

Lenition with Adjectives

[MP3 Link] Lenition (Aspiration) is the process of changing the sound of a consonant, usually at the beginning of a word, under certain conditions. This is shown by putting an ‘h’ after the consonant.

Two of the occasions where lenition is necessary (but not limited to) are when adjectives follow the adverbs ‘very’ and ‘too.’

Remember, L, N, R, (the LoNeR consonants) may have a slight sound change, but don’t add the ‘h.’ Also, sg, sm, sp, or st do not change at all.

Plain Adjective		“Very” Example		“Too” Example	
teth	hot	glè theth	very hot	ro theth	too hot
fuair	cold	glè fhuair	very cold	ro fhuair	too cold
blàth	warm	glè bhlàth	very warm	ro bhlàth	too warm
math	good	glè mhath	very good	ro mhath	too good
dona	bad	glè dhona	very bad	ro dhona	too bad
snog	nice or cute	glè shnog	very nice or cute	ro shnog	too nice or cute
reamhar	fat	glè reamhar	very fat	ro reamhar	too fat
caol	thin	glè chaol	very thin	ro chaol	too thin
mòr	big	glè mhòr	very big	ro mhòr	too big
beag	small	glè bheag	very small	ro bheag	too small
brèagha	beautiful	glè bhrèagha	very beautiful	ro bhrèagha	too beautiful
grannda	ugly	glè ghrannda	very ugly	ro ghrannda	too ugly
toilichte	happy	glè thoilichte	very happy	ro thoilichte	too happy
brònach	sad	glè bhrònach	very sad	ro bhrònach	too sad
fliuch	wet	glè fhliuch	very wet	ro fhliuch	too wet
tioram	dry	glè thioram	very dry	ro thioram	too dry

Examples:

Tha mi fuar. / I am cold.

Tha mi glè fhuar. / I am very cold.

Tha mi ro fhuar. / I am too cold.

A bheil e snog? / Is he nice?

Chan eil e glè shnog. / He is not very nice.

Nach eil sinn ro bhlàth? / Aren't we too warm?

Tha sinn ro bhlàth! / We are too warm!

Chan eil mi fliuch. / I am not wet.

A bheil thu tioram? / Are you dry?

Nach eil i brèagha? / Isn't she beautiful?

Exercises:

Translate:

- 1) happy
- 2) sad
- 3) wet
- 4) dry
- 5) large/big
- 6) small
- 7) hot
- 8) cold
- 9) good
- 10) bad

Translate:

- 1) I am hot.
- 2) Is she cold?
- 3) He is dry.
- 4) Isn't he wet?
- 5) She is cold.
- 6) They are sad.
- 7) Is Bob thin?
- 8) I am happy.
- 9) He is nice.
- 10) Aren't they happy?

Answers:

Part 1

- 1) toilichte
- 2) brònach
- 3) fliuch
- 4) tioram
- 5) mòr
- 6) beag
- 7) teth
- 8) fuar
- 9) math
- 10) dona

Part 2

- 1) Tha mi teth.
- 2) A bheil i fuar?
- 3) Tha e tioram.
- 4) Nach eil i fliuch?
- 5) Tha i fuar.
- 6) Tha iad brònach.
- 7) A bheil Bob caol?
- 8) Tha mi toilichte.
- 9) Tha e snog.
- 10) Nach eil iad toilichte?