

Duilleag Mìneachaidh



Fàilte oirbh! | Welcome!

Learners in Scotland may be surprised by the number of Gaelic words commonly used in Scottish English. Gaelic words, or words derived from Gaelic, are often used to talk about the landscape, **loch** 'loch, lake', **beinn** 'ben, mountain', **gleann** 'glen'. Place names in Scotland are very often of Gaelic origin, with **baile** 'town', **ceann** 'head' and **caol** 'narrows' appearing frequently. Scottish cultural activities often involve Gaelic words and traditions, **cèilidh** 'ceilidh, visit', **uisge-beatha** 'whisky' and **sgian dubh** 'black knife'.

Fàilte | Welcome Slàinte | Cheers Bùrach | Bourach Cèilidh | Ceilidh Clann | Clan Gu leòr | Galore Beinn | Ben Uisge-beatha | Whisky
Sasannach | Sasennach
Sluagh-ghairm | Slogan
Bothan | Bothy
Gleann | Glen
Caol | Kyle
Loch | Loch

Càrn | Cairn
Cabair | Caber
Bròg | Brogue
Sgian dubh | Skean dhu
Sporan | Sporran
Capall-coille | Capercaillie

Srath | Strath



Aibidil na Gàidhlig | The Gaelic Alphabet

Although the English alphabet uses 26 letters, not all European languages use all of these. Italian for example only uses 21, but Gaelic is even more efficient, getting by with just 18. Despite using relatively few characters, Gaelic actually has more sounds than English. These additional sounds are represented by combinations of letters, with the letters **h** and **i** frequently used to represent a change in sound. English speakers will be familiar with this concept, for example, we know that a **ph** is pronounced as **f**, and that **t** in words finishing **-tion** is pronounced **sh**.

The alphabet below shows all the letters used in English, with those not used in Gaelic crossed out and marked in red:











Beannachdan | Greetings & Goodbyes

Math or Mhath

Madainn and **Oidhche** are feminine nouns, which cause lenition where possible in any adjectives which follow them. **Feasgar** and **Latha** are masculine nouns and these do not cause lenition in adjectives which follow them.

Madainn mhathGood morning

Oidhche mhath Goodnight

Feasgar mathGood afternoon

Latha math Good day

As in English, **Madainn mhath** 'Good Morning' and **Feasgar math** 'Good Afternoon' are a bit formal as greetings. A more informal greeting in Gaelic would be **Sin thu** or **Sin sibh** meaning 'That's you' or 'There you are' - we might say 'It's yourself' as an equivalent to these in English.

Halò | Hello

Haidh | Hey

Sin thu/sibh | There you are

Saying Goodbye

Beannachd leat/leibh 'Blessings with you' and **Slàn leat/leibh** 'Farewell, Go safe' are typical blessings, with the response **Mar sin leat/leibh** 'Like that with you' commonly used. **Tìoraidh** is a common informal goodbye, a Gaelic version of 'Cheerio'. **Oidhche mhath** 'Goodnight' is, like the English, only used when parting company of an evening.

Beannachd leat / leibh

Blessings with you

Slàn leat / leibh Health with you

Tìoraidh/Tìors an-dràsta Cheers just now

Leat VS leibh

- leat is the singular form for speaking to one person.
- **leibh** is the plural, for speaking to more than one person, or the polite form.









Ainmean sa Ghàidhlig | Names in Gaelic

The form of a person's name changes when we are talking directly to them. This is called 'The Vocative Case', **An Tuiseal Gairmeach**. Masculine and feminine names follow different rules. Words in the vocative case are preceded by **a**, except when they start with a vowel, or **f** + vowel.

When we soften an initial consonant, this is marked by an **h**, and is called 'lenition'. The letters **l**, **n**, **r** don't show lenition in writing. Words which begin with **sg**, **sm**, **sp**, **st** cannot lenite as these sounds are too strong to soften. 'Slenderisation' is when we change the sound at the end of a word, adding an **i** before the final consonant, or consonant group, or when we change a final broad vowel, **ean** ending to **ein**.

FEMALE NAMES: LENITE ONLY

1. Names starting with a consonant

Madainn mhath a Mhòrag!

The name **Mòrag** changes to **A Mhòrag** in the Vocative Case, so we can see that female names lenite, shown by the **h** after the first consonant. However feminine names don't slenderise, although they often have slender endings in any case.

2. Names starting with L, N, R

Sin thu, a Raonaid!

