

# 1 SOUNDS AND SPELLING

## 1.0 A GENERAL GUIDE TO THE UKRAINIAN ALPHABET AND PRONUNCIATION

We begin with an informal presentation of the sounds of the Ukrainian language, which we will qualify in the subsequent more detailed examination. The outline in this chapter draws on works in the Bibliography.

The transcription which we use is that of the International Phonetic Alphabet. The approximate pronunciation equivalents given are also meant as a rough, preliminary guide. Wherever in the present book we make transliterations for purposes other than phonetic and phonological, we respectively replace [β/v, ε, jε, ʒ, ɪ, ɔ, t̄s, t̄ʃ, ʃ, ʃt̄ʃ] with [w/v, e, je, ž, y, o, c, č, š, šč], and the apostrophe and soft sign with an apostrophe.

### THE UKRAINIAN ALPHABET – Українська абетка LETTERS AND SOUNDS – Літери та звуки

<i>Printed</i>	<i>Hand-written</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Transcription</i>	<i>Approximate pronunciation<sup>1</sup></i>
<b>A a</b>	<i>А а</i>	<b>а</b>	[a]	<i>a</i> as in northern English <i>bad</i> .
<b>Б б</b>	<i>Б б</i>	<b>бе</b>	[b]	<i>b</i> as in English <i>bed</i> .
<b>В в</b>	<i>В в</i>	<b>ве</b>	[β/v]	<i>v</i> as in English <i>vet</i> (but with perhaps more participation of <i>both</i> lips).
<b>Г г</b>	<i>Г г</i>	<b>ге</b>	[h]	close to English <i>h</i> in <i>house</i> , but with more voice and less aspiration (see the list of grammatical terms).
<b>Ґ ґ</b>	<i>Ґ ґ</i>	<b>ге</b>	[g]	<i>g</i> as in English <i>get</i> ; quite a rare sound in native Ukrainian words.
<b>Д д</b>	<i>Д д</i>	<b>де</b>	[d]	<i>d</i> as in English <i>debt</i> .
<b>Е е</b>	<i>Е е</i>	<b>е</b>	[ε]	<i>e</i> as in English <i>get</i> . May become <b>и</b> -like when unstressed (see below).
<b>Є є</b>	<i>Є є</i>	<b>є</b>	[jε]	<i>ye</i> as in English <i>yet</i> .
<b>Ж ж</b>	<i>Ж ж</i>	<b>же</b>	[ʒ]	<i>s</i> roughly as in English <i>pleasure</i> (keep your voice low and push out your lips).

<b>З</b> з	<i>З</i> з	<b>зе</b>	[z]	<i>z</i> as in English <i>zen</i> .
<b>(И) и</b>	<i>и</i> и	<b>и</b>	[i]	somewhat between English <i>i</i> in <i>sit</i> and the very beginning of the <i>a</i> in <i>gaze</i> , usually transliterated as <i>y</i> . May become e-like when unstressed (see above).
<b>И</b> и	<i>И</i> и	<b>и</b>	[i]	<i>ee</i> as in English <i>seen</i> or <i>i</i> as in English <i>machine</i> .
<b>Й</b> й	<i>Й</i> й	<b>йот</b>	[ji]	<i>yea</i> as in English <i>yeast</i> .
<b>К</b> к	<i>К</i> к	<b>ка</b>	[k]	<i>y</i> as in English <i>soya</i> .
				<i>k</i> as in English <i>skittle</i> (with minimal aspiration).
<b>Л</b> л	<i>Л</i> л	<b>ел</b>	[l]	<i>l</i> as in English <i>look</i> .
<b>М</b> м	<i>М</i> м	<b>ем</b>	[m]	<i>m</i> as in English <i>money</i> .
<b>Н</b> н	<i>Н</i> н	<b>ен</b>	[n]	<i>n</i> as in English <i>near</i> .
<b>О</b> о	<i>О</i> о	<b>о</b>	[ɔ]	<i>o</i> as in English <i>got</i> , not as in English <i>more</i> . May become <i>y</i> -like when unstressed (see below).
<b>П</b> п	<i>П</i> п	<b>пе</b>	[p]	<i>p</i> as in English <i>spot</i> (with minimal aspiration).
<b>Р</b> р	<i>Р</i> р	<b>ер</b>	[r]	<i>r</i> as in Spanish <i>caro</i> .
<b>С</b> с	<i>С</i> с	<b>ес</b>	[s]	<i>s</i> as in English <i>sit</i> .
<b>Т</b> т	<i>Т</i> т	<b>те</b>	[t]	<i>t</i> as in English <i>stop</i> (minimal aspiration).
<b>У</b> у	<i>У</i> у	<b>у</b>	[u]	<i>oo</i> as in English <i>hoot</i> .
<b>Ф</b> ф	<i>Ф</i> ф	<b>еф</b>	[f]	<i>f</i> as in English <i>fan</i> .
<b>Х</b> х	<i>Х</i> х	<b>ха</b>	[x]	<i>ch</i> as in Scottish English <i>loch</i> (but pronounced without too much rasping).
<b>Ц</b> ц	<i>Ц</i> ц	<b>це</b>	[t͡s]	<i>ts</i> as in English <i>bits</i> .
<b>Ч</b> ч	<i>Ч</i> ч	<b>че</b>	[t͡ʃ]	<i>ch</i> as in English <i>church</i> (not as in <i>cheer</i> ; push out your lips).
<b>Ш</b> ш	<i>Ш</i> ш	<b>ша</b>	[ʃ]	<i>sh</i> as in English <i>shoot</i> (keep your voice low and push out your lips).
<b>Щ</b> щ	<i>Щ</i> щ	<b>ща</b>	[ʃt͡ʃ]	<i>sh ch</i> as in English <i>fresh chicken</i> (without a pause).
<b>(Ь) ь</b>	<i>ь</i>			the 'soft sign' <b>м'який знак</b> , it follows consonants and indicates that they are to be pronounced palatalized.
<b>Ю</b> ю	<i>Ю</i> ю	<b>ю</b>	[ju]	<i>you</i> as in English <i>you</i> .
<b>Я</b> я	<i>Я</i> я	<b>я</b>	[ja]	<i>ya</i> as in English <i>yahoo</i> .

’	<b>апо́стро́ф</b>	apostrophe (usually to separate a consonant, which then remains hard, from a following [j]).
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It can also be useful to be able to transliterate the Ukrainian alphabet, that is to write out Cyrillic using Latin letters. A standard transliteration remains to be decided upon. Here we give a simplified ‘non-linguistic’ system, in the order of the letters of the alphabet (the final element in parentheses is the Cyrillic equivalent; if there is more than one element in parentheses, the first represents alternative transliterations of the letter concerned).

a (а)	b (б)	v (в)	h (г)
g (ґ)	d (д)	e (е)	ie (je, ye <sup>†</sup> ) (є)
zh (ж) (ж)	z (з)	y (и)	i (і)
ī (ji, yi <sup>†</sup> ) (ї)	i (j, y) (й)	k (к)	l (л)
m (м)	n (н)	o (о)	p (п)
r (р)	s (с)	t (т)	u (у)
f (ф)	kh (x, ch) (х)	ts (ц) (ц)	ch (č) (ч)
sh (ш) (ш)	shch (šč) (щ)	* (ь)	iu (ju, yu <sup>†</sup> ) (ю)
ia (ja, ya <sup>†</sup> ) (я)	’ (’)		

<sup>†</sup> = *ye, yi, yu, ya*, if used, are restricted to the very beginning of a word or following a vowel word-internally.

\* = may be omitted (it most often is, in titles and bibliographies).

Although they are not separate letters of the alphabet, in that they do not have their own sections in dictionaries, the combinations **дж**, **дз**, and **дзь** (including **дзю**, **дзя**) are to be pronounced as one sound each, namely [dʒ], [dʒ], and [dʒʲ]: **Ходжу́** [xɔdʒu] ‘I walk’, **джинси́** [dʒɪnsɪ] ‘jeans’, **дзеркало́** [dʒɛrkalɔ] ‘mirror’, **дзвони́к** [dʒvɔnɪk] ‘little bell’, and **дзьоб** [dʒɔb] ‘beak’.

Sometimes they do represent two sounds, namely at morpheme juncture, and are pronounced as respective sequences of [d] + [ʒ], [z], [zʲ]: **піджива́ти** ‘to be refreshed’, **віджи́лий** ‘obsolete’, **підзе́мний** ‘underground’, **підзира́ти** ‘to observe secretly’.

