

A Learner's Grammar of Jamaican  
*Part of the Open Grammar Project*

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## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. The Open Grammar Project

This volume is part of a series of learner's grammars by the Open Grammar Project. Like the other entries in the series, it is first and foremost an ongoing *synthesis* of available linguistic information, which has been compiled, organized, and annotated so as to be maximally useful to **learners** rather than (just) **linguists**. It is assumed that the reader is interested in making the journey *from* the source language *to* the target language, and provides succinct advice on a range of relevant topics to make that journey easier. It also takes for granted that the learner is seeking to speak and write (as well as read and understand) a *living* language of practical rather than just scholarly or historical interest.

In this task we are indebted to the source works listed in the bibliography section at the end of each volume. Many of the sources consulted are the work of linguistic experts, and those interested in learning more about the workings of a particular language are encouraged to seek out these source materials to read more deeply on the subject. The concept of a *learner grammar* as used here, however, differs in both purpose and form from traditional linguistic grammars: it has most significantly a *didactic* rather than simply *descriptive* goal, and is further organized broadly under headings and topics according to the *source* rather than *target* grammar to make it easier for the learner to find the information they are looking for using familiar terms and categories.

There are a number of other unique features of this book. The content and source code of the book is open licensed and has been designed specifically to allow for easy machine as well as human parsing of the information within. The project is also "open" in the sense that additions, changes, corrections, and other contributions are welcome from anyone interested in improving the quality of the material.

More detailed information about the Open Grammar Project and the Learner's Grammar series can be found on the project home page:

<https://opengrammar.github.io/>

It is intended that this series be a complement rather than an alternative to both linguistic grammars and classroom textbooks, and it is hoped that it may serve as a useful reference for both new learners and those wishing to improve or maintain their language skills.

### 2.2. Source

The source code for this book can be found in the [project repository on GitHub](#).

The PDF version is available [here](#).

This book also comes with a number of appendices:

- [A Gazetteer of Placenames in Jamaican \(PDF\)](#)
- [A Learner's Glossary of Jamaican \(PDF\)](#)

## 2.3. Jamaican

### 2.3.1. Name

The Jamaican language goes by a variety of names in different contexts: **Patwa** (*Patois*), Jamaican Patwa, Creole, Jamaican Creole, Afro-Jamaican, JamC, JC, AfroJam, or simply **Jamiekan** (*Jamaican*), with the most common among Jamaican speakers themselves being **Patwa**.

Although Jamaican is the native and first language of almost the entire population of Jamaica, it takes a number of different forms that fall along a continuum stretching from the *basilect* (furthest distance from Standard Jamaican English) to the *acrolect* (closest distance from Standard Jamaican English). Forms all along the middle of this continuum are common in Jamaica, while the extremes (basilectal and acrolectal forms) are relatively rare.

Following the example of most published linguistic grammars, this text will tend towards an idealized basilectal form which for simplicity's sake will be referred to as *Jamaican*.

# 3. Writing system

## 3.1. Alphabet

The Jamaican alphabet consists of 25 letters, including one letter — **c** — which is sometimes (as here) considered a digraph, since it only appears in the form **ch**

- lowercase letters: **a, b, ch, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z**
- uppercase letters: **A, B, Ch, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z**

### 3.1.1. Overview of Jamaican alphabet

Uppercase	Lowercase	Name	Pronunciation (IPA)	Notes
A	a	ie	/a/	
B	b	bii	/b/	
Ch	ch	chii	/tʃ/	
D	d	dii	/d/	
E	e	hii	/e/	
F	f	hef	/f/	
G	g	jii	/g/	
H	h	iech	/h/	the pronunciation (or absence) of <b>h</b> depends on dialect
I	i	hai	/i/	
J	j	jie	/dʒ/	
K	k	kie	/k/	
L	l	hel	/l/	
M	m	hem	/m/	
N	n	hen	/n/	
O	o	uo	/o/	
P	p	pii	/p/	
R	r	haar	/ɹ/	
S	s	hes	/s/	

Uppercase	Lowercase	Name	Pronunciation (IPA)	Notes
T	t	tii	/t/	
U	u	yuu	/u/	
V	v	vii	/v/	
W	w	doblyu	/w/	
X	x	ex	/ks/	
Y	y	wai	/j/	
Z	z	zed	/z/	

## 3.2. Special Characters

Jamaican in the orthography presented here (based on the Cassidy-JLU System) does not require any special characters or diacritics to write.

## 3.3. Punctuation

### 3.3.1. Basic punctuation

Punctuation in Jamaican generally follows the same conventions as Standard Jamaican English and UK English more generally

Some writers may use an apostrophe to separate two words that should be read together

- **no av** → **na'av** (*not have*)

Sometimes an apostrophe may be used to indicate sound change when two words are merged

- **du it** → **dwi'it** (*do it*)

It may also be used to avoid difficult to pronounce strings of letters in the merged word

- **gi iin** → **gi'iin** (*give in*)

## 4. Pronunciation

### 4.1. Vowels

There are five short vowels, three long vowels, and four diphthongs in Jamaican

- short vowels: **a, e, i, o, u**
- long vowels: **aa, ii, uu**
- diphthongs: **ai, ie, uo, ou**

#### 4.1.1. Vowel length

Vowels in Jamaican can be either short or long

- short vowels: **a, e, i, o, u**
- long vowels: **aa, ii, uu**

##### 4.1.1.1. Short vowels

There are five short vowels in Jamaican

- short vowels: **a, e, i, o, u**

The short vowel **a** is pronounced /a/, as the "a" in *father*

- **aliv** /aliv/, *olive*
- **ban** /ban/, *band*
- **wan** /wan/, *one*
- **dala** /dala/, *dollar*
- **bada** /bada/, *bother*

The short vowel **e** is pronounced /e/, as the "e" in *bed*

- **ded** /ded/, *dead*
- **bel** /bel/, *bell*
- **breda** /breda/, *brother / friend*

The short vowel **i** is pronounced /ɪ/, as the "i" in *thin*

- **sik** /sɪk/, *sick*
- **migl** /mɪgl/, *middle*
- **bita** /bita/, *bitter*

The short vowel **o** is pronounced /o/, as the "o" in @

- **kot** /kot/, *cut*
- **ogli** /ogli/, *ugly*

The short vowel **u** is pronounced /u/ (recognized as /ʊ/ by some authors), as the "u" in @

- **dukunu** /dukunu/, (a kind of pudding)
- **kuk** /kuk/, *cook*
- **butu** /butu/

#### 4.1.1.2. Long vowels

The long vowels are pronounced by doubling the length of the corresponding short vowels

- long vowels: **aa**, **ii**, **uu**

##### 4.1.1.2.1. aa

The long vowel **aa** is pronounced /a:/, as the @ in @

- **aad** /a:d/, *hard*
- **aaf** /a:f/, *half*
- **aaks** /a:ks/, *ask*
- **baal** /ba:l/, *ball*
- **baat** /ba:t/, *bath*
- **baaba** /ba:ba/, *barber*
- **saaf** /sa:f/, *soft*
- **Naat Amerika** /na:t ameri:ka/, *North America*
- **kwaat** /kwa:t/, *quart*
- **yaad** /ja:d/, *yard*
- **aad iez** /a:d iez/, *disobedient*
- **plaan** /pla:n/, *plant*
- **kaan** /ka:n/, *corn*
- **taak** /ta:k/, *talk*
- **waata** /wa:ta/, *water*

##### 4.1.1.2.2. ii

The long vowel **ii** is pronounced /i:/, as the "@" in @

- **iit** /i:t/, *eat*
- **tii** /ti:/, *tea*
- **miin** /mi:n/, *mean*
- **siin** /si:n/, *agreed, OK* (affirmative particle)
- **tiich** /ti:tʃ/, *teach*
- **biini** /bi:ni/, *tiny*
- **paliis** /pali:s/, *police*

#### 4.1.1.2.3. uu

The long vowel **uu** is pronounced /u:/, as the "@" in @

- **buut** /bu:t/, *booth / boot*
- **shuut** /ʃu:t/, *shoot*
- **byuuti** /bju:ti/, *beauty*
- **skuul** /sku:l/, *school*
- **dailuut** /dailu:t/, *dilute*
- **uu** /u:/, *who*
- **manguus** /mangu:s/, *mongoose*
- **Yuukrien** /ju:kɹiɛn/, *Ukraine*
- **Kyuuba** /kju:ba/, *Cuba*
- **Yuurop** /ju:ɹɒp/, *Europe*
- **yuut** /ju:t/, *youngster*
- **myuuzik** /mju:zik/, *music*
- **kuul** /ku:l/, *cool*
- **pyuuriti** /pju:ɹiti/, *purity*
- **fuud** /fu:d/, *food*
- **fyuu** /fju:/, *few*
- **ruut** /ɹu:t/, *root*
- **hatityuud** /hatitju:d/, *attitude*
- **nyuu** /nju:/, *new*
- **chruu** /tʃɹu:/, *through*
- **chuun** /tʃu:n/, *tune*
- **chuut** /tʃu:t/, *truth*



## 4.1.2. Diphthongs

There are four diphthongs in Jamaican

- diphthongs: **ai**, **ie**, **uo**, **ou**

### 4.1.2.1. ai

The diphthong **ai** is pronounced /aɪ/, as the "igh" in *sigh* or the "y" in *try*

- **baik** /bark/, *bike*
- **chrai** /tʃɹaɪ/, *try*
- **rait** /ɹaɪt/, *write*
- **taim** /taɪm/, *time*
- **fain** /faɪn/, *find*
- **hAirish** /haɪɹɪʃ/ or /aɪɹɪʃ/, *Irish*
- **dairek** /daɪɹɛk/, *direct*
- **ail** /aɪl/, *oil*
- **bwai** /bwaɪ/, *boy*
- **bait** /baɪt/, *bite*
- **bwail** /bwaɪl/, *boil*
- **paint** /paɪnt/, *point*
- **pwail** /pwaɪl/, *spoil*
- **sait** /saɪt/, *sight / site*
- **madifai** /madɪfaɪ/, *modify*
- **yai** /jaɪ/, *eye*

### 4.1.2.2. ie

The diphthong **ie** is pronounced /ɪɛ/, as the "e" in @ or the "e" in @

- **kiek** /kɪɛk/, *cake*
- **biek** /bɪɛk/, *bake*
- **mien** /mɪɛn/, *main*
- **aalzwie** /a:lzwɪɛ/, *always*
- **aatiek** /a:ɹɪɛk/, *heartache*
- **badarieshan** /badaɹɪɛʃan/, *hassle / inconvenience*
- **bied** /bɪɛd/, *bathe / beard*

- **biefies** /bɪɛfɪɛs/, *bare-faced / blatant*
- **biev** /bɪɛv/, *to behave*
- **chriet** /tʃɪɛt/, *straight*
- **exkiep** /ɛkskɪɛp/, *to escape*
- **fiet** /fɪɛt/, *fate / faith*
- **iel** /ɪɛl/, *to greet*
- **ier** /ɪɛɪ/, *year / hair / hear*
- **iez** /ɪɛz/, *ear*
- **sitieshan** /sitɪɛʃan/, *situation*
- **hiet** /hɪɛt/, *eight*
- **die** /dɪɛ/, *day*
- **Mie** /mɪɛ/, *May*
- **liedi** /lɪɛdi/, *lady*
- **liet** /lɪɛt/, *late*
- **rien** /ɹɪɛn/, *rain*
- **ies** /ɪɛs/, *haste, hurry*
- **tieta** /tɪɛta/, *theatre*
- **Mantiga Bie** /mantiga bɪɛ/, *Montego Bay*
- **Mobie** /mɔɓbɪɛ/, *Mobay*
- **jiel** /jɪɛl/, *jail*
- **biebi** /bɪɛbi/, *baby*
- **jinarieshan** /dʒɪnaɹɪɛʃan/, *relatives*
- **nieshan** /nɪɛʃan/, *nation*
- **miebi** /mɪɛbi/, *maybe*
- **fies** /fɪɛs/, *face*
- **niel** /nɪɛl/, *nail*
- **tiel** /tɪɛl/, *tail*
- **pitiet** /pitɪɛta/, *potato*
- **pliet** /plɪɛt/, *plate*
- **pier** /pɪɛɪ/, *avocado*
- **siem** /sɪɛm/, *same*
- **shiem** /ʃɪɛm/, *shame*

- **spies** /spɪɛs/, *space*
- **chienj** /tʃɪɛndʒ/, *change*
- **Mieri** /mɪɛ.ɹi/, *Mary*
- **tiebl** /tɪɛbl/, *table*
- **wie** /wɪɛ/, *way*
- **niem** /nɪɛm/, *name*
- **sieka** /sɪɛka/, *because*
- **ieti** /ɪɛti/, *eighty*



This diphthong is sometimes written as **ia** with the corresponding pronunciation /iɛ/

#### 4.1.2.3. uo

The diphthong **uo** is pronounced /uɔ/, as the "@" in @ or the "@" in @

- **gruo** /gɹuɔ/, *grow*
- **uol** /uɔl/, *hole / whole / old*
- **kuoknat** /kuɔknat/, *coconut*
- **suos** /suɔs/, *source*
- **huoliip** /huɔli:p/, *many / a lot*
- **luokal** /luɔkal/, *local*
- **guol** /guɔl/, *goal / gold*
- **guot** /guɔt/, *goat*
- **nuoz** /nuɔz/, *nose*
- **puos** /puɔs/, *post*
- **shuo** /ʃuɔ/, *show*
- **uona** /uɔna/, *owner*
- **fu** /fuɔ/, *four*
- **kuol** /kuɔl/, *cold*
- **uoba** /uɔba/, *over*
- **kuos** /kuɔs/, *coast*
- **ruod** /ɹuɔd/, *road*
- **raktuon** /ɹaktuɔn/, *stone*
- **puosi** /puɔsi/, *postman*
- **shuolda** /ʃuɔlda/, *shoulder*

