



## DANE-ZAA ZÁÁGÉ? (BEAVER LANGUAGE) PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

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This guide is based on the *Doig River Dictionary* by Marshall and Jean Holdstock. It is intended as an introduction to pronouncing and writing the sounds used in Dane-zaa Záágé? (the Beaver language).

To write our language, we use the sounds represented by the Latin alphabet (used also for the English and French languages) in combination with additional symbols for the sounds we use that are not part of the Latin alphabet. Please refer to the Symbols chart for the list of phonetic and tonal characters which we use in addition to Latin letters.

To begin learning our language, listen carefully to Billy Attachie pronouncing the sounds found in our alphabet, and then practice them yourself.

BEAVER LETTER	BEAVER WORD	ENGLISH MEANING	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT (OR NEAR EQUIVALENT) OF THE SOUND
a	gat	'tree'	Sounds like the vowel in the English word <i>cut</i> .
aa	saa	'sun'	Sounds like the sound at the beginning of the English word <i>ah</i> .
ąą	ahą́ą	'yes'	Sounds like Beaver aa, but pronounced through the nose.
ae	egae	'spoon'	Sounds like the two vowels a and e pronounced as a single vowel, with
			the a brief and the e longer.
ai	hak'ai	'cow'	Sounds like the two vowels a and ii pronounced as a single vowel.
b	bes	'knife'	Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of ball.
ch	aché?	'tail'	Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <i>chain</i> .
ch'	ch'onê	'coyote'	Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <i>chain</i> , except the sound is
			glottalized so there is a "popping" sound.
d	dane	'person'	Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <i>dog</i> .
dl	dlezhe	'grizzly'	Sounds like a sequence of <i>d</i> followed by <i>l</i> as in <i>toddler</i> .
dz	adzě?	'heart'	Sounds like a sequence of $d$ followed by $z$ as in the English word $lids$ .
₫z	<u>dz</u> eníi	'calendar'	Sounds like a sequence of $d$ followed by $z$ as at the English word $lids$ ,

of s, but the air comes around the sides of the tongue.  m melh 'snare' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of me.  n nódaa 'lynx' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of net.  o gogosh 'pig' Sounds like the vowel at the beginning of open.  o ató? 'leaf' Sounds like the vowel at the beginning of only.  s sas 'bear' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of son.	BEAVER LETTER	BEAVER WORD	ENGLISH MEANING	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT (OR NEAR EQUIVALENT) OF THE SOUND
vowel.  e ebaa 'weasel' Sounds like the Beaver vowel e said through the nose.  ea dabea 'sheep' Sounds like the vowel in the English word hat.  ea kulea 'old man' Sounds like the Beaver vowel ea said through the nose.  g gaah 'rabbit' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of the English word goat.  gh ghaje 'goose' This sound is different that any English sound, although in rapid speech many English speakers change the g sound of ragged to a sound that is close to the gh sound of Beaver.  h hahaa 'moose' In many words /h/ has a stronger sound at the beginning of syllables  i shin 'song' Sounds like the vowel in stick.  j jéyo? 'bull Sounds like the vowel in seat.  Sounds like the vowel in seat.  k 'k' at 'willow' Sounds like the sound at the beginning of kite.  k' k'at 'willow' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of kite.  k' k'at 'willow' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of kite, except the sound is glottalized so there is a "popping" sound.  1 aláá? 'boat' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of leaf.  Ih lhuuge 'fish' This sound is different than any English sound. It has the sibilant quality of s, but the air comes around the sides of the tongue.  m melh 'snare' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of me.  n nódaa 'lynx' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of me.  n nódaa 'lynx' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of mo.  at'ô? 'leaf' Sounds like the vowel at the beginning of moly.  s sas 'bear' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of son, except with the tongu just behind or between the teeth.  sh shin 'song' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of son, except with the tongu just behind or between the teeth.				except with the tongue just behind or between the teeth.
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ea dabea 'sheep' Sounds like the vowel in the English word hat.  ça kulça 'old man' Sounds like the Beaver vowel ca said through the nose.  g gaah 'rabbit' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of the English word goat.  gh ghaje 'goose' This sound is different that any English sound, although in rapid speech many English speakers change the g sound of ragged to a sound that is close to the gh sound of Beaver.  h aháa 'yes' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of hen.  h hadaa 'moose' In many words /h/ has a stronger sound at the beginning of syllables  i shin 'song' Sounds like the vowel in stick.  jijih 'grouse' Sounds like the vowel in stick.  j jéyo? 'bull moose'  k ke 'shoes' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of hen.  Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of hen.  k' k'at 'willow' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of hen.  I aláá? 'boat' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of heaf.  Ih lhuuge 'fish' This sound is different than any English sound. It has the sibilant quality of s, but the air comes around the sides of the tongue.  m melh 'snare' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of me.  n nódaa 'lynx' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of not.  o gogosh 'pig' Sounds like the vowel at the beginning of open.  q at'ô? 'leaf' Sounds like the vowel at the beginning of son.  s sas 'bear' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of son, except with the tongu just behind or between the teeth.				vowel.
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moose'   K   ke 'shoes'   Sounds like the sound at the beginning of kite.	ii	jiih	'grouse'	Sounds like the vowel in <i>seat</i> .
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				just behind or between the teeth.
t tís 'crutch' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of tea.	sh	shin	'song'	Sounds like the sound at the beginning of <i>she</i> .
	t	tís	'crutch'	Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <i>tea</i> .
t' at'\(\display\) 'leaf' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of tea, except the sound is	ť'	at'ǫ́?	'leaf'	Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <i>tea</i> , except the sound is
glottalized so there is a "popping" sound.				glottalized so there is a "popping" sound.
tl tlezaa 'dog' Sounds like a sequence of $t$ followed by Beaver $lh$ . There is no similar	tl	tlę <u>z</u> aa	'dog'	Sounds like a sequence of t followed by Beaver Ih. There is no similar
sound in English.				sound in English.

BEAVER LETTER	BEAVER WORD	ENGLISH MEANING	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT (OR NEAR EQUIVALENT) OF THE SOUND
tl'	tl'uulh	'rope'	Sounds like a sequence of t followed by Beaver Ih, except the sound is
		•	glottalized so there is a "popping" sound. There is no similar sound in
			English.
ts	tsáá?	'beaver'	Sounds like a sequence of t followed by s as at the end of lets.
<u>ts</u>	<u>ts</u> e	'pipe'	Sounds like a sequence of t followed by s as at the end of lets, except with
			the tongue just behind or between the teeth.
ts'	ts'ádé?	'blanket'	Sounds like a sequence of $t$ followed by $s$ as at the end of <i>lets</i> , except the
			sound is glottalized so there is a "popping" sound.
<u>ts</u> '	<u>ts</u> 'iih	'mosquito'	Sounds like a sequence of $t$ followed by $s$ as at the end of <i>lets</i> , except the
			sound is glottalized so there is a "popping" sound and the tongue is just
			behind or between the teeth.
u	chush	'down	Sounds like the vowel in <i>book</i> .
		feather'	
uu	chuu	'water'	Sounds like the vowel in <i>food</i> .
W	wąlále	'butterfly'	Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of worm.
у	ya <u>s</u>	'snow'	Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <i>yes</i> .
Z	mazíí?	'his/her	Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <i>zigzag</i> .
		body'	
zh	dézhaa	'she/he	Sounds like the second consonant in <i>measure</i> .
		has started	
		to go'	

## PHONETIC AND TONAL SYMBOLS USED IN WRITING DANE-ZAA ZÁÁGÉ?

Dane-zaa Záágé? (the Beaver language) uses the Latin alphabet (also used by the English and French languages) in combination with the following symbols which indicate sounds that are not found in the Latin alphabet.

SYMBOL	EXAMPLE IN BEAVER WORD	ENGLISH MEANING	EXPLANATION OF SYMBOL & SOUND
?	ma'aahé?	'his/her snowshoes'	This symbol (?) indicates a glottal stop; a break in sound between vowels. It sounds like the consonant sound that comes between the two parts of <i>Uh-Oh!</i> This sound is made when the vocal cords are pressed together to stop the flow of air and then released.
,	k'at	'willow'	The apostrophe associated with a consonant means that the sound is "glottalized;" with glottalization, the consonant has a popping sound.  The popping sound is made by combining a glottal stop (made when the vocal cords are pressed together to stop the flow of air and then released) simultaneously with another consonant.  This example, k'at, sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <i>kite</i> , with an extra "popping" sound.
,	táádézhaa	'he is going up'	The acute accent (high tone) indicates that the vowel has a relatively higher pitch than the unmarked vowels.
_	<u>s</u> án	"star"	The underlined letters indicate dental sounds. Dental sounds are made by saying the sound of a letter with the tip of the tongue placed just behind or between the teeth (not on the ridge behind the teeth).  This example, <u>s</u> án, sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <i>son</i> , except with the tongue just behind or between the teeth.
ι	aťó?	'leaf'	The hook under a vowel means that it is nasalized, and pronounced through the nose. This example sounds like the vowel at the beginning of <i>only</i> .
~	madě?	'his/her eye'	The hachek over a vowel indicates a rising pitch.
^	ch'onê	'coyote'	The circumflex over a vowel indicates a falling pitch.

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