Remember that words starting with **L, N, R,** or **Sg, Sm, St, Sp** don't lenite so no changes are made to the name **Raonaid**.

3. Names starting with a vowel

Feasgar math, Eilidh!

When a name begins with a vowel, we drop the **a** before the name. Vowels cannot lenite, so no changes are made to names here. MALE NAMES: LENITE AND SLENDERISE

1. Names starting with a consonant

Madainn mhath a Sheumais!

The name **Seumas** changes to **A Sheumais** in the Vocative Case. From this, we can see that male names lenite, shown by the **h** after the first consonant, and also slenderise their endings, shown by the **i** before the final consonant.

2. Names starting with L, N, R

Sin thu, a Ruairidh!

Remember that words starting with **L, N, R,** or **Sg, Sm, St, Sp** don't lenite. In this example, the name **Ruaraidh** already has a slender final vowel, **i**, so we do not need to change this.

3. Names starting with a vowel

Feasgar math, lain!

With names beginning with a vowel, we drop the a before the name in the Vocative Case. Again the name lain already has a slender ending, with an **i** as the final vowel, so we don't need to change this.







4. Names starting with F+vowel

Oidhche mhath, Fhionnghal!

Again, like male names, we drop the **a** before the word as the **Fh** is silent, leaving the lenited name starting with a vowel. We don't slenderise female names in the vocative so **Fionnghal** becomes **Fhionnghal**.

4. Names starting with F+vowel

Oidhche mhath, Fhearghais!

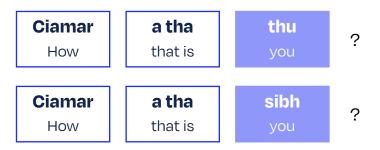
The name **Fearghas** starts with an F+vowel and when we lenite words starting with **F** the **Fh** becomes silent. This means that the name now starts with a vowel sound and for this reason we drop the **a** before the name. We also have to slenderise the broad **as** ending, so we get **Fhearghais** in the Vocative.



Ciamar a tha sibh? | How are you?

Like many European languages, Gaelic has a singular, informal, and a plural, formal, form of the word 'you'. You should always check which pronouns other learners are comfortable with and use them accordingly: **thu**, **sibh**, **e**, **i**, or **iad**.

- thu is the informal and singular form
- **sibh** is the formal and plural form



- A: Ciamar a tha **thusa**?
- B: Tha **mise** gu math. Ciamar a tha **sibh fhèin**?
- A: Chan eil mi dona, tapadh leat.

To add stress to a word in Gaelic, we don't use our voice like we do in English, we use an emphatic ending, or add **fhèin** 'self' as in the above dialogue. The simple pronouns all have emphatic versions, given in the table to the right.

Ciamar	a tha	thusa
How	that is	YOU
Tha	mise	gu math
Am	/	well

I / me	mi
you	thu
he / him	е
she / her	i
we / us	sinn
you (pl)	sibh
they / them	iad

mi	mise
thu	thusa
е	esan
i	ise
sinn	sinne
sibh	sibhse
iad	iadsan







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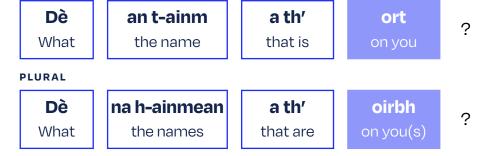


Dè an t-ainm a th' oirbh? | What is your name?

Dè an t-ainm a th' ort? literally means 'What is the name that is on you?' Gaelic has a feature known as prepositional pronouns, which means there is a special form when using a phrase like 'on you'. In Gaelic the preposition, in this example, 'on', comes together with the pronoun, here 'you', giving us **ort** rather than 'air + thu'.

Both **a tha air** and **a th' air** are seen, but it is common to drop a vowel when two vowels come together, known as 'elision'. **Tha** is therefore often shortened to **th'** when followed by a vowel. This is noticeable in speech where **tha** will run into the next word rather than be pronounced separately.

SINGLE



Like French and some other European languages, Gaelic has a singular and plural or formal form of the word 'you';

- is the singular form ort
- oirbh is the plural or polite form

air + mi orm air + thu ort air + e air oirre air + i air + sinn oirnn oirbh air + sibh air + iad orra

Saying what your name is

The easiest and most common response to this question is **Is mise** meaning 'I am '. There also is a way to say 'My name is ' which follows a similar structure to the question: 'S e Màiri an t-ainm a th' orm or 'S e Màiri a th' orm.

Caraidean Ùra | New Friends







