

### Phonology, pronouns, nouns and postpositions

/a/ <b>a</b>	/j/ <b>y</b>	/o/ <b>o</b>	/tʃ/ <b>tz</b>
/æ/ <b>a</b>	/k/ <b>c, qu<sup>1</sup></b>	/o:/ <b>ō</b>	/tʃ:/ <b>tl</b>
/e/ <b>e</b>	/kʷ/ <b>cu<sup>2</sup>uc<sup>3</sup></b>	/p/ <b>p</b>	/fj/ <b>ch</b>
/e:/ <b>ē</b>	/l/ <b>l</b>	/s/ <b>c<sup>1</sup>z</b>	/w/ <b>hu<sup>2</sup>uh<sup>3</sup></b>
/i/ <b>i</b>	/m/ <b>m</b>	/f/ <b>x</b>	/ʔ/ <b>h</b>
/i:/ <b>ī</b>	/n/ <b>n</b>	/t/ <b>t</b>	

<sup>3</sup> At end of syllables

- Vowel length is often unwritten; when written, long vowels have a macron, and short vowels a breve.
  - ātl **water**, ihui **thus**; or atl, ihui
  - tepetl > tepētēl **mountain** or tepetl **someone's mat**
- Long **ō** is often written **u**, but this is rare for short **o**; **v** for **u** is common word-initially.
  - telpuchtlī > tēlpōchtli **young man**
  - vmpa > ōmpa **yonder**
- Vowels **i, ī** could also be written **y** or **j** and vice versa for semivowel **y**.
  - yuh > iuh **like**, injc > inc **so that**
  - yiollo > iyōllo **his, her heart**
- Glottal stop **h** is usually only written between vowels, but can be indicated with a grave or a circumflex accent on the preceding vowel.
  - amo > ahmō **not**, ehecatī > ehecatī **wind**
  - tlātoāni > tlāhtoāni **king**
- Clusters **oa** and **ohua** are often confused, as are **ia** and **iya**.
  - cohuatl > cōātīl **snake**, pia > piya **hold**
- **hu, uh** may be written **o** or **u**, **v**.
  - iehoatl > yehhuatl **he, she, it**, eua > ehua **depart**
- **cua** is written **qua**, **coa**; **uc** can be written **cuh**, **cu**, **uhc**.
  - tecuhtli > tēuctli **lord**; quavitl > cuahuhtl **tree**
- **z** can be spelt **ç**; **tz** can be spelt **tç**.
  - çoquitl > zoquitl **clay**; tçonquiza > tzonquiza **finish**
- **n** after vowels could be written with a tilde over the preceding vowel.
  - ipā > İpan **on it**;
  - ma tlāçcā > mā tlacuācān **let them eat**

tz	+ ch > chch <sup>1</sup>	nimitz+chiya > nimichiya	I await you
ch	+ y > chch <sup>1</sup>	oquich+yōtl > oquichchōtl	manliness
t	+ # > h	mati, pret. mah	know
n, m	+ hu > hu	am+huāluhuih > ahuāluhuih	y'all come
l	+ tl > ll	pil+tlī > pillī	child
l	+ y > ll	pil+yōtl > pillōtl	childhood
uh	+ m > mm	cuaauh+māitl > cuammāitl	tree-branch
n	+ m > mm	on+mati > ommati	she feels inside
n	+ p > mp	non+pēhua > nompēhua	I go forth
m	+ # > n	nemi, pret. nen	live
m	+ c > nc	cem+cah > cencah	very
m	+ ch > nch	quim+chīhua > quinchīhua	I do them
m	+ cu > ncu	cem+cuemītl > cencuemiitl	one field
m	+ n > nn	am+nemi > annemi	y'all live
m	+ t > nt	cem+teitl > centetl	one stone
m	+ tl > ntl	am+tlapiya > antlapiya	y'all keep stuff
m	+ tz > ntz	cem+tzontli > centzontli	four hundred
uh	+ p > pp	nāuh+pa > nāppa	four times
ch	+ tz > tztz <sup>1</sup>	tōch+tzintli > tōtzintli	dear rabbit
tz	+ y > tztz <sup>1</sup>	huitz+yoh > huitzoh	thorny
n, m	+ x > xx <sup>1</sup>	quim+xōxa > quixxōxa	he hexes them
ch	+ x > xx <sup>1</sup>	nēch+xōxa > nēxxōxa	he hexes me
x	+ y > xx <sup>1</sup>	mix+yoh > mixxoh	cloudy
y	+ # > x, z <sup>2</sup>	piya, pret. pix	do
h	+ V > yV	ah+oc > ayoc	no longer
z	+ y > zz <sup>1</sup>	ez+yoh > ezzoh	bloody
n, m	+ z > zz <sup>1</sup>	zan+cē > zazcē	just one
ch	+ z > zz <sup>1</sup>	amēch+zāloh > amēzzāloh	he held y'all

