

RULES

for the Roman Pronunciation of Latin.

It was laid down by Pope St Pius X as desirable that the Roman pronunciation of Latin should be followed. Among English-speaking people this, especially as regards the vowel-sounds, is best learnt by ear; but the following rules can usefully be given.

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The primary quality of good Latin pronunciation is that of *accentuation*.

Accentuation consists in emphasising in each accented word, by a lively, buoyant and brief impulse given to the voice, the penultimate (last but one) or antepenultimate (last but two) syllable; thus providing the components of the word with a centre to which all are related.

A word is made up of syllables; syllables of :

1. *vowels* and *diphthongs*, each with its particular quality of sound;
2. *consonants*, each with its own manner of articulation.

Below are the rules of pronunciation, so far as this can be expressed in English.

I. Vowels and Diphthongs.

a) VOWELS.

Each vowel has a single pure sound, which should not vary, **whatever consonant follows**.

A has an open sound as in *father*, but slightly less broad; though not as in *can*.

E approximately as in *met*; avoid any hint of a second sound as in *obey*.

I, as **ee** in *feet*; less broad than in *sheep*.

O, as the **o** in *for*; not as in *go*.

U, as **oo** in *moon* rather than **u** in *put*; never as in *rug*.

Y has always the same sound as the Latin **I**.

When two vowels come together, each as a rule keeps its own pronunciation. There are, however, certain diphthongs or double sounds.

b) DIPHTHONGS.

AE and **OE** have the same sound as the Latin **E** above.

AU and **EU** (as also **EI** in interjections) and **AY**; the two vowels form one syllable, but both must be distinctly heard. The chief emphasis is on the first, which must be given its pure sound; in singing, the second is only heard at the moment of passing to the following syllable.

U preceded by **Q** or **NG** and followed by another vowel, keeps its normal sound, but forms one syllable with the vowel that follows, which latter has the chief emphasis; ex. *qui, quam*, are of one syllable; *cui* (except in certain Hymns) is of two; *sanguis* of two syllables only.

I as a semi-consonant (or for **J**) pronounced as Engl. **Y**, forms one syllable with the following vowel; ex. *iam*, one syllable; *maior*, two syllables only.

AY is pronounced as **i** in *rice*.

AI, OU are never diphthongs; ex. *ait, prout*, of two syllables.

II. Consonants.

GENERAL RULE: every consonant is sounded separately.

B, D, F, K, L, M, N, P, Q, V, are pronounced as in English.

C, before *e, i, y, æ, œ*, that is before the sounds of the Latin **e** and **i**, is pronounced **ch** as in *church*.

CC before the same vowels is pronounced **tch**.

SC before the same vowels, as **sh** in *shed*.

Except for these cases, **C** is pronounced as **K**.

CH is always pronounced as **K**, even before the sounds of **e** and **i**.

G before the sounds of **e** and **i** is soft as in *generous*; otherwise it is hard as in *government*.

GN has the same sound as in the Italian *Signor*; the **g** scarcely heard; the **n** as if followed by a short **i**; ex. *agnus*.

H is mute, as in English *hour*; except that in *mihi, nihll*, and words formed from these, it is pronounced as **K**.

J, pronounced as English **Y**, forms one syllable with the following vowel; ex. *ejus (eius); major (major)*; two syllables only.

S as in *sea*; but between vowels it is slightly softened; ex. the **s** in *miserere* is less close to **z** than in Engl. *misery*.

TI standing before a vowel and following any letter except **S, X** or **T**, is pronounced **tsee**.

TH is always simply **t**.

X is **KS**, as in Engl. *expect*; but between two vowels it is softened slightly, as **xc** in Engl. *excise*.

XC before the sounds of **e** and **i** is pronounced **KSH**; ex. *excelsis*.

Z is pronounced **dz**, like **ds** in Engl. *stands*.