



toki pona

Developed by linguist Sonja Lang, toki pona is a language with ~130 words.

It uses only 14 IPA phonemes: *a e i o u j k l m n p s t u w*

Basic Sentences

The particle *li* separates the subject from the predicate.

↪>R – *The cat is eating.*

↪>o – *People sleep.*

There is no verb “to be.” The part after *>* (predicate) can be a noun or an adjective.

↪>R – *Fruits are food.*

≈>u – *Water is good.*

If the subject is *P* or *b* alone, the *>* is always omitted.

P>R – *I eat.*

b>u – *You are good.*

Ambiguity

Toki Pona words are less specific than English words, so one-to-one translation is not as easy.

P>R – *I am eating, I was eating, or I will be eating.*

Many words have multiple or general meanings.

↪ – *A cat, dog, or any land mammal.*

↪ – *Any fruit or vegetable.*

Most words can act as nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs.

≈ – *Water, wet, or to wash.*

u – *Good, simple, to improve, or wellness.*

Nouns have no number and there is no “a” or “the.”

↪ – *A fish, the fish, some fish.*

P – *I, me, we, or us.*

Direct objects

The particle *>>* signifies the direct object. This also makes the previous word into a verb.

↪>R>>≈ – *The animal drinks the water.*

P>>u – *I wash my hands.*

b>>u – *You enlarge it.*

Modifying words

Words can be modified by appending other words.

↪~ – *small human, child ?*

△P – *My house.*

♡u – *A good feeling.*

To negate a word, append *x*.

P~oX – *I'm not sleeping.*

↪X>o – *No one is talking. ?*

With multiple modifiers, they all modify the first word.

□Y|| – *Two plant lists.*

□X△ – *A blue and black box.*

You can change the way the modifiers interact using *pi*.

□LY|| – *A two-plant list.*

□LX△ – *A dark-blue box.*

Prepositions

↪, ~, =, △, and □ can act as prepositions. They go at the end of a statement.

ΡX△ – *I eat with cutlery.*

Ρ>△ – *The animal is in the house.*

↪=△ – *You sing like a bird!*

ΡL△ – *I return from work.*

↪o>△Lb – *They said that to you.*

Questions

There are three ways to form a question. If you want a yes-or-no answer, use verb *X* verb.

↪oX△ – *Is she playing?*

This will usually result in one of three types of replies:

o – Yes: *[she is] playing.*

oX – No: *[she is] not playing.*

X – No: *[she is] not [playing].*

If you want to check something, end the sentence with *Y?*

b>Y? – *Are you making fire?*

Ρ^>△LY? – *Is the cute cat in a box?*

Replace unknown info with *?* to form an open-ended question.

↪?>X>R≈ – *Who's bringing the drinks?*

b>>? – What are you making?

Interjections

Interjections are common. Add *L* for emphasis.

u – *Good! / Great! / Thanks!*

o/L – *So powerful!*

↪ – *Hello! / Hi! / Greetings!*

~ – *True! / Correct!*

Ru – *Bon appetit!*

Conjunctions

There are many ways to say “and”. Use *+* for 2+ subjects.

P+b>O|| – *You and I are playing a lot.*

For 2+ predicates, repeat *>*.

Ρ↓>v>^> – *This animal is small and cute.*

For direct objects, repeat *>>*.

↪o>△P>>o – *She sees a bird and a fish.*

For prepositions, repeat the preposition.

P>>△R0R0 – *I build the house using sticks and stones.*

Y can be used to mean “or.”

↪uY~ – *Is this good or bad?*

PYb>A – *You or I are going to the store.*

Loanwords

Toki Pona uses **proper adjectives**, not nouns. These are marked by a box. Only the first sound of each word is read.

↪[Jan Sonja] – *A person named Sonja, a.k.a. jan Sonja.*

↪[Deutsch] – *The language “Tosi” (Deutsch), a.k.a. German.*

↪[USA] – *The land Mewika (USA) is big.*

Loanwords should try to follow Toki Pona’s rules for syllables:

- They have exactly one vowel.
- They may have *n* at the end.
- The first syllable in a word may start with a vowel.
- The others must all start with a consonant.
- The combinations *wu*, *wo*, *ji*, *ti*, *nm* and *nn* are avoided.

The word !

Preverbs

Context

Numbers

people

jan	person, somebody
kulpu	group, community, company, collection, team
mama	parent, caretaker; creator
meli	female, feminine
mi	(1st-person) I, me, we, us
mije	male, masculine
ona	(3rd-person) he, she, it, they, ...
sina	(2nd-person) you, y'all
tonsi	nonbinary; transgender

body

insa	inside, center, between, middle; organ, stomach
kute	ear; hear, listen
lawa	head, mind; lead; leader; rule
luka	hand, arm; 5
lukin	look, see, examine; eye; try
monsu	behind, back, rear
nena	nose, bump, hill, button
noka	foot, leg; roots, lower part
pilin	heart, feeling (emotion, sense)
selo	outer layer, skin, peel, shell, bark; boundary
sijelo	body, physical state, torso
sinpin	vertical surface, wall; front, face
uta	mouth, lips

things

ijo	thing, object, matter
ilo	tool, machine, device, instrument
leko	square, cube, block, brick
linja	long and flexible thing, rope, hair, line, string
lipu	flat object, paper, document, card, website
lupa	door, window, hole, pit, portal
namako	spice, ornament; extra, additional
nena	nose, bump, hill, button
palisa	long hard object, rod, stick
poki	Container, bag, bowl, box, cup
sike	circle, sphere; cycle, orbit, year
supa	horizontal surface, bed, floor, table, platform, stage

necessities

esun	market, shop; trade, buy, sell
len	cloth, fabric; hidden, private
mani	money, currency; valuables
misikeke	medication, medical practice
moku	eat, drink; food
pan	bread, grain, potato, pasta, rice
tomo	building, room, tent, shelter
wile	want, must, need

sight

jelo	yellow, yellowish color
kule	color; aspect of sense, timbre, pitch, flavor, texture; queer
laso	blue, green, turquoise, indigo
loje	red, reddish color
lukin	look, see, examine; eye; try
pimeja	black; dark, unlit; dark color
sitenen	image, picture, symbol, writing
walo	white; light-colored, bright color

activity

alasa	hunt, forage, seek, attempt, try
esun	market, shop; trade, buy, sell
jo	have, hold, carry, contain
kalama	to make noise; sound
kepeken	using, with, by means of
kipisi	cut, split, slice; piece, part
ku	to interact with Toki Pona Dictionary by Sonja Lang
lape	sleep, rest
pali	work, create, take action on
pana	give, send, emit, provide
pu	to interact with Toki Pona: The Language of Good by Sonja Lang
sitenen	image, picture, symbol, writing
su	to interact with the illustrated story book series produced by Sonja Lang
toki	talk, communicate; tale; language
unpa	sex, to have sexual relations
utala	fight, compete, battle; challenge

state

ante	different, change, changed, other
awen	stay, remain, wait; protect, save; to continue
kama	arrive, summon; future; become
ken	can, may, ability; possible; allow, enable; to be able to
open	begin, start; turn on; opening
pini	finish, stop; turn off; close, end, final
tawa	motion, walking, flight, travel; going to, for; from the perspective of
tempo	time, moment, period, duration
weka	away, absent, distant; remove, rid

connection

anu	(possibility marker), or
e	(direct object marker)
en	(multiple subject marker)
kin	too, also
la	(context marker)
ti	(predicate marker)
lon	located at; real, true, exist
pi	(regroups modifiers)
seme	(question marker); what, which
tan	by, from, because; origin, cause
taso	only, exclusively; but, however

critters

akesi	reptile, amphibian, scaly animal
kala	fish, marine animal
kijetesantakalu	raccoon, procyonid, musteloid
pipi	insect, bug, spider, tiny crawling creature
soweli	land animal, beast
waso	bird, flying animal, winged animal

evoke

a	(emphasis/emotion interjection); ah, oh, haha, eh, um
mu	(animal noise/onomatopoeia)
n	(thinking interjection); hm, uh
o	(vocative/imperative marker), must, ought, should, could, would
w	utala

descriptions

ante	different, change, changed, other
ike	bad, negative, unpleasant, cringe, complex, harmful, unneeded
jaki	disgusting, unclean, toxic
kiwen	hard object, stone, rock, metal
ko	clay, dough, something pliable, powder, sand
lawa	head, mind; lead; leader; rule
titi	little, small, short; few; young
namako	spice, ornament; extra, additional
nasa	strange, unusual, silly, unexpected; drunk
pona	good, positive, pleasant, simple, friendly, useful, peaceful, based
sama	same, similar; sibling, peer; as, like
sin	new, fresh; another, extra
suli	big, heavy, large; important; adult
suwi	sweet; cute, innocent, adorable

locating

apna	bottom, underside; below; defeat, humble, lowly
insa	inside, center, between, middle; organ, stomach
lon	located at; real, true, exist
monsi	behind, back, rear
ni	this, that, these, those
poka	side, hip; next to, near
poki	container, bag, bowl, box, cup
selo	outer layer, skin, peel, shell, bark; boundary
sewi	up, top, above; divine, sacred, supernatural; awesome, inspiring
sinpin	vertical surface, wall; front, face
weka	away, absent, distant; remove, rid

ideas

jasima	mirror, reflection, opposite
moli	death, dead, dying; kill, murder
monsuta	monster, fear, scary, threat, danger
musi	entertainment, fun, game, art, amusing, interesting
nasin	method, doctrine; road, way
nimi	word, name
olin	love, bond, compassion, respect
pakala	damage, break, harm; mistake
pitin	heart, feeling (emotion, sense)
sewi	up, top, above; divine, sacred, supernatural; awesome, inspiring
sona	knowledge, information; know; wisdom, skill
tempo	time, moment, period, duration
utala	fight, compete, battle; challenge
wawa	amazing; power, energy; intense
wile	want, must, need

elements

kasi	plant, vegetation; herb, leaf
kili	fruit, vegetable
kiwen	hard object, stone, rock, metal
kon	air, breath, wind; spirit, soul
lete	cold, cool, frozen; raw
ma	earth, land, soil; country, territory
mun	moon, night sky object, star
seli	hot, warm; heat, fire; burn
soko	mushroom, fungus, lichen
suno	sun, light source; light, glow
telo	water, liquids, drinks; to wash, to clean

counting

ala	not, nothing, no; 0; (negation); (yes-no question)
ale	all, everything, entirety; any; 100
luka	hand, arm; 5
mute	many, several; very; 20
nanpa	number, -th
tu	2; separate, divide, split
wan	1; combine, join, mix