

# Norwegian on the Web



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## Pronunciation

**Collected texts from NoW Chapters 1 -10**

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This manuscript contains all pronunciation notes in the text book.

# Pronunciation Chapter 1

## The Norwegian alphabet

The Norwegian alphabet contains 29 letters, 9 vowels and 20 consonants:

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z Æ Ø Å**

Below you will find each letter in upper and lower case as well as the pronunciation of the Norwegian "name" of the letter. The pronunciation is given with reference to The International Phonetic Alphabet, IPA. A colon after a vowel indicates a long speech sound. Absence of colon after the vowel indicates a short speech sound, cf. the long vowel /e:/ used to name the letter , and the short vowel /e/ in /ef/, to name the letter .

Below, brackets, < >, surround symbols that are to be regarded as letters, while slashes, / /, surround symbols that indicate speech sounds.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>
<b>a</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>i</b>	<b>j</b>
/ɑ:/	/be:/	/se:/	/de:/	/e:/	/ef/	/ge:/	/ho:/	/i:/	/je:/
<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>k</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>o</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>q</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>t</b>
/ko:/	/el/	/em/	/en/	/u:/	/pe:/	/kʰ:/	/ær/	/es/	/te:/
<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>W</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>Æ</b>	<b>Ø</b>	<b>Å</b>
<b>u</b>	<b>v</b>	<b>w</b>		<b>x</b>	<b>y</b>	<b>z</b>	<b>æ</b>	<b>ø</b>	<b>å</b>
/u:/	/ve:/	/ <sup>2</sup> dobelt, ve:/		/eks/	/y:/	/set/	/æ:/	/ø:/	/o:/

The three last letters, the vowels < Æ æ, Ø ø, Å å > are rare among languages that are using the Latin alphabet. If necessary, users of foreign keyboards can replace each of them with a combination of two vowel letters:

<æ>	-	<ae>	"sær"	→	"saer"	weird
<ø>	-	<oe>	"sør"	→	"soer"	south
<å>	-	<aa>	"sår"	→	"saar"	wound, sore

Of the remaining letters, < c, q, w, x, z > in general only occur in loanwords (camping, quiz, watt, xylofon, pizza).

## The Norwegian and English letters compared

Below is a short overview comparing the pronunciation of Norwegian alphabet compared to English. Cases where there is no overlap are marked with a hyphen.

The overlap between English and Norwegian speech sounds is smaller than what the list below seems to indicate as the list only refers to the letters. There are several consonant sounds that are expressed through consonant clusters (consequently they are not included in

the alphabet, but they will be discussed in Chapter 5). The alphabet by itself does not express the difference between long and short vowels.

Norwegian letter	English reference
a	Like <a> in "hard"
b	Like <b> in "buy"
c	Before front vowels <i, e, y> cf. /s/ in "circus" Before back vowels <a, o, u> cf. /k/ in "camping"
d	Like <d> in "dog"
e	Like <e> in "bed"
f	Like <f> in "fine"
g	Like <g> in "girl"
h	Like <h> in "hat"
i	Like <ee> in "see"
j	Like <y> in "yes"
k	Like <k> in "kite"
l	Like <l> in "live"
m	Like <m> in "map"
n	Like <n> in "now"
o	No equivalent
p	Like <p> in "pen"
q	In Norwegian, <qu> is pronounced as /kv/, cf. "quiz" - /kvis/
r	Like Scottish "r". The tip of the tongue taps the alveolar ridge.
s	Like <s> in "see"
t	Like <t> in "tea"
u	Approximately as the final vowel in "new"
v	Like <v> in "violin"
w	Like <v> in "violin"
x	Like <x> - /ks/ in "tax"
y	No equivalent
z	Pronounced as /s/, cf. "zoom" - /su:m/
æ	Like <a> in "bad"
ø	No equivalent
å	Like <aw> in "saw"

## Pronunciation Chapter 2

### Norwegian vowels

The Norwegian alphabet contains nine vowels:

**A, E, I, O, U, Y, Æ, Ø, Å**

The vowel letters may indicate short or long vowel sounds. All nine vowels may occur as long or short. In the examples below, the colon, < : >, indicates a long vowel. Absence of colon after the vowel indicates a short vowel. Absence of colon after the vowel indicates a short vowel.

