Nahuatl Grammar Notes

D.K. Jordan

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This material is assembled from notes I have taken while trying to learn a little about Nahuatl. If you find it useful in learning or teaching Nahuatl, please feel free to reproduce or distribute it as frequently or broadly as you like. I don’t guarantee the accuracy of any of it. As I refine it, I will try to make updated versions available by ftp from my web site: http://anthro.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan

Nahuatl Grammar Notes, Revised 060103
Notation Conventions
# = shows a word boundary when compulsory (e.g., a final i is shown as i#).
- = sign that shows where an affix attaches to another element. (e.g., a suffix may be shown as -lo.)
: = Two dots over a vowel (huän) show that it is long. (In standard orthography a macron is used.) Two dots on the front of a suffix (:-an) show that it lengthens the previous vowel. (A convenient alternative orthography could use a doubled vowel to indicate vowel length.\(^1\))
< = what follows is a plural form. (E.g. pilli < R-tin means that the plural of pilli is pïpiltin. See below for meaning of R.)
> = what follows is a preterit (past) form. (E.g., päca > päc means that päca has the preterit form päc.)
\(\approx\) = alternates with
<< = derived from
>> = produces, goes to, gives
C = consonant
DO = Direct object
IO = Indirect object
k = the sound k, whether spelt c or qu. (This is used here only when spelling will vary by context.)
kw = the sound kw, whether spelt cu or uc. (This is used here only when spelling will vary by context.)
Launey = Tags usage from Launey’s Introduction à la Langue et à la Littérature Aztèques.
R = first syllable is reduplicated (and the vowel lengthened) in the plural. (Used only in abbreviating plural formations, e.g. pilli < R-tin means the plural of pilli is pipiltin.)
s = the sound s, whether spelt z or c. (This is used here only when spelling will vary by context.)
V = vowel
V1, V2, V3, V4 = verb of class 1, 2, 3, or 4. (I have normally tried to indicate the transitivity of the verb, e.g. Vt2.)
Vb = verb
Vi = intransitive verb (usually followed by a class number: Vi3)
Vr = reflexive verb (sometimes followed by a class number: Vr3)
Vt = transitive verb (sometimes followed by a class number: Vt3)
Vtt = bitransitive verb (always takes two objects)
w = the sound w, whether spelt hu or uh. (This is used here only when spelling will vary by context.)

\(^1\)It is extremely rare for a vowel to be doubled in fully transcribed Nahuatl. (So far I know of no instances.) In the unlikely event that this might happen, the two vowels could be separated with an apostrophe, thus allowing the double-vowel convention to indicate length unambiguously. However, double vowels are common in the incomplete “Franciscan” transcriptions when an unwritten glottal stop comes between them. That is another whole issue.
### Aide-Mémoire to Verbal Subject & Object Affixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Prefixes</th>
<th>Object Prefixes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ni- (n-)</td>
<td>ti (t-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ti- (t-)</td>
<td>am- (an-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. —</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somebody: të</td>
<td>something: tla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Reflexive Prefixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. no- (n-)</td>
<td>to- (t-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. mo- (m-)</td>
<td>mo- (m-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. mo- (m-)</td>
<td>mo- (m-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Aide-Mémoire to Pronominal & Noun Affixes

#### Possessive Prefixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. no- (n-)</td>
<td>to- (t-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. mo- (m-)</td>
<td>amo- (am-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ï-</td>
<td>ïm- (ïn-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Possessive Suffixes (added to possessed nouns)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-hui</td>
<td>-huän</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-uh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Absolutive Suffixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-tli</td>
<td>-tin/meh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-tl</td>
<td>-(me)h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l-li</td>
<td>-tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-in</td>
<td>-meh, -tin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Agentive Suffixes (nouns derived from verbs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-qui</td>
<td>-queh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-co</td>
<td>V-c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The plural is normal in Nahuatl only for animate things or inanimate things granted metaphorical animate status.

---

2. The -o- is dropped before a, e, or “strong” i.
3. The absolutive suffix -in is largely used in a small number of words related to bugs, worms, and other very small animals.
Summary of Nahuatl Noun Morphology

Plural is marked for animate items only, although this is compromised in the creation of animatizing and inanimatizing metaphors. All nouns are either possessed (composed of items 1-2-3 in the following list) or absolutive (composed 2-4). Addition of item 0 creates a clause.

0. Prefixed subject pronoun (only if the remainder is a predicate complement to the subject pronoun)
   1. ni / ti
   2. ti / an
   3. -

   The prefixed subject pronouns render the remainder of the compound a predicate nominative on an assumed present-tense linking verb. (Ti-toltecatl = “You are a Toltec.”)

