

German Pronunciation Guide



Vowels includes Italian "bright" vowels [a, e, i, o, u] plus [ɛ, ɔ]

Each vowel has a short and a long version. As a general rule, vowels are long when followed by a single consonant or by **h** and short when followed by two consonants. All double vowels are long.

Written as	Example	English equivalent	IPA
a short	wann	father	ɑ
long	sagen	awe	ɑ:
e short	essen	fed	ɛ
long	Regen	day	ɛ:
i short	immer	lit	ɪ
long	Kino, sie	meet	i:
o short	gott	ought	ɔ
long	wo	row	o:
u short	und	foot, look	ʊ
long	Kuß	moon	u:
ä short	Männer	hen	ɛ
long	spät	ate	ɛ:
ö short	können	Fr. coeur (Brit. further)	ø
long	mögen	Fr. je, deux	ø:
ü short	müssen	Fr. tu (Brit: new)	ʏ
long	milde	garden	y:
e schwa	Garten unaccented		ə (ɛ)

Vowel combinations

Written as	Example		IPA
au long	Frau, Haus	frown	ɑʊ
äu long	Häuser, Bäume	boy	ɔʊ
ei long	ein, mein	mine	ɛi, ai
eu long	heute, Leute	loiter	øʊ

Consonants

Most consonants are pronounced as in English. The exceptions are:

Written as	Example	English Equivalent	IPA
b at end of word	ab	top	p
d at end of word	Kind	mint	t
g at end of word	Tag	lock	k
h at end of syllable	nehmen, froh	though	ɰ
j	ja, jung	yacht	j
s before a vowel	Samstag, Gemüse	zap, lazy	z
s otherwise	lustig	soul	s
z	zwei, ganz	lots, sits	ts
v	viel, vor	feel, for	f
w	wie, wo	venus, vote	v
B	Fuß, Großmutter	hiss	ss
r	Ritter, der	Brit: mother	r, ʁ

Letter combinations

Written as	Example		
ch after a, o, u, au	Tochter, Kuchen	Seet, hoch	x
ch otherwise, ig at end of word	ich, möchten, dreißig	human	ʃ
sch	Flasche, schau	ash, shop	s
tsch	Deutsch	couch	ʃ
sp generally	Sprache	sh-prime	sp
st generally	Stunde	sh-tune	st

Practice words

closed i and e, open e
mir, mehr (to me, more)
hier, her, Herr (here, there, Mr.)
dir, der (to you, the)
Bier, Bär (beer, bear)

i to mixed vowel
Stile, Stühle (style, chair)
liegen, lügen (to lay down, to lie)
vier, für (4, for)
(Eng. fear, add lips)

closed and open e
wer, wär (who, was)
den, denn (the, then)
wen, wenn (whom, if)
(Eng. vain, Venmo)

closed e to mixed vowel
lesen, lösen (read, lose)
Besen bösen (broom, bad)
(Eng. bay, add lips)

open e to mixed vowel
helle, Hölle (bright, hell)
fällig, völlig (due, complete)
(Eng. fell, Brit. further)

closed and open o
wohne, Wonne (dwell, delight)
bog, Bock (bend, ram)
(Eng. own, ought)

closed and open u
spuken spucken (haunt, spit)
(Eng. shoe, shook)

Flipped r or dropped/vowel

Mir, dir, ihr, wir
er, wer
more open when adding vowel

Beethoven *Symphony No. 9*
Freude schöner Götter funken
Tochter aus Elysium
wir betreten feuertrunken
himmlische dein heilig tun!
Deine Zauber binden wieder
was die Mode streng geteilt
Alle Menschen werden Brüder
wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem*
Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen Herr Zebaoth
meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich
nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn
mein Leib und Seele freuen sich in dem lebendigen Gott

Mozart *Requiem* - a touch of German Latin
requiem luceat sanctus coeli

Handbook of Diction for Singers, 2nd edition
David Adams, used at Juilliard School of Music

Vowels

/a/ /a:/ **Mann, Vater**

/e/ /e:/ **Melodie, sehr**

/ɛ/ /ɛ:/ **denn, Träne**

/i/ /i:/ **Universität, liegen**

/ɪ/ **bin, inmitten**

/o/ /o:/ **woran, Sohn**

/ɔ/ **Sonne, trocken**

/u/ /u:/ **Juwel, Buch**

/ʊ/ **Mutter, Ungeduld**

/y/ **Bücher, Elysium**

/ʏ/ **Mütter, Glück**

/ø:/ **schön, Goethe**

/œ/ **plötzlich, Götter**

ɛ/ə/ **gegeben, Liebe**

r/ɐ/ **Bruder, nur, Erde**

Diphthongs

/ae/ **mein, Hain**

/ao/ **Frau, Baum**

/ɔø/ **euch, Bäume**

Affricate Consonants

/ts/ **zehn, Cäcilie**

/tʃ/ **Deutsch**

Nasal Consonants

/n/ **Nacht, nennen**

/m/ **mehr, immer**

/ŋ/ **singen, danken**

Lateral Consonants

/l/ **Licht, füllen**

Glide

/j/ **ja, jetzt, Lilie**

Plosive Consonants air stop

/b/ **beben**

/p/ **Pracht, pfeife, ab**

/d/ **dadurch**

/t/ **Teil, retten, Bad**

/g/ **gegen Gnade**

/k/ **Knie, blicken, Tag**

Fricative Consonants - air flow

/v/ **Wagen, Klavier**

/f/ **von, Philosoph**

/s/ **essen, bis**

/ʃ/ **spät, Stern, rasch**

/z/ **See, gewesen**

/h/ **Hoheit**

/ç/ **ich, durch, selig**

/x/ **ach, auch, doch**

Vibrant Consonants

/r/ **rot, irren**

Other Symbols

/:/ long vowel sound

/' primary syllabic stress

/,/ secondary stress

/ʔ/ glottal separation

REVIEW OF UNITS 4 – 7: Included are examples of rules studied

Provide IPA:

1. es	ɛ	(it)	Blutes	u ə	(blood's)
2. stolze	ɔ	(proud)	ihnen	i ə	(them)
3. hin	i	(there)	vierzig	i I	(forty)
4. <u>ste</u> he	e ə	(stand)	mit	I	(with)
5. ob	ɔ	(whether)	drunter	ʊ	(under)
6. Gruß	ʊ	(greeting)	bis	I	(until)
7. Scherz	ɛ	(joke)	froher	o ə	(more glad)
8. um	ʊ	(around)	direkt	i ɛ	(direct)
9. findet	I ə	(finds)	weg	ɛ	(away) Weg [e]
10. diesig	i I	(hazy)	Mond (d is [t])	o:	(moon)
11. in	I	(in)	Studentin	ʊ ɛ I	(student)
12. Schnee	e	(snow)	von	ɔ	(of)
13. Erde	e	(earth)	ruhten	u ə	(rested)
14. Wille	I ə	(will)	Lehrerin	e ə I	(teacher)
15. tiefer	i ə/ɪ	(deeper)	vom	ɔ	(of the)
16. bin	I	(am)	sprießt	i	(sprouts)
17. Boot	o:	(boat)	ewiges	e I ə	(eternal)
18. des	ɛ	(of the)	im	I	(in the)
19. Besen	e ə	(broom)	Strom	o:	(river)
20. zum	ʊ	(to the)	lustiges	ʊ I ə	(cheerful)