The vowel is usually short before two or more consonant letters:

<takk>	/'tak/	thank you
<legge>	/'lege/	put

In other cases the vowel is normally long:

<ta>	/'ta:/	take
<tak>	/'ta:k/	roof
<lege>	/'le:ge/	doctor

In addition to the distinction between short and long vowel, some vowel letters in Norwegian may also represent other vowel sounds:

1) In many words a short < o > is pronounced like < å >:

<komme>	/'kome/	come
<jobbe>	/'jobe/	work

2) A short < u > may be pronounced as < o >:

<nummer>	/'numer/	number
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3) In many words with < e > + r, both short and long < e > is pronounced like < æ >:

<terminal>	/'tærmi'nɑ:l/	terminal
<er>	/'æ:r/	am, are, is
<her>	/'hæ:r/	here

4) In one important word < e > is pronounced < i >:

<de>	/'di:/	they
------	--------	------

**The Norwegian and English vowel letters compared**

<b>Norwegian letter</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>a</b>	Like <a> in «hard»
<b>e</b>	Like <e> in «bed»
<b>i</b>	Like <ee> in «see»
<b>o</b>	No equivalent
<b>u</b>	Approximately as the final vowel in "new"
<b>y</b>	No equivalent
<b>æ</b>	Like <a> in "bad"
<b>ø</b>	No equivalent
<b>å</b>	Like <aw> in "saw"

## Pronunciation Chapter 3

### Norwegian diphthongs

Norwegian has five common diphthongs represented by the vowel sequences:

AI	EI	AU	ØY	OY
ai	ei	au	øy	oy

Diphthongs are two adjacent vowel sounds that are occurring within the same syllable. The pronunciation is done as a rapid, gliding shift from one vowel to another. The symbols used here for indicating the pronunciation of the words are equal to those found in The International Phonetic Alphabet, IPA.

Letter	Speech sound (IPA)	Norwegian words	Pronunciation	English
<b>ai</b>	/ɑi/	<b>kai</b>	/'kɑi/	quai
<b>ei</b>	/æi/	<b>hei</b>	/'hæi/	hello
<b>au</b>	/æu/	<b>sau</b>	/'sæu/	sheep
<b>øy</b>	/øy/	<b>øy</b>	/'øy/	island
<b>oy</b>	/oy/	<b>soya</b>	/'soyɑ/	soya

A few more rare diphthongs will be described in the large grammar.

## Pronunciation Chapter 4

### Norwegian consonants

The Norwegian alphabet contains twenty consonant letters:

**B C D F G H J K L M N P Q R S T V W X Z**

The letters < c, q, w, x, z > are quite rare and mostly used in loanwords (camping, quiz, watt, xylofon, pizza).

Norwegian letter	English reference
<b>b</b>	Like <b> in "buy"
<b>c</b>	Before front vowels <i, e, y> cf. /s/ in <circus> Before back vowels <a, o, u> cf. /k/ in <camping>
<b>d</b>	Like <d> in "dog"
<b>f</b>	Like <f> in "fine"
<b>g</b>	Like <g> in "girl"
<b>h</b>	Like <h> in "hat"
<b>j</b>	Like <y> in "yes"
<b>k</b>	Like <k> in "kite"
<b>l</b>	Like <l> in "live"
<b>m</b>	Like <m> in "map"
<b>n</b>	Like <n> in "now"
<b>p</b>	Like <p> in "pen"
<b>q</b>	In Norwegian, <qu> is pronounced as /kv/, cf. "quiz" - /kvis/
<b>r</b>	Like Scottish "r". The tip of the tongue taps the alveolar ridge.
<b>s</b>	Like <s> in "see"
<b>t</b>	Like <t> in "tea"
<b>v</b>	Like <v> in "violin"
<b>w</b>	Like <v> in "violin"
<b>x</b>	Like <x> - /ks/ in "tax"
<b>z</b>	Pronounced as /s/, cf. "zoom" - /su:m/



## Silent sounds

In Norwegian, several consonants may occur as so-called mute or silent sounds; which means they are written, but not pronounced.

