

## Learning Maldivian (Dhivehi)

There are few possibilities to learn Dhivehi. Most of them are scientific linguistic books.

This site is NOT scientific, its purpose is to make learning Dhivehi easy. So the grammar is arranged in a way that allows to learn easily.

It's not perfect, even its sources are not complete (see "literature"). It's more "first aid" in learning Dhivehi.

If you are using a mobile phone, you won't be able to read the Maldivian alphabet

– there are several apps available for free to teach your mobile to read Dhivehi, just look in your app-store.

You'll need a dictionary – there is one available for free as mobile app on google play.

Attention: This site only contains the rules for normal speech. Don't use it when you meet a person of higher rank than you!

### Content:

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### Maldivian script – Thaana

The Maldivian script is named Thaana. It's written from right to left.

On the line, there are consonants.

Vowels that follow a consonant (or even the lack of a vowel) are written beneath or below.

Example:

letter	English transscription	pronunciation
ބ	b	Like English "b"
ބަ	ba	short, vowel sounds like in "but"
ބާ	baa	Long, vowel sounds like in "bath"
ބެ	be	Vowel sounds like in "bench"
ބޭ	bey	Vowel sounds like in Beirut
ބި	bi	Vowel sounds like in "bin"

ބ	bee	Just like the honey-bee
ބޯ	bo	Vowel sounds like the first “o” in bottom
ބޯޅ	boa	Long o, vowel sounds like in “ball”
ބު	bu	Vowel sounds like in “book”
ބޯ	boo	Vowel sounds like in “booth”
ބ	b	No vowel following the letter “b”

The vowels are the same with each consonant.

This is the usual transcription.

On twitter, by some people, the long vowels are transcribed by big letters – for lack of space.

So: ba, bA, be, bE, bi, bl, bo, bO, bu, bU

### Consonants:

The next table contains consonants, their English transcription and hints for pronunciation. They are in the order of the Maldivian alphabet.

consonants	transcription	pronunciation
ހ	h	“h” like in “house”
ޝ	sh h	Sounds similar to English “sh”, but is spoken with retroflex tongue, that means, the tip of the tongue is up, the air flowing at the sides of the tongue (this consonant exists only in Maldives). - If this consonant stands within a word, bearing the “no vowel”-sign, it doubles the following consonant. - If this consonant stands at the end of a word, bearing the “no-vowel” sign, it’s just a hard stop at the end of the word.
ނ	n	“n” like in “nose”
ރ	r	Rolling “r” like in Scotia, Germany, Singhalese
ބ	b	“b” like in “bee”
ލ	lh	“l” with a retroflex tongue (sound also exists in Singhalese and indian languages) (retroflex: tongue rolled up)
ކ	k	“k”
ޅ	(not transcribed)	- This consonant marks the beginning of a vowel. It can be heard, if you compare “bio” and “by occasion” – the beginning of the “o” flows in bio and is hard in “by occasion” - If this consonant stands within a word, bearing the “no-vowel”-sign, than it doubles the following consonant. - If this consonant stands at the end of a word, bearing the “no-vowel” sign, it’s just a hard stop at the end of the word. This stop is so hard that to Europeans it sounds like a short “k”.
ވ	v	Like English “v” or “w”

م	m	m
ف	f	f
ث	dh	Voiceful English "th"
ط	th	English th
	iy	If this consonant stands at the end of a word, bearing the "no-vowel"-sign, it's pronounced "y"
ل	l	l
ج	g	"g" like in "garden"
غ	gn	Sounds like ny- like gn in Italian "Lasagne" – similar to the start of "news"
س	s	s
د	d	d
ذ	z	Voiceful s
ي	y	Y like in "yard"
پ	p	P
ج	j	J like in "jungle"
ك	ch	"ch" like in "chapter"

There are also some special letters:

ش is used quite often, it's transcribed „sh“ and pronounced just like english „sh“.

