

How To Read

Below is a table of the symbols used in "Modified Baybayin" alphabet.

| Baybayin Symbol | Latin Letter | Sound |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------|
| ᜆ | A | /a/ |
| ᜇ | E / I | /e/ /i/ |
| ᜈ | O / U | /o/ /u/ |
| ᜉ | Ca / Ka | /ca/ /ka/ |
| ᜊ | Ba / Va | /ba/ /va/ |
| ᜋ | Da | /da/ |
| ᜌ | Fa / Pa / Pha | /fa/ /pa/ |
| ᜍ | Ha | /ha/ |
| ᜎ | Ga | /ga/ |
| ᜏ | La | /la/ |
| ᜐ | Ma | /ma/ |
| ᜑ | Na | /na/ |
| ᜒ | Nga | /ŋa/ |
| ᜓ | Sa / Za | /sa/ /za/ |
| ᜔ | Ta | /ta/ |
| ᜕ | Wa | /wa/ |
| ᜖ | Ya | /ja/ |
| ᜗ | E / I | /e/ /i/ |
| ᜘ | O / U | /o/ /u/ |
| ᜙ | Consonant marker | |

Examples

The first three symbols in the table represent vowels. Tagalog vowels originally only consisted of A, I and O. Then when borrowed words were introduced from Spanish and English, E and U were added and utilized the same symbol as I and O respectively. These are typically used when a word starts with a vowel, like “ama”, or when there are two consecutive vowels, like “maaari”. See examples below:

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| ᜆᜈ | ᜆ | ᜈ |
| ama | a | ma |

| | | | | |
|--------|----|---|---|----|
| ᜈᜆᜆᜈ | ᜈ | ᜆ | ᜆ | ᜈ |
| maaari | ma | a | a | ri |

The next fourteen rows show the base symbols for consonants. By default all of the consonant symbols have an “a” after the associated consonant, making them “syllabic”. For example if you wanted to write the word “ba” or “ka” they would both be the symbol associated with the respective consonant without a mark above or below (more on that later). See example below:

| | | |
|------|----|----|
| ᜆᜄ | ᜆ | ᜄ |
| baka | ba | ka |

The next two symbols are called "kudlits". A kudlit is added either above or below a consonant symbol to modify which vowel follows. If a kudlit is added above the vowel that follows is either an "i" or an "e". If a kudlit is added below the vowel that follows is either an "o" or a "u".

In the word “filipino” the first three symbols will have kudlits above because they are followed by “i”. The last symbol will have a kudlit below because it is followed by an “o”. See example below:

| | | | | |
|----------|----|----|----|----|
| ᜆᜄᜆᜈᜆᜈ | ᜆ | ᜆᜈ | ᜆ | ᜈᜈ |
| Filipino | fi | li | pi | no |

The final symbol in the table is the "krus" kudlit. This again modifies a consonant symbol by making it a standalone consonant. In the word "aking" the symbol for "ng" has a krus kudlit below because it is not followed by a vowel. See example below:

| | | | |
|--------|---|----|----|
| കിങ്ങ് | ക | കി | ങ് |
| aking | a | ki | ng |

The First Rule of Baybayin

"Kung anong bigkas, siyang baybay."

Baybayin is a phonetic alphabet meaning, words are written how they sound not necessarily as they are expressed in the Latin alphabet. The most common examples of this are "ng" and "mga". These two words are pronounced "nang" and "manga" and should be expressed as such when written in Baybayin.

| ᠨᠠᠩ | ᠨᠠ | ᠩ |
|-----------|----|----|
| nang (ng) | na | ng |

| | | |
|-------------|----|-----|
| မာဂ | မ | ဂ |
| manga (mga) | ma | nga |

Borrowed words

There are many words in Tagalog that have been borrowed from other languages. Most notably from Spanish and English. This is why, when transliterating modern Tagalog into Baybayin, many symbols represent two or more letters from the Latin alphabet OR are a combination of symbols to produce a similar sound. Many words when expressed in Baybayin will first be "Tagalized" or in other words, they are written phonetically using the Roman alphabet. (more on these later) Here is a table of the most notable borrowed sounds and how they are expressed in Baybayin:

| Baybayin Symbol | Original Tagalog | Borrowed |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| ᜏ | I | E |
| ᜚ | O | U |
| ᜔ | K | C / Ch / Qu (Spa) |
| ᜘ | B | V |
| ᜙ | F | P / Ph |
| ᜛ | H | J / G (Spa) |
| ᜞ | S | C / Z |
| ᜟᜢ | Ts | Ch / Ci |
| ᜟᜣᜤ ᜟᜣᜥ | Siy / Sy | Sh |
| ᜟᜣᜦ ᜟᜣᜧ | Diy / Dy | J (Eng) |
| ᜟᜨ | Kuw | Qu (Spa / Eng) |

Examples

In the following section, each example table contains a Baybayin, a Tagalized, and an original version of each word.

