How Welsh sounds Ynganu

1 · read it out loud

The trick: Welsh is spelled the way it sounds, so once you know the letters you can read almost any word. Eight letters are written with two signs, ch, dd, ff, ng, ll, ph, rh and th, and a dictionary files each as one letter: llaeth comes after lwc. There's no k, q, v, x or z outside a few borrowed words.

Letters	Sounds like	Example
a e i o	a in hat, e in bed, i in sit, o in hot; held longer in some short words	**mam / da** mum / good
w	a vowel: the oo in book or food; before a vowel, the w in wet	**cwm / gwin** valley / wine
u	the ee in see in the South; said further back in the North	**un / du** one / black
y	like u in the last syllable; in other syllables the u in but	**dyn / mynydd** man / mountain
ch	the ch in Scottish loch, never as in chips	**bach / chwech** small / six
dd	the th in this	**dydd / heddiw** day / today
th	the th in thin	**cath / gwaith** cat / work
f, ff	f is v; ff is f	**fi / ffordd** me / road, way
ll	tongue as for l, then blow air out past its sides	**llaw / llyfr** hand / book
rh	an r with a puff of air	**rhad / rhif** cheap / number
ng	the ng in sing	**llong / angen** ship / need
c, g, si	c and g always hard, as in cat and go; si before a vowel is sh	**siop / gardd** shop / garden
ae, ai, au	close to the eye in my	**cae / haul** field / sun
wy	usually oo and ee in one beat	**bwyd / wy** food / egg
stress	almost always the second-to-last syllable	**ysgol / Cymru** US-gol / KUM-ree

ll · dd · rh

the sounds in names that surprise everyone

Llanelli hla-NEH-hli · **Dafydd** DAV-ith · **Rhys** HREES

â ê î ô û ŵ ŷ

the to bach, little roof, makes a vowel long

tŷ TEE · **dŵr** DOOR · **Siân** SHAHN

W and y are vowels too: cwm, valley, has the oo of book, and dyn, man, sounds like deen in the South. Before another vowel, w is the w of wet: gwin, wine.

F is v, ff is f: fi, me, is said vee, and ffôn, phone, starts like phone. Dd is the soft th of this, th the hard th of thin. Ph only turns up when a p changes: pen, head; ei phen hi, her head.

The to bach and the stress: the little roof on â, ê, î, ô, û, ŵ and ŷ makes a vowel long and can tell two words apart: tân, fire; tan, until. The stress almost always falls on the second-to-last syllable; a few words stress the end, like Cymraeg, Welsh.

North and South: they sound different, and a few everyday words differ: milk is llaeth in the South and llefrith in the North; now is nawr or rŵan. This sheet gives one common way and marks the big differences.

How words work Gramadeg

The verb usually comes first: Dw i'n hoffi te, I like tea, is word for word am I liking tea. Welsh has no word for a, so cath is a cat, or just cat. The is y before a consonant, yr before a vowel or h, and 'r after a vowel: y ci, yr afal, i'r dref.

ci a dog	y ci the dog	y cŵn the dogs	cath a cat	y gath the cat	y cathod the cats

Every noun is masculine or feminine

masculine

stays as it is after y, and so does the describing word after it

y ci, the dog
y bachgen, the boy
ci mawr, a big dog

feminine

softens its first letter after y, and so does the describing word after it

y gath, the cat (cath)
y ferch, the girl (merch)
cath fawr, a big cat (mawr)

Learn the gender with the word: words for women are feminine and words for men masculine, but for most nouns you just learn it. On the next pages each noun wears its gender colour, so you don't have to guess.

Soft mutation: the first letter can change

dy gath your cat, from cath	ei gath e his cat: c softens to g	ei chath hi her cat: c turns to ch, another change
y gath the cat: feminine after y	yn Gymraeg in Welsh, from Cymraeg	dau gi two dogs, from ci: the noun stays singular

Nine letters soften: c to g, p to b, t to d, b to f, d to dd, m to f, ll to l, rh to r, and g drops off: gardd, garden; yr ardd, the garden. Dy, your, ei, his, i, to, o, from, and dau, two, all cause it. To look a word up, think back: gath could be cath.

