

# lipu lili pi toki pona

## lipu lili pi toki pona



This is a special all-in-one render of *lipu lili pi toki pona*, formerly known as *nasin pi jan Sotan*. Some (most?) of the link might be broken or conflicted, so expect some hiccups. This document is written for Github in Github Flavored Markdown, so converting it properly is not as easy as it would be with other documents (that I write with Python markdown in mind). I tried to automatize as much of the process as possible and the result is what you see here. Beginning with the Definitions everything is kept untouched (with the exception of the deleted Table of Contents under Grammar). I hope you find this version hopeful as well as visually not-that-unpleasant.

Sincerely: *jan Sotan*

### Table of Contents¶

- Preface
- Contact
- Copyright
- Definitions
  - pu
  - pona
  - Dialect
  - Usually, usual
  - Modifier
  - Particle
  - Ambiguous, ambiguity
  - Formal use
  - Gray area, gray zone
  - Informal use
  - Sins and lesser sins
- Grammar
  - Word structures and pronunciation
    - \* Letters
    - \* Syllables
  - Unofficial words
    - \* Transliteration of proper names
  - Word order
    - \* Modifiers
    - \* Possessors
  - Separators
    - \* e
    - \* li
    - \* la
    - \* pi
      - General use
      - Modifier groups
      - Possessors

- Other uses
  - pi li
- Prepositions
  - \* kepeken
  - \* lon
  - \* tawa
  - \* tan
  - \* sama
  - \* Direction words
- Questions
  - \* Answering a yes/no question
- Punctuation
  - \* Commas
  - \* Question marks
  - \* Exclamation marks
  - \* Colons
    - e ni
    - X ni
  - \* Quotes
  - \* Dialogue
- Time
- Numbers
- Conjunctions
  - \* And
    - Special cases
  - \* Or
  - \* But
- Difference between a/kin, lukin/oko and namako/sin
- Deprecated words
- Colors
- Sins
  - \* Using "tawa" like it was in English
    - Alternatives
  - \* Using "en" and "anu" at the beginning of a sentence
    - Alternatives
- Lesser sins
  - \* kepeken e
    - Alternative
  - \* Shortening "jan" to "j-" prefix
    - Alternative
  - \* Using direct address at the end of a sentence
    - Alternative
- Dictionary
  - pu
  - As I use
    - \* Words
      - A
      - E
      - I
      - J
      - K
      - L
      - M
      - N
      - O
      - P
      - S
      - T
      - U

- W
    - \* Older words
    - \* Replaced words
    - \* Shortenings
  - Phrases, interjections
    - \* Others
    - \* Acronyms
- tok’ apona
  - Shortenings
  - Contractions
    - \* Pronouns
    - \* ala
    - \* li
    - \* X ni
    - \* pi
    - \* Assimilations
    - \* Time
  - oke
  - Use of non-proper names as unofficial words or nouns

## Preface ¶

This doc is basically a brief-ish, but almost complete description of the *toki pona grammar* (that happened to come along with a dictionary as well) that is based on *how I use the language*. This doc is intended to those who has a basic understanding on the language, or interested in how others interpret it.

Most people will use toki pona according to pu or jan Pije’s o kama sona e toki pona!. These are great sources and I wish not to compete with them... except that I kind of do. Many people learn from different sources that describes toki pona slightly differently and, for the sake of simplicity, I will call these variations *dialects*. Those differences are often minute and arguably identical to pu (depending on how one interprets pu), which was my goal as well when I first wrote this *nasin*.

Why was it called *nasin pi jan Sotan*? Because I want to make it clear that it is, in fact, describes toki pona as a language in a way that in practice most people will not have any problem with it, but there are fundamental differences between some of the structures and the "logic behind the language" that may make it different. Just a quick example, the particles *e* and *li* were (and sometimes still are) a matter of debate whether they are independent words, separators between or parts of the noun/verb/subject/object, etc. I have my own view on them, others have different ones and, in the end, maybe every one of us is right, since *pu* did not gave us a definite answer -- it only says that they are particles and *this* and *that* are what they do. Let us not mention the issues with *pi* -- with little to no stretch, we (many toki pona enthusiasts and I) could write pages on this subject alone; it’s different uses, alternative interpretations, other’s views on it, what rules do or should apply to it, etc. Also, I needed a name that uniquely identifies this document.

But as time have passed and plans have changed, this doc ultimately was renamed to *lipu lili pi toki pona*. It technically still described "my nasin", but I felt like this name would suit it better, especially since I plan to [censored].

Lastly, I would like to point out that unlike many "proper" grammar descriptions, many sentences begin with "I" instead of using passive. This is because originally this document was only to present "how *I* use the language", rather than "this is how the language should be used". While technically this is still true (as of 05/05/2019), in the future I would expand this doc and change ("properize") its language.

PS: As a disgusting attempt to get people to read my writings, one of my original reasons to write the predecessor of this doc was to make clear what and how I meant things. I applied either these same rules or its (mostly unwritten) predecessors since around 2015 in things that you can read at [dschorsaanjo.hu/toki-pona](https://dschorsaanjo.hu/toki-pona).

## Contact ¶

If you find any error in the text (either grammatical or contextual), please send a pull request, fork the project, or write an email to me at [b.zoltan.gorza@gmail.com](mailto:b.zoltan.gorza@gmail.com)!

## Copyright ¶

This work by B. Zoltán Gorza is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License. To view a copy of the license, visit [this site](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

The brutal mess of code that I call *htmlize* and its associated files are licensed under the New BSD License (also known as 3-clause BSD license). A full copy of the license is included within that file.

## Definitions¶

Here I list every definition that I use and can (probably will) be misunderstood.

- pu
- pona
- Dialect
- Usually, usual
- Modifier
- Particle
- Ambiguous, ambiguity
- Formal use
- Gray area, gray zone
- Informal use
- Sins and lesser sins

### pu¶

The definition of the word is *interacting with the official Toki Pona book*[sic], but as a noun it refers to the book itself.

### pona¶

*pona* means *good* (among others). When such phrases used as *pona way* and *more pona*, it means that it fits better the language.

These sentences often describe personal interpretations and opinion.

### Dialect¶

A variant of toki pona, despite how similar it is to *pu*.

### Usually, usual¶

These are referring to how words are used and defined in *pu*. This meaning is not used in the dictionary!

### Modifier¶

I use the word *modifier* as an umbrella term for *adjectives and adverbs*, and quite often used interchangeably with *adjective* as well (i.e. everything that changes or modifies the meaning of a noun or noun phrase).

### Particle¶

Particles are either *function words* (that have only grammatical function) or *other words* (that cannot be assigned to other parts of speech).

### Ambiguous, ambiguity¶

It does not mean how ambiguous a sentence is in English (or in any translation), but how a sentence can be transcribed between dialects (e.g. the name "tok' apona" is "toki pi pona ala" in *pu* dialect, not "toki pona ala" -- this is a bad example, and mostly matters only for purposely non-standard toki pona dialects).

### Formal use¶

This is the use of the language in larger groups, forums and in any place outside of a small community. In those, people probably learned the language from various sources, lessons, so it is important to use more strict rules to create less ambiguity.

In other words, this is *proper* toki pona and this is how toki pona should be used.

## Gray area, gray zone¶

Everything falls into the gray area that are often challenged by speakers of the language whether something is correct or not.

You should try to avoid using structures things that fall into the gray area, unless the audience is familiar with them and accept its use.

## Informal use¶

This is the use of the language in small groups, chats, and in literature and music (poems, lyrics, raps). It is probably less strict than the *formal use*, though it also has or should have its well defined rule set. My informal use is based on tok'apona, although it have changed since its publication.

This is described in detail in informal.md.

## Sins and lesser sins¶

These are (bad) habits and widespread use of words that I do not agree with. Some of these may be in other sets of lessons. Some of these may be "legalized" in *informal use*.

The *lesser sins* are either more widespread (hence less preventable), or sort of close to the usual use of toki pona, but against rules or in an undefined gray zone.

These are defined at the end of the grammar.

## Grammar¶

The grammar and the dictionary is mostly based on (and 100% backward-compatible with) *pu*, but also extends and tries to clarify it based on other sources (*jan Pije's* lessons, *jan Kipo's* writings, *common practices*, etc) and my own interpretations as well.

- Grammar
- Word structures and pronunciation
  - Letters
  - Syllables
- Unofficial words
  - Transliteration of proper names
- Word order
  - Modifiers
  - Possessors
- Separators
  - e
  - li
  - la
  - pi
  - General use
  - Modifier groups
  - Possessors
  - Other uses
  - pi li
- Prepositions
  - kepeken
  - lon
  - tawa
  - tan
  - sama
  - Direction words
- Questions
  - Answering a yes/no question
- Punctuation
  - Commas
  - Question marks

- Exclamation marks
- Colons
- e ni
- X ni
- Quotes
- Dialogue
- Time
- Numbers
- Conjunctions
  - And
  - Special cases
  - Or
  - But
- Difference between a/kin, lukin/oko and namako/sin
- Deprecated words
- Colors
- Sins
  - Using "tawa" like it was in English
  - Alternatives
  - Using "en" and "anu" at the beginning of a sentence
  - Alternatives
- Lesser sins
  - kepeken e
  - Alternative
  - Shortening "jan" to "j-" prefix
  - Alternative
  - Using direct address at the end of a sentence
  - Alternative

## Word structures and pronunciation¶

Words and syllables has their own well-defined structure. For the structures I will use the following notations:

- **V:** a *vowel* (a, e, i, o, u)
- **C:** a *consonant* (j, k, l, m, n, p, s, t, w)
- **n:** is an *optional n* (always at the end of a word)
- **\*** means *any number* (e.g. **V\*** for "any number of vowels")
- **?** means *one or zero* (e.g. **V?** for "one or zero vowel")
- **+** means *one or more* (e.g. **V+** for "one or more vowels")
- **()** for grouping parts

## Letters¶

Every letter's pronunciation is mostly the same as in Esperanto.

*This long description of letters and sounds are from the draft of lipu toki pona, which is a planned toki pona book suitable for learners as well.*

The alphabet has only *14 letters*: five vowels and nine consonants. Alternative pronunciations are allowed due to the small number of consonants.

Vowel	Sound
a	[a/ ]
e	[ /e]
i	[ /i]
o	[o]
u	[u/ ]

Many user tend to use *nasal vowels* when the consonant is followed by a *n* (in this case the *n* may not be pronounced). Every vowel is an independent sound and never a diphthong (as, for example, *o* is often pronounced as [ou] in English)!

Consonant	Sound	Alternative
j	[j]	
k	[k]	[g]
l	[l]	[r]
m	[m]	
n	[n]	[ŋ]
p	[p]	[b]
s	[s]	[z]
t	[t]	[d]
w	[w]	[v]

The [v] pronunciation is considered wrong by some users, but it is sometimes used (especially if the user's native language does not have a [w] sound).

The [ŋ] pronunciation is most often used before stop consonants (*k, p, t*) or at the end of a syllable.

Even though the [k] [p], [t] sounds can be pronounced as their voiced counterparts ([g], [b], [d] respectively), this is barely ever done in practice.

The [r] and [z] sounds are never used normally outside of obvious experimenting or unknown personal reasons.

## Syllables¶

In most cases, the basic syllable structure is **CVn**, which means it *begins with a consonant*, which is *followed by a vowel* and there might be an *optional n* at the end of the syllable. Syllable ending *n* cannot be used, if the following syllable begins with another *n*!

There are four forbidden consonant-vowel pairs:

- ji,
- ti (becomes si),
- wo, and
- wu.

There is a rule, that the words may begin with a *vowel*, hence the **ultimate word structure** is **C?Vn(CVn)\***. Every (official and unofficial) word should and do fit into this structure.

## Unofficial words¶

Unofficial words or *proper names* are *transliterations of one's real name*, but there are cases, when someone chooses a new, "random" name. None method is wrong, till the name fit into the already shown structure.

You should avoid choosing a name that is also an *official word*. One of the possible exeptions is when one is called Ken (there is not a good workaround for such cases).

The proper names are *adjectives*, and usually they are always after a noun (*jan* for names, *ma* for countries, *ma tomo* for cities, etc.). However, when it is obvious what we refer to, nouns can be omitted, especially when this would lead to repetition. The most often seen example of this is *nimi mi li X*, when using *jan* would make the sentence incorrect (using *mi jan X* is always preferred). Some examples:

- *nimi mi li Atamo* (my name is Adam) instead of *nimi mi li nimi Atamo* -- it is obvious that Sotan is the name, although *mi jan Atamo* is always preferred.
- (when talking about someone) *ona li Sopiija* (she's Sophie) instead of *ona li jan Sopiija* -- by context it is obvious that the noun is *jan*, although this is unadvised and falls into *gray area*, unless there was at least one previous instance of saying *jan Sopiija* previously.

## Transliteration of proper names¶

Personal names' transliteration is usually based on its *pronunciation* rather than how it is written. The followings are *not* rules, only recommendations and customs:

- the number of syllables should be the same
- the letter **r** becomes **l**, **w** or **k** (depends on how it is pronounced)
- English's **th** becomes **s** (if voiceless) or **t** (if voiced)
- consonant clusters can be either split (like *Solatan*) or reduced to one (as in *Sotan*).

- vowel clusters should become different syllables (by putting a consonant between them)

It is obvious that there are multiple ways to "tokiponize" a name. For example, the Hungarian name *Zoltán* could be any of these (list is incomplete):

- *Sotan* (by dropping the *l*)
- *Solan* (by dropping the *t*)
- *Solatan* (by adding an additional vowel to resolve the consonant cluster)
- *Soli* (based on the nickname *Zoli*)
- *Sosi* (after *ti>si* conversion; possible nickname for *Sotan*, also a version for *Zolti* which is a usually hated nickname of the original)

For country names, there is another unwritten customary rule: they should not only be unique, but also as distinguishable as possible.

## Word order ¶

The word order is SVO (subject-verb/predicate-object) or SliVeO (subject-*li*-verb/predicate-*e*-object), and prepositions are after the object. The *usual prepositions* (kepeken, lon, tawa) can be placed right after the subject (but *before li*) as well, although this use falls into the *gray area*.

Adjectives, adverbs (commonly *modifiers*) and possessive is *after* the head (which can be almost anything besides *particles*).

Since toki pona does not have a *copula* (like English's *to be*), the predicate can be either a verb or a modifier (as in *ona li sulī* -- he/she is big).

## Modifiers ¶

Depending on what the head is, we can talk about *noun phrases*, *preposition phrases*, etc. For the sake of simplicity I shall write about *noun phrases* only, but the rules apply to any other phrases as well.

When we have multiple modifiers, the interpretation begins with the *left-most* one. This modifies the noun and then the next modifier modifies the *modified noun*, and so on. This can be visualized like this:

N M M M > (N M) M M > ((N M) M) M > (((N M) M) M)

For a practical example:

jan pona sulī mute (many adult friends) builds up like this:

1. *jan* (man)
2. *jan pona* (friend)
3. *jan pona sulī* (big friend)
4. *jan pona sulī mute* (many big friends)

As you can see, the modifier applies to *everything in front of it*. If we want to use multiple modifiers for *one* as *one single* modifier (e.g. *sulī mute* for "very big"), then we need to use a *pi* particle. For example: *jan pona pi sulī mute* means "very big friend".

The use of *pi* is explained in (much) greater details here.

## Possessors ¶

If we want to express that something is *ours*, we have two ways to go:

1. make a sentence (using *jo* that means *to have*);
2. add the possessor to the noun phrase.

The former works like it would in almost every other languages, so we focus on the second case only.

Possessors work as modifiers, but they are always *at the end* of a noun phrase. As with modifiers, they are separated by a *pi*, usually only when it consists more than one word, but I recommend to use them in every case, since it can lead to ambiguity. As a quick example: *soweli mi* (my pet), *tomo tawa mi* (my car), *tomo sulī pi jan Anon* (Anon's big house). Some more details can be found under *pi* about this.



## Separators¶

### e¶

*e* separates the *predicate* and the *object*. Multiple *es* indicates *and*. For example, *mi moku e kili e kala* means *I eat vegetables and fish*.

### li¶

*li* separated the *subject* and the *predicate* (e.g. "ona li moku."), unless the subject is *mi* or *sina* only (e.g. "mi moku.", but "mi mute li moku"). Also, multiple *lis* in a sentence means "and" between predicates (e.g. "ona li moku li tawa" -- she is eating and walking and "mi pilin pona li unpa" -- I feel good and reproduce). Using multiple verbs with the same object is also possible (mi alasa li moli e soweli utala -- I hunt and kill the attacking animal).

It is often seen to use *multiple lis with their own objects* within a sentence, especially if we want to express *simultaneous actions*. It is a recurring debate this is correct or not. At either case, using multiple sentences with the same subject works out just fine and always the preferred way, although one might want to use a *la phrase* to indicate simultaneousness (most likely *kin la*). An example would be *mi moku e kili li lukin e sitelen tawa* (I eat vegetables and watch a movie) vs *mi moku e kili. (kin la) mi lukin e sitelen tawa.* (I eat vegetables. (Also) I watch a movie).

Using multiple *ls* with *different* objects are a *gray zone* use, but unlike many other *gray zone* structures, this one is relatively accepted and almost always understood.

### la¶

*la* separates the context (or the time) and the main sentence. The context is usually a condition, a time or *la phrase*. The *context* does not have to be a full sentence (e.g. "sina la ni li jan pona" -- for you, there is a friend). If the *context* is a full sentence, then the *la* structure means *if/then* or *when/then* (mi moku, la mi pilin pona).

Some words before *la* has special meaning if they are alone. The most often seen example is "ken". These meanings will be shown in the *dictionary*.

Multiple *la* is also possible, then the main sentence is the *last one* (e.g. *tenpo ni la mi wile, la mi moku.* -- "now, if I will, I eat", *mi lon tomo mi, la sina ken toki, la mi tu li ken toki.* -- "when I'm in the city and you can talk, we can talk").

Some of the common *la phrases*:

- **ken la:** maybe, possibly
- **kin la:** also, additionally
- **lon la:** really, actually
- **mi la:** for me, personally, I think (not used then the subject is *mi*)
- **tan ni la:** therefore

Sometimes we see writing prepositional phrases (e.g. "lon tomo Putapesi") used in a *la phrase* too.

### pi¶

#### General use¶

*pi* makes us able to express more complex and abstract thoughts. It is a separator that separates *modifier groups*, thus changing the way how a series of words are interpreted. For example, *jan pona pali mute* means literally "many working good people" or "many working friends". By adding a *pi*, it may become *jan pona pi pali mute* (a workaholic friend) or *jan pi pona pali mute* (man of many working goodness -- better translation is welcomed).

When it comes to the question of *multiple pi\_s*, many argues whether it is correct or simply wrong. I see little to no problem with it, we can apply all of our basic rules with practically no changes to make it work and *nothing* really forbids it. The only thing that needs to be added for them is the general assumption that *modifier groups* as a whole acts like *single modifiers*.

Naturally, the *pona* way is to keep sentences and generally everything else as short as possible, so having *multiple pis* is unadvised. Although when we need further clarification, it is often preferred as opposed to using multiple sentences. Ultimately the question comes to this: which way is more *pona*, having one longer sentences with multiple *pis*, or having more, but shorter and simpler sentences? I am an advocate of the former one, although the absolute truth is that ideally none of these would be needed.

For a quick reminder, modifiers comes *after* the head (in the examples this shall be a noun) and the modifiers modify the series of words before it, like this:

1. *jan* (man)
2. *jan pona* (friend)
3. *jan pona sulì* (big friend)
4. *jan pona sulì mute* (big friends)

## Modifier groups¶

With introducing a *pi*, we can separate the different *modifier groups* (consisting at least one modifier, although having only one word after *pi* that is not the possessor is useless) that, as a whole, work like individual modifiers.

- *jan pona pi sulì mute* (very big friend)
- *jan pi sulì mute* (very big man)
- *jan pi pona sulì mute* (many-big-good man)
- *jan pona sulì pi mute* (many big friends OR big friend of quantity -- this latter is hard to interpret without proper context, and even then it would be challenging)

By adding more modifier groups, the meaning can be further detailed:

- *jan pona pi sulì mute pi pona lukin* (good-looking very big friend)
- *jan pona pi sulì pi mute pi pona lukin* (good-looking many big friends -- usually "mute" would be the last in this case); same as *jan pona sulì mute pi pona lukin*

Using a *single word modifier* after a *multiple word long modifier group* is problematic: it is very unclear what we want to express, so these should be avoided.

Finally let us break down an example and see how it all works out. Our ridiculous example shall be *jan pona mute pi pona mute lukin pi sona mute pi jan Anon* (Anon's wise, very good-looking friends).

1. **jan** (man)
2. **jan pona** (friend)
3. **jan pona mute** (friends)
4. **jan pona mute pona** (good friends)
5. **jan pona mute pi pona mute** (very good friends)
6. **jan pona mute pi pona mute lukin** (very good-looking friends)
7. **jan pona mute pi pona mute lukin sona** (*sona is part of the previous mod. group, or a new, single modifier?*)
8. **jan pona mute pi pona mute lukin pi sona mute** (wise very good-looking friends)
9. **jan pona mute pi pona mute lukin pi sona mute pi jan Anon** (Anon's wise, very good-looking friends)

Now let us see the same example as a tree graph (head - modifier group - individual words). Note that the meanings apply on to this context!

- jan (man)
  - pona mute (very good)
    - \* pona (good)
    - \* mute (very)
  - pona mute lukin (very good-looking)
    - \* pona (good)
    - \* mute (very)
    - \* lukin (looking)
  - sona mute (wise)
    - \* sona (knowledge)
    - \* mute (many)
  - jan Anon (someone named Anon)
    - \* jan (man)
    - \* Anon (Anon -- name)

## IMPORTANT!

Naturally, the *pona* way is to keep sentences and generally everything else as short as possible, so having *multiple pis* is unadvised. Although when we need further clarification, it is often preferred as opposed to using multiple sentences. Ultimately the question comes to this: which way is more *pona*, having one longer sentences with multiple pis, or having

more, but shorter and simpler sentences? I am an advocate of the former one, although the absolute truth is that ideally none of these would be needed.

## Possessors ¶

In the usual way though you cannot say *it is mine*. With a minor trick, it is easily expressible like *ona li pi mi*. Usually it is not used, but it was part of official and semi-official grammars for years (in the pre-pu era).

In many lessons *pi* is used only if there are more than one word after it. I recommend to use *pi* every time when it marks *possession* ("ona li tomo pi mi", "ni li tomo pi jan pona"). Since the possessor should *always be* at the very end of a noun phrase, using a *pi* is very helpful when the possessor is one word long and not a pronoun.

In *pu*, it is not explicitly said that there must be at least 2 words after *pi*; instead, it talks about *noun groups* (i.e. noun phrases, that I would rather call *modifier group*). The word *group* suggest that it should be at least 2 long, but technically nothing explicitly says that it could not be a *one long group*, i.e. a single word, which would normally be unnecessary (it does not change meaning), unless we talk about possessors, hence my recommendation to use them in this case.

