



# The Welsh Vocabulary Builder 1

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Just a short note to begin: Bangor University in Wales has compiled a list of words used in contemporary Welsh, including data as to how frequently each word is used. Here is what they say on their website, [www.bangor.ac.uk/canolfanbedwyr/ceg.php.en](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/canolfanbedwyr/ceg.php.en):

“This is a word frequency analysis of 1,079,032 words of written Welsh prose, based on 500 samples of approximately 2000 words each, selected from a representative range of text types to illustrate modern (mainly post 1970) Welsh prose writing. . . The sample included materials from the fields of novels and short stories, religious writing, children's literature both factual and fiction, non-fiction materials in the fields of education, science, business, leisure activities, etc., public lectures, newspapers and magazines, both national and local, reminiscences, academic writing, and general administrative materials (letters, reports, minutes of meetings).”

I have taken their data and sorted each word by frequency. By “word,” I mean “dictionary headword,” which would for example include all the conjugated forms of a verb. The only difference here is that I have separated out homonyms by part of speech as much as I could. In Welsh, there is some overlap between adjectives and adverbs, and between verbs and nouns. In a few cases, it was not possible to distinguish homonyms for the same part of speech.

The top 500 words comprise 75% of the entire set, so that if you learn just 500 words, you will be able to go a very long way with Welsh. What follows is a daily set of two vocabulary words to learn. This way, you'll be able to get your 500 words in a mere 9 months with only 5 to 10 minutes of study per day. I have also added one conjugate verb form, because these are important, starting with all the forms of “be” and then adding unpredictable forms from the most common irregular verbs.

Don't worry about learning everything here, only the words in **bolded blue**. Also, do not worry about the grammar of the example sentences, especially in the first few weeks. Just have a look to start familiarizing yourself with the feel of the language. There are a few usage notes, which you are free to skip, followed by example sentences. The day's words will be in **blue**; words you have had previously will be in **red**. There are green **homonym alerts** for those cases where another word has the same or similar spelling. (For the convenience of the learner, I am including instances where Welsh actually does distinguish with apostrophes or accent marks, e.g. 'na vs na or môr vs mor.) There are also orange **pronunciation alerts** at the first instance of a specific sound.

The calendar dates listed below are to guide those attending the 2013–2014 Welsh classes at the Cambrian hall.

A further note: if there are any errors, please send corrections to me in care of the Vancouver Welsh Society, and I will update these documents.

Day One: 15 September

**Today's words: yr = the; bod = be; dw i = I am**

By far the most common Welsh word is the definite article **yr**, “the”. It accounts for one out of every thirteen words in the language. The word varies in form depending on the words surrounding it, changing to **'r** when following a word ending in a vowel, and to **y** when the next word begins with a consonant (see examples below). Before feminine nouns, **yr** and its shorter forms cause *lenition* or *soft mutation*. Words normally beginning with P, T, C, B, D, G, or M undergo lenition after **yr<sup>L</sup>**, with the following changes: P > B, T > D, C > G, B > F, D > DD, G > — (i.e. nothing at all), and M > F. (The <sup>L</sup> is not written in Welsh, but I'm using it here to show that this word causes the soft mutation.)

**Pronunciation Alerts!** The Welsh letter Y is the most difficult for learners. In non-final syllables and in the most common one-syllable Welsh words\*, Y is pronounced like *a* in English *about*, or when stressed a bit like English *u*



**Dw i'n gwybod eich bod chi yn yr ogof.**

**I know that you are in the cave.** (Word by word, **Am I** «particle» **knowing your being you in the cave.**)

Day Two: 16 September

**Today's words:** **yn** = «particle»; **ac** = and; **rwyt ti** = you are

Another very common word is the particle **yn<sup>L</sup>**, which changes to **'n<sup>L</sup>** after a vowel. This word has no equivalent in English, but it is necessary in Welsh. Because Welsh most often uses the word order verb-subject-predicate, the word **yn<sup>L</sup>** tells you that the subject is done and the predicate is coming, in the form of a noun, adjective, or adverb. The word is also used to form adverbs from adjectives, like *-ly* in English.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **yn** and **'n** can also have other meanings.

Today's other really common word is the conjunction **ac**, meaning “and”. Some dialects pronounce the word as if it were spelled *ag*, but *ac* is always acceptable. Before consonants (that is, most of the time) the word is simply **a<sup>H</sup>**. The <sup>H</sup> indicates the *aspirate* or *spirant* mutation, which affects only three consonants: P > PH, T > TH, and C > CH. There are many homonyms of **a** in Welsh, so the mutation can be quite helpful.

**Pronunciation Alerts!** A is always pronounced as in Spanish or Italian. PH (considered one letter) is pronounced as English, as is TH (also one letter), but always *th* as in *thin* and never as in *then*. CH (one letter again) is like the *ch* in the Scottish *loch* or German *bach*, often represented by *kh* in English transliterations of foreign words.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **a** can also have other meanings.

Today's form of **bod** is the singular / informal form of “you are,” **rwyt ti**.

**Pronunciation Alert!** The Welsh diphthong WY is like the Spanish UY. It is similar to English *ooey*, as in *gooey*, but one syllable, like *oy* in *boy* but with an *oo* instead of *o*. More rarely, the sound can be like English *wi-* as in *wish* or *wee*. When Welsh needs to clarify or distinguish, the former is written *ŴY* (*ooy*) and the latter as *WŶ* (*wee*).

Examples:

**Rwyt ti'n hapus a chyfoethog.**

**You are happy and rich.** (*cyfoethog* becomes **chyfoethog** after **a<sup>H</sup>**)

**Rwyt ti'n wlyb ac oer.**

**You are wet and cold.** (*gwlyb* becomes **wlyb** after **'n<sup>L</sup>**)

Day Three: 17 September

**Today's words:** **i** = to / for; **mi** = I / me; **mae e / mae o | mae hi** = he is (S) / he is (N) | she is

Another leniting word is the preposition **i<sup>L</sup>**. It basically means “to” or “for,” but prepositions have so many idiomatic usages that it will take time to come to terms with them all, and few of them are an exact match to English. In Welsh, most prepositions can be conjugated, just like verbs, so that *to him* is not **\*\*i fe**, but **iddo fe**. (The two asterisks are used in linguistics to mean that what follows is ungrammatical.) In the formal, literary language, the pronoun is omitted and **iddo** is enough. The forms of **i** vary a little, but the basic conversational forms are **i fi** (to me), **i ti** (to you [s.]), **iddo fe** (to him / to it), **iddi hi** (to her / to it), **i ni** (to us), **i chi** (to you [pl.]), and **iddyn nhw** (to them). **i<sup>L</sup>** and most other leniting words take the full set of soft mutations, that is, those listed above for **yn<sup>L</sup>** but also including LL > L and RH > R. Note that the conjugated prepositions do not cause lenition directly, though it often appears after them for other grammatical reasons.

**Pronunciation Alerts!** The Welsh letter I is like the Spanish or Italian letter I, not like English, except before vowels where it is like English y.

E is always pronounced as in Spanish or Italian.

F is always pronounced as English *v*: think *of*.

The Welsh NH is both letters pronounced simultaneously, but in practice the N usually attaches to the previous word, and the NH-word is treated as if it starts with just H-. This is the same for MH and NGH.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **i** can also have other meanings.

The English pronoun I (subject case) and me (object case) is **mi** in Welsh, which has a tendency to be permanently lenited to **fi** (pronounced *vee*) and even just **i**, which looks just like the preposition above. Watch that your spell-checker doesn't try to capitalize **i**! More rarely, Welsh uses the emphatic pronouns **myfi** and **minnau** (**finnau**, **innau**). **Myfi** expresses emphasis (English **I!**, **me!**) while **finnau** adds contrast: "me, too"; "I, on the other hand", etc.

**Pronunciation Alert!** AU is pronounced as the *y* in English *my*. As with most Welsh words ending in -AU, there are variations in the spoken language, often -A in North Wales and -E in South Wales.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **mi** and **i** can also have other meanings.

Today's form of **bod** is **mae**: **mae e** ("he is" / "it is", South Wales) / **mae o** ("he is" / "it is", North Wales) / **mae hi** ("she is" / "it is", all Wales). With nouns as subjects, **mae** is used for both singular and plural: **mae John** "John is", **mae Mary** "Mary is", **mae John & Mary** "John and Mary are".

**Pronunciation Alert!** The Welsh diphthong AE is like English *y* in *my*.

Examples:

**Mae hi wedi rhoi anrheg i mi.**

**She gave me a gift / she gave a gift to me.**

**Es i i'r siop.**

**I went to the store.** (The first **i** is "I", the second is "to").

**Mae e'n rhy brysur i fynd i weld y gêm rygbi.**

**He is too busy to go see the rugby game.** (**fynd** is lenited from **mynd**; **weld** is lenited from **gweld**)

Day Four: 18 September

**Today's words:** **o** = from / of; **yn** = «particle» [another one]; **dyn ni** = we are

Another conjugated preposition is **o<sup>L</sup>**, meaning "from" or "of". Its conjugated forms are **ohono i**, **ohonot ti**, **ohono fe**, **ohoni hi**, **ohonon ni**, **ohonoch chi**, **ohonynd nhw**. There are some variations in the more formal literary language and in North Wales, but they are easily recognizable from this pattern (**ohonat ti**, **ohonynt**, etc.). As with **i<sup>L</sup>**, the conjugated forms do not cause mutations. Note that you now have two ways to say "of": with **yr**, and with **o<sup>L</sup>**. **O<sup>L</sup>** is used more for a portion or part of a set and where "of" implies "from", and **yr** for most other cases where English uses "'s" or "of".

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **o** can also have other meanings.

You have already met the particle **yn<sup>L</sup>**, which announces the predicate. A very similar word is **yn**, no mutation, which announces a following verb, and like **yn<sup>L</sup>** it is often reduced to **'n**. Welsh verbs are usually given in the form of the verb-noun, which is more like the English gerund (-ing form) than the infinitive, and this is the form used after **yn**. As with **yn<sup>L</sup>**, there is no direct translation. When emphasizing a verb, as in English "I'm going," you stress the **yn**: **dw i yn mynd**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **yn** and **'n** can also have other meanings.

