

Latvian

latviešu valoda

Spoken in: Latvia

Region: Northern Europe

Total speakers: 1.4 million

Genetic Classification: Indo-European languages Baltic languages Eastern Baltic Latvian

Official language of: Latvia, European Union

The Latvian language belongs to the Eastern Baltic sub-group of the Baltic language group in the Indo-European language family, and it is neither Germanic, nor Slavic. Its closest and only living relative is the Lithuanian language. However, while related, the Latvian and Lithuanian vocabularies vary greatly from each other and are not mutually intelligible.

Latvian is an inflective language with several analytical forms, three dialects, and German syntactical influence. There are two grammatical genders in Latvian. Each noun is declined in seven cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental, locative, and vocative.

The first publication to be printed in Latvian appeared in 1585. The first Latvian dictionary, Lettus, was compiled by Georg Mancelius in 1638. The German monks who wrote these texts used a version of the the Fraktur alphabet adapted from German which was ill suited to the Latvian language. This alphabet was used until the mid 1930s, when it was replaced with a modified version of the Latin alphabet devised by Dr. J. Endzelins and K. Mühlenbach.

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

Latvian alphabet & pronunciation

A a	Ā ā	B b	C c	Č č	D d	Dz dz	Dž dž	E e	Ē ē	F f	G g
ā		bē	cē	čē	dē	dzē	džē	ē		ef	gē
[a]	[a:]	[b]	[t͡s]	[t͡ʃ]	[d]	[d͡z]	[d͡ʒ]	[ɛ, e]	[ɛ:, e:]	[f]	[g]
Ģ ģ	H h	I i	Ī ī	J j	K k	Ķ ķ	L l	Ļ ļ	M m	N n	Ņ ņ
mīkstais gā	hā	ī		jot	kā	mīkstais kā	el	mīkstais el	em	en	mīkstais en
[ɟ]	[x]	[i]	[i:]	[j]	[k]	[c]	[l]	[lʌ]	[m]	[n]	[ɲ]
O o	P p	R r	S s	Š š	T t	U u	Ū ū	V v	Z z	Ž ž	
o	pē	er	es	eš	tē	ū		vē	zē	žē	
[uo]	[p]	[r]	[s]	[ʃ]	[t]	[u]	[u:]	[v]	[z]	[ʒ]	