- **tuo** /tuɔ/, *toe*
- **ruos** /ruɔs/, *roasted*
- **nuo** /nuɔ/, *know*
- **puo** /puɔ/, *poor*
- **buot** /buɔt/, *boat*
- **tuori** /tuɔ.ɹi/, *story*
- **muo** /muɔ/ or **muor** /muɔ.ɹ/, *more*
- **nuot** /nuɔt/, *note*
- **muos** /muɔs/, *most*
- **uom** /uɔm/, *home*
- **duo** /duɔ/, *door*
- **suop** /suɔp/, *soap*
- **puot** /puɔt/, *sports*
- **suos** /suɔs/, *source*
- **papishuo** /papiʃuɔ/, *foolishness* (exclamation of surprise)
- **juok** /dʒuɔk/, *joke*
- **stuon** /stuɔn/, *stone*



This diphthong is sometimes written as **ua** with the corresponding pronunciation /ʊə/

When **uo** is at the beginning of a word, it may sometimes be pronounced (and written) with either an **h** or a **w** in front of it, depending on the speaker

- **uol** (*hole / whole / old*) → **huol** → **wuol**

This applies to derivative terms as well

- **uoliip** → **huoliip** → **wuoliip** (*many / a lot / large group*)
- **uol-taima** → **huol-taima** → **wuol-taima** (*old-timer*)
- **di uol a dem** → **di huol a dem** → **di wuol a dem** (*all of them / everyone*)

#### 4.1.2.4. ou

The diphthong **ou** is pronounced /ɔu/, as the "@" in @ or the "@" in @

- **kou** /kɔu/, *cow*
- **toun** /tɔun/, *town*



This diphthong is sometimes written as **au** with the corresponding pronunciation /ɔʊ/

### 4.1.3. Nasal Vowels

There are five nasal vowels in Jamaican, corresponding to the five short vowels listed above

- Nasal vowels: **ahn**, **ehn**, **ihn**, **ohn**, **uhn**
- Nasal vowel sounds: /ã/, /ẽ/, /ĩ/, /õ/, /ũ/

As seen above, the letters **hn** are added after a vowel to indicate that it is a nasal vowel:

- **ahn** /ã/, *and*

Long vowels can also be nasalized with **hn**

- **kyaahn** /kjã:/, *can't*
- **iihn** /i:/, *isn't it?*

The nasal vowel **ahn** is pronounced /ã/, as in the "anc" in French *blanc*

- **pahn** /pã/ *on, upon*
- **frahn** /fɾã/, *from*
- **ahn** /ã/, *and*
- **kiahn** /kjã/, *can*
- **wahn** /wã/, *want*
- **kyaahn** /kjã:/, *cannot*

The nasal vowel **ehn** is pronounced /ẽ/, as the "in" in French *vin*

- **wehn** /wẽ/, (anterior marker)
- **dehn** /dẽ/, *they*

The nasal vowel **ihn** is pronounced /ĩ/, as the "@" in @

- **ihn** /ĩ/, *he / she*

The nasal vowel **ohn** is pronounced /õ/, as the "on" in French *bon*



this sound should be represented by /õ/, which is a precomposed character ɔ combined with a tilde [~]; for convenience, /õ/ is used here in its place)

- **sohn** /sõ/, *some*

- **duohn** /duõ/, *don't*

The nasal vowel **uhn** is pronounced /ũ/, as the "un" in French *un*

- **suhn** /sũ/, *soon*

#### 4.1.4. Table of vowels and diphthongs

Vowel	Pronunciation	Length	Example	Notes
<b>a</b>	/a/	short	<b>wan</b>	as the "a" in <i>father</i>
<b>e</b>	/e/	short	<b>bel</b>	as the "e" in <i>bed</i>
<b>i</b>	/ɪ/	short	<b>migl</b>	as the "i" in <i>thin</i>
<b>o</b>	/o/	short	<b>kot</b>	
<b>u</b>	/u/	short	<b>kuk</b>	as the "oo" in <i>cool</i>
<b>aa</b>	/a:/	long	<b>baal</b>	
<b>ii</b>	/i:/	long	<b>siin</b>	
<b>uu</b>	/u:/	long	<b>yuut</b>	
<b>ahn</b>	/ã/	short, nasal	<b>pahn</b>	as in the "anc" in French <i>blanc</i>
<b>ehn</b>	/ẽ/	short, nasal	<b>wehn</b>	as the "in" in French <i>vin</i>
<b>ihn</b>	/ĩ/	short, nasal	<b>ihn</b>	
<b>ohn</b>	/õ/	short, nasal	<b>sohn</b>	as the "on" in French <i>bon</i>
<b>uhn</b>	/ũ/	short, nasal	<b>suhn</b>	as the "un" in French <i>un</i>
<b>ai</b>	/aɪ/	diphthong	<b>baik</b>	as the "igh" in <i>sigh</i> or the "y" in <i>try</i>
<b>ie</b>	/ɪɛ/	diphthong	<b>kiek</b>	
<b>uo</b>	/uɔ/	diphthong	<b>ruod</b>	
<b>ou</b>	/ɔu/	diphthong	<b>kou</b>	

#### 4.1.5. Sounds to note

##### 4.1.5.1. ya (ia)

The sound **ya** /ja/ is equivalent to, and sometimes written as, **ia**:

- **nyam (niam)** /ɲam/, *eat*
- **gyal (gial)**, *girl*

#### 4.1.5.2. yaa (iaa)

Likewise, the lengthened version **yaa** /ja:/ is equivalent to, and sometimes written as, **iaa**:

- **kyaahn (kiaahn)** /kjã:/, *cannot, can't*
- **gyaadn (giaadn)** /gja:dn/, *garden*
- **kyaar (kiaar)** /kja:r/, *car*
- **gyaad (giaad)** /gja:d/, *guard*
- **kyaahn** or **kyaan (kiaahn or kiaan)** /kjã:/ or /kja:n/, *cannot, can't*
- **pyaahn-pyaahn (piaahn-piaahn)** /pjã:pjã:/, *weak*

## 4.2. Consonants

There are 23 consonants in Jamaican

- Consonants: **b, d, ch, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, ng, p, r, s, sh, t, v, w, x, y, z, zh**

The consonant **b** is pronounced /b/, as the "b" in *book*

- **bami** /bami/, *bammy* (a traditional cassava flatbread)
- **botn** /botn/, *button*
- **biek** /biek/, *bake*
- **bigop** /bigop/, *praise, commend*

The consonant **d** is pronounced /d/, as the "d" in *door*

- **dopi** /dopi/, *ghost*
- **daag** /da:g/, *dog*

The consonant **ch** is pronounced /tʃ/, as the "ch" in *chair*

- **choch** /tʃotʃ/, *church*
- **chruu** /tʃru:/, *through*
- **chuun** /tʃu:n/, *tune*
- **chuut** /tʃu:t/, *truth*
- **chrikifai** /tʃiikifai/, *cunning*

The consonant **f** is pronounced /f/, as the "f" in *four*

- **fedā** /feda/, *feather*
- **fuud** /fu:d/, *food*
- **fyuu** /fju:/, *few*
- **falara** /falaxa/, *follower*

The consonant **g** is pronounced /f/, as the "f" in *four*

- **goli** /goli/, *gully*
- **guot** /guot/, *goat*

The consonant **h** can be silent, or depending on the speaker, dialect, and emphasis it may be pronounced /h/, as the "h" in *happy*

- **hit** /hit/ or /it/, *to hit*
- **hen** /hen/ or /en/, *hen*
- **hAirish** /haɪɪʃ/ or /aɪɪʃ/, *Irish*

The consonant **j** is pronounced /dʒ/, as the "j" in *jump*

- **mieja** /mɪɛdʒa/, *measure*
- **joj** /dʒodʒ/, *judge*
- **vijan** /vɪdʒan/, *vision*

The consonant **k** is pronounced /k/, as the "c" in *cut*

- **kait** /kart/, *kite*
- **kalij** /kalɪdʒ/, *college*
- **kisaada** /kisa:da/, *cassava*
- **klaat** /kla:t/, *cloth*
- **kolcha** /koltʃa/, *culture*
- **konchri** /kontʃɪ/, *country*
- **kom** /kom/, *come*
- **kot** /kot/, *cut*

The consonant **l** is pronounced /l/, as the "l" in *left*

- **laiyad** /laɪjad/, *liar*
- **laiyan** /laɪjan/, *lion*
- **liin** /li:n/, *lean*

The consonant **m** is pronounced /m/, as the "m" in *map*



- **magij** /magɪdʒ/, *maggot*
- **man** /man/, *man*

The consonant **n** is pronounced /n/, as the "n" in *new*

- **nomba** /nomba/, *number*
- **nais** /nais/, *nice*

The consonant **ng** is pronounced /ŋ/, as the "ng" in *wing*

- **sang** /saŋ/, *song*
- **sing** /sɪŋ/, *sing*
- **grong** /gɹɒŋ/, *ground*

The consonant **p** is pronounced /p/, as the "p" in *pear*

- **picha** /pitʃa/, *picture*
- **piil** /pi:l/, *peel*
- **pudn** /pudn/, *pudding*
- **pus** /pus/, *cat*

The consonant **r** is pronounced /ɹ/, as the "r" in *red*

- **redi** /ɹedi/, *ready*
- **ron** /ɹɒn/, *run*
- **rait** /ɹaɪt/, *write*

The consonant **s** is pronounced /s/, as the "s" in *sin*

- **sinieli** /sɪniɛli/, *snail*
- **sik** /sɪk/, *sick*

The consonant **sh** is pronounced /ʃ/, as the "sh" in *shoe*

- **shuo** /ʃuo/, *show*
- **shap** /ʃap/, *shop*
- **shout** /ʃout/, *shout*
- **sheda** /ʃeda/, *shadow*
- **shaat** /ʃa:t/, *short*
- **shuga** /ʃuga/, *sugar*
- **shuolda** /ʃuolda/, *shoulder*

- **shaachij** /ʃa:tʃɪdʒ/, *shortage*
- **disepshos** /dɪsepʃos/, *deceitful*
- **sofarieshan** /sofariɛʃan/, *suffering*

The consonant **t** is pronounced /t/, as the "t" in *tin*

- **tiks** /tɪks/, *a tick*
- **tuu** /tu:/, *two; too*
- **toti** /totɪ/, *thirty*

The consonant **v** is pronounced /v/, as the "v" in *very*

- **van** /van/, *van*
- **vuot** /vuot/, *vote*



In the acrolect, **v** may be replaced with **b**, e.g.: **lob** → **lov** (*love*).

The consonant **w** is pronounced /w/, as the "w" in *well*

- **wala** /wala/, *wallow*
- **wail** /wail/, *wild*

The consonant **x** is pronounced /ks/, as the "x" in *exercise*

- **aax** /aks/, *ask*
- **mongx** /monks/, *among; amongst*



In some orthographies, **x** may be written as **ks**, e.g.: **aaks**, **mongks**, etc.

The consonant **y** is pronounced /j/, as the "y" in *you*

- **yampi** /jampi/, *yampi* (a small variety of yam)
- **yong** /jɒŋ/, *young*
- **yai** /jaɪ/, *eye*
- **yaad** /ja:d/, *yard*

The consonant **z** is pronounced /z/, as the "z" in *zoo*

- **zela** /zela/, (a wake for the dead)
- **zuu** /zu:/, *zoo*

The consonant **zh** is only used in loanwords; it is pronounced /ʒ/, as the "s" in *illusion*

- **plezha** /pleʒa/, *pleasure*
- **vorzhan** /voɪʒan/, *version*
- **chrezha** /chɹɛʒa/, *treasure*
- **divizhan** /diviʒan/, *division*



In the acrolect, **zh** may be replaced by **j** /dʒ/, for example: **pleja**, **vorjan**, **chreja**, **divijan**, etc.

