

Spoken Tamil through Roman Alphabet

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Introduction

We often marvel at the capacity of children, even before schooling, to pick up a language of their surroundings. This is because they are not unduly bothered by alphabet or by glossy textbooks. All they do is to imitate the sound they hear around and the context in which the sounds are made. In a short period of time, they start speaking the language.

Sound plays a vital part in the process of learning languages. As the children grow, they gather a bigger vocabulary of words and expressions by sheer association. This is the method we shall employ in our effort to learn to speak in Tamil. The sounds we shall use are sounds which we are familiar with i.e. letters of the Roman alphabet. The lessons which follow are meant for those who are familiar with English language.

If we went by conventional way of learning Tamil, mastering the letters of the Tamil alphabet might take weeks or even months because there are nearly 250 letter-symbols in it. Whereas our new method of learning through Roman alphabet does not involve learning any new letters. We simply have to employ only 39 characters, of which 23 are roman letters which we already know and the remaining 16 are some of the same letters but with diacritical marks above them. Diacritical marks are signs which are used to differentiate between the different values of the same letter.

Therefore, we should have no difficulty in using the roman letters as tools to familiarise ourselves with the sounds of Tamil words. Of the 26 letters, we leave out three – q, w and x – and on 12 of the remaining 23, we shall use diacritical signs. The total comes to 39. Every letter in spoken Tamil is covered within these 39 symbols.

What the phonetic value of each of these characters is, is given in Lesson 1.

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Lesson 1

Romanized Tamil alphabet and their phonetic values

	The sound of:	as in:		The sound of:	as in:
a	u	us, must, cut	o	o	omit, molest
ā	a	car, far	ō	o	role, pole
b	b	bus, tub	ö	ou or ow	out, foul, owl
c	ch	chop, rich	p	p	pen, nip
d	th	them, the, though	r	r	rock, fur
d'	d	den, bed	ř	rr	curry, merry
e	e	met, set	s	s	sun, sit
ē	a	day, gay, pay	ś	thin <i>sh</i>	<i>Shanti</i>
f	f	fun, tiff	š	sh	shop, bush
g	g	gun, dog	t	th	with, python
h	h	hat, he	t'	t	ten, bet, top
i	i	sit, pit	u	u	full, put, push
ī	ee	peel, meet	ū	oo	fool, moon, cool
j	j	jam, jet	ü	y	rhythm
k	k	king, kit	v	v	van, victory
l	l	let, look	y	y	yawn, toy
l'	l	ploy, blue, glue	ÿ	y	sky, fry, my
m	m	man, Tom	z	z	zero, zoo
n	n	net, bin	ž	The sound produced when we try to utter 'sha' without the tongue touching the roof of the mouth.	
ñ	n	and, band, shun			
(n)	n	tank, bang, pink, punch, munch [Instances where the n is not fully pronounced, but blends with the succeeding consonant.]			

Lesson 2

Glossary of nouns and verbs in Tamil

These are the common nouns and verbs used in spoken Tamil. To get familiar with the romanized Tamil alphabet, practise reading the words aloud.

The list of nouns follows in pages 3 to 7.

Members of a family

Mother	ammā / tāy	Brother (younger)	tambi
Father	appā / tandÿ	Sister (younger)	tangÿ
Parent	peṭ'ror	Grandfather	tātā
Son	magan	Grandmother	pāṭ'ti
Daughter	magal'	Grandson	pēran
Baby	kuṣṣandÿ	Granddaughter	pētti
Brother (elder)	aññā / aññan	Relative(s)	urāvinar
Sister (elder)	akkā		

Greetings & Common Expressions

Sir	ayyā	Please	dayavü seydü
Madam	ammā	Yes	ām / āmām
Hello / Salutations	vañakkam	No / Not	illÿ
Thank you	nanri	Okay	sari
Sorry	mannikkavum	But	ānāl

Language & Speech

Language	bāśÿ / moṣi	Silence	mōnam
Word	vārtÿ	Letter (mail)	kaḍ'idam
Speaking / Speech	pēccü	Letter (of alphabet)	eṣuttü

Nouns used in questions (Interrogative nouns)

Who	yār	What	enna
Where	e(n)gē	Here	i(n)gē
		There	a(n)gē
How	eppaḍ'i	This way / Thus	ippaḍ'i
		That way	appaḍ'i
Why	yēn	For this reason	idanāl
		For that reason	adanāl
When	eppōdū, eppō (colloquial.)	Now	ippōdū, ippō (col.)
		Then	appaḍdū, appō (col.)
How many	ettanÿ	This many	ittanÿ
		That many	attanÿ
How much	evvaḷ'avü	This much	ivvaḷ'avü
		That much	avvaḷ'avü

People

Man (mankind)	manidan	Youth	ilÿ(n)yan
People	makkal'	Elderly Person	mudiyavar
Man	añ / āl'	Student	māñavan
Woman	peñ	School	paḷli
Male / Manhood	añ / añmÿ	Studies	paḍ'ippü
Female/ Womanhood	peñ / peñmÿ	Religion	madam
Birth	piravi	God	kaḍ'avuḷ'
Death	marañam	Mind	manam

Marriage	vivāham / kalyāṇam (col.)	Conscience	manassākṣi
Age	vayadū	Thought	eṅṅam
Child	kuṣandṅ	Civilization /	nāgarīkam
Teenager	siṟuvan	Culture	kalācāram

