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# Quenya Tengwainen Writing Quenya with Tengwar

A practical guide

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## Introduction

The writing signs of Feanor can be used for many tongues, and there is a large variation among the written examples from the Third Age. There are also variations *within* each language. This makes the study of Tengwar laborious and often frustrating. The probably most consistent writing mode is found among sources in Quenya, High-elven. However, it also has some minor variations. The purpose of this paper is to show how Quenya *can* be written with Tengwar. It is not a complete list of all variants. Where variations exist, the simplest, most common variant is chosen, thus giving a minimal set of rules for practical use. These rules do not, of course, apply at all to any other language such as Sindarin, English or Swedish. Finally, many thanks goes to Mellonath Daeron for useful comments and suggestions.

## Rules

Quenya is written *phonemically*. There is in other words a direct correspondence between how words are pronounced and written with Tengwar. This is also true when the words are transcribed to Latin letters.

With Tengwar belong Tehtar, additional signs, which are used for vowels and other things. The tables at the end show their sound values and how they are transcribed.

Tehtar for vowels are placed above the tengwa for the preceding consonant. This is practical, since words in Quenya often end with a vowel. (In most other languages it's the other way around, so there vowel tehtar are commonly placed on the following tengwa.) Example: *falma* "wave" is written ᑭᓄᓄ.

When there is no preceding tengwa (e.g. at the beginning of a word) the tehta is placed on a mute *vowel carrier*, ı. Example: *elen* "star" is written ıᑭᓄ.

Long vowels, which are transcribed with an acute accent, are placed on a separate *long vowel carrier*, ʃ. Example: *namárie* "farewell" is written ᓄᓄᓄʃı.

Long consonants, which are transcribed with a doubled letter, is marked with a wavy line below the tengwa. Example: *metta* "end" is written  $\text{m}^{\sim}\text{t}^{\sim}$ .

The letters **s** and **ss** are written with Silme and Esse, or with Silme nuquerna and Esse nuquerna when a tehta is placed above. Example: *lasse* "leaf" is written  $\text{t}^{\sim}\text{s}^{\sim}$ .

The letter **r** is written with Rómen when it is followed by a vowel, otherwise with Óre. Example: *coranar* "sun-round", "year" is written  $\text{ó}\text{r}^{\sim}\text{a}\text{n}\text{a}\text{r}$ .

There are six diphthongs in Quenya: **ai**, **oi**, **ui**, **au**, **eu**, **iu**. (Other vowel combinations are not diphthongs, and pronounced separately). Diphthongs are written in a peculiar way, with a tehta for the first vowel placed above Yanta or Úre. Examples: *luin* "blue" is written  $\text{t}^{\sim}\text{l}\text{u}\text{i}\text{n}$ , *aure* "day" is written  $\text{ó}\text{y}^{\sim}$ . As can be seen, the signs of a diphthong are written "backwards" compared to other text in Quenya.

In Quenya, **y** is a consonant. It is written in a special way. When y follows a consonant (such as r, l, or n), the consonant is *palatalized*. This is written with two dots under the tengwa. Example: *fanya* "cloudy veil" is written  $\text{f}^{\cdot}\text{a}\text{n}\text{y}\text{a}$ .

In other cases, when y doesn't follow a consonant (e.g. at the beginning of a word) is written with Anna and two dots below. Examples: *yulma* "cup" is written  $\text{y}^{\cdot}\text{l}\text{m}\text{a}$ , *yáve* "fruit" is written  $\text{y}^{\cdot}\text{j}^{\cdot}\text{v}\text{e}$ . (So these are not diphthongs).

The combination **nw** is normally written with Númen and Wilya, but at the beginning of a word with Nwalme. Examples: *vanwa* "lost" is written  $\text{n}^{\cdot}\text{w}\text{a}\text{w}\text{a}$ , *nwalca* "cruel" is written  $\text{n}^{\cdot}\text{w}\text{a}\text{l}\text{c}\text{a}$ .

A following **s** may (but need not) be written with a downward hook (  $\text{~}$  ) attached to the bow of the preceding tengwa, especially in the consonant combinations **ts**, **ps** and **cs** (sometimes transcribed **ks** or **x**). Examples: *otso* "seven", *lepse* "finger" and *nixe* "frost" are written  $\text{ó}\text{t}\text{s}^{\sim}$ ,  $\text{l}\text{e}\text{p}\text{s}^{\sim}$  and  $\text{n}\text{i}\text{x}\text{e}$ .

