

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.

𐀹 > 𐀺 - The cat is eating.

𐀺 > 𐀽 - People sleep.

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

𐀽 > 𐀺 - Fruits are food.

𐀹 > 𐀽 - Water is good.

If the subject is 𐀹 or 𐀺 alone, > is always omitted.

𐀹 𐀺 - I eat.

𐀺 𐀽 - You are good.

Ambiguity

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

𐀹 𐀺 - I am eating, I was eating, or I will be eating.

Many words have multiple or general meanings.

𐀹 - A cat, dog, or any land mammal.

𐀽 - Any fruit or vegetable.

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

𐀹 - Water, wet, or to wash.

𐀽 - Good, to improve, or wellness.

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

𐀹 - A fish, the fish, some fish.

𐀹 - I, me, we, or us.

Direct objects

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

𐀹 > 𐀺 >> 𐀹 - The animal drinks the water.

𐀹 𐀹 >> 𐀺 - I wash my hands.

𐀺 𐀹 >> 𐀽 - You enlarge it.

Modifying Words

Words can be modified adding other words directly after them.

𐀺 𐀹 - My house.

𐀹 𐀽 - A good feeling.

To negate a word, put 𐀹 after it.

𐀹 𐀹 𐀹 - I'm not sleeping.

𐀹 𐀹 > 𐀹 - No one responded.

Each additional modifier affects the very first word.

𐀺 𐀹 𐀹 - Two plant lists.

𐀺 𐀹 𐀹 - A blue and black box.

You can insert 𐀹 between words to change this behavior.

𐀺 𐀹 𐀹 - A two-plant list.

𐀺 𐀹 𐀹 - A dark-blue box.

Prepositions

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

𐀹 𐀹 𐀹 - I eat with cutlery.

𐀹 > 𐀹 𐀹 - The rat is in the hall.

𐀺 𐀹 𐀹 - You sing like birds!

𐀹 𐀹 𐀹 - I'm back from work.

𐀹 > 𐀹 >> 𐀹 𐀹 - They said that to you.

Questions

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

𐀹 > 𐀹 𐀹 - Is she playing?

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

𐀹 - Yes: [she is] playing.

𐀹 𐀹 - No: [she is] not playing.

𐀹 - No: [she is] not [playing].

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

𐀺 𐀹 𐀹? - Are you making fire?

𐀹 𐀹 > 𐀹 𐀹? - Is the cute cat in a box?

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

𐀹? > 𐀹 >> 𐀹 𐀹 - Who's bringing the drinks?

𐀺 𐀹 >>? - What are you making?

Conjunctions

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

ŀ + ʘ > ʘ ||| - You and I are playing a lot.

Repeat > for 2+ predicates.

ʘ ↓ > ʘ > ^ - This animal is small and cute.

Repeat >> for 2+ objects.

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

Do the same for prepositional phrases.

ŀ ʘ >> ʘ ʘ ʘ ʘ - I built the hut with sticks and stones.

You can use ʘ to mean "or".

ŀ ʘ ʘ ʘ ʘ - We'll either go to the store or to the park.

ʘ ʘ ʘ > ʘ - That's either an insect or a lizard.

Interjections

Interjections are common. Add ʘ for emphasis.

ʘ - Good!; Great!; Thanks!

ʘ - Hello!; Hi!; Greetings!

ʘ ʘ - True!; Correct!

Loanwords

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

ʘ (ʘ ʘ ʘ ʘ) - A person named Sonja, a.k.a. jan Sonja.

ʘ (ʘ ʘ ʘ ʘ) - The language "Tosi" (Deutsch), a.k.a. German.

ʘ (ʘ ʘ ʘ ʘ) > ʘ - 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 ʘ

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

ʘ ʘ - Listen!

ʘ ʘ - Please drink.

You can use ʘ after a subject to address them.

ʘ (ʘ ʘ ʘ ʘ) ʘ - Pape!

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

ʘ ʘ ʘ ʘ - Joy to you.

ŀ ʘ ʘ - I should be working.

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

ʘ (ʘ ʘ ʘ) ʘ ʘ - Eat, Ton.

Preverbs

Preverbs go before verbs to modify their meaning.

ŀ ʘ ʘ - I can write.

ʘ ʘ > ʘ ʘ ʘ - The small bird wants to become big.

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

Context

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

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

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

= ŀ ʘ ʘ ʘ ||| - Just like me, you know a lot.

ʘ ? ʘ ʘ ʘ - Why are you hot?

The preposition ʘ can be omitted in this case.

ʘ ʘ ʘ ʘ - I sleep [at] night.

Numbers

Combine number words to add them up.

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

The word ʘ can be used to mark ordinals.

ʘ ʘ 1 > ʘ - The first book is good.