Possessed Nouns
1. Possessive pronoun prefix (incompatible with 4; requires 3)
   Specific Possessor (common):
   1. no / to
   2. mo / amo ≈ mo
   3. î ≈ mo / îm ≈ mo

   Non-Specific Possessor (uncommon):
   tê human possessor
   tla non-human possessor
   ne dummy possessor on reflexive verbs made into nouns (a relic pronoun)

2. Noun Stem (Sometimes involving some replacive items.)
3. Possessive suffix (incompatible with 4, required by 1)
   singular: V-uh ≈ C-hui ≈ -
   plural: huän

Unpossessed (Absolutive) Nouns
1. Noun Stem (Sometimes involving some reduplicative plurals.)
2. Absolutive number suffix (incompatible with 1 and 3)
   singular: tlî ≈ lîli ≈ tl ≈ ln ≈ -
   [Assimilations: l+tlî >> lîli; V+li >> V-tlî; C+tl >> C-tlî]
   plural: tin ≈ meh ≈ h
Summary of Nahuatl Verb Morphology

A Nahuatl verb is composed of the following elements:

0. Optative Marker (separate word)
   - mä = if, should it be that, let it be that
   - tlä = tlë = if, should it be that, perhaps, let it be that
     (more polite than mä)
   - mäca[mö] = if not; let it not be that (from mä + ahmo)
   - tläca[mö] = if not; let it not be that (more polite than mäcamö)

1. Negative marker
   - ah (prefix)
   - ahmo negative marker (separate word). (Incompatible with optative marker, item 0.)

2. Antecessive Prefix (Showing action is or will be finished by the time of speech or the time of the main verb. Compulsory with preterit.)
   - ö

3. Subject pronoun
   - 1 ni / ti (≈ xi)
   - 2 ti (≈ xi) / am (≈ an) (≈ xi) (use xi in optative)
   - 3 - /

4. Object pronoun (Specific Benefactive, IO, or DO) (incompatible with 7, below). (See “How to Choose” box after item 12.)
   - 1. nëch / tëch
   - 2. mitz / amëch
   - 3. c/qui⁴ / quim (quim >> im as extra DO pronoun if pressed)

5. Directional marker (for space or time)
   - on = thither
   - huäl = hither

6. Reflexive pronoun
   - 1 no / to
   - 2 & 3 mo
   - remnant ne (used when reflexive verb is used nonreflexively)

7. Non-specific Benefactive, IO, or DO pronoun (incompatible with 5, above). (See “How to Choose” box after item 12.)
   - (This is a dummy object for use with transitive verbs without a stated object.)
   - tô for humans
   - tla for non-humans
   - (Note that tla in this position can also serve as a depersonalizing mock subject for use when the real subject is a place name and hence inherently locative.)

8. Verb in Appropriate Stem Form
   - (See below for way to figure out what verb is in which class.)

9. Tense & number suffix (See table below.)
10. Causative ending (added only to intransitive verbs)
    - (Caution: many irregularities in this formation!)
    - tia/ltia = to, at, on

⁴-Use e before or after a vowel, qui elsewhere.
11. Passive/inactive ending
   \textit{lo} ≈ \textit{hua} ≈ \textit{o} ≈ \textit{ohua} ≈ \textit{hualo}

12. Applicative ending (to increase number of objects by one)
   (\textit{i})(\textit{j}ia = \text{to, at, on})

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|}
\hline
\textbf{How to Choose Object Pronouns:} \\
(Relevant to items 4 \& 7 above.) \\
Agree with the \textit{rightmost} in the following sequence \\
Direct Object < Indirect Object < Benefactive Object \\
(“I give it < to you < for her.”) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
Verbs

A normal Nahuatl verb has nine “time/mood” forms. How they are formed depends on which of four “classes” the verb falls into. Further, the nine time/mood forms are sometimes usefully thought of as derived from three “bases,” although these may not be of much interest to a beginner. Table 1 shows the forms for regular verbs. Table two shows the four “irregular” verbs of Nahuatl. Table three explains how to assign a verb to a class.  