*Note 1:* There are not many words in Ukrainian with **г** [g], and in some publications (especially older, Soviet-era ones) the letter **г** will still be found to cover both [h] and [g]. In the following words we have [g]:

<b>га́нок</b> balcony	<b>гра́ти</b> grating (compare <b>гра́ти</b> ‘to play’)
<b>га́ва</b> crow	<b>аґрусі́вка</b> gooseberry brandy
<b>гу́дик</b> button	<b>ге́дзь</b> gadfly

*Note 2:* The sound [t̪s] is almost always soft when word- and syllable-final: **ка́рбоване́ць** ‘rouble’, and in suffixes, for example, **-цьк-**, **-ець-**, **-ць-**:

<b>туре́цький</b> Turkish	<b>амери́кáneць</b> American
<b>робі́тніць</b> of the workwomen	

Exceptions are isolated words (usually borrowings), for example,

**пала́ц** palace      **абза́ц** paragraph, indentation

It is always soft before [i], and often before [a], [ɔ], [u]:

<b>праці́вниця</b> workwoman	<b>вікони́ця</b> little window (G.sg. n.)
<b>однокла́сницю́</b> classmate (A.sg. f.)	<b>п'ятна́дцять</b> fifteen
<b>ву́лиця</b> street	<b>цьо́му́</b> this (D.sg. m./n.)

Note:

<b>ца́р</b> tsar	<b>ца́п</b> goat
<b>цу́кор</b> sugar	<b>цура́тися</b> to avoid
<b>цу́ценя́</b> puppy	<b>цо́кати</b> to clink

But [ts̄] is always hard before [ɛ], [ɪ]: **Кравце́ві**, dative of the surname **Краве́ць** 'Taylor'. Compare:

<b>озе́рце́</b> small lake	<b>вікони́це</b> small window
<b>се́рце</b> heart	<b>цитри́на</b> lemon
<b>цитата́</b> quotation	

[ts̄j] can also come about as a result of the combination -ть + ся in verbs, in which case [ts̄j] is long:

**доведе́ться** will have to      **зупи́няться** they will stop

Note 3: The sound [t̄j] is hard in Ukrainian, except before [i] and when lengthened:

**о́чі** eyes      **облі́ччя** face.

Note 4: The letters **я**, **ю**, **є** either represent [j] + [a, u, ɛ] or the vowels alone after a soft consonant. The vowel **ї** always represents [j] + [i]:

<b>я́блуко</b> apple	<b>ю́ний</b> youthful
<b>п'є́са</b> play, drama	<b>Євге́н</b> Eugene
<b>весі́лля</b> wedding (feast)	<b>любо́в</b> love
<b>ллéться</b> flows	<b>ї́дкий</b> biting, tart
<b>істо́рії</b> stories	

They represent two sounds at the very beginning of a word or within a word after a vowel or after an apostrophe or soft sign:

<b>м'я́кий</b> soft	<b>м'я́та</b> mint
<b>ю́рба́</b> crowd	<b>інтерв'ю́</b> interview
<b>мо́ї</b> my/mine (nom. pl.)	<b>пої́хати</b> to set/drive off
<b>поєди́ння</b> accord	<b>об'єди́ння</b> union
<b>сім'я́</b> family	<b>зв'язо́к</b> link, tie

Although the apostrophe is meant to indicate that a preceding consonant is hard, in practice one might occasionally hear a soft articulation; see 1.1.8.

## 1.1 THE PRONUNCIATION AND SOUND SYSTEM OF UKRAINIAN

### 1.1.1 PREAMBLE

The preceding paragraphs begged a few questions on, among other things, stress, the role of the soft sign, the use of the apostrophe, the opposition of voiced and voiceless consonants, the opposition of hard and soft consonants, consonantal and vocalic alternations, the assimilation and simplification of consonantal groups, and intonation. We treat these after a general presentation of the sound system, or phonology, of Ukrainian, starting with a schematic outline of the phonemes.

### 1.1.2 THE VOWEL SYSTEM

	<i>Front</i>	<i>(Central)</i>	<i>Back</i>
High/close	i		u
High-mid	ɪ		
Open-mid	ɛ		ɔ
Low/open		a	

The vowels as given are phonemes, but using the phonetic symbols which correspond most closely to their predominant phonetic incidence, i.e. as chief allophones. The major areas of variation apply to unstressed [ɪ, ɛ]. These two tend to approximate to each other. Moreover, unstressed [ɔ] before stressed [u] (and at times even [i]) may narrow to [u] or [ɔw] or, perhaps better, to [o]. Otherwise pronunciation is essentially as given, with variation consisting in accommodation to contiguous sounds. The phoneme [ɪ] is occasionally also symbolized as [i̯], which is however properly a high central vowel, as in Russian, and hence misleading.

Given that it is meaningful to isolate phonemes, as above, then this needs to be given some measure of justification. There is no problem with /a, ɔ, u, i/, in that they can stand as independent words. The phoneme /ɛ/ can be justified by adducing minimal pairs, for example, *пáра* 'pair' – *пéра* 'feathers', 'pens'. This leaves /ɪ/. Put most simply, this candidate seems weaker since it cannot be an independent word and never occurs at the very beginning of a word. So, given that /i/ occurs word-initially and after soft consonants, while /ɪ/ occurs only after hard consonants, we might seem to have a case of complementary distribution, with [ɪ] an allophone of a phoneme /i/. Again, we might say that certain people pronounce [i̯] after hard consonants (i.e. where *i* alternates with *o*) and palatals (or certain soft consonants), for example, *ни́с* 'nose',

сіній 'blue', безкраїй 'endless'. But more important, given the arguable status of such data, would be (i) the phonetic difference between [i] and [ɪ], given that the latter is in fact much closer phonetically to [ɛ] than to [i] (we see this particularly when [ɛ] and [ɪ] are unstressed), and (ii) the fact that [i] and [ɪ] contrast after consonants which do not participate in the hard/soft distinction, for example, **Кинь!** 'Throw!' – **кінь** 'horse', **Бий!** 'Hit!' – **бий** 'battle'. Ukrainian, therefore, arguably has six vocalic phonemes.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1.3 THE CONSONANT SYSTEM

		<i>Place of articulation</i>					
		<i>Bilabial</i>	<i>Labio-dental</i>	<i>Dental</i>	<i>Palatal</i>	<i>Velar</i>	<i>Glottal</i>
<i>Manner of articulation</i>	Obstruents						
	Plosives	p		t	tʲ	k	
		b		d	dʲ	g	
	Fricatives		f	s	sʲ	ʃ	x
				z	zʲ	ʒ	h
	Affricates			ts	tsʲ	tʃ	
				dʒ	dʒʲ	dʒ	
	Sonorants						
	Fricatives	[w]	β-v			j	
	Stops						
Nasal	m		n	nʲ			
Lateral			l	lʲ			
Vibrant			r	rʲ			

We give [w], a phonetic feature, because it is salient and, for reasons given below, currently recommended. One should note that /β-v/, as an allophone of which [w] occurs, does not contrast with /f/; /β-v/ is a weak sort of /v/, articulated with the lower lip behind the upper teeth (/f/, and English /v/, are articulated with the lower lip in front of the upper teeth). Something close to English /v/ might occur half-soft before /i/, for example, **віз** 'conveyed (masc.)'. Some commentators would contrast this, where the **i** alternates with **e**, i.e. **везла́** 'carried (fem.)', with **віз** 'cart', which arguably has a hard [v] before the [i] which alternates with **o**, for example, **во́за** 'cart (G.sg.)'. However, we have to see this nowadays as a dialectal feature and, whatever the dialectal reality, we have the complication of the **в** in **везла́** being hard anyway. We are left with questions of chronology. Less problematic is the soft **в** in such words as **ві́тер** 'wind', where the **i** arises from \***ǐ** and would have always remained soft, but where there is no alternation.

The horizontal axis in the above diagram represents place of articulation (where constriction or blockage of the oral cavity occurs); the vertical axis

represents mode or manner of articulation (the extent or type of constriction of the oral cavity). The two vertical pairs in certain columns are respectively voiceless and voiced. The horizontal pairs within certain columns represent respectively hard or non-palatalized and soft or palatalized consonants. The small superscript [j] indicates softness or palatalization, that is the articulation, simultaneous with the articulation of the consonant, of a palatal element. The consonants as given are phonemes; each one also has a phonetic reality as a sole or chief allophone as appropriate; several also have subsidiary allophones. Arguably, the representation of the phonemes in this manner is misleading, in that it suggests some phonetic reality; however, our experience is that from a practical point of view such a representation is both generally accessible and also to some extent represents the speakers' psychological reality.

What may surprise is that the labials, labio-dentals, palatals (except for [j]), and velars are not paired for palatalization in the table. Essentially they are seen only to occur in a semi-soft variant, before [i]; however, at least [β] might be felt to contrast with [β], for example, **свѣт** 'kinsman', 'matchmaker' – **свѣтѣ** 'holy'. (Note that ULVN indicates the preferred pronunciation of the initial sequence **св-** here as **с'в'**, i.e. as [sʲβʲ]). One opinion, conveyed by Shevchenko 1993: 55, is to see this whole series as a 'peripheral subsystem'; such *ad hoc*ery is often resorted to, though it is unnecessary. Finally, we know that a good number of Ukrainian consonants occur as long consonants. These may be quite straightforwardly seen as geminates and hence as sequences of two consonants.

