

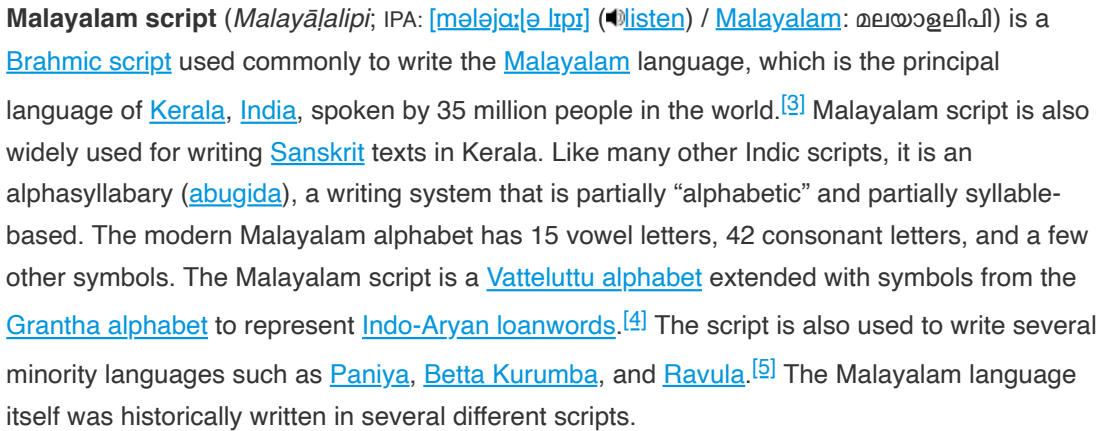
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Malayalam script - Wikipedia

29-37 minutes

Malayalam script	
വിജ്ഞാനകോശം	
Type	Abugida
Languages	Malayalam Sanskrit Konkani Paniya Betta Kurumba Ravula
Time period	C. 830 – present ^{[1][2]}
Parent systems	Proto-Sinaitic script <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phoenician alphabet Aramaic alphabet Brahmi script Tamil-Brahmi Grantha alphabet Malayalam script
Sister systems	Sinhala script Tigalari script
Direction	Left-to-right
ISO 15924	Mlym, 347
Unicode alias	Malayalam
Unicode range	U+0D00–U+0D7F
<p>This article contains IPA phonetic symbols. Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other symbols instead of Unicode characters. For an introductory guide on IPA symbols, see Help:IPA.</p>	





Overview[\[edit\]](#)

The basic characters can be classified as follows:

- An independent vowel letter is used as the first letter of a word that begins with a vowel. A consonant letter, despite its name, does not represent a pure consonant, but represents a consonant + a short vowel /a/ by default. For example, ഐ is the first consonant letter of the Malayalam alphabet, which represents /ka/, not a simple /k/. A vowel sign is a [diacritic](#) attached to a consonant letter to indicate that the consonant is followed by a vowel other than /a/. If the following vowel is /a/, no vowel sign is needed. The [phoneme](#) /a/ that follows a consonant by default is called an [inherent vowel](#). In Malayalam, its phonetic value is [unrounded](#) [e],^[6] or [ə] as an [allophone](#). To denote a pure consonant sound not followed by a vowel, a special diacritic [virama](#) is used to cancel the inherent vowel. The following are examples where a consonant letter is used with or without a diacritic.

- 2 sur 18 16/03/2020 à 18:52

- ക *ka* = ക് /k/ + അ vowel sign a

Malayalam alphabet is [unicase](#), or does not have a [case](#) distinction. It is written from left to right, but certain vowel signs are attached to the left (the opposite direction) of a consonant letter that it logically follows. In the word കേരളം (*Kēraḷam*), the vowel sign േ (ē) visually appears in the leftmost position, though the vowel ē logically follows the consonant k.

History[\[edit\]](#)

Malayalam was first written in the [Vatteluttu alphabet](#), an ancient script of [Tamil](#). However, the modern Malayalam script evolved from the [Grantha alphabet](#), which was originally used to write [Sanskrit](#). Both Vatteluttu and Grantha evolved from the [Tamil-Brahmi](#), but independently.

Vatteluttu alphabet[\[edit\]](#)

Vattezhuthu ([Malayalam](#): വട്ടെഴുത്ത്, *Vaṭṭezhuthŭ* [?], “round writing”) is a script that had evolved from [Tamil-Brahmi](#) and was once used extensively in the southern part of present-day [Tamil Nadu](#) and in [Kerala](#).