Home

House / Home	vīdū	Wall	cuvar
Room	aṟṅ	Ladder	eṅṅi
Door	kadavū	Bureau	bīrō
Window	jannal	Kitchen	samayaḷ aṟṅ
Stairs	paḍi	Oven / Stove	aḍuppu
Cot	kaṭṭil	Cooking	samayaḷ
Bed	paḍukkṅ	Vessel	pāttiram
Table	mēṅṅ	Food	sāppāḍū / uṅṅavū
Chair	nārkāli	Plate	taṭṭū
Floor	taṟṅ	Ladle	kaṟandī

Festivals & Occasions

Festival	viṣā / paṅḍiṅṅ	Invitation	aṣṅppū
Greetings	vāṣṅṅtū	Guest	virundāli
Gift	paṟisū	Fasting	nō(n)bū
Wedding	tirumaṅṅam	Feasting	virundū
Birthday	piṟanda nāḷ		

The body and related

Body	uḍal / uḍambū	Heart	idayam
Head	taḷṅ	Hand	kṅ
Brain	mūḷṅ	Finger	viraḷ
Hair	mudī	Stomach	vayirū
Face	mukam	Hip	iḍuppu
Eye	kaṅṅ	Leg	kāl
Ear	kādū	Foot	pādam
Nose	mūkkū	Back	mudugū
Mouth	vāy	Bone	elumbū
Tongue	nākkū	Breath	mūccū
Teeth	paḷ	Sleep	uṟakkam / tūkkam
Lips	udaḍū	Hunger	paṣi
Cheek	kannam	Pain	vali
Neck	kaṣuttū	Disease	nōy
Shoulder	tōḷ	Medicine	marundū
Chest	mārbū		

World Affairs

World	ulagam	Law	saṭṭam
Nation	dēṣam	Power	balam
Government	arasū	Capacity	tīramṅ
Army	śēṅṅ	Right	urimṅ

Commercial Terms

Money	pañam	Expense(s)	silavü
Price	vilÿ	Trade (noun)	vyāpāram
Worth	madippü	Profit	lābam
Own / Ownership	sonda / sondam	Loss	našt'am
Job / Work	vēlÿ	Shop	kađÿ
Salary	śambałam		

Numerals (grammatical / colloquial)

One	onrū / oññü	Ten	pattü
Two	irandü / rendü	Twenty	irubadü / iruvadü
Three	mūnrū / mūññü	Thirty	muppadü
Four	nā(n)gū / nālū	Forty	nārpādü / nāppādü
Five	ÿ(n)dü / a(n)jü	Fifty	ÿmbadü / ambadü
Six	ārū	Sixty	arūpadü / arūvadü
Seven	ēžü	Seventy	ežupadü / ežuvadü
Eight	ełt'ü	Eighty	eñbadü
Nine	onbadü	Ninety	toññürü
Zero	pūjyam	Hundred	nürü
Point (decimal)	pułłi	Thousand	āyiram

Nouns related to Directions / Location

Direction	disÿ	Above / Upper	mēlē / mēl
East	kižakkü	Below / Lower	kīžē / kīž
West	mērkü	At the bottom	ađiyil
North	vađakkü	In the middle	nađuvil
South	teřkü	Inside / Inner	ułłē / uł
Side	pakkam	Outside / Outer	vełiyē / vełi
Left	iđadü	In the gap	iđayil
Right	valadü	Around	śułri
Front / Infront	mun / munnāl	Position / Place	iđam
Rear / Behind	pin / pinnāl		

Nouns related to Time

Today	inrū	Time (period)	kālam
Tomorrow	nālÿ	Hour / Time (real)	mañi
Yesterday	nēłrū	Minute	nimidam
That day	anrū	Second	nođi
Day/ Days	nāl / nāt'kał	Day (of the week)	kižamÿ
Week	vāram	Sunday	nyāyirü
Month	mādam	Monday	tingał
Year	varuśam	Tuesday	cevvāy
Morning	kālÿ	Wednesday	budan
Evening	mālÿ	Thursday	vyāžan
Night	iravü	Friday	vełłi
Daytime	pagal	Saturday	śani
Early morning	atikālÿ		

Geological terms

Earth	būmi	Light / Bright	veḷiccam
Soil	mañ	Dark	iruttū
Sand	mañal	Sky	vānam / āgāyam
Way / Route	važi	Cloud	mēgam
Distance	dūram	Rain	mažy
Height	uyaram	Wetness / Moisture	īram
Water	jalam / taññīr	Sea	kaḍal
Air	kāṭṛū	Island	tīvū
Sun	sūriyan	Heat	sūdū
Moon	candiran / nilā	Cold	kuḷir

Fruits (pažam), vegetables (kāy) and food ingredients

Banana	vāžy pažam	Potato	uruly kižangū
Mango	māmpažam	Lady's finger	vendy
Grapes	drāksy	Eggplant/ Brinjal	kattiri
Lemon	elumiccý	Raw Banana	vāžykkāy
Pomegranate	mātuḷy	Rice (raw)	arisi
Tomato	takkāli	Salt	uppū
Greens	kīry	Chilli	miḷagāy
Cabbage	mutṭy gōs	Gram / Pulses	paruppū
Coconut	tē(n)gāy	Egg	mutṭy
Onion	ve(n)gāyam	Flour	māvū

