



COMPLETE SWAHILI

MASTER COURSE

JUMA MWINYI
AMINA CHALE

1.

SWAHILI GRAMMAR



Chapter 1

About the Swahili Language

The Swahili language or “Kiswahili” is discussed in relation to its history, geography, different dialects, and the spread of Kiswahili through the centuries. This chapter will also cover the status of the language in the world today and some aspects of cultural significance that the Swahili learner should be familiar with.

Kiswahili is a Bantu language that belongs to the Niger-Congo language family. The word Bantu means “people.” The languages of Baganda in Uganda, Sotho in Lesotho, Zulu in South Africa and Kikuyu in Kenya are other examples of Bantu languages. Although these languages are not mutually intelligible, they are all derived from one common ancestral language and share some basic vocabulary, word building processes and sentence structure.¹ For example, the word for person in Kiswahili is *mtu* meaning “person” or *watu* meaning “people.” Both the singular and plural forms of the word are very similar in many Bantu languages as shown in Table 1.1

TABLE 1.1
Table showing some Bantu languages

Bantu Language	Country	Singular	Plural
Baganda	Uganda	<i>omuntu</i>	<i>abantu</i>
Sotho	Lesotho	<i>motho</i>	<i>batho</i>
Zulu	South Africa	<i>umuntu</i>	<i>abantu</i>
Kikuyu	Kenya	<i>muntu</i>	<i>abato</i>

Kiswahili was originally spoken along the East African Coast from Southern Somalia to the Northern part of Mozambique and has existed for more than 1,000 years. The word “Swahili” has been derived from the Arabic word “Sahel” meaning “coast.” The expansion of Swahili into the hinterland was facilitated by Coastal slave traders, merchants, missionaries and colonialists. The late Presidents Nyerere of Tanzania, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Prime Minister Milton Obote of Uganda promoted Kiswahili during the struggle for independence (*uhuru*). President Nyerere promoted Swahili in many ways including the translation of two Shakespearean plays: *The Merchant of Venice* (*Mabepari wa Venice*) and *Julius Caesar* (*Juliasi Kaisari*). Nyerere also made Swahili the medium of instruction in elementary schools.

Currently Kiswahili is mainly spoken in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. In addition it is spoken to some extent in seven other countries or regions in East and Central Africa, namely, Rwanda, Burundi, the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Southern Somalia, Northern Mozambique, Malawi and Northern Zambia which together have a Swahili speaking population of roughly 50 million. Outside the East and Central Africa Region, Kiswahili is spoken in Oman, some parts of Madagascar, South Africa and Djibouti.

Kiswahili is spoken in more than 15 dialects throughout East and Central Africa. The *Kiunguja* dialect of Zanzibar has been adopted as Standard Swahili since 1935 and is used by the media, as a medium of instruction in schools and in business transactions.

Other major dialects are *Kimvita*, *Kiamu*, *Kipemba* and *Kitumbatu* based in Mombasa, Lamu, Pemba and Unguja Islands respectively. Apart from these dialects, there are other dialects of people living in the interior of East and Central Africa, which tend to reflect the tribal languages of different Bantu speaking peoples.

As a consequence of interaction between the local people and foreigners, Kiswahili has many loan words from other languages such as Arabic, English, German, Portuguese, Persian and Hindi. It has been estimated that foreign words in the Swahili language make up approximately 30% of the vocabulary, with the majority coming from Arabic.² While it is true that Swahili uses many foreign words, it is also true to say that the Swahili people have adapted foreign words to meet their own needs. For example, borrowed words that have closed vowels (i.e. ending with consonants) have been changed so that they have open vowels (i.e. ending with a vowel). Also some loan words have completely changed

their meaning. For example, the word *rafiki* (friend) is originally taken from the Arabic word “rafik” meaning “trusted one.” Furthermore, it has been shown that the origin of some loan words cannot be traced to any particular language. In addition, Swahili has contributed words to the English vocabulary such as the word *safari*, which means “journey.”

The great explorer, Sir Richard Francis Burton, who visited the East African Coast in the middle of the 19th Century, had this to say about the language:

Kiswahili is both rich and poor. . . . It abounds in names of sensuous objects; there is a term for every tree, shrub, plant, grass, and bulb, and I have shown that the several ages of cocoa-nut are differently called. . . . Abounding in vowels and liquids, the language admits a vast volubility of utterances; in anger or excitement, the words flow like a torrent, and each dovetails into its neighbour until the whole speech becomes one vocabule.³

Kiswahili has attained an international status. The African Union, formerly the Organization of African Unity (OAU), has adopted Kiswahili as one of the official languages of Africa. For many years, major radio networks have been broadcasting Swahili programs. They include the BBC, Voice of America, Radio South Africa, Deutschewel (Germany), Radio Cairo, Radio Japan, Radio Beijing, All India Radio and Radio Moscow International. Many universities and colleges in Europe, Asia, North America and other parts of Africa have Swahili programs. Also, Swahili has been used in some North American movies such as *Hotel Rwanda*, *the Last King of Scotland*, *the Lion King* and *Darwin’s Nightmare*. There are also several popular Swahili songs known throughout the world such as *Hakuna Matata* (No worries), *Malaika Nakupenda Malaika* (Angel, I love you Angel) and *Jambo Bwana* (Hello Mister). In addition, some English songs such as *All Night Long* (by Lionel Ritchie) and *Liberian Girl* (by Michael Jackson) have Swahili phrases in them.

Furthermore, there are hundreds of websites that deal with Swahili grammar, culture history and current news. The most ambitious initiatives to promote Kiswahili have been started in the United States including the world famous *Kamusu* Project which is managed by the Swahili Department at Yale University. Both Google and Microsoft have launched Swahili language Internet search engines to make Kiswahili accessible to the world.

Let us now discuss some cultural aspects, which anyone interested in studying the Swahili language should be familiar with. These aspects are Swahili greetings (see Chapter 4), oral traditions, expressions of gratitude, hospitality and clothing.

Unlike in the Western world, the Swahili people take their greetings very seriously, especially in the rural areas where the majority of the population resides. It is considered impolite to pass by someone without greeting him or her even though the person may be a complete stranger. However, this courtesy is not as commonly practiced in the cities. After initial greetings, information can be exchanged about other things such as work, school, family, business and so forth.

Greeting is a form of socialization designed to inform, educate and entertain especially in a countryside where there are only a few newspapers, radios, televisions and telephones. Furthermore, greetings help the community to conform to rigid social conventions. Just as each member of the community is pleased to hear good stories told about him or her, so one was sure that a disgraceful story would find the same treatment—the story of shame would inevitably be heard in every group and may be talked about as if it was an inquisition in a court of law.⁴ Greetings are accompanied by a handshake using the right hand. The left hand is never used for a handshake while greeting. Neither can it be used for giving or receiving things because it is associated with cleaning oneself after visiting the bathroom (*choo*). If for some reasons one must use the left hand, due to a disability or if the right hand is occupied, one must apologize by saying *samahani*, which means “sorry.”

The Swahili people have strong storytelling traditions since many rural residents do not have frequent access to books, newspapers and the internet. These stories are designed to teach good morals, pass customs and traditions from one generation to the next, inculcate speaking skills and for entertainment purposes.

Since many rural Swahili people live a communal lifestyle, everyone is expected to provide a helping hand to other community members. Therefore, it is less common for rural Swahili people to use expressions of gratitude when favors are exchanged. On the contrary, if they do not fulfill their responsibilities or if they misbehave, they are chastised, blamed and sometimes even punished. The word for expressing gratitude in Swahili is *asante* when thanking one person or *asanteni* when thanking more than one person.

Visitors to East and Central Africa always remember the hospitality of the Swahili people most of whom go out of their way to assist complete strangers. They invite visitors (*wageni*) not only to share meals (*karibu chakula*) but also to have tea (*karibu chai*). When a guest bids farewell, he/she is welcome to visit again (*karibu tena*).

The type of clothing used by the Swahili people varies from place to place depending on the weather. On the coast where it is hot, women wear *kanga* (a rectangular piece of cloth) and men wear *kanzu* (loose-fitting garments). Some traditional Muslim women cover themselves with *baibui* (a black loose-fitting garment which covers the entire body except the eyes). The *kanga* cloth is of particular significance because it has writings in Swahili which are designed to educate, inform and pass on words of wisdom from one generation to the next. This is why the *kanga* is referred to as “the cloth that speaks.”

Notes

1. Thomas J. Hinnebusch, Sarah M. Mirza, *Swahili: A foundation for speaking reading and writing*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), xvi.
2. Hinnebusch, Mirza, xvii-xviii.
3. Edward Rice, *Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton* (New York NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1990), 282.
4. G. Balamoan, *The Blue Nile Boy* (London, UK: Karia Press, 1989), 119.

Chapter 2

The Alphabet, Pronunciation and Common Mistakes

The Swahili language is now written in the modern Roman alphabet. In past times, before the colonization of East Africa in the 1890's, any written Swahili would have been written using Swahili words but using the Arabic script and alphabet. As a result some words in modern Swahili retain an Arabic pronunciation and are spelled a specific way in order to evoke the original Arabic sound. A good example would be the combination of DH. The combination of DH in the word *fedha* (money) is NOT pronounced fed-ha, as most English speakers would attempt. Instead the "DH" sound is equivalent to the TH in "That" but NEVER as the TH in "thing." So *fedha* should sound like "fe-THat" but minus the "t" at the end, producing "fe-THa." Only 24 of the 26 letters in the modern Roman alphabet are used in Swahili, the letters Q and X are not used.

Vowels

Vowel sounds are the most important sounds to pronounce correctly as this is where most non-native speakers make mistakes. Here are examples on the correct pronunciation of vowel sounds.

- A as in "bat" – *barua* (letter)
- E as in "end" – *endelea* (continue, progress)
- I as the "e" in "be" – *kiti* (chair)
- O as in the "o" in "open" – *jambo* (hello)
- U as the "u" in "student" – *babu* (grandfather)

Note the double “oo” in Swahili does NOT produce the same “uuu” sound as in English. The double “oo” in Swahili is simply a lengthened “o.” The word “*kioo*” (glass, mirror) is NOT pronounced as “ki-uu” but as “ki-OO.” Giving the double “oo” the “uuu” sound as in “pool” “fool” and “school” is a common mistake for English speakers. Simply make the “regular” sound for the letter “o” and stretch it for an extra half a second.

Stress

One thing to note before continuing, in Swahili stress ALWAYS falls on the second last syllable, as shown by the italicized syllable below. So, if we break up the previous Swahili words into syllables, we would get the following:

ba-ru-a (letter)
e-nde-le-a (continue, progress)
ki-ti (chair)
ja-mbo (hello)
ba-bu (grandfather)

In addition to the stress falling on the second last syllable, words that start with the letter “n” have a special rule when breaking the word up into syllables. When dealing with a word starting with the letter “n” and followed by another consonant the letter “n” either forms a separate syllable or part of another syllable based on the following rule. If the letters following the letter “n” can be broken down into one syllable ONLY, then the letter “n” is treated as a separate syllable.

n-chi (country)
n-ne (four)

However, if the letters following “n” can be broken into more than one syllable, then the letter “n” DOES NOT form a separate syllable, instead it is incorporated into the first syllable.

nde-ge (bird or plane)
nji-wa (dove)

Also note that the letter “m” can at times form its own syllable such as in *m-to-to* (child) or be part of another syllable such as in *mbo-ga* (vegetable).

Consonants

Consonants are the easiest sounds in Swahili, and always stay the same:

B as in “buck” or “bad” – *baba* (father)

C is never found alone, but is always found with H

CH as in “chocolate” – *chafu* (dirty)

D as in “drug” – *dawa* (drug, medicine)

F as in “fast” – *fahamu* (know, understand)

G as in “goose” – *gari* (vehicle). It is always a “hard” G as in “goose” or “gun” and never a “soft” G as in “gym” or “gentle.”

H as in “hat” – *hali* (condition)

J as in “join” – *jambo* (hello)

K as in “kind” – *kaka* (brother)

L as in “love” – *lala* (sleep). In a few cases, native Swahili speakers interchange “L” and “R” so that “*lala*” becomes “*rara*.” However this is considered poor Swahili and should not be done in Standard Swahili.

M as in “mother” – *mama* (mother)

N as in “nice” – *na* (and)

P as in “put” – *paka* (cat)

Q is never used in Swahili

R as in “rope” – *rafiki* (friend) Also see “L” above for the interchangeability of “L” and “R”

S as in “soup” – *soma* (read, study)

T as in “take” – *twiga* (giraffe)

V as in “vest” – *vita* (war)

W as in “wait” – *wapi?* (where?)

X is never used in Swahili

Y as in “yes” – *yai* (egg)

Z as in “zero” – *zawadi* (gift, present)

Swahili also has many letters found in combination that produce specific sounds. There are 3 broad categories of letter combinations, but

only the 3rd category will be of some difficulty to English speakers. The combination letters will be introduced in capital letters below.

Category 1

Letter combinations in this category are the easiest for English speakers as they already exist in English and are pronounced exactly the same, for example:

- CH as in “chocolate” – *chafu* (dirty)
- NJ as in “enjoy” – *njaa* (hunger)
- SH as in “shore” – *shule* (school)
- TH as in “thing” – *thamani* (price, worth)
- VY as in “envy” – *vyumba* (rooms)

Category 2

Letter combinations in this category only occur in English in compounded words, i.e. words made up of two nouns. In order to get the correct pronunciation in Swahili one must say the compounded word quickly, so as to get the combined letters to be pronounced as one sound as a Swahili speaker would. Listed below are some of the letter combinations that occur in Swahili.

- BW as in “subway” – *bwana* (sir)
- KW as in “backward” – *kweli* (true, truth)
- MW as in “teamwork” – *mwalimu* (teacher)
- NG as in “sunglory” – *nguo* (clothing, garment)
- NY as in “lanyard” – *nyumba* (house)
- PW as in “upward” – *pwani* (coast)

Category 3

These letter combinations are the most challenging for English speakers at first because they have NO equivalent sounds in English. Only listening to Swahili speakers and some practice will allow Swahili language learners to produce and recognize these sounds.

AA as in *baada* (after). AA is a voiced guttural sound taken directly from the 18th letter of the Arabic alphabet. However, even most native Swahili speakers do not pronounce it the “correct” Arabic way and in-

stead pronounce it in much the same way as an English speaker would attempt to pronounce it. “*Baada*” (after) is pronounced as a lengthened “A” as in “aaa-partment” where the letter “a” is stretched for an extra half a second.

DH as in *fedha* (money). DH makes the TH sound from “THat” but NEVER the TH sound from “THing.”

GH as in *ghali* (expensive). GH is a voiced guttural sound taken directly from the 19th letter of the Arabic alphabet. “*Ghali*” (expensive) is pronounced starting with the hard “G” sound from “gun” but flowing immediately into the “H” sound as in “house.”

KH as in *khanga* (a piece of fabric). KH is a voiceless guttural sound taken directly from the 7th letter of the Arabic alphabet. Anyone who knows Arabic, Persian or Swahili can produce this sound.

NG’ as in *ng’ombe* (cow/cattle). Please note the presence of an apostrophe in this case. When the apostrophe occurs a specialized sound is produced. The sound is closest to the NG in “singer” where air is pushed through the nose making a nasalized NG. A similar sound exists in Spanish with the letter ñ but without the “y” sound associated with that letter.

New Vocabulary

- baada*: after
- baba*: father(s)
- babu*: grandfather(s)
- barua*: letter(s)
- bwana/ma-*: sir(s), gentleman/men
- chafu*: dirty
- chumba/vy-*: room(s)
- dawa*: medicine(s), drug(s)
- endelea*: continue, progress
- fahamu*: understand
- fedha*: money, silver
- gari/ma-*: vehicle(s), car(s)
- ghali*: expensive
- hali*: condition, state
- jambo*: hello
- kaka*: brother(s)
- khanga*: piece of fabric
- kioo/vi-*: glass, mirror(s)

kiti/vi-: chair(s)
kweli: true, truth(s)
lala: sleep
mama: mother(s)
mboga: vegetable(s)
mwalimu/wa-: teacher(s)
na: and, with, by, also
-na-: present tense marker
nchi: country(ies), state(s)
ndege: plane(s), bird(s)
ng'ombe: cow(s), cattle
nguo: cloth(es), clothing, garment(s)
ni-: I
njaa: hunger(s), famine(s)
njiwa: dove(s)
nne: four
nyumba: house(s)
paka: cat(s)
pwani: coast(s)
rafiki: friend(s)
shule: school(s)
soma: read, study
thamani: price, value, worth
twiga: giraffe(s)
vita: war(s)
wapi?: where?
yai/ma-: egg(s)
zawadi: present(s), gift(s)

Simple Sentence Structure in Swahili

We will now introduce students to the construction of simple sentences in Swahili. All of the following concepts will be covered in detail in their relevant Chapters; the purpose here is for students to be able to distinguish the major “parts” of a Swahili sentence. The simple Swahili sentence is constructed using the acronym S.T.V.

S = Subject
 T = Tense
 V = Verb

Swahili uses a system of prefixes, suffixes and even infixes to communicate the required information instead of separate words as in English. In Swahili an entire sentence can consist of one word, if the sentence contains only one verb.

A simple sentence such as “I am studying” would be translated into Swahili as *Ninasoma*.

Deconstructing the above Swahili sentence we get *ni-na-soma*

Subject = NI - the subject of the sentence, in this case “I”

Tense = NA - the tense marker, in this case indicating the verb is in the present

Verb = SOMA - the verb, in this case “study”

Simple sentences in Swahili ALWAYS follow the structure S.T.V. – Subject, Tense, and Verb. More complicated Swahili sentences will of course contain more “parts” but for now simple Swahili sentence structure will be used in the opening Chapters of this book. The following Chapters will teach each of these “parts” of a Swahili sentence, the Subject, the Tense and the Verb.