**Dyn ni** is "we are".

**Pronunciation Alert!** The -Y- here is pronounced as in English *dun*.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **dyn** (pronounced *deen*) and **ni** can also have other meanings.

Examples:

**Dyn ni'n teithio o Lundain i Gymru.**

**We are travelling from London to Wales.** (Lundain < Llundain; Gymru < Cymru)

**Dyn ni'n pyrnu torth o fara o'r popty.**

**We are buying a loaf of bread from the bakery.** (fara < bara) [Note: popty can also mean "oven."]

Day Five: 19 September

**Today's words: ar = on; ei = his | its; dych chi = you are**

Yet another leniting conjugated preposition is **ar<sup>l</sup>**, "on" or "upon". Its conjugated forms are **arna i, arnat ti, arno fe, arni hi, arnon ni, arnoch chi, arnyn nhw**. As with **o<sup>l</sup>**, there are variations. **Ar<sup>l</sup>** is often used to express conditions or temporary states. Where English says "She has a cold," Welsh says **Mae annwyd arni hi**, literally **is cold on her**. Before verbs, **ar** can mean "about to", and it frequently is used to form a verbal adjective or adverb: **ar agor**, "open" (from **agor**, "open"); **ar gael**, "available" (from **cael**, "get").

The possessive pronoun "his" | "its" is **ei<sup>l</sup>**. There are only two genders in Welsh, masculine and feminine. English has three: masculine, feminine, and neuter, with most inanimate nouns as neuter. Although we think of these as gendered categories, they're really just random. English has category A "he" (man, boy), category B "she" (woman, girl), and category C "it" (table, tree): most nouns are in category C. Welsh has only A and B, so the choice of pronoun will vary between the two languages. After **o<sup>l</sup>** and other short words ending in a vowel, **ei<sup>l</sup>** is just **'i<sup>l</sup>: o'i<sup>l</sup>**. After **i<sup>l</sup>**, it changes to **'w<sup>l</sup>: i'w<sup>l</sup>**. This is called an "infix pronoun" because of the way it attaches to another word. There is also an infix **'s** which attaches to the negative words **na, ni, oni**, and **pe**.

The thing possessed is often followed by the personal pronoun she / her | it, particularly if it is possessing a phrase (more than one word) or for emphasis. A feature of Welsh that is very different from English is that the object of a verb is expressed with a possessive pronoun, not an object pronoun. **Dw i'n ei weld e: I see him.** (Lit., **am I <particle> his seeing him.**)

**Pronunciation Alert!** The Welsh diphthong EI has variable pronunciations by dialect. It is usually composed of *u* as in *up* plus *ee* as in *keen*, making a sound found in the speech of many Canadians' pronunciation of *right*. Having said that, this particular word is an exception. In the possessive pronouns, EI is pronounced as if it were spelled I. Welsh doesn't have many exceptions to its rules, but unfortunately the few it has show up quite early! In this case it is the modern spelling that is mistaken—it is modelled on Latin *eius* rather than the historical Welsh spelling.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **ei, 'i, 's**, and **'w** can also have other meanings.

The second person plural of **bod** is **dych chi**.

Examples:

**Dych chi'n rhoi ei lyfr ar y bwrdd.**

**You are putting his book on the table.** (lyfr < llyfr)

**Dych chi'n rhan o'i deulu nawr.**

**You're a part of his family now.** (deulu < teulu)

**Mae arna i eisiau bwyd.**

**I am hungry.** (literally, **is on me want food**)

Awn ni i'w dŷ ef ar ben y mynydd.

Let's go to his house on top of the mountain. (dŷ < tŷ; ben < pen)

Day Six: 20 September

Today's words: **yn** = in; **yr** = «particle»; **maen nhw** = they are

You have already encountered two words spelled **yn**: **yn** before verbs, and **yn<sup>L</sup>** before the predicate. There is a third **yn**, the preposition meaning “in”. (But not “in a,” which is a different word, **mewn**: **yn** is only in something definite.) It causes a third mutation, nasalization (<sup>N</sup>). It affects the same consonants as **yn<sup>L</sup>**, but with the following changes: P > MH, T > NH, C > NGH, B > M, D > N, G > NG. M does not change. **Yn<sup>N</sup>** changes forms, but it doesn't lose the initial Y. Instead, before words now beginning with M it becomes **ym<sup>N</sup>**, and before words now beginning with NG it becomes **yng<sup>N</sup>**.

**Pronunciation Alert!** The Welsh letter NG (one letter) is like the *ng* in English *young singer*, and not like *younger finger*. This letter comes between G and H in the Welsh alphabet. Unlike English, it can begin a syllable, which takes a little getting used to. Occasionally, though, the letter N is followed by G, and this NG (two letters) is pronounced like *younger finger*. You'll know by where they are alphabetized in the dictionary.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **yn** and **ym** can also have other meanings.

There is also another **yr**, this time a particle. **Yr** begins a positive sentence, that is, one that is not a question and not a negative sentence with “not”. The word is exceedingly common in the literary language, but rarely heard in speech. Like **yr**, it changes to **y** before a consonant, and sometimes the **-r** alone is attached to the following verb.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **yr** and **y** can also have other meanings.

The third person plural of to be is **maen nhw**, pronounced as if it were **maen hw**. The **maen** form is only used with the pronoun; expressed nouns use **mae**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **maen** can also have other meanings.

**Y mae hi'n siarad yn hen-ffasiwn.**

She speaks in an old-fashioned way. (**yn** here is **yn<sup>L</sup>**, turning an adjective into an adverb)

**Maen nhw'n byw yng Nghymru.**

They live in Wales. (Nghymru < Cymru)

**Maen nhw yn y bar.**

They are in the bar.

Day Seven: 21 September

Today's words: **am** = around / about; **eu** = their; **oes?** = is there? / are there?

Yet another leniting conjugated preposition is **am<sup>L</sup>**, “around” or “about”. With time, “am” can mean “for [the duration of]”. Its conjugated forms are **amdana i**, **amdanat ti**, **amdano fe**, **amdani hi**, **amdanon ni**, **amdanoch chi**, **amdanyn nhw**. As with **ar<sup>L</sup>**, there are variations. **Am<sup>L</sup>** is often used to express desire or intention, and it is also used of clothing. Where English says “He has a coat on,” Welsh says “**Mae côt amdano fe**,” literally “**is coat about him**.”

The possessive pronoun “their” is **eu<sup>+H</sup>**. It does not cause a mutation, but if the following word begins with a vowel, **eu** is followed by an **h**. The word **afalau**, “apples,” becomes **ei afalau** “his apples,” but **eu hafalau**, “their apples.” After **o<sup>L</sup>** and other short words ending in a vowel, **eu<sup>+H</sup>** is just **'u<sup>+H</sup>**: **o' u<sup>+H</sup>**. After **i<sup>L</sup>**, it changes to **'w<sup>+H</sup>**: **i' w<sup>+H</sup>**, and with **na**, **ni**, **oni**, or **pe** it is **'s**. The thing possessed is often followed by the person pronoun they / them.

**Pronunciation Alert!** EU is the same as EI.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **'i** and **'w** can also have other meanings.

Welsh has many words for “is”, such as **mae**. Another is **oes**, which is used to ask the question “is there?” The answer is either **oes**, “yes,” or **nae oes**, “no”. Welsh does not have one single word for “yes” or “no,” and tends to answer by matching the verb.

**Pronunciation Alerts!** OE is pronounced as in English *oy*.

Welsh *s* is never pronounced as English *z*. The combination *si* is pronounced like English *sh*, but otherwise *s* is always like English *ss*.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **oes** can also have other meanings.

**Oes côr amdanat ti? Oes.**

**Are you wearing a coat? Yes.** (Lit., **is-there coat about you?**)

**Mae eu teulu yn byw yng Ngogledd Cymru.**

**Their family lives in North Wales.** (Ngogledd from Gogledd).

**Dw i am fynd.**

**I want to go or I intend to go** (Lit., **am I about going**)

Day Eight: 22 September

Today's words: **wedi** = after; **a** = who / which; **yw** = is

The preposition **wedi**, “after” does *not* cause a mutation and does not conjugate. Simple! This versatile preposition is also commonly used to form the past tense: **dw i wedi gweld Paris**, “I have seen Paris,” is literally “**am I after seeing Paris.**” **Wedi** is often reduced to **'di**, especially in speech.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **di** can also have other meanings.

**a<sup>l</sup>** is a relative pronoun, which means it sets up a relative clause. It can be translated as “who,” “whom,” or “which,” and more rarely “whose” or “that.” Welsh likes to change the word order for emphasis, so this pronoun is more common in Welsh than “who” is in English.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **a** can also have other meanings.

Yet another word for “is” is **yw**, which is used in the copula construction. When “is” functions more as an equal sign than a description of existence, the word required is **yw**. In Welsh, the word order is the reverse of the English: **glas** (blue) **yw'r môr** (sea) = **the sea is blue**. Since this construction puts a noun or adjective at the beginning of the sentence, it can also add emphasis to the first word. **Mae'r môr yn las** = **The sea is blue** (neutral); **glas yw'r môr** = **the sea is blue** (as opposed to some other colour).

**Pronunciation Alert!** The diphthong *yw* is a combination of short *y* and *w* as one syllable. It is the same as *iw* (*i* + *w*) in South Wales.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **yw** can also have other meanings.

Examples:

**Dw i wedi gofyn am dŷ newydd a welais i ddoe.**

**I asked about a new house that I saw yesterday.** (literally, **am I after asking about house new; dŷ < tŷ**)

**Tŷ John yw, ond dw i am ei brynu.**

**It is John's house, but I want to buy it.** (literally, **House John it-is, but am I about its buying**)

Day Nine: 23 September

**Today's words:** **gan** = with / by; **cael** = get; **sy** = which is

Still another leniting conjugated preposition is **gan<sup>l</sup>**, “with” or “by”. Its conjugated forms are **gen i**, **gen ti**, **ganddo fe**, **ganddi hi**, **gennyn ni**, **gennoch chi**, **ganddyn nhw**. As with **am<sup>l</sup>**, there are variations. **Gan<sup>l</sup>** is often used to express possession, especially immediate or physical possession. Where English says “He has a coat,” Welsh says “**Mae côt ganddo fe**,” literally “**is coat with him**.” It is even more common to switch the order, a process which triggers an additional soft mutation: “**Mae ganddo fe gôt**,” literally “**is with him coat**.” Before verbs, **gan** means “since”. Since the initial **g-** is a permanently lenited form of **c-**, the word sometimes gets mutated to **chan**.