Malayalam was first written in Vattezhuthu. The [Vazhappally](#) inscription issued by [Rajashekhara Varman](#) is the earliest example, dating from about 830 CE.^{[1][2]} In the Tamil country, the modern [Tamil script](#) had supplanted Vattezhuthu by the 15th century, but in the [Malabar](#) region, Vattezhuthu remained in general use up to the 17th century,^[7] or the 18th century.^[8] A variant form of this script, [Kolezhuthu](#), was used until about the 19th century mainly in the [Kochi area](#) and in the Malabar area.^[9] Another variant form, [Malayanma](#), was used in the south of [Thiruvananthapuram](#).^[9]

Grantha[\[edit\]](#)

	ka	kha	ga	gha	ṇa
Grantha	𑌕	𑌖	𑌗	𑌘	𑌙
Tigalari	𑌕	𑌖	𑌗	𑌘	𑌙
Malayalam	ക	ഖ	ഗ	ഘ	ൺ
Kannada	ಕ	ಖ	ಗ	ಘ	ಢ
Sinhala	ක	ඛ	ග	ඝ	ඣ

Grantha, Tigalari and Malayalam scripts

According to [Arthur Coke Burnell](#), one form of the Grantha alphabet, originally used in the [Chola dynasty](#), was imported into the southwest coast of India in the 8th or 9th century, which was then modified in course of time in this secluded area, where communication with the east coast was very limited.^[10] It later evolved into Tigalari-Malayalam script was used by the [Malayali](#), Havyaka Brahmins and Tulu Brahmin people, but was originally only applied to write [Sanskrit](#). This script split into two scripts: Tigalari and Malayalam. While Malayalam script was extended and modified to write vernacular language Malayalam, the Tigalari was written for Sanskrit only.^{[10][11]} In Malabar, this writing system was termed Arya-eluttu (ആര്യ എഴുത്ത്, *Ārya eḷuttŭ*),^[12] meaning “Arya writing” (Sanskrit is [Indo-Aryan language](#) while Malayalam is a

[Dravidian language](#)).

Vatteluttu was in general use, but was not suitable for literature where many Sanskrit words were used. Like Tamil-Brahmi, it was originally used to write [Tamil](#), and as such, did not have letters for voiced or aspirated consonants used in Sanskrit but not used in Tamil. For this reason, Vatteluttu and the Grantha alphabet were sometimes mixed, as in the [Manipravalam](#). One of the oldest examples of the Manipravalam literature, *Vaishikatantram* (വൈശികതന്ത്രം, *Vaiśikatantram*), dates back to the 12th century,^{[13][14]} where the earliest form of the Malayalam script was used, which seems to have been systematized to some extent by the first half of the 13th century.^{[1][8]}

[Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan](#), a poet from around the 17th century, used Arya-eluttu to write his Malayalam poems based on Classical Sanskrit literature.^[10] For a few letters missing in Arya-eluttu (*ḷa*, *ḷa*, *ṛa*), he used Vatteluttu. His works became unprecedentedly popular to the point that the Malayali people eventually started to call him the father of the Malayalam language, which also popularized Arya-eluttu as a script to write Malayalam. However, Grantha did not have distinctions between *e* and *ē*, and between *o* and *ō*, as it was as an alphabet to write a Sanskrit language. The Malayalam script as it is today was modified in the middle of the 19th century when [Hermann Gundert](#) invented the new vowel signs to distinguish them.^[10]

By the 19th century, old scripts like Kolezhuthu had been supplanted by Arya-eluttu – that is the current Malayalam script. Nowadays, it is widely used in the press of the Malayali population in Kerala.^[15]

Malayalam and [Tigalari](#) are sister scripts are descended from Grantha alphabet. Both share similar glyphic and orthographic characteristics.

Orthography reform^[edit]

In 1971, the [Government of Kerala](#) reformed the [orthography](#) of Malayalam by a government order to the education department.^{[16][17]} The objective was to simplify the script for print and typewriting technology of that time, by reducing the number of glyphs required. In 1967, the government appointed a committee headed by [Sooranad Kunjan Pillai](#), who was the editor of the Malayalam Lexicon project. It reduced number of glyphs required for Malayalam printing from around 1000 to around 250. Above committee's recommendations were further modified by another committee in 1969.

This proposal was later accepted by major newspapers in January 1971. The reformed script came into effect on 15 April 1971 (the [Kerala New Year](#)), by a government order released on 23 March 1971.

