

Séimhiú (Lenition/Aspiration/Softening)

Litir Letter	Seáncló Old Script	Sampla Example	Fuaimniú Pronunciation	Béarla English
bh	ḃ	an bhean bhuel	[f]un van well	the woman well!
ch	ċ	a chat	a khot	his cat
dh	ḋ	dhuit dhíol	Gitch yiel[d]	for you sold
fh	ḟ	ar fhíll sí?	or ill she	did she return?
gh	ġ	ghoid ghéill	Gidge Yale	stole surrendered
mh	ṁ	gan mhoill a mhéar	gone will a ver[y]	w/o delay his finger
ph	ṗ	a Phóil	a foil	Paul!
sh	ś, ř	shíl mé	heel may	I thought
th	ṫ	a thoil	a hill	his will

Séimhiú “softens” the sound of a letter in Irish. This is shown in the old script by putting a dot over the letter, and in the new script by writing an “h” after it. Note that “d”, “s”, and “t” sometimes do not get séimhiú when they come after an “n”. Also, some of the sounds depend on whether they are broad (next to “a”, “o” or “u”) or slender (next to “e” or “i”).

Urú (Eclipsis)

Litir Letter	Seáncló Old Script	Sampla Example	Fuaimniú Pronunciation	Béarla English
n-a	n-Δ	ár n-athair	are no[t] her	our father
mb	mb	a mbó	a mow	their cow
gc	gc	a gcill	a gill	their church
nd	nθ	i ndán	in on	in store
n-e	n-e	a n-eilifint	a n-elephant	their elephant
bhf	bḟ	an bhfuil tú?	un will too	are you?
ng	nɣ	i ngrá	[s]ing raw	in love
n-i	n-ɪ	le n-ithe	le ni[t] hu[t]	to eat
n-o	n-o	le n-ól	le knoll	to drink
bp	bp	a bpáirc	a bark	their park
dt	θt	an dtig leat?	[f]un dig [f]lat	can you?
n-u	n-u	a n-úll	[f]un [p]ool	their apple

Urú changes the sound of a letter to that of a different letter. The new sound is written in front of the one that it replaces or “eclipses”. Note that “d”, “s”, and “t” sometimes do not get urú when they come after an “n”. Also, the “n” prefix on a vowel only happens in certain cases; the dash is needed when confusion can occur (e.g. *ár n-athair* = our father, *ár nathair* = our snake).

Other Changes at the Start of a Word

Litir Letter	Seáncló Old Script	Sampla Example	Fuaimniú Pronunciation	Béarla English
h-a	h-Δ	a h-aghaidh	a high	her face
h-e	h-e	a h-eilifint	a h-elephant	her elephant
h-i	h-ɪ	le h-im	le him	with butter
h-o	h-o	le h-ocras	le[t] hoe crus[t]	with hunger
h-u	h-u	a h-úll	a hool[igan]	her apple
t-a	τ-Δ	an t-aer	un tare	the air
t-e	τ-e	an t-éileamh	un [s]tay love	the request
t-i	τ-ɪ	an t-iasc	un tea [h]usk	the fish
t-o	τ-o	an t-ocras	un toe crus[t]	the hunger
t-u	τ-u	an t-úll	un tool	the apple
ts	τs, τɾ	sa tSeapáin	saw chap on	in Japan

The “h” prefixes can be written with or without a dash. The “t” prefixes must be written with a dash when confusion can occur (e.g. *an t-éad* = the jealousy, *an téad* = the rope). The “t” prefix on “s” can be written with or without a dash.