



The Welsh Vocabulary Builder 3

(words 201–300)
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Day One Hundred and One: 24 December

Today's words: **efo** = with; **symud** = move; **petai e / o | hi** = if he / she were

The preposition **efo** means “with,” and about 1/3 of the time the form is **hefo**, with an H. The meaning is essentially the same as that of **gyda^H**. The differences between the four Welsh words for “with” (**â^H**, **(h)efo**, **gan^L**, & **gyda^H**) are both subtle and regional. For practical purposes, **efo** can be seen as the North Welsh equivalent of Southern **gyda** for physical proximity (**efo / gyda Mihangel**, “(together) with Michael”), while **â^H** expresses the instrument (**â phensil**, “with a pencil”) and **gan^L** expresses the manner in which something is done (**gan ofal**, “with care”) or agent who does something (**gan Mihangel**, by Michael*). Possession (“have”) is **gan^L** in North Wales, **gyda^H** in South Wales.

*Note: Personal names do not mutate in Modern Welsh, though they did in Middle Welsh.

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

Much simpler is the verb **symud**, stem **symud-**, which means “move” in the physical sense. Moving house is **symud tŷ**, and a mobile phone (cell phone) is **ffôn symudol**.

The form **petasai** is more commonly abbreviated to **petai**. **Y petai a'r petasai** means “the ifs and the buts.”

Examples:

Dydy e ddim wedi symud am awr.
He hasn't moved for an hour.

Dyn ni'n mynd efo'n gilydd. (S. Wales: **gyda'n gilydd**)
We're going together.

Mae fel petai wedi'i wneud ei hunan.
It's as if he did it himself.

Day One Hundred and Two: 25 December

Nadolig Llawn! (“Merry Christmas” or “Happy Christmas”)

Today's words: **tynnu** = pull; **cyhoeddi** = publish; **petasen ni** = if we were

The verb **tynnu**'s stem is **tynn-**. It means “pull” or “draw” (in the non-artistic sense, though you do **tynnu llun**, “take a picture”). It means “take off” for clothing and has a variety of other metaphorical meanings derived from pulling or drawing. **Tynnu yn ôl** is “withdraw” or “take back”.

The verb **cyhoeddi** (stem **cyhoedd-**) is a little more directly comparable to English “publish”, especially in the wider sense of “make public.”

The **ni** form of the **pet-** forms of **bod** is **petasen ni**.

Examples:

Mae rhaid i fi dynnu yn ôl beth a ddywedais i.
I must take back what I said.

Ydy eich llyfr chi wedi cael ei gyhoeddi eto?
Has your book been published yet?

Dyn ni'n teimlo fel petasen ni wedi gallu ei wneud e yn ei le yntau.*
We feel as if we could have done it instead of him.

*Note: **yntau** is used here instead of **e** to show contrast with the previous “**ei . . . e**”.

Day One Hundred and Three: 26 December

Today's words: **credu = believe; **unwaith** = once; **petawn ni** = if we were**

The verb for “believe” is **credu**, stem **cred-**. It is cognate with (but not borrowed from) Latin *crēdō* and thus related to French *croire*, Italian *credere*, Spanish *creder*, and the English words *creed* and *credit*.

The adverb **unwaith** is a compound of **un^l** and **gwaith** “time” and means “once” or “at once time”. The common phrase for “once again” is **unwaith eto**, a very useful phrase when you would like someone to repeat what they've said to you in Welsh!

Another form for **petasen ni** is **petawn ni**, which is in common use but unfortunately easy to confuse with **petawn i**. Remember to say both Ns, as in “unknown.” **Petawn** is also used with **nhw** (but see also below).

Examples:

Dw i'n credu fy mod i'n iawn.
I believe that I'm right.

Unwaith, roedd llawer o dai yma.
At one time there were a lot of houses here.

Petawn ni ddim wedi symud, byddwn ni'n byw yma o hyd / byddwn ni'n dal i fyw yma.
If we hadn't moved, we'd live here still / we'd still live here.

Day One Hundred and Four: 27 December

Today's words: **ail = second; **blaen** = front; **petawen ni** = if we were**

Ail^l is the ordinal adjective “second”, and precedes its noun (and so causes lenition). Like “first,” it is unrelated to the cardinal number, but in Welsh all of the ordinal numbers after “second” are easily recognizable: English -th is Welsh -**fed**.

Blaen is a more complicated noun, masculine, with the plural **blaenau** (as in **Blaenau Gwent**). It means “front” but also “top” or “edge”, and by extension “first part; border”. It is the root of **ymlaen** (**yn^N** + **blaen** > **ym** + **mlaen**), and is part of many compound prepositions: **mynd yn^N** + **blaen** is “go ahead” or “continue,” and puts the possessive pronoun in the middle: **af yn fy mlaen**, **ei yn dy flaen**, **â yn ei flaen**, etc. (Etc. itself is “**ac yn y blaen**,” abbreviated to **a.y.y.b.**). **O flaen** “in front of” works in the same way.

Another common abbreviation for **petasen** is **petawen**, without the -s-.

Examples:

Dw i wedi ceisio unwaith, ac dw i wedi ei wneud e yr ail waith.
I tried once, and I did it the second time.

Beth yw'r peth o'n blaen ni?
What is that thing in front of us?

Petaen ni'n mynd yn ôl, byddwn ni'n iawn.
If we go back, we'll be all right.

Day One Hundred and Five: 28 December

Today's words: **sylw** = notice / attention; **gwraig** = woman | wife; **petasech chi** = if you were (pl.)

The word for “notice” or “attention” is masculine: **sylw**, plural **sylwadau**. “Pay attention” is **talw sylw**. “Point something out” (or “draw attention to something”) is **tynnu sylw at^L something**. In the plural, **sylwadau** is most often “comments” or “remarks”.

As **gŵr** is both “man” and “husband,” the feminine noun **gwraig** can mean “woman” or “wife”. There are many other words, as well: **benyw**, **dynes**, **menyw**, and **merch** can all be used for an adult woman, and that’s without getting into **arglwyddes** “lady” and the string of other words for “girl” or “young adult woman”: **bun**, **geneth**, **hogan**, **rhiain**, **roces**. The plural of **gwraig** is **gwagedd**. It is also an agent suffix, like **-wr** / **-wyr**: **-wraig** / **-wagedd**. The word for “student,” for example, is **myfyriwr** (m), plural **myfyrwyr** (m / mixed), or **myfyrwraig** (f), plural **myfyrwagedd** (f).

The most formal **chi** for of the past conditional is **petasech chi**.

Examples:

Talwch sylw!
Pay attention!

“Petunia” yw enw fy ngwraig.
My wife’s name is “Petunia.”

Petasech chi'n talu sylw, ni fyddai rhaid i mi ddweud popeth ddwywaith.
If you would pay attention, I wouldn't have to say everything twice.

Day One Hundred and Six: 29 December

Today's words: **athro** = teacher; **prif** = main; **petaech chi** = if you were (pl.)

The word for “teacher” or “professor” is **athro** for a man, and **athrawes** for a woman. The plural is **athrawon** (male / mixed) and **athrawesau** (specifically female).

Another adjective which goes before the noun is **prif**, “main” or “chief” or even “first” (in the sense of “primary”). You have now encountered almost all of the ones that commonly do so: **gwir** (some meanings), **hen** (some meanings), **hoff** “favourite”, **holl**, **prif**, **unig** (some meanings). Numbers and pronominal adjectives precede the noun, as do a few others ordinary adjectives in set expressions or poetry (always leniting) but in general Welsh likes its adjectives following the nouns they qualify. A “head teacher” (USA: “principal”) is **prifathro**.

One of the short forms of **petasech** is **petaech chi**.

Examples:

Mae'r athrawon yn gweithio yn yr ysgol.
The teachers work at school.

Dyna'r prif reswm i'w wneud.
That's the main reason to do it.

Dych chi'n edrych fel petaech chi wedi dysgu.

You look like you've learned.

Day One Hundred and Seven: 30 December

Today's words: drwg = bad; pa = what, which; petasent = if they were

The opposite of **da** is **drwg**, and like **da** the comparatives are irregular: **cynddrwg** (eq.), **gwaeth** (comp.), **gwaethaf** (superl.). **Drwg** can mean “evil” as well as bad, and as a noun it is a euphemism for the Devil: **Y Drwg** “**The Evil One.**”

Pa^l is a versatile little word which asks the question “what”. Like many short unstressed words, it often disappears in the colloquial language, leaving behind only the mutation. You have already seen **beth?**, which is **pa^l + peth** (**what thing? = what?**). **Pa^l le?** becomes **ble?** (**what place? = where?**), **pa^l sut?** is usually just **sut?** (**how?**), and **pa^l bryd?** becomes **pryd?** (**when?**). **Pa^l fath?** usually keeps both words. It is never wrong to use the full expression, but it's worth remembering that you might hear the shorter forms and that they are not entirely predictable.

The final form of the **pet-** tense is **petasent**, the third-person plural. In less formal registers, it shares the same forms as **ni**, and so requires the pronoun **nhw** to distinguish it. And congratulations! This completes the paradigm of **bod** you need for daily use. There are more forms that are worth recognizing, so I'll go on, but this is the basic set.

Examples:

Mae rhywbeth drwg yma.
There is something evil here.

Pa fath o beth?
What kind of thing?

Petasent yn gwybod, bydden nhw'n dweud wrthyn ni.
If they knew, they would tell us.

[Note: **Petasent** is more formal than **bydden**, and you wouldn't ordinarily use these two in the same sentence.]

Day One Hundred and Eight: 31 December

Today's words: adroddiad = report; amlwg = obvious; bwyf = (that) I be

Adroddiad, plural **adroddiadau**, means “report”. It comes from the verb **adrodd**, “relate,” “narrate,” or “report.” It is masculine. Welsh Society meetings involve many **adroddiadau**!

The adject **amlwg** means “obvious”. Its comparative stem, like other adjectives ending in -G, hardens: **amlwced**, **amlwchach**, **amlwcaf**, though these forms are not often encountered.

The verb **bod** has a subjunctive mood, like English does, and like English it is moribund. It is used as a parallel present for situations that are possible but not actual, usually preceded by “if” or “that.” If I were rich (but I'm not), I would give you money. When I was rich (and I was) I did give you money.

In most Welsh verbs, the regular ordinary present, known as the indicative mood, can have a future sense, and that is also the case for the subjunctive mood of **bod**. The first person is **bwyf**, which means “[if] I be” or “[that] I be”. It derives from **byddwyf**.

It is used in the poem **Arglwydd, Arwain trwy'r Anialwch** (**Lord, Lead [me] through the Desert**) by William Williams (i.e. Pantycelyn), better known by its associated tune, **Cwm Rhondda** (**Rhondda Valley**) or in English as “Bread of Heaven” or “Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah.”

Rho i mi fanna, rho i mi fanna, Give me manna, give me manna

Fel na bwyf yn llwfrhau

So that I shall not lose heart

(A quick side note: **llwfrháu** or **llwfrháu** means to become **llwfr**, which is an adjective that means “cowardly.” The verb means “quail” or “grow faint-hearted” or “become weak in spirit”.)

Further Examples:

Mae'n amlwg dy fod di'n athro drwg achos dw i ddim yn dysgu dim byd.
It's obvious that you're a bad teacher because I'm not learning anything.

Beth ydy'r adroddiad yn dweud am y pethau pwysicaf?
What does the report say about the most important things?

Day One Hundred and Nine: 1 January (**Blwyddyn Newydd Dda!**)

Today's words: lawr = down; dilyn = follow; bŷch = (that) you be (s.)

The adverb **lawr** “down” is a permanently mutated form of the noun **llawr**, “floor,” which is pretty much always down from where you're standing. It is often found in combination with **i'**: **i' lawr** “down, downward”.

The verb **dilyn** (stem **dilyn-**) means “follow”. Note that the -N- does not double in the stem.

The second-person singular subjunctive is **bŷch**, (if / that) **you be**, from **byddych**. The longer form is also used for the plural (see below). It is used in Deuteronomy 16:20 in the 1588 translation of the Bible (so, roughly equivalent to the King James Version as far as how formal and poetic it sounds):

Cyfiawnder, cyfiawnder a ddilyni; fel y byddych fyw, ac yr etifeddych y tir yr hwn y mae yr ARGLWYDD dy DDUW yn ei roddi i ti.

Righteousness: it is righteousness you shall follow; so that you shall live and inherit the land that the LORD your GOD is giving you.

(King James Version, *That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*)

Further examples:

Rho'r pethau hynny i lawr, os gwelwch yn dda.
Put those things down, please.

Dw i ddim yn gallu dilyn y stori.
I can't follow the story.

Day One Hundred and Ten: 2 January

Today's words: maes = field; datblygu = develop; bêch = (that) you be (s.)

There are two main words for “field” in Welsh. The masculine noun **maes**, plural **meysydd**, means an open field, while a **cae** is one that has been enclosed. In North Wales, the short form **mas** is the equivalent of South Welsh **allan**, “out” —one of the key vocabulary features distinguishing the two regions.

The verb **datblygu** (stem **datblyg-**) means “develop.”

The second-person singular subjunctive of **bod** has an alternate form, **bêch** or **byddech**. **Byddech** is also found for the second person plural, so context is important. There is a hymn that uses it, **Mwynhau Duw yw dedwyddwch dyn, Man's Bliss Is Enjoying God:**

Chwilio **amdanat**, addfwyn Arglwydd,
Mae fy enaid yma a thraw ;
Teimla' mod yn berffaith ddedwydd
Pan y byddech di gerllaw.

My soul is seeking you, gentle Lord,
Here and there ["My soul is" is actually on this second line]
I shall feel that I'm perfectly blissful
When you are nearby. [lit. "at hand"]

This is in the subjunctive because the speaker is not stating definitively that God is nearby, but expressing that in the condition *when* God is nearby, *then* the speaker will feel (indicative mood) bliss.

Further examples:

Mae'r iaith Gymraeg yn dal i ddatblygu.
The Welsh language is still evolving.

Does dim tai yn y maes 'na.
There are no houses in that field.

Day One Hundred and Eleven: 3 January

Today's words: **peidio** = don't | cease; **wyneb** = face | surface; **bo** = (that) he / she / it be

The versatile verb **peidio** (stem **peidi-**) means "stop" or "cease," but it is also used to form the negative imperative "don't": **paid â^h verb** (singular) and **peidiwch â^h verb** (plural) = **don't verb**. In colloquial Welsh, the spirant mutation can be dropped, and sometimes the preposition **â^h** is omitted entirely.

The noun **wyneb** means "face," and metaphorically "surface." It is a masculine noun, with the plural **wynebau**.

The most common form of the subjunctive is the third person, **bo**. A common phrase is **cyn bo hir**, "before long," and it is also frequently found after **tra** "while".

Homonym Alert! Note that the lenited form **fo** can also have other meanings.

Examples:

Paid â theimlo'n ddrwg!
Don't feel bad!

Beth sy ar dy wyneb?
What's on your face?

Bydd popeth yn iawn tra bo'r iaith Cymraeg yn fyw.
Everything will be fine as long as (i.e. while) the Welsh language is alive.

Day One Hundred and Twelve: 4 January

Today's words: **siarad** = speak; **bynnag** = any- | -ever; **bôm** = (that) we be

The verb **siarad** (stem **siarad-**) means speak. In Welsh you **siarad â^h speak with / speak to** someone. You can also use other prepositions, but they are regarded as less correct, as anglicisms, or both.

Bynnag is an adjective which doesn't have a single-word translation in English, but is usually rendered with "any-" or "-ever". **Beth bynnag**, "whatever"; **fodd bynnag**, "however", "anyway"; **pw y bynnag**, "whoever", "whosoever".

The first person plural subjunctive is **bôm**, shortened from **byddom**. Another biblical example: **Tra na byddom yn edrych ar y pethau a welir, ond ar y pethau ni welir: canys y pethau a welir sydd dros amser, ond y pethau ni welir sydd dragwyddol.** (2 Corinthiaid 4:18.)

While we do not look at things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen: for things that are seen are subject to time, but the things that are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18.)

(King James Version: *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*)

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

Further examples:

Dw i'n gallu siarad Cymraeg â chi o'r diwedd!
I can speak Welsh with you at last!

Dw i'n dysgu, beth bynnag.
I'm learning, anyhow.

Day One Hundred and Thirteen: 5 January

Today's words: **duw** = god; **cynllun** = plan; **boch** = (that) you be (pl.)

The word for “god” is **duw**, plural **duwiau**. As in English, it is capitalized whenever it refers to the deity of the main three monotheistic religions, but lowercase when referring to polytheistic systems, e.g. of the ancient Celts or Romans. The word is masculine. “Goddess” is **duwes**, plural **duwesau**.

Another masculine noun is **cynllun**, plural **cynlluniau**. It means “plan.”

The subjunctive for **chi** is **byddoch** or **boch**.

From Leviticus 10:9, **Gwin a diod gadarn nac yf di, na'th feibion gyda thi, pan ddeloch* i babell y cyfarfod; fel na byddoch feirw.**
***deloch** is the second person plural subjunctive of **dod** (irregular)

You shall not drink wine and strong drink, nor your sons with you, when you come to the meeting tent, lest you die. (lit. **so not you-be dead**)

(King James, *Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die*)

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

Further examples:

Oedd llawer o dduwiau gan y Rhufeiniaid?
Did the Romans have many gods?

Oes gen ti gynllun am y flwyddyn nesaf?
Do you have a plan for next year?

Day One Hundred and Fourteen: 6 January

Today's words: **darllen** = read; **heddiw** = today; **bônt** = (that) they be

The verb **darllen**, “read”, is the same in its stem, **darllen-**.

The adverb “today” is **heddiw**, often reduced to **heddi** in speech, particularly in South Wales.

The final form of the conditional is **byddont**, often **bônt**. The shorter forms are more often used in modern contexts, e.g.:

Mae'r Ganolfan Camfanteisio ar Blant a'u Hamddiffyn Ar-lein (CEOP) yn rhan o heddlu'r DU a'i gwaith yw gwarchod plant rhag cael eu cam-drin yn rhywiol lle bynnag y bônt.

The Centre for the Exploitation of Children* and Their Protection Online (CEOP) is part of the UK police and its work is to protect children from being sexually abused wherever they are.

*This is my translation, but their own doesn't sound great in English, either: "Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre". Rest assured that in either language they work *against* the exploitation of children!

The subjunctive is used because these children aren't anywhere in particular, but they *might be* somewhere.

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

Further examples:

**Wyt ti wedi darllen llawer o lyfrau yn Gymraeg?
Have you read many books in Welsh?**

**Oes gennych chi gynlluniau am heddiw?
Do you guys have plans for today?**

Day One Hundred and Fifteen: 7 January

Today's words: llygad = eye | spring; ysgrifennu = write; bydder = (that) one be

"Eye" is feminine: singular **llygad**, plural **llygaid**. It is mostly used for the eyes in the head, but there is a long tradition of using the word for water, as well, where it bubbles up from underground. The Roman-era British word for Bath is **Aquae Sulis**, and **sulis** is the old ancestral-to-Welsh word for both "eye" and "fountain". (*Súil* still means "eye" in Irish but in Welsh, Breton, and Cornish is has shifted to "sun," the eye in the sky—modern Welsh **haul**).

The verb **ysgrifennu**, stem **ysgrifenn-**, means "write" and comes from Latin *scribere*. There are a few different dialectal forms, all dropping the final -U to form the stem: **sgrifennu** and **sgwennu** are the most common.

The impersonal subjunctive in Welsh is **bydder**. It is also the impersonal imperative. Here is an example from a collection of folklore published in 1882, called **Ystên Sioned (Janet's Pot)**:

Y mae o bwys nid bychan pa le y bydder yn sefyll arno pan glywer gyntaf gân y gog. Os ar dir glas porfaog y bydder, yna caiff y dyn hwnnw gyflawnder o flith. . .

It's of no small importance where one stands when the cuckoo's first song is heard. If one is on green grazing ground, then that man will have an abundance of cows' milk. . .

In the second instance, you could omit **bydder** "one is" from the English translation altogether: **If on green grazing ground. . .**

Further examples:

Mi wela' i a'm llygad fach i. . . (North Welsh)
I spy with my little eye. . .

**Mae rhaid i mi ygrifennu atoch chi.
I must write to you.**

Day One Hundred and Sixteen: 8 January

Today's words: **golwg** = sight / view / look; **gwybodaeth** = knowledge; **bawn** = (that) I / we / they be

The plural of **golwg** is **golygon**. The word is masculine sometimes, and feminine other times, so take your pick. At root the word means “look” or “appearance,” but by extension “sight” or “view.” In other words, either the look of a person, or the act of looking by a person, or what one sees when looking. One of the major Welsh periodicals is called *Golwg360*.

The word “knowledge” is **gwybodaeth**, with its rare plural **gwybodaethau**, a feminine noun. It is formed from the verb-noun **gwybod** plus the abstract suffix **-aeth**.

The form **bawn** is a short form of a number of different forms of **bod**, including **buaswn**, **byddom** and **byddont**, and so is usually followed by **i**, **ni** or **nhw** for clarity. It is often found in the construction **pe bawn**, which is equivalent to **petawn**.

Examples:

Mae golwg ddrwg arno.
He looks sinister. (lit. **Is look bad on-him**).

Mae llawer o wybodaeth yn llyfrau.
There is a lot of knowledge in books.

Pe bawn i'n ifanc, byddwn i'n symud i Gymru.
If I were young, I'd move to Wales.

Day One Hundred and Seventeen: 9 January

Today's words: **cwmni** = company; **hyd** = length; **bait** = (that) you be

The Latin > French > English word “company” has been borrowed into Welsh as **cwmni**, masculine, plural **cwmniau**.

Pronunciation Alert! The diaeresis (Welsh **didolnod**, the accent with the two little dots) means that two vowels next to each other are pronounced separately, **cwm-ni-au** (I goes “eee”) rather than ****cwm-niau** (I like English Y). The diaeresis looks like an umlaut but isn't: the two accents have different functions. Old-fashioned English (coöperate!), French, Spanish, and Welsh use the diaeresis; German and Swedish use the umlaut.

You have already met the preposition **hyd**, which derives from the noun **hyd**, “length.” The noun is masculine, plural **hydau**.

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

The subjunctive form **buasit** has a short form, **bait**. Here is a line from **Marwnad Lleucu Llwyd (Lament on the Death of Brown-Haired Lucy)** by her boyfriend **Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen (Red-Headed Llywelyn, the son of Old Morris: 14th century)**:

Pe bait fyw, myn Duw, nid awn.
If you were alive, by God, I would not go.

Llywelyn Goch can drop the **yn^t** because he is a medieval poet. You cannot. As a side note, look how little literary Welsh has changed from the fourteenth century. This is one of the reasons that Welsh is often (erroneously) called “the oldest language in Europe”.

Further examples:

Ydych chi'n gweithio i gwmni neu ar eich penn eich hunan?
Do you work for a company or on your own?

Hir iawn yw hyd yr amseroedd aros.
The length of the waiting times is very long.

Day One Hundred and Eighteen: 10 January

Today's words: **penderfynu** = **decide**; **cynnwys** = **contain / include**; **baet** = **(that) you be**

The stem for **penderfynu**, “decide”, is **perderfyn-**. The word comes from **pen** and **terfyn**, from Latin *terminus* “boundary, end, limit”. When you come to the end of the end, you have to make the decision!

Cynnwys, stem **cynhwys-** or more colloquially **cynwys-**, means “contain” or “include”. The common phrase **yn cynnwys**, used without accompanying forms of **bod**, means “including.” You will sometimes see **yn gynnwys**, with the verb re-analyzed as an adjective, but try to avoid the mutation here.

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

Many of the older verb forms in -IT in the second person singular have shifted to -ET in the modern language, and the shorter subjunctive **bait** has the variant **baet**. It is not important to memorize these forms, but it is important to recognize them because they are difficult to look up in most dictionaries. An example from an online comment to a blog post:

Onid gwell fyddai pe baet wedi'i bostio dan ffug enw?
Wouldn't it have been better if you had posted it under a pseudonym? (lit. **false name**)

Further examples:

Mae ein teulu ni yn cynnwys mam, tad, a thair merched.
Our family includes a mother, a father, and three daughters.

Wyt ti wedi perderfynu am fynd, neu beidio?
Have you decided about going, or not?

Day One Hundred and Nineteen: 11 January

Today's words: **rhywbeth** = **something / anything**; **gosod** = **set / place | let | install**; **bai** = **(that) he / she / it be**

You have already seen the combination of **rhyw** + **beth**, **rhywbeth**. (This is just where it falls in the list of most common words on its own.) This pronoun means “something” or “anything”.

The verb **gosod** has a wide range of meaning. The basic meaning is “set”, but its range overlaps to a degree with **rhoi** in the sense of “put” and “place”. It is also used to mean “install.” Its stem is **gosod-**.

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

An alternative to **petai** is **pe bai**, depending on dialect.

Examples:

Wyt ti am osod y bwrdd, os gweli di'n dda?
Will you set (or lay) the table, please? (lit. “Are you about setting,” i.e. “Do you want to set”—polite phrasing.)

Mae rhywbeth yn bod yma.
Something is going on here.

**“Pe Bai Cymru yn Rhydd” ydy enw llyfr gan Gwynfor Evans.
“If Wales Were Free” is the name of a book by Gwynfor Evans.**

Day One Hundred and Twenty: 12 January

Today’s words: **pwylgor** = committee; **cyfle** = opportunity; **baem** = (that) we be

The masculine noun **pwylgor** means “committee” (**pwyl** = “sense” and **cor** = “chorus”). The plural is **pwylgorau**.

Cyfle is also masculine, and means “opportunity” or “chance”. The plural is **cyfleoedd**. The prefix **cyf-** is like *co-* or *com-* in English (both from Latin *com-*), so **cyf-** + **lle** is when there’s a coincidence of place.

The form **baem** is highly literary, but again worth recognizing because how else would you ever figure it out? An example published in *Yr Haul (The Sun)* in 1857 is as follows. The passage is difficult, but interesting because it shows some of what people were thinking about in the Wales of 150 years ago!

Drachefn, pe baem yn clywed am sêr* y nefoedd, bod ganddynt drigolion aneirif mewn hawddfyd neu mewn adfyd, peth rhy uchel yw, ni fedrwn ni ei brofi neu ei ddangos yn anwir.

Once again, if we were to hear about the stars of the heavens, that they have innumerable inhabitants in prosperity or in adversity, it is a thing too high—we could neither test it nor show it to be untrue.

Note that **hawddfyd** and **adfyd** are compounds of **byd**, and that **anwir** is the negative **an-** “un-” + **gwir**.

* There is no **to bach** (circumflex) in the text, but in modern spelling it has one.

Further example:

Mae cyfle i chi ymuno â phwyllgor Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver. (the verb **ymuno** is **yn^N** + **un**, unify, join)
You have an opportunity to join a Vancouver Welsh Society committee.

Day One Hundred and Twenty-One: 13 January

Today’s words: **tir** = land; **rhag** = before | lest; **baen** = (that) we / they be

The word **tir**, plural **tiroedd**, means “land,” with much the same senses as English. It is cognate with Latin *terra* (French *terre*, Spanish / Italian *tierra*), but unlike those words, **tir** is masculine.

The preposition **rhag** means “before” in the sense of “in front of,” and is often equivalent to “fore-” in English. The phrase **rhag ofn**, “for fear of,” is commonly used as “lest”, and many of the specific uses require the translation “from” or “against”, though “before” usually works to understand the meaning. **Rhag** differs from **blaen** in that it is a true preposition, and even conjugates: **rhagof**, **rhagot**, **rhagddo**, **rhagddi**, **rhagon**, **rhagoch**, **rhagddyn**. More colloquially, the internal -DD- can appear in the first- and second-person forms, as well, and there is other variation (e.g. **rhagon** is more formally **rhagom**).

Baem is **baen** more colloqually, where it needs the pronoun to decide whether it is **baen ni** or **baen nhw**. Here is an example from a Welsh translation of Anne Frank’s diary:

Rydw* i wedi bod yn gofyn i mi fy hun drosodd a throsodd a fyddai’n well pe baen ni heb fynd i guddio, pe baen ni bellach wedi marw, ac yn rhydd o’r trallod hwn.

That is, **I have asked myself over and over whether it would have been better if we had not gone into hiding, if we had died by now, and free of this trouble**.
***Rydw = dw**

Further examples:

Ydy'r tir hwn yn perthyn i chi?
Does this land belong to you?

Mae'r gwaith yn mynd rhagddo yn dda.
The work is progressing well. (Lit. **Is-the work «particle» going before-it «particle» good**)

Day One Hundred and Twenty-Two: 14 January

Today's words: ochr = side; cenedlaethol = national; baech = (that) you be

You have seen the word **tu** for “side,” in the sense of location (“to the side of”). A more immediate word for side, in the sense of the physical surface of an object, is **ochr**, plural **ochrau**, which is feminine. There is quite a bit of overlap between the two words. In the more metaphorical senses, for example one side of an issue or a dispute, **ochr** is the usual word.

The adjective for “national” is **cenedlaethol**, which comes from **cenedl** “nation” + the abstract suffix **-aeth** + the adjectival suffix **-ol**.

Baech is an alternative to **buasech**.

Examples:

Byddai'n dda gen i pe baech yn gadael y tŷ hwn.
I would love it if you would leave this house.

Mae'r peth wrth ochr y llyfrau.
The thing is next to the books. (lit. **at side**)

Beth ydy ieithoedd cenedlaethol Canada?
What are the national languages of Canada?

Day One Hundred and Twenty-Three: 15 January

Today's words: cefn = back; cyflwyno = present / introduce; baent = (that) they be

The word for “back,” both the body part and the directional sense, is **cefn**, plural **cefnau**, masculine.

The verb which means “present” or “introduce” is **cyflwyno**, stem **cyflwyn-**.

Another form of **buasent** is **baent**, “[that] they be.” On the Egypt Centre’s webpage, which is affiliated with Swansea University, a sentence reads:

mae rhai fel pe baent wedi cael eu defnyddio yn offrwm i Hathor,

the Welsh translation of

some seem to have been used as offering (sic) to Hathor,
(literally “**is some as if they-be after having their using «particle» offering to Hathor.**”)

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

Further examples:

Mae'r ysgol y tu cefn i'r tŷ.
The school is in back of the house.

Ga' i gyflwyno Ffred?
May I introduce Fred?

Day One Hundred and Twenty-Four: 16 January

Today's words: drws = door; pell = far; boed = (let him / her / it) be!

The word for "door" is **drws**, plural **drysau**, a masculine noun.

The adjective for "far" is **pell**.

The next form of **bod**, **boed**, is equivalent to **bydded**. It is the third person singular imperative, so "let him be!" or "let her be!" or "let it be!" or "let there be!" With the imperative, the subject of the verb is indicated by the preposition **i'**: **boed i'r dyn ddod!** = **let the man come!** (So The Beatles' *Let It Be* would be **Boed Iddo**.) An example from 1822 is:

Boed i'r rhai a ddeuant o hyd i'r llythr hwn ei anfon i Belfast, i'r News Letter Office.
Let those who find this letter send it to Belfast, to the News Letter Office.

Further examples:

Mae'r drws ar agor.
The door is open.

Mae Cymru yn bell oddi wrth Ganada.
Wales is far away from Canada.

Day One Hundred and Twenty-Five: 17 January

Today's words: lleol = local; cant = hundred; bid = (let him / her / it) be!

The adjective **lleol**, formed from **lle**, means "local".

The numeral **cant** means "hundred," and in fact is cognate with the "hund-" part of "hundred" as well as Latin *centum* and French *cent*. The plural is **cannoedd**. Before nouns, the word takes the form **can**^(N), but in practice that is mostly used with time and measurements. Before ordinary objects, the form is more often **cant o^L**. In Middle Welsh, **cant** caused the nasal mutation, but in Modern Welsh that only remains in a few set expressions such as **can mlynedd**, "one hundred years". Numerals are adjectives, but **cant** can also be a masculine noun meaning "percent": **dau y cant** is "two percent." (The normal rules would require ****dau'r cant**, but in the expression **y cant** the article tends not to change.)

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

Another form of **boed**, slightly more common, is **bid**. An example from the *Mabinogi* is **A fo ben, bid bont** (**Who would be chief, let him be a bridge.**)

Examples:

Mae'r ysgol leol yn dda.
The local school is good.

Mae cannoedd o ysgolion yng Nghymru.
There are hundreds of schools in Wales.

Bid i'r Cymro ei iaith ei hun.

Let the Welshman have his own language (lit. **Let-be to-the Welshman his language his own**)

Day One Hundred and Twenty-Six: 18 January

Today's words: **dosbarth** = class | district; **bardd** = poet; **byddent** = (let them) be!

The plural of **dosbarth**, “class” or “district”, is **dosbarthiadau**, and it is masculine. The etymology comes from **parth**, “part,” and the root sense is a division. So in the sense of “class,” it can mean a course in school (in the North American sense of “course”; the British sense is **cwrs**) or a socio-economic class. Referring to an individual class meeting, **dosbarth** emphasizes that it's part of a series, but the contents of a given class would be the **gwrs**, “lesson”.

The Welsh noun **bardd** looks like the English *bard*, and there is a reason for that: both derive from an older Celtic word first reported by Julius Caesar in the Latinized Gaulish form, *bardus*. One of the main things the ancient bards did was memorize, compose, and recite poetry, and this remains the basic sense in Welsh. **Bardd**, “poet,” is masculine, and the plural is **beirdd**.

The third person imperative is **byddent**.

Examples:

Oes dosbarth Cymraeg heno?

Is there a Welsh class tonight? (note: the indefinite article is in blue because it goes with the noun)

Mae beirdd yn bwysig yng Nghymru.

Poets are important in Wales.

Byddent i'r beirdd ysgrifennu!

Let the poets write!

Day One Hundred and Twenty-Seven: 19 January

Today's words: **disgwyl** = expect / await; **cyfarfod** = meeting; **ydwyf** = I am [*extra formal*]

The verb **disgwyl** has the stem **dysgwyl-** and means “expect,” and sometimes “await”. When used of a woman, it means “pregnant,” exactly as in English “she is expecting” but perhaps a bit more common.

The masculine noun **cyfarfod** means “meeting,” both in the sense of a group of people sitting down together and in the sense of an encounter. The plural is **cyfarfodydd**. As with other **cyf-** words, the colloquial forms **cwarfod** and **cwarfodydd** are sometimes encountered.

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

The formal form of **dw i** is **ydwyf** (no **i**). With the positive particle **yr**, the phrase is **yr ydwyf**, “I am.” All of the bewildering variety of colloquial and literary forms can be derived from this phrase, and it is still used in literary Welsh, so it is good to recognize. It occurs twice in the Welsh translation of Exodus 3:14, **ydwyf yr hwn ydwyf**, usually rendered **I am that I am** or **I am who I am** in English translations.

Examples:

Ydych chi'n disgwyl gweld eich teulu chi?

Are you expecting to see your family?

Oes cyfarfod Cymdeithas Gymraeg* heno?

Is there a meeting of the Welsh Society tonight?

(*Cofiwch, this should be **Cymdeithas Gymreig**.)

Wyt ti'n cytuno? Ydwyf.

Do you agree? Yes. [very formal]

Day One Hundred and Twenty-Eight: 20 January

Today's words: deg = ten; efallai = perhaps; rwyf = I am [formal]

Numbers in Welsh are difficult, so brace yourself.

The numeral “ten”, **deg**, historically caused the nasal mutation in words beginning with B, D, and G. In contemporary Welsh, this only happens with a few words, but in each case the form of the numeral changes to **deng^N**: **deng^N mlynedd**, **ten years** (of time), **deng^N mlwydd**, **ten years** (of age); **deng^N niwrnod**, **ten (full) days**. **Deng^N** is also used in front of other words beginning with M- such as **milltir** “mile” and **munud** “minute”. With words beginning in G, **deng^N + ng-** can look like the soft mutation if the two NGs run together, and either mutation can occur in the literary language. Fortunately, the likelihood that you'll have ten things that start with G is so small that you can deal with this confusion the way colloquial Welsh deals with it, by ignoring it. There's only one phrase you might encounter, **dengwaith**, which is **deng^L + gwaith** “time”. Compounds of “ten” (which are not the numbers you are expecting) behave in the same strange way: **deuddeg**, “twelve,” and **pymtheg**, “fifteen”.

In the old style of numbers, still in common use, “ten” is also used to form higher numbers. Ten through seventeen and nineteen all use **deg**:

un ar ddeg, 11

deuddeg, 12

tri / tair ar ddeg, 13

pedwar / pedair ar ddeg, 14

pymtheg, 15

un ar bymtheg, 16

dau / dwy ar bymtheg, 17

pedwar / pedair ar bymtheg, 19

(The missing 18 is **deunaw**, “two nines”. In closely the related language Breton it's **triwec'h**, “three sixes”.)

Likewise, some of the multiples of 10 use **deg**. 30 is **deg ar hugain**; 70 is **deg a^H thrigain** (note the change in preposition); 90 is **deg a^H phedwar ugain**, and all the 30s, 70s, and 90s use the system above, so 99 is **pedwar ar bymtheg a^H phedwar ugain**, similar to French *quatre-vingt-dix-neuf* which will never seem complicated again. If you have 99 children, you use the singular noun in the middle of the number: **pedwar plentyn ar bymtheg a^H phedwar ugain**, literally **four child upon fifteen and four twenty**. You get used to it.

Welsh new style numbers, brought in by English speakers who would prefer that Welsh work like the language they are used to, English, just read the digits. 99 is **naw deg naw**, **nine tens nine**, and **99 children** is **naw deg naw o^L blant**.

Much simpler is the adverb **efallai**, “perhaps.” It comes from **ef a allai**, “he / it could [be].” In colloquial Welsh, this is often **falle** in South Welsh, not to be confused with **felly**; North Welsh often uses **ella**.

Another formal way to say “I am” is **rwyf**, a contraction of **yr ydwyf**.

Examples:

Mae hi'n ddeng mlwydd oed.

She is ten years old.

Efallai bydda' i'n dod.

Perhaps I'll come.

Rwyf yn mynd i'r cyfarfod.
I am going to the meeting.

Day One Hundred and Twenty-Nine: 21 January

Today's words: **achos** = cause / reason | because; **sefyll** = stand; **ydyw** = it is

The noun **achos** derives from Latin *occāsiō* (“occasion, opportunity”) but came to mean “cause” or “reason” in Welsh. Unlike its Latin ancestor it is masculine, and its plural is **achosion**. I suspect the Bangor study has misidentified most of the instances of **achos**, because its most common use is as a conjunction, where it means “because”. For this reason, I’m breaking my keep-the-parts-of-speech-separate rule here.

The verb **sefyll** means “stand”. Its stem is **saf-**. While not technically irregular, that means a few of the conjugated forms will be hard to recognize, but if you see S + vowel + F, it’s probably a form of **sefyll** or a derivative.

The form **ydyw**, like **ydwyf**, is the fuller form from which **yw** and **ydy** derive, and is identical in meaning. It is more formal but also fairly common.

Examples:

Dw i wedi gadael achos roedd popeth yn ddrwg.
I left because everything was bad.

Does dim rhaid ichi sefyll trwy'r dydd.
You don't have to stand all day.

Beth ydyw enw eich merch chi?
What is your daughter's name?

Day One Hundred and Thirty: 22 January

Today's words: **marw** = die; **cynnal** = hold (*event*) / maintain; **ydyw** = we are

The verb **marw** has the stem **marw-**. It means “die.” The English adjective “dead” is represented in Welsh by the past tense: **wedi marw** “dead” / “died” / “has died”.

Homonym Alert! Note that **marw** can also have other meanings (well, at least, it can also be other parts of speech).

The verb **cynnal**, stem **cynhali-**, generally means “support” or “sustain,” but the most common meanings are “hold” for events, and “maintain” in the sense of “uphold”.

The formal form of “we are” is **ydyw**, again without the expressed **ni**.

Examples:

Mae Ffred wedi marw yn ddiweddar.
Fred died recently.

Maen nhw'n cynnal cyfarfod amdanoch chi.
They're holding a meeting about you.

Yr ydyw yn gweithio ar hyd o bryd.
We are working right now.

Day One Hundred and Thirty-One: 23 January

Today's words: **pedwar** = four; **syniad** = idea; **maent** = they are

The numeral “four” is **pedwar** when masculine and **pedair** when feminine. After four, the masculine / feminine distinction goes away (except in compounds such as **pedair cath ar bymtheg** + **pedwar ci ar bymtheg**, **nineteen cats** + **nineteen dogs**). “Four” does not normally cause a mutation.

The noun for “idea” is **syniad**, which is masculine. Its plural is **syniadau**.

The formal form of the third person plural, present tense, is **maent**. Remember that this is never used when the noun is expressed, only by itself or with the pronoun, which should be **hwy** and not **nhw**. (This is because **nhw** is formed from the **-t** in **maent** plus the **hw-** in **hwy**: if **-NT + HW-** > **-N NHW** doesn't make sense straightaway, remember that the nasal mutation of **T** is **NH**.) If the various levels of formal and informal are confusing, take comfort in the incorrect Welsh verse including in the highly acclaimed and widely published series *The Dark Is Rising* by the British children's author Susan Cooper:

Y maent yr mynyddoedd yn canu
Ac y mae'r arglwyddes yn dod

The mountains are singing
And the lady is coming

The bit in brown is to show that it's ungrammatical: **Y maent** is correct for **they are**, but when the plural **mountains** is expressed, it ought to change back to **y mae**, and after the vowel it should be **'r mynyddoedd**, not **yr**. (Also, **dod** is less old-fashioned: I'd use **dyfod** if you want to sound poetic) Susan Cooper was apparently very defensive when these errors were pointed out to her, and claimed that her translator was correct despite all the evidence to the contrary. What the translator did is called “hypercorrection”, trying to fix errors that aren't there, like English “Whom doth thou thinketh thou is?”

Examples:

Mae pedwar ohonym yn fy rheulu i.
There are four of us in my family.

Dyna syniad da!
That's a good idea!

Y maent yn gallu ei wneud e.
They can do it.

Day One Hundred and Thirty-Two: 24 January

Today's words: **cartref** = home; **profiad** = experience; **ydys** = it is

Cartref, plural **cartrefi**, is a masculine noun meaning “home”. Welsh tends to lenite adverbs, so if you just say **gartref**, it means “at home.” A similar word is **adref**, “homewards” or just “home” as in “going home.” In colloquial Welsh, the final **-F** is often dropped in all of these.

The noun **profiad** means “experience.” Its plural is **profiadau**, and it is masculine.

Ydys is like **ydwy**, a formal form the present tense of to be. The **-ys** is actually cognate with English *is*. The main difference is that while **ydwy** is clearly third-person, **ydys** is impersonal, although in practice the best English translation is often “it is”. An example comes from the title of a book published in 1735 (which, as a side note, is entered incorrectly in every library catalogue that contains it—I've corrected “niodd” to “modd,” an obvious scanning error, and “cyflawn” to “cyflawn,” an obvious typo; for the rest, I only modernized the spelling.):

Histori yr heretic Pelagius : yn yr hon y rhoddir cyflawn Hanes o'i heresi ef: dangosir, y modd y torrodd yr Heresi honno allan yn ddiweddar ym mysg y protestaniaid: y modd yr ydys yn gwyrddroi yr ysgrythurau tuag at ei Hamddiffyn, hefyd: y modd y cafodd ei dwyn i mewn (yn yr oes ddiwetha aeth hebio) i'r Deyrnas hon

The History of the Heretic Pelagius: in which is given the full History of his heresy: it is shown, the way that this heresy lately broke out among the Protestants: the way the Scriptures are distorted towards its defence, as well: the way it was led in (in the last age gone by) to this Realm.

Further examples:

Mae'r tŷ newydd yn dechrau bod yn gartref.
The new house is becoming a home.

Beth oedd eich profiadau yng Nghanada?
What were your experiences in Canada?

Day One Hundred and Thirty-Three: 25 January

Today's words: gwasanaeth = service; mwyn = mild / kind; ysydd = which is

The noun **gwasanaeth** is masculine, plural **gwasanaethau**. It means “service,” and derives from **gwas**, “young man.” **Gwas** came to mean “servant,” a typical young man’s job. The cognate word in Breton, *gwaz*, took a different direction—it now means “husband”.

With luck, your servant is **mwyn**, which means “mild,” “gentle,” or “kind,” or even “dear” (this last meaning is more often expressed by **annwyl** or **cu**). There is a popular folksong, **Yr Hen Ŵr Mwyn (The Gentle Old Man)** which begins:

Ple buoch chi neithiwr yr hen ŵr mwyn, / Yr hen ŵr mwyna'n fyw?
Where were you last night, you dear old man, the kindest old man alive?

(There is some wiggle room in translating **yr hen ŵr**, which in direct address is **you old man** but otherwise is **the old man**.)

The formal form of **sy** or **sydd** is **ysydd**, sometimes spelled as two words and sometimes (especially in older works) **yssydd**. Again, it works in exactly the same way, it’s just more formal.

Examples:

Pa fath o wasanaeth sydd ar gael yma, beth bynnag?
What kind of service is available here, anyway?

Mae'r gath yn fwyn, ond paid â mynd yn agos i'r ci.
The cat is gentle, but don't go close to the dog.

Y dyn hwnnw ysydd fy nhad.
It's that man who is my father *or*
That man is my father. (This word order places emphasis on the phrase “that man”)

Day One Hundred and Thirty-Four: 26 January

Today's words: bore = morning; colli = lose; yssef = that is

One of the first phrases you learn in Welsh is usually **bore da**, “good morning.” This helps you remember that **bore** is masculine, though it won’t help you with the plural, **boreau**. It also lies at the root of the word for tomorrow, **yfory**. As with most time words, if you need to be adverbial about it, the word mutates: **fore Sadwrn, on Saturday morning**. Sometimes, however, **bore** is just modifying the time word, in a way the English translation doesn’t show, so no mutation: **bore 'fory, tomorrow morning; bore ddoe, yesterday morning**. Extra mutations won’t hurt you, so when in doubt, mutate.

The verb **colli** is “lose”, with the stem **coll-**. Bad spellers are asked to remember that the verb “loose,” meaning “let go,” is **gollwng**, an entirely different word.

You have already had the word **sef** as a conjunction, but it is secretly another form of the verb **bod**, **yss·ef**, **ys** from **ydys** and **ef**, “it”. The translation is “which is,” “that is,” or “namely.”

Examples:

Bore da! Sut wyt ti y bore 'ma?
Good morning! How are you this morning?

Fe gollais i lyfr pwysig.
I lost an important book.

Enw y llyfr yw *Dysgu Cymraeg* yssef sut i ddysgu'r iaith.
Learning Welsh is the name of the book; that is, how to learn the language.

Day One Hundred and Thirty-Five: 27 January

Today's words: diwrnod = day; Saesneg = English; byddaf = I will be

The basic word for day is **dydd**, but Welsh makes a distinction where English does not. “Day” is **dydd** when as in “day” vs “night” (**nos**) or a specific day vs. some other day (both **dydd**). On the other hand, the set of hours of daylight or the set of twenty-four hours are both **diwrnod**. In other words, **dydd** is “day” when it refers to the date or the concept, and **diwrnod** is “day” when referring to the space of time that a day represents, with some variation in idiomatic use. If it helps, French has a similar distinction, with *jour* being the **dydd**-word, and **diwrnod** being *journée*. **Diwrnod** is masculine and its plural is **diwrnodau**, though in the plural **dyddiau** often works better.

Saesneg means “English,” the language. The adjective describing English culture is **Seisnig**. Both derive from the word “Saxon” (technically, from the Old English plural *Seaxan* via Latin *Saxones*, “Saxons”). What is now England was conquered by various Germanic groups including Angles and Saxons, but while the Angles gave their name to the country and its people in English, the Celtic languages still refer to them as Saxons.

The more formal version of **bydda' i** is **byddaf**.

Examples:

Roedd y diwrnod yn llawn o waith.
The day was full of work.

Ar ôl dysgu Cymraeg, mae eisiau arna i ddysgu Saesneg.
After learning Welsh, I want to learn English. (Note: **Wedi dysgu** would be **having learned**.)

Byddaf yn cymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod nesaf.
I will take part in the next meeting.

Day One Hundred and Thirty-Six: 28 January

Today's words: sir = county / shire; pe = if; byddant = they will be

The word for “county” in Welsh is **sir**, pronounced as if beginning with the English SH- sound. It is a feminine noun, which is why the name of the county undergoes soft mutation when following it, and the plural is **siroedd**.

Welsh has two words for “if,” **os** and **pe**. **Pe** is what is sometimes called “contrary-to-fact,” meaning that it is used in situations that aren't presumed to be factual, whether that means fictional or merely unlikely. Before a vowel, the

word can take the form **ped**. There is also a form **pes**, used in literary Welsh, which preserves an old infixed pronoun **-s** which has basically the same meaning as modern **'w** and for the purposes of translation can usually be treated as if it were **pe**.

The formal third person future is **byddant**.

Examples:

Dyn ni'n symud o Sir Fynwy i Sir Gâr.
We are moving from Monmouthshire to Carmarthenshire.

Pe collaswn i'r gêm, allwn i ddim dod yn ôl i'r ysgol.
If I had lost the game, I wouldn't be able to come back to school.

Byddant yn byw o hyd.
They are still living.

Day One Hundred and Thirty-Seven: 29 January

Today's words: rhyfel = war; enghraifft = example; ydoedd = it was

The word for "war" is **rhyfel**, plural **rhyfeloedd**. It is masculine. World War I is still often referred to as **Y Rhyfel Mawr, The Great War**.

The word **enghraifft** means "example." It is feminine, with the plural **enghreifftiau**. The Welsh phrase for "for example" is **er enghraifft**, abbreviated **e.e.**; its equivalent in English (or Latin, for that matter) is "e.g."

Ydoedd is used in the literary language as a past tense of **dydw**. That is, when a word other than the verb is placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis, **ydoedd** is used to connect the subject to the predicate. In a biographical work from 1824, Mrs. Ann Hughes is described thus: **Merch ydoedd i Mr. John Jones, o Benybont (She was a daughter of Mr. John Jones of Penybont)**. The same sentence could have been written **Yr oedd hi'n ferch i Mr. John Jones, o Benybont** with no change in meaning, only the loss of a slight emphasis of **merch**.

Further examples:

Mae rhyfeloedd yn ddrwg iawn.
Wars are very bad.

Ydych chi'n gallu rhoi enghraifft i fi o'r gair "anesboniadwy"?
Could you give me an example of the word "inexplicable"?

Day One Hundred and Thirty-Eight: 30 January

Today's words: canol = mid- / middle; creu = create; roeddynt = they were

The adjective **canol** means "mid-" or "middle". It usually follows the noun, but not always: **the Middle Ages** are **Yr Oesoedd Canol** or **Y Canol Oesoedd**, with the later less frequent but still common. Mid-Wales is **Y Canolbarth**, "the middle part".

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

The verb **creu**, "create," has the stem **cre-**. Genesis 1:1 reads **Yn y dechreuad y creodd Duw y nefoedd a'r ddaear, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**

The more formal form of **roedden nhw** is **roeddynt**, and even more formally **yr oeddynt**.

Examples:

Bydda' i'n dysgu Cymraeg Canol.
I'll be learning Middle Welsh.

Dych chi'n creu eich byd eich hun.
You're creating your own world.

Roeddynt yn darllen llyfrau.
They were reading books.

Day One Hundred and Thirty-Nine: 31 January

Today's words: ystyried = consider; byth = ever; byddit = you will be

The verb **ystyried** uses the stem **ystyri-**. It means “consider,” based on the root **ystyr**, “meaning”.

The adverb **byth** means “ever,” or, in a negative sentence, “never.” It is placed directly after the subject and before the **yn**. It resists mutation in some contexts, as in **Cymru am byth! (Wales forever!)**, while blithely mutating to **fyth** in others. In general, it tends to mutate when modifying adjectives, in which case the translation is “still” or “even” (**gwell fyth, better still / even better**). It resists mutation after prepositions, such as **am^l** (in which case it's technically the homonymous noun, anyway, just functioning adverbially), and when modifying verbs, the mutation is optional. Generally, with this word, when in doubt, keep the **b-**.

Byth is not the only “ever / never” word, and in fact is only appropriate in imperfective sentences, that is, those where the action is not completed. That is the present tense, the future tense, and the **oedd** tenses. As Gareth King helpfully points out in *Modern Welsh: A Comprehensive Grammar*, **byth** is used whenever **yn** is used with the verb, and **erioed** is used when **wedi** is the connector (though other grammars disagree). Another way to look at it is that **byth** is the choice unless the tense is the preterite (definite past) or the pluperfect, which in English are “I have *somethinged*” or “I had *somethinged*”—in those cases use **erioed**.

Homonym Alert! Note that **byth** and its mutations can also have other meanings.

Byddit is the more formal form of **byddet ti**. The alternation between -IT and -ET is common with various forms of the second person singular.

Examples:

Mae rhaid i fi ystyried eich syniad chi.
I must consider your idea.

Fydd e byth yn dod i'n tŷ ni / Fydd e fyth yn dod i'n tŷ ni.
He will never come to our house.

Pryd fyddit yn dechrau?
When will you start?

Day One Hundred and Forty: 1 February

Today's words: plaid = party (group); nes = until; buon = they were

The word **plaid** is perhaps best known from the political party **Plaid Cymru**, “the party of Wales.” It is a feminine noun, plural **pleidiau**, so “Welsh party” would be **Plaid Gymreig** and “Welsh-language party” would be **Plaid Gymraeg**. The word is only “party” in the political sense; other gatherings of people are expressed by a variety of other words. The adjective formed from **plaid** is **pleidiol**, which is in one of the lines from the national anthem and inscribed on the edges of some of the UK's pound coins: **pleidiol wyf i'm gwlad, I am partial to my country**. As

with many things, this line is difficult to translate: **pleidiol** has the sense of “being a partisan for” as well as “fond of.”

The conjunction **nes** is one of many meaning “until”. It is found both alone and together with **hyd** in **hyd nes**; there is no real difference in meaning.

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

A less formal form of both **buom** and **buont** is **buon**, which requires the pronoun for clarification: **buon ni** or **buon nhw**.

Examples:

Ydych chi'n aelod o Plaid Cymru?
Are you a member of Plaid Cymru [the Party of Wales]?

Fyddda' i ddim yn penderfynu nes i mi glywed ohono fe.
I won't decide until I hear from him.

Buon nhw yn cerdded dros Gymru.
They were walking across Wales.

Day One Hundred and Forty-One: 2 February

Today's words: **corff** = **body**; **awdurdod** = **authority**; **byddwyf** = **(that) I be**

Corff, “body,” is from Latin *corpus*, as is English *corpse*. Like the former but unlike the latter, it can be any body, living or dead. The plural is **cyrff** and it is masculine (though the Latin is neuter).

“Authority” is also masculine and both English and Welsh are also ultimately from Latin *auctoritas* (which is feminine, although the root word *auctor* is masculine): **awdurdod**, plural **awdurdodau**. It has the same semantic range as the English word.

A fuller form of **bwyf** is the subjunctive **byddwyf**. A nineteenth-century ballad about how hard life is in New York contains the line **Pan byddwyf mewn galar a thristwch, When I am in sorrow and sadness** (implying “but right now I’m not”).

Further examples:

Dydy hen gyrff yn symud fel cyrff ieuaine!
Old bodies don't move like young bodies!

Beth ydy enw yr awdurdod lleol?
What is the name of the local authority?

Day One Hundred and Forty-Two: 3 February

Today's words: **coed** = **trees / woods**; **llawn** = **full**; **byddo** = **[that] he / she / it be**

Like **plant**, **coed** is a plural noun, meaning “trees” or a collection of trees, a “wood” or “woods” or “forest”, and also one of the words for the substance “wood”. Its singulative, a single tree, is **coeden**. The -EN ending on the singulative shows that **coeden** is feminine, unlike masculine **plentyn** with its -YN. Because a collection of trees might sometimes need pluralizing, there is a rare double plural, **coedydd**, meaning “forests”. There are other words for woods, as well, notably **coedwig**.

The adjective **llawn** means “full”, a function that is also expressed by a nominal suffix **-iad**. “Full of” something is

llawn *something* or **llawn o^L** *something*, but a *something-ful* is a *something-iad*. The word appears in the popular Welsh son **Calon Ian** (“Pure Heart”): **Calon lân yn llawn daioni**, A pure heart full of goodness.

A longer form of **bo** is **byddo**. Another Biblical example (great for old-fashioned and formal Welsh): **Fel y byddo arnynt eisiau bara a dwfr**, from Ezekiel 4:17: **That they may lack bread and water**, more literally **As upon-them there-be want of bread and water**.

Further examples:

Mae coeden fawr yma.
There is a large tree here.

Mae’r lle yn llawn—beth am fynd i rywle arall?
The place is full—what about going somewhere else?

Day One Hundred and Forty-Three: 4 February

Today’s words: **llun** = picture | Monday; **adran** = department / section; **baent** = [that] they be

The word **Llun**, “Monday,” usually occurs as a part of the phrase **dydd Llun** “Monday” (Monday daytime / Monday in general) or **nos Lun** “Monday night.” **Llun** is always capitalized, but the words for “day” and “night” sometimes are and sometimes aren’t, depending on the writer’s style. The word comes from Latin *lunae*, which is feminine, but in Welsh the word is masculine (though as a practical matter it hardly ever comes up, as it is merely modifying **dydd** or **nos**).

A homonym, also a noun, is **llun** meaning “picture”. The plural is **lluniau**, and it is masculine. In Welsh, taking a picture is **tynnu llun**.

The word for “department” or “section” is **adran**, plural **adrannau**, which is feminine.

Another way of saying **petasent** is **pe baent**. The difference is regional, and the two are equivalent.

Examples:

Fydd Ffred yno ddydd Llun?
Will Fred be there on Monday?

Mae adran newyddion yn gweithio’n iawn.
The news department is working well.

Pe baent wedi meddwl amdano, ni fyddent wedi dod.
If they had thought about it, they would not have come.

Day One Hundred and Forty-Four: 5 February

Today’s words: **cerdded** = walk; **bychan** = small; **swn i** = [if] I were

The verb **cerdded** has the stem **cerdd-**, and its basic meaning is “walk.” Like Russian идти, it can also mean “go, travel” if the way you are getting there is on foot.

There is another adjective which is a near synonym of **bach**, “small”: **bychan**. It has a rare feminine form, **bechan**, and a plural, **bychain**. They share the irregular comparatives **lleied**, **llai**, and **lleiaf**. There’s not a great deal of difference between them, though **bychan** is perhaps slightly smaller. Occasionally it’s useful: a **tŷ bychan** is an ordinary small house, but **tŷ bach** is the most common phrase for “washroom”!

Saint David famously use this word. Below is the medieval spelling from lines 10–13 of page 70v of the manuscript

Llanstephan 27, better known as **Llyfr Coch Talgarth (the Red Book of Talgarth)**. Medieval spelling first (and note that I've used 6 is in place of the character 6, which probably won't display correctly on your screen. If you see "the character □," it sort of looks like a lopsided open number six. It's just a medieval variation of the letter w):

Argl6ydi vrodyr ach6ioryd byd6ch lawen ached6ch a6ch ffyd ach crefyd. agne6ch y petheu bychein a glywsa6ch ac a welsa6ch y gennyfi.

In Modern and hopefully more recognizable spelling, this becomes

Arglwyddi frodyr a chwirydd byddwch lawen a chedwch eich ffydd a'ch crefydd, a gwnewch y pethau bychain a glywsoch ac a welsoch gennyf i.

Lords, brothers and sisters, be happy and keep your faith and your religion, and do the little things which you heard and saw me do.

Petaswn i, in daily speech, is often reduced to **swn i**.

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

Examples:

Dw i'n cerdded ar hyd y ffordd.
I am walking along the road.

Mae'r ferch fechan yn ddwy flwydd oed.
The little girl is two years old.

Swn i'n dweud gair, bydda' i'n gwneud camgymeriad.
If I were to say a word, I'd be making a mistake.

Day One Hundred and Forty-Five: 6 February

Today's words: afon = river; wythnos = week; set ti = [if] you were (s.)

Most English speakers know the Welsh word for river, because it is also the name of a rather large river in the southwest of England: the Avon. In Welsh, this is spelled **afon**, and can refer to any river. (There is no longer a specific Welsh word for the river Avon, if there ever was one; there are a number of rivers in Britain whose name is just the old British word "river".) In Celtic mythology, rivers were often understood to be goddesses. Some ancient goddess we know are Matrona (Gaulish: the river Marne), Sequana (Gaulish: the river Seine), and Sabrina (British: the river **Hafren** (Welsh) / **Severn** (English)). It follows that the word for river is feminine. The plural is **afonydd**.

Another very old feature is the word for "week," **wythnos**, a feminine noun which makes perfect sense if you'll bear with me. The first thing to note is that the ancient Celts seems to have started their day at sunset, as in the Jewish calendar, and not at midnight as in the Roman calendar and the system we now use. Halloween customs, which came into popular culture through the Irish, involve a similar system: traditionally, Halloween begins at sunset on the 31st of October for a day called *Samhain* (Welsh **Calan Gaeaf**), which is 1 November. So, **nos = night**. The next feature, which the Romans did use, is called inclusive counting. It is confusing. If today is Thursday, in English we would consider Saturday to be two days later (Friday = 1, Saturday = 2, but Thursday = 0). An ancient Roman or Celt would consider Friday to be two days later: Thursday = 1, Friday = 2, so two. The starting point is arbitrary, as long as everyone agrees. So when talking about a week, an ancient Roman used the word *nundinae*, "9 days", conveniently called A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H. The market was held every H, which to the Romans was every 9th day: $H_1 + A + B + C + D + E + F + G + H_2 = 9$. The Romans switched to the familiar seven-day week in the imperial period, while they were ruling Britain, and the Welsh week follows the Roman system, so a week is from Monday₁ (1) to next Monday₂ (8): **wyth**. So a Welsh week is a **wythnos**, "eight nights". The plural is **wythnosau**.

The colloquial form of the second-person conditional, **petaset ti**, is **set ti**. My example was posted online in

ForumWales in 2005:

Set ti'n gallu stopo bod yn gas wrth bobl, fyddai dy garma yn gwella. Q.E.ffycin.D.
If you could stop being nasty to people, your karma would improve.

(**stopo** is a colloquial substitution for **peidio**; **gwella** is a verb derived from **gwell**; the untranslated phrase is Latin *quod erat demonstrandum* with an English swear word infixed in Welsh spelling, a delightful if profane mixture of three languages.)

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

Examples:

Beth yw enw'r afon hon?
What is the name of this river?

Wela' i chi ymhen wythnos.
I'll see you in a week. (ymhen < ynⁿ + penn, "at the end of")

Day One Hundred and Forty-Six: 7 February

Today's words: **torri** = break; **erioed** = ever; **sai fe / fo | hi** = [if] he / she / it were

"To break" is **torri**, with the stem **torr-**. It is also used for sandwiches, to cut them (British English) or to make them (North American). To interrupt someone is **torri ar draws** someone.

The adverb **erioed** "ever" / "never" was discussed above, under **byth**. An easy way to remember the difference between them is that **erioed** comes from **er ei oed** (for its age) which has the sense of the past. **Byth** sounds like **bydd, will be**, so that it has more of a future sense. "Did you ever?" would use **erioed**, but "will you ever?" will use **byth**. In the negative, **erioed** takes the place of **ddim**.

The abbreviation of **petasai** is **sai fe / sai fo | sai hi**. Although I have included **fo**, the construction is not common in North Wales.

Examples:

Paid â thorri yr hen bethau wrth gerdded drwyddynt!
Don't break the old things as you walk through them!

Welais i erioed hen bethau fel hynny.
I have never seen old things like these.

Sai hi'n torri'r hen bethau, fydden nhw byth yn cael eu gweld!
If she breaks the old things, they won't be seen again!

Day One Hundred and Forty-Seven: 8 February

Today's words: **bellach** = further / any longer / now; **agor** = open; **sen ni | nhw** = [if] we | they were

Bellach comes from the comparative of **pell**, "far," but permanently lenited, because it is always an adverb. It means "further" in the metaphorical sense, and can be translated as "any longer" or, in a negative sentence, "no longer." The most common translation is probably "now," but in the sense of "by now" or "from now on," and never in the sense of "at the moment," which is **nawr** or one of its variants. If "now" indicates a change, use **bellach**; if a statement about the present, use **nawr**.

The verb for "open" is **agor**, whose stem is also **agor-**. The adjective "open" (as in "the shop is open") is **ar agor**.

For both the first and third person plural, the reduced form of the conditional is **sen**, which needs the pronoun to specify further: **sen ni** or **sen nhw**.

Examples:

Dw i'n gallu siarad Cymraeg bellach.
I can speak Welsh now. (=having learned it)

Dw i'n gallu siarad Cymraeg nawr.
I can speak Welsh now. (=if I want to, as opposed to speaking English)

Agorwch y drws!
Open the door!

Sen ni'n dysgu iaith newydd, bydden ni'n gallu cael gwaith.
If we learn a new language, we could find work.

Day One Hundred and Forty-Eight: 9 February

Today's words: **posib** = possible; **newid** = change; **sech chi** = [if] you were (pl.)

The adjective for “possible” has two forms: **posib**, slightly more common, and **posibl**, the fuller and more formal form. Fortunately, this is one of those adjectives where you don't have to decide for the comparative forms, which are **mor bosib(l)**, **mwyr posib(l)** and **mwyafr posib(l)**.

The verb for “change” is **newid**. Be careful not to confuse this with the adjective **newydd**! Its stem is **newidi-**.

The final short form of the **petas-** verbs is **sech chi**, “if you were”.

Examples:

Fyddech chi'n newid? Mae'n bosib.
Will you change? It's possible.

Sech chi'n darllen Cymraeg, bydd yn bosib i chi ddarllen yr hwn!
If you read Welsh, it will be possible for you to read this!

Day One Hundred and Forty-Nine: 10 February

Today's words: **ynglŷn** = regarding / about; **ymddangos** = appear; **ŷm** = we are

Ynglŷn is “about” in the sense of “concerning,” “regarding,” or “with regard to” and is always followed by **â^H**. It is similar to **am^L**, but without the spatial dimension of **am^L** (“about, around”).

The verb **ymddangos** means “appear” or “show oneself.” It has the reflexive prefix **ym^L-**, functionally equivalent to the Latin/French/Spanish *se*, Italian *si*, German *sich*, Russian *-ся*, etc. The rest of the verb is **dangos**, and so has the same N-G (rather than the single letter NG; pronounced **ymddan-gos**) and the same stem: **ymddangos-**.

A literary contraction of **ydym** is **ŷm**, “we are.”

Homonym Alert! Note that **ym** (without the *to bach*) can also have other meanings. The adaptation of the Christmas carol *We Three Kings* into Welsh begins: **Tri ŷm ni o'r dwyrain draw** (lit. **Three are we from the far east**).

Further examples:

**Beth yw dy farn ynglŷn â'r Gymdeithas Gymraeg?
What is your opinion of the Welsh Society?**

**Ymddangosodd llawer o blant o'r tu ôl i'r ysgol.
Many children appeared from behind the school.**

Day One Hundred and Fifty: 11 February

Today's words: coleg = college; sôn = mention; ŷch = you are

The word for “college” is **coleg**, plural **colegau**, and it is masculine.

The verb for “mention” or “talk about” is **sôn**, but it requires a preposition: **sôn am^L** *something*. The stem is **soni-**.

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

The short form of **ydych** is **ŷch**. An example comes from a folk narrative collected in 1969 in Abergwaun (Fishguard): **Pan weles i'r hen asyn, ŷch chi'n gwbod. . .** (**When I saw the old donkey, you know. . .**). [Note: **gwbod** is a dialectal form of **gwybod**.]

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

Further examples:

**Ar ôl yr ysgol, bydda i'n mynd i'r coleg.
After school, I'll go to college.**

**Paid â sôn amdano!
Don't mention it!**

Llongyfarchiadau! / Congratulations!

You have now learned 300 of the most common Welsh words,
69½ % of all the words used in the Bangor study of contemporary Welsh.