#### 1.1.4 STRESS

The acute accent placed over certain vowel letters marks the primary stress; a grave accent marks a secondary stress, restricted to compound words. We will not mark the stress on monosyllabic words. It is not in any case ever marked in normal written Ukrainian, except in grammars, courses, and where a word's meaning depends on the stress, for example,

<b>за́мок</b> castle	<b>замо́к</b> lock
<b>о́бід</b> circle, hoop	<b>обі́д</b> lunch
<b>пла́кати</b> to weep	<b>плака́ти</b> posters (N.A.pl.)
<b>пе́ра</b> feathers, pens (N.A.pl.)	<b>пера́</b> of the feather, pen (G.sg.)
<b>во́ди</b> waters (N.A.pl.)	<b>води́</b> water (G.sg.)
<b>на́сипати</b> to pour in (perf.)	<b>насипа́ти</b> to pour in (imperf.) <sup>3</sup>

In the transcription, which we use sparingly, we denote the stress by a superscript short vertical (secondary stress by a subscript short vertical), inserting it into monosyllables as appropriate. On the whole we place the stress mark immediately before the stressed vowel; another approach places the stress before the consonant or consonants (groups including sonorants may be

split) preceding the stressed vowel, in other words roughly indicating syllable rather than vowel stress.

There is no general rule as to where the stress falls in a Ukrainian word; you must learn it as you go along, and be prepared to find it moving from syllable to syllable in some words (where there seems to be variation or a choice, we give two stresses for a word). It is worth noting that there is a tendency in modern Ukrainian to transfer the stress of three- or more-syllable first-declension nouns (ending in *-a*) to the endings in the plural, for example,

**ма́ківка** – **макі́вкі** (*-ám, -áми, -áх*) poppy head/flower

Others are:

<b>на́ймичка</b> maid	<b>ма́ківочка</b> small poppy head/flower
<b>ла́стівка</b> swallow (dim.)	<b>ла́стівочка</b> swallow (dim.)
<b>я́гідка</b> small berry	<b>товáришка</b> comrade (fem.)

This may even be found in a few two-syllable nouns:

<b>ху́стка</b> neckerchief	<b>ді́вка</b> girl
<b>кни́жка</b> book	<b>рі́чка</b> river

The vowels [a] and [o] are pronounced clearly whether stressed or unstressed. However, before [u] and [i] (particularly but not always stressed) an unstressed [o] may acquire a [u]-like quality:

<b>ону́ком</b> grandson (I.sg.)	<b>дові́датися</b> to find out
<b>полу́мисок</b> platter	<b>нотува́ти</b> to note down
<b>ми побі́гли</b> we ran off	<b>своі́м</b> one's (I.sg. m./n.)

When unstressed, the vowel [ε] may be pronounced somewhat like [i] and the vowel [ɪ] may approximate to [ε]:

<b>ме́не</b> me (A.G.)	<b>ме́ні</b> me (D.L.)
<b>сестра́</b> sister	<b>перемо́га</b> victory
<b>університе́т</b> university	<b>техні́чний</b> technical
<b>меха́нік</b> mechanic	<b>медичі́нна</b> medicine

### 1.1.5 VOICED AND VOICELESS CONSONANTS, ASSIMILATION

In Ukrainian, as in many other languages, there are voiced and voiceless consonants. It is possible to classify them in pairs. Thus:

[p]	–	[b]	=	п	–	б	
[f]	–	[v]	=	ф	–	в	(but see 1.1.3 and below)
[t]	–	[d]	=	т	–	д	
[tʲ]	–	[dʲ]	=	ть	–	дь	
[s]	–	[z]	=	с	–	з	



[sʲ]	–	[zʲ]	=	сь	–	зь
[ʃ]	–	[ʒ]	=	ш	–	ж
[ts]	–	[dz]	=	ц	–	дз
[tsʲ]	–	[dzʲ]	=	ць	–	дзь
[tʃ]	–	[dʒ]	=	ч	–	дж
[ʃtʃ]	–	[ʒdʒ]	=	щ	–	ждж
[k]	–	[g]	=	к	–	г
[x]	–	[h]	=	х	–	г

Those given with a final soft sign stand for palatalized consonants preceding either a soft sign or one of the vowels **я, ю, і, є** in the spelling. Note that at the very end of a word and syllable voiced consonants remain voiced in Ukrainian, as in English but different from such languages as German and Russian.

A few examples:

**шві́дше** [ʃvʲɪdʃɛ] more quickly  
**ї́жте** [jʲiʒtɛ] eat  
**ро́зталʹ** [rʲɔʒtalʲ] thaw (weather)  
**шві́дко** [ʃβʲɪdkɔ] quickly  
**ні́ж** [nʲiʒ] knife  
**рі́бка** [rʲɪbka] little fish  
**ка́зка** [kʲazka] tale – **ка́ска** [kʲaska] helmet  
**за́любки** [zaʲɫubkʲɪ] with pleasure  
**ме́д** [mʲɛd] honey  
**скрі́зь** [skrʲizʲ] everywhere, always

Note that in a sequence of voiceless + voiced consonant, assimilation does take place, and is not reflected in the spelling:

<b>вокzáл</b> [vogzʲal] railway station	<b>мо́лотьба́</b> threshing [mɔɫɔdʲbʲa]
<b>якби́</b> [jakbʲɪ] if	<b>анекдо́т</b> anecdote [anɛgdʲɔt]
<b>хо́ч би</b> [xʲɔdʒbɪ] no matter what	

The consonants [n], [m], [l], [r] are voiced but do not participate in this correlation; in other words, a voiceless consonant in front of any of them remains voiceless, for example:

**при** [prɪ] beside, near (not \*[brɪ])

Before voiceless consonants the only voiced consonants to devoice are [z] (when in a prefix) and [h] in the middle of a word. Thus:

<b>розниса́ти</b> to distribute (writing)	<b>розніпа́ти</b> to strew, scatter (perf.)
<b>безпла́новий</b> without a plan	<b>безпла́тний</b> free (of charge)
<b>во́гко</b> damp	<b>ні́гті</b> nails (on fingers)
<b>кі́гті</b> claws	

but **ле́гкий** ‘easy’ may have both [x] and [h], and **мо́гті** ‘to be able’ and **лягті** ‘to lie down’ have [h].

Before voiced consonants, voiceless consonants are voiced:

<b>про́сьба</b> request	<b>боротьба́</b> struggle
<b>молотьба́</b> threshing	<b>клятьба́</b> curse

Note too that the prefix **з-** may be fixed in the spelling and pronunciation as **с-** [s] before some voiceless consonants, namely **к, п, т, х, ф**:

<b>схóдити</b> , but with its perfective	<b>зійти́</b> to rise, descend
<b>спита́ти</b> to enquire	<b>зби́ти</b> to fasten
<b>схопи́ти</b> to seize	<b>згорі́ти</b> to burn/be burnt
<b>сфотографува́ти</b> to photograph	<b>звести́</b> to lead down, mislead

With the prefixes **роз-, без-, від- (од-), над-, під-, об-, між-, перед-, воз-, понад-, пред-, через-** the voiced character of the final consonant is retained (and conveyed in the spelling):

<b>розко́лоти</b> to split	<b>безперéчний</b> incontestible
<b>вiдпу́стити</b> to let go	<b>пiдбiгти</b> to run up to

### 1.1.5.1 The consonant [β/v]

At the beginning of a word before a consonant, in the middle of a word after a vowel before a consonant, and at the end of a word after a vowel the consonant [β/v] is pronounced as a sound intermediate between [v] and [u] (it is sometimes asserted that it is a straight labio-dental when soft before [i], for example, as in **вiн** [vʲin] 'he'). The lips may be round and protrude, i.e. it is bilabial, or we have the lower lip behind the upper teeth. At the end of a word we should not have [f] for this sound, though one cannot but admit that it is heard. In other words, [w] is prescribed:

<b>сказáв</b> said (masc.)	<b>любóв</b> love
<b>зробíв</b> did (masc.)	<b>впéвнений</b> assured, made certain
<b>пóвний</b> full	

## 1.1.6 HARD AND SOFT CONSONANTS

The hard/soft pairs which we find in Ukrainian are as follows (first those which are accepted as phonemic, second those which are rather restricted, on the whole to the position before **i** [i], where they tend, even then, to be minimally palatalized, and are thus peripherally phonemic):

[t]	–	[tʲ]	=	<b>т</b>	–	<b>ть</b>
[d]	–	[dʲ]	=	<b>д</b>	–	<b>дь</b>
[s]	–	[sʲ]	=	<b>с</b>	–	<b>сь</b>
[z]	–	[zʲ]	=	<b>з</b>	–	<b>зь</b>
[ts]	–	[tsʲ]	=	<b>ц</b>	–	<b>ць</b>
[dʒ]	–	[dʒʲ]	=	<b>дж</b>	–	<b>джь</b>