#### 4.2.1. Overview of Consonant Sounds

Consonant	Pronunciation	Example	Notes
<b>b</b>	/b/	<b>bami</b>	as the "b" in <i>book</i>
<b>d</b>	/d/	<b>dopi</b>	as the "d" in <i>door</i>
<b>ch</b>	/tʃ/	<b>choch</b>	as the "ch" in <i>chair</i>
<b>f</b>	/f/	<b>feda</b>	as the "f" in <i>four</i>
<b>g</b>	/f/	<b>goli</b>	as the "f" in <i>four</i>
<b>h</b>	/h/	<b>hit</b>	as the "h" in <i>happy</i> ; may be silent depending on the speaker and dialect
<b>j</b>	/dʒ/	<b>joj</b>	as the "j" in <i>jump</i>
<b>k</b>	/k/	<b>kalij</b>	as the "c" in <i>cut</i>
<b>l</b>	/l/	<b>laiyad</b>	as the "l" in <i>left</i>
<b>m</b>	/m/	<b>man</b>	as the "m" in <i>map</i>
<b>n</b>	/n/	<b>nomba</b>	as the "n" in <i>new</i>
<b>ng</b>	/ŋ/	<b>sang</b>	as the "ng" in <i>wing</i>
<b>p</b>	/p/	<b>pudn</b>	as the "p" in <i>pear</i>
<b>r</b>	/ɹ/	<b>redi</b>	as the "r" in <i>red</i>
<b>s</b>	/s/	<b>sinieli</b>	as the "s" in <i>sin</i>
<b>sh</b>	/ʃ/	<b>shuo</b>	as the "sh" in <i>shoe</i>
<b>t</b>	/t/	<b>toti</b>	as the "t" in <i>tin</i>
<b>v</b>	/v/	<b>vuot</b>	as the "v" in <i>very</i>
<b>w</b>	/w/	<b>wail</b>	as the "w" in <i>well</i>
<b>y</b>	/j/	<b>yaad</b>	as the "y" in <i>you</i>

Consonant	Pronunciation	Example	Notes
<b>z</b>	/z/	<b>zela</b>	as the "z" in <i>zoo</i>
<b>zh</b>	/ʒ/	<b>plezha</b>	as the "s" in <i>illusion</i> ; only used in loanwords

## 4.2.2. Consonant Combinations

### ny, gy, ky

In some loanwords from West African languages, **ny** is pronounced (/ɲ/) as in the "ñ" in Spanish *enseñar*

- **nyam** /ɲam/, *eat*

The combination **ky** is pronounced /kʲ/, as in @ (this sound is written with the symbol /c/ in IPA, but for clarity we have written it phonemically as /kʲ/):

- **kyaahn** /kʲã/, *can't; cannot*

Similarly, **gy** is pronounced /gʲ/ (or more accurately /ɟ/) as in @:

- **gyaadn** /ɟaɗn/, *garden*



Some people may write **niam** instead of **nyam**, and **kiaan** for **kyaan**, **gial** for **gyal**, et cetera

### chr

- **chrabl** /tʃɪabl/, *travel*
- **chrai** /tʃɪaɪ/, *try*
- **chrang** /tʃɪaŋ/, *strong*
- **chrent** /tʃɪɛnt/, *strength*
- **chriet** /tʃɪɪɛt/, *straight*
- **chrii** /tʃɪi:/, *tree, three*
- **chriit** /tʃɪi:t/, *treat*
- **chrik** /tʃɪɪk/, *trick*
- **chrikifai** /tʃɪɪkɪfai/, *cunning*
- **chrech** /tʃɪɛtʃ/, *stretch*
- **chrecha** /tʃɪɛtʃa/, *stretcha*
- **chrangga** /tʃɪaŋga/, *stronger*

## **jr**

- **jraafut** /dʒɹɑ:fut/, *lame*
- **jred** /dʒɹed/, *Rastafarian*
- **jresbak** /dʒɹesbak/, *reverse*
- **jresdong** /dʒɹesdon/, *shift position*
- **jriepop** /dʒɹiɛpop/, *accost*
- **jraadong** /dʒɹɑ:don/, *reduced*
- **jraaz** /dʒɹɑ:z/, *drawers*
- **jraa** /dʒɹɑ:/, *draw*
- **jrap** /dʒɹap/, *drop*
- **jringk** /dʒɹɪŋk/, *drink*
- **jrai** /dʒɹɑɪ/, *dry*
- **jres** /dʒɹes/, *dress*
- **jrom** /dʒɹɒm/, *drum*
- **brejrin** /brɛdʒɹɪn/, *friend*
- **onjrid** /ondʒɹɪd/, *hundred*

## **xk**

- **exkiep** /eksɹɪɛp/, *to escape*

### **4.2.3. Sounds to note**

#### **4.2.3.1. Syllabic n**

Syllabic **n** is pronounced /n/, and can occur following **b**, **d**, **s**, **t**, or **z**

- **notn** /notn/, *nothing*
- **sebn** /sebn/, *seven*
- **kudn** /kudn/, *could not*
- **ebn** /ebn/, *heaven*
- **gyaadn** /gja:dn/, *garden*
- **iibn** /i:bn/, *even*
- **sitn** /sitn/, *something*
- **wapn-bapn** /wapnɒapn/, *poorly constructed, thrown together*
- **touzn** /touzn/, *thousand*

- **mountn** /mountn/, *mountain*
- **kriebn** /kɹiɛbn/, *gluttonous*
- **pudn** /pudn/, *pudding*
- **fraitn** /fɹaɪtn/, *frighten*
- **paadn** /pa:dn/, *pardon*
- **katn** /katn/, *cotton*
- **Swiidn** /swi:dn/, *Sweden*
- **riizn** /ɹi:zn/, *reason*
- **lisn** /lisn/, *listen*
- **paasn** /pa:sn/, *preacher*
- **kozn** /ko:zn/, *cousin*

#### 4.2.3.2. Syllabic l

- **haxesobl** /haksesobl/, *accessible*
- **anmigl** /anmigl/, *palm*
- **bringgl** /bɹiŋgl/, *agitated*
- **iejobl** /ɪɛdʒobl/, *mature, as in person*
- **manazebl** /manazebl/, *polite*
- **onggl** /oŋgl/, *only*
- **sensobl** /sensobl/, *sensible*
- **sipl** /sipl/, *slippery*
- **migl** /migl/, *middle*
- **Mandivl** /mandivl/, *Mandeville*
- **piipl** /pi:pl/, *people*
- **chobl** /tʃobl/, *trouble*
- **ombl** /ombl/, *humble*
- **kianggl** /kjaŋgl/, *candle*
- **rigl** /ɹigl/, *riddle*
- **chrabl** /tʃɹabl/, *travel*
- **taikl** /taɪkl/, *title*
- **haatikl** /ha:tɪkl/, *article*
- **likl** /likl/, *little*
- **torkl** /toɪkl/, *turtle*

#### 4.2.3.3. Syllabic m

- **lebm** /lebm/, *eleven*
- **apm** /apm/, *happen*
- **sopm** /sopm/, *something*
- **waapm** /wa:pm/, *what's happening / what's up (greeting)*
- **uopm** /uɔpm/, *open*

#### 4.2.4. Silent Letters

The letters **h** and **r** are often added or omitted at the beginning and end of words, respectively, depending on the speaker

- **aatikl** → **haatikl** (*article*)
- **fuο** → **fuor** (*four*)

See [Consonants](#) for more details on the pronunciation of **h** and **r**

#### 4.2.5. Elided Sounds

Certain consonant combinations tend to be avoided at the beginning of a word, for example /sk/, /sp/ and /st/

- **kuul** /ku:l/, *school* (also **skuul**)
- **krichoul** /kɹitʃoul/, *owl*
- **kraani** /kɹa:ni/, *skinny*
- **chrang** /tʃɹaŋ/, *strong*
- **chrent** /tʃɹɛnt/, *strength*
- **chriet** /tʃɹiɛt/, *straight*
- **tap** /tap/, *stop*
- **plit** /plit/, *split*

# 5. Morphology

## 5.1. Nouns

### 5.1.1. Basic Form of Nouns

### 5.1.2. Plural of nouns

To form the plural of a given *definite* noun, use the article **di** and add the plural marker **-dem** to the end of the word

- **di pikni-dem**, *the children*
- **di nieba-dem**, *the neighbours*
- **di buk-dem**, *the books*
- **di pus-dem**, *the cats*
- **di daag-dem**, *the dogs*
- **di pat-dem**, *the pots*
- **di man-dem**, *the men*
- **di uman-dem**, *the women*
- **di bwai-dem**, *the boys*
- **di piipl-dem**, *the people*
- **di faama-dem**, *the farmers*
- **di hat-dem**, *the hats*
- **mi iez-dem**, *my ears*

It is not necessary to add the plural marker **-dem** if it follows a cardinal number

- **di faiv buk**, *the five books*

If the plural noun is *indefinite* it is also not necessary to use the **-dem** marker

- **Buk de pan di tiebl**, *Books are on the table*
- **Mango swiit**, *Mangoes are sweet*
- **Im a sel yam a maakit**, *He is selling yams in the market*

Examples of using plural nouns:

- **Di pikni-dem laas di piepa**, *The children lost the paper*
- **Di buk-dem de pan di tiebl**, *The books are on the table*



- **Di pus-dem av nof pikni**, *The cats have many kittens*
- **Ruoz tel im se a Klaris mash di pat-dem**, *Rose told her that it was Claris that broke the pots*
- **Di man-dem dig di uol ahn di uman-dem plaant di kaan**, *The men dug the holes and the women planted the corn*
- **Si yu buk-dem ya**, *Here are your books*



Many linguists have noted that **-dem** is not strictly speaking a plural marker: plural nouns (for example, indefinite nouns and inanimate objects) can be expressed without it, and there are several restrictions on its use. Generally speaking, it is used more often for human beings than for animals, and more often for animals than for inanimate objects. (For more details, see Stewart, 2011.)

#### 5.1.2.1. Plural Reduplication

In rare cases it is possible to create a plural noun by repeating it:

- **buk-buk** (*several*) *books*



However this can only be used with mono-syllabic nouns and only when referring to groups of more than two

In other cases, a reduplicated noun can indicate affection or intimacy:

- **gal-gal**, *daughter (affectionate appellation)*

#### 5.1.2.2. Associative Plural

If the plural suffix **-dem** is attached to the end of a proper name, it means (*person named*) *and the others*

- **Jan-dem**, *John and the others*

Examples:

- **Ruoz-dem tel im se a Klaris mash di pat**, *Rose and the others told her that it was Claris that broke the pot*

#### 5.1.3. Measure Words

#### 5.1.4. Case

##### 5.1.4.1. Nominative Case

#### 5.1.4.2. Accusative Case

#### 5.1.4.3. Genitive Case

Use the pattern **x y** to express a possessive relationship between two nouns, such as *the x of y* or *the x's y*

- **di nieba-dem ous**, *the neighbours' house*
- **Mieri son**, *Mary's son*
- **Piita daata**, *Peter's daughter*
- **Maak buk**, *Mark's book*
- **Sanja bag**, *Sandra's bag*
- **Sanja buk ahn Piita bag de pan di grong**, *Sandra's book and Peter's bag are on the floor*

#### 5.1.5. Proper Nouns

##### 5.1.5.1. Personal Names

Given names (also known as **Kristiyan niem**, *Christian names*) follow the same rules of phonology as other words (including loan words) in Jamaican. So *George* becomes **Jaaj** (pronounced /dʒa:dʒ/), *Mary* becomes **Mieri** (pronounced /mɪɛ.ɪ/), and so on.

It is important to note that in many social contexts, nicknames may be used in preference to given names (see [Nicknames](#) and [Yard Names](#) below).

##### 5.1.5.1.1. Female Names

Some examples of common female given names in Jamaica:

- **Darati** /daɾati/, *Dorothy*
- **Ieda** /ɪeda/, *Ada*
- **Iemi** /ɪɛmi/, *Amy*
- **Jien** /dʒɪɛn/, *Jane*
- **Kiet** /kɪɛt/, *Kate*
- **Klier** /klɪɛɪ/, *Claire*
- **Kyari** /kja.ɪ/, *Carrie*
- **Luwiiz** /luwi:z/, *Louise*
- **Mieri** /mɪɛ.ɪ/, *Mary*
- **Nansi** /nansi/, *Nancy*
- **Puosha** /puɔʃa/, *Portia*

- **Sanja** /sandʒa/, *Sandra*
- **Siera** /sɪɛra/, *Sarah*
- **Silvia** /silvia/, *Sylvia*
- **Yuuna** /yuna/, *Una*

#### 5.1.5.1.2. Male Names

Some examples of common male given names in Jamaica:

- **Aizak** /aɪzak/, *Isaac*
- **Aligzanda** /alɪgzanda/, *Alexander*
- **Anju** /andʒu/, *Andrew*
- **Bruus** /bɹus/, *Bruce*
- **Chaali** /tʃali/, *Charlie*
- **Danal** /danal/, *Donald*
- **Derik** /deɹɪk/, *Derek*
- **Dievid** /dɪɛvɪd/, *David*
- **Edwad** /edwad/, *Edward*
- **Eliat** /eliat/, *Eliot*
- **Jaaj** /dʒadʒ/, *George*
- **Jan** /dʒan/, *John*
- **Jiemz** /dʒɪɛmz/, *James*
- **Juo** /dʒuɔ/, *Joe*
- **Kenet** /kenet/, *Kenneth*
- **Klifod** /klɪfod/, *Clifford*
- **Larans** /laɹans/, *Laurence*
- **Luwi** /luwi/, *Louis*
- **Maak** /mak/, *Mark*
- **Maakos** /makos/, *Marcus*
- **Maikal** /maɪkal/, *Michael*
- **Matyu** /matju/, *Matthew*
- **Naaman** /nəman/, *Norman*
- **Orbort** /oɹbort/, *Herbert*
- **Owad** /owad/, *Howard*

**Paal** /pal/, *Paul*

- **Pachrik** /patʃɹɪk/, *Patrick*
- **Piita** /pita/, *Peter*
- **Saiman** /saiman/, *Simon*
- **Salaman** /salaman/, *Solomon*
- **Samyuel** /samjuəl/, *Samuel*
- **Stiibm** /stiibm/, *Stephen*
- **Tamas** /tamas/, *Thomas*
- **Vik** /vik/, *Vic*
- **Yuu** /ju/, *Hugh*

#### 5.1.5.2. Nicknames

In practice, many people may be only rarely referred to by their given name. A rich system of nicknaming exists in Jamaican and nicknames are frequently based on characteristics or appearance rather than the given name of the person in question.

