

# Suggested Steps to Follow when using **Asheninka**

*H. Andrew Black*

*SIL International*

asheninka\_support@sil.org

23 February 2026

Version: 1.3.0

## Contents

1	The basic “game” to play . . . . .	1
1.1	Setup . . . . .	1
1.2	Play the game . . . . .	2

## 1 The basic “game” to play

Setting up and using **Asheninka** is a bit like playing a game. One needs to make sure the crucial items are set up correctly and then one starts playing. This document outlines some suggestions on how to set up and play this game. Please see the User Documentation for more information. (Use menu item **Help / User Documentation** to see it or click [here](#).)

### 1.1 Setup

The basic setup for any of the implemented approaches is as follows:

1. Create a new project (use menu item **File / New**).<sup>1</sup>
2. Set the font, sort order, and keyboard<sup>2</sup> needed for both the vernacular and analysis languages (use menu item **Settings**).
3. Make sure that what is in the **Segment Inventory** covers all the segments you have in the orthography. Depending on the orthography, you may find that you'll need to add environments for some graphemes within some segments. For the Onset-nucleus-coda approach, check the onset, nucleus, and coda boxes as needed for each segment. For the Moraic approach, set the number of moras born by each segment.

---

<sup>1</sup>If you already have a project and it is very similar to what you need for this new project, you can also use menu item **File / Save As**.

<sup>2</sup>Keyboards are not yet implemented on Linux.

4. Make sure that every segment is in a natural class for the CV pattern approach or is somewhere in the sonority hierarchy for the other approaches that use it.
5. For the CV pattern approach, create **CV Syllable Patterns** that cover the kinds of syllables you think the language has. Be sure to allow for vowel-initial syllables if the language has them.
6. For the “Hyphen” approach, create the “Hyphen” classes and rules needed.
7. For those approaches needing them, set the **Syllabification Parameters**.
8. For the Nuclear projection approach, write some rules.
9. For the Optimality Theory approach create some constraints and rank them.
10. Import a list of words (or key them one by one).
11. Back up your project (use menu item **File / Project Management / Back up this project**).

With this, you have done the basic setup.

## 1.2 Play the game

You are now ready to play the game. Try the following steps:

1. Use menu item **Parser / Parse all Words** to have **Asheninka** parse all the words in the current “Words” view.
2. Look at the results. You can click on a column header to sort by that column. Doing this on the **Parser Result** column in the current “Words” view will show all the words which failed at the top (at least in the English user interface language).
3. Make frequent (labeled) backups via menu item **File / Project Management / Back up this project**. You can make a backup, try something else (e.g., add a segment or class; re-order the syllable patterns or add a new one; adjust the sonority hierarchy; change the **Syllabification Parameters**, etc.), perform the **Parser / Parse all Words** process and see how it goes. If it's worse, just restore from the backup. If it's better, make a backup of that and go on.

This is the basic process while playing the game. In addition, the following items may be helpful at various points in the process.

1. Use menu item **Tools / Compare Implementations** to compare a backup with what you have now or to compare two backups. This creates a report of what is different between the two states. It shows only those things which differ.
2. Use menu item **Parser / Try a Word** to test various words or to try and figure out why a given word does not parse the way you expect.
3. Use menu item **Tools / Find Word** to look for sequences of characters, if that helps you see patterns in the data.
4. Use one of the word-oriented filters (via menu item **Tools**) to look for patterns that may help you see what is going on.

5. Use the current “Predicted vs. Correct” view to discover any words whose parse does not match what is in the correct column. There may well be cases where it is not worth the effort to get the parser to correctly syllabify certain words (e.g., loan words in a different orthography or words which may well be misspelled). In such cases, just manually set the correct syllabification and do not worry that these fail to parse successfully.
6. Use menu item **Tools / Predicted to correct syllabification** to more quickly set which words are correctly syllabified. In fact, you should use this before exporting the results.