

## Verb Classes

Thus far, we have been using the terms "weak verb" and "strong verb". This has proved sufficient for using present tense and future tense. But it is only half of the story.

Tamil verbs have been divided up into 7 verb classes. What is remarkable about Tamil is that all verbs belong to 1 of the 7 verb classes. The verbs of any particular class all follow the same pattern when it comes to making the past, present, and future tenses. Only relatively few words are irregular. (We have already come across 2 -- *t h* and *Ngh.*) Some exceptions exist to the general patterns of these verb classes, but such exceptions are minimal.

What we thought of as weak verbs is a generalization of Classes 1-4. Strong verbs are from Classes 6 and 7. Class 5 contains irregulars. It will not be discussed properly within the main lessons, but it can be found at [Appendix A](#). Since most of the verbs that belong to a class have common characteristics, it will be helpful to memorize one verb from each class as a reference for other verbs in that class.

<i>Class</i>	<i>General Pattern</i>	<i>Example</i>
1	1-syllable, short vowel, ends in - a <sub>i</sub> ; - S <sub>i</sub> ; - y <sub>i</sub>	(see below)
1a	ends in - a <sub>i</sub>	nra <sub>i</sub>
1b	ends in - S <sub>i</sub>	Ms <sub>i</sub>
1c	ends in - y <sub>i</sub>	nry <sub>i</sub>
2	2 syllables, ends in - a <sub>i</sub> ; - u <sub>i</sub> ; - o <sub>i</sub> ; - , , - l	tsu <sub>i</sub>
3	ends in - C (exception - L, - W -- see below)	NgR
4	ends in - L, - W	NghL
5	Irregular verbs	~
6	combination of Class 2 and Class 4 patterns	nfhL
7	ends in - m	el

## Exceptions And Irregulars

The ultimate determiner to which class a verb belongs is not the verb root, but the way it forms past and present/future tenses. (It will become clearer after the next lesson on the [Past Tense](#).) This explains why மஓ is a Class 1a verb and நரு is a Class 2 verb.

Note that there are probably no more than 10 or so verbs in [Class 5](#). However, (even fewer) irregular verbs may appear in other classes. In particular, remember that த் and ந஑ are irregular verbs. However, த் is a Class 2 verb, but ந஑ fits into Class 3. Also, ஁ is a Class 7 verb.

## Verbs - Past Tense

The following chart shows how to put verbs into the past tense, based on their verb class.

From this lesson forward, an attempt will be made to include the verb class number as a superscript to the verb root.

Class	Past Tense
1a	add ி; + verb suffix
1b	drop the - ஸ; then add ற் ி; + verb suffix
1c	drop the - ய; then add ட் ி; + verb suffix
2	add ற் ி; + verb suffix
3	add ஁ ி; + verb suffix
4	drop the - ஂ, double the last letter, and add the verb suffix
5	~
6	add ி ி; + verb suffix

7	add e; + verb suffix
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For future reference, we will need define the past tense stem as the part of the past tense verb before the verb suffix. So for the verbs j L<sup>6</sup> and fhj j pU<sup>7</sup>, the past tense stems would be j l j j ;- and fhj j pUej ;-.

### Examples

1.
  - a. ehd; nraNj d; = "I did"
  - b. mtu;fs; Mz ;l hu;fs; = "They ruled"
  - c. ehq;fs; nrdNwhk; = "We went"
2. ep tsuej ha; = "You grew"
3. mts; Ngrpdhs; = "She spoke"
4. eb;fs; Nghl ;Bu;fs; = "You put"
5. (see below)
6. ehk; nfhLj Nj hk; = "We gave"
7. mJ el ej J = "It walked"

### Examples Of Irregular Verbs

Verb	Past Tense	Present Tense	Future Tense
epy <sup>5</sup>	epdwhu;fs;	epw;fpwhu;fs;	epwghu;fs;
ty <sup>5</sup>	tpwwhd;	tpw;fpwhd;	tpwghd;
Nfs <sup>5</sup>	Nfl ;l hs;	Nfl ;fpwhs;	Nfl ghs;
th <sup>2</sup>	tej hu;fs;	tUfpwhu;fs;	tUthu;fs;
jh <sup>2</sup>	j eNj d;	j UfpNwd;	j UNtd;
nrhy <sup>3</sup>	nrhdNdd;	nrhy;fpNwd;	nrhyNtd;
gz ;Z <sup>3</sup>	gz ;z pNdhk;	gz ;Z fpNwhk;	gz ;Z Nthk;

Ngh <sup>3</sup>	Nghdhu;	Nghf;pwu;	Ngh t hu;
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## Dative Case

The dative case is added to nouns to mean "to", "for", or "for the sake of".

### Dative Case

- If the word ends in - , , - < , - l , or - Ma; add - f;F
- All other words add the suffix - C f;F .

Again, remember that suffix rules for **Thamil cases**, as well as our **basic set** of suffix rules, should be used in conjunction with the dative case suffix, if they are applicable. In general, non-case-suffixes (- M, - C k; etc.) only follow the basic set of suffix addition rules. Case suffixes (- l , - f;F / - C f;F , etc.) are added by first using case suffix rules, if they apply, before using the basic suffix rules.

### Irregulars

Only a handful of words, which are all pronouns, add the dative case slightly differently.

Word	Dative Case
ehd;	vdf;F
eP	cdf;F
mJ	mj w;F
ehk;	ekf;F

### Examples

- eh;fs; fi l f;F Nghf;pw;fsh? = "Are you going to the store?"

- Nkfyh cdf;F rhgghl ;i l thq;f;pdhs;= "Mekalaa bought the candy for you"
- ehd; tñ ;Lf;F NghNtd;= "I will go home"
- khL Mw;Wf;F Nghf;wJ = "A bull goes to the river"
- khz tu;fs; jpdKk; tFgGf;F gbgghu;fS;= "Students read for class daily"
- Foei j fs; Gq;fhTf;F Nghthu;fhs;= "Children will go to the park"