Plants

Plant	cedi	Thorn	muḷ
Leaf	ily	Tree	maram
Flower	pū	Root	vēr

Common animals

Animal	mirugam	Donkey	kažudy
Dog	nāy	Monkey	kura(n)gū
Cat	pūny	Elephant	yāny
Cow	paśu	Tiger	puli
Buffalo	erumy	Lion	si(n)gam
Bull	kāly	Bear	kaḍi
Cattle (in general)	māḍū	Fish	mīn
Goat	āḍū	Snake	pāmbū
Pig	panri	Lizard	palli
Horse	kudiriy	Insect	pūcci

Common birds

Bird	paṛavy	Cuckoo	kuyil
Hen/Rooster/Chicken	kōzi	Peacock	mayil
Duck	vāttū	Crow	kākký
Parrot	kiḷi	Vulture	kažugū
Owl	āndy	Crane	kokkū
Dove	puṛā		

Abstract Nouns			
Right	śari	Respect/ Reverence	madippü
Wrong	tavarü	Pride	perumÿ
Truth	nijam / uñmÿ	Honesty	nāñayam
Lies	poy	Good (noun)	nalladü
Difficulty	kašt'am	Bad / Evil (noun)	ket'tadü
Ease	sulabam	Harm	keđudal
Strength	balam	Freedom	viđudaly
Emotion	uñarcci	Use	upayogam
Happiness	magižcci	Size /Amount	aļavü
Sadness	varuttam	Hurry (noun)	avasaram
Anger	kōpam	Loudness	sattam
Jealousy/ Envy	porāmÿ	Softness	menmÿ
Confusion	kužappam	Beauty	ažagü
Suspicion /Doubt	śandēham		

Note:

- To obtain the plural form of a noun, “kaļ” is added to the singular form.

E.g.:

Son (magan) – Sons : magankaļ
House (viđü) – Houses : viđukaļ

- When the conjunction of two or more nouns (or pronouns) is to be shown, i.e. for ‘and’ or ‘too’, the phrase “um” is added to both nouns.

E.g.:

The horse (kudirÿ) and the carriage (vandi) – kudirÿyum vandiyum
Both you (nī) and I (nān) – nīyum nānum

Mother (ammā) too / Mother also – ammāvum

- When the meaning of ‘something only’ or ‘just something’ is to be conveyed, the word ‘mat'tum’ is added to the noun or pronoun.

E.g.:

Only potato (urulÿ kižangü) – urulÿ kižangü mat'tum
Just father (appā) and I (nān) – appāvum nānum mat'tum

The list of commonly used verbs follows in pages 8 & 9.

Verbs (in alphabetical order)

Absorb/ Suck (liquids)	urí(n)jü	Hide / Conceal	marý
Accept	yēt'rukkoł'	Hit / Strike	ad'i
Act	nađi	Invite	ažý
Allow	anumati	Jump	tāvü / kudi
Announce	ařivi	Know	aři
Approach	aňugü	Let go	vid'ü
Arrange	ađ'ukkü	Lick	nakkü
Awaken	ežuppü	Live	vāž
Bathe	kuł'i	Lock	pūt'tü
Be	irü	Look	pār
Be troubled/disturbed	bādikka pađü	Love	nēsi
Blab	uł'arü / pidať'rü	Manage	nađ'attü
Bump	mut'tü	Move (Budge)	ašý
Bump hard	id'i	Move (Intransitive ⁺)	nagarü
Buy	vā(n)gü	Move (Transitive ⁺)	nagarttü
Cheat	ēmāt'rü	Organize	amý
Clean	tud'ý	Pick / Choose	poř'ukkü
Cleanse	alambü / kažuvü	Play	vilayād'ü
Close	mūdü	Play (music, etc.)	vāsi
Come	vā	Press / Depress	ažuttü
Correct	tiruttü	Print	accad'i
Create / Produce	pađý	Push	tal'fü
Crush	nasukkü	Put	pōđü / vý
Cut (Transitive ⁺)	vet'tü	Read	pađi
Cut/Snap (Intransitive ⁺)	ařü	Report / Notify	terivi
Dance	ād'ü	Rinse	alašü
Deal (with)	samāł'i	Run	ōđü
Decompose	ažugü	Scold / Abuse	tiť'tü
Demolish	id'i	Sell	vilýkkü kođü
Do	sey	Separate / Detach	piri
Dry (Intransitive ⁺)	ularttü	Shake (Intransitive ⁺)	ād'ü
Eat	šāppid'ü	Shake (Transitive ⁺)	āt'tü
Feel	uňar	Sing	pāđü
Fly	para	Sit	uť'kār
Forget	mařa	Slap	ařý
Get down / Get off	ira(n)gü	Sleep	tü(n)gü
Get up	ežü / ežundü irü	Snatch / Pluck	paři
Give	tā / kođü	Speak	pēsü
Go	pō	Stand	nił
Grasp	pid'i	Stay	irü
Grind	ařý	Stay (Reside)	ta(n)gü
Hate	veřü	Steal	tirud'ü
Heat	kāyccü	Stick / Glue	ot'tü
Help	udavü	Stink	nāřü

Stop (Intransitive ⁺)	niruttü	Take	eđü
Stop (Transitive ⁺)	tadü	Tear	kiži
Suffer	varundü	Test / Prove	nirübi
Suppress	adakkü	Touch	tođü
Think / Count	eññü	Wander	alÿ
Think / Plan	yōsi	Want / Like / Wish	virumbü
Turn (Intransitive ⁺)	tirumbü	Wash	tuvÿ
Turn (Transitive ⁺)	tiruppü	Weep	ažü
Unload	irakkü	Work	velÿ sey
Untie	aviž / avižttü vidü	Write	ežudü
Uphold	nimirttü	Yell	kattü
Walk	nađa		

+ Some verbs have both Transitive and Intransitive applications. Transitive verbs are those which act on an object directly in the expression – such as ‘shake’ in ‘The boy is *shaking the tree*’. Intransitive verbs are those which convey an action that is performed by the subject itself in the expression – such as ‘shake’ in ‘*The building shook* during the earthquake’.