Recommendations by the committees^[edit]

Use non-ligating vowel signs for *u*, *ū*, and *ṛ*^[edit]

In the traditional orthography, that had been taught in the primary education till that time, any consonant or consonant ligature followed by the vowel sign of *u*, *ū*, or *ṛ* are represented by a cursive consonant-vowel ligature. The glyph of each consonant had its own way of ligating with

these vowel signs. This irregularity was simplified in the reformed script.^[18] As per that, a vowel sign or the consonant sign would always have a disconnected symbol that does not fuse with the base consonant.

Examples:

- *ku:* → കൂ
- *kū:* → കു
- *kr:* → ക്ര
- *nu:* → നൂ
- *śu:* → ശൂ

Reph is replaced with *Chillu ra*^[edit]

In traditional orthography, the reph is represented by a dot over the subsequent letter. Instead of that, explicit stand-alone *Chillu ra* would be used.

- *rkka:* 'ക്ക → രിക്ക

Split uncommon conjuncts with *Chandrakkala*^[edit]

Also, most of traditional consonant-consonant ligatures, especially the less common ones only used to write words of Sanskrit origin, were split into non-ligated forms with explicit *chandrakkala*. For example:

- ഗ് *g* + ദ *da* = *gda:* → ഗദ്
- ല് *l* + ത *ta* = *lta:* → ല്ത
- ശ് *ś* + ന *na* = *śna:* → ശ്ന
- ശ് *ś* + മ *ma* = *śma:* → ശ്മ

1. The ligature (ശ്മ) *śma* is required as an additional letter. For examples, ശ്മശാനം, *śmaśanam*, is the word for [cemetery](#).

Use non-ligating sign for conjoining *ra*^[edit]

Any consonant or consonant ligature followed by the conjoining *ra* is represented by a cursive tail attached to the consonant or the consonant-ligature. In the reformed script, this consonant sign would be disconnected from the base and represented as a left-bracket like symbol placed on the left side of the cluster.

- *kra:* ക്കര → ക്രര
- *kru:* ക്കരൂ → ക്രരൂ

Current status^[edit]

Today the reformed orthography, is commonly called *putiya lipi* ([Malayalam](#): പുതിയ ലിപി) and

traditional system, *paḷaya lipi* ([Malayalam](#): പഴയ ലിപി).^[19] Current print media almost entirely uses reformed orthography. The state run primary education introduces the Malayalam writing to the pupils in reformed script only and the books are printed accordingly. However, the digital media uses both traditional and reformed in almost equal proportions as the fonts for both the orthographies are commonly available.

Malayalam letters[\[edit\]](#)

Vowels[[edit](#)]

Vowel letters and vowel signs[[edit](#)]

The following tables show the independent vowel letters and the corresponding dependent vowel signs (diacritics) of the Malayalam script, with **romanizations** in [ISO 15919](#), transcriptions in the [International Phonetic Alphabet](#) (IPA).

Monophthongs

	Short			Long		
	Independent	Dependent		Indep.	Dependent	
		Vowel sign	Example		Vowel sign	Example
a	അ a /a/	(none)	പ pa /pa/	ആ ā /a:/	ഓ pa /pa:/	
i	ഇ i /i/	ി	പി pi /pi/	ഈ ī /i:/	പീ pī /pi:/	
u	ഉ u /u/	ു	പു pu /pu/	ഊ ū /u:/	പൂ pū /pu:/	
r	ഋ ṛ /rɪ/	ൃ	പ്ര pr /prɪ/	ഠ ṭ /rɪ:/	പ്ര pṛ /prɪ:/	
l	ഌ ḷ /li/	ള	പ്ല pl /pli/	ഡ Ḍ /li:/	പ്ല pḷ /pli:/	

e	എ e /e/	െ	പെ pe /pe/	ഈ ē /eː/	േ	പേ pē /peː/
o	ഒ o /o/	ൊ	പൊ po /po/	ഓ ō /oː/	ോ	പോ pō /poː/



A Malayalam sign. Notice the word-initial *a* അ in **akkādami**, and the vowel sign *ē* ൈ in **Kēraḷa**.

ṛ, *ṝ*, *ṛ̥*, *ṛ̌*, used to write [Sanskrit](#) words, are treated as vowels. They are called semi-vowels and are phonetically closer to vowels in Malayalam and in Classical Sanskrit where pANinI, the Sanskrit grammarian, groups them with vowel sounds in his sUtras. (see [Proto-Indo-European language](#) and [Vedic Sanskrit](#)). The letters and signs for *ṝ*, *ṛ̥*, *ṛ̌* are very rare, and are not considered as part of the modern orthography.^[20]

The vowel signs *ā*, *i*, *ī* are placed to the right of a consonant letter to which it is attached. The vowel signs *e*, *ē*, *ai* are placed to the left of a consonant letter. The vowel signs *o* and *ō* consist of two parts: the first part goes to the left of a consonant letter and the second part goes to the right of it. In the reformed orthography, the vowel signs *u*, *ū*, *ṛ* are simply placed to the right of the consonant letter, while they often make consonant-vowel ligatures in the traditional orthography.