**Verb Table 1: Bases & Time/Mood Endings (With Examples)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cry</td>
<td>live</td>
<td>bathe</td>
<td>eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1 base:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>-(h)</td>
<td>-(h)</td>
<td>-(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotidian</td>
<td>:ni(h)</td>
<td>:ni(h)</td>
<td>:ni(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>-ya(h)</td>
<td>-ya(h)</td>
<td>-ya(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti-chöca=h = we cry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti-ältia-:ni = you are in the habit of bathing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am-qui-cua-:ya-h = you were eating it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cry</td>
<td>live</td>
<td>bathe</td>
<td>eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2 base:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterit</td>
<td>-(k(eh))</td>
<td>-(queh)</td>
<td>-(queh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluperfect</td>
<td>-ca(h)</td>
<td>-ca(h)</td>
<td>-ca(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admonitive</td>
<td>-(tin)</td>
<td>-(tin)</td>
<td>-(tin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ö-ti-älti-h-queh = we bathed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti-yöl-ca = you had lived</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mäca qui-cuah-tin = let them not eat it, lest they eat it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cry</td>
<td>live</td>
<td>bathe</td>
<td>eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3 base:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>-(z(queh))</td>
<td>-(z(queh))</td>
<td>-(z(queh))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optative</td>
<td>-(cän)</td>
<td>-(cän)</td>
<td>-(cän)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>-z奎ya(h)</td>
<td>-z奎ya(h)</td>
<td>-z奎ya(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chöca-z-queh = they will cry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mä yöl-can = let them live</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cált-źqueh = they will bathe him</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cált-ź奎ya = they would bathe him</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ö-c-ält-ź奎ya = she would have bathed him</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

5.-Remember: In these tables, C = consonant, V = vowel; but Vi, Vt, Vr = verb intransitive, transitive, reflexive.
6.-The quotidian form stresses that an action is usual or customary. Some writers call it the “customary present.”
7.-Also called the perfect, the preterit is used for single past events. Note that the use of the prefix ö is compulsory with the preterit.
8.-The admonitive form is sometimes called the vetative. It is used to warn against something. My sources conflict on whether it is more usually used with mä or mäco. Apparently it contains a negative within it, and is not negated by a separate negative added to it.
9.-What I have here called optative is sometimes called imperative. It is used to express the wish that something be done. Note that in the optative, 2nd person singular and plural subject prefixes become xi-.
Verb Table 2: The Four Irregular Verbs

Letters in parentheses are added only in the plural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dictionary:</th>
<th>çä/ye</th>
<th>huïtza</th>
<th>yä/huih</th>
<th>huïllä/huïllhuih</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be</td>
<td>cah</td>
<td>huïtz</td>
<td>sing: yauh</td>
<td>huïllauh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present sing.</td>
<td>cah</td>
<td>huïtz</td>
<td>sing: yauh</td>
<td>huïllauh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present pl.</td>
<td>cateh</td>
<td>huïtzh</td>
<td>pl: huih</td>
<td>huïllhuih</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>yeya(h)</td>
<td>huïllaub(h)</td>
<td>yäya(h)</td>
<td>huïllhuiya(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterit</td>
<td>catca-(h)</td>
<td>huïtza-(h)</td>
<td>ya(h)</td>
<td>huïllala(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>ye-(h)</td>
<td>yä-(h)</td>
<td>huïllal-</td>
<td>huïllal-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verb Table 3: Decision Tree to Assign a Verb to a Class
(Examples show production of preterit from present.)

1. Closed List of “Exceptions”

Four irregular verbs:
çä/ye, huïtza, yä/huih, huïllä/huïllhuih
(See Verb Table 2.)
päca (päc) = to wash (V2 not V1)
töna (tönac) = to be warm; to prosper (V1 not V2)
zöma (zömah) = to infuriate (V4 not V2)

2. Verbs in V-hua and V-ya

- hua (Vi) >> 1
  - ëhua >> ëhuac = he departed

- hua (Vtr) >> 2
  - ëhua >> mëuh = he arose (raised himself)

- ya (Vi) >> 1 or 2 as you like

3. Selected Monosyllables

Monosyllables in #Ca# >> V4
Monosyllables in i# >> V1 (and i >> ï)
  i >> quïc = he drank it

4. Verbs in -o, -tl, and -ca

Co >> V1 (and o >> ò)
  pano >> panöqueh = they passed
  temo >> temöc = he descended

10. What is irregular about these verbs is that they do not have complete paradigms based on the same root, but rather mix two different roots together, also using the preterit forms of the second root for the present. It is easiest simply to call them irregular and memorize the table.