These nicknames are also known as **yaad niem** (*yard names*), and are generally used by friends, family, and others for most purposes other than formal occasions (such as by teachers in school, or accessing government or other institutional services).

Impromptu nicknames may also be given to strangers, for example, when calling out to someone on the street if their name is not known. Like yard names, these are generally based on easily recognizable physical characteristics and other descriptors such as occupation.

##### 5.1.5.2.1. Yard Names

The vast majority of yard names are descriptive or have some sort of story that explains their origin. However, occasionally, a yard name may be based on the actual given name of the person concerned. For example, "Nicholas" or "Nick" might be known as:

- **Neki** ("Necky")
- **Niki** ("Nicky")
- **Niko** ("Nico")

Similarly, someone whose name begins with the letter *V* might be known as:

- **Vii** ("Vee")

The two principles (descriptor and element based on given name) can also be combined:

- **Likl Dii** ("Little D", e.g. a person of short stature whose given name begins with the letter "D")
-

- **Hevi Dii** ("Heavy D", e.g. a large person whose given name begins with the letter "D")

Sometimes yard names are otherwise completely conventional names that nevertheless have nothing to do with the person's given name:

- **Alisha** ("Alicia", given name e.g. *Kelly*)
- **Anji** ("Angie", given name e.g. *Celia*)
- **Chrisha** ("Tricia", given name e.g. *Louise*)
- **Chrudi** ("Trudy", given name e.g. *Sandra*)
- **Doreen** ("Doreen", given name e.g. *Mary*)
- **Pachrik** ("Patrick", given name e.g. *Mark*)
- **Tam** ("Tom", given name e.g. *James*)
- **Tuoni** ("Tony", given name e.g. *Edward*)

#### 5.1.5.2.2. Identifiers

The prefix **Mis** or **Misiz** is often added to some other name or characteristic to make a female yard name:

- **Miss Opie**
- **Miss Vyel**
- **Misiz Steps** ("Mrs. Steps")



In combination with a surname, **Mis** and **Misiz** can also be used to form an honorific address (see further below).

Names can be based on work:

- **Tiich** ("Teach")
- **Tiicha** ("Teacher")
- **Nars** ("Nurse")

For merchants or employees of particular stores, apart from general occupational descriptions, yard names may be based on the specific product they sell:

- **Kriimi** ("Creamy", someone who sells icecream)
- **Notsi** ("Nutsy", someone who sells nuts)
- **Juusi** ("Juicy", sells juice)

A male merchant may often be referred to as "*product*-man" depending on what they sell:

- **Manggo-man** ("Mango-man", a man who sells mangoes)

- **Gliina-man** ("Gleaner-man", a man who sells the *The Gleaner* newspaper)
- **Juus-man** ("Juice-man", a man who sells juice)

On the other hand, the yard name may be based on the place where the product is sold:

- **Shaka** ("Shakka", works at a juice shack)

From the above it can be seen that someone who sells juice might have any of the following yard names:

- **Juicy** (male or female)
- **Juice-man** (male only)
- **Shakka** (male or female)

#### 5.1.5.3. Honorifics

There are several standard honorific titles which are used in Jamaican, either independently, or in combination with a surname:

- **Mista**, *Mr.*
- **Mis**, *Miss*
- **Misiz**, *Mrs.*
- **Ma**, *Ma'am*
- **Sa**, *Sir*
- **Mas**, *Master*

The following are some respectful forms of address for women:

- **Empress**
- **Princess**
- **Baby**
- **Mommy**
- **Aunty**
- **Miss**

The following are some respectful forms of address for men:

- **Boss**
- **Bossman**
- **Bossy**
- **Bredren**

- **General**
- **Prince**
- **Sar**
- **Uncle**

Formal introductions usually involve a greeting (e.g., **Gud maaning**, **Gud aftanuun**, **Gud iivning**) plus an honorific title (**Mista**, **Mis**, **Misiz**) and the person's surname:

- **Gud maanin**, **Mista Jansn**, *Good morning, Mr. Johnson*
- **Gud aftanuun**, **Mis Yuuz**, *Good afternoon, Miss Hughes*
- **Gud iivning**, **Misiz Juonz**, *Good evening, Mrs. Jones*

Children usually refer to adults who are not relatives or friends as **Sa**, **Mista**, or **Mis**.

Respected family member or elders may be referred to using the honorific title **Maas** (*Master*) followed by their given name:

- **Maas Aizak** (*Master Isaac*)

#### 5.1.5.4. List of yard names

The following names have been reported by various people as being examples of yard names in use in Jamaican communities:

- **Apl** ("Apple")
- **Apl Jie** ("Apple J.")
- **Baba** ("Babba")
- **Badis** ("Baddis", *Baddest*)
- **Bala** ("Balla")
- **Bambi** ("Bambi")
- **Big Ed** ("Big Head")
- **Biga** ("Bigga")
- **Blaka** ("Blacka")
- **Blaki** ("Blackie")
- **Blaks** ("Blacks")
- **Blosom** ("Blossom")
- **Bob Stiil** ("Bob Steel")
- **Bodi** ("Birdie")
- **Boizi** ("Boysie")

- **Breda** ("Bredda")
- **Bruk Fut** ("Bruk Foot")
- **Bublz** ("Bubbles")
- **Bula** ("Bulla")
- **Buubzi** ("Boobsy")
- **Buudi** ("Boody")
- **Cheri** ("Cherry")
- **Ches-Man** ("Chess Man")
- **Chiiz** ("Cheese")
- **Chiki** ("Chickie")
- **Chikin** ("Chicken")
- **China** ("Chinna")
- **Daimon** ("Diamond")
- **Debi** ("Debbie")
- **Devil** ("Devil")
- **Dogart** ("Dogheart")
- **Dogi** ("Doggie")
- **Don Don** ("Dun Dun")
- **Donkiman** ("Donkeyman")
- **Doti Moni** ("Dutty Money")
- **Duki** ("Ducky")
- **Enjil** ("Angel")
- **Faiyaman** ("Fireman")
- **Faini** ("Finey")
- **Fasi** ("Fassy")
- **Fati** ("Fatty")
- **Frigen** ("Frigen")
- **Frogi** ("Froggy")
- **Futa** ("Foota")
- **Glamati** ("Glamatty")
- **Goli Bangx** ("Gully Banks")
- **Goli** ("Gully")



- **Gon Keli** ("Gun Kelly")
- **Haip-Op** ("Hype-Up")
- **Hedz** ("Headz")
- **Jan Jan** ("Jon Jon")
- **Jan Tom** ("John Tom")
- **Jani** ("Jonny")
- **Juju** ("Juju")
- **Junjo** ("Junjo")
- **Junya** ("Junior")
- **Kanak** ("Canuck")
- **Keidi** ("Kady")
- **Klarki** ("Clarky")
- **Kori-Kat** ("Curry-Cat")
- **Korli Loks** ("Curly Locks")
- **Kuu-Kuu** ("Coo-Coo")
- **Kuuli-Man** ("Coolie man")
- **Kyuti** ("Qutie")
- **Lengki** ("Lenky")
- **Likl Man** ("Little Man")
- **Likl Mis** ("Little Miss")
- **Likl** ("Likkle")
- **Maas Juo** ("Maas Joe")
- **Mama** ("Mama")
- **Man A Man** ("Man a man")
- **Mankiman** ("Monkeyman")
- **Menshan** ("Mention")
- **Merleisha** ("Merleisha")
- **Monchi** ("Munchie")
- **Monsta Pii** ("Monsta P")
- **Murda** ("Murda")
- **Muudi** ("Moodie")
- **Nachral** ("Natural")

- **Nalij** ("Knowledge")
- **Nando** ("Nando")
- **Ogli Man** ("Ugly Man")
- **Pem Pem** ("Pem Pem")
- **Pensil Man** ("Pencil Man")
- **Pet** ("Pet")
- **Piichiz** ("Peaches")
- **Pingki** ("Pinky")
- **Plomi** ("Plummie")
- **Ponchi** ("Punchie")
- **Ponsi** ("Puncie")
- **Posela** ("Pussella")
- **Pou** ("Pow")
- **Preshas** ("Precious")
- **Prinses** ("Princess")
- **Priti** ("Pretty")
- **Puuchi** ("Poochie")
- **Puuki** ("Pookie")
- **Rambo** ("Rambo")
- **Rati** ("Ratty")
- **Rieni** ("Rainy")
- **Rinegied** ("Renegade")
- **Ruudi** ("Rudie")
- **Shan Shan** ("Shan Shan")
- **Sheli** ("Shelly")
- **Shodee** ("Shodee")
- **Shottis** ("Shottis")
- **Shuga** ("Suga", "Sugar")
- **Ska** ("Ska")
- **Skata Shot** ("Scatta Shot")
- **Skoli Ed** ("Scully Head")
- **Skwidi** ("Squidy")

- **Sliipi** ("Sleepy")
- **Smaili** ("Smiley")
- **Smuuchi** ("Smuchie")
- **Son Son** ("Sun Sun")
- **Sopent** ("Serpent")
- **Splash** ("Splash")
- **Splinta** ("Splinter")
- **Staa** ("Star")
- **Stiki** ("Sticky")
- **Tii-Shot** ("T-Shirt")
- **Twinie** ("Twinie")
- **Wet Daag** ("Wet Dog")
- **Wich Flieva** ("Which Flavour")
- **Winji** ("Winjy")
- **Witi** ("Witty")
- **Yaga** ("Yagga")
- **Yangki** ("Yankee")

#### 5.1.5.5. Place Names

See the accompanying *Gazeteer of Placenames in Jamaican* for a list of common placenames and their pronunciation.

#### 5.1.6. Diminutives

(In progress)

#### 5.1.7. Pronouns

##### 5.1.7.1. Personal Pronouns

There are six basic personal pronouns in Jamaican: **mi**, **yu**, **im**, **wi**, **unu**, **dem**

- **mi**, *I* (first person singular)
- **yu**, *you* (second person singular)
- **im** / **ihn**, *he* / *she* (third person singular)
  - also: **shi** / **ar**, *she*
  - also: **i** / **it**, *it*

- **wi**, *we* (first person plural)
- **unu**, *you* (second person plural)
- **dem** / **dehn**, *they* (third person plural)

In some cases, the subject pronouns **im** and **dem** can be pronounced **ihn** and **dehn**

- **Ihn tel lai pahn mi**, *He told a lie about me*
- **Dehn a go iit aaf aal di raip plom ahn gwaava af di chrii**, *They are going to eat up all the ripe plums and guavas from the tree*

No special conjugation is needed when using different personal pronouns in a sentence

- **Mi nuo di man**, *I know the man*
- **Im nuo di man**, *He knows the man*
- **Yu nuo di man**, *You know the man*
- **Dem nuo di man**, *They know the man*

There are no gender distinctions in personal pronouns in the Jamaican acrolect

- **Im gi im im**, *She gave it to him*

However in the mesolect, there is a distinction between **im** (*he*) and **shi** (*she*)

- **Im a di liida**, *He is the leader*
- **Shi a di liida**, *She is the leader*

There is also frequently a distinction between **im** (*he*) and **i** (*it*)

- **I hebi kyaan-don**, *It is extremely heavy*

The pronoun **wi** (*we*) can mean *we* as in including the speaker and the listener, or as the speaker and others (not including the listener)

- **Wi de go a Tong**, *We are going to town*
- **Wi nuo di man**, *We know the man*
- **Wi ahn Mieri kech liet**, *We and Mary arrived late*

#### 5.1.7.2. Object pronouns

Object pronouns are the same as subject pronouns in Jamaican

- **Dem kaal mi fi kohn elp dem**, *They asked me to help them*
- **Im a laaf afta wi**, *He is laughing at us*

### 5.1.7.3. Possessive pronouns

- **mi**, *my*
- **yu**, *your*
- **im**, *his*
- **shi**, *her*
- **wi**, *our*
- **unu**, *your (pl.)*
- **dem**, *their*
- **fi mi**, *mine*
- **fi yu**, *yours*
- **fi im**, *his*
- **fi shi**, *hers*
- **fi wi**, *ours*
- **fi dem**, *theirs*
- **uufa** *whose*

#### **mi**

- **Mi pensl ahn yu buk ina dem ous**, *My pencil and your book are in their house*
- **Mi fuud ina di pat**, *My food is in the pot*

#### **yu**

- **yu niem**, *your name*
- **yu frak**, *your dress*
- **yu buk-dem**, *your books*

#### **im**

- **im sista Mieri**, *his sister Mary*
- **im daata**, *his daughter*
- **im niem**, *his name*
- **im ous**, *his house*

#### **fi mi**, *mine*

- **Di fuud ina di pat a fi mi**, *The food in the pot is mine*

#### **fi yu**, *yours*

- **A wish wan a dem a fi yu?**, *Which one of them is yours?*

**uufa**, *whose*

- **A uufa picha dis?**, *Whose picture is this?*

#### 5.1.7.4. Reflexive Pronouns

- **miself**, *myself*
- **unuself** or **yuself**, *yourself*
- **imself**, *himself*
- **demself**, *themselves*



**-self** in the above pronouns may sometimes be pronounced (and written) as **-sef**.

#### 5.1.7.5. Demonstrative Pronouns

There are two kinds of demonstratives in Jamaican: simple and compound

- simple demonstratives: **dis**, **dat**, **ya**, **de**
- compound demonstratives: **dis-ya**, **dat-de**, **dem-ya**, **dem-de**

