

Languages

The languages spoken by the yinrih

- [Hearthsider Grammar](#)

Hearthsider Grammar

Hearthsider is a xenolang spoken by the same critters as the previously presented Commonthroat. Hearthsider is the innermost planet next to the yinrih's home star of Focus. It is a tidally locked [eyeball planet](#), with the Nightless Desert surrounding the subsolar point and a greenbelt along the terminator. Most hearthsiders live on the day side. The capital, The City of Eternal Noon (or Evernoon if you're feeling lazy) is directly on the subsolar point.

What follows is a preliminary grammar cobbled together from my notes. It gets less organized toward the end.

Phonology

vowels

The following table shows the notation used for vowels.

Phonation	Tone	Weak		Strong	
		Short	Long	Short	Long
Whine	High	d	D	f	F
	Low	b	B	c	C
Growl	High	j	J	k	K
	Low	g	G	h	H
Grunt	High	n	N	p	P
	Low	l	L	m	M
Hiss	Plain	t	T	v	V
	Trilled	w	W	x	X

As with all yinrih languages, vowels carry most of the weight. There are five vowel qualities, or *phonations*: a whine, a growl, a grunt, a plain hiss, and a trilled hiss. These vowels can either be plain (monophthongs) or contoured (diphthongs). A plain vowel can have one of two lengths (short or long), one of two tones (low or high) and one of two volumes, or strengths as they are called here (weak or strong). Hisses are an exception. They cannot carry tone, only length and strength.

A contour consists of two plain vowels which serve as the endpoints of a gradient. The attributes of each plain vowel determine the shape of the gradient. There are a few rules that govern what vowels can form contours. First, two plain vowels that differ only in length cannot form a contour. Second, the two vowels must have the same phonation type. Last, the two types of hisses, plain and trilled, cannot form contours with one another. If any of these rules are broken, a hiatus occurs between the vowels and they form two syllables.

The best way to convey how a vowel is pronounced is to describe its phonetic features one by one. For plain vowels, this is simple enough: give its length, tone, strength, then phonation. [b] is a short, low, weak whine. [P] is a long, high, strong grunt. Since hisses cannot carry tone, you do it a bit differently. [t] is a short *plain* weak hiss, and W is a long *trilled* strong hiss. Yes, describing hisses like this breaks English's normal adjective order, sorry.

Describing contours gets a little trickier. If both of the vowels in a contour share a phonetic feature, we use the same description we would for a plain vowel with that feature. If both vowels are long, then the contour is simply described as long. If both vowels are high, the contour as a whole is high, and so on. If there is a gradient between the two vowels, we describe it as follows:

- A vowel that goes from low to high tone is called *rising*.
- A vowel that goes from high to low tone is called *falling*.
- A vowel that goes from weak strength to strong (increasing volume) is called *strengthening*.
- A vowel that goes from strong to weak (decreasing volume) is called *weakening*.

But what about length? If the first vowel is short and the second is long, then the change from one vowel to the other occurs earlier in the syllable, so we call these contours *early*. If the first vowel is long and the second is short, the change occurs later in the syllable, so these contours are called *late*.

For example [Bd] is a /late rising weak whine/, and [tV] is an /early plain strengthening hiss/.

“ Here's a quick cultural sidebar about hisses. To a human, yinrih hisses sound very goose-like. Hisses are to yinrih what clicks are to humans. Yinrih hiss all the time, to show frustration or unwelcome surprise, like a human saying "arrgh!" or "ouch!" Hisses are also used as an attention-getter, especially to small animals, like humans calling *pspspsps* to a cat. But these sounds are paralinguistic. Only Hearthsider uses hisses phonemically, so the language sounds all the more exotic to foreign ears and is notoriously hard to pronounce for second language learners.

Consonants

Consonants are simple compared to vowels. There are three regular consonants: a huff, a chuff, and a yip, and two semivowels corresponding to the two kinds of hisses. A huff is an exhalation through the nose. A chuff sounds somewhat like a short purr, or the prusten sound made by tigers and snow leopards. Yinrih chuff as a form of greeting, like a human smile. A yip is a quiet little bark.

Hiss semivowels do not carry strength or length.

Sound	Symbol
huff	q
chuff	r
yip	s
plain hiss semivowel	y
trilled hiss semivowel	z

phonetactics

All syllables in Hearthsider are open (V or CV), and there are no consonant clusters or gemination. Hiss semivowels cannot coexist with hiss vowels in the same syllable.

Grammar

First thing's first, Hearthsider *loves* nouns. There are very few true adjectives or verbs. Various noun-based constructions convey things like quality and manner.

Word order is subject verb object compliment. The compliment is a noun phrase that specifies the verb, such as JqH *walking* or dqDb *seeing*.

The most common verbs are the *transitive* "do" t /short plain weak hiss/ and *intransitive* "do" w /short trilled weak hiss/. There's also a copula st /yip, short plain weak hiss/ used with predicate nouns and prepositional phrases.

```
rMl t qb b sBsb zGK
Light do you a shine friend
```

Light shine upon you, friend!

Pluractionality

You can indicate that an action occurred multiple times by making the compliment noun phrase plural. You mark plurality in the articles.

```
rc t b qMqm B dqDb
1sg do IND human IND.PL see
```

The sentence above could have several meanings depending on context or modifiers elsewhere in the sentence.

I see a human several times.

I see a human often.

I see a human regularly.

