

Unit 1 The sounds of Bahtssal

Introduction: Writing Bahtssal

The Bahtssal language is easy to write. You will use the same letters that you use to write in English.

There are a few differences.

Bahtssal doesn't use all the letters.

For example there is no **f**, **v**, or **z** in Bahtssal.

A few of the letters are said differently.

q and **x** for example, don't sound like English.

You have to use some accents when you write Bahtsaal.

Some of these look like this: ' and `

You will soon see how this works.

As you learn the language, it will start feeling very natural.

Lesson 1: The vowel sounds

To speak Bahtssal, you have to be able to say the sounds.

In this lesson, you will learn how say some of the sounds that you read.

Remember, sometimes these letters look the same as English but they are said a bit differently.

The Bahtssal vowels

When you read these sounds, say them out loud.

First say the English words then say the vowel by itself, for example say; "father, hall, a, ah."

a and **e** sounds:

☉ *Listen to these sounds*

a or **ah** is said like the a in father and hall.

You will notice that sometimes the same sound can be written two different ways.

aa is said just like **a**, but you have to hold it a bit longer.
Say it like saw and law.

Notice the double letters. They are held a bit longer than single letters. This will be explained a little later.

ae is said like like -ay in play and stay.

Pay special attention to the letters that are underlined. They sound different than the ones that aren't underlined.

e or eh is said like the e in set and let.

Practice:

Here are some simple words in Bahtssal.

Try saying these using the right sounds for the vowels.

1. haa (I)
2. ma (you)
3. les (snot)
4. haal (flat tule)
5. baekh (they)
6. shal (wing)
7. gaa (to sit)
8. mer (to lie down) *The r is like a Spanish r.*
9. paeth (thin)

i sounds:

🎧 *Listen to these sounds*

i or ih is said like the i in sit and fit.

ii or eee is said like ee in week and see. Hold it a bit longer.

i or ai is said like the vowel sound in high and guy.

Practice:

1. hai (what?)
2. gii (head louse)
3. shih (name)
4. piil (to carry in your arms)
5. tsits (root)
6. diile' (forehead) *The accent means the stress is on the second syllable.*
7. gaai (land)
8. eee (yes)

o sounds:

☉ *Listen to these sounds*

- o** is said like the o in pot and hot.
- o** or **oh** is said like the o sound in spoke and rope.
- oa** is said like **o** or **oh** but you hold it a bit longer.
Say it like snow and show.
- oii** is a special sound. It sounds like -oy in boy and toy.

Practice:

1. kol (worm)
2. noat (grey)
3. soii (bread)
4. no (ashes)
5. shoal (towards the east)
6. shom (to shoot once)
7. tow (rafter)
8. oa (ok, agreed)
9. ts'oii (pack basket with open weave) *You can ignore this accent for now.*

u sounds:

☉ *Listen to these sounds*

- u** or **uh** is said like u in sum and hug.
- u** is said like u in duke and Luke.
- uu** is said like **u** but held longer. Say it like the u in rude and dune.

Practice:

1. baabu' (thigh, top of leg) *Notice the accent; stress is on the second syllable.*
2. duuwe' (last night)
3. ga'yu (up) *Notice the accent; stress is on the first syllable.*
4. gu'ra (close by)
5. li**ibu**' (whistle made of bone)
6. mu'la (mule)
7. yi**bu**' (branch)

Review

Now that you have had some practice saying words in Bahtssal, let's review some of the things you have learned.

Double letters

Double letters are held longer than single letters. You have to make sure you say them differently because some words are the same except for the sound of the vowel.

If someone said something that you didn't hear, you would say **hai** (what?). But if you wanted to say the word for grape, you would say **haai**, holding the a sound longer.

Let's practice long and short sounds.

