

EXHIBIT “A”

German Umlauts



German Umlauts – ä, ö, ü

Ask anyone who does not speak German about the language and they will all say how difficult and harsh it sounds. Those who cannot speak it are wary and do not know where to start to even learn it. But there are around *100 million German native speakers* in the world, so it is a necessary language if you are planning to interact with them.

Granted, the German language is quite complicated, but with practice and time anyone can master it. These complications and linguistic quirks make it a great language for those who love learning new and challenging words.

One interesting characteristic that the German language has is its letters. More specifically, the three additional letters of its alphabet make it quite unique. These additional letters are called *umlauts* and this article will explain what they are and how to pronounce them.

What are umlauts?

Learning a new language is difficult, especially if it has sounds which your mouth might not have been used to pronouncing. When it is very difficult for two sounds to connect to one another, we try to make them easier and simplify them. That is how umlauts were born.

Umlauts are assimilations or vowel harmonies. This means that one of the sounds was changed to make another similar sound that is easier to say. For example, if we say two vowels with one in the front part of the mouth and the other in far back of the mouth, it will require us to put more effort than if we pronounced them closer together.

By trying to pronounce these vowels together, the Germanic language got umlauts. The umlauts are more common when the word contains two vowels one after the other, with the second vowel being "i".

For example, saying the sound "ai", "oi", or "ui" is more difficult because the first letter is pronounced by a sound in the front of the mouth, while the "i" is pronounced in the back. So to make things easier for themselves, people initially started pronouncing the "i" as "j". So those sounds became "aj", "oj", and "uj".

Further down in time, the sounds evolved and are now the three German umlauts, which are written as "ae", "oe", and "ue".

What are the types of German umlauts?

There are three German umlauts in addition to the 26 letters of the alphabet. These umlauts are:

- Ä
- Ö
- Ü

Umlauts are characterized by the two dots on top of the letter and they are very useful for learning German. They are crucial in being grammatically correct and pronouncing the words right.

To make matters more complicated, each of these umlauts has two variations. The variations are for "short" umlauts and "long umlauts" This is to distinguish between different words and it makes a difference in pronunciation.

The difference between short and long umlauts is that the sounds you make while saying them will just differ in length. Instead of holding a sound too long, you will say it quicker for short umlauts, while for long umlauts, you will have to hold the sound for a bit.

How to pronounce German umlauts?

German umlauts are highly useful in the language, but for non-native speakers they are difficult sounds to master. That is because there are no equivalent sounds in English that sound the same as the umlauts in German. So to be able to learn how to pronounce German umlauts, we have to try and approximate the sounds using existing words.

Pronouncing the umlaut Ä

Since there are two variations of this type of umlaut, we have to go through both of them and give examples. The short Ä is pronounced like the "e" in the word "bet" in English. It is like saying "eh".

The long Ä on the other hand is simply taking the short one and keeping the sound, so making it longer. It is like saying the "ay" in "say".

For a better idea on the pronunciation, we've compiled a list of examples of words that sound like Ä and some German words that use this umlaut.

Umlaut	Sound	English Word Example	German Word Example	German Sentence
Short Ä	ê	The "e" in Bet The "e" in End The "a" in Apple The "e" in Get	Äpfel – Apple Männer – Men Bänke – Benches Hände – Hands	Example: Diese Äpfel schmecken sehr gut. (These apples taste very good.)
Long Ä	Start with the Short Ä and lengthen it + add a silent H	The "a" in Mad The "ai" in Air The "ay" in Say	Ähnlich – Similar Nächste– Next Mädchen – Girl Währung – Currency	Example: Deutsch und Englisch sind sich sehr ähnlich . (German and English are very similar.)

It's difficult to differentiate between the short and long Ä, but a general rule of thumb could be that the word has a long Ä if there is a letter "h" after the umlaut. If you can notice that the word has a long Ä, then you should pronounce the silent "h" even if it is not written there.