Some are a combination of symbols used to mimic certain sounds like “siy” or “sy” (informal) for “sh” and “f” for “ph”. See examples below:

| ᜏᜒᜃᜅ᜔ᜃ | ᜏᜒ ᜏᜃ | ᜆ | ᜃ |
|---------|------------|---|-----|
| siyampu | siya / sya | m | pu |
| shampoo | sha | m | poo |

| ᜆ᜔ᜃᜅ᜔ᜃᜏᜃ | ᜃ | ᜆ | ᜃ | ᜆ | ᜏ |
|-------------|-----|----|-----|----|---|
| Filipins | fi | li | pi | n | s |
| Philippines | Phi | li | ppi | ne | s |

Some letters are borrowed from both Spanish and English but make different sounds according to the context. These are mainly “diy” or “dy” (informal) for “j” and “k” or “kuw” for “qu”. See examples below:

| ᜏᜆ᜔ᜃᜅ | ᜏᜆ | ᜆ | ᜃ |
|----------|------|----|----|
| kuwaliti | kuwa | li | ti |
| quality | qua | li | ti |

| ᜏᜏᜏᜆ | ᜏᜏ | ᜏ | ᜆ |
|-------|----|----|---|
| Keson | Ke | so | n |

| | | | |
|--------|----------|----|---|
| Quezon | Que (ke) | zo | n |
|--------|----------|----|---|

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|----|---|
| ကုဇုန် | ကုဇု နုဇု | န | န |
| Diyesus | Diye / dye | su | s |
| ဟုဇုန် | ဟု | န | န |
| Hesus | He | su | s |
| Jesus (eng/spa) | Je (diye/he) | su | s |

The letter “c” contributes to forming multiple different sounds in various borrowed words. It can be expressed having an “s”, “k” or “ch” sound. The “ch” sound is expressed with “ts”. See examples below:

| | | | | |
|------------|----|---|---|----|
| နုဇုန်ဇုန် | န | န | န | န |
| sentro | se | n | t | ro |
| centro | ce | n | t | ro |

| | | | | |
|------------|----|-------|----|----|
| နုဇုန်နုဇု | န | န | န | န |
| sekreto | se | k | re | to |
| secreto | se | c (k) | re | to |

| | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|------|---|---|
| နုဇုန်နုဇုနုဇု | န | န | နုဇု | န | န |
| antsent | a | n | tse | n | t |

| | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|-----|---|---|
| ancient | a | n | cie | n | t |
|---------|---|---|-----|---|---|

When “ch” is used it commonly is expressed as “ts” or “k”. See examples below:

| | | | | |
|---------|-----|---|----|---|
| ᑦᓴᓴᓂᓴ | ᑦᓴ | ᓴ | ᓂ | ᓴ |
| tsismis | tsi | s | mi | s |
| chismis | chi | s | mi | s |

| | | | | |
|-----------|----|-----|----|----|
| ᓂᑦᓴᓂᓴ | ᓂ | ᓴ | ᓂ | ᓴ |
| mekaniko | me | ka | ni | ko |
| mechanico | me | cha | ni | co |

Both “e” and “o” also originally didn’t exist and are expressed in the same way as “i” and “u” respectively. See examples below:

| | | | |
|-------|----|----|---|
| ᑦᓴᓴ | ᑦ | ᓴ | ᓴ |
| Hesus | He | su | s |
| Jesus | Je | su | s |

| | | | | |
|--------|---|----|---|----|
| ᑦᓴᓴᓂᓴ | ᑦ | ᓴ | ᓂ | ᓴ |
| Ehipto | E | hi | p | to |
| Egipto | E | gi | p | to |

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| ሀሴ | ሀ | ሴ |
| uso | u | so |

The final borrowed consonants are V, Ph, P and Z. See examples below:

| | | |
|------|----|----|
| ባቅ | ባ | ቅ |
| baka | ba | ka |
| vaka | va | ka |

| | | | |
|-------|---|----|----|
| ፕላኖ | ፕ | ላ | ኖ |
| plano | p | la | no |

| | | | |
|-------|----|---|----|
| ሴቦራ | ሴ | ቦ | ራ |
| sebra | se | b | ra |
| zebra | ze | b | ra |