## Other uses ¶

It is also often used to express *about* (mostly along with *ijo*: *mi sitelen e ijo pi mi* -- I write about myself).

## pi li ¶

**This following is deeply in the gray-zone and should be avoided during normal use!**

*pi* is (very rarely and wrongly) also used for *relative clauses* sometimes (*mi lukin e jan pi moku e kala* -- I see a man who eats a fish): this practice is not recommended and technically incorrect.

I recommend to use *pi li* for relative clauses, which originates from *jan Sonja* (the reference would be here, but my request for approval was left unanswered). It can be used after either the subject or the object.

For (a ridiculous) example: *ona pi li moku e kala li olin e jan pi li moku e kili*. -- They, who eat a fish, love people, whom eat fruits.

Note: this latter use is anything but *pu* or *standard*. A usual way to express this would be something like this: *jan pi moku kala li olin e jan pi moku kili*. This is very ambiguous (in every meaning of the word) and arguably wrong too.

*The use of "pi li" and generally the use of "relative clauses" should be avoided!*

## Prepositions ¶

The *usual or traditional prepositions* are *kepeken*, *lon* and *tawa*. The words *tan* and *sama* often used as prepositions (and *pu* also defines them so), and sometimes also the words for directions (mostly *poka*). Although *tan* and *sama* could and should be next to the *usual prepositions*, traditionally *kepeken*, *lon* and *tawa* are introduced in the same lesson, while *tan* and/or *sama* are introduced in another one, hence I tend to call only those three *usual or traditional*.

As a general rule, if there are more than *one word* after the preposition, a *pi* should be used! In the case of *locations*, the location word should be seen as part of the preposition (i.e. *lon poka pi tomo mi* instead of *lon poka tomo mi*).

## kepeken ¶

The usual meanings are *with* and *use*. Usually it is not used as a verb (if so, it means *use* as a verb and *with* as a preposition), although originally *kepeken* was a verb (and another word was used for *with* that was removed from the language).

## lon ¶

The usual meaning is *located in/on/at*, and *existing* as an adjective. It usually does not used as a verb, but it could be with the meaning *to place in/on* or *to put into/onto*. *lon* can also used for *time* ("lon tenpo ni" -- now), although using a *la structure* is recommended.

## tawa ¶

The usual meanings are *moving to*, *going to* and *for*, *to*. As an adjective it also means *moving*, and as a verb it is sometimes used for saying *to move something*.

## **tan¶**

Usually it means *by, from, because of* as a preposition. It also can mean *reason* as a noun and *to cause* as a verb.

## **sama¶**

The usual meanings are fine (see in the dictionary).

## **Direction words¶**

With the usual use, these (*sinpin, sewi, anpa, insa, poka* and *monsi*) are *after a preposition* (lon or tawa) and there is a "pi" after these, if it is followed by more than one word, or has a modifier. It is an often seen practice, that these are used as preposition (especially *poka* for historical reasons); this is not recommended, but if you use them this way (i.e. for *quoting someone using it*), put a comma before them.

## **Questions¶**

There are *four ways* to create a question: 1. repeat the *verb, preposition* or *pre-verb before the verb* and put an *ala* between them (sina wile ala wile moku?); 3. put an "anu" into the sentence and mark it with a question mark that it is a question (sina wile moku anu musi?); 2. put "anu seme" to the end of the sentence (sina wile moku anu seme?); 4. use "seme" as the subject or the object (sina wile moku e seme?).

The first two cases will result in a *yes-no question*, while the latter two in an *open question*.

## **Answering a yes/no question¶**

To answer of a yes/no question, *repeat the verb* of the question (with or without the subject) to say "yes", and *say "ala"* or *repeat the verb (with or without the subject) with "ala"* to say "no". Alternatively, you can always answer with a full sentence.

## **Punctuation¶**

The ultimate rule of punctuation is this: besides the full stop at the end of the sentence and the colon after certain structures, everything is either optional or an alternative.

## **Commas¶**

The commas , have *no grammatical meaning*, they are only helps to interpret written sentences. These are optional. I often use commas in the following cases and places:

- *before la*, if there is a full sentence before it (mi moku, la mi pilin pona);
- *before prepositions*, if it is not obvious that the word is a preposition or an adjective (ona li tomo tawa mi), or it is not a preposition by *pu* (ona li tawa, poka mi);
- *before X ni* structures.

And I do not use comma *before taso when it is a conjunction*. Within *pu* there is *one* example, where it is used, although I think it is a much more pona way to end the sentence with a period and start the next one with taso (ona li pona. taso ona li ike lukin).

## **Question marks¶**

Question marks ? are used at the end of questions. See more about questions under questions.

## **Exclamation marks¶**

I use exclamation marks ! in

- imperative sentences (o moku!),
- interjections (moku pona!), and
- after regular, but somehow emphasized sentences (mi wile moku! ona li sulì a!).

In both imperatives and interjections the subject is *optional*.

## Colons¶

Colons : are always used in **X ni** structures, where **X** is either a *preposition* or the separator *e*.

## e ni¶

The closest translation of *e ni* would be *that* (as a *conjunction*) in English. I like to think of it as a "placeholder", since it basically renders the next sentence to be the previous/main sentence's object, for example:

- *mi toki e ni: jan li wile jo e jan pona.* (I say that people want to have friends)
- *mi wile e ni: jan li utala ala.* (I want that people don't fight ~ I want people to stop fighting)
- *mi sona e ni: jan pi mute lili li lukin e lipu ni.* (I know that few people reads this booklet)

If we interpret *e ni* as I described above, in theory every verb that has a direct object can be used with it, although in practice only a handful is used with it, including *sona*, *toki* and *wile*. Similarly, if we want to use an *X ni* as well (i.e. when we want to say something like "I want that people stop fighting, because peace is good"), then the *X ni* comes after the object/subordinate sentence.

## X ni¶

The *X ni* structures (where *X* is a preposition) is similar to *e ni*, they both usually translate to conjunctions in English, except we use prepositions instead of *e*.

This definition however is kind of misleading, since in practice we use only *tan ni* (because, since) and *sama ni* (similar to, similarly). I am not aware of any instances of using *lon ni* or *kepeken ni*. I have seen *tawa ni* as well for "for", but that seems to be a bit of a stretch, since *tan ni* covers that meaning and much less ambiguous.

Commas are often used in front of *X ni* for easier readability.

Some examples:

- *jan li wile utala, sama ni: soweli li wile unpa.* (People want to fight, similarly to how animals want to procreate)
- *mi wile e ni: jan li utala ala, tan ni: utala li ike.* (I want people to stop fighting, because fighting is bad)
- *mi wile e soweli tan ni: soweli li wile e mi: jan lawa ona li pilin pona.* (I want a pet, because they want to keep their master is happy)

## Quotes¶

I recommend using *double quotes* "..." for quotes to avoid ambiguity with shortenings (where *apostrophes* ' might be used) and special uses (like *jan Lope's lessons* -- this latter is only mentioned for the sake of completeness, it is not widely used and generally unadvised).

For second level quotes I recommend to use the *guillemet* «...» (also known as *angle quotes*), or when special characters are not available, simply one or two *angle brackets* <<...>> <...>.

## Dialogue¶

*The followings are experimental, purely recommendations and no rules; there are no official ways to write dialogues in toki pona.*

For dialogues, I recommend using *en-dashes* –, *em-dashes* – or *two hyphens* -- (if no special characters available). When *en-dashes* are mentioned, all of the listed alternatives are acceptable; the important thing is that you should use only one of them consistently.

