



## THE SLOVENE LANGUAGE, ALPHABET AND PRONUNCIATION

Slovene or Slovenian (language) (= slovenski jezik, slovenščina) is an Indo-European language and a member of the South Slavic branch, spoken by round about 2.2 million people, mostly Slovenes living in their native independent land Slovenia in Central Europe. There are also communities of Slovene speakers in Austria, Hungary and Italy. Other Southern Slavic languages include Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian and Bulgarian. The oldest Slavic text in the Latin alphabet, the *Freising Fragments* (= *Brižinski spomeniki*) (c. 970), are written in a very early form of Slovene; the language is not attested again until the 16th century, when Lutheran reformers translated the *Bible* into Slovene. The first Slovene translation of the *Bible* was published in 1584. In 1811, Slovene was adopted as the language of education, administration and the media and later became the official language of Slovenia. The language has a remarkable degree of dialect diversity considering the size of its speech area, probably enhanced by the country's alpine geography and long period of domination by non-Slovene-speaking rulers.



The language uses a modified Latin alphabet and its modern alphabet consists of 25 unique lower- and uppercase letters. There are 5 letters for vowels (A, E, I, O, U) and 20 for consonants. Three letters carry a diacritic: a caron (hacheck, check): Č, Š and Ž. The Western Q, W, X, Y are excluded from the pure language, as are some Southern Slavic characters, Ć, Dž, Đ, LJ, NJ, however they are used in encyclopaedias and dictionary listings, for foreign Western proper nouns or toponyms are not transcribed as they are in some other Slavic languages. The Slovene language is mostly phonetic – with few exceptions – which means that it is pronounced as it is written. Each letter has only one specific sound which makes reading and writing easy. It is very important to remember the correct sounds of the letters and once you have done so you will be able to read and write with hardly any mistakes.

A a	B b	C c	Č č	D d	E e	F f	G g	H h	I i	J j	K k	L l
a	be	ce	če	de	e	ef	ge	ha	i	je	ka	el
[a]	[b]	[tʃ]	[tʃ]	[d]	[e/e/a]	[f]	[g]	[x]	[i]	[j]	[k]	[l/w]
M m	N n	O o	P p	R r	S s	Š š	T t	U u	V v	Z z	Ž ž	
em	en	o	pe	er	es	eš	te	u	ve	ze	že	
[m]	[n]	[ɔ, o]	[p]	[r]	[s]	[ʃ]	[t]	[u]	[v]	[z]	[ʒ]	

The editors at ASTRUM Music Publications are aware that there are many slight differences between languages that are too subtle to be shown with signs, understood by choral singers world wide. Even the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) is there not sufficient.

To truly learn the proper Slovene pronunciation, it would be best to practice with a native Slovene speaker.  
As an alternative, ASTRUM Music Publications has made available recordings of lyric's pronunciations of the publisher's editions on its web site ([www.astrum.si](http://www.astrum.si)).

**CONSONANTS** There are twenty consonants in Slovene. They can be voiced or unvoiced. They are pronounced as they are spelt. The *voiced consonants* are: b, d, g, j, l, m, n, r, v, z, ž; the *unvoiced consonants* are: c, č, f, h, k, p, s, š, t.

LETTER	PRONUNCIATION	SYMBOL	IPA*
<b>B</b>	1) end of word : like <b>p</b> in <b>put</b> 2) elsewhere : like <b>b</b> in <b>bad</b>	pb	[b]
<b>C</b>	like <b>ts</b> in <b>cats</b>	ts	[ts]
<b>Č</b>	like <b>ch</b> in <b>church</b>	ch	[tʃ]
<b>D</b>	1) end of word : like <b>t</b> in <b>put</b> 2) elsewhere : like <b>d</b> in <b>bad</b>	td	[d]
<b>F</b>	like <b>f</b> in <b>fig</b>	f	[f]
<b>G</b>	1) end of word : like <b>k</b> in <b>key</b> 2) elsewhere : like <b>g</b> in <b>bag</b>	kg	[g]
<b>H</b>	like <b>h</b> in <b>huge</b> (always pronounced)	h	[h, x]
<b>J</b>	like <b>y</b> in <b>yes</b>	y	[j]
<b>K</b>	like <b>k</b> in <b>kind</b>	k	[k]
<b>L</b>	1) end of word (in "final position"), after vowel: like <b>w</b> in <b>win</b> 2) elsewhere: like <b>l</b> in <b>late</b>	l, w	[l, w]
<b>M</b>	like <b>m</b> in <b>milk</b>	m	[m]
<b>N</b>	like <b>n</b> in <b>new</b>	n	[n]
<b>P</b>	like <b>p</b> in <b>post</b>	p	[p]

LETTER	PRONUNCIATION	SYMBOL	IPA*
<b>R</b>	1) generally as rolled <b>r</b> : like <b>r</b> in <b>road</b> 2) sometimes as a "vowel": like <b>er</b> in <b>her</b>	r	[r]
<b>S</b>	like <b>s</b> in <b>seed</b>	s	[s]
<b>Š</b>	like <b>sh</b> in <b>ship</b>	sh	[ʃ]
<b>T</b>	like <b>t</b> in <b>team</b>	t	[t]
<b>V</b>	1) after vowel, before a consonant: like <b>w</b> in <b>win</b> 2) alone : like <b>oo</b> in <b>soon</b> 3) elsewhere : like <b>v</b> in <b>vine</b>	w, oo, v	[v]
<b>Z</b>	like <b>z</b> in <b>zero</b>	z	[z]
<b>Ž</b>	like <b>s</b> in <b>measure</b>	zh	[ʒ]

**VOWELS** There are five vowels in Slovene: a, e, i, o, u. Even though stress marks are not placed over the letters, there are rules of stress to be observed in the pronunciation of the Slovene vowels.

LETTER	PRONUNCIATION	SYMBOL	IPA*
<b>A</b>	like <b>a</b> in <b>car</b>	a	[a]
<b>E</b>	like <b>e</b> in <b>let</b>	eh	[ɛ, e, ə]
<b>I</b>	like <b>ee</b> in <b>meet</b>	ee	[i]
<b>O</b>	like <b>o</b> in <b>short</b>	oh	[ɔ, o]
<b>U</b>	like <b>oo</b> in <b>soon</b>	oo	[u]

\* IPA = INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET