# CHAPTER 1 – ORÍ KÌNÍ ÍN

**THE YORUBA ALPHABETS – ÀWỌN ALÚFÁBẸ́Ẹ̀TÌ YORÙBÁ**

There are twenty – five (25) alphabets in Yoruba language. They are:

A B D E Ẹ F G GB H I J K L M N O Ọ P R S Ṣ T U W Y.

**NOTE** – **Àkíyèsí**:

Letters like, c, q, v, x and z are not among Yoruba alphabets.

**How to Pronounce the Alphabets:**

**The Yoruba Alphabets Similar Pronunciation In English**

## A *ah*

B *bee*

D *dee*

E *hay*

Ẹ *air*

F *fee*

G *gee* (as in *go*)

GB (has no English similarity)

H *hee*

I *ee*

J *jee*

K *key*

L *lee*

M *mee*

N *nee*

O *oh*

Ọ *or*

P *pee*

R *ree*

S *see*

Ṣ *she*

T *tea*

U *ooh*

W *wee*

Y *yee*

**Yoruba Vowels - Awọn Fawẹli Yoruba**

Yoruba alphabets contains only seven (7) vowels, namely:

a e ẹ i o ọ u

a *(ah)* e *(hay)* ẹ *(air)* i *(ee)* o *(oh)* ọ *(or)* u *(ooh)*

In the same vein there are eighteen (18) consonants:

**Yoruba Consonants - Awọn Kọ́nsónántì Yoruba**

b d f g gb h j k l m n p r s ṣ t w y

Let’s make some two letter words, using consonant + vowel.

**Forming Two-Letter Words – Kíkọ Àwọn Ọ̀rọ̀ Oní-Lẹ́tà Méjì.**

b = ba *(bah)* be*(bay)* bẹ *(bair)* bi *(bee)* bo *(boh)* bọ*(bor)* bu*(boo)*

d = da *(dah)* de*(day)* dẹ *(dair)* di *(dee)* do *(doh)* dọ*(dor)* du*(boo)*

f = fa *(fah)* fe*(fay)* fẹ *(fair)* fi *(fee)* fo *(foh)* fọ*(for)* fu*(foo)*

g = ga *(gah)* ge*(gay)* gẹ *(gair)* gi *(gee)* go *(go)* gọ*(gor)* gu*(goo)*

h = ha *(hah)* he*(hay)* hẹ *(hair)* hi *(hee)* ho *(hoh)* họ*(hor)* hu*(hoo)* wa *(wah)* we*(way)* wẹ *(wair)* wi *(wee)* wo *(woh)* wọ*(wor)* wu*(woo)*

ETC

By yourself, form more of these two-letter words with the remaining consonants; gb, j, k, l, m, etc

**TONAL MARKS:**

The tone marks adopted to help in pronouncing Yoruba words are the first three musical notes;

*‘do’ ‘re’ ‘mi’*

*“do”* is the low tone. The sign representing this is ( ̀ )

*“re”* is the medium tone. It has no sign representation

*“mi”* is the high tone. The sign representing this is ( ́ )

**\*These tone marks are strictly placed on Yoruba vowels, except in few instances they are used on letter ‘*n*’.**

For instance, try to call these common words below. Let the tones in the brackets above guide you. Pronounce the corresponding tone mark before pronouncing the word.

**BRAINWORK**

WORD TONE

(i). Come – wá ‘*mi’* wá

(ii). Child – ọmọ *re re* ọmọ

(iii). A name – Adé *re m*i Adé

(iv). Cooked garri – ẹ̀bà *do do* ẹ̀bà

**NASAL VOWELS – ÀWỌN FÁWẸ̀LÌ ÀRÁNMÚPÈ**

### These are five nasal vowels, namely:

an, ẹn, in, ọn, un

**The Nasals How to Pronounce**

#### i. -an e.g. san – *to pay* is pronounced *‘sun’*

#### ii. -ẹn e.g. yẹn – *that* is pronounced *(Japanese)‘Yen’*

iii. -in e.g. dín – *to fry* is pronounced as *‘dean’*

iv. -ọn e.g. pọ́n – *to be ripe* is pronounced the same as ‘*an*’

in (i) above.

v. -un e.g. fún – *to give* is pronounced as *‘foon’* and not

as ‘*fun’*

**BRAINWORK**

***Now try and pronounce the words below.***

1. rán – *to sew*; yán – *to yawn*; ọsàn – *orange*
2. yẹn – *that* hẹn - *yes*
3. pín – *to divide*; sín – *to sneeze* rìn – *to walk*
4. fọn – *to blow [a trumpet]*; pọ́n – *to be ripe* ẹ̀fọn – *mosquito*
5. sùn – *to sleep*; sún – *to shift*; sun – *to burn*
6. Ọsàn yẹn - *That orange*.

**SINGULAR AND PLURAL – ẸYỌ ÀTI Ọ̀PỌ̀**

The article *‘àwọn’* is used to express plurality of Yoruba nouns.

For instance:

**Ẹyọ Ọ̀pọ̀**

ọsàn – orange àwọn ọsàn - oranges

ẹ̀fọn – mosquito àwọn ẹ̀fọn - mosquitoes

ọmọ - child àwọn ọmọ - children

ilé – house àwọn ilé - houses

ènìyàn – person àwọn ènìyàn – persons/people