
Amharic

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Amharic is a Semitic language, related to Hebrew and Arabic. Like these other languages, Amharic has its own very old writing system. This system is called "Ge'ez." Modern Amharic is spoken by more than 23,000,000 people and is the official language of Ethiopia. Below are some words in Amharic written in the traditional way, and translated into English. At the bottom, the same Amharic words are given in a Roman transcription that reflects their pronunciation (the Roman alphabet is the one that English is based on). The transcriptions are in random order. The capital letters G, T, K and C represent special sounds of Amharic. These are very different from g, t, k, and c. In most cases the special sounds are pronounced farther back in the mouth than the ordinary ones are. This distinction is very important in Amharic.

1. Match the transcriptions below with the Amharic words in the following list:

Amharic Word	Roman Transcription	English
a. ኮከ		my peach
b. ጌታ		master
c. ቤቱ		his house
d. ለባ		fuzz
e. ቆቆ		my partridge
f. ፒያኖ		piano
g. ጋጤ		my stall
h. ቆቆቹ		his partridges
i. ጣቱ		his finger
j. ዚፔ		my zipper

Roman transcriptions (in random order):

GaTe, koke, betu, KoKoCu, laba, Tatu, zipe, KoKe, piyano, Geta

2. Now, fill in the gaps in the following table. Draw the Amharic characters carefully – you can do it!:

	Amharic Word	Roman Transcription	English
k.		papaya	papaya
l.			my fingers
m.			his peach
n.		zaboCu	his bridles
o.	ዳቦ		
p.	ገጠቹ		
q.	ኩቶቹ		his mugs
r.	ገዜጣ		newspaper