☉ *Listen to these sounds*

Long

haa
gii
noat
baekh
duuwe'
shii
gaa
shoal

Short

ma
les
kol
gu'ra
shih
no
shal
mer

Accents

You probably noticed that words with more than one syllable sometimes have an accent in them. This accent tells you which part of the word is said louder. This is also called stress. So the accent shows you which part of the word is *stressed*.

Lets practice stress. Some of these words are stressed on the first syllable, some are stressed on the second syllable.

☉ *Listen to these sounds*

First

ga'yu
bai'le (husband)
gu'ra
bae'kal (them)

Second

biila' (fish worm)
duuwe'
baabu'
diile'

mu'la
shae'la (young man)

baatin' (big)
yiibu' (branch)

Complete Vowel Chart

[INSERT VOWEL CHART HERE]

Lesson 2: The consonant sounds

In Lesson 1 we learned how to say the vowel sounds. In Lesson 2, we are going to learn to say the other sounds in Bahtssal; the consonants. Many of these are said just like in English. That is why you were able to read the examples of words in Lesson 1. There are also some that are going to be new to you. You will have to listen to these sounds carefully from the audio recording.

Bahtssal consonant sounds that are like English

Here are the sounds that are the same as in English. Some of these are written with more than one letter, but they are a single sound. Remember, just like the vowel sounds, these letters always sound the same.

☉ *Listen to these sounds*

<u>Bahtssal letter</u>	<u>English sound</u>	<u>Bahtssal word</u>
b	bone and baby	baabu'
ch	chart and lunch	chaemal (chair)
d	daughter and down	diile'
g	go and bag.	ga'y <u>u</u>
h	hike and home	maahaa' (brother in law)
j	jeep and june.	jii'wa

k	keep and poker.	ko <u>l</u>
l	loss and goal	laa (sun)
m	mile and clam	mu' <u>l</u> a
n	near and fun	no <u>a</u> t
p	pole and hop	paako <u>a</u> ' (to pierce)
r	? (Spanish or English)	mer
s	send and best	so <u>i</u> i
sh	shoot and mash	sho <u>a</u> l
tch	pitch and catch.	mi <u>i</u> tche' (pounding basket)
t	tomato and tall	to <u>w</u> (rafter)
ts	cats and its.	tsits
w	walk and will	waa (we)
y	young and yes	ga'y <u>u</u>

Bahtssal consonant sounds that are NOT like English

A few sounds in Bahtssal are not pronounced the same way as in English. Some of these are pronounced in ways that are unfamiliar to you. To learn to say these sounds, you will have to practice. Use the audio recordings to listen to the sounds and try to repeat them. They will also be described in this lesson so you can understand how to make these sounds.

A sound that is almost like English © Listen to these sounds

th this is very similar to the th sound in these words: thing, think, thought. But you do not let out as much air when you say the Bahtssal sound. It is like saying the letter t with your tongue between your teeth.

Practice

ma'thi (doe, female deer)

thu <u>u</u> nu'	(mouse)
pa <u>e</u> th	(thin)
thi <u>i</u> ba'l	(near)

Two sounds that are not like English ☉ Listen to these sounds

There are two sounds in Bahtssal that are not used at all when you speak English. These sounds are important to learn to say because they are used a lot in Bahtssal. Be sure you know these well, because they are written like English letters, but they don't sound the way you expect them to.

- x** this letter is used for a sound a bit like a scraping at the back of your mouth.
- xh** Sometimes this sound is written this way, by adding an h.
- xk** It is also written this way, with a k.

You might make this sound if you you were trying to clear a hair stuck at the back of your tongue. If you know Spanish, it is like the sound of j in Spanish conejo (rabbit). It is also like the ch in German noch (yet). It is not a difficult sound to make. Listen closely to the audio recording of this sound.

Practice

xa'ka	(wet)
xaaba'	(fog)
wa <u>e</u> x	(paternal aunt)
da <u>e</u> x	(elder sister)
xhamaa	(foot)
xk <u>u</u> kaal	(shoulder)

- q** this letter is similar to **k** but the sound is made further back in your throat. This sound is not easy to make and it might sound like a k to you at first. Spend some time listening to the audio recording to learn this sound.