1) < d > is silent in < ld, nd, rd > and may be silent in the end of syllables after a vowel:

< kald >	/'kɑl/	cold
< Trondheim >	/'tronheim/	Trondheim
< bord >	/'bu:r/	table
< med >	/'me:/	with

2) < g > is silent in < gj > and in adjectives ending in :

< gjøre >	/'jø:re/	do
< hyggelig >	/'hygeli/	nice

3) < h > is silent in < hj, hv >:

< hjelpe >	/'jelpe/	help
< hvor >	/'vur/	where

4) < t > is silent in definite form singular of neuter nouns:

< flyet >	/'fly:e/	the plane
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5) < t > is also silent in one important word, < det >:

< det >	/'de:/	it, that
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## Pronunciation Chapter 5

### Norwegian consonants - clusters

The Norwegian alphabet contains twenty consonant letters:

**B C D F G H J K L M N P Q R S T V W X Z**

The letters < c, q, w, x, z > are quite rare and mostly used in loanwords (camping, quiz, watt, xylofon, pizza).

### Some consonant clusters

- 1) **The /ʃ/ sound** In Norwegian some consonant sounds are represented by consonant clusters. The sound /ʃ/ is represented in several ways.

/ʃ/ may be written < sj >:  
 < stasjon >     /staˈʃuːn/     station

/ʃ/ may be written < skj >:  
 < skjema >     /ˈʃeːma/     form

/ʃ/ may be written < sk > in front of < i, y, ei, øy >:  
 < skinke >     /ˈʃiŋke/     ham

/ʃ/ may be written < rs >:  
 < kurs >     /kʉːʃ/     course

- 2) **The /ç/ sound** The sound /ç/ is represented in several ways:

/ç/ may be written < kj >:  
 < kjøpe >     /ˈçøːpe/     to buy

/ç/ may be written < k > in front of < i, y, ei, øy >:  
 < kino >     /ˈçiːnu/     cinema  
 < kylling >     /ˈçyliŋ/     chicken

/ç/ may be written < tj >:  
 < tjue >     /ˈçʉːe/     twenty

- 3) **The sounds /t/, /d/, /ŋ/, /l/, /ʃ/** In Norwegian there are a set of consonant sounds that are pronounced with the tip of the tongue curled upwards and a little bit backwards. The bottom part of the tip of the tongue is touching the ridge behind the upper front teeth. The sounds /t/, /d/, /ŋ/, /l/, /ʃ/ are represented by the letter combinations

/t/ may be written <rt>:

< forteller > /fo'teler/ tell, tells

/d/ may be written <rd >:

< hvordan > /'vuðan/ how

/ŋ/ may be written <rn >:

< gjerne > /'jæ:ŋe/ gladly

/l/ may be written <rl >:

< ærlig > /'æ:li/ honest

/ʃ/ may be written <rs >

< norsk > /'noʃk/ Norwegian

#### 4) **The /ŋ/ sound**

The velar sound /ŋ/ is written <ng>

< lang > /'lanŋ/ long

< mange > /'maŋe/ many

<n> in front of <k> is in general pronounced /ŋ/

< bank > /'baŋk/ bank

## Pronunciation Chapter 6

### Norwegian prosody

In Norway you find several dialects that are quite different. When it comes to pronunciation the differences are related to consonant inventory and intonation.

There is no standard spoken Norwegian. It is common in teaching Norwegian as a second language to approach the *Bokmål* writing system, but the teacher often retains the intonation of her/his everyday speech, that is; dialect.

The description below is a general overview over Norwegian prosody.

### Long or short vowels

Norwegian vowels may be long or short.

< vin >	/'vi:n/	wine
< vinn >	/'vin/	win
< vind >	/'vin/	wind
< vink >	/'viŋk/	hand signal, hint

In general, the duration is indicated through the orthography. If a vowel is followed by *one consonant*, it is *long*, if it is followed by *double consonants* or a *consonant cluster*, it is *short*. Above the long vowel is indicated in phonemic writing by using colon < : >.

