

வாங்க, தமிழ் படிக்கலாம்
vAnga, thamizh padikkalAm

Lesson No. 8

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Hi everyone,

This week we will meet the three remaining members of the family.

Let's review what we have covered so far.

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

	Already covered
	Covered in this lesson

With this lesson, we would be completing all the "*Thamizh*" letters. Why that emphasis on *Thamizh*? Because there are some more letters which are in *Thamizh* but they are NOT *Thamizh* letters.

Letters like. "ஹ (ha)" and "ஜ (ja)" are commonly used in *Thamizh*, but they are not *Thamizh* letters. That is why, I did not show them in the table, so far. These letters come under the category of "Grantha" letters¹.

I will cover them in the next lesson. That would fill up the blanks against the English letters "h", "j" and "x" in the Table.

¹ Please see section under [தமிழில் கிரந்த எழுத்துகள்](#)

Some Terminologies

So far, I have been purposely avoiding the grammatical aspects and some important terminologies to keep it as easy and simple for you. Now that you are all familiar with almost all the letters, it is time to learn a few essential ones.

First we learnt

அ ஆ இ ஈ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ ஔ as Vowels.

In Thamizh, they are called **உயிர் எழுத்துக்கள்** ("uyir ezuththukkaL")

You know they are the equivalents of the English vowels **a, e, i, o, u**

All the English vowels are SHORT sound vowels. LONG vowel sounds were conveyed by combinations of the vowels.

In Thamizh we have separate letters for SHORT and LONG vowel sounds.

The short ones, "அ இ உ எ ஓ" are called **குறில்** ("kuRil")

The long ones "ஆ ஈ ஊ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஔ" are called **நெடில்** (nedil)

Then we learnt க்ங்ச்ஞ் ட்ண்த்ந்ப்ம்ய்ர் ல்வழ்ளற்ன்

(ங் and ஞ், we will see shortly.)

There are totally eighteen of them. They are called **மெய் எழுத்துக்கள்** ("mei ezuththukkaL"). In English, they called Consonants. They are the equivalents of the English Alphabets leaving the five vowels. This is what you see in the Table on Page 2.

உயிர் means Life. மெய் means body. Just as a body cannot exist without Life, the "மெய் எழுத்துக்கள்" group of letters cannot exist on their own. They need Life². We give them life by attaching the "உயிர் எழுத்துக்கள்" to them.

When we add "உயிர்" to "மெய்", the combined letter is called "**உயிர்மெய் எழுத்து**" ("uyirmei ezhuththu")

For example, when we add "அ" sound to the above group of "மெய் எழுத்துக்கள்", we get

கங்சஞடண்தந்பமயரலவழ்ளற்ன³

These are the "**உயிர்மெய் எழுத்துக்கள்**".

² Can the English Consonants b, c, d, f, etc, stand on their own? No, they have to combine with the vowels to form the syllables. When we talk of Vowels and Consonants, we don't appreciate that significance. But when we talk of Life and body (uyir and mei) the impact is more. It is easy to understand that body needs Life.

³ You have seen how we write க by typing "ka", right? "k" represents "க்". "a" represents "அ". By combining the two, you get "ka" which becomes "க".

Those eighteen உயிர் மெய் எழுத்துக்கள் can be grouped into three groups of six letters as follows.