11. This table has been remarkably robust. So far it has accurately predicted the verb class of every Nahuatl verb I have seen.
-tla >> V1
  mötla >> quimötłac = he threw stones at him
-ca >> V1
  chöca >> chöcaqueh = they wept
tèca >> motècac = he lay down

5. Other Verbs
   CCV >> V1
     itta >> quittaqueh = they saw it
     ahci >> ahcic = he arrived
   VCV >> V2
     quïza >> niquíz = I sent out
     miqui >> mic = she died; miqueh = they died
     tzacua >> niquitzauç = I covered it
     nèci >> nèzqueh = they appeared
     xima >> ninoxin = I shaved myself
     chiya = nitlachix = I looked
     mati = quimah = he knew it
   VV >> V3
     ihtoa >> ihtoh = he spoke, quihtohqueh = they said it
Verb Table 4: “Passive” Endings

Classs 1 & 2
- o, - ö, í-huá
  transitive in -i, -a  - lö
  intransitive in -i  - íhuá, - ohuá
  intransitive in a  - ohuá

Class 3-: lö
Class 4-: lö

Irregular verbs:
  cah >> yelohua  yä >> huïlohua

For some verbs - lö optionally alternates with - o.

Note that applying the passive endings always produces a Class-1 verb, with past in - c/-queh and future in - z.

Root Consonant Mutations With the Suffix - : huá

cV# >> cöhuá
mV# >> möhuá
huV# >> öhuá
VsV# >> V xoühuá
VtzV# >> V chöhuá
CsV# >> Cxöhuá
CtzV# >> Ctzöhuá

Usage examples:

The passive, better called “non-active” or “middle-voice,” cannot show an agent. When applied to an intransitive verb, it shows a general condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vt1 to drink</th>
<th>Vt1 to lay down</th>
<th>Vt2 to capture</th>
<th>Vt2 to hurl</th>
<th>Vt1 to see</th>
<th>Vt2 to die</th>
<th>it is drunk</th>
<th>he is laid out</th>
<th>he is captured</th>
<th>he is thrown</th>
<th>you are seen</th>
<th>they are dying</th>
<th>people are dying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>í = i</td>
<td>hua</td>
<td>tecahua</td>
<td>äno</td>
<td>tía</td>
<td>miquih</td>
<td>mico</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Causatives & Applicatives

General Form: Vb + tia = to make sb Vb [st]

Example: quiza (Vi) = exit (Vi)
    quix-tia (causative)= remove (cause to exit) (Vt)
    quix-ti-lia (applicative of causative)
        = remove (something) from (somebody) (Vtt)

How to Form a Causative: -tia -ltia

Causatives From Intransitive Verbs:
-ti# (verb derived from noun) >> -lia
-i# >> itia
Vqui# & Vca# >> Vctia
:huV# >> :uhtia
:mV# >> :mtia
:nV# >> :nVtia
zV# >> xtia
tV# >> chtia

Causatives From Transitive Verbs
Passive formed in -lo# >> -ltia
Passive formed in -o# or -hua# >> tia

Causatives From All Verbs (optional variant)
-a# >> -altia (less common than above)

Causatives From Irregular Verbs:
cah >> ?
yäuh >> huïca (Vt1) = conduct, lead

Causatives from Non-Verbs
N+ti(y)a = to provide somebody with N
Adj+tia = to render something Adj

How to Form a Semi-Causative
(Converts Vi to Vt. Not a productive device(?) but many pairs of verbs conform to this.)
-a# >> -ia#
-i# >> -a#  -ki# >> -tza#
-i# >> -ia#  -ti# >> -tla#

-ihui# or -ahui# >> -oa#
How to Form an Applicative: -lia -ia

#Ca# >> #Cälia
-ca >> quia (= quilia) -tzV# >> chlia
-hua >> huia (= huilia) -tV# >> chlia
-iya# >> -iyalia -sV# >> xlia
-tlV# >> tilia ≈ chtlia -Ca# >> Cilia

Auxiliary & Intentional Verb Suffixes

Table of Auxiliary Suffixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>past</th>
<th>future</th>
<th>formula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cah = be</td>
<td>-ticah</td>
<td>-ticatca</td>
<td>-tiez</td>
<td>to be Vb-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ëhua = rise,</td>
<td>-tëhua</td>
<td>-tëhuac</td>
<td>-tëhuaz</td>
<td>to depart, Vb-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huetzi = fall</td>
<td>-tihuetzi</td>
<td>-tihuetz</td>
<td>-tihuetziz</td>
<td>to Vb quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huïtz = come</td>
<td>-tihuïtz</td>
<td>-tihuïtza</td>
<td></td>
<td>to come Vb-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ihcac = stand</td>
<td>-tihcac</td>
<td>-ticaca,</td>
<td>-ticaz</td>
<td>to stand Vb-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-ticaya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mani = be</td>
<td>-timani</td>
<td>-timan,</td>
<td>-timaniz</td>
<td>to be Vb-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(spread out)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-timanca</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nemi = live</td>
<td>-tinemi</td>
<td>-tinem</td>
<td>-timaniza</td>
<td>to go about Vb-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ca)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(on)oc = lie</td>
<td>-toc</td>
<td>-toca</td>
<td>-toz</td>
<td>to lie Vb-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quïza = emerge,</td>
<td>-tiquïza</td>
<td>-tiquïz</td>
<td>-tiquïzaz</td>
<td>to pass, Vb-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yauh = go</td>
<td>-tiuh</td>
<td>-tia</td>
<td>-tiaz</td>
<td>to go/be Vb-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(&lt;&lt;ti+yauh)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(&lt;&lt;ti+yah)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table of Intentional Suffixes