The following letters are used for arab consonants (as a muslim country Maldives lent a lot of words from Arabia)

– besides the five described, they are very scarcely used:

ح	“h” or “kh” – an rough h that can be heard.
خ	
س	
س	
ف	
ج	“gh”
چ	
ق	“q”
ق	
ك	“kh” – sound between k and h, harder than ح, but not yet a “k”
ف	
الله	Allah, means god.

#### Exercise:

- Write words of your own language with Maldivian letters.
- If you are in Maldives, read tables.
- Read a few lines of a Maldivian newspaper (Dhivehi edition – e.g. haveeru, miadhu ... they are also online available)
- Continue with this exercise, until you know all vowels and all consonants of the first table.

## Nouns

### 1. Genera (kinds):

There's no „male“ or „female“ or „neutral“ –

But there are “human” and “non-human”

And there's defined (the table – meyzu) and undefined (a table – meyzeh, any table - meyzaku)

**Learn the defined forms first, later the undefined. That's easier.**

### 2. Declination

#### a. Cases

N - Nominativ (answer to the question: “who?”)

G - Genitiv (answer to the question: “Whose?”)

D - Dativ (answer to the question: “To whom?”)

A - Accusativ (answer to the question: “whom?”) – usually the same form as N

L - Lokativ (answer to the question: “Where?”)

Abl - Ablativ (answer to the questions: “ from where, of what, by what, through what?”)

And there are little words that just are to be added at the end of a word:

- “aai” – and

- “aa” – with

#### b. Endings of the words “non-human”:

For one:

case	Defined (the)	Undefined (a)	Undefined (any)
N	-	օֹ	օֹ
G	օֹ	օֹֹ	օֹֹ
D	օֹֹ	օֹֹֹ	օֹֹֹ
A	-	օֹ	օֹ
L	օֹֹ	օֹֹֹ	օֹֹֹ
Abl	օֹֹֹ	օֹֹֹֹ	օֹֹֹֹ

For two or more:

case	Defined (the)	Undefined (a and any)
N	օֹֹ	օֹֹֹ
G	օֹֹֹ	օֹֹֹֹ
D	օֹֹֹֹ	օֹֹֹֹֹ

A	فُو	فُوْ
L	فُوْنِي	فُوْنِيْ
Abl	فُوْنِسْ	فُوْنِسْ

Example:

فُوْنِسْ - room

N	فُوْنِسْ	فُوْنِسْ	فُوْنِسْ	فُوْنِسْ	فُوْنِسْ
G	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ
D	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ
A	فُوْنِسْ	فُوْنِسْ	فُوْنِسْ	فُوْنِسْ	فُوْنِسْ
L	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ
Abl	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ	فُوْنِسِيْ

c. Endings for the words „human“

For one:

case	Defined (the)	Undefined (a)	Undefined (any)
N	-	اِنْسَانٌ	اِنْسَانٌ
G	اِنْسَانِيْ	اِنْسَانِيْ	اِنْسَانِيْ
D	اِنْسَانِيْ	اِنْسَانِيْ	اِنْسَانِيْ
A	-	اِنْسَانٌ	اِنْسَانٌ
L	اِنْسَانِيْ	اِنْسَانِيْ	اِنْسَانِيْ
Abl	اِنْسَانِيْ	اِنْسَانِيْ	اِنْسَانِيْ

For two or more:

case	Defined (the)	Undefined (a/any)
N	اِنْسَانِيْنَ	
G	اِنْسَانِيْ	
D	اِنْسَانِيْ	
A	اِنْسَانِيْنَ	
L	اِنْسَانِيْ	
Abl		

Words ending with „a“, if they are two or more, will have “in” (expection: meehaa)

Words ending with “i” , if they are two or more, will only have the “n”

Examples:

Kulhuntheriyaa - player

N	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئ	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئ	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئ
G	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئِي	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئِي	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئِي
D	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئَرِئ	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئَرِئ	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئَرِئ
A	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئ	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئ	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئ
L	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئِي	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئِي	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئِي
Abl	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئَرِئ	نَوَسْرِيْمَرِئَرِئ	

Meehaa – man

With this word, the ending –aa only exists in the defined form for one.

