

High Valyrian Pronunciation Guide

Below is a description of all the sounds of High Valyrian and their spellings.

- **A, a**: Pronounced like the "a" in "father".
- **Ā, ā**: Pronounced like the "a" in "father", but held slightly longer.
- **B, b**: Pronounced like the "b" in "bad".
- **D, d**: Pronounced like the "d" in Spanish "diente".
- **E, e**: *Always* pronounced like the "a" in "gate".
- **Ē, ē**: Pronounced like the "a" in "gate", but held slightly longer.
- **G, g**: Pronounced like the "g" in "goat" (never like the "g" in "genius").
- **Gh, gh**: Pronounced like the "r" in French "rouge" (never like the "gh" in "ghost").
- **H, h**: Pronounced like the "h" in "hop". This sound is *always* pronounced, even if it comes after another consonant, or at the end of a word. The only cases in which it is *not* pronounced is when it occurs in the digraphs **gh**, **kh** and **th**.
- **I, i**: Pronounced like the "i" in "machine".
- **Ī, ī**: Pronounced like the "i" in "machine", but held slightly longer.
- **J, j**: Pronounced like the "j" in "jam" in isolation, but often pronounced like the "g" in "genre" or the "y" in "yellow" when occurring in consonant clusters. The letter **j** in High Valyrian has a variable pronunciation and acts kind of like a chameleon, changing depending on context. It can sometimes vary with **i**.
- **K, k**: Pronounced like the "k" in "sky" (this sound features *no* aspiration. Aspiration is the puff of air that occurs in the "k" in "kite". Compare the "k" in "kite" and the "k" in "sky" [try holding your hand in front of your face when pronouncing both]. The High Valyrian **k** should always be pronounced like the "k" in "sky"; never like the "k" in "kite").

- *Kh, kh*: Pronounced like the "ch" in the German pronunciation of "Buch". In English, this sound is commonly used with onomatopoeic words associated with disgust, like "blech!" or "ich!" To pronounce it correctly, put your tongue in position to pronounce a *k*, but release it slowly; allow the air to pass through the constricted space. The result should be a sound like white noise.
- *L, l*: Pronounced like the "l" in "love" (*never* like the so-called "swallowed l" in "filth").
- *Lj, lj*: Pronounced like the "li" in "million".
- *M, m*: Pronounced like the "m" in "matter".
- *N, n*: Pronounced like the "n" in "never".
- *Ñ, ñ*: Pronounced like the "ni" in "onion" or the initial "N" in an East Coast pronunciation of "New York".
- *Ñj, ñj*: Pronounced like the "nj" in "ninja". (May also be spelled *nj*.)
- *O, o*: Pronounced like the "o" in "tote".
- *Ō, ō*: Pronounced like the "o" in "tote", but held slightly longer.
- *P, p*: Pronounced like the "p" in "spike" (this sound features *no* aspiration. Aspiration is the puff of air that occurs in the "p" in "pike". Compare the "p" in "pike" and the "p" in "spike" [try holding your hand in front of your face when pronouncing both]. The High Valyrian *p* should always be pronounced like the "p" in "spike"; never like the "p" in "pike").
- *Q, q*: This is likely the most difficult sound in High Valyrian for an English speaker to master. The sound is produced by touching the back of the tongue to the uvula and making a constriction as one would for a *k*. One pronounces this sound like any other stop (*p, t, k*), it's just pronounced further back in the mouth than an English speaker is used to. Think about when the doctor asks you to go, "Ahhhhhhh..." Try doing that, and as you're doing it, take the back of your tongue, without moving it, and plug up the opening in the back of your mouth. That should put you in perfect position to pronounce *q*.

- **R, r:** Pronounced like the "rr" in Spanish "perro". It's a nice trilled "r", so be sure to get the trill in there. In the later period the trill started to tame a bit in environments where Spanish single "r" became a flap. Pronunciation varies depending on the original language of the speaker. In the oldest form of Valyrian it was a true trill.
- **Rh, rh:** Pronounced as *r* above, but without voicing. It will sound kind of like pronouncing *h* and *r* at the same time.
- **S, s:** Pronounced like the "s" in "sad".
- **T, t:** Pronounced like the "t" in "stake" (this sound features *no* aspiration. Aspiration is the puff of air that occurs in the "t" in "take". Compare the "t" in "take" and the "t" in "stake" [try holding your hand in front of your face when pronouncing both]. The High Valyrian *t* should always be pronounced like the "t" in "stake"; never like the "t" in "take").
- **Th, th:** Pronounced like the "th" in "thin" (*never* like the "th" in "that").
- **U, u:** Pronounced like the "u" in "ruminant".
- **Ū, ū:** Pronounced like the "u" in "ruminant", but held slightly longer.
- **V, v:** Pronounced like the "v" in "van" in isolation, but often pronounced like the "w" in "wagon" when occurring in consonant clusters. The letter *w* in High Valyrian has a variable pronunciation and acts kind of like a chameleon, changing depending on context. It can sometimes vary with *u* or *o*.
- **Y, y:** Pronounced like the "u" in French "rue", or the "ü" in German "für".
- **Ȳ, ȳ:** Pronounced like the "u" in French "rue", or the "ü" in German "für", but held slightly longer.
- **Z, z:** Pronounced like the "z" in "zebra".
- **Long Vowels:** Long vowels are held for twice as long as ordinary vowels. Consider the "a" vowel in English "bat" and in English "bad". Notice how the "a" vowel in "bad" is considerably longer than the "a" vowel in "bat"? The same can be true of *any* vowel in High Valyrian. Such vowels are written with a macron

(e.g. *a* is a short vowel and *ā* is a long vowel). It shouldn't require too much effort.

- **Double Consonants:** Doubled consonants, or geminates, occur frequently in High Valyrian. To pronounce a doubled consonant, simply pronounce it twice. You might think of it as lingering over the consonant. Think of the "s̄" sound you pronounce in "Miss Sally". It's a longer "s" than if you pronounce the similar phrase "Miss Ally". The same goes for the doubled consonants of High Valyrian. One important note about the romanization: If a digraph (e.g. *kh*, *gh*, etc.) is *doubled*, only the first letter will be doubled (hence, *kkh* not *khkh*). The consonant is pronounced like a doubled consonant, though, as actual combinations such as *k* followed by *kh* are impossible.

Stress:

- Word-final consonants are extrametrical, in terms of stress. Stress usually falls on the penultimate syllable. If the penultimate syllable is short, stress will fall on the antepenultimate syllable *if* it's heavy. Certain forms (e.g. the imperative) will have word-final stress, but otherwise word-final stress is unusual. Note that vowel clusters which begin with *i* are treated as a single vowel for purposes of stress (i.e. *ia*, *ie* and *io*).