Chapter 3

Personal Subject Prefixes, Personal Pronouns, and Their Negations

As you may recall, a simple Swahili sentence is constructed by using the STV rule discussed in Chapter 2. The STV rule is shown below:

Subject + Tense + Verb

In this chapter we will look at the first “spot” in a simple Swahili sentence, where the subject is located. In Swahili, the subject is denoted by a prefix which is then attached to a tense marker followed by a verb. When the subject being referred to is a human being, animal or an insect, the “spot” is taken by a Personal Subject Prefix. In this chapter, we will focus on Personal Subject Prefixes while Subject Prefixes dealing with things that are not humans, animals or insects will be covered in future Chapters.

Section A: Personal Subject Prefixes

Table 3.1 identifies who is the subject in a Swahili sentence i.e. who is “doing” the verb.

TABLE 3.1
Personal Subject Prefixes Table

<i>Ni-</i> I	<i>Tu-</i> We
<i>U-</i> You (singular)	<i>M-</i> You (plural)
<i>A-</i> He/She	<i>Wa-</i> They

Using Table 3.1, we can make the following simple sentences:

NI-na-soma = *Ninasoma*. – I am studying.

TU-na-soma = *Tunasoma*. – WE are studying.

U-na-soma = *Unasoma*. – YOU (singular) are studying.

M-na-soma = *Mnasoma*. – YOU (plural, literally YOU ALL) are studying.

A-na-soma = *Anasoma*. – HE/SHE is studying.

WA-na-soma = *Wanasoma*. – THEY are studying.

Note that *A-* stands for EITHER “he” or “she.” If it is unclear whom the speaker is referring to, they may name the person, or add additional words to describe the person, “the man in the white shirt” or words such as “that woman.” The best way to think of *A-* is as “the person.” *Anasoma* then becomes “THE PERSON is studying” without assigning them any specific gender.

Also note that in Swahili there are two “types” of the word “you.” There is a “you” addressed to one person, as in English, which is represented by the Personal Subject Prefix *U-* and there is a “you” for more than one person, which is represented by the Personal Subject Prefix *M-* which would most closely be translated in English as “you all.”

Practice Exercise A

Let’s do some practice using the Personal Subject Prefixes we have just learned. Fill in the blank spot with the correct Personal Subject Prefix from Table 3.1 that corresponds with the English word in capital letters inside the brackets.

1. _____-*najua*. (WE know.)
2. _____-*najua*. (THE PERSON knows.)
3. _____-*najua*. (THEY know.)
4. _____-*najua*. (I know.)
5. _____-*najua*. (YOU [pl. = plural] know.)
6. _____-*najua*. (YOU [sing. = singular] know.)
7. _____-*nasema*. (THE PERSON is speaking.)
8. _____-*nasema*. (I am speaking.)
9. _____-*nasema*. (WE are speaking)
10. _____-*nasema*. (YOU [sing.] are speaking.)

11. _____-*nasema*. (YOU [pl.] are speaking.)
12. _____-*nasema*. (THEY are speaking.)

Section B: Negation of Personal Subject Prefixes

So far, we have made some simple Swahili sentences in their affirmative form. Now we will look at making negative Personal Subject Prefixes. In other words, changing “*Ninasoma*.” “I am studying.” into “I am NOT studying.”

TABLE 3.2
Negation of Personal Subject Prefixes Table

<i>Si-</i> I (am not)	<i>Hatu-</i> We (are not)
<i>Hu-</i> You [singular] (are not)	<i>Ham-</i> You [plural] (are not)
<i>Ha-</i> He/She (is not)	<i>Hawa-</i> They (are not)

In other words, *NI-* becomes *SI-*
TU- becomes *HATU-*
U- becomes *HU-*
M- becomes *HAM-*
A- becomes *HA-*
WA- becomes *HAWA-*

As you can see, most Personal Subject Prefixes are made negative by placing *H-* or *HA-* in front of them. The only exception is *NI-*, which instead becomes *SI-*.

Practice Exercise B

As in Practice Exercise A, please insert into the blank space the NEGATIVE Personal Subject Prefix that corresponds with the English word(s) in capital letters inside the brackets.

13. _____-*juu*. (WE do NOT know.)
14. _____-*juu*. (THE PERSON does NOT know.)
15. _____-*juu*. (THEY do NOT know.)

16. _____-*juu*. (I do NOT know.)
17. _____-*juu*. (YOU [pl.] do NOT know.)
18. _____-*juu*. (YOU [sing.] do NOT know.)
19. _____-*semi*. (THE PERSON is NOT speaking.)
20. _____-*semi*. (I am NOT speaking.)
21. _____-*semi*. (WE are NOT speaking.)
22. _____-*semi*. (YOU [sing.] are NOT speaking.)
23. _____-*semi*. (YOU [pl.] are NOT speaking.)
24. _____-*semi*. (THEY are NOT speaking.)

The disappearance of the tense marker (-*na*-) and the changing of the verb -*jua* to -*juu* and -*sema* to -*semi* will be explained in future Chapters. The most important concept to remember right now is the 6 Personal Subject Prefixes and how to make them negative.

Section C: Personal Pronouns and Their Negation

In addition to the Personal Subject Prefixes, Swahili also has 6 SEPERATE words that act as Personal Pronouns. These can be added to the sentence to reinforce and emphasise who is the subject of the sentence, the person “doing” the verb. For example, *Mimi* belongs with *ni*- from *ninasoma* which becomes *Mimi ninasoma* meaning literally, “I, I am studying.” While this sort of construction would be unnecessary in English, it is perfectly acceptable in Swahili. Table 3.3 illustrates the 6 possible Personal Pronouns.

TABLE 3.3
Personal Pronouns Table

<i>Mimi</i> = I [goes with <i>Ni</i> -]	<i>Sisi</i> = We [goes with <i>Tu</i> -]
<i>Wewe</i> = You (singular) [goes with <i>U</i> -]	<i>Ninyi</i> = You (plural) [goes with <i>M</i> -]
<i>Yeye</i> = He/She [goes with <i>A</i> -]	<i>Wao</i> = They [goes with <i>Wa</i> -]

So, our previous sentences would now become:

Mimi ninasoma. – I, I am studying.

Sisi tunasoma. – WE, we are studying.

Wewe unasoma. – YOU, you are studying.

Ninyi mnasoma. – YOU (pl.), you (pl.) are studying.

Yeye anasoma. – THE PERSON, the person is studying.

Wao wanasoma. – THEY, they are studying.

These Personal Pronouns (*Mimi*, *Sisi* etc.) do NOT have to be used. *Ninasoma* is still a complete sentence and makes perfect sense to a Swahili speaker. However they are often used at the beginning of a sentence because it “sounds better” to Swahili ears, or for extra emphasis.

Practice Exercise C

Insert into the blank space the Personal Pronoun that corresponds with the English word in capital letters inside the brackets.

25. _____ *unajua.* (YOU[sing.], you[sing.] know.)
26. _____ *ninajua.* (I, I know.)
27. _____ *wanajua.* (THEY, they know.)
28. _____ *anajua.* (HE/SHE [THE PERSON], he/she knows.)
29. _____ *tunajua.* (WE, we know.)
30. _____ *mnajua.* (YOU [pl.], you [pl.] know.)
31. _____ *ninapika.* (I, I am cooking.)
32. _____ *wanapika.* (THEY, they are cooking.)
33. _____ *unapika.* (YOU [sing.], you[sing.] are cooking.)
34. _____ *anapika.* (THE PERSON, the person is cooking.)
35. _____ *mnapika.* (YOU [pl.], you [pl.] are cooking.)
36. _____ *tunapika.* (WE, we are cooking.)
37. _____ *wanauliza.* (THEY, they are asking.)
38. _____ *unauliza.* (YOU[sing.], you[sing.] are asking.)
39. _____ *ninauliza.* (I, I am asking.)
40. _____ *tinauliza.* (WE, we are asking.)
41. _____ *mnauliza.* (YOU [pl.], you [pl.] are asking.)
42. _____ *anauliza.* (HE/SHE, he/she is asking.)

Negative Sentences with Personal Pronouns

Whether a sentence is affirmative or negative, no changes are made to the Personal Pronouns. They can be added to the sentence to reinforce and emphasise who is the subject of the sentence, for example:

Mimi ninasoma. – I, I am studying.

The negation of which is simply:

Mimi sisomi. – I, I am not studying.

New Vocabulary

a-: “He/She” Personal Subject Prefix

ha-: “He/She” negative Personal Subject Prefix

ham-: “You (pl.)” negative Personal Subject Prefix

hatu-: “We” negative Personal Subject Prefix

hawa-: “They” negative Personal Subject Prefix

hu-: “You” negative Personal Subject Prefix

jua: the verb “know”

jui: the negative of the verb “know” in the present tense

m-: “You (pl.)” Personal Subject Prefix

mimi: “I” personal pronoun

-na-: an infix, present tense marker, placing the verb in the present

ni-: “I” Personal Subject Prefix

ninyi: “You all” personal pronoun

pika: the verb “cook”

sema: the verb “speak” or “say”

semi: the negative of the verb “speak” or “say” in the present tense

si-: “I” negative Personal Subject Prefix

sisi: “We” personal pronoun

soma: the verb “study” or “read”

somi: the negative of the verb “study” or “read” in the present tense

tu-: “We” Personal Subject Prefix

u-: “You” Personal Subject Prefix

uliza: the verb “ask”

wa-: “They” Personal Subject Prefix

wao: “They” personal pronoun

wewe: “You” personal pronoun

yeye: “He/She” (The person) personal pronoun

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. *TUnajua.* (WE know.)
2. *Anajua.* (THE PERSON knows.)
3. *WAnajua.* (THEY know.)
4. *NInajua.* (I know.)
5. *Mnajua.* (YOU [pl.] know.)
6. *Unajua.* (YOU [sing.] know.)
7. *Anasema.* (THE PERSON is speaking.)
8. *NInasema.* (I am speaking.)
9. *TUnasema.* (WE are speaking.)
10. *Unasema.* (YOU [sing.] are speaking.)
11. *Mnasema.* (YOU [pl.] are speaking.)
12. *WAnasema.* (THEY are speaking.)

Answers to Practice Exercise B

13. *HATUjui.* (WE do NOT know.)
14. *HAjui.* (THE PERSON does NOT know.)
15. *HAWAjui.* (THEY do NOT know.)
16. *SIjui.* (I do NOT know.)
17. *HAMjui.* (YOU [pl.] do NOT know.)
18. *HUjui.* (YOU [sing.] do NOT know.)
19. *HAsemi.* (THE PERSON is NOT speaking.)
20. *SIsemi.* (I am NOT speaking.)
21. *HATUsemi.* (WE are NOT speaking.)
22. *HUsemi.* (YOU [sing.] are NOT speaking.)
23. *HAMsemi.* (YOU [pl.] are NOT speaking.)
24. *HAWAsemi.* (THEY are NOT speaking.)

Answers to Practice Exercise C

25. *Wewe unajua.* (YOU [sing.], you [sing.] know.)
26. *Mimi ninajua.* (I, I know.)
27. *Wao wanajua.* (THEY, they know.)

28. *Yeye anajua.* (HE/SHE [THE PERSON], he/she knows.)
29. *Sisi tunajua.* (WE, we know.)
30. *Ninyi mnajua.* (YOU [pl.], you [pl.] know.)
31. *Mimi ninapika.* (I, I am cooking.)
32. *Wao wanapika.* (THEY, they are cooking.)
33. *Wewe unapika.* (YOU [sing.], you [sing.] are cooking.)
34. *Yeye anapika.* (THE PERSON, the person is cooking.)
35. *Ninyi mnapika.* (YOU [pl.], you [pl.] are cooking.)
36. *Sisi tunapika.* (WE, we are cooking.)
37. *Wao wanauliza.* (THEY, they are asking.)
38. *Wewe unauliza.* (YOU [sing.], you [sing.] are asking.)
39. *Mimi ninauliza.* (I, I am asking.)
40. *Sisi tunauliza.* (WE, we are asking.)
41. *Ninyi mnauliza.* (YOU [pl.], you [pl.] are asking.)
42. *Yeye anauliza.* (HE/SHE, he/she is asking.)

Chapter 4

Swahili Greetings

The Swahili people of East and Central Africa take their greetings seriously. This chapter introduces the most commonly used Swahili greetings. It also discusses expressions that are associated with the Swahili culture.

Section A: Calling out *Hodi*

The Swahili people use the word *Hodi* (May I come in?) when they approach someone's house. When *Hodi* is used in this context, it is the equivalent of ringing the doorbell in the Western world. The visitor continues to call out *Hodi* until he/she gets a response from her/his host. The response to *Hodi* is:

Karibu. – Welcome.

If there is more than one person visiting, the response is:

Karibuni. – Welcome all.

The suffix *-ni* denotes the plural form of *Karibu*. But in other contexts, the suffix *-ni* can mean “in” or “at” (See Chapter 10). If permission to enter someone's premises is denied, the host responds by saying:

Hakuna hodi. – You may not come in.

The word *Hodi* is also used when one approaches a river or a well to request for permission to come nearer to the river or well. Due to the lack of potable water, many people in rural areas in East and Central Africa do laundry or bathe in rivers or use water from wells.

If one wants to pass through a crowd, one may also call out *Hodi*. In this case, the word *Hodi* means “May I pass?” The response to this kind of *Hodi* is also *Karibu*. Sometimes instead of using *Hodi* in asking for permission to pass through a crowd, the word *Samahani* which means “Excuse me” is used. The response to *Samahani* is *Bila Samahani* or “No excuse needed.”

Greeting:

Hodi? – May I come in?

Response:

Karibu. – Welcome.

Greeting:

Hodi? – May I come in?

Response:

Hakuna hodi. – You may not come in.

Greeting:

Samahani. – Excuse me.

Response:

Bila samahani. – No excuse needed.

Practice Exercise A

Fill in the blanks.

1. When a person approaches somebody’s house he/she calls out _____.
2. If the host wants to welcome the visitor, he/she responds by saying _____.
3. If more than one person is visiting, the host responds by saying _____.
4. If the host does not want the visitor to enter the house he/she responds by saying _____.
5. When someone wants to pass through a crowd, the person may say _____ or _____.

Section B: Greetings

After a visitor enters the premises, greetings are exchanged. The most common Swahili greetings are *Jambo* (affair, matter, thing) and *Habari* (the news).

Jambo Greetings

Before discussing *Jambo* Greetings, it is important to recall the negative forms of Personal Subject Prefixes as taught in Chapter 3.

If you want to greet one person, you must combine the Negative Personal Subject Prefix for the Second Person singular, which is *HU-* (You [sing.] not) with *Jambo* to form:

Hujambo? – You do not have a matter?

The other person responds by combining the Negative Personal Subject Prefix of the First Person Singular, which is *Si-* (I not) with *Jambo* to form:

Sijambo. – I am fine. (Literally means “I do not have a matter.”)

If the person being greeted is a woman (*bibi*), one would greet her by saying:

Hujambo bibi? – How are you madam?

If the greeter is a man (*bwana*), the lady would respond by saying:

Sijambo bwana. – I am fine sir.

When greeting more than one person, the greeter would combine the Negative Personal Subject Prefix of Second Person Plural, which is *Ham-* (you [pl.] not) with *Jambo* to form:

Hamjambo? – You (pl.) do not have a matter?

The response to *Hamjambo?* is:

Hatujambo. – We are fine. (Literally means “We do not have a matter.”)

Combining the Negative Personal Subject Prefix of First Person Plural *Hatu-* (we [pl.] not) with the word *Jambo* is how we arrive at the response *Hatujambo*.

If a teacher (*mwalimu*) is greeting his/her students (*wanafunzi*), he/she would say:

Hamjambo wanafunzi? – How are you students?

The students would respond by saying:

Hatujambo mwalimu. – We are fine teacher.

By following the examples above, the *Jambo* greeting can also be used to inquire about a person(s) who are not in the vicinity. When inquiring about a single person who is not present, the greeter would combine the Negative Personal Subject Prefix of Third Person Singular, which is *Ha-* (he/she not) with *Jambo* to form:

Hajambo? – How is he/she? (Literally means “He/She does not have a matter?”)

The response would be:

Hajambo. – He/She is fine. (Literally means “He/She does not have a matter.”)

If one is enquiring about Third Person Plural, one would ask:

Hawajambo? – How are they? (Literally means “They do not have a matter?”)

The response would be:

Hawajambo. – They are fine. (Literally means “They do not have a matter.”)

As you can see from the Third Person examples above, when a Third Person is inquired about, whether singular or plural, the answer stays in the Third Person.

The *Jambo* greeting is the only form of greeting which may be preceded by the word *Je* which is designed to alert the person or persons being greeted that a question is about to be asked (You will learn more about *Je* in Chapter 16 on Question Words). For example, instead of just saying:

Watoto hawajambo? – How are the children?

One would begin by saying:

Je, watoto hawajambo? – How are the children?

The response would still be:

Watoto hawajambo. – The children are fine.

Please note that the *jambo* greeting and the response to the *jambo* greeting allows for the word order to be reversed. Therefore, the example above can be posed as:

Hawajambo watoto? – How are the children?

The response would be:

Hawajambo watoto. – The children are fine.

Practice Exercise B

Translate into Swahili.

6. Dad and mom are fine.
7. The children are fine.
8. Teacher is fine.
9. The youth is fine.
10. Grandfather is fine.
11. Is the lady fine?
12. Are you (pl.) fine?
13. You (sing.) are fine.
14. We are fine.
15. How is Joanna?

Choose the correct response to the *Jambo* Greetings from the two responses found in the bracket.

16. *Peter and Anna* (*hajambo, hawajambo*).
17. *Walimu* (*hujambo, hawajambo*).
18. *Mkulima* (*hajambo, hatujambo*).
19. *Polisi (pl.)* (*sijambo, hawajambo*).
20. *Mtoto* (*hawajambo, hajambo*).
21. *Mfanyakazi* (*hujambo, hajambo*).
22. *Wapishi* (*hujambo, hawajambo*).
23. *Wanafunzi* (*hawajambo, hajambo*).
24. *Madaktari* (*hajambo, hawajambo*).
25. *Mimi na John* (*hawajambo, hatujambo*).

Section C: *Habari* Greetings

As stated previously, the word *Habari* means “The News.” When greeting another person, the greeter says:

Habari? – What is your (sing.) news?

When greeting more than one person, the greeter says:

Habarini? – What is your (pl.) news?

As stated earlier in this Chapter, the suffix *-ni* denotes the plural form of *Habari*.

With this type of greeting one can ask about “The News” of anything after the initial greetings have been exchanged.

Examples:

Habari za leo? – The news of today?

Habari za watoto? – The news about the children?

Habari za asubuhi? – The news of the morning?

Habari za kazi? – The news about work?

The response to the *Habari* Greeting always contains the word *Nzuri* meaning “Good” or “Fine.” If something is wrong, the respondent is expected to say *Nzuri* first and then provides an explanation afterwards

about what is amiss by using the word *lakini* which means “but.” Upon hearing the sad news, the greeter is expected to express sorrow by saying either *Pole sana* meaning “I feel very sorry for you (sing.)” or *Poleni sana* “I feel very sorry for you (pl.).” The response to *Pole* or *Poleni* is one of the following: *Nimeshapoa*. meaning “I have already recovered.” *Tumeshapoa*. meaning “We have already recovered.” *Ameshapoa*. meaning “He/She has already recovered.” or *Wameshapoa*. meaning “They have already recovered.” depending on who is being referred to. This response is followed by *Asante sana* meaning “Thank you very much.” or *Asanteni* if more than one person is being thanked.

Example:

Kojo:

Hujambo Christine? – How are you Christine?

Christine:

Sijambo Kojo. Habari za kazi? – I am fine Kojo. What is the news about work?

Kojo:

Nzuri sana. Watoto hawajambo? – Very good. How are the children?

Christine:

Hawajambo, lakini Alexi ni mgonjwa. – They are fine, but Alex is sick.

Kojo:

Pole sana. – I am very sorry for you (sing.)/I am sorry to hear that.

Christine:

Ameshapoa. Asante sana. – He has already recovered. Thank you very much.

Practice Exercise C

Translate into English.

26. *Habari za masomo?*

27. *Habari za asubuhi?*

28. *Habari za babu?*

29. *Habari za safari?*

30. *Habari za mwalimu?*

31. *Habari za mkulima?*

32. *Habari za wasichana?*

33. *Habari za kazi?*

34. *Habari za madaktari?*

35. *Habari za Kanada?*

Section D: Other forms of Swahili Greetings

Apart from *Habari* and *Jambo* Greetings, there are other forms of greetings which the student of Swahili should be familiar with. These are: *Shikamoo*, *Salama*, *Hali gani*, *Mambo* and Arabic Greetings.

Shikamoo Greetings

This type of greeting is meant to show respect and is reserved for people such as parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, older siblings, teachers as well as people in authority.

The word *Shikamoo* means “Hello” or “Accept my respect.” During the era of the slave trade on the East African Coast and Zanzibar, slaves used to greet their masters using this form of greeting. The response to *Shikamoo* is *Marahaba* meaning “Hello” or “Delightful.” When greeting more than one person one could say, *Shikamooni*. Again, the suffix -*ni* denotes the plural form. However, the response to *Shikamooni* is still *Marahaba*.

Salama Greetings

The word *Salama* means peaceful. One can greet another person by just saying:

Salama? – Is it peaceful?

The other person responds by saying:

Salama sana. – Very peaceful.

There is no plural form for this type of greeting. Thus, when greeting more than one person, one should still say:

Salama? – Is it peaceful?

Hali gani Greetings

The word *Hali* means “Condition” and *gani?* means “what?” When greeting someone, the greeter could say:

Hali gani? – What is your condition?

The response is:

Njema. – I am fine.

If more than one person is being greeted, the same greeting and response would apply.

Mambo Greetings

The word *Mambo* is the plural of *Jambo*, which means “things, matters, and affairs.” This is a recent form of greeting used mostly by young people. The person using this form of greeting would just ask:

Mambo? – What’s up?

The other responds by saying:

Poa. – Cool.

Arabic Greetings

It is common on the East African Coast for Swahili speakers to greet each other in Arabic. It is a sign of being educated if someone greets others using a foreign language! Swahili speakers commonly use the following Arabic greetings:

Salam alekum? – How are you? Literally means “Peace be upon you all.”

The other person would respond by saying:

Alekum salam. – I am well. Literally means “Upon you all be peace.”

Another form of Arabic greeting is *Sabalkheri*. One person would greet another by saying:

Sabalkheri. – Good morning.

The response to *Sabalkheri* is the same, which is *Sabalkheri*.

Masalkheri is yet another form of Arabic greeting which means “Good Evening,” and the response is *Masalkheri*.

Handshakes

A handshake constitutes part of Swahili greetings. When greeting each other, the Swahili people always shake hands. For reasons already explained (See Chapter 1), the right hand rather than the left is used for greetings, and foreigners are expected to do likewise. Greeting someone without offering or returning a handshake is considered disrespectful. Also, while relatives and acquaintances of both genders may shake hands while greeting each other, it is considered inappropriate behaviour for a man to shake a lady’s hand especially if she is someone’s wife unless she offers her hand to the person greeting her.

Kwa heri

After greetings are exchanged, the Swahili people, like others, say goodbye to each other at the end of the conversation by saying:

Kwa heri. – Goodbye.

The other person responds by saying:

Kwa heri ya kuonana. – Goodbye till we meet each other again.

An alternative response to *Kwa heri* is:

Karibu tena. – Come again.

When saying “Goodbye” to more than one person, the phrase *Kwa herini* is used, again, the suffix *-ni* denoting the plural form.

Practice Exercise D

Provide appropriate responses to the following greetings.

36. *Salam alekum?*
37. *Salbakheri.*
38. *Masalkheri.*
39. *Shikamoo?*
40. *Kwa heri.*
41. *Salama?*
42. *U hali gani?*
43. *Mambo?*
44. *Pole.*
45. *Poleni.*

Indicate whether or not the following statements are True or False by writing the letters T or F at the end of the statement.

46. A handshake is part of Swahili greeting.
47. The right hand is always offered for a handshake.

New Vocabulary

- alekum salam:* I am well
ameshapoa: He/She has already recovered
asante: thank you
asubuhi: morning(s)
bibi: lady(ies), grandmother(s)
bila samahani: No excuse needed
daktari/ma-: doctor(s)
gani?: what?, which?, how?
habari: news, what news?
habarini?: What is your (pl.) news?
hakuna: there is nothing
hajambo?: how is he/she?
hamjambo?: you (pl.) are fine?
hatujambo: we are fine
hawajambo?: how are they?
hodi?: may I come in?
hujambo?: you (sing.) are fine?

jambo/mambo: thing(s), matter(s), affair(s)

je?: well, how about?

Kanada: Canada

karibu: near, nearby, nearly, close, welcome (sing.)

karibuni: welcome (pl.)

kazi: work, job(s)

kijana/vi-: youth(s), young person(s)

kuonana: meet each other

kwa heri: goodbye (sing.)

kwa herini: goodbye (pl.)

lakini: but, nevertheless

leo: today

marahaba: hello, delightful

masalkheri: good evening

mfanyakazi/wa-: worker(s)

mgonjwa/wa-: sick person(s), patient(s)

mkulima/wa-: farmer(s)

mpishi/wa-: cook(s), chef(s)

msichana/wa-: girl(s)

mtoto/wa-: child(ren)

mwanafunzi/wa-: student(s)

ni: is/are

-ni: denotes plural form

nimeshapoa: I have already recovered

njema: fine

nzuri: good

poa: cool, calm, peaceful, feel better

pole: sorry (sing.)

poleni: sorry (pl.)

polisi: police

sabalkheri: good morning

safari: journey(s), safari trip(s)

salam alekum: How are you?

salama: peaceful, safe

samahani: excuse me, sorry

sana: very

shikamoo: Hello (said to an elder)

shikamooni: Hello (pl.) (said to elders)

sijambo: I am fine

somo/ma-: academic subject(s)

tena: again, furthermore, besides

tumeshapoa: We have already recovered

wameshapoa: They have already recovered

ya: of

za: of

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. *Hodi.*
2. *Karibu.*
3. *Karibuni.*
4. *Hakuna hodi.*
5. *Hodi or Samahani.*

Answers to Practice Exercise B

6. *Baba na mama hawajambo.*
7. *Watoto hawajambo.*
8. *Mwalimu hajambo.*
9. *Kijana hajambo.*
10. *Babu hajambo.*
11. *Je, bibi hajambo?*
12. *Hamjambo?*
13. *Hujambo.*
14. *Hatujambo.*
15. *Je, Joanna hajambo?*
16. *Hawajambo.*
17. *Hawajambo.*
18. *Hajambo.*
19. *Hawajambo.*
20. *Hajambo.*
21. *Hajambo.*
22. *Hawajambo.*
23. *Hawajambo.*
24. *Hawajambo.*
25. *Hatujambo.*

Answers to Practice Exercise C

26. What is the news about studying?
27. What is the morning's news?
28. What is the news about grandfather?
29. What is the news about the journey?
30. What is the news about the teacher?
31. What is the news about the farmer?
32. What is the news about the girls?
33. What is the news about work?
34. What is the news about the doctors?
35. What is the news about Canada?

Answers to Practice Exercise D

36. *Aleykum salam.*
37. *Salbakheri.*
38. *Masalkheri.*
39. *Marahaba.*
40. *Kwa heri ya kuonana/Karibu tena.*
41. *Salama.*
42. *Njema.*
43. *Poa.*
44. *Nimeshapoa or Ameshapoa.*
45. *Tumeshapoa or Wameshapoa.*
46. True.
47. True.

Chapter 5

Present and Future Tenses and Their Negations

In this chapter, we will learn how to make simple sentences using verbs in the present tense and future tense. In Swahili, a particular tense marker denotes each tense. The present tense marker is *-na-* and the future tense marker is *-ta-*. The hyphens (-) before and after the tense marker indicate that something has to be added before and after the tense marker. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Personal Subject Prefix comes before the first hyphen and the verb comes after the second hyphen (STV rule). We will now learn how simple sentences using tense markers are constructed.

Section A: The Present Tense

The present tense is used to show an action that is in progress at the present moment or an action that takes place on a daily basis. As mentioned above, the present tense is expressed by the tense marker *-na-*. Sentences using present tense markers are constructed in the following manner.

Personal Subject Prefix + Present Tense Marker + Verb

There are six Personal Subject Prefixes in Swahili. Please refer to Chapter 3 for more details. The present tense marker is always *-na-*. There are many verbs in Swahili as you may have seen in previous chapters, and you will see many more in this chapter.

If we want to make a simple sentence such as “I am playing,” we do it as follows. We take the Personal Subject Prefix for “I” which is *ni-*. We then attach this to the present tense marker *-na-* and we get *nina-*. Finally, we attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and we get *Ninacheza* which means “I am playing.”

Using the same method of construction with other Personal Subject Prefixes and Bantu verbs (see below for more information on different categories of verbs), we get:

U-na-soma. – You (sing.) are reading.

A-na- andika. – He/She is writing.

Tu-na-kimbia. – We are running.

M-na-chekeka. – You (pl.) are laughing.

Wa-na-nunua. – They are buying.

The important thing to notice here is that in all these sentences, *-na-* is the present tense marker and it does not change.

We will now briefly mention verbs in Swahili. Swahili verbs can be divided into three categories: verbs of Bantu origin, Arabic verbs and Monosyllabic verbs. Monosyllabic verbs are Bantu verbs; however, since they have special rules, they will be treated as a separate category. It is important to remember these categories of verbs as they will have their own rules governing the construction of affirmative and negative sentences. In the present tense, verbs of Bantu origin and Arabic verbs follow the same rules in affirmative sentences. The verbs discussed so far in Section A are all verbs of Bantu origin. Below are some examples of verbs of Arabic origin.

Ni-na-kubali. – I am accepting.

U-na-fikiri. – You (sing.) are thinking.

A-na-rudi. – He/She is returning.

Please note the way to distinguish Bantu verbs from Arabic verbs is by looking at the last vowel of the verb. The last vowel of a Bantu verb is always the letter *a* while Arabic verbs never end with the letter *a* and instead end with either *e*, *i* or *u*.

Monosyllabic verbs are treated slightly differently. Monosyllabic verbs have a *ku-* infinitive marker prefixed to the verb and this is retained in affirmative present tense sentences for all Monosyllabic verbs except *pa*.

The most common Monosyllabic verbs are listed below:

- la* (eat)
- pa* (give)
- wa* (become)
- nywa* (drink)
- nya* (rain)
- chwa* (setting of the sun)
- ja* (come)
- fa* (die, perish)
- cha* (rising of the sun)

Sentences using present tense markers with Monosyllabic verbs are constructed as follows:

- Ni-na-kula.* – I am eating.
- U-na-kunywa.* – You (sing.) are drinking.
- A-na-kuja.* – He/She is coming.

Practice Exercise A

Translate the following sentences into English.

1. *Mnasoma.*
2. *Wanaandika.*
3. *Anapika.*
4. *Tunaruka.*
5. *Anapenda chakula.*
6. *Unaishi Kanada.*
7. *Watu wanakuja.*
8. *Mgonjwa anakunywa dawa.*
9. *Mama anapika.*
10. *Babu anafikiri.*

Section B: Present Tense Negation

When negating a simple present tense sentence, we need to negate the Personal Subject Prefix, the present tense marker and the verb. In present tense sentences, the Personal Subject Prefix is always negated by substituting it with a Negative Personal Subject Prefix (see Chapter 3), and the present tense marker is always negated by deleting it; however each of

the three categories of verbs is negated differently. This is illustrated below:

Negative Personal Subject Prefix + ~~Present Tense Marker~~ + Negated Verb

Negated Bantu Verbs

With verbs of Bantu origin, negation of the verb is done by changing the last vowel of the verb, which is *a*, to the letter *i*. If we want to negate a present tense sentence containing a Bantu verb, such as, *Ninacheza* “I am playing,” we do it as follows. We substitute the Personal Subject Prefix for “I” which is *ni-* with the Negative Personal Subject Prefix which is *si-*. We then delete the present tense marker *-na-*. Since the present tense marker is deleted, the Negative Personal Subject Prefix is directly attached to the negated verb. As mentioned above, since the last vowel of the Bantu verb changes to the letter *i*, the verb “play” which is *cheza* would become *-chezi*. The complete negation of *Ninacheza* “I am playing” would be *Sichezi* “I am not playing.”

Here are more examples:

Ninapika. – I am cooking.

Sipiki. – I am not cooking.

Unasoma. – You (sing.) are reading.

Husomi. – You (sing.) are not reading.

Negated Arabic Verbs

The negation of present tense sentences containing Arabic verbs is done in the same way as sentences containing verbs of Bantu origin, except that Arabic verbs retain their last vowel in their negated verb i.e. the Arabic verb remains unchanged.

Examples:

Ninarudi. – I am returning.

Sirudi. – I am not returning.

Unafahamu. – You (sing.) understand.

Hufahamu. – You (sing.) do not understand.

Negated Monosyllabic Verbs

The negation of present tense sentences containing Monosyllabic verbs is also done in the same way as sentences containing regular Bantu verbs, except that Monosyllabic verbs drop their infinitive *ku-* in their negated form. Also note that the last vowel of Monosyllabic verbs change to *i* as seen in other negated Bantu verbs.

Examples:

Ninakula. – I am eating.

Sili. – I am not eating.

Unakunywa. – You (sing.) are drinking.

Hunywi. – You (sing.) are not drinking.

Practice Exercise B

Translate the following into English.

11. *Hatufahamu.*

12. *Hawanywi.*

13. *Hakubali kwenda Kenya.*

14. *Hawali samaki.*

15. *Daktari haji.*

16. *Huandiki.*

17. *Mama harudi leo.*

18. *Mtoto hafikiri.*

19. *Msichana hali samaki.*

20. *Sisomi katika Chuo Kikuu cha Toronto.*

Section C: The Future Tense

The future tense is used to show an action that will take place in the future. As mentioned previously, the future tense is expressed by the tense marker *-ta-*. Sentences using future tense markers are constructed in the following manner.

Personal Subject Prefix + Future Tense Marker + Verb

If we want to make a simple sentence such as “I will play,” we do it as follows. We take the Personal Subject Prefix for “I” which is *ni-*. We

then attach this to the future tense marker *-ta-* and we get *nita-*. Finally, we attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and we get *Nitacheza* which means “I will play.”

Using the same method of construction with other Personal Subject Prefixes and Bantu verbs, we get:

U-ta-soma. – You (sing.) will read.

A-ta-andika. – He/She will write.

Tu-ta-kimbia. – We will run.

M-ta-chekeka. – You (pl.) will laugh.

Wa-ta-nunua. – They will buy.

