

வாங்க, தமிழ் படிக்கலாம்
vAnga, thamizh padikkalAm

Lesson No. 3

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Hi everyone,

Hope you all had a fun time, typing Thamizh letters and simple words.

Did you type the names of your friends and relations?

Isn't it thrilling? It is as if you have grown wings and experienced the joy and thrill of flying.

This week we will focus on consolidating what we have learnt so far. It is always a good philosophy not to make too rapid a progress. The progress should be very gradual but steady. The fundamentals have to be understood clearly. The foundation should be strong for the superstructure to be stable.

In the good old days of Kings expanding their empires, whoever followed the rule "**Invade, Conquer, Consolidate and Advance**" succeeded in establishing and ruling huge empires for a long long time.

It is a sensible and successful approach for any other facet of life also.

So, let us implement that methodology in our learning program. We will,

1. Learn a little bit (INVADE)
2. Practice it over and over again and become thorough with that portion (CONQUER)
3. Revise everything that you have learnt up to that point, right from the beginning (CONSOLIDATE)
4. Learn a little bit more (ADVANCE)
5. Repeat

Music is traditionally taught this way.

So, this week, our focus will be on "conquering and consolidating" what we learnt last week.

-o O o -

Short and Long vowel sounds.

Last week I had asked you to type the names of your friends and cousins. I had given these example names.

Sundar, Nirmala, Akash, Anu, Vetri, Banu, Banumathi, Vandana, Hamsa, Uma. Abi, Sudhakar, Kala.

When you type those names, Azhagi would convert them to,

ஸுண்டர், ணிர்மல, ஆகஷ், ஆனு, வெற்றி, பனு, பனுமதி, வண்டன, ஹம்ச, ஊம, ஆபி, ஸுதகர், கல.

Ignore the names with the letters that you have not learnt. What about the rest? Did you get a feeling that something is wrong?

Would you believe if I told you that all of them (except one) are wrong?

We had no problem reading those names correctly in English.

What went wrong when you convert them to Thamizh?

They all went wrong in the correct representation of LONG and SHORT vowel sounds.

Phonetically, we should have typed,

nirmalaa, aakaash, anu, baanu, baanumathi, vandhanaa, umaa. abi, kalaa.

Then you would have got the correct versions of those names as follows.

நிர்மலா, ஆகாஷ், அனு, பானு, பானுமதி, வந்தனா, உமா, அபி, கலா.

The corrections are shown in BOLD format,

We are learning to form Thamizh words by mentally assembling them using our knowledge of English spelling. While doing so, we have to be very cautious about the short and long vowel sounds and avoid capitalizing the beginning of the words or sentences.

Let's take the word "Nirmala" which became "ணிர்மல".

"N" was wrong. It represents ண். We should have used "n" because we want it to be "ந"

Remember the rule? ண and ண் are not eligible to come at the beginning of a word; only ந is empowered for that.

Secondly, it is not "nirmala", it is nirmal**aa**. The ending sound is a LONG sound.

In almost all the words in that example collection, the mistakes were the same.

Let's take word "Banumathi" which became "பனுமதி". We should have typed "baanumathi" to get the correct form பானுமதி.

This reminds me of an old comedy scene from a Tamil movie. Before we see that clip, you need to learn some new terminology. Then only you will enjoy the word play in that clip.

Syllable formation – English Vs Thamizh

Let's briefly go over one important concept, which is the core of how the Thamizh letters are formed for syllables conveying various vowel sounds, as compared to English.

In English, take the English alphabet "**m**".

We learn it as "**yem**". Therefore, we never realized, it actually represents the root sound "**m**" (pronounced "**im**")

To make different syllables out of that root sound, you add one or more vowels to it; e.g. **ma**, **maa**, **mi**, **mee**, **mu**, **moo**, and so on.

In Thamizh, the corresponding letter is **ம்** (read "**im**")

Its combinations, representing the various vowel sounds are formed by attaching various symbols, not letters.

