

STANDARD KURDISH ORTHOGRAPHY TABLE

Roman (Hawar)	Cyrillic	Arabic
VOWELS:		
A a	А а	ا / ئا *
E e	Ә ә	ه / ئه *
Ê ê	Е е	ي / ئي *
I i	Ь ь	/ ئى *
Î î	И и	ي [vowel] / ئي *
O o	О о	و / ئو *
U u	Ö ö	و [vowel] / ئو *
Û û	У у	وو / ئوو *
‘E (E) ‘e (e)	Ә’ ә’	عه

CONSONANTS:

B b	Б б	ب
C c	Ц ц	ج
Ç ç	Ч ч	چ
Ç’ ç’	Ч’ ч’	چ
D d	Д д	د
[D] [d]		ض
‘E (E) ‘e (e)	Ә’ ә’	عه
F f	Ф ф	ف
G g	Г г	گ
H h	Һ һ	ه

* Initial vowels begin with a hamzah kursi (ء)

Roman (Hawar)	Cyrillic	Arabic
H h (H') (h')	Н н	ح
J j	Ж ж	ژ
K k	К к	ك
K' k'	К' к'	ك
L l	Л л	ل
Ł ł	Л̄ л̄	ل
M m	М м	م
N n	Н н	ن
P p	П п	پ
P' p'	П' п'	پ
Q q	Q q	ق
R r	Р р	ر
R̄ r̄	Р̄ р̄	ر
S s	С с	س
Ş ş	Ш ш	ش
Ş ş		ص
T t	Т т	ت
T' t'	Т' т'	ت
Ṭ ṭ		ط
V v	В в	ف
W w	W w	و [consonant]
X x	Х х	خ
X̄ x̄	Г' г'	غ
Y y	Й й	ي [consonant]

Roman (Hawar)	Cyrillic	Arabic
Z z	З з	ز
'	'	ع

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1. In Sorani, the conjunction 'and' (و) should be rendered **u** if the preceding word ends in a consonant, and **w** following a vowel. In Kurmanji, it is spelled **û** in Latin orthography and should be romanized that way as well.

2. In the Arabic orthography for Kurdish, all vowels are written out, with the exception of *i* (short *i*), which is expressed by a "kasrah" under the preceding consonant, although that "kasrah" is rarely written. At the beginning of a word, the *i* is preceded by a "kursî hamza" (see 3. below):

kirin "to do"	кърън	کرن
k'irîn "to buy"	к'ър'ин	کیرین
int'în "to sigh"	ьнт'ин	ئنتین

3. In the Arabic orthography for Kurdish, when a vowel comes at the beginning of a word -- or when a vowel directly follows another vowel -- a "kursî hamza" precedes it, e.g.

agir "fire"	агър	ئاگر
o'ir "luck"	ог'ър	ئوغر
exte 'nag horse"	эхтэ	ئهخته
naêm "I don't come"	наем	ئايم

4. In the Arabic orthography for Kurdish, the four forms of the Arabic letter *hā* (هههه) have been reinterpreted. Two forms (initial ه and medial ه) are the letter H, while two forms (final ه and independent ه) are the letter E.

Final and independent H are both expressed by the initial form (ه). Hence, the full paradigm for H is: initial ه; medial ه; final ه; independent ه.

Examples:

initial ه:

"each"	həp	هه
hətin "to come"	hətən	هاتن
"flood"	ləhi	لهي

medial ه:

bihistin "to hear"	bəhistin	بهستن
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final ه:

"place; bed"	šəh	هه
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independent ه:

meh "month"	məh	مه
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E (ا) behaves like the letters əlif ا, wāw و, dāl د, and rā r, in that it never joins to the following letter (i.e., it has no medial form). Consequently, the following letter must start over with the initial form (unless there is only one following letter, in which case it will be written in the independent form). As with other vowels, initial E (ا) is preceded by the kursî hamzah (ة), yielding initial اة. Hence, the full paradigm for E is:

intitial [beginning a word] اة; [medial ا]; final ا; independent ه.