The important thing to notice here is that in all these sentences, *-ta-* is the future tense marker and it does not change.

In the future tense, verbs of Bantu origin and Arabic verbs follow the same rules in affirmative sentences. Below are some examples of verbs of Arabic origin.

Ni-ta-kubali. – I will accept.

U-ta-fikiri. – You (sing.) will think.

A-ta-rudi. – He/She will return.

Monosyllabic verbs retain their infinitive marker *ku-* in sentences using future tense markers.

Ni-ta-kula. – I will eat.

U-ta-kunywa. – You (sing.) will drink.

A-ta-kuja. – He/She will come.

Practice Exercise C

Translate the following sentences into English.

21. *Mtasoma barua.*

22. *Wataandika.*

23. *Atapika.*

24. *Tutaruka katika ndege.*

25. *Atapenda zawadi.*

26. *Utaishi Kanada.*

27. *Watu watakuja katika duka.*
28. *Mgonjwa atakufa.*
29. *Kaka atanunua nguo.*
30. *Mama atapika samaki.*

Section D: Future Tense Negation

It is very simple to negate future tense sentences. The only change that occurs is that the Personal Subject Prefix is substituted with Negative Personal Subject Prefix. The future tense marker and each of the three categories of verbs remain the same. This is illustrated below:

Negative Personal Subject Prefix + Future Tense Marker + Verb

If we want to negate a future tense sentence containing a Bantu verb, such as, *Nitacheza* “I will play,” we do it as follows. We substitute the Personal Subject Prefix for “I” which is *ni-* with the Negative Personal Subject Prefix which is *si-*. We then attach it to the future tense marker *-ta-* to get *sita-*. We finally attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and the complete negation of *Nitacheza* “I will play” would be *Sitacheza* “I will not play.”

Here are more examples of negation of future tense sentences containing verbs of Bantu origin.

- Nitapika.* – I will cook.
- Sitapika.* – I will not cook.
- Utasoma.* – You (sing.) will read.
- Hutasoma.* – You (sing.) will not read.

Here are examples of negation of future tense sentences containing verbs of Arabic origin.

- Watarudi.* – They will return.
- Hawatarudi.* – They will not return.
- Mtafahamu.* – You (pl.) will understand.
- Hamtafahamu.* – You (pl.) will not understand.

Here are examples of negation of future tense sentences containing Mono-syllabic verbs. Please note that the infinitive *ku-* is retained.

Nitakula. – I will eat.

Sitakula. – I will not eat.

Utakunywa. – You (sing.) will drink.

Hutakunywa. – You (sing.) will not drink.

Practice Exercise D

Translate the following into English.

31. *Hatutafahamu.*
32. *Watoto hawatakunywa.*
33. *Hatakubali.*
34. *Hawatakufa.*
35. *Daktari hatakuja.*
36. *Hutaenda katika soko.*
37. *Mama hatarudi leo.*
38. *Mtoto hatafikiri.*
39. *Thomas hatakula samaki.*
40. *Sitasoma leo.*

New Vocabulary

andika: write

cha: rising of the sun

chakula/vya-: food(s)

cheka: laugh

cheza: play

chuo/vy- kikuu/vi-: university(ies)

chwa: setting of the sun

duka/ma-: shop(s)

enda: go, move

fa: die

fikiri: think

ishi: live

ja: come

katika: in, into, inside, at

kimbia: run

kubali: accept, agree

la: eat
mtu/wa-: person(s)
nunua: buy
nya: rain
nywa: drink
pa: give
panda: love, like
rudi: return, come back
ruka: jump, fly
samaki: fish(es)
soko/ma-: market(s)
wa: be, exist

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. You (pl.) are reading.
2. They are writing.
3. He/She is cooking.
4. We are flying.
5. He/She loves food.
6. You (sing.) are living in Canada.
7. The people are coming.
8. The patient is drinking medicine.
9. Mother is cooking.
10. Grandfather is thinking.

Answers to Practice Exercise B

11. We don't understand.
12. They are not drinking.
13. He/She is not agreeing to go to Kenya.
14. They are not eating fish.
15. The doctor is not coming.
16. You (sing.) are not writing.
17. Mother is not returning today.
18. The child is not thinking.
19. The girl is not eating fish.
20. I am not studying at the University of Toronto.

Answers to Practice Exercise C

21. You (pl.) will read a letter.
22. They will write.
23. He/She will cook.
24. We will fly in an airplane.
25. He/She will love the gift(s).
26. You (sing.) will live in Canada.
27. People will come in the shop.
28. The patient will die.
29. Brother will buy clothes.
30. Mother will cook fish.

Answers to Practice Exercise D

31. We will not understand.
32. The children will not drink.
33. He/She will not agree.
34. They will not die.
35. The doctor will not come.
36. You (sing.) will not go inside the market.
37. Mother will not return today.
38. The child will not think.
39. Thomas will not eat fish.
40. I will not study today.

Chapter 6

Simple Past and Past Perfect Tenses and Their Negations

In this chapter, we will learn how to make simple sentences using verbs in the simple past tense and past perfect tense. In Swahili, a particular tense marker denotes each tense. The simple past tense marker is *-li-* and the past perfect tense marker is *-me-*. The hyphens (-) before and after the tense marker indicate that something has to be added before and after the tense marker. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Personal Subject Prefix comes before the first hyphen and the verb comes after the second hyphen (STV rule). We will now learn how simple sentences using tense markers are constructed.

Section A: The Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense is used to show an action that took place in the past. As mentioned previously, the simple past tense is expressed by the tense marker *-li-*. Sentences using simple past tense markers are constructed in the following manner.

Personal Subject Prefix + Simple Past Tense Marker + Verb

If we want to make a simple sentence such as “I played,” we do it as follows. We take the Personal Subject Prefix for “I” which is *ni-*. We then attach this to the simple past tense marker *-li-* and we get *nili-*. Finally, we attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and we get *Nilicheza* which means “I played.”

Using the same method of construction with other Personal Subject Prefixes and Bantu verbs, we get:

- U-li-soma.* – You (sing.) read.
A-li-andika. – He/She wrote.
Tu-li-kimbia. – We ran.
M-li-chekeka. – You (pl.) laughed.
Wa-li-nunua. – They bought.

The important thing to notice here is that in all these sentences, *-li-* is the simple past tense marker and it does not change.

In the simple past tense, verbs of Bantu origin and Arabic verbs follow the same rules in affirmative sentences. Below are some examples of verbs of Arabic origin.

- Ni-li-kubali.* – I accepted.
U-li-fikiri. – You (sing.) thought.
A-li-rudi. – He/She returned.

Monosyllabic verbs retain their infinitive marker *ku-* in sentences using simple past tense markers.

- Ni-li-kula.* – I ate.
U-li-kunywa. – You (sing.) drank.
A-li-kuja. – He/She came.

Practice Exercise A

Translate the following sentences into English.

1. *Mlisoma barua.*
2. *Walipanda mazao.*
3. *Alisikitika sana.*
4. *Tuliruka.*
5. *Alipenda zawadi.*
6. *Uliishi Ujerumani.*
7. *Watu walikuja katika duka.*
8. *Mgonjwa alipona.*
9. *Alinunua baiskeli.*
10. *Mama alipika samaki.*

Section B: Simple Past Tense Negation

It is also fairly easy to negate simple past tense sentences. In simple past tense sentences, the Personal Subject Prefix is always negated by substituting it with a Negative Personal Subject Prefix. The simple past tense marker is always negated by substituting it with the negative simple past tense marker which is *-ku-*. Bantu and Arabic verbs remain unchanged in their negated form; however, the infinitive marker *ku-* is dropped in negated Monosyllabic verbs. This is illustrated below:

Negative Personal Subject Prefix +
Negated Simple Past Tense Marker + Verb

If we want to negate a simple past tense sentence containing a Bantu verb, such as, *Nilicheza* “I played,” we do it as follows. We substitute the Personal Subject Prefix for “I” which is *ni-* with the Negative Personal Subject Prefix which is *si-*. We then attach it to the negative simple past tense marker *-ku-* to get *siku-*. We finally attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and the complete negation of *Nilicheza* “I played” would be *Sikucheza* “I did not play.”

Here are more examples of negation of simple past tense sentences containing verbs of Bantu origin.

Nilipika. – I cooked.
Sikupika. – I did not cook.
Ulisoma. – You (sing.) read.
Hukusoma. – You (sing.) did not read.

Here are examples of negation of simple past tense sentences containing verbs of Arabic origin.

Walikubali. – They accepted.
Hawakukubali. – They did not accept.
Mlifahamu. – You (pl.) understood.
Hamkufahamu. – You (pl.) did not understand.

Here are examples of negation of simple past tense sentences containing Monosyllabic verbs. Please note that the infinitive *ku-* is deleted, the *-ku-*

that appears in the sentences below is the negative simple past tense marker.

Nilikula. – I ate.

Sikula. – I did not eat

Ulikunywa. – You (sing.) drank.

Hukunywa. – You (sing.) did not drink.

Practice Exercise B

Translate the following into English.

11. *Hatukufahamu.*

12. *Watoto hawakunywa.*

13. *Hakukubali.*

14. *Hawakula.*

15. *Daktari hakuja.*

16. *Hukununua.*

17. *Mama hakurudi leo.*

18. *Mtoto hakufikiri.*

19. *Thomas hakula nyama.*

20. *Sikusoma katika Chuo Kikuu cha Washington.*

Section C: The Past Perfect Tense

The past perfect tense is used to show an action that took place in the past and the resulting state of that action still exists, or a simple present action which is complete.

The past perfect tense is expressed by the tense marker *-me-*. Sentences using past perfect tense markers are constructed in the following manner.

Personal Subject Prefix + Past Perfect Tense Marker + Verb

If we want to make a simple sentence such as “I had played,” we do it as follows. We take the Personal Subject Prefix for “I” which is *ni-*. We then attach this to the past perfect tense marker *-me-* and we get *nime-*. Finally, we attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and we get *Nimecheza* which means “I have played.”

Using the same method of construction with other Personal Subject Prefixes and Bantu verbs, we get:

U-me-soma. – You (sing.) have read.

A-me-fariki. – He/She is dead.

Tu-me-kimbia. – We have run.

M-me-cheke. – You (pl.) have laughed.

Wa-me-nunua. – They have bought.

The important thing to notice here is that in all these sentences, *-me-* is the past perfect tense marker and it does not change.

In the past perfect tense, verbs of Bantu origin and Arabic verbs follow the same rules in affirmative sentences. Below are some examples of verbs of Arabic origin.

Ni-me-kubali. – I have accepted.

U-me-fikiri. – You (sing.) have thought.

A-me-rudi. – He/She has returned.

Monosyllabic verbs retain their infinitive marker *ku-* in sentences using past perfect tense markers.

Ni-me-kula. – I have eaten.

U-me-kunywa. – You (sing.) have drunk.

A-me-kuja. – He/She has come.

Practice Exercise C

Translate the following sentences into English.

21. *Wahariri wamemaliza kazi.*
22. *Wamepanda nyanya.*
23. *Amepoza chai.*
24. *Mwalimu amechanganya kemikali.*
25. *Amelala.*
26. *Umeishi Marekani.*
27. *Watu wamekuja katika kiwanja cha michezo.*
28. *Mgonjwa amekunywa dawa.*
29. *Amenunua kompyuta.*
30. *Bibi amepika mayai.*

Section D: Past Perfect Tense Negation

There are two different ways of negating past perfect tense sentences. In past perfect tense sentences, the Personal Subject Prefix is always negated by substituting it with a Negative Personal Subject Prefix. The past perfect tense marker is negated by substituting it with either the negative past perfect tense marker which is *-ja-* if the action could still take place, or the negative simple past tense marker *-ku-* if there is no possibility that the action could still take place. Bantu and Arabic verbs remain unchanged in their negated form; however, the infinitive marker *ku-* is dropped in negated Monosyllabic verbs.

Negative Personal Subject Prefix + Negated Past Perfect Tense
Marker/Negated Simple Past Tense Marker + Verb

If we want to negate a past perfect tense sentence containing a Bantu verb, such as, *Nimecheza* “I have played,” we do it as follows. We substitute the Personal Subject Prefix for “I” which is *ni-* with the Negative Personal Subject Prefix which is *si-*. We then attach either the negative past perfect tense marker *-ja-* to get *sija-* OR the negative simple past tense marker *-ku-* to get *siku-*. We finally attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and the complete negation of *Nimecheza* “I have played” would be *Sijacheza* “I have not played yet” OR *Sikucheza* “I did not play.”

Here are more examples of negation of past perfect tense sentences containing verbs of Bantu origin.

Nimepika. – I have cooked.

Sijapika. – I have not yet cooked OR

Sikupika. – I did not cook.

Umesoma. – You (sing.) have read.

Hujasoma. – You (sing.) have not yet read OR

Hukusoma. – You (sing.) did not read.

Here are examples of negation of past perfect tense sentences containing verbs of Arabic origin.

Wamekubali. – They have accepted.

Hawajakubali. – They have not yet accepted OR

Hawakukubali. – They did not accept.

Mmefahamu. – You (pl.) have understood.

Hamjafahamu. – You (pl.) have not yet understood OR

Hamkufahamu. – You (pl.) did not understand.

Here are examples of negation of past perfect tense sentences containing Monosyllabic verbs. Please note that the infinitive *ku-* is deleted.

Nimekula. – I have eaten.

Sijala. – I have not yet eaten OR

Sikula. – I did not eat.

Umekunywa. – You (sing.) have drunk.

Hujanywa. – You (sing.) have not yet drunk OR

Hukunywa. – You (sing.) did not drink.

Practice Exercise D

Translate the following into English.

31. *Hawajafahamu.*

32. *Watoto hawakula.*

33. *Hajakubali.*

34. *Hakulima.*

35. *Balozi hajaja.*

36. *Hujamaliza mtihani.*

37. *Mama hajapika.*

38. *Rafiki hajafika.*

39. *Tatu hakula kuku.*

40. *Sijasoma katika Chuo Kikuu cha Toronto.*

New Vocabulary

baiskeli: bicycle(s)

balozi/ma-: ambassador(s)

chai: tea

changanya: mix

fariki: die

fika: arrive

kemikali: chemical(s)
kiwanja/vi-cha/vya michezo: stadium(s)
kompyuta: computer(s)
kuku: chicken(s)
lima: cultivate
maliza: complete, finish
Marekani: The United States of America
mhariri/wa-: editor(s)
mtihani/mi-: examination(s)
nyama: meat
nyanya: tomato(es), grandmother(s)
panda: climb, plant
pona: cure, heal
poza: cool off
sikitika: regret
Ujerumani: Germany
zao/ma-: crop(s)

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. You (pl.) read a letter.
2. They planted crops.
3. He/She regretted very much.
4. We flew.
5. He/She loved the gift(s).
6. You (sing.) lived in Germany.
7. People came in the shop.
8. The patient was cured.
9. He/She bought bicycle(s).
10. Mother cooked fish.

Answers to Practice Exercise B

11. We did not understand.
12. The children did not drink.
13. He/She did not agree.
14. They did not eat.
15. The doctor did not come.

16. You (sing.) did not buy.
17. Mother did not return today.
18. The child did not think.
19. Thomas did not eat meat.
20. I did not study at University of Washington.

Answers to Practice Exercise C

21. The editors have completed the work.
22. They have planted tomatoes.
23. He/She has cooled off the tea.
24. The teacher has mixed the chemical(s).
25. He/She has slept.
26. You (sing.) have lived in America.
27. People have come to the stadium.
28. The patient has drunk (taken) the medicine.
29. He/She has bought a computer(s).
30. Grandmother has cooked eggs.

Answers to Practice Exercise D

31. They have not yet understood.
32. The children did not eat.
33. He/She has not yet agreed.
34. He/She did not cultivate.
35. The ambassador has not yet come.
36. You (sing.) have not yet completed the exam.
37. Mother has not yet cooked.
38. The friend has not yet arrived.
39. Tatu did not eat chicken.
40. I have not yet studied at University of Toronto.

Chapter 7

The Swahili Noun Class System: M-/WA- and M-/MI-

Most languages in the world, with English being the main exception, classify nouns into different groups known as noun classes. Historically, the division of nouns into noun classes in Swahili was based on how the East African people perceived the world. For instance, they grouped human beings into one class, animals into another class, sharp and elongated objects into another class and so on. As time passed, the East African region came into increasing contact with the outside world initially due to trade expansion and later, colonialism. This contact caused the Swahili language to borrow new words from other languages such as English, German, Portuguese, Arabic, Hindi and so forth. The increase in Swahili vocabulary brought about the need to revise and expand the noun classes. Currently, nouns are classified into 8 noun classes. Listed below are the names of the noun classes and a brief description of what they contain. We will learn more details about each noun class in the chapters to follow.

1. M-/WA- class contains human beings.
2. M-/MI- class contains trees, plants, etc.
3. JI-/MA- class contains fruits, parts of plants, etc. It also contains mass nouns and collectives.
4. KI-/VI- class contains objects useful to humans and artifacts, etc.
5. N- class contains words borrowed from other languages, names of animals and relationship nouns, etc.

6. U- class contains household objects, names of countries, abstract nouns and qualities.
7. PA- class contains locatives.
8. KU- class contains verbal nouns.

Section A: The M-/WA- Class

This is one of the few noun classes in Swahili in which most nouns refer to one particular type of thing. In this noun class, most nouns refer to human beings. It is important to remember that **not** all nouns referring to human beings are contained in this class. We will come across some nouns referring to human beings while studying the JI-/MA-, KI-/VI- and N- classes in upcoming chapters.