“Coming & Going in order to Vb”
Use present stem (Base 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Come (Introverse conjugations)</th>
<th>Go (Extroverse conjugations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tense</td>
<td>sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fu</td>
<td>-quiuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pr/pa</td>
<td>-co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optative</td>
<td>-qui</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Verbal Nouns

Nouns are often derived from verbs to show an actor or agent (“runner”), a patient (“employee”) or an abstraction (“running”).

Abstract Nouns. In Nahuatl abstract nouns derived from verbs normally simply add -liztli or -iztli to the verb stem: nemi = to live, nemïztli = living; cochi = to sleep; cochiliztli = sleeping; tlazohtla = to love, tlazohtlaliztli = love; miqui = to die, miquiliztli/miquiztli = death.

Sometimes transitive verbs include të- or tla- dummy object prefixes (for people and things respectively or mo for reflexive verbs) in the abstraction: të.machtia = to instruct (people), të.machtî.liztli = instructing, education.

Agentive Nouns. Agentive nouns (indicating actors) are usually formed in the absolutive form in one of three ways:

1. Add the suffix -ni to verbal stem (and form the plural by adding -meh to that):

   mati = to know, tla.mati = to know (something), tla.matini = scholar, tla.matni.meh = scholars, the scholarly people.

2. Add the suffix -qui (plural: -queh) to the preterit form (deleting the preceding o-):

   chöca = to cry, ö chöcac = cried, chöcacqui = the one crying
   miqui = to die, ö mic = died, micqueh = dead people
   cuà = eat, ö cuah = ate, cuahqui = eater

3. In a few cases, the preterit agentive form omits the singular -qui (but not the plural -queh) and is indistinguishable from the preterit verb except that the ö is missing:

   poloa = to lay waste, të.poloa = to conquer (people), ö të.poloh = conquered, të.poloh = conqueror, të.poloh.queh = conquerors, conquistadores.

When possessed (non-absolutive), all agentive nouns take the same form: preterit + -ca- + -uh (plural: -huän):

tla.mati.ni = scholar,
i.i.tla.mat.ca.uh = his scholar, i.tla.mat.ca.huän = his scholars
chöcac.qui = the one crying, no.chöca.ca.uh = my crying one
mic.qui = a dead person,
to.mic.ca.uh = our dead (person) to.mic.ca.huän = our dead (people)
tëpoloh.queh = conquerors, mo.tëpoloh.ca.uh = your conqueror
Consonant Mutations

