

Abyssinica SIL Font Documentation

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Introduction to the Abyssinica SIL Font Package



The Ethiopic script is used for writing many of the languages of Ethiopia and Eritrea. [Ethiopic \(U+1200..U+137F\)](http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1200.pdf)¹ was added to Unicode 3.0. [Ethiopic Supplement \(U+1380..U+139F\)](http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1380.pdf)² and [Ethiopic Extended \(U+2D80..U+2DDF\)](http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U2D80.pdf)³ were added to Unicode 4.1. **Abyssinica SIL** supports all Ethiopic characters which are in Unicode including the Unicode 4.1 extensions. Some languages of Ethiopia are not yet able to be fully represented in Unicode and, where necessary, we have included non-Unicode characters in the Private Use Area (see [Private-use \(PUA\) characters supported by Abyssinica SIL](#)⁴).

This release is a regular typeface, with no bold or italic version available or planned.

¹ <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1200.pdf>

² <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1380.pdf>

³ <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U2D80.pdf>

⁴ http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=AbyssinicaSIL_UsersGuide#pua

Supported character ranges

This font supports 461 Ethiopic characters and over 241 Latin characters from the Unicode 4.1 standard, as well as over 125 Private Use Area (PUA) characters. In total, over 978 glyphs are included. The following character ranges constitute many of the characters supported by this font:

C0 Controls and Basic Latin	U+0020..U+007E
C1 Controls and Latin-1 Supplement	U+00A0..U+00FF
Latin Extended-A	U+0152..U+0153, U+0160..U+0161, U+0178, U+017D..U+017E
Latin Extended-B	U+0192
Spacing Modifier Letters	U+02C6, U+02DC
Combining Diacritical Marks	U+0300..U+0304, U+0307..U+0308, U+030B..U+030C, U+030F
Ethiopic	U+1200..137C
Ethiopic Supplemental	U+1380..U+1399
Ethiopic Extended	U+2D80..U+2DDE
General Punctuation	U+2007..U+200A, U+2013..U+2014, U+2018..U+201A, U+201C..U+201E, U+2020..U+2022, U+2026, U+2030, U+2039..U+203B
Superscripts and Subscripts	U+2070, U+2074..U+2079
Currency Symbols	U+20AC
Letterlike Symbols	U+2122
Geometric Shapes	U+25CC
Dingbats	U+2713
PUA	U+E021, U+E029, U+E031, U+E039..U+E043, U+E068..U+E06E, U+E070..U+E072, U+E200, U+E202..U+E205, U+E217, U+E227, U+E230..U+E236, U+E24F, U+E257, U+E25F, U+E26F, U+E290..E296, U+E2A8..U+E2AE, U+E2B7, U+E2BF, U+E2D7..U+E2DE, U+E2E7, U+E2F8..U+E2FE, U+E313, U+E318..U+E31F, U+E328..U+E32E, U+E338..U+E33F, U+E343, U+E34F, U+E380..U+E386, U+E400..U+E406, U+E408, U+E410..U+E416, U+E490..E494, U+E496, U+E498..U+E49A

Supported character ranges

Private-use (PUA) characters supported by Abyssinica SIL

PUA characters in the font are documented in [SILEthiopicPrivateUseAreaBlock.pdf](#) which is included in the font download.

Advanced typographic capabilities

This font supports various advanced typographic capabilities using the Graphite, OpenType, or AAT font technologies.

- Auto placement of diacritics (one level only) on Ethiopic syllables only (not on Latin characters)
- Kerning of almost 200 pairs of Ethiopic syllables

These capabilities are available in any application that supports the Graphite technology. They are also available via the OpenType technology, though this requires applications that provide a sufficient level of support for OpenType features. (See [System Requirements](#).) With AAT applications, only limited combinations of base characters and diacritics will work correctly; beyond the supported set of combinations, diacritic placement may be inferior.

A sample of diacritic placement and kerning is shown below:

Diacritic placement:

ሎሐ።ሥ።ፍ።ሱ

Kerned: Not kerned:

ሲ፣፣ ሲ፣፣

ሊ፣፣ ሊ፣፣

Abyssinica SIL Sample - Diacritic placement and Kerning

Conversion

In order to use this font with existing data that was created for use with fonts developed using custom-encoded fonts, it is necessary to re-type or convert data to produce data that is encoded in conformance with the Unicode Standard. TECKit is one program that can be used for character encoding conversion. TECKit allows users to write their own custom conversion mappings.

The TECKit package is available for download from SIL's TECKit Web site: [TECKit](#)⁸.

Three [TECKit](#)⁹ mapping files (compiled and uncompiled) are available as a separate download ([SIL-Ethiopia \(Latin to Fidel\) Unicode mapping](#)¹⁰). They are intended for use where text has been input “phonetically” as a syllable (be, ppi, etc.) and conversion to fidel is desired (ሲ, ፣, etc.).

Keyboarding

The ability to obtain the full benefits of this font is also dependent upon having means for Unicode character input. This package does include a Keyman keyboard. The Keyman Keyboard can be downloaded from [Abyssinica SIL Font Download](#)¹¹.

⁸ http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=TECKitIntro

⁹ http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=TECKitIntro

¹⁰ http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=MappingFiles#SILEthiopic

¹¹ http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=AbyssinicaSIL_download#download

This keyboard was developed for keyboarding the Ethiopic Script. For guidelines on who can use Keyman and for downloading, go to: <http://www.tavultesoft.com>. The "Abyssinica SIL Unicode" keyboard is designed to work with the Abyssinica SIL font which can be downloaded separately or as a part of this package. Unless you need to use the Private Use Area (PUA) characters in this font you can use this keyboard with any Ethiopic Unicode font. For complete instructions on keyboard installation and usage, go to [Keyboard Installation and Use](#)¹².

