

Toki Pona

Toki Pona is a language developed by linguist Sonja Lang, with only around 130 words.

This side describes the grammar, the other side contains vocabulary.

This version is by jan Sa, CC0.

[Original](#) by blinry.

This document is simply a cheat sheet and is not exhaustive. For more, visit <https://tokipona.org/>

Alphabet

Toki Pona uses these letters:

a e i j k l m n o p s t u w

All consonants are the same as English, except j ls like English "y." Vowels are all similar to Spanish.

Basic sentences

The particle *li* separates the subject from the predicate.

soweli li moku. - The cat is eating.

jan li lape. - Someone is sleeping.

There is no verb "to be."

The part after *li* (predicate) can be a noun or an adjective.

kili li moku. - Fruits are food.

telo li pona. - Water is good.

If the subject is *mi* or *sina* alone, the *li* is always omitted.

mi moku. - I eat.

sina pona. - You are good.

Ambiguity

Toki Pona words are less specific than English words, so one-to-one translation is not as easy.

mi moku. - I am eating. / I was eating. / I will be eating.

Many words have multiple or general meanings.

soweli - cat / dog / (any land mammal)

kili = (any fruit or vegetable)

Most words can act as nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs.

telo - water / wet / to wash

pona = good, simple / to improve, to make better / well, greatly

Nouns have no default countability. They also do not have any default identifiability.

kili - a fruit / the fruit / some fruits / the fruits

mi - I / me / we / us

Direct objects

The particle *e* separates a verb from its direct object. This also makes the word before into a verb.

soweli li moku e telo. - The animal drinks the water.

mi telo e soweli. - I wash the cat. / I apply water to the cat.

sina suli e ona. - You embiggen it. / You make it big.

Modifying words

Words can be modified by appending other words.

jan lili - small human, child

tomo mi - my house

pilin pona - a good feeling

To negate a word, append *ala*.

mi lape ala. - I'm not sleeping.

jan ala li toki. - No one is talking.

With multiple modifiers, they all modify the first word.

lipu kasi tu - two plant documents

poki laso pimeja - a blue and black box

You can change the way the modifiers interact using *pi*.

lipu pi kasi tu - a document of two plants

poki pi laso pimeja - a dark-blue box

Prepositions

kepeken, *lon*, *sama*, *tan*, and *tawa* can act as prepositions. They go at the end of a statement.

mi moku kepeken ilo. - I eat with cutlery.

soweli li lon tomo. - The animal is in the house.

sina toki sama kala! - You talk like a fish!

mi kama tan esun. - I arrive from the store.

ona li toki e ni tawa sina. - They said this to you.

Conjunctions

There are many ways to say "and." For *multiple* subjects, use *en*.

mi en sina li musi mute. - You and I are playing a lot.

For predicates, repeat *li*.

soweli ni li lili li suwi. - This animal is small and cute.

For direct objects, repeat *e*.

ona li jo e waso e kala. - She has a bird and a fish.

For prepositions, repeat the preposition.

mi pali e tomo kepeken palisa kepeken kiwen. - I make the house using sticks and stones.

anu can be used to mean "or."

ni li pona anu ike? - Is this good or bad?

mi anu sina li tawa esun. - You or I are going to the store.

Loaned Adjectives

Toki Pona does not use proper nouns, but rather proper adjectives:

jan Sonja - a Sonja person, a person named Sonja

toki Tosi - a Tosi (Deutsch) language, German

ma Mewika li suli. - The US is big.

Loaned adjectives should follow Toki Pona's phonology. Toki Pona uses a (C)V(n) syllable structure. Vowel clusters, consonant clusters, and the sequences *wu*, *wo*, *ji*, *ti*, *nm*, and *nn* are disallowed.

O

You can use *o* before a verb to turn it into a command.

o kute! - Listen!

o pali. - Work, please.

You can use *o* after a subject to address that subject.

jan Pape o! - O Pape!

You can have *o* between a subject and predicate to express a wish, desire, request, etc.

pona o tawa sina. - I wish for goodness to go to you.

mi o pali. - I should be working.

Or it can also be a contraction of the first two uses.

soweli Ton o moku. - Eat, Ton.

Interjections

Interjections are used often, sometimes paired with *a* for emphasis.

pona! - Good! / Great! / Thanks!

wawa a! - So powerful!

toki! - Hello! / Hi! / Greetings!

lon! - True! / Correct!

moku pona! - Bon appetit! / What a fantastic meal!

Questions

There are two ways to form yes or no questions. For yes/no questions, use "verb *ala* verb."

sina moku ala moku? - Are you eating?

To say yes, repeat the verb. To say no, say "verb *ala*" or "*ala*."

moku - yes

moku ala / ala - no

For open-ended questions, you can also use "*anu seme*."

sina moku anu seme? - Are you eating?

kala anu seme li lon poki? - Are fish in the box?

seme can also be used to create nonpolar questions. Replace the word in question with *seme*.

jan seme li toki? - Who's talking?

sina pali e seme? - What are you making?

The question mark is a stylistic choice. Toki Pona uses grammar to mark questions, not tone or punctuation.

In general, all you need for punctuation is to separate sentences.

Preverbs

Preverbs *go* before verbs to modify their meaning.

mi kama sona. - I come to know.

waso lili li wile suli. - The small bird wants to be big.