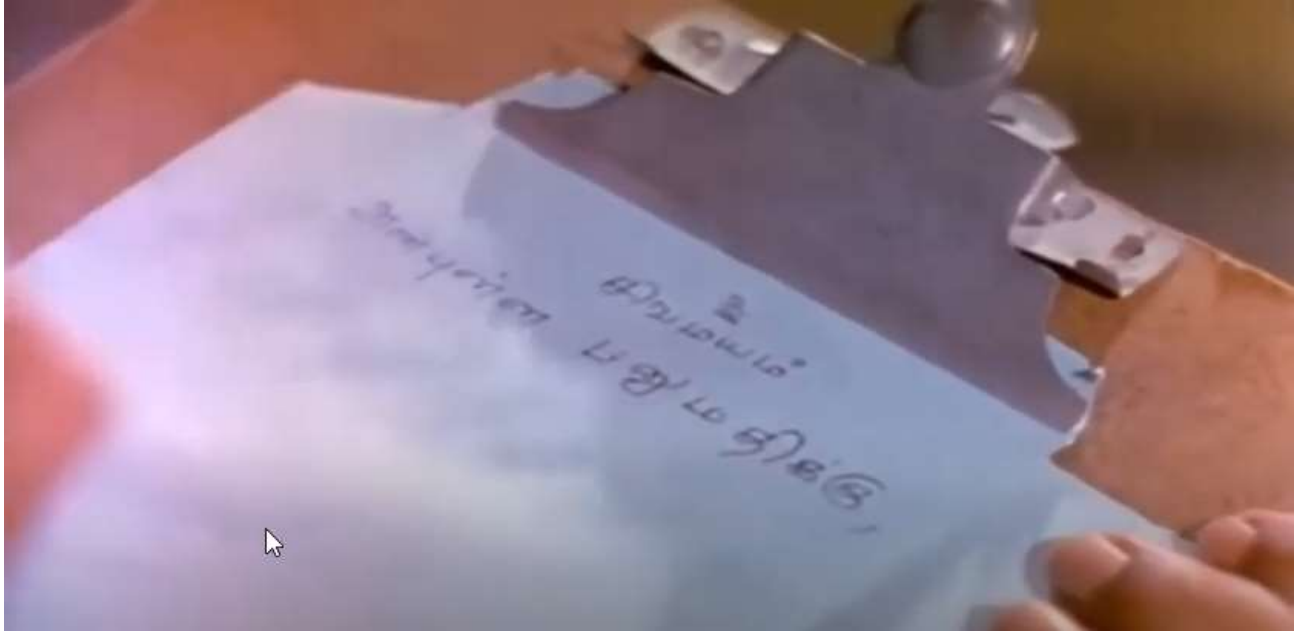
ம, மா, மி, மீ, மு, மெ, மே, மை, மொ, மோ, மௌ

For example, we add the symbol ா to **ம** (ma -the short sound) to make it **மா** ("maa" -the long sound). That symbol is called "kaal", which in Thamizh, means "leg".

Each of those symbols have a name. We will learn about them later.

When someone writes **ம**, when he should be writing **மா**, the Teacher would say, "**ma pakkaththila kaal podu**". I suppose you understand now what it means. Keep this in mind when you watch the clip. Let us proceed.

This is a clip from the movie "kudumbam oru kadhambam"



<https://youtu.be/l6DJmHx4tTY>

Did you have a hearty laugh?

Back to where we left off.

We are so used to writing the name as Banumathi, we never think for a moment that what we had in our mind was **Baanumathi**. It is not our fault. English has trained us like that, with spellings like **ball**, **mall**, **call**, **talk**, **walk**; Phonetically, they should have been **baall**, **maall**, etc.

So, if we type **Banumathi**, obviously, the output would be பனுமதி, which is incorrect.

Similarly, "kala" became கல (means "mix"!) instead of கலா. You should have typed "kalaa".

"Uma" became "஁ம" (meaning "dumb"!), instead of "உமா". Remember, Capital letters signify LONG sound. You should have typed "umaa".

By the way, did you notice I am talking about using "aa" for the long sound, while I told in the previous lesson to use "A" for it?

I am referring to "aa" just to drive home the "long sound" concept. Azhagi would interpret both "aa" and "A" as the long ஆ sound.

Then why not use "aa"? Why use A?

If you get habituated to type "aa" to represent the long ஆ sound, then by force of habit, you will do the same thing for other letters also.

Since "e" represents the "எ" sound, you might type "ee" and expect "ஏ". You will be surprised to see "ஈ" instead of "ஏ". You are supposed to type "E" to get "ஏ".

Same thing happens with the letter "o". While "o" represent "ஒ", typing "oo" will result in "ஔ". You have to type "O" to get "ஒ".

To avoid such unpleasant surprises and confusion, get used to representing the **long sounds with the corresponding Upper Case.**

For the long ஆ ("awe" sound), always use A

For long ஒ ("woe" sound), always use O (upper case)

For the long ஔ ("woo" sound), you can use U, but it is more easy and intuitive to use "oo" as in English.

For ஈ ("ee" sound), you can use I, but more convenient to use "ee" as in English.

Always, be aware of the short and long sounds and use the appropriate letter.