Most nouns in the M-/WA- class are denoted by the agreement prefix *m-* in the singular form, which changes to *wa-* in the plural form. Listed below are some examples:

mtu – person
watu – people
mganga – doctor, shaman
waganga – doctors, shamans
mgeni – visitor, guest
wageni – visitors, guests
mgonjwa – sick person
wagonjwa – sick people
mpishi – chef
wapishi – chefs
mtoto – child
watoto – children
mtumishi – servant
watumishi – servants
mfanyakazi – worker
wafanyakazi – workers
mzee – old person
wazee – old people

Mzee is also used as a term of respect for someone older than you are.

There are two exceptional nouns in the M-/WA- class that do not refer to humans. These nouns refer to animals and insects in a general sense. They are:

mdudu – insect
wadudu – insects
mnyama – animal
wanyama – animals

You will see in an upcoming chapter that the specific names of animals and insects are found in the N- class.

The M-/WA- class also contains many nouns that are denoted by the agreement prefix *mw-* in the singular form. These nouns also take the agreement prefix *wa-* in the plural form. With these nouns, when the agreement prefix *mw-* in the singular form is removed, we remain with a stem noun that begins with a vowel. For example, in a noun such as *mw-alimu* (teacher), when the agreement prefix *mw-* is removed, we remain with the stem noun *-alimu* (meaning knowledge). When such a noun is pluralized, the plural contains two vowels occurring together i.e *mw-alimu* (teacher) changes to become *wa-alimu* (teachers) in the plural form. Since it is difficult to pronounce words that have vowels adjacent to each other, the Swahili language has developed the following merger rules:

a + a becomes “a”
 a + e becomes “e”
 a + i becomes “e”

Hence, when *mw-alimu* changes into plural, we would expect it to become *wa-alimu* but based on the above rule, it becomes *walimu* (since a + a becomes a).

Another example would be a noun such as *mw-izi* (thief). When *mw-izi* changes into plural, we would expect it to become *wa-izi*, but based on the rule above, it becomes *wezi* (since a + i becomes e). Here are more examples of nouns that begin with the agreement prefix *mw-* in the singular form and follow the merger rule.

mwanafunzi – student
wanafunzi – students
mwana – child

wana – children
mwenyeji – inhabitant
wenyeji – inhabitants

Other words that need a special mention are compound nouns. Here are some common compound nouns:

mwanamke – woman
wanawake – women
mwanaume – man
wanaume – men
mwanasiasa – politician
wanasiasa – politicians

Since a compound noun is made of two nouns, when changing the compound noun into its plural form, we have to pluralize both of its two component nouns individually. When *mwanamke* is changed into plural, we have to pluralize both of its 2 component nouns, *mwana* and *mke*. When *mwana* changes into plural, we would expect it to become *wa-ana*, but based on the rules that we have studied, it becomes *wana* (since a + a becomes a). *Mke* is a regular noun whose prefix begins with *m-* in the singular form and changes to *wa-* in the plural form to become *wake*. Hence, *mwanamke* changes to become *wanawake* in the plural form.

Please note that when the word *mwana* is used in compound nouns, it does not retain its original meaning of “a child.” Also note that the plural form of the noun *siasa* remains unchanged from its singular form because it belongs to the N- Class. You will learn more about the N-Class in Chapter 9.

Nationalities and some occupations also fall under the M-/WA- noun class. However, they do not follow the merger rules explained above. For example, the noun *Mw-amerika* (American) in the plural becomes *Wa-amerika* (Americans). As you can see, the adjacent vowels remain together and are not merged into one vowel. Here are more examples of nationalities:

Mwafrika – African
Waafrika – Africans
Mwarabu – Arab
Waarabu – Arabs

Mfaransa – French person
Wafaransa – French people
Mholanzi – Dutch person
Waholanzi – Dutch people
Mhindi – Indian
Wahindi – Indians
Mchina – Chinese person
Wachina – Chinese people

Here are some examples of occupations:

mkulima – farmer
wakulima – farmers
mchoraji – artist
wachoraji – artists
mwimbaji – singer
waimbaji – singers

Practice Exercise A

Translate the following into their plural in Swahili.

1. student
2. teacher
3. girl
4. patient
5. guest
6. hunter
7. insect
8. boy
9. worker
10. chef

Practice Exercise B

Change the following plurals into singulars.

11. *wanyama*
12. *wenyeji*
13. *wakulima*

14. *wazee*
15. *wanawake*

Practice Exercise C

Translate the following nationalities and occupations into Swahili.

16. Italians
17. Russians
18. Iranian
19. Spanish people
20. Nigerian
21. worker
22. players
23. farmers
24. chef
25. writers

Section B: The M-/MI- Class

Unlike the M-/WA- class, the nouns in the M-/MI- class do not refer to one particular type of thing. This noun class contains mostly trees and plants. It also contains natural phenomena, some parts of the body and many other nouns which do not appear to have much in common with other nouns in this class.

Most nouns in the M-/MI- class are denoted by the agreement prefix *m-* in the singular form, which changes to *mi-* in the plural form. Listed below are some examples:

- mti* – tree
- miti* – trees
- mmea* – plant
- mimea* – plants
- mbuyu* – Baobab tree
- mibuyu* – Baobab trees
- mkono* – hand
- mikono* – hands
- mguu* – leg
- miguu* – legs

mchezo – game
michezo – games
mtihani – examination
mitihani – examinations
mto – pillow, river
mito – pillows, rivers
moto – a fire
mioto – fires
moyo – heart
mioyo – hearts

The M-/MI- class also contains many nouns, which are denoted by the agreement prefix *mw-* in the singular form. These nouns also take the agreement prefix *mi-* in the plural form. Listed below are some examples:

mwaka – year
miaka – years
mwezi – month, moon
miezi – months, moons
mwili – body (of living thing)
miili – bodies (of living things)
mwisho – conclusion
miisho – conclusions
mwembe – mango tree
miembe – mango trees
mwiba – thorn
miiba – thorns

Please observe that there is no difference in appearance between the singular nouns that begin with the agreement prefix *mw-* in the singular form in M-/WA- class and M-/MI- class. Therefore, in order to determine which agreement prefix the noun must take in the plural form, the meaning must be known. If the meaning is a descriptive of a human being, or the word for animal (*mnyama*) or insect (*mdudu*) the plural will begin with *wa-*, otherwise, the plural will begin with *mi-*.

Practice Exercise D

Change the following singulars into plurals.

26. *mkono*
27. *mguu*
28. *mlima*
29. *mji*
30. *mwaka*
31. *mwili*
32. *mwiba*
33. *moyo*
34. *mkate*
35. *mzigo*

Practice Exercise E

Translate the following into English.

36. *mifereji*
37. *misitu*
38. *miezi*
39. *milango*
40. *mitaa*

New Vocabulary

- mbuyu/mi-*: baobab tree(s)
mchezaji/wa-: actor(s), dancer(s), player(s), athlete(s)
mchezo/mi-: game(s), play(s)
Mchina/wa-: Chinese person(s)
mchoraji/wa-: artist(s)
mdudu/wa-: insect(s)
Mfaransa/wa-: French person(s)
mfereji/mi-: ditch(es)
mganga/wa-: doctor(s), shaman(s)
mgeni/wa-: visitor(s), guest(s)
mguu/mi-: leg(s), by foot
Mhindi/wa-: Indian(s)
Mhispania/wa-: Hispanic(s)

Mholanzi/wa-: Dutch person(s)
mji/mi-: city(ies), town(s)
mkate/mi-: bread(s)
mke/wa-: wife(ves)
mkono/mi-: hand(s)
mlango/mi-: door(s)
mlima/mi-: mountain(s)
mlimaji/wa-: farmer(s)
mmea/mi-: plant(s)
Mnigeria/wa-: Nigerian(s)
mnyama/wa-: animal(s)
moto/mi-: fire(s)
moyo/mi-: heart(s)
Mrusi/wa-: Russian(s)
msitu/mi-: forest(s)
mtaa/mi-: street(s)
mti/mi-: tree(s)
mto/mi-: pillow(s), river(s)
mtumishi/wa-: servant(s), steward(s)
mvulana/wa-: boy(s)
Mwafrika/wa-: African(s)
mwaka/miaka: year(s)
Mwamerika/wa-: American(s)
mwana/wa-: child(ren)
mwanamke/wanawake: woman/women
mwanasiasa/wa-: politician(s)
mwanaume/wa-: man/men
mwandishi/wa-: writer(s), author(s)
Mwarabu/wa-: Arab(s)
mwembe/miembe: mango tree(s)
mwenyeji/wa-: inhabitant(s), host(s)
mwezi/miezi: month(s), moon(s)
mwiba/mi-: thorn(s)
mwili/mi-: body(ies)
mwimbaji/wa-: singer(s)
mwindaji/wa-: hunter(s)
Mwirani/wa-: Iranian(s)
mwisho/miisho: end(s), conclusion(s)
Mwitali/wa-: Italian(s)

mwizi/wezi: thief(ves)

mzee/wa-: elder(s), old person(s)

mzigo/mi-: luggage(s)

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. *wanafunzi*
2. *walimu*
3. *wasichana*
4. *wagonjwa*
5. *wageni*
6. *wawindaji*
7. *wadudu*
8. *wavulana*
9. *wafanyakazi*
10. *wapishi*

Answers to Practice Exercise B

11. *mnyama*
12. *mwenyeji*
13. *mkulima*
14. *mzee*
15. *mwanamke*

Answers to Practice Exercise C

16. *Waitali*
17. *Warusi*
18. *Mwirani*
19. *Wahispania*
20. *Mnigeria*
21. *mfanyakazi*
22. *wachezaji*
23. *walimaji*
24. *mpishi*
25. *waandishi*

Answers to Practice Exercise D

26. *mikono*
27. *miguu*
28. *milima*
29. *miji*
30. *miaka*
31. *mili*
32. *miiba*
33. *mioyo*
34. *mikate*
35. *mizigo*

Answers to Practice Exercise E

36. ditches
37. forests
38. months
39. doors
40. streets

Chapter 8

Swahili Noun Classes: JI-/MA- Class and KI-/VI- Class

This chapter will focus on two more noun classes in the Swahili noun class system namely the JI-/MA- class and KI-/VI- class. We will begin with the JI-/MA- class.

Section A: The JI-/MA- Class

There are some categories of nouns, which generally fall under the JI/MA- noun class. This includes names of fruits, some parts of plants, some parts of the body, one's status or occupation. It also includes non-countable nouns, some abstract nouns, collectives and a special category of nouns called the augmentatives.

This class is often referred to as the JI-/MA- class since some nouns in this class have the prefix JI- in the singular form, which may either change to MA- in the plural form or have MA- added to it. You may also come across some nouns, which contain JI- in the singular form but contain an irregular plural prefix. Other nouns in this class have no prefix in the singular form but contain MA- in the plural form. Below are the main categories that exist in the JI-/MA- class.

1. These nouns contain the prefix JI- in the singular form, which changes to MA- in the plural form:

jicho – eye

macho – eyes

jiwe – stone

mawe – stones
jifya – earth
mafya – hearths

Exception nouns

There are some nouns that fall into this category that contain the prefix JA- in the singular form which change to MA- in the plural form:

jambo – matter
mambo – matters

2. These nouns contain the prefix JI- in the singular form to which MA- is added in the plural form:

jibu – answer
majibu – answers
jina – name
majina – names
jimbo – province
majimbo – provinces

3. These nouns contain JI- in the singular form but contain irregular plural prefix:

jino – tooth
meno – teeth
jiko – stove
meko – stoves

4. These nouns have no prefix in the singular form but contain MA- in the plural form:

gari – car
magari – cars
dirisha – window
madirisha – windows
daraja – bridge
madaraja – bridges
gazeti – newspaper

magazeti – newspapers

jani – leaf

majani – leaves

wazo – thought

mawazo – thoughts

5. These nouns do not have a singular form. They only appear in the plural form and are denoted by the prefix MA

maji – water

maziwa – milk

mafuta – oil

matata – trouble

Practice Exercise A

Change the following nouns from singular to plural where applicable.

1. *tunda*

2. *tawi*

3. *jua*

4. *ua*

5. *majivu*

6. *pera*

7. *figa*

8. *jini*

9. *jembe*

10. *mazungumzo*

Translate the following sentences into Swahili.

11. They asked questions.

12. He/She got (encountered) problems.

13. The officers will come tomorrow.

14. We will buy pineapples.

15. I want an egg.

Here are a few categories of nouns that generally fall under the JI-/MA- class:

- Names of fruits, some parts of plants and some parts of the body which occur in pairs or a set:

chungwa – orange

machungwa – oranges

nanasi – pineapple

mananasi – pineapples

jani – leaf

majani – leaves

gogo – tree-trunk

magogo – tree-trunks

sikio – ear

masikio – ears

jicho – eye

macho – eyes

- Nouns indicating one's status or occupation:

bwana – mister/sir

mabwana – misters/sirs

rais – president

marais – presidents

dereva – driver

madereva – drivers

daktari – doctor

madaktari – doctors

- Non-countable nouns are shown below. These nouns only appear in the plural form:

maji – water

maziwa – milk

mafuta – oil

- Some abstract nouns are also included in this noun class. The singular and plural form of the noun may be the same or may be different:

wazo – thought

mawazo – thoughts

tatizo – problem
matatizo – problems
mazungumzo – conversation
mazungumzo – conversations
matata – trouble
matata – troubles

Note: This class can be used to collectivize or augment nouns. These concepts will be taught in Chapter 38.

Change the following occupation nouns from singular to plural.

16. *Waziri*
17. *Jambazi*
18. *Rubani*
19. *Nabii*
20. *Nesi*

Section B: The *KI-/VI-* class

Most nouns in this class refer to household objects or languages. A few nouns in this class refer to parts of the body and some animals. This class is the easiest class in Swahili to use as far as singulars and plurals are concerned. Most nouns in this class have the prefix *KI-* in the singular form which changes to *VI-* in the plural form. A minority of nouns in this class have the prefix *CH-* in the singular form which changes to *VY-* in the plural form. However, not all nouns beginning with *CH-* belong to the *KI-/VI-* class.

1. These nouns contain the prefix *KI-* in the singular form which changes to *VI-* in the plural form:

kiatu – shoe
viatu – shoes
kiazi – potato
viazi – potatoes
kidonge – pill
vidonge – pills
kijiko – spoon
vijiko – spoons

kisu – knife
visu – knives
kitabu – book
vitabu – books

2. These nouns contain the prefix CH- in the singular form which changes to VY- in the plural form:

chombo – tool, utensil
vyombo – tools, utensils
chumba – room
vyumba – rooms
chakula – food
vyakula – food
choo – lavatory
vyoo – lavatories

Practice Exercise B

Change the following nouns from plural to singular where applicable.

21. *vituo*
22. *vyura*
23. *viungo*
24. *vyuma*
25. *viumbe*
26. *vyama*
27. *vyandarua*
28. *vinyozi*
29. *vitanda*
30. *vioo*

Translate the following sentences into Swahili.

31. You will need matches.
32. The barbers are cutting hair.
33. We used a mosquito net over the bed.
34. He/She broke an ankle.
35. We arranged a meeting.

Here are a few categories of nouns that belong to the *KI-/VI-* class:

- Household objects, some parts of the body and some animals:
 - kijiko* – spoon
 - vijiko* – spoons
 - kisu* – knife
 - visu* – knives
 - chakula* – food
 - vyakula* – food
 - kiuno* – waist
 - viuno* – waists
 - kiboko* – hippopotamus
 - viboko* – hippopotami
 - kifaru* – rhino
 - vifaru* – rhinos
- Also, the names of languages belong to this class and they only exist in the singular form.
 - Kiswahili* – Swahili
 - Kiingereza* – English
 - Kifaransa* – French
 - Kireno* – Portuguese
 - Kiarabu* – Arabic
- Nouns that show incapacity or subordinate status belong here:
 - kiziwi* – deaf person
 - viziwi* – deaf people
 - kipofu* – blind person
 - vipofu* – blind people
 - kijana* – youth
 - vijana* – youths
 - kibarua* – labourer
 - vibarua* – labourers

Note: This class can be used to make diminutive nouns. This concept will be taught in Chapter 38.

How would you say the following languages in Swahili?