[n]	–	[nʲ]	=	н	–	нь
[l]	–	[lʲ]	=	л	–	ль
[r]	–	[rʲ]	=	р	–	рь
[b]	–	[bʲi]	=	б	–	бі
[p]	–	[pʲi]	=	п	–	пі
[β]/[w]	–	[vʲi]/[βʲi]	=	в	–	ві
[f]	–	[fʲi]	=	ф	–	фі
[m]	–	[mʲi]	=	м	–	мі
[k]	–	[kʲi]	=	к	–	кі
[h]	–	[hʲi]	=	г	–	гі
[x]	–	[xʲi]	=	х	–	хі
[ʒ]	–	[ʒʲi]	=	ж	–	жі
[ʃ]	–	[ʃʲi]	=	ш	–	ші
[t̪]	–	[t̪ʲi]	=	ч	–	чі
[ʃ̪]	–	[ʃ̪ʲi]	=	щ	–	щі
[d̪ʒ]	–	[d̪ʒʲi]	=	дж	–	джі
[ʒd̪ʒ]	–	[ʒd̪ʒʲi]	=	ждж	–	жджі

For the first group, the spelling of the soft consonant with a following soft sign is purely a convention for the purposes of the table. In the actual spelling, as we shall see in the examples, a soft consonant can be identified by its being followed by one of the following letters: **я, є, і, ю, and ь** either on its own or followed by **о** as **ьо**. The special letters serve simply to indicate that the preceding consonant is soft. If a vowel, an apostrophe, or nothing precedes **я, є, ю**, then they represent [j] + [a, ɛ, u]. As for **і**, it is only ever [i]; should there be a preceding [j], then the letter **ї** (which is always [ji]) is used. We might symbolize this as follows:

<i>Soft-series vowel</i> (after soft consonant or nothing)	[j] + vowel (after vowel, apostrophe, or nothing)	<i>Hard-series vowel</i> (after hard consonant or nothing)
<b>я</b>	<b>я</b>	<b>а</b>
<b>є</b>	<b>є</b>	<b>е</b>
<b>і</b>	<b>ї</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>и</b> only after hard consonant
<b>ьо</b>	<b>їо</b> after consonant or nothing	<b>о</b>
<b>ю</b>	<b>ю</b>	<b>у</b>

It might be noted that consonants were originally soft or half-soft before **е** and **и**.

We can on the whole divide the consonants up as follows as regards hardness and softness:

HARD-ONLY: [b, p, β/v, m, f], [ʒ, tʃ, ʃ, dʒ], [g, k, x], [h]

Final labial consonants and final **p** are always hard in Ukrainian:

<b>голуб</b> pigeon, dove	<b>кров</b> blood
<b>верф</b> wharf	<b>степ</b> steppe
<b>сім</b> seven	<b>звір</b> (wild) animal

These and the rest of this group may soften slightly before [i] and before **я, ю** in foreign words and a few Ukrainian words:

<b>білий</b> white	<b>місто</b> town, city
<b>бюро</b> office	<b>пюре</b> purée
<b>збіжжя</b> grain	<b>клоччя</b> tow, oakum
<b>Запоріжжя</b> Zaporizhia	

SOFT-ONLY: [j]

HARD AND SOFT: [d, dʲ, t, tʲ, z, zʲ, s, sʲ, ts̄, ts̄ʲ, l, lʲ, n, nʲ, r, rʲ, dz̄, dz̄ʲ]. They are soft:

(i) Before the soft sign:

<b>жовтень</b> October	<b>сьомий</b> seventh
------------------------	-----------------------

(ii) Before **i**:

<b>сіль</b> salt	<b>дім</b> house, home
<b>ніч</b> night	

(iii) Before the vowel letters **я, ю, є**:

<b>лякати</b> to frighten	<b>любити</b> to love, like
<b>сіне</b> blue (N./A.sg.N.)	<b>дзюркотати</b> to murmur, gurgle

(iv) Immediately before soft consonants:

<b>майбутнє</b> the future	<b>сьогодні</b> today
<b>радянський</b> Soviet	

Here are a few more examples:

<b>ти</b> [t'i] you	<b>ті</b> [tʲ'i] those
<b>дякую</b> [dʲ'akuju] thank you	
<b>сад</b> [s'ad] garden	<b>сядь</b> [sʲ'adj] sit down
<b>палац</b> [pal'at̄s̄]	<b>хлопець</b> [xl'ɔpɛtsʲ] boy
<b>дзвін</b> [dz̄βʲ'in] bell (nom. sg.)	<b>дзвіна</b> [dz̄β'ɔna] bell (gen. sg.)
<b>раса</b> [r'asa] race, breed	<b>ряса</b> [rʲ'asa] cassock

For the second group in the list at the beginning of this section we have given the letters followed by **і** because this is the commonest environment we come across. Some examples:

<b>білий</b> [b'i'ilij] white	<b>вів</b> [v'i'iβ] led
<b>кінь</b> [k'i'inj] horse	<b>шість</b> [ʃ'i'si'tʃ] six
<b>ножі</b> [nɔz'i] knives	<b>уночі</b> [unɔtʃ'i] at night

What has been said above does not refer to sequences of two consonants, of which the second is soft. In such cases the general rule is that the first is pronounced soft too unless it is a labial. So:

<b>у місті</b> [um'i'si'tʃi] in the town	<b>одній</b> [ɔdɲ'i'ij] one (D.L.sg. f.)
<b>сніг</b> [sɲ'i'ih] snow	

and after the labials, namely **б, п, в, ф, м**:

<b>я люблю</b> [j'a l'ubl'ju] I love.
<b>коноплі</b> [kɔn'ɔp'li] hemp (G.sg. f.)
<b>вони графлять.</b> [vɔn'i hrɔf'l'at'] They draw lines.
<b>вони кормлять.</b> [vɔn'i k'orm'l'at'] They feed.

Remember that in Ukrainian consonants are hard before **е**:

<b>театр</b> theatre	<b>лєбідь</b> swan
<b>Нева́</b> the Neva (river)	<b>серенада</b> serenade
<b>день</b> day	<b>дзеркало</b> mirror

Note the suffixes **-ськ-, -зьк-, -цьк-**:

<b>російський</b> Russian	<b>різький</b> of Riga
<b>козацький</b> cossack	

Do not confuse these with cases where we are not dealing with the same suffixes:

<b>плáський</b> flat	<b>різкий</b> harsh, sharp
<b>в'язкий</b> adhesive	

The soft sign is never written after **ж, ч, ш, щ**, and these consonants are hard, except when lengthened before **я, ю, є**, and, slightly softened, before **і**.

### 1.1.7 THE SOFT SIGN

The soft sign palatalizes an immediately preceding consonant. One might see it extremely approximately as symbolizing the palatal *par excellence*, namely a *y*-sound, which is to be incorporated as well as possible into the preceding consonant. This *y*-sound appears also in our transcription of **є, і, ю, я**; of these only the first one and last two occur regularly immediately after consonants, and their first component, the *y*, has the same effect as the soft

sign (in the 1870s one hopeful reformer of the Ukrainian spelling system, M. Drahomanov, even suggested replacing them after a consonant with **ь + е, і, у, а**). It is worth stressing that the soft sign itself is not a sound, in spite of the crude approximation given above; it tells us something about the preceding sound. In other words, the noun **українець** ‘Ukrainian (man)’ is a consonant-final noun, and the final consonant is soft.

It is written after soft **д, т, з, с, ц, н, л** at the end of a word or word-internally before a hard consonant:

<b>в’язень</b> prisoner	<b>вiдповiдь</b> answer, reply
<b>мить</b> sudden moment	<b>перепiсуватись</b> to correspond (with)
<b>олiвeць</b> pencil	<b>пáморозь</b> hoarfrost
<b>молотьбá</b> threshing	<b>сiльний</b> strong
<b>вчiтель</b> teacher	

Note that it frequently occurs in word-formational suffixes: **-ськ-, -цьк-, -зьк-, -еньк-, -оньк-, -есеньк-, -iсiньк-, -юсiньк-**, for example:

<b>пáнський</b> lord’s, splendid	<b>козáцький</b> cossack
<b>вузький</b> narrow	<b>гладeнький</b> very smooth/sleek
<b>голiвонька</b> pretty little head	<b>малiсiнький</b> extremely small
<b>малюсiнький</b> very small	

It is not written:

- (i) After consonants which occur hard only: **б, п, в, м, ф, ж, ч, ш, щ**, and word-final **р**. But: **Гóрький** ‘Gorky’ (the author), as a Russian name, retains the soft sign as it is in Russian; compare the related Ukrainian adjective **гiркiй** ‘bitter’.
- (ii) Between soft consonants (except for **л**), including lengthened consonants:  
**волóсся** hair
- (iii) After **н** before **ж, ч, ш, щ, -ськ-, -ств-**:

<b>кiнчик</b> end (dim.)	<b>мeнший</b> smaller
<b>iнший</b> other	<b>кiнський</b> horse (adj.)
<b>пáнство</b> distinction, nobility	

### 1.1.8 THE APOSTROPHE

The apostrophe is inserted to separate a hard consonant from a following **с, ї, ю, я**. In other words, it serves to convey the sound [j] after hard consonants and before the vowels of letters **я, ю, є, ї**:

<b>п’ятниця</b> Friday	<b>Лук’янов</b> Lukjanov (surname)
<b>м’якота</b> soft flesh	

If the consonant before the apostrophe is a prefix or a part of a prefix, then it may be softened by the [j], for example:

**під'їхати** to drive up to (not softened)  
**з'їзд** congress      **з'явітися** to appear (both softened)

Thus it is used after the labials (**п'ять** 'five'), after **р** at the end of a syllable (**бур'ян** 'weed(s)', **кур'єр** 'courier'), after a prefix or the first component of a compound word (**з'їхати** 'to come down', **дит'ясла** 'crèche'), and in foreign words (**комп'ютер** 'computer', **ад'ютант** 'adjutant').

