

CONSTRUCTED LANGUAGE GRAMMAR

Quenya Grammar 1

Reading the High-elven language of Tolkien: sounds, nouns, cases, adjectives, pronouns and verbs, with every form labelled.

10 Chapters

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Generated with Claude

QUENYA GRAMMAR 1

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Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 1 · What Quenya Is

Tolkien's Languages introduced both Elvish languages, and *Sindarin Grammar 1* took the Grey-elven one apart. This course does the same for Quenya, the High-elven language. Quenya looks very different on the page: where Sindarin changes the start of its words, Quenya adds endings to the end of them. Before the first rule, this chapter explains what kind of language Quenya is, where its evidence comes from, and the labels this course uses so you always know how sure a form is.

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> Quenya is a language Tolkien revised for most of his life. The grammar in this course is the *late* Quenya of his later years, built from published texts and edited notes. Where the evidence stops, so does the grammar.

What Quenya Is

Quenya is the older, more formal Elvish language of Tolkien's world. Within the story it was spoken by the High-elves who had lived in Valinor, and in the Third Age of Middle-earth it was a language of ceremony and lore rather than everyday talk. The name is usually translated "language" or "elf-language".

It is also the first Elvish language Tolkien worked on. Wikipedia dates his start to about 1910 to 1911, and says he called it *Qenya* around 1915; the spelling was later changed to *Quenya*. Its sound and structure drew on several real languages: Finnish was an early and strong influence (Tolkien called it "a dominant influence" but said it was "much reduced" in late Quenya), and Latin shaped the grammar and the stress rule. Tolkien borrowed almost no actual words from them.

Phases of the Language

Because Tolkien kept changing Quenya, a form can be right in one period and wrong in another. Wikipedia describes the stages as follows:

PHASE	APPROXIMATE DATES	WHAT TO KNOW
Early Quenya (Qenya)	c. 1910 to 1920s	The first version; much of its grammar and vocabulary was later replaced
Middle Quenya	to about 1950	The stage around the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*
Late Quenya	c. 1950 to 1973	After the book, the grammar changed little; this is the version most learners study, and the one this course uses

The date ranges differ slightly between sources: the Eldamo database, for example, divides the periods as Early (1910 to 1930), Middle (to 1950) and Late (to 1973). Treat the dates as rough.

Where the Evidence Comes From

LAYER	WHAT IT IS	HOW MUCH TO TRUST IT
Published texts	Poems, greetings and cries in *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion* and Tolkien's own spoken and printed poems	Highest: Tolkien published them
Edited notes	Word-lists and grammar notes from his papers, printed in journals such as *Vinyar Tengwar* and *Parma Eldalamberon*	High, but they come from different phases
Scholars' reconstructions	Grammars and databases built from the evidence, such as Paul Strack's Eldamo	Useful, but scholars disagree in places
Fan extensions	New words and sentences invented so the language can be used	Not Tolkien's; only as good as their method

Quenya is better supplied with texts than Sindarin. "Namárië" is the longest Quenya text Tolkien published in his lifetime, and Wikipedia also lists poems he read aloud and which were printed in 1983, such as "Oilima Markirya", and shorter Quenya lines in the books.

The Labels This Course Uses

As in *Sindarin Grammar 1*, every Quenya form carries one of three labels:

LABEL	MEANING	EXAMPLE
Attested	Found in a text or notes by Tolkien	*Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima*
Reconstructed	Not found as such, but worked out by a scholar from the evidence	a case form given in a scholar's table
Built by rule	Made by this course from a general rule, to practise the rule	an exercise form with no source of its own

Only the first kind is safe to quote as Tolkien's Quenya. The other two are for learning.

Two Attested Greetings, Read Closely

Two short Quenya lines in *The Lord of the Rings* are enough to practise the method.

```
# Attested: Sam's cry (The Lord of the Rings)
Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!
  Hail Eärendil, brightest of stars!

# Attested: Frodo's greeting (The Lord of the Rings)
Elen síla lúmenn' omentielvo
  "A star shines on the hour of our meeting" (usual translation; see the box below)
```

Notice that the first line has a plural-looking ending on *Elenion* ("of stars"), which is the sort of ending that makes up much of this course; Chapters 3 to 5 explain how they work. The second line shows an apostrophe, marking a vowel dropped in front of another word (*lúmenn'* for *lúmenna* before *omentielvo*).

WATCH OUT: NOT YET VERIFIED

The English meaning of Sam's cry comes from Wikipedia. The meaning of Frodo's greeting was confirmed in Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 10. The explanation of *Elenion* as a genitive plural, and the dropped vowel in *lúmenn'* are from my own knowledge and I have not checked them against a source; later chapters will verify them. Treat them as provisional.

WATCH OUT: A TRANSLATION IS NOT A SOURCE

Websites and apps that offer to "translate English to Quenya" usually guess, mixing phases and inventing words. Treat any such output as built by rule at best.

WATCH OUT: FORMS CHANGE BETWEEN PHASES

A word from an early list may have been replaced in the late language. Always ask which phase a form comes from.

COMMON MYTHS

- **"Quenya is Finnish with a Latin hat."** Both influenced it, but Tolkien said Finnish was much reduced in the late language, and he borrowed almost no words.
- **"There is one Quenya."** There are several phases, and some forms in older lists no longer apply.
- **"If it is on a Tolkien website, it is Tolkien's."** Many sites mix his words with fan inventions.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Wikipedia, "Quenya" (read to the first 100,000 characters of a longer page), and a general web search on the language and its phases. I did not find reliable detail on *Markirya* or *Aia Eruion* in those results, so this chapter says only what Wikipedia reports about the 1983 printing.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Name the three phases of Quenya used in this chapter, give the rough dates of each, and say which one this course teaches and why that matters when you meet a word in an old list.

View solution

EXERCISE 2

List the four layers of evidence for Quenya from most to least reliable. For each of the last two, say one thing a learner should do before trusting a form.

View solution

EXERCISE 3

A website offers to translate "I love you" into Quenya. Write three questions you would ask before trusting the result, using the labels from this chapter, and label Sam's cry and the sentence you would get from the website.

View solution

CHAPTER 1 QUICK REFERENCE

- Quenya = High-elven, begun c. 1910 to 1911 (Qenya c. 1915), influenced by Finnish and Latin
- Phases: Early, Middle (to c. 1950), Late (c. 1950 to 1973); this course uses late Quenya
- Evidence layers: published texts, edited notes, scholars' reconstructions, fan extensions
- Labels: **attested**, **reconstructed**, **built by rule**
- Attested: *Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!* "Hail Eärendil, brightest of stars!"; *Elen síla lúmenn' omentielvo*

COMING NEXT

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 2 covers the sounds and the Latin-style spelling, so you can read every example in the rest of the course aloud.

Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 2 · Sounds and Spelling

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 1 said that Quenya has Latin and Finnish behind it. Both show in how it sounds: clean vowels, few consonant clusters, and a stress rule borrowed from Latin. This chapter gives you the sounds and the spelling so you can read every later example aloud. The facts are from Wikipedia's account of late colloquial Noldorin Quenya; see the box on sources at the end.

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> Quenya is written the way it is said. Five vowels, long ones marked with an acute accent, a short list of consonant groups, and one stress rule that depends on whether a syllable is "heavy". Learn those and you can pronounce any word.

Vowels

There are five short vowels, *a e i o u*, and five long ones, written with an acute accent: *á é í ó ú*. The exact quality of the vowels is not known. Wikipedia reports one scholar's view (Pesch) that *a*, *i* and *u* sound the same short and long, while short *e* and *o* are more open than long *é* and *ó*; the page also says the pronunciation is likely close to Italian and Spanish.

SHORT	LONG	EXAMPLE IN THIS COURSE
a	á	*Namárië*
e	é	*Elenion*; *Aldudénië*
i	í	*effírië* ("death")
o	ó	no example yet
u	ú	no example yet

The diaeresis: ë

A diaeresis (two dots) over *e* marks a vowel that is *not* part of a diphthong, as in *ëa* and *ëo*. It also marks a final *e* as pronounced, not silent: *lassë* "leaf" has two syllables, with a spoken final

vowel. Wikipedia does not give a fuller rule for when the diaeresis is written, so this course follows the spelling of each source.