There are four simple demonstratives

- **dis**, *this*
- **dat** or **daa**, *that*
- **ya**, *here*
- **de**, *there*

The simple demonstratives come before the noun they refer to

- **dis uman**, *this woman*

There are four compound demonstratives

- **dis-ya**, *this here*
- **dat-de**, *that there*
- **dem-ya**, *these here*
- **dem-de**, *those there*

There are also two additional demonstratives with the suffix **-so** for emphasis

- **yaso** /jaso/, *right here*

- **deso** /deso/, *right there*

When used together with a noun, the first part of the compound demonstrative comes before the noun and the second part comes after it

- **dis man ya**, *this man here*
- **da man de**, *that man there*

Examples of demonstrative pronouns:

- **Dis bwai a go mek mi sin miself**, *This boy is going to make me lose my cool*
- **Dis-ya buk swiit no hel**, *This book is extremely enjoyable*
- **Im laas dat-de wan**, *He lost that one*
- **Dat-de buk laas**, *He lost that book*
- **Im laas dat-de**, *He lost that one*
- **Dis-ya pen naa rait gud**, *This pen is not writing properly*
- **Dat-de pen naa rait gut**, *That pen is not writing properly*
- **Di bwai mek mi staat kos badwod**, *The boy caused me to start swearing*
- **Jan sidong de a laaf**, *John sat there laughing*
- **Tiicha no kech ya yeti**, *Teacher hasn't reached here yet*
- **Mi nuo se im de ya**, *I know that he/she is here*
- **Mi si im doun ya yeside**, *I saw him/her down here yesterday*

To express the prepositional sense of *here* (as in French *voilà*), use **si**

- **Si yu buk-dem ya**, *Here are your books*
- **Si mi hat ya**, *Here is my hat*
- **Si mi ya**, *Here I am*
- **Si im ya**, *Here he is*
- **Si Jan ya**, *Here is John*
- **Si wan neks wan ya**, *Here is another one*

#### 5.1.7.6. Indefinite Pronouns

The words **smadi** (*someone*) and **sitn** (*something*) are used to represent indefinite things

- **Smadi uu sing kaal singa**, *Someone who sings is called a singer*
- **Dem gi smadi di mechiz fi gi mi**, *They gave someone the message to give to me*
- **Dem tek di ogli sitn gi di pikni**, *They took the ugly thing and gave it to the child*

- **Evribadi iit wen dem fiil laik, dem no wiet pan nobadi**, *Everybody ate when they felt like it; they didn't wait for anyone*
- **No mek nobadi luk dong pan im ar chriit im laka se im a notn**, *Don't let anyone look down on him or treat him like nothing*
- **smadi** or **sumadi**, *somebody / someone*
- **nobadi**, *nobody / no one*
- **enibadi**, *anybody / anyone*
- **ebribadi**, *everybody / everyone*
- **sitn** or **sinting** or **sopm**, *something*
- **sopm** /sopm/, *something*
- **notn**, *nothing*
- **ebriting**, *everything*
- **somwe**, *somewhere*
- **nowe**, *nowhere*
- **ebriwe**, *everywhere*



The **ebri-** in **ebribadi**, **ebriting**, and **ebriwe** may be pronounced as **evri-** in the mesolect.

## 5.1.8. Articles

### 5.1.8.1. Definite Article

The definite article **di** *the* is used in a similar way to English

- **di fuud**, *the food*
- **di man**, *the man*
- **di pikni**, *the child*
- **di ous**, *the house*
- **di moni**, *the money*
- **di pikni-dem**, *the children*
- **di tiebl**, *the table*
- **di paati**, *the party*
- **di mechiz**, *the message*



### 5.1.8.2. Indefinite Article

The indefinite article **wahn** *a/an* is pronounced with a nasalized vowel (similar to the French *an*)

- **wahn uman**, *a woman*
- **wahn man**, *a man*
- **wahn dopi**, *a man*

Examples:

- **Wahn uman gi Piita di loki lato nomba fi plie**, *A woman gave Peter the lucky lottery number to play*
- **Wahn dopi lik wahn man**, *A ghost hit a man*
- **Piita pik wan apl ahn Mieri pik tuu**, *Peter picked one apple and Mary picked two*



the indefinite article **wahn** is distinct from the numeral **wan** *one*

## 5.2. Adjectives

Adjectives in Jamaican are not marked for gender or number. In other words, they do not change depending on the gender of the noun they describe, or whether the noun is plural or singular.

### 5.2.1. Order of Adjectives and Nouns

Adjectives precede the nouns they describe, as in English

- **taal ier**, *long hair*

### 5.2.2. Comparison of Adjectives

#### 5.2.2.1. Degree Words

- **tuu**, *too*
- **bad**, *very*

Most degree words come before the adjective they describe

- **tuu bad**, *too rude*

However, when used as a degree word, **bad** always comes after the adjective it describes

- **hat bad**, *very hot*
- **Di fuud hat bad**, *The food is very hot*
- **It tuu kris**, *It's too stiff*

- **Im fala dem bot no tuu kluos**, *He followed them, but not too close*

#### 5.2.2.2. Comparatives

The comparative form of adjectives is created by adding the suffix **-a** to the end of the word

- **big**, *big* → **biga**, *bigger*
- **rich**, *rich* → **richa**, *richer*

Adjectives can be compared using the word **dan (dahn)** together with the comparative form of the adjective

- **Mieri richa dan Piita**, *Mary is richer than Peter*
- **Jan biga dan im sista Mieri**, *John is older than his sister Mary*

#### 5.2.2.3. Superlatives

The superlative form of adjectives is created by adding the suffix **-is** to the end of the word

- **smaalis**, *smallest*
- **bigis**, *biggest*
- **waizis**, *wisest*

Superlatives can also be formed using **di muos** + A

**di muos**, *the most*

- **Wich wan a di muos impuotant wan?**, *Which one is the most important?*
- **It a di muos impuotant wan**, *It's the most important one*

**muos a unu**, *most of you*

#### 5.2.3. Adjective Reduplication

Adjectives can be reduplicated to give a meaning similar to the suffix **-ish** in English

- **chaka-chaka**, *untidy / disorderly / in disarray*
- **fool-fool**, *foolish*
- **friedi-friedi**, *frightened / cowardly*
- **ful-ful**, *very full*
- **gud-gud**, *really good / quite good*
- **juki-juki**, *prickly or needle-like*
- **kluos-kluos**, *very close / intimate*

- **laafi-laafi**, *inclined to laughter*
- **likl-likl**, *quite small*
- **maaga-maaga**, *very skinny*
- **naasi-naasi**, *having nasty, filthy characteristics*
- **ogli-ogli**, *very ugly*
- **plenti-plenti**, *plentiful*
- **sluo-slue**, *very slow*
- **swiit-swiit**, *very sweet*
- **taaki-taaki**, *talkative*
- **taal-taal**, *very tall / very high*
- **yala-yala**, *yellowish, yellow-spotted*
- **susu-susu**, *whispering*
- **blenop-blenop**, *blended together*
- **wan taal-taal mountn**, *a very high mountain*
- **som likl-likl ous**, *some rather small houses*

## 5.3. Verbs

### 5.3.1. Tense of Verbs

#### 5.3.1.1. Present Tense

Stative verbs can be used alone without change in the present tense

- **Mi honggri**, *I'm hungry*
- **Im sik**, *He is sick*
- **Jan fuul**, *John is foolish*
- **Im ded**, *He is dead*
- **Mi niem Jan**, *My name is John*
- **Mi laik manggo**, *I like mangoes*
- **Jan sik ahn im daata nuo**, *John is sick and his daughter knows*
- **Wi fried a siniek**, *We are afraid of snakes*
- **Hou yu du?**, *How are you doing?*

### 5.3.1.2. Present Progressive Tense

If an action is ongoing, use the progressive marker **de** or **a** before the verb to indicate the present progressive tense

- **Rien de faal**, *It is raining*
- **Mi ed de hat mi**, *My head is hurting*
- **Mi de kom**, *I am coming*
- **Mi de nyam di fuud**, *I am eating the food*
- **Mi de go a Tong**, *I am going to Town*
- **Mi a go a maakit**, *I'm going to the market*
- **Mi a go a mi yaad**, *I'm going home*
- **Jan de kuk, Mieri de riid ahn Piita a chap ud**, *John is cooking, Mary is reading, and Peter is chopping wood*
- **Di piipl-dem de kos di govament**, *The people are cursing the government*
- **Im a plaan kaan**, *He is planting corn*
- **Im a rait wan leta**, *He is writing a letter*

Some "adjectives" are actually stative verbs and can also be used with **de** to indicate current state

- **Di bwai de bad**, *The boy is being bad*
- **Im de taiyad**, *He is becoming tired*

### 5.3.1.3. Habitual Present Tense

The habitual marker **a** is used before the verb to indicate the habitual present tense

- **wan plies we dem a plie haki mach**, *a place where they play hockey matches*

### 5.3.1.4. Negative Plain Present Tense

The negative present-tense marker **no**

- **Mi no nuo we fi se**, *I don't know what to say*
- **Mi no nuo we fi du**, *I don't know what to do*
- **Mi no nuo we im de**, *I don't where he is*
- **Mi no nuo we im niem**, *I don't know what his name is*
- **Mi no nuo we im a go**, *I don't where he is going*
- **Mi no fraitn fi di huol jing bang a unu**, *I'm not scared of any of you lot*
- **Im no nuo se yu de a yaad**, *He doesn't know that you are at home*

### 5.3.1.5. Negative Present Progressive Tense

The negative present-progressive marker **naa**

- **Mi naa du notn**, *I am not doing anything*
- **Di pikni-dem naa du dem lesn**, *The children are not doing their lessons*
- **Jais naa fiks yu frak**, *Joyce is not going to fix your dress*
- **Mi naa gi yu non**, *I won't give you any*

### 5.3.1.6. Past Tense

Dynamic verbs can be used alone without any changes in the past perfective tense

- **Mieri kuk di fuud**, *Mary cooked the food*
- **Di man nyam di manggo**, *The man ate the mango*
- **Wahn dopi lik wahn man**, *A ghost hit a man*
- **Dem tiif di faiv buk outa di shap**, *They stole the five books from the store*
- **Mi gi di uman di flowaz**, *I gave the woman the flowers*
- **Di daag bait mi**, *The dog bit me*
- **Di uman gi di bwai di fuud**, *The woman gave the boy the food*
- **Im kot di pitietia**, *He cut the potato*
- **Mieri tek di naif kot di bred**, *Mary cut the bread with the knife*
- **A wa Jan bai wid di moni?**, *What did John buy with the money?*
- **Kom wid mi!**, *Come with me!*
- **Piita kot di bred wid di naif**, *Peter cut the bread with the knife*
- **Bab sing wid Piita**, *Bob sang with Peter*
- **Mieri an Jan go a paati laas nait**, *Mary and John went to a party last night*
- **Di kyaar lik di chrii**, *The car hit the tree*
- **Di ship krash pan wan ailan**, *The ship crashed on an island*
- **Jan kot di pitietia**, *John cut the potato*
- **Mi no ier notn bout dat-de**, *I didn't hear anything about that*
- **Jan ahn Mieri kuk ahn nyam di bikl**, *John and Mary cooked and ate the food*
- **Dem chrai fi kyari im iina di ous**, *They tried to carry him into the house*
- **Im waan unu nof taim, bot unu naa lisn**, *He warned you many times, but you didn't listen*
- **Di man ahn di uman wash di kluoz ahn kliin di ous**, *The man and the woman washed the clothes and cleaned the house*

- **Im si di kroud ahn aks dem a wa a gwaan,** *He saw the crowd and asked them what was going on*

#### 5.3.1.6.1. Past Progressive Tense

The past-tense marker **wehn** indicates that an action in the past was ongoing

- **Dis-ya pikni wehn aalwiesz ogli,** *This child was always ugly*
- **Jan wehn de nyam di kiek,** *John was eating the cake*
- **Jan wehn de bil di ous,** *John was building the house*
- **Di pikni wehn de kil di flowaz,** *The child was killing the flowers*
- **Di piipl-dem wehn de kos di govament,** *The people were cursing the government*

#### 5.3.1.6.2. Past Perfect Tense

The anterior marker **did** can sometimes indicate that some action or condition occurred in the past (in the mesolect)

- **Im did wel rich,** *He was very rich*
- **Shi pie muo dan wa shi did pie di fos taim,** *She paid more than she had paid the first time*

#### 5.3.1.6.3. Negative Past

The negative past-tense marker **nehn**

- **Jan nehn de bil di ous,** *John was not building the house*

#### 5.3.1.7. Future Tense

The future tense is formed using the markers **a go**, **gwain**, **gwai**, or **de go**

- **This man a go ton tiicha tu,** *This man is going to become a teacher as well*
- **Dehn a go iit aaf aal di raip plom ahn gwaava af di chrii,** *They are going to eat up all the ripe plums and guavas from the tree*
- **Im de go dwiit,** *He's going to do it*
- **Mi de go a Tong tumaro,** *I am / will be going to Town tomorrow*
- **Uu de go merid yu?,** *Who is going to marry you?*
- **Yu beli gwai bi yu dounfal!,** *Your stomach is going to be your downfall!*

**a go** and **de go** are sometimes written with a hyphen as **a-go** and **de-go** respectively, to distinguish between the progressive present and the future tense