### Stress

In general the first syllable of Norwegian words is stressed. In phonemic writing stress is indicated by an apostrophe < ' >

< Norge >	/'norge/	Norway
< spise >	/'spi:se/	eat

However, in loanwords the stress pattern can be different, and you will find words stressed on the first, second, penultimate and ultimate syllable.

< telle >	/'tele/	count
< fortelle >	/fo'tele/	tell
< studere >	/stu'de:re/	study
< student >	/stu'dent/	student

There are some rules for stress placement in loanwords:

Verbs ending in "-ere" is stressed on the penultimate syllable

<studere>	/stʊ'de:re/	study
<spandere>	/span'de:re/	treat, stand treat
<repetere>	/repe'te:re/	repeat

Nouns ending in "-ent" are stressed on the ultimate syllable

<student>	/stʊ'dent/	student
<produsent>	/prudʊ'sent/	producer
<prosent>	/pru'sent/	percent

More details are given in the large grammar.

In compounds, each of the constituting parts carries its original stress. The two stresses in the word are labeled primary and secondary stress respectively. The primary stress is found in the first part of the compound, the secondary stress is found in the second part.

< engelsk >	/'eŋelsk/	English
< lærer >	/'læ:rer/	teacher
< engelsk lærer >	/'eŋelsk 'læ:rer/	English teacher (teacher from England)
< engelsklærer >	/'eŋelsk ,læ:rer/	teacher of English

## Word tones

Norwegian has two word tones called tone 1 and tone 2. By means of the tonal pattern it is possible to distinguish between two words with identical sound structure as

<b>Tone 1:</b> loven	/ <sup>1</sup> lo:ven/	the law
<b>Tone 2:</b> låven	/ <sup>2</sup> lo:ven/	the barn

Tones are not discussed in this introductory course. Consequently tones are not indicated for singular words. In the collective word list for NoW chapter 1-6 and chapter 7-10 word tones are indicated for each word. See more details about word tones in the large grammar.

## Pronunciation Chapter 7

### Postalveolar sounds

Norwegian contains some speech sounds that are expressed by letter combinations. Here we will have a look at one group of five sounds that are articulated with the tip of the tongue curled upwards and a little bit backwards. The bottom part of the tip of the tongue is touching the ridge behind the upper front teeth. As the tongue is touching the rear part of the alveolar ridge - that is; the ridge in the roof of the mouth between the upper teeth and the hard palate - the sounds are called "postalveolar" sounds (an alternative name is "retroflex" sounds). In general these sound are written as combinations of the letter <r> and < t, d, n, l, s >. In phonetic writing the sounds are represented with special letters as shown below.

Letter sequence		Pronunciation of letter sequence		
<rt> as in "fort"	quick, fast	/r/ + /t/	→	/t̪/
<rd> as in "ferdig"	finished	/r/ + /d/	→	/d̪/
<rn> as in "barn"	children	/r/ + /n/	→	/n̪/
<rl> as in "farlig"	dangerous	/r/ + /l/	→	/l̪/
<rs> as in "mars"	March	/r/ + /s/	→	/s̪/

The examples above are shown with the sound occurring inside words. The same effect will be observed when /r/ is the last sound of one word and /t, d, n, l, s/ is the first sound in the following word. The two sounds melt together and create a new sound. This process, the coalescence of two sounds into one, is often referred to as assimilation.

/ t, d, n, l, s /			/ t̪, d̪, n̪, l̪, s̪ /		
må ta	/mo <sup>1</sup> ta:/	must take	har tatt	/ha <sup>1</sup> t̪at/	has taken
må dra	/mo <sup>1</sup> dra:/	must leave	har dratt	/ha <sup>1</sup> d̪rat/	has gone
må nå	/mo <sup>1</sup> no:/	must reach	har nådd	/ha <sup>1</sup> n̪od/	has reached
må lese	/mo <sup>2</sup> le:se/	must read	har lest	/ha <sup>1</sup> l̪est/	has read
må se	/mo <sup>1</sup> se:/	must see	har sett	/ha <sup>1</sup> l̪et/	has seen

As a speaker of Norwegian you are used to listen for the /r/ sound in the end of a word, as it may signal present tense as in "leser, snakker, skriver, spiser". From the description above it follows that the r-sound of present tense will be absent if the following word in isolation is starting with /t, d, n, l, s/. This means that the only sign of present tense is the postalveolar sound. Thus the listener has to analyze /t̪, d̪, n̪, l̪, s̪/ as /r/+t/, /r/+d/ and so on.