**Pronunciation Alert!** Note that G is always pronounced as in English *go*, never as in *joe*.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **gan** can also have other meanings.

The verb **cael**, fuller form **cafael**, is a very versatile verb whose basic meaning is “get”. It can also be used for “have” in many idiomatic phrases and where the implication is that you have something because you have gotten it. Colloquially, the verb is also used to form the passive voice. It is irregular, with its most common verbal stem **caf-**, or more colloquially, just **c-**. The verb stem is what the personal endings are attached to. The word is also used for “may” as in “May I?”

**Pronunciation Alert!** Note that C is always pronounced as in English *cap*, never as in *sap*.

Another third-person singular present tense of the verb to be combines the functions of **a<sup>l</sup>** and **yw**: **sy**. It can be translated “who is,” “which is,” or even just “is”. It is most common following a question word.

**Oes ganddo fe gath?**

**Does he have a cat?** (lit., **is-there with him cat?**)

**Oes. Mae e wedi cael cath fach ddoe.**

**Yes. He got a kitten yesterday.** (lit., **there-is. Is he after getting cat small yesterday**)

**Pwy sy'n gath fach dda? Y ti!**

**Who's a good kitten? You!** (lit. **who which-is <particle> cat little good? The you!**)

—another case of Welsh using the article where English does not.)

Day Ten: 24 September

**Today's words:** **hwn / hon / hyn** | **rhain** = this | these; **ond** = but; **sydd** = which is

Although Welsh words only have two genders, masculine and feminine, the word for “this” has three forms: one to stand in for a masculine (**hwn** = **this**), one for a feminine (**hon** = **this**), and one for an abstract idea (**hyn** = **this**). These words are always used with the definite article **yr**. In the singular, **hwn** and **hon** can be used as adjectives or pronouns, while singular **hyn** can only be a pronoun: **yr hwn** = **this** (m.); **y ci hwn** = **this dog**; **yr hon** = **this** (f.); **y gath hon** = **this cat**; **yr hyn** = **this** (abstraction). The adjectival plural is **hyn**, while the pronoun can be either **hyn** or **rhain**: **yr hyn** or **y rhain** = **these**; **y cathod hyn** = **these cats**.

**Pronunciation Alert!** The Welsh letter RH (one letter) is a voiceless rolled R. Saying a rolled R and H at the same time is a good approximation.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **hyn** can also have other meanings.

More simply, the conjunction **ond** “but” works as in English, except that it is also commonly used with the negative to mean “only.”

**Sydd** is just another form of **sy**. There is no difference in meaning or usage and both are common in Welsh; **sydd** represents about 40% of the instances, and **sy** 60%.

**Pronunciation Alert!** Note that DD (a single letter) is always pronounced as *th* in English *then*.

Examples:

**Pwy sydd yma? Dim ond fi.**  
**Who is here? Only me.** (Lit., not **but me**.)

**Mae'r gath hon yn wen, ond du yw'r rhain.**  
**This cat is white, but these are black.**

Day Eleven: 25 September

**Today's words: fe (S) / fo (N) = he / him | it; un = one; mai = is**

The Welsh masculine pronoun “he” / “him” is one of the key variants between North Wales and South Wales. In the north, the word is **fo**, often shortened to **o** in conjugated verbs and prepositions. In the south, the word is **fe**, often shortened to **e**. In the literary language, you usually see **ef**, with the emphatic forms **efe** / **efo**. The “him too” emphatic form is **yntau**. Remember that when this word refers to something that is neuter in English, it must be translated as “it”.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **fe**, **o**, **fo**, and **efo** can also have other meanings.

The word for “one” is **un**. Like the definite article, this adjective mutates a following feminine noun but not a masculine one. (If you like, you can think that Welsh has a masculine “one”, **un**, and a feminine “one,” **un<sup>f</sup>**.) Welsh has no indefinite article, so unlike the French *un* it never means “a” or “an”.

**Pronunciation Alert!** U in North Wales is /i/, a high central unrounded vowel. To learn to make this sound, practice by saying *red book*. What you are doing moving from *red* to *book* is moving from a front vowel to a back vowel. Once you have mastered this move, start with *ee* as in *keen* and move the vowel back. It should not be as far back as *oo* (as in *moon*). You can use a (clean!) pencil eraser to push your tongue back if that helps. In South Wales, U and I are the same.

Like English, Welsh uses word order to communicate. When a sentence using **yw** is put into a subordinate clause, it becomes **mai**. It can be translated as “that” and functions in the same way as subordinating **bod**, except that it conveys emphasis.

**Pronunciation Alert!** AI is pronounced y as in *my*.

Examples:

**Ffred yw e.**  
**That's Fred.** (lit. Fred **is he**)

**Mae e'n siarad yn dda.**  
**He speaks well.**

**Dw i'n meddwl bod Ffred yn siarad heno.**  
**I think that Fred is speaking tonight.**  
(Lit., **am I <particle> thinking being Fred <particle> speaking tonight.**)  
(No emphasis: idly wondering.)

**Dw i'n meddwl mai Ffred sy'n siarad heno.**  
**I think that Fred is speaking tonight.**  
(Lit., **am I <particle> thinking that-is Fred who-is <particle> speaking tonight.**)  
(Emphasis: Fred, as opposed to someone else)

**Rho fi un o'r rhain, os gwelwch chi'n dda.**  
**Give me one of these, please.**

Day Twelve: 26 September

**Today's words:** **â** = with / as; **dim** = not; **taw** = is

Like the conjunction **a<sup>h</sup>**, the preposition **â<sup>h</sup>** (“with” or “as”) causes the aspirate mutation of P, T, and C. Before vowels, the form of the word is **ag**, which causes no mutation. Note that the form before consonants has the *to bach* (“little roof”) or circumflex accent to distinguish it from the word for “and.” This word for “with” is similar to **gan**, but tends to be used for instrument (“by means of”) or for close association, and it is also commonly paired with certain verbs, notably reflexives beginning with **ym-**. In comparisons, it means “as”.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **ag** can also have other meanings, as can **a** (without the *to bach* / circumflex).

The most common negative is **dim**, an adverb which functions much as *pas* does in French: *ne verb pas* = Welsh **ni** verb **ddim**. As with *ne* in colloquial French, Welsh **ni** is often dropped. When the negative object or complement is definite (that is, when the sentence is “no «specific person(s) / thing(s)»”, **dim** sometimes combines with **o<sup>l</sup>** to form the conjugated preposition **mo**, conjugated like **o<sup>l</sup>** but with more of a tendency to drop the internal **-ohon-**: **Welais i mohono fe, I didn't see him** (lit., saw **I not-of him**).

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **dim** can also have other meanings.

The verb **taw** is exactly equivalent to **mai**, but more common in parts of South Wales.

**Pronunciation Alert!** AW is pronounced *ow* as in *How now, brown cow?*

**Dim ond un sy'n mynd â fo.**  
**Only one is going with him.**

**Dw i'n meddwl taw dim ond un sy'n mynd â fo.**  
**I think that only one is going with him.**

Day Thirteen: 27 September

**Today's words:** **fel** = like; **mawr** = big; **ydw i?** = am I?

The preposition **fel** is used similarly to English “like,” though it can also be used as a conjunction (“as”).

The adjective **mawr** means “big” or “large” or “great,” as in the American university *Bryn Mawr*, “Big Hill.” In Welsh, the adjective usually follows the noun. Welsh adjectives have four degrees: the positive, **mawr**, “big”; the comparative, **mwyr**, “bigger” or “more”; the superlative, **mwyaaf**, “biggest” or “most”. Unlike English, there is also a fourth degree, the equative. **Cymaint** is translated as “as big” or “so big”. [Usually, the order given is positive, equative, comparative, and superlative.] **Mawr** is also one of the rare adjectives with a plural form, **mawrion**, though that usage is confined to old-fashioned literary contexts.

While **dw i** is Welsh for “I am,” to ask a question you must use the interrogative form. This question form is **ydw i**, “am I?” In both sentences, the word order is verb-subject-predicate, but the form of the verb tells whether it is a statement or a question. Most Welsh verbs use lenition to indicate whether the verb is a question, and in the formal language a particle, but **bod** is more complicated. Most often the answers are in the second person—**ydw i?** “am I?”: **wyt** “yes” [you are] / **nac wyt** “no” [you are not]. Technically, there is also a particle **a<sup>l</sup>** here, but it is usually omitted.

Examples:

**Ydw i'n dysgu? Wyt.**  
**Am I learning? Yes.**

**Mae Cymru yn fawr, ond mae Canada yn fwy.**  
**Wales is big, but Canada is bigger.**

**Mae Canada fel Cymru mewn ffordd.**  
**Canada is like Wales in a way.**

Day Fourteen: 28 September

**Today's words: hwnnw / honno / hynny | rheiny = that | those; mewn = in a; wyt ti? = are you?**

The Welsh words for “that” and “those” work exactly like those for “this” and “these,” and look similar. The masculine is **hwnnw** = **that**, the feminine is **honno** = **that**, and the abstract idea is **hynny**. A common abbreviation is **h.y.**, like “i.e.” in English (for **hynny yw**, “that is”). In the singular, **hwnnw** and **honno** can be used as adjectives or pronouns, while singular **hynny** can only be a pronoun: **yr hwnnw** = **that** (m.); **y ci hwnnw** = **that dog**; **yr honno** = **that** (f.); **y gath honno** = **that cat**; **yr hynny** = **that** (abstraction). The adjectival plural is **hynny**, while the pronoun can be either **hynny** or **rheiny**, also spelled **rheini**: **yr hynny** or **y rheiny** = **those**; **y cathod hynny** = **those cats**.