Note:

- These are the root verbs. As they stand, they signify commands/ instructions.
E.g. You come = **nī vā**.
- To convert these verbs into infinitives like ‘to come’ (**vara**), ‘to write’ (**ežuda**), we should add ‘a’, ‘ka’/‘ga’ or ‘kka’ to the verbs.

Command		Infinitive form of verb	
Sit	uṭkār	To sit	uṭkāra
Go	pō	To go	pōga
Walk	nađa	To walk	nađakka

- To make negative commands of these verbs, in the sense:
“You *do not* come” = **nī varādē**, we just add ‘ādē’ to the infinitive form.
E.g.:

ežuda [inf. form] + **ādē** [for negative command] = **ežudādē** (don’t write)

Command	Infinitive form of verb	Negative Command			
Sit	uṭkār	To sit	uṭkāra	Don’t sit	uṭkārādē
Go	pō	To go	pōga	Don’t go	pōgādē
Walk	nađa	To walk	nađakka	Don’t walk	nađakkādē

Lesson 3

Pronouns & Nouns

Pronouns			Nouns		
1.	I:	nān	1.	Little Girl:	śírūmi
2.	We:	nā(n)gaḷ	2.	Student:	māñavan
3.	You:	nī	3.	Students:	māñavargaḷ
4.	You (Plural/ Respectful):	nī(n)gaḷ	4.	Carpenter:	taccan
5.	He:	avan	5.	Insect:	pūcci
6.	She:	avaḷ	6.	Elderly Person:	mudiyavar
7.	They:	avargaḷ	7.	Worms:	pužukkaḷ
8.	It:	adū	8.	Little Boy:	śíruvan
9.	They (these):	ivṃ	9.	Leaves:	ilṃgaḷ
10.	They (those):	avṃ	10.	Workers:	tožilāḷigaḷ
11.	Who	yār	11.	Father	tandṃ
12.	What	enna	12.	Work	vēḷṃ

Remember that “(n)gaḷ” / “gaḷ” is added to a singular noun to make it plural.

Exercise:

Pair the appropriate pronouns and nouns.

E.g.

1. **avan** (He) + **taccan** (Carpenter) = **avan taccan** (He is a carpenter)

In Tamil, “is” is not written. It is understood.

2. **enna** (What) + **vēḷṃ** (Work) = **enna vēḷṃ** (What is the work?)

Lesson 4

Pronouns in the genitive / possessive case & Nouns

Pronouns (possessive)			Nouns		
1.	My/ Mine:	en	1.	Book:	puttakam
2.	Our/ Ours:	e(n)gaḷ	2.	Kid Sister:	ta(n)gḷ
3.	Your:	un	3.	Vehicle:	vandī
4.	Your (Plu/Resp):	u(n)gaḷ	4.	Elder Brother:	aññan
5.	His:	avanuḍaya / avan (col.)	5.	House:	vīḍū
6.	Hers:	avaḷuḍaya / avaḷ (col.)	6.	Nests:	kūḍugaḷ
7.	Their:	avargaḷin	7.	Work:	vēḷy
8.	Its:	adan	8.	Dress:	sēḷy
9.	Their (Neuter):	ivḷygaḷin	9.	Food:	uṇavū
10.	Their (Neuter):	avḷygaḷin	10.	Price:	vilḷy
11.	Whose:	yāruḍaya / yār (col.)	11.	Pen:	pēnā
12.	Of Which:	edanuḍaya	12.	Key:	sāvi

Exercise:

Pair the appropriate pronouns and nouns from above.

E.g.

- avaḷ (Her) + sēḷy (Dress) = avaḷ sēḷy (Her dress)
- edanuḍaya (Of Which) + sāvi (Key) = edanuḍaya sāvi (the key of which?)

Lesson 5

Pronouns in the accusitive case & Verbs

Pronouns (accusitive)			Verbs (commands / instructions)		
1.	Me:	ennġ	1.	look:	pār
2.	Us:	e(n)gaġġ	2.	touch:	tođġ
3.	You:	unnġ	3.	ask:	kēġ
4.	You (Plu/Resp):	u(n)gaġġ	4.	catch:	pidġ
5.	Him:	avanġ	5.	deal:	samāġi
6.	Her:	avaġġ	6.	leave:	vidġ
7.	Them:	avargaġġ	7.	send:	anuppġ
8.	It:	adġ	8.	wake:	ežuppġ
9.	These:	ivġgaġġ	9.	count:	eññġ
10.	Those:	avġgaġġ	10.	stop:	niruttġ
11.	Whom:	yārġ	11.	to invite:	ažġkka
12.	Which:	edġ	12.	to give:	kođukka

Exercise:

Pair the appropriate pronouns and verbs from above.

E.g.

1. **ennġ** (Me) + **tođġ** (Touch) = **ennġ tođġ** (Touch me)

In Indian languages, the verb is always placed last.

2. **yārġ** (Whom) + **ažġkka** (to invite) = **yārġ ažiġkka** (Whom to invite?)