The words that can act as preverbs are *wile*, *kama*, *sona*, *lukin*, *ken*, *awen*, and sometimes *alasa*.

Context

la can be used to mark the context of a sentence. *X la Y* means "In the context of X, Y." This can mean time, cause, topic, or any other relationship to the main sentence.

sina lon poka mi la mi pilin pona. - When you are by my side, I feel good.

Most prepositional terms can be moved behind a *la*.

mi lape lon tenpo pimeja. tenpo pimeja la mi lape. - I sleep at night.

sina seli tan seme? tan seme la sina seli? - Why are you hot?

Numbers

Combine number words to add them up.

wan - 1 *tu* - 2 *luka* - 5

mute - 20 *ale* - 100

tu tu - 4 *luka tu wan* - 8

nanpa can be used to mark ordinals.

jan nanpa wan li pona. - The first person is good.

ni li nasin nanpa mute tu wan. - That is 23rd Street.

And... that's it!

a	(emphasis, emotion, or confirmation)	kon	air; spirit, essence; unseen agent	nanpa	-th; number	*soko	mushroom
akesi	reptile, amphibian	*ku	to interact with <i>Toki Pona Dictionary</i>	nasa	strange, unusual; foolish; silly	sona	to know; wisdom knowledge, info
ala	no, not, zero	kule	color, colorful	nasin	way, road, doctrine, method	soweli	land animal
alasa	to hunt, to forage	kulupu	community, group, company, nation	neni	bump, hill, nose	suli	big, heavy, large
ale (ali)	all; everything; 100	kute	ear; to hear	ni	this, that	suno	light source, sun; bright
anpa	downward, humble, lowly	la	(context marker)	nimi	word, name	supa	horizontal surface, thing to put objects on
ante	different, other, changed	lape	sleeping, resting	noka	foot, leg; lower part	suwi	sweet; cute
anu	(connects phrases with “or” rather than “and”)	laso	blue, green	o	(vocative / imperative particle)	tan	from, by, because
awen	enduring, kept, protected; to continue to	lawa	head, mind; ruler; to lead, to regulate	olin	to love, to respect	taso	but, however; only
e	(direct object marker)	*leko	square, block	ona	third-person pronoun	tawa	going to; for; moving
en	(multiple subject marker)	len	cloth, fabric; cover, layer of privacy	open	to begin, to start; opening	telo	liquid, water, beverage
esun	market, shop, fair	lete	cool, cold; raw	pakala	broken, damaged; to mess up	tenpo	time, duration, moment, period
ijo	thing, object, phenomenon	li	(predicate marker)	pali	to do, to work on	toki	to say; language
ike	bad, negative; irrelevant	lili	small, little; few, a bit; young	palisa	long hard object; rod, stick	tomo	indoor space; building, home
ilo	tool, machine, device, instrument	linja	long and flexible thing; string, cord, hair, thread	pan	grain, pasta, bread, rice	*tonsi	non-binary, trans
insa	centre, inside, content; organ, stomach	lipu	flat object; paper, card, document, website	pana	to give, to emit, to send	tu	Two
jaki	disgusting, unclear, toxic	loje	red, reddish	pi	(regroups modifiers)	unpa	sex; to have sexual relations
jan	person, somebody	lon	located at, present at, true	pilin	heart, feeling	uta	mouth, lips; oral
jelo	yellow, yellowish	luka	arm, hand; five	pimeja	black, dark, unlit	utala	to battle; challenge
jo	to have, carry, contain, hold	lukin	to see, examine	pini	finished, past, end	walo	white; light-colored, pale
kala	sea creature	lupa	door, hole, orifice	pipi	bug, insect	wan	one; unique
kalama	sound; to make a sound, utter	ma	earth, land; outdoors; soil	poka	hip, side; nearby	waso	flying creature
kama	arriving, coming, future; to become	mama	parent; creator; caretaker	poki	container, bag, box, bowl, cup	wawa	strong, powerful; confident, energetic
kasi	plant, vegetation; grass, leaf	mani	money, cash, currency item	pona	good, useful, simple, positive	weka	absent, away
ken	to be able to, can, may; possible	*meli	Female	pu	interacting with <i>Toki Pona: The Language of Good</i>	wile	must, need, want
kepeken	to use, with, by means of	mi	first-person pronoun	sama	similar, same; as	These definitions have been slightly shortened to better fit a single page. Also refer to other dictionaries and speakers!	
**kijetesantakalu	Musteloids, such as racoon	*mije	male	seli	Fire; heat source		
kili	fruit, vegetable	moku	to eat, to drink; food	selo	outer form, outmost layer; skin, peel	*These words have been marked as widespread by lipu Linku , which means that less than 90% of speakers use this word.	
*kin	also, too	moli	dead, dying	seme	what? which?		
*kipisi	to cut, to divide; part, division	monsia	back, behind, rear	sewi	area above, highest part; divine, sacred	**This word is a common joke word, not intended for serious use.	
kiwen	hard object, metal, stone, rock	*monsuta	fear; monster; scary	sijelo	body, torso. physical state		
ko	clay, semi-solid, paste, powder	mu	(animal noise)	sike	circular object, cycle; of one year		
		mun	night sky object	sin	new, fresh; another		
		musi	entertaining, fun, recreational	sina	second-person pronoun		
		mute	many, a lot; very; quantity	sinpin	face, front, wall		
		*namako	spice, additional	sitelen	image, picture, writing, symbol		