

Pronunciation notes:

(1) AW!

In Unst, Yell, and parts of the South Mainland, a long 'aa' is pronounced as 'aw'. In 'Tree **craas**' it happens in all the key words! **We have tried to spell 'aa' where this variation happens. The sound can then be read in the way suited to your area.**

So: Single 'a' is pronounced 'a' by everybody! e.g 'sat'
Double 'aa' is pronounced 'aw' in some places. e.g. 'saat'

Exceptions we have left are '**twa**' and '**wha?**' as these are so widely established with a single 'a'. (Please let us know of any others you spot.)

(In some areas, the plural 'waas', 'craas', etc, does not sound *exactly* like 'wahs', 'crahs', either, but there is no way of indicating this sound in English orthography! Again, please read 'aa' as you would say it.)

(2) Pronunciations of 'Lerwick' as in 'Peerie Cat':

Please use whatever is said in your area: *Lerweek*, *Lerook*, or *Lerrick*.

(3) Shö/ she

'Shö' is an accepted spelling and widespread pronunciation of 'she'. However, in some parts of Shetland 'she' is commonly pronounced as in English. Both are therefore acceptable spellings, and both have been used here. Again, it is for you to choose how you pronounce whichever is used.

(4) -ng sound

'Finger' in Shetland dialect rhymes with 'singer'. ('Fingers')

Grammar notes:

(1) **Me and you**

'Du' is normally used for 'you' in 'familiar' situations. (Who you 'du' is an interesting and important topic of discussion; this is just a grammar note!)

'Du' and 'dee' are used just like 'I' and 'me', 'he' and 'him', 'she' and 'her'. ('Dee', like 'me', 'him' and 'her' is an object, not a subject). If in doubt, imagine using one of the above pronouns.

e.g. I'm late. Du's late. He's late.

Shö's waitin for me/ dee/ him.

Shö laeks me/ dee/ him.

NB. After 'du' any verb behaves as it would after 'he' e.g. *du is*, *du says*.

(2) **Me and my shadow, and you and yours**

In most areas, there are two words for both 'my' and 'your' (fam.).

If 'my' and 'your' are not stressed, most areas would say 'me' for 'my' and 'dee' for 'your':

e.g. I axed me faider. (stress is on 'faider')
Whit's dee name? (stress is on 'name')

But if the word is *stressed*, and it's important to emphasise who this belongs to, then we use 'my' and 'dy':

e.g. Catch **my** shadow!
 Caught **dy** shadow!

N.B. Some areas use *my* an *dy* always, stressed or not.

The word for 'yours' (familiar) is 'dine'.

e.g. Catch my shadow an I'll catch **dine**!

(3) Special commands (*Examples - Da Rabbit's Lullaby*)

lay dee doon lie down
lay du dee doon *is extra emphatic, like 'just you lie down'*

faa asleep fall asleep
faa du asleep just you fall asleep

This adding in 'du' – or 'you' if in the plural – makes any command extra emphatic:

e.g come along
come you along – ony time!

gie him a row
gie du him a proper row!

(4) Whit's happened?

In Shetland dialect, it is good practice to use the verb 'to be', not 'to have' when talking about things that (in English) *have* happened.

E.g. A 'm been on holiday. We 're/ wir been on holiday.
Is du read da last Harry Potter? Ir dey read him tö?

This pattern may be changing, but it is still very much to be found.

Examples: *Whaar ir dey gone? (Creepie craalies)*
 Is du seen him? No, A'm no seen him. (Lost)
 Is he geen furt wi da dug? (Peerie guizer)
 Whit ir you hented aa dis books oot for? (Lost)

One step farther back in time – things that *had* happened – it works like this:

Examples: *She wis hed tree whalps (Sam's Pal)*
 He tow't he wis geen doon ahint da bookcase. (Lost)

Vocabulary in pre-school pack (except Peerie guizer)

Note: an asterisk means there is a grammar note*

a	<i>as in 'da boats a Maelie' - of (of can be either o or a)</i>
aa right	all right
aa	all
aafil	awful <i>also</i> awfully
aald or owld	old
about	about
aer	little amount
aesy	easy <i>also</i> easily
aet	eat
aff	off
afore	before
ageen	again ('Again' also written, pronounced 'agenn')
ahint	behind
ain	own
airm	arm
an	and
anse	obey
anunder	underneath
apo/ apö/ apon/ apun	upon
at	<i>as English 'at' but also as follows:</i> that (<i>rel. pron.</i>) e.g. (1) da best rabbit at ever I saa – the best rabbit <i>that</i> I ever saw (<i>Da Rabbit's Lullaby</i>) (2) dis is da een at brook.. – this is the one <i>that</i> broke.... (<i>Fingers</i>)
at	that <i>as in</i> dat mony books at – so many books <i>that</i> ... (<i>Lost</i>)
athin	in
atil	in
avaa	at all
awaa	away
ax(ed)	ask(ed)

baa
bairns
bed (*as in* ‘he bed’)
bit
bizzin
black klock
blinkie
blyde
N.B. He wis da blyde
boannie
bong
braaly

brae
brak
bricht
bridder
brokken *or* **brocken**
broo
brook
broon
but an ben

caald *also* **cowld**
cam
canna
catched
clatch
clim(med)
clippit
cloosh!

