
Learn Ndebele Documentation

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1	Pronunciation	3
1.1	Vowels	3
2	Pluralisation	5
2.1	People	5
2.2	Things	5
3	Pronouns	7
3.1	Personal Pronouns	7
3.2	Possessive Pronouns	7
4	Vocabulary: Simple Phrases	9
4.1	General	9
4.2	Greetings	9
4.3	Thanks	9
5	Vocabulary: Actions	11
6	Vocabulary: Animals	13
6.1	General	13
6.2	Domestic	13
7	Vocabulary: Food	15
7.1	General	15
7.2	Staples	15
8	Vocabulary: Misc	17
9	Vocabulary: People	19
9.1	General	19
9.2	Family	19
9.3	Body Parts	19
9.4	Names	19
9.5	Misc	19
10	Indices and tables	21

Contents:

Pronunciation

1.1 Vowels

Vowel	Pronunciation
a	ah
e	eh
i	ee
o	oh/or
u	oo

Pluralisation

2.1 People

Here follows a general rule to which there are inevitable exceptions:

Type	Prefix	Example	Meaning
Plural	o	obaba	fathers
Singular	u	umfana	a boy

2.2 Things

Here follows a general rule to which there are inevitable exceptions:

Type	Prefix	Example	Meaning
Plural	ama	amabhiza	horses
Singular	i	ibhokisi	a box

Pronouns

3.1 Personal Pronouns

Ndebele	English	Example	Meaning
mina	me/I	Mina ngithanda ukubala	I love to read
wena	you	Udlani wena?	What are you eating?
bona	them/they	Bahambe ngaphi bona?	Where did they do?
lina	yous/you lot	Lifunani lina?	What do you lot want?

Note: When talking to a group (lina) the prefix of the adjective (funani) is changed from the singular (u) to the plural (li). So lifunani versus ufunani.

3.2 Possessive Pronouns

Ndebele	English	Example	Meaning
lami	mine	Ibhuku lami	My book
lakho	yours	Iphepha lakho	Your paper
yami	mine	Inja yami	My dog
yakho	yours	Indlu yakho	Your house
lawe	with you	Ngihambe lawe	I am going with you
wami	mine	Umama wami	My mother

<p>Warning: Not sure of the definitive rule here on which to pick. For example when do you know to use lami over yami?</p>

Vocabulary: Simple Phrases

4.1 General

yebo yes

hatshi no

hayi no (colloquial)

4.2 Greetings

sakubona hello

unjani? how are you?

Sakubona Wendy, unjani? Hello Wendy, how are you?

Some suitable responses:

Ngiyaphila I'm fine

Ngidanile I'm sad

Ngithabile I'm happy

Ibizo lami nguSimon My name is Simon

4.3 Thanks

Ngiyabonga Thank you

Siyabonga We thank you

Sibongile We are thankful

Vocabulary: Actions

buya come

hamba go

woza come

Vocabulary: Animals

6.1 General

inyamazana animal

6.2 Domestic

inja dog

ibhiza horse

Vocabulary: Food

7.1 General

inyama meat

7.2 Staples

umumbhu maize

Vocabulary: Misc

ibhokisi box

Vocabulary: People

9.1 General

indoda man

inkazana girl

umfazi woman

umtwana child

umuntu person

9.2 Family

ubaba father

umama mother

9.3 Body Parts

ikhanda head

9.4 Names

ibizo name

igama name

isibongo surname

9.5 Misc

Ubuhle beauty

Umuhle You're beautiful

Muhle S/he is beautiful

Indices and tables

- *genindex*
- *modindex*
- *search*