

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.

Original cheat sheet by blinry, this version by Green Guy (jan Sa), CC0.

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

<https://morr.cc/toki-pona-cheat-sheet/>

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 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 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 suli. – 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 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*, *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)	**kokosila	to speak a language where Toki Pona is more appropriate	musi	entertaining, fun	sike	circular object, cycle, of one year
akesi	reptile, amphibian	kon	air, spirit, essence	mute	many, a lot, very	sin	new, fresh, another
ala	no, not, zero	*ku	interacting with <i>Toki Pona Dictionary</i>	*n	hmm, uhh	sina	second-person pronoun
alasa	to hunt, to forage	kule	color, colorful	*namako	spice, additional	sinpin	face, front, wall
ale/ali	all, everything	kulupu	community, group, company	nanpa	-th, number	sitelen	image, picture, writing, symbol
anpa	downward, humble, lowly	kute	ear, to hear	nasa	strange, unusual	*soko	mushroom
ante	different, other, changed	la	(context marker)	nasin	way, road, doctrine, method	sona	to know, wisdom knowledge, info
anu	or	*lanpan	get, seize, steal	ni	this, that	soweli	land animal
awen	enduring, kept, protected	lape	sleeping, resting	nimi	word, name	suli	big, heavy, large
e	(direct object marker)	laso	blue, green	noka	foot, leg	suno	light source, bright, sun
en	(multiple subject marker)	lawa	head, ruler, to lead, to regulate	o	(vocative / imperative particle)	supa	horizontal surface
**epiku	epic	*leko	square, block	*oko	eye	suwi	sweet, cute
esun	market, shop, fair	len	cloth, fabric	olin	to love	tan	from, by, because
ijo	thing, object	lete	cool, cold, raw	ona	third-person pronoun	taso	but, only
ike	bad, negative	li	(predicate marker)	open	to begin, to start, open, turn on	tawa	going to, moving
ilo	tool, machine, device	lili	small, little, few	pakala	broken, mistake	telo	liquid, beverage
insa	centre, inside, organ, stomach	linja	long and flexible thing, string	pali	to do, to work on	tenpo	time, duration, moment, period
jaki	disgusting, unclean, toxic	lipu	flat object, paper, card, website	palisa	long hard object	toki	to say, language
jan	person, somebody	loje	red, reddish	pan	grain, pasta, bread, rice	tomo	indoor space
*jasima	mirror, reflect	lon	located at, present at, true	pana	to give, emit, send	*tonsi	non-binary, trans
jelo	yellow, yellowish	luka	arm, hand, five	pi	(regroups modifiers)	tu	two
jo	to have, carry, contain, hold	lukin	to see, examine	pilin	heart, feeling	unpa	sex, to have sexual relations
kala	sea creature	lupa	door, hole, orifice	pimeja	black, dark, unlit	uta	mouth, oral
kalama	sound, to make a sound	ma	earth, land, outdoors, soil	pini	finished, past, end	utala	to battle, challenge
kama	arriving, coming, future	mama	parent, creator	pipi	bug, insect	walo	white, light-colored, pale
kasi	plant, vegetation	mani	money, cash, currency item	poka	hip, side, nearby	wan	one, unique
ken	to be able to, can, may, possible	meli	female	poki	container, bag, box, bowl, cup	waso	flying creature
kepeken	to use, with, by means of	*meso	average	pona	good, useful, simple, positive	wawa	strong, powerful
**kijete-santakalu	Musteloids, such as racoon	mi	first-person pronoun	pu	interacting with <i>Toki Pona: The Language of Good</i>	weka	absent, away
kili	fruit, vegetable	mije	male	sama	similar, same, as	wile	must, need, want
*kin	also, too	*misikeke	medicine, drugs	seli	fire, heat source	These definitions have been slightly shortened to better fit a single page. Also refer to other dictionaries and speakers!	
*kipisi	to cut, divide	moku	to eat, drink, food	selo	outer form, layer, skin, peel		
kiwen	hard object, metal, stone, rock	moli	dead, dying	seme	what? which?		
ko	clay, semi-solid, powder	monsi	back, behind, rear	sewi	area above, highest part, divine, sacred	*These unofficial words have been marked as significant by the <i>Toki Pona Dictionary</i> , but do not appear in <i>Toki Pona: the Language of Good</i> . They are included here for lookup purposes, but you don't have to use them.	
		*monsuta	fear, monster, scary	sijelo	body, physical state, torso		
		mu	(animal noise)			**This word is a common joke word, not intended for serious use	
		mun	night sky object				