



toki pona

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

Kanata (𐀂𐀃𐀅) uses the Canadian Aboriginal Syllabary to represent the 46 possible consonant vowel pairs:

	e	i	o	u	a	𐀀
𐀁	𐀂	𐀃	𐀄	𐀅	𐀆	𐀇
p-	𐀈	𐀉	𐀊	𐀋	𐀌	𐀍
t-	𐀎	𐀏	𐀐	𐀑	𐀒	𐀓
k-	𐀔	𐀕	𐀖	𐀗	𐀘	𐀙
m-	𐀚	𐀛	𐀜	𐀝	𐀞	𐀟
n-	𐀠	𐀡	𐀢	𐀣	𐀤	𐀥
l-	𐀦	𐀧	𐀨	𐀩	𐀪	𐀫
s-	𐀬	𐀭	𐀮	𐀯	𐀰	𐀱
j-	𐀲	𐀳	𐀴	𐀵	𐀶	𐀷
w-	𐀸	𐀹	𐀺	𐀻	𐀼	𐀽

𐀀 is a naming mark. Light text indicates syllables not allowed in Toki Pona.

Basic Sentences

The particle 𐀂 separates the subject from the predicate.

𐀂 - The cat is eating.

𐀃 𐀂 𐀄 - People sleep.

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

𐀂 - Fruits are food.

𐀂 - Water is good.

If the subject is or alone, the 𐀂 is always omitted.

- I eat.

- You are good.

Ambiguity

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

- 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.

- Good, simple, to improve, or wellness.

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

- A fish, the fish, some fish.

- I, me, we, or us.

Direct objects

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

𐀂 𐀃 - The animal drinks the water.

𐀃 - I wash my hands.

𐀃 - You enlarge it.

Modifying words

Words can be modified by appending other words.

𐀃 - Child (small human).

- My house.

- A good feeling.

To negate a word, append 𐀄

𐀄 𐀂 - I'm not sleeping.

𐀃 𐀄 𐀂 - No one is talking.

With multiple modifiers, they all modify the first word.

𐀃 𐀄 - Two plant lists.

- A blue and black box.

You can change the way the modifiers interact using pi .

𐀃 𐀄 - A two-plant list.

- A dark-blue box.

Prepositions

, , , , and can act as prepositions. They go at the end of a statement.

𐀄 - I eat with cutlery.

𐀂 - The animal is in the house.

- You sing like a bird!

- I return from work.

𐀂 𐀃 - They said that to you.

Questions

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

𐀂 𐀄 - Is she playing?

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

- Yes: [she is"] playing.

𐀄 - No: [she is"] not playing.

𐀄 - No: [she is"] not [playing"].

If you want to check something, end the sentence with 𐀄

𐀄 - Are you making fire?

𐀂 𐀄 - Is the cute cat in a box?

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

𐀃 𐀃 - Who's bringing the drinks?

𐀃 - What are you making?

Interjections

Interjections are common. Add 𐀄 for emphasis.

- Good! / Great! / Thanks!

𐀄 - So powerful!

- Hello! / Hi! / Greetings!

- True! / Correct!

- Bon appetit!

Conjunctions

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

𐀃 𐀂 - You and I are playing a lot.

For 2+ predicates, repeat 𐀂.

𐀂 𐀂 - This animal is small and cute.

For direct objects, repeat 𐀃.

𐀂 𐀃 𐀃 - She sees a bird and a fish.

For prepositions, repeat the preposition.

𐀃 - I build the house using sticks and stones.

𐀄 can be used to mean “or.”

𐀂 𐀄 𐀃 - Is this good or bad?

𐀄 𐀂 𐀃 - 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.

𐀃 Sonja - A person named Sonja, a.k.a. jan Sonja.

Tosi - The language “Tosi” (Deutsch), a.k.a. German.

Mewika 𐀂 - 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 𐀀 at the end.
- The first syllable in a word may start with a vowel.
- The others must all start with a consonant.

- The combinations 𐀂, 𐀃, 𐀄, & 𐀅 are avoided.

The word

You can use 𐀂 before a verb to turn into a command. n it - Listen!

- Please drink.

You can use 𐀂 after a subject to address them.

𐀃 Eten - Eten! (Aden)

You can place 𐀂 between subject and predicate to express a wish, desire, request, etc.

- Joy to you.

- I should be working.

Or it can also be a contraction of the first two uses.

Sasa - Eat, Sasa. (Sasza)

Preverbs

Preverbs go before verbs to modify their meaning.

- I can write.

𐀂 - The small bird wants to become big.

The words , , , , 𐀄, and 𐀄 can be preverbs.

Context

The word 𐀂 can be used to mark the context of a sentence:

a b means: In the context of a, b. This can mean time, cause, topic, etc.

- When you are by my side, I feel good.

The word 𐀂 is often used to move a prepositional phrase to the front of the sentence.

- Just like me, you know a lot.

- Why are you hot?

The preposition 𐀂 can be omitted in this case.

𐀂 - I sleep [at] night.

Numbers

Combine number words to add them up.

For example, 𐀂 is 1, 𐀂 is 2, 𐀂 is 5, 𐀂 is 20, 𐀄 is 100, 𐀂 is 4, and 𐀂 is 8.

The word 𐀂 can be used to mark ordinals.

𐀃 𐀂 - The first book is good.

- 26th Street.

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

necessities	
	market, shop; trade, buy, sell
	cloth, fabric; hidden, private
	money, currency; valuables
	medication, medical practice
	eat, drink; food
	bread, grain, potato, pasta, rice
	building, room, tent, shelter
	want, must, need

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

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

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

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

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

connection	
	(possibility marker), or
	(direct object marker)
	(multiple subject marker)
	too, also
	(context marker)
	(predicate marker)
	located at; real, true, exist
	(regroups modifiers)
	(question marker); what, which
	by, from, because; origin, cause
	only, exclusively; but, however

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

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

things	
	thing, object, matter
	tool, machine, device, instrument
	square, cube, block, brick
	long and flexible thing, rope, hair, line, string
	flat object, paper, document, card, website
	door, window, hole, pit, portal
	spice, ornament; extra, additional
	nose, bump, hill, button
	long hard object, rod, stick
	container, bag, bowl, box, cup, category
	circle, sphere; cycle, orbit, year
	horizontal surface, bed, floor, table, platform, stage

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

critters	
	reptile, amphibian, scaly animal
	fish, marine animal
	raccoon, procyonid, musteloid
	insect, bug, spider, tiny crawling creature
	land animal, beast
	bird, flying animal, winged animal

evoke	
	(emphasis/emotion interjection); ah, oh, haha, eh, um
	(animal noise/onomatopoeia)
	(thinking interjection); hm, uh
	(vocalive/imperative marker), must, ought, should, could, would

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