Practice

qaaw <u>i</u> i'	(boy)
qu <u>u</u> l	(dried cooked fish)
qo <u>i</u> i	(swan)
qaaq <u>o</u> '	(valley, meadow)

A group of sounds that include the sound h ☉ Listen to these sounds

These sounds are different from English because there is usually a vowel after h in English. In Bahtssal there are five letters that are said with an h sound in front. These are written with the h sound so you know how to pronounce them.

It is important to say the h sound so it can be clearly heard.

hl	taahla' (inside of thigh)
hm	hmaa (shore)
hn	gaahn <u>uu</u> 'l (to talk)
hw	naahwa' (shypoke, a type of crane)
hy	hy <u>u</u> l (snow)

A group of sounds that are "popped"

These sounds are similar to sounds of English, but they are said with a kind of popping sound. You will be able to learn how to say them once you understand how to make them "pop."

The way to make these sounds is to hold your breath while you say them. Try holding your breath with your mouth open. You will see that you are holding your breath by closing your throat, not your lips. This is how you have to hold your breath to make these sounds.

Let's take the p` for example. If you hold your breath while you say a normal p, you will have to "pop" it to make any sound and it will sound like a p`. The air comes out of your mouth, it does not come out of your lungs.

At first it will be difficult to say words with these sounds in them. As you practice and listen to the audio recordings of the words with these sounds, it will get easier.

the glottalized consonants

🎧 *Listen to these sounds*

k`	k`aash p <u>u</u> k`	(yawn) (real, true)
p`	mi <u>i</u> p` p`o <u>k</u> h	(he) (to smoke tobacco)
q`	q` <u>u</u> sa' q`o <u>a</u>	(elbow) (to drink)
t`	t`aala' dat`	(tick) (wife)

th`	l<u>o</u>ath`	(green brush)
	th`<u>o</u>	(brains)
tch`	g<u>u</u>tch`	(young)
ts`	ts`aa	(to break off by twisting)
	ts`<u>a</u>e	(mushroom)

As you can see, these sounds are written using a special accent. They are called glottalized. When you talk about them you can call them "glottalized p, glottalized k, glottalized t, ..." and so on.

The last two symbols

Now you know almost all the sounds in Bahtssal. You will see that there are a few more symbols you will need to know to be able to read and speak Bahtssal.

The dot

© *Listen to these sounds*

Sometimes you will see a word written with a dot or a period right in the middle of it or at the end of it. Here is an example:

boa.o' (elk) has a dot between two vowels.

This dot is usually after a vowel sound. You can make this sound easily. You do it already in English.

You might make this sound when you break something. You might say something like; "uh oh, I think I broke it." Or if you spill your milk, you might say; "uh oh, I spilled it." When you say "uh oh" you will notice that you have to stop the sound in the middle. That stop is called a glottal stop. It is used between vowels and at the end of words in Bahtssal and it is written as a dot. If you used it in English it would look like this: "uh.oh, I spilled my milk."

Practice

b<u>o</u>a.<u>o</u>'	(to hunt)
h<u>o</u>a'la.	(sack)
y<u>i</u>.i'	(feather)
ke'ke.	(crazy)
maa.a<u>i</u>'	(food)

The down accent

© *Listen to these sounds*

You have seen the down accent already. It is used in two ways. It is used for the "popped" consonants **p` , t` , k`**. For vowels, it is used for the same sound as the dot. You will usually see it before vowels at the begining of words.

Examples

`u <u>y</u>	(eye)
`i <u>i</u>	(yes)
`a <u>e</u> .a <u>e</u> .a <u>e</u>	(thank you)

Complete Consonant Chart

[INSERT CONSONANT CHART HERE]

Unit 2 Bahtssal Grammar

Lesson 1: Making words

Lesson 2: Making sentences