- **We im a go,** *Where is he going?*
- **We im a-go iit?,** *Where is he going to eat?*

## 5.3.2. Mood of Verbs

### 5.3.2.1. Potential Mood

**kyahn + V**

- **Maas Jan se im kyahn kom tumaro**, *Mr. John said he is able to come tomorrow*

### 5.3.2.2. Passive

- **Di raip plaantn-dem don ruos yet?**, *Have the ripe plaintains been roasted yet?*

## 5.3.3. Verb Complements

**op, aaf etc.**

- **tan op**, *stand up*
- **git op**, *get up*
- **klaim op**, *climb up*
- **wiek op**, *wake up*
- **uopm op**, *open up*
- **bon op**, *burn up*
- **gyada op**, *gather up*
- **tingk chriet**, *think straight*
- **siniik roun**, *sneak around*
- **twis roun**, *twist around*
- **iit aaf**, *eat up*
- **laaf afta**, *laugh at*

## 5.3.4. Verb Chaining

There is no infinitive form of verbs in Jamaican as in the English *to run* or *to eat*

Bare verbs — that is, verbs without any prefixes or suffixes — can be used instead to string together a chain of actions in sequence

- **An den dem git op ahn staat daans**, *And then they got up and started to dance*

If there is an object after one or both of the verbs, they can likewise be strung together without any other changes

- **Im tek di moni gi puo piipl**, *He took the money to give to poor people*

Some verbs, like **laik** (*like*), **lov** (*love*) are followed by **fi** when used with other verbs

- **laik fi**, *like to*
- **lov fi**, *love to*

Examples:

- **Shi laik fi sing**, *She likes to sing*
- **Mi wuda laik fi ier wa yu tingk**, *I would like to hear what you think*
- **Im lov fi big op imself**, *He likes to boast*
- **Im lov fi elp ada piipl**, *He loves to help other people*
- **Dem lov fi susu-susu**, *They love to whisper / They love to gossip*

### 5.3.5. Verb Reduplication

Verbs can be reduplicated to repetition or continuous action

- **tiif-tiif**, *steal repeatedly*

## 5.4. Adverbs

In Jamaican adjectives can be used as adverbs to describe verbs without further modification

- **Di daag a baak loud**, *The dog is barking loudly*
- **Tan op chrang**, *Stand up strong*

In some cases, such as with **suun** (*soon*) adverbs may come before the verbs they describe

- **Soma suun kom**, *Summer is coming soon*

### 5.4.1. Reduplication

Just like adjectives, adverbs can be reduplicated to intensify their meaning

- **aad aad**, *extremely hard / as hard as possible*
  - **tingk aad aad**, *wrack one's brains / think hard*
  - **bluo aad aad**, *blow as hard as one can*
- **loud-loud**, *very loudly*
  - **Dem did a ala ahn baal loud loud**, *They hollered and cried loudly*



### 5.4.2. also

The meaning of *also, too, as well* is expressed in Jamaican using the adverb **tu**

- **Mi a go de tu**, *I am going there too*
- **Mi waan sliip tu**, *I want to sleep too*
- **Jien se im waan sliip tu**, *Jane says she wants to sleep too*
- **Mi wuda laik si im tu**, *I'd like to see him too*
- **Fi mi bak a hat mi tu**, *My back hurts too*
- **Di pikni-dem gaan a puos tu**, *The children have gone to the post office too*

### 5.4.3. more

The equivalent word to *more* in Jamaican can be pronounced **muo** /muɔ/ or **muor** /muɔɹ/ depending on the speaker

- **Dem tingk se dem wuda get muo moni**, *They thought they would get more money*

To make a comparison, use **muo dan** or **muor dan**

- **muo dan dat**, *more than that*
- **muo dan eniting els**, *more than anything else*
- **muo dan sebn big grup a dem**, *more than seven big groups of them*
- **no muo dan dat**, *no more than that*
- **Im muo dan redi fi help**, *He's more than ready to help*
- **Mi av nof muo sitn fi se tu unu**, *I have many more things to tell you*
- **Ef yu gi sumadi sopm, it mek yu muo api dan ef sumadi gi yu sopm**, *If you give somebody something, it makes you more happy than if somebody give you something*

There are a number of other expressions using **muo**, which are listed below

#### 5.4.3.1. the more..., the more...

**di muo ..., a di muo ...**

- **Di muo im bluo, a di muo di man rap di jakit rong im**, *The more he blew, the more the man wrapped his cloak around him*
- **Di muo dem nyam manggo, a di muo manggo dem waahn fi nyam**, *The more mangos they ate, the more mangos they wanted to eat*

#### 5.4.3.2. more and more

##### muo ahn muo

- **Bot dem kudn kip kwaiyat, dem pred it muo ahn muo,** *But they couldn't keep quiet, and they spread it more and more*
- **Di gruur a piipl we kom a maakit did a gruo muo ahn muo,** *The group of people who came to the market grew more and more*
- **Dat miin se unu fi dipen pan im muo ahn muo ahn du wa im tel unu fi du,** *That means that you have to depend on him more and more and do what he tells you to do*

#### 5.4.3.3. anymore

##### no ... no muor, not ... anymore

- **Dem no kier bout we rait ar rang no muo,** *They don't care anymore about what is right or wrong*
- **Piipl a-go staat tingk se di edikieshan no wot notn no muor,** *People will start to think that education isn't worth anything anymore*

#### 5.4.4. Adverbial phrases

- **aal uova,** *all over*
- **aal uova di worl,** *all over the world*

#### 5.4.5. Intensifiers

There are several adverbial intensifiers or emphatic modifiers in Jamaican that can be used to express such things as *indeed, surely, extremely, truly, very, very* and so on

##### fi-chruu, indeed / surely / extremely

- **Mis Bek nyuu ous big fi-chruu,** *Miss Beck's new house is big indeed*
- **Dem-ya tamrin sowa, sa — dem sowa fi-chruu,** *These tamarinds are sour, sir — they are sour indeed*
- **Laad, misis, yu koward fi-chruu,** *Lord, Miss, you are a coward indeed*
- **Dat-de daag maaga fi-chruu — wa mek yu no fiid im?,** *That dog is so thin — why don't you feed him?*
- **Jan sista en beks fi-chruu,** *John's sister was exceedingly angry*
- **Dis-ya bwai fat fi-chruu,** *This boy is very, very fat*

##### kyaan-don, exceptionally / exceedingly

- **Di arinj-dem aafa dis-ya chrii swiit kyaan-don,** *The oranges from this tree are very, very sweet*

- **A suoso kuoknatiina di bag—i hebi kyaan-don**, *There are only coconuts in the bag—it is exceedingly heavy*
- **Mi kluoz-dem wetop kyaan-don iina di rien**, *My clothes got very, very wet in the rain*
- **Bra Jaaj en fraitn kyaan-don**, *Brother George was exceedingly frightened*
- **Mis Bek biebi ogli kyaan-don**, *Miss Beck's baby is very, very ugly*
- **A wan dego bambie manggo im gi mi, bot i swiit kyaan-don**, *She only gave me one Bombay mango, but it was very, very sweet*
- **Sami en grojful kyaan-don**, *Sammy was exceedingly grudgeful*

**nontaal**, *at all / even a little*

- **Mi no grii wid dis nontaal**, *I don't agree with this at all*

#### 5.4.6. Time and frequency

- **yeside yesterday**
- **tide today**
- **tumaro tomorrow**
- **Yeside mi go a Darati yaad**, *Yesterday I went to Dorothy's house*
- **Wi spen kopl wiik wid dem**, *We spent a couple of weeks with them*
- **maanin, morning**
- **aftanuun, afternoon**
- **iivning, evening**
- **nait, night**
- **fi tuu wiik, for two weeks**
- **ebri wiik, every week**
- **neks ier, next year**
- **laas ier, last year**

##### 5.4.6.1. always

**aalwiez**

- **Dis-ya pikni wehn aalwiez ogli**, *This child was always ugly*

##### 5.4.6.2. never

**neba**

- **Im neba gi mi notn**, *He didn't give me anything*

#### 5.4.6.3. every

(In progress)

#### 5.4.6.4. often

Frequency adverbs like **aaftin** (*often*) come after the subject and object of the sentence

- **Di pikni nyam manggo aaftin**, *The child eats mangoes often*

**muotaim**, *often / frequently*

- **Lionaado muotaim diskraib az di aakitaip a di Renesans man**, *Leonardo is often described as the archetype of the Renaissance man*
- **Singin muotaim du ina grup a ada myuuzishan**, *Singing is often done in a group of other musicians*
- **Okiejanali, suoshal muuvment eh-invalv ina dimokrataizin nieshan, bot muotaim dehn flourish afta dimokratizieshan**, *Occasionally, social movements are involved in democratizing the nation, but frequently they flourish after democratization*
- **Alminak azwel a fizikal rekaad, muotaim piepa, a soch sistim**, *An almanac is also a physical record, frequently on paper, of such a system*

**noftaim**, *often / frequently*

- **Di torm chrajidi noftaim refa tu wahn spisifik chradishan a jraama**, *The term tragedy frequently refers to one specific tradition of drama*
- **Demya divijan no myuuchali eksklusiv, ahn signifikant uovalap noftaim prezant**, *These divisions are not mutually exclusive, and significant overlap is frequently present*
- **Ousomeba, di friez noftaim kanfyuuz wid madan filasafi**, *However, the phrase is often confused with modern philosophy*
- **Yuuman aktiviti noftaim kansida laka difrahn kyatigori frahn adaels nachral finamina**, *Human activity is frequently considered to be in a different category from other kinds of natural phenomena*
- **noftaim aalso refa tu az navl** *often also referred to as "novels"*

#### 5.4.6.5. sometimes

**somtaim**

- **De waizis man iz somtaim fuul**, *The wisest man is sometimes a fool*

#### 5.4.6.6. Duration

- **Mi naa rait im tel neks wiik**, *I won't write her till next week*

### 5.4.6.7. Other Time Words

#### 5.4.6.7.1. Months

Jamaican	English
Janiweri	<i>January</i>
Febiweri	<i>February</i>
Maach	<i>March</i>
Iepril	<i>April</i>
Mie	<i>May</i>
Juun	<i>June</i>
Julai	<i>July</i>
Aagas	<i>August</i>
Septemba	<i>September</i>
Aktuoba	<i>October</i>
Novemba	<i>November</i>
Disemba	<i>December</i>

### 5.4.7. Prepositions

#### 5.4.7.1. Location

Locative prepositions are used to describe the position or location of an object

- **pan** or **pahn**, *on*
- **anda** or **aanda**, *under / below*
- **uoba** or **uova**, *over*
- **ina** or **iina** or **iin**, *in / into*
- **pan tap a**, *on top of*
- **baka**, *behind*
- **infronta**, *in front of*
- **saida**, *beside / next to*
- **outsaid**, *outside*
- **outsaida**, *outside of*
- **nier**, *near*

- **mongks**, *among / amongst*

#### **outsaida**

- **outsaida di siti**, *outside of the city*
- **outsaida di kyamp**, *outside of the camp*
- **outsaida yu duor**, *outside of your door*

#### **nier**

- **nier di giet**, *near the gate*

#### **roun**

- **Pupa gaan roun de**, *My father has gone round there*
- **Sta Kiet roun de**, *Sister Kate is around there*

#### **op**

- **Im klaim op de**, *He/she climbed up there*
- **Sta Kiet op de a baal**, *Sister Kate is up there crying*

#### **uoba**

- **Sta Kiet no uoba ya**, *Sister Kate is not over here*

#### **aanda**

- **anda di tiebl**, *under the table*
- **anda di fig chrii**, *under the fig tree*
- **Pupa aanda de**, *My father is under there*
- **Di buk aanda de**, *The book is under there*
- **Di daag gaan aanda de**, *The dog has gone under there*
- **"We di daag de?" "Di daag de aanda tiebl ya"**, *"Where is the dog?" "The dog is here under the table"*

#### **baka**

- **Shi kom op baka im**, *She came up behind him*
- **Shi go baka im**, *She went behind him*
- **Mi ier wan vais baka mi**, *I heard a voice behind me*
- **Wan bag a piipl fala baka im**, *A huge crowd of people followed behind him*

## ina / iin

- **ina di ous**, *in the house*
- **ina di bos**, *in the bus*
- **yu buk ina im ous**, *your book is in his house*
- **Mi fuud ina di pat**, *My food is in the pot*
- **"We di pikni-dem de?" "Di pikni-dem ina skuul ya"**, *"Where are the children?" "The children are here in school"*
- **Som a dem iin ya**, *Some of them are here*
- **Di buk iin de**, *The book is in there*
- **Di biebi iin de a sliip**, *The baby is in there sleeping*
- **Mi bredda iin a bush de**, *My brother is there in the bush*
- **Di daag gaan iin de**, *The dog has gone in there*

## iina

- **iina di ous**, *into the house*
- **Shi a put di ail iina di pat**, *She put the oil into the pot*
- **Dem komplien wen di goli klag op, bot dem naa tap dash dem robish iina i**, *They complain when the gully gets clogged up, but they don't stop throwing their garbage in it*

## pan

- **Mi pudong di baaskit pan di step**, *I put the basket down on the step*

## pan tap a

- **pan tap a di tiebl**, *on top of the table*
- **pan tap a di leda**, *on top of the ladder*
- **pan tap a kichin dresa**, *on top of the kitchen dresser*
- **A klier pan tap a kichin dresa mi en put i, yunuo?**, *It's way on top of the kitchen dresser I had put it, you know?*