Lesson 6

Pronouns denoting association & Verbs

Pronouns (associative)			Verbs (commands / instructions)		
1.	With Me:	ennōḍ'ü	1.	accept:	śerttukkoḷ
2.	With Us:	e(n)gaḷōḍ'ü	2.	come:	vā
3.	With You:	unnōḍ'ü	3.	walk:	naḍ'a
4.	With You (Plu/Resp):	u(n)gaḷōḍ'ü	4.	go:	pō
5.	With Him:	avanōḍ'ü	5.	associate:	paḷagü
6.	With Her:	avaḷōḍ'ü	6.	speak:	pēsü
7.	With Them:	avargaḷōḍ'ü	7.	play:	viḷayādü
8.	With It:	adōḍ'ü	8.	eat:	śāppid'ü
9.	With These:	ivýgaḷōḍ'ü	9.	think:	yōsi
10.	With Those:	avýgaḷōḍ'ü	10.	take away:	kond'ü pō
11.	With Whom:	yārōḍ'ü	11.	to eat:	śāppid'a
12.	With What:	edōḍ'ü	12.	to combine:	śērkka

Exercise:

Pair the appropriate pronouns and verbs from above.

E.g.

- avaḷōḍ'ü (With Her) + pēsü (Speak) = avaḷōḍ'ü pēsü (Speak with her)
- edōḍ'ü (With What) + śērkka (to combine) = edōḍ'ü śērkka (To combine with what?)

Lesson 7

Pronouns in the instrumental case & Verbs

Pronouns (instrumental)			Verbs (infinitive)		
1.	By Me:	ennāl	1.	to deal:	samāl'ikka
2.	By Us:	e(n)ga'āl	2.	to come:	vara
3.	By You:	unnāl	3.	to do:	seyya
4.	By You (Plu/Resp):	u(n)ga'āl	4.	to suppress:	aḍ'akka
5.	By Him	avanāl	5.	to turn:	tiruppa
6.	By Her	ava'āl	6.	to speak:	pēsa
7.	By Them	avarga'āl	7.	to stand:	nir'ka
8.	By It	adanāl	8.	to stop:	taḍ'ukka
9.	By These:	iv'ya'āl	9.	to walk:	naḍ'akka
10.	By Those:	av'ya'āl	10.	to give:	tara
11.	By Who:	yārāl	11.	to buy:	vā(n)ga
12.	By What:	edanāl	12.	to open:	tir'akka

mud'iyum – mud'iyādū

mud'iyum means 'is possible' and **mud'iyādū** means 'is not possible'. If we add either of these to combinations of pronouns and relevant infinitive verbs from above, we get the full sense of the expression – 'is possible' or 'is not possible'.

Exercise:

Pair the appropriate pronouns and infinitive verbs from the table and add **mud'iyum / mud'iyādū**.

E.g.

- e(n)ga'āl (By Us) + seyya (to do) + mud'iyādū =
e(n)ga'āl seyya mud'iyādū (It is not possible by us to do)
- edanāl (By What) + tir'akka (to open) + mud'iyum =
edanāl tir'akka mud'iyum (With what is it possible to open?)

Lesson 8

Pronouns denoting recipients (Dative) & Abstract Nouns

Pronouns (dative)			Abstract Nouns		
1.	For Me:	enakkü	1.	Peace:	nimmadi
2.	For Us:	e(n)gaḷukkü	2.	Grouse:	varuttam
3.	For You:	unakkü	3.	Protection:	kāval
4.	For You (Plur/ Resp):	u(n)gaḷukkü	4.	Pleasure:	magiḻcci
5.	For Him:	avanukkü	5.	Tiredness:	aḷuppü
6.	For Her:	avaḷukkü	6.	Praise:	pārātṭü
7.	For Them:	avargaḷukkü	7.	Concern:	kavalṻ
8.	For It:	adarkkü	8.	Fear:	accam
9.	For These:	ivṻgaḷukkü	9.	Support:	ādaravü
10.	For Those:	avṻgaḷukkü	10.	Enthusiasm:	ūkkam
11.	For Whom:	yārukkü	11.	Need:	tēvṻ
12.	For What:	edarkkü	12.	Use:	upayōgam

Exercise:

Pair the appropriate pronouns and abstract nouns from above.

E.g.

- avaḷukkü (For Her) + ādaravü (Support) = avaḷukkü ādaravü (support for her)
- yārukkü (For Whom) + tēvṻ (Need) = yārukkü tēvṻ (For whom is the need?)

Lesson 9

Pronouns in the locative case & Abstract / General Nouns

Pronouns (locative)			Abstract & General Nouns		
1.	In Me:	ennid'am	1.	Belief:	nambikkÿ
2.	In Us:	e(n)ga'id'am	2.	Suspicion:	śandēham
3.	In You:	unnid'am	3.	Anger:	kōbam
4.	In You (Plu/Resp):	u(n)ga'id'am	4.	Defeat:	tōlvi
5.	In Him:	avanid'am	5.	Courage:	tuñiccal
6.	In Her:	ava'id'am	6.	Affection:	anbū
7.	In Them:	avarga'id'am	7.	Argument:	vādam
8.	In It:	adil	8.	Attention:	gavanam
9.	In These:	ivÿga'il	9.	Confusion:	kužappam
10.	In Those:	avÿga'il	10.	Truth:	uñmÿ
11.	In Whom:	yārid'am	11.	Grouse:	varuttam
12.	In What:	edil	12.	Interest:	akkarÿ

Note:

The case ending for pronouns associated with non-living things is “il” – while the case ending for pronouns of living things is “id'am” –also implying a sense of “with”. For example, “adil” (In It) or “avanid'am” (In Him or With Him).

