

# Tamil / தமிழ் Tamil

romanization: UN 1972/77 + KNAB modifications

## I. Independent vowel characters

1	அ	a	5	உ	u	9	ஐ	ai
2	ஆ	ā	6	ஊ	ū	10	ஓ	ō
3	இ	i	7	எ	ē	11	ஔ	o
4	ஈ	ī	8	ஏ	e	12	ஔள	au

## II. Consonant characters

1	க	ka	8	ந	na	15	ழ	ḷa	22	ஸ	sa <sup>A</sup>
2	ங	ṅa	9	ப	pa	16	ள	ḷa	23	ஹ	ha <sup>A</sup>
3	ச	cha	10	ம	ma	17	ற	ṛa	24	க்ஷ	kṣha <sup>A</sup>
4	ஞ	ñā	11	ய	ya	18	ன	ṇa	25	ற்ற	ṛra
5	ட	ṭa	12	ர	ra	19	ஜ	ja <sup>A</sup>	26	ன்ற	ṇra
6	ண	ṇa	13	ல	la	20	ஸ	sha <sup>AB</sup>			
7	த	ta	14	வ	va	21	ஷ	ṣha <sup>A</sup>			

<sup>A</sup> Characters borrowed from the Grantha script.

<sup>B</sup> Special syllable character: ஸ்ரீ shrī.

## III. Abbreviated vowel characters and other symbols (ஐ stands for any consonant)

1	ஐ	a	5	ஐ	u <sup>D</sup>	9	ஐ	ai <sup>F</sup>	13	ஃ	ḥ <sup>G</sup>
2	ஐ	ā <sup>A</sup>	6	ஐ	ū <sup>E</sup>	10	ஐ	ō	14	ஃ	(H)
3	ஐ	i <sup>B</sup>	7	ஐ	ē	11	ஐ	o			
4	ஐ	ī <sup>C</sup>	8	ஐ	e	12	ஐ	au			

<sup>A</sup> In older and Classical literature special ligatures were used for ணா ṇā, றா ṛā, னா ṇā.

<sup>B</sup> Variation: டி ti.

<sup>C</sup> Variation: டீ tī.

<sup>D</sup> Variations: கு ku, று ṅu, சு chu, ஞு ṅu, டு tu, ணு ṅu, து tu, நு nu, பு pu, மு mu, யு yu, ரு ru, லு lu, etc.

<sup>E</sup> Variations: கூ kū, நூ nū, சூ chū, ஞூ ṅū, டூ tū, ணூ ṅū, தூ tū, நூ nū, பூ pū, மூ mū, யூ yū, ரூ rū, லூ lū, etc.

<sup>F</sup> In older and Classical literature special ligatures were used for லை lai, ளை ļai, ளை ளை nai, ளை ளை nai.

<sup>G</sup> Absent in the original table.

<sup>H</sup> Pronunciation without a vowel: க் k.

## Notes

1. In order to maintain reversibility middle dot (·) is added if the sign of absence of inherent vowel (◌̣) should be followed by an independent vowel character.
2. In the UN romanization middle dot is omitted.
3. In local romanization: ch → (often) s, k → g<sup>A</sup>, t → th/d<sup>A</sup>, ṭ → t/d<sup>A</sup> (<sup>A</sup> – between vowels).

## Pronunciation

ai [ei]<sup>A</sup>, ch [s]~[ʃ] / [tʃ]<sup>B</sup> / [dʒ]<sup>C</sup>, j [dʒ], k [k] / [g]<sup>D</sup> / [x]<sup>E</sup>, ! [l], ழ [ɻ]~[ʒ], ṅ [ŋ], ṅ [ɲ], ṅ [n]<sup>F</sup>, p [p] / [b]<sup>G</sup> / [β]<sup>H</sup>, r [r], ர [r], ரு [tʃr], று [ndr], sh [ʃ], t [t] / [d]<sup>I</sup> / [ð]<sup>H</sup>, ṭ [t] / [d]~[t]<sup>J</sup>, v [v]~[w]

<sup>A</sup> – In non-initial syllables.

<sup>B</sup> – When doubled or after ன, ட.

<sup>C</sup> – After ன.

<sup>D</sup> – After ன, ன, ன.

<sup>E</sup> – Between vowels or after ல, ர, ய.

<sup>F</sup> – In Old Tamil it was an alveolar n.

<sup>G</sup> – After ம, ன, ன.

<sup>H</sup> – Between vowels or after ர, ய.

<sup>I</sup> – After ன.

<sup>J</sup> – Between vowels or after ன.