

Background

The Dothraki people are a race of nomadic warriors and hunter-gatherers in George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* fantasy book series. Their language, *Lekh Dothraki*, was developed by David J. Peterson for *Game of Thrones*, HBO's adaptation of George R. R. Martin's series.

Spelling and Pronunciation

Within the fictional history of the *Song of Ice and Fire* series, the Dothraki haven't yet developed a writing system for their language. For that reason, the language is written in our world with a modified form of the roman alphabet (what we use for English).

{ ch, f, g, h, j, k, m, } Pronounced as they are in English (even at the end
{ s, sh, v, w, y, z } of a word or a syllable).

{ t, d, n, l } Pronounced as they are in English, save the tongue
is placed in between the teeth, rather than with the
tip of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth.

{ r } In between vowels, pronounced as a flap, like the
"d" in "ambassador"; elsewhere (and when
doubled), like the "rr" of Spanish "perro".

{ th, zh } **th**: Pronounced as in "thin", not "that".
zh: Pronounced as in "azure", not "zoo".

{ kh, q } **q**: Similar to "k", but further back in the mouth.
NOT pronounced like the "qu" in "quit"
kh: Like the "x" in Spanish "México".

{ a, e, i, o } In order: "a" as in "bad"; "e" as in "bed"; "i" as in
"machine"; and "o" as in "bode".

{ CC } A doubled consonant is held for longer than a
single consonant. Cf. the difference in the length of
the "s" in English "Miss Ally" vs. "Miss Sally".

If a word ends in a consonant, it's stressed on the final syllable. If it ends in a vowel and is preceded by two consonants (digraphs don't count), it's stressed on the penultimate syllable. In all other cases, the word will be stressed on the first syllable.

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Nominal Inflection

In English, nouns generally only inflect for singular and plural. In Dothraki, nouns also inflect for what is called *nominal case*. The case of the noun tells the listener what role the noun plays in the sentence (just as we know "her", in English, could never be the subject of the sentence, and "she" could never be the object).

Similar to French, Dothraki nouns fall into two genders, but rather than masculine and feminine, Dothraki classifies nouns as either *animate* or *inanimate*. Here's a sample declension paradigm for an animate noun (*verak* "traveler"):

Animate Noun Declension Paradigm			
Case	Singular	Plural	Example
Nominative	<i>verak</i>	<i>veraki</i>	<i>Verak dothrae</i> . "The traveler is riding."
Accusative	<i>verakes</i>	<i>verakis</i>	<i>Anha tih verakis</i> . "I saw the travelers."
Genitive	<i>veraki</i>	<i>veraki</i>	<i>Hazi zande veraki</i> . "That's the traveler's sack."
Allative	<i>verakaan</i>	<i>verakea</i>	<i>Kisha dothrash verakaan</i> . "We rode to the traveler."
Ablative	<i>verakoon</i>	<i>verakoa</i>	<i>Me lan verakoa</i> . "He ran away from the travelers."

Animate nouns that end in a vowel take the same endings, but an *s* is added before the nominative plural, genitive, allative and ablative suffixes. Accusative nouns add *-es* straight onto the end of the word in both the singular and plural.

Now let's see an example of an inanimate noun (*olta* "hill"). A distinguishing characteristic of inanimate nouns is they make no singular / plural distinction at all:

Inanimate Noun Declension Paradigm		
Case	Form	Example
Nominative	<i>olta</i>	<i>Olta vo zhokvao</i> . "The hill isn't large."
Accusative	<i>olt</i>	<i>Mhrazh laz tiha olt</i> . "The man can see the hills."
Genitive	<i>olti</i>	<i>Hranna olti atha</i> . "The hill's grass is dry."
Allative	<i>oltaan</i>	<i>Gaezosi anni lanish oltaan</i> . "My brothers ran to the hills."
Ablative	<i>oltoon</i>	<i>Chiori dothra oltoon</i> . "The woman rode away from the hill."

Verb Conjugation

Dothraki verbs are similar to verbs in a language like Spanish or French, in that the form of the verb changes depending on the person and number of the subject. It also conjugates in three tenses (past, present and future) and agrees with the *polarity* (positive or negative) of the main clause. We can illustrate the full conjugation paradigm with two verbs: *dothralat* ("to ride") which begins with a consonant and ends with a vowel, and *afazhat* ("to be hot"), which begins with a vowel and ends with a consonant:

Present Tense Conjugation Paradigm								
	Positive				Negative			
	Singular		Plural		Singular		Plural	
1st	<i>dothrak</i>	<i>afazhak</i>	<i>dothraki</i>	<i>afazhaki</i>	<i>dothrok</i>	<i>afazhok</i>	<i>dothroki</i>	<i>afazhoki</i>
2nd	<i>dothrae</i>	<i>afazhi</i>	<i>dothrae</i>	<i>afazhi</i>	<i>dothrao</i>	<i>afazhi</i>	<i>dothrao</i>	<i>afazhi</i>
3rd	<i>dothrae</i>	<i>afazha</i>	<i>dothrae</i>	<i>afazhi</i>	<i>dothrao</i>	<i>afazho</i>	<i>dothrao</i>	<i>afazhi</i>

