

1.2: The Alphabet

Albanian is a phonetic language. This means that, as a general rule, Albanian spelling directly corresponds to the pronunciation of words. Each letter has a specific sound that doesn't change in the context.

The alphabet has 36 letters, 29 consonants and 7 vowels, each presenting a different sound from the other. Most of the letters in Albanian are recognizable and represent a similar sound as in English. Others look familiar but represent different sounds. Nine letters are digraphs, which means they are written as a combination of two consonants but are considered to be a single letter.

Letter	Similar English sound	Example	
A a	<i>father</i>	akullore	(icecream)
B b	<i>boy</i>	babai	(father)
C c	<i>cats, hats</i>	copë	(piece)
Ç ç	<i>charm, church</i>	çantë	(bag)
D d	<i>door, debt</i>	derë	(door)
DH dh	<i>they, then</i>	dhomë	(room)
E e	<i>bed</i>	era	(wind)
Ë ë	<i>around, alone</i>	hëna	(moon)
F f	<i>foot, far</i>	flamur	(flag)
G g	<i>goodbye</i>	goca	(girl)
GJ gj	-----	gjuha	(language)
H h	<i>hat</i>	hotel	(hotel)
I i	<i>interest, bead</i>	interesi	(interest)
J j	<i>yesterday</i>	jeta	(life)
K k	<i>come, car</i>	këmba	(foot, leg)
L l	<i>little</i>	lule	(flower)
LL ll	<i>fall</i>	llampa	(lamp)
M m	<i>morning</i>	motër	(sister)
N n	<i>noon</i>	nëna	(mother)
NJ nj	-----	një	(one)
O o	<i>four</i>	ora	(hour)
P p	<i>pen</i>	punë	(work)
Q q	-----	qeni	(dog)
R r	<i>room</i>	radio	(radio)
RR rr	-----	rreshkitësja	(slide)
S s	<i>sister</i>	seminari	(seminar)
SH sh	<i>shower</i>	shumë	(many)
T t	<i>talk</i>	tavolina	(table)

TH th	<i>thin</i>	thoni	(speak)
U u	-----	ura	(bridge)
V v	<i>very, van</i>	vera	(wine)
X x	<i>dz</i>	xixë	(spark)
XH xh	<i>joke</i>	xhaxha	(uncle)
Y y	-----	ylli	(star)
Z z	<i>zero</i>	zogu	(bird)
ZH zh	<i>vision</i>	zhurmë	(noise)

Double vowel letters:

In language like English, two vowels written together often represent a single different sound. But in Albanian, two vowels together in a word are read as two distinct separate sounds. For example the **ae** in airport is read aloud as two separate vowels.

Although Albanian is general a completely phonetic language. The only exception is the letter ë. When it is found at the end of a word, it is often silent. This letter ë can sometimes be silent in the middle of a word as well. For example, in the word “Mirëdita,” (Good Afternoon) the ë is also considered silent.

Always Remember: When in doubt, Albanian is pronounced exactly the way it is spelled!