

Ceacht

1

**Dia dhuit!
Conas atá tú?**

Hello! How are you?



This lesson looks at common greeting and introductions – the sorts of things that begin any conversation.

This lesson contains the following topics:

1. Hello!
2. Greeting more than one person
3. Saying 'How are you?'
4. Introductions
5. Broad and slender consonants
6. Séimhiú (Lenition)
7. The vocative case of personal names
8. Ordering drinks
9. Please and thank you
10. Saying goodbye
11. Personal pronouns
12. Tá and Níl

Greetings and introductions

1. Hello!

The first thing you need to learn is how to say, “Hello!”

In Irish, a formal, although religious, greeting is:

(May) God bless you! **Go mbeannaí Dia dhuit!**

/gə m'æ:ni: d'ia̯ ɣit' /

Or the shortened version:

(lit. God to-you!) **Dia dhuit!**

/d'ia̯ ɣit' /



The Irish word for God is related to the Latin, *Deus* (*Gloria in excelsis Deo*) and *diva* (the Latin for *goddess*), and languages descended directly from Latin, such as Italian *Dio* and French, *Dieu*, (Old/Norman French, *Dioes*), as well as other Indo-European languages, the Greek, *Zeus*, and *theos*. Borrowing from these languages led to the development of the English words, *deity*, *divine* and *theology*.

The reply to this greeting is:

(lit.) God and Mary to-you! **Dia's Muire dhuit!**

/d'ias mir'ə ɣit' /

You might also be greeted with: **Dia's Muire dhuit!**

The reply, then, would be:

God and Mary and St Patrick to-you! **Dia's Muire dhuit agus Pádraig!**

/d'ias mir'ə ɣit' a:gəs pɑ:dræg' /

Someone could also greet you with **Dia's Muire dhuit agus Pádraig!**

Then you would have to think up another saint to add, such as **Bríd** (*St Bridget*) or **Máirtín** (*St Martin*). Try this:

*God and Mary and St Patrick
and all the Saints to you!*

**Dia's Muire dhuit agus Pádraig agus
na Naoimh uile!**

/d'ias mir'ə ɣit' a:gəs pɑ:dræg' a:gəs
nə nɔ:β' il'ə /

There! That should put an end to it!

Friends often greet each other with:

Any news? **Aon scéal?**
/u:N s'k'e:L/

The most frequent reply you'd hear is:

No news! **Diabhal scéal!** **Dheamhan scéal!**
/d'auL s'k'e:L/ ^{u,c} /ɣ'u:N s'k'e:L/ ^c
/d'iəβəL s'k'e:L/ ^M



An Diabhal is *the Devil*! So, literally it means: *Devil news*! The word is often used in colloquial Irish as an 'emphatic negative' meaning: *not a scrap*! In Conamara, you might hear **dheamhan** (*demon*) instead.

Of course, if you do have some exciting news, be sure to tell your friend about it!

When you walk into a pub, or into someone's house, you would say:

God (bless those) in the house! **Dia sa teach!**
/d'iə sə t'æ:x/

The reply is still: **Dia's Muire dhuit!**

2. Greeting more than one person

Duit is a combination of two words: **do**, meaning *to* or *for*, and **tú** meaning *you*.

When speaking to more than one person, the word for *you* is **sibh**.

If you are greeting more than one person, you'd say:

Dia dhaoibh!
/d'iə ɣu:β'/

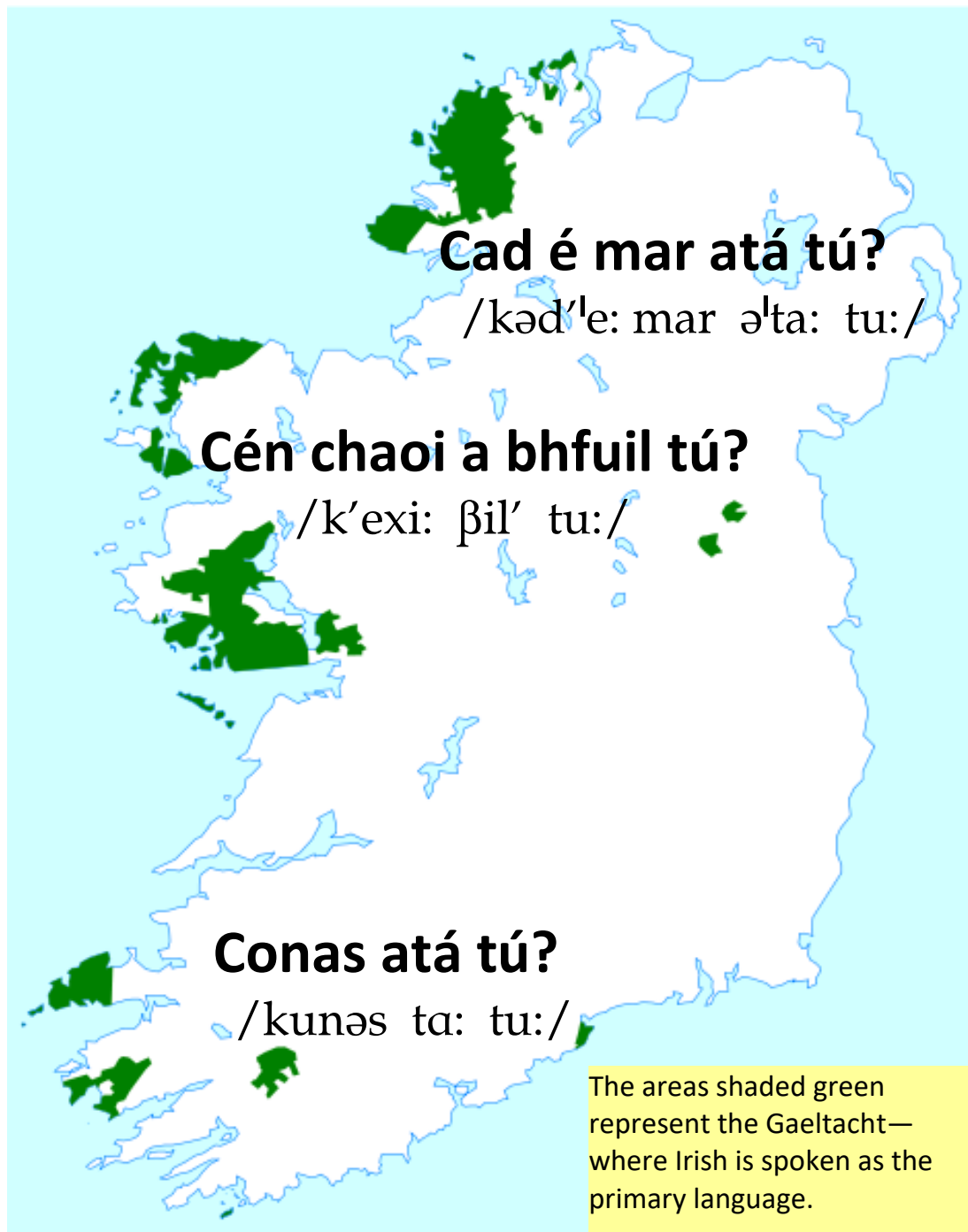
do + tú = duit

do + sibh = daoibh

In most parts of Ireland, after a word ending with a vowel sound, the **d** in **duit** and **daoibh** (and all words derived from **do**), is usually *lenited* (softened) to **dh**. In Conamara, it is usually always *lenited*, but in Donegal, it is almost never *lenited*, and you'll hear: **Dia duit!** or **Dia dhaoibh!** (More about *lenition* in Section 5.)

3. Saying 'How are you?'

It is very common for people to greet each other simply with 'How are you? People say 'How are you?' differently – according to the region they are from.



The easiest to remember is the one most commonly used in Munster and Leinster: **Conas atá tú?** **Conas** means *how*. But in the *Gaeltacht* areas of Ulster, **cad é mar** (*what way*), and in Connacht, **cén chaoi** (*what shape*) are more common ways of saying *how*.

Compare **Conas atá tú?** with Italian: *Come stai (tú)?*
or Spanish: *Como estás (tú)?*

And how would you answer?

