

Tengwar mode for Na'vi

~: Ṫṛṛṛṛṛṛṛṛ Ṫṛṛṛṛṛṛṛ ḅṛṛ Ṫṛṛṛṛṛṛ Ṫṛṛṛṛṛṛ :-

The Na'vi obviously have no writing system of their own, but we **Aysawtute** have devised one for our own purposes. This transcription uses the Roman alphabet, but it occurred to me to see how a mode of *Tengwar* would work – and as it turns out, the answer is rather well.

The most well-known writing system of Tolkien's creation is arguably *Tengwar* (lit. "letters"), seen, for example, on the One Ring. It is commonly associated with Elvish, but the fact is that the system itself is independent of the target language – the words of that Ring inscription are in fact in Black Speech, the language of Mordor.

The primary letters are arranged in a grid of four columns (*témar*/"series") and six rows (*tyeller*/"grades"), which correspond to points and methods of articulation, respectively. The exact definitions are made on a language-by-language basis, but some conventions have developed that are frequently adhered to. This Na'vi mode is mostly based on the classic Quenya mode.

I have made the first series a wholly alveolar one, bringing the sibilants into the primary table, and the first grade corresponds to the ejectives, which relegates the voiceless plosives to the second one. One obvious advantage of this arrangement is that where lenition occurs, the first grade lenits to the second one, and the second one to the third – with the notable exception of **k**, which breaks the symmetry because it does not lenit to a homorganic consonant. The affricate **ts** has not been assigned a letter of its own, and is instead constructed with *ando* (ṛ) and the *sa-rince*/"s-hook" (ṣ).

Turning to the additional letters, *lambe* (Ṫ) and *alda* (Ṛ) are used for **I** (consonantal) and **II** (vocalic) respectively, but since *óre* (ṛ) is already used for the alveolar flap (in the "weak" grade), *rómen* (Ṛ) rather than *arda* (Ṛ) is employed for **rr**. *Hyarmen* (λ) denotes **h**, and the related *halla* (l) has been chosen to represent the glottal stop to retain the phonetic connection between the two sounds. The latter cannot be used with a vowel *tehta* (see below), but this can actually be seen as advantageous since the glottal stop lenits to zero, so its removal will have no effect on the rest of the word. *Yanta* (λ) and *úre* (ṣ) are used to form the diphthongs ending with **-y** and **-w** respectively, with a *tehta* denoting the first vowel.

Vowels are written with *tehtar* (diacritic symbols above the *tengwar*), and when read they follow the sound value of the parent symbol (except for the diphthongs as defined above). A *tehta* which has no *tengwa* to go with is carried by *telco* (ṫ), which has no sound value of its own. The five common vowel *tehtar* have more or less their common values, and for the remaining sounds **ì** and **ä**, the double-dot and inverted three-dot *tehtar* are used, respectively.

To learn more about Na'vi, please visit <http://www.learnnavi.org/>, and for more information about *Tengwar*, go to <http://at.mansbjorkman.net/tengwar.htm>. The font *Tengwar Annatar*, which is used in this document, can be found at <http://home.student.uu.se/j/jowi4905/fonts/annatar.html>.

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Primary letters

		S E R I E S			
		I <i>Alveolars</i>	II <i>Labials</i>	III <i>Palatals</i>	IV <i>Velars</i>
G R A D E S	1. <i>Ejectives</i>	ɖ tx	ɓ px	ɟ	ɣ kx
	2. <i>Voiceless plosives</i>	ɖ t	ɓ p	ɟ	ɣ k
	3. <i>Voiceless fricatives</i>	ɸ s	ɓ f	ɟ	ɣ
	4. <i>Voiced fricatives</i>	ɸ z	ɓ v	ɟ	ɣ
	5. <i>Nasals</i>	ɖ n	ɓ m	ɟ	ɣ ng
	6. <i>"Weak"</i>	ɖ r	ɓ w	ɟ y	ɣ

Affricate **ɖts**

Additional letters

ɖ rr	ɟ	ɖ l	ɟ ll
ɟ	ɟ	ɟ	ɟ
λ h	ɟ	λ -y	o -w

Blue letters can occur in syllable-final position, and red ones can start initial clusters.

Vowels

ɨ i	ɨ ì	ɨ e	ɨ ä
	ɨ u	ɨ o	ɨ a