## saida

- **Maak a eks saida di niem**, *Mark an "x" beside the name*

## outsaid

- **Dem kom tan op outsaid**, *They came and stood outside*
- **Im go outsaid ahn im baal**, *He went outside and cried*

### 5.4.7.2. Direction

#### 5.4.7.2.1. to

**a**

- **go a Tong**, *go to Town*

#### 5.4.7.2.2. from

**fram**

#### 5.4.7.2.3. Relative Directions

- **rait**, *right*
- **lef**, *left*
- **rait an said**, *right side / right hand side*
- **lef an said**, *left side / left hand side*
- **Unu lef an no nuo wa unu rait an a du**, *Your left hand doesn't know what your right hand is doing*
- **op**, *up*
- **dong**, *down*
- **faawod**, *forward*
- **bakwod**, *backward*
- **kom faawod**, *come forward*
- **luk faawod tu** or **luk faawod fi**, *look forward to*
- **Shi kom faawod ahn tel im di prablem shi av wid dem**, *She came forward and told him the problem she had with them*
- **Im luk faawod fi di die wen im kyahn ritaiya**, *He's looking forward to the day when he can retire*
- **Wi a luk faawod fi di nyuuz**, *We look forward to the news*

#### 5.4.7.2.4. Cardinal Directions

- **naat**, *north*
- **iis**, *east*
- **sout**, *south*
- **wes**, *west*

#### 5.4.7.2.5. Intercardinal Directions

- **naatiis**, *north east*
- **naatwes**, *north west*



- **soutiis**, *south east*
- **soutwes**, *south west*

## 5.5. Clauses

### 5.5.1. Relative Clauses

The question word **we** can also be used as a relative pronoun similar to *what, which, that, or where*

Relative clauses are formed using the connector-word **we** to link both parts of the sentence

- **Wi fain di moni we Jan laas**, *We found the money that John lost*
- **Gi wi di fuud we wi niid**, *Give us the food that we need*
- **Mi no nuo we fi se**, *I don't know what to say*
- **Mi no nuo we fi du**, *I don't know what to do*
- **Mi no nuo we im niem**, *I don't know what his name is*
- **Mi no nuo we im de**, *I don't where he is*
- **Mi no nuo we im a go**, *I don't where he is going*
- **Mi a-go tel unu sitn we nobadi no nuo bout**, *I'm going to tell you all something that nobody knows about*
- **du we im du**, *do what he does*

## 5.6. Existential verbs

- **a**, *there is / there are*
- **yu gat**, *there is / there are*
- **A tuu apruoch tu Ort sayans**, *There are two approaches to Earth science*
- **A suoso kuoknatiina di bag**, *There are only coconuts in the bag*

## 5.7. Conjunctions

### 5.7.1. like / as

**laka**

- **sinting laka dat**, *something like that / a thing like that*

**laka se** *as if / like*

- **Im ron laka se dem set daag afta im**, *He ran as if they had set dogs after im*

- **It luk laka se im ago kil im wid lik**, *It appears that he is going to beat him to death*
- **Yuuman aktiviti noftaim kansida laka difrahn kiatigori frahn adaels nachral finamina**, *Human activity is often considered to be in a different category from other natural phenomena*
- **No mek nobadi luk dong pan im ar chriit im laka se im a notn**, *Don't let anyone look down on him or treat him like nothing*

## 5.7.2. Coordinating Conjunctions

### 5.7.2.1. and

Two nouns, adjectives, verbs, or clauses can be connected with the word **ahn** (also written as **an**)

- **Jan ahn Mieri**, *John and Mary*

Nouns: N + **ahn** + N

- **arinj ahn manggo**, *oranges and mangos*

Verbs: S + V + (O) + **ahn** + V + (O)

- **baal ahn muon**, *cry and moan*
- **Piipl a-go a baal ahn a grain dem tiit**, *People will cry and gnash their teeth*
- **Smadi fain i ahn aid i agen**, *Somebody found it and hid it again*
- **Shi a-go elp unu ahn tek kier a unu**, *She'll help you and take care of you*
- **Im sel evriting we im uon ahn go bai i**, *He sold everything he had and bought it*

### 5.7.2.2. with

**wid**

- **Kom wid mi!**, *Come with me!*
- **Bab sing wid Piita**, *Bob sang with Peter*
- **Piita kot di bred wid di naif**, *Peter cut the bread with the knife*
- **Mi no grii wid dis nontaal**, *I don't agree with this at all*
- **A wa Jan bai wid di moni?**, *What did John buy with the money?*

### 5.7.2.3. together

**tugeda**

- **Wi chat Patwa tugeda**, *We speak to each other in Jamaican*

#### 5.7.2.4. but

##### bot

- **Wi chat nof Patwa, bot wi no rait i, dat a wi prablem,** *We speak a lot of Patois, but we don't write it, and that's our problem*
- **Mi likl, bot mi talawa,** *I may be small, but I am strong-and fearless*
- **Mi no riili laik manggo bot dis-ya manggo swiit mi,** *I don't really like mangoes but I find this one delicious/to be pleasing*
- **Bot dat no pruuv se wa mi a du rait,** *But that doesn't prove that what I am doing is right*

#### 5.7.2.5. for

##### fi

- **Shi aks im fi du sitn fi ar,** *She asked him to do something for her*



The first **fi** in the above example is equivalent to English *to*, while the second corresponds to *for*.

#### 5.7.2.6. so

(In progress)

#### 5.7.2.7. or

##### ar

- **mi neva yuuz no big wod ar chrai fi soun waiz,** *I never used big words or tried to sound wise*

#### 5.7.2.8. as well as

(In progress)

#### 5.7.2.9. in order to

##### fi

- **Mi a go a shap fi bai milk,** *I am going to the shop to buy milk*
- **Jien gaan a shap fi bai bred,** *Jane has gone to the shop to buy bread*
- **Dem gi smadi di mechiz fi gi mi,** *They gave someone the message to give to me*
- **Wahn uman gi Piita di loki lato nomba fi plie,** *A woman gave Peter the lucky lottery number to play*
- **Mi sen im op a ruod fi miit di bos,** *I sent him up to the road to meet the bus*

- **Kozn Kyari wash di pat fi bwail di yam**, *Cousin Carrie washed the pot to boil the yam*
- **Mi son gaan a kalij fi ton dakta**, *My son has gone to college to become a doctor*
- **Mi a go de fi miit di bos**, *I am going there to meet the bus*
- **Di piipl dem sidong fi nyam ahn jringk**, *The people sat down to eat and drink*

#### 5.7.2.10. provided that

(In progress)

### 5.7.3. Correlative Conjunctions

#### 5.7.3.1. either...or

(In progress)

#### 5.7.3.2. not only...but also

(In progress)

#### 5.7.3.3. neither...nor

(In progress)

#### 5.7.3.4. both...and

(In progress)

#### 5.7.3.5. whether...or

(In progress)

#### 5.7.3.6. just as... so

**siem laik**

**jos laik**

**laik wan**

- **laik wan onggr-beli laiyan**, *like a hungry lion*

#### 5.7.3.7. the... the

(In progress)

#### 5.7.3.8. as...as

(In progress)

#### 5.7.3.9. no sooner... than

(In progress)

#### 5.7.3.10. rather... than

(In progress)

### 5.7.4. Subordinating Conjunctions

#### 5.7.4.1. after

**afta**, *after*

- **Afta dat mi a-go bak**, *After that I'll go back*

**fram dat**, *afterwards / after that / from then on*

- **Fram dat dem fried fi aks im no muo kwestiyan**, *After that they were afraid to ask him any more questions*

#### 5.7.4.2. although

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.3. as

**hou / ou / siem wie hou**

- **Siem wie hou mi tel yu, a so i go**, *It happened exactly as I told you*

#### 5.7.4.4. as far as

- **Az faar az mi nuo, mi no du notn rang**, *As far as I know, I haven't done anything wrong*

#### 5.7.4.5. as if

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.6. as long as

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.7. as soon as

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.8. as though

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.9. because

There are a number of different ways of expressing *because* in Jamaican:

- **kaa**
- **kaaz**
- **kaazn**
- **bekaa**
- **sieka**

#### 5.7.4.10. before

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.11. however

**ousomeba**

- **Ousomeba, di friez noftaim kanfyuuz wid madan filasafi**, *However, the phrase is often confused with modern philosophy*

#### 5.7.4.12. if

**ef**

#### 5.7.4.13. in order that

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.14. since

**sens**

- **sens di advent a sayans**, *since the advent of science*

**fram**

- **fram mi a likl bwai**, *since I was a little boy*

#### 5.7.4.15. so

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.16. so that

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.17. that

- **mek shuor se**, *make sure that*
- **Mek shuor se yu no tel nobadi**, *Make sure that you don't tell anyone*
- **Mek shuor se nobadi no nuo bout dis**, *Make sure that nobody knows about this*
- **Mek shuor se unu no get iina no chobl**, *Make sure that you don't get in any trouble*

#### 5.7.4.18. than

**dan**

#### 5.7.4.19. though

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.20. unless

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.21. until

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.22. when

**wen**

- **wen mi kech a di skuul**, *when I arrived at the school*

**siem taim**, *when / at the same time that*

#### 5.7.4.23. whenever

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.24. where

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.25. **whereas**

(In progress)

#### 5.7.4.26. **wherever**

**eniwe**

- **Eniwe im de, sniek duon lef far**, *Wherever he is, a snake is not far off*
- **Eniwe yu de wi kaal yu!**, *Wherever you are, we'll call you*

#### 5.7.4.27. **while**

(In progress)

## 5.8. Particles

### 5.8.1. Interrogative particles

- **iihn** /i/, *isn't it?* (interrogative particle)
- **siin** /sin/, *agreed, OK* (affirmative particle)
- **no?** / **na?** /no/, /na/, *isn't that so? / don't you agree? / right? / eh?*
- **ya** / **yaa**, *eh?*

### 5.8.2. Mood particles

**ya** / **yaa** (emphasis / imperative etc)

## 5.9. Numbers

### 5.9.1. Cardinal Numerals

Number	Jamaican	English
1	wan	one
2	tuu	two
3	chrii	three
4	fuor or fuor	four
5	faib or faiv	five
6	siks	six
7	sebn or sevn	seven



Number	Jamaican	English
8	iet or hiet	<i>eight</i>
9	nain	<i>nine</i>
10	ten	<i>ten</i>
11	lebm	<i>eleven</i>
12	twelb	<i>twelve</i>
13	tertiin	<i>thirteen</i>
14	fuotiin	<i>fourteen</i>
15	fiftiin	<i>fifteen</i>
16	sixtiin	<i>sixteen</i>
17	sebntiin	<i>seventeen</i>
18	ietiin or hietiin	<i>eighteen</i>
19	naintiin	<i>nineteen</i>
20	twenti	<i>twenty</i>
30	toti	<i>thirty</i>
40	faati	<i>forty</i>
50	fifti	<i>fifty</i>
60	siksti	<i>sixty</i>
70	sebnti or sevnti	<i>seventy</i>
80	ieti	<i>eighty</i>
90	nainti	<i>ninety</i>
100	onjrid	<i>hundred</i>
300	chrii onjrid	<i>three hundred</i>
500	faib onjrid	<i>five hundred</i>
1000	touzn	<i>thousand</i>
1000000	miliyan	<i>million</i>

- **sevnti-tuu**, *seventy-two (72)*
- **ieti-fuo**, *eighty-four (84)*
- **nainti-nain**, *ninety-nine (99)*

Examples:

- **Di bwai-dem tek wan manngo ahn tuu apl**, *The boys took one mango and two apples*

### 5.9.2. Ordinal Numerals

Number	Jamaican	English
1s	fos	<i>first</i>
2n	sekan	<i>second</i>
3d	tod	<i>third</i>
4t	fuot	<i>fourth</i>
5f	fif	<i>fifth</i>
6s	siks	<i>sixth</i>
7n	sebn	<i>seventh</i>
8t	iet	<i>eighth</i>
9t	naint	<i>ninth</i>
10t	tent	<i>tenth</i>

- **di 16t (sixtiint) senchri**, *the 16th century*
- **di 20t (twentiet) senchri**, *the 20th century*
- **di 21s (twenti-fos) senchri**, *the 21st century*

Examples:

- **Di fos manggo di bwai-dem tiif pwail**, *The first mango the boys stole spoiled*

### 5.9.3. Reduplicated Numerals

Monosyllabic numerals can be reduplicated to mean *(number) at a time* or *(number) by (number)*

- **wan-wan**, *one by one / one at a time*
- **tuu-tuu**, *two by two / two at a time*
- **chrii-chrii**, *three by three / three at a time*
- **fuor-fuor**, *four by four / four at a time*

Examples of reduplicated numerals:

- **Dem tek wan-wan buod bil i ous**, *They built the house one piece of board at a time*

## 5.10. Sentences

### 5.10.1. Word Order

Basic Jamaican sentences are S-V-O, that is to say, they follow the order *subject-verb-object*

- **Mangguus nyam foul**, *Mongoose eat chickens*

The subject, verb, and object may take the form of phrases rather than a single word, but the basic sentence order is the same

- **Di man chrech out im an**, *The man stretched out his hand*

In the example above, **di man** is the subject of the sentence, **chrech out** is the verb (verb phrase) or action that the subject is performing, and **im an** is the object, or recipient of the action

### 5.10.2. Parts of a sentence

(In progress)