<sup>2</sup> **z** if it follows a **z**, e.g. **celiya**, pret. **celiz blossom**.

- -caul, pl. -cahuān Vb-er<sup>1</sup>
- -huia use N, provide N
- -(l)iztli Vb-ing
- -lli something Vb-ed
- -ni, pl. -nimeh Vb-er<sup>2</sup>
- -qui, pl. -queh Vb-er<sup>2</sup>
- -tia provide with N, become N
- -yo inalienable possession
- -yoh thing full of N
- -yōtl N-ness, N-ship

<sup>2</sup> Only absolutive nouns

- miqui **die**, miquiliztli **death**
- nonac **my meat**, nonacayo **my flesh**
- tlamati **he knows things**, tlamatini (**he is a**) **scholar**

Specific possessor		Indefinite possessor	
1	sg. no-	tē-	someone's
2	pl. to-	tla-	something's
3	mo-		
	ī-		
	in-/im-		

Absolutive		Possessive	
sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
C-tli	-tin, -meh	C-hui	-huān
V-tl	-(me)h	V-uh	
l-li	-tin		
-in	-meh, -tin		

- Possessive: nouns with a possessive prefix.
- Plurals in **-h** and **-tin** may have reduplication of the first syllable of the stem, whose vowel is lengthened:

- Only animate nouns inflect for number:
  - cihuātl** woman, **cihuah** women
  - tetl** rock, rocks

-c(o)	in, at
-ca	by means of, through, with
-huān	(together) with, moreover, and
-icampa	behind
-ih̄tic	inside, within
-ixpan	in front of, facing
-nāhuac	next to, close to
-pampa	because of, concerning
-pan	on, in, at
-(t)icpac	on top of
-tech	next to, adhering to
-tlan	by, next to, below
-tzintlan	below, underneath

- Postpositions may take the reverential suffix **-tzinco**

- a<sup>o</sup>: ahmō
- -<sup>co</sup>: -tzinco
- j<sup>o</sup>: Juan
- q̄: que(h)
- q̄: qui(h)
- q̃: qua(h)
- t(o)te<sup>o</sup>: totēcuiyō
- x̄po, x̄o, etc.: Cristo

# Classical Nahuatl grammar cheat sheet

The verbal complex

## Verb prefixes

Always in this order

- ➊ Imperative/optative marker  
mā if, let it be  
tlā if, let it be (please)  
māca[mō] mā + ahmō  
tlāca[mō] tlā + ahmō
- ➋ Negative marker  
ah not, un-  
ahmō not, no
- ➌ Antecessive prefix  
ō already
- ➍ Subject pronoun  
sg. pl.  
1 ni- ti-  
2 ti-<sup>1</sup> am-/an-<sup>1</sup>  
3 ø- ø-  
<sup>1</sup> xi- if optative
- ➎ Definitive object pronoun  
sg. pl.  
1 nēch- tēch-  
2 mitz- amēch-  
3 c-/qui- quim-/im-
- ➏ Directional marker  
huāl hither  
on thither
- ➐ Reflexive pronoun  
sg. pl.  
1 no- to-  
2 mo- } -self, -selves  
3 mo- }
- ➑ Indefinite object pronoun  
tē- someone, people  
tla- something, stuff

