

02 - Basic Sentences

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In this lesson we will look at how to form basic sentences in *yani sayo*. We will rely on the following vocabulary:

Yani Sayo	Adinjo	English	Toki Pona
yi	yi, ki, kuyi, kuki	I, me, us, my, mine, our, ours	mi
ti	ci, cinu, kuci, kucinu	you, you all, your, yours	sina
xisi	ji, fi, xi, kuji, kufi, kuxi	he, she, it, they, his, hers, its, their, theirs	ona
li	–	<i>precedes the verb phrase</i>	li
sayi	sayomin, curito, dér	good, clear, great, to make better, to improve, to repair	pona
wali	walu, horkel, rank	bad, evil, perverse, wrong, to make worse, to break	ike
tulit	churito, dul	big, great, grand, important, elder, to grow	suli
motli	mor, tal, dun	small, short, few, trivial, young, younger, to shrink, to reduce	lili
papi	pavat, sedjim, vadrinn	fruit, vegetable, mushroom, to cultivate, to harvest	kili
telwin	telar, tamar, ace, zoán	land animal, mammal, pet, to tame, to live with	soweli

Lesson

We'll start the basic sentence structure:

[noun] li [noun/adjective]

This is the equivalent of the English structure

[noun] is (a) [noun/adjective]

or the Adinjo Journalist structures

[menachin] [menachin/gormachin] ic
[menachin] an[menachin/gormachin]

For example:

Yani Sayo: xisi li tulot
English: (He/she/it/they) (is/are) (big/great/important).
Journalist: (Ji/fi/xi) churito ic.

As this demonstrates, a single word in Yani Sayo may have multiple interpretations in a given sentence, and will be more clear based on the context in which a sentence is spoken or written. We can extend this even further, as some words in Yani Sayo have much broader domains of meaning than others:

Yani Sayo: papi li sayo
English: (Fruits/vegetables/mushrooms) are (good/tasty)
Journalist: (Pavatu/sedjimu/vadrimnu) (sayomin) ic.

In this case, it is fairly obvious that “sayo” is used to reflect the positive quality or goodness of “papi”.

It doesn't matter what sentence you are forming, in Yani Sayo you must always use “li” to mark the end of your subject and start of your predicate – unlike some other languages, there is no exception to this rule for any pronouns, and a sentence cannot be complete without “li” or another particle which is allowed to fill the same role.

This means it is very different to say:

Yani Sayo: yi sayo
English: My goodness
Journalist: Kuyi sayoma.

as opposed to:

Yani Sayo: yi li sayo
English: I'm good, I'm okay
Journalist: Yi zamur ic.

Now that we've covered this, try translating the following sentences into Yani Sayo:

🕒 1. Animals are important. | Zoanu frelmagic. >

telwin li tulot

② 2. He is little. | Ji dun ic. >

xisi li motli

③ 3. I am great. | Yi curito ic. >

yi li tulot

④ 4. It is a dog. | Xi kita ic. >

xisi li telwan

⑤ 5. You are bad. | Ci walu ic. >

ti li walo