Kaffi gär. I like coffee. Ech drénke gär Téi. I like drinking tea. And Ech hunn dech gär is I love you.

Spot the n: in every sentence below, look at the words before a consonant. Mir gi muer, but Mir ginn heem: h keeps the n.

Read these sentences

1. Moien, ech sinn d'Anna.
   Hi, I'm Anna.
2. Ech wunnen zu Lëtzebuerg.
   I live in Luxembourg.
3. Entschëllegt, wou ass d'Gare?
   Excuse me, where is the station?
4. Wat kascht dat?
   How much is that?
5. E Kaffi, wann ech gelift.
   A coffee, please.
6. Ech léiere Lëtzebuergesch.
   I'm learning Luxembourgish.
7. Haut ass et ganz kal.
   It's very cold today.
8. Mir gi muer an d'Stad.
   We're going into town tomorrow.
9. D'Zopp ass wierklech lecker!
   The soup is really tasty!
10. Maach der keng Suergen, mir hunn Zäit.
    Don't worry, we've got time.

Meet a word you don't know? In Kitsumi, hover any word in subtitles to see what it means.