Compliment Nouns

The compliment nouns, such as `dqDb` *see* and `sBsb` *shine* can be used as regular nouns, in which case they mean an act or event described by the noun, or the abstract concept defined by the noun. So more literally they mean *seeing* and *shining*.

Articles

There are definite and indefinite articles, plus a third one I haven't defined yet. It may indicate a gnomic use of the noun. Number is not indicated on nouns themselves, but on their articles.

Article	Singular	Plural
indefinite	b	B
definite	m	M
gnomic?	g	G

True Verbs

There are only a few syntactic verbs. Among other things I haven't defined yet, verbs have polarity, with a positive "do" and a negative "do not" form

Verb	Meaning	verb	meaning
t	do (transitive)	v	not do (transitive)
w	do (intransitive)	x	not do (intransitive)

Verb	Meaning	verb	meaning
st	be	sv	not be

m sMsm w m sBsb
DEF sun do.INTR DEF shine

The sun shines

To indicate a predicate adjective, you use the intransitive "do" w.

M Lmsl w b ybF
the.PL claw do.INT a sharpness

The claws are sharp.

Pronouns

Person	singular	Plural
1st	rc	crc
2nd	qb	bqb
3rd	rl	lrl

The Construct State

The construct state indicates that a noun is being modified by another noun. This usually means the noun in the construct state is possessed by a following noun, but it's also one way Hebrew expresses attributive adjectives.

You put a noun in the construct state with the suffix -x /short trilled strong hiss/. The suffix was originally a preposition governing the following noun, but gradually decayed to become a suffix on the preceding noun.

M Lmsl-x m qHKqk w b ybF
the.PL claw-CON the man do.INT a sharpness

The man's (adult male yinrih's) claws are sharp.

The construct state is also used to form adverbs.

qb t rL B jygj-x Mzm
2sg do 3sg a.PL hold-CON wrongness

You're holding it wrong. (literally "you do it a holding of wrongness")

Prepositions

Prepositions come before the nouns they govern. Prepositional phrases, when they modify a noun, come after the modified noun.

m sbdsd zb m Fzfb
the pup (juvenile female yinrih) in the house

The pup in the house

Hearthsider uses prepositions in a similar way to the construct state, to form adjectival phrases.

m sCFsf rT M sCqg
DEF woman (adult female yinrih) covered_in DEF.PL bald_spot

The balding woman (novice healer)

Adjectives

Hearthsider does have a few true adjectives, but only for expressing quantity and comparison.

zG qb rc w b X qMP
against 2sg 1sg do a more greatness

I'm bigger than you.

rc w m qpmqnL
1sg do.INT the exhaustion

I'm really tired!

Prepositional phrases used as predicates may drop the verb `st` in indicative sentences.

rc sw m vTrt
1sg full_of the loneliness

I'm really lonely :(

This may make it common to reanalyze propositions as pseudo verbs.

The agentive may be expressed with an infix **v** /long plane strong hiss/ after the first syllable of the word. If the first syllable already contains a hiss, the allomorph **qV** /huff, long plane strong hiss/ is used instead. So **JqH** *walking* becomes **JVqH** *walker*. There may be a patientive equivalent in **T** and **qT**. As with Commonthroat, when two dissimilar vowels touch, a hiatus is introduced. **qTsv** *kindling* = **qTqTsv** *kindled, sapient*

Something like an emphatic or mirative sense can be achieved by reduplicating the verb, usually written as two separate words.

rc t lrl b dqDb
1sg do 3pl a see

I see them.

rc t t lrl b dqDb
1sg do do 3pl a see

I really see them, I do see them.

There is a speech pattern seen in younger pups whereby the compliment noun of a sentence is followed immediately by another noun that is either a synonym or closely related word.

rc t lrl b dqDb jrJg
1sg do 3pl a see regard

I see-regard them.

The "main" compliment is **dqDb** *seeing* and is followed immediately by the similar word **jrJg** *regarding or considering or beholding*.

There are a few theories about where this construction came from. One posits that it's a result of exposure to Commonthroat, specifically its serial verb constructions which don't exist in standard Hearthsider. Another theory says that it started as pups attempting to sound more grown up by tossing in extra related words. In any case, it's seen as very puppyish and is never used by adults except in conscious imitation.

VV dqDb jrJg lrl t t qx b brb b qLm
wow see regard, 3pl do do not a tail a have

Wow! Lookie! they really have no tail!

Hearthsider has dedicated negative forms for verbs. Most positive verbs are weak and you form the corresponding negative form by strengthening the weak vowel.

sv m Jzgh, sc?
is_not the network, OK?

It's not the network, OK?

sv /yip, short plain strong hiss/ is the negative form of **st** "'to be (a noun or prepositional phrase)"
Unlike its positive form, you can't drop **sv** when the predicate is a prepositional phrase.

sc /yip, short low strong whine/ can be translated as *OK?* or *Got it?* or *do you understand?* It always has an interrogative meaning.

t (*transitive "do"*) can have a causal meaning compared to its intransitive counterpart **w**.

rc w b JqH c m Bfzf
1sg do.TR a walk to the market

I walk to the market

rc t M sbdsd b JqH c m Bfzf
1sg do.TR DEF.PL pup a walk to the market

I walk the pups to the market.

rc t M sbdsd b JqH c m Bfzf
1sg do.TR DEF.PL pup a walk to the market

I walk the pups to the market.