In the past tense, the verb doesn't agree with the person of the subject, so the paradigm can be represented more simply:

Past Tense Conjugation Paradigm							
Positive				Negative			
Singular		Plural		Singular		Plural	
<i>dothra</i>	<i>afazhi</i>	<i>dothrash</i>	<i>afazhish</i>	<i>dothro</i>	<i>afazho</i>	<i>dothrosh</i>	<i>afazhosh</i>

To form the future, simply add a *v-* to the front of the corresponding present tense conjugation for all vowel-initial forms. For consonant-initial forms, add an *a-* to the positive present tense for the positive future, and an *o-* to the positive present tense for the negative future. Here are some examples:

- ❖ *Anha adothrak vaesaan.* "I will ride to the city."
- ❖ *Vorsasi afazhish oskikh.* "The fires were hot yesterday."
- ❖ *Me vo dothro Jereseraan Jima asshekh.* "He didn't ride to the Western Market today."
- ❖ *Jin tawak vos afazho.* "That metal isn't hot."

Notice that in Dothraki, sentences we would translate with "be" plus an adjective are, instead, translated with a single verb. These are called *stative verbs*, and Dothraki uses them in place of adjectives most of the time.

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Vocabulary and Phrases

* Greetings *		* Cultural Terms and Phrases *	
<i>M'athchomaron!</i> ~ <i>M'ath!</i>	Hello!~Hi!	<i>arakh</i>	Dothraki blade
<i>Athchomar chomakea!</i>	Welcome!	<i>hrazef</i>	horse (general)
<i>Hash yer dothrae chek?</i>	Are you doing well?	<i>sajo</i>	one's own horse
<i>Sek!~Sekosshi!</i>	Yes!~Definitely!	<i>dothrakhoqoyi</i>	blood rider
<i>Vos!~Vosecchi!</i>	No!~No way!	<i>khal</i>	leader
<i>Athdavrazar!</i>	Excellent!	<i>khaleesi</i>	wife of the <i>khal</i>
<i>San athchomari (yeraan)!</i>	Congratulations (to you)!	<i>khalasar</i>	band/tribe
<i>Hajas!</i>	Cheers!	<i>jahak</i>	braid
<i>Fonas chek!~Fonashek!</i>	Goodbye!~Bye!	<i>Me nem nesa.</i>	It is known.

* Pronouns *		* Commonly Used Active Verbs *	
<i>anha~anna~anni</i>	I~me~mine	<i>char-ak</i>	I hear
<i>yer~yera~yeri</i>	you~you~your (sg.)	<i>tih-ak</i>	I see
<i>shafka~shafka~shafki</i>	thou~thee~thy (sg./pl.)	<i>ast-ak</i>	I say
<i>me~mae~mae</i>	s/he~him/her~his/her	<i>laj-ak</i>	I fight
<i>yeri~yeri~yeri</i>	you~you~your (pl.)	<i>addriv-ak</i>	I kill
<i>mori~mora~mori</i>	they~them~their	<i>azh-ak</i>	I give
<i>fin~fines~fimi</i>	who~whom~whose	<i>adakh-ak</i>	I eat
<i>jini~jin~jini</i>	this~this~this one's	<i>fich-ak</i>	I take
<i>hazi~haz~hazi</i>	that~that~that one's	<i>remek-ak</i>	I sleep

* Adverbs/Other *		* Commonly Used Stative Verbs *	
<i>affin~ajjin~ahhaz</i>	when~now~then	<i>davra-k</i>	I'm useful/good
<i>chek</i>	well	<i>zhokw-ak</i>	I'm large
<i>che...che...</i>	either...or...	<i>naqis-ak</i>	I'm small
<i>hash...hash...</i>	if...then...	<i>fish-ak</i>	I'm cold
<i>she~mra~qisi</i>	on~in~near	<i>dik-ak</i>	I'm fast
<i>ha~ki~haji</i>	for~by~because	<i>zheana-k</i>	I'm beautiful
<i>hatif~irge</i>	before~after	<i>haj-ak</i>	I'm strong
<i>ma~majin</i>	and/with~and then	<i>vezhven-ak</i>	I'm excellent
<i>zhey</i> [name]	to call someone by name	<i>imesh-ak</i>	I'm young

Looking for More...?

* Dothraki and Conlanging on the Web *

Official Dothraki Blog	http://dothraki.com/
Dothraki Fan Site	http://dothraki.org/
David J. Peterson	http://dedalvs.com/
Language Creation Society	http://conlang.org/