How Quechua sounds Runasimi

Which Quechua: Quechua is a family of languages spoken in the Andes, and its varieties differ. This sheet uses Southern Quechua as spoken around Cusco (Cusco-Collao), in the official alphabet with three vowels. Other varieties, like those of Ayacucho, central Peru or Ecuador, sound different and use some different words.

The trick: one letter is one sound, and every letter is said. The alphabet: a ch chh ch' h i k kh k' l ll m n ñ p ph p' q qh q' r s t th t' u w y.

Letters	Sounds like	Example
a	a in father	**allin / mama** good / mother
i	i in machine, but short	**inti / kiru** sun / tooth
u	u in put	**uma / unu** head / water
i, u by q	said like e and o next to q, qh and q'	**urqu / sunqu** mountain / heart
k, p, t, ch	as in English, but with no puff of air	**kay / tayta** this / father
kh, ph, th, chh, qh	the same, with a strong puff of air after it	**khuchi / phuyu / qhari** pig / cloud / man
k', p', t', ch', q'	a sharp pop: hold your breath in your throat, then let go	**k'acha / t'anta / q'uñi** lovely / bread / warm
q	a k said deep in the throat; at the end of a syllable it's rough, like ch in loch	**qam / pusaq** you / eight
ll	lli in million, said as one sound	**llama / llaqta** llama / town
ñ	ny in canyon	**ñan / ñuqa** road / I
w, y	w in wet, y in yes	**wasi / yana** house / black
r	a light tap of the tongue	**rumi / runa** stone / person
h, l, m, n, s	much as in English; h is a light breath	**hatun / sumaq** big / beautiful

a · i · u

three vowels, and that's all

qucha lake, said qo-cha · **sunqu** heart, said son-qo

older books and signs often write e and o

chaki · ch'aki

the apostrophe makes a different letter

chaki foot · **ch'aki** dry

pacha earth · **p'acha** clothes

Plain, puff and pop: k, p, t, ch and q have no puff of air. With h after them, add a strong puff. With the apostrophe, close your throat and let go with a pop. They make different words: chaki, foot; ch'aki, dry.

Stress: on the second-to-last syllable, and it moves along when you add an ending: WA-si, wa-SI-pi, wa-si-ku-NA-pi. Arí, yes, is one of the few words that stress the end, shown with an accent.

How words work wasiykunapi

No gender, no the: Quechua has no masculine or feminine and no word for the or a. wasi is a house or the house, and pay is he and she.

Words in colour

noun
a thing, a person or a place
wasi house · **unu** water

describing word
comes before the noun
hatun big · **sumaq** beautiful

verb
in the dictionary form, ending in -y
rimay speak · **mikhuy** eat

other
little words and phrases
mana no · **kunan** now

Endings stack

wasi	wasiy	wasiyki	wasiykuna	wasiykunapi
a house, the house	my house	your house	my houses	in my houses

One ending, one job, always in the same order: the word, then whose, then -kuna for more than one, then where. So wasi, wasiy, wasiykuna, wasiykunapi: house, my house, my houses, in my houses.

Endings for in, to, from and with

wasipi	wasiman	wasimanta	mamaywan	t'antata
in the house, at home: -pi, in, at	to the house: -man, to	from the house: -manta, from	with my mum: -wan, with	bread, as the object: -ta

Who: rimay, to speak, and kay, to be

	I speak	I am	I don't speak
ñuqa I	rimani	kani	mana rimanichu
qam you	rimanki	kanki	mana rimankichu
pay he, she	riman	kan	mana rimanchu
ñuqanchis we, you too	rimanchis	kanchis	mana rimanchischu
ñuqayku we, not you	rimayku	kayku	mana rimaykuchu
qamkuna you, all	rimankichis	kankichis	mana rimankichischu
paykuna they	rimanku	kanku	mana rimankuchu

The verb goes last: Ñuqa t'antata mikhuni, I eat bread, word for word I bread eat. The ending already says who, so ñuqa is often left out. We has two forms: ñuqanchis takes you in, ñuqayku leaves you out.

To be: Ñuqa yachachiqmi kani, I'm a teacher. For he and she, kan is usually left out: Pay yachachiqmi, she's a teacher. -mi, or -n after a vowel, says I'm sure of this: Allillanmi, I'm well; Kayqa t'antan, this is bread. -qa marks what you're talking about.

Saying no: mana before, -chu on the verb: Mana rimanichu, I don't speak; Mana yachanichu, I don't know. **Questions:** -chu on the word you ask about: Runasimita rimankichu? Do you speak Quechua? Allillanchu? Are you well? With a question word, no -chu: Ima sutiyki? What's your name?