coarn
coarner
coo

ball
children
lived (*past tense of* ‘bide’)
but (*English ‘but’ is also written*)
buzzing
beetle
torch
happy
How happy he was
pretty
bang, thump
with an adj this means ‘quite’ *or* ‘pretty’
e.g. braaly peerie – quite small
slope
break
bright
brother
broken
(top of) **slope**
broke
brown
a little house, often little more than a **but** room
(living-room/kitchen) and a **ben** room
Shō guid dancin but an ben – she went dancing from one
end of the house to the other (*Keetie Bairdy*)

cold
came
can’t
caught
sticky deposit; dirt that sticks to you
climb(ed)
clipped
(*as in* he fell cloosh!) *word expresses dramatic
nature of fall!*
corn
corner
cow

coo's lick	wavy forelock of hair which will not lie flat
couldna	couldn't
cowld <i>also caald</i>	cold
craa	crow
craal(ed)	crawl(ed)
crabbit	bad tempered
cuggle	rock, wobble
cuggly	inclined to rock or wobble
da moarn	tomorrow
da	the
<i>N.B. special use of da</i>	He wis da blyde! How happy he was! He wis da excited! How excited he was!
daa	grandfather
dan	then
dat	that
dat	<i>as in 'dat mony' - so many</i>
*dee	<i>you (fam.) – used as object</i>
dem	them
denty	dainty
der <i>also dir</i>	their (<i>as in 'der bedroom'</i>)
der <i>also dir</i>	there's/ there are (<i>as in 'der nauthin for me'</i>)
der <i>also dir (or dey're)</i>	they're (<i>as in 'dir a filskit pair!'</i>)
dere	there <i>as in 'over there'</i>
deuk	duck
dey wir	<i>as in 'dey wir an aaful lock' – there was/were...</i> <i>as in 'he said dey wir silly' – they were</i>
dey	they
didna	didn't
*dine	yours (<i>fam.</i>)
dirlin	vibrating
dir	<i>see der</i>
dis	this
dö	do
dook	a dip in the water
doon <i>apon it</i>	sad, depressed
doon	down
doonpoor	downpour
dort (<i>verb</i>)	

also tak da dorts	to sulk
dorty	sulky
dreep	drip
drookled	soaked
*du	you (<i>familiar</i>)
dug	dog
dunter	eider duck
*dy	your (<i>familiar</i>)

ee	one (<i>adj.</i>) E.g. ee day – one day (<i>Sam's pal</i>)
ean	one e.g. ean fur wir aald daa – one for our grandad (<i>Noo dan moorit yowe</i>)
een	eyes
after	after
elt	mess
ere da streen (or aer da streen)	the night before last
ey	always

faa	fall
faan	fallen (<i>pp. of 'faa'</i>)
faat	fault
fae	from
faersom	frightening, fearsome
faert	afraid
faider	father
fan	found (<i>past tense of 'fin'</i>)
filsket or filskit	frisky, high-spirited
fin	find
fir or for or fur	for (<i>all three spellings exist</i>)
fit	foot
fitbaa	football
fled	flew or (<i>p.p.</i>) flown away (can also mean ' <i>ran/ run away</i> ')
flee	fly
flör	floor
flytes	scolds
fock	as in ' <i>your fock</i> ' – family;

foo	(in most contexts ‘fock’ just means <i>people</i>)
foo	full <i>as in</i> ‘tree bags foo’
foo mony	how
forkietail	how many
freend	earwig
fur (<i>see fir</i>)	friend
furt	for
	outside

gadder	gather
gaff(ed)	laugh(ed)
geen	gone (<i>past participle of</i> ‘geng’)
geng	go
gless	glass
gluff	scare, fright
gluffed	scared
gotten	pp. of ‘got’
grice	pig
grund	ground
guid	went (<i>past tense of</i> ‘geng’)
gutter	mud
guttery	muddy
gyaan	going
<i>(also gyaain or gjaan)</i>	