#### 5.10.2.1. Subject

(In progress)

#### 5.10.2.2. Predicate

(In progress)

#### 5.10.2.3. Object

(In progress)

#### 5.10.2.4. Copula

The copula **a** (*is*) is always used when equating two nouns or noun phrases

- **Jan a obya-man**, *John is a ritual specialist*
- **Mi a sia-man**, *I am a seer*

However, the copula is never used to connect nouns and adjectives

- **Di rich man miin**, *The rich man is stingy*

In the above example, the noun phrase "rich man" and the adjective "miin" are connected without needing to use **a**

Use of the copula with prepositions is variable — some prepositions need it and others do not

- **Yu shuda ina di ous**, *You should have been in the house*
- **Dem wehn ina di bos**, *They were in the bus*

**de** → copula + locative

- **Di shot we yu waahn ina ous**, *The shirt which you want is inside the house*
- **Di shot we yu waahn de ina ous**, *The shirt which you want is inside the house*
- **Juozi de (ina) Mie Pen**, *Joseph is in May Pen*

#### 5.10.2.5. Complements

### 5.10.3. Questions

#### 5.10.3.1. Question words

There are several main question words, or interrogative pronouns that are used to ask questions in Jamaican

- **wa**, *what*
- **uu** or **huu**, *who*
- **wa-taim**, *when*
- **wich-wie**, *how*
- **we** or **wich-paat** or **wichapaat** or **wepaat**, *where*
- **wa mek** or **a wa mek**, **mek**, *why*
- **uufa**, *whose*
- **wich** or **wish**, *which*
- **umoch**, *how much / how many*

These question words usually come at the beginning of a sentence

##### 5.10.3.1.1. what

**wa**

- **Wa yu niem?**, *What is your name?*
- **Wa di tiicha niem?**, *What is the teacher's name?*
- **Wa di biebi niem?**, *What is the baby's name?*
- **Wa yu a du?**, *What are you doing?*
- **Wa Jan a du?**, *What is John doing?*
- **Wa unu a du?**, *What are you (pl.) doing?*

- **Wa tiicha a du?**, *What is the teacher doing?*
- **Wa yu se?**, *What did you say?*
- **Wa dakta se?**, *What did the doctor say?*
- **Wa dem se?**, *What did they say?*

#### 5.10.3.1.2. who

##### **uu / huu**

- **A uu yu?**, *Who are you?*
- **Uu tel yu se yu no gat no sens?**, *Who told you that you have no sense?*

#### 5.10.3.1.3. when

##### **wa-taim**

- **Wa-taim yu kum uom yeside?**, *When did you come home yesterday?*

#### 5.10.3.1.4. how

##### **wich-wie**

- **Wich-wie yu waahn mi fi dwiit?**, *How do you want me to do it?*

#### 5.10.3.1.5. where

##### **we / wich-paat / wichapaat / wepaat**

- **We yu a go?**, *Where are you going?*
- **We yu de?**, *Where are you?*
- **We im de?**, *Where is he?*
- **We dem de?**, *Where are they?*
- **Wich-paat yu kom fram?**, *Where are you from?*
- **Wepaat yu faada de?**, *Where is your father?*
- **We Jan-dem a go?**, *Where are John and his friends going?*
- **Wich-paat yu waak gu dong de?**, *Where do you walk to get down there?*

#### 5.10.3.1.6. why

##### **wa mek**

- **Wa mek yu neba kom?**, *Why didn't you come?*
- **Wa mek yu tel im we mi se?**, *Why did you tell him what I said?*

- **Wa mek dem ron-we go a bush?**, *Why did they run away to the bushes?*
- **Wa mek Mis Bek a baal so?**, *Why is Miss Beck crying so much?*
- **Wa mek dem a baal ahn gwaan so?**, *Why are they crying and carrying on this way?*
- **Wa mek yu tan so lang?**, *Why did you stay so long?*
- **Wa mek yu neba go?**, *Why didn't you go?*
- **Wa mek yu a gwaan so?**, *Why are you behaving like that?*
- **Wa mek unu a baal so?**, *Why are you all crying this way?*
- **Wa mek dem gwaan aal dem wie de?**, *Why do they behave in that manner?*
- **A wa mek som smadi fain-faal so?**, *Why are some people so hard to please?*
- **Wa mek unu kip dis-ya ruum so chaka-chaka?**, *Why do you keep this room so untidy?*

#### 5.10.3.1.7. which

**wich**

**A wish wan a dem a fi yu?**, *Which one of them is yours?*

#### 5.10.3.1.8. how much / how many

The word **umoch** can be used to express both *how much* and *how many* in questions

- **Umoch bred unu av?**, *How much bread do you have?*
- **Umoch buk unu av?**, *How many books do you have?*
- **umoch taim**, *how many times?*
- **Laif no jos bout umoch sitn wi uon**, *Life isn't just about how many things we own*
- **Yu fi sidong fos ahn chek out umoch it a-go kaas yu**, *You should sit down first and figure out how much it's going to cost you*
- **Dem kount op umoch di buk dem wot**, *They counted up how much the books were worth*

**wat**, *how much (specifically for prices)*

- **Wat a kwaan da milk?**, *How much a quart is the milk?*

#### 5.10.3.1.9. how long / how far etc

The word **ou** can be combined with adjectives to create questions about extent / degree / length of time, etc.

**ou lang**, *how long*

- **Ou lang yu a-go wiet?**, *How long are you going to wait?*
- **Ou lang yu plan fi kip tingz fram wi?**, *How long are you planning to keep things from us?*

**ou faar**, *how far*

**ou big**, *how big*

- **Im shuo dem ou big ahn powaful im bi**, *He showed them how big and powerful he was*

**ou aad**, *how hard*

- **Shi nuo ou aad unu a wok**, *She knows how hard you work*
- **Mi shuor se unu memba ou aad wi did afi wok**, *I'm sure you remember how hard we had to work*

**ou diip**, *how deep*

- **Chek ou diip di waata bi**, *Check how deep the water is*

#### 5.10.3.1.10. Question words in non-interrogative sentences

Question words can also be used in sentences that are not strictly questions, for example, in conjunction with **wanda**

- **A wanda wa mek Bucha Juonz so maaga ahn kraani**, *I wonder why Butcher Jones is so thin and skinny*
- **A wanda we yu a go**, *I wonder where you are going*
- **A wanda wa di biebi niem?**, *I wonder what the baby's name is*
- **A wanda huu tel yu se yu no gat no sens?**, *I wonder who told you that you have no sense*
- **A wanda wa-taim yu kum uom yeside?**, *I wonder when you came home yesterday*
- **A wanda wich-wie yu waahn mi fi dwiit?**, *I wonder how you want me to do it*

#### 5.10.3.2. Inversion

Statements can be made into questions by adding a rising intonation (or in writing, a question mark) at the end of the sentence, without the need for inversion

- **Im av kyaar?**, *Does he have a car?*

#### 5.10.3.3. Question Particles

In some cases, the initial question particle **a** may come at the beginning of the sentence to indicate that it is a question

- **A wa Jan bai wid di moni?**, *What did John buy with the money?*
- **A yu kyar di baaskit go gi im?** *Are you the one who carried the basket to him?*
- **A uu yu a luk fa?**, *Who are you looking for?*

#### 5.10.3.4. Confirmation

Emphatic agreement or confirmation is expressed with **iihn**, *isn't it?*

- **Da blebi de kyan gwaan fenke-fenke, iihn?**, *That baby is rather finicky, isn't it?*
- **Jan kyan wok haad, iihn?**, *John can work hard though, can't he?*
- **Mis Jien gat moni, iihn?**, *Miss Jane is rich, isn't she?*
- **Ruut a baal, iihn?**, *Ruth is crying, isn't she?*
- **Di kansrt gwaan gud, iihn?**, *The concert went well, didn't it?*
- **Dem gyal spaitful, duo, iihn?**, *Those girls are vindictive, though, aren't they?*
- **Dem kwik fi kos wi aaf, iihn?**, *They are ready to curse us, aren't they?*
- **Yu wuda en mos hafi tel Juo, iihn?**, *You would have had to tell Joe, wouldn't you?*
- **Mis Mati ton smadi nou, iihn?**, *Miss Matty is somebody to be reckoned with now, isn't she?*

#### 5.10.4. Commands

##### 5.10.4.1. Imperative

- **Kom ya!**, *Come here!*
- **Kom wid mi!**, *Come with me!*
- **Muuv yu han!**, *Move your hand!*
- **Go a yu yaad**, *Go home!*
- **Chrech out yu an!**, *Stretch out your hand!*

##### 5.10.4.2. Negative commands

To tell someone *not* to do something, use the negator **no** followed by the imperative form

- **No kaal mi niem ina no miksop**, *Don't mention my name in any scandals*
- **No tel mi fi tap i naiz!**, *Don't tell me to hush up!*
- **No du wa im tel unu fi du**, *Don't do what he tells you to do!*

The word **duohn** (*don't*) can also be used

- **Duohn figat!**, *Don't forget!*

##### 5.10.4.3. Table of command forms

Imperative form	Example
bare verb	<b>kom ya</b>



<b>no</b> + bare verb	<b>no tel mi</b>
<b>duohn</b> + bare verb	<b>duohn figat</b>

### 5.10.5. Quoted speech

#### 5.10.5.1. Direct quotation

The quoted speech should be placed between quotation marks, and can be introduced with **se**

- **Im ax im se, "Yu waahn get beta?"**, *He asked him, "Do you want to get better?"*

#### 5.10.5.2. Indirect quotation

One way to quote someone's thoughts or opinions indirectly is to use a verb (e.g., **tingk**, *think*, or **ax**, *ask*) along with **se**, followed by the full original quote without modification

- **Im tingk se it bes fi wi no put no muo presha pan unu**, *He thinks that it would be best to not put any more pressure on you*

## 6. Contextual Language

### 6.1. Register

#### 6.1.1. High Register

##### 6.1.1.1. Markers

(In progress)

##### 6.1.1.2. Honorifics

(In progress)

#### 6.1.2. Low Register

##### 6.1.2.1. Markers

(In progress)

##### 6.1.2.2. Idioms

- **dem lov fi big op demself**, *they like to boast*
- **dat a chuu**, *indeed / yes / truly*

##### 6.1.2.3. Slang

### 6.2. Non-verbal cues

#### 6.2.1. Onomatopoeia

- **susu**, *whisper*
- **susu-susu**, *whispering*
- **tip tip**, *drip drip / drip drop*
- **Mi ier di paip a liik tip tip uol nait**, *I heard the pipe leaking "drip drip" all night*

#### 6.2.2. Interjections

Interjections can be used to express such things as surprise, hesitancy, pain, frustration, approval, or disapproval

**kistiit**

The interjections **kistiit** or **kis-tiit** (*kiss teeth*) and **sok-tiit** (*suck teeth*) are used to indicate annoyance or scorn

## **cho**

The interjection **cho** is used to indicate scorn, impatience, annoyance, disagreement, or expostulation

- **Cho, yu tu nyami-nyami, yu beli gwai bi yu dounfal**, *Hmph, you're too greedy and you're stomach is going to be your downfall!*

## **ku!**

The interjection **ku!** (*look!*) can be used in a variety of situations to call attention to something nearby

- **Ku de!**, *Look there!*
- **Ku ya!**, *Look here!*
- **Ku Kozn Ruut a baal!**, *Look! There's Cousin Ruth crying!*
- **Ku Mis Bek breda!**, *Look! There's Miss Becky's brother!*
- **Ku hou im doti ahn ragidi!**, *Look how dirty and ragged he is!*

## **6.2.3. Gestures**

### **6.2.3.1. List of common gestures**

(In progress)

## **6.3. Gambits**

### **6.3.1. List of commonly-used gambits**

(In progress)

## **6.4. Proverbs**

- **Di griet fuul iz praud az daag wid tuu tiel**, *The great fool is as proud as a dog with two tails*
- **De waizis man iz somtaim fuul**, *The wisest man is sometimes a fool*
- **Praia in di mout ongli iz nuo praia**, *A prayer that is in the mouth only is no prayer*
- **No fi waant a tong mek kau no taak**, *It is not for want of a tongue that a cow does not talk*
- **Bifuor fies ahn bihain bak no a wan** (Before one's face and behind one's back is not the same thing), *Two-faced, duplicitous*
- **No kos aligeta langmout til yu kraas riba**, *Don't curse the long mouth of the alligator until you have crossed the river*

- **Chikin a bush kyaahn bwail suup** ("A chicken in the bush cannot be used to make soup"), *A bird in hand is worth two in the bush*
- **Pus gaan, rat a tek ous** ("When the cat is gone, the rats take over the house"), *When the cat's away, the mice will play*
- **Bokit a go a wel aal die, wan die di Batam wi drap out** (A bucket that goes down the well all day long, one day the bottom will drop out), *It is a long lane that has no turning*

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## 7.7. Online resources

- [Jamaican structure dataset](#) by Joseph T. Farquharson - Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures (APICS) Online (CC BY)

- [Jamaican Language Audio Dictionary](#) at Patwa.org (CC BY-SA)
- [Glottolog Resources for Jamaican](#)
- [Phonological Inventory of Jamaican](#) - PHOIBLE Online (Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology)
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- *Jamaican National Dictionary* (in progress)
- [Jamaican Creole Texts](#) by Peter L. Patrick
- [Jamaican and Caribbean Weekly News Summary](#) by Jamaicans.com - Podomatic

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