



# Alphabet

l	<i>a</i>	[ə]	ʝ	<i>o</i>	[ɔ]
ll	<i>á</i>	[e:]	ʟ	<i>ó</i>	[ow]
lɔ	<i>b</i>	[b]	lɔ	<i>p</i>	[p]
ɬ	<i>d</i>	[d]	lɔ̄	<i>p'</i>	[p']
ɖ	<i>e</i>	[ɛ]	ʝ	<i>s</i>	[s]
ɛ	<i>é</i>	[ej]	ɬ	<i>t</i>	[t]
ɔ	<i>f</i>	[f]	ɬ	<i>t'</i>	[t']
ɸ	<i>g</i>	[g]	ɛ	<i>th</i>	[θ]
ɸ	<i>h</i>	[h]	ɬ	<i>ts</i>	[tʰs]
ɬ	<i>i</i>	[i]	lɔ	<i>ts'</i>	[tʰs']
ɬ	<i>í</i>	[i:]	ʟ	<i>u</i>	[u]
ɸ	<i>k</i>	[k]	ɬ	<i>ú</i>	[u:]
ɸ	<i>k'</i>	[k']	lɔ	<i>w</i>	[w]
ɝ	<i>l</i>	[l]	ɔ	<i>x</i>	[x]
ɛ	<i>m</i>	[m]	ɖ	<i>y</i>	[j]
ɝ	<i>n</i>	[n]			

In some cases assimilation occurs that changes the place of articulation of a final consonant to that of the following initial consonant. These changes are reflected in spelling, so you may see the same word with different final letters in different contexts.

word-final ɝ (*n*) may become ɛ (*m*)

word-final ɬ (*d*) may become lɔ (*b*) or ɸ (*g*)

word-final ɬ (*t*) may become lɔ (*p*) or ɸ (*k*)

## Punctuation

-	.	Period/full stop (used as in English).
=	.	Paragraph-final period/full stop.
·	,	Separates clauses only; not used to separate members of a list, indicate pauses, etc.
↵	!	Exclamation mark (used as in English).
L	“	Opening and closing quotation marks. An underline extends under the quoted text. Also used for names and other proper nouns.
J	”	
<u>h</u>	!”	Ligature of exclamation mark and closing quotation mark.
Z	(	Opening and closing parentheses. An underline extends under the parenthetical text.
Δ	)	

## Grammar Overview

In general, T'owal avoids excessive redundancy; the plural marker *le* is omitted if a number is specified, and tense markers are omitted if context makes the tense clear. In this text very little tense marking is used, which is intended as a sort of “storytelling style” (the lack of a tense marker does not indicate the present tense!). When tense markers do appear, they are used to refer to points earlier and later in the story. Similarly, although gender can be conveyed in T'owal the default is always gender-neutral, with gender specified only when necessary for expression or disambiguation. In this text I have chosen to omit references to gender as being unimportant to the narrative as a whole.

T'owal is primarily right-branching, with one major exception noted below. There are four parts of speech: nouns, verbs (including adjective- and adverb-like stative verbs), conjunctions, and interjections.

Rather than using “subject” and “object,” I define each verb as having a certain number of potential nominal arguments which usually occur in a fixed order. In this document I denote these as  $A_1$ ,  $A_2$ , etc. Though the first argument is often an agent of some sort, this is not always the case; (see *kwet* and *tuf* in the glossary for relevant examples).

While the nominal arguments occur in a fixed order, the placement of the verb relative to those arguments is free, giving various possible word orders (e.g.  $VA_1A_2$ ,  $A_1VA_2$ ,  $A_1A_2V$ , etc.). The first phrase of a clause may be partially left-branching to allow something other than the head of a phrase to come first (e.g. “In a hole in the ground there lived ... ” rather than “There lived in a hole in the ground ... ”). Non-clause-initial phrases are always right-branching.

Within any given clause, the finite verb and its nominal arguments (specifically, the heads of the verb and noun phrases) are all marked by changing their first vowel from lax (*a, e, i, o, u*) to tense (*á, é, í, ó, ú* respectively). Any verbs or nouns that are not marked are dependents of one of the marked words. If there is more than one marked verb in a clause, the first one is the finite verb and any others are infinitives functioning as nominal arguments. Multiple clauses within a sentence are always divided with commas to make it clear which nominal arguments go with which verb.

