

Toki Pona

Toki Pona is a language developed by linguist Sonja Lang, with only 137 words.

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

This version is based on v2 by jan Sa (Discord: Green Guy#5294), CC0.

Original by [blinry](#).

This version uses both *Toki Pona: The Language of Good* and *Toki Pona Dictionary* as its bases.

Alphabet

Toki Pona uses these letters:

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

You can base them on their sounds in the IPA, but pronunciation doesn't matter.

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* can be a noun or an adjective.

kili li moku – Fruits are food.

telo li pona – Water is good.

telo li moku – Water is a drink.

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 has ambiguity built into the language. You'll need proper context to understand the intended meaning of a sentence. Verbs have no set tense.

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 singular/plural, and no definite/indefinite article:

kili – a fruit / the fruit / some fruits / the fruits

Direct objects

The particle *e* separates a verb from its direct object.

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

mi telo e soweli – I wash the cat.

Modifying words

Words can be modified by appending other words.

jan lili – small person, 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 sentence.

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 tawa sina – They're talking to you.

“And”

There are many ways to say “and.” With subjects you use *en*.

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

With predicates you repeat *li*.

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

With direct objects you repeat *e*.

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

With prepositions you repeat the preposition.

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

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 sulisuli – The US is big.

Loaned adjectives must follow Toki Pona's phonology. Toki Pona uses a (C)V(N) syllable structure. The C can only be one consonant. 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.

Questions

There are two ways to form yes or no questions. The first way is “word *ala* word.”

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

You can also append “*anu seme*”.

sina moku anu seme? – Are you eating or what?

A common way to answer yes to these kinds of questions is with *lon* (meaning “true” or “affirmative”).

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?

Preverbs

Preverbs go before verbs to modify their meaning.

mi kama sona – I come to know.

waso lili li wile sulisuli – The small bird wants to be big.

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

Context

la can be used to mark the context of a sentence. *X la Y* means “In the context of X, Y.”

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. *tu tu* – 4. *luka tu wan* – 8

nanpa can be used to mark ordinals.

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

And... that's it!

