Icelandic Language
Outline

1. History
2. Alphabet / pronunciation
3. Basic phrases
4. Basic geology terms
History – old scripts

• Icelandic Sagas from the 1200s preserve a written language similar to present
• Documented an era of Norse conquest and the settlement of Iceland
• Modern Icelanders can read these texts with only minor spelling modifications
• Pronunciation changed considerably between 12th and 16th centuries

Njáls saga (circa 1350) - wikipedia.org/wiki/saga
Alphabet

Aa Áá Bb Cc Dd Đđ Ee Éé Ff Gg Hh Ii Íí Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Óó Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Úú Vv Ww Xx Yy Ýý Zz Òò Ññ
Pronunciation

- a – (car, bar)
- á – ou (house)
- e – (bed, end)
- é = je – ye (yet)
- i,y – (inside, impossible)
- í,ý – ee
- j – y (yes)
- o – (bolt)
- ó – oa (goat)
- u – like german ü (über)
- ú – oo (zoo)
- æ – as in hæ (identical to hi) and bæ (identical to bye)
- ö – as in German, or like u in urgent

en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Icelandic/Alphabet_and_Pronunciation/
## Pronunciation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>is like &quot;a&quot; in &quot;bar&quot;, &quot;tar&quot; and &quot;car&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Á</td>
<td>is like &quot;ou&quot; in &quot;house&quot;, &quot;about&quot; and &quot;shout&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>same as English P, but without the puff of air, as in &quot;spit&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>same as English T, but without the puff of air, as if &quot;stick&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ð</td>
<td>is like &quot;th&quot; in &quot;feather&quot;, &quot;father&quot; and &quot;that&quot;, but as the last letter of a word it represents ð/p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>same as in English except that it's always short, like in &quot;bed&quot; and &quot;end&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Í</td>
<td>like an English &quot;ee&quot; and the &quot;i&quot; in &quot;Maria&quot; and the &quot;y&quot; in &quot;diary&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>is like &quot;y&quot; in &quot;yes&quot;, &quot;Yahweh&quot;, &quot;Yoda&quot; and &quot;yikes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>same as in English &quot;king&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>same as in English &quot;love&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>same as in English &quot;mom&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>same as in English &quot;never&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ñ</td>
<td>same as in English &quot;From&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó</td>
<td>is like &quot;ye&quot; in &quot;yet&quot; (used to be spelled in Icelandic &quot;je&quot; and is pronounced the same, see &quot;j&quot; and &quot;e&quot; in Icelandic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó</td>
<td>is like &quot;y&quot; in &quot;young&quot; between vowel and -i, -j; dropped between a, á, ó, u, ú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó</td>
<td>like &quot;k&quot; in &quot;wick&quot; at the beginning of a word, between a vowel and -i, -n; ñ after vowels, before a, u, ð, r, and when it's the last character of a word; like &quot;ch&quot; in Scottish &quot;loch&quot; after vowels and before t, s; like &quot;y&quot; in &quot;young&quot; between vowel and -i, -j; dropped between a, á, ó, u, ú</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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[en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Icelandic/Alphabet_and_Pronunciation/](en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Icelandic/Alphabet_and_Pronunciation/)
# Pronunciation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O</th>
<th>like &quot;a&quot; in British English &quot;all&quot; and &quot;o&quot; in &quot;bolt&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ó</td>
<td>is like &quot;o&quot; in &quot;sole&quot; and like &quot;oa&quot; in &quot;goat&quot; and &quot;soap&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>generally same as in English &quot;Peter&quot;, but can be softer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>non-existent in English except Scottish English, virtually identical to a Spanish rolled R, from the very front of the mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>same as in English &quot;soup&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>same as in English &quot;time&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>virtually identical to a French &quot;u&quot; (as in &quot;cul&quot;), or a German &quot;ü&quot; (as in &quot;über&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ú</td>
<td>like English &quot;oo&quot; as in &quot;zoo&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>somewhere between English V and W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>same as in English &quot;six&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>exactly like Icelandic &quot;i&quot;, it's only a matter of spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ý</td>
<td>exactly like Icelandic &quot;i&quot;, it's only a matter of spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>like &quot;th&quot; in &quot;thunder&quot;, &quot;theatre&quot; and &quot;thong&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Æ</td>
<td>is like the name of the letter &quot;i&quot; in English or in &quot;icy&quot; (hi/æ &amp; bye/bæ are the same in English and Icelandic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ö</td>
<td>like German &quot;ö&quot; and English &quot;u&quot; in &quot;urgent&quot; or &quot;fur&quot;</td>
</tr>
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Pronunciation – double letters

au
Like "ur" in "fur" (do not pronounce the r) followed by "ee" in "see" but with no intervening "r" - "u(r)-ee", similar to "oy" in "boy".