36. Hindi
37. Spanish
38. Chinese
39. Maasai language
40. Persian/Farsi

New Vocabulary

chama/vy-: political party(ies)
chandarua/vy-: mosquito net(s), veil(s)
chombo/vy-: vessel(s), tool(s), utensil(s)
choo/vy-: lavatory(ies)
chuma/vy-: steel, iron
chungwa/ma-: orange(s)
chura/vy-: frog(s)
daraja/ma-: bridge(s)
dereva/ma-: driver(s)
dirisha/ma-: window(s)
figa/ma-: hearth(s)
gazeti/ma-: newspaper(s), magazine(s)
gogo/ma-: tree trunk(s)
hitaji: need
jambazi/ma-: gangster(s)
jani/ma-: leaf(ves)
jembe/ma-: hoe(s)
jibu/ma-: answer(s)
jicho/macho: eye(s)
jifya/ma-: hearth(s)
jiko/meko: stove(s), kitchen(s)
jimbo/ma-: province(s)
jina/ma-: name(s)
jini/ma-: spirit(s)
jino/meno: tooth/teeth
jiwe/mawe: stone(s)
jua/ma-: sun(s)
juu ya: over, above, about
kata: cut
kesho: tomorrow

Kiajemi: Persian/Farsi, Persian/Farsi language
Kiarabu: Arabic, Arabic language
kiatu/vi-: shoe(s)
kiazi/vi-: potato(es)
kibarua/vi-: labourer(s)
kibiriti/vi-: match(es) – for lighting a fire
kiboko/vi-: hippopotamus(mi)
Kichina: Chinese, Chinese language
kidonge/vi-: pill(s)
Kifaransa: French, French language
kifaru/vi-: rhino(s)
kifundo/vi-: ankle(s)
Kihindi: Hindi, Hindi language
Kihispania: Spanish, Spanish language
Kiingereza: English, English language
kijiko/vi-: spoon(s)
kikao/vi-: meeting(s)
Kimaasai: Maasai, Maasai language
kinyozi/vi-: barber(s)
kipofu/vi-: blind person(s)
Kireno: Portuguese, Portuguese language
kisu/vi-: knife(ves)
Kiswahili: Swahili, Swahili language
kitabu/vi-: book(s)
kitanda/vi-: bed(s)
kituo/vi-: stop(s), station(s)
kiumbe/vi-: organism(s)
kiungo/vi-: body joint(s)
kiuno/vi-: waist(s)
kiziwi/vi-: deaf person(s)
mafuta: fat, oil
maji: water
majivu: ashes
matata: trouble
maziwa: milk
mazungumzo: conversation(s)
nabii/ma-: prophet(s)
nanasi/ma-: pineapple(s)
nesi/ma-: nurse(s)

ofisa/ma-: officer(s), official(s)
panga: rent, arrange
pata: get, receive
pera/ma-: guava(s)
rais/ma-: president(s)
rubani/ma-: pilot(s)
sikio/ma-: ear(s)
swali/ma-: question(s)
taka: want
tatizo/ma-: problem(s)
tawi/ma-: branch(es)
tumia: use, spend, exploit
tunda/ma-: fruit(s)
ua/ma-: flower(s)
unywele/nywele: hair(s)
vunja: break
waziri/ma-: minister(s)
wazo/ma-: thought(s)

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. *atunda*
2. *matawi*
3. *majua*
4. *maua*
5. *majivu*
6. *mapera*
7. *mafiga*
8. *majini*
9. *majembe*
10. *mazungumzo*
11. *Waliuliza maswali.*
12. *Alipata matatizo.*
13. *Maofisa watakuja kesho.*
14. *Tutanunua mananasi.*
15. *Ninataka yai.*
16. *Mawaziri*

17. *Majambazi*
18. *Marubani*
19. *Manabii*
20. *Manesi*

Answers to Practice Exercise B

21. *kituo*
22. *chura*
23. *kiungo*
24. *chuma*
25. *kiumbe*
26. *chama*
27. *chandarua*
28. *kinyozi*
29. *kitanda*
30. *kioo*
31. *Utahitaji vibiriti.*
32. *Vinyozi wanakata nywele.*
33. *Tulitumia chandarua juu ya kitanda.*
34. *Alivunja kifundo.*
35. *Tulipanga kikao.*
36. *Kihindi*
37. *Kihispania*
38. *Kichina*
39. *Kimaasai*
40. *Kiajemi*

Chapter 9

Swahili Noun Classes: N- and U-

This chapter will focus on two more noun classes in the Swahili noun class system namely the N- class and the U- class. We will begin with the N- class.

Section A: The N- Class

The N- class contains words mostly borrowed from other languages primarily English and Arabic. It also contains names of animals and relationship nouns. Due to the large number of borrowed words in Swahili, the N- class is the largest of all the noun classes. However, although the majority of borrowed words are contained in the N- class, some borrowed words can be found in other noun classes.

Nouns in the N- class are identical in both their singular and plural forms and therefore do not have singular or plural prefixes. The only way that singular and plural nouns are distinguished in this class is by the agreement that the noun takes with the subject prefix, object infix etc. Noun class agreements will be taught in future chapters. Here are a few categories of nouns that belong to the N- class:

1. Nouns borrowed from other languages:

baiskeli – bicycle(s)

meza – table(s)

barabara – road(s)

barafu – ice

kahawa – coffee

kalamu – pen(s), pencil(s)

inchi – inch(es)

dakika – minute(s)

bunduki – gun(s)

askari – guard(s)

polisi – police

2. Names of animals:

simba – lion(s)

twiga – giraffe(s)

pundamilia – zebra(s)

paka – cat(s)

mbwa – dog(s)

inzi – fly(ies) (any sort)

samaki – fish

farasi – horse(s)

nguruwe – pig(s)

3. Relationship nouns:

baba – father(s)

mama – mother(s)

dada – sister(s)

kaka – brother(s)

bibi – grandmother(s)

shangazi – paternal aunt(s)

rafiki – friend(s)

ndugu – relative(s)

There are some nouns in the N- class which do not belong to any of the categories listed above:

ndizi – banana(s)

nyumba – house(s)

chumvi – salt

chupa – bottle(s)

simu – telephone(s)

mboga – vegetable(s)

takataka – garbage

Practice Exercise A

Identify the noun classes to which the following nouns belong.

1. *mtoto*
2. *mama*
3. *ua*
4. *pesa*
5. *sigara*
6. *mgeni*
7. *kijiko*
8. *kikombe*
9. *sabuni*
10. *nyoka*

Section B: The U- class

Most nouns belonging to this class are abstract nouns, uncountable nouns and names of some countries. Almost all nouns in this class have the letter U- as a prefix when in singular form however a few nouns begin with the letter W- in the singular form. Here are a few categories of nouns which belong to the U- Class:

1. Abstract nouns:

- utata* – complication, complexity
- ufalme* – kingship
- uzee* – old age
- utoto* – childhood
- Uislamu* – Islam
- Ukristo* – Christianity
- ujana* – youthfulness
- uvivu* – laziness
- umoja* – unity
- wingi* – plenty
- uhuru* – freedom
- urefu* – length, depth, height
- uchofu* – tiredness
- ulaghai* – deceitfulness
- ulinganifu* – harmony
- ulinzi* – security, defence

ujamaa – relationship, socialism

uchoyo – greed

upendo – love

ukimwi – AIDS

Many of the above nouns are made from adjectives (example: *uvivu* from *vivu*, lazy), nouns from other noun classes (example: *ujamaa* from *jamaa*, relative) and some verbs (example: *upendo* from *penda*, love). Since they are abstract nouns, they do not have a plural form.

2. Uncountable nouns:

ugali – corn meal porridge

ubongo – brain matter

uboho – bone marrow

wali – rice

umeme – electricity

3. Names of countries or regions:

Ulaya – Europe

Uchina – China

Unguja – Zanzibar

Uingereza – Great Britain

Uhindi – India

Uarabuni – Arabia

Umaasai – Maasailand (the land of the Maasai tribe)

Since the above nouns are names of countries, they also do not have a plural form.

4. Nouns which have plural forms:

Nouns in this category have different ways of forming their plurals as listed below.

- The plural form is made by dropping the first letter of the noun as shown in the examples below:

ukuta – wall

kuta – walls

unywele – hair

nywele – hairs
ukumbi – lounge
kumbi – lounges
ukoja – necklace
koja – necklaces
utambi – wick
tambi – wicks
ushanga – bead
shanga – beads

- If after dropping the letter u, the noun begins with d, g or z, then the letter *n-* is prefixed to the noun.

udevu – beard
ndevu – beards
uduvi – shrimp
nduvi – shrimps
ugimbi – beer
ngimbi – beers

- If after dropping the letter u, the noun begins with b or v, then the letter *m-* is prefixed to the noun.

ubao – plank
mbao – planks
ubawa – wing
mbawa – wings
ubinja – whistle
mbinja – whistles

- If after dropping the letter u, the remaining part of the noun is Mono-syllabic, the letters *nyu-* are prefixed to the noun.

uzi – thread
nyuzi – threads
uso – face
nyuso – faces
ua – courtyard
nyua – courtyards
uma – fork
nyuma – forks

- If the noun begins with the letter *w*, the letter *w* is dropped and the letters *ny-* are prefixed to the noun.

waadhi – sermon

nyaadhi – sermons

wadhifa – position

nyadhifa – positions

wavu – net

nyavu – nets

waraka – document

nyaraka – documents

- Some nouns in the U- Class take the plural prefix of the JI-/MA-class after dropping their first letter *u-*.

uamuzi – judgment

maamuzi – judgments

uangalizi – management

maangalizi – management styles

ubainisho – clear evidence

mabainisho – clear evidence

There are some exceptions to the above rules. Example:

ulimi – tongue

ndimi – tongues

Practice Exercise B

Change the following nouns from singular to plural.

11. *ukoo*

12. *Urusi*

13. *wakati*

14. *ukali*

15. *utajiri*

16. *wino*

17. *ufa*

18. *udongo*

19. *upana*

20. *ufunguo*
21. *ubavu*
22. *uwingu*
23. *wingu*
24. *uwongo*
25. *ukosefu*

New Vocabulary

- askari*: guard(s), soldier(s)
barabara: road(s)
barafu: ice
bunduki: gun(s)
chumvi: salt
chupa: bottle(s)
dada: sister(s)
dakika: minute(s)
farasi: horse(s)
inchi: inch(es)
inzi: fly(ies) (any sort)
jamaa: relative(s)
kahawa: coffee
kalamu: pen(s), pencil(s)
kikombe/vi-: cup(s)
mbwa: dog(s)
meza: table(s)
ndizi: banana(s)
ndugu: relative(s)
nguruwe: pig(s)
nyoka: snake(s)
pesa: money
pundamilia: zebra(s)
sabuni: soap(s), detergent(s)
shangazi: paternal aunt(s)
sigara: cigarette(s)
samba: lion(s)
simu: telephone(s)

takataka: garbage
ua/ny-: courtyard(s)
uamuzi/maamuzi: decision(s), judgement(s)
uangalizi/maangalizi: management, management styles
Uarabuni: Arabia
ubainisho/bainisho: clear evidence
ubao/m-: plank(s), board(s)
ubavu/m-: rib(s)
ubawa/m-: wing(s)
ubinja/m-: whistle(s)
uboho: bone marrow
ubongo: brain matter
Uchina: China
uchofu: tiredness
uchoyo: greed
udevu/ndevu: beard(s)
udongo: dirt, soil
uduvi/nduvi: shrimp(s)
ufa/ny-: crack(s), fault(s)
ufalme: kingship
ufunguo/funguo: key(s)
ugali: corn meal porridge
ugimbi/ngimbi: beer(s)
Uhindi: India
uhuru: freedom, independence
Uingereza: Great Britain
Uislamu: Islam
ujamaa: relationship, socialism
ujana: youthfulness
ukali: fierceness
ukimwi: AIDS
Ukristo: Christianity
ukoja/koja: necklace(s)
ukoo/koo: family(ies)
ukosefu: deficit, shortage(s)
ukumbi/kumbi: lounge(s), meeting hall(s)
ukuta/kuta: wall(s)

ulaghai: deceitfulness
Ulaya: Europe
ulimi/ndimi: tongue(s)
ulinganifu: harmony
ulinzi: security, defence
uma/ny-: fork(s)
Umaasai: Maasailand
umeme: electricity, lightning
umoja: unity
Unguja: Zanzibar
upana: width
upendo: love
urefu: length, depth, height, distance
Urusi: Russia
ushanga/shanga: bead(s)
uso/ny-: face(s)
utajiri: wealth
utambi/tambi: wick(s)
utata: complication, complexity
utoto: childhood
uvivu: laziness
uwingu/mbingu: sky(ies)
uwongo/ma-: lie(s)
uzee: old age
uzi/ny-: thread(s), string(s)
vivu: lazy
waadhi/nyaadhi: sermon(s)
wadhifa/nyadhifa: position(s)
wakati/nyakati: time(s), moment(s)
wali: rice
waraka/nyaraka: document(s)
wavu/nyavu: net(s)
wingi: plenty
wingu/ma-: cloud(s)
wino: ink

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. M-/WA- class
2. N- class
3. JI-/MA- class
4. N- class
5. N- class
6. M-/WA- class
7. KI-/VI- class
8. KI-/VI- class
9. N- class
10. N- class

Answers to Practice Exercise B

11. *koo*
12. *Urusi*
13. *nyakati*
14. *ukali*
15. *utajiri*
16. *wino*
17. *nyufa*
18. *udongo*
19. *upana*
20. *funguo*
21. *mbavu*
22. *mbingu*
23. *mawingu*
24. *maongo*
25. *ukosefu*

Chapter 10

Swahili Noun Classes: PA- and KU- and Noun Class Agreement

This chapter will focus on two more noun classes in the Swahili noun class system namely the PA- Class and KU- class. In addition, the subject prefix agreement for all Swahili noun classes will be taught.

Section A: The PA- (Mahali Class)

Although this noun class contains only one noun i.e. *mahali* which means “location(s),” it is by far the most complicated of all noun classes as far as its agreements are concerned. Location in Swahili takes three types of agreements depending on the type of location.

The letter “P” denotes definite location;

The letter “K” denotes indefinite location or area; and

The letter “M” denotes inside location.

The agreements for the PA- Class will be taught in Section C. In Swahili, it is very simple to translate phrases containing information about a location. You simply add the locative suffix *-ni* at the end of the noun. This can be used to translate the prepositions “in,” “on” or “at,” depending on the context in English. Below are some examples:

kabati – cupboard

kabatini – in the cupboard

nyumba – house

nyumbani – in/at the house

njia – road

njiani – on/in the road

shule – school

shuleni – in/at school

Also, the locative suffix *-ni* can be replaced with the preposition *katika* placed in front of the noun, when translating the prepositions “in” or “at.” For example:

kabatini – in the cupboard

katika kabati – in the cupboard

There are some instances where the locative suffix *-ni* cannot be used to replace the preposition *katika*. *Katika* must be used with compound nouns which contain a noun and an adjective as well as nouns constructed using the *-a* of Association as shown below:

chuo kikuu – university

katika chuo kikuu – in/at the university

shirika la uma – public institution

katika shirika la uma – in/at the public institution

Practice Exercise A

Translate the following into Swahili.

1. at work
2. on the bed
3. in the bag
4. at the petrol station
5. in the Indian Ocean
6. in the world
7. on the river bank
8. on the tower
9. at the shop
10. in university

Section B: KU- Class

In Swahili, the KU- Class is only used with verbs and is used to form infinitives or gerunds. In English, an infinitive is the preposition “to” plus the verb (i.e. to go, to eat, to work etc). An infinitive can be used as a verb complement in a sentence (verbal infinitive) or as the subject of a sentence (verbal noun). A gerund is a verb form that ends in -ing. A gerund carries the same meaning as a present tense participle or can be used as the subject of a sentence (verbal noun). Below are some examples:

Infinitive - Verbal Infinitive

Ninapenda kusoma. – I like to read.

Gerund - Present tense participle

Ninapenda kusoma. – I like reading

Infinitive - Verbal Noun

Kusoma ni kuzuri. – To read is good.

Gerund - Verbal Noun

Kusoma ni kuzuri. – Reading is good.

Verbal nouns are nouns in the KU- Class and take agreements according to this class. This will be taught in the following section.

Although the negation of the KU- Class is rarely used, infinitives or gerunds in the KU- Class are negated by inserting the infix *-to-* between the infinitive *ku-* marker and the verb. Below are some examples for Bantu and Arabic verbs:

kusoma – read/reading

kutosoma – not to read/not reading

kulala – to sleep/sleeping

kutolala – not to sleep/not sleeping

kudharau – to ignore/ignoring

kutodharau – not to ignore/not ignoring

Below are some examples for Monosyllabic verbs. Please note that Monosyllabic verbs retain their *ku-* infinitive marker when negated.

kula – to eat/eating

kutokula – not to eat/not eating

kupa – to give/giving

kutokupa – not to give/not giving

Practice Exercise B

Change the following verbs into their infinitives and then negate them.

11. *panda*

12. *amka*

13. *ruka*

14. *imba*

15. *iba*

Translate the following sentences into Swahili.

16. You (sing.) want to sleep.

17. He/She does not like to cultivate.

18. We finished swimming.

19. Cheating is not good.

20. They want not to bargain

Section C: Subject Prefix Agreement

In this section, we will learn how the noun classes taught previously are used in a sentence. In Swahili, the noun dominates the sentence and when used with a verb, the Subject Prefix has to agree with the noun. Subject prefixes for the M-/WA- Class (Personal Subject Prefixes and their negations) were taught in Chapter 3. We will be focusing on the remaining noun classes in this section.

TABLE 10.1
Chart for Subject Prefixes and their Negations

Noun Class		Affirmative Subject Prefix	Negative Subject Prefix
Singular	M - 1 st person singular	<i>ni-</i>	<i>si-</i>
	2 nd person singular	<i>u-</i>	<i>hu-</i>
	3 rd person singular	<i>a-</i>	<i>ha-</i>
Plural	WA - 1 st person plural	<i>tu-</i>	<i>hatu-</i>
	2 nd person singular	<i>m-</i>	<i>ham-</i>
	3 rd person singular	<i>wa-</i>	<i>hawa-</i>
Singular	M-	<i>u-</i>	<i>hau-</i>
Plural	MI-	<i>i-</i>	<i>hai-</i>
Singular	JI-	<i>li-</i>	<i>hali-</i>
Plural	MA-	<i>ya-</i>	<i>haya-</i>
Singular	KI-	<i>ki-</i>	<i>haki-</i>
Plural	VI-	<i>vi-</i>	<i>havi-</i>
Singular	N-	<i>i-</i>	<i>hai-</i>
Plural	N-	<i>zi-</i>	<i>hazi-</i>
Singular	U-	<i>u-</i>	<i>hau-</i>
Plural	U-	<i>zi-</i>	<i>hazi-</i>
	PA-	<i>pa-</i>	<i>hapa</i>
	KU-	<i>ku-</i>	<i>haku-</i>
	M-	<i>m-</i>	<i>ham-</i>
	KU-	<i>ku-</i>	<i>kuto-</i>

Below are examples of Subject Prefix Agreements for all noun classes except Personal Subject Prefix Agreements which were covered in Chapter 3.

