

Let's Have a Relay 2026

Mutwenda Torch for Keras

THE TEXT

Pen mekaf, gung Susidse wedau onget mutwup yichu. Gung Mubuku wedau yeangga ni onget mutwup denaamu. Gung Myas wedau angosen, ezbe unhu zuut uyuupa gachtadaa, azeb ukh enatenat melakh wakne sidru. Puz angosempa, ezbe leashna gemaangu ruusni uyuupa chimu, leashna zhituuz pantu.

Myas fif umutwup umekaf senef bepaachu, ri azeb holaasu. Ukh yeangga fiyumi nwifdyu nefodfu, ri nef nos'hop yanggaduu. Fyimu ziyuut yuupel den nef padsu. Ufiyumi frupa benfet yuupa den mefa badtu. Myas yu zebemu, dizhit zoukhapa khuzpa badtu. Dankaa yuupapa uyuupa breke luuku, ri ufiyumi frupa boku. Fiyumi na nefadaa, wenau mefa danchu. Myas uyuupa breke luuku, ku azeb fo yuzbi yelaapu.

Yeanggapa na khazeb fiyumi madchu ri azeb na yuzbi danchu. Azeb nezebe huutu- khazeb fiyumi yuupa wakne gemaangu. Fiyumipa onget umutwup tuu tuupu, ri yuzbi nezebe uz Myas masnu- angosempa ima yuzbi kakhbasheb. Yu yu nisopa khufli bomu. Ni zuut doama, um khufli, Myas khazeb wehon mokhtan zantu.

Myas hwengge madtu. Mubuku ryab ima khazeb fiyumi ima fimuut, azeb zhot'hoz melakh paamu. Mokhtanpa yeangga izyemuun pantu; uz nezebe, Susidse fesatne yichau.

MUTWENDA

I created Mutwenda, “Language of the Oases,” for a Pathfinder campaign I’m helping worldbuild for. It is the native language of the Dwarves who inhabit the desert city of Shimalu. This city, the “Sanctuary for All,” has always featured a blend of cultures, and is a major haven for travellers passing through the region.

PHONOLOGY

Consonants

	Labial	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palata l	Velar	Glottal
Stops	p, b	t, d			k, g	
Fricative s	f	s, z	ʃ <sh>, ʒ <zh>		x <kh>	h
Affricate			tʃ <ch>			
Approx. & Trills	w	l, r/r*		j <y>		
Nasals	m	n			ŋ <ng>	

* r word initially and after vowels; r after consonants and glides

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	i, i: <ii>		u, u: <uu>
Mid	e		o
Low		a, a: <aa>	
Diphthongs	ea, ei, eu,	ai, au,	oi, ou, oa

Note on romanization: an apostrophe is placed between a consonant and h, or between n and g, when needed to indicate separate sounds rather than a digraph.

Stress typically falls on the final syllable if it contains a long vowel, or a cluster, stop, or velar nasal in the coda; otherwise it falls on the penultimate syllable. There are exceptions to this, most notably for verbs, which retain stress on any closed final syllable.

GRAMMAR

Morphology

Many words in Mutwenda are based on triconsonantal roots, an ordered set of consonants featured in words with related meanings, to which different sets (called “templates”) of vowels & affixes are added, to express different concepts or grammatical forms. In the charts displaying these templates, numbers are used to refer to the root consonants.

NOUNS

Definiteness

Definiteness is marked on nouns by way of a clitic, *-pa* (which became attached to nouns after the formation of noun templates.) It derived from the demonstrative pronoun *pa*, “this,” but appears in the enclitic position, whereas the demonstrative now occurs before the noun.

The addition of *-pa* does not change word stress. However, if a noun ends in a nasal consonant, *-pa* will turn the nasal into *m* due to place assimilation.

Number

Number is marked on nouns in the form of separate templates for singular, plural, and occasionally, dual form. The singular is the unmarked form.

Animacy

Nouns are divided into animate and inanimate classes. Often, an animate and inanimate form will be derived from the same verb, with different meanings. For example: *beadna* “blacksmith,” and *boadna*, “forge.” However, with some templates the animate and inanimate forms are identical.

Note that many plants, as well as animals and people, are included in the animate class.

PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns take singular, dual, and plural forms. They distinguish 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person, and 3rd person is further divided into animate and inanimate forms. Note that the 3rd person plural form has lost its initial vowel in all but the most formal types of writing and speech. The 2nd person plural is also used as a respectful singular towards authority figures.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st Person	ing	engwaa	ngoil
2nd Person	wau	wye	wyel
3rd Person Animate	azeb	abzaa	yuzbi (formal use: ayuzbi)
3rd Person Inanimate	oaz	rebzaa	oabzu

Possessive pronouns are formed by prefixing *kh-* to the personal pronouns.