Various other means may be available for different operating-system platforms to create additional input methods. For instance, [Microsoft Keyboard Layout Creator](#)¹³ can be used for this purpose on Microsoft Windows. For the Mac, version 10.2 of Mac OS X includes a mechanism for users to create custom Unicode keyboard layouts (see <http://developer.apple.com/technotes/tn2002/tn2056.html>).

See also: [Ge'ez Script Keyman Keyboards](#)¹⁴ and [The Ethiopic Unicode Resource Page](#)¹⁵

License

Abyssinica SIL is released under the [SIL Open Font License](#)¹⁶ - please read it carefully and do not download the fonts unless you agree to the terms of the license:

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Version 1.0 - 22 November 2005

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DEFINITIONS

"Font Software" refers to any and all of the following:

- font files
- data files
- source code

¹² http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=KeyboardInstallationAndUse#KM_install

¹³ <http://www.microsoft.com/globaldev/tools/msklc.msp>

¹⁴ <http://keyboards.ethiopic.org/>

¹⁵ <http://www.abysiniacybergateway.net/fidel/unicode/>

¹⁶ http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=OFL

- build scripts
- documentation

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Notes to contributors

The release of Abyssinica SIL version 1.0 under the OFL license provides a means for people to contribute to the project. For information on what you're allowed to change or modify, consult the OFL and OFL-FAQ. The OFL-FAQ also gives a very general rationale regarding why you would want to contribute to the project.

Anyone can make their own modified version of Abyssinica SIL (using a different name), but SIL International will continue to maintain and develop the canonical version of the Abyssinica SIL font. As the package maintainer, we warmly welcome contributions. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Format:** We are open to contributions in various formats, but if you want to maximise the chances of us including your work, please make it available to us (via email or a URL) as either a FontLab database (preferred) or a PostScript Type 1 (or OT-CFF) font.
- **Source files:** We're including the FontLab database used in developing the font. The font, however, was not solely built from this FontLab database, so a simple "Generate Font" will not give you an identical result. The database is provided not as canonical source but as an aid to anyone who might find it useful to have access to it. For those who may find them useful, we are also providing the Graphite GDL file (`ETKernComb.gdl`) and VOLT project files (`Abyssinica_SIL.vtp`, `AboveMarks.vtg`, `Kern.vtl`, `Mark.vtl`).
- **Copyright attribution:** If you submit something for inclusion in the Abyssinica SIL font, we will ask you to affirm that it is your original work, and ask you to assign the copyright of your work to SIL International. This is to ensure that future releases can be made under improved versions of the OFL without needing to track you down for further permission. This follows the same principle used by the FSF. Keep in mind that we are a not-for-profit organization committed to free/libre and open source software, and that any contributions incorporated in the fonts will always be available under the OFL or a similar license.
- **Quality:** Because we want to be able to guarantee a high level of quality for the Abyssinica SIL font, we will review submissions carefully. Please don't be discouraged if we do not include a submission for this reason, or ask you to make specific revisions.
- **Types of contributions:** If you wish to make a contribution - a set of additional glyphs, scripts, code, etc. - please contact us before you do any work to see if it is a contribution we currently need. Every addition adds to the complexity of the project and needs to be carefully planned. This also avoids two people working on the same type of addition at the same time.

Installation and Use

Once the package has been downloaded, if you downloaded the `.exe` package you can double-click on it to install the files in a temporary folder.

Otherwise you will need a decompression utility such as [WinZip](http://www.winzip.com/)¹⁷ (Windows) or [Stuffit Expander](http://www.aladdinsys.com/downloads/software.html)¹⁸ (Macintosh) to expand the archive. Within the archive is the font file and documentation (`AbyssinicaSILFontDocumentation.pdf`).

This font can be installed using standard font installation procedures for the given operating-system platform. Note that certain applications may not see the new font immediately. You may have to quit and restart the application for the font to become available.

¹⁷ <http://www.winzip.com/>

¹⁸ <http://www.aladdinsys.com/downloads/software.html>

If you downloaded the `AbyssinicaSILKeymanKbd.kmp` file you must have Keyman already installed. You can double-click on `AbyssinicaSILKeymanKbd.kmp` to automatically install the keyboard package and font.

Release History

25 May, 2006 Release of Abyssinica SIL (1.0)

Known Issues

Diacritic positioning

Microsoft Office 2003 supports dynamic positioning of most diacritics (but not U+135F ᐃ ETHIOPIC COMBINING GEMINATION MARK) over the Ethiopic range (U+1200..U+135A) but not over Ethiopic Supplement or Ethiopic Extended characters. However, Microsoft Publisher 2003 does support dynamic positioning of U+135F ᐃ ETHIOPIC COMBINING GEMINATION MARK.

Support

As these fonts and utilities are distributed at no cost, we are unable to provide a commercial level of personal technical support. We will, however, try to resolve problems that are reported to us.

We do hope that you will report problems so they can be addressed in future releases. Even if you are not having any specific problems, but have an idea on how this system could be improved, we want to hear your ideas and suggestions.

Please note that these fonts are intended for use by experienced computer users. Installing and using these fonts is not a trivial matter. The most effective technical support is usually provided by an experienced computer user who can personally sit down with you at your computer to troubleshoot the problem.

General troubleshooting information, including frequently asked questions, can be found in the documentation. Additional information is also available on the general [Font FAQ page](#)¹⁹. If that fails to answer your question you can contact us at:

User Support
SIL International
Non-Roman Script Initiative
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.
Dallas, TX 75236
USA

Telephone: (972) 708-7495 FAX: (972) 708-7388
Email: ✉ SIL_fonts@sil.org

¹⁹ <http://scripts.sil.org/FontFAQ>