

Laka-noo Gunditjmara

(I speak Gunditjmara)

... I feel it with my body, with my blood. Feeling all these trees all this Country ... Earth. Like your father or brother or mother because you born from earth...'

(Bill Neidjie 2007 p. 39)

LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR GUNDITJMARA LANGUAGES SOUND CHART/S



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SOUND CHART (in English letters and sound references....)

This Sound Chart is to help you learn, understand and practice the sounds of our Gunditjmara languages. It is like we are at kindergarten or prep grade again, learning our alphabet, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Of course, ours was not a written language previously, however that is how we are working with our language today, both oral and written text. This brings complexities to our learning.

One of the first things, if we are to become literate in our language, if we want to speak read and write our languages; we need to **learn the sounds**.

The sounds of our language are the sounds of **our Country our Mother Earth**.

They are the voice of the **Land our Ancestors our Elders ourselves**.

Language, story, song and dance resonate with Country and place. Our language is the voice of the Land and this is heard in our songs. Our stories are the body of the Land and the rhythm and heartbeat of the Land is felt in the dance. In these ways our culture and language are embodied in Country.

Set out below is the Sound Chart and three steps I use to learn:

- **Practice each individual sound every day; SAY IT OUT LOUD.**
- **Then practice sounding words, slowly making each sound**
- **then progressively pronounce the word faster until you are saying it at a normal speaking pace and rhythm**

Rhythm – in our language: our rhythm comes from the pattern of speech which is emphasis; that is where the accent is placed in the words. Ours is in the first syllable or first part of the word; and then again in the third part; the fifth.

see in purple where the emphasis is; Example: **koorookee**

....you will get the hang of it, just keep using language everyday; SAY IT OUT LOUD TO YOURSELF AT HOME; GO OUT ON COUNTRY, SAY IT, THE ANCESTORS WILL HEAR YOU; THEY WILL HELP YOU. Becoming familiar with language builds our confidence and being comfortable to use it and in this way our languages becoming living in our daily lives again for us and our families.

Vowels are a speech sound made with your mouth open and your tongue in the middle of your mouth not touching your teeth, lips etc. Vowels are a letter such as ‘**a,e,i,o,u**’ and sometimes **y** in English, that represents a vowel.

Gunditjmara Vowel sounds (Keerray Woorroong Dictionary spelling system*)

a is sounded as in ‘**car**’

ee is sounded as in ‘**feet**’

oo is sounded as in ‘**foot**’

e is sounded as in **bed** or **egg**

o is sounded as in ‘**pot**’

u is sounded as in ‘**but**’ or sometimes ‘**put**’

The spelling of these soundings depend on the spelling system or the accepted pronunciation that is used in community. (More on spelling next sheet.) but as an example now- **Gunditjmara** is commonly spelt and accepted by all of us as with a ‘**G**’ (sound like ‘**g**oat’) at the start and the ‘**u**’ letter represents the sound as in **pu**t or **fo**ot; same sound; different letters; are used in different spellings to represent it. ‘Budj Bim’ is usually pronounced with the **Budj** word pronounced as in ‘**bu**t’ sound (see how tricky it can be reading English for our language sounds 😊)

*The standardized spelling system I have used here is from the Keerray Woorroong Dictionary developed by our father Ivan Couzens (dec). If we all use this system then we will all learn the same and be able to read each others writing. However you can choose from a the Dhauwurd Wurrong draft system I have included system in the document Spelling or you can use the Barry Blake system also in the spelling document. No other dialects have developed a standard spelling system. More on spelling in the Spelling document.

CONSONANTS are one of the speech sounds or letters of the alphabet that is not a vowel. Consonants are pronounced by stopping the air from flowing easily through the mouth especially by closing the lips or touching the teeth with the tongue

b/p as in big or pig sounds can change from different positions in a word ie at beginning or end of word like '**poopoop**' it is pronounced with the sounds '**boopoop**'
don't worry it is ok to make the sound **b** or **p**

g is sounded as in goat
'g' and **'k'** are interchangeable/intersecting/overlapping sounds, again, the sound is somewhere in-between a **'g'** and a **'k'** ie: koorokeeyarr
when I say this I pronounce this as **gk**ooro**k**eeeyarr
'gk' is sounded at the back of your throat

k is sounded as in '**k**oori' or or **k**ick (it to me 😊)

l is sounded as in love or luuurve (however you say it 😊)

m is sounds as in milk or maid

n is sounded as in naughty or nice

nh is sounded with tongue touching back of the teeth as in nhuh

ng is sounded as in **sing** (without the si bit ☺); but not as in **anger**

This one is trickier:

ny or **yn** is sounded as in **onnyon**

'ny' is used at the beginning of words and
'yn' is used at the end of words to prevent
'ny' being pronounced as in **many** when
read by us as English speakers/readers
example: weeny would read as weenee_ so it
is spelt weeyn=fire

r is sounded as in **road** (with a bit of a rev in the **r** like the Scots)

rl is sounded by curling tongue backwards and released into an **'l'**
like Carl or Carlton (c'mon the Tigers ☺)

rt is sounded as in heartt

tongue is curled backwards released into **'t'**
sorry to say, but a close example I can give,
is probs a bit like the Yanks say heart

rn is sounded as in earn

tongue curled backwards and released into **'n'**

rr is sounded as in a rolled or trilled **r**;

like when the lads are dancing and they make
the 'drrr drrr' sound

t is sounded as in tea (would you like a cuppa tea bout now ☺)

th is sounded as in 'the' like a **dth** sound

tongue behind the teeth and ridge at front of mouth

ty/yt is sounded as in 'the dog bit you' or ditch

'**ty**' is used at the start and middle of words and '**yt**' at the end of words to prevent us as English speakers reading it and pronouncing it as in 'pretty' example: tyamateeyt=knowledge but if spelt tyamateety we would say it differently (LOL)

w is sounded as in **w**ater

y is sounded as in **y**ellow

SOUND CHART DHAUWURD WURRONG

(draft of characteristic spellings used by Dhauwurd Wurrong)

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Gunditjmara Vowel sounds (Dhauwurd spelling characteristics; DW doesn't have standardized system yet but these are some of the spellings they commonly use)

a is sounded as in 'car'
e is sounded as in bed or egg
i is sounded as in an extended 'ii' which is why its 'ee' in Keerray woorroong; but also as in indigo
o is sounded as in 'pot'
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The spelling of these soundings depend on the spelling system or the accepted pronunciation that is used in community. (More on spelling next sheet.) but as an example now- **Gunditjmara** is commonly spelt and accepted by all of us as with a 'G' (sound like 'goat') at the start and the 'u' letter represents the sound as in put or foot; same sound; different letters; are used in different spellings to represent it.

'Budj Bim' is usually pronounced with the **Budj** word pronounced as in 'but' sound (see how tricky it can be reading English for our language sounds 😊)

you will remember the Keerray spelling see the comparison below

Budj Bim

Pooyt Peem

These are the same words spelt differently. As long as you understand the spelling system used for each then you can say them, read them and understand each other.

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