

Tlingit Alphabet

Adapted from a document prepared by Dzéiwsh, James Crippen, for the TTC-UBC Partnership

These are the symbol and symbol combinations used to represent the phonemes of Tlingit in the Revised Popular Orthography. Phonemes that have restricted use are indicated in brackets.

Consonants

← front of mouth back of mouth →

	labial	alveolar	post-alveolar	lateral	palatal	velar	labial velar	uvular	labial uvular	glottal	labial glottal
unaspirated plosives (stops)	(b)	d				g	gw	ḡ	ḡw		
aspirated plosives (stops)	(p)	t				k	kw	k̲	k̲w		
ejective plosives (stops)		t'				k'	k'w	k̲'	k̲'w	.	(.w)
nasals	m	n									
plain fricatives		s	sh	l		x	xw	x̲	x̲w	h	(hw)
ejective fricatives		s'		l'		x'	x'w	x̲'	x̲'w		
unaspirated affricates		dz	j	dl							
aspirated affricates		ts	ch	tl							
ejective affricates		ts'	ch'	tl'							
approximants				l̲	y	ÿ	w				

Vowels

- Nasalized vowels are written with a nasalization hook under the vowel, as for example ɛ̃.
- Low tone vowels are unmarked, as for example a, aa.
- High tone vowels are written with an acute accent over the first vowel letter, as for example á, áa.
- The addition of symbols for nasalized y and nasalized w is under discussion.
- Preceding or following a uvular consonant /u:/ is [o:], written as < ɔo > . Preceding or following a uvular consonant /u/ is [o], written as < ɔ > .

Vowels

	short			long		
	front	central	back	front	central	back
close	i		u	ee		oo
mid	e		ɔ	ei		ɔo
open		a			aa	



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Consonants

← front of mouth back of mouth →

	labial	alveolar	post-alveolar	lateral	palatal	velar	labial velar	uvular	labial uvular	glottal	labial glottal
unaspirated plosives (stops)	(b), /p/	d, /t/				g, /k/	gw, /kʷ/	ǰ, /q/	ǰw, /qʷ/		
aspirated plosives (stops)	(p), /pʰ/	t, /tʰ/				k, /kʰ/	kw, /kʰʷ/	ǰ̥, /qʰ/	ǰ̥w, /qʰʷ/		
ejective plosives (stops)		tʰ, /tʰʼ/				kʰ, /kʰʼ/	kʰw, /kʰʷʼ/	ǰ̥ʰ, /qʰʼ/	ǰ̥ʰw, /qʰʷʼ/	. , /ʔ/	(.w), /ʔʷ/
nasals	m, /m/	n, /n/									
plain fricatives		s, /s/	sh, /ʃ/	l, /ɬ/		x, /x/	xw, /xʷ/	ɣ, /ɣ/	ɣw, /ɣʷ/	h, /h/	(hw), /hʷ/
ejective fricatives		sʰ, /sʰʼ/		ɬʰ, /ɬʰʼ/		xʰ, /xʰʼ/	xʰw, /xʰʷʼ/	ɣʰ, /ɣʰʼ/	ɣʰw, /ɣʰʷʼ/		
unaspirated affricates		dz, /ts/	j, /tʃ/	dl, /tɬ/							
aspirated affricates		ts, /tsʰ/	ch, /tʃʰ/	tl, /tɬʰ/							
ejective affricates		tsʰ, /tsʰʼ/	chʰ, /tʃʰʼ/	tlʰ, /tɬʰʼ/							
approximants				l, /l/	y, /j/	ÿ, /ɥ/	w, /w/				

Vowels

- Nasalized vowels may be written with a nasalization hook under the vowel, as for example ɛ̃.
- High tone vowels are written with an acute accent over the first vowel letter, as for example á, áa.
- Low tone vowels are unmarked, as for example a, aa.
- The addition of symbols for nasalized y and nasalized w is under discussion.
- Preceding or following a uvular consonant /u:/ is [o:], which may be written as <oo>. Preceding or following a uvular consonant /u/ is [o], which may be written as <o>.

Vowels

	short			long		
	front	central	back	front	central	back
close	i, /i/		u, /u/	ee, /i:/		oo, /u:/
mid	e, /e/		o, [o]	ei, /e:/		oo, [o:]
open		a, /a/			aa, /a:/	

Aspirated-Unspirated Contrasts for Tlingit

Instrumental studies (Maddieson, Smith, & Bessell 2001) have reinforced the observations of field researchers that Tlingit speakers who learned the language as one of their first languages use an aspirated vs. unaspirated contrast for plosives (stops) and affricates (indicated in the phonetic transcriptions above by a raised ^h following the symbols for aspirated sounds as opposed to the plain symbols representing unaspirated sounds) rather than a voiced-voiceless contrast that is used for example in English plosives (stops).

Maddieson, Ian, Caroline Smith, & Nicola Bessell. 2001. Aspects of the Phonetics of Tlingit. *Anthropological Linguistics* 43(2): 135–176.



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