I am	Tá mé /tɑ: m'e:/ ^{C,U}	{	<i>well</i>	go maith	/gə ma: /
			<i>very well</i>	go han(a)-mhaith*	/gə ha:N(ə)βa: /
			<i>fine</i>	go breá	/gə b'r'a: /
			<i>wonderful(ly)</i>	go hiontach	/gə hʉntəx /
or	Táim /tɑ:m' / ^M	{	<i>poorly</i>	go dona	/gə duNə /
			<i>awful(ly)</i>	go hainnis	/gə ha:N'is' /
			<i>tired</i>	tuirseach*	/tir's'əx /
			<i>sick</i>	tinn	/t'i:N' / /t'aiN' / ^M

Placing the word **go** before an adjective turns it into an adverb, similar to the suffix *-ly* in English: **ciúin**, *quiet*; **go ciúin**, *quietly*

Go causes an **h** to be prefixed to the next word it starts with a vowel: For example: **iontach**, *wonderful*; **go hiontach**, *wonderful(ly)*

***An** (**ana** in Munster) means *very*, and is always stressed. It is written with a hyphen connecting it to the word it modifies, and causes séimhiu (lenition) to the following sound (except **t**, **d** or **s**).

If you are well, it is traditional to thank God for the state of your health: **Tá mé go maith, buíochas le Dia!** *I'm well, thanks to God!*

And the common reply is: **Agus tú féin?** *And yourself?*

Here are some other common expressions:

Not so bad (as that). **Níl mé chomh dona sin.**
/n'i:l' m'e: xə duNə s'in' /

No complaints (for-me). **Ní gearánta dhom.**
/n'i: g'æ:ra:ntə yʉm /



Good enough. OK. **Maith go leor.**
/ma: gə l'o:r /

Right enough. OK. **Ceart go leor.**
/k'æ:rt gə l'o:r /

*Rather than **Tá mé tuirseach**, (*I'm tired*), it is more common to hear **Tá tuirse orm**. (*lit. Tiredness is on-me.*)

4. Introductions

What is your name?

The most common way of asking someone their name is:

Cad is ainm duit?

/ka:d is a:n'əm' dít' /

Which literally means:

What is (a) name for-you?

And you would reply:

... is ainm dom.

/... is a:n'əm' dum/

... is my name.

(... is (a) name for-me.)

You are also likely to hear:

Cén t-ainm atá ort?

/k'e:n ta:n'əm' ə'ta:rt/

Which literally means:

What name is on-you?

And you would reply:

... atá orm.

/... ə'ta:rəm/

... is my name.

(... is on-me.)

And you could simply answer:

Is mise... or just Mise ...

/is m'is'ə/

/m'is'ə/

I'm ...

To introduce someone, you simply have to say: *This is...*:

Seo é ...

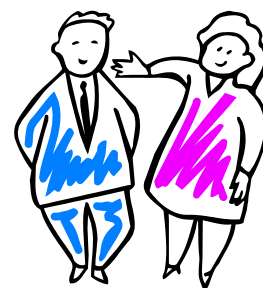
/s'o β'e:.../

to introduce a man.

Seo í ...

/s'o β'i:.../

to introduce a woman.



Notice that /β'/ is inserted between the vowel sounds to aid pronunciation. In South Conamara, you hear /d'/ inserted instead.

If you would like to say: *I'm pleased to meet you:*

Tá áthas orm bualadh leat!

/ta:həs orəm buələ l'æ:t/

Which literally means:

There's joy on-me hitting with-you!

5. Broad and slender consonants

In Irish, consonant-sounds are grouped into two qualities: *slender* (**caol**) and *broad* (**leathan**), corresponding to the amount of space between blade of the tongue and the roof of the mouth (palate) when pronouncing them.

Slender consonant-sounds are pronounced with a narrow or slender distance between the tongue and (often touching) the *hard* palate, as in: **Cé?** *Who?*

Broad consonant-sounds are pronounced with a wider or broad distance between the tongue and (often touching) the *soft* palate: as in: **Cá?** *Where?*

Table of consonant sounds

The following tables show roughly where in the mouth and how each Irish consonant-sound is produced. The sounds are shown here using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Slender consonants are marked with '.

