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PRONUNCIATION

SOUNDS: All vowels and consonants are to be pronounced distinctly; each individual letter has its full value.

All the words in Chicheŵa end with a vowel. And whenever we split a word into syllables, the last letter in each syllable should always be a vowel; pronounce distinctly each syllable:

Mu-nthu; Chi-ngwe; Chi-tse-ko; Mpha-mvu

VOWELS: There are only five sounds, corresponding to the five vowels; the sound is always pure and has no equivalent in English:

A	French "a": "Vas á la plage!"	Anyamata anaba mbatata.
E	French "é": "l'été passé"	Sadakwerebe ndege.
I	French "i": "Dis-lui de venir!"	Ine sindili bwino.
O	French "o": "C'est monotone"	Wafotekoza zonse.
U	French "ou": "Voulez-vous ouvrir?"	Udzu uja uli kuti?

When two vowels are joined together, each keeps its value.

CONSONANTS: Every consonant has to be pronounced clearly; to avoid confusion between words which are more or less similar.

J pronounced "dj" as in English: **Mbuzi yanga ija yaŵiwa.**

H always needs emphasis in diphthongs **Kh, p^h, th:**

Khama; Kukhoma; Phala; Kuphika; Thabwa; Kutheka.

CH is always very soft and has no equivalent in English (formerly the orthography was often C): **Chingwe; Chobvala; Kuchedwa be late.**

In a few words, the sound is "tch": **Tchire, Kutchedwa be called.**

NG is a nasal sound, as in "singing": **Ng'oma; Ng'ombe;** different from NG: **Ngoma; Ngongole.**

R is pronounced softly like "l" and is often interchanged with L;

R usually follows the vowels E and I: **Gwira; Lerc.**

L follows the vowels A; O; U: **khalani; Dula! Tsogola!**

W pronounced U: **Kuwawasa; Mwanuna.** The bilabial fricative **w** has a particular sound **Malawi; Mawere. Lowani!**

TONES: Chicheŵa is a tone language. The succession of tones, high-low-medium, is based on the words themselves. A same word may have two different meanings according to the tone given: **Mtengo: a tree the price; Kulemera: be rich, be heavy; Mbale: brother, a plate.**