Remember பனுவல்தி

-o O o -

What we have learnt so far

This tables gives a bird's eye view of the total scope. What we have learnt is highlighted. It is also a Reference Table showing the relation between English letters and Thamizh letters.

a	அ			n	ந்	ன்
A	ஆ	aa		N	ண்	
b	ப்			o	ஒ	
				O	ஓ	
c	க்			p	ப்	
d	ட்			q	ஃ	
e	எ			r	ர்	
E	ஏ			R	ற்	
f	ஃப்			s	ச்	
g	க்			t	ட்	
h				u	உ	
				U	ஊ	oo
i	இ			v	வ்	
l	ஈ	ee				
j				w	வ்	
k	க்			x		
l	ல்			y	ய்	
L	ள்					
m	ம்			z	ழ்	

[illegible]

Syllable formation –A revisit

Root		Vowel sign		
ம		dot	=	ம்
ம			=	ம
ம	+	ா	=	மா
ம	+	ி	=	மி
ம	+	ீ	=	மீ
ம	+	ு	=	மு
ம	+	ூ	=	மூ
ம	+	ெ	=	மெ
ம	+	ே	=	மே
ம	+	ை	=	மை
ம	+	ொ	=	மொ
ம	+	ோ	=	மோ
ம	+	ௌ	=	மௌ

Remember we talked about the symbols? Let's continue with that.

The table on the left shows how the Thamizh letters representing various combinations of vowels, is formed.

Did you observe how various symbols are added to the basic letter?¹

When you learn to write Thamizh the traditional way, it is definitely a challenge to learn.

First of all, learning the shapes of all the basic letters is, in itself, a big challenge.

Added to that is the challenge of remembering all the symbols and how they are added to the main letter.

Some symbols hang from the letter, some sit on the letter, one stands on the right, some stand on the left and some of them stand on both sides.

Root		Vowel sound		we type	Azhagi makes it
m			=	m	ம்
m	+	a	=	ma	ம
m	+	aa		maa	மா
m	+	i		mi	மி
m	+	ee		mee	மீ
m	+	u		mu	மு
m	+	oo		moo	மூ
m	+	e		me	மெ
m	+	E		mE	மே
m	+	ai		mai	மை
m	+	o		mo	மொ
m	+	O		mO	மோ
m	+	au		mau	மௌ

Compare that with what we do while typing Thamizh. It is so intuitive. We just have to type the appropriate letter and add its vowel combination.

Azhagi takes care of adding the appropriate symbol to the main letter.

¹ Did you notice those DOTTED circles in the symbols? That circle denotes the place of the main letter which these symbols would modify. Did you observe ம taking the place of the circle in the right column

Here is a table giving all the combinations of the letters that we have learnt so far.

		அ	ஆ	இ	ஈ	உ	ஊ	எ	ஏ	ஐ	ஒ	ஓ	ஔ
		a	aa	i	ee	u	oo	e	E	ai	o	O	au
			ா	ி	ீ	ு	ூ	ெ	ே	ை	ொ	ோ	ௌ
m	ம்	ம	மா	மி	மீ	மு	மூ	மெ	மே	மை	மொ	மோ	மௌ
		ma	maa	mi	mee	mu	moo	me	mE	mai	mo	mO	mau
v	வ்	வ	வா	வி	வீ	வு	வூ	வெ	வே	வை	வொ	வோ	வௌ
		va	vaa	vi	vee	vu	woo	ve	vE	vai	vo	vO	vau
nh	ந்	ந	நா	நி	நீ	நு	நூ	நெ	நே	நை	நொ	நோ	நௌ
nH	ன்	ன	னா	னி	னீ	னு	னூ	னெ	னே	னெ	னொ	னோ	னௌ
N	ண்	ண	ணா	ணி	ணீ	ணு	ணூ	ணெ	ணே	ணை	ணொ	ணோ	ணௌ

While most of the Thamizh letters follow the same pattern, a few of them defy it.

For example, ம + ி = மி -This letter is following the rule.

But ம + ு = மு -This is NOT following the rule.

ம + ூ = மூ -This letter is also not following the rule

Most other letters also have this problem, particularly when it comes to the "wu" and "woo" sound.

When we WRITE Thamizh, we have to learn all this various forms. But, while TYPING, Azhagi makes it all easy. You need to remember only the English letter combinations **which remain the same** for all Thamizh letters. Azhagi takes care of converting it to the required form.

In fact, Thamizh letters went through a kind of rationalization in the recent past. Before that, the letters were looking like this.

னா	னை	ணா	ணை	Now
னா	னை	ணா	ணை	Earlier

Incidentally, the Tamil word ஆனை ("aanai" –elephant) looks like this in the old Thamizh.

ஆனை Does that னை look like an Elephant?