Most beginners will have a difficult time pronouncing this umlaut and English speakers will have the urge to glide the umlaut into a different vowel. That is when you are trying to say the short Ä for example as an ê and you say "êy". You must try not to do this because the German vowels and umlauts do not mix with each other in pronunciation as is the case in English.

For a better idea on how to pronounce the Ä umlaut, below you will find an audio recording from German learning sites where examples of the use of Ä are provided.

- [Short Ä audio recording](#)
- [Long Ä audio recording](#)

Pronouncing the umlaut Ö

The umlaut Ö is one of the more difficult umlauts for non-native Germans to pronounce it. For English speakers specifically, this is difficult because English does not have a sound which is similar to it. So if you are learning German, you must be careful on how you pronounce this umlaut and practice it a lot.

The way you can go about pronouncing the Ö umlaut is by pursing your lips halfway in a circle as if you were saying O and then trying to say the *short* Ä.

We've compiled examples that you can use as a basis to be able to say the umlaut Ö.

Umlaut	Sound	English Word Example	German Word Example	German Sentence
Short Ö	Start saying "ê" and purse your lips into an O.	The "i" in Flirt* The "o" in Word*	Öffnen – To open Stöcke – Sticks Wörter – Words Löffel – Spoon	Example: Bitte öffnen Sie das Fenster nicht. (Please do not open the window.)
Long Ö	Lengthen the Short Ö	The "o" in Worm* The "i" in Bird*	Öl – Oil Schön – Pretty Böse – Evil Löwe – Lions	Example: Das Bild ist sehr schön. (The picture is very pretty.)

*The "r" in the pronunciation is silent

For a better idea on how to pronounce the Ö umlaut, below you will find an audio recording from German learning sites where examples of the use of Ö are provided.

- [Short Ö audio recording](#)
- [Long Ö audio recording](#)

Pronouncing the umlaut Ü

The last umlaut in German language is the Ü. Similar to the Ö, there is no sound in the English language which is the equivalent of this umlaut.

The way to pronounce the Ü umlaut is by making the sound "ee" and pursing your lips as if you were whistling, almost completely shut. Your tongue must stay in the same place as when you say the sound "ee" and you should only change the shape of your mouth as if were saying "oo".

The easiest way to do this is to start by saying the sound "ee" and then slowly changing the shape of your mouth from its wider position to a closed whistling shape.

We've compiled examples that you can use as a basis to be able to say the umlaut Ü. Unfortunately, this umlaut is almost impossible to find in any English word so there are no examples of it in the language.

Umlaut	Sound	German Word Example	German Sentence
Short Ü	Say the sound "ee" and purse your lips almost completely shut	Müll – Rubbish Türe – Doors Schlüssel – Key	Example: Bitte werfen Sie den Müll nicht auf den Boden. (Please do not throw the rubbish on the floor.)
Long Ü	Lengthen the Short Ü	Bühne – Stage Mühle – Mill Üben – Practice	Example: Ich muss Deutsch üben . (I have to practice German.)

For a better idea on how to pronounce the Ü umlaut, below you will find an audio recording from German learning sites where examples of the use of Ü are provided.

- [Short Ü audio recording](#)
- [Long Ü audio recording](#)

Summary of German umlaut pronunciation

In summary, the three German umlauts are pronounced as follows:

- Ä – make the sound "eh" or "ê" without gliding into the sound "ey";
- Ö – make the sound "ê" and purse your lips into an O shape;
- Ü – make the sound "ee" and then purse your lips as if you are whistling;

Reading how to pronounce something and seeing examples can give you a pretty good idea how to pronounce the umlauts. However, it is much better when you listen to it. The video below gives a short overview on how to pronounce the German umlauts.

What are German umlauts used for?

German umlauts have evolved in the language as part of the grammar. In order to be grammatically correct in using German, you must use umlauts too. Not using them will confuse those who are reading or listening to you speaking German.