- Mti ulianguka.* – The tree fell down.
Miti ilianguka. – The trees fell down.
Yai halinuki. – The egg does not smell bad.
Mayai hayanuki. – The eggs do not smell bad.
Kitabu kimeanguka. – The book has fallen down.
Vitabu vimeanguka. – The books have fallen down.
Pete inameremeta. – The ring is shining.
Pete zinameremeta. – The rings are shining.
Ukuta hautasimama. – The wall will not stand.
Kuta hazitasimama. – The walls will not stand.
Mahali pananuka. – The place smells bad (definite location).
Mahali pananuka. – The places smell bad (definite location).
Mahali kunanuka. – The place smells bad (indefinite location).
Mahali kunanuka. – The places smell bad (indefinite location).
Mahali mnanuka. – The place smells bad (inside location).
Mahali mnanuka. – The places smell bad (inside location).
Kuandika kuzuri. – The writing is good.
Kuandika kuzuri. – The writings are good.

As you can see from Table 10.1 and the examples, the PA- and KU-Class keep the same subject prefixes when changing from singular to plural. Also, several noun classes share their affirmative and/or negative subject prefixes as shown in Table 10.2

TABLE 10.2
Shared Affirmative and Negative Subject Prefixes

	Noun Class	Affirmative Subject Prefix	Negative Subject Prefix
Singular	M-/MI-	<i>u-</i>	<i>hau-</i>
Singular	U-	<i>u-</i>	<i>hau-</i>
Singular	M-/WA- 2 nd person sing.	<i>u-</i>	<i>hu-</i>
Plural	M-/MI-	<i>i-</i>	<i>hai-</i>
Singular	N-	<i>i-</i>	<i>hai-</i>
Plural	N-	<i>zi-</i>	<i>hazi-</i>
Plural	U-	<i>zi-</i>	<i>hazi-</i>

It is also important to note that although nouns referring to humans, animals and insects may exist in other noun classes, they still take agreement with the M-/WA- Class. Exceptions to this rule will be taught in Chapter 38.

- Daktari atafika.* – The doctor will arrive.
- Madaktari watafika.* – The doctors will arrive.
- Simba hajalala.* – The lion has not yet slept.
- Simba hawajalala.* – The lions have not yet slept.
- Kipofu atakula.* – The blind person will eat.
- Vipofu watakula.* – The blind people will eat.

Also, note that all countries take agreement with the singular N-class even though some of them exist in the U- Class. As you can see in the example below the Subject Prefix is *i-* which is for the singular N-class, even though the word *Urusi* belongs in the U- class.

Urusi imeendelea. – Russia has progressed.

Lastly, if the inanimate noun(s) being referred to is/are unknown, the sentence will take agreement with the N- Class. For example:

- Itanukia.* – It will smell good.
- Zitanukia.* – They will smell good.

Practice Exercise C

Change the following singular sentences into plural when applicable.

21. *Ndoo imejaa maji.*
22. *Mti unanukia.*
23. *Gari halitasimama.*
24. *Ndege anaruka.*
25. *Mahali pameanguka.*
26. *Unywele uling"aa.*
27. *Kipofu anajenga nyumba.*
28. *Kitanda kimesimama.*
29. *Kucheka ni kubaya.*
30. *Mwanafunzi alimwaga mafuta.*

Translate the following sentences into English.

31. *Ndoo zimejaa maji.*
32. *Miti inanukia.*
33. *Magari hayatasimama.*
34. *Ndege wanaruka.*
35. *Mahali pameanguka.*
36. *Nywele ziling"aa.*
37. *Vipofu wanajenga nyumba.*
38. *Vitanda vimesimama.*
39. *Kucheka ni kubaya.*
40. *Wanafunzi walimwaga mafuta.*

New Vocabulary

- amka*: wake up
anguka: fall
Bahari ya Hindi: Indian Ocean
-baya: bad
danganya: cheat
dharau: ignore, despise
dunia: world(s), the Earth
iba: steal
imba: sing
jaa: fill
jenga: build
kabati/ma-: cupboard(s), locker(s)
mahali: place(s)
meremeta: shine, glitter
mfuko/mi-: bag(s), pocket(s), sack(s)
mnara/mi-: tower(s)
mwaga: spill, pour
ndoo: bucket(s)
ng"aa: shine
njia: way(s), method(s), road(s), path(s)
nuka: smell bad, stink
nukia: smell good, scent
ogelea: swim, wash
patina: haggle, bargain
pete: ring(s)

petroli: petrol, gasoline
shirika/ma- la/ya uma: public institution(s)
si: is not/are not
simama: stand
ukingo/kingo: riverbank(s)
-zuri: good, beautiful

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. *kazini*
2. *kitandani*
3. *mfukoni*
4. *katika kituo cha petroli*
5. *katika Bahari ya Hindi*
6. *duniani*
7. *ukingoni*
8. *mnarani*
9. *dukani*
10. *katika chuo kikuu*

Answers to Practice Exercise B

11. *kupanda – kutopanda*
12. *kuamka – kutoamka*
13. *kuruka – kutoruka*
14. *kuimba – kutoimba*
15. *kuiba – kutoiba*
16. *Unataka kulala.*
17. *Hapendi kulima.*
18. *Tulimaliza kuogelea.*
19. *Kudanganya si kuzuri.*
20. *Wanataka kutopatana.*

Answers to Practice Exercise C

21. *Ndoo zimejaa maji.*
22. *Miti inanukia.*
23. *Magari hayatasimama.*

24. *Ndege wanaruka.*
25. *Mahali pameanguka.*
26. *Nywele ziling"aa.*
27. *Vipofu wanajenga nyumba.*
28. *Vitanda vimesimama.*
29. *Kucheka ni kubaya.*
30. *Wanafunzi walimwaga mafuta.*
31. The buckets have been filled with water.
32. The trees smell good.
33. The vehicles will not stop.
34. The birds are flying.
35. The place (definite) has fallen down.
36. The hairs were shining.
37. The blind people are building the house(s).
38. The beds have stood upright.
39. To laugh is bad/ Laughing is bad.
40. The students spilled oil.

2.

SWAHILI VOCABULARY



a – afterwards

A

det	a/an	a
n	ability	uwezo
	able	
v	1. be able to	weza
adj	2. talented	tunukiwa
n	Aboriginal person	mu-aboringinal
	about	
adv	1. approximately	karibu
prep	2. concerning	kuhusu
	above	
prep	1. over	juu
phrase	2. the example above	mfano tangulizi
adj	absent	hakuna
adv	absolutely	kabisa
n	accent	tamshi
v	accept	kubali
adj	acceptable	kubalika
n	accident	ajali
adj	accidental	ki-ajali
v	accompany	pamoja
n	account	hesabu
v	ache	maumivu/ugua
v	achieve	pata
n	achievement	kupata
prep	across	upande
v	act	fanya
n	activity	utendaji
n	actor	muigizaji
v	add	ongeza
n	addition	ongeza/nyongeza
n	address	anwani
n	adjective	kivumishi
	admit	kubali
v	1. tell the truth about	ungama
v	2. allow to enter	ingiza
v	adopt (take on)	kubalisha
n	adult	mtu mzima
n	advantage	faida
n	adventure	shani
n	adverb	kielezi
n	advice	mawaitha
n	aerobics	mazoezi
n	aeroplane	ndege/aeropleni
v	afford	weza
adj	afraid	ogopa
prep	after	baada
n	afternoon	jioni
adv	afterwards	baadaye

again – argue

adv	again (one more time)	tena
	against	
prep	1. next to	karibu na
prep	2. anti	kinyume
n	age	umri
adv	ago	zamani
v	agree	kubali
	aid	
n	1. help	saidia
v	2. help	usaidizi
v	aim (try)	nia
n	air	hewa
n	airport	kiwanja cha ndege
adj	all (every)	wote
v	allow	ruhusu
adv	alone	pweke
adv	aloud	kwa sauti
n	alphabet	alphabeti
adv	already	tayari
adv	also (too)	pia/vile vile
conj	although	ijapokuwa
adv	altogether	pamoja
adv	always	kawaida
prt v	am *see be	
n	ambulance	ambulansi
n	amount	kiwango
n	amphibian	mnyama aishiye arthini na majini
v	analyse (study)	changanua
conj	and	na
n	angle (mathematical usage)	penbe
adj	angry	kasirika
n	animal	mnyama
n	ankle	kifundo
adj	annual	mwaka
	answer	
n	1. reply	jibu
v	2. reply	itika
adj	any	yeyote
adv	anymore	na-zaidi
pron	anyone	yeyote
pron	anything	chochote
adv	apart (separate)	kando
n	apology	radhi
v	appear (come into view)	onekana/tokea
n	apple	tunda
n	appointment	mwaliko/uteuzi
prt v	are *see be	
n	area	eneo/uwanja
v	argue	jadili

argument – autumn

n	argument	ubishi/mzozo
v	arise	inuka
n	arm (part of body)	mkono
n	army	jeshi
prep	around	humuhumu
	arrange	
v	1. put in order	rekebisha
v	2. make plans	faya mipango
v	arrest (take into custody)	tia nguvuni/shika
v	arrive	wasili
n	arrow	mshale
n	art	sanaa
n	artist	msanii
adv	as (to such a degree)	kama
n	ash	jivu
adj	ashamed	haibika/ona haya
v	ask	uliza
v	assemble	kusanya
n	assembly	baraza
n	assignment (for school)	mazoezi
v	assist	saidia
n	assistant	msaidizi
prep	at	kwenye
pt v	ate *see eat	
n	athletics	riadha
phrase	athletics carnival	tamasha la wana riadha
n	atom	atomu
v	attach	shikanisha
	attack	
n	1. fight	vita
v	2. fight	vita/pigana
	attempt	
n	1. try	jaribu
v	2. try	jaribu
v	attend	hudhuria
n	attendance	hudhuria
n	attention	uangalifu/usikivu
v	attract	vutiya/pendeza
adj	attractive	inavutia
n	aunt	shangazi
abbrev	Aussie *see Australian	
n	Australia	Australia
adj	Australian	mu-Australia
n	Australian flag	bendera ya Australia
n	Australiana	yaki-Australia
n	author	mwandishi
n	autumn	majiri ya joto puguani

average – basketball

n	average	1. arithmetical mean	kiwango cha katikati
adj		2. ordinary	kawaida
v	avoid		zuiya/kwepa/epuka
adj	awake		amka
adv	away		mbali
prep	away from		kuwa mbali na
adj	awful		mbaya
pt v	awoke	*see awake	
n	axe		shoka
B			
n	baby		mtoto
	back		
n		1. body part	mgogo
adv		2. opposite front	nyuma
phrase		3. give it back	rudisha
n	backbone		nguzo/uti wa mgogo
n	background		picha ya nyuma
n	backpack		egeza gari vibaya
n	backyard		upande wa yuma
adj	bad		mbya
n	badminton		mchezo
n	bag		begi
v	bake		pika keki
v	balance		sawazisha/mabaki
n	balcony		kipumzikio
adj	bald		kipara
	ball		
n		1. toy	mpira wa mtoto
colloq phr		2. have a ball (good time)	wakati mwema
n	balloon		baluni
n	banana		ndizi
n	band (music group)		bendi
n	bangle		bangili/pochi
n	bank		benki/kando
	bar		
n		1. place to drink	kilabu
v		2. stop from something	wacha
n		3. metal rod	kipande cha chuma
n	barbecue		nyama choma
abbrev	barbie	*see barbecue	
adj	bare		kavu/tupu
n	barrier		kizuishi
n	base (bottom)		chini/msingi
n	basin (wash)		beseni/bakuli
n	basket		kikapu
n	basketball		mpira wa kikapu

basketball court – bid

n	basketball court	kiwanja cha mpira wa kikapu
	bat	
n	1. sporting equipment	fimbo
n	2. animal	popo
n	bath	oga
n	bathroom	bafu
n	battle	vita
n	bay (inlet)	kando/ufuoni
abbrev	BBQ *see barbecue	
v	be	kuwa
n	beach	uvuoni
n	beach towel	taulo
n	beach umbrella	mwavuli
n	beak	mdomo
	beam	
n	1. ray of light	muali
n	2. wooden plank	ubao
n	bean	maharagwe
n	beard	ndevu
	beat	
v	1. win	shinda
v	2. hit	pinga
n	3. rhythm	mpingo
adj	beautiful	vizuri/maridadi
pt v	became *see become	
conj	because	kwa sababu
v	become	kuwa
n	bed	kitanda
n	bedroom	chumba cha kulala
n	bee	nyuki
n	beef	nyama ya ngombe
pt v	began *see begin	
v	begin	tangulia
n	beginner	mtangulizi/mwanzilishi
v	behave	tenda/jiweka
n	behaviour	tabia/mwenendo/adabu
prep	behind	nyuma
n	bell	kengele
v	belong	ni ya
n	belt	mshipi
n	bench	kiti
v	bend	kunja
pt v	bent *see bend	
adj	best	bora zaidi
v	bet	bahatisha
adj	better	bora
prep	between	katikati/kati ya
n	bicycle	baiskeli
v	bid	zabuni

big – boat

adj	big	kubwa
abbrev	bike *see bicycle	
	bill	
n	1. money	pesa
n	2. account	akaoti
n	3. of a bird	ya ndege
n	bird	ndege
	birth	
n	1. act of being born	jifunguwa/kuzaa
phrase	2. date of birth	tarehe ya kuzaliwa
n	birthday	sikukuu ya kuzaliwa
n	biscuit	biskuti
	bit	
n	1. small piece	kidogo
phrase	2. a little bit	kidogo
pt v	3. *see bite	
v	bite	uma
adj	black (colour)	nyeusi
n	blackboard	bodi nyeusi
n	blade	upanga
	blame	
n	1. censure	laani
v	2. lay responsibility with	lazimika
adj	blank	kavu/tupu
n	blanket	blanketi
v	bleed	vuja damu
pt v	blew *see blow	
	blind	
adj	1. unable to see	upovu
n	2. window covering	paziya
n	blindness	upovu
	block	
n	1. child's toy	mpira
v	2. stop from doing something	kusimamisha jambo
phrase	3. a block away	kupita nyumba moja
phrase	4. block of flats	nyumba ya orofa
adj	blond	mrembo
n	blood	damu
adj	bloody	damu damu
	blow	
n	1. hit	gonga/piga
v	2. pertaining to wind	kuhusu upepo
phr v	3. blow up	puliza/lipua
	blue	
adj	1. colour	rangi
colloq	2. sad	kasirika/huzuni
n	board (stiff material)	mbao/bodi
n	board game	mchezo wa bodi
n	boat	mashua/dau

body – break

n	body	mwili
v	boil	chemsha
	bold	
adj	1. as typeface	mrembo
adj	2. daring	ujasili
n	bomb	bomu
n	bone	mfupa
n	book	kitabu
n	bookshelf	rafu ya kitabu
n	boomerang	rudi tena
	boot	
n	1. of car	buti
n	2. footwear	kiatu
	border	
n	1. as of country, state	mpaka
n	2. edge	pembeni/ukingo
adj	bored	kuboeka
adj	boring	kutofurahisha
v	borrow	omba/kopa
	boss	
n	1. person in charge	msimamizi
v	2. tell what to do	kuamrisha
adj	both	pamoja
v	bother	sumbua
n	bottle	chupa
	bottom	
n	1. body part	tako
n	2. lower edge	chini
pt v	bought *see buy	
v	bounce	rukaruka
n	bowl	bakuli/kombe
n	box	sanduku
n	boy	mvulana
abbrev	bra *see brassiere	
n	brain	ubongo
	branch	
n	1. of tree	kipande cha mti
v	2. separate	gawanya/achanisha
n	brassiere	sindiria
adj	brave	shujaa
adv	bravely	kishujaa
n	bread	mkate
n	breadth	pumzi
	break	
n	1. pause	pumziko
v	2. opposite of fix	vunja
phr v	3. break down (as in car)	kuharibika
phr v	4. break down (as health)	kuwa mgonjwa

breakfast – bus stop

phr v	5. break in (as housebreak)	kuvunja nyumba
phr v	6. break up (for holidays)	kwenda likizo
n	breakfast	kifungua kinywa
n	breath	pumua/hema
v	breathe	pumzi
v	breed	zalisha
n	brick	tofali
n	bridge	daraja
	bright	
adj	1. shiny	metameta/angaza
adj	2. clever	mwerevu
v	brighten	angazisha
adj	brilliant	elevu
v	bring	leta
adj	broad	pana
n	broccoli	mboga
pt v	broke *see break	
colloq	broke (penniless)	kutokuwa na pesa
phrase	broken arm	kuvunjika mkono
n	brother	ndugu wa kiume
pt v	brought *see bring	
n	brush	brashi
n	bucket	kikapu/ndoo
v	build	jenga
pt v	built *see build	
n	bulb (electric light)	globu
n	bullet	risasi
	bully	
n	1. person who harasses others	mtu wa kisirani/muudhi
v	2. harass	subua/chokoza
	bunch	
n	1. group	kundi
phrase	2. bunch of flowers	kifungo cha mauwa
	burn	
n	1. injury caused by fire	maumivu kitokana na moto
v	2. be on fire	chomeka
v	burst	lipuka
v	bury	zika
n	bus	basi
	bush	
n	1. outback	koko
n	2. small tree	msitu
	business	
n	1. company	kampuni
colloq phr	2. mind your own business	sugulika na kazi yako
n	bus stop	kitua cha basi

