

Introduction

Zdetl is the official language of the Zhodani Consulate in the age of the Third Imperium. While its precise origins are unknown, it is commonly accepted that it developed in the wake of what is today known as the Final War when the surviving humans on Zhdant found themselves bereft of their alien masters. Over the millennia, Zdetl gradually evolved into its modern form and was universally adopted as the official language in the 300th Teqozdij of the Driantia Zhdantia, equivalent to Imperial year -6055.

A distinguishing feature of modern Zdetl is its emphasis on standardization in morphology, grammar, syntax and structure. Zhodani culture is fundamentally assimilative in nature; in other words, the Consulate is not interested in conquest by force but rather by acculturation. To this end, the Consular official language has been regularized over time to make it easy to teach and learn, or at least less difficult than other languages are. This does not mean Zdetl lacks complexity - like the ancient Terran game of Go, its fundamentals can be learned in minutes, but it can take a lifetime of study and practice to truly master.

Spelling, Pronunciation, and Accent

Words in Zdetl have been standardized in spelling and pronunciation and are phonetic in nature. Each of the major phonemes has a single letter symbol, called **tlatoni** (とㄥㄥㄥㄥ) associated with it, and each **tlatoni** has one sound. There are no silent letters. If a phoneme is unvoiced, it is not written.

Vowels

The Zdetl vowels are **A**, **E**, **I**, **IA**, **IE**, **O**, and **Ř**. Each has a unique sound and all are pronounced consistently regardless of where they appear.

ㄥ	A as in father , never as in pale
ㄥ	E as in get or let , never as in pier
ㄥ	I as in kit , never as in mile
ㄥ	IA as in yaweh
ㄥ	IE as in layer
ㄥ	O as in go
ㄥ	Ř is a throaty “r” sound, almost unvoiced like the “r” in work . This sound can be challenging to learn and recognized in Anglicized Zdetl; students should practice saying it often. It will be noted in the text as ř where needed.

Don't make the vowel sounds too long. Each vowel should be pronounced as clearly and as purely as possible.

Consonants

The consonant phonemes in Zdetl are: **B, BL, BR, CH, CHT, D, DL, DR, F, FL, FR, J, JD, K, KL, KR, L, M, N, NCH, NJ, NS, NSH, NT, NTS, NZ, NZH, P, PL, PR, Q, QL, QR, R, S, SH, SHT, T, TS, TL, V, VL, VR, Y, Z, ZD, ZH, and ZHD**. As stated previously, each consonant sound has one **tlatoni** and one sound only. Try to pronounce each consonant as clearly as possible. This will get easier with practice. Review the table of consonants on page vi.

Syllable Structures and Accentuation

In Zdetl, words are constructed in sets of *syllables* that follow consistent patterns. These can take the form of a single vowel (V), a consonant followed by a vowel (CV), a vowel followed by a consonant (VC), or a vowel between an initial and a final consonant (CVC). When spoken, words are always accented on the *penultimate* (second-to-last) syllable, or in the case of two-syllable words, on the *final* syllable. Because it can be difficult to clearly identify syllable breaks in the Anglicized transliteration of Zdetl, students should familiarize themselves with the Zdetl **tlatonl** as shown in the previous tables.

Practice reading and saying the following words to familiarize yourself with pronunciation.

Atrint	ᠠᠷᠢᠨᠲᠢ	At- rint - “raining”, the wet season following the winter thaw
Vrienstial	ᠪᠷᠢᠨᠰᠡᠳᠢᠰᠢᠯᠠ	Vrien- stial - “heat”, the warm summer season
Atchafser	ᠠᠳᠴᠠᠮᠢᠰᠡᠷ	At- chaf -ser - “waning”, the autumn season when the heat of summer fades
Ataniebl	ᠠᠳᠠᠨᠢᠭᠢᠪᠣᠯ	A- tan -iebl - “harvest”, the season to harvest mature crops
Ashtiavl	ᠠᠰᠲᠢᠠᠪᠯᠠ	Asht- iavl - “chill”, the winter season
Atpiapr	ᠠᠳᠢᠫᠠᠫᠢᠷ	At- piapr - “thaw”, the spring season when winter’s chill wanes and the weather becomes warmer
Zhant’ad	ᠵᠠᠩᠲᠠᠳ	Zhant’ ad - commoner; the lowest class of citizen in the Zhodani Consulate
Dlenchiepr	ᠳᠡᠨᠴᠢᠭᠡᠫᠤᠷ	Dlench- iepr - intendant; the lowest rank of nobility
Zhobrdievl	ᠵᠣᠪᠷᠳᠢᠭᠡᠪᠠ	Zhobr- dievl - noble; the ruling class in Zhodani society
Pranatl	ᠫᠢᠷᠠᠨᠠᠲᠤᠯᠠ	Pra- natl - “aspirant”, the lowest rank of nobility, equivalent to a Knight in the Imperium
Jdistebr	ᠵᠢᠳᠢᠰᠡᠳᠢᠷ	Jdi- stebr - “wellborn”, the second rank of nobility, equivalent to a Baron in the Imperium
Viestlas	ᠪᠢᠶᠡᠰᠢᠲᠠᠰᠤᠯᠠᠰ	Vies- tlas - “highborn”, the third rank of nobility, equivalent to an Imperial Marquis
Zhobrtlasche	ᠵᠣᠪᠷᠲᠠᠰᠢᠴᠡ	Zhobr- tlas -che - “noble born”, the second highest rank of nobility, equivalent to an Imperial Count
Preblshienchiashav	ᠫᠤᠪᠯᠠᠰᠢᠬᠡᠨᠴᠢᠠᠰᠠᠬᠠᠸᠠᠪ	Prebl-shiench- ia -shav - “princely born”, the highest rank of nobility in the Consulate, equivalent to an Imperial Duke

