

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