

I-umlaut in Old English verbs.

As it applies in West Saxon grammar, the i-umlaut rule can be stated as follows:

- 1) a basic back vowel is fronted, and *o*, *ō* are also unrounded; the short vowel that varies between *a* and *o* is fronted to *e*;
- 2) a basic *short* front vowel is raised (*æ* to *e*, *e* to *i*);
- 3) *ēa*, *ēo*, and *īo* become *īe*, while *ea*, *eo*, and *io* become *ie*,
- 4) but basic *ie* becomes *i*.

In other words:

$\bar{u} \rightarrow \bar{y}$	$\text{æ} \rightarrow \text{e}$
$\text{u} \rightarrow \text{y}$	$\text{e} \rightarrow \text{i}$
$\bar{o} \rightarrow \bar{ē}$	$\bar{ē}\text{a}, \bar{ē}\text{o}, \bar{i}\text{o} \rightarrow \bar{i}\text{e}$
$\text{o} \rightarrow \text{e}$	$\text{ea}, \text{eo}, \text{io} \rightarrow \text{ie}$
$\text{a} \sim \text{o} \rightarrow \text{e}$	$\text{ie} \rightarrow \text{i}$
$\bar{a} \rightarrow \bar{æ}$	
$\text{a} \rightarrow \text{æ}$	

The following verb forms exhibit i-umlaut of the vowel of the root:

NO forms of class II weak verbs;¹

only the 2sg. and 3sg. present indicative of normal strong verbs;

all present forms of strong verbs with j-presents

(namely *biddan*, *licgan*, *sittan*, *fricgan* [poetic], *þicgan* [Anglian];
hebban, *hliehhan*, *sceþþan*, *scieppan*, *stæppan*, *swerian*; *wēpan*)

and of irregular class I weak verbs

(namely *bycgan*, *læccan*, *rāccan*, *sēcān*, *tēcān*, *þencān*, *þyncān*, *wyrccan*,
and all weak verbs in *-ecccān* and *-ellān*);

ALL forms of regular class I weak verbs.

¹ Unless the verb is derived from a noun or adjective that already exhibits umlaut; such a verb is *syngian* ‘to sin’, derived from *synniġ* ‘sinful’.

Umlauted forms are underlined in the following table.

	‘love’ (w II)	‘come’ (strong)	‘seem’ (w I irr.)	‘strengthen’ (w I)
pres. indic.				
1sg.	lufie	cume	<u>bynće</u>	<u>trymme</u>
2sg.	lufast	<u>cymst</u>	<u>byncest</u>	<u>trymst</u>
3sg.	lufaþ	<u>cymbþ</u>	<u>bynčþ</u>	<u>trymþ</u>
pl.	lufiaþ	cumaþ	<u>bynčaþ</u>	<u>trymmaþ</u>
pres. subj.				
sg.	lufie	cume	<u>bynće</u>	<u>trymme</u>
pl.	lufien	cumen	<u>bynčen</u>	<u>trymmen</u>
pres. iptv.				
sg.	lufa	cum	<u>bynć</u>	<u>tryme</u>
pl.	lufiaþ	cumaþ	<u>bynčaþ</u>	<u>trymmaþ</u>
nonfinite pres.				
ptc.	lufiende	cumende	<u>bynćende</u>	<u>trymmende</u>
inf.	lufian	cuman	<u>bynčan</u>	<u>trymman</u>
vbl. nn.	tō lufienne	tō cumenne	<u>tō bynćenne</u>	<u>tō trymmenne</u>
pret. indic.				
1sg.	lufode	cōm	þūhte	<u>trymede</u>
2sg.	lufodest	cōme	þūhtest	<u>trymedest</u>
3sg.	lufode	cōm	þūhte	<u>trymede</u>
pl.	lufodon	cōmon	þūhton	<u>trymedon</u>
pret. subj.				
sg.	lufode	cōme	þūhte	<u>trymede</u>
pl.	lufoden	cōmen	þūhten	<u>trymeden</u>
nonfinite pret.				
ptc.	lufod	cumen	þūht	<u>trymed</u>