

# German Diction Primer

## Vowels

<i>written</i>	<b>Long (closed) vowel</b>		<b>Short (open) vowel</b>	
	<i>sung</i>	<i>equivalent</i>	<i>sung</i>	<i>equivalent</i>
a	[ɑ]	as in British "bath"	[a]	"ah"
ä	[e]	as in "take"	[ɛ]	"eh"
e	[e]	as in "take"	[ɛ]	"eh"
i	[i]	"ee"	[ɪ]	"ih"
o	[o]	"oh"	[ɔ]	as in British "hot"
ö	[ø]	as in British "bird"	[œ]	slightly relaxed [ø]
u	[u]	"oo"	[ʊ]	as in "hook"
ü	[y]	rounded [i]	[ʏ]	slightly relaxed "ü"

- Long: final, stressed syllable  
before single consonant followed by vowel  
before single consonant in root syllable
  - Short: before two or more consonants  
before 2+ consonants in root syllable  
unstressed prefixes
  - "e" becomes [ə] (schwa) for unstressed prefixes, and final, unstressed syllables.
  - "o" becomes [ɔ] for final, unstressed syllables.
  - Prolong the first vowel in all diphthongs: ai/ei=[ai]="sigh", au=[au]="ow", äu/eu=[ɔɪ]="oy".
  - Every word that begins with a vowel is preceded by a glottal stop
- double vowel  
before "h"  
end of word  
most prepositions  
unstressed "i", "u"  
before ß, "ck", "ng", "sch", usually "ch"

## Consonants

- Many consonants are as in English: d, f, h, k, l, m, n, ng, p, t, x
- Some are otherwise consistent: qu=[kv], th=[t], v=[f], w=[v], z=[ts], ß=[s]

<i>written</i>	<i>sung</i>	<i>equivalent</i>
b	[b]	"b". <i>Exception</i> : [p] at end of word or syllable.
c	[k]	"k". <i>Exception</i> : [ts] before a front vowel.
ch	[x] [ç]	A guttural sound, like a prolonged "k". After a, o, u, au. A hissing sound at the back of the front teeth. After e, i, etc.
d	[d]	"d". <i>Exception</i> : [t] at end of word, or end of root syllable before consonant.
g	[g] [k]	Hard "g", as in "go". "k". At end of word or syllable. <i>Exception</i> : [ç] after "i".
j	[j]	"y", as a glide.
r	[r]	Flipped (or rolled for double). <i>Exception</i> : dropped at end of word.
s	[s] [z] [ʃ]	"s" "z". At start of word, intervocalic, or after voiced consonant <i>and</i> before vowel. "sh". Before "p" or "t" at start of word or syllable.
sch	[ʃ]	"sh"
st	[ʃt]	"sht". At start of word, or root syllable. <i>Otherwise</i> , "st".