# ADLAM ALPHABET LEARNING GUIDE   

In ten lessons<br><br><br>Aysha SOW<br>亿u<br>In collaboration with Abdoulaye J Barry

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## Introduction




This learning guide is intended for those who wish to have the basics of the Adlam alphabet. This guide is in English and Pular and versions in other languages are available or will be available soon.

Adlam is an African alphabet that was created in 1989 by brothers Ibrahima and Abdoulaye Barry to correctly transcribe all sounds that exist in the Pular language and other African languages without resorting to diacritical signs or modified characters. Adlam is supported by all major operating systems. Therefore, you can use it on your Chrome, Windows, or Mac computer as well as on your Android smartphones (Samsung, Techno, etc.) and iOS phones (iPhone, iPad, etc.).

Pular, which is the language of the Fulbe, is spoken in more than 20 African countries by more than 75 million people. It is called Pular or Pulaar in countries west of the Niger river including Fouta Djallon and Fouta Toro. In countries east of the Niger river from Mali and Burkina Faso to Sudan, it is called Fulfulde.

I hope that with this book you will have the fundamentals that will allow you to read and write with the Adlam alphabet. I hope that it will also allow you to become more involved in the promotion of our languages without which Africa will not be able to free itself from cultural and linguistic domination and begin its economic and social development.

## 

The ADLaM alphabet or Alkule ADLaM consists of 28 letters with 5 vowels and 23 consonants． It is written from right to left with letters joined（كلكصله）or separated（کاצدک）．

PRONUNCIATION ROMAN／LATIN LOWER CASE UPPER CASE LOWER CASE UPPER CASE

| a | A | b | G | $\checkmark$ | $G$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Da | D | ك | 4 | ப | צ |
| La | L | 9 | 0 | コ | $\xrightarrow{1}$ |
| Ma | M | s | 9 | 9 | S |
| Ba | B | le | 12 | ๒ | 12 |
| Sa | S | w | $\underline{\underline{w}}$ | w | ט |
| Pa | P | 0 | D | ■ | D |
| Bha | Bh | $\mathcal{G}$ | 9 | 9 | S |
| Ra | R | ¢ | $\underline{\square}$ | $\underline{\square}$ | ¢ |
| E（Red） | E | B | B | R | $B$ |
| Fa | F | $\varsigma$ | К | 万 | Ћ |
| i（Bit） | 1 | U | U | U | U |
| O | O | $\bigcirc$ | C | C | C |
| Dha | Dh | d | bl | d | a |
| Yha | Yh | $\tau$ | $c$ | $\tau$ | C |
| Wa | In | f1 | A | f | F |
| Na | N | a | マ | 2 | 2 |
| Ka | K | F1 | F1 | 丹 | Э |
| Ya（Yard） | Y | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| U（Rude） | U | a | （1） | 0 | ［ 0 |
| $J$ | J | m | D | m | 9 |
| Cha（Chat） | Tch | ¢ | 9 | く | ¢ |
| Ha | H | 3 | 3 | 〕 | b |
| Qha | Qh | 91 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Ga | G | ¢ | B | ᄂ | 3 |
| Ny（Tenure） | Ny | ¢ | 8 | 反 | 反 |
| Ta | T | 10 | 10 | 饣 | 15 |
| Nha | Nh | A | d | R | R |

## Sesson: The vowels - (Mase dhen) كتلسله لمهح

There are five vowels called Mase in Pular. They play the same role in Pular as in English.

| $O$ | $C$ | $U$ | $B$ | $G$ | Upper |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $O$ | $C$ | $U$ | $R$ | $\ddots$ | Lower |
| $\mathbf{u}$ | $\mathbf{o}$ | $\mathbf{i}$ | $\mathbf{e}$ | $\mathbf{a}$ | Roman |

## 

As in English or Arabic, in Pular also a vowel can be long.
To indicate that a vowel is long, a diacritical sign is put above the vowel. There are two signs. One for the letter $৮$ and the other for the other 4 vowels.