Unmarked verbs and nouns have various meanings depending on context:

1. an unmarked verb dependent on another verb may be interpreted as an adverb, or as the head of a prepositional phrase if followed by an unmarked noun (see below)
2. an unmarked verb dependent on a noun may be interpreted as an adjective, participle, or even the head of a small dependent clause (with the preceding noun corresponding to its  $A_1$ )
3. an unmarked noun dependent on another noun is a possessor
4. an unmarked noun dependent on a nonfinite verb has the role of its  $A_2$  (note that “nonfinite verb” may refer either to an unmarked verb or a marked one that is acting as a nominal argument of a finite verb)

In some instances, an unmarked verb followed by an unmarked noun is best translated as a preposition and its object. For example, with *sin* “person,” *dne* “to leave,” and *sonden* “forest,” you could translate *sin dne sonden* as “a person leaving a forest” or “a person who is leaving a forest” according to (2) and (4) above; but with *nas* “run” added in, *sín nás dne sonden* is best translated as “a person is running from the forest.”

In other cases an unmarked verb may be interpreted as an infinitive, especially when following certain nouns. In such a construction the infinitive acts as a possessing noun. For example, *si* is a noun indicating an animate agent, and is almost always followed by an unmarked verb, as in *si thdat* “leader” (lit. “doer of leading”). Similar words to watch out for in this text are *fén* and *pwa*.

## Glossary

Words are listed with unmarked vowels only, and without the assimilations noted on page 2.

l	a	c	and (can coordinate clauses or phrases; note the placement of commas to tell the difference.)
ᵐᵒᵐᵉᵗᵒ	<i>bmetho</i>	n	monarch
ᵐᵒᵓ	<i>bos</i>	pn	(obviate animate pronoun; see entry for <i>mo</i> .)
ᵐᵒᵐᵉᵗ	<i>bwet</i>	vi	end
ᵐᵒᵐᵉᵗ	<i>bwud</i>	vt	encounter ( $A_1$ encounters $A_2$ )

ᄡᄢ	<i>de</i>	vt	<b>until</b> (A <sub>1</sub> lasts until A <sub>2</sub> )
ᄡᄢᄢ	<i>dne</i>	vt	<b>leave, go away from</b> (A <sub>1</sub> leaves location A <sub>2</sub> ; when used adverbially, the usual translation is “from”).
ᄡᄣ	<i>do</i>	vi	<b>large</b>
ᄡᄣᄣ	<i>dus</i>	n	<b>home</b>
ᄢ	<i>e</i>	vt	<b>at, in, on, etc.</b> (general locative; A <sub>1</sub> is in location A <sub>2</sub> ).
ᄢᄣ	<i>ex</i>	vi	<b>all, every</b>
ᄢᄣᄣ	<i>fan</i>	vt	<b>see</b> (A <sub>1</sub> sees A <sub>2</sub> )
ᄢᄣᄣ	<i>fdu</i>	vi	<b>alive, live</b>
ᄢᄣᄣ	<i>fen</i>	n	<b>action, event, instance</b> (may simply refer to any action, but often followed by an unmarked verb; in this case, the verb is a possessing infinitive and the meaning is “an instance of __ing,” e.g. <i>fen t'es</i> “plan” (n) from <i>t'es</i> “plan” (v), or <i>fen fan</i> “sight, vision” from <i>fan</i> “see.”)
ᄢᄣᄣ	<i>fut</i>	vt	<b>die, kill</b> (A <sub>1</sub> dies (of cause A <sub>2</sub> ); A <sub>2</sub> kills A <sub>1</sub> )
ᄢᄣᄣᄣᄣ	<i>fyonte</i>	n	<b>birch tree</b>
ᄣᄢᄢᄢ	<i>gwid</i>	vd	<b>send</b> (A <sub>1</sub> sends A <sub>2</sub> to recipient or location A <sub>3</sub> )
ᄣᄣ	<i>ha</i>	vt	<b>have, own</b> (A <sub>1</sub> has A <sub>2</sub> )
ᄣᄣᄣᄣ	<i>hled</i>	vt	<b>choose</b> (A <sub>1</sub> chooses A <sub>2</sub> )
ᄣᄣᄢᄢᄢ	<i>hlyi</i>	n	<b>body</b>
ᄣᄣᄣ	<i>hne</i>	pn	<b>you, your</b> (“your” only when unmarked and following another noun as a possessor)
ᄣᄣᄣᄣᄣ	<i>hontsu</i>	vi	<b>hide, hidden, secret</b> (A <sub>1</sub> is hidden, or A <sub>2</sub> hides A <sub>1</sub> )
ᄣᄣᄣ	<i>hox</i>	vi	<b>no, none, not, zero</b>
ᄣᄣ	<i>hu</i>	vt	<b>be, exist</b> (A <sub>1</sub> exists, or A <sub>1</sub> is A <sub>2</sub> . May be used adverbially for identification, e.g. X <i>hu</i> Y = “X, which/who is (called) Y”)
ᄣᄣᄣᄣ	<i>hyan</i>	n	<b>knife</b>
ᄢ	<i>i</i>	n	<b>that, this, the following</b> (usually refers to the next clause or sentence as a whole)
ᄢᄣ	<i>il</i>	vt	<b>similar</b> (A <sub>1</sub> is similar to A <sub>2</sub> ; used in this text as a preposition meaning “like” or “in the manner of”)
ᄢᄣᄣ	<i>ix</i>	c	<b>or</b>

