

Sinhalese

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Spoken in: Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand, Canada and the United Arab Emirates.

Total speakers: 14 million

Genetic specification: Indo-European Indo-Iranian Indic Sinhalese

Official language of: Sri Lanka

Sinhalese is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in Sri Lanka by about 12 million people. There are also considerable numbers of Sinhalese speakers in Singapore, Thailand, Canada and the United Arab Emirates.

The script used in writing Sinhalese is evolved from the ancient Brahmi script used in most Aryan languages. At present the Sinhalese alphabet has 56 characters with four more characters added recently, which is one of the longest in the world.

Sinhalese and Tamil were constitutionally recognised as the official languages of Sri Lanka in 1956. The earliest surviving literature in Sinhala dates from the 9th century AD.

Currently SSWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service employs 4 Sinhalese sessional interpreters.

Sinhalese alphabet

Vowels and vowel diacritics with ka

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|------------|--------------|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| a | ā | æ | ǣ | i | ī | u | ū | r | r̄ |
| [a, ə] | [a:, a] | [æ] | [æ:] | [i] | [i:] | [u] | [u:] | [ri, ru] | [ri:, ru:] |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| ka | kā | kæ | kǣ | ki | kī | ku | kū | kr | kr̄ |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| e | ē | ai | o | ō | au | | | | |
| [e] | [e:] | [aj] | [o] | [o:] | [aw] | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| ke | kē | kai | ko | kō | kau | | | | |

Consonants

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|---|--------|---|-----------|
| ක | k [k] | ඛ | kh [kʰ] | ග | g [g] | ඝ | gh [gʰ] | ඛ | n̄ [ŋ] | ඟ | n̄g [ŋ̄g] |
| ච | c [tʃ] | ඡ | ch [tʃʰ] | ජ | j [dʒ] | ඣ | jh [dʒʰ] | ඤ | ñ [ɲ] | | |
| ට | t̪ [ʈ] | ඨ | th [ʈʰ] | ඩ | ɖ [ɖ] | ඪ | ɖh [ɖʰ] | ණ | n̄ [ɳ] | ඬ | n̄ɖ [ʈ̄ɖ] |
| ඵ | t̪ [ʈ] | ඹ | th [ʈʰ] | ඳ | d [d] | ධ | dh [dʰ] | න | n [n] | ඳ | n̄d [ʈ̄d] |
| ප | p [p] | ඵ | ph [pʰ] | බ | b [b] | භ | bh [bʰ] | ම | m [m] | ඹ | m̄b [ʈ̄b] |
| ය | y [j] | ර | r [r] | ල | l [l] | ව | v [v] | ළ | l̄ [ɭ] | | |
| ශ | ś [ʃ] | ඡ | ṣ [ʃ] | ස | s [s] | හ | h [h] | | | | |