Vh always produces a short vowel.
All final vowels become short.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arranged by Input</th>
<th>Arranged by Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ch + ch &gt;&gt; ch (optional)</td>
<td>cc &lt;&lt; uc + c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch + tz &gt;&gt; tz (optional)</td>
<td>ch &lt;&lt; ch + ch (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h + t &gt;&gt; lt (?)</td>
<td>ch &lt;&lt; tz + ch (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kw + p &gt;&gt; kp</td>
<td>co &lt;&lt; uc + o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l + tl &gt;&gt; ll</td>
<td>h# &lt;&lt; t# (usually written t anyway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l + y &gt;&gt; ll</td>
<td>ll &lt;&lt; 1 + tl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m# &gt;&gt; n#</td>
<td>ll &lt;&lt; 1 + y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mC &gt;&gt; nC unless C = m or p</td>
<td>lt &lt;&lt; h + t (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n + y &gt;&gt; yy</td>
<td>mm &lt;&lt; uh + m (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t# &gt;&gt; h# (usually written t anyway)</td>
<td>n# &lt;&lt; m#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tz + ch &gt;&gt; ch (optional)</td>
<td>kp &lt;&lt; kw + p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tz + tz &gt;&gt; tz (optional)</td>
<td>ll &lt;&lt; 1 + tl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uc + c &gt;&gt; cc</td>
<td>ll &lt;&lt; 1 + y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uc + o &gt;&gt; co</td>
<td>lt &lt;&lt; h + t (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uh + m &gt;&gt; mm (optional)</td>
<td>mm &lt;&lt; uh + m (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uh + o &gt;&gt; o</td>
<td>nC &lt;&lt; mC (unless C = m or p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uh + p &gt;&gt; pp (optional)</td>
<td>o &lt;&lt; uh + o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y# &gt;&gt; x#</td>
<td>pp &lt;&lt; uh + p (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z + ch &gt;&gt; zz (usual)</td>
<td>tz &lt;&lt; ch + tz (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z + l &gt;&gt; zz (usual)</td>
<td>tz &lt;&lt; tz + tz (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z + t &gt;&gt; xt</td>
<td>tz &lt;&lt; tz + tz (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z + tz &gt;&gt; zz (usual)</td>
<td>x# &lt;&lt; y#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z + x &gt;&gt; zz (usual)</td>
<td>xt &lt;&lt; z + t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z + y &gt;&gt; zz (usual)</td>
<td>yy - n + y</td>
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<td>z + z &gt;&gt; zz (usual)</td>
<td>zz &lt;&lt; z + ch (usual)</td>
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<td>z + z</td>
<td>zz &lt;&lt; z + l (usual)</td>
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<td>z + z</td>
<td>zz &lt;&lt; z + tz (usual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z + z</td>
<td>zz &lt;&lt; z + x (usual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z + y</td>
<td>zz &lt;&lt; z + y (usual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefix Forms</td>
<td>cëm-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mäcuïllí</td>
<td>cë  = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= 5</td>
<td>chicua + 1 = 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mahtlactli</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= 10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caxtölli</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= 15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cem-pöhualli</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= 20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 5 = 25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 10 = 30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 15 = 35</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm-pöhualli</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>= 40</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 5 = 45</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 10 = 50</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 15 = 55</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary Table of Nahuatl Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0/5</th>
<th>1/6</th>
<th>2/7</th>
<th>3/8</th>
<th>4/9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefix Forms:</td>
<td>cëm-</td>
<td>öm-</td>
<td>(y)ë(y)i-</td>
<td>nähu-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mäcuïllí</td>
<td>cë = 1</td>
<td>öme = 2</td>
<td>(y)ë(y)i = 3</td>
<td>nähu = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= 5</td>
<td>chicua + 1 = 6</td>
<td>chicu + 2 = 7</td>
<td>chicu + 3 = 8</td>
<td>chicu + 4 = 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mahtlactli = 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caxtölli = 15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cem-pöhualli = 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= 20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 5 = 25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 10 = 30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 15 = 35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm-pöhualli = 40</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>= 40</td>
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<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 5 = 45</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 10 = 50</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öm 15 = 55</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1998 = nähu-tzontli caxtölli-on-nähu-pöhualli caxtölli-on-ëyi
        4 four-hundreds (1600) + 15 + 4 twenties (380) 15 + 3 ones (18)
2006 = mäcuïllí-tzontli chicu-cë
        5 four-hundreds (2000) chicu-cë (6) six

Jordan: Nahuatl Grammar Notes, revised 060110, page 14
Reference Table of Most Affixes

The following alphabetical table is intended to include all of the affixes in the foregoing tables in a single list. It is divided into prefixes and suffixes (based on which side of the root the affix goes on).

Prefixes
ah- = negative verb prefix
ahmo- = negative verb prefix
am- = 2nd person plural possessive & subject prefix
amëch- = 2nd person plural object prefix
amo- = 2nd person plural possessive prefix
an- = 2nd person plural subject prefix
c- = 3rd person singular object prefix
huäl- = directional prefix ("hither")
i- = 3rd person singular possessive prefix
ïm- = 3rd person plural possessive prefix
ïn- = 3rd person plural possessive prefix
m- = 2nd & 3rd person singular & plural reflexive prefix
m- = 2nd person singular possessive prefix
mä- = optative verb marker (= if), normally written as separate word
mäca = negative optative verb marker ("if not"), normally written as separate word
mäcamo- = negative optative verb marker ("if not"), normally written as separate word
mitz- = 2nd person singular object prefix
mo- = 2nd & 3rd person singular & plural reflexive prefix
mo- = 2nd person singular possessive prefix
n- = 1st person singular possessive, reflexive, and subject prefix
na- = reciprocally
ne- = non-specific object prefix
ne- = dummy possessive prefix on nouns derived from reflexives
néch- = 1st person singular object prefix
ni- = 1st person singular subject prefix
no- = 1st person singular possessive & reflexive prefix
ö- = preterit prefix
on- = directional prefix ("thither")
qui- = 3rd person singular object prefix
quim- = 3rd person plural object prefix
quin- = 3rd person plural object prefix
Rh- (reduplication of initial syllable plus -h) = prefix stressing repetitive action
t- = 1st person plural possessive, reflexive, and subject prefix
t- = 2nd person singular subject prefix
të- = non-specific human possessive prefix
tëch- = 1st person plural object prefix
ti- = 1st person plural subject prefix
ti- = 2nd person singular subject prefix
tla- = non-human object prefix
tlä- = optative verb marker (“if”), normally written as separate word
tläca- = negative optative verb marker (“if not”), normally written as separate word
tläcamo- = negative optative verb marker (“if not”), normally written as separate word
to- = 1st person plural possessive & reflexive prefix
- = 3rd person singular & plural subject prefix (null prefix)