ቀ1	<i>k'a</i>	vi	(forms the future tense when used adverbially; see note on tense above)
ቀጋፍላ	<i>ksed</i>	n	<b>group, organization</b>
ቀህፎ	<i>kuth</i>	n	<b>thing</b>
ቀገፍጋ	<i>kwet</i>	vt	<b>hate</b> (A <sub>1</sub> is hated by A <sub>2</sub> . If A <sub>2</sub> is dropped, then A <sub>1</sub> is implied to be hated by the speaker or by people in general; in other words, A <sub>1</sub> is terrible or evil.)
ቃ1ፃ	<i>lal</i>	vd	<b>say, speak</b> (A <sub>1</sub> says A <sub>2</sub> to A <sub>3</sub> , or A <sub>1</sub> tells A <sub>2</sub> A <sub>3</sub> (i.e. A <sub>1</sub> is always the speaker but A <sub>2</sub> and A <sub>3</sub> do not have a fixed order))
ቃፍ	<i>le</i>	vi	<b>multiple</b> (plural marker; omitted if it is clear from context)
ቃጠ	<i>li</i>	vi	(When used adverbially, conveys a general irrealis mood, indicating that the described action does not necessarily actually occur)
ቃገጠ	<i>lot</i>	vi	<b>again</b>
ፍፍፃ	<i>men</i>	vd	<b>tell</b> (A <sub>1</sub> tells A <sub>3</sub> about A <sub>2</sub> )
ፍጠፃፃ	<i>minol</i>	n	<b>country, kingdom, nation</b>
ፍገ	<i>mo</i>	pn	(proximate animate pronoun. Used for most third-person animate referents, so the referent may switch fairly freely; the obviate pronoun <i>bos</i> used mostly for disambiguation)
ፃ1ጋ	<i>nas</i>	vi	<b>run</b>
ፃህፃ	<i>nul</i>	vt	<b>follow</b> (A <sub>1</sub> follows A <sub>2</sub> in time)
ፃ	<i>o</i>	vt	<b>with</b> (A <sub>1</sub> is with A <sub>2</sub> ; when used adverbially, the usual translation is “with”.)
ፃፃ	<i>ol</i>	vt	<b>be able, can</b> (A <sub>1</sub> can do A <sub>2</sub> )
ፃጋ	<i>os</i>	c	<b>if</b>
ፃጠ	<i>ot</i>	n	<b>that, this, the preceding</b> (usually refers to the preceding clause or sentence as a whole)
፳1ፎ	<i>p'ath</i>	n	<b>hair, fur</b> (refers to a single strand)
፳ፍፍ	<i>p'ef</i>	vt	<b>desire, want</b> (A <sub>1</sub> wants A <sub>2</sub> )
፳ጠፎ	<i>p'ith</i>	n	<b>magic</b> (when used as a possessor, may be translated as “magical”)
፳ፃፍ	<i>p'of</i>	vi	<b>maybe</b>
፳ህጠ	<i>p'ut</i>	vt	<b>surprise</b> (A <sub>1</sub> surprises A <sub>2</sub> )
፳1ጋፃፃ	<i>pasyo</i>	n	<b>crown</b>

ᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>psil</i>	vt	<b>precede</b> (A <sub>1</sub> precedes A <sub>2</sub> in time)
ᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>pwa</i>	n	<b>moment, occasion, time</b> (may be followed with an unmarked verb; in this case, the verb is a possessing infinitive and the meaning is “the time that __ happens.” A following noun is an argument of that verb, so the full meaning is “when __ does __.”)
ᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>pyen</i>	vt	<b>carry, contain, hold</b> (A <sub>1</sub> carries or contains A <sub>2</sub> )
ᵋᵋᵋ	<i>sal</i>	vt	<b>make</b> (A <sub>1</sub> makes A <sub>2</sub> )
ᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>sdoye</i>	vt	<b>gather</b> (A <sub>1</sub> gathers A <sub>2</sub> )
ᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>sgen</i>	vt	<b>other, different</b> (A <sub>1</sub> is different from A <sub>2</sub> )
ᵋᵋ	<i>si</i>	n	<b>doer</b> (when followed with a verb, creates an animate agentive noun, i.e. someone who does that thing (much like English “-er”). e.g. <i>fdu</i> “live” → <i>si fdu</i> → “creature, living being,” or <i>thdat</i> “lead” → <i>si thdat</i> “leader”)
ᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>sigu</i>	n	<b>exterior, outside</b>
ᵋᵋᵋ	<i>sin</i>	n	<b>human, person</b>
ᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>sk’etut</i>	n	<b>soldier</b>
ᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>slod</i>	n	<b>leg</b>
ᵋᵋ	<i>so</i>	vi	<b>walk</b>
ᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>sonden</i>	n	<b>forest</b>
ᵋᵋᵋ	<i>sos</i>	vi	<b>complete, entire, whole</b>
ᵋᵋ	<i>su</i>	n	<b>I, me, my</b> (“my” only when unmarked and following another noun as a possessor)
ᵋᵋᵋ	<i>swa</i>	vi	<b>usual, habitual</b> (when used adverbially, conveys the habitual mood)
ᵋᵋᵋ	<i>t’an</i>	vi	<b>alone, only</b>
ᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>t’es</i>	vt	<b>intend, plan</b> (A <sub>1</sub> plans for A <sub>2</sub> to happen)
ᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>thbaha</i>	vt	<b>marry</b> (A <sub>1</sub> marries A <sub>2</sub> (as in A <sub>1</sub> and A <sub>2</sub> get married))
ᵋᵋᵋᵋ	<i>thdat</i>	vt	<b>direct, lead</b> (A <sub>1</sub> leads A <sub>2</sub> )
ᵋᵋᵋ	<i>thdo</i>	vt	<b>fight</b> (A <sub>1</sub> fights A <sub>2</sub> )
ᵋᵋᵋ	<i>then</i>	vt	<b>exceed</b> (A <sub>1</sub> exceeds A <sub>2</sub> . When used adverbially, forms a comparative, with a following noun as the comparand, e.g. <i>sín úli then fyonte</i> = “the people are more numerous than the birch trees”)
ᵋᵋᵋ	<i>thwi</i>	n	<b>sibling</b>

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚	<i>ts'ohef</i>	vt	exchange, trade
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>ts'un</i>	vt	bring, take (A <sub>1</sub> brings/takes A <sub>2</sub> to a new location)
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>tse</i>	vt	cause (A <sub>1</sub> causes A <sub>2</sub> )
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>tsin</i>	vt	use (A <sub>1</sub> uses A <sub>2</sub> )
ᳵ᳚	<i>tso</i>	vi	(forms the passive voice when used adverbially; the order of the verb's arguments is reversed, allowing different arguments to be dropped)
ᳵ᳚	<i>tu</i>	c	but
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>tuf</i>	vt	move, travel (A <sub>1</sub> moves or travels, or A <sub>2</sub> moves A <sub>1</sub> )
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>tul</i>	vt	acquire, get, take (A <sub>1</sub> takes A <sub>2</sub> )
ᳵ᳚᳚᳚	<i>tyot</i>	n	area, place
ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚	<i>ubsul</i>	vi	real
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>uli</i>	vi	numerous
ᳵ᳚᳚᳚	<i>ults'a</i>	vd	promise (A <sub>1</sub> promises A <sub>2</sub> to A <sub>3</sub> )
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>us</i>	vt	intend, for (A <sub>1</sub> is intended for A <sub>2</sub> ; in this text, A <sub>1</sub> is an action intended to bring about a result A <sub>2</sub> )
ᳵ᳚᳚᳚	<i>was</i>	vd	give (A <sub>1</sub> gives A <sub>2</sub> to A <sub>3</sub> )
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>we</i>	vi	forms the past tense when used adverbially; see note on tense above
ᳵ᳚᳚᳚	<i>wis</i>	vt	reside (A <sub>1</sub> resides in location A <sub>2</sub> )
ᳵ᳚᳚᳚	<i>wol</i>	vt	think (A <sub>1</sub> thinks A <sub>2</sub> )
ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚	<i>wutsyut</i>	vt	disgust, disgusting (A <sub>1</sub> disgusts A <sub>2</sub> ; A <sub>2</sub> finds A <sub>1</sub> to be disgusting)
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>xi</i>	vt	go (A <sub>1</sub> goes to location A <sub>2</sub> . When used adverbially, the usual translation is "to.")
ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚	<i>xmen</i>	vi	necessary (when used adverbially, the meaning is essentially "must"/ "need to")
ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚	<i>yeftsu</i>	vt	follow (A <sub>1</sub> follows the motion or leadership of A <sub>2</sub> )
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>yi</i>	vi	long
ᳵ᳚᳚	<i>yu</i>	vi	two