Diphthongs

A diphthong is two vowels in one syllable. Late Noldorin Quenya has six: *iu eu ai au oi ui*. All are "falling" (the first vowel is the stronger) except *iu*, which is "rising" and sounds like *yu*. In the older language all of them were falling.

Consonants

The consonant inventory is small and regular. The table groups the letters Wikipedia lists for Noldorin Quenya.

KIND	LETTERS	NOTES
Nasals	m n ñ (ng)	*ñ* is the "ng" of *sing*; it is used only for early Quenya, as in *Ñoldor*, otherwise written *n*
Stops	p t c (k)	*c* is used in place of *k*
Fricatives	f v s h	*h* after *e* or *i* in *ht* is pronounced like German *ich*; after other vowels like *ach*
Approximants	l r w y	*y* is the "y" of *yes*

Plain *b d g* do not occur on their own. They appear only inside the groups *mb nd ld rd ng* (and one other), and only between vowels. Vanyarin Quenya, the dialect of the Vanyar in Valinor, kept two sounds, *th* and *z*, which Noldorin Quenya replaced with *s* and *r*.

Special spellings

SPELLING	SOUND
qu	"kw" (written *q* or *qu*)
hw	a breathy "w", as in some pronunciations of *which*
hy	a "ch" sound as in German *ich* (Noldorin); "sh" in Vanyarin
ty, ny, ly	a consonant followed by a "y" glide; *ny* is like the start of English *new*

SPELLING	SOUND
x	sometimes stands for "ks", as in *Helcaraxë*

A general rule from the same source covers these: a cluster with a second *y* is palatalised, one with a second *w* is rounded, and one that begins with *h* is breathy and unvoiced.

Which Consonant Groups Are Allowed

- **Doubled consonants** occur inside words: *pp tt cc mm nn ss ll rr*. The page gives *effírië* "death" as an exception with a doubled *f*.
- **At the end of a word** only *n r l s t* and *nt* are allowed. Final *m* became *n*.
- **At the start of a word** single consonants are used (*p t c f s h m n v l r y w* and a few more), plus the groups *x ps ty ny ly qu* (and *ñw*, which became *nw* in Noldorin).
- **Inside a word** there is a long list of two-consonant groups, such as *ld mb mp nc nd ng nt*, and only twelve three-consonant groups.
- Two different stops cannot sit next to each other (one turns into a fricative), and *ft* is avoided.

Stress

Stress is predictable, and it follows the Latin rule. First count the syllables:

- Two syllables: stress the **first**.
- Three or more: stress the **second to last** syllable if it is heavy; otherwise stress the **third to last**.

A **heavy** syllable contains a long vowel, a diphthong, or ends in a consonant (including the first half of a cluster such as *ld* or *ss*). Everything else is light.

```
# Stress by rule (the rule is Wikipedia's; the syllable counts are mine)
Quenya      QUEN-ya           2 syllables: first
lassë       LAS-së            2 syllables: first
Ñoldor      ÑOL-dor           2 syllables: first
Namárië     na-MÁ-ri-ë        "ri" is light, so stress "má" (long vowel)
effírië     ef-FÍ-ri-ë        "ri" is light, so stress "fí" (long vowel)
Elenion     e-LE-ni-on        "ni" is light, so stress "le"
```

There is also a weaker secondary stress, and the page notes that stress matters in verse.

Reading a Word Aloud: a Procedure

1. Split the word into syllables, treating a vowel with a diaeresis as its own syllable and each diphthong as one syllable.
2. Say the vowels as in Italian or Spanish, long if accented.
3. Say each consonant as above (*c* is hard, *qu* is "kw", *hy* is like "ch" in German *ich*).
4. Apply the stress rule.

WATCH OUT: DIALECTS DIFFER

The sounds above are late Noldorin Quenya. Vanyarin Quenya kept *th* and *z*, and in some clusters it pronounced *ty*, *dy* and *hy* differently. Nothing in this course depends on the Vanyarin forms, but old word lists may show them.

WATCH OUT: THE PRONUNCIATION IS PARTLY RECONSTRUCTED

The exact vowel qualities are uncertain, and the diphthong table on Wikipedia could not be fully matched with its own prose list. Treat the pronunciation hints here as a good working guide, not as Tolkien's recording.

NOT YET VERIFIED

My syllable divisions and stress marks in the example block are my own application of Wikipedia's rule, not taken from a source. The "ng" description of *ñ*, the English comparison words (*which*, *new*, *ich*, *ach*), and the claim that the diaeresis makes a final *e* a separate syllable are my own wording of Wikipedia's IPA symbols. The Wikipedia page's final 61,385 characters were not read, and a second page (Grammar of late Quenya) had no phonology section.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Wikipedia, "Quenya" (phonology section, first 100,000 characters); Wikipedia, "Grammar of late Quenya" (searched, no phonology section).

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Using the stress rule, mark the stressed syllable of *Aldudénië*, *Eärendil*, *Helcaraxë* and *Quenya*. Count the syllables first, and say which are heavy and why. Label your answers as built by rule.

View solution

EXERCISE 2

Explain what the diaeresis does in *lassë* and in *ëa*, and name the six diphthongs of late Noldorin Quenya, saying which one is rising.

View solution

EXERCISE 3

Which of these could not be a Quenya word, and why: *quen*, *delk*, *lasse*, *bad*? Use the rules about final consonants and plain *b d g*.

View solution

CHAPTER 2 QUICK REFERENCE

- Vowels: *a e i o u*; long *á é í ó ú*; *ë* marks a vowel outside a diphthong and a spoken final *e*
- Diphthongs: *iu eu ai au oi ui* (only *iu* is rising)
- Spelling: *c* for k; *qu* = kw; *hw*, *hy*, *ty ny ly*; *x* = ks; *ñ* only in early forms
- Plain *b d g* only inside *mb nd ld rd ng*; word-final consonants: *n r l s t nt*
- Stress: 2 syllables = first; 3 or more = second-to-last if heavy, else third-to-last

COMING NEXT

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 3 begins the grammar proper with nouns: the stems, the article, and how Quenya marks singular, plural and dual.

Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 3 · Nouns and Number

With the sounds in place (*Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 2*), the grammar proper begins with the noun. English marks "more than one" with *-s* and little else. Quenya has four numbers, not two, and each is shown by an ending added to the end of the word. This chapter covers those endings and the small word *i* "the". Cases, which are also endings on the noun, come in Chapters 4 and 5.

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> A Quenya noun can be *one* (singular), *several* (plural), *some* (partitive plural) or *a pair* (dual). The singular has no ending; the others add one.

The Four Numbers

The table shows the late-Quenya forms as Wikipedia gives them in the everyday style (Tarquesta; see the box on registers below). The glosses are Wikipedia's.

NUMBER	ENDING	LASSË "LEAF"	ALDA "TREE"	ELDA "ELF"
Singular	none	lassë	alda	Elda
Plural (general)	*-i* or *-r*	lassi	aldar	Eldar
Plural (partitive)	*-li*	lasseli	aldali	Eldali
Dual	mainly *-t*	lasset	ciryat ("pair of ships")	

The general plural: -i or -r

This is the ordinary "more than one". Which ending a noun takes depends on the type of the noun. In the examples, nouns ending in *-ë* take *-i* (*lassë*, *lassi*), while nouns ending in *-a* such as *alda* and *Elda* take *-r* (*aldar*, *Eldar*). Wikipedia says only that the choice depends on "the type of the noun" without a full rule, so this is a pattern in the examples, not a stated rule.

The partitive plural: -li

The partitive plural means "some" or "several", not "all". Wikipedia's example set is:

- *Eldar* (no article): Elves in general.
- *i Eldar*: the Elves already named, sometimes in contrast to other creatures.
- *Eldali*: some Elves. The definite article is seldom used with this form.