க ச ட த ப ற

-> வல்லினம் ("vallinam") meaning, they are HARD

ங ஞ ண ந ம ன

-> மெல்லினம் ("mellinam") meaning they are SOFT

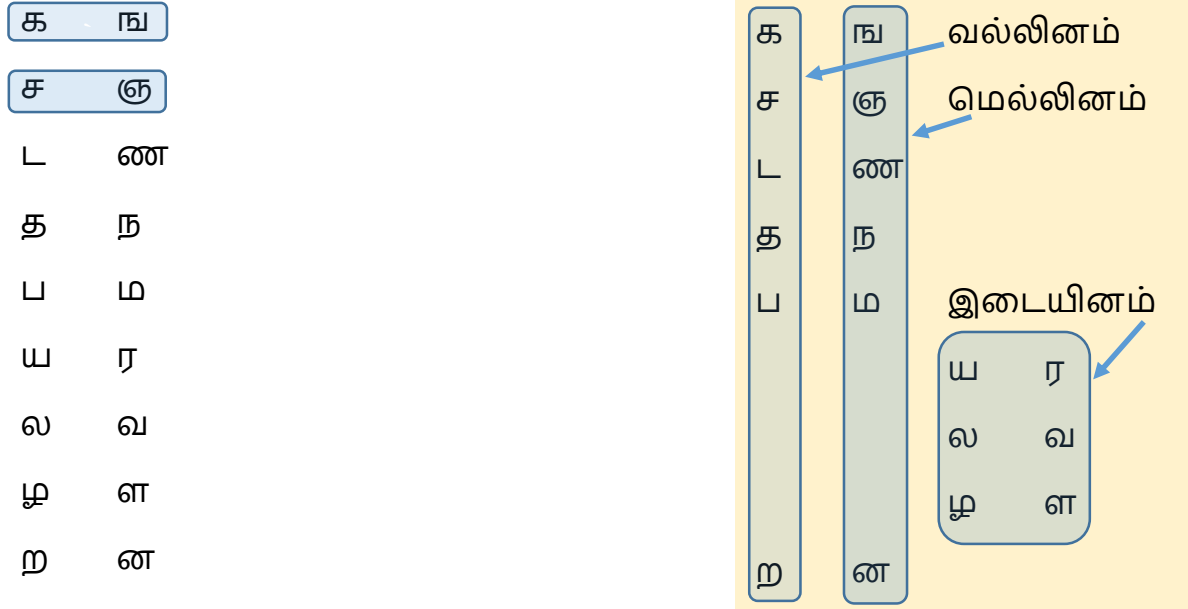
ய ர ல வ ழ ள

-> இடையினம் ("idaiyinam") meaning they are MEDIUM

Those names have a significance. As you pronounce the letters, you will appreciate how the HARD category sounds very **guttural**, SOFT category sounds **nasal**, and MEDIUM category sounds in between those two.



Now, let us rearrange those eighteen letters as nine pairs of letters.

The picture on the right side shows a further rearrangement of the pairs to illustrate the three main groups we saw above.



The relationship between the pairs "க நங்" and "ச ஞ" is what we are going to see next.

An overview of the two of the letters for this week.

	ங், நு 	ஞ், ஞு 
Thanglish representation	nG, nGa	gn, gna
partner of	க	ச

ங், நு 

"ங்" will always be followed by "க" (or its other forms).

That is why I mentioned "*partner of*" in the above table.

You will understand the relationship when you see the examples. If you click on the speaker icon, you will hear me reading out all the words. But, try without doing that.

தங்கை 	younger sister	பங்காளி	cousin
thangai		pangALi	
சங்கம்	association	அங்கம்	part
sangam		angam	
சங்கு	conch	பங்கு	share
sangu		pangu	
மாங்காய்	mango	தேங்காய்	cocoanut
mangAi		thEngAi	
தங்கம்	gold	வெங்காயம்	onion
thangam		vengAyam	
பூங்கா	Park	கங்கை	River Ganga
poongA		gangai	
திங்கள்	1. Monday 2. month 3. Moon	உங்கள்	your
thingaL		unGaL	

"க" takes the "ga" sound, when is preceded by "ங்", as seen in the above examples.

Did you observe I have given the Thanglish word for தங்கை as "thangai"?

Yeah, it is that simple. Just type the phonetic Thanglish and let Azhagi do the rest.

ஞ், ஞ்

"ச" being the partner of "ஞ்", it will always follow "ஞ்", as seen in the following examples.

Another interesting thing happens here. In all these words ("ஞ்" preceding "ச"), "ச" takes the "ja" sound⁴.

மஞ்சள் manjaL	turmeric	கஞ்சி kanji	porridge
இஞ்சி inji	ginger	நஞ்சு nanju	poison
பஞ்சு panju	cotton	கிளிஞ்சல் kiLinjal	sea shell
ஊஞ்சல் oonjal	Swing	பூஞ்சை poonjai	fungus
பஞ்சம் panjam	famine	கொஞ்சம் konjam	a little

While typing, you don't have to remember the letter combination for "ஞ்". You can just type the phonetic Thanglish word. Azhagi will convert it to the right form.

ஞ is a special letter

Unlike "ங்" which can only play a partner role, "ஞ" can stand on its own also. See the following examples.

ஞாயிறு gnAyiRu	1. Sunday 2. Sun	ஞானி gnAni	enlightened person
ஞானம் gnAnam	knowledge, enlightenment	ஞாபகம் gnAbagam	memory
ஞாலம் gnAlam	the world		

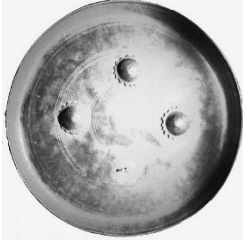
If you don't like typing "gnAni" for ஞானி, you can also type "njAni". Azhagi will convert that to "ஞானி".

⁴ You might recall, when we were talking about "ச", I said it has a third sound also, apart from "sa" and "cha".



We had a glimpse of this letter in our very first lesson, when we were talking about Vowels. It is time to get to know more about this versatile letter.

It is said to derive its name from its appearance. The picture below, shows the metal "Shield" used by Swordsmen, in the olden days. Do you see the resemblance?