N	چَرَّ	چَرَّ	چَرَّ	چَرَسْر
G	چَرِّي	چَرِّي	چَرَّي	چَرَسْرِي
D	چَرَّرِئ	چَرَّرِئ	چَرَّرِئ	چَرَسْرَرِئ
A	چَرَّ	چَرَّ	چَرَّ	چَرَسْر
L	چَرِّي	چَرَّي	چَرَّي	چَرَسْرِي
Abl	چَرَّرِئ	چَرَّرِئ	چَرَّرِئ	

**Exercise:**

Learn defined words first.

Get a dhivehi text, for example of a newspaper, and look for words with these endings.

Mark them.

Take a dictionary and try to translate these single words.

Then do the same with the undefined word-endings.

**Special:**

Ships: if two or more, -faharu is added: dhoani (boat) – dhoanifaharu (boats)

Generalized: gas (bush, tree) – gasgahaa gehi (vegetation)

Some words just get doubled if two or more:

Bas (word) – basbas (words),

Same: نَسْرِي (deeds), مَرِئَرِئ (islands, villages), ڪَو ڪَو, رَوَر, رَوَرِئ, مَرِئَرِئ

These exceptions just have to be learned...

## Pronouns

Attention! These are the pronouns used in normal speech.

Don't use them for speaking with or about persons of higher rank!

I	- اَنَا
You	- أَنْتَ
He/she	- هُوَ / هِيَ
We	- هُمْ / هُنَّ
You	- أَنْتُمْ
They	- هُمْ / هُنَّ

Declination of the pronouns:

N	اَنَا	أَنْتَ	هُوَ	هُمْ	لَهُمْ	أَنْتُمْ
G	أَنْتِ	لَهُنَّ	أَنْتَ	أَنْتُمْ	لَهُنَّ	أَنْتُمْ
D	أَنْتِ	لَهُنَّ	أَنْتَ	أَنْتُمْ	لَهُنَّ	أَنْتُمْ
A	أَنْتِ	لَهُنَّ	أَنْتَ	أَنْتُمْ	لَهُنَّ	أَنْتُمْ

## Verb

A verb signs what is done.

At the first look, it's easy:

Usually all **persons** use the same ending of the verb.

(I, we = 1; you= 2; he/she/it/they=3)

And there are only three times: presence, future, past.

On the second look, there seem to be innumerable forms of the verbs.

The reason is – there are many ways to look on what is going on. And every way has its own form of the verb (**modus**)

The most easy modus is progressive – the way you just tell something.

With this modus we'll start.

1- I hit	-	أَنَا أَضْرِبُ
2- You hit	-	أَنْتَ تَضْرِبُ
3- He hits	-	هُوَ يَضْرِبُ
1- We hit	-	هُمْ يَضْرِبُونَ
2- You hit	-	أَنْتُمْ تَضْرِبُونَ
3- They hit	-	هُمْ يَضْرِبُونَ

You see, it's quite easy, as all persons use the same form.

Same:

I eat: أَنَا أَكُلُ

You get: *لاؤ ى سُرَسِير*

Only exception:

I know: *اَسْرَسِير*

This is special to Maldivian. In some cases the subject (the actor) is not in nominativ ("Who is acting? – I = *اَسْرَسِير*") but in Dativ (to me = *اَسْرَسِير*).

We might also translate: "it's known to me" = "I know"

So to this kind of verbs, there exists only the third person.

There are **3 stems** of each verb. From these roots all forms of the verb are derived: presence, past and a participle (participle shows that something is ready done, like in the first lines of a newspaper: "prices risen!")

