

Pronunciation Guide for Pattullo Bridge Replacement

hənqəminəm Orthography and Pronunciation Guide

This is a guide that instructs readers how to write and pronounce hənqəminəm sounds.

Upper-case letters are not used in the orthographic system.

hənqəminəm has 36 consonants, 22 of which are not found in English! Some, like tʰ, are very special sounds as they appear in only a handful of languages around the world.

Since the majority of hənqəminəm sounds are different from those of English, the English alphabet (orthography) is not an adequate nor a straightforward system for writing hənqəminəm words. Instead, Musqueam uses the North American Phonetic Alphabet (NAPA), where each sound is represented by a single distinct symbol. This is a significant advantage for learning how to read, as the hənqəminəm alphabet creates consistency of interpretation and predictability of pronunciation.

Though they may appear foreign at first, symbols like “ə” (called ‘schwa’) are found in the pronunciation guides of most English dictionaries. Other symbols are used in the alphabets of many Native languages of North America, as well as in several languages from countries around the world.

Vowels

Symbol & Pronunciation

i	the “i” in pizza
e	the “e” in bet
a	the “a” in father
u	the “u” in flute
ə	the “u” in but

When vowels are followed by a colon “:”, this means the vowel is lengthened.

Consonants

Some sounds that are the same in both hənqəminəm and English are: h, k, l, m, n, p, s, t, w, and y.

Symbol & Pronunciation

c	“ts” sound as in cats
č	“ch” sound as in cheese
ɬ	Place your tongue as though you were going to pronounce an “l” sound, then blow a steady stream of air past the sides of your tongue where it rests against the inside surface of your molars.
ɬ̥	This sound starts like a t̥ and then releases into the ɬ sound described above.
q	Similar to “k” only with your tongue pulled farther back.
š	“sh” sound as in shirt
θ	Called theta, it makes a “th” sound as in think
tʰ	This sound starts like a t̥ and then releases into the theta θ sound.
x	Like the “h” in huge.
χ	This is a sort of raspy sound made at the back of the mouth.
ʔ	The stop you hear in the middle of the word uh-oh

What does that little comma above or next to a letter mean?

Some həŋqəminəm consonants, such as č, k̥, ɬ̥, p̥, q̥, or t̥, are categorized as glottalized or ejective stops. They are distinguished from their non-glottalized counterparts by an audible popping sound upon their release.

l, m, n, w, and y represent the group of consonants known as resonants, characterized as such because of the reverberating or “resonant” quality of their sound. Their glottalized counterparts l̥, m̥, n̥, w̥, and y̥, like the glottalized stops, are also represented with an apostrophe, but are distinguished from the stops by their sound which is achieved by constricting the vocal cords during the articulation of a particular resonant.

What does that little “w” (ʷ) next to a letter mean?

The little ʷ next to a letter means that the particular sound is made with your lips rounded. So the həŋqəminəm word kʷe:l sounds very similar to the English word quell.