

## Examples for the Guide

Ok, just to jog your memory:

- an apostrophe ' indicates a slender letter (surrounded by e and i)
- C stands for a consonant, any consonant
- V stands for a vowel, any vowel
- anything that appears in brackets ( ) can be there, but doesn't have to be. A hyphen in brackets (-) means that any letter could be there, but doesn't have to be
- a hyphen - means that a letter has to be there
- \* indicates lenition
- Stress normally falls onto the first syllable of a word in Gaelic (see also the page on Stress)

The first word we'll look at is a nice and easy one - doras.

1. The first letter we're looking for is a d. Now the first question you must always ask yourself when looking at a consonant is whether it is broad or slender. This one is broad because it is followed by an a. So look for the d's ... it can only be the first one but how do we read this (-)d(-)? Well, (-) means that there might be a letter there in front of the d but doesn't have to be. In our case, there is nothing in front but we're still fine. Then the d. That just tells us it's a broad d. The last (-) tells us something might come after the d. In our case, there is something after the d so this is our man: [d̪]
2. Next we're looking for an o. Now the first question you must always ask yourself when looking at a vowel is whether it is stressed or unstressed. Or in other words - are we in the first part of the word or not? Yes, we are in the first syllable, so we do not want any entries that say UNSTRESSED. So we look for the o section. Could it be the first one? (-)o(i) + g(-), b(-), m(-), lost C? Well, let's have a look. (-) means that there might be a letter there in front of the o and we have a d, so everything is fine. Then we have the o. The (i) means that there might be an i there but doesn't have to be. In our case, there is no i. The next bunch of letters and brackets mean that the o HAS to be followed by either a g, b, m or a lost consonant. Unfortunately our next letter is an r so it can't be this one. As we eliminate them one by one, we come to the third last one which says (-)o(i)-ELSEWHERE. Since none of the others apply, this is the one we want: [o]
3. Next we want an r so the first question is: broad or slender? Broad, because there is an o in front and an a after. Single broad r ... how about -r(-)? This means something has to come in front ☑ and something might come after ☑. So it's an [r].

4. Next we're looking for an a. So the first question is: stressed or unstressed? Unstressed, we're nowhere near the first part of the word. So we need something that says a UNSTRESSED. And sure enough, we have -a(-) UNSTRESSED. This means something has to come in front ☑ and something might come after ☑. So it's an [ə]
5. Last letter is an s, so ... broad or slender? Broad because there is an a in front. Broad s is easy, there is only one option (-)s(-) ... something might be in front ☑ and something might be after - which we don't but that's ok. So it's an [s]

So there you go, the whole word is [dʒərəs]. Now this might seem like a lot of trouble to get to one simple word and in this case it probably is. But remember two things: this was an easy word and not all pronunciation rules are as simply and that as time goes on, the more you use the Guide the more of it you will remember and the less you will need to refer to it for every letter!

Ok, how about a more tricky one like caill?

1. The first letter we're looking for is a c. so the first question is: broad or slender? Broad, because there is an a after it. Not a huge amount of choice here - it's the first one. It reads (C)c- which means that there might be a consonant in front of it but doesn't have to be ☑, that it's a broad c ☑ and that something has to come after it ☑. It's a [k]
2. Ok, next we're looking for an ai combination. Seeing these are vowels, the first question is: stressed or unstressed? Stressed (this word only has one syllable so chances are it's stressed) so we do not want any entries that say UNSTRESSED. Could it be the first entry (-)a(i)(-)? Possibly, but to be on the safe side, let's check whether there is a more specific rule which applies to this word. Can't be the second entry, that says UNSTRESSED. 3 and 4 are out of the question too because there is no dh anywhere. 5 isn't possible either as this talks about a followed by something. How about 6? (-)ai + ll, nn, m ... this means an ai which is followed by ll, nn or m at the end of a word (or in the second row followed by another consonant llC, nnC, mC). This is certainly the case here so we've found out entry: [ai]
3. Next we need a ll, so the big question is: broad or slender? Slender, because there is an i right in front of the ll. That's also an easy one, there is only one slender ll: -ll'(-), so something has to be in front ☑, slender double ll ☑ and something might come after it ☑ so it's a [l']. That makes the whole word [kaiL']

How about cailleach then? Wouldn't that be ... well, let's see shall we?

1. The first letter we're looking for is a c. so the first question is: broad or slender? Broad, because there is an a after it. Not a huge amount of choice here - it's the first one. It reads (C)c- which means that there might be a consonant in front of it but doesn't have to be ☑, that it's a broad c ☑ and that something has to come after it ☑. It's a [k], same as before.
2. Ok, next we're looking for an ai combination. Seeing these are vowels, the first question is: stressed or unstressed? Stressed (this word only has one syllable so chances are it's stressed) so we do not want any entries that say UNSTRESSED. How about the same entry as for caill? Well, entry 6 for ai states that it applies to words which either end in ll or have a consonant directly after it: llC. Since in cailleach the ll is followed by a vowel, it can't be entry 6. Looking on, we find 7 a likely candidate: (-)a(i) + llV ... which translates as a or ai followed by ll followed by another VOWEL. Since this is exactly what we have here, we've found our man: [a]
3. Next we need a ll, so the big question is: broad or slender? Slender, because there is an i right in front of the ll. That's also an easy one, there is only one slender ll: -ll'(-), so something has to be in front ☑, slender double ll ☑ and something might come after it ☑ so it's a [lʲ].
4. The next letter is ea, the first question is: stressed or unstressed? Unstressed, so we need something that says ea UNSTRESSED. Again, this is an easy one as there is only one ea that says unstressed, so it's [ə]
5. Last we have a ch, so the big question is: broad or slender? Broad, there is an a right in front of it. Again the choice here is easy, there is only one option for a broad ch: (-)ch(-), so it's pronounced [x] which makes the whole word: [kaLʲəx]

Notice how the vowel is different here compared to caill? This isn't something arbitrary going on and if you want to know what it is, check out the page on [compensatory lengthening](#).