The dual: -t

The dual means two, usually a natural pair (hands, eyes, ships in company). Its main ending is *-t*: *ciryat* from *cirya* "ship", and *lasset* from *lassë*. Some other nouns have forms with *-u* in particular cases, but *-u* is not a general dual ending, so this course does not teach it as one.

The Article: i

Quenya has one article, *i*, meaning "the". There is no word for "a": a noun with no article is indefinite or general, as in *Eldar* "Elves". Wikipedia gives only usage notes for the article, so this course does not state full rules for it.

```
# From the Wikipedia examples (glosses as given there)
Eldar        Elves in general
i Eldar      the Elves (previously named)
Eldali       some Elves   (the article is seldom used with this form)
```

Words With Limited Number

- *armar* "goods" is a plural-only word with no singular.
- Short, one-syllable nouns often use only one plural: *má* "hand" has only *máli*.
- *tó* "wool" has neither dual nor plural, according to Tolkien.

Stems and Types

Quenya nouns come in types according to how the word ends. Wikipedia does not define formal classes, but mentions vowel-ending words (*cirya* "ship", *lassë* "leaf"), words from an earlier period such as *ondo* "stone", *nér* "man" and *cas* "head", and a set of consonant-ending words that take an *-i-* before possessive endings (*atarinya* "my father"). The type matters later, because the case endings attach slightly differently to each.

WATCH OUT: TWO REGISTERS

The forms above are the everyday style, *Tarquesta*. The formal, literary style, *Parmaquesta*, uses a long *-í* for the general plural (*lassî*) and *-lí* for the partitive (*lasselî*). Wikipedia says the rules for the long *-í* are unpublished. This course teaches the everyday forms.

WATCH OUT: *-I* VERSUS *-R* IS NOT FULLY EXPLAINED

The choice of plural ending is given as "depends on the noun type", and the page lists no complete rule. Learn it from the examples and check a source before using a new word. Some of the paradigms on the page also have blank entries for *nér* and *cas*.

NOT YET VERIFIED

These facts come from one summary of Wikipedia's "Grammar of late Quenya" page; I have not checked the page itself, nor Tolkien's original notes. My description of the pattern in which nouns in *-ë* take *-i* and nouns in *-a* take *-r* is an observation from the six examples, not a rule from a source. The idea that the dual is "usually a natural pair" is my own explanation.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Wikipedia, "Grammar of late Quenya" (nouns, number and dual sections), read through a summary. The paradigms follow the page's "Plotz declension" tables, which come from Tolkien's late notes.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Fill in the four numbers for *cirya* "ship", using the endings from the chapter. Which of your forms are attested in the chapter's tables and which are built by rule?

View solution

EXERCISE 2

Explain the difference in meaning between *Eldar*, *i Eldar* and *Eldali*, and say what is unusual about the article with the third.

View solution

EXERCISE 3

A learner says "the plural of every Quenya noun ends in *-r*". Use the chapter's table to correct this, and name two things about plurals that the sources leave unexplained.

View solution

CHAPTER 3 QUICK REFERENCE

- Four numbers: singular (no ending), general plural (*-i* or *-r*), partitive plural (*-li*), dual (mainly *-t*)
- Examples: *lassë*, *lassi*, *lasseli*, *lasset*; *alda*, *aldar*, *aldali*
- Article: *i* "the"; no word for "a"
- *Eldar* = Elves in general; *i Eldar* = the Elves named; *Eldali* = some Elves
- Parmaquesta uses *-í* and *-lí*; its rules are unpublished

COMING NEXT

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 4 starts the case system: how an ending on the noun shows who owns something, who gives, or who receives.

Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 4 · Cases 1

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 3 showed that a Quenya noun changes at its end to show number. It changes at its end for a second reason too: to show its job in the sentence. These job-endings are called *cases*. English mostly uses small words and word order for this ("of the ship", "to the ship"); Quenya often puts the same information in an ending. This chapter covers the core cases, and *Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 5* covers the ones that show place and means.

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> A case is an ending that tells you what a noun is doing: the doer, the thing acted on, the owner, the receiver. Late Quenya has about ten, but only a few are ever needed in a sentence, and the sources are patchy.

The Case Table

Wikipedia's account of late Quenya rests mainly on a 1967 letter by Tolkien, the "Plotz declension", which gives full forms only for two nouns, *cirya* "ship" and *lassë* "leaf". It lists ten cases, counting short forms. This chapter takes the four main ones; the table shows the singular endings for those two nouns, with the formal-style forms (Parmaquesta) given on the page.

CASE	JOB (PER WIKIPEDIA)	CIRYA "SHIP"	LASSË "LEAF"
Nominative	Subject of the verb; used with most prepositions	cirya	lassë
Accusative	Direct object	ciryá	lassé
Genitive	Mainly origin ("of", "from")	ciryo	lassëo
Dative	Indirect object ("to", "for"); a short form of the allative	ciryan	lassen

Nominative: the bare form

The nominative has no ending. It marks the subject of a verb and is the dictionary form of the word. Wikipedia's example is *Finwë carë*, "Finwë is making".

Accusative: the thing acted on

The accusative marks the direct object. In the formal (Parmaquesta) paradigm it is a lengthened final vowel: *ciryá*, *lassé*. In everyday Quenya (Tarquesta) it is the same as the nominative, so in practice the order of the sentence and the context show who does what to whom.

Genitive: "of" and "from"

The genitive is formed with *-o* on a noun ending in *-a* (*cirya* to *ciryo*, with the final vowel replaced) or on a noun ending in *-ë* (*lassë* to *lassëo*, with the vowel added). Wikipedia calls its main meaning "origin" and notes that it overlaps with the ablative and adjectival cases. Its example pair is *Sinda Eldo* "a Grey Elf's" against plural *Sindar Eldaron* "Grey Elves'".

Dative: "to" and "for"

The dative marks the person who receives. The ending is *-n*: *ciryan*, *lassen*. Wikipedia describes it as a shortened form of the allative (Chapter 5). In the plural it is *-in* and in the dual *-nt*.

Plural and Dual Cases

The case endings also come in plural and dual forms. Wikipedia's table gives them for *cirya* and *lassë*:

CASE	CIRYA, PLURAL	LASSË, PLURAL	CIRYA, DUAL	LASSË, DUAL
Nominative	ciryar	lassí	ciryat	lasset
Accusative	ciryai	lassí	ciryat	lasset
Genitive	ciryaron	lassion	ciryato	lasseto
Dative	ciryain	lassin	ciryant	lassent

Study the pattern, not each cell. The plural genitive ends in *-on* (*ciryaron*), the plural dative in *-in*, the dual genitive in *-o* and the dual dative in *-nt*. Note that *lassí* is the formal plural from Chapter 3, written with the long *-í*.

Showing Possession

In English, *my father* and *the ship's captain* use two methods. Quenya has three:

- **The genitive** for "of" and origin: *Sinda Eldo* "a Grey Elf's".
- **The adjectival case** (Wikipedia's tenth case), formed with *-va* (*ciryava*, *lasseva*), which is "also used to indicate possession".
- **Possessive endings** attached to the noun, which say *whose* it is.

OWNER	ENDING	EXAMPLE (WIKIPEDIA'S GLOSS)
my	*-(i)nya*	*atarinya* "my father"
our (leaving out the listener; see Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 7)	*-(e)mma*	*ataremma* "our father"
their	*-nta*	*mánta* "their hand"
her (dual noun)	dual possessive	*máryat* "(her) two hands"

```
# Attested in Namárië, as quoted by Wikipedia
Varda ortanë máryat
  Varda has uplifted her (two) hands.
  máryat   má "hand" + -rya "her" + -t dual, "her two hands"

# Case ending on the adjective, not the noun (Wikipedia's example)
Elendil vorondo voronwe
  Elendil the faithful's fidelity
  (the nominative would be Elendil voronda)
```

The point of the second example is that the case ending (*-o*, here in *vorondo*) can sit on the adjective, not the noun, so "Elendil the faithful" is marked as an owner by changing *voronda* to *vorondo*.