## Verb classes

- Cl 1 Vbs in -VCCV
  - Cl 2 Vbs in -VCV
  - Cl 3 Vbs in -VV
  - Cl 4 One-syllable Vbs in -a
- Exceptions
- Vbs in -Co, -tla, -ca: Cl 1
  - Intransitive Vbs in -hua: Cl 1
  - One-syllable Vbs in -i: Cl 1
  - Transitive Vbs in -hua: Cl 2
  - Vbs in -ya: Cl 1 or 2
  - tōna be warm, pāca wash: Cl 1
  - zōma become angry: Cl 4

## Verbal bases

B 1 is the dictionary form. Other bases are derived as follows:

	B 2	B 3
Cl 1	B 2 = B 1	B 3 = B 1
Cl 2	-V > -ø	B 3 = B 1
Cl 3	-V > -h	-V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub> > -V <sub>1</sub> :
Cl 4	-h	-V > -V:

## Example

	B 1	B 2	B 3
Cl 1	chōca-	chōca-	chōca- cry
Cl 2	yōli-	yōl-	yōli- live
Cl 3	āltia-	āltih-	ālti- bathe
Cl 4	cua-	cuah-	cuā- eat

## Tense/Mood endings

Tense/Mood	B	sg.	pl.
Present	1	-ø	-h
Habitual	1	-ni <sup>1</sup>	-nih <sup>1</sup>
Imperfect	1	-ya <sup>2</sup>	-yah
Preterite	2	-c <sup>3</sup>	-queh
Pluperfect	2	-ca	-cah
Admonitive	2	-h <sup>3</sup>	-(h)tin <sup>3</sup>
Future	3	-z	-zqueh
Optative	3	-ø	-cān
Conditional	3	-zquiya	-zquiyah

<sup>1</sup> Preceding V lengthened

<sup>2</sup> Preceding V lengthened except Cl 1

<sup>3</sup> Only Cl 1, otherwise -ø

## Irregular verbs

- ➊ cā/ye be  
sg. pl.  
Pres. cah cateh  
Impf. yeya yeyah  
Pret. catca catcah  
Fut. yez yezqueh
- ➋ huītza go  
sg. pl.  
Pres. huītz huītzeh  
Impf. huītza huītzah
- ➌ yā/huih come  
sg. pl.  
Pres. yauh huih  
Impf. yāya yāyah  
Pret. yah yahqueh  
Fut. yāz yāzqueh
- ➍ huāllā/huālhuih come  
sg. pl.  
Pres. huāllauh huālhuih  
Impf. huālhuiya huālhuiyah  
Pret. huāllah huāllahqueh  
Fut. huāllaz huāllazqueh

## Auxiliary verbs

Auxiliary verbs specify physical position of the main verb, condition under which the main verb takes place and mark aspect, and are made as follows:

- ➊ The main verb in the preterite stem
- ➋ Ligature morpheme -t(i)-
- ➌ The auxiliary verb, bearing tense and number

Verb	Ind.	Aux.
cah	be	be Vb-ing
ēhua	rise	depart Vb-ing
huetzi	fall	Vb quickly
huītza	come	come Vb-ing
ihcac	stand	stand Vb-ing
mani	be, cover	be Vb-ing
nemi	live	go about Vb-ing
(on)oc	lie	lie Vb-ing
quīza	emerge	pass Vb-ing
yauh <sup>1</sup>	go	be Vb-ing

<sup>1</sup> ti+yauh > -tiuh

## Verbs of purposive motion

Purposive motion suffixes take the present stem

		Come	Go
Pres./Pret.	sg.	-co	-to
	pl.	-coh	-toh
Future	sg.	-quiuh	-tiuh
	pl.	-quihuih	-tihuih
Optative	sg.	-qui	-h, -ti
	pl.	-quih	-tih, tin

## Verb suffixes

- ➊ Causative  
-(l)tia cause to Vb
- ➋ Passive  
-(l)o  
-(o)hua  
-hualo } be Vb'ed
- ➌ Applicative  
-i(l)ia do Vb for someone

A reflexive prefix combined with either a causative or an applicative suffix creates a reverential verb

## Example

niquittato I went to see it

## Literature consulted

- ➊ Andrews, J. Richard. *Introduction to Classical Nahuatl*. Rev. ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. 678 pp.
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- ➌ Lockhart, James. *Nahuatl as Written: Lessons in Older Written Nahuatl with Copious Examples and Texts*. Nahuatl Studies Series 6. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001. 251 pp.