



# Twi (Akan) Alphabet & Pronunciation Cheat Sheet for Diasporans & Foreigners

Quick Reference for Beginners (Asante Twi Focus)

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## Overview

Twi (Asante dialect) uses 22 letters: 15 consonants + 7 vowels.

Missing from English: C, J, Q, V, X, Z

Unique to Twi: Ɛɛ (open e) and Ɔɔ (open o)

Tones matter in spoken Twi (high, low, downstep), but writing doesn't mark them routinely. Practice with audio!

## The Twi Alphabet with Pronunciation

Letter	Sound (IPA approx.)	English Example	Twi Word Example
A a	/a/ or /æ/	father / cat	aba (snake), adwuma (work)
B b	/b/	book	ba (child), bɔ (hit)
D d	/d/	dog	da (sleep/day), dua (tree)
E e	/e/ or /ɪ/	day / bit	efi (dirty), edu (ten)
Ɛ ɛ	/ɛ/	bed / set	enam (meat), sɛ (like/if)
F f	/f/	fish	fi (come from), foforo (new)
G g	/g/	go	gye (take), goma (gum)
H h	/h/	hat	hwe (look), hɛ (wear)
I i	/i/	feet	ini (this), iyi (this one)
K k	/k/	cat	ka (say/bite), kɔ (go)
L l	/l/	love	la (sing), lɔre (lorry)
M m	/m/	man	ma (give), me (me)
N n	/n/	no	na (and), ne (his/her)
O o	/o/ or /ɔ/	go / book	odo (love), wo (you)
Ɔ ɔ	/ɔ/	thought / or	ɔba (child), sɔ (catch fire)
P p	/p/	pen	pa (beg/forgive), pii (many)
R r	/r/ (rolled/trilled)	red (Scottish)	re (progressive), ara (still)
S s	/s/	sun	sɛ (if), so (up)
T t	/t/	top	ta (stick), ti (head)
U u	/u/	moon	wu (die), tumi (power)
W w	/w/	we	wo (you/are), wɔ (they)

Letter	Sound (IPA approx.)	English Example	Twi Word Example
Y y	/j/	yes	ya (hurt), ye (do/be)

## Important Digraphs (Common 2-letter Combinations)

These are frequent and change pronunciation:

Digraph	Pronunciation (approx.) & Example
dw	/d̥w/ like “j” + “w” — dwane (run)
gy	/d̥j/ like “j” in jam — gye (receive/take)
hw	/hw/ or /f <sup>w</sup> / — hwe (look/test)
hy	/ç/ or “sh” like shirt — hye (wear/enter)
ky	/tʃ/ like “ch” in church — kyere (show/teach)
ny	/ɲ/ like “ñ” in canyon — nya (get)
tw	/tʃ <sup>w</sup> / like “chw” — twa (cut)
kw	/k <sup>w</sup> / like “qu” in quick — kwan (road)
nw	/ɲw/ nasal + w — nwa (snail)

### Quick Tips for Pronunciation:

- ɛ (ɛ) = open like “e” in “bed” or “e” in French “mère”
- ɔ (ɔ) = open like “aw” in “law” or “o” in “or”
- Vowels can be short or long (length changes meaning, e.g., pa vs. paa)
- Consonants are mostly like English, but practice rolled /r/ and no “v” sound (f is used)
- Nasal sounds (like ny, nw) come through the nose

## Mini Practice

Try saying:

Me din de Kofi. (My name is Kofi.)

Wo ho te sen? (How are you?)

Me ho ye, medaase! (I’m fine, thank you!)

Happy learning — *Yebekɔ so!* (*We will continue!*) Listen to native speakers on YouTube (e.g., SpeakGhana, Twi For Beginners) for tones and rhythm.