WATCH OUT: NO SEPARATE POSSESSIVE CASE

Some learners expect a "possessive case" next to the genitive. Wikipedia does not list one: possession is covered by the genitive, the adjectival case in *-va*, and the possessive endings above. This chapter therefore teaches those three means instead of a fifth case.

WATCH OUT: THE SOURCES DISAGREE WITH THEMSELVES

The page says the accusative is separate in the formal register, yet its pronoun section says Quenya has no nominative/accusative distinction; the page does not settle this. Many plural and dual forms of *nér* and *cas* are blank. The paradigms for *ondo* "stone", *nér* "man" and *cas* "head" are also from an earlier period (about 1935), so this chapter uses only *cirya* and *lassë*.

NOT YET VERIFIED

All case forms come from one summary of Wikipedia's "Grammar of late Quenya"; I have not checked the page itself or Tolkien's letter. The breakdown of *máryat* into *má* + *-rya* + *-t* is my own analysis, not stated in the summary. My description of how the genitive is formed from nouns in *-a* and *-ë* is read from the two paradigm cells, not a rule on the page. The gloss of *-(e)mma* as "our (leaving out the listener)" comes from a summary that called it "first plural exclusive"; a later, fuller table (Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 7) lists *-mma* as dual exclusive, so which "we" it is remains uncertain.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Wikipedia, "Grammar of late Quenya" (cases section), read through a summary.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Using the table, give the nominative, accusative, genitive and dative singular of *lassë* and of *cirya*, and say which forms differ in everyday Quenya (Tarquesta).

View solution

EXERCISE 2

Translate "my ship" and "our ship" using the possessive endings, label each as attested or built by rule, and explain why *atarinya* is the only safe model for the ending.

View solution

EXERCISE 3

Explain in your own words how *Elendil vorondo voronwe* differs from *Elendil voronda*, and list the three ways Quenya shows possession.

View solution

CHAPTER 4 QUICK REFERENCE

- Case = ending showing a noun's job; late Quenya has about ten (counting short forms)
- Nominative: bare form (subject). Accusative: long vowel (*ciryá*) in the formal register; same as nominative in everyday Quenya
- Genitive: *-o* (*ciryo*, *lassëo*); plural *-on*. Dative: *-n* (*ciryan*); plural *-in*; dual *-nt*
- Possession: genitive, adjectival *-va*, or possessive endings (*-(i)nya*, *-(e)mma*, *-nta*)
- Attested: *Varda ortanë máryat*; *atarinya*, *ataremma*, *mánta*

COMING NEXT

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 5 covers the cases of place and means: allative "to", locative "in", ablative "from" and instrumental "with".

Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 5 · Cases 2

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 4 covered the cases that show who does what: subject, object, owner, receiver. This chapter covers the cases that answer "where?" and "with what?". English uses small words such as *to*, *in*, *from* and *with*; Quenya adds an ending to the noun instead. As before, the forms come from the "Plotz declension" (a 1967 letter of Tolkien), which gives full paradigms for *cirya* "ship" and *lassë* "leaf".

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> Four endings do the work of English "to", "in", "from" and "with": **allative** (towards), **locative** (at, in), **ablative** (away from) and **instrumental** (by means of). Each has a singular, plural and dual form.

The Singular Endings

CASE	MEANING	CIRYA "SHIP"	LASSË "LEAF"
Allative	motion towards	ciryanna	lassenna
Locative	location, position	ciryassë	lassessë
Short locative	shortened locative	ciryas	lasses
Ablative	motion away from	ciryallo	lassello
Instrumental	means or instrument	ciryanen	lassenen

Look at the patterns: allative *-nna*, locative *-ssë*, ablative *-llo*, instrumental *-nen*. Wikipedia notes that the dative from Chapter 4 (*ciryan*) is a shortened form of the allative (*ciryanna*). For *lassë* the final *-ë* becomes *-e-* before the ending (*lassenna*), which the table shows.

Examples in Use

```
# Examples given on the Wikipedia page, with its glosses
elenna        toward a star, starward(s)        allative of elen "star"
```

```
Lóriendesse   in Lórien                    locative
earello       from the sea                 ablative
an i falmali  = i falmalinna(r)
              upon the many waves          the ending -nna corresponds to an
```

The last line shows two ways to say the same thing: a small word (*an*) with the plural partitive noun *falmali*, or the same noun with the allative ending (*falmalinna(r)*). The page gives no example of the instrumental, so this chapter does not invent one.

With Number

Each case has its own endings in the plural and dual. In the table, "Pl. 1" is the general plural (*-r* or *-i*) and "Pl. 2" is the partitive plural (*-li*) from Chapter 3. Forms are those the page prints for the formal register.

CASE	CIRYA PL. 1	LASSË PL. 1	CIRYA PL. 2	CIRYA DUAL	LASSË DUAL
Allative	ciryannar	lassennar	ciryalinna(r)	ciryanta	lassenta
Locative	ciryassen	lassessen	ciryalisse(n)	ciryatsë	lassetsë
Short locative	ciryais	lassis	ciryalis	(not given)	(not given)
Ablative	ciryallon	lassellon	ciryalillo(n)	ciryalto	lasselto
Instrumental	ciryainen	lassínen	ciryalínen	ciryanten	lassenten

The pattern to learn: the plural ending is the singular one with a final *-n* or *-r* added (*-llo* to *-llon*; *-ssë* to *-ssen*; *-nna* to *-nnar*), and the partitive plural puts *-li-* before the case ending (*ciryalinna(r)*). The brackets show that the page gives the final consonant as optional.

Choosing the Right Case

1. Is something *moving*? Towards it: allative. Away from it: ablative.
2. Is it *staying* in a place? Locative (or the short locative).
3. Is the noun a *tool or means*? Instrumental.
4. Does the noun belong to *origin* or *ownership*? Back to the genitive of Chapter 4.

WATCH OUT: FORMAL FORMS, NOT EVERYDAY

The tables are the formal register (Parmaquesta). Wikipedia gives no full everyday (Tarquesta) paradigm, and says only that the formal long *-í* plural has unpublished rules. A form such as *lassínen* is therefore a formal form and may not match what everyday Quenya would use.

WATCH OUT: GAPS

The page gives no example of the instrumental, no dual form of the short locative, and no explanation of how the cases are used with the dual. Nouns other than *cirya* and *lassë* are not covered here because their forms come from an earlier period (about 1935) and have blanks.

NOT YET VERIFIED

The forms and glosses come from a summary of Wikipedia's "Grammar of late Quenya"; I did not read the page itself or Tolkien's letter. The patterns "plural = singular + -n or -r" and "*-li-* before the case ending" are my reading of the table cells, not stated rules. The advice for "choosing the right case" is my own teaching summary. I could not find in the page the Namárië place-names or phrases I had hoped to use (such as Valimar and Mar-nu-Falmar), so this chapter does not claim anything about them.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Wikipedia, "Grammar of late Quenya" (cases section, two readings through summaries).

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Give the allative, locative, ablative and instrumental singular of *cirya* and *lassë* from the table, then translate "from the ship", "to the leaf", "in the ship" and "with the leaf" (leave out the article for now).

View solution

EXERCISE 2

Explain the two ways of saying "upon the many waves", name the case ending involved, and say which of the two is the short, noun-only form.

View solution

EXERCISE 3

Take *ciryallon* and *ciryalillo(n)*. Break each into noun, number ending and case ending, say how they differ in meaning, and label them attested or built by rule.

View solution

CHAPTER 5 QUICK REFERENCE

- Allative *-nna* (towards), locative *-ssë* (in, at; short *-s*), ablative *-llo* (from), instrumental *-nen* (by means of)
- Plural: add *-n* or *-r* (*-llon*, *-ssen*, *-nnar*); partitive adds *-li-* first (*ciryalinna(r)*)
- Dual: *-nta*, *-tsë*, *-lto*, *-nten* (*ciryanta*, *ciryatsë*, *ciryalto*, *ciryanten*)
- Attested glosses: *elenna* "toward a star"; *Lóriendesse* "in Lórien"; *earello* "from the sea"; *an i falmali = i falmalinna(r)* "upon the many waves"

COMING NEXT

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 6 turns to adjectives: how they agree with the noun, where they stand, and how they are compared.

Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 6 · Adjectives

Nouns have number (*Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 3*) and case (Chapters 4 and 5). Adjectives, the words that describe nouns, take part in this system in a lighter way: they agree with their noun in number, but not usually in case. This chapter covers the shape of adjectives, agreement, word order, comparison, and how almost any noun can be turned into an adjective.

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> A Quenya adjective takes a plural when its noun does, usually goes *before* the noun, and is compared with a small word, *lá* "than". Case endings go on the noun, not the adjective, with one exception noted below.

What Adjectives Look Like

The Wikipedia page quotes Tolkien: adjectives end in *-a*, *-e*, *-o* (rare) or *-n*, and a stem ending in *-n* is "nearly always" really *-nd*. The example is *melin* "dear", with plural *melindi*. The page also notes that "Quenya adjectives may be freely used as nouns", as English does in "the brave".

Agreement in Number

An adjective agrees with its noun in number but, in general, not in case. The old plural ending was *-i*. In late Quenya, an adjective ending in *-a* changes that *-a* to *-ë* in the plural.

ADJECTIVE	SINGULAR	PLURAL	RULE
golden	laurëa	laurië	*-a* becomes *-ë*
dear	melin	melindi	stem in *-nd*; plural adds *-i*

```
# Attested (the plural adjective agrees with the plural noun)
laurië lantar lassi
  golden fall (the) leaves  (Wikipedia's gloss)
  laurië   golden (plural)
  lantar   fall
```

```
  lassi    leaves (plural of lassë, Chapter 3)

# Built by rule: the same sentence with a singular noun (Wikipedia's example)
*laurëa lanta lassë
  golden falls (the) leaf   (starred: not an attested form)
```

The line is, as I recall, the opening of *Namárië*, the poem named in *Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 1*. It is a good model: the adjective *laurië* is plural because *lassi* is plural, and the verb *lantar* is plural too (Chapters 8 and 9).

Where the Adjective Goes

Wikipedia quotes Tolkien's Common Eldarin grammar: "Adjectives normally preceded the qualified noun, and in attributive use were seldom separated from it." The page adds that an attributive adjective inflects for number only when it comes *before* the noun; when it comes after, "the situation is reversed". The examples are:

FORM	MEANING	NOTE
Sindar Eldar	Grey Elves	normal order; adjective plural, noun plural
Eldar sindar	Grey Elves	"abnormal order", only in verse
Sinda Eldo	a Grey Elf's	genitive on the noun (Chapter 4)
Sindar Eldaron	Grey Elves'	plural genitive
Eldar sindaron	(abnormal order)	abnormal order, as for *Eldar sindar*

Numerals, by contrast, usually follow the noun.

Case and Adjectives

Case endings normally go on the noun or the pronoun, not on the adjective. There is one pattern in which the ending can sit on the adjective of a noun-plus-adjective group, from Chapter 4:

- *Elendil voronda*: "Elendil the faithful" (nominative).

- *Elendil vorondo voronwe*: "Elendil the faithful's fidelity", with the genitive *-o* on *voronda*.

Comparison

Comparatives are normally made with a preposition, *lá* "than", "much as in French *plus*" in Wikipedia's words. The present-tense "is" (*ná*) may be left out.

```
# The pattern, as given on the page
A (ná) calima lá B.        A is brighter than B.
A (ná) arya B.             A is better than B.

# Irregular: mára "good"
  comparative   arya          "better"
  superlative   i arya + genitive    "best"
```

The adjective *mára* "good" is irregular: its comparative is *arya*, and its superlative is *i arya* followed by a genitive. The page gives no regular superlative ending, and no comparative endings such as *-ve*; this chapter does not teach any.

Turning Nouns into Adjectives

The adjectival case, formed with *-va*, "describes qualities, and turns almost any noun into an adjective". It also indicates possession (see Chapter 4). The singular forms printed are *ciryava*, *lasseva*, *ondova*, *nerwa* and *carwa*, and the plural partitive forms are *ciryalíva* and *lasselíva*. So *lasseva* can mean "of a leaf" or "leafy"; the page does not give a full set of examples.

> **WATCH OUT: STARRED FORMS**
>
> The singular version of the poem line, **laurëa lanta lassë*, is marked with a star on the page because it is not an attested form. Never quote a starred form as Tolkien's.

> **WATCH OUT: THE ORDER RULE IS SUBTLE**
>
> The statement that an adjective inflects for number only when it comes before the noun is quoted from one page and is not explained by examples beyond the five in the table. Treat the "abnormal" orders as poetry, not as a model.

NOT YET VERIFIED

All forms and quotations come from a summary of Wikipedia's "Grammar of late Quenya"; I did not read the page itself. The summary reported that the page contains no colour words, no adjective plural in *-lis*, no comparative marker *-ve* and no adjective suffixes *-ya* or *-inqua*, so this chapter teaches none of them; I have not checked that with another source. My translations "of a leaf" and "leafy" for *lasseva* are my own, built by rule. That the line opens *Namárië* is from my own memory, not the summary. Whether the verb *lantar* is plural because *lassi* is plural is my explanation; the summary did not say.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Wikipedia, "Grammar of late Quenya" (adjectives, syntax and cases sections), read through a summary.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Give the plural of *laurëa* and of *melin*, and say what rule produces each. Then build "golden ships" from *laurië* and *cirya*, using the plural endings from Chapter 3, and label your answer.

View solution

EXERCISE 2

Translate "A is better than B" and "A is brighter than B" into Quenya, using the patterns in the chapter. Which of the two uses an irregular adjective?

View solution

EXERCISE 3

Explain the difference between *Sindar Eldar* and *Eldar sindar*, and between *Elendil voronda* and *Elendil vorondo voronwe*. Say in which case the case ending falls on the adjective.

View solution

CHAPTER 6 QUICK REFERENCE

- Adjective stems end in *-a*, *-e*, *-o* (rare) or *-n* (really *-nd*): *melin*, plural *melindi*
- Plural: *-a* becomes *-ë* (*laurëa* to *laurië*)
- Normal order: adjective before noun; case endings go on the noun (exception: *Elendil vorondo voronwe*)
- Comparison: *A (ná) calima lá B*; irregular *mára* to *arya* "better", superlative *i arya* + genitive
- Noun to adjective: adjectival case *-va* (*lasseva*)

COMING NEXT

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 7 covers pronouns: the free forms, the endings that attach to verbs and nouns, and the verb "to be".

Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 7 · Pronouns

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 4 met the possessive endings on nouns, such as *atarinya* "my father". They are one part of a larger system: Quenya, like Latin and Finnish, usually attaches its pronouns to the word they belong to as short endings, and keeps separate pronouns for emphasis. This chapter sets out the whole system and the two verbs meaning "to be". The verbs themselves are the subject of Chapters 8 and 9.

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> "I", "you", "he" and the rest are normally *endings*, not words: *-nye* "I", *-lye* "you", *-s* "it/him/her". Quenya also has a "we" that includes you and a "we" that does not, and it has a dual ("we two") as well as a plural.

The Pronoun System

Wikipedia's table is headed "Early Noldorin Quenya Forms" but says it draws on sources of about 1965 to 1973 and so describes late Quenya. The article also carries a cleanup banner, so treat the table as a secondary summary of Tolkien's notes. The columns are the long ending used on a verb ("subject"), the free (separate) pronoun, and the possessive ending.