Diphthongs

	Independent	Dependent	
		Vowel sign	Example
ai	ഐ ai /aj/	ൈ	പൈ pai /pai/
au	ഔ au /au/	ൌ (archaic)	പൌ pau /pau/
		ൌ (modern)	പൗ pau /pau/

It is important to note the vowel duration as it can be used to differentiate words that would otherwise be the same. For example, /kalam/ means "earthenware pot" while /kaːlam/ means "time" or "season".^[21]

Anusvaram^[edit]

Anusvaram

am̐	അം am̐	o m̐	പം paṁ
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	/am/	/m/	/pam/
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An *anusvaram* (അനുസാരം *anusvāram*), or an *anusvara*, originally denoted the [nasalization](#) where the preceding vowel was changed into a [nasalized vowel](#), and hence is traditionally treated as a kind of vowel sign. In Malayalam, however, it simply represents a consonant /m/ after a vowel, though this /m/ may be [assimilated](#) to another [nasal consonant](#). It is a special consonant letter, different from a "normal" consonant letter, in that it is never followed by an inherent vowel or another vowel. In general, an *anusvara* at the end of a word in an Indian language is transliterated as *m̐* in [ISO 15919](#), but a Malayalam *anusvara* at the end of a word is transliterated as *m* without a dot.

Visargam[[edit](#)]

Visargam

ah	അ ഹ	ഃ ഹ	ഘ പാഹ
	/ah/	/h/	/pah/

A *visargam* (വിസർഗം, *visargam*), or *visarga*, represents a consonant /h/ after a vowel, and is transliterated as *ḥ*. Like the *anusvara*, it is a special symbol, and is never followed by an inherent vowel or another vowel.

ക കാ കി കീ കു കൂ ക്യ കെ കേ കൈ കൊ കോ കൗ കഃ കിഃ

Malayalam vowel signs combined with letter ക (ka)

Consonants[[edit](#)]

Basic consonant letters[[edit](#)]

The following tables show the basic consonant letters of the Malayalam script, with **romanizations** in [ISO 15919](#), transcriptions in [IPA](#), and Unicode CHARACTER NAMES. The character names used in the report of the Government of Kerala committee (2001) are shown in *lowercase italics* when different from Unicode character names.^[20] Those alternative names are based on the traditional romanization used by the [Malayali](#) people. For example, *tha* in “[Thiruvananthapuram](#)” is neither ISO **tha** nor Unicode THA, but *tha* in this sense (ത). The [ISCI](#) (IS 13194:1991) character names are given in parentheses when different from the above.

Varga consonants

	Voiceless		Voiced		
	Unaspirated	Aspirated	Unaspirated	Aspirated	Nasal
Velar	ക ka /ka/ KA	ഖ kha /kʰa/ KHA	ഗ ga /ga/ GA	ഘ gha /gʱa/ GHA	ങ ṅa /ŋa/ NGA
Palatal or	ച ca /t͡ʃa/ or	ഛ cha /t͡ʃʰa/ or	ജ ja /d͡ʒa/ or	ഝ jha /d͡ʒʱa/ or	ഞ ña /ɲa/ NYA

Postalveolar	/ca/ CA <i>cha</i>	/cʰa/ CHA <i>chha</i>	/ɟa/ JA <i>jha</i>	/ɟʱa/ JHA <i>jhha</i>	<i>nha</i> (nja)
Retroflex	ട ṭa /ṭa/ TTA <i>ta</i> (hard ta)	ഠ ṭha /ṭʰa/ TTHA <i>tta</i> (hard tha)	ഡ ḍa /ḍa/ DDA <i>da</i> (hard da)	ഢ ḍha /ḍʱa/ DDHA <i>dda</i> (hard dha)	ണ ṇa /ṇa/ NNA <i>hard na</i>
Dental	ത ṯa /ṯa/ TA <i>tha</i> (soft ta)	ഠ ṯha /ṯʰa/ THA <i>ttha</i> (soft tha)	ദ ḏa /ḏa/ DA <i>dha</i> (soft da)	ഢ ḏha /ḏʱa/ DHA <i>ddha</i> (soft dha)	ന ṇa /ṇa, na/ ^[A] NA <i>soft na</i>
Labial	പ pa /pa/ PA	ഫ pha /pʰa/ PHA	ബ ba /ba/ BA	ഭ bha /bʱa/ BHA	മ ma /ma/ MA

The consonants /ṭ, ḍ, ṇ/ are retroflex. In Malayalam, they are produced by touching the [underside](#) of the tip of the tongue to the front part of the [hard palate](#) ([apico](#)-palatal).

