

# 1.1 Yr Wyddor Gymraeg: The Welsh Alphabet

The traditional Welsh alphabet has 28 letters:

A

B

C

Ch

D

Dd

E

F

Ff

G

Ng

H

I

L

Ll

M

N

O

P

Ph

R

Rh

S

T

Th

U

W

Y

| Letter | Name of Letter | Corresponding sound<br>(IPA) |
|--------|----------------|------------------------------|
| a      | <i>â</i>       | /a, ɑ ː /                    |
| b      | <i>bî</i>      | /b/                          |
| c      | <i>èc</i>      | /k/                          |
| ch     | <i>èch</i>     | /x/                          |
| d      | <i>dî</i>      | /d/                          |
| dd     | <i>èdd</i>     | /ð/                          |
| e      | <i>ê</i>       | /ɛ, ɛ ː /                    |
| f      | <i>èf</i>      | /v/                          |
| ff     | <i>èff</i>     | /f/                          |
| g      | <i>èg</i>      | /g/                          |
| ng     | <i>èng</i>     | /ŋ/                          |
| h      | <i>âets,</i>   | /h/                          |

|    |                 |                                             |
|----|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|
| i  | <i>î</i>        | /ɪ, i : , j/                                |
| l  | <i>èl</i>       | /l/                                         |
| ll | <i>ell</i>      | /ɫ/                                         |
| m  | <i>èm</i>       | /m/                                         |
| n  | <i>en</i>       | /n/                                         |
| o  | <i>ô</i>        | /ɔ, o : /                                   |
| p  | <i>pî</i>       | /p/                                         |
| ph | <i>ffî</i>      | /f/                                         |
| r  | <i>èr</i>       | /r/                                         |
| rh | <i>rhî, rhô</i> | /r̥/                                        |
| s  | <i>ès</i>       | /s/                                         |
| t  | <i>tî</i>       | /t/                                         |
| th | <i>èth</i>      | /θ/                                         |
| u  | <i>û</i>        | /i̥, i : / (North), /ɪ, i : / (South)       |
| w  | <i>ô</i>        | /ʊ, u : , w/                                |
| y  | <i>ÿ</i>        | /i̥, i : , ə/ (North), /ɪ, i : , ə/ (South) |

## 1.2 Vowels and consonants:

Seven letters of the Welsh alphabet function as vowels, namely:

|      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| A, a | E, e | I, i | O, o | U, u | W, w | Y, y |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

Of these, two letters, namely **I, i** and **W, w**, may sometimes be **semivowels**. For example, the letter **i** represents a vowel sound in the word **inc** but a semivowel in **iâr**. In the same way, the letter **w** is a vowel in **wrth** but a semivowel in **wal**.

Vowels can be short or long.

### 1.2.1 Examples of short vowels:

|     |     |     |      |     |      |      |
|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|------|
| tan | pen | cip | ffon | sut | dwrn | bryn |
|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|------|

### 1.2.2 Examples of long vowels:

|     |      |     |      |      |     |     |
|-----|------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|
| tân | tref | pîb | ffôn | crud | dŵr | dyn |
|-----|------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|

Sometimes a circumflex is used to represent long vowels, but not every time.

Two vowels may be combined to form a **diphthong**.

### 1.2.3 Examples of diphthongs:

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| ae | ai | au | ei | ew | eu | ey |
| iw | oe | oi | ow | wy | ŵy | yw |

### 1.2.4 Every other letter in the Welsh alphabet is a **consonant**:

|      |        |        |        |        |      |        |
|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|--------|
| B, b | C, c   | CH, ch | D, d   | DD, dd | F, f | FF, ff |
| G, g | NG, ng | H, h   | L, l   | LL, ll | M, m | N, n   |
| P, p | PH, ph | R, r   | RH, rh | S, s   | T, t | TH, th |

Although not part of the traditional Welsh alphabet, by now **J, j** is also accepted as a Welsh letter. The letter **j** comes between **i** and **l** in the alphabet (the same position as in English).

One of the features of Welsh consonants is that they always represent one sound only.

It can be seen that some of the letters consist of more than one symbol, such as **ch**, **ng** and **ph**. These should nevertheless be thought of as individual letters, and they are treated as such in dictionaries. Three of these, namely **dd**, **ff** and **ll**, contain doubled letters. Other than these, the only letters which double are **n** and **r** (e.g., **tynnu** and **gyrru**).