Irish consonant-sounds (IPA)

	Labial		Dental/Alveolar		Palatal/Velar		Aspirate
	Plosive	Fricative	Plosive	Fricative	Plosive	Fricative	
Voiceless	p, p'	f, f'	t, t'		k, k'	x, x'	h
Voiced	b, b'	β, β'	d, d'		g, g'	ɣ, ɣ'	
Nasal	m, m'		n, n', n'		ŋ, ŋ'		
Liquid	l, l', l', r, r'						
Sibilant	s, s'						

In spelling, vowel-letters have two functions: Besides indicating a vowel-sound, the vowel-letter next to a consonant also shows the quality of the consonant-sound (broad or slender).

The letter, **e** or **i** is written between a back vowel and a consonant to show that the consonant (or consonant group) is *slender*.

Similarly, **a**, **o**, or **u** is written between a front vowel and a consonant to show that the consonant (or consonant group) is *broad*.

Caol le caol agus leathan le leathan.

Slender with slender and broad with broad.

6. Séimhiú (Lenition)

Séimhiú (*lenition*) happens when a word causes a following consonant sound to become *fricative*, that is, pronounced with a constant stream of air (instead of stopping the flow of air with the lips or tongue). In Irish, many words cause séimhiú to the following consonant sound. It is written as a dot (ponc) above (Irish script) or an **h** after (Roman script) the consonant-letter.

The following table shows the effect of séimhiú on the plosive consonants: **p, b, t, d, c** and **g**, as well as **m** and **s**.

	Labial		Dental/Alveolar		Palatal/Velar		Aspirate
	Plosive	Fricative	Plosive	Fricative	Plosive	Fricative	
Voiceless	p	ph/f (fh) ⁴	t		c	ch ¹	h/sh/th ³
Voiced	b	bh ⁵	d	dh/gh ²	g	dh/gh ²	
Nasal	m	mh ^{5/6}	n		ng		
Liquid				l, r			
Sibilant				s			

- ch** is pronounced as in German: when broad against the soft palate, as in *Bach*; when slender against the hard palate, as in *ich*.
- dh** and **gh** represent the same sounds. When slender, it is pronounced against the hard palate, like *y* in *yellow*; when broad it is pronounced with friction against the soft palate, like *gh* in *ugh*!
- sh** and **th** are the same sound as **h**. **Shó! Thó! Hó!**
- fh** is *always* silent!
- bh** and **mh** are pronounced *bilabially* (with both lips); try to pronounce *b* or *m* without the lips meeting, but with a light buzzing sound:
 - Broad **bh/mh** often sounds like English *w* *without* rounded lips.
 - Slender **bh/mh** often sounds like English *v* using *both lips* rather than lips and teeth.



Similarly, in the Gaeltacht, **f/ph** is usually pronounced *bilabially*.

- bh** and **mh** are pronounced similarly, except that **mh** is nasalised; when pronouncing it and the vowel-sounds that come into contact with it, release most of the air through the nose – similar to French.

7. The vocative case of personal names

In Irish, the way a name sounds can often change when you are talking directly to them. This is called the *vocative* case – an tuiseal gairmeach.

In English, when addressing people or objects, names were often preceded with *oh*. This is now only found in poetry and nursery rhymes. For example:

Oh Mother dear! See here! See here! Our mittens we have lost!

In Irish, when addressing people or things directly, names are preceded by the particle **a**, which is often not pronounced, but it causes séimhiú (lenition) to a following consonant sound:

Máire > a Mháire /mɑ:r'ə/ / (ə) βɑ:r'ə/	Cáit > a Cháit /kɑ:t' / / (ə) xɑ:t' /
Siobhán > a Shiobhán / s'iβɑ:n/ / (ə) hiβɑ:n/	Bairbre > a Bhairbre /ba:r'əb'r'ə/ / (ə) βa:r'əb'r'ə/
Deirdre > a Dheirdre / d'er'əd'r'ə/ / (ə) γ'er'əd'r'ə/	Gráinne > a Ghráinne /grɑ:n'ə/ / (ə) γrɑ:n'ə/
Pádraigín > a Phádraigín /pɑ:rəg'i:n' / / (ə) fɑ:rəg'i:n' /	Fionnuala > a Fhionnuala /f'iNuələ/ / iNuələ/