I use the following rules when writing dialogue ():

- En-dash –, if the direct dialogue *begins after line break*, or after *dialog tags* and *actions*;
- En-dash –, if the direct dialogue *followed by an indirect dialog*;
- Quotation marks " for *indirect dialogue*;
- Quotations marks " for *quoting* (whether within a dialogue or otherwise);
- The line cannot begin with a *dialogue tag or action*. The dialogue tags would come after the last line of dialogue (separated by en-dash) and actions would be on a separate line (along with dialogue tags if needed) between two lines of dialogue.

**Example** (for the dialogue format, not for the use of the language):

ona li toki e ni: "mi wile tawa weka!" mi sona e ni: jan li apeja e ona.

-- mi pilin e ni: sina wile pini e toki kalama. sina sona e ni: mi kepeken sina. jan li wile apeja e sina, la jan li wile utala e

mi! -- mi toki tawa ona.

-- pona! mi sona e ni. taso mi pilin monsuta. -- oko ona li telo. -- mi ken pali e seme?

-- mi sona ala. ike mi.

ona li awen lili li toki e ni kepeken kalama mute: -- o nasa ala! sina ike ala.

*The followings are even more experimental.*

As an alternative way, in toki pona it is rational that always writing *X toki tawa Y* is long and ugly. I recommend that especially in conversations between more than 2 people always mark who is speaking with *brackets* (like -- (*jan Sotan*) *xyz*).

Additionally, in this case the noun could be omitted and the rest might be shortened, since normally different *jan* have conversations (like (*Sotan*) *xyz* or (*S*) *xyz*).

As an alternative way of writing it, add the name right after the en-dash (without any whitespace) and "close" the name by a single hyphen or an en-dash. *Do not* mix these method within a single conversation like they are in the example!

### Example (with mixed signs):

ona li toki e ni: "mi wile tawa weka!" mi sona e ni: jan li apeja e ona.

-- (mi) mi pilin e ni: sina wile pini e toki kalama. sina sona e ni: mi kepeken sina. jan li wile apeja e sina, la jan li wile utala e mi!

--ona- pona! mi sona e ni. taso mi pilin monsuta. -- oko ona li telo. -- mi ken pali e seme?

--mi- mi sona ala. ike mi.

(ona) o nasa ala! sina ike ala.

## Time¶

These are the *tenpo X la...* sentences. Time also can be expressed after *lon*. I use the followings for time:

- **tenpo pini:** past,
- **tenpo ni:** current,
- **tenpo kama:** future,
- **tenpo suno:** daytime,
- **tenpo pimeja:** night,
- **tenpo pali:** weekday,
- **tenpo mun:** month,
- **tenpo sike suno:** year (alternatively *tenpo suno sike* is used as well, but using it is unadvised),
- **tenpo mute:** often, many times,
- **tenpo mute mute:** very often, many many times,
- **tenpo pi mute lili:** sometimes,
- **tenpo (pi) kama lili:** in near future,
- **tenpo (pi) suno pini:** yesterday,
- **tenpo kin:** again (alternatively *tenpo sin*),
- etc (by the same scheme).

When *tenpo* is used by itself, it often means a *time interval* and not a specific time (in either case, the exact meaning is context dependent).

I also use the phrase *tenpo la* meaning "sometimes".

## Numbers¶

Numbers are *rarely used* in the language. They work like *adjectives*, but they are never preceeded by *pi*, and they are placed *after* modifiers and *before* the possessor.

In most of the time, this *simple version* is used and recommended (for amounts): - **ala** for 0, - **wan** for 1, - **tu** for 2, - **mute** for 3+ or *plural* (unknown amount, but more than 1), and - **ale** for *every* or *countless amount*.

There is also a bit more complex way: - **ala** for 0, - **wan** for 1, - **tu** for 2, - **luka** for 5, - **mute** for 20, and - **ale** for 100.

These ways can be extended with the deprecated **tuli** (3) and **po** (4).

For *ordinal numbers*, put the word "nanpa" before the number.

Quick examples are:

- *jan tu* -- two individuals
- *jan nanpa tu* -- the second individual
- *jan pona luka tu tu pi jan Anon* -- Anon's nine friends
- *jan pona tu nanpa wan pi jan Anon* -- Anon's first two friends (ordinals should come after the number).

If we need to write down huge (20+) numbers, I recommend to write the number down with simple numbers and never even attempt to say them out loud (e.g. *tenpo sike suno 2019*).

There is no official (or any widely accepted) way to say mathematical expressions. As a personal opinion, numbers should be avoided (besides the *simple version*) as often as possible.

## Conjunctions ¶

With exception of *taso*, no one of these should start a sentence (use *la structures* instead).

## And ¶

And is expressed in *three ways*, depending on where we want to say it:

1. if it is *between subjects*, use *en*;
2. if it is *between verbs*, use *li*;
3. if it is *between objects*, use *e*.

For example, *sina en mi li wile pali li pali e ijo e ijo ante*.

## Special cases ¶

In special cases, where one would use an "and", but toki pona usually does not give an easy solution for that, I recommend using "en" as it would normally *never* be in those positions and thus it is easily understandable. This use is **very debatable** and **falls in the gray area**.

As a contraction, *en* also could be *between modifiers* too, when two different kind of thing is expressed. Generally it looks like this:

*N pi M1 en M1*, where *N* is a noun, followed by a *pi*, *M1* is a modifier and *M2* is another modifier. Usually this piece would look like this: *N M1 SEP N M2*, where *SEP* is a separator. This could work with *possessors* too (as *moku pi jan Atamo en jan Sofija* -- the food of Adam and Sophie).

It meant to be used mainly in *speak* (where stress and emphasis helps to make it clear how this should be interpreted)!

## Example

*jan pi pona en toki* = *jan pona SEP jan toki* (good people and talking people) -- the SEP marks that there is an "e" or a "li" or an "en", depends on where it is within a sentence.

Obviously, if this structure is in the object, it is preceded by an "e" (...e *jan pona en toki*). If it is a predicate, there is a "li" (note: it *cannot* be used after a verb!).

Important, that it does not work with multiple modifiers without *pi*!

*jan pona toki en ike kalama* and *jan pona en ike kalama* are weird and really hard to understand. With one modifier (the original *jan pona en toki*) or with an additional *pi* (*\_jan pi pona toki en ike kalama*) it is understandable, but only with the right context.

## Or ¶

This is expressed by *anu*. It can be used between either *subjects*, *verbs* or *objects* ("sina anu mi li pali", "sina wile anu pali", "sina pali e ijo anu ijo ante"). It also could be used as *en* between modifiers (see: Conjunctions > And > Special cases)!

## But ¶

*taso* is the word you need. I always end the sentence with a period before it (*mi wile pali. tasu sina pali*, not like *mi wile pali, tasu sina pali*), although it is more of a habit than a rule: *pu* does not explicitly allow using commas instead of periods before *taso*, there is one instance where it does that in an example. There were debates whether this is a typo or an intentional use. If you want to express *exception*, then I recommend to use *and* and *negative* (*mi wile e ale e ike ala*) instead of *taso* (*mi wile e ale. tasu mi wile ala e ike*). Using *and* and *negative* is more compact, shorter, and ultimately more *pona*.

## Difference between a/kin, lukin/oko and namako/sin¶

These words became merged in *pu*. As most of the speakers, I use them differently:

- *a* makes a word *emotionally emphasized* or *exaggerated*, while *kin* is for *confirmation* and used as *also*;
- *oko* means *eye*, all the other is *lukin*;
- *namako* means *extra*, *bonus* and *sin* means *new*, *fresh*.

There is another good alternative to use *oko* as a word, thus making a difference between the meanings of *look* (*oko*) and *see* (*lukin*).

The definitions above are not full: for the detailed definitions, see the *dictionary*.

