



Quapaw Language Basic Pronunciation Guide

The various ethnologists, linguists, and researchers who have studied and documented the Quapaw language often developed their own unique systems to represent the sounds of our language. Our writing system is based upon the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), a dynamic system used by linguists to document languages across the globe. Each individual sound (*referred to as a 'phoneme'*) used in this system has its own entry in the guide. We have provided English sound equivalencies, where possible, to make learning easier for native English speakers. Finally, there are two key concepts you should understand before you may fully utilize this guide:

Nasal Sounds

It is important to know how to produce the **nasal sound** when speaking Quapaw. Put simply, a nasal is produced by pushing sound out of your mouth and nose at the same time. This sound is used in many languages around the world (*including English*), but the modern English alphabet does not have a letter that represents it. This may be tricky to understand without reference, so we recommend using online resources to learn how to produce these sounds on your own. The following video link provides an effective demonstration for producing the nasal sound: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xVq8T88oJw>

Aspirated Sounds

In addition to nasal sounds, the Quapaw language also utilizes pre- and post- **aspirates**. If a particular letter is “aspirated” in either writing system, it indicates an “h” sound should come before (in the case of pre-aspirates) or after (post-aspirates) the consonant in question. The following video delves into how to create these sounds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PSdlctYBsw>

Please notify our department via email if a link no longer works. Our email address is LanguageDepartment@quapawnation.com

You may find this information on our website here: <https://quapawlanguage.org/curriculum/guides/quapaw-language-pronunciation-guide>

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Phoneme	Pronunciation & Example Word (<i>in Quapaw</i>)
a	Like the “ <i>au</i> ” sound in the English word, “awesome.” Example: a (<i>arm</i>)
ḁ	Like pronouncing “ a ” but inflected with a nasal sound; same as the French vowel ã. Example: mḁ (<i>arrow</i>)
b	Like the hard “ <i>buh</i> ” sound as in the English word, “boy.” Example: baštá (<i>to smooth, sand, or plane</i>)
bd/bn	Like pronouncing “ b ” followed by a smooth transition to a hard “ <i>d</i> ” or “ <i>n</i> ” sound. Example: bnḁ / bdḁ (<i>smell, to emit any odor</i>)
č	Like hard “ <i>ch</i> ” sound in the English word, “change.” Example: jčḁka (<i>mouse</i>)
d	Like hard “ <i>d</i> ” sound in the English word, “dog.” Example: de (<i>to go</i>)
e	Like the short “ <i>ε</i> ” sound in the English word, “egg.” Example: e (<i>that, he, she, it</i>)
i	Like the long “ <i>ee</i> ” sound in the English word, “piano.” Example: íha (<i>mouth</i>)
ḱ	Like pronouncing “ i ” but inflected with a nasal sound. Example: ḱ (<i>rock</i>)
k	Like the hard “ <i>k</i> ” sound in the English word, “king.” Example: kaniké (<i>thank you</i>)
k^h	A post-aspirated ‘k’; like the breathy “ <i>kuh</i> ” sound in the English word, “kid.” Example: jk^hétte (<i>shoulder</i>)
kk	A pre-aspirated ‘k’; you should hold an “ <i>h</i> ” sound before pronouncing a hard “ <i>k</i> ” sound. Example: níkka (<i>man</i>)

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kd	Like pronouncing “k” followed by a smooth transition to a hard “d” sound. Example: kde (<i>start homeward</i>)
kn	Like pronouncing “k” followed by a smooth transition to a hard “n” sound, as in the English word, “no.” Example: kn̩ (<i>sit</i>)
m	Like the “m” sound in the English word, “mom.” Example: mikká (<i>raccoon</i>)
n	Like the hard “n” sound in the English word, “no.” Example: napé or nəpé (<i>hand</i>)
o	Like the “oh” sound in the English word, “only.” Example: ohq (<i>cook, boil</i>)
q	Like pronouncing “o” but inflected with a nasal sound. Example: hq / hə (<i>what, how, in what manner</i>)
p	Like the hard “p” sound in the English word, “pat.” Example: póxpá (<i>red-headed woodpecker</i>)
p^h	A post-aspirated ‘p’; like the breathy “puh” sound in the English word, “pot.” Example: ophá (<i>following along</i>)
pp	A pre-aspirated ‘p’; you should hold an “h” sound before pronouncing a hard “p” sound. Example: ppétte (<i>fire</i>)
s	Like the short “s” sound in the English word, “sit.” Example: si (<i>foot</i>)
š	Like the “sh” sound in the English word, “shop.” Example: šóke (<i>dog</i>)
t	Like the hard “t” sound in the English word, “tomato.” Example: taní (<i>tobacco</i>)
t^h	A post-aspirated ‘t’; like the breathy “tuh” sound in the English word, “top.” Example: t^hi (<i>arrive, to have come here</i>)

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tt	A pre-aspirated ‘t’; you should hold an “h” sound before pronouncing the hard “t” sound. Example: tte (<i>buffalo</i>)
w	Like the “w” sound in the English word, “water.” Example: wahá (<i>relation, family</i>)
x	No English equivalent sound; pronounced like the guttural “ach” sound in the German name, “Bach.” Examples: okáxpa (<i>Quapaw</i>) or xótte (<i>gray</i>)
y	This sound only occurs when “i” precedes another vowel. Example: aaní (<i>to swim</i>) becomes ádanyo (<i>I swim</i>)
ɣ	No English equivalent sound; pronounced like the letter ‘g’ in the English word, “go” but without fully closing your mouth. Example: káye
z	Like the “z” sound in the English word, “zero.” Examples: zaní (<i>all</i>) or zi (<i>yellow</i>)
ž	Like the “zh” sound in the English word, “treasure.” Example: žą / žq (<i>tree, wood, log</i>)
ʔ	Referred to as a ‘ glottal stop ’; this symbol indicates a brief pause in a word, much like the space that occurs when saying the English phrase, “uh-oh.” Examples: wésʔa (<i>snake</i>) or mikkáxʔe (<i>star</i>)
ˈ	This symbol only appears over vowels and indicates an accented syllable. Extra emphasis should be placed on that syllable compared to other vowels in the word. Possible accented vowels: á, é, í, ó Nasal vowels may also be accented: ă, ě, ǫ