If a male name ends in a broad consonant, it is made slender, usually indicated by putting the letter **i** before it:

Mícheál > a Mhícheáil /m'i:xɑ:l/ / (ə) β'i:xɑ:l' /	Colm > a Choilm /koləm/ / (ə) xel'am' /
Séamas > a Shéamais /s'e:məs/ / (ə) h'e:məs' /	Donall > a Dhonail /du:nəl/ / (ə) γu:nəl' /
Breandan > a Bhreandain /b'r'æ:ndən/ / (ə) β'r'æ:ndən' /	Tadhg > a Thaidhg /taig/ / (ə) haig' /
Peadar > a Pheadair /pæ:dər/ / (ə) f'æ:dər' /	Fionn > a Fhinn / f'iN/ / (ə) iN' /

The only exception to this is: **a Liam!**

8. Ordering drinks

When at the bar, you might be asked:

What will you have? **Cad a bheidh agat?***
/ka:də β'eɣ' a:(gə)d/

And you'd reply:

I'll have... **Beidh ... agam.**
/b'eɣ' ... a:(gə)m/
/b'eg' ... ə gum/^M

Or you might be asked:

What would you like? **Cad ba mhaith leat?****
/ka:d bə βa: l'æ:t/

And you'd reply:

I'd like... **Ba mhaith liom ...**
/bə βa: l'um/



***Beidh** is the *future* form of **tá**. As Irish has no word for *have*, this literally means: *What'll be at-you?*

****Cad ba mhaith leat?** literally means: *What'd be good with-you?*

Here are some examples of drinks you might order:

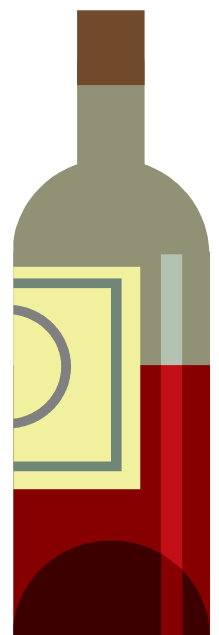
a pint of beer/ale/stout **pionta beorach/leanna/portáir.**
/p'untə b'o:rəx/l'a:nə/porta:r'/

a schooner of lemonade **scúnar liomanáide**
/sku:nər l'uməna:d'ə/

a middy of orange juice **leathphionta sú oráiste**
/l'æ:f'untə su: ora:s't'ə/

a glass of red/white wine **gloine fíona dheirg/bháin**
/glen'ə f'i:nə ɣ'er'əg'/βa:n'/

a jug of water **crúsca uisce**
/kru:skə is'k'ə/



The English word *whiskey* originally comes from the Irish phrase **uisce beatha** (*water of life*), although **fuisce** is now commonly used to refer to *whiskey*.

9. Please and thank you

The Irish expressions for *please* literally mean: 'if it is your will' or 'with your will':

tú (to one person)	sibh (to more than one person)
más é do thoil é /mɑ:s'e: də hel'e:/	más é bhur dtoil é /mɑ:s'e: βə(r) del'e:/
le do thoil /l'e də hel' /	le bhur dtoil /l'e βə(r) del' /

The Irish expression for *thank you* literally means 'may good be at-you' (may you have good):

tú (to one person)	sibh (to more than one person)
go raibh maith agat /gə rə mɑ:(həgə)d/ /gə reβ' mɑ:həgət/ ^M	go raibh maith agaibh /gə rə mɑ:(hə)gəβ' / /gə reβ' mɑ:həgəβ' / ^M

10. Saying goodbye

Slán meaning *healthy* or *safe* is the general term for *goodbye*. If you want to be a little more adventurous:

tú	sibh
Slán agat! /slɑ:N a:(gə)d/	Slán agaibh! /slɑ:N a:gəβ' /
Slán leat! /slɑ:N l'æ:t/	Slán libh! /slɑ:N l'iβ' /

is said when you are leaving to someone staying behind

is said when you are staying behind to someone leaving

See you (stay safe until) later!