Demonstrative pronouns

Mutwenda has a 3 way, person-oriented distinction for demonstrative pronouns. The same forms are used as demonstrative adjectives.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
This/these (by me)	pa	repa	lepa
That/those (by you)	pwo	ripwo	lipwo
That/those (over there)	az	ryaz	hlaz

For **relative pronouns**, see the section on clause structure below.

VERBS

Each Mutwenda verb has 10 basic TAM forms (see the charts for these in the templates section below).

Finite verbs admit past, present, and future tense, further divided by aspect: the present is divided into simple/progressive and habitual, the past has simple and progressive/habitual forms, while the future has a simple form only, with the future progressive/habitual sense expressed periphrastically with the infinitive + the verb *pimuut* “to reach for” in the simple future. *Pimuut* is also used in the past tense to express the sense “was going to.”

There is an irrealis mood which admits nonpast (formerly the realis future habitual) and past forms, and a single imperative form. The irrealis is typically used to express something that is desired, uncertain, or contrafactual.

Non-finite forms are the infinitive and the participle. The participle often functions as an adjective; it also has a particular use in yes-or-no questions, which is not featured in the torch.

MODIFIERS

Adjectives

Most basic adjectives will take 3 different templates for animate singular, inanimate singular, and plural.

Attributive placement

A noun can be placed in the attributive position before a noun it modifies. For this construction, the prefix *u-* (before a consonant) or *uz-* (before a vowel) is attached to the first noun. This comes from the preposition *uz* “of, from, part of.”

uzhemang glim “a jackrabbit-friend”

Possession

Possession is marked with the preposition *ukh*, which precedes the possessor, and the possessor precedes the possessee.

ukh zhemang glim “a jackrabbit’s friend”

Comparatives

The word **rus** means “very” or “more”; it is used with the preposition *gi* “with” to form a comparison.

Khuzpa rus nes’hop no. “The tree is very tall.”

Khuz rus nes’hop no gi wau. “A tree is taller than you.”

Rus nes’hop khuzpa gi wau no. “The very tall tree is with you.”

Another construction for expressing comparison is to pluralize the noun being modified and add on the attributive prefix *u-/uz-*; then turn the adjective into a noun by adding the definite article *-pa*.

ukhuzli nes’hop’pa “The taller tree” (literally, “of trees, the tall one”)

ukhuzli rus nes’hop’pa “The tallest tree”

CLAUSE STRUCTURE

Alignment & word order

Mutwenda has nominative-accusative alignment. It is predominantly head-final, and in its modern form has SOV word order, with SVO order appearing in some set phrases, and many relative clauses. To summarize its basic word order:

Subject - Object - Verb

Preposition- Noun (and a few Noun - Postposition constructions, but these are not featured in the torch)

Adjective - Noun

Genitive - Noun

Relative clause - Noun

Demonstrative - Noun

Noun-Article (enclitic)

Adverbs often precede the verbs they modify, but may also appear elsewhere in the phrase.

Relative clauses & clause coordination

Word order in Mutwenda relative clauses is typically subject- verb- object, and the relative clause most often precedes the nouns it relates to. It is introduced by a relative pronoun, which can be animate or inanimate:

ebze, zebe - if it's the subject

nebze, nezebe- if it's the object.

The relative clause either introduces the noun, or includes a personal pronoun that refers to the same noun as the relative pronoun, and falls where that noun otherwise would, given the SVO word order. A restrictive relative clause will always introduce the noun, rather than use a personal pronoun, and the main clause resumes with a pronoun, or simply repeats the noun. Sometimes, particularly if the relative clause is fairly long, and/or the noun has other modifiers, it can appear after the noun, with a slightly different structure. Here, the personal pronoun is not included within the relative clause, but appears immediately after it, to resume the main clause. This construction only occurs when the relative pronoun is the subject of the relative clause.

Examples:

"The cat (who saw a bird) read a book."

(who she saw bird) cat book read. OR *Cat (who saw bird) she book read.*

"The cat saw the bird (who read a book).

Cat (who bird read a book) he saw. OR *Cat bird (who read book) he saw.* (NOTE: unlike relative pronouns, personal pronouns take the same form for subject and object.)

"The bird (whom the cat saw) read a book."

(whom cat saw he) bird book read.

"The cat saw the book (that the bird read)."

Cat (that bird read it) book saw.

The inanimate form **nezebe** can coordinate clauses in other ways as well, eg:

"I saw that you read the book"

I nezebe saw- you read the book.

The expression **uz nezebe** is used to refer back to a previous phrase, and conveys the meaning "because of that" or "as a result."

