

Hmong Vowels

There are **no short and long vowel** pronunciations in Hmong. There is only **one pronunciation** for each Hmong vowel.

No	Hmong Vowel	English phonics	Sound as in English words
1	a	<i>ah</i>	a bout, pa, ma
2	ai	ai	Thai – The same pronunciation as in English
3	au	<i>ao</i>	Lao , how, now
4	aw	<i>er</i>	per . Do not curl your tongue for the “r”, however.
5	e	<i>ay</i>	day , say
6	ee	<i>eng</i>	English , leng
7	i	<i>ee</i>	bee , see, lee
8	ia	ia	Kia – same as English
9	o	<i>aw</i>	law , saw , awe
10	oo	<i>ong</i>	among
11	u	<i>oo</i>	zoo , soo , too
12	ua	<i>oua</i>	Moua , poor
13	w	<i>ew</i>	See above right for explanation.
14	aa*	<i>ung</i>	lung . *This is a Hmong Leng vowel.

To say the Hmong **W** vowel:
The closest English phonics is perhaps the word “**hmm**”, but with your mouth *open* and make the sound “**ew**” with little or no air through your nose. Making sure “**ew**” does not sound like “**oo**” as in word **too**, however.

Now let’s combine some of the consonants you have learned with the vowels above using the 2nd musical pitch “**Re**” from the “**Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti**.” This pitch has **no** tone markers that is.

1	Hmong word	da	dai	dau	daw	de	dee	di	do	doo	du	dua	dia
2	English phonics	<i>dah</i>	<i>dai</i>	<i>dao</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>day</i>	<i>deng</i>	<i>dee</i>	<i>daw</i>	<i>dong</i>	<i>doo</i>	<i>doua</i>	<i>dia</i>
3	Hmong word	na	nai	nau	naw	ne	nee	ni	no	noo	nu	nua	nia
4	English phonics	<i>nah</i>	<i>nai</i>	<i>nao</i>	<i>ner</i>	<i>nay</i>	<i>neng</i>	<i>nee</i>	<i>naw</i>	<i>nong</i>	<i>noo</i>	<i>noua</i>	<i>nia</i>

The Hmong word **da** means *to swim* or *lie down*. **dai** means *to hang*, **de** is *to pinch*, and **do** is *to stir*. The last Hmong word **no** means *cold*.

Now you already have learned the single consonants, vowels and one Hmong tone – “**Re**”. I called this tone marker – Cim **Zoo** in Hmong – English phonics is **zhong**. **Zoo** means **good** in Hmong.