Exercise:

Pair the appropriate pronouns and abstract nouns from above.

E.g.

1. unnid'am (In You) + kōbam (Anger) = unnid'am kōbam (angry with you)
2. edil (In What) + akkarÿ (Interest) = edil akkarÿ (Interest in what?)

Lesson 10

Pronouns in the ablative case & Abstract / General Nouns

Pronouns (ablative)			Abstract & General Nouns		
1.	From Me:	ennid'am irundü	1.	Money:	kāšü
2.	From Us:	e(n)gal'id'am irundü	2.	Honey:	tēn
3.	From You:	unnid'am irundü	3.	Fragrance:	mañam
4.	From You (Plu/Resp):	u(n)gal'id'am irundü	4.	Reward:	parisü
5.	From Him:	avanid'am irundü	5.	Censure:	vašavü
6.	From Her:	ava'id'am irundü	6.	Flower:	pū
7.	From Them:	avargal'id'am irundü	7.	Blessing:	āši
8.	From It:	adil irundü	8.	Respect:	mariyādÿ
9.	From These:	ivÿgal'il irundü	9.	Affection:	anbū
10.	From Those:	avÿgal'il irundü	10.	Advice:	upadēsam
11.	From Whom:	yārid'am irundü	11.	Reply:	badil
12.	From What:	edil irundü	12.	Sweetness:	inippü

Note:

These pronouns (in the ablative case) are the same as in Lesson 9 (in the locative case) except for the addition of the term “irundü” which gives the meaning – from me, from us, etc. For example, “adil” + “irundü” – “adil irundü” (From It).

Exercise:

Pair the appropriate pronouns and nouns from above.

E.g.

1. **adil irundü** (From It) + **mañam** (Fragrance) = **adil irundü mañam**
(fragrance from it)
2. **yārid'am irundü** (From Whom) + **badil** (Reply) = **yārid'am irundü badil**
(Reply from whom?)

Lesson 11

Nouns and Case Endings

In the lessons 3 – 10, we learnt the different stances of pronouns caused by different contexts. The study may seem a bit complicated by the classification of pronouns into 1st person (singular & plural), 2nd person (singular & plural) and 3rd person (singular & plural). In the case of nouns, unlike pronouns, there is no such complication. All nouns are treated as “3rd person”. The appended letters/words are all the same as for “3rd person” in Pronouns.

Let us now taken an example – “boy” (**payyan** in Tamil). The different cases of the noun “boy” are: ‘the boy’, ‘of the boy’ or *boy’s*, ‘to/for the boy’, ‘with the boy’, ‘by the boy’, ‘for the boy’, ‘in the boy’ and ‘from the boy’. In Tamil, the differing statuses of the word “**payyan**” (boy) are indicated by the different tagging letters. These are:

	Noun Case	Letters Attached	Resultant Word	Meaning
1.	Subjective:	nil	payyan	boy
2.	Accusative:	+ ÿ	payyan + ÿ = payyanÿ	the boy
3.	Instrumental:	+ āl	payyan + āl = payyanāl	by the boy
4.	Associative:	+ ōdū	payyan + ōdū = payyanōdū	with the boy
5.	Dative:	+ ukkū	payyan + ukkū = payyanukkū	to/for the boy
6.	Ablative:	+ idam irundū	payyan + idam irundū = payyanidam irundū	from the boy
7.	Genitive /Possessive:	+ udaya	payyan + udaya = payyanudaya	boy’s
8.	Locative:	+ idam	payyan + idam = payyanidam	in the boy

Similarly, all nouns can be declined. When the nouns end with a vowel, like “**gitā**” and “**guru**”, the appendages start with a ‘v’ e.g. **gitāvÿ : gitāvukkū : guruvÿ : guruidam irundū** etc. (This is explained in Lesson 14 – ‘Vowels and case endings’)

Lesson 12

Verbs and Tenses

Actions or occurrences happen in three phases of time: present, future and past. The phases in which they happen are indicated by the addition of some letters to the root verb.

Most of the verbs listed in the Glossary of Lesson 2 can be conjugated by the addition of letters as follows:

	Present	Future	Past
1 st Person	+ kīrēn	+ vēn / ppēn	+ ttēn / nēn
2 nd Person	+ kīrāy	+ vāy / ppāy	+ ttāy / nāy
3 rd Person	+ kīrār	+ vār / ppār	+ ttār / nār

These additions, indicating tenses, are given below; These are the normal applications.

	Verb	person	Present tense	Future tense	Past tense	Remarks
1.	pō (go)	1 st person	pōkīrēn	pōvēn	pōnēn	
2.		2 nd person	pōkīrāy	pōvāy	pōnāy	
3.		3 rd person	pōkīrār	pōvār	pōnār	
4.	sey (do)	1 st person	seykīrēn	seyvēn	seydēn	
5.		2 nd person	seykīrāy	seyvāy	seydāy	
6.		3 rd person	seykīrār	seyvār	seydār	

However, some of the verbs do not quite conform to this arrangement. These verbs are conjugated separately as follows.

