

## Vowels

Sound	Description of the Sound	Finnish Examples <b>Click on word to hear sound</b>
<b>a</b>	like <b>a</b> in <i>father</i>	<a href="#">banaani</a> , <a href="#">radio</a>
<b>e</b>	like <b>e</b> in <i>set</i>	<a href="#">tee</a> , <a href="#">englanti</a>
<b>i</b>	like <b>i</b> in <i>sit</i>	<a href="#">Helsinki</a> , <a href="#">viisi</a>
<b>o</b>	like <b>o</b> in <i>toy</i>	<a href="#">soolo</a>
<b>u</b>	like <b>u</b> in <i>book</i> (but lips more pursed)	<a href="#">ruusu</a> , <a href="#">puu</a>
<b>y</b>	like German <b>ü</b> or French <b>u</b> ; i.e. like <b>i</b> but with tightly rounded lips	<a href="#">hyvä</a> , <a href="#">yksi</a>
<b>ä</b>	like <b>a</b> in <i>hat</i>	<a href="#">päivää</a>
<b>ö</b>	like German <b>ö</b> or French <b>eu</b> ; i.e. like <b>e</b> but with more strongly rounded lips	<a href="#">öljy</a> , <a href="#">söpö</a>

## Consonants

Sound	Description of Sound	Finnish Examples
<b>b</b>	like <b>b</b> in <i>ball</i>	<a href="#">banaani</a> , <a href="#">baari</a>
<b>d</b>	like <b>d</b> in <i>do</i>	<a href="#">kahdeksan</a> , <a href="#">yhdeksän</a>
<b>f</b>	like <b>f</b> in <i>fan</i>	<a href="#">filmi</a> , <a href="#">filosofia</a>
<b>g</b>	like <b>g</b> in <i>guide</i>	<a href="#">geologia</a>
<b>h</b>	like <b>h</b> in <i>hen</i>	<a href="#">Helsinki</a>
<b>j</b>	like <b>y</b> in <i>yes</i>	<a href="#">joo</a> , <a href="#">marja</a>
<b>k</b>	like <b>k</b> in <i>pumpkin</i> (softer <b>k</b> than in <i>kit</i> , no aspiration)	<a href="#">kahvi</a> , <a href="#">markka</a>
<b>l</b>	like <b>l</b> in <i>let</i>	<a href="#">litra</a> , <a href="#">nolla</a>
<b>m</b>	like <b>m</b> in <i>moon</i>	<a href="#">markka</a>
<b>n</b>	like <b>n</b> in <i>no</i>	<a href="#">neljä</a> , <a href="#">numero</a>
<b>ng</b>	like <b>ng</b> in <i>singing</i> but longer	<a href="#">Helsingissä</a>
<b>p</b>	like <b>p</b> in <i>spin</i> (softer <b>p</b> than in <i>pin</i> , no aspiration)	<a href="#">päivää</a> , <a href="#">piano</a>
<b>r</b>	like Spanish <b>r</b> (slightly rolled), r should not affect the quality of the adjacent vowels	<a href="#">radio</a>
<b>s</b>	like <b>s</b> in <i>stop</i>	<a href="#">soolo</a> , <a href="#">viisi</a>
<b>t</b>	like <b>t</b> in <i>stop</i> (softer <b>t</b> than in <i>top</i> , no aspiration)	<a href="#">tee</a>
<b>v</b>	like <b>v</b> in <i>van</i>	<a href="#">viisi</a>

## Length

The distinction between *long* and *short* consonant and vowels is very important in Finnish. Long sounds are indicated by doubling a letter. For an idea of the difference between long and short sounds, compare the p sounds in *top part* with *to part* or the vowels in *feed* and *fit*. In Finnish, a difference in length can make a difference in meaning.

## Diphthongs

**Finnish has a large number of diphthongs, i.e. combinations of two different vowels in one syllable. A few Finnish diphthongs are very much like diphthongs in English, others are less familiar.**

Sound	Description of the Sound	Finnish Examples
ai	like <b>ai</b> in <i>aisle</i>	laiva
ei	like <b>ey</b> in <i>hey</i>	<a href="#">hei</a>
oi	like <b>oi</b> in <i>voice</i>	<a href="#">moi</a>
ui	like <b>uy</b> in Spanish <i>muy</i>	uida
yi	resembles <b>ui</b> in French <i>suis</i> but Finnish <b>y</b> slightly less rounded than French <b>u</b>	kysyi
äi	<b>ä</b> followed by a short <b>i</b> in the same syllable	<a href="#">päivää</a>
öi	<b>ö</b> followed by a short <b>i</b> in the same syllable	töihin
au	resembles <b>ow</b> in <i>cow</i>	auto
eu	<b>e</b> followed by a short <b>u</b> in the same syllable	leuka
iu	<b>i</b> followed by a short <b>u</b> in the same syllable	viulu
ou	like <b>o</b> in <i>so</i> but more rounded	koulu
äy	<b>ä</b> followed by a short <b>y</b> in the same syllable	täynnä
öy	<b>ö</b> followed by a short <b>y</b> in the same syllable	pöytä
ie	like <b>ie</b> in Spanish <i>bien</i>	mies
uo	like <b>uo</b> in Italian <i>buona</i>	Suomi
yö	<b>y</b> followed by a short <b>ö</b> in the same syllable	<a href="#">Hyvää yötä</a>