| 0’ | C | U' | ®́ | Ġ | Upper |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| O | С | U | ®ٌ | も | Lower |
| uu | Oo | ii | ee | aa | Roman |

Note: If in English, long vowels are not written distinctly, in Pular however, they are especially important, and are clearly indicated as in Arabic. Moreover, in Pular, their presence in a word can completely change the meaning of the word.
For example: כנר

| I do not drink water | Mi yarataa ndiyan | هن Зكلصكهِّ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| It is the water I drink | Ko ndiyan mi yarata |  |
| To be lazy | aamugol | كُّهנمדת |
| To dance | amugol | كلكـمكه |

## Lesson 3：Consonants－（Yhiye dhen）（2لحهR

There are 23 consonants called Yhiye in Pular．They play the same role in English as in Pular

| Roman／Latin | Lower Case | Upper Case | Lower Case | Upper Case |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| D | 4 | 4 | צ | y |
| L | $\bigcirc$ | $\bigcirc$ | $\bigcirc$ | Я |
| M | S | $S$ | 9 | S |
| B | le | 12 | $\underline{\square}$ | 12 |
| S | lu | $\underline{\square}$ | W | 山 |
| P | Q | Q | ■ | D |
| Bh | 9 | 9 | $\checkmark$ | S |
| R | ¢ | U |  | บ |
| F | $\bigcirc$ | 亿 | 万 | Ћ |
| Dh | d | d | d | 6 |
| Yh | $\tau$ | c | $\tau$ | c |
| W | Fl | $\mathfrak{F}$ | $f$ | F |
| N | a | て | 2 | 2 |
| K | F | $\rightrightarrows$ | 于 | 习 |
| Y | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| J | $m$ | $\square$ | m | $\bigcirc$ |
| C／Tch | ¢ | C | ర | C |
| H | 5 | 3 | 〕 | ל |
| Qh | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| G | $\leq$ | $B$ | 3 | 3 |
| Ny | $\delta$ | 8 | ¢ | ¢ |
| T | 12 | 12 | ¢ | T0 |
| Nh | 入 | 入 | ® | T |

## Gemination - هللكَكلد

In Pular there is the doubling of consonants when the same consonant is said twice.
To indicate that a consonant is doubled, the diacritic sign $\overline{\text { r }}$ called or tchiddal is put above the consonant: $\overline{\mathbf{y}}$

The presence or absence of the tchiddal can change the meaning of a word.
For example: :

| To offer | Yedhugol | 3תلمهاهתد |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| To be solid | yedhdhugol |  |


| To sprain | hubhugol |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| To ignite | hubhbhugol |  |


| To coat | wujugol |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| To steal | wujjugol |  |


| To turn or to abandon | selugol | لللهصنها |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| To be healthy | sellugol |  |

## Note

In some cases, a consonant may play the role of the tchiddal. Thus, when two consonants follow each other without there being a vowel between them, the first one is muted, and rather plays the role of the tchiddal.

 pronounced even when they do not have a vowel.

As for the letter כ (h), when it does not have a vowel, the vowel that precedes it becomes




## 

When a vowel is combined with a consonant，we get a syllable or what is called in Pular RUSGUKU（sigande）in the singular and 8 （chigandhe）in the plural．