No single word for yes or no

Wyt ti'n barod? are you ready?	Ydw. yes (it means I am)	Nac ydw. no (it means I am not)

Answer with the verb: Wyt ti'n barod? Ydw, I am. Ydy hi'n oer? Is it cold? Ydy, it is; nac ydy, it isn't. Na alone is a quick, casual no.

Bod, to be, the way people say it

dw i I am	rwyt ti you are, to a friend	mae e / hi he is / she is	dyn ni we are	dych chi you are, politely or to more	maen nhw they are

One verb does the work: add 'n and any verb: Dw i'n dysgu Cymraeg, I'm learning Welsh; Mae hi'n byw yn Abertawe, she lives in Swansea. Ddim makes it not: Dw i ddim yn deall, I don't understand. These are spoken forms; written Welsh is fuller: rydw i, rydyn ni, rydych chi. Ti is you to a friend, a child or family; chi is more than one person, or polite.

The first 258 words Y geiriau cyntaf

How: learn five a day, then listen for them in Welsh films and series. *Pink italics* say how a word is used, not what it means.

Greetings and survival

Shwmae
hello, hi *(South; you'll see it everywhere)*

Su'mae
hello, hi *(North)*

Bore da
good morning

Prynhawn da
good afternoon

Noswaith dda
good evening

Nos da
good night

Hwyl
bye *(it also means fun)*

Hwyl fawr
goodbye

Wela i di
see you *(to a friend)*

Diolch
thanks

Diolch yn fawr
thank you very much

Croeso
welcome; also you're welcome

Os gwelwch yn dda
please *(it means if you see it good)*

Esgusodwch fi
excuse me

Mae'n ddrwg gen i
I'm sorry *(you'll also hear sori)*

Sut wyt ti?
how are you? *(to a friend)*

Sut dych chi?
how are you? *(politely, or to more)*

Da iawn, diolch
very well, thanks *(the answer)*

Beth yw dy enw di?
what's your name? *(to a friend)*

... dw i
I'm ... *(Anna dw i, I'm Anna)*

Dych chi'n siarad Saesneg?
do you speak English?

Dw i ddim yn deall
I don't understand

Dw i ddim yn gwybod
I don't know

Iechyd da!
cheers! *(it means good health)*

Question words

pwy
who *(Pwy yw hwnna? Who's that?)*

beth
what *(often just be)*

ble
where *(in the North, lle)*

pryd
when

pam
why

sut
how

faint
how much, how many *(Faint mae'n gostio? How much is it?)*

pa
which *(pa liw? which colour?)*

O ble dych chi'n dod?
where are you from? *(it means from where do you come?)*

Me and you

fi
me, I *(after a verb also i: dw i, I am)*

ti
you, to a friend, a child or family

e / hi
he / she *(in the North, o for he)*

ni
we, us

chi
you, to more than one, or politely

nhw
they, them

fy
my *(fy nhad, my father, from tad)*

dy
your, to a friend *(dy gath, your cat)*

ein / eich / eu
our / your / their

Little words

a, ac
and *(ac before a vowel: bara ac afal)*

hefyd
also, too

ond
but

neu
or

iawn
very, after the word *(da iawn, very good)*; also OK, right

tipyn bach
a little *(tipyn bach o Gymraeg, a little Welsh)*

dim ond
only, just

yma / yna
here / there; after a noun, this / that *(y tŷ yma, this house)*

gyda
with *(in the North, efo)*

heb
without

yn
in *(yn Abertawe, in Swansea)*

i
to *(i'r dref, to town)*

o
from, of *(o Gymru, from Wales)*

achos
because

efallai
maybe

Hello: Shwmae is the everyday hi in the South and Su'mae in the North, and helo works everywhere. Hwyl, bye, also means fun, so hwyl fawr is a big, warm goodbye.

Please and thanks: os gwelwch yn dda is please to anyone; to a friend, os gweli di'n dda. Diolch is thanks, diolch yn fawr is thanks a lot, and the answer is croeso, welcome.

