Toki Pona

Toki Pona is a language developed by linguist Sonja Lang, with only 137 words.

This side describes the entire grammar, the other side contains the entire vocabulary.

This version is by Jan Sa, CC0. Original by blinry.

To translate, reach out to me on Discord: Green Guy#5294

This version uses both Toki Pona: The Language of Good and Toki Pona Dictionary as its bases.

Alphabet

Toki Pona uses these letters: a e i j k l m n o p s t u w

You can base them on their sounds in the IPA, but pronunciation doesn’t matter.

Basic sentences

The particle li separates the subject from the predicate.

sowell li moku. – The cat is eating.
jan li lape. – Someone is sleeping.

There is no verb “to be.”

The part after li can be a noun or an adjective.

kili li moku. – Fruits are food.
telo li moku. – Water is good.

If the subject is mi or sina alone, the li is always omitted.

mi moku. – I eat.

sina pona. – You are good.

Ambiguity

Toki Pona has ambiguity built into the language. You’ll need proper context to understand the intended meaning of a sentence. Verbs have no set tense.

mi moku. – I am eating. / I was eating. / I will be eating.

Many words have multiple or general meanings.

sowell = cat / dog / (any land mammal)
kili = (any fruit or vegetable)

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

telo = water / wet / to wash
pona = good, simple / to improve, to make better / well, greatly

Nouns have no singular/plural, and no definite/indefinite article:

kili = a fruit / the fruit / some fruits / the fruits

Direct objects

The particle e separates a verb from its direct object.

sowell li moku e telo. – The animal drinks the water.
mi telo e soweli. – I wash the cat.

Modifying words

Words can be modified by appending other words.

jan li lape. – Someone is sleeping.

With multiple modifiers, they all modify the first word.

lipu kasi tu – two plant documents
poki pi laso pimeja – a blue and black box

You can change the way the modifiers interact using pi.

lipu pi kasi tu – a document of two plants
poki pi laso pimeja – a dark-blue box

Prepositions

kepeken, lon, sama, tan, and tawa can act as prepositions. They go at the end of a sentence.

mi moku kepeken ila. – I eat with cutlery.
sowell li lon tama. – The animal is in the house.
sina toki sama kala! – You talk like a fish!
mi kama tan esun. – I arrive from the store.

ona li toki tawa sina. – They’re talking to you.

“And”

There are many ways to say “and.” With subjects you use en.

mi en sina li musi mute. – You and I are playing a lot.

With predicates you repeat li.

sowell li li lili li suwi. – This animal is small and cute.

With direct objects you repeat e.

ana li jo e waso e kala. – She has a bird and a fish.

With prepositions you repeat the preposition.

mi pali e tomo kepeken palisa kepeken kiwen. – I make the house using sticks and stones.

Loaned Adjectives

Toki Pona does not use proper nouns, but rather proper adjectives:

jan Sonja – a Sonja person, a person named Sonja

mi moku. – yes
moku ala / ala – no
You can also append “anu seme.”
sina moku anu seme? – Are you eating or what?

A common way to answer yes to these kinds of questions is with lao (meaning “true” or “affirmative”).

seme can also be used to create nonpolar questions. Replace the word in question with seme.

jan seme li toki? – Who’s talking?
sina pali e seme? – What are you making?

Preverbs

Preverbs go before verbs to modify their meaning.

mi kama sono. – I come to know.

The words that can act as preverbs are wile, kama, sono, lukin, ken, awen, and sometimes alas, open, and pini.

Context

la can be used to mark the context of a sentence. X la Y means “In the context of X, Y.”
sina lon poka mi la mi pilin pona. – When you are by my side, I feel good.

Most prepositional terms can be moved behind a la.

mi moku la mi temo kepeken pimeja la mi lape. – I sleep at night.

sina seli tan seme? tan seme la sina seli? – Why are you hot?

Numbers

Combine number words to add them up.

wan – 1  tu – 2  luka – 5
tu tu – 4  luka tu wan – 8

nanpa can be used to mark ordinals.

jan nanpa wan li pona. – The first person is good.