Example for stems:

To hit:

Presence: jaha-

Past: jehi-

Participle: jahai-

**Learn the blue forms first – to start speaking.**

**Then the dark red forms. These forms you'll need most!**

**Remember: if no person is named, it's the same for all persons!**

**Verbs with more than one syllable, ending in presence stem with an "a":**

Example: jaha (hit)

	presence	future	past
stem	<i>جَاز</i>		<i>جَهِر</i>
Progressive	<i>جَازِير</i>	<i>جَازِيرَسِير</i>	<i>جَهِر</i>
Simple Person 1+2		<i>جَازِيرَسِير</i>	<i>جَهِرَسِير</i>
Person 3		<i>جَازِيرَسِير</i>	<i>جَهِر</i>
Imperative	<i>جَاز</i>		
Infinitive	<i>جَازِير</i>		
Infinitive in dictionary			<i>جَازِير</i>
Participle	<i>جَازِير</i> = stem		<i>جَازِيرَسِير</i> (person 1+2)
			<i>جَازِير</i> (person3)

stem: verb without ending

Progressive: way just to tell something – he hits...

Simple telling

Imperative: order: do so!

Participle: doing or done

Similar with the following verbs:

**Verbs with one syllable**

Example: kanee – eat

	presence	future	past
<b>stem</b>	كَا		كَا
<b>Progressive</b>	كَايِي	كَايِي	كَا
<b>Simple</b> Person 1+2		كَايِي	كَا
Person 3		كَايِي	كَا
<b>Imperative</b>	كَا		
<b>Infinitive</b>	كَايِي		
Infinitive in dictionary			كَايِي
<b>Participle</b>	كَا = stem		كَايِي (person 1+2)
			كَايِي (person3)

**Verbs with “nn”**

	presence	future	past
<b>stem</b>	كَيِي		كَيِي
<b>Progressive</b>	كَيِييِي	كَيِييِي	كَيِي
<b>Simple</b> Person 1+2		كَيِييِي	كَيِي
Person 3		كَيِييِي	كَيِي
<b>Imperative</b>	كَيِي		
<b>Infinitive</b>	كَيِييِي		
Infinitive in dictionary			
<b>Participle</b>	كَيِي = stem		كَيِييِي (person 1+2)

			ދަންނަ (person3)
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### Verb “engenee”

Remember: This kind of verb turns the subject in DATIV, therefore no first or second person.

	presence	future	past
stem	ދަންނަ		ދަންނަ
Progressive	ދަންނަ	ދަންނަ	ދަންނަ
Simple Person 1+2		---	---
Person 3		ދަންނަ	ދަންނަ
Imperative	---		
Infinitive	ދަންނަ		
Infinitive in dictionary			
Participle	ދަންނަ = stem		ދަންނަ (person 1+2) ދަންނަ (person3)

### Exercise:

Get your dictionary and look for nouns and verbs you need in a special situation.  
Form short sentences, only 2 or 3 words, not more than 4.  
(don't bother whether they are perfect Dhivehi. But USE some of these sentences when speaking to Maldivian people. Do they understand you?)

Get a newspaper and look for verbs and nouns (Only the forms you know already!).  
Look in your dictionary for the translation. What is the article speaking about?

### Irregular verbs

presence	Past	participle
go	went	gone
ދަންނަ	ދަންނަ	ދަންނަ
give	gave	given
ދަންނަ	ދަންނަ	ދަންނަ
come	came	come
ދަންނަ	ދަންނަ	ދަންނަ

play	played	played
ލަވަޔިރ	ލަވަޔިރު	ލަވަޔިރު

**Further forms of the verbs**

For beginners, this table isn't to learn.

Just use it, when you see or hear a form of a verb that you don't know.

Don't learn them until you're quite sure in the use of the forms above – and:

Don't learn the all at once – just learn one modus after the other.

Continue when you are sure that you use it in the correct way.

Modes:

Relative – used instead of a relative clause : jahaa meehaa – the man who hits...

Habitualis – usually doing

Hortative – similar to imperative – exhortation to do: Do it!

Reason – that what I do is the reason for the following: “because I do”

Temporalis – “When I do this...”