While **yn<sup>N</sup>** mean “in,” it is only used with a definite noun. With an indefinite noun, the preposition is **mewn** “in a”, with the variant **miwn**.

**Pronunciation Alert!** EW is another diphthong, a combination of *e* as in *met* and *oo* as in *moon*.

The second person singular’s question form is **wyt ti?** The matching form for **wyt** questions is **wyt** if “yes” and **nac wyt** if “no”, but most often the answers are in the first person—**wyt ti?** “are you?": **ydw** “yes” [I am] / **nac ydw** “no” [I am not].

Examples:

**Wyt ti'n dod mewn car?**  
**Are you coming in a car?**

**Wyt ti'n dod yn y car?**  
**Are you coming in the car?**

**Wyt ti'n dod yn y car hwnnw?**  
**Are you coming in that car?**

Day Fifteen: 29 September

**Today's words: ei = her | it; ni = not; ydy e / o | hi? = is he / it | she / it?**

The possessive pronoun “her” / “its” is **ei<sup>H/+H</sup>**, which is exactly the same as the masculine pronoun in form and pronunciation, but instead of causing lenition it causes aspiration or, if the following word begins with a vowel, prefixes an H. After **o<sup>L</sup>** and other short words ending in a vowel, **ei<sup>H/+H</sup>** is just **'i<sup>H/+H</sup>**: **o<sup>H/+H</sup>**. After **i<sup>L</sup>**, it changes to **'w<sup>H/+H</sup>**: **i<sup>w<sup>H/+H</sup></sup>**.

The thing possessed is often followed by the personal pronoun she / her | it, particularly if it is possessing a phrase (more than one word) or for emphasis.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **ei**, **'i**, **'s**, and **'w** can also have other meanings.

The original adverb for “not” in Welsh is **ni<sup>H/L</sup>**, which changes to **nid** before vowels. The mutation here is often called “mixed,” but it simply means that the word aspirates the following word if it can (P > PH, T > TH, C > CH), but if it cannot, it lenites. B > F, D > DD, G > — (i.e. nothing at all), M > F, LL > L, RH > R. **Ni<sup>H/L</sup>** comes before the verb, and so is usually the first word in its clause.

Combined with an **o**, an old form of **os** “if,” **ni**<sup>HL</sup> / **nid** becomes **oni**<sup>HL</sup> / **onid**, “unless”. This word is also used for the tag, which is the short phrase tacked on to the end of a negative sentence to turn it into a negative question. The tag system in Welsh is quite complex, but essentially amounts to adding “is it?” or “isn’t it?” to the end of the sentence. If the answer expected is positive (“is it?”), it is formed with **on’d** (often just **ond**) or a reduced form **yn(d)** before the verb: “**on’d ydy?**” / “**ynd ydy?**” This translates as “isn’t it?” or “don’t you think so?” or even “you know?” If the expected answer is negative, it is **na**<sup>HL</sup> / **nac**: “**nac ydy?**” Tags are very common in Welsh because the word order is the same in all sentences, whether it’s a question or not.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **ni** and **ond** can also have other meanings.

Another form of “is” is **ydy**, which has two functions. It is used to ask questions, but it is also used as a variant of **yw**; to an extent they are interchangeable depending on dialect. The answer to **ydy** questions is **ydy** if “yes” and **nac ydy** if “no”.

Examples:

**Ydy hi’n mynd â’i chath a’i hafalau?**

**Is she bringing her cat and her apples?** (chath < cath; hafalau < afalau)

**Nac ydy. Nid aiff â’i chath.**

**No. She will not bring her cat.**

Day Sixteen: 30 September

**Today’s words: wrth = at; mynd = go; ydyn ni? = are we?**

One more leniting conjugated preposition is **wrth**<sup>L</sup>, “at” or “by”. Its conjugated forms are **wrtho i**, **wrthot ti**, **wrtho fe**, **wrthi hi**, **wrthyn ni**, **wrthoch chi**, **wrthyn nhw**. As with **gan**<sup>L</sup>, there are variations. **Wrth**<sup>L</sup> is used for physical proximity. It shows up in a few common idioms, such as **wrth gwrs**, “of course,” and **wrth ei**<sup>L</sup> **fodd** / **wrth ei**<sup>H/+H</sup> **bodd** / etc., “delighted” or “thrilled”. Note that before verbs, **wrth** means “as” or “in the course of”.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that the mutated forms **fodd** and **modd** can also have other meanings.

Another common irregular verb is **mynd** “go”. The stem is nothing at all, so if a conjugated form looks like just a verb ending and starts with A or E, it is probably from **mynd**. With the following preposition **â**<sup>H</sup>, the verb means “take”, as in transporting an object. Some common and highly irregular forms are the imperative. The singular is **dos!** in North Wales, and **cer!** in South Wales. (You should learn one form to speak, but recognize both to hear.) The plural is usually **ewch!**, but sometimes **cerwch!** in South Wales.

The interrogative form for the first person plural is **ydyn ni?** (are we?).

Examples:

**Ydyn ni’n mynd i’r ffair?**

**Are we going to the fair?**

**Ydyn. Dyn ni wrth ein boddau.**

**Yes. We are thrilled.**

**Mae’r dynion wrth y bar.**

**The men are at the bar.**

Day Seventeen: 1 October

**Today’s words: dod = come; ein = our; ydych chi? = are you?**

The verb for “come” is **dod**, older **dyfod**, and its stem is **d-** or **deu-**. Just as **mynd â** means “take,” **dod â** means “bring”, though in the more restricted usage: when the actor is literally coming with something. **Dyfod** reduces to many different forms in the dialects, for example **dŵad** (the change of internal -YF- to -W- occurs in many words). Like **mynd**, the singular imperatives are irregular: **tyrd!** in North Wales, **dere!** in the South; **dewch!** in the plural for all of Wales.

The possessive pronoun for “we, us” is **ein<sup>+H</sup>**, “our”. Like **ei<sup>H/+H</sup>** and **eu<sup>+H</sup>**, it prefixes an H to words beginning with a vowel. After a vowel, it can reduce to **'n<sup>+H</sup>**. The thing possessed is often followed by the person pronoun *we / us*.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **'n** can also have other meanings.

The interrogative form of the second person plural is **ydych chi?** The matching form for **ydych** questions is **ydych** if “yes” and **nac ydych** if “no”, but most often the answers are in the first person—**ydych chi?** “are you?": **ydw** “yes” [I am] / **ydyn** “yes” [we are] / **nac ydw** “no” [I am not] / **nac ydyn** “no” [we are not].

Examples:

**Ydych chi'n dod i'n parti ni?**  
**Are you coming to our party?**

**Nac ydyn. Mae ein teulu ni yn dod i ymweld â ni.**  
**No. Our family is coming to visit us.**

Day Eighteen: 2 October

**Today's words: gwneud = do / make; at = toward; ydyn nhw? = are they?**

Yet another irregular verb is **gwneud**. Like French *faire*, it can mean “do” or “make” depending on context, and is commonly used as an auxiliary verb like English *do* or German *machen*. Its stem is **gwn-**, though in speech the **gw-** is often dropped. This is one of those verbs that rewards memorizing the paradigm (complete set of forms). Even fuller forms of the verb are found in the literary language, where it is **gwneuthur**—this verb has everything from **nes** to **gwnaethpwyd!** Plus, it's used almost as often as **bod**.

**Homonym Alert!** Conjugated forms of **gwneud** such as **nes** can also have other meanings.

One more leniting conjugated preposition is **at<sup>L</sup>**, “toward” or “to”. Its conjugated forms are **ata i**, **atot ti**, **ato fe**, **ati hi**, **aton ni**, **atoch chi**, **atyn nhw**. As with **wrth<sup>L</sup>**, there are variations. **At<sup>L</sup>** means “toward” or “up to”, while **i<sup>L</sup>** means “to” or “into.” You give an object **at<sup>L</sup>** a person, for example, but you give knowledge **i<sup>L</sup>** a person.

“Are they” as a question is **ydyn nhw?**

Examples:

**Beth dych chi'n gwneud?**  
**What are you doing?** [= right now]

**Beth dych chi'n ei wneud?**  
**What do you do?** [= as a job]

**Ydyn nhw'n anfon llythr atot ti?**  
**Are they sending you a letter / are they sending a letter to you?**

Day Nineteen: 3 October

**Today's words: na = than; gweld = see; dw i ddim = I am not**

You have already seen one comparison, **mwy**, for “more.” To compare it to something else, you need the conjunction **na**<sup>H</sup> (**nac** before vowels), “than”.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **na** can also have other meanings.

The verb **gweld** “see” is perfectly regular: verbal endings are attached to the verbal stem, **gwel-**. This verb is used in the expression for “please,” **os gwelwch chi’n dda**, literally “if see you well,” that is, if you’ll see favourably. In speech, this is often reduced to **os gwelch yn dda**. The singular, **os gweli di’n dda**, is used less often, as the phrase has become fossilized.

With Welsh verbs, there are three kinds of sentences. Positive (ordinary declarative) sentences; interrogative sentences, which ask a question, and negative sentences. Each requires a different particle causing a mutation, but with the verb **bod** there are simply different forms. The colloquial first-person form for “I am not” is **dw i ddim**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **dim** can also have other meanings.

Examples:

**Oes mwy o gathod ganddi hi na chanddo fe?** (gathod < cathod; chanddo < ganddo < gan + fe)  
**Does she have more cats than he does?** (Lit. **is-there more of cats with her than with him?**)

**Dw i ddim yn gweld sut i gyfieithu’r frawddeg honno.**  
**I don’t see how to translate that sentence.** (frawddeg < brawddeg)

Day Twenty: 4 October

**Today’s words:** **ôl** = track; **gallu** = be able / can; **dwyt ti ddim** = you are not (s.)

All Welsh nouns should be learned with singular, plural, and gender, since neither plural nor gender is predictable based on the singular. **Ôl** is masculine and more than one **ôl** would be **olion**. The word means “track,” “trace,” “remnant,” “wake” [as in a boat’s wake] or “print” (as in “fingerprint” or “footprint”), and it is found in the popular name **Olwen**.