The first 247 words Ñuqa, qam, pay

How: learn five a day, then listen for them in Quechua songs, videos and series. *Pink italics* say how a word is used, not what it means.

Me and you

ñuqa
I, me

qam
you, one person

pay
he, she: there is no gender

ñuqanchis / ñuqayku
we, you too / we, but not you

qamkuna
you, more than one

paykuna
they

kay / chay / haqay
this / that / that over there

Question words

ima
what *(Imataq kay? What's this?)*

pi
who

may
where *(maypi, where, at what place)*

maymanta
where from

mayman
where to

hayk'aq
when

hayk'a
how much, how many

imayna
how

imarayku
why

mayqin
which

Little words

kaypi / chaypi
here / there

mana
no, not *(page 2)*

ancha
very *(ancha sumaq, very beautiful)*

astawan
more

llapan
all, everyone

ña
already

manaraq
not yet

hinaspa
and then

ichaqa
but

hina
like, as

sapa
each, every

Family

mama
mother, mum

tayta
father, dad

wawa
baby, child

churi / ususi
son / daughter, said by a father; a mother says wawa

wawqi
a man's brother

ñaña
a woman's sister

hatun mama / hatun tayta
grandmother / grandfather *(it means big mother, big father)*

ayllu
family, the wider kind; also community

warmi
woman; also wife

qhari
man; also husband

People

runa
person, people

sipas / wayna
young woman / young man

machu / paya
old man / old woman

masi
friend, companion *(masiy, my friend)*

yachachiq
teacher *(it means one who teaches)*

yachakuq
student, learner

hampiq
healer, doctor

llamk'aq
worker

We, two ways: ñuqanchis is we, you included; ñuqayku is we, but not you. Brothers and sisters depend on who's speaking: a man's brother is his wawqi, a woman's sister is her ñaña.

Time and things Kunan, paqarin

When

kunan
now

qhipaman
later

kunan p'unchay
today *(it means this day)*

paqarin
tomorrow

qayna p'unchay
yesterday

sapa p'unchay
every day

p'unchay
day

tuta
night

tutamanta
early in the morning

killa
month; also moon

wata
year

pacha
time; also earth, world

The body

uma
head

ñawi
eye

rinri
ear

sinqa
nose

simi
mouth; also language

kiru
tooth

maki
hand

chaki
foot

sunqu
heart

wiksa
belly

chukcha
hair

kunka
neck

Things

qullqi
money; also silver

p'acha
clothes

punku
door

tiyana
seat, chair *(it means place to sit)*

puñuna
bed *(it means place to sleep)*

manka
cooking pot

q'ipi
bundle, a load carried on the back

nina
fire

Weather and nature

inti
sun

quyllur
star

para
rain

wayra
wind

rit'i
snow

phuyu
cloud

mayu
river

qucha
lake

urqu
mountain

pampa
plain, open flat land

allpa
earth, soil

t'ika
flower

rumi
stone

Animals

allqu
dog

llama
llama

paqu
alpaca

wallpa
hen, chicken

quwi
guinea pig

khuchi
pig

kuntur
condor

pisqu
bird

challwa
fish

atuq
fox

uywa
animal you keep, livestock

Numbers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
huk	iskay	kimsa	tawa	pichqa	suqta	qanchis	pusaq	isqun	chunka

11	12	20	30	100	1,000
chunka hukniyuq	chunka iskayniyuq	iskay chunka	kimsa chunka	pachak	waranqa

Counting: chunka is ten. 11 is chunka hukniyuq, ten with one; 20 is iskay chunka, two tens. After a number, no plural: iskay wasi, two houses.

Today: kunan p'unchay, today, is word for word this day: kunan is now, p'unchay is day.