If there is no [j], there is no apostrophe: **свято** 'holiday', 'feast', **цвях** 'nail', **морквяний** 'of a carrot (**морква**)' – we note that the consonant here is a labial, and the consonant before it belongs to the root. We find the same in foreign words (especially from French):

**бюро́** office                      **пюпі́тр** reading desk  
**фюзеля́ж** fuselage

Before [ɔ] the jot ([j]) is conveyed by **й** or **ь** (or even both), so here there is no need for the apostrophe:

**Воробі́юв** (family name)      **серйо́зний** serious  
**бульйо́н** bouillon

Here are a few more examples:

<b>ти б'єш</b> [t'ɪ bj'ɛʃ] You beat	<b>об'єкт</b> object
<b>ві́д'їзд</b> [v'ɪd'j'ɪzd] departure	<b>п'ять</b> [pjatʲ] five
<b>п'ю.</b> [pj'u] I drink.	<b>здоро́в'я</b> [zdr'ovja] health
<b>ф'юкати</b> [f'jukati] to whistle, hiss	<b>м'які́й</b> [mjak'iʲ] soft
<b>з ма́тір'ю</b> [z'm'a't'irju] with mother	

### 1.1.9 CONSONANT ALTERNATIONS<sup>4</sup>

One of the initial difficulties in learning Ukrainian is the need to build up vocabulary; this task can be aggravated if one is not aware of certain quite regular changes which occur in many common words and are reflected in the spelling. Here we mention three important consonantal alternations.

(i) [k] – [tʃ], [h] – [ʒ], [x] – [ʃ] = **к – ч, г – ж, х – ш**

<b>рік</b> – рі́чний – рі́чниця	year – annual – anniversary
<b>бік</b> – бі́чний – бо́ча́стий	side – lateral – with large sides
<b>слуга́</b> – служі́ти – служба́	servant – to serve – service
<b>кни́га</b> – кни́жка – кни́жник	book – book – bibliophile
<b>друг</b> – дру́же – дру́жина	friend – friend (voc.) – wife
<b>страх</b> – стра́шити – стра́шний	dread, very – to frighten – terrible
<b>дух</b> – душі́ти – ду́шно	soul, spirit – to strangle – hot, close

- (ii) [k] – [tʃ], [h] – [zʃ], [x] – [sʃ] = к – ц, г – з, х – с

The second of each pair appears before [i] i, something which is an important feature of the declension of nouns:

кні́жка – кні́жці	book (nom. – dat./loc.sg.)
нога́ – но́зі	foot/leg (nom. – dat./loc.sg.)
свекру́ха – свекру́ці	mother-in-law (nom. – dat./loc.sg.)
ро́к – у ро́ці	year (nom.sg.) – in . . . year (loc.sg.)
уніве́рмаг – в уніве́рмазі	store (nom.sg.) – in the store (loc.sg.)
ву́хо – у ву́ці	ear (nom.sg.) – in the ear (loc.sg.)

Note that the alternation ц – ч can occur as well:

хлопе́ць – хло́пче! – хлопчи́на	boy – boy! (voc.) – boy
форте́ця – форте́чний	fortress – of a fortress

- (iii) A much broader range of consonantal alternations is as follows:

[t] – [tʃ]	=	т – ч
[d] – [dʒ]	=	д – дж
[s] – [ʃ]	=	с – ш
[z] – [ʒ]	=	з – ж
[k] – [tʃ]	=	к – ч
[h] – [zʃ]	=	г – ж
[kh] – [ʃ]	=	х – ш
[p] – [pʲ]	=	п – пль
[b] – [bʲ]	=	б – бль
[m] – [mʲ]	=	м – мль
[f] – [fʲ]	=	ф – фль
[n] – [nʲ]	=	н – нь
[l] – [lʲ]	=	л – ль
[r] – [rʲ]	=	р – рь
[st] – [ʃtʃ]	=	ст – щ
[zd] – [ʒdʒ]	=	зд – ждж

These alternations are found in a wide number of forms. Their regularity helps us relate *земля́* ‘earth’ to *земни́й* ‘earthly’, without the soft л, and *кра́пати* ‘to drip’, to *кра́пля* ‘drop’. These alternations are extremely common in the verb, and they are a function of the stem type to which each particular verb belongs. The following are a number of first-conjugation infinitives (see 6.3.1.1) in which the basic consonant is present (on the left of each pair), while throughout the present tense we have the transformed consonant (on the right). Thus:

хоті́ти	to want	я хо́чу, ми хо́чемо, вони́ хо́чуть	I/we/they . . .
писа́ти	to write	я пи́шу, ми пи́шемо, вони́ пи́шуть	I/we/they . . .
пла́кати	to weep	я пла́чу, ми пла́чемо, вони́ пла́чуть	I/we/they . . .



<b>могти́</b>	to be able	<b>я мо́жу, ми мо́жемо, вони́ мо́жуть</b>	I/we/they . . .
<b>боротися́</b>	to wrestle	<b>я борю́ся, ми бо́ремося, вони́ борю́ться</b>	I/we/they . . .

Note, however, that in the last example, which can stand for all the few such verbs where the last consonant is **н, л, р**, that consonant is soft only in the first-person singular and the third-person plural. In the first conjugation there are also verbs where no alternation occurs, for example:

<b>бра́ти</b>	to take	<b>я беру́, ми беремо́, вони́ беру́ть</b>	I/we/they . . .
<b>жи́ти</b>	to live	<b>я живу́, ми живемо́, вони́ живу́ть</b>	I/we/they . . .
<b>нести́</b>	to carry	<b>я несу́, ми несемо́, вони́ несу́ть</b>	I/we/they . . .

When in a second-conjugation verb the consonant before the infinitive ending **-ити** falls into this group, the change occurs only in the first-person singular, except where the consonant is a lip (labial) consonant (see, **6.3.2.1**, for example). Thus:

<b>плати́ти</b>	to pay	<b>я плачу́, ми пла́тимо, вони́ пла́тять</b>	I/we/they . . .
<b>ходи́ти</b>	to go	<b>я ходжу́, ми ходи́мо, вони́ ходять</b>	I/we/they . . .
<b>говори́ти</b>	to speak	<b>я говорю́, ми гово́римо, вони́ гово́рять</b>	I/we/they . . .
<b>пусти́ти</b>	to let go	<b>я пу́щу, ми пу́стимо, вони́ пу́стять</b>	I/we/they . . .

Note that these changes occur in passive participles too:

<b>збере́жений (зберегті́)</b>	saved, preserved
<b>зобра́жений (зобразі́ти)</b>	depicted
<b>пе́чений (пекті́)</b>	baked
<b>оголо́шений (оголосі́ти)</b>	announced
<b>підтве́рджений (підтве́рдити)</b>	confirmed
<b>скоро́чений (скороти́ти)</b>	shortened, abridged
<b>об'ї́джений (об'їзди́ти)</b>	driven around
<b>випу́щений (випусти́ти)</b>	released

Observe that second-conjugation verbs whose stem-final consonant is a labial have an inserted **л** in both the first-person singular and the third-person plural, and in the passive participle:

<b>гублю́</b>	–	<b>губля́ть (губи́ти)</b>	to lose
<b>топлю́</b>	–	<b>топля́ть (топи́ти)</b>	to melt, sink
<b>ловлю́</b>	–	<b>ловля́ть (лови́ти)</b>	to catch
<b>соромлю́</b>	–	<b>соромля́ть (сороми́ти)</b>	to put to shame
<b>роблю́</b>	–	<b>робля́ть</b>	to do
<b>ломлю́</b>	–	<b>ломля́ть</b>	to break

And participles:

<b>загу́блений</b>	<b>уто́плений</b>
<b>злов́лений</b>	<b>присоро́млений</b>

1.1.10 THE ALTERNATIONS [ɔ] – [i], [ɛ] – [i]

One of the characteristic features of Ukrainian is that there are many words where the vowel *i* is in a relationship with either the vowel *o* or the vowel *e*. In the simplest terms, we have *i* before a single consonant which belongs to the same syllable. Typically this will occur in grammatical forms (mostly of nouns, but also some past-tense verb forms) in which a zero ending alternates with a vocalic ending, triggering the *o-i* or *e-i* alternation; thus:

**рік** year but *G.sg.* **ро́ку**

which have the syllable division (using ‘/’ to separate syllables):