| Roman | Adlam | Roman | Adlam | Roman | Adlam | Roman | Adlam | Roman | Adlam |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $u$ | 0 | $\bigcirc$ | C | $i$ | U | $\boldsymbol{e}$ | 18 | $a$ | $\checkmark$ |  |
| $d u$ | ك104 | do | كه | di | UU | de | ك88 | $d a$ | لكا | ப |
| lu | 어우 | 10 | רת | li | صن | le | טת | $1 a$ | טם | Я |
| $m u$ | 0 | mo | תם | mi | هU | me | ת88 | ma | كا | S |
| bu | Orde | bo | صِه | bi | صِ | be | صַهR | $b a$ | صلىا | 12 |
| su | للـd | so | لله | si | UللU | se | للهم | sa | للكا | W |
| pu | 얻 | po | Q | $p i$ | ロט | pe | R | $p a$ | Dם | D |
| bhu | 0 OH | bho | $\bigcirc$ | bhi | U | bhe | RG | bha | كם | $S$ |
| ru | O1P | ro | لِه | ri | U上 | re | WR | $r a$ | لِّ | บ |
| $f u$ | 어 | fo | ¢ | fi | Шち | $f e$ | Вち | $f a$ | ¢ | Ћ |
| dhu | ل010 | dho | لمه | dhi | لهu | dhe | لم8 | dha | لمها | 6 |
| yhu | 어 | yho | ع | yhi | عU | yhe | R | yha | عם | c |
| wu | 엇 | wo | ๑ศ | wi | UF | we | BA | wa | 囚 | F |
| nu | 02 | no | 20 | ni | U2 | ne | R2 | na | 2 | 2 |
| ku | 억 | ko | 日ت | ki | Uヲ | ke | ®7 | ka | 回 | ヨ |
| yu | 013 | yo | Зת | $y i$ | U3 | ye | 83 | ya | צ6 | 3 |
| ju | 0 | jo | $\Omega$ | Dji | யワ | dje | ロル | dja | 凹 | $\bigcirc$ |
| tchu | Of（ | tcho | （8） | tchi | （\％） | tche | ת8， | thia | （\％） | ¢ |
| hu | O60 | ho | לת | hi | טU | he | כת | ha | לם | ל |
| qhu | 어이 | qho | اكه | qhi | 101 | qhe | R⿴囗 | qha | اكها | 9 |
| gu | ك104 | go | كه | gi | كا | ge | كاه | ga | كا | 3 |
| nyu | 0 | nyo | هת | nyi | هu | nye | 888 | nya | عם | $\delta$ |
| tu | ded | to | ת | $t i$ | ய | te | Rת | ta | תם | T0 |
| nhu | OXR | nho | $\Omega 8$ | nhi | UR | nhe | $R 8$ | nha | 180 | R |

## 

As in English，there are also nasalized consonants in Pular．But unlike English where nasalized consonants are in the middle or the end of a word（bring，land，etc．）in Pular，words can start with a nasalized consonant：2بللحكلح（ndiyan）．

The nasalization mark in Adlam is the letter $\mathrm{Z}_{1}(\mathrm{~N})$ to which is sometimes added the diacritical sign called nyondal（＇）or همحكکكلد，and which resembles the apostrophe．

The 4 nasalized letters are：

| Romain | Prononciation Adlam | Romain | Début de mot | Majuscule | Minuscule |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| nda | 2 | nd | 42 | צ＇a | צ＇z |
| mba | V10＇2 | mb | lez | リ＇ス | ＠＇2 |
| nja | W＇2 | nj | m2 | פ＇ス | m＇2 |
| nga | 2 | ng | 32 | З＇ス | Ч＇2 |

## Note：

As Abdoulaye Barry explained in one of his publications，the nyondal or apostrophe can be omitted in the following cases：
－If the nasalized consonant is at the beginning of the word，it is not necessary to add the nyondal or apostrophe to the letter $\boldsymbol{\imath}$ ．For example，instead of writing can just write
－If the consonant that precedes the one that is nasalized does not have a vowel，the
 of 04 0
－If the nasal consonant is preceded by a $\mathbf{Z}$ that does not have a vowel，it is not necessary to add the nasalization mark（＇Z）to the consonant that follows．For example，we can




## 

Introducing yourself - לمص̄لصهلكامد
Reading No 1:
|
English
Good afternoon
My name is Paté
I'm from Timbo
I am a student
I am 12 years old
My father's name is Yero
My mother's name is Kade
I have one big brother
His name is Samba
He, too, is a student
We live in Dabola
We have a rice field

