

Races and Languages in Tanaska

The predominant races in the Tanaskan region and their languages are described below. There are many other humanoid and monstrous creatures found in the area that have their own languages or use an altered version of a more common language.

Humans

Humans are the predominant race in the Tanaskan lands. The humans of Tanaska tend toward olive colored skin with dark eyes (brown or hazel), and dark hair, but lighter or darker complexions are not unusual. The Tanaskan language is the common tongue of the land and is the primary language of most residents (human and otherwise). Other parts of the world have their own regional language.

Halflings

Halflings are next most populous race in Tanaska, at least above ground. Halflings do not have a separate socio-political structure and are considered as equally “Tanaskan” as their human neighbors. That said, halflings do tend to live in their own communities, either in rural villages, or in predominantly halfling neighborhoods within larger towns and cities.

Halflings in general have strong creative tendencies and many of the most renown painters, writers, performers, and other artisans are halflings.

While halflings have their own language, in current times it is not typically spoken in casual conversation, even within their own tight-knit enclaves. Even so, most halfling-created stories, songs, operas, and plays are written and performed in the halfling language. It is primarily because of this that halfling is the most common second language learned by other Tanaskan races.

Dwarves

The Midrange mountains in central Tanaska are home to a large population of dwarves who live within the caverns and mines that are found throughout the mineral-rich bedrock. The full extent of this underground network of passages which connects hundreds of dwarven settlements (called “berks”) is not widely known to outsiders. Because most dwarves express little desire to venture beyond the borders of their own berk, even among the dwarves themselves there are very few that have extensive knowledge of the underground network of passages and caverns.

In the time before the War of Unity, a family clan, or group of clans formed the basis for a dwarven berk. As dwarven interaction and trade with the surface populations became more common however, a new type of dwarven community arose. These new settlements were founded closer to the surface near land that was rich in resources that could be mined, crafted, and traded. These new settlements became known as “geldberks” (or “gelds”) and were organized more like a business enterprise. Share owners or partners in the venture became the founders and political leaders of the geld, while workers and artisans would be drawn to the geld for the ready work and (usually) good pay. Dwarven gelds are literally “company towns” and the law is whatever the geld-leader (the “Gelsitz”) establishes.

Because most of the interactions between dwarves and surface-dwelling races tend to be related to trade and commerce, dwarves have been somewhat stereotyped as being shrewd in their business dealing and hard-driving bargainers. Dwarves also have a reputation for being exceptional craftsmen, not only in the forging of weapons and armor, but also in the invention and construction of mechanical devices, as well as engineering of larger structures.

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All dwarves share the same language which has both an oral and written form, although there are regional dialects.

Elves

As with humans, there is a wide variety of sub-races among the elven people and many elven “nations” across Haret. Bordering on the kingdom of Tanaska to the north-west is the elven kingdom of Kelnitheria and it is from there that most elves in Tanaska originate. These elves are considered expatriates within Tanaska and are treated as foreigners, even though they may have lived within the kingdom’s borders for several human generations.

The elves of Kelnitheria live predominantly in small, isolated communities throughout the coniferous forest that covers their land. There is no central government, but all the elves of Kelnitheria recognize a high-queen as their leader. Currently that is Ellishandra Tellinarian.

Unlike humans, all elves around the world share the same elven language which has both an oral and written form.

Gnomes

Gnomes were originally a race of fey from the Concordance that permanently settled on the Prime Material. Over the millennia that have passed since, they have lost most of their ties to their fey heritage and are now considered to be a native race.

Gnomes are highly individualistic and never developed any sociopolitical institutions; there is no gnomish nation or king, and gnomes rarely form strong, cohesive communities that endure. Gnomes are a restless, inquisitive race and rarely settle down in one place for very long. Because of this, gnomish settlements are extremely rare and even if a small group of gnomes come together for some reason, they don’t usually remain together long enough to establish a true community.

Gnomes have their own language which has its roots in the planar language of the Concordance (Teanga) but has evolved to the point that the two are now distinct languages. Unlike Teanga, the gnomish language has a written form as well as an oral form.

Orcs

The orcs in the region are predominantly found in the lands to the west of Tanaska across the Argondoline mountains. While there was a very brief armistice between the many orc tribes and the other races of Tanaska during the War of Unity, as soon as the common threat was defeated the truce ended. Since then, Orcish raiding parties will often cross the mountains to loot and pillage border settlements, but there has never been any unified attack on Tanaskan lands. Occasionally a group of orcs will break away from their tribe, usually because of some internal conflict, and settle in remote areas of Tanaskan. As long as these splinter-tribes remain peaceful, they are typically left alone, however few have ever been able to maintain the peace for long and an organized Tanaskan militia is sent to kill or drive them off.

The orcish language is the native tongue of all orcs in the area and is used as common language among many of the other humanoid tribes in the region in addition to their racial language (goblins, hobgoblins, bugbears, and gnolls). Orcish is predominantly an oral language. There is a rudimentary written form, but it does not fully encompass the oral form.

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Other Notable Languages

Several other notable languages are listed below with an indication of its prevalence (common, uncommon, rare, extremely rare)

Draconic (uncommon) – The language of dragons, drakes, and kobolds. Draconic has no written form.

Druidic (very rare) – Spoken only by druids, it is an adaptation of Teanga, the language of the Concordance, but altered to the extent that knowledge of one does not allow understanding of the other. Druidic has a full written form while Teanga does not.

Giant (uncommon) – Spoken by the races of giants, cyclops, ettins, ogres, and trolls. There is a written form, however only a few members of the giantish races learn or use it.

Sylvan (rare) – A language used by many non-humanoid creatures with ties to the natural world or who live in the wild forests and other untamed lands. This includes plant creatures, and magical beasts such as centaurs, unicorns, aranea, hags, spriggan, grippli, leucrota, lammasu, and sphinxs. Many of these creatures may have their own racial language as well. There is no written form of Sylvan.

Planar Languages

Shadowtongue – (extremely rare) A language used by native denizens of the Shadow Plane. Most of the sentient races that dwell within the plane have their own language, but almost all the intelligent denizens also speak the common language of the plane called Shadowtongue.

Teanga (extremely rare) – The language of the fey and the common language used by races that live in the Plane of Concordance. This includes fey as well as elemental creatures with the capability of speech. There is no written form of Teanga, but some of the more intelligent native speakers have adopted use of the mortal Druidic language.

Deific Languages (extremely rare) – On the plane of the Gods, each realm has its own language that is used by the denizens. Each language has a written form, but many of the creature native to the plane do not know how to read or write it.

Confrontion – Anarchic

Paxion – Veritan

Dionus – Celestial

Pestula – Abyssal

Sarmat – Sagastic

Igoft – Daemonic

Altrusia – Beatic

Maeldain – Infernal

Cyclopenda – Archivan

Proteus – Protean