**рік/** but **ро́/ку/**

and:

<b>він ніс</b> he carried	but	<b>вона неслá</b> she carried
<b>ніс</b> nose ( <i>N.sg.</i> )	but	<b>но́са</b> ( <i>G.sg.</i> )
<b>шість</b> six ( <i>N.</i> )	but	<b>ше́стї</b> ( <i>G.</i> )
<b>кінь</b> horse ( <i>N.sg.</i> )	but	<b>ко́ня</b> ( <i>G.sg.</i> )
<b>Київ</b> Kyiv ( <i>N.sg.</i> )	but	<b>Ки́сва</b> ( <i>G.sg.</i> )

and, the other way round:

<b>сіл</b> villages ( <i>G.pl.</i> )	but	<b>се́ло</b> ( <i>N.sg.</i> )
<b>гір</b> mountains ( <i>G.pl.</i> )	but	<b>го́ра</b> ( <i>N.sg.</i> )

And we may find that the word regularizes itself so as to have the same vowel throughout. Thus:

<b>дорі́жка</b> path ( <i>N.sg.</i> )	but	<b>дорі́жок</b> ( <i>G.pl.</i> )
<b>кі́нця</b> end ( <i>G.sg.</i> )	but	<b>кі́нець</b> ( <i>N.sg.</i> ) <sup>5</sup>

*i* does not always alternate with *o/e* (the last two are examples of this; others include **ліс** ‘forest’, **лі́то** ‘summer’, **сі́ла** ‘she sat down’, **бі́лий** ‘white’<sup>6</sup>) and, as in the penultimate set of examples, *o/e* do not always alternate with *i*. These exceptions include:

(i) **-оро-**, **-ере-**, **-оло-**, **-еле-** between consonants:

<b>морóз</b> frost	<b>мо́лот</b> mallet
<b>бе́рег</b> bank, shore	<b>ше́лест</b> rustling, lispings
<b>го́лод</b> famine	

(ii) **-ор-**, **-ер-**, **-ов-** between consonants:

<b>го́рб</b> hump
<b>во́вк</b> wolf

(iii) Where there is a vowel-zero alternation (zero alternation affects *o*, *e*), typically in the declension of many nouns when a vocalic ending appears:

- сон – сну sleep                      **чёрвень – чёрвня** June  
 земля – земéль land                **пісня – пісéнь** song  
 день – дня day                        **кутóк – куткі** corner
- (iv) In some words of a 'bookish' or formal nature:  
**наро́д – наро́ду** people      **зако́н – зако́ну** law
- (v) In the prefix **воз-** and the suffix **-тель**:  
**возвелі́чити** to extol      **вчі́тель** teacher
- (vi) In the genitive plural of deverbals in **-ення**:  
**зна́чення – зна́чень** meaning
- (vii) In the second-person singular non-past and the imperative:  
**іде́ш**. You go.                      **Прихо́дь** Come!  
**Дозво́льте** Allow!                but **Сті́йте** Stop!
- (viii) In many suffixes:  
**Шевче́нко** Shevchenko      **голу́бонько** pretty little dove  
**мале́нький** small
- (ix) In foreign words:  
**педаго́г** pedagogue      **о́рден** order, decoration  
 Unless they are older and have been absorbed, for example:  
**шко́ла – шкі́л** school      **ко́лір – кольо́рів** colour
- (x) In non-Ukrainian surnames and other proper names in **-ов, -ев, -єв**, and in words formed from them:  
**Суво́ров** (surname)                **Лук'я́нов** (surname of Russian origin)  
**росто́вський** Rostov (adj.)

There are also instances of analogy:

**осно́ва – осно́в** basis      **іме́на – іме́н** (first) names

### 1.1.11 CONSONANT GROUPS: ASSIMILATION

Perhaps the most notable assimilation (= becoming similar) of consonant groups in Ukrainian relates to the sequence of the hushing consonants **ж, ч, ш** and the soft hissing consonants **зь, ць, сь**. Here the hushing consonant assimilates to the hissing consonant, giving a long hissing consonant (note that a voiced hushing consonant remains voiced). Thus:

**кні́жка** [kn'ɪʒka] book (N.sg.)      – **кні́жці** [kn'ɪʒ't͡ɕ'i] book (D.L.sg.)  
**дочка́** [dɔtʃk'a] daughter (N.sg.)      – **дочці́** [dɔtʃ't͡ɕ'i] daughter (D.L.sg.)

**Ти читаєш.** [tɪ iʃit'ajɛʃ] You read – **Ти смієшся.** [tɪ ɕimʲij'ɛsʲɔʲa] You laugh.  
**дощка** [d'oʃka] board (N.sg.) – **дощці** [d'oʃtsʲi] board (D.L.sg.)

In spite of this, one does often hear a spelling pronunciation in the above groups.

Hissing consonants before hushing consonants within a word assimilate:

**безжа́лісний** [z:] pitiless      **без ша́пки** [ʃ:] without a cap  
**підрі́ши** [ʃ:] having grown up

Hissing consonants in one word which precede hushing consonants beginning the next word without a pause assimilate to the hushing consonants, optionally even in voice:

**без ша́пки** [bɛʃ ʃ'apki] without a cap (not the expected [bɛz ʃ'apki])

It should be admitted that these assimilations do not always take place; this may be due to the influence of Russian or of the spelling.

Something which does on the whole always happen is that dental plosives assimilate to following hissing/hushing consonants (this is not noted in the spelling):

**кімна́тці** little room (D.L.sg.)      **неві́стці** daughter-in-law (D.L.sg.)  
**крава́тці** necktie (D.L.sg.)      **борі́дці** short beard (D.L.sg.)

All the above have [ʃɕʲtsʲ]. Similarly:

**лю́дський** human = [dʒʲsʲ], **солда́тський** soldier (adj.) = [ʃsʲ]

Assimilation in the formation of possessives derived from personal names is not reflected in the spelling either:

**Пара́ска – Пара́счин**      **Оні́ська – Оні́счин**

Sometimes the spelling does change, reflecting a mutation of the consonants brought on (historically) by the nature of a following suffix:

-цьк-	+ -ин(а) > -чч-	<b>коза́цький – коза́ччина</b>
-с(ь)к-	+ -ин(а) > -щ-	<b>віск – во́щина</b>
		<b>полта́вський – Полта́вщина</b>
-шк-	+ -ан-/-ян- > -щ-	<b>до́шка – доща́ний</b>
-ск-, -ст-	in verbs > -щ-	<b>ве́реск – верещáти</b>
		<b>проста́ти – проща́ти</b>
-зк-	in verbs > -жч-	<b>брызк – бряжча́ти</b>
-ськ-	in names > -щ-	<b>Васько́ – Ва́щенко/Ва́щук</b>
-зьк-	in names > -жч-	<b>Кузько́ – Ку́щенко</b>
г, ж, з	+ -ш(ий) > -жч-	<b>дорогі́й – доро́жчий</b>
		<b>ду́жий – ду́жчий</b>
с	+ -ш(ий) > -щ-	<b>висо́кий – ви́щий</b>

Meanings: 'cossack's' – 'cossack state', 'wax' – 'honeycomb', 'of Poltava' – 'the Poltava region', 'board' – 'of a board', 'shriek' – 'to shriek', 'to forgive' (perf. – imperf.), 'jingle' – 'to jingle', '(personal) names', '(family) names', 'dear', 'expensive' – 'dearer', 'tough', 'strong' – 'tougher', 'high', 'tall' – 'higher'

Summary of changes:

[s] + [ʃ] → [ʃ:]:	<b>проні́сши</b> having carried along
[z] + [ʃ] → [ʒ]:	<b>підві́зши</b> having given a lift
[z] + [ʒ] → [ʒ:]:	<b>безжу́рний</b> carefree
[z] + [tʃ] → [ʒtʃ]:	<b>безче́сний</b> dishonest
[z] + [dʒ] → [ʒdʒ]:	<b>з джа́зу</b> (lit.) from jazz
[ʃ] + [s] → [ʃʲ:]:	<b>смі́єшся</b> you laugh
[ʃ] + [ts] → [ʃʲtsʲ]:	<b>у пля́щці</b> in a bottle
[ʒ] + [ts] → [ʒʲtsʲ]:	<b>у ло́жці</b> in a spoon
[tʃ] + [ts] → [tʃʲ:]:	<b>у нетерпля́чці</b> in impatience
[d] + [ʒ]/[tʃ]/[ʃ] → [dʒ]:	<b>відшкодува́ти</b> to make good damage, <b>відчепі́ти</b> to unhook, <b>віджи́влюва́ти</b> to revive
[d] + [z]/[ts]/[s] → [dʒ]:	<b>підзе́мний</b> underground, <b>підско́чити</b> to jump up, <b>відци́діти</b> to strain off
[t] + [s] → [ts]:	<b>бага́тство</b> riches
[t] + [ʃ] → [tʃ]:	<b>коро́тшати</b> to become shortened
[t] + [tʃ] → [tʃʲ:]:	<b>вітчи́зна</b> fatherland

