

Kuruma was traditionally not a written language. Over the years, linguists and ethnographers recording the Kuruma language have used a spelling system that shows how words are supposed to sound.

The rules for pronunciation are not always the same as in English, because Kuruma had some sounds that are not used in the English language. This chart shows how letters are supposed to sound in Kuruma.

This sound chart has been taken from the *Kurrama: Kurrama – English Dictionary, English – Kurrama Wordlist, Topical Wordlist and Sketch Grammar* (2006) compiled by Alan Burgman and published by the Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre.

Vowels

Short Vowels:

a – like ‘u’ in but

i – like ‘i’ in fin

u – like ‘u’ in pudding

Long Vowels:

aa – like ‘a’ in father

ii – like ‘i’ in marine

uu – like ‘u’ in pudding (but longer)

Sound Chart - Kuruma

Consonants

j –	like ‘j’ in jetty, but with the middle of the tongue pulled back to the roof of the mouth
k –	between the ‘k’ in kite and ‘g’ in goanna
l –	like ‘l’ in love
lh –	like ‘l’ in love, but with the blade of the tongue against the back of the top front teeth
ly –	like ‘lli’ in million
m –	like ‘m’ in mouse
n –	like ‘n’ in night
ng –	like ‘ng’ in sing
nh –	like ‘n’ in night, but with the blade of the tongue against the back of the top front teeth
ny –	like ‘ny’ in canyon
rn –	like ‘n’ in night, but with the tip of the tongue curled backwards
p –	between the ‘p’ in pot and the ‘b’ in box
r –	like ‘r’ in rain, but with the tip of the tongue curled backwards
rr –	rolling ‘r’ (not used in English, but similar to the ‘tt’ in butter when you say it very quickly)
s –	like ‘s’ in snake
t –	between the ‘t’ in tickle and the ‘d’ in dingo
th –	between ‘t’ and ‘d’, but with the blade of the tongue against the back of the top front teeth
rt –	between ‘t’ and ‘d’, but with the tip of the tongue curled backwards
w –	like ‘w’ in water (at the beginning of a word, w can be silent when it appears before ‘u’)
y –	like ‘y’ in yellow (at the beginning of a word, y can be silent when it appears before ‘i’)