7.	vā (come)	1 st person	varugirēn	varuvēn	vandēn	'vā' becomes 'var'
8.		2 nd person	varugirāy	varuvāy	vandāy	
9.		3 rd person	varugirār	varuvār	vandār	
10.	nil (stand)	1 st person	nirkirēn	nirpēn	ninrēn	'nil' becomes 'nir'
11.		2 nd person	nirkirāy	nirpāy	ninrāy	
12.		3 rd person	nirkirār	nirpār	ninrār	
13.	šāppid'ü (eat)	1 st person	šāppid'ukirēn	šāppid'uvēn	šāppit't'ēn	change in past tense
14.		2 nd person	šāppid'ukirāy	šāppid'uvāy	šāppit't'āy	
15.		3 rd person	šāppid'ukirār	šāppid'uvār	šāppit't'ār	
16.	tā (give)	1 st person	tarugirēn	taruvēn	ta(n)dēn	d.o.
17.		2 nd person	tarugirāy	taruvāy	ta(n)dāy	
18.		3 rd person	tarugirār	taruvār	ta(n)dār	
19.	pār (see/look)	1 st person	pārkkirēn	pārppēn	pārttēn	d.o.
20.		2 nd person	pārkkirāy	pārppāy	pārttāy	
21.		3 rd person	pārkkirār	pārppār	pārttār	
22.	ed'ü (take)	1 st person	ed'ukkirēn	ed'uppēn	ed'uttēn	d.o.
23.		2 nd person	ed'ukkirāy	ed'uppāy	ed'uttāy	
24.		3 rd person	ed'ukkirār	ed'uppār	ed'uttār	

To express the negative sense of these verbs, to the infinitive form of the verb we add *ill'ÿ* (*not*) in the case of present and past tenses, and *pōvadill'ÿ* (*going to not*) in the case of future tense. The case is same with 1st, 2nd and 3rd person.

For example:

When the verb is *ežudü* (*write*), the infinitive form is *ežuda* (*to write*). Hence, the negative terms are:

Verb	person	Present tense	Future tense	Past tense
ežudü (write)	1 st person	ežudavill'ÿ	ežuda pōvadill'ÿ	ežudavill'ÿ
	2 nd person	ežudavill'ÿ	ežuda pōvadill'ÿ	ežudavill'ÿ
	3 rd person	ežudavill'ÿ	ežuda pōvadill'ÿ	ežudavill'ÿ

* The explanation for how *ežuda + ill'ÿ = ežudavill'ÿ*, etc. is contained in Lesson 14 – 'Vowels and case endings'.

Lesson 13

Adjectives

There is a marked difference in the formation of adjectives – words which describe the qualities of nouns – in English and Tamil. In English, adjectives are causal and primary. Take the word “soft”. From this word is derived the abstract quality of ‘softness’. Similarly, “hard” and “hardness”; “cruel” and “cruelty”; etc.

Whereas, in Tamil, the converse holds good. The abstract noun is the primary and causal; and the adjective is the derived word. “kaḍḍinam” (hardness) is the primary and from it is derived the adjective “kaḍḍinamāna” (hard) by the addition of the letters “āna”. Adjectives are also formed by adding the letters “uḷḷa” or “atṛa” (‘with’ and ‘without’, respectively). This is invariably true for the formation of most adjectives and therefore, the process is simplified – just adding the appropriate suffixes to abstract nouns.

The three commonest suffixes are “āna” and “uḷḷa”, to denote the existence of a quality, and “atṛa”, to denote the absence of the quality. Examples:

- I. uṛudi (firmness)
uṛudiyāna (uṛudi + āna) means firm. *
uṛudiyatṛa (uṛudi + atṛa) means unstable.
- II. kūrmṃ (sharpness)
kūrmayāna (sharp)
kūrmayatṛa (blunt)

* The explanation for how uṛudi + āna = uṛudiyāna, etc. is contained in Lesson 14 – ‘Vowels and case endings’.

III. **buddi** (intelligence)

buddiyul'fa (intelligent) – **buddi** + **ul'fa**

buddiyat'ra (dull) – **buddi** + **at'ra**

etc.

There are, of course, primary / causal words qualifying nouns as well. These are not as many as the former variety. A few examples of the latter variety are given below.

a) **kod'iya** (fierce)

b) **sama** (equal)

c) **nalla** (good)

d) **ket't'a** (bad)

etc.

In the following page, there are two elementary exercises in adjectives.

Adjective Exercise 1:

Pair the nouns and adjectives from below:

Adjectives			Nouns		
1.	Raw:	kaccā	1.	Tree:	maram
2.	Rare:	apūrva	2.	Machine:	yandiram
3.	Pretty:	ažagiya	3.	Road:	sāl̥y
4.	Tasty:	suv̥yāna	4.	Gait:	naḍ̥y
5.	Old:	pažaya	5.	Student	māñavan
6.	Intimate:	neru(n)giya	6.	Fruit:	pažam
7.	Special:	śiranda	7.	Stick:	kombū
8.	Stout:	tāḍ̥itta	8.	Food:	uñavū
9.	Erect:	nimir(n)da	9.	Cloth:	tuñi
10.	Long:	nīnḍa	10.	Floor:	tar̥y
11.	Novel:	nūtana	11.	Girl:	peñ
12.	Wet:	īramāna	12.	Friend:	nañban

Adjective Exercise 2:

Give the opposites of the following adjectives keeping in mind that “āna” and “uñ̥a” are the opposites of “aṭ̥ra”

			Root Abstract Noun
1.	ruci uñ̥a	X	(ruci = taste)
2.	buddi aṭ̥ra	X	(buddi = intelligence)
3.	nimmadiyāna	X	(nimmadi = peace)
4.	kaḍ̥inamāna	X	(kaḍ̥inam = hardness)
5.	paṭ̥rū uñ̥a	X	(paṭ̥rū = interest)

Lesson 14

Vowels and Case Endings

In the earlier lessons, we saw that when case-endings are added on to nouns (or pronouns), the different positions which the nouns assume are obtained. For e.g. “by the boy”, “with the boy”, “for the boy”, etc.

