Toki Pona

Developed by linguist Sonja Lang, Toki Pona is a language with around 130 words.

Basic Sentences

The particle 〉 separates the subject from the predicate.

⚡〉🐱 - The cat is eating.
〇〉⚡ - People sleep.

There is no verb "to be". The part after 〉 can be a noun or an adjective.

⚡〉🐱 - Fruits are food.
≈〉⌣ - Water is good.

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

𝙋 🐱 - I eat.
𝙗 ⌣ - You are good.

Ambiguity

Toki Pona words are less specific that English, so direct translation is challenging.

𝙋 🐱 - 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, to improve, or wellness.

Nouns have no number and there is no "a" or "the".

✕〇 - A fish, the fish, some fish.
𝙋 - I, me, we, or us.

Direct objects

The particle 》 signifies the direct object. This also makes the word before a verb.

⚡〉🐱》≈ - The animal drinks the water.
𝙋 ≈》⚡ - I wash the cat, or I apply water to the cat.
𝙗 ⋁》⚡ - You enlarge it.

Modifying Words

Words can be modified adding other words directly after them.

⌂ 𝙋 - My house.
♡⌣ - A good feeling.

To negate a word, put ✕ after it.

𝙋 ⚡✕ - I'm not sleeping.
〇✕〉⚡ - No one responded.

Each additional modifier affects the very first word.

□ ⚡ || - Two plant lists.
⊔ ⚡ ⚠ - A blue and black box.

You can insert ⌞ between words to change this behavior.

□ ⌞ ⚡ || - A two-plant list.
⊔ ⌞ ⚡ ⚠ - A dark-blue box.

Prepositions

The words 🐱, ⊥, =, ⌒, and ⋀ can start prepositional phrases at the end of a sentence.

𝙋 🐱⚡⊓ - I eat with cutlery.
⚡〉⊥⌂ - The rat is in the hall.
𝙗 ⚡=⚡ - You sing like birds!
𝙋 ⋀⌒🐱 - I'm back from work.
⚡〉⚡》↓⋀𝙗 - They said that to you.

Conjunctions

There are many ways to say "and". Use + for 2+ subjects.

𝙋 + 𝙗 〉⚡ ||| - You and I are playing a lot.

Repeat 〉 for 2+ predicates.

⚡↓〉⌣〉⚡ - This animal is small and cute.

Repeat 》 for 2+ objects.

⚡〉⚡》⚡》✕ - She sees the birds and fish.

Do the same for prepositonal phrases.

𝙋 ⚡》⌂⚡ 0 ⚡♡ - I built the hut with sticks and stones.

You can use ⋎ to mean "or".

𝙋 ⋀✕⋎⊕⚡ - We'll either go to the store or to the park.
‡⋎‡〉⊥ - That's either an insect or a lizard.

Loanwords

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

〇(⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡) - A person named Sonja, or simply Sonja.
⚡(⚡⊔⊥〇) - A "Tosi" (Deutsch) language, or German.
⊕(⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡⋀)〉⋁ - The land Mewika (USA) is big.

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

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

The word 𝙙

You can use 𝙙 before a verb to turn it into a command.

𝙙 ⚡ - Listen!
𝙙 🐱 - Please drink.

You can use 𝙙 after a subject to address them.

〇(⌣⚡⚡+) 𝙙 - Pape!

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

⌣ 𝙙 ⋀𝙗 - Joy to you.
𝙋 𝙙 ⚡ - I should be working.

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

· ⚡(⌂⊔↑) 𝙙 🐱 - Eat, Ton.

Interjections

Interjections are common. Add 𝙙 for emphasis.

⌣ - Good!; Great!; Thanks!
⚡ - Hello!; Hi!; Greetings!
⊥ - True!; Correct!

Questions

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

⚡〉⚡✕⚡ - Is she playing?

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

⚡ - Yes: [she is] playing.

⚡✕ - No: [she is] not playing.
✕ - No: [she is] not [playing].

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

𝙗 ⚡⋎? - Are you making fire?
⚡⌒〉⊥⊔⋎? - Is the cute cat in a box?

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

〇?〉⚡》🐱≈ - Who's bringing the drinks?
𝙗 ⚡》? - What's he making?

Preverbs

Preverbs go before verbs to modify their meaning.

𝙋 Ḳ⊡ - I can write.
⚡ ⋎〉⚡⋀⋁ - The small bird wants to become big.

The words ⚡, ⋀, ⚡, ⊙, Ḳ, ⋀, and ⚡ can be preverbs.

Context

The word 〉 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 or any other relationship to the main sentence.

𝙗 ⊥⌂ 𝙋 〉𝙋 ♡⌣ - When you are by my side, I feel good.

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

= 𝙋 〉𝙗 ⚡ ||| - Just like me, you know a lot.
⌒?〉𝙗 ⚡ - Why are you hot?

The preposition ⊥ can be omitted in this case.

⊙⚠〉𝙋 ⚡ - I sleep [at] night.

Numbers

Combine number words to add them up.

For exmaple, 1 is 1, || is 2, ⋀ is 5, ||| is 20, ∞ is 100, |||| is 4, and ⋀|| 1 is 8.

The word ⌗ can be used to mark ordinals.

□⌗1 〉⌣ - The first book is good.
↑⌗|||||1 - 23rd Street.