Simultaneous – “while doing this...”

Concessive – “Although I do ...”

Inchoative – I start to do it

Irreal – I would do it, if things weren't as they are : “If I were in parliament...”

Optative – I wish to do it “Let's do it!”

Conditional – If I do this, then...

Successive – After ...

There might be other modes but they are not found in the sources of this site.

There are even more forms, when polite speech is added – but as I said before:

Don't speak Dhivehi with a person of higher rank.

If you are already quite used to speaking Dhivehi, let a Maldivian teach you the polite speech.

modes	ޖަހަފިރ	ލަވަޔިރ	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް
Relative	ޖަހަފިރު	ލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް
Habitual	ޖަހަފިރުޖަހަފިރު	ލަވަޔިރުލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް
Hortative	ޖަހަފިރު	ލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	
Reason	ޖަހަފިރު	ލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް
Temporal	ޖަހަފިރު	ލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް
Simultaneous	ޖަހަފިރުލަވަޔިރު	ލަވަޔިރުލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް
Simultaneous	ޖަހަފިރުލަވަޔިރު	ލަވަޔިރުލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް
Concessive	ޖަހަފިރު	ލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް
Inchoative	ޖަހަފިރުލަވަޔިރު	ލަވަޔިރުލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް
Irreal	ޖަހަފިރުލަވަޔިރު	ލަވަޔިރުލަވަޔިރު	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް	ޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔްޕްލޭޔް

Optative	حَزْرِيْ سُرُوْ / حَزْرِيْ سُرُوْ سُرُوْ	لَا حَزْرِيْ سُرُوْ / لَا حَزْرِيْ سُرُوْ	يْ سُرُوْ سُرُوْ سُرُوْ / يْ سُرُوْ سُرُوْ	اَسْرِيْ قُرُوْ
Conditional	حَزْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ	لَا حَزْرِيْ	يْ سُرُوْ حَزْرِيْ	اَسْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ
Successive	حَزْرِيْ سُرُوْ	لَا حَزْرِيْ سُرُوْ	يْ سُرُوْ سُرُوْ	اَسْرِيْ سُرُوْ
Successive	حَزْرِيْ	لَا حَزْرِيْ	يْ سُرُوْ	اَسْرِيْ

## Numbers

0	سُرُوْ
1	اَسْرِيْ
2	قُرُوْ
3	حَزْرِيْ
4	حَزْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ
5	حَزْرِيْ سُرُوْ
6	رُ
7	رُ حَزْرِيْ
8	رُ حَزْرِيْ سُرُوْ
9	سُرُوْ
10	حَزْرِيْ
11	اَسْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ
12	سُرُوْ / حَزْرِيْ سُرُوْ
13	قُرُوْ حَزْرِيْ
14	سُرُوْ حَزْرِيْ
15	حَزْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ
16	سُرُوْ حَزْرِيْ
17	سُرُوْ حَزْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ
18	اَسْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ
19	سُرُوْ حَزْرِيْ / اَسْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ
20	وَرُ
21	اَسْرِيْ وَرُ
22	سُرُوْ وَرُ
23	قُرُوْ وَرُ
24	سُرُوْ حَزْرِيْ وَرُ
25	حَزْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ وَرُ
26	سُرُوْ حَزْرِيْ وَرُ
27	رُ حَزْرِيْ وَرُ
28	اَسْرِيْ حَزْرِيْ وَرُ

29	ސަވަންދަ ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
30	ސަދަދަ

After thirty there are two systems of counting – just find out, which one is used in your region.

31	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
32	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
33	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
34	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
35	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
36	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
37	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
38	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
39	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
40	ސަދަދަ	
50	ސަދަދަ	
60	ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
70	ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
80	ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
90	ސަދަދަ	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ

100	ސަދަދަ
200	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
300	ސަދަދަ ސަދަދަ
1000	ސަދަދަ

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additional own research  
 Antje Beckers

