

## That, This, And Question Words

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In Tamil, asking questions or pointing out objects up close ("this"/ "these") or objects far away ("that"/ "those") is very simple. In general, the prefix "஠ –" points out objects far away, the prefix "ஃ –" points out objects up close, and the prefix "அ –" asks "which?" or "what?" about the object.

There are a few groups of words in Tamil that differ only by their prefixes and are related in this way. In addition, the similarity between words in one group is that they refer to the same thing. The chart below categorizes these words.

That		This		What/which		Relationship
me:j	that	, e:j	this	ve:j	which?	(adjectives)
mJ	that thing	, J	this thing	vJ	which thing?	thing
mq:F	there	, q:F	here	vq:F	where?	place
mg:nghOJ	then	, g:nghOJ	now	vg:nghOJ	when?	time
mggb	in that manner	, ggb	in this manner	vggb	how?	manner / method
md;W	that day	, d;W	today	vd;W	which day?	day
mt;tsT	that much	, t;tsT	this much	vt;tsT	hwo much?	amount
mj;ji d	that many	, j;ji d	this many	vj;ji d	how many?	number
mt;d;	that boy	, t;d;	this boy	vt;d;	which boy?	boy
mts;	that girl	, ts;	this girl	vts;	which girl?	girl
mtu;	that elder	, tu;	this elder	vtu;	which elder?	elder
mi t	those things	, i t	these things	vi t	which things?	things

## More Question Words

There are a few more words that ask a question, but these words have no "ம-/, -" equivalents.

Question Words	
ahu;	who?
vdd	what?
Vd;	why?
vjji dahtJ	which rank?

When using the question word *ahu;*, the respect/plural verb suffix (-*Mu;fS*) must be used with the verb. Ex:

- *ahu; Nghf;w;hu;fS;?* = "Who goes?"

## Sentence Order

The words in the big chart above, whose relationship is either "time", "manner", or "day" are called adverbs. It is important to distinguish adverbs because the placement of words in a Tamil sentence is different from English.

Tamil Sentence Word Order
1. subject
2. "other words"
3. adverbs
4. verb

To learn about using the verb , U with adverbs for making sentences like "It is red" or "He is here", go to the next lesson, [Adjectives / Adverbs](#).

## Adjectives / Adverbs

### Adjective / Adverb Relationships

Some nouns can take one ending to become an adjective or another ending to become an adverb. Not all nouns can form an adverb and an adjective. Some form neither of the two. The rules aren't precise here.

Like in English, adjectives precede the nouns which they describe, regardless of what place in the [sentence word order](#) the word falls.

#### Ending For Adjectives

Adjectives formed from a noun usually end in -Md.

#### Ending For Adverbs

Adverbs formed from a noun usually end in -Mf.

Adjective		Adverb		Noun	
mofhd	beautiful	mofhf	beautifully	moF	beauty
nkyj hd	soft	nkyj hf	softly	nkyp	softness
eYkhd	blue	eYkhf	blue-ly	eYk;	blueness
gri rahd	green	gri rahf	green-ly	gri r	green-ness
cgghd	salty	cgghf	saltily	c gG	salt, saltiness

### Simple Sentences Revisited / , U

Why would there be a need to make words like "green-ly" and "blueness"? Well, to start with, eYk; is the word for blue. In Tamil, [colors](#) are nouns, not adjectives.

In simple sentences in which something is being described by an adjective, adverbs are used instead of the adjectives. To make these sentences:

1. Convert the adjective into an adverb.
2. Then use the verb , U as the word for "is". (Don't forget to put it into the correct tense and to add the correct verb suffix!)
3. Remember to put the words in the correct order.

That's it! (Phew!)

## Examples

- mJ gri rahf , Uf;f;wJ = "It is green."
- mJ rptgghf , Uf;f;wJ = "It is red."
- ehDk; Nfhkj pAk; Ntfkhf XLNthk; = "Gomathi and I will run fast."
- mtu;fs; rupahf NgRf;whu;fs; = "They speak correctly."
- mej Nfs;tp kpf vspi kahf , Uf;f;wJ = "That question is very easy."

## Professions / Family Words

### Family Words

There are more words in Tamil for family members, since the words are more specific about the relationship between two family members. The number of words for family members in Tamil is perhaps a reflection that the extended family is an important part of Tamil society.

Family Words			
Female		Male	
mk;kh	mother	mggh	father
mf;fh	older sister	mz ;z h	older brother
j qi f	younger sister	j kgp	younger brother
mj ;i j	aunt	khkh	uncle

ṛḡj ; p	aunt	ṛḡj ; ggh	uncle
ṅḡṇak;kh	aunt	ṅḡṇaggh	uncle
Ṇḡj ; p	granddaughter	Ṇḡd;	grandson
kUkfs;	niece / daughter-in-law	kUkfd;	nephew / son-in-law

## Professions

People who have a specific profession can be called by their profession. Some words are like compound words, with the name of the profession included.

Professions		
fhty;fhud;	policeman	fhty; = police
fhty;fhup	policewoman	
kUj ; tu;	doctor	kUe;J = medicine

## Plural Nouns

### Plural Noun Suffix Addition

The suffix for turning a singular noun into a plural noun is fs;. Since fs; does not begin with a vowel, none of the special [previously learned](#) rules for adding suffixes apply. In addition, words that end in certain letters change while becoming plural.

#### Forming Plural Nouns

- If the word ends in -k;, drop the -k; and add -q;fs;
- If the word is one syllable...
  - and ends in a long vowel sound, add f;fs;
  - has a short vowel sound and ends in..
    - -y;, drop the -y; and add W;fs;

- - S<sub>i</sub>; drop the - S<sub>i</sub>; and add l<sub>i</sub>; fS<sub>i</sub>;
- For all other nouns, add - fS<sub>i</sub>;

This may seem like a lot, but it isn't. Most nouns fall into the last category, which is simple. One syllable words that end in a vowel sound are actually one-letter words. Words like this are G<sub>t</sub>, <, j<sub>i</sub> but there aren't too many. There also aren't many short vowel sound, one-syllable words ending in y<sub>i</sub> or S<sub>i</sub>; but some are gy<sub>i</sub>; and fy<sub>i</sub>;

So although all of the rules may come in handy, it is typical to use the first rule and the last rule the most.

## Examples

- kuk<sub>i</sub>; + - fS<sub>i</sub>; = kuq<sub>i</sub>; fS<sub>i</sub>;
- gok<sub>i</sub>; + - fS<sub>i</sub>; = goq<sub>i</sub>; fS<sub>i</sub>;
- < + - fS<sub>i</sub>; = <f<sub>i</sub>; fS<sub>i</sub>;
- G<sub>++</sub> - fS<sub>i</sub>; = G<sub>f</sub>; fS<sub>i</sub>;
- fy<sub>i</sub>; + - fS<sub>i</sub>; = fw<sub>i</sub>; fS<sub>i</sub>;
- ge;J + - fS<sub>i</sub>; = ge;J fS<sub>i</sub>;
- E}y<sub>i</sub>; + - fS<sub>i</sub>; = E}y<sub>i</sub>; fS<sub>i</sub>;
- KS<sub>i</sub>; + - fS<sub>i</sub>; = Kl<sub>i</sub>; fS<sub>i</sub>;