ʘ ʘ ||| 1 - 23rd Street.

a 𐀀	marks emphasis, emotion	kalama 𐀂	sound, to make a sound, to utter	len 𐀄	cloth, fabric, cover, layer of privacy
akesi 𐀆	reptile, amphibian	kama 𐀈	arriving, coming, future, to become	lete 𐀊	cool, cold, raw
ala 𐀌	no, not, nothing, zero	kasi 𐀎	plant, vegetation, grass, leaf	li 𐀐	marks the predicate
alasa 𐀒	to hunt, forage, seek, try	ken 𐀔	to be able to, can, may, possible	lili 𐀖	small, little, few, a bit, young
ale (ali) 𐀘	all, every, 100	kepeken 𐀚	to use, with, by means of	linja 𐀜	long and flexible thing, string, cord, hair, thread
anpa 𐀞	downward, humble, lowly	kijete-santakalu 𐀠	Musteloid, raccoon	lipu 𐀢	flat object, paper, card, document, website
ante 𐀤	different, other, changed	kili 𐀣	fruit, vegetable	loje 𐀦	red, reddish
anu 𐀧	connects phrases with "or"	kin 𐀩	also, too	lon 𐀨	located at, present at, true
awen 𐀭	enduring, kept, protected, to continue to	*kipisi 𐀰	to cut, to divide, part, division	luka 𐀬	arm, hand, five
e 𐀲	marks direct objects	kiwen 𐀲	hard object, metal, stone, rock	lukin 𐀮	to see, examine
en 𐀴	connects multiple subjects	ko 𐀴	clay, semi-solid, paste, powder	lupa 𐀰	door, hole, orifice
*epiku 𐀶	epic, cool, awesome, amazing	kon 𐀶	air, spirit, essence, unseen agent	ma 𐀸	earth, land, outdoors, soil
esun 𐀺	store, to trade	ku 𐀸	interact with <i>Toki Pona Dictionary</i>	mama 𐀻	parent, creator, caretaker
ijo 𐀼	thing, object, phenomenon	kule 𐀼	color, colorful	mani 𐀽	money, cash, currency item
ike 𐀾	bad, negative, irrelevant	kulupu 𐀿	community, group, company, nation	meli 𐀿	female
ilo 𐀽	tool, device, instrument	kute 𐀿	ear, to hear	*meso 𐀿	midpoint, medium, neither one nor the other
insa 𐀽	center, inside, content, organ, stomach	la 𐀽	marks context	mi 𐀿	first-person pronoun
jaki 𐀽	disgusting, unclean, toxic	lape 𐀽	sleeping, resting	mije 𐀿	male
jan 𐀿	person, someone	laso 𐀽	blue, green	*misikeke 𐀿	medicine, medical
*jasima 𐀿	mirror, reflection, opposite	*lanpan 𐀿	take, seize catch, receive, get	moku 𐀿	to eat, to drink, food
jelo 𐀿	yellow, yellowish	lawa 𐀿	head, mind, ruler, to lead, to regulate	moli 𐀿	dead, dying
jo 𐀿	to have, carry, contain, hold	leko 𐀿	square, block	monsi 𐀿	back, behind, rear
kala 𐀿	sea creature			monsuta 𐀿	fear, monster, scary
				mu 𐀿	an animal noise

mun	☾	night sky object	pini	Ⅰ	finished, past, end	supa	⌌	horizontal surface, thing to put objects on
musi	🎵	entertaining, fun, recreational	pipi	🐛	bug, insect	suwi	^ ^	sweet, cute
mute		many, a lot, very, quantity	poka	↪	hip, side, nearby	tan	↪	from, by, because of
n	ᵿ	indicates thinking, recognition	poki	□	container, bag, box, bowl, cup	taso	┆	but, however, only
namako	🍷	spice, additional	pona	☺	good, useful, simple, positive	tawa	△	going to, for, moving
nanpa	井	-th, number	pu	🗨	interacting with <i>Toki Pona: The Language of Good</i>	telo	≈	liquid, water, beverage
nasa	🌀	strange, unusual, foolish, silly	sama	=	similar, as, like	tenpo	🕒	time, duration, moment, period
nasin	↑	way, read, doctrine, method	seli	🔥	fire, heat source	toki	🗨	to say, language
nenā	∩	bump, hill, nose	selo	📱	outer form or layer, skin, peel	tomo	🏠	indoor space, building, home
ni	↓	this, that	seme	?	what? which?	tonsi	🏳️	non-binary, trans
nimi	□	word, name	sewi	⴪	area above, highest part, divine, sacred	tu		two
noka	🦶	foot, leg, lower part	sijelo	👤	body, torso, physical state	unpa	👯	sex, to have sexual relations
o	ᵿ	marks command or address	sike	🕒	circular object, cycle, of one year	uta	👄	mouth, lips, oral
*oko	👁	eye, ocular, visual	sin	↻	new, another, fresh	utala	⚔	to battle, challenge
olin	💞	to love, to respect	sina	ᵿ	second-person pronoun	walo	⚪	white, light-colored, pale
ona	👤	third-person pronoun	sinpin	🏠	face, front, wall	wan	1	one, unique
open	🔲	to begin, to start, opening	sitelen	🖼	image, picture, writing, symbol	waso	🐉	flying creature
pakala	🔪	broken, damaged, to mess up	*soko	🍄	mushroom	wawa	💪	strong, powerful, confident, energetic
pali	🔧	to do, to work on	sona	🧠	to know, wisdom, knowledge, info	weka	✖	absent, away
palisa	📏	long hard object, rod, stick	soweli	🐾	land mammal	wile	🌀	must, need, want
pan	🍝	grain, pasta, bread, rice	*su	🗨	interacting with the illustrated story books			
pana	👉	to give, to emit, to send	suli	🏔	big, heavy, large			
pi	└	regroups modifiers	suno	☀	light source, sun, bright			
pilin	💖	to feel, heart, feeling						
pimeja	⬛	black, dark, unlit						

These definitions are shortened to fit one page. For thorough definitions and usage, use [lipu Linku](https://tokipona.org).

*These words are less common, and beginners should avoid them.