Other consonants

യ ya /ja/ ^[A] YA	ര ra /ra/ ^[B] RA	ല la /la/ ^[C] LA	വ va /va/ ^[D] VA
---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

ശ śa /ʃa/ ^[E] SHA <i>soft sha</i> (sha)	ഷ ṣa /ʃa/ ^[E] SSA <i>sha</i> (hard sha)	സ sa /sa/ ^[G] SA	ഹ ha /ha/ HA
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ഛ ḥa /ɕa/ ^[H] LLA <i>hard la</i>	ഴ ḷa /ɕa/ ^[J] LLLA / ഴ / ൴ / <i>zha</i> (retroflexed ra)	റ [K] ra, ṭa /ra, ta/ RRA (hard ra)	ണ ṇa /na/ ^[L] NNNA	ത [M] ṭa /ta/ ^[M] TTTA
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- [A](#) [Dental nasal](#) or [alveolar nasal](#), depending on the word.
- [B](#) [Alveolar tap](#).
- [C](#) The tip of the tongue almost touches the teeth ([l̪]), forward than the English /l/.
- [D](#) [vʱ].
- [E](#) [ʃʱ].
- [F](#) Voiceless apico-palatal [approximant](#) [ɕ̺̪].^[22]
- [G](#) [Dental](#) sibilant fricative [s̪].
- [H](#) Apico-palatal [l̪].
- [I](#) This glyph is a ligature (KA + VIRAMA + SSA), but is sometimes listed as a basic unit. Often pronounced [ʃ̺̪a].
- [J](#) Voiced apico-palatal approximant [ɕ̺̪].^[22] This consonant is usually described as /ɭ/, but also

can be approximated by /ɻ/.^[23]

- **ക** (1) Repetition of this letter (റ + റ) often represents a [geminated voiceless alveolar plosive](#), /tʃa/; (2) *chillu-n* + this letter (ൻ + റ) often represents /nda/; (3) otherwise [alveolar trill](#) (apical) /ra/. Optionally, (1) may be transliterated as *ṭa* instead of *ṛa*, (2) as *ṇṭa* (not *ṇḍa*) instead of *ṇṛa*.
- **ല** Corresponds to Tamil லா ண. Used rarely in scholarly texts to represent the alveolar nasal, as opposed to the dental nasal.^[24] In ordinary texts both are represented by நா ண.
- **മ** Used rarely in scholarly texts to represent the voiceless alveolar plosive, as opposed to the [voiceless dental plosive](#) represented by താ ണ. In ordinary texts this sound is represented by രാ ണ.^[24]

Chillus^[edit]

A *chillu*, or a *chillaksharam* (ചില്ലക്ഷരം, *cillakṣaram*), is a special consonant letter that represents a pure consonant independently, without help of a [virama](#). Unlike a consonant represented by an ordinary consonant letter, this consonant is never followed by an inherent vowel. [Anusvara](#) and [visarga](#) fit this definition but are not usually included. ISCII and Unicode 5.0 treat a *chillu* as a glyph variant of a normal ("base") consonant letter.^[25] In Unicode 5.1 and later, however, *chillu* letters are treated as independent characters, encoded atomically.^[26]

Six independent chillu letters (0D7A..0D7F) had been encoded in Unicode 5.1.^[26], three additional chillu letters (0D54..0D56) were encoded with the publication of Unicode 9.0.^[27]

Chillu letters

Letter	Unicode name	Base	Remarks
ണർ	CHILLU NN	ṇa ണ	
ൻ	CHILLU N	ṇa ണ	
ർ	CHILLU RR	ra റ	Historically from <i>ra</i> , not from <i>ṛa</i> (RRA) റ.
ൽ	CHILLU L	la ല	Historically from <i>ta</i> ണ.
ൾ	CHILLU LL	la ല	Historically from <i>ṭa</i> ണ
കർ	CHILLU K	ka ക	
മർ	CHILLU M	ma മ	Not in modern use
യർ	CHILLU Y	ya യ	Not in modern use
ലൾ	CHILLU LLL	lla ഴ	Not in modern use

Chandrakkala^[edit]

The virama in Malayalam is called candrakkala (chandrakkala), it has two functions:^{[28][29][a]}

- As virama: used to suppress the inherent vowel

- As samvruthokaram: represent the “half-u” sound [ə]

As virama[[edit](#)]

Chandrakkala റ്റ (ചന്ദ്രക്കല, *candrakkala*) is a diacritic attached to a consonant letter to show that the consonant is not followed by an inherent vowel or any other vowel (for example, ക *ka* → ക് *k*). This kind of diacritic is common in Indic scripts, generically called *virama* in Sanskrit, or *halant* in Hindi.