TEMPLATES FOUND IN THE TORCH

REGULAR IRREGULARITIES

Several sound changes can cause changes to the root or template of a word. The ones to keep in mind for this torch are as follows.

1. Nasal place assimilation: a nasal adopts the place of articulation of a stop that follows it.
2. Front vowels after h, kh, ng turn into back vowels.
3. A geminate consonant reduces to a single, and lengthens the preceding vowel.
4. Vowel-liquid and vowel-glide changes
 - a. aw, (e)al => uu
 - b. oaw => ou
 - c. ar => o or e
5. In certain circumstances, when a liquid or glide appears after an unstressed vowel and before a stressed one, the unstressed vowel will drop out.

NOUNS

Nominal Form 1

	Singular	Plural
animate/ inanimate	1-e-2-a-3	1-yu-23-i
example ("mountain")	mekhab	myukhbi

Nominal Form 2

	Singular	Plural
animate	1-ea-23-a	1-ea-23-el
example ("blacksmith")	beadna	beadnel
inanimate	1-oa-23-a	1-oa-23-el
example ("forge")	boadna	boadnel

Nominal Form 3- Agentive

	Singular	Plural
animate/ inanimate	a-12-o-3	a-12-yuu-3
example ("chef, cook")	anfos	anfyuus

Nominal Form 4- Passive Derivation

	Singular	Plural
animate	1-yu-23-e	1-yu-23-yu
example ("fool, misled one")	fyunshe	fyunshyu
inanimate	1-we-23-e	1-wi-23-yu
example ("building")	swebde	swibdyu

ADJECTIVES

Adjective Form 1

(example: "scorching")

	Singular	Plural
animate	1-e-2-ho-3	1-i-2-o-3-a
example	nefhod	nifoda
inanimate	1-o-2-ho-3	1-i-2-o-3-a
example	nofhod	nifoda

Template for roots with 2 consonants:

	Singular	Plural
animate	1-e-ho-2	1-i-2-o-a
inanimate	1-o-ho-2	1-i-2-o-a

VERBS

Basic active verb forms

(Example: miduun "to speak")

TAM	Template	Example
imperative	1-i-2-i-3	midin
present progressive/ simple	1-e-2-o-3	medon
present habitual	1-a-2-a-3	madan
future simple	1-i-2-esi-3	midesin

past simple	1-a-23-u	madnu
past progressive/habitual	1-e-2-aa-3-u	medaanu
nonpast irrealis	1-a-23-esi-3	madnesin
past irrealis	1-a-23-ashe-3	madnashen
infinitive	1-i-2-uu-3	miduun
participle	1-a-23-aa	madnaa

Passive Verb Forms

(Example: fimuut “to get, obtain, win”)

TAM	Template	Example
imperative	1-i-23-i	finti
present progressive/ simple	1-i-23-e	finte
present habitual	1-i-2-ii-3-i	fimiiti
future simple	1-i-23-esi	fintesi
past simple	1-e-2-a-3-u	fematu
past progressive/habitual	1-a-23-a-3-u	fantatu
nonpast irrealis	1-i-2-ii-3-esi	fimiitesi
past irrealis	1-i-2-ii-3-eshi	fimiiteshi
infinitive	1-i-23-yu	fintyu
participle*	1-e-2-a-3-aa	femataa

- The past participle template for roots with 2 consonants is 1-e-2-au

Reflexive/ Middle Voice Verb Forms (miduun)

TAM	Template	Example
imperative	1-e-2-a-3-du	medandu
present progressive/ simple	1-e-2-a-3-daa	medandaa
present habitual	1-e-2-aa-3-ad	medaanad
future simple	1-e-2-a-3dus	medandus
past simple	1-a-23-adu	madnadu

past progressive/habitual	1-e-2-aa-3-adu	medaanadu
nonpast irrealis	1-a-23-a-3-dus	madnandus
past irrealis	1-a-23-a-3-dush	madnandush
infinitive	1-e-2-a-3-duu	medanduu
participle	1-a-23-adaa	madnadaa

Causative Verb Forms (fimuut)

TAM	Template	Example
imperative	iz-1-e-2-i-3	izfemit
present progressive/ simple	iz-1-e-2-o-3	izfemot
present habitual	ze-1-a-2-a-3	zefamat
future simple	iz-1-i-2-esi-3	izfimesit
past simple	ze-1-a-23-u	zefantu
past progressive/habitual	iz-1-e-2-aa-3-u	izfemaatu
nonpast irrealis	ze-1-a-23-esi-3	zefantesit
past irrealis	ze-1-a-23-ashe-3	zefantashet
infinitive	iz-1-e-2-uu-3	izfemuut
participle	ze-1-a-23-aa	zefantaa

Inceptive Verb Forms

(example: sibuud “to build”)