As the plural indefinite form of nouns also ends in "-r" ("jenter, gutter, biler, busser"), the phenomenon described above is valid here as well.

## Pronunciation Chapter 8

### Reductions

In Chapter 4 you read about "silent letters", i.e. consonants that are written, but do not represent a sound. In some cases the vowel "e" is written, but not pronounced. If an /e/ occurs in an unstressed syllable between /t, d, n, l, s/ and /n/, the /e/ is not pronounced. The final /n/ constitutes the second syllable and must be pronounced clearly. When you pronounce these words you go straight from /t, d, n, l, s/ in the end of one syllable to the /n/ of the next.

Careful pronunciation		Common pronunciation	
tretten	/ <sup>2</sup> treten/	thirteen	/ <sup>2</sup> treɲ/
boden	/ <sup>1</sup> bu:den/	the storage room	/ <sup>1</sup> bu:dɲ/
vinen	/ <sup>1</sup> vi:nen/	the wine	/ <sup>1</sup> vi:nɲ/
bilen	/ <sup>1</sup> bi:len/	the car	/ <sup>1</sup> bi:lɲ/
bussen	/ <sup>1</sup> busen/	the bus	/ <sup>1</sup> bʊsɲ/

#### This rule is for instance applied

1. for numbers 13 – 19 (tretten, fjorten, femten, seksten, sytten, atten, nitten)
2. when masculine nouns ending in /t, d, n, l, s/ are put in singular definite form

en hatt	→	hatt <u>e</u>	the hat
en bod	→	bod <u>e</u>	the storage rom
en vin	→	vin <u>e</u>	the wine
en bil	→	bil <u>e</u>	the car
en buss	→	buss <u>e</u>	the bus

3. when masculine, feminine and neuter form ending in /t, d, n, l, s/ are put in plural definite form

en hatt	→	hattene
en bod	→	bodene
en vin	→	vinene
en bil	→	bilene
en buss	→	bussene

## Pronunciation Chapter 9

### Connected speech

The pronunciation of Norwegian is characterized by other features than just the speech sounds, long and short vowels, stress and tones. One issue that is important to master is how to produce connected speech. What is typical of Norwegian is that one word is directly connected to the previous and the following word. This linking of words can be illustrated in the following way:

Han snakker engelsk                      Han-snakker-engelsk

This sentence should sound like one continuous chain of sounds:

**Hans**nakker**eng**elsk

Bold letters indicate stressed syllables:

Hun er ikke engelsk                      Hun-er-ikke-engelsk

This sentence should sound like one continuous chain of sounds:

Huner**ikke**engelsk

Some languages, German for example, do not connect words in this way. If a word starts with a vowel, a glottal stop sound ("Knacklaut", IPA symbol < ʔ >) will be inserted in front of the vowel:

Hun er ikke engelsk                      Hun ʔer ʔikke ʔengelsk

If this is introduced in Norwegian, it will lead to short frequent stops that will destroy the fluency which is expected.

Other languages, Spanish for example, do not accept words starting with /s/+another consonant (like /p, t, k/). In Spanish the /s/+consonant sequence must be preceded by a vowel, an /e/. If this is introduced in Norwegian, it will create new syllables that are not expected and which will destroy the expected fluency.

Norwegian	English	Spanish
Spania	Spain	España
student	student	estudiante
skole	school	escuela

Other languages, Farsi for example, combine the two phenomena mentioned above. Here the



/s/+consonant sequence also must be preceded by a vowel, which in its turn will be preceded by the glottal stop.