As a general rule of thumb, umlauts are mostly used in the following situations:

- Differentiate between singular and plural
- Differentiate between present and past tenses

Singular and Plural

In any language, singular is one and plural is many. The German umlauts are used to make that distinction. For example the word "house" is singular and in German it is "Haus". In plural, the English version becomes "Houses", while in German it becomes "Häuser". Additional examples include:

- Hand (hand) and Hände (hands)
- Stock (stick) and Stöcke (sticks)
- Kuss (kiss) and Küsse (kisses)
- Stuhl (chair) and Stühle (chairs)

Present and Past Tense

Another way the umlauts are used is to distinguish between the present and the past tense. An example could be the verb "to lie". In English this is *to lie* in the present tense and *lied* in the past tense. In German this becomes "*lügen*" in the present tense and "*log*" in the past tense. Other examples include

- Haben (have) and Hätten (had)
- Schlafen (sleep) and Schläft (slept)

How to type the German umlauts?

Each country has their own keyboards which have been customized to fit their own alphabet. So if you are not a native German speaker or do not live in Germany, your keyboard might not have the umlauts you need to type correctly.

One solution to this is to simply get a German keyboard. It will have the umlauts on the right hand side, as shown in the picture below.



Photo: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cmb166/8452387460/>

The other one is to write the umlauts using the keyboard combination keys. These combinations work on most keyboards and will give you the umlaut you need.

Lowercase Umlaut	Keyboard Combination	Uppercase Umlaut	Keyboard Combination
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ä	ALT 0228	Ä	ALT 0196
ö	ALT 0246	Ö	ALT 0214
ü	ALT 0252	Ü	ALT 0220

Finally, if it is too much trouble to do either one of these, you can modify the way you write umlauts. We said in the beginning that the umlaut is the letter followed by "e". So you could write the umlauts like this:

- ä = ae
- ö = oe
- ü = ue

German speakers will know that when you write a letter followed by "e", it means you are writing the umlaut. So whichever way you choose, you will be using the German umlauts correctly.



The German Professor

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How to pronounce ö and ü

by [TheGermanProfessor](#) — 15 Comments ↓

The most difficult sounds to pronounce are typically the ones that do not exist in your native language (or in languages whose sounds you have already mastered). For English speakers these include the umlauted vowels **ö** and **ü**. Fortunately, there is a very effective method you can use for arriving at these sounds.

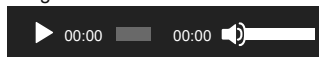
To pronounce the **ö**-sound, say “ay” as in *day* (or as in the German word **See**). While continuing to make this sound, tightly round your lips. Look in a mirror to make sure your lips are actually rounded. Voilà! The resulting sound is the **ö**-sound.

A similar method results in the **ü**-sound. Say “ee” as in *see* (or as in the German word **vier**). Again, while saying the sound, round your lips. The resulting sound is the **ü**-sound.

Like any unfamiliar sounds, being able to pronounce **ö** and **ü** correctly will come with repeated practice. After you find the correct mouth position using the tips above, practice reading words containing these characters aloud. Below are several audio files for you to listen to.

Here are two lists of commonly used words to get you started:

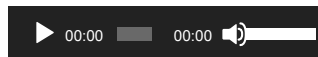
Long **ö**-sound



Long ö is full with strongly rounded lips.

schön
mögen
nötig
Söhne
Lösung
möglich
hören
persönlich
Österreich
König

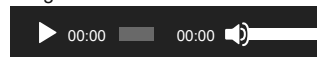
Short **ö**-sound



Short ö is shorter in duration and sounds more clipped.

können
zwölf
Körper
Töchter
öffentlich
löschen
Küche
Schlösser
völlig
öfter

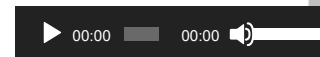
Long **ü**-sound



Long ü is full with strongly rounded lips.