### 1.1.12 CONSONANT GROUPS: SIMPLIFICATION

In a group of three consonants the middle one will generally fall out, even in the spelling. There will also be simplification in larger groups. Thus:

<b>ві́сть</b> – <b>ві́сник</b>	news – messenger
<b>ко́ристь</b> – <b>ко́рисний</b>	profit/advantage – useful
<b>че́сть</b> – <b>че́сний</b>	honour – honest
<b>пе́рстень</b> – <b>пе́рсня</b>	ring (N. – G.)
<b>при́страсть</b> – <b>при́страсний</b>	passion – passionate
<b>о́бласть</b> – <b>обласний</b>	province/district (noun – adj.)
<b>ра́дість</b> – <b>ра́дісний</b>	joy – joyful
<b>ща́стя</b> – <b>щаслі́вий</b>	luck/happiness – lucky/happy
<b>ко́ристь</b> – <b>ко́рисли́вий</b>	profit/advantage – covetous
<b>сте́літи</b> – <b>сла́ти</b>	to make a bed, spread
<b>ти́ждень</b> – <b>ти́жня</b> – <b>ти́жне́вий</b>	week (N.sg. – G.sg. – adj.)
<b>ви́їзд</b> – <b>ви́їзний</b>	departure – departing/on the point of departure

<b>проїзд – проїзний</b>	passage – ticket (= adjectives with the root -їзд-)
<b>брязк – брязнути</b>	loud metallic sound – to fall noisily/metallically
<b>бліск – блиснути</b>	splendour/light – flash
<b>брїзка – брїзнути</b>	splash – to splash
<b>плюск – плюснути</b>	splashing – to splash
<b>писк – піснути</b>	squealing – to squeal
<b>тиск – тіснути</b>	press/throng – to press/squeeze
<b>тріск – трїснути</b>	cracking sound – to crack/split
<b>ма́сло – масний</b>	butter – fat/greasy
<b>ми́сль – умісний</b>	thought/idea – intentional
<b>ремесло́ – ремісник</b>	trade – tradesman

And note:

<b>се́рце – сердець</b>	heart (N.sg. – G.pl.)
<b>ченця́ – чернець</b>	monk (G.sg. – N.sg.)

In the following words the letter **т** is written but not pronounced:

<b>ші́стна́дцять</b> sixteen	<b>ші́стдеся́т</b> sixty
<b>ші́стсо́т</b> six hundred	

This also happens in foreign words expanded by **-ськ-**, **-ств-** (the **т** is kept in the spelling, but not pronounced):

<b>студе́нтський</b> student (adj.)
<b>студе́нтство</b> students
<b>аге́нтство</b> agency

There are also foreign words where the **т** is pronounced, though rather feebly, for example,

<b>аванпо́стний</b> outpost (adj.)	<b>компо́стний</b> compost (adj.)
<b>контра́стний</b> contrast(ing) (adj.)	<b>форпо́стний</b> advance post (adj.)

In such words there may be variation in spelling.

And there are a few native words where **т**, **к** are both written and pronounced, for example,

<b>зап'я́стний</b> wrist (adj.)	<b>кістля́вий</b> bony
<b>пестлі́вий</b> soft, delicate	<b>хвасти́лий</b> boastful
<b>то́скно</b> sadly	<b>скна́ра</b> miser
<b>ви́пускний</b> issue (adj.) (and other adjectives in <b>-пуск-</b> )	
<b>брэ́зкнути</b> to become flabby	

Thus we note that groups of three or more consonants are usually simplified by the deletion of one of them, usually internal to the group; the deletion is often reflected in the spelling, but it may lead to a change not reflected in the spelling:

<b>ждн – жн:</b>	<b>тиждень – тїжня</b> week
<b>здн – зн:</b>	<b>проїзд – проїзний</b> passage – ticket
<b>стн – сн:</b>	<b>пристрасть – пристрасний</b> passion – passionate
<b>стл – сл:</b>	<b>стелити – слати</b> to make up a bed
<b>скн – сн:</b>	<b>тиск – тїснути</b> pressure – to squeeze
<b>зкн – зн:</b>	<b>брїзка – брїзнути</b> splash – to splash
<b>нт + ськ → [nʲsʲk]:</b>	<b>студентський</b> of students
<b>ст + ськ → [sʲk]:</b>	<b>туристський</b> of tourists
<b>нт + ст → [nst]:</b>	<b>агєнтство</b> agency
<b>ст + ц → [sʲt͡sʲ]:</b>	<b>солїстци</b> soloist (D.L.sg.)
<b>ст + д → [zd]:</b>	<b>шїстдесят</b> sixty
<b>ст + → [s:]:</b>	<b>шїстсот</b> six hundred

In some words there is no simplification:

<b>кїстлявий</b> bony	<b>пєстлявий</b> tender, delicate
<b>хвастлявий</b> boastful	<b>випускний</b> of something that comes out
<b>рискнїти</b> to take a risk	

### 1.1.13 GEMINATION AND LENGTHENING OF CONSONANTS

These are found exclusively between vowels:

<b>подрўжжя</b> wedlock, marriage	<b>новосїлля</b> house-warming
<b>облїччя</b> face	<b>тїнню</b> shadow (I.sg.)

Compare:

<b>щастя</b> happiness, luck	<b>радїстю</b> joy (I.sg.)
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Note the pronunciation (and spelling) of the present tense of **лїти** (also derivatives):

**лїю, лїєш, лїє, лїємó, лїєтє, лїють**

It should be borne in mind that the following consonants never lengthen, but remain combined with [j]: [b], [p], [β], [m], [f], [r], namely the labials and [r]:

<b>з любóв'ю</b> with love	<b>вєрф'ю</b> dockyard (I.sg.)
<b>пїр'я</b> feather(s)	<b>сїм'я</b> family

Lengthening is conveyed in the spelling by doubling or gemination. This occurs on morpheme boundaries:

prefix + root:	<b>беззубий</b> toothless, <b>віддячити</b> to recompense, <b>роззутий</b> barefooted
two prefixes:	<b>возз'єднати</b> to reunite
root/stem + suffix (most often adjectives):	<b>докорінно</b> fundamentally, <b>неписьмєнний</b> illiterate, <b>щодєнний</b> everyday, daily
root/stem + postfix <b>-ся</b> (in verbs):	<b>їсся</b> rushed
compound (including truncated) words:	<b>міськком</b> city committee (but the lengthening is not present in the pronunciation)

And there is lengthening of [t, z, s, ts̄, l, n, ʒ, tʃ, ʃ] between two vowels:

<b>життя</b> life	<b>знання</b> knowledge
<b>гілля</b> branches	<b>колєся</b> ears (of corn)
<b>роздоріжжя</b> crossroad	<b>десятирїччя</b> period of ten years
<b>тїню</b> shadow (I.sg.)	<b>рїллєю</b> ploughed field (I.sg.)
<b>востаннє</b> for the last time	

Namely:

- (i) Before **я** and other case endings, but not the genitive plural (because of the nature of the ending), in very many neuter nouns, for example:  
**значєння** meaning (G.pl. **значєнь**)
- (ii) Before **я** in some masculine and feminine nouns (and all the case endings in **-ї, -є, -ю, -я**, but not genitive plural **-єй**), for example:  
**стаття** article, **суддя** judge
- (iii) Before **-ю** in the instrumental singular of feminines whose nominative singular ends in a soft sign or a husher, for example:  
**мить – мїттю** sudden moment      **сїль – сїллю** salt  
**вїсь – вїсцю** axle      **рїч – рїчцю** thing
- (iv) In forms of the verb **лити**: **ллю**, and so on.
- (v) In a few adverbs, for example:  
**спроснїня** while asleep
- (vi) In the reinforcing and (im)possibility adjectival suffixes **-єнн-, -єнн-, -єнн-**, for example:  
**здоровєнний** very robust/healthy      **нездїйснєнний** unrealizable  
**незрївнїєнний** incomparable
- (vii) A few Church Slavonic words, for example:  
**свєщєнний** holy      **благословєнний** blessed



## 1.2 A FEW NOTES ON PROBLEM AREAS IN SPELLING

### 1.2.1 o AND e AFTER HUSHERS AND [j]

Both are possible in Ukrainian. One tends to find *e* before a soft or historically soft consonant, and *o* before a historically hard consonant or before a syllable with [a, ɔ, u, i]:

<b>жені́тися</b> – <b>жона́тий</b>	to marry – married (of a man)
<b>че́тверо</b> – <b>чоти́ри</b>	four
<b>копі́єчка</b> – <b>копійо́к</b>	copeck (N.sg. of dim. – G.pl. of non-dim.)
<b>книжо́к</b> of the books	<b>до́чок</b> of the daughters
<b>бджо́ла</b> bee	<b>пшоно́</b> millet
<b>чо́го</b> of what	<b>щока́</b> cheek
<b>його́</b> him, it	<b>знайо́мий</b> friend, acquaintance

However, analogy may intervene:

<b>на ве́чорі</b> – <b>ве́чора/ве́чору</b>	evening ( <b>ве́чір</b> )
<b>сві́жості</b> – <b>мо́лодості</b>	freshness – youth
<b>пи́шемо</b> – <b>пи́шете</b>	write
<b>пе́чений/спе́чено</b> – <b>зро́блений/зро́блено</b>	baked – done

Note: **грошовий** ‘money’ (adjective), **бойовий** ‘fighting’

The vowel *e* is retained in the suffixes **-ечк-**, **-енк(о)** and certain others, and also in ancient bookish and borrowed words:

<b>до́щечка</b> small board	<b>Шевче́нко</b> (family name)
<b>пече́ра</b> cave	<b>же́ртва</b> victim
<b>шеф</b> chief	<b>чемпіо́н</b> champion

Other spellings are established by convention or tradition:

<b>черво́ний</b> red	<b>чека́ти</b> to wait
<b>шепо́тіти</b> to whisper	<b>ще́дрий</b> generous

Note particularly the convention of *e* in nominal endings, but *o* in pronominal and adjectival ones:

**ста́нцією** – **на́шою** – **коли́шньою** station – our – erstwhile/former (I.sg. f.)

### 1.2.2 VELARS PLUS [ɪ, i]

[i] occurs, both in the orthography and pronunciation, after velars in Ukrainian in instances of alternation with [ɔ, ɛ] (here the velar is pronounced either soft or hard) and in the nominative-accusative plural of adjectives and pronouns. Thus:

<b>кінь</b> horse	<b>гірка</b> hillock
<b>глухім</b> deaf/dull/thick (L.sg. m./n.)	<b>такій</b> such (D.L.sg. f.)
<b>недолугі</b> weak (N.A.pl.)	<b>легкі</b> light, easy (N.A.pl.)
<b>глухі</b> deaf (N.A.pl.)	<b>всякі</b> every (N.A.pl.)

[i] occurs in the genitive singular and nominative-accusative plural of first-declension nouns, the nominative-accusative plural of second-declension nouns, and the nominative-accusative singular masculine of adjectives and pronouns and the oblique cases of the plural of adjectives and pronouns:

<b>рукі</b> of the hand	<b>ногі</b> of the leg
<b>свекрухі</b> mothers-in-law	<b>руки</b> hands
<b>ноги</b> legs	<b>свекрухи</b> of the mother-in-law
<b>берегі</b> banks, shores	<b>чоловікі</b> husbands
<b>кожухі</b> sheepskin coats	
<b>недолугий</b> weak	<b>всякий</b> every
<b>глухий</b> deaf	
<b>недолугих</b> weak	<b>легкими</b> light
<b>глухими</b> deaf	<b>всякими</b> every

### 1.2.3 THE ALTERNATIONS [u – w – v/β], [i – j] IN SPELLING

We find these alternations both at the beginning of a certain number of words and in the corresponding conjunction and preposition. Thus:

<b>вчитель</b> – <b>учитель</b> teacher	<b>іти</b> – <b>йти</b> to go/walk
<b>він і вона́</b> he and she	<b>вона́ й ону́ка</b> she and (her) granddaughter
<b>сів у крісло</b> sat in the chair	<b>сіла в автобус</b> got on the bus

The vowels [i, u] are both pronounced and noted in the orthography by the appropriate letters, in principle, at the beginning of a phrase before consonants (у **Києві** ‘in Kyiv’), after a word ending in a consonant (**Іва́н і Окса́на** ‘Ivan and Oksana’), or between words, one of which ends, and the other begins, in a consonant (**Він у кю́хні** ‘He’s in the kitchen’). Otherwise we have [j, w, v/β]. Note that Ukrainian у/в are one preposition (thus uniting the two original prepositions). Ukrainian **в, й** convey consonants and asyllabic vowels which occur between a vowel and a consonant at word juncture and after a vowel at the end of a word.

### 1.2.4 FOREIGN WORDS

In most instances the meanings of the following words are clear.

Many older loanwords are completely assimilated, and are unlikely to be recognized as borrowings:

**борщ** beetroot soup      **палац** palace  
**цибу́ля** onion

But quite a few words remain clearly foreign:

Words with [f]: **фото, фесервѐрк, фѐрма**

Words beginning with [a, ε]: **артѝст, ескѝмѝс, ампермѝтр, архѝтѝктор**

Words with the foreign **ya, ia**: **буду́ар, павѝан, дѝалѝг, дѝаметр**

Words with unusual consonantal groups: **маѝстер, консѝнсус, інстру́кція, абстра́ктний, конста́нта**

Many foreign words assimilate to Ukrainian consonantal (less frequently vocalic) alternations:

**еле́ктрик** electrician – **електри́чний**

**специ́фіка** – **специфі́чний**

**Пари́ж** – **пари́зький**

**Ле́йпциг** – **ле́йпцизький**

And there are indeclinables (see 2.1.3.3 on foreign words and 2.3.4 specifically on indeclinables):

**таксі́**      **жабо́**  
**кенгуру́**

Regarding the pronunciation of foreign words, we should note:

[l]: may be hard or soft before [a, o, u]:

**бала́нс, со́ло**      **пляж, алюмі́ній**

but hard before [ε]:

**ле́кція**      **еле́ктрик**  
**елеме́нт**      **елегі́я**  
**елега́нтний**

[h, g]: traditionally = r [g] (though in proper names the orthography permits г):

**гра́фік**      **геоло́гія**  
**гекта́р**      **гектолі́тр**  
**герба́рій**      **горизо́нт**  
**Гельсінгфо́рс**      **Гава́на**

In a few English words we have x:

**хавбе́к**      **хоке́й**  
**хол**

[f, θ] are usually conveyed in Ukrainian by [f]:

**фóрма**      **катастро́фа**  
**фі́зика**      **орфогра́фія**

Foreign double consonants are not usually retained (certainly not in pronunciation):

**баро́ко**      **беладóна**  
**браві́симо**      **грип**  
**клас**      **інтерме́цо**  
**ком'уна**      **су́ма**  
**шасі́**

But in certain situations a double consonant is possible, even in the pronunciation:

(i) On the morpheme boundary:

**іммігра́ція**      **апперце́пція**  
**сюрреалі́зм**

(ii) In a few words, for example:

**мі́рра**      **бру́тто**  
**ва́нна**      **ма́нна**  
**не́тто**      **пе́нні**  
**то́нна**      **бі́ль**  
**бу́лла**      **ві́лла**

(iii) In proper names:

**Андо́рра**      **Голла́ндія**  
**Маро́кко**      **Ни́цца**

The apostrophe is very widely used, to convey, for example, the separate pronunciation of [j]:

(i) Before **я**, **ю**, **є**, **ї** after **б**, **п**, **в**, **м**, **ф** and **г**, **к**, **х**, **ж**, **ч**, **ш**:

**комп'ю́тер**      **ка́р'є́ра**  
**п'є́дста́л**

(ii) After an original prefix ending in a consonant:

**ад'юта́нт**      **ін'є́кція**  
**кон'ю́кту́ра**

French words with the vowels conveyed by **я**, **ю** are an exception here:

**бюро́**      **пю́ре**  
**кюве́т**      **рюкза́к**

The consonants here are soft.

Softness may be conveyed by the soft sign. If there is no [j], then the soft sign is not written (but the softness remains):

<b>конферен́сьє</b>	<b>ательє́</b>
<b>марсельє́за</b>	<b>мі́льярд</b>
<b>бульйо́н</b>	<b>медальйо́н</b>
<b>каньйо́н</b>	<b>віньє́тка</b>
<b>нюа́нс</b>	<b>ілюзі́я</b>
<b>мадя́р</b>	

For **и** and **i** the 'rule of nine' often applies, namely **и** usually after **д, т, з, с, ц, ж, ч, ш, р**:

<b>ді́спут</b>	<b>ті́тул</b>
<b>зигза́г</b>	<b>симфо́нія</b>
<b>цикло́н</b>	<b>жира́ф</b>
<b>речита́тів</b>	<b>ши́на</b>
<b>ринг</b>	

This does not extend to foreign proper names, where **i** may be written after all consonants:

<b>Грі́г</b>	<b>Ші́ллер</b>
<b>Чи́каго</b>	<b>Ді́ккенс</b>
<b>Лей́пциг</b>	

But:

<b>Ри́м</b>	<b>Брита́нія</b>
<b>Атла́нтика</b>	<b>А́рктика</b>
<b>Кита́й</b>	<b>Пари́ж</b>
<b>Ри́га</b>	

The letter **i** is written (i) after consonants other than the nine:

<b>гі́пс</b>	<b>лінгві́стика</b>
<b>ні́кель</b>	<b>пірамі́да</b>

(ii) At the beginning of words:

<b>інтерва́л</b>	<b>ізо́м</b>
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(iii) Before vowel letters and **й**:

<b>діале́кт</b>	<b>революці́йні</b>
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(iv) At the end of indeclinable words:

<b>па́рі</b>	<b>жю́рі</b>
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