



Latin Pronunciation Guide

Italian/Ecclesiastical Pronunciation



Carmenta
Online Latin Tutors

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Vowels

The precise pronunciation of vowels depends on the context of the vowel, the letters that are around it. The best way to learn the exact length of vowels in various words is to listen to your teacher and imitate.

A (long)	ah	<i>as in father</i>	example: Ītalia
A (short)	uh	<i>as in Maria</i>	example: lūna
E (long)	ay	<i>as in hay</i>	example: ēvenio
E (short)	eh	<i>as in bet (really, though, the short "e" is more of a slightly shortened version of ay)</i>	example: venter
I (long)	ee	<i>as in machine</i>	example: sīcut
I (short)	ih	<i>as in bit (really the short and long "i" are a shortened or lengthened version of a sound in between ee and ih)</i>	example: missus
O (long)	oh	<i>as in flow without the final "w" sound</i>	example: nōn
O (short)	oar (without the r sound)	<i>as in order</i>	example: hortus
U	oo	<i>as in tulip</i>	example: tua
Y	ee	<i>pronounced exactly like Latin long I sound, as in machine</i>	example: hymnus

AE	ay	<i>pronounced exactly like Latin long E sound (like ay in English “stay”)</i>	example: aeterna
OE	ay	<i>pronounced exactly like Latin long E sound (like ay in English “stay”)</i>	example: coelī
AI	aye	<i>as in by</i>	examples: ait Cāius
AU	ow	<i>as in now</i>	example: laudāmus
EI	ay	<i>as in day</i>	examples: rei ēia
EU	ay-oo or eh-oo slurred together	<i>like the vowel sounds of day and you in quick succession</i>	examples: meus ēheu
<i>*“ai”, “ei”, and “eu” can be pronounced as two separate syllables or as diphthongs depending on the context; “au” is always a diphthong</i>			
UA	oo-ah or wah		examples: quā suāvis sua
UE	oo-eh or weh		examples: anguem ēruens
UI	oo-ee or oo-ih or wee or wih		examples: aliquī docuit
UO	oo-oh or woh		examples: equō abnuo

"ua", "ue", "ui", and "uo" can be pronounced as two separate syllables or as diphthongs depending on the context

Consonants

B	b	<i>as in bat</i>	example: bonae
C	k	<i>as in cut before consonants; before A, O, U; or at the end of a word</i>	examples: sacra cantāte sicut huic
C	ch	<i>as in child before E, I, Y, AE, OE</i>	examples: parcē dulcis cymbalum caelestis coelī
CC	k-ch or ch-ch	<i>as "k-ch" or "ch-ch" before E, I, Y, AE, OE</i>	examples: ecce accipiter [Two ways to pronounce the double "c": "eck-chay" or "ech-chay." Strictly speaking, it should be the first, but the "k" sound is lost when pronouncing.]
CC	k	<i>as in cut before A, O, U</i>	example: peccāta
CH	k	<i>as in cut</i>	example: chorus
D	d	<i>as in down</i>	example: donā
F	f	<i>as in feet</i>	example: filius

G	g	as in gold before consonants (except N) or before A, O, U	examples: grātia gaudē ergō singulus
G	j	as in gem before E, I, Y, AE, OE	examples: genuit frēgit
GN	ny	as in canyon	examples: magnam agnus
H	h	as in hair	examples: mihi nihil But initial "h's" are <i>SILENT!</i>
J	y	as in yet	example: ejus (eius) <i>[written as "i" in Classical Period]</i>
K	k	as in key	example: kalendae
L	l	as in light	example: liber
M	m	as in moon	example: meum
N	n	as in nice	example: dōnec
P	p	as in pan	example: prīma
PH	f	as in phone	example: prophēta
QU	kw	as in quick <i>[Just as in English, the letter "q" is always followed by "u" and they are pronounced together as a single sound.]</i>	example: quando

R	r [but trilled slightly]	as in rest [but never as intense as the English R]	examples: rēgīna [For a single “r” there is a very slight trill, hardly noticeable.] terra [For a double “r” there is a slight prolongation of the trill, but it is still slight, nothing like the Spanish roll.]
S	s	as in sing , when not between two vowels in its word	example: semper
S	z	as in rise when between two vowels in its word	example: miserēre
SC	sk	as in scale before A, O, U	examples: requiescat cognosco obscura
SC	sh	as in shine before E, I, Y, AE, OE	examples: dēscendit suscitāns
SCH	sk	as in school	examples: schola paschāli
T	t	as in time before all letters except i + vowel; and at ends of words	examples: sanctum timeo erat
TI	tsee	as in tse-tse fly before a vowel and preceded by any letter except S, T, X	examples: grātia sitio
TI	tee	as in tea before a vowel and after S, T, X	example: modestia
TH	t	as in thyme	example: theātrum
V	v	as in vine	example: vīnum

X	ks	<i>as in tax</i>	example: lux
Z	dz	<i>as in seeds</i>	example: Gāza

Rules of Accent

ultima: the last syllable of a word

penult: the second-to-last syllable of a word

antepenult: the third-to-last syllable of a word

- 1) If a word has one syllable, accent that one syllable.
- 2) If a word has two syllables, accent the first of the two syllables.
- 3) If a word has three or more syllables, then it is accented on either the penult or the antepenult, and you need to use the following Rules of Accent to determine which of the two syllables is accented.

- 1) If the penult is long, accent it. If the penult is short, accent the antepenult.
- 2) How to tell if the penult is long:
 - a) It contains a diphthong, or
 - b) It is long by nature (it has a macron over the vowel), or
 - c) It is long by position (it is followed by two consecutive consonants).

If it fits into none of these three categories, then the penult is short.

Also, remember that a vowel followed by a vowel is always short.

