

SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION

In Norwegian, there are some letter combinations which may cause problems when it comes to pronunciation, and there are also quite a few letters that are not spoken in certain positions. Here are some guidelines to the pronunciation of some frequent letter combinations and some general rules for silent letters.

Some frequent letter combinations and their pronunciation

The column «Pronunciation» transcribes the sound in latin letters, whereas the column «IPA» gives the precise phonetical symbols for the sounds in question.

Letter combination	Pronunciation	IPA	Example
sj skj ski sky skei skøy	/sh/ [1] /sh/ /shi/ /shy/ /shei/ /shøy/	ʃ	sjelden (seldom) skjorte (shirt) skinne (shine) skytte (shoot) skei (spoon) skøyte (skate)
kj tj ki ky	/kj/ [2] /kj/ [3] /kji/ /kji/	ç / tʃ	kjøkken (kitchen) tjue (twenty) kino (cinema) kylling (chicken)
hj gj gi gy	/j/ [4] /j/ /ji/ /ji/	j	hjem (home) gjærne (gladly) gifte seg (get married) begynne (begin)

Notes:

[1] Pronounced like *sh* in the English word *she*.

[2] The /kj/-sound sounds like the hissing of an angry cat. The sound does not exist in English, but it is the same sound as *ch* in the German word *ich*. If you find this sound difficult to produce, you can also pronounce it like *ch* in the English word *chair*.

[3] *tj* is pronounced as separate letters in some words, like *tjene*.

[4] In Norwegian, the letter *j* is pronounced like English *y* in the word *yet*.

Some silent letters in Norwegian

	Silent in...	Example	Pronunciation
d	the word «med» -rd at the end of a word* -nd at the end of a word -ld at the end of a word at the end after a long vowel	med (with) ord (word) vind (wind) kald (cold) rød (red)	/me/ /or/ /vin/ /kal/ /rø/
g	the word «og» the ending -ig gj	og (and) hyggelig (nice) gjenta (repeat)	/å/ /hygeli/ /jenta/
h	hv hj	hva (what) hjem (home)	/va/ /jem/
t	«det» the definite form of neutrals	det (it) huset (the house)	/de/ /huse/

* There are some exceptions from this rule. However, the exceptions are in less frequent words.