PERSON	ENDING ("SUBJECT")	FREE FORM	POSSESSIVE
I	-nye (short -n)	ní	-nya
you (familiar)	-tye	tyé	-tya
you (polite)	-lye	lyé	-lya
he, she (animate)	-se (short -s)	sé	-rya / -ya
it (inanimate)	-sa (short -s)	sá	-rya / -ya

"We", "you" and "they": dual and plural

PERSON	DUAL (TWO)	PLURAL (THREE OR MORE)
we, including you	-ngwe / -nque; free *wet*	-lwe / -lve; free *wé* / *vé*
we, excluding you	-mme / -nwe; free *met*	-lme; free *mé*
you (polite)	-llë / -stë; free *let*	-lde / -lle; free *lé*
they	-sto / -ttë; free *tú*	-ntë (animate); free *té*

The "we" that includes the listener (inclusive) and the "we" that leaves the listener out (exclusive) are different words, a distinction English lacks. The dual forms are for exactly two: for example, *wet* is "you and I", and *met* is "he or she and I".

The Possessive Endings

These are the endings from Chapter 4, now set out in full. They add *-t* (dual) or *-r* (plural) to show whether the *thing owned* is one, two or many.

OWNER	ONE THING	TWO THINGS	MANY THINGS
my	-(i)nya	-(i)nyat	-(i)nyar
your (polite)	-lya	-lyat	-lyar
his, her	-rya / -ya	-ryat / -yat	-ryar / -yar
their	-nta	-ntat	-ntar

Wikipedia adds that body parts that come in pairs are usually not marked as plural: *mánta* is "their hand" (each has one) and *mántat* is "their hands" (each has two). The *-i-* in *atarinya* "my father" is the form after a consonant-ending noun; *ataremma* "our father" has the matching *-e-*.

Object Suffixes

A third-person object is added to the end of the verb-plus-subject ending: *-s* for one, *-t* for more than one.

```
# Examples from the Wikipedia article (glosses as given)
utúvie-lye-s   You have found it/him/her
utúvie-lye-t   You have found them
  utúvie   have found
  -lye     you
  -s / -t  object: it/him/her, them

Melinyes        I love him (or her)     (reconstructed, per the page)
Melin sé        I love him (or her)     (with the free pronoun)
Melinyet        I love them             (reconstructed, per the page)
```

Melinyes shows the whole pattern in one word: *melin* "I love", *-ye* a linking vowel, and *-s* "him or her". The page says that *Melinyes* and *Melinyet* are reconstructed, not found in Tolkien.

The Verb "To Be"

Quenya has two verbs. *Na-* is the copula, joining a noun, adjective or pronoun to another word ("A is bright"). *Ëa-* means "exist".

TENSE	NA- (SINGULAR)	NA- (PLURAL)	ËA- (SINGULAR)	ËA- (PLURAL)
Aorist (general)	na	nar	ëa	ëar
Present	ná	nár	ëa	ëar
Past	né	ner	engë	enger
Future	nauva	nauvar	euva	euvar
Perfect	anaië	anaier	engië	engier

The copula is optional in the present tense, as in the comparison pattern *A (ná) calima lá B* from Chapter 6, and is left out when the meaning is clear.

> **WATCH OUT: THE TABLE IS A SECONDARY SUMMARY**
>
> The pronoun table is labelled "Early Noldorin" yet dated to Tolkien's later notes, and the page carries a cleanup banner. Check Vinyar Tengwar 49 and Parma Eldalamberon 17 (cited by the page) before relying on a form.

WATCH OUT: *-MMA* IS DUAL IN THIS TABLE

In Chapter 4 the ending *-(e)mma* in *ataremma* was described as "our (not including you)". The full table here lists *-mma* as the *dual* exclusive ("he or she and I"), with the plural exclusive as *-lma*. The two summaries of the same page disagree, so treat the gloss of *ataremma* as "our father" and do not rely on which "we" it is until the page is checked.

WATCH OUT: GAPS IN THE TABLE

The free form for "you" (plural, familiar) is marked uncertain; the third-person plural inanimate free form *sa* is probably a misprint for *sá*; the full set of emphatic pronouns is unpublished; and there is no complete verb-person table. The page also says the familiar "you" was dropped in colloquial speech and replaced by a polite form built on *tar* "sir/madam" (*Cariltar*, from *Carilye tar*, "you do, sir"), but it is unclear whether this applies to late Quenya.

NOT YET VERIFIED

These forms are from a summary of Wikipedia's "Grammar of late Quenya"; I did not read the page itself or Tolkien's notes. I left out the more complex "short subject" and "impersonal agreement" columns. The hyphenation of *Melinyes* into *melin + -ye + -s* is my own analysis, not the page's. The comparison of the inclusive and exclusive "we" with English is mine.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Wikipedia, "Grammar of late Quenya" (pronouns, possessives and verb "to be" sections), read through a summary.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Give the ending and the free form for "I", "you (polite)" and "he or she", then explain the difference between the "we" with *wet* and the "we" with *met*.

View solution

EXERCISE 2

Break *utúvie-lye-s* and *Melinyet* into parts, translate each, and label them attested, reconstructed or built by rule.

View solution

EXERCISE 3

Choose the right form of "to be" for "the ship was", "the ships are" and "the ship will exist". Say whether you need *na-* or *ëa-* each time, and explain the difference between *mánta* and *mántat*.

View solution

CHAPTER 7 QUICK REFERENCE

- Endings: *-nye* I, *-lye* you (polite), *-tye* you (familiar), *-se* he/she, *-sa* it
- Free forms: *ní*, *lyé*, *tyé*, *sé*, *sá*
- "We": inclusive (you too) vs exclusive; dual (two) vs plural
- Possessives: *-(i)nya*, *-lya*, *-rya*, *-nta*; add *-t* / *-r* for two / many things
- Object: *-s* (one), *-t* (more); *utúvie-lye-s* "you have found it/him/her"
- To be: *na-* (copula: *ná*, *né*, *nauva*) and *ëa-* (exist: *ëa*, *engë*, *euva*)

COMING NEXT

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 8 takes up verbs: how stems are built, the aorist and present tenses, the person endings from this chapter, and commands.

Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 8 · Verbs 1

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 7 gave the pronoun endings and the verb "to be". This chapter turns to ordinary verbs: how they are built, the two tenses of "now" (the aorist and the present), how they agree with their subject, and how to give a command or forbid something. *Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 9* covers past, perfect and future.

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> A Quenya verb has a stem (*car-* "make, do"), a tense form, and a pronoun ending: *carin* "I make". Commands are not endings but little words in front of the verb: *á* "do!" and *áva* "don't!".

Two Kinds of Verb

Wikipedia describes two types, using Tolkien's terms:

- **Root verbs** (also "weak", usually transitive): built straight from a root, such as *car-* "make; do".
- **Derivative verbs** (also "strong", usually intransitive): stems that usually end in *-ta*, *-na* or *-ya*, such as *henta-* "to eye".

A form with no pronoun attached is called "impersonal" (*carë*); a form with a pronoun ending is "personal" (*carin* "I do").

The Aorist and the Present

The *aorist* is the general tense: what a verb does as a fact or habit, with no focus on the moment. The *present* is the "happening now" tense. Both are shown here for one verb of each type. The forms are as printed on the page.

TENSE	CAR- SINGULAR	CAR- PLURAL	HENTA- SINGULAR	HENTA- PLURAL
Aorist	carë (cari-)	carir	henta	hentar
Present	cára	cárar	hentëa	hentëar

Two patterns are visible. The plural adds *-r* (*carë* to *carir*, *henta* to *hentar*), which matches the noun plural of Chapter 3. And the present of *car-* lengthens the stem vowel (*cára*), while the present of *henta-* inserts *-ë-* (*hentëa*). The page gives no general rule for forming the present, so these are patterns from two verbs.

Agreement and Person Endings

The plural *-r* appears when the subject is a separate plural noun or pronoun. A dual ending *-t* also exists.

```
# Examples from the Wikipedia article (glosses as given there)
Finwë carë.              Finwë is making.
Quendi carir.            The Elves are making.
A ar B carir.            A and B are making.
Carinyë.                 I am making.
carin  /  cáran      I do / I am making   (the ending -n, "I")
Nai siluvat elen atta.  May two stars shine.   (dual -t)
utúvie-lye-s             You have found it/him/her
```

The ending *-n* (long form *-nye*) is "I", as in Chapter 7. The pronoun endings *-lye* "you" and *-s* "it/him/her" also attach to verbs, but the page does not say that they attach in the same way in every tense, so this course teaches them from the examples only.