The most common use, however, is probably in the compound preposition **ar ôl**, “after”, and **yn ôl**, “following” or “back” (as an adverb). Instead of conjugating these prepositions, the possessive pronoun is used to possess the noun in the phrase: **ar ei ôl**, “after him / it”, and **yn ei hôl**, “following her / it.” With a verb, there is an even more complicated construction with another preposition, **i**, which is conjugated. **ar ôl iddi weld**, “after she saw.” Literally, this is “on track to-her seeing”; slightly less literally, “following (**ar ôl i**) her (-**ddi**) seeing (**weld**)”. Note that in this case, the verb is lenited following the conjugated preposition, because of the word order. These usages may seem strange, but they are common and essential and worth trying to understand.

The regular verb “be able” is **gallu**, more often translated with the English auxiliary verb “can”. The **g-** disappears when lenited, so any verb beginning in **all-** or occasionally **ell-** is probably from **gallu**.

**Pronunciation Alert!** LL is the most difficult Welsh letter. Start by placing your tongue for L (say “llllllllllllllllllll”). Then, without moving your tongue, say one of the fricatives (*f* or *th* as in *thing* or hiss like an angry cat). This is the voiceless lateral fricative /ɬ/. It takes some practice to hear and some to make, and it is important to distinguish from CH, SH, and TH.

The negative second person singular is **dwyt ti ddim**. The initial **d-** comes from **nid**.

Examples:

**Dwyt ti ddim yn gallu gwneud hynny.**  
**You can’t do that.**

**Dw i ddim yn dod yn ôl.**  
**I'm not coming back.**

**Dw i'n dod ar ôl swper.**  
**I'm coming after swper.**

Day Twenty-One: 5 October

**Today's words: er = although; arall = other; dyw e / o | hi ddim = he | she is not**

A simpler conjunction is **er**, “although” or “for” or “despite”. It is part of the expression **e.e., er enghraifft**, “e.g.” or “for example”. As with the compound prepositions above, conjugated **i** is used with the personal pronouns: **er iddo weld, although he sees**, with the same lenition of the verb. In the literary language, **er** can mean “since”.

The word for the adjective “other” or “another” in most contexts is **arall**, plural (“others” / “some others”) **eraill**. Unlike most other adjectives, the plural is in common use. It can also be translated as “else” depending on context.

In the negative, the form is **dyw hi ddim**, or for the masculine, **dyw e (S) / o (N) ddim**.

Examples:

**Er hynny, dyw hi ddim yn dod yn ôl.**  
**However, she's not coming back.** (lit. **despite that, –are you not «particle» coming in wake.**)

**Beth am gael cath fach arall?**  
**What about getting another kitten?**

**Beth am gael cathod bach eraill?**  
**What about getting some other kittens?**

Day Twenty-two: 6 October

**Today's words: hi = she / her; neu = or; dyn ni ddim = we are not**

The personal pronoun for “she” / “her,” or for inanimate feminine nouns, “it”, is **hi**, with the emphatic **hyhí** and the “she too” form of **hithau**.

The leniting conjunction **neu<sup>L</sup>** means “or”.

“We are not” is **dyn ni ddim**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **dyn** and **ni** can also have other meanings.

Examples:

**Oes cath neu gi ganddi hi?**  
**Does she have a cat or a dog?** (Lit. **is-there cat or dog with her?**)

**Nac oes. Dyn ni ddim yn hoffi cathod.**  
**No. We don't like cats.**

Day Twenty-three: 7 October

**Today's words: gyda = with; fy = my; dych chi ddim = you are not**

The preposition **gyda<sup>h</sup>** is formed from the word **cyd** and the pronoun **â<sup>h</sup>**, and so it too causes the aspirate mutation of P, T, and C. Many native speakers ignore this rule, but you shouldn't. Before vowels, the form of the word is **gydag**, which causes no mutation. This word for “with” means essentially the same as **gan**. Like **gan**, since the initial **g-** is a permanently lenited form of **c-**, the word sometimes gets mutated to **chyda<sup>h</sup>** or **chydag**. It is frequently reduced to **'da<sup>h</sup>** in speech and sometimes in informal writing.

Another mutation! The possessive pronoun for “my” is **fy<sup>N</sup>**, but after vowels it changes to **'m** (no mutation). In practice, this word is often dropped in speech altogether, leaving only the mutation behind: **'nhad = my father**.

The negative of “you are” (plural) is **dych chi ddim**.

Examples:

**Dych chi ddim yn gallu.**  
**You cannot.**

**Oes cath gyda chi?**  
**Do you have a cat?**

**Mae fy nghath i'n hapus.**  
**My cat is happy.**

Day Twenty-four: 8 October

**Today's words: dweud = speak, say; trwy = through; dyn nhw ddim = they are not**

The verb for “say” and some meanings of “speak” is semi-regular. The stem, **dywed-**, is based on the full form of the verb, **dywedyd**. In Welsh you speak **wrth<sup>L</sup>** someone, not “to” them. In speech, the verb is often further reduced to **deud** or even change to **gweud**. For this reason, it is easy at first to confuse the dialectal forms of **gwneud**, **dod**, and **dweud**. Be careful out there!

The latest in the series of leniting conjugated prepositions is **trwy<sup>L</sup>**, “through”. Its conjugated forms are **trwyo i**, **trwot ti**, **trwyddo fe**, **trwyddi hi**, **trwon ni**, **trwoch chi**, **trwyddyn nhw**. As with **at<sup>L</sup>**, there are variations, notably the permanently lenited **drwy<sup>L</sup>** and forms based on it—about 25% of writers use **drwy** rather than **trwy**.

The negative of “they are” is **dyn nhw ddim**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **dyn** can also have other meanings.

Examples:

**Dyn nhw ddim yn mynd trwy'r dwnnel.**  
**They are not going through the tunnel.**

**Dyn nhw ddim yn dweud pam.**  
**They are not saying why.**

**Mae e'n dweud celwydd wrtho i.**  
**He is tell me a lie.**

Day Twenty-five: 9 October

**Today's words: dau = two; rhoi = give, put; does dim = there is / are not**

Welsh numbers are a lot of fun. Most of the complications come from higher numbers, but there are a few from the beginning. The adjective “two” has both a masculine form, **dau<sup>L</sup>**, and a feminine form, **dwy<sup>L</sup>**. After the definite

article **y**, both undergo soft mutation: **y ddau** / **y ddwy** “the two”. In parts of South Wales, **dau** is sometimes pronounced and occasionally spelled **dou**. After numbers, Welsh nouns use the singular form rather than the plural. Why not? You already know there are two of them.

The verb **rhoi** (stem **rho-**) has a fuller form **rhoddi**, stem **rhodd-**, used about 25% of the time. Its basic meaning is “put, place, set,” but from that it has developed the sense of “give”. It has some highly irregular forms, especially in the literary language. The ones to watch out for are the third person present, “he / she / it gives” or “will give”: **rhydd**, **rhy**, or **dyry** (as in **y ddraig goch a ddyry gychwyn**\*, “**the red dragon will lead the way**,” or more literally “**the red dragon will give the start off**”). The third person past tense is **rhoddodd**, **rhodd**, **rhoddes**, or **rhoes**, and the second singular imperative is **rho!** or **dyro!**

\* The source is a poem, which is why the **a** is often left out and why the phrase is often rendered with the fifteenth-century spelling, **y ddraig goch ddyry cychwyn**. The final word should always be *pronounced* **gychwyn** in this phrase, as the initial C- is just a medieval spelling convention.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **rhy** can also have other meanings.

The negative of **oes** is **does dim**, “there is not” or “there are not.”

Examples:

**Mae’r ddau ohonon ni yn dod.**  
**The two of us are coming.**

**Dw i’n rhoi anrheg i chi.**  
**I am giving you a present (I am giving a present to you).**

**Does dim anrheg yma.**  
**There is no present here.**

Day Twenty-six: 10 October

**Today’s words: lle = place; nhw = they / them; bydda’ i = I will be**

There are a few different words for the noun “place,” but the most common is **lle**, plural **llefydd** or **lleoedd**, m. Either plural is acceptable and both are used fairly equally. **Yn<sup>n</sup> lle** means “instead of”.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **lle** can also have other meanings.

The personal pronoun for “they” has two distinct forms, one for the formal, literary language and one for the spoken language. The literary form is formally **hwynt**, less formally **hwy**, but the colloquial form is **nhw**. If one of the more formal forms, the preceding verb or preposition will often end in -t. The emphatic form is **hwynt-hwŷ**. The most common variations of the “they likewise” form are **hwythau** (formal) and **nhwthau** (colloquial).

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **hwy** can also have other meanings.

The future positive form of **bod** is **bydda’ i** for the first person singular.

Examples:

**Mae popeth yn ei lle.**  
**Everything is in its place.**

**Bydda i’n mynd ar ôl hynny.**  
**I’ll go after that.**

**Dyn nhw ddim yn hapus, ond maen nhwthau yn hapus.**  
**They're not happy, but they [= a different set] are happy.**

Day Twenty-seven: 11 October

**Today's words: iawn = right / very; pob = every; byddi di = you will be (s.)**

The adjective “right” is **iawn**, but as in colloquial English it can be used as an adverb to strengthen another adjective, in which case it means “very.” It's also used for “all right” or “fine.”

The adjective **pob** means “every”. Unlike most adjectives, it precedes the noun it modifies, and unlike most adjectives that do precede the noun, it does not cause that noun to mutate (because it is a reduced form of a pronoun and not historically an adjective at all). The phrase “good luck” in Welsh is **pob lwc**.

The second person singular future positive form of **bod** is **byddi di**.

**Pob lwc i ti. Byddi di'n iawn.**  
**Good luck to you. You'll be fine.**

**Mae pob un ohonon ni yn lwcus.**  
**Every one of us is lucky.**

Day Twenty-eight: 12 October

**Today's words: ni = we / us; pan = when; bydd e / o | hi = he / she will be**

The personal pronoun for “we” / “us” is **ni**, with the emphatic **nyñi** and the “us too” form of **ninnau**. The Welsh-American newspaper *Ninnau* could be translated as “Us, Too” or as “Us!” with the force of the exclamation point showing the difference between **ni** and **ninnau**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **ni** can also have other meanings.

