







Welcome to our first grammar lesson!

Many of my students find it challenging to learn grammar on its own, especially when context is absent and it becomes too technical. However, there are benefits of learning grammar, as Malagasy grammar is very different from that of Western languages. Furthermore, there are rules and logic to the Malagasy language which can help the student to progress faster.

If you find it challenging, do try and use it as a reference tool, rather than a textbook to be studied.

Let us start with the two basic elements of a complete sentence — SUBJECT and PREDICATE. A SUBJECT can be a person, thing or place, which the sentence resolves around. A PREDICATE is the part of the sentence that complements the subject.

There are 3 things to note:

1. In Malagasy sentences, the SUBJECT is **not** at the start of the sentence. In English, we will say “Polly is happy”, but in Malagasy, it becomes “Happy is Polly”.
2. The PREDICATE can be a NOUN (**mpamboly izy = he is a farmer**), a NUMBER (**3 ny mpamboly = the farmers are three (/it.))**, an ADJECTIVE (**faly ny mpamboly = the farmer is happy**), an ADVERB (**omaly ny fety = the party was yesterday**), a VERB (**miasa izy = he is working**) etc.  
3. Particularly for French speakers to note, Malagasy nouns do not have gender, so there is no need for the predicate to follow the subject in terms of grammatical gender.  



Here are a few examples of sentences with predicates as adjectives:

**MADIO** ny rivotra = the air is clean

**FALY / RAVORAVO** izy = he/she is happy

**TSY madio** ny rivotra = the air is not clean

**TSY ravoravo** izy = he is not happy

To help you form questions based on the type of subject or predicate, you will use question words like “**MANAHOANA/ MANAKORY**” (HOW), “**INONA/INO**” (WHAT), “**IZA/ZOVY**” (WHO) etc, depending on the type of predicate.  

Questions:

**When the predicate is an ADJECTIVE**

Manahoana ny ... ? / Manakory ny ... ?

- E.g. 1. Manakory ny rivotra ? – Madio  
2. Manakory izy ? – Ravoravo

**When asking about the SUBJECT/OBJECT**

Inona no ... ? / Ino ... ?

- E.g. 1. no madio ? – ny rivotra ( ny = the)

**When the subject is a PERSON**

Iza no ... ? / Zovy ... ?

- E.g. 1. Zovy ravoravo ? – Izy

**Using the particle “VE” or “MOA” as a way of posing a question**

.....Ve .....? / ..... Moa .....?

– la, ... / Ehe, tsy ...

- E.g. 1. Ravoravo moa izy ? – la  
2. Madio ve ny rivotra ? – Ehe



Here are some basic adjectives to add to your vocabulary:

| Adjective  | Meaning | Antonym   |
|--|---------|---|
| Tsara  | Good    | Ratsy<br>= TSY tsara                                    |
| Mafana   | Hot     | Mangatsiaka <sup>off</sup> /<br>manintsy <sup>tsm</sup> |
| Faly <sup>off</sup> /<br>Ravoravo <sup>tsm</sup> | Happy   | Malahelo  |
| Madio  | Clean   | Maloto  |
| Lehibe <sup>off</sup> /<br>geda <sup>tsm</sup>   | Big     | Kely <sup>off</sup> / Hely <sup>tsm</sup>               |
| Mora   | cheap   | Lafo  |



## EXERCISE 1:

After reviewing the lesson, you can now try and form your own sentences with the following exercise:

Pair the following “subjects” with appropriate “predicate adjectives”. IIIlooikiuku88k8kijuYou can use the adjectives in the table above to help you.

NB: Remember that the subject comes after the predicate in Malagasy.

ny andro ( the weather )



aho / zaho ( (me)

Andriamanitra ( God )

ny sakafo ( the meal)

ny vary ( the rice)

ny rano ( the water )

## EXERCISE 2:

Practise using the following ‘question word’ to ask about the sentences you have just formed

Manahoana ny . . . ? / Manakory ny . . . ?