

## Introductory information

### Pronunciation:

The accent marks you see over the "long vowels" are called "fadas". Fada means long in Irish. If you have your computer language setting to Irish, you can make a fada vowel by typing "option + a" (or whatever vowel you wish). You can even make a capital fada vowel by typing "option + shift + a" Every computer system is different, but if you figure this out it will save you LOTS of time. Fadas are very important. An "a fada" or "á" is its own letter. The pronunciation and stress of the word is different because of the fada.

The vowels are pretty easy to catch on to. They are much like vowels in English.

Broad and slender consonants.... A consonant is called broad if it is next to an a, o or u. A consonant is slender if it is next to an i or e. This is similar to our English soft and hard consonants.... the difference is, in English the consonant is affected by the vowel after it (agitate - g is soft because an i is after it). In Irish, the consonant must be surrounded by slender or broad consonants. This is one reason that Irish words look so bizarre to our English mind. MOST of the time, you will NOT see an i on one side of a consonant and an a on the other. They purposely surround the consonant with either slender or broad. This changes the sound of some consonants in ways we English speakers will not expect. (I only found 2 words on the whole phrase sheet that violates this: "aris" and "ansin" A is broad and i is slender. This is a pretty rare example of breaking the rules.)

The almighty "h". For grammatical reasons, an h is often added to a consonant in a word. This changes how it is pronounced. You must also be aware of whether the consonants are surrounded by slender or broad vowels. When you begin getting used to this, you will know you are making progress! It happens all the time, so be ready with your pronunciation sheet to help you along for a little while.

The double vowel combinations work a little differently than in English.

The final category of double vowels has a column that says "Glide vowel". Remember I said that consonants are surrounded by either slender or broad. This glide vowel is simply a vowel to make sure this rule stays in order.... This doesn't have to make sense. I'll point it out to you as we look at some of the common phrases.

### The phrases:

Ireland has distinct dialects in various regions. We will occasionally come across phrases like "How are you?" that are very very different in Irish depending on the region. We will also find conflicting pronunciation. Once you get a grasp on the basics, it becomes easier to modify your pronunciation to go with a specific region. So if you do end up studying in Ireland some day, don't worry. You will have enough of a head start that shifting a little to accommodate regional differences will be easy.