The conjunction “when” is **pan<sup>t</sup>**, which should not be confused with the question word asking about when something happens. It causes soft mutation, but that can be blocked by the particle **yr**, even if that is not expressed! **Pan mae X. . .**, “when X is. . .” never mutates **mae**, for example. When in doubt, though, mutate!

The third person future is **bydd**. This is also the imperative for the second person singular: **bydd!** = (you) be!

Examples:

**Dw i'n hapus pan dw i'n ei gweld hi.**  
**I am happy when I see her.**

**Bydd hi'n fy ngweld i pan fydda' i'n dod.**  
**She will see me when I come.**

**Dyn ni'n gwneud popeth.**  
**We do everything.**

Day Twenty-nine: 13 October

**Today's words: rhai = some / ones; gwaith = work | time; byddwn ni = we will be**

The plural of the numeral **un**, when used as a pronoun, is **rhai**, “some [people / things]”. Normally, because Welsh does not have an indefinite article, “some” is not expressed separately. **Olion** can be “traces” or “some traces.”

There are two nouns with the same singular form: **gwaith** “time” or “occasion” is feminine, and **gwaith** “work” is masculine. Both take the plural **gweithiau**, though the masculine also takes a variety of alternate plurals. The “work” meaning is very much like English, but in Welsh there are a lot of ways to say “time.” This one refers to a single instance, not the abstract concept.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **weithiau** (but not **gweithiau**) can also have other meanings.

The future form of the first person plural is **byddwn ni**. This is also the imperative: **byddwn!** = **let’s be!**

Examples:

**Mae rhai ohonon ni yn dod.**  
**Some of us are coming.**

**Byddwn ni yn y gwaith yfory.**  
**We will be at work yfory.** (Note that **gwaith** is not mutated after **y**, and so must be the masculine **gwaith**.)

**Byddi di’n iawn y waith hon!**  
**You’ll be fine this time!** (Note that **gwaith** is mutated after **y**, and so must be the feminine **gwaith**.)

Day Thirty: 14 October

**Today’s words:** **da** = good; **Cymru** = Wales; **byddwch chi** = you will be (pl.)

The irregular adjective **da** means “good”. The four degrees are: the positive, **da**; the equative, **ystal**, “as good” / “so good”; the comparative, **gwell**, “better”; the superlative, **gorau**, “best”. There is no plural form. When turned into an adverb with **yn<sup>L</sup>**, **da** means “well,” as in the phrase for “please,” **os gwelwch chi’n dda**. Often in a reduced form, the idiom **o’r gorau** (**o’r gore**) means “okay”. The way to express “I would rather” in Welsh to express preference is idiomatically with **gwell**: **mae’n well gen i**, “I would rather,” more literally **it is better with me**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **da** can also have other meanings.

**Cymru** “Wales” is a feminine noun, though there is no plural. Effectively, the gender means that if you put an adjective after **Cymru** to modify it, that means the adjective will be lenited.

The future form of the second person plural is **byddwch chi**. This is also the imperative: **byddwch!** = **(you) be!**

Examples:

**Mae’r gath yn bod yn dda.**  
**The cat is being good.**

**Byddwch chi’n dod i Gymru.**  
**You will be coming to Wales.**

**Dydy Cymru ddim yn fawr, ond mae hi’n lle da.**  
**Wales isn’t large, but it is a good place.**

Day Thirty-One: 15 October

**Today’s words:** **hefyd** = also, too; **cynnar** = early; **byddan nhw** = they will be

The adverb **hefyd** means “too” or “also”. **Ni hefyd** is more common than **ninnau**, and the difference is that **ni hefyd** means “we too” or “us too” neutrally or in addition, but **ninnau** is “we too” or “us too” in emphasis or contrast to something expressed earlier.

**Cynnar**, the adjective “early”, has the stem **cynt-** for its comparatives: **cynted** (eq.), **cynt** (comp.), and **cyntaf**. The comparative **cynt** is frequently used to mean “previous” or “sooner”. The superlative **cyntaf**, in addition to meaning “earliest,” is the ordinal number “first”. On its own, **gynt** (the permanently mutated form of **cynt**) means “once” or “at one time”.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **cynt** can also have other meanings.

The future form of the third person plural is **byddan nhw**.

Examples:

**Byddan nhw'n dod, hefyd.**  
**They will come, too.**

**Byddan nhw'n mynd i Gymru.**  
**They will go to Wales.**

**Aeth y wobr gyntaf i fi!**  
**First prize went to me!** (**aeth** is from irregular **mynd**)

Day Thirty-two: 16 October

**Today's words:** **yna** = then | there | that; **hun** = self; **fydda' i?** = Shall I be? / Will I be?

The basic meaning of the adverb **yna** is “there,” a place a distant from you in space. By extension, it often means “then,” a place a distant from you in time, and it also serves as a synonym for the adjectives **hwinnw** and **honno**, “that,” when used with the definite article. Especially in this last use, it is common to see **yna** abbreviated as **'na**. It is also used with **mae** to mean “there is” or “there are” in positive sentences. There is a Welsh song entitled **Oes, mae 'na le**, which translates as “Yes, there is a place,” presumably answering the question **Oes lle?** (“is there a place?”). As you can see, this usage causes the soft mutation in the following word.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **na** can also have other meanings.

**Pronunciation Alert!** Unusually, this word is accented on the final syllable.

The English word -self, as in *myself*, *yourself*, etc., is **hunan** in South Wales. Its plural is **hunain**. In the North, all numbers are just **hun**. You have to watch out a little bit because English speakers are prone to saying “myself” in three situations, which are all different in Welsh. One is the reflexive: “I see myself” or “wash myself” or otherwise do something to my own self. Like French, this is often taken care of by the verb, but when it isn't this is Welsh **hun** / **hunan**. Another is emphatic: I, myself, am special! This is where Welsh can use **myfi** or **finnau**. A third is when English speakers are confused about whether to choose “I” or “me,” they often just punt and say “myself” (“Fred and myself went to the races”). This is always wrong, but the consistency seems to make them happy. It sounds even worse in Welsh than it does in English: try not to do it in any language!

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **hun** can also have other meanings.

As with the present tense, the future interrogative takes special forms. Here this is more in line with regular verbs: the initial consonant of questions is lenited due to the effects of the dropped particle **a<sup>L</sup>**, so **fydda' i?** “will I be?” The answer is either **byddi** “yes [you will be]” or **na fyddi** “no [you will not be]”.

Examples:

**Mae'r gath 'na yn ddu.**  
**That cat is black.**

**Dw i'n gweld fy hunan.**  
**I see myself.**

**Fyddda' i'n iawn ar ôl hynny?**  
**Will I be all right after that?**

Day Thirty-three: 17 October

**Today's words:** **pobl** = people; **peth** = thing; **fyddi di?** = Will you be? (s.)

“People” is **pobl**, a noun sometimes spelled and pronounced **pobol**. It is a feminine noun, and its plural “peoples” (as in multiple groups of people) **pobloedd**.

Another noun is **peth**, plural **pethau**, m., “thing.” The common plural ending **-au** is often reduced to **-a** in North Wales and to **-e** in South Wales.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **beth** (but not **peth**) can also have other meanings.

The second person singular future interrogative form is **fyddi di?**

Examples:

**Mae pobl yn mynd i Gymru.**  
**People are going to Wales.**

**Rho'r peth hwnnw i fi.**  
**Give that thing to me.**

**Fyddi di'n gwneud y gwaith?**  
**Will you do the work?**

Day Thirty-four: 18 October

**Today's words:** **Cymraeg** = Welsh; **yma** = here | this; **fydd e / o | hi?** = Will he | she be?

The English adjective “Welsh” is represented by two different words. The word for the Welsh language is **Cymraeg** (all other “Welsh” things are **Cymreig**: technically, the Vancouver Welsh Society ought to be **Y Gymdeithas Gymreig**, not **Y Gymdeithas Gymraeg**, which means “the Vancouver Welsh-Language Society”). To do something in Welsh is to do it **yn Gymraeg**. Note the mutation! This is not **yn<sup>N</sup>** “in” but **yn<sup>L</sup>** «predicate particle», and the phrase is an adverb, “Welshly.”

**Pronunciation Alert!** Unusually, this word is accented on the final syllable.

The basic meaning of the adverb **yma** is “here.” It also serves as a synonym for the adjectives **hwn** and **hon**, used in the same way (i.e. with the definite article). Especially in this latter use, it is common to see **yma** abbreviated as **'ma**. It can also mean “now,” though there are several other more common ways to express “now” in Welsh.

**Pronunciation Alert!** As with **Cymraeg**, this word is accented on the final syllable.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **ma** can also have other meanings (**'ma** is usually **yma** and **ma'** is usually **mae**).

The third person singular interrogative future form is **fydd e (S) / o (N) | hi?**

Examples:

**Mae pobl yn siarad Cymraeg yma.**  
**People speak Welsh here.**

**Peth da yw siarad Cymraeg.**  
**Speaking Welsh is a good thing.**

**Gwnewch popeth yn Gymraeg!**  
**Do everything in Welsh! (popeth < pob + peth)**

**Fydd e yma?**  
**Will he be here?**

**Ni fydd.**  
**No.**

Day Thirty-five: 19 October

**Today's words: hen = old; bach = small / little; fyddwn ni? = Will we be?**

The adjective **hen** “old” comes before the noun it modifies, and because of this it causes soft mutation. (Since this is based on position and not an inherent property of the word, I am omitting the <sup>L</sup>.) Its irregular comparative forms are **hyned** (eq.), **hŷn** (comp.), and **hynaf** (superl.), but newer forms based on the stem **hen-** also occur. Since the equative does not begin with **cy-**, it requires the adverb **mor** or **cyn**, “as” or “so” (*see below*). Note the *to bach* on **hŷn**, as opposed to **hyn**. **Hen** is also used as an intensive adverb, a little like very, and the construction for the exclamation “you —!” in Welsh is **y(r) —!** but more emphatically **yr hen<sup>L</sup> —!**

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **hyn** can also have other meanings.