All case endings start with a vowel. When they follow a noun ending with a vowel (like **bālu**, **mañi**) the two vowel-sounds combine to form a compound word. In such cases, the vowels undergo a change. What the changes are, are given in the table below:

Ending vowel of the word:	ā or u or ū	i or ī or ĩ
Change in the vowel :	Initial vowel of suffix changes into v , vā , vō or vi	Initial vowel of suffix changes into y , ya , yā or is <i>dropped</i>
Accusitive case: [Suffix = ĩ]	akkā + ĩ = akkāvĩ subbu + ĩ = subbuvĩ pū + ĩ = pūvĩ	tambi + ĩ = tambiyĩ selvi + ĩ = selviyĩ
Instrumental or Associative case: [Suffix = āl, ōḍũ]	ammā + āl = ammāvāl bālu + ōḍũ = bāluvōḍũ	oĩ + āl = oĩyāl
Dative case: [Suffix = ukkũ]	guru + ukkũ = guruvukkũ gītā + ukkũ = gītāvukkũ	citti + ukkũ = cittikkũ ta(n)gĩ + ukkũ = ta(n)gĩkkũ (u is dropped)
Possessive case: [Suffix = uḍāya/ in]	pū + in = pūvin akkā + uḍāya = akkāvudāya	tambi + in = tambiyin tan(g)ĩ + uḍāya = ta(n)gĩyudāya
Locative case: [Suffix = idāma]	guru + idāma = guruvīdāma sītā + idāma = sītāvīdāma	pāt'ti + idāma = pāt'tiyīdāma
Ablative case:	In the ablative case, ‘irundũ’ is added to the ‘idāma’. Changes are the same as in locative case.	

Lesson 15

Miscellaneous: vēṇḍum – vēṇḍām

These two words have opposite meanings. “vēṇḍum” means ‘is wanted’ or ‘is needed’ or ‘must’. “vēṇḍām” means ‘don’t want’ or ‘no need’. They are written either after a noun or after a verb in infinitive form.

When “vēṇḍum” follows a noun, it gives the meaning of desire or need.

[e.g. enakkü pañam vēṇḍum = I want money]

When “vēṇḍām” follows a noun, it denotes the opposite meaning, of ‘don’t want’ or ‘no need’.

[e.g. avanukkü udavi vēṇḍam = He does not need help]

Exercise 1:

Translate the following sentences in Tamil into English. (Vide earlier lessons for meanings of words.)

enakkü un puttakam vēṇḍum	I want your book
avanuḍaya udavi vēṇḍum	
paḍikka nēram vēṇḍum	
unnuḍan uṇḍavü* vēṇḍām	
avaḷukkü ādaravü vēṇḍum	

* uṇḍavü = relationship

When “vēndum” follows an infinitive verb, it indicates intent (must/ want to).

[e.g. nān ežuda vēndum = I want to write].

When “vēndām” follows an infinitive, it gives the meaning ‘must not’/’no need to’.

[e.g. aval aža vēndām = She need not weep].

Exercise 2:

Translate the following sentences in Tamil into English. (Vide earlier lessons for meanings of words.)

kužandġ viļayāda vēndum	The child must play
avan pāda vēndām	
nī ennġ pārka vēndām	
nām dinamum* kuļikka vendum	
marattġ vetta vēndum	
vittġ pūttā vēndām	

* dinamum = daily

Lesson 16

Miscellaneous: intransitive verbs

There are some verbs in Tamil which are used in a sentence without a direct subject. The grammatical notations for these verbs differ as well. When used, these verbs are to be read as actions happening ‘by themselves’, i.e. without direct subjects. There may, however, be objects in the sentence that are affected by the actions.

The following are examples of sentences in Tamil in which these verbs appear, along with near-equivalents in English:

maḻḻ peygiṛadū	It rains
veyyil ad'ikkiṛadū	The sun is beating down
ud'ḻ nanḻndadū	dress got wet
kuḷam nirambiyadū	the tank filled up
talḻ valittadū	head ached
viḻā naḍ'andadū	the festival took place
ad'i pat't'adū	got hurt

Recollection Exercises

Translate the following sentences in English into Tamil.

<i>Case Endings of Nouns & Pronouns:</i>		
1.	My mother	en amma / en t̄ay
2.	Look (at the) sea	
3.	Go <u>with</u> Gowri	
4.	<u>from</u> (the) school	
5.	<u>in</u> the village (village = gr̄amam)	
6.	height <u>of</u> the hill (hill = mal̄y)	
7.	gift <u>for</u> younger sister	
8.	possible <u>by</u> him	
9.	not possible <u>by</u> you	
10.	I want rest (rest = ōyvü)	

<i>Adjectives:</i>		
1.	tall man	
2.	white flower	
3.	strong hand	
4.	dark room	
5.	hard work	
6.	long road	
7.	wet floor	
8.	beautiful temple (temple = kōvil)	
9.	intelligent people	
10.	tasty food	

<i>Verbs:</i>		
1.	I <u>shall go</u> for the wedding	
2.	You sing with emotion	
3.	Guhan went to (a) shop	
4.	Where will you go?	
5.	Carpenter is making (a) chair	
6.	Elder sister read (a) book	
7.	Boy stands in the street (street = terü)	
8.	I shall give you money	
9.	Friend ate food	
10.	I took photo (photo = fōt'ō)	