**Suffixes**

- **-a** = non-productive transitivizing suffix for verbs ending in -i#
- **-ahui** = non-productive transitivizing suffix
- **-altia** = alternative causative suffix for any verb ending in -a#
- **-c** = agentive suffix? used after V
- **-c** = in, at, among
- **-c** = interparticle ligature when the second particle is negative
- **-c** = preterit verb form (V1)
- **-c(a)** = interparticle ligature when the second particle is negative
- **-ca** = particle added to the preterit stem to form an possessed agentive noun ending in -uh or -huan
- **-ca** = pluperfect verb form
- **-ca** = through, by, with, for
- **-cän** = optative plural marker
- **-cän** = in the place/time of
- **-cäti** = -ti = (added to N) to be a N, to act as N
- **-chöhua** = form of impersonal ending -hua for verbs ending in VtZV# (The first vowel is retained before the ch.)
- **-co** = agentive suffix? used after C
- **-co** = “come”; singular present/past intentional suffix added to Base 1
- **-co/c** = in, at, among
- **-coh** = “come”; plural present/past intentional suffix added to Base 1.
- **-eh** (pl. -ehqueh) = possessor of (after C; see huah.)
- **-h** = “go”; singular optative intentional suffix added to Base 1.
- **-h** = plural suffix, especially for nouns ending in tl
- **-h** = present, quotidian, imperfect, & pluperfect verb form plural marker
- **-h** = admonitive verb form (V1) (lost in plural)
- **-hua** = passive suffix (added to Base 2 ending); see lō.
- **-huän** = in the company of, with
- **-huän** = possessed plural suffix
- **-huah** = possessor of (esp. after V; see -eh)
- **-hualo** = passive/inactive verb ending
- **-hui** = possessive singular suffix used after C
- **-huic** = toward, against
- **-icampa** = behind
- **-ixpan** = before, in the presence of
- **-ia** = non-productive transitivizing suffix for verbs ending in -a# or -i#
- **-ia** applicative formant (adds an object); see -lia. Also occurs as misspelling of -iya.
- **-icpac** = on top of, on someone’s head, above
-ihtic = inside, in the belly of
-ihua = passive formant; see lö
-ihui = non-productive transitivizing suffix
-ilia = applicative verb ending (adds an object)
-itic See -ihtic
-ińco = on the surface of
-lan = next to, in the place of
-lhuia See -lia
-li = absolutive suffix for nouns ending in l
- lia = causative suffix used with denominative verbs in -ti#
-lia applicative (≈-lhuia ≈-ia)
Used to introduce additional oblique object, often benefactive.
-liztli (1) entification, (2) abstraction
-lō (-loh) = passive formant.
-loh = covered with, characterized by; see -yoh
-lotl = -ship, -ness; see yोtl
-ltia = causative suffix
-ltia = See -tia.
-män = locative suffix
-meh = plural suffix, especially for nouns ending in tl
-mőhua = form of impersonal ending -hua for verbs ending in mV#
-nahuac = next to, close to, near, within shouting distance of
-nī = quotidian verb form singular (V1 V2)
-nī = quotidian verb form singular (V3 V4)
-o = passive/inactive suffix (added to Base 2 ending in C)
-ōhua = form of impersonal ending -hua for verbs ending in huV#; also occurs as misspelling of -oa.
-oa = non-productive transitivizing suffix; also occurs as misspelling of -ohua.
-oh = covered with, characterized by; see -yoh
-ohua = passive/inactive suffix; see lö
-olt See -yotl
-pa = (1) times (with number); (2) moment relative to point in time
-pal = for, by means of, for the sake of
-pampa = account of, for, reason for, through, because of
-pan = in, on for, above, in the time of, in the presence of
-queh = future verb form plural marker
-queh = plural suffix, especially for preterit agentives
-queh = preterit verb form plural marker
-qui = agentive suffix used after C
-qui = “come”; singular optative intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-quih = “come”; plural optative intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-quihuih = “come”; plural future intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-quihuih = “come”; singular future intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-tēhua = to depart Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from őhua “rise, depart.”)
-tēhuac = departed Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from őhua “rise, depart.”)
-tēhuaz = will depart Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from őhua “rise, depart.”)
-tech = joined to, upon, as far as, concerning, beside, next to (general connector in verbal idioms)
-ti = “go”; singular optative intentional suffix added to Base 1
-ti = -cäti = (added to N) to be a N, to act as N
-tia = was Vb-ing (ti+yah) (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from yuah “go.”)
-tia = causative suffix (=-tia)
    N+ti(y)a = to provide sb with N
    Adj+tia = to render st Adj
    Vb + tia = to make sb Vb [st]