Examples:

initial اة:

enî "forehead"	əni	ئهني
"horse" (Sorani)	əsp	هسپ

[*medial ا: medial is replaced by final, as with əlif , wāw etc.*]

final ا:

"flood"	ləhi	لهي
ç'em "river"	ç'em	چهم

"we" (Sorani)	emə	ئيمه
p'îne "patch"	п'инə	پينه
<i>independent</i> ە:		
dest "hand"	дəст	دهست
"like, as"	wək	وهك

5. The Arabic letter $\text{yā}'$ ي has two equivalents in the Roman orthography: it can be the vowel î and the consonant y . Likewise, the Arabic letter wāw و can be both the vowel u and the consonant w . If preceded by a consonant, $\text{yā}'$ ي and wāw و are the vowels î and u respectively, e.g.,

dîtî "s/he saw" (Sorani)	[дити]	ديتي
bîbînim "If I see it" (Sorani)	[бибиньм]	بيبينم
Soranî "Sorani"	Сорани	سوراني
K'urd "Kurd"	К'örd	كورد
tu "thou, you"	tö	تو

Likewise, $\text{yā}'$ ي and wāw و are the consonants y and w respectively:

a) at the beginning of a word, e.g.,

yarmetî "help" (Sorani)	[йармэти]	يارمه تي
witin "to say" (Sorani)	[wьтън]	وتن

or

wutin "to say" (Sorani)	[wötън]	ووتن
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b) if preceded by a vowel (including short i , which is not written), e.g.,

şayan "worthy" (Sorani)	[шайан]	شايان
na y bînim "I don't see it" (Sor.)	[найбиньм]	نايبينم
'water" (Sorani)	[aw]	ئاو
bedew "beautiful"	бэдəw	بهدهو
diwêre "s/he dares"	дъwерə	دویره
biyanî** "foreign"	бъйани	بياني

** Also: bîyanî бийани

şıyan "to be able"	шъѣан	شیان
c) if preceded by a consonant and followed by a vowel, e.g. birwa "belief" (Sorani)	[бърwa]	بروا
xwarin "to eat"	xварьн	سوارس
dîtyan "they saw" (Sorani)	[дитѣан]	دیتیان
asyaw "mill" (Sorani)	[асѣaw]	

6. In the Cyrillic orthography for Kurdish, the distinction between aspirated stops (ç', k', p', t') and unaspirated stops (ç, k, p, t) is always written, and Soviet scholars also preserve this distinction in the roman orthography. Elsewhere it is generally ignored, and consequently this distinction does not exist in the Arabic orthography for Kurdish.

7. The Soviet scholars created the **е'** (Cyrillic **ѣ'**), which represents two different sounds: when the sound is [‘ayin] + e, as at the beginning of a word (in Arabic script written **عه**), a preferable spelling is **‘e**, placing the apostrophe *before* the vowel. By analogy, one also finds ‘a (**عا**), ‘î (**عی**), ‘o (**عو**), ‘û (**عوو**). The original **е'** [with the apostrophe *after* the vowel] is reserved for cases where the vowel [e] is followed by the [‘ayin], as in the word **me‘r** (**مه‌ع‌ر**), a dialectal variant of **mar** [snake]. Since **е'** could be identified either as a vowel or a consonant, it has been added to both categories in the Kurdish orthographic table.

Standard reference dictionaries for Kurdish include:

for Kurmanji (northern dialects)

Michael L. Chyet. *Kurdish-English Dictionary = Ferhenga Kurmancî-Inglîzî*
(New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 2003)

Ferdîdon Çelebî and Danko Sipka. *Kurmanji Kurdish-English Glossary*
(Springfield, VA : Dunwoody, 2002)

for Sorani (central dialects)

Shafiq Qazzaz. *The Sharezoor : Kurdish-English Dictionary* (Erbil : Aras, 2000)