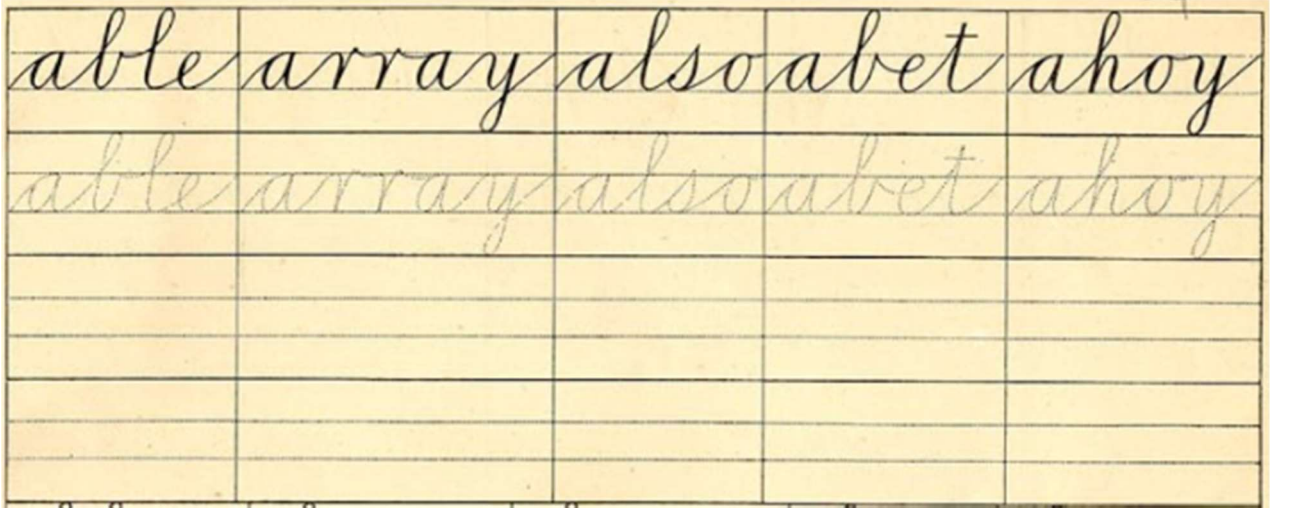
I marvel at such intricate beauty of Thamizh.

Imposition

I am sure you all know "Imposition". But I am not sure if you are aware of the "imposition" that I am going to give you.

It was a common practice in the olden days, for the teacher to give "imposition" to the students. The teacher would tell you to write a sentence ten times or 50 times or even 100 times to make you memorize that sentence. Most often it was given more as a punishment (write 100 times, "I am sorry, I will not come late again") than as a learning tool.

You might know of "Copy books" also. They looked like this.



We had to write the same sentence again and again, to improve our hand-writing.

This is what I would like you to do. Type the set of letters given below, 10 times.

Seriously! No cheating! No copy/paste!

Start with

அ ஆ இ ஈ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ ஒள

Then

ம்	ம	மா	மி	மீ	மு	மூ	மெ	மே	மை	மொ	மோ	மௌ
----	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

Needless to tell you again and again, spell out the letters loudly as you type.

If you are on Desktop, make sure you have Azhagi running.

Continue this with the other combinations.

வ் வ வா வி வீ வு வூ வெ வே வை வொ வோ வெள

ந் ந நா நி நீ நூ நொ நோ நௌ

ன் ன னா னி னீ னு னூ னெ னே னை னொ னோ னௌ

ண் ண ணா ணி ணீ ணு ணூ ணெ ணே ணை ணொ ணோ ணௌ

Are you wondering where to type all this? I thought about it. So, I created a play area for you. Click on the link below.

<http://www.homeopoonga.com/lesson-3-typing-practice/>

It will take you to a page containing a big notepad area. Both Windows and Android users can use this area for typing whatever they want. It has multiple typing areas, one for each block of letters. A typical one looks like this.



Initially it will appear like this.

As you keep typing, a vertical scrollbar would appear automatically and you can continue to type. The sentences would keep scrolling up.

If you want to delete, Right click for context menu, SELECT ALL and CUT (or press DEL)

Android users, LONG PRESS for context menu; then same procedure.

Remember, CUT will appear only AFTER SELECT ALL.

There is also much easier way out. Just REFRESH the page!

Time to say, Bye for now.

"Practise makes man perfect", goes the English proverb.

With this in mind, I have created some exercises for you to practice reading and typing.

They are available for download, as various annexures. Please do make it a point to go through them and practice as much as you can.

These practice sessions would put you on a very strong footing. Your future sessions would be a cake-walk.

Just as in any Physical Workout, the initial phase is a torture. Your mind and body rebel. You may curse and groan. Don't give up. You have to endure. You have to convince yourself to go through all that torture. Once you pass that stage, it is smooth sailing afterwards.

I have created an YouTube channel also. You can post your suggestions there, if that is more convenient.

This is the link to subscribe to that channel.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChPsaoGfPR1sVxKHT6VvcEQ?sub_confirmation=1

We will learn some new letters in the next lesson.

Until then,

Best Wishes to you all,

Sundararajan

(Feel free to address me as KPS)

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