bust – cardboard

	bust	
colloq	1. break	vunjika
n	2. female body part	matiti
adj	busy	shughuli
conj	but	lakini
n	butcher	mchinjaji
n	button	chini
v	buy	nunua
prep	by	kwa
C		
n	cabbage	kabeji
n	cable	waya
n	cafe	hoteli/mkahawa
n	cage	pango
n	cake	keki
v	calculate	hesabu
n	calculator	machine ya kuhesabia
n	calendar	kalenda
	call	
v	1. name	jina/ita
n	2. as for phone	piga simu
phr v	3. call for	simu ya/taka
phr v	4. call off	simamisha
phr v	5. call out	itana
	calm	
adj	1. peaceful	salaam/tulifu
phr v	2. calm down	tulia
pt v	came *see come	
n	camera	kamera
v	camp	kambi
	can	
v	1. able to	weza
n	2. steel container	mkebe
n	candle	mshumaa
n	canteen (tuck shop)	kantini
	cap	
n	1. headwear	kofia/kitambaa cha kichwa
n	2. top	kifuniko/juu
	capital	
n	1. important location	mji mkuu
phrase	2. capital letter	herufi kubwa
n	capsicum	pilipili
n	capsule	tembe/kapsuli
n	captain	kapteni
n	car	gari
n	card	kadi
n	cardboard	kadbodi

care – chalk

v	care	jali
adj	careful	angalifu
adv	carefully	taratibu
n	carnival	tamasha
n	carrot	karoti
	carry	
v	1. take	chukuwa/beba
phr v	2. carry on (keep going)	endelea
	case	
n	1. bag	begi
phrase	2. just in case	kama hauta
n	cash	pesa/fedha
	cassette	
phrase	1. audio cassette	kaseti ya kusikiza
phrase	2. video cassette	kaseti ya video
	cast	
n	1. of a play	mchezo
v	2. throw	rusha/tupa
n	castle	nyumba kubwa
adj	casual	kibarua/nadra
n	cat	paka
	catch	
phrase	1. catch a train	panda gari la moshi
phrase	2. catch a cold	shika homa
colloq phr	3. catch on (understand)	fahamu/elewa
phr v	4. catch up (reach)	karibiya/wasili
pt v	caught *see catch	
	cause	
n	1. reason	sababu
v	2. make happen	sababisha
n	cave	pango
abbrev	CD *see compact disc	
n	ceiling	dari
n	cell	shina
n	cent	senti
adj	central	katikati
	central processing unit	
n	1. pertaining to computer	Injini ya komputa
abbrev	2. CPU	
n	centre	katikati
n	century	karne
n	cereal	nafaka
n	ceremony	sherehe
adj	certain	weza
adv	certainly	wezekana
n	chain (jewellery)	mkufu
n	chair	kiti
n	chalk	chaki

chance – cigarette

n	chance	nafasi
	change	
n	1. money	chenji
v	2. alter	badili/geuza
phrase	3. change one's mind	badilisha mawazo
phrase	4. change clothes	badilisha mavazi/nguo
adj	changeable	kigeugeu
n	change room	chumba cha kubadilisha nguo
n	channel	mlango/njia
n	chapter	sura
n	character (literary)	tabia/silika/namna
	charge	
n	1. cost	bei
v	2. as for battery	weka moto
phr v	3. in charge	msimamizi
v	chase	kimbiza
adj	cheap	rahisi
v	cheat	danganya
v	check	chunguza/angalia
n	cheek (body part)	shavu
colloq	cheeky (naughty)	mjeuri
	cheer	
v	1. make happy	furahisha/shangilia
n	2. sound expressing enthusiasm	cheka
n	chemist	duka la dawa
n	cheque	cheki/hundi
n	cherry	switi ya sini
n	chess	mchezo wa chesi
n	chest	kifua
n	chewing gum	peremende ya kutafuna
	chicken	
n	1. animal	kuku
colloq	2. not brave	mwoga
n	child	mtoto/mwana
adj	childish	kitoto
n	chin	kidevu
	chips	
n	1. hot variety	viazi
n	2. cold crisps	chipsi baridi
n	chocolate	chocoleti
n	choir	waimbaji
v	choose	chagua
	chop	
n	1. meat cut	kata nyama
v	2. cut	kata
pt v	chose *see choose	
n	church	kanisa
n	cigarette	sigara

cinema – coin

n	cinema	sinema
n	circle	duara
adj	circular	mviringo
n	circumference	mzuguko
n	city	mji mkuu
	claim	
n	1. assertion	dai
v	2. assert	dai
	clap	
n	1. loud noise	makofi
v	2. show appreciation	piga makofi
n	class (group of students)	darasa
n	classmate	wanafunzi wenzake
n	classroom	darasa
phrase	classroom block	sehemu ya darasa
n	claw	kucha
n	clay	mchanga/udongo
	clean	
v	1. remove dirt	kusafisha
adj	2. opposite dirty	safi
adj	clear	wazi/safi
adj	clever	mwerevu/mjanja
n	cliff	mwamba
v	climb	panda juu
v	cling	ninginia/ambata
n	clock	saa ya mezani au ukutani
	close	
v	1. shut	kufunga
adj	2. near	karibu
adj	closed	fungwa
n	cloth	vazi/nguo
n	clothes	mavazi/nguo
n	clothes line	safu ya nguo
n	clothing	nguo/vazi
n	cloud	wingu
adj	cloudy	mawingu mengi
	club	
n	1. group of people	chama
n	2. implement	tekeleza
n	clue	dalili/elekezo
n	coal	mawe
n	coast	pwani
adj	coastal	ya pwani
n	coat	kabuti/koti
n	cockatoo	ndege/mkulima
n	coconut	nazi
n	coffee	kahawa
n	coin	sarafu

cold – concern

n	cold	1. illness	homa
adj		2. opposite hot	baridi
adj	cold-blooded		muaji
n	collar		kola
v	collect		kusanya
n	collection		kusanyo
n	college		chuo kikuu
	colour		
n		1. hue	rangi
v		2. make colourful	paka rangi
adj	colourful		maridadi
	comb		
n		1. hair accessory	kichana
v		2. do one's hair	chana
	come		
v		1. move towards	karibia/njoo
phr v		2. come from	kutoka kwa
phr v		3. come out (as in sun)	kuchomoza
colloq phr		4. Come on! (Let's go.)	twende
adj	comfortable		starehe
n	comic		mchezo
n	comic strip		andiko la mchezo
v	command		agizo/amri
adj	common		kawaida
n	commonsense		hisia
n	communication		mawasiliano
n	community		jamii
n	compact disc		kaseti
n	company (business)		kampuni
v	compare		linganisha
n	compass		bikari
n	compasses (geometry equipment)		kompasi
v	compete		shindana
n	competition		shindano
v	complain		lalamika
n	complaint		lalamiko
	complete		
v		1. finish	maliza
adj		2. finished	malizika
v	complicate		gumisha/tatanisha
adj	complicated		ni ngumu/tatizo
n	complication		ugumu/mashaka
n	composer		muandishi/msanii
n	composition		utungo/insha
n	computer		kompyuta/kichakato
n	concern		husu/pasa

concerned – couple

adj	concerned	husiana
n	concert	kuigiza
n	condition	hali
n	cone (geometrical shape)	koni
v	confuse	changanya/vuruga mawazo
v	congratulate	pongeza
v	connect	unganisha
n	connection	unganisho
adj	conscious	kupata fahamu/tanabahi
v	consider	fikiri
phr v	consist of	ina
n	consonant	konsonanti
v	contain	ina
n	container	kikebeo
n	contents (as of a book)	yaliyomo/faharasa
v	continue	endelea
	contrast	
n	1. difference	tofauti
v	2. find differences	tofautisha
v	control	endesha
n	conversation	mazungumzo
	convict	
n	1. person convicted of a crime	mahabusu
v	2. find guilty of a crime	hukumu
v	cook	pika
	cool	
adj	1. opposite warm	baridi
colloq	2. trendy	mzuri/poa
	copy	
n	1. imitation	uigaji/fuasa
v	2. imitate	iga
n	corner	kona
	correct	
v	1. make right	sahihisha
adj	2. right	sahihi/haki
n	corridor	ukumbi
v	cost	bei/gharama
n	cotton	pamba
n	cotton wool	uzi wa pamba
	cough	
n	1. the act or sound of coughing	kohoa
v	2. expel air from the lungs	kukohoa
n	council	diwani
n	counsellor	hatibu/mshauri
	country	
n	1. political division	chama
n	2. opposite city	nchi
n	couple	bibi na bwana

courage – crush

n	courage	moyo
adj	courageous	hodari/shujaa
	course	
n	1. set of lessons	mafunzo/masomo
n	2. way to go	mwelekeo
phrase	3. of course (naturally)	kwa kawaida
n	court (as tennis court)	uwanja
n	cousin	ndugu/binamu
	cover	
n	1. outside of a book	jalada/kava
v	2. put cover on something	funika
n	coward	mwoga
n	crab	mnyama wa mjini
v	crack	ufa
	craft	
n	1. vessel	chombo
n	2. handiwork	kazi ya mkono/sana
	crash	
n	1. collision	pigana/gongana
v	2. shatter	tawanya
adj	crazy	wazimu/kichaa
n	creature	kiumbe
n	creek	hori
v	creep	tambaa
n	crescent (shape)	umbo
	cricket	
n	1. insect	mdudu
n	2. sport	mchezo
	criminal	
n	1. person who commits crime	mvunja sheria/jambazi
adj	2. against the law	mvunja sheria
n	crocodile	mamba
adj	crooked	kombokombo
n	crops	mimea
	cross	
n	1. a symbol of two intersecting lines	kia
adj	2. angry	hasira/kasirika
v	3. move from one side to another	kupitana
phr v	4. cross out (delete)	vuta
n	crossword	mchezo wa kujaza maneno
n	crowd	umati
adj	crowded	kujazana
adj	cruel	katili
	crush	
v	1. flatten	bomoa
colloq	2. a liking for someone	kumpenda mtu/kutamani

cry – darkness

n	cry	1. loud utterance	kilio
v		2. weep	lia
n	cube		mcheraba
n	cucumber		tango
n	cupboard		kabati
v	cure		tibu
adj	curious		dadisi/chunguza
	curl		
n		1. ringlet of hair	kifungo cha nywele
v		2. form curls	kuwa nyepesi/nyororo
n	currency (money)		pesa/fedha
	current		
adj		1. topical	sasa
n		2. moving water	mto
n	curtain		pazia
n	curve		mkunjo
n	custom		mila/desturi
n	customer		mteja
v	cut		kata
adj	cute		mrembo
	cycle		
v		1. ride	endesha
n		2. circular event	hali ya mviringo
n	cylinder		mcheduara
D			
abbrev	dad *see father		
abbrev	daddy *see father		
adj	daily		kila siku
	damage		
n		1. injury	maumivu/jeraha
v		2. cause injury	sababisha jeraha
adj	damp		unyevu
n	dampener (type of bread)		unyevu zaidi
	dance		
n		1. social gathering for dancing	kusanyiko la wacheza densi
v		2. rhythmical movement	densi
n	danger		hatari
adj	dangerous		hatari
adj	daring		mjasiri
	dark		
adj		1. opposite light	giza
adj		2. opposite fair	mbaya
n	darkness		giza

date – dependable

n	date 1. calendar	kalenda
n	2. fruit	tunda
n	daughter	binti
n	day	siku/mchana
adj	dead	kufa
adj	deaf	kiziwi
	deal	
n	1. amount	kiwango
v	2. give out	patiana/peana
n	death	kifo
n	debt	deni
	decay	
n	1. decomposition	kuoza
v	2. rot	oza
v	deceive	danganya
v	decide	amua
n	decimal	kidude
n	decision	uwamuzi
n	deck (of house)	nyumba
v	declare	tangaza/julisha
	decrease	
n	1. diminution	upungufu
v	2. become smaller in number	punguza
adj	deep	undani/refu
	defeat	
n	1. loss	poteza
v	2. beat	shindwa
v	define	elezea
	degree	
n	1. of temperature	joto/baridi
n	2. amount	kiwango
	delay	
n	1. hold up	chelewesha
v	2. put off till later	aherisha
abbrev	deli *see delicatessen	
n	delicatessen	maankuli/mchuzi
n	delight	furahi
adj	delightful	furahia
v	deliver	fikisha
	demand	
n	1. urgent requirement	hitaji la haraka
v	2. ask for with authority	kudai
v	demonstrate	onyesha/fundisha
n	demonstration	onyesho/maandamano
n	dentist	daktari wa meno
v	depend	tegemea
adj	dependable	kumtegemea

dependant – discussion

adj	dependant	jitegemea
n	depth	undani
v	descend	kwenda chini
v	describe	elezea
n	description	elezeo
	desert	
n	1. hot, dry place	jangwa
v	2. leave	kwenda/toka/ondoka
v	deserve	stahili
	desire	
n	1. longing	tarajia/husudu
v	2. wish for	takia/tamani
n	desk	dawati
v	destroy	haribu
n	destruction	uharibifu
	detail	
n	1. minute part	kanaga
v	2. describe fully	kanaganaga
n	detective	jasusi/kachero
n	detention (pertaining to school)	jela
v	dial	piga
n	diameter	kipenyo
	diamond	
n	1. precious stone	mawe ya zamani/uru
adj	2. shape	sura/umbo
n	diary	shajara/kalenda
n	dictionary	kamusi
pt v	did *see do	
n	didgeridoo	chumbo cha mziki cha wa-Aboriginal
v	die	kufa/kuaga dunia
n	diet	chakula
adj	different	tofauti/ingine
adj	difficult	ngumu
v	dig	chimba
n	dingo	mnyama/mbwa mwitu
n	dinner	chakula cha mchana
n	dinosaur	dinosa
n	direction	elekezo
n	dirt	uchafu
adj	dirty	chafu
v	disagree	bishana/kataa
n	disagreement	ubishi/kutokubaliana
n	disc (round, flat object)	diski
n	disco	densi/disko
v	discover	vumbua
n	discovery	uvumbuzi
v	discuss	jadili
n	discussion	majadiliano

disease – drop

n	disease	ugonjwa/maradhi
n	dish	sahani
n	dishwasher (appliance)	machine ya kuoshea vyombo
n	disk (of computers)	diski
n	disk drive	diski mdadi
v	dislike	dharau/chukia
v	dismiss	tupilia/fukuza
n	distance	umbali
v	disturb	sumbua
v	dive	tumbukia/piga mbizi
v	divide	gawanya
n	division	mgawanyiko
v	divorce	talaka
	do	
v	1. perform	fanya
phrase	2. What does she do? (What's her job?)	Anafanya kazi gani?/Kazi yake ni ipi?
phrase	3. How do you do? (greeting)	habari yako/hujambo
n	doctor	tabibu/daktari
n	document	cheti
n	dog	mbwa
n	dollar	dola
n	door	mlango
v	double	mara mbili
	doubt	
n	1. uncertainty	shaka
v	2. hesitate to believe	kutia shaka
v	drag	vuruta
n	dragon	mnyama wa kutisha
pt v	drank *see drink	
v	draw	chora
n	drawer	sanduku/mchoraji
	dream	
n	1. images during sleep	ndoto
v	2. imagine	ota
pt v	dreamt *see dream	
	dress	
n	1. woman's clothing	vazi la manamke/kitenge
v	2. to put on clothing	vaa nguo
pt v	drew *see draw	
	drink	
n	1. beverage	kinywaji
v	2. swallow liquid	meza kinywaji
v	drive	endesha
n	driveway	njia ya gari
	drop	
n	1. small amount of water	tone
v	2. let fall	angusha

drought – email

n	drought	ukame/kiangasi
pt v	drove *see drive	
v	drown	zama
n	drug	dawa
n	drum	deramu/ngoma
n	drunk (person who drinks too much alcohol)	kulewa/mlevi
adj	dry	kavu
pt v	dug *see dig	
adj	dumb (of speech)	kiziwi
prep	during	wakati
	dust	
n	1. dirt	uchafu/vumbi
v	2. clean of dirt	panguza/osha
n	duster	kivutia uchafu
n	duty (something you must do)	jukumu/wajibu
E		
n	eagle	mwewe/tai
n	ear	sikio
adj	early	mapema
v	earn	mapato/mshahara
n	earring	hereni
n	earth	arhi
n	east	magharibi
adj	easy	rahisi
v	eat	kula
n	echidna	mnyama
n	edge	kando/ukingo
v	edit	hariri
n	education	elimu
n	effect	tukio/athari
n	effort	juhudi/bidii
n	egg	yai
adj	either	ama/moja wapo
n	elastic	inavutika
n	elbow	kisugudi/kiko
	elder	
adj	1. older than	mzee kuliko
n	2. older person	mzee
n	election	uchaguzi
n	electrician	fundi wa stima
n	electricity	stima/umeme
	email	
n	1. Internet letter	barua pepe
v	2. send an Internet letter	tuma barua pepe

embarrass – excellent

v	embarrass	haibisha
adj	embarrassed	haibika/fadhaika
n	emergency	tharura
n	emigrant	mhamiaji
n	emotion	hisia
v	employ	ajiri
n	employee	muajiriwa/mfanya kazi
n	employer	muajiri
n	employment	kazi/ajira
adj	empty	kavu/tupu
n	emu	emu-ndege
v	encourage	tia changamoto
	end	
n	1. termination	simamisha
v	2. finish	mwisho
n	enemy	adui/hasimu
	engaged	
adj	1. busy	shugili nyingi
adj	2. soon to be married	oza
n	engine	ingini
v	enjoy	furahia
adj	enormous	kubwa