That "Shield" is called ஆய்தம் ("Aidham"). Since the letter resembles ஆய்தம், it is called ஆய்த எழுத்து.

It is pronounced as "Akᵛ"

To type it, we use the letter "q". Switch to Thamizh keyboard mode and try it out.

Thamizh words using ூ are quite limited.

அஃதுᵛ aqthu	that one	இஃது iqthu	this one
எஃகு eqku	steel	அஃறிணை aqRiNai	inanimate

Probably because of its limited usage in Thamizh, this letter has come in very handy to write the words from other languages.

Here are some typical examples.

Language	Original word	written in Thamizh as	How to type in Azhagi
English	fan	ஃபான்	fAn
English	photo	ஃபோட்டோ	phOttO or fOttO
English	zero	ஃஜீரோ ⁵	qjeerO
English	zebra	ஃஜீப்ரா	qjeebrA
Urdu	khan	ஃகான்	qkAn
Urdu	akhbar	அஃக்பர்	aqkbar

Did you see how Azhagi converted "fAn" to "ஃபான்" and "photo" to "ஃபோட்டோ"? You just had to type the phonetic word and Azhagi did the rest. So, whenever you want to type ூ, just type "f" or "ph" as per the English spelling.

For ூ and ூ, there is no such shortcut. You have to type "qja" or "qka".

⁵ We will deal with ஜ and other such letters, in the next lesson.

Reading Practice

All the while we were reading only single words. Now that we have learnt all the letters, why not we read some small sentences? You can use the Thanglish guide on the right. But, by now, I am sure, you would feel more comfortable to read Thamizh itself directly.

வணக்கம்	vaNakkam
உங்களுக்கு தமிழ் தெரியுமா?	ungaLukku Thamizh theriyuma?
ஓ, நன்றாகத் ⁶ தெரியும்	O, nanRAgath theriyum
உங்கள் பெயர் என்ன?	ungaL peyar enna?
என் பெயர் முருகன்	en peyar murugan
உங்க ஊர் எது?	ungaL oor edhu?
என்னுடைய ஊர் பெங்களூர்	ennudaiya oor bengaloor
நீங்கள் எப்போது வந்தீர்கள்?	neengaL eppOthu vantheergaL?
நான் இப்போது தான் வந்தேன்	naan ippOthu thAn vanthEn
உங்கள் தந்தை பெயர் என்ன?	ungaL thanthai peyar enna?
என் தந்தையின் பெயர் பரமசிவம்	en thanthaiyin peyar paramasivam
உங்களுக்கு எத்தனை வயது?	ungaLukku eththanai vayathu?
எனக்கு பதினெட்டு வயது	enakku pathinettu vayathu
உங்களுடைய உயரம் என்ன?	ungaLudaiya uyaram enna?
என்னுடைய உயரம் ஐந்து அடி பத்து அங்குலம்	ennudaiya uyaram aindhu adi paththu angulam

⁶ நன்றாக தெரியும் is what you want to convey. But Thamizh grammar demands that you say நன்றாகத் தெரியும். Instead of trying to understand and remember the grammar rules, just get used to such expressions. In fact, when you talk casually in one continuous flow, you would realize you are actually saying நன்றாகத்தெரியும். To say நன்றாக தெரியும், you have to give a perceptible pause after நன்றாக. That spoils the normal flow of speech.

Challenge Time

Are you ready for the "Read, Record, Playback and Transcribe" challenge?

Use the small sentences in the previous page.

Read the sentences and record them.

Listen to the recording, and type the sentences.

How do you feel? Easy?

If it is not, it only means one thing. You probably have not been so diligent about doing all the exercises of the previous lessons.

After you are done, compare your typed word with the original.

Did you get all the words correctly?

If you feel uncomfortable in reading or writing, don't worry. Just start from Lesson 1, all over again. Do all the exercises. You would find it much easier, after that.

In fact, a complete revision of all the lessons, at this point, would actually be very beneficial. You will become supremely confident. No need to say ever again, "theiryum, aanaa theriyaadhu".

Reading Thamizh Movie Names

This is something that you should try. Since you might be already familiar with the names of many Thamizh movies, you might find it easy to read them. Click on the link below, for a list of all Thamizh movies.

[List of all Thamizh movies \(Year wise\)](#)

Time to say, Bye for now.

I am glad we have been able to get introduced to all the Thamizh letters in a reasonably short time.

Next week, we will look at Grantha Letters. Over the centuries, many borrowed words from other languages, particularly from Sanskrit, have come into common usage. To read or write such borrowed words we need to know the Grantha letters. So, let us spend some time on it, next week.

As always, I am open to suggestions. Let us make this journey a pleasant one for every one of us.

Until next week,

Best Wishes to you all,

Sundararajan

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