People and time Pobl ac amser

Family

mam
mum, mother

tad
father, dad

brawd
brother

chwaer
sister

mab
son

merch
daughter; also girl

mam-gu / nain
grandmother *(South / North)*

tad-cu / taid
grandfather *(South / North)*

ewythr
uncle

modryb
aunt

rhieni
parents *(plural)*

teulu
family

plentyn
child *(plant, children)*

gŵr
husband

gwraig
wife

People

dyn
man

menyw / dynes
woman *(South / North)*

bachgen
boy *(bechgyn, boys)*

ffrind
friend

meddyg
doctor

athro
teacher, a man

athrawes
teacher, a woman

pobl
people *(one feminine word: y bobl, the people)*

heddlu
police

Things

ffôn
phone

llyfr
book

arian
money; also silver

allwedd
key

car
car

ffenest
window

drws
door

tocyn
ticket

When

heddiw
today

yfory
tomorrow

ddoe
yesterday

nawr / rŵan
now *(South / North)*

wedyn
later, afterwards

bore
morning

prynhawn
afternoon

noson
evening, night *(one evening)*

dydd
day *(dydd Llun, Monday)*

diwrnod
day, a whole day

awr
hour

amser
time

wythnos
week

mis
month

blwyddyn
year

Days of the week

dydd Llun
Monday *(moon day)*

dydd Mawrth
Tuesday *(Mars day)*

dydd Mercher
Wednesday *(Mercury day)*

dydd Iau
Thursday *(Jupiter day)*

dydd Gwener
Friday *(Venus day)*

dydd Sadwrn
Saturday *(Saturn day)*

dydd Sul
Sunday *(sun day)*

Getting around

bws
bus

trên
train

awyren
plane

maes awyr
airport

gorsaf
station

i'r chwith / i'r dde
to the left / to the right

yn syth ymlaen
straight on

Numbers

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
dim	un	dau, dwy	tri, tair	pedwar, pedair	pump	chwech	saith	wyth	naw	deg	un deg un

12	20	21	30	40	50	100	1,000
un deg dau	dau ddeg	dau ddeg un	tri deg	pedwar deg	pum deg	cant	mil

Counting and nouns: the noun after a number stays singular, and some numbers change its first letter: dau gi, two dogs; tri char, three cars. Two, three and four have a form for feminine nouns: dwy gath, two cats; tair merch, three girls. 11 is un deg un, one ten one; you'll also hear older forms like un ar ddeg.

Days take a capital: dydd Llun is Monday. On Monday softens to ddydd Llun: Wela i di ddydd Llun, see you on Monday.

Food, places, verbs Bwyta, mynd, gwneud

Food and drink

dŵr
water

coffi
coffee

te
tea

llaeth / llefrith
milk *(South / North)*

cwrw
beer

gwin
wine

bwyd
food

bara
bread

caws
cheese

cig
meat

pysgod
fish *(plural; one fish is pysgodyn)*

cawl
soup; also a stew of lamb and leeks

cacen
cake

afal
apple

bara brith
fruit loaf *(it means speckled bread)*

paned
a cuppa, a cup of tea or coffee

brecwast
breakfast

cinio
lunch, dinner *(the midday meal)*

Dw i'n hoffi ...
I like ...

Mae eisiau bwyd arna i
I'm hungry *(it means a need of food is on me)*

Mae syched arna i
I'm thirsty

Places

tŷ
house

adref / gartref
home, going home / at home

ysgol
school

siop
shop

bwyty
restaurant

caffi
café

ysbyty
hospital

dinas
city

tref
town

stryd
street

tŷ bach
toilet *(it means little house)*

môr
sea

mynydd
mountain

afon
river

traeth
beach

castell
castle

Cymru
Wales *(yng Nghymru, in Wales)*

Cymraeg
Welsh, the language *(y Gymraeg)*

Verbs, in the dictionary form

bod
be

mynd
go

dod
come

gwneud
do, make

bwyta
eat

yfed
drink

gweld
see

gweithio
work

cysgu
sleep

siarad
speak, talk

dweud
say, tell

deall
understand

prynu
buy

darllen
read

ysgrifennu
write

dysgu
learn; also teach

byw
live *(somewhere)*

gwrando
listen

aros
wait, stay

hoffi
like

caru
love

gwybod
know a fact

nabod
know a person or place

Describing words

da / drwg
good / bad

mawr / bach
big / small

poeth / oer
hot / cold

newydd / hen
new / old *(hen goes before the noun)*

drud / rhad
expensive / cheap

hawdd / anodd
easy / hard

hapus / trist
happy / sad

hyfryd
lovely

coch / glas / gwyrdd
red / blue / green

The dictionary form never changes: put bod, to be, in front, with 'n (yn) before the verb: Dw i'n bwyta, I eat or I'm eating; Maen nhw'n yfed te, they drink tea. Dw i eisiau, I want, takes no 'n.