Commands

The imperative and prohibitive are made with particles, not verb endings:

MEANING	PATTERN	EXAMPLE (PAGE'S GLOSS)
Command	*á* (or *a*) + verb	*Á carë!* "Do it!"; *A laita te!* "Bless them!"; *Á hyame rámen!* "Pray for us!"
Prohibition	*áva* + verb	*Áva carë!* "Don't do it!"
"Don't!" alone	*avá* or *ává*	(on its own)
For absent persons	*á* + plural verb	*Á carir* "let them do it"
Wish	*nai*	*nai tiruvantes* (the page gives no translation)

Number is not marked in the command itself. Wikipedia also gives *áva márië!* "Go (away) happily!", where *áva* is the imperative of the irregular verb *auta-* "depart", so the same sound *áva* can be a command to go or a ban, depending on the verb.

Saying No: ua-

Quenya negates a verb with a separate negative verb, *ua-*, which carries the pronoun, and the main verb stays in its impersonal form. Wikipedia suggests that this may be borrowed from Finnish.

TENSE	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE	MEANING
Aorist	carin	uan carë	I do not make
Present	cáran	uan cára	I am not making

The page lists variants (for example *uin carë* for the aorist) and negatives of the other tenses, which Chapter 9 revisits.

WATCH OUT: ONLY TWO VERBS FULLY MODELLED

The tables are for *car-*, *henta-* and the irregular *auta-*. A verb you meet elsewhere may not follow these patterns, and the page gives no rules for the present beyond the examples. The page also does not discuss the infinitive.

WATCH OUT: TWO DATES, TWO GRAMMARS

The page says the impersonal paradigms were written in the late 1960s and are given for the singular only. Some forms, such as *carë (cari-)*, show alternate stems without a rule. Treat the paradigm as Tolkien's late sketch, not a complete system.

NOT YET VERIFIED

All forms are from a summary of Wikipedia's "Grammar of late Quenya"; I did not read the page itself. The summary reported that the page does not cover the infinitive, the endings *-ro*, *ávë* or *alë*, the sample verbs *tulë* and *tuluva*, or a general rule for the present; I have not checked other sources, so none are taught. My glosses "general tense" for the aorist and "happening now" for the present are my own plain-language explanations. The statement that the plural *-r* matches the noun plural is my observation.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Wikipedia, "Grammar of late Quenya" (verbs, negation, moods and agreement sections), read through a summary.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Give the aorist and present, singular and plural, of *car-* and of *henta-*, then say what the plural ending is and how the present of each verb differs from its aorist.

View solution

EXERCISE 2

Translate "Do it!", "Don't do it!", "I am making" and "The Elves are making" using the patterns in the chapter, and say which of your answers are attested on the page.

View solution

EXERCISE 3

Negate "I do not make" and "I am not making" with *ua-*, and explain how the negative sentence differs structurally from the affirmative. Then say why the particle *áva* is ambiguous between "go" and "don't".

View solution

CHAPTER 8 QUICK REFERENCE

- Root verbs (*car-*) and derivative verbs in *-ta -na -ya* (*henta-*)
- Aorist: *carë*, plural *carir*; *henta*, *hentar*. Present: *cára*, *árar*; *hentëa*, *hentëar*
- Person endings: *-n* (*-nye*) "I"; plural *-r*; dual *-t*
- Commands: *á* + verb; prohibition *áva* + verb; *nai* for a wish

- Negation: *ua-* with the pronoun + the verb in its impersonal form (*uan carë*)

COMING NEXT

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 9 completes the verb system: the past, perfect and future forms, and the gerund.

Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 9 · Verbs 2

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 8 covered the aorist and present tenses, commands and negation. This chapter finishes the verb with the tenses of "then" and "later": the past, the perfect ("has done") and the future, plus the gerund and negation in every tense. The final chapter will then use all of it to read real text.

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> Each Quenya tense has its own shape: the past adds *-në*, the future adds *-uva*, and the perfect adds a vowel in front, lengthens the stem and ends in *-ië*. Learn the pattern from the table, then check each new verb against a source.

The Full Verb Table

Here are the forms for the two verbs from Chapter 8, as printed on Wikipedia's page. Each cell is given in singular and plural, and the table adds the tenses you have not seen yet.

TENSE	CAR- "MAKE, DO"	HENTA- "EYE"
Aorist	carë, carir	henta, hentar
Present	cára, cárar	hentëa, hentëar
Past	carnë, carner	hentanë, hentaner
Future	caruva, caruvar	hentuva, hentuvar
Perfect	acárië, acárier	ehentië, ehentier
Gerund	cárië, cárier	hentië, hentier

The Past

The past is made with *-në* after the stem: *carnë* (from *car-*) and *hentanë* (from *henta-*). The plural is *-r* again: *carner*, *hentaner*. The page glosses *carnen* as "I made", showing the usual pronoun

ending *-n* after the tense.

The Future

The future ends in *-uva* (plural *-uvar*): *caruva*, *hentuva*. The page glosses *caruvan* as "I shall make". Note that *henta-* drops its final *-a* before the ending (*hentuva*, not **hentauva*); that is what the table shows, and the page gives no explanation.

The Perfect

The perfect says that an action has been completed: the page glosses *acáriën* as "I have made". It is built with a vowel placed in front of the stem and a lengthened stem vowel, followed by *-ië*: *acárië* from *car-* and *ehentië* from *henta-*. For *car-* the prefix is *a-* and for *henta-* it is *e-*. The page does not say whether this prefix is an "augment" or a repeated vowel, so this course just calls it the perfect prefix.

The Gerund

The gerund is the verb used as a noun, like English "making" in "making is hard". The forms are *cárië* and *hentië*, with plurals *cárier* and *hentier*. The page lists them but gives no gloss or description of their use, so this chapter gives no sentence for them.

An Irregular Verb: auta-

The verb *auta-* "depart, go away, disappear, be lost, pass away" has a mixed pattern, with the stem sometimes shortened to *av-* or *va-*. The page prints its forms:

TENSE	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Aorist	ava	avar
Present	avëa, auta	avëar, autar
Past	vánë, avantë	váner, avanter
Future	auva, autuva	auvar, autuvar

TENSE	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Perfect	(a)vánië	(a)vánier

```
# Quoted on the page from The Silmarillion
Auta i lómë!     The night is passing!
  auta   passes, departs   (present of auta-)
  i      the
  lómë   night
```

Negation in Every Tense

As in Chapter 8, a negative sentence uses the verb *ua-* plus the main verb in its impersonal form. The page prints this table for "I":

TENSE	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE	MEANING
Aorist	carin	uan / uin carë	I do not make
Present	cáran	uan cára / uan carë	I am not making
Past	carnen	uan carnë / únen carë	I did not make
Future	caruvan	uan caruva / úvan carë	I shall not make
Perfect	acáriën	uan acárië / uien carë	I have not made

Each tense has two ways to negate: *ua-* plus the tensed verb, or a tensed form of *ua-* (*únen*, *úvan*, *uien*) plus the plain stem *carë*. The page says that *ua-* could be fully conjugated in the formal register and in verse.

> **WATCH OUT: WHAT THIS CHAPTER LEAVES OUT**
>
> My outline for this chapter included participles, but the page (as summarised) does not cover them, and it does not say what the perfect prefix is called or how the gerund is used. They are left out, not guessed. The page does not say that the aorist can stand for the future, either.

> **WATCH OUT: THE TABLES LIST VARIANTS**

The page prints more than one form in some cells (*vánë / avantë*, *auva / autuva*), without saying which is preferred or whether they belong to different periods. Treat them as alternatives until a source says otherwise.