Slán go fóill!

/slɑ:N gə fo:l' /

(May you go) safe(ly) home(wards)!

Slán abhaile!

/slɑ:N ə'βa:l'ə/

Goodnight!

Oíche mhaith!

/i:xə βa:/



11. Personal pronouns

The pronouns in Irish are used quite differently than in English:

- The *conjunctive* form is used immediately after a finite verb (and is always the subject of the verb).
- The *disjunctive* forms are used when not following a finite verb (and may be the subject or object of the verb).
- There is also a special *emphatic* form.

Singular pronouns:

		Conjunctive	Disjunctive	Emphatic
1	<i>I, me</i>	mé	mé	mise
2	<i>you (s.)</i>	tú	thú	tusa
3	<i>he, him</i>	sé	é	seisean
	<i>she, her</i>	sí	í	seise

Plural pronouns:

		Conjunctive	Disjunctive	Emphatic
1	<i>we, us</i>	muid/sinn^M	sinn^M	muide^C/muidne^U/sinne^M
2	<i>you (pl.)</i>	sibh	sibh	sibhse
3	<i>they, them</i>	siad	iad	siadsan

12. Tá and Níl

The verb **tá** is a form of the verb *to be*, when describing someone or something as it is *right now*. **Níl** is the negative particle, meaning *not*. It is placed before the verb and causes séimhiú.

After a particle such as **ní**, a special ‘dependent’ form of **tá** is used: **fuil**. **Ní fhuil** is the result – which is always written in its contracted form (as it is pronounced): **níl**.

<i>I am</i>	tá mé, táim^M	<i>I am not</i>	níl mé, nílim^M
<i>you are</i>	tá tú	<i>you are not</i>	níl tú
<i>he (it) is</i>	tá sé	<i>he (it) is not</i>	níl sé
<i>she (it) is</i>	tá sí	<i>she (it) is not</i>	níl sí
<i>we are</i>	tá muid, táimid^M	<i>we are not</i>	níl muid, nílimid^M
<i>you are</i>	tá sibh	<i>you are not</i>	níl sibh
<i>they are</i>	tá siad	<i>they are not</i>	níl siad



Dia dhuit!
Is mise Máiréad.
Cad is ainm duit?

Dia's Muire dhuit, a
Mháiréad.
Tá áthas orm bualadh leat.
Peadar is ainm dom.
Cén chaoi a bhfuil tú?



Tá mé go maith, go raibh
maith agat, agus tusa?

Tá mé go han-mhaith,
buíochas le Dia!



Ar mhaith leat cupán caife?
Would you like a cup of coffee?

Ba mhaith, go raibh maith agat!
Yes (I would), thank you.



Conas atá tú? *How are you?*

Provide an appropriate response for the pictures below.



Beannachtaí

Greetings

Greet the following people. (Try and use a few different ways that you know, and remember to use the Vocative case.)

Brian

*Dia dhuit,
a Bhriain!*

**Siobhán****Eoin****Fionnuala****Tomás****Bairbre****Mícheál****Caitríona****Diarmaid****Treasa**

Cómhrá

Conversation

Déan cabhrú le Máire ag caint leis an freastalaí tábhairne!

Help Máire talk to the bartender!

Máire: Dia _____!

Mícheál: Dia's Muire dhuit! Cén chaoi a _____ tú?

Máire: Tá mé go _____, buíochas _____ Dia!

Agus _____?

Mícheál: Ní gearánta dom. Is mise Mícheál. Cad _____ ainm duit?

Máire: Máire _____.

Mícheál: Tá áthas _____ bualadh leat, a Mháire.
Cad a bheidh agat?

Máire: Beidh gloine _____ dheirg agam,
más é _____, a _____.

Mícheál: Seo dhuit!

Máire: Go _____!

Mícheál: Ná habair é! (*Don't mention it!*)