Norwegian	English	Farsi pronunciation of Norwegian
spa	spa	/'ʔespa/
student	student	/'ʔestudent/
skole	school	/'ʔeskule/

When speaking Norwegian, one should also pay attention to phenomena related to /r/ + /t, d, n, l, s/ which are mentioned earlier. If one word is ending in /r/ and the next is starting with /t, d, n, l, s/, the sounds will assimilate to /t̥, d̥, ŋ, l̥, s̥/.

Letter sequence		Pronunciation of letter sequence
<rt> as in "er to"	is two	/r/ + /t/ → /t̥/ → /æ'tu: /
<rd> as in "er det"	is it	/r/ + /d/ → /d̥/ → /æ'de: /
<rn> as in "er ny"	is new	/r/ + /n/ → /ŋ̥/ → /æ'ny: /
<rl> as in "er litt"	is a little	/r/ + /l/ → /l̥/ → /æ'lit /
<rs> as in "er syk"	is ill	/r/ + /s/ → /s̥/ → /æ'fj:k /

This phenomenon contributes highly to connecting words to each other.

**No pauses at all?**

Are there no pauses in spoken Norwegian? Of course there are. In connected speech the pauses will occur where you find commas and full stops in a written text. There will also be stops when the speaker stops to think, is hesitating or rephrasing the utterance. But in general one can say that when you are speaking Norwegian, words should be closely connected with no intervening sounds or pauses.

By using connected speech and pauses correctly, you can make different patterns of the following five names and thus express whether you are talking about five, four or three persons.

- 5 persons: Britt, Anne, Kari, Marie, Louise
- 4 persons: Britt Anne, Kari, Marie, Louise
- Britt, Anne Kari, Marie, Louise
- Britt, Anne, Kari Marie, Louise
- Britt, Anne, Kari, Marie Louise
- 3 persons: Britt, Anne Kari, Marie Louise
- Britt Anne, Kari, Marie Louise
- Britt Anne, Kari Marie, Louise

## Pronunciation Chapter 10

### Speech rhythm

The pronunciation of Norwegian is characterized by a certain speech rhythm which often is labelled *stress timing*. The rhythm is related to the relation between stressed and unstressed syllables.

In general one can say that in connected speech there is a tendency that stressed syllables occur with equal intervals. The letters ABCD constitute an utterance. The boxes into which the letters are put, indicate that they should be delivered with equal intervals.

Imagine that you are pronouncing the letters of the alphabet. Speak with a loud voice and deliver the letters as described above. (Here and below, capital letters indicate that the syllables are stressed).

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

**If you for instance point at some coloured squares, you could say:**

RØD	BLÅ	GUL	GRØNN
-----	-----	-----	-------

Here all words are stressed and pronounced with the same patterns as the letters. You could try the same with numbers. (Here we use <FIR'> which is a monosyllabic version of "fire" - "four".)

EN	TO	TRE	FIR'
----	----	-----	------

This goes for names as well:

ANN	TOR	LEIF	BRITT
-----	-----	------	-------

Or cities:

BONN	YORK	HULL	NICE
------	------	------	------

Or music:

POP	JAZZ	ROCK	SWING
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### Unstressed syllables

If there are unstressed syllables in the utterance, the pattern above is maintained. That means that unstressed syllables will be compressed in order to maintain equal intervals between the stressed syllables. The more unstressed syllables there are, the more compression will occur. The compression of syllables is achieved by speaking faster. Non-capital letters indicate unstressed syllables:

RØD	BLÅ	GUL	GRØNN
RØD og	BLÅ og	GUL og	GRØNN
RØD og så	BLÅ og så	GUL og så	GRØNN
RØD og så en	BLÅ og så en	GUL og så en	GRØNN
RØD og så er det	BLÅ og så er det	GUL og så er det	GRØNN

Consequently, one characteristic feature of spoken Norwegian is the change of speed while speaking. Sometimes the speed is slow (few syllables between two stressed syllables, some times it is high (several syllables between two stressed syllables).