Half-u[[edit](#)]

At the end of a word, the same symbol sometimes represents a very short vowel, known as “half-u”, or “samvruthokaram” (സംവൃതോക്കാാരം, *saṁvṛtōkāraṁ*), or *kuttiyaḷ ukaram* (കുട്ടിയൽ ഉക്കരം).^[30] The exact pronunciation of this vowel varies from dialect to dialect, but it is approximately [ə]^[31] or [ɨ], and transliterated as *ũ* (for example, ന *na* → ന് *nũ*). Optionally, a vowel sign *u* is inserted, as in നു (= ന + ു + ി). According to one author, this alternative form is historically more correct, though the simplified form without a vowel sign *u* is common nowadays.^[32] This means that the same spelling ന് may represent either *n* or *nũ* depending on the context. Generally, it is *nũ* at the end of a word, and *n* elsewhere; നു always represents *nũ*.

The *virama* of *Tigalari script* behave similarly to Malayalam. Virama has three functions: to suppress the inherent vowel (as the halant of Devanagari); to form conjunct consonants; to represent the half-u.^{[33][34]}

Note: ¹ Srinidhi A and Sridatta A made comments on the proposals of Cibu Johny et al.^[35]

Ligatures[[edit](#)]

Consonant ligatures[[edit](#)]

Like in other *Indic scripts*, a *virama* is used in the Malayalam script to cancel—or “kill”—the *inherent vowel* of a consonant letter and represent a consonant without a vowel, so-called a “dead” consonant. For example,

1. ന is a consonant letter *na*,
2. ി is a virama; therefore,
3. ന് (*na* + virama) represents a dead consonant *n*.

If this *n* ന് is further followed by another consonant letter, for example, *ma* മ, the result may look like ന്മ, which represents *nma* as *na* + virama + *ma*. In this case, two elements *n* ന് and *ma* മ are simply placed one by one, side by side. Alternatively, *nma* can be also written as a *ligature* ന്മ.

Generally, when a dead consonant letter C₁ and another consonant letter C₂ are conjoined, the result may be either:

1. A fully conjoined ligature of C₁+C₂;
2. Half-conjoined—

- C₁-conjoining: a modified form (half form) of C₁ attached to the original form (full form) of C₂
- C₂-conjoining: a modified form of C₂ attached to the full form of C₁; or

3. Non-ligated: full forms of C₁ and C₂ with a visible virama. ^[36]

If the result is fully or half-conjoined, the (conceptual) virama which made C₁ dead becomes invisible, only logically existing in a [character encoding](#) scheme such as Unicode. If the result is non-ligated, a virama is visible, attached to C₁. The glyphs for *nma* has a visible virama if not ligated (ന്മ), but if ligated, the virama disappears (ന്മ). Usually the difference between those forms is superficial and both are semantically identical, just like the meaning of the English word *palaeography* does not change even if it is spelled *palæography*, with the ligature [æ](#).

Common consonant ligatures^[edit]

Several consonant-consonant ligatures are used commonly even in the new orthography.

Common ligatures

	<i>kka</i>	<i>ṅka</i>	<i>ṇṇa</i>	<i>cca</i>	<i>ñca</i>	<i>ṇṇa</i>	<i>ṭṭa</i>	<i>ṇṭa</i>	<i>ṇṇa</i>	<i>tta</i>	<i>nta</i>	<i>nna</i>	<i>ppa</i>	<i>mpa</i>	<i>mma</i>
Non-ligated	ക്ക	ങ്ക	ങ്ങ	ച്ച	ഞ്ച	ണ്ണ	ട്ട	ണ്ട	ണ്ണ	ത്ത	ന്ത	ന്ന	പ്പ	മ്മ	മ്മ
Ligated	ക്ക	ക	ങ	ച്ച	ഞ്ച	ഞ്ഞ	ട്ട	ണ്ട	ണ്ണ	ത്ത	ന്ത	ന്ന	പ്പ	മ്പ	മ്മ

The ligature *mpa* ന്പ was historically derived from *npa* ന്പ. The ligatures *cca*, *bba*, *yya*, and *vva* are special in that a doubled consonant is denoted by a triangle sign below a consonant letter.