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ㄊ	Initial/final	B as in boy
ㄌ	Initial/final	BL as in blue
ㄅ	Initial/final	BR as in brood
ㄆ	Initial/final	CH as in child , never hard as in kick or soft as in charade
ㄆ	Initial	CHT as in which type
ㄊ	Initial/final	D as in dog
ㄌ	Initial/final	DL as in paddle
ㄌ	Initial/final	DR as in dry
ㄈ	Initial/final	F as in far
ㄈ	Initial/final	FL as in fly
ㄈ	Initial/final	FR as in free
ㄑ	Initial/final	J as in jump
ㄑ	Initial	JD
ㄑ	Initial/final	K as in kite or kick
ㄑ	Initial/final	KL as in wrinkle or clatter
ㄑ	Initial/final	KR as in cracker
ㄌ	Initial/final	L as in long
ㄌ	Initial/final	M as in many
ㄌ	Initial/final	N as in no or new
ㄌ	Final	NCH as in bench or crunch
ㄌ	Final	NJ as in exchange
ㄌ	Final	NS as in dans macabre
ㄌ	Final	NSH as in mensh
ㄌ	Final	NT as in can't
ㄌ	Final	NTS as in pants
ㄌ	Final	NZ as in cans
ㄌ	Final	NZH as in fringe
ㄌ	Initial/final	P as in cap
ㄌ	Initial/final	PL as in play
ㄌ	Initial/final	PR as in pray
ㄌ	Initial/final	Q is pronounced like an Arabic Q, a glottal hard g as in Qatar
ㄌ	Initial/final	QL as in glue
ㄌ	Initial/final	QR as in grown
ㄌ	Initial/final	R as in run
ㄌ	Initial	S as in sun
ㄌ	Initial/final	ST as in store
ㄌ	Initial/final	SH as in wish or shut
ㄌ	Initial	SHT as in Ishtar
ㄌ	Initial/final	T as in tall
ㄌ	Initial/final	TL as in little
ㄌ	Initial/final	TS as in sets or tsetse fly
ㄌ	Initial/final	V as in very
ㄌ	Initial/final	VL as in Vland
ㄌ	Initial/final	VR as in vroom
ㄌ	Initial	Y as in yet
ㄌ	Initial/final	Z as in zoo
ㄌ	Initial	ZD as in mazda or Thursday
ㄌ	Initial/final	ZH as in measure
ㄌ	Initial	ZHD as in Zhdant
ˆ	Final	A glottal stop or soft pause between syllables

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Note the placement of the accent in longer words. Zdetl makes extensive use of compound words composed of two, three or more words appended together. This can subtly change the pronunciation and accentuation of the root and sub-words, so study the Zdetl carefully to identify syllable breaks. Becoming familiar with the **tlatoniedl** (ᕐᕕᕐᕋᕐᕋᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐ) or *alphabet* is critical

Nenjchinzhe'driante **ᠨᠡᠩᠵᠢᠨᠵᠡᠳᠢᠷᠢᠨᠲᠡ** Nenj'chin-zhe'-**driant**-e -
 "Consular Legion of Merit", the
 highest military honor bestowed
 on a Zhodani citizen

to understanding how to pronounce Zetl words and sentences.

A Note on Word Construction

Students will note that Zdetl makes extensive use of complex word constructions. In many cases, a single word composed of one or more root words and appended suffixes and prefixes can convey as much meaning as an entire sentence in Anglic. Adjectives, nouns, and verbs are often combined into single complex word forms.

Consider the following:

vlezhdaf (ᠪᠯᠵᠡᠳᠠᠳᠠ) - **vlezhd** (star) + **-af** (yonder, afar); “yonder star”

vlezhdatlishaf (ᐅᑦᑕᑦᑭᑦᑎᑦᑯᑦ) - **vlezhd** (star) + **atl** (lord) + **ish** (our) + **af** (yonder); *our Star Lord-class cruiser over there/yonder*

shivvajdatl (±ṣṛṇṇṇṇṇṇ) - **shiv** (moon) + **va** (to shine) + **jdatl** (mountains); *the Mountains of Moonlight, a mountain range on Qiknavra*

These constructions can become quite complex and convey subtle meanings:

dlenchieprzinichpatlasdish (ぢエチエロコスアス王ロ尺と尺上シス土) -
dlenchiepr (intendant) + **zin** (child) + **ichpa** (new) + **tlas** (superlative) +
dish (our): *our newest intendant child*

Students are encouraged to study these word constructions and parse them carefully in order to understand them.

Punctuation

Beginning Zdetl did not include any discussion of punctuation in Zdetl, because such markings had not been clearly identified at the time. In this volume you will see a variety of symbols that serve similar functions to those used in Anglic:

Zdetl	Anglic	Usage
*	.	Full stop, indicates the end of a sentence.
,	,	Comma, indicates a subordinate clause.
//	!	Exclamation marking.
/	?	Question mark, usually emphasizes interrogatives.
'	"	Quotation, used to indicate speech.
:	:	Colon, emphasizes a concept.