Below you find possible answers to the question "Hva slags musikk liker du?" (What kind of music do you like?). You can answer:

POP	JAZZ	ROCK	SWING
POP og	JAZZ og	ROCK og	SWING
POP og så	JAZZ og så	ROCK og så	SWING
POP og så litt	JAZZ og så litt	ROCK og så litt	SWING

### Rhythm unit: The foot

A *foot* is a unit that starts with a stressed syllable and ends before the next stressed syllable. If one apply this concept on what is said above, one can say that in Norwegian there is a tendency that all *feet* should have equal duration independent of how many syllables there are in each foot.

The utterance "OS, NES, BØ, DAL" below could be a list of places along a railway line, or it could be the answer to questions like: "Name the municipalities in X county". The second, third and fourth could be answer to "Where did you go this summer?". The two last utterances could be he answer to "Where will you go next summer?"

FOOT	FOOT	FOOT	FOOT
OS	NES	BØ	DAL
OSlo	BERgen	HAmar	BODø
OSlo og	BERgen og	HAmar og	BODø
OSlo og så	BERgen og så	HAmar og så	BODø
OSlo og kanskje	BERgen og kanskje	HAmar og kanskje	BODø
OSlo og så kanskje	BERgen og så kanskje	HAmar og så kanskje	BODø

It is not so common to find utterances made up of feet with an equal number of syllables, like the ones above. You will most likely find this pattern in poems.

In everyday speech there is a variation when it comes to the number of syllables in the feet of an utterance. Minimally, there will be one syllable in a foot (which according to our definition must be stressed); maximally, there will be six or seven. In general, there are no more than four or maybe five. This implies that feet contain one stressed syllable and 3-4 unstressed ones.

KEN skal til (3) ANNa kan (3) LIKer du ikke (4) VET du når (3)	OSlo og (3) SNAKKe (2) KAFFe med (3) BUSSen går til (4)	BERgen (2) ENGelsk (2) SUKKer og (3) BØ (1)	MELK (1)
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**Observe** that feet may start in the middle of a word. This will occur when any syllable in the word except for the first is stressed:

Stavanger > staVANGer  
 Paris > paRIS  
 studere > stuDERe

<b>FOOT</b>	<b>FOOT</b>	<b>FOOT</b>	<b>FOOT</b>
PETer ANNa bor i pa KEN og ma-	REISer fra sta- RIS RIa stu-	VANGer til  DERer	OSlo  NORSK

What is typical for unstressed syllables is that they are spoken with a rather flat tone. You will make the major tonal changes in the stressed syllables, and in the end of clauses.

### Initial unstressed syllables

In many cases an utterance will start with one or more unstressed syllables, that means light syllables that occur before the first stressed one. These syllables, which constitute an *anacrusis*, behave in the same way as the unstressed ones within a foot: They are rapidly spoken and are delivered with a rather flat tone:

<b>ANACRUSIS</b>	<b>FOOT</b>	<b>FOOT</b>
en det er det er en det er er det et e-	BIL ANN BUSS HUSet mitt LEKtrisk	TOG

In general there are up to four or five unstressed syllables before the first stressed one, and as we said earlier: In principle they are pronounced in the same way as unstressed syllables following a stressed syllable.

## Summary

What is required in order to pronounce Norwegian in a satisfactory way? You need to master the central parts of the different levels of speech. You do if you are able to

1. master the different speech sounds
2. pronounce short and long vowels (which only occur in stressed syllables)
3. master phenomena related to rapid speech (assimilation, reduction)
4. link words together to make the clause sound like one chain
5. pronounce stressed syllables in an adequate way, that is to stress the heavy syllable sufficiently
6. maintain equal intervals between stressed syllables
7. compress unstressed syllables and pronounce them with a flat tone
8. If you do this, your pronunciation of Norwegian most likely will be good enough. You will probably have an accent, but in general all Norwegians will understand what you are saying.

## One last hint

Norwegian speech rhythm is quite similar to the speech rhythm of English, German or Dutch. This means that students with these languages as their mother tongue can rely on their own rhythmical patterns when speaking Norwegian. However, sound systems and intonation are different, so students will have to refine their pronunciation.

Some languages, for example Polish and Spanish, have a different speech rhythm than Norwegian. Often the syllables are of equal duration, and if this is transferred to Norwegian, the speech will be perceived as *staccato* as there is no compression of unstressed syllables.