	<i>cca</i>	<i>bba</i>	<i>yya</i>	<i>vva</i>
Non-ligated	ച്ച	ബ്ബ	യ്യ	വ്വ
Ligated	ച്ച	ബ്ബ	യ്യ	വ്വ

Consonant + *ya*, *va*, *la*, *ra*^[edit]

1. The consonant letter *ya* is generally C₂-conjoining after a consonant in both orthographies. For example,

- *k* ക്ക + *ya* യ = *kya* ക്യ
- *p* പ്പ + *ya* യ = *pya* പ്യ

In *kya* ക്യ, a variant form of *ya* (യ്) is placed after the full form of *ka* ക, just like *ki* കി is written *ka* ക followed by the vowel sign *i* ി. In other words, the variant form of *ya* (യ്) used after a consonant letter can be considered as a diacritic. Since it is placed after the base character, it is sometimes referred to as a *post-base* form. An exception is *yya* യ്യ (see above).

1. Similarly, *va* after a consonant takes a post-base form:

- *k* ക്ക + *va* വ = *kva* ക്വ
- *p* പ്പ + *va* വ = *pva* പ്വ

An exception is *vva* വ്വ (see above).

1. The consonant letter *la* after a consonant traditionally takes a below-base form. These forms are used also in the new orthography, though some fonts do not support them.

- *k* ക്ക + *la* ല = *kla* ക്കു
- *p* പ്പ + *la* ല = *pla* പ്പു
- *l* ല്ല + *la* ല = *lla* ല്ലു

1. A consonant letter *ra* after a consonant usually takes a pre-base form in the reformed orthography, while this combination makes a fully conjoined ligature in the traditional orthography.

- *k* ക്ക + *ra* റ = *kra* ക്കു
- *p* പ്പ + *ra* റ = *pra* പ്പു

nta and *tta*[\[edit\]](#)

The ligature *nta* is written as *n* ന് + *ra* റ and pronounced /nda/. The ligature *tta* is written as *t* ത് + *ra* റ.

	<i>nta</i>	<i>tta</i>
Non-ligated	ന്റ	ത്റ
Ligated	ന്റു	തു
Digraph	ന്ററ	ത്ററ


In those two ligatures, a small *ra* റ is written below the first letter (*chillu-n* if it is a dead *n*). Alternatively, the letter *ra* is sometimes written to the right of the first letter, making a [digraph](#) (just like [ωι](#) used instead of [ω](#) in Greek). The spelling *ന്ററ* is therefore read either *nra* (two separate letters) or *nta* (digraph) depending on the word. Similarly, *ത്ററ* is read either *rara* or *tta*.^{[\[26\]](#)}

Dot reph[\[edit\]](#)

In the traditional orthography, a dead consonant *r* before a consonant sometimes takes an above-base form, known as a *dot reph*, which looks like a short vertical line or a dot. Generally, a *chillu-r* is used instead of a dot reph in the reformed orthography.

- *r* റ്റ + *ga* ണ = *rga* (Reformed: റ്റു)
- *r* റ്റ + *ja* ങ = *rja* (Reformed: റ്റു)

Consonant-vowel ligatures[\[edit\]](#)

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Other symbols[\[edit\]](#)

Praslesham	ʃ	Corresponds to Devanagari avagraha , used when a Sanskrit phrase containing an <i>avagraha</i> is written in Malayalam script. The symbol indicates the elision of the word-initial vowel <i>a</i> after a word that ends in <i>ā</i> , <i>ē</i> , or <i>ō</i> , and is transliterated as an apostrophe ('), or sometimes as a colon + an apostrophe (:'). (Malayalam : പ്രശ്ലേഷം, <i>praślēṣam</i> [?])
Malayalam date mark	നറ	Used in an abbreviation of a date.
Danda		Archaic punctuation marks used as full stops or for delimiting verses .
Double danda		

Malayalam numbers and fractions are written as follows. These are archaic and no longer commonly used.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	100	1000	1/4	1/2	3/4
൦	൧	൨	൩	൪	൫	൬	൭	൮	൯	൧൦	൧൦൦	൧൦൦൦	൧൦൦൦	൧൦൦൦	൧൦൦൦

Unicode[\[edit\]](#)

Malayalam script was added to the [Unicode](#) Standard in October, 1991 with the release of version 1.0.