Most describing words come after the noun: tŷ mawr, a big house; dydd oer, a cold day. After a feminine noun they soften: cath fach, a small cat; noson dda, a good evening.

Show words Geiriau o'r teledu

Reactions

O ddifri?
seriously? really?

Gwych!
great! brilliant!

Ardderchog!
excellent!

Da iawn!
well done! very good!

Wrth gwrs
of course

Yn union
exactly

Llongyfarchiadau!
congratulations!

Dim problem
no problem

Dim ots
never mind, it doesn't matter

Ych a fi!
yuck!

Dyna ni
there we go, that's it

Chwarae teg
fair play, fair enough *(see below)*

Wel
well, so *(see below)*

The big scenes

Dw i'n dy garu di
I love you *(to one person, as ti)*

Dw i'n gweld dy eisiau
I miss you *(it means I see your need)*

Bydd yn ofalus!
be careful! *(to a friend)*

Helpwch!
help!

Beth ddigwyddodd?
what happened?

Beth sy'n bod?
what's wrong? what's the matter?

Paid â phoeni
don't worry *(to a friend)*

Bydd popeth yn iawn
it'll all be fine

Dere yma!
come here! *(in the North, tyrd yma!)*

Brysia!
hurry up! *(to a friend)*

Pob lwc!
good luck!

Pen-blwydd hapus!
happy birthday!

What to call people

cariad
love, darling *(it means love)*

bach
dear, after a name *(see below)*

bois
lads, guys, to a group

Annwyl ...
Dear ... *(to start a letter)*

Wel and chwarae teg: wel is well; it opens a sentence and fills a pause: Wel, dw i ddim yn gwybod. Well, I don't know. Chwarae teg, fair play, gives credit where it's due: Chwarae teg, mae e wedi trio. Fair play, he's tried.

North and South on screen: the South says Shwmae, nawr and mae e; the North says Su'mae, rŵan and mae o, and dan ni and dach chi for dyn ni and dych chi. Both are right, and you'll hear both.

Calling someone: bach, little, after a name sounds warm: Dafydd bach, and with a woman's name it softens, Siân fach. Cariad, love, is for anyone you're fond of.

Practice Ymarfer

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

Questions: mae turns into ydy, and rwyt into wyt: Mae hi'n oer. Ydy hi'n oer? Is it cold? Wyt ti'n hoffi te? Do you like tea? With dych chi, just ask it: Dych chi'n barod? Are you ready?

Saying no: add ddim: Dw i'n hoffi te. Dw i ddim yn hoffi coffi. I don't like coffee. Mae turns into dyw (in the North, dydy): Dyw hi ddim yn oer. It isn't cold.

Like and would like: Dw i'n hoffi te. I like tea. Hoffwn i de. I'd like some tea. Hoffech chi de? Would you like tea? Dw i eisiau paned. I want a cuppa.

Read these sentences

1. Shwmae, Anna dw i.
   Hi, I'm Anna.

2. Dw i'n dod o Abertawe.
   I'm from Swansea.

3. Esgusodwch fi, ble mae'r tŷ bach?
   Excuse me, where is the toilet?

4. Faint mae'r tocyn yn gostio?
   How much is the ticket?

5. Paned o de, os gwelwch yn dda.
   A cup of tea, please.

6. Dw i'n dysgu Cymraeg.
   I'm learning Welsh.

7. Mae hi'n oer iawn heddiw.
   It's very cold today.

8. Dyn ni'n mynd i'r traeth yfory.
   We're going to the beach tomorrow.

9. Mae'r cawl yma'n hyfryd!
   This cawl is lovely!

10. Paid â phoeni, mae digon o amser.
    Don't worry, there's plenty of time.

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