

## NOTES ON SYLLABIFICATION IN CLASSICAL ARMENIAN

Word-initially, Armenian does not allow for complex clusters; when encountering a pattern CCV- at the beginning of a word, a schwa needs to be introduced.

This is done after the first consonant: CCV- > CəCV-

e.g.    նման                    նը-ման  
          սրել                    սը-րել

An exception to this rule (like in many other languages) is posed by the sibilants (ս & զ): when occurring before occlusives (պ, տ, կ, etc.) or affricates (ծ, ց, ձ, ճ, ջ, ղ), the cluster SCV- (S being the sibilant) is resolved as əS-CV-.

e.g.    զթագաիորն            ըզ-տա-գա-ւո-րըն  
          սքանչելի            ըս-քան-շե-լի

Word-internally, -CC- is perceived as a natural syllable boundary, i.e. -C-C-. Therefore, no insertions are necessary.

e.g.    շարժումն                շար-ժու-մըն

Word-finally, cluster of -VCC will remain as such (i.e. pronounced in succession).

e.g.    մաքս            յաշտ            ինձ

When ending in nasals, or liquids after sibilants, however, these clusters are separated. VCN > -V-CəN, -VSL > -V-SəL

e.g.    սար            ա-սըր  
          ինն            ի-նըն

Some morphological boundaries are observed, too; this is true for the definite clitics (-ն, -ս, -ի) and some of the case endings (-ք after գ, կ, ք; -ս); these, however, are only separated with schwa when necessary.

e.g.    քաղաքք            քա-ղա-քըք  
          այսս            այ-սը-սը-ս  
          ընկերք            ըն-կերք

For clusters of 3 or more consonants, -CCC-, it is best remembered that the idea is to form simple, stable, easy to pronounce syllables; thus, with all the above in mind, you'll find that word-initially, CCC- > CəC-C-; medially, -CCC- > -CC-C-; and finally -CCC > -C-CəC.

e.g.	խնդալ	խըն-դալ
	թարգման	թարգ-ման
	դուստր	դուս-տըր

For more complex clusters, but also generally, one ought to remember that shwa will be inserted where a vowel has been lost due to vocalic alternation; these words are usually either compounds or derivatives, and are thus not phonologically predictable, but rely on lexical considerations.

e.g.	սիրտ -- սրտի	(սըր-տի)
	սուրբ -- անսրբութիւն	(ան-սըր-բու-թիւն)

[These are only practical notes; in theory, things become somewhat more complicated. A major role is played by the concept of sonority, and various rules of precedence and sonority contour apply. This would go beyond what we need for reading, though].