Another adjective is **bach**, “small” or “little”. Its comparative forms, even more irregular, are **lleied**, **llai**, and **lleiaf**. As with most adjectives, **bach** follows the noun in modifies. These comparative forms also serve for another word for small, **bychan**. The idiom **o leiaf** means “at least.”

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **bach** can also have other meanings.

The interrogative future of the first person plural is **fyddwn ni?**

Examples:

**Mae Cymru yn hen iawn.**  
**Wales is very old.**

**Fydd Cymru yn fwy neu yn llai yn y dyfodol?**  
**Will Wales be bigger or smaller in the future?**

**Bydd Cymru cymaint (a chyn lleied) ag y mae hi heddiw.**  
**Wales will be as big (and as small) as it is today.**

**Fyddwn ni'n hŷn yfory.**  
**We'll be older tomorrow.**

Day Thirty-six: 20 October

**Today's words: rhan = part; chi = you (pl.); fyddwch chi? = Will you be? (pl.)**

The noun **rhan**, pl. **rhannau** (note the double -N-) is feminine. It means “part” or “section.”

The second person plural personal pronoun is **chi**. Historically, however, the word was **chwi**—except for words resulting from an initial mutation, all Welsh words beginning with CH- begin with CHW- (sort of like Q + U in English). **Chwi** is still used in more formal writing, and it is the basis for the emphatic form **chwychwí**. The “you too” form is found in both variants: **chwithau** and **chithau**.

The interrogative future of the second person plural is **fyddwch chi?**

Examples:

**Ydy Vancouver yn rhan o Gymru?**

**Is Vancouver a part of Wales?**

**Byddwn ni'n mynd. A chithau?**

**We'll be going. Are you? (literally and you?)**

**Fyddwch chi yng Nghymru?**

**Will you be in Wales?**

Day Thirty-seven: 21 October

**Today's words: mor = as / so; rhaid = need / must; fyddan nhw? = Will they be?**

The adverb **mor<sup>l</sup>** is used with the positive form of longer adjectives to form the equative degree. This is just like the way English doesn't say "beautifuler", but "more beautiful." For the comparative and superlative degrees, Welsh uses the words for "more" (**mwy**) and "most" (**mwyafl**), but for the equative it uses **mor**. So for the adjective **bach**, **lleied** could be expressed **mor fach**. (This construction is commoner with the equative than with the other two degrees, probably by analogy with English.) It is not used with equative forms beginning in **cy-**. The lenition is the same as for **yr**, where RH- and LL- do not lenite.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **mor** can also have other meanings.

The noun for "necessity" or "need" is **rhaid**, m., pl. **rheidiau**. The most common usage is quasi-verbal, **mae rhaid i<sup>l</sup> someone <sup>l</sup>verb something**. Note the lenition before the verb! The verb **mae** is often omitted here in speech.

The third person plural future interrogative is **fyddan nhw?** The answer is **byddan** "yes" or **na fyddan**, "no."

Examples:

**Dyw Ffred ddim mor hen â hynny.**

**Ffred is not as old as all that. (lit., is Fred not so old as that)**

**Mae rhaid i fi ddweud.**

**I have to speak.**

**Fyddan nhw'n ei wneud e?**

**Will they do it?**

Day Thirty-eight: 22 October

**Today's words: cyn = before; dros = over; fydda' i ddim = I will not be**

The preposition **cyn** means "before" in the sense of time. As with many prepositions, an additional **i** is required before definite nouns: **cyn i chi ddod** = "before you come". Note that this usage of **cyn** does not cause any mutation on its own.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **cyn** can also have other meanings, such as its use before the equative degree, like **mor**.

The next leniting conjugated preposition is **dros<sup>l</sup>** or **tros<sup>l</sup>**, "over" or more metaphorically "for" in the sense of "on behalf of," as in the national anthem. Its conjugated forms are **troso i**, **trosot ti**, **trosto fe**, **trosti hi**, **troson ni**, **trosoch chi**, **trostyn nhw**. As with **trwy<sup>l</sup>**, there are variations, notably the permanently lenited **dros<sup>l</sup>** and forms based on it—but unlike **trwy<sup>l</sup>**, **dros<sup>l</sup>** is more common, used about 7/8 of the time.

The negative future first person is the same as the interrogative, but followed by **ddim: fydda' i ddim**.

Examples:

**Bydd rhaid i fi weld cyn fynd.**  
**I shall have to see before going.**

**Fyddan nhw'n dweud dros Gymru?**  
**Will they speak for Wales?**

**Fyddda' i ddim yn cael te, diolch.**  
**I won't have tea, thank you.**

Day Thirty-nine: 23 October

**Today's words: dim = nothing; blwyddyn = year; fyddi di ddim = you will not be (s.)**

The adverb **dim** meaning “not” comes from the noun **dim** meaning “nothing” or “zero,” which is masculine. There is no plural in common use. The idiom **dim ots** (“zero odds”) means “no problem”; **does dim ots 'da fi**, “I don't care.”

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **dim** can also have other meanings.

The noun **blwyddyn** “year”, pl. **blynyddoedd**, is feminine. It has special plural forms with numbers. With age, the form is usually **blwydd: dwy flwydd oed**, “two years old.” With other expressions of time, the plural is **blynedd: dwy flynedd yn ôl**, “two years ago.”

“You will not be” in the second person singular is **fyddi di ddim**.

Examples:

**Mae dau yn fwy na dim!**  
**Two is more than nothing!**

**Dw i wedi bod yma am flynyddoedd.**  
**I have been here for years.**

**Fyddi di ddim yn y gwaith yfory.**  
**You will not be at work tomorrow.**

Day Forty: 24 October

**Today's words: rhyw = some / any; hyd = until; fydd e / o | hi ddim = he | she will not be**

The adjective **rhyw** functions as an indefinite modifier. Like **hen**, it goes before the noun in modifies, and as such it causes lenition by position. It usually means “some” rather than “any,” which is ordinarily **unrhyw**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **rhyw** can also have other meanings (one of which is “sex”).

The preposition **hyd**<sup>1</sup> is usually found in conjunction with other prepositions, but on its own it means “until” or “up to”. It does not conjugate. It does lenite, but is rarely found in a context to do so. I suspect that although the Bangor list marked the preposition as the most common use of the word, this is a mistake, and they really mean the noun **hyd** when used as a compound preposition, as in **ar hyd y nos**. **O hyd**, as a prepositional phrase, means “still.”

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **hyd** can also have other meanings.

“You will not be” in the third person singular is **fydd e (S) / o (N) ddim**, “he will not be,” or **fydd hi ddim**, “she will not be”.

Examples:

**Mae rhyw bobl yn gweld yn well na fi.**  
**Some people see better than I do.**

**Hyd heddiw, dw i ddim wedi deall.**  
**Until today, I did not understand.**

**Fydd hi ddim yma.**  
**She won't be here.**

Day Forty-One: 25 October

**Today's words: os = if; beth = what; fyddwn ni ddim = we will not be**

The conjunction “if” is **os**, but only if the outcome is likely to come to pass in the judgement of the speaker. Otherwise the conjunction is **pe**. (Hey, languages are complicated.) **Os** requires the interrogative form (**os ydy, os oes**), but because it takes the place of the particle **a<sup>l</sup>**, there is no lenition: **os bydd, os gwelwch chi'n dda**.

The word for thing, **peth**, in a permanently lenited form, has become another word, the interrogative pronoun **beth**, meaning “what?” In speech and sometimes in writing, **beth** is often shortened to **be'**. Choosing the verb to go with **beth** is slightly complicated. **Beth** is a placeholder word; the answer to “what?” is a word or phrase. Consider the following three sentences:

What is going on? (What is the subject of the sentence. Answer, **Nothing** is going on: use **sy**)  
What are you doing? (What is the object of the sentence. Answer, You are doing **nothing**: use **mae**)  
What is his name? (What is a predicate nominative. Answer, His name is **Frank**: use **yw / ydy**)

If you mix these constructions up, you will still be understood.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **beth** can also have other meanings.

“We will not be” is **fyddwn ni ddim**.

Examples:

**Beth ydych chi'n gweld?**  
**What do you see?**

**Beth yw'r hwn?**  
**What is this?**

**Os byddwn ni'n mynd, fyddwn ni ddim yma.**  
**If we go, we won't be here.**

Day Forty-Two: 26 October

**Today's words: dyn = man; ysgol = school; ladder; fyddwch chi ddim = you will not be (pl.)**

The noun **dyn**, m., is a word for “man”, but as in the English of an earlier era, it can also be used to mean “person,” “human,” and in the plural (**dynion**) it still often does mean “people” rather than “men.” This is *not* usually the case

with the other word for man, **gŵr**, which never refers to a woman in the singular and very rarely in the plural. There is a slight distinction in meaning between **dynion** and **pobl**, but the two mostly overlap. A rule of thumb is that if you can substitute “human beings,” don’t use **pobl**, and if you are talking about “a people”, don’t use **dynion**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **dyn** can also have other meanings.

**Pronunciation Alert!** This is “clear Y,” and pronounced *deen*, as opposed to the **dyn** in **dyn ni**.

The feminine noun **ysgol**, plural **ysgolion**, means both “ladder” (from Latin *scālae*) and, more commonly, “school” (from Latin *schola*). In Welsh, words that begin with **ys-** often lose the initial **y-**, so you will also see **'sgol**, **'sgolion**, usually without the helpful apostrophe.

The negative future of **bod** for the second person plural is **fyddwch chi ddim**.

Examples:

**Mae dynion wedi gwneud pethau diddorol.**  
**People have done interesting things.**

**Beth ydy'r ysgolion yn gwneud drostoch chi?**  
**What do the schools do for you?**

**Fyddwch chi ddim yn mynd i'r ysgol mwyach.**  
**You will not go to school any more.**

(N.B.: **mwyach** “greater” is sometimes used in negative sentences to mean “no more, [not] any more”. Typically, adverbs are lenited, but **mwyach** retains its initial M.)

