

Amharic

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Spoken in: Ethiopia

Region: East Africa

Total speakers: 21 million (17.4 million native)

Genetic Classification: Afro-Asiatic Semitic South Transversal Amharic

Official language of: Ethiopia

Amharic is a Semitic Language of the Afro-Asiatic Language Group; the origins of the language and its people are traced back to the 1st millennium B.C. Immigrants from south-western Arabia crossed the Red Sea into present-day Eritrea and mixed with the Cushitic population. Thus, new languages formed as a result of this union.

Amharic is a syllabic language that uses a script that originated from the Ge'ez alphabet. It has 33 basic characters with each having 7 forms for each consonant-vowel combination.

The language has different forms of use depending on age and gender. The affix of the 'root word' changes to express differences among age and gender. There is a female form, male form, polite form and informal form.

Amharic alphabet:

Consonants

ሀ	ለ	ሐ	መ	ሠ	ረ	ሰ	ሸ	ቀ	ቂ	በ	ተ	ቸ	ገ	ጎ	ነ	ኘ	አ
h	l	h	m	s	r	s	š	q	qu	b	t	č	h	hu	n	ñ	'
[h]	[l]	[h]	[m]	[s]	[r]	[s]	[ʃ]	[kʰ]	[kʷ]	[b]	[t]	[tʃ]	[h]	[hʷ]	[n]	[ɲ]	[ʔ]
ከ	ኸ	ወ	ዐ	ዘ	ዠ	የ	ደ	ጀ	ገ	ጎ	ጠ	ጪ	ጸ	ጺ	ፀ	ፈ	ፕ
k	h	w	'	z	ž	y	d	ǰ	g	gu	t	č	p	s	z	f	p
[k]	[h]	[w]	[ʔ]	[z]	[ʒ]	[j]	[d]	[dʒ]	[g]	[gʷ]	[t]	[tʃ]	[pʰ]	[ts]	[ts]	[f]	[p]

Vowels

ä	u	i	a	e	ə	o
[a]	[u]	[i]	[a]	[e/ɛ]	[ə]	[o/ɔ]

Currently SSWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service employs 1 sessional Amharic interpreter.