

Introduction to Te Reo Māori Pronunciation

CHI Talk 2 by Karaitiana Taiuru

Vowels

- All Māori words end with a vowel
- No two consonants appear together in te reo Māori except for the digraphs 'ng' and 'wh'
- If unsure of how to pronounce a Māori word, break it up by vowels (see slide 4 & 8).
- Macrons (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū, Ā, Ē, Ī, Ō, Ū) are placed above vowels to signal they are pronounced longer

Vowel Pronunciation

- **Short**

- **a** as in aloud
- **e** as in entry
- **i** as in eat
- **o** as in ordinary
- **u** as in to

- **Long**

- **ā** as in car
- **ē** as in led
- **ī** as in peep
- **ō** as in pork
- **ū** as in loot

Foundation of every Māori word

a	e	i	o	u
ha	he	hi	ho	hu
ka	ke	ki	ko	ku
ma	me	mi	mo	mu
na	ne	ni	no	nu
nga	nge	ngi	ngo	ngu
pa	pe	pe	po	pu
ra	re	ri	ro	ru
ta	te	ti	to	tu
wa	we	wi	wo	wu
whā	whe	whi	who	whu

Diphthongs and vowel sequences

- Usually, the vowels are sounded in sequence. There are some exceptions including macrons on one vowel and some words.
- āe rā = without a doubt, no doubt

Digraph

- The 'ng' digraph is pronounced as it sounds in the English word 'singer'.
- The 'wh' digraph originally sounded like the 'wh' in 'whisper', but in most dialects has evolved to be more like the English 'f' sound.

Consonants

- Consonants are pronounced as you would in English, with two key exceptions:
- **T** The 't' sound depends on which vowel appears after it. When it is followed by an 'a', 'e' or 'o', pronounce it with as little sibilant sound as possible (almost like a 'd'). When it is followed by an 'i' or 'u', it includes a slight sibilant sound, but not nearly as much as an English 't'.
- **R** Pronounced as a soft 'rolled' r.

Dialect examples

- Ngāi Tahu:
 - Often replace 'ng' with 'k'
 - Interchange vowels such as pounemu for pounamu (Greenstone).
 - Use 'g' for 'k' as in Ōtāgo
 - Use 'l' for 'r' Akaloa
- Tūhoe replace 'ng' with 'n'
- Some Iwi replace 'wh' with 'w' or 'h'
- Taranaki iwi replace 'h' with a glottal stop

Practice words

- Ka-ra-i-ti-a-na (Karaitiana)
- Ta-i-u-ru (Taiuru)
- Ngā-i Ta-hu (Ngāi Tahu)
- Wā-na-ka (Wānaka)
- Wā-na-nga (Wānanga)
- Ki-a o-ra (Kia ora)
- Tē-nā ko-e (Tēnā koe)
- Whā-na-u (whānau)

- Others?