

Pronunciation – Diphthongs: Transcript

Context

Hola y Buenos días. Okay, let's talk about diphthongs! What, you ask, are diphthongs? Well, they're a combination of vowels that are pronounced together as one syllable. Still not sure? Well, let's dive into them a bit further and also practice their pronunciation.

Information

1. Like we've already discussed, a diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds that are pronounced as one syllable. Like in the Spanish word for "city" ciudad. The **u** and **i** are pronounced together as form one complete sound. Believe it or not, there are fourteen possible diphthong combinations in Spanish and they occur much more frequently in Spanish than in English. Listen to the Spanish diphthongs:

ia	ai	ua	au	iu	ui
ie	ei	ue	eu		
io	oi	uo			

2. The key to pronouncing these vowel combinations in Spanish is to always keep them together in one syllable. Most of these combinations are pronounced separately in English but never in Spanish. For example, the name Diana is pronounced with three syllables in English: Di-a-na. In Spanish, on the other hand, it is always pronounced with only two syllables: **Dia-na**. When pronouncing the Spanish diphthongs, the "i" will have a "y" sound while the "u" will have a w sound.
3. Now, listen to these words and pay close attention to the pronunciation of the diphthongs with **i** they contain. *Estudiando, traigo, comiendo, peine, oigo, pionero. Repite. Estudiando, traigo, comiendo, peine, oigo, pionero.*

Listen to these words and pay close attention to the pronunciation of the diphthongs with **u** they contain. *Causa, cuanto, deuda, duende, cuota, cuidado. Repite. Causa, cuanto, deuda, duende, cuota, cuidado.*

4. Finally, An exception is when the letter **u** is silent in the combinations **qu** and **gu** in words like **que** and **guerra**. Also, if the letters **i** or **u** carry an accent, they do not form diphthongs and the vowels are pronounced separately, as in *María* or *Raúl*.

Review

So all you need to remember is that diphthongs are combinations of two vowels that are pronounced as one syllable. These combinations are pronounced separately in English but never in Spanish. Okay. *Eso es todo. Adiós.*