TAM	Template	Example
imperative	1-i-2-fe-3-ii	sibfedii
present progressive/ simple	1-i-2-fi-3-ye	sibfidye
present habitual	1-i-2-iif-3-ir	sibiifdir
future simple	1-i-2-fe-3-es	sibfedes
past simple	1-e-2-o-3-fu	sebodfu

past progressive/habitual	1-a-23-o-3-fu	sabdodfu
nonpast irrealis	1-i-2-ii-3-fes	sibiidfes
past irrealis	1-i-2-ii-3-fesh	sibiidfesh
infinitive	1-i-2-fe-3-el	sibfedel
participle	1-e-2-o-3-faa	sebodfaa

GLOSSARY

For words with meanings that can be reasonably put together from the root + the template, only the root is included here. Words that are not based on a triconsonantal root, are irregular in unpredictable ways, or whose meaning has strayed from the root, are given their own entries. Pronouns, which can be found in tables within the grammar, have not been included here.

WORD	TYPE	DEFINITION
angosen	noun	Minor deity, spirit (Dim. of ongsa, “god.”)
b-d-t	root	Strike, beat
benfet	adjective	Gamey, strong-smelling (of food)
b-p-ch	root	Balance, perch, position in a high place
breke	noun	A scream, or an animal’s call
b-r-k	root	Scream, non-verbal cry
b-r-m	root	Crash, loud noise
chimu	noun	Flesh, meat, muscle
den	preposition	Near, by
dizhit	conjunction/ verb	But, however/ active imperative of <i>dizhuut</i> - to freeze, to halt
d-m-ch	root	Run, fast travel
d-m-k	root	Bleed, blood flow, bloodshed
d-n-m	root	Home, dwelling, reside
doama	noun	Flow, moving water, spring

enatenat	noun	Vulture (an animal believed to help spirits cross over to the afterlife)
ezbe	relative pronoun	
f-s-t	root	Stillness, peace, tranquility
fif	preposition	On, on top of
f-m-t	root	Get, obtain, succeed, win
fo	preposition	From, away from
fru	adjective	Old
fyim, plu: fiyumi	noun	Child, children, offspring
g-ch-t	root	Form, shape, appearance
gi	preposition	With, as
g-m-ng	root	Eat, consume, food, sustenance
gung	preposition	By way of, with (instrumental)
h-l-s	root	Watching, looking, vigilance
h-l-t	root	Vision, sight, view
h-m-g	root	Sacrifice, give something to a deity
ima	preposition	For, for the sake of, in order to, bound for/towards (with verb of motion)
khuz	noun	tree
k-kh-b	root	Forgive, let go of anger
ku	conjunction	While, as
l-sh-n	root	Personhood, sentience, population
l-w-k	root	Make, do
m-d-ch	root	call, speak loudly, announce
m-d-t	root	Command, order
mefa	noun	Palm tree
mekaf	noun	Plateau
m-l-kh	root	Bloom, mature
mokhtan	noun	Datura, datura flower
m-s-n	root	Beg, plead, petition
Mubuku	name	

mutwup	noun	oasis
Myas	name	
na	preposition	To, towards
nau	preposition	Like, similar to
-ne	suffix	Forms an adverb
nef	noun	fire
nezebe	Relative pronoun	
n-f-d	root	Burn
ni	preposition	In, inside
n-s-p	root	Stand, upright, height
ongset	adjective (inani)	Sacred, associated with or belonging to a deity
-pa	definite article	the
pen	preposition	at, on
p-d-s	root	Put, place
p-m-m	root	Hold, grasp, handful
p-m-t	root	Reach for, future action, intent
puz	conjunction	Then, thus, so
ri	conjunction	And, also
ruusni	adverb	Too much, excessively
r-y-b	root	Unbinding, mercy, release from debt or punishment
se-	prefix	Place/ site for x
s-d-r	root	Location, place, find
Susidse	name	
tuu	noun	water
t-w-p	root	Drink, beverage, hydration
ukh	preposition	Under, of (possession)
um	preposition	beneath
unhu	verb- copula	Was (past simple)
uz	preposition	From, of
wakne	adverb	already

w-d	root	Know, be familiar with, understand
w-n	root	Dark, black
yichau	verb	To exist (past prog/habit)
yichu	verb	To exist (past simple)
y-l-p	root	Flight, flying creatures, soaring
y-m-g	root	Grow, cultivate
y-m-n	root	Come to an end, be finished, former, to set (of the sun)
yu	Noun/ preposition	sky/ above
zuut/ ziyuut	adjective	White, bright (sing/plu)
zh-t-z	root	Poison, venom, contaminate
z-n-t	root	Bring to life, animate, cause to live
z-w-kh	root	Blinding light, flash