## Deprecated words¶

With the exception of the most known deprecated words (*monsuta* and *kipisi*), it is recommended to avoid using these *in formal use*. Though I do not think that using deprecated (or even planned) words is a bad thing, especially if they *were not replaced* (e.g. 'powe' and 'pake' have no obvious counterparts). On the other hand, I would avoid using the *numbers* ('tuli', 'po').

## Colors¶

Colors are *jelo* (yellow), *laso* (blue, green) and *loje* (red). Additionally *suno* is often used for the color *gold*.

To express the color of something, you can use *kule* as a noun before them (e.g. *kule kasi* for green or *kule mun* for silver).

You can also mix colors using more than one words, for example *laso loje* for magenta. If there is a dominant color, then put that at the first place and place the other/rest after it.

Many use *laso* for *blue* and *green*. I use *laso* for *blue* only, and *kule kasi* for green.

## Sins¶

These are unforgivable habit that have to end.

## Using "tawa" like it was in English¶

Sometimes we can see sentences like "sina wile moku tawa pilin pona" (you have to eat for feeling good) or "ona li pali tawa kama jo e ijo" (he works for getting something). It is **toki pona and not English**. Do not do this. Just do not.

It should be obvious that *tawa* also shall never be used as a *conjunction*.

## Alternatives¶

Use a *la* structure (ona li pali, la ona li ken kama jo e ijo, lon tenpo kama), or use *tan ni*: (if possible) after the preposition and a *subject* in the following sentence (sina moku tan ni: sina wile pilin pona).

## Using "en" and "anu" at the beginning of a sentence¶

Starting a sentence with *en* or *anu* is wrong. It is against every rule.

## Alternatives¶

Use *kin la* instead of "en", and *ante la* instead of "anu". In some cases *en la* and *anu la* may work too.

## Lesser sins¶

These are widespread use of words that cannot be prevented anymore (since these in lessons or were official in the past).

## kepeken e¶

jan Pije's and others', mostly older lessons use "kepeken e" to express the verb *use*. In my opinion it is unnecessary and only gives headache to many people. In most of the cases it is obvious whether one wants to say "use" or "with".

**Removing this one from lesser sins is under consideration.**



## Alternative¶

Drop the e.

## Shortening "jan" to "j-" prefix¶

It is a new phenomenon and seems to be spreading. There is no real problem with it in informal use, but in formal use it is ugly.

## Alternative¶

Do not be lazy and write *jan Sotan* instead of *jSotan*. Thank you.

## Using direct address at the end of a sentence¶

It is often seen that people put the direct address to the end of a sentence (ni li ijo, *jan Ijosan*) instead of starting with it (*jan Ijosan o*, ni li ijo).

## Alternative¶

Put the direct address to the beginning and use an *o* after it (additional comma is recommended).

## Dictionary¶

- pu
- As I use
- Words
- Older words
- Replaced words
- Shortenings
- Phrases, interjections
- Others
- Acronyms

## pu¶

You can check the dictionary that was published in *pu* on this site. See country names here.

These sources were published under *public domain*.

## As I use¶

These are the word definitions, mostly based on how I use them. Widespread alternative meanings will be also described (marked with *alt*): these alternate meanings are not wrong, though in most cases I do not prefer or recommend to use them. It also includes deprecated, joke and replaced words (under Older words and Replaced words). The shortened part of speech's meanings will be below the dictionary. See the shortenings of part of speeches here!

I use the country names as they are in *pu* (or try to guess them as a last resort).

There are three words pairs that are merged in *pu* ("a/kin", "lukin/oko", "namako/sin"). Many people use them interchangeably; I do not. The definitions will be written under them as under every other word, but I will not mark the alternate meanings, I only left a *see also* note.

## Words¶

A E I J K L M N O P S T U W

## A¶

a

p emotional emphasis, exaggeration, superlative (after *adjectives*)

int ah! I got it! Hahaha! (as "a a a")

see kin

**akesi**

**n** reptile, amphibian, non-cute animal

**n alt** monster

**ala**

**n** nothing, no one, null

**v** deny

**mod** no, not

**int** no!

**alasa**

**n** hunting, searching

**v** hunt, forage, gather, look for, search determinedly

**ale/ali**

**n** everything, life, universe

**adj** all, every, countless amount

**num** hundred

**la** all told, nevertheless, despite everything, either way

*ale* was the original, while *ali* was added to avoid ambiguity with *ala* in speech.

**anpa**

**n** bottom, below

**v** bend the knee, kneel, bow, accept (the terms)

**v alt** defeat, beat, conquer, enslave

**mod** low, down, dependent

**dir** below, down, beneath

**ante**

**n** changing, diversity

**v** alter, change, convert, translate

**adj** altered, changed, different, other

**la** or, otherwise

**anu**

**p** or

**la alt** or

**awen**

**n** waiting, staying

**v** wait, wait for (with "tawa"), stay, remain

**ve** save, protect

**pv** keep

**adj** kept, protected, safe, remaining

**la** still

**E¶****e**

**p** and (if there are multiple objects)

**p sep** separates the predicate and the object

**en**

**p** and (between subject)

**la alt** and

**esun**

**n** business

**v** pay, do business, sell

**adj** financial, salable

**I¶**

**ijo**

n unspecified object; something, thing, object

**ike**

n bad(ness), evil

v ruin, spoil

adj bad, negative, wrong, corrupted, evil, complex

la sadly

**ilo**

n tool, machine, device, thing used for a specific purpose

**insa**

n inside, stomach

adj internal

dir inner, inside, center

**J¶****jaki**

n dirt, garbage, filth, shit

v defile, stain, shit

adj disgusting, toxic, unclean

**jan**

n human, person, somebody

adj humanoid, human-like

**jelo**

adj yellow

**jo**

v have, own, carry, contain

**K¶****kala**

n fish

adj fish-like, marine (animal/monster)

**kalama**

n sound, noise, roar

v produce a sound, yell, bawl

adj loud, unrecognizable (sound)

**kama**

n alt event, happening, beginning

pv become, manage to, will, pursue actions to arrive to (a certain state)

mod future, coming, arriving

**kasi**

n plant, vegetation

adj plant-like, vegetating, green (after *kule*)

**ken**

n ability, chance, possibility

pv can, able to, allowed to

adj able, possible, allowed

**kepeken**

prep use, with

ve alt use

**kili**

n fruit, vegetable, mushroom

**kin**

p confirmation, emphasis (not as strong as *a*); also, too  
 1a also, and  
 see a

**kiwen**

n metal, rock, stone, hard object  
 adj hard, heavy  
 Originally *wawa ma* was used before this word was created.

**ko**

n semi-solid material, paste, powder, clay, dough  
 adj semi-solid, powder

**kon**

n air, breath, spirit, essence, meaning, sense, concept  
 v breath  
 v alt inhale  
 adj air-like, gaseous

**kule**

n color  
 v color  
 adj colorful, pigmented

**kulupu**

n community, group, nation, society

**kute**

n ear  
 v hear, listen to (talking, music)

**L¶****la**

p sep separates the context and the main sentence

**lape**

n sleeping, resting  
 v sleep, rest  
 adj sleeping, resting

**laso**

adj blue  
 adj alt green

**lawa**

n leader, lead, head, mind  
 v lead, rule, manage, control, direct  
 adj leading, ruling, in charge

**len**

n cloth, fabric, textile, cover, layer, network, layer of privacy  
 v wear, dress, cover, hide  
 adj dressed, clothed, covered

**lete**

n cold  
 adj cool, cold, raw, uncooked, emotionally cold (person)

**li**

p and (if there are multiple predicates)  
 p sep separates the predicate and the object

