Lithuanian

Printed	Script	English
A a	*A a*	*a*
Ą ą	*A ą*	*ah*
B b	*B b*	*b*
C c	*C c*	*ts*
Č č	*Č č*	*ch*
D d	*D d*	*d*
E e	*E e*	*e, ă*
Ę ę	*Ę ę*	*ă*
Ė ė	*Ė ė*	*ā*
F f	*F f*	*f*
G g	*G g*	*g*
H h	*H h*	*h*
I i	*I i*	*i*
Į į	*Į į*	*ee*
Y y	*Y y*	*ee*
J j	*J j*	*y*

Printed	Script	English
K k	*K k*	*k*
L l	*L l*	*l*
M m	*M m*	*m*
N n	*N n*	*n*
O o	*O o*	*o*
P p	*P p*	*p*
R r	*R r*	*r*
S s	*S s*	*s*
Š š	*Š š*	*sh*
T t	*T t*	*t*
U u	*U u*	*u*
Ų ų	*Ū ā*	*oo*
Ū ū	*Ų ų*	*oo*
V v	*V v*	*v*
Z z	*Z z*	*z*
Ž ž	*Ž ž*	*zh*

The Lithuanian Alphabet

Lithuanian uses a modified version of the Roman alphabet. The letters *q*, *x*, and *w* are not used except in words of foreign origin. There are 9 characters formed by combining diacritical marks with standard Roman letters. Three are consonants: ***č***, ***š***, and ***ž***. Six are vowels: ***ą***, ***ę***, ***ė***, ***į***, ***ų***, and ***ū***.

It is impossible to describe these sounds adequately in writing; one must listen to and imitate native speakers. But we can say that the basic vowels are closer to those of most European languages than to those of American English. Thus ***a*** is more like the sound in "f*a*ther" than the *a* in "h*a*te" or "c*a*t"; short ***e*** is more like the *e* sound in "b*e*t" (sometimes even like *ă* in "m*a*n") than in "m*e*"; ***i*** is more like the *i* in "sh*i*p" than in "h*i*gh"; and ***u*** is more like the *u* in "p*u*t" than in "c*u*t." Vowels in Lithuanian are pure—they do not slide off into diphthongs, unless one is specifically dealing with one of the diphthongs (*ai, au, ei, ie, ui* and *uo*).

The ***ą*** is a long sound much like the *a* in English "f*a*ther," and ***ę*** is an open vowel, somewhat like *a* in English "b*a*d." Lithuanian ***ė*** is long and much like the long *ā* in English "m*a*de" (without the final *y* sound we typically add to that vowel). Lithuanian ***ū*** and ***ų*** are pronounced the same, like *u* in English "tr*u*th." The ***į*** and ***y*** are also different ways of writing the same sound, a long *ē* much as in English "d*ee*p," whereas Lithuanian ***i*** sounds closer to the short *ĭ* in English "sh*i*p."

All consonants except ***j*** can have palatalized versions, that is, versions in which the palate is used in articulating the sound, as well as non-palatalized (compare the *n* sounds in "*n*ot" and "o*ni*on"—the latter is palatalized). Consonants are palatalized before front vowels ***(i, į, y, e, ę, ė)***. Before vowels, spelling conventions call for indicating the palatization by inserting an *i*.

Of the consonants, note particularly ***c***, pronounced much like *ts* in English "ca*ts*"; ***č***, much like English *ch* in "*ch*urch"; ***j***, like *y* in English "*y*acht"; ***š***, much like *sh* in "*sh*ip"; and ***ž***, like *zh*, or the *s* in "mea*s*ure." This may be important in research, since Anglicized forms of names with these letters often changed ***c, č, j, š,*** and ***ž*** to *ts, ch, y, sh,* and *zh,* respectively.

Source: Shea, Jonathan D., and William F. Hoffman. *Following the Paper Trail: A Multilingual Translation Guide.* Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 1994.