## Notes

In transcriptions, an elided vowel is marked with an apostrophe. Also, concatenated words are written with a hyphen. No corresponding signs are needed in Tengwar. Example: *tenn' ambar-metta* "until [the] world-ending" is written  $\text{t}\text{e}\text{n}\text{n}'\text{a}\text{m}\text{b}\text{a}\text{r}\text{m}\text{e}\text{t}\text{t}\text{a}$ .

A diaeresis (two dots) is sometimes seen in transcribed Quenya. It has no phonological significance and consequently no correspondance in Tengwar. It should be avoided since it is easily confused with an umlaut; e.g. **a** and **ä** are totally different vowels in Swedish or German. The father of Elrond is thus not *Eärendil*, but *Earendil*:  $\text{e}\text{a}\text{r}\text{e}\text{n}\text{d}\text{i}\text{l}$ .

## Excercises

1. Transcribe Treebeard's reverence to Celeborn and Galadriel *A Vanimar, vanimálion nostari!*

2. What do these words mean? (The answer is found in the *Silmarillion*).

ἰ ῥῖḡṇṇṇ ῥḡḡḡḡḡ ῥḡḡḡḡ ἰḡḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ

3. Transcribe Frodo's greeting *Elen síla lúmenn' omentielvo*.

4. Transcribe the month names *Narvinye, Nénime, Súlime, Viresse, Lótesse, Nárie, Cermie, Úrime, Yavannie, Narquelie, Hísime*, and *Ringare*.

5. What do these words mean? (The answer is found in the *Silmarillion*).

ἰῥἰḡḡḡḡ ṵḡḡ ḡḡ ἰḡḡḡḡ ἰḡ ἰḡḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ ἰῥἰḡḡḡḡ ṵḡḡ

6. Write all the tengwa names with Tengwar.

7. Transcribe Frodo's call in Torech Ungol *Aiya Earendil Elenion Ancalima!*

8. Who utters these words, and why? (The answer is found in *The Lord of the Rings*).

ἰῥ ἰḡḡḡḡ ἰḡḡḡḡḡ ἰῥἰḡḡḡḡḡ: ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡ ἰḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ  
ῥḡḡ ἰḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ

9. Transcribe Cirion's Oath to Eorl (UT 3 II iii) *Vanda sina termaruva Elenna-nóreo alcar enyalien ar Elendil Vorondo voronwe. Nai tiruvantes i hárar mahalmassen mi Númen ar i Eru i or ilye mahalmar ea tennoio*.

10. Transcribe Treebeard's utterings *Laurelindórenan lindelorendor malinornéliion ornemalin. Taurelilómea-tumbalemorna Tumbaletaurea Lómeanor*.

11. Transcribe the song *Namárie* (Galadriel's lament in Lothlórien).

12. Write a poem in Quenya. Then transcribe it to Tengwar, using your best calligraphy. Illuminate the initial tengwa with gold.

## Consonants

1 Tinco ṭ t	2 Parma Ṗ p	3 Calma ċ c	4 Qesse q qu
5 Ando ṇ nd	6 Umbar ṃ mb	7 Anga ŋ ng	8 Ungwe ṅ ngw
9 Súle ḥ -	10 Formen Ḧ f	11 Aha ċ -	12 Hwesta ḏ hw
13 Anto ḥ nt	14 Ampa ḥ mp	15 Anca ċ nc	16 Unque ḏ nqu
17 Númen ṇ n	18 Malta ṃ m	19 Noldo ŋ -	20 Nwalme ṅ nw-
21 Óre ṛ r	22 Vala ṽ v	23 Anna y y-	24 Wilya w w
25 Rómen r r	26 Arda rd rd	27 Lambe l l	28 Alda ld ld
29 Silme s s	30 S. Nuquerna s s	31 Esse ss ss	32 E. Nuquerna ss ss
33 Hyarmen h h	34 Hw. Sindarinwa - -	35 Yanta -i -i	36 Úre -u -u

## Vowels

á a	é e	í i	ó o	ú u
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## Diphthongs

ai ai	oi oi	ui ui	au au	eu eu	iu iu
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## Y (without preceding consonant)

ya ya	ye ye	yu yu	yo yo
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## Special characters

Vowel carrier j	Long vowel carrier J	Comma ·	Period :	Exclamation mark !	Question mark ?
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