

There can be two ways to write the vowel sounds of Lekwungen. One way is to write vowel sounds as they sound to English speakers. Another is to write what we know to be the ‘meaningful’ vowels, where a difference in the vowel creates a change in the word meaning. For example, the only difference between Lekwungen *ɣiŋət* ‘to step’, and *ɣáŋət* ‘to give’, or between English *pen* and *pin*, is the vowel. Change the vowel, and the meaning of the word changes. The decision on which way to write the vowels will have to be made, but this provides a guide for how to write vowels if this ‘meaningful’ way is chosen.

Sometimes, how a vowel sounds can change, without actually changing the meaning of the word. One of the ways this can happen is when the vowel is influenced by the consonant next to it. My thesis studied this, and found that there are several places where this can happen in Lekwungen. For example, the vowel written with the letter *i* in *ɣiŋət* and in *sɬiqʷ* sound different: the first is like the vowel sound in *beet*, the other like the vowel sound in *bit*. In a system where vowels were written as they sound to English speakers, these two vowels would be written differently. But in a system where only the meaningful vowels were written, they would be written the same. This is because we know it is the *qʷ* in *sɬiqʷ* that is changing how the *i* is said and sounds, so we know it is still the same *i* as in *ɣiŋət*. Lekwungen has another vowel – schwa – that usually sounds like the vowel in *but* that also changes how it sounds when next to certain consonants, and it changes a lot. It can sound like the vowel sound in *book*, like in *boat*, even like in *bit*, but this change only happens with specific consonants, so we know that the difference is not meaningful, and so all the variations can be written with the letter *ə*.

## Quick-Reference to writing vowels in Lekwungen

If it sounds like...	And is...	Then write...	Page reference
the <i>i</i> in <i>bit</i>	before q, q <sup>w</sup> , q̇, q̇ <sup>w</sup> , x, or x <sup>w</sup>	i	Pg. 131
	after č, č̇, or y	ə	Pg. 124
the <i>ee</i> in <i>beet</i> or the <i>ea</i> in <i>beat</i>	anywhere	i	
the <i>e</i> in <i>pet</i>	anywhere (usually before ʔ, q, q <sup>w</sup> , q̇, q̇ <sup>w</sup> , x, or x <sup>w</sup> ; after č, č̇, or y)	e	Pg. 124, 131, 136
the <i>a</i> in <i>fate</i>	anywhere	e	
the <i>oo</i> in <i>book</i> or the <i>u</i> in <i>put</i>	anywhere (usually before k <sup>w</sup> , k̇ <sup>w</sup> , q <sup>w</sup> , q̇ <sup>w</sup> , x <sup>w</sup> , or ẋ <sup>w</sup> )	ə	Pg. 127
the <i>o</i> in <i>poke</i> or the <i>oa</i> in <i>boat</i>	anywhere	əw	Pg. 127
the <i>u</i> in <i>but</i>	anywhere	ə	
the <i>a</i> in <i>father</i>	before ʔ and before and after q, q̇, q <sup>w</sup> , q̇ <sup>w</sup> , x <sup>w</sup> , or ẋ	ə	Pg. 131, 136
	anywhere else	a	
Short like the first or third <i>a</i> in <i>banana</i> (vs. the second <i>a</i> in <i>banana</i> )	anywhere	ə	Pg. 112