Tür
führen
Schüler
Füße
grün
für
über
natürlich
früher
üblich

Short **ü**-sound



Short ü is shorter in duration and sounds more clipped.

fünf
müssen
dürfen
Stück
wünschen
künftig
erfüllen
Glück
Küche
Gründe

And now here are some sets of minimal pairs using the long and short **o**, **ö**, **u**, and **ü** sounds. Listen closely to the differences between the sounds.

Short **o**-sound



bocke
konnte
Tochter

Short **ö**-sound

Böcke
könnte
Töchter

Long **o**-sound



Long **ö**-sound

lösen	lösen
Böden	Böden
lohne	löhne

Short u-sound	Short ü-sound
---------------	---------------



Mutter	Mütter
durfte	dürfte
Burgen	bürgen

Long u-sound	Long ü-sound
--------------	--------------



Spuren	spüren
gute	Güte
Bruder	Brüder

Short vowel sound	Long vowel sound
-------------------	------------------



Hölle	Höhle
flösse	Flöße
schösse	Schöße
wüsste	Wüste
Hütte	hüte
Fülle	fühle

Short ö-sound	Short ü-sound
---------------	---------------



Hölle	Hülle
Röcke	rücke
Köche	Küche
Stöcke	Stücke
knöpft	knüpft

Long ö-sound	Long ü-sound
--------------	--------------



schwöre	Schwüre
flöge	Flüge
Söhne	Sühne
zöge	Züge
töte	Tüte

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15 comments on “How to pronounce ö and ü”



niku says:

[October 19, 2012 at 4:51 AM](#)

Some comments from Grandgent, *German and English Sounds*, Art. 31,5:

ü, ī, ö, ē, † which do not correspond to anything in English, are front rounded vowels. Dr. Hochdörfer produces them in two ways According to the first method, the middle and back of the tongue take positions somewhat similar to those they occupy for ī, i, ē, e ; the fore-part of the tongue is retracted as far as possible, leaving a tolerably large cavity in front of the mouth ; the lips are protruded and rounded. In the second mode of formation the middle and back of the tongue take nearly the same positions that they have for ī, i, ē, e ; the tip is pressed against the lower front teeth ; a bowl like hollow appears in the fore-part of the tongue ; the lips are protruded and energetically rounded. The latter method is the one described by Vietor [*Element der Phonetik*, second edition (1887), p. 85]; for me it is much easier than the other.

† long ü-sound, short ü-sound, long ö-sound, short ö-sound respectively.

Grandgent, *German and English Sounds*

<http://archive.org/details/germanandenglis00grangoog>

[Reply](#)



Heath says:

[November 26, 2012 at 12:43 AM](#)

Your trick works! I have a natively speaking German girlfriend and I've tried using your suggestion above and she says it sounds correct, BUT it needed a little more refining by bringing the lower jaw forward slightly for both sounds. Thanks A LOT. I find this ONE of the big nerve racking hurdles of learning the language: my ü and ö were sounding too much the same. (And still will until I practice a lot more using your trick). Most of my fellow students in German class cannot make the two sounds distinct and clear. Additionally, It isn't a matter of sounding more German either. If you are unable to make the distinct sounds, the meaning can be different. Best.

[Reply](#)



James says:

[April 23, 2014 at 11:52 PM](#)

On my mother's side of the family it originated as Gudel- (latinized), where later the "d" became a "t" upon arrival in the English Colonies. I've done a little research and suspect there has been a change in spelling over the centuries from Gödel to Gudel-, perhaps to be in tune with local populations at some point in history, just as Gudel- became Gutel-.

Is there any reference for a change in spellings with the letter "ö" to have become a "u"? If so, it would indicate a Celtic origin of the name since Gödel, according to some sources, is also the name given to the Celts in the British Isles prior to the arrival of the Romans.

The Celts spread through southern Europe to Spain and on to the British isles, possibly when connected between Spain and the isles when the English Channel was a shallow plain.

The dating of mainland European Celts, including those in Spain and England is much more recent according to historical accounts than the appearance of the plain between Europe and England, however.