**lili**

adj small, little, short, young, a bit

**linja**

n hair, rope, thread; long and flexible thing

adj long and flexible

**lipu**

n book, page, document, website, record

adj flat

**loje**

adj red, reddish

**lon**

adj existing, real, true

ve place (position if after *lon*), put (position if after *tawa*)

prep located at, at the time of

p indeed, that's right

p alt general yes

la really, trully int indeed (as an *approval*, not as an answer to a question)

**luka**

n hand, arm

adj tangible, palpable

mod with hands, by hands

num five

**lukin**

n alt eye

v look, see, examine, read, watch; (with *tawa*) search, look for, seek

pv try to

adj visible, readable

mod seemingly, looking (like "good looking")

see oko

**lupa**

n hole, orifice, window, door

v pierce, stab, dig

adj full of holes, holey

**M****ma**

n earth, land, country, place, outdoor area

adj outside

**mama**

n parent, ancestor, origin, creator, caretaker

adj parent, ancestor, parental

**mani**

n money, wealth, livestock, value, currency

adj valuable

**meli**

n female, woman, girl, wife, girlfriend

adj female, feminine

**mi**

n I, me; we, us

adj my, mine; our, ours

**mije**

n male, man, husband, boyfriend

adj male, masculine

**moku**

n food, meal

v consume, eat, drink, inhale, swallow

adj edible

**moli**

n death

v die, dying

ve murder, kill

adj dying, sentenced to death, dead, lethal, mortal, fatal

**monsi**

n back, behind, rear end

v retreat

mod back

dir behind

**mu**

n animal noise, meaningless or incomprehensible talking

v make animal noise, speak incomprehensibly

adj meaningless, incomprehensible, unintelligible

**mun**

n moon, star

adj lunar

**musi**

n play, fun, game, art, artifact

v play, have fun

ve entertain

mod artistic, entertaining

**mute**

n amount, quantity

v multiply, spread, extend

adv (comparative adjective)

mod many (3+), a lot, more, much, very

num twenty

**N¶****namako**

n additional, spice (for food)

v flavor, update

mod extra, additional

see sin

Added along with *kipisi* and *monsuta* in 2010. In *pu* it was merged with *sin*.**nanpa**

n number

v count, number, quantify

adj countable, finite

p -th (ordinal number)

**nasa**

v fool around

adj unusual, strange, weird, crazy, intoxicated

**nasin**

n way, method, custom, path, road

v follow, adopt

v alt indoctrinate; plan, plot; clear a path

mod methodical, systematic, doctrinal

**nena**

n bump, button, mountain, hill, nose

adj bumpy, hilly, undulating

**ni**

n this, that

adj this, that

p that (as a conjunction, after *e* or a *preposition*)

**nimi**

n name, word

v name (the name is after *sama*)

**noka**

n foot, leg, organ of locomotion, lower part

v alt kick

adj lower (on something)

adv on foot, with foot

**O¶****o**

p (marks imperative and vocative)

p sep separates the noun of direct address and the sentence

**oko**

n eye

v look (but not *see*) see lukin

**olin**

n love

v love, adore

adj lovable, loving

**ona**

n they (singular and plural)

mod their, theirs (singular and plural)

**open**

n start, beginning

v begin, start, open, turn on (*not* sexually)

pv begin to, start to

adj available, open, turned on (*not* sexually), ready

**P¶****pakala**

n error, bug, accident, mistake, damage

v brake, damage, mess up

adj broken, damaged, harmed, messed up

int dammit! shoot!

**pali**

n working, job, process

v do, make, build, prepare, work (on)

**palisa**

n rot, stick; long and solid (hard) thing

adj long and solid (hard)

**pan**

n bread, cereal, corn, rice, grain

**pana**

n giving, sharing

v give, send, share, publish, release  
adj given, shared, public

**pi**

p of (marks the possessor)  
p **sep** separates modifier groups after the noun

**pilin**

n feeling, instinct, emotion, heart (sometimes after *insa*)  
v feel, smell, sense, guess, think about (an opinion)  
mod feeling, emotionally

**pimeja**

n darkness  
v darken  
adj dark, unlit, black, hidden (metaphorically)

**pini**

n end, finish, past  
v finish, end, stop, complete, turn off  
pv end, finish, stop  
mod finished, past, former, ex-

**pipi**

n insect, bug, spider

**poka**

n side, hip  
prep along with, together with, next to  
prep **alt** with  
dir near, next to, side of

**poki**

n box, container, bag, bowl  
v contain

**pona**

n good, help, peace  
v help (someone), repair, fix, improve  
adj good, positive, friendly, useful, simple, nice, right (*not* the direction)  
adv well  
int great! thanks!

**pu**

n the *Toki Pona book*  
v interacting with the *Toki Pona book*  
adj according to/as in/by the *Toki Pona book*  
adj **alt** official

**S¶**

**sama**

n equality, each other (usually after *e*)  
v **alt** to make similar  
adj same, similar, sibling, fellow  
prep like, as, same as, equal to  
la similarly, like

**seli**

n heat, fire, chemical reaction  
v cook, bake, heat  
adj hot, warm, cooked

**selo**

n outer layer, outer side, shell, skin, wall, separator



v separate

adj outer (side)

**seme**

n what? who?

adj which? what kind?

adv how?

p what? which? wh-? (creates a question)

**sewi**

n area above, highest part, top

n alt god, sky

v get up, arise, lift, raise up, win

v alt worship, adore

adj divine, sacred, holy, supernatural

adj alt formal, religious, elevated, superior

dir above, up

**sijelo**

n body, torso

**sike**

n round or circular thing

v repeat, rotate

v alt form into a circle, encircle, surround

pv repeat

adj round, circular, spherical

adv repeatedly, again and again

adj alt of one year

**sin**

v renew, freshen, upgrade

adj new, fresh, another

see namako

**sina**

n thou, you

adj thy, thine, your, yours

**sinpin**

n face, front

n alt wall

adj front, facial

dir front of

**sitelen**

n drawing, writing, picture, image, symbol, visual representation

n alt letter

v draw, write, paint

adj written, drawn

adj alt representational, metaphorical, figurative

**sona**

n knowledge, science (of something), intelligence, wisdom

v know, skilled in

pv alt know how to

adj known, smart (figuratively, like in "smart phone")

**soweli**

n animal, mammal, land animal

n alt lovable animal

adj wild, animalistic

**suli**

adj big, large, adult, heavy, important

**suno**

n sun, light, shine

n alt light source

adj bright, lit, shining, gold (color)

**supa**

n horizontal surface

adj thing you can rest on

**suwi**

n candy, sweets

v sweeten

adj cute, sweet, adorable

adj alt innocent

**T****tan**

n reason, ground

v reason, cause

adj grounded

prep because (of), since, by, from

**taso**

adj only

conj but

**tawa**

v move (something)

adj moving

prep going to, for, to

**telo**

n liquid, fluid, beverage, water

v water, wash

v alt swim

adj liquid, wet

**tenpo**

n time, moment, period

la sometimes

**toki**

n speak, language

v say, talk, tell, communicate, think (of something grounded)

adj spoken

**tomo**

n house, room, indoor space, home

adj alt urban

**tu**

v cut

num two

**U****unpa**

n sex, making love, intercourse

v have sex with, copulate with

v alt have marital relation with

adj sexual  
adv sexually

**uta**  
n mouth, lips  
v kiss  
mod oral

**utala**  
n fight, battle, war  
v battle, challenge  
adj fighting

## W¶

**walo**  
adj white, light, pale, innocent, virgin

**wan**  
adj unique  
num one

**waso**  
n bird  
adj winged (animal), flying (creature)

**wawa**  
n energy, power  
v energize, empower  
adj strong, powerful, energetic, intense

**weka**  
v get away from, ignore, throw away, remove  
adj away, ignored

**wile**  
n will, urge, need, hope  
v want  
pv want, should, have to, must, need  
adj wanted, desired, necessary

## Older words¶

**apeja**  
n depression, abuse, shame, dishonor  
v verbal attack, disgrace, depress  
adj shame, dishonored, depressive  
now ike, utala toki  
Added in early 2010, but was not included in *pu*.