## 

| English |  | บูกถ์ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Husband | حفَكلًّهR | حمَّه |
| Wife |  | 963836 |
| Spouse | كهحكلصكّكهR |  |
| Child | كـللمكا | צللَهه |
| Grandparent |  |  |
| Grandmother |  |  |
| Grandfather |  |  |
| Mother |  |  |
| Father |  |  |
| Maternal uncle |  |  |
| Aunt |  |  |
| Paternal uncle | صِكمَلِّكّكهR | صِلمَلِّكّهه |

Reading No 2:

| English | 960¢ |
| :---: | :---: |
| Good evening. |  |
| My name is Malal. | تصه Sكلصلد |
| I am married to one woman. |  |
| We have three children together. |  |
| My wife's name is Fatou |  |
| Fatou gave birth not long ago |  |

## Lesson 7: The Day - هحلمَلم בكحلد

| English | كلكصّك9 |
| :---: | :---: |
| Good evening |  |
| Today is Friday |  |
| Today is nice | לكلحكه |
| Since the day before yesterday, it has not rained |  |
| We are done praying |  |
| I am going back to the market |  |
| I am a clothes salesman |  |

## The days of the week -

| The days in English | U601D |  <br> (Pularised Arabic) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Monday | كrer | ટR己®ת |
| Tuesday |  |  |
| Wednesday |  | كلصكلصلىا |
| Thursday |  | كلصتهلهنلسلىا |
| Friday |  | 7makr |
| Saturday |  | كلسلهתاه8ا |
| Dimanchand |  | كلصحّ |

The day before yesterday, it was Monday Yesterday was Tuesday

Today is Wednesday
Tomorrow will be Thursday
The day after tomorrow will be Friday


 سحلحكا


## 

| The months in English | Pronunciation | 2ل1 UF®9 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| January | Siilo | سللّكهת |
| February | Thiolto/Colto | كعصهת |
| March | Mbooyo |  |
| April | Seedhto | سلفعّهתه |
| May | Duujo |  |
| June | Korso | تصשس |
| July | Bite | תهعس |
| August | Yuko |  |
| September | Warm | للللصתه |
| October | Yarko | צكلصوه |
| November | Jolo | תחתחת |
| December | Bowto | صلمعهת |


| The seasons in English | Corresponding months <br>  zlud |  284 Buzĩon |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Winter | للّلمه - همصهم - | RلصW |
| Dry season |  |  |
| Rainy season | תمسله - |  |
| Fall |  | ككصّلفح'كه |


| English | 9604b |
| :---: | :---: |
| When were you born? | ته כתבكها |
| I was born in January 1994. |  |
| Where were you born? |  |
| I was born in Labé. |  |

## Lesson 9：The numbers－اصلفصَ

Like the letters，the numbers in Adlam are also written from right to left．The Pular numbers are also read from right to left．In Pular，the unit or what is being counted is said before the number．For example，we will say：3للهكُ سلتلمَه（Ten people）