Please give me your best guess if such a connection MIGHT or DOESN'T exist and I'll use that as an indication on whether to look further. I realize that over the passage of so many centuries such a connection could be tenuous at best, so I'm only looking for any statements from authoritative sources. Language seems to be a better indication of how family names arose than do very old historical records still available in church archives since many older records have disappeared.

[Reply](#)[TheGermanProfessor](#) says:[April 26, 2014 at 11:11 AM](#)

James,

It is certainly possible that sounds could have shifted over time. And even other sounds in the name that you aren't considering could have changed (a common correspondence is G <-> K). It is also possible that both of these variants came from a common earlier form.

To complicate matters even further, there was not ONE German language, but a whole range of German dialects, so it would be possible that a word pronounced one way (e.g. Gödel) was pronounced differently (e.g. Gudel) in another German-speaking area. If you compare cognates in related languages, such as German and English, you can see how words that once came from the same root can evolve in different ways — for example in English (i.e. from Anglo-Saxon German dialect)/modern German: hound-Hund, thou-du, bone-Bein, free-frei, way-weg, chin-Kinn, two-zwei.

So, while I can't give you a definitive answer about the relationship between the two variants, it is certainly possible that they are related. On the other hand, they could be entirely unrelated. If you keep searching, you may find evidence to support one premise or the other.

[Reply](#)

Northumbrian says:

[October 11, 2015 at 4:22 AM](#)

Ö is very similar to the 'ur' sound in British English found in words such as hurt, world or word.

[Reply](#)[TheGermanProfessor](#) says:[June 23, 2017 at 11:42 AM](#)

This is a good tip!



Mai Queeck says:

[March 18, 2016 at 11:11 AM](#)

To my ears the shape of the sound – as opposed to the length – of the long ö and the short ü appear to be very similar. But since I'm not a native German speaker, it's hard for me to be sure.

But I came across a video that says the same thing, even warning students not to be confused (<https://goo.gl/lzCx7X>). It says phonetically that

long ö = long [ø]

short ü = short [ø]

short ö = short [œ]

long ü = long [ü]

So, for example, Brücke would be pronounced Br[short ø]cke, not Br[short ü]cke.

How does this, uh, "sound" to you? I would love it if you could make another an audio clip comparing long ö words with short ü words.

By the way, really appreciate your site. These word pair comparison audio sets are extremely helpful.

[Reply](#)**TheGermanProfessor** says:[March 18, 2016 at 2:31 PM](#)

I think you will find at least something close to an answer to your question here:

<http://soundsofspeech.uiowa.edu/german/german.html>

Watch the clips for /Y/ and /œ/. The points of articulation (perhaps what you are calling the “shape” of the sound) are close, but they are slightly different.

Of course, these examples are sounds in isolation. When you start putting the vowels into words, their actual pronunciation can shift depending on the place and manner of articulation of the consonants that precede and follow them. Maybe that is what the YouTube video is trying to get at. However, I don't think these pronunciation anomalies are something learners have to worry about. If you strive for standard pronunciation of sounds, those shifts happen naturally as your mouth quickly adjusts shape to pronounce words.



ali hassan says:

[December 4, 2016 at 11:33 AM](#)

Very helpful with voice method

[Reply](#)

Sharon Smith says:

[May 7, 2017 at 9:00 AM](#)

How will I know if the vowels are long or short?

[Reply](#)**TheGermanProfessor** says:[May 26, 2017 at 2:32 PM](#)

Fortunately, German orthography is a help to us in determining whether vowels are long or short.