ei, ey
Like "ay" in "say".

gi, gj
Like "gy" in "drag-you" at word start; like "y" in "yes" in word middle or at word end.

hv
Like "kv" in "lock vent".

kk
Like "chk" in Scottish "Loch Carron".

ll
Like "tl" in "settle". Similar to Welsh "ll" (double L) but more aspirated (has more air to it).

ng
Like "nk" in "thinker", not "ng" in "finger".

nn
Like "dn" in "hard-nosed" when after "á", "é", "í", "ó", "ú", "ý", "æ", "au", "ei", or "ey"; or like "nn" in "tunnel" after "a", "e", "i", "ó", "u", "ý" or "ö".

pp
Like "h" and "p" fused together, similar to "hop" without the "o".

rl
Like "dl" in "riddle" similar in form to Welsh "ll" (double L) but said harder.

rn
Like "dn" in "hard-nosed" when after "á", "é", "í", "ó", "ú", "ý", "æ", "au", "ei", or "ey".

tt
Like "h" and "t" fused together, similar to "hut" without the "u".
Counting to 10

1
einn, (masculine) (ay-dn)
ein, (feminine) (ayn)
eitt, (neuter) (ay-h)

2
tveir, (masculine) (tvay-r)
tvær, (feminine) (tvigh-r)
tvö, (neuter) (tw-uh)

3
þríg, (masculine) (threer)
thríjr, (feminine) (three-yow-r')
thríjú, (neuter) (three-oo)

4
fjórir, (masculine) (fee-oh-rir)
fjórar, (feminine) (fee-oh-rar)
fjögur, (neuter) (fee-uh-grr)

5
fimm (fim)

6
sex (sex)

7
sjö (see-uh)

8
átt (ow-tah)

9
níu (nee-uh)

10
tíu (tee-uh)
Basics

Hello.
Halló. (Hah-low)
Hello (informal, to a man).
Sæll. (Sight-l.)
Hello (informal, to a woman).
Sæl. (Sigh-l.)
Hi.
Hæ. (High.) Like the English word.
Common amongst younger generations.

Good morning.
Góðan daginn. (Goh-dhan da-kin.)
Good evening.
Gott kvöld. (Got kvur-lt.)

Do you speak English?
Talarðu ensku? (Ta-lar-dhu en-sku?)
Yes.
Já. (Yaw.) or Jú (Yoo; answering a negative question).
OK.
Allt í lagí. (Atlt ee lak-i.)
or Ókei (Oh-kay; this is used amongst younger generations.)

No.
Nei. (Nay.)

Excuse me, (getting attention).
Afsakið. (Av-sak-idh.)

Excuse me, (begging pardon).
Fyrirgefðu. (Fi-rir-gyev-dhu.)

Please.
Gjörðu svo vel, (to one person). (Gyer-dhu svo vel.)
or Gerið þið svo vel, (to many people). (Ger-adh thi-dh svo vel.)

Thank you.
Þakka þér fyrir. (Thah-ka thyer fi-rir.)

Thanks (informal)
Takk. (Tahk.)

What is your name?
Hvað heitirðu? (Kvadh hay-tir-dhu?)

My name is ______ .
Ég heiti ______ . (Yeh hay-ti ______ .)

Nice to meet you.
Komdu sæll, (to a man). (Komdu sight-l.)
Komdu sæl, (to a woman). (Komdu sighl.)
Reading a map

Vikraborgir = pumice cities

Þrihyrningur = triangle / threesome?

hraun = lava

Trölladyngja = chamber of trolls

vatn = water

fjöll = mountains

vikur = weeks; sandur = sand weeks of sand?

á = stream

fell = mountain

jökull = glacier

www.vatnajokulsthjodgardur.is
Basic Geology Terms

- jökull – glacier
- fjörðurinn - fjord
- fjall/fell (fjöll) – mountain (mountains)
- eldfjall – volcano
- dalur - valley
- eyja – island
- vatn – water
- stöðuvatn – lake
- fljót – river
- á – stream / river
- foss - waterfall
- hraun - lava
- Eyjafjallajökull – island mountain glacier
References


4. Additional pictures from
   - [wikipedia.org/wiki/sagas](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/sagas)
   - [bbc.co.uk/blogs/radio4/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/radio4/)
   - mmedia.is
   - [www.vatnajokulsthjodgardur.is](http://www.vatnajokulsthjodgardur.is)