Food, places, verbs Mikhuna, wasi, ruray

Food and drink

mikhuna
food *(it means something to eat)*

unu
water

t'anta
bread

aycha
meat

papa
potato

sara
maize, corn

kinwa
quinoa

chuñu
freeze-dried potato

uchu
chilli

kachi
salt

runtu
egg

lawa
thick soup

hak'u
flour

mut'i
boiled maize

aqha
a drink made from maize

Places

wasi
house, home

llaqta
town, village

chakra
field, farm plot

ñan
road, path

qhatu
market, market stall

yachay wasi
school *(it means house of learning)*

kancha
yard, a walled space

paña / lluq'i
right / left

runasimi
Quechua, the language *(it means people's speech)*

Qusqu
Cusco, the city

Verbs

rimay
speak, talk

mikhuy
eat

puñuy
sleep

riy
go *(rini, I go)*

hamuy
come

puriy
walk; also travel

rikuy
see

uyariy
listen, hear

qhaway
look, watch

yachay
know

yachakuy
learn

yachachiy
teach

llamk'ay
work

munay
want

kuyay
love, care for

tiyay
sit; also live somewhere

ruray
do, make

quy
give

apay
carry, take

rantiy
buy

ñawinchay
read

qillqay
write

takiy
sing

tusuy
dance

pukllay
play

yanapay
help

tapuy
ask

kutiy
come back, return

waqay
cry

asiy
laugh

kichay / wichqay
open / close

Describing words

hatun / huch'uy
big / small

allin / mana allin
good / bad *(it means not good)*

musuq / mawk'a
new / old, for things

chiri / q'uñi
cold / warm

sumaq
beautiful, lovely

k'acha
lovely, fine, smart

misk'i
sweet, tasty

kusisqa
happy

llakisqa
sad

sayk'usqa
tired

achka / pisi
a lot, many / a little, few

karu
far

sinchi
strong

puka / q'illu
red / yellow

yana / yuraq
black / white

q'umir / anqas
green / blue

Verbs: the dictionary form ends in -y. Take it off and add the ending for who: rimay, rimani, I speak; mikhuy, mikhuni, I eat; riy, rini, I go. Every verb on this sheet works this way (page 2).

Describing words go before the noun and never change: hatun wasi, a big house; hatun wasikuna, big houses.

Phrases and show words Allillanchu?

Hello and goodbye

Allillanchu?
hello, how are you? *(it asks are you well?)*

Allillanmi
I'm well, fine *(the answer)*

Qamri?
and you?

Imaynalla kachkanki?
how are you?

Rimaykullayki
hello, formal and respectful *(see below)*

Ima sutiyki?
what's your name?

Sutiyqa ...
my name is ...

Maymanta kanki?
where are you from?

Tupananchiskama
see you *(it means until we meet)*

Paqarinkama
see you tomorrow

Please, thanks and help

Arí / Manan
yes / no *(some areas say Manam)*

Sulpayki / Añay
thank you: both are used *(see below)*

Ama hina kaspa
please

Pampachaway
sorry, forgive me

Mana yachanichu
I don't know

Runasimita rimankichu?
do you speak Quechua?

Pisillatan rimani
I speak a little

Imataq kay?
what's this?

Reactions

Allinmi!
good! that's fine!

Ancha sumaq!
how lovely! *(it means very beautiful)*

Chiqaqchu?
really? *(it asks is it true?)*

Ñuqapas
me too

Hinallataq
same to you, likewise

Alalaw!
brr, it's cold!

Atatay!
yuck! how awful!

The big scenes

Kuyayki
I love you

Yanapaway!
help me!

Haku!
let's go!

Hamuy kayman!
come here!

Suyaway!
wait for me!

Ama waqaychu
don't cry

Ama manchakuychu
don't be scared

Kaypi kachkani
I'm here

What to call people

mamay / taytay
to an older woman / man, with respect *(it means my mother, my father)*

sunquchay
my darling *(it means my little heart)*

kuyasqay
my love, my dear

Sulpayki and Añay: both mean thank you, and you'll hear both. Use the one people around you use.

Rimaykullayki: the respectful hello, for older people and people you don't know. Between friends, Allillanchu? or Imaynalla kachkanki? is enough. -lla makes a word gentle and warm, which is why it's in all three.

mamay and taytay: older people are often called mamay and taytay, my mother and my father, as a sign of respect, not only in the family. Tupananchiskama is tupay, to meet, with -kama, until; Paqarinkama is paqarin, tomorrow, with the same ending.

Practice Haku!

How: cover the grey lines with a strip of paper. Read the Quechua out loud, then slide it down to check. Can you read every line without peeking? You've got it.

-qa, the topic: it marks what the sentence is about: Sutiyqa Inti, my name is Inti; Wasiyqa hatunmi, my house is big.

Read every letter: nothing is silent, and the apostrophe is a pop: t'an-ta, two beats.

Read these sentences

1. Allillanchu? Sutiyqa Inti.
   Hi, how are you? My name is Inti.

2. Allillanmi, sulpayki. Qamri?
   I'm fine, thank you. And you?

3. Qusqumanta kani.
   I'm from Cusco.

4. Ñuqa yachachiqmi kani.
   I'm a teacher.

5. Mamaywan qhatuman rini.
   I go to the market with my mum.

6. Papata mikhuni.
   I eat potatoes.

7. Wasiyqa hatunmi.
   My house is big.

8. Allquyqa mana hatunchu.
   My dog isn't big.

9. Paykuna Qusqupi tiyanku.
   They live in Cusco.

10. Ñuqanchis runasimita yachakunchis.
    We learn Quechua, you and I.

Meet a word you don't know? In Kitsumi, hover any word in subtitles to see what it means.