NOT YET VERIFIED

All forms are from summaries of Wikipedia's "Grammar of late Quenya"; I did not read the page itself. The statements "the past is made with *-në*" and "the future ends in *-uva*" are my reading of the table; the summary quoted *-uva* as the future ending but did not state a rule for the past. My description of the perfect (prefix plus lengthened vowel plus *-ië*) is my own reading of *acárië* and *ehentië*. The explanation that *henta-* drops its *-a* before *-uva* is my reading of the table, and the summary gave none. The 'Auta i lómë' quotation is as reported in the summary; I did not check the line in *The Silmarillion*.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Wikipedia, "Grammar of late Quenya" (verbs and negation sections), read through two summaries.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Fill in the six forms (aorist, present, past, future, perfect, gerund) of *car-* in the singular from the table, then add the pronoun ending *-n* to the past, future and perfect to make "I made", "I shall make" and "I have made".

View solution

EXERCISE 2

Say "I did not make", "I shall not make" and "I have not made" in both ways of negating, using the table. Which forms are attested on the page?

View solution

EXERCISE 3

Explain the sentence *Auta i lómë!* word by word, naming the tense of *auta*. Then list two things about *auta-* that make it irregular.

📄 View solution

CHAPTER 9 QUICK REFERENCE

- Past: *carnë*, *carner*; *hentanë*, *hentaner*
- Future: *-uva / -uvar*: *caruva*, *hentuva*
- Perfect: prefix + lengthened stem + *-ië*: *acárië*, *ehentië*
- Gerund: *cárië*, *hentië*
- Negation: *ua-* forms with the plain stem (*uan carnë*, *uan caruva*, *uan acárië*)
- Irregular *auta-* "depart": *Auta i lómë!* "The night is passing!"

COMING NEXT

Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 10 puts it all together: reading the attested lines and short texts, with a method, and a recap of the course.

Quenya Grammar 1

Course 1 · Chapter 10 · Reading the Texts

Nine chapters have built up the pieces: sounds, nouns, cases, adjectives, pronouns and verbs. This last chapter uses them together on real lines, the way a learner of Quenya actually works. The goal is not to write new Quenya (which is risky, as *Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 1* explained) but to read the attested lines carefully and know how sure you are of each part.

> **THE IDEA IN A BOX**
>
> Reading Quenya is detective work: split the line into words, find the stem and the endings, check each against what the course taught, and label each result attested, reconstructed or built by rule.

A Method for Reading

1. **Pronounce it.** Mark the syllables and the stress (*Quenya Grammar 1, Chapter 2*).
2. **Find the verb** and its tense and person (Chapters 7 to 9). A particle such as *á*, *áva* or *nai* is a clue to a command or wish (Chapter 8).
3. **Find each noun**: stem, number (Chapter 3) and case ending (Chapters 4 and 5).
4. **Attach the adjectives**: they agree in number and usually come first (Chapter 6).
5. **Look for pronoun endings** on verbs and possessive endings on nouns (Chapter 7).
6. **Label the result** and list what you could not explain.

Six Readings

Each line is attested, and the English is the gloss given in the source named. The breakdown is this course's own analysis, marked where it goes beyond a source.

```
# 1. Frodo's greeting (The Lord of the Rings)
Elen síla lúmenn' omentielvo
  A star shines on the hour of our meeting
  elen       star
  síla       shines  (from sil- "shine")
  lúmenn'    "hour" with the allative ending -nna, cut short before the next word
```

```
  omentielvo "our meeting": omentië + a first-person plural ending (Chapter 7)

# 2. Sam's cry (The Lord of the Rings)
Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!
  Hail Eärendil, brightest of stars!
  Elenion    "of stars": a plural genitive, cf. lassion in Chapter 4
  (Ancalima is not analysed here.)

# 3. A line from Namárië
laurië lantar lassi
  golden fall (the) leaves
  laurië (plural adjective, Chapter 6)  lantar (plural verb)  lassi (plural noun)

# 4. A line from Namárië
Varda ortanë máryat
  Varda has uplifted her (two) hands
  ortanë     past tense, with -në as in hentanë (Chapter 9)
  máryat     má "hand" + possessive + dual -t (Chapters 4 and 7)

# 5. The Silmarillion
Auta i lómë!
  The night is passing!
  auta (present of auta-)   i (the)   lómë (night)

# 6. A blessing
Nai siluvat elen atta
  May two stars shine
  nai        wish particle (Chapter 8)
  siluvat    sil- "shine" + future -uva + dual -t
  elen atta  star two: the number follows the noun (Chapter 6)
```

What the Readings Show

- Every grammar point of the course appears in a real line: plurals, genitive, dual, past, future, particles.
- The meanings of the full lines are Tolkien's. Most breakdowns are this course's, and where a source does not give the detail, the form is only built by rule.
- A learner can read these lines with confidence, but cannot write new sentences with the same confidence: a new sentence needs vocabulary and forms that are not all attested.

WATCH OUT: THE LIMITS OF QUENYA

Quenya changed through Tolkien's life, the sources give full paradigms for only a few nouns and verbs, and several points are disputed or unpublished. A fan translation can be convincing and still wrong. Treat any sentence you meet as built by rule until you have found its source.

Where to Look Next

- **Eldamo**, Paul Strack's dictionary, which lists words by period and source.
- **Tolkien Gateway**, with articles on single phrases such as Frodo's greeting.
- **Vinyar Tengwar** and **Parma Eldalamberon**, the journals that publish Tolkien's notes.
- **Wikipedia's "Quenya" and "Grammar of late Quenya"**, the summaries this course used.

NOT YET VERIFIED

The meaning of Frodo's greeting ("A star shines on the hour of our meeting") is now confirmed by a web search, which also found Tolkien Gateway's note that *lúmenn'* is an allative shortened before the next word (the fuller form is *lúmenna omentielvo*). The same search gave *elen* as "star", *sil-* as "shine" and *lúmë* as "time or hour". The other breakdowns in the readings are my own analysis from the earlier chapters, built from summaries of one Wikipedia page, and are not confirmed: that *Elenion* is a plural genitive, that *omentielvo* contains the "our" ending, that *ortanë* is a past in *-në*, and that *siluvat* is future plus dual. I did not analyse *Ancalima*. That *laurië lantar lassi* and *Varda ortanë máryat* are lines of *Namárië* is from my memory and from the Wikipedia summary's mention of the second.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Tolkien Gateway, "Elen síla lúmenn' omentielvo", and a web search on that phrase; Wikipedia, "Grammar of late Quenya", and the sources of Chapters 1 to 9.

Course Recap

CHAPTER	WHAT YOU LEARNED
1	What Quenya is; its phases, evidence and the labels
2	Sounds, spelling and the Latin-style stress rule

CHAPTER	WHAT YOU LEARNED
3	Number: singular, plural, partitive plural, dual; the article *i*
4	Core cases and possession
5	Cases of place and means
6	Adjectives, word order and comparison
7	Pronouns and the verb "to be"
8	Aorist, present, commands and negation
9	Past, perfect, future, the gerund
10	Reading real lines

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Read *Varda ortanë máryat* with the method: pronounce it, find the verb and its tense, break down *máryat*, and label every item attested, reconstructed or built by rule.

View solution

EXERCISE 2

Read *Nai siluvat elen atta* word by word. Which chapters supply the explanation for each part? What would change if the line meant "May one star shine"?

View solution

EXERCISE 3

A website gives *Ciryar carner elenna* as "The ships went to a star". Check it with the course: which parts are supported, which are not, and what label does the whole sentence get?

View solution

CHAPTER 10 QUICK REFERENCE

- Method: pronounce; verb; nouns; adjectives; pronoun endings; label the result
- Attested lines: *Elen síla lúmenn' omentielvo*; *Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!*; *laurië lantar lassi*; *Varda ortanë máryat*; *Auta i lómë!*; *Nai siluvat elen atta*
- Treat new sentences as built by rule until the source is found
- Resources: Eldamo, Tolkien Gateway, *Vinyar Tengwar*, *Parma Eldalamberon*

COURSE COMPLETE

This is the last chapter of Quenya Grammar 1. For the other Elvish language, see *Sindarin Grammar 1*; for the wider picture of Tolkien's languages, see *Tolkien's Languages*.