A vowel is **long** when:

- it is followed by a single consonant that would belong to the next syllable if separated (e.g. **ledig**(le|dig), **mag**, **hören** (hö|ren), **Ofen** (O|fen))
- it is doubled (e.g., **Staat**, **Beet**)
- it is followed by an **h** (e.g., **fahren**, **ihn**, **Jahr**)

A vowel is **short** when:

- it is followed by a double consonant (e.g., **Bett**, **offen**, **männlich**)
- it is followed by two or more different consonants, usually (e.g., **Stadt**, **Kunst**, **denken**)
- it appears in a common one-syllable word followed by a single consonant (e.g., **es**, **im**, **ob**)

There are some exceptions, e.g. foreign words, but these rules will apply in most situations.



Felix says:

[March 6, 2018 at 11:36 PM](#)

ö = i in Stir Stiir = stööör

[Reply](#)



[TheGermanProfessor](#) says:

[September 27, 2018 at 10:43 PM](#)

This is not a helpful tip because "stir" is pronounced differently across the many varieties of English.



Stephanie says:

[September 7, 2018 at 11:52 AM](#)

much easier for o-umlaut pronunciation – oo as in Foot in english.

[Reply](#)



[TheGermanProfessor](#) says:

[September 13, 2018 at 11:59 PM](#)

It's easier because it's not accurate. The "oo" sound in foot is not the same as ö.

4 Pings/Trackbacks for "How to pronounce ö and ü"

[German 1 Week 28 IM UNTERRICHT | Frau Messerschmitt](#) says:

[March 2, 2015 at 9:40 AM](#)

[...] 4. Pronunciation practice: <http://www.thegermanprofessor.com/how-to-pronounce-o-and-u/> [...]

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[March 6, 2015 at 6:21 AM](#)

[...] Online Pronunciation practice: <http://www.thegermanprofessor.com/how-to-pronounce-o-and-u/> [...]

[Sitzung am 21. November 2016 – cityudeutscha1berlin](#) says:

[November 22, 2016 at 9:50 PM](#)

[...] Wir machen eine Ausspracheübung 'ö'. Sehen Sie dazu : die Aussprache von 'ö' und 'ü'. [...]

[How to Pronounce German Words with a Surprisingly Simple Method | FluentU German](#) says:

[July 11, 2017 at 10:03 PM](#)

[...] "Oueh" (Okay, this is nearly impossible to explain or write, but it's almost as if you made your lips and face like you were going to say the letter [...])

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How to say "ä", "ö", and "ü" correctly in Ge



German Pronunciation: How exactly do you pronounce the German Umlaute "ä", "ö" and '

'Long' (i.e. stressed):

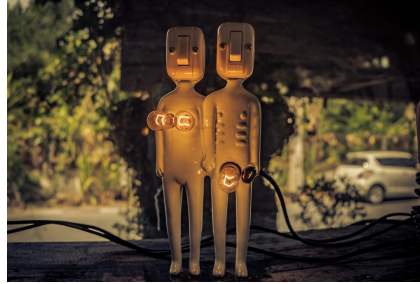
- "ä" as in "Käse" is like an English person saying "air".
- "ü" as in "müde" is like a Scottish person saying "grew". (make the sound "ee" as in "green" but make your lips into an "o" shape)
- "ö" as in "blöd" is like an English person saying "burn". (make the sound "a" as in the word "barn" but make your lips into an "o" shape)

'Short' (i.e. unstressed):

- "ä" as in "hängen" is pronounced like the English word "ten".
- "ü" as in "Mütter" is like the English word "wit" but round your lips as if whistling.
- "ö" as in "Hölle" is like an English person saying "her".

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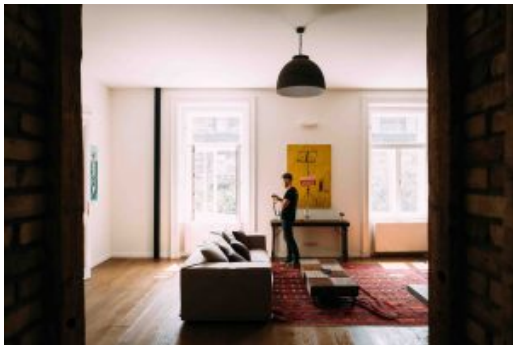




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