haal	haul
haand	hand
hae	have
hae, boy	here, boy, have this!
haes	has
haes du...?	do you have...?
haet	hot (or heat)
haily puckles	hailstones
hame	home
hed	had
hedder-kowe	bushy plant of heather
hegri	heron
hent(ed)	gather(ed)

himsel	himself
hing(s)	hang(s)
hit or it	it
hoch	the back of the knee
hock(in)	dig(ging), delve (delving)
hoid	hide
hoidin	hiding
hol (o watter)	puddle
hoose	house

i	in
ida or i da	in the
in a skrit	in a great hurry
inta	into
ir	are

jaa	jaw
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ken	know
Kirr! Kirr!	Shoo! (to poultry)
Kist!	Shoo! (to cats)
kye	cows, cattle

laek	like
lang	long
Lerook	Lerwick (<i>North mainland pronunciation</i>)
Lerrick/ Lerweek	<i>other pronunciations</i>
licht	light
lippen(ed)	expect(ed)
lock	lot
lookit	looked
lowe	glow
löf	palm of hand
lug	ear

maa	seagull
mad	angry
maest	most
mair	more
mak	make
makkin	making
Mam	Mum
*me	me; <i>also my (as in 'me name', 'me faider')</i>
midder	mother
mittened (a hadd)	grabbed (hold)
moarnin	morning
moch	moth
mony	many
mooratoog/ mooritoog	ant
moorit	natural brown colour of Shetland wool
moose	mouse
mooth	mouth
mou	mouth
muckle	<i>(adj)</i> big; <i>(adv)</i> much

nae	no <i>as in</i> 'nae sense'
naethin/ nauthin	nothing
nane (<i>pron</i> 'nenn')	none
neep	turnip
noo	now

o	of
oagin	crawling
ony	any
onywye	anywhere
oo	wool at <u>fleece</u> stage. (Wool for knitting is <i>yarn</i> or <i>wirsit</i>)
oot	out
ootfaa	row, disagreement
oppen(ed)	open(ed)
ower	over
owld or aald	old
oxter	armpit

peerie	little, small
peerie minty	very small, tiny
peyed	payed
pickit	picked
platch or platsh	to walk heavily through water, or as if through water
pletts	plaits
pooskered	exhausted
postcaird	postcard
press	cupboard
pul	pull
raelly	really
reck(it)	reach(ed)
roond	round
saa	saw
sailie	<i>a fun word to rhyme with Maelie</i>
sall	shall
sanna	shan't
shaa(s)	show(s)
shaest	chase
shair	chair
shalder	oyster-catcher
shall	shell
shappit-lookin	bashed-looking
shiggle	shake, wobble
shiggly	shaky, wobbly
shö also she	she
skeetin	sliding/ skimming
skurt	bosom
slater	woodlouse
sleekit	sly
sleepit	slept
smaa	thin, narrow; 'lang an smaa' <i>means</i> 'long and thin'
snaa	snow

sock	<i>any</i> piece of knitting. ('Tak dee sock' means 'take your knitting')
sood a	should have
sood	should
sookin	sucking
soond	sound
speeder	spider
spoot	spout
stack	stuck
stairhead	landing
stirling	starling
stöl	stole
ston (or sten or steen)	stone (said differently in different areas)
stoppit	stopped
strippit	striped
swittle	to splash gently in water

ta or tae	to
tae(s)	toe(s)
tak	take
tammie norie	puffin
tap	top
thoosan taes	centipede
ting	little one (<i>lit.</i> thing)
tink	think
tirn	angry
tirrick	arctic tern
toom	thumb
towt	thought (<i>past tense of</i> 'tink')
transe	passageway (e.g. between house and barn)
tree	three
twa	two

vexed sad, sorry

waa	wall
wabbit	exhausted
watter	water

weel	well
weet	wet
wha	who
whaar ir dey gone?	where have they gone?
whaar	where
whalp	puppy
whin <i>also whan</i>	when
whit <i>also what</i> (<i>rhyming with 'cat'</i>)	what
whit laek is?	what is like?
/what laek is...?	
whit wye/ what wye	why?
wi	with
wid	would
willy-lang-legs	daddy-long-legs
winna	won't
wir	our
wir	were (<i>as in</i> 'he said dey wir silly')
wir (wir been)	we are (we have been – <i>see grammar note</i>)
wirsit	made of woollen yarn; woollen yarn itself
wis	was (<i>as in</i> 'he wis')
*wis hed	had had
*wis lost his	had lost his
wis	us (<i>as in</i> 'help wis')
wiss	wish
wisna dat ...?	wasn't that...?
yackle	molar tooth
yall(ed)	yell(ed)
yoag	large horse-mussel
yon <i>or yun</i>	that
yowe	ewe