-tiaz = will be Vb-ing (ti+yaz) (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from yuah “go.”)
-tic = adjective suffix
-tica = ca = on account of (a person), by means of (a thing), at the place/time of, during.
-ticaca = stood Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from ihcac “stand.”)
-ticah = to be Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from cah “be.”)
-ticacatca = was Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from cah “be.”)
-ticaca = stood Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from ihcac “stand.”)
-ticacaz = will stand Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from ihcac “stand.”)
-ticah = to be Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from cah “be.”)
-ticacaz = will be Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from cah “be.”)
-tih = “go”; plural optative intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-tih = admonitive verb form plural marker
-tihcac = to stand Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from ihcac “stand.”)
-tihcuetch = Vb-ed quickly (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from huetzi “fall.”)
-tihcuetchi = to Vb quickly (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from huetzi “fall.”)
-tihcuetchiz = will Vb quickly (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from huetzi “fall.”)
-tih = “go”; plural present & future intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-tihuic = to come Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from huic “come.”)
-tihuicaza = came Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from huic “come.”)
-timanac = was Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from mani “be spread out.”)
-timanacca = was Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from mani “be spread out.”)
-timaniz = will be Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from mani “be spread out.”)
-tin = “go”; plural optative intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-tin = plural suffix, especially for nouns ending in tli or glottal stop
-tin = admonitive verb form plural marker
-tinemi = to go about Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from nemi “live.”)
-tinemiz = will go about Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from nemi “live.”)
-tinen = went about Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from nemi “live.”)
-tinenca = went Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from nemi “live.”)
-tiqui = passed Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from quiza “emerge, pass.”)
-tiquiza = to pass Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from quiza “emerge, pass.”)
-tiqui = will pass Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from quiza “emerge, pass.”)
-tiuh = to be Vb-ing (ti+yauh) (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from yauh “go.”)
-tuuh = “go”; singular present & future intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-tl = common absolutive suffix used for stems ending in V
-tla = non-productive transitivizing suffix for verbs ending in -gi#
-tlah = place of, place abundant in N.
-tlan = next to, under, between, under
-tli = absolutive suffix for nouns ending in C
-to = “go”; singular past intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-toe = to lie Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from on > oc “lie.”)
-toca = lay Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from on > oc “lie.”)
-toh = “go”: plural past intentional suffix added to Base 1.
-tón = dim. suffix; derrog. suffix.
-toz = will lie Vb-ing (Auxiliary added to Base 2, from on > oc “lie.”)
-tza = non-productive transitivizing suffix for verbs ending in -ki#
-tzélan = between, amidst, in the middle of
-tzé = vocative form of -tzintli
-tzihua = form of impersonal ending -hua for verbs ending in CtzV# (The C is retained before the tz.)
-tzintli = augmentative and dim. suffix in absolutive form.
-tzintlan = below
-uh = possessive singular suffix attached after -ca- in agentive nouns formed from verbs.
-xihua = form of impersonal ending -hua for verbs ending in CsV# (The C is retained before the x.)
-xühua = form of impersonal ending -hua for verbs ending in VsV# (The first vowel is retained before the x.)
-yân = place where something is done (suffixed to verbal stem)
-yötl (after z: -zötl, after l: -lötl) = -ship, -ness
-yoh (-oh) = covered with, characterized by
-z = future verb form (V1 V2) (lengthens prior vowel in V3 & V4)
-zquía (-h) = conditional verb form.
:= optative verb form (V3 V4) (lengthening of previous vowel)
- = optative verb form (V1 V2) (null suffix)
- = possessive suffix used after V or C (alternative) (null suffix)
- = present verb form singular (null suffix)
- = preterit & admonitive verb form (V2 V3 V4) (null suffix)