a (emphasis, emotion or confirmation)	kon air, breath; essence, spirit; hidden reality, unseen agent	mute many, a lot, more, much, several, very	sijelo body (of person or animal), physical state, torso
akesi non-cute animal; reptile, amphibian	*ku interacting with Toki Pona Dictionary	*n hmm, uhh	sike round or circular thing; ball, circle, cycle, sphere, wheel, (sike suno) of one year
ala no, not, none, zero, 0	kule colourful, pigmented, painted	nanpa -th (ordinal number), number, numbers	sin new, fresh, another
alasa to hunt, forage	kulupu community, company, group, nation, society, tribe	nasa unusual, strange; foolish, crazy; drunk, intoxicated	sina you
ale / ali all; abundant, countless, plentiful, life, (number) 100	kute ear, hear	nasin way, custom, doctrine, method, path, road	sinpin face, foremost, front, wall
anpa bowing down, downward, humble, lowly, dependent	la (between the context phrase and the main sentence)	nena bump, button, hill, mountain, nose, protuberance	sitelen image, picture, representation, symbol, mark, writing
ante different, altered, changed, other	*lanpan get, seize, steal	ni that, this	*soko mushroom
anu or	lape sleeping, resting	nimi name, word	sona to know, be skilled in, be wise about, info, wisdom, knowledge
awen enduring, kept, protected, safe, waiting, staying, to continue to	laso blue, green	noka foot, leg, organ of locomotion; bottom, lower part	soweli animal, beast, land mammal
e (before the direct object)	lawa head, mind, to control, direct, guide, lead, own, plan, regulate, rule	o hey! O! (vocative or imperative)	suli big, heavy, large, long, tall; important; adult
en (between multiple subjects)	*leko square, block	olin to love, have compassion for, respect, show affection to	suno sun; light, brightness, glow, radiance, shine; light source
*epiku epic, awesome	len cloth, clothing, fabric, textile; cover, layer of privacy	ona he, she, it, they	supa horizontal surface, thing to put or rest something on
esun market, shop, fair, bazaar, business transaction	lete cold, cool; uncooked, raw	open to begin, start; open; turn on	suwi sweet, fragrant; cute, innocent, adorable
ijo thing, phenomenon, object, matter	li (predicate marker)	pakala botched, broken, damaged, harmed, messed up, „damn!“	tan by, from, because of
ike bad, negative; non-essential, irrelevant	lili little, small, short; few; a bit; young	pali to do, take action on, work on; build, make, prepare	taso but, however, only, (wan taso) alone
ilo tool, implement, machine, device	linja long and flexible thing; cord, hair, rope, thread, yarn	palisa long hard thing; branch, rod, stick	tawa going to, toward; for; from the perspective of, moving
insa centre, content, inside, between; internal organ, stomach	lipu flat object; book, document, card, paper, record, website	pan cereal, grain; barley, corn, oat, rice, wheat; bread, pasta	telo water, liquid, fluid, wet substance; beverage, to wash, to water
jaki disgusting, obscene, sickly, toxic, unclean, unsanitary	loje red, reddish	pana to give, send, emit, provide, put, release	tenpo time, duration, moment, occasion, period, situation
jan human being, person, somebody	lon located at, present at, real, true, existing	pi of (regroup modifier)	toki to communicate, say, speak, talk, use language, think
*jasima mirror, reflect	luka arm, hand, tactile organ (number) 5	pilin heart (physical or emotional), feeling, emotion, a direct experience	*tonsi non-binary, trans , gendernonconforming
jelo yellow, yellowish	lukin to look at, see, examine, observe, read, watch,	pimeja black, dark, unlit	tomo indoor space; building, home, house, room, structure
jo to have, carry, contain, hold	lupa to seek, look for, try to door, hole, orifice, window	pini ago, completed, ended, finished, past, end	tu two, (number) 2, divide(d)
kala fish, marine animal, sea creature	ma earth, land; outdoors, world; country, territory; soil	pipi bug, insect, ant, spider	unpa sex, to have sexual / marital relations with
kalama to produce a sound; recite, utter aloud, Sound, noise	mama parent, ancestor; creator, originator; caretaker, sustainer	poka hip, side; next to, nearby, vicinity	uta mouth, lips, oral cavity, jaw
kama arriving, coming, future, summoned	mani money, cash, savings, wealth; large domesticated animal	poki container, bag, bowl, box, cup, cupboard, drawer, vessel	utala to battle, challenge, compete against, struggle against
kasi plant, vegetation; herb, leaf	meli woman, female, feminine person; wife	pona good, positive, useful; friendly, peaceful; simple	walo white, whitish; light-coloured, pale
ken to be able to, be allowed to, can, may, possible	*meso average, middle	pu interacting with the official Toki Pona book	wan unique, united, one, (number) 1
kepeken to use, with, by means of	mi I, me, we, us	sama same, similar; each other; sibling, peer, fellow, as, like	waso bird, flying creature, winged animal
**kijete -Musteloids, such as	mije man, male, masculine person; husband	seli fire; cooking element, chemical reaction, heat source	wawa strong, powerful; confident, sure; energetic, intense
santakalu racoon	*misi -medicine, drug	selo outer form, outer layer; bark, peel, shell, skin; boundary	weka absent, away, ignored
kili fruit, vegetable	keke to eat, drink, consume, swallow, ingest	seme what? which?	wile must, need, require, should, want, wish
*kin also, too	moku dead, dying	sewi area above, highest part, something elevated	
*kipisi to cut, divide	moli back, behind, rear		
kiwen hard object, metal, rock, stone	*monsuta fear, monster, scary		
ko clay, clinging form, dough, semi-solid, paste, powder	mu (animal noise or communication)		
**koko -to speak a language	mun moon, night sky object, star		
sila where toki pona ist more appropriate	musi artistic, entertaining, frivolous, playful, recreational, fun		

* an official *nimi sin* in *ku*

** a joke word, not serious