**kan**  
prep among, with, near by  
now poka, kepeken  
Removed in 2003, although many would have liked to keep it.

**kapesi**  
adj brown, gray  
now pimeja  
Removed in 2002.

**kijetesantakalu**  
n animal from the Procyonidae family (such as raccoons and kinkajous)  
now soweli  
Added as an April Fool's joke in 2009.

**kipisi**

n cutting, splitting

v cut, split

adj split

now tu

Presented along with *namako* and *monsuta* around 2010, not included in *pu*.

**majuna**

adj old

now lili ala, sulii

Removed before first public draft.

**monsuta**

n monster, fear

v fear, be afraid of

adj frighten, frightening

adj alt fearful, afraid

now ike, akesi

Added in 2010 along with *kipisi* and *namako*, not included in *pu*.

**leko**

n stairs, square, block, edge

adj edged, square

now sike ala

Removed in 2004.

**pake**

n blocking, prevention, obstruction

v block, obstruct, prevent

adj blocked, prevented

Suggested by jan Sonja, never added.

**pata**

n sibling

now jan sama

Removed in 2004.

**po**

num four

now tu tu

Removed before toki pona became well-known.

**powe**

n being false, cheating, trick

v be false, deceive, pretend, cheat, trick

adj false, untrue

now lon ala, toki ike, ike

Never was added to any official dictionary.

**tuli**

num three

now tu wan

Removed before toki pona became well-known.

**Replaced words¶****iki**

Old version of *ona*.

Replaced for its similarity to *ike*.

**ipi**

Proposed replacement for *iki*.

It was never added to any list, rejected in first vetting.

## **jalan**

Proposed replacement for *noka* by Jan Sonja. The community voted against it.

## **kapa**

Old version of *nenā*.

Replaced early on for unknown reasons.

This was the very first word to be replaced from the first public draft.

## **pasi**

Variation of *pasila*.

It was only a typo used in one or two lists instead of *pasila*, where they listed extinct words.

## **pasila**

Old version of *pona*.

Replaced before the first public draft.

## **Shortenings¶**

- **n** noun
- **v** verb (with or without an object; if there is no *ve*, then usually with an object)
- **ve** verb with object
- **pv** pre-verb or auxiliary
- **adj** adjective
- **adv** adverb
- **prep** preposition
- **dir** direction words (technically *adjectives*, but also used as *preposition*)
- **mod** modifier (*adjective* or *adverb*)
- **p** particle (mostly grammatical/function words)
- **sep** separator (subclass of *particles*)
- **num** number
- **int** interjection
- **conj** conjunction
- **la** meanings of the word if it stands alone before *la* (these meanings are often a *conjunction* or a *conjunctive* in English).
- **now** (some of the) current version(s) of *non-pu* words (if there is any)
- **alt** alternate meaning (i.e. *not* how I use)
- **see** see also (only under *a*, *kin*, *lukin*, *namako*, *oko* and *sin*)

## **Phrases, interjections¶**

Some of them may not be understood at first by other speakers. The word *jan* marks the subject (or the noun of direct address): it can be either *a name* (*jan X*) or *sina*. The subject (i.e. direct address) is always at the beginning of the sentence!

*(jan o,) toki!* -- Hello!

*mi tawa!* -- See ya! (said by who comes)

*(jan o,) tawa pona!* -- Good bye! (said by who stays)

*(jan o,) pona (mute)!* -- thank you, thanks

*(jan o,) pona tawa sina!* -- you're welcome

*ike mi* -- my fault, sorry

*ni/ona li ala* -- it's nothing, never mind, it doesn't matter

*ale-ali* -- either way, same thing

*(jan o,) pakala!* -- screw you!

*ni li...* -- there is...

*X li pona/ike tawa mi* -- I like/don't like X

*se'?* -- wut?

## Others¶

*jan li moku e palisa moli.* -- X is smoking a cigarette.

## Acronyms¶

These are mostly used in some chat groups and are not well known (with the exception of *tp*), included only for the sake of completeness.

*tp* -- toki pona (mostly used in English texts)

*ptm* -- pona tawa mi (I like... -- Subject shall be used!)

*omem* -- o moli e mi (kill me now)

*tnp* -- tenpo (mostly to say hours, e.g. 10tnp for 10 o'clock -- 24 hour format should be used)

## tok' apona¶

This dialect of toki pona is heavily based on my previous attempt to write a dialect, called tok' apona (that repository is still online for historical reasons, it will not be updated anymore). Every informal use is optional, and to be avoided in formal use!

- Shortenings
- Contractions
- Pronouns
- ala
- li
- X ni
- pi
- Assimilations
- Time
- oke
- Use of non-proper names as unofficial words or nouns

## Shortenings¶

Every word that is *longer than three letters* can be shortened, especially if a word's last vowel is the same as the following word's first letter, as far as the word is clearly recognizable. If a *three long word* seems to be shortened, that it signs that the *vowel is nasal*. This is marked by an *apostrophe*!

## Contractions¶

The contractions are unmarked, unless it says otherwise.

## Pronouns¶

*mi* and *sina* became *-mi* and *-na* suffixes after *verbs and prepositions*, and *ona* became *o'* before *verbs, prepositions, pi li* and *pli* (wilemi, wilena, o' li wile)

*sina* can shorten to *-na* even *after pi* (...pi 'na).

## ala¶

This can be shortened to *a-* or *al-* prefix (depends on whether the word-to-be-negated starts with a vowel or a consonant). It can negate *verbs, prepositions, nouns* and *adjectives*. The word-to-be-negated cannot start with an *a!* (awile, alunpa) If there are only the negated adjective and ala after a noun, the use of "pi" is unnecessary (hence, "tok' apona" instead of "toki pi apona").

It is recommended to separate the *a-* prefix and the word with a hyphene (e.g. "a-pali", "al-ike").

## li¶

This can be shortened to *l'* before the predicate (especially if it *begins with a vowel*). It can be done if the predicate begins, or the subject ends with a *vowel*. It can take one of these two position: 1. before the predicate as a *prefix*, if it begins with a *vowel* (l'olin), 2. after the subject as a *postfix*, if the predicate begins with a *consonant* (lawal' toki).

Shortening the *li* before a *shortened ala* is not recommended (too similar to *la*; you should not do it, unless you want to increase ambiguity), but shortening it before (a not shortened) *ala* is fine.

As a special case, *pi li* can be shortened to *pli* or *p'li*.

### **X ni¶**

In X ni structures (where X can be a preposition or the e particle), the *ni* can be elided, and without ending the sentence, the text (i.e. the next sentence) continues.

For example: *mi sona e ni: monsuta li lon ala* becomes *mi sona e monsuta li lon ala*.

### **pi¶**

*pi* can be dropped when it separates a noun and multiple modifiers connected by *en* (see: **conjunctions > and > special cases** in the grammar).

### **Assimilations¶**

A *preposition's* or a *verb's terminal 'n'* can be assimilated to the following noun's or subject-suffix's 'n' or 'm' ("tammi" from "tan mi" and "lomma" from "lon ma").

### **Time¶**

It is often seen that people shorten *tenpo ni* as *tenni*. Other variations are also seen sometimes. In these cases, the *ten-*prefix stands for *tenpo*.

### **oke¶**

It can be used as a *general approval* or like *okay in English*. Should not be used whatsoever! The only possible use of it is only in speech when one does not want think of a real toki pona equivalent, so uses a *tokiponized okay*.

### **Use of non-proper names as unofficial words or nouns¶**

Often and internationally used words (the Internet for example) are also can be used as unofficial word, or as a noun, eliminating the restriction that they should also be an adjective.