| English | Pronunciation | Adlam pronunciation | Numbers | 284 8\％ヘัดข |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Zero | Mehre | תתרטם | 0 | $\bigcirc$ |
| One | Go＇o | דهת | 1 | I |
| Two | Dhidhi | لهنللمU | 2 | 1 |
| Three | Tati | תهשט | 3 | と |
| Four | Nayi | حكل3U | 4 | と |
| Five | Jowi |  | 5 | 8 |
| Six | Jeego＇o | هعٌา | 6 | б |
| Seven | Jeedhidhi | m | 7 | 8 |
| Eight | Jeetati | ル®ึ | 8 | ४ |
| Nine | Jeenayi | 推 | 9 | 2 |
| Ten | Sappo（sappande） |  | 10 | $\bigcirc 1$ |
| Eleven | Sappo e go＇o |  | 11 | 11 |
| Twelve | Sappo e dhidhi |  | 12 | 亿 |
| Thirteen | Sappo e tati |  | 13 | ど |
| Fourteen | Sappo e nayi |  | 14 | とl |
| Fifteen | Sappo e jowi |  | 15 | 81 |
| Twenty | Noogayi |  | 20 | 01 |
| Thirty | Thiappandhe tati |  | 30 | つบ |
| Forty | Thiappandhe nayi |  | 40 | つと |
| One Hundred | Teemedere |  | 100 | O91 |
| Two hundred | Teemeddhe tati |  | 200 | 001 |
| Thousand | Wuluure（ujunere） |  | 1.000 | 0001 |
| Five miles | Guluuje jowi |  | 5.000 | 000 \＆ |
| One hundred thousand | Guluuje teemedere |  | 100.000 | 000 001 |
| One million | Dubunere |  | 1.000 .000 | 000 000 1 |
| One billion | Dujunere |  | 1．000．000．000 | 0000000001 |
| Two billion | Dujune dhidhi |  | 2．000．000．000 | 000 000 0001 |

## 

## 

Subject Personal pronouns (simple)

| English | Pronunciation | 82umzo9 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Mi | US |
| You | A | G |
| He/She | 0 | ( C |
| We (inclusive) | En | 28 |
| Us (We Exclusive) | Men | 2R |
| You (Plural or deferential) | On | 2 |
| They/They | Bhe | RT |

These pronouns are used:

1. For the negative form of verbs:



## Subject personal pronouns (compound)

These are pronouns born from combining a simple pronoun and a form of the auxiliary $\boldsymbol{\Omega}$.

| English | Pronunciation | R2UREN1 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $1 \mathrm{am} / \mathrm{I}$ have | Midho | كنلمه |
| You are/You have | Adha (Hidha) |  |
| He is/He has | Omo (Himo) | عهת (כلفه) (כلهת) |
| We are/We have | Edhen (Hidhen) | هلd |
| We are/We have | Medhen | ת |
| You are | Odho (Hidhon) | علمهح (حللمת2) |
| They/They | Ebhe (Hibhe) |  |

These pronouns are used:

1. To express:



2. With descriptive verbs:



## Object personal pronouns

In Pular, these are pronouns that always come after the verb, and are the object of the action done by the subject through the verb.
For example: كU or I called him

| English | Pronunciation | вวแmn |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Me | $\mathrm{lan} / \mathrm{mi}$ | صكّ/هu |
| You | maa | كّ̛ |
| Him/Her | mo | ת |
| Us | en | 2® |
| Us | men | $2 \Omega$ |
| You | on | 2 |
| Them | bhe | RG |

Reading No 3:
(صكلحكالحكهR

| English | كلكصكل9 |
| :---: | :---: |
| Alpha called me | كصڭكّ |
| He brought us gifts | 2® |
| He gave me a shirt | C |
| He gave you a phone. | C |
| I asked him if he has brought gifts for mom and dad | ת <br>  |
| He brought them shoes |  |
| He brought you clothes | C |

## The Verbs -

In the infinitive form, all Pular verbs end with either שתלתחת (agol), or (egol).

1. The verbs that end with (ugol) are:

- Active verbs where the subject does the action but is not the object of the action.



- Verbs ending with (ugol) can also be descriptive verbs. These are verbs
 (to be black or dark)


2. The verbs that end with action, and is at the same time the object of the action. They include verbs like
 down)
Example: هس للحَلآها (I got up). In this example, the subject is and at the same time, it is the object of the verb للحَّلكاعد (to get up)
3. The verbs that end with $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ (egol) are passive verbs where the subject does not do the action but is the object of the action of the verb: façara (to be hungry),


In this example, the subject of the verb is $\boldsymbol{\Omega}$ (I) and it is not doing the action, but the action is being done to it.

## Note:

Some verbs can take all three forms. For example from the root حَתْمٍ one can have:


u ש. . 2019 actur a


##  suncub