Block[\[edit\]](#)

The Unicode block for Malayalam is U+0D00–U+0D7F:

Malayalam ^{[1][2]} Official Unicode Consortium code chart (PDF)																
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F
U+0D0x	൦	൧	൨	൩	൪	൫	൬	൭	൮	൯	൧൦	൧൧	൧൨	൧൩	൧൪	൧൫
U+0D1x	൧൬	൧൭	൧൮	൧൯	൨൦	൨൧	൨൨	൨൩	൨൪	൨൫	൨൬	൨൭	൨൮	൨൯	൩൦	൩൧
U+0D2x	൩൨	൩൩	൩൪	൩൫	൩൬	൩൭	൩൮	൩൯	൪൦	൪൧	൪൨	൪൩	൪൪	൪൫	൪൬	൪൭
U+0D3x	൪൮	൪൯	൫൦	൫൧	൫൨	൫൩	൫൪	൫൫	൫൬	൫൭	൫൮	൫൯	൦൦	൦൧	൦൨	൦൩
U+0D4x	൦൪	൦൫	൦൬	൦൭	൦൮	൦൯	൦൦	൦൧	൦൨	൦൩	൦൪	൦൫	൦൬	൦൭	൦൮	൦൯
U+0D5x	൦൦	൦൧	൦൨	൦൩	൦൪	൦൫	൦൬	൦൭	൦൮	൦൯	൦൦	൦൧	൦൨	൦൩	൦൪	൦൫
U+0D6x	൦൬	൦൭	൦൮	൦൯	൦൦	൦൧	൦൨	൦൩	൦൪	൦൫	൦൬	൦൭	൦൮	൦൯	൦൦	൦൧
U+0D7x	൦൨	൦൩	൦൪	൦൫	൦൬	൦൭	൦൮	൦൯	൦൦	൦൧	൦൨	൦൩	൦൪	൦൫	൦൬	൦൭

Notes

- [^] As of Unicode version 13.0
- [^] Grey areas indicate non-assigned code points

Chillus in Unicode^{[[edit](#)]}

For example, *avan* അവാൻ (“he”) is written as *a* അ + *va* വ + *chillu-n* റ്റ, where *chillu-n* represents the *n* sound without a vowel. In other Indic scripts, the same word would be possibly written as *a* + *va* + *na* + virama. However, in Malayalam script, that sequence represents a different word, *avanŭ* അവൻ (“to him”), and is not interchangeable with *avan*.^[37] This is because in modern Malayalam script, the sign for a virama also works as the sign for a [vowel ũ](#) at the end of a word, and is not able to cleanly “kill” the inherent vowel in this case.^[31]

To differentiate a pure consonant (*chillu*) and a consonant with *ũ*, [zero-width joiner](#) (ZWJ) and [zero-width non-joiner](#) (ZWNJ) were used before Unicode 5.1.^[25] However, this system was problematic. Among other things, glyph variants specified by ZWJ or ZWNJ are supposed to be non-semantic, whereas a *chillu* (expressed as letter + virama + ZWJ) and the same consonant followed by a *ũ* (expressed as letter + virama + ZWNJ) are often [semantically](#) different. After a long debate,^{[31][32]} Nine *chillu letters* now have their own [code points](#) since Unicode 9.0, though applications should also be prepared to handle data in the representation specified in Unicode 5.0.^[26] This means, fonts should display chillus in both sequences; while an input method should output standard chillus.

The ligature *ṇṭa* റ്റ is very common and supported by most Malayalam fonts in one way or another, but exactly how it should be encoded was not clear in Unicode 5.0 and earlier, and two incompatible implementations are currently in use.^[38] In Unicode 5.1 (2008), the sequence to represent it was explicitly redefined as *chillu-n* + virama + *ṛa* (റാ).^[26]

See also^{[[edit](#)]}

- [Arabi Malayalam](#)
- [Coorgi–Cox alphabet](#)
- [Malayalam Braille](#)
- [Mulabhadra](#)
- [Simplified Tamil script](#)
- [Suriyani Malayalam](#)

Notes^{[[edit](#)]}

- [^] ^{Jump up to: [a](#) [b](#) [c](#)} Ager, Simon (1998). *"Malayalam alphabet, pronunciation and language"*. Omniglot. Retrieved 2009-09-08.
- [^] ^{Jump up to: [a](#) [b](#)} *"Vazhapally Temple"*. Vazhappally Sree Mahadeva Temple. Archived from *the original* on 2011-01-09. Retrieved 2009-10-31.

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6. [^] [Canepari \(2005\), pp. 396, 140.](#)
7. [^] [Burnell \(1874\), p. 39.](#)
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External links^{[[edit](#)]}

- [Website to help you read and write the Malayalam alphabet](#)

- [Malayalam Unicode Fonts](#)