

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.

𐌿 > 𐌶 - The cat is eating.
𐌹 > 𐌶 - People sleep.

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

𐌵 > 𐌶 - Fruits are food.
𐌺 > 𐌶 - Water is good.

If the subject is 𐌶 or 𐌵 alone, > is always omitted.

𐌶 𐌶 - I eat.
𐌵 𐌶 - You are good.

Ambiguity

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

𐌶 𐌶 - I am eating, I was eating, or I will be eating.

Many words have multiple or general meanings.

𐌿 - A cat, dog, or any land mammal.
𐌵 - Any fruit or vegetable.

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

𐌺 - Water, wet, or to wash.
𐌶 - Good, to improve, or wellness.

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

𐌶 - A fish, the fish, some fish.
𐌶 - I, me, we, or us.

Direct objects

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

𐌿 > 𐌶 >> 𐌶 - The animal drinks the water.
𐌶 >> 𐌿 - I wash the cat, or I apply water to the cat.
𐌵 >> 𐌶 - You enlarge it.

Modifying Words

Words can be modified adding other words directly after them.

𐌶 𐌶 - My house.
𐌶 𐌶 - A good feeling.

To negate a word, put 𐌶 after it.

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - I'm not sleeping.
𐌶 𐌶 > 𐌶 - No one responded.

Each additional modifier affects the very first word.

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - Two plant lists.
𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - A blue and black box.

You can insert 𐌶 between words to change this behavior.

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - A two-plant list.
𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - A dark-blue box.

Prepositions

The words 𐌶, 𐌶, 𐌶, 𐌶, and 𐌶 can start prepositional phrases at the end of a sentence.

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - I eat with cutlery.
𐌿 > 𐌶 - The rat is in the hall.
𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - You sing like birds!
𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - I'm back from work.
𐌶 > 𐌶 >> 𐌶 𐌶 - They said that to you.

Conjunctions

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

𐌶 𐌶 > 𐌶 𐌶 - You and I are playing a lot.

Repeat > for 2+ predicates.

𐌿 > 𐌶 > 𐌶 - This animal is small and cute.

Repeat >> for 2+ objects.

𐌶 > 𐌶 >> 𐌶 >> 𐌶 - She sees the birds and fish.

Do the same for prepositional phrases.

𐌶 𐌶 >> 𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - I built the hut with sticks and stones.

You can use 𐌶 to mean "or".

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - We'll either go to the store or to the park.
𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 > 𐌶 - 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.

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - A person named Sonja, or simply Sonja.
𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - A "Tosi" (Deutsch) language, or German.
𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 > 𐌶 - 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 𐌶

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

𐌶 𐌶 - Listen!
𐌶 𐌶 - Please drink.

You can use 𐌶 after a subject to address them.

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - Pape!

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

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - Joy to you.
𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - I should be working.

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

𐌿 𐌶 𐌶 - Eat, Ton.

Interjections

Interjections are common. Add 𐌶 for emphasis.

𐌶 - Good!; Great!; Thanks!
𐌶 - Hello!; Hi!; Greetings!
𐌶 - True!; Correct!

Questions

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

𐌶 > 𐌶 𐌶 - Is she playing?

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

𐌶 - Yes: [she is] playing.

𐌶 𐌶 - No: [she is] not playing.
𐌶 𐌶 - No: [she is] not [playing].

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

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 ? - Are you making fire?
𐌿 𐌶 > 𐌶 𐌶 ? - Is the cute cat in a box?

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

𐌶 ? > 𐌶 >> 𐌶 𐌶 - Who's bringing the drinks?
𐌶 𐌶 > ? - What's he making?

Preverbs

Preverbs go before verbs to modify their meaning.

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - I can write.
𐌶 𐌶 > 𐌶 𐌶 - The small bird wants to become big.

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

Context

The word 𐌶 can be used to mark the context of a sentence: *a* 𐌶 *b* means: In the context of *a*, *b*. This can mean time, cause, topic or any other relationship to the main sentence.

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

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

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - Just like me, you know a lot.
𐌶 𐌶 > 𐌶 𐌶 - Why are you hot?

The preposition 𐌶 can be omitted in this case.

𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 𐌶 - I sleep [at] night.

Numbers

Combine number words to add them up.

For exmaple, 1 is 1, 11 is 2, 11 is 5, 111 is 20, 1111 is 100, 11111 is 4, and 111111 is 8.

The word 𐌶 can be used to mark ordinals.

𐌶 𐌶 1 > 𐌶 - The first book is good.
𐌶 𐌶 11111 1 - 23rd Street.