And… that’s it!
a (emphasis, emotion, or confirmation)
akesi reptile, amphibian
ala no, not, zero
alasa to hunt, to forage
ale/ali all, everything
anpa downward, humble, lowly
ante different, other, changed
anu or
awen enduring, kept, protected
e (direct object marker)
en (multiple subject marker)
**epiku epic
esun market, shop, fair
ijo thing, object
ike bad, negative
ilo tool, machine, device
insa centre, inside, organ, stomach
jaki disgusting, unclean, toxic
jan person, somebody
*jasima mirror, reflect
jelo yellow, yellowish
jo to have, carry, contain, hold
kala sea creature
kalama sound, to make a sound
kama arriving, coming, future
kasi plant, vegetation
ken to be able to, can, may, possible
kepekken to use, with, by means of
**kijete Musteloids, such as raccoon
santakalu
kili fruit, vegetable
*kin also, too
*kipisi to cut, divide
kiwen hard object, metal, stone, rock
ko clay, semi-solid, powder
**kokosila to speak a language where Toki Pona is more appropriate
kon air, spirit, essence
*namako spice, additional
*ku interacting with Toki Pona Dictionary
kule color, colorful
kulupu community, group, company
kute ear, to hear
la (context marker)
*lanpan get, seize, steal
lape sleeping, resting
laso blue, green
lawa head, ruler, to lead, to regulate
*leko square, block
len cloth, fabric
lete cool, cold, raw
li (predicate marker)
*leko square, block
lili small, little, few
linja long and flexible thing, string
lipu flat object, paper, card, website
loje red, reddish
lon located at, present at, true
luka arm, hand, five
lukin to see, examine
lupa door, hole, orifice
ma earth, land, outdoors, soil
mama parent, creator
mani money, cash, currency item
meli female
*mexo average
mi first-person pronoun
mije male
*misikeke medicine, drugs
moku to eat, drink, food
moli dead, dying
monsı back, behind, rear
*monsuta fear, monster, scary
mu (animal noise)
mun night sky object
musı entertaining, fun
mute many, a lot, very
*n hmm, uhh
*namako spice, additional
nanpa -th, number
nasa strange, unusual
nasin way, road, doctrine, method
nena bump, hill, nose
ni this, that
nimi word, name
noka foot, leg
*(vocative/ imperative particle)
o
*oko eye
olin to love
ona third-person pronoun
open to begin, to start, open, turn on
pakala broken, mistake
pali to do, to work on
palisa long hard object
pan grain, pasta, bread, rice
pansa to give, emit, send
pi (regroups modifiers)
pilin heart, feeling
pimeja black, dark, unlit
pini finished, past, end
pipi bug, insect
poka hip, side, nearby
poki container, bag, box, bowl, cup
pona good, useful, simple, positive
pup interactıng with Toki Pona: The Language of Good
puma
sama similar, same, as
seli fire, heat source
selo outer form, layer, skin, peel
seme what? which?
sewi area above, highest part, divine, sacred
sijelo body, physical state, torso
sike circular object, cycle, of one year
sin new, fresh, another
sina second-person pronoun
sinpin face, front, wall
sitelen image, picture, writing, symbol
*soko mushroom
sona to know, wisdom knowledge, info
sowelı land animal
suli big, heavy, large
suno light source, bright, sun
supa horizontal surface
suwi sweet, cute
tan from, by, because
taso but, only
tawa going to, moving
telo liquid, beverage
tenpo time, duration, moment, period
toki to say, language
tomo indoor space
*tontı non-binary, trans
tu two
unpa sex, to have sexual relations
uta mouth, oral
utala to battle, challenge
walo white, light-colored, pale
wan one, unique
waso flying creature
wawa strong, powerful
weka absent, away
wile must, need, want

These definitions have been slightly shortened to better fit a single page. Also refer to other dictionaries and speakers!

*These unofficial words have been marked as significant by the Toki Pona Dictionary, but do not appear in Toki Pona: The Language of Good. They are included here for lookup purposes, but you don’t have to use them.

**This word is a common joke word, not intended for serious use.