Day Forty-Three: 27 October

**Today’s words: medd = say; plant = children; fyddan nhw ddim = they will not be**

The verb **medd** is defective, which means that it does not exist in all persons and tenses. The most common forms are **medd** “he / she says” (present tense) and **meddai** “he /she said” (imperfect tense). **Meddwn i** “I said” and **meddan nhw** “they said” also occur frequently. Outside of the present and imperfect, the verb is not used, not even as a verb-noun.

Most Welsh nouns are formed like English, where the singular is the basic form and changes are made to form the plural: *child*, singular, plus *-ren = children*. Many common Welsh nouns, however, work the other way around, and start with the plural. The masculine noun **plant** means “children,” but a single child is a **plentyn**. The technical terms for these are the collective and the singulative. Other than the formation of the two forms, the plural behaves like a plural noun (and sometimes like a mass noun) and the singulative like a singular in every other way.

The future third person negative of **bod** is **fyddan nhw ddim**.

Examples:

**“O’r gorau,” meddai fe.**  
**“Okay,” he said.**

**Mae’r plant yn mynd i’r ysgol. Hôre!**  
**The children are going to school. Hooray!**

**Fyddan nhw ddim yn dweud.**  
**They won’t tell.**

Day Forty-Four: 28 October

**Today's words:** **dechrau** = start; **newydd** = new; **byddir** = will be

The verb “begin” or “start” is **dechrau**, stem **dechreu-**. There is a Welsh proverbial phrase, **dechrau o'r dechrau**, “begin at the beginning.” (Here the verb-noun is being both verb and noun.)

The adjective for “new” is **newydd**. It has no feminine or plural form as an adjective, but you can probably guess the meaning of the plural noun **newyddion**.

In addition to the spoken forms, Welsh has a number of literary forms. Beside the six person-number combinations of the spoken language (I am, you (s) are, he / she / it is, we are, you (pl) are, they are), literary Welsh has an *impersonal* form. This means that although someone is doing whatever is being done, it is irrelevant who it is. The closest English approximation is the passive voice or the third person “one is”, but there really is no exact translation. Alternatively, you could use an impersonal “you” or “they”. In the future tense, the impersonal form of **bod** in Welsh is **byddir**.

For **byddir**, since it is a literary form, I've pulled an example from literary Welsh, a passage about cooking terms in the Welsh dialects. I've translated this same word in two different ways. The first instance, **byddir yn crasu**, I've rendered as “**one will bake**”, while the second, **nid crasu bara y byddir**,” as “**bread will not be baked**.” This has nothing to do with the word order, just the flow of the sentence in English. (The underlining in the English translation is to clarify the Welsh words being discussed as words.)

**Yn Llangynwyd byddir yn crasu tishan a bara ond yn pobi cig (yn y ffwrn) a chaws (o flaen y tân). Ymhellach i'r gorllewin, nid crasu bara y byddir, ond ei bobi.**

**In Llangynwyd one will bake cake and bread but roast meat (in the oven) and cheese (before the fire). Further to the west, bread will not be baked, but roasted.**

Further Examples:

**Dw i wedi dechrau.**  
**I have begun.**

**Beth sy'n newydd?**  
**What's new?**

Day Forty-Five: 29 October

**Today's words:** **felly** = thus; **gwybod** = know; **roeddwn i** = I was

The adverb for “thus” or “so” is **felly**. Do not confuse with **'falle**, a colloquial form of the unrelated **efallai**, “perhaps”. It is rare for native Welsh words to start with **f-**, and the few that are not borrowings are like **felly**, which centuries ago also used to begin with **E-**.

The verb for “to know” is **gwybod**, an irregular verb based on **bod**. The stem is more or less **gwy-** or **gwydd-**, but with exceptions. In the spoken language, the word is often pronounced **gw**o**bod**. As in French, there is a distinction between knowing a fact, with **gwybod**, and being acquainted with someone, which is the verb **adnabod**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that forms of conjugated **gwybod** such as **gwn** and **gŵyr** can also have other meanings.

The imperfect tense of **bod** is the most common past tense. **Roeddwn i** means “I was”. With **wedi**, this tense is used to form the pluperfect: **Roeddwn i wedi bod**, “I had been.”

Examples:

**Felly, bydd rhaid i fi gwneud y peth.**  
**So, I'll have to do it.** (Lit. “do the thing”).

**Wedi mynd i'r ysgol, dw i'n gwybod pethau.**  
**Having gone to school, I know things.**

**Roeddwn i'n mynd i'r gwaith pan welais i'r dyn.**  
**I was going to work when I saw the man.**

Day Forty-six: 30 October

**Today's words:** **rhwng** = between; **meddwl** = think; **roedd** **ti** = you were (s.)

The preposition **rhwng** “between” or “among” does not cause any mutations, but it does conjugate: **rhyngo i, rhyngot ti, rhyngddo fe, rhyngddi hi, rhyngon ni, rhyngoch chi, rhyngddyn nhw**. As usual, there are variations in these forms.

The verb **meddwl** “think” has the stem **meddyli-**.

The second person singular imperfect of **bod** is **roedd** **ti**.

Examples:

**Mae Cymru rhwng Lloegr ac Iwerddon.**  
**Wales is between England and Ireland.**

**Beth wyt ti'n meddwl amdano?**  
**What are you thinking about?**

(N.B.: to avoid ending a sentence with a preposition, Welsh just conjugates it in the third person singular. You could also say **Am beth wyt ti'n meddwl?**)

**Roedd** **ti'n meddwl am Gymru.**  
**You were thinking about Wales.**

Day Forty-seven: 31 October

**Today's words:** **byd** = world; **heb** = without; **roedd e / o | hi** = he | she was

**Byd**, m., pl. **bydoedd**, means “world,” but **yn y byd** can also mean “any” (and the same is true for its cognates in Irish, *ar bith*, Scottish Gaelic, *airsam bith*, and Breton, *ebet*—the Breton usually comes with a negative and means “not any”). **Dim** is “nothing” but **dim byd** is “nothing at all.”

The next leniting conjugated preposition is **heb<sup>l</sup>**, “without”. Its conjugated forms are **hebdo i, hebdot ti, hebdo fe, hebddi hi, hebddon ni, hebddoch chi, hebddyn nhw**. As with **tros<sup>l</sup>**, there are variations, especially with regard to the internal **-dd-**, which is not used with the first or second person in literary Welsh. **Heb** can be used with verbs as another way of negating them: **dw i heb fynd**, “I have not gone”, lit. “am I without going.”

The third person imperfect of **bod** is **roedd**.

Examples:

**Beth yn y byd sy'n digwydd? Dim byd!**  
**What in the world is going on? Nothing at all!**

**Roedd e'n meddwl amdanat ti.**  
**He was thinking about you.**

**Dyn heb wlad yw e.**

**He is a man without a country.**

Day Forty-eight: 1 November

**Today's words:** **yno** = there; **ti** = you; **roedden ni** = we were

Welsh has three degrees of distance, unlike English which tends to have two: you're either here (**yma**) or you're there (**yna**). In Welsh, the third degree is **yno**, which is also translated as "there," but more distant from the speaker. When it needs to make the distinction, English expresses this with "over there" or, more archaically, "yonder". Like **yma** and **yna**, this word is accented on the final syllable.

The second person singular pronoun is **ti** in Literary Welsh and in South Wales, frequently lenited to **di**, but **chdi** in the North. This has no effect on the literary emphatic form **tydí**, but the more common contrastive form is either **tithau** or **chdithau**.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **di** can also have other meanings.

The first person plural of the imperfect is **roedden ni**.

Examples:

**Beth sy'n well i'w ddweud, ti neu chi?**  
**What's better to say, you [s] or you [pl]?**

**Yno mae byd newydd.**  
**Over there, there is a new world.**

**Roedden ni'n meddwl yn Gymraeg.**  
**We were thinking in Welsh.**

Day Forty-nine: 2 November

**Today's words:** **dan** = under; **pen** = head | end; **roeddech chi** = you were (pl)

The next leniting conjugated preposition is **dan<sup>L</sup>**, "under" or "beneath". Its conjugated forms are **dana i**, **danat ti**, **dano fe**, **dani hi**, **danon ni**, **danoch chi**, **dany'n nhw**. As with **heb<sup>L</sup>**, there are variations: as with **trwy<sup>L</sup>** and **dros<sup>L</sup>** the permanently lenited **dan<sup>L</sup>** and comes from historical **tan<sup>L</sup>**. Unlike **trwy<sup>L</sup>** but like **dros<sup>L</sup>**, **dan<sup>L</sup>** is more common, but **tan<sup>L</sup>** is used about ¼ of the time.

**Homonym Alert!** Note that **dan** and **tan** can also have other meanings.

The masculine noun **pen**, plural **pennau**, means "head," both as the body part and as the most important part of something. Metaphorically, it also means the top or front "end" of something, including time. **Penblwydd** is Welsh for "birthday" or "anniversary", literally year's end. The phrase is used in many other idioms: **ar fy mhén fy hunan** is "on my own" or "alone".

The imperfect form of the second person plural is **roeddech chi**.

Examples:

**Roeddech chi dan ddylanwad Ffred.**  
**We were under Fred's influence.**

**Beth sy ar fy mhen?**  
**What is on my head?**

Day Fifty: 3 November

**Today's words: erbyn = by; iaith = tongue | language; roedden nhw = they were**

The preposition for “by” in the sense of time is **erbyn**, which neither conjugates nor causes mutation. Together with **yn<sup>N</sup>** in the phrase **yn<sup>N</sup> erbyn**, it means “against” in the sense of opposition. A common idiomatic phrase is **erbyn hyn**, “by now” (literally “by that”).

The word for “tongue” is a feminine noun, **iaith**, plural **ieithoedd**. It is much more common in its secondary meaning of “language.”

The imperfect in the third person plural is **roedden nhw**.

Examples:

**Roedden nhw yn erbyn ni.**  
**They were against us.**

**Erbyn 2014 byddwch chi wedi dysgu Cymraeg.**  
**By 2014 you will have learned Welsh.**

**Roedden nhw yn yr ysgol am flynyddoedd.**  
**They were in school for years.**

## Llongyfarchiadau! / Congratulations!

You have now learned 100 of the most common Welsh words,  
which comprises 58% of the words used in the Bangor study.