

COMANCHE SOUNDS AND THE COMANCHE ALPHABET

It is important to distinguish between the sounds in the Comanche language and the alphabet used to represent the sounds.

There are six (6) vowel symbols and twelve (12) consonant symbols (plus the two consonant combinations ts and kw). Underlining is used to indicate voiceless vowels, and doubled vowel symbols indicate long vowels.

VOWEL SYMBOLS FOR COMANCHE

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Comanche Word</u>	<u>Comparable sound in English</u>
a	sari dog	<u>o</u> in pot or <u>a</u> in father
e	ekap <u>i</u> red	between <u>a</u> in gate and <u>e</u> in get
i	wa?i <u>p</u> woman	<u>ea</u> in neat or <u>ee</u> in keep
o	pohya walk	similar to <u>o</u> in hope
u	suniku like that	<u>oo</u> in root or scoop
ʉ	ʉnʉ you	similar to <u>u</u> in put or <u>u</u> in undo

Vowels written with double symbols are pronounced like the corresponding single symbol vowels, but held longer:

aa	kaarʉ	sit
ee	kutseena	coyote
ii	sari	dog
oo	wa?oo	cat
uu	huutsuu	bird
ʉʉ	Nʉʉʉ	Comanche

Whispered vowels are indicated by underlining. They are almost inaudible.

<u>Whispered Vowel</u>	<u>Example</u>	
<u>a</u>	kawos <u>a</u>	coyote
<u>e</u>	taab <u>e</u>	sun
<u>i</u>	noob <u>i</u>	hill
<u>o</u>	aaw <u>o</u>	cup
<u>u</u>	uht <u>u</u>	give
<u>ʉ</u>	tsaat <u>ʉ</u>	good

Comanche also has combinations of two vowels. For example, ai, pronounced like the ie of pie, as in taiboo, a “non Indian person,” and oi, pronounced like the oy of toy, as in hoitsybunsy, “how about yourself.”

CONSONANT SYMBOLS FOR COMANCHE

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Comanche Word</u>	<u>Comparable sound in English</u>
b	tɔbitsi really	similar to <u>y</u> in having
h	haitɕi friend	<u>h</u> of horse
k	kee no	<u>k</u> of skip
kw	kwasi tail	<u>qu</u> of queen
m	mia go	<u>m</u> of meat
n	nɔuka dance	<u>n</u> of neat
p	puuku horse	<u>p</u> of speech
r	arɔka deer	<u>tt</u> of better, or <u>d</u> of rider
s	sarii dog	<u>s</u> of same
t	tanɔ we	<u>t</u> of stop
ts	tsihtiawe point	<u>ts</u> of hits
w	wɔnɔ stand	<u>w</u> of weather
y	yahne laugh	<u>y</u> of yet
z	moʔo hand	glottal stop, as in uh-oh

There are also a few sound / spelling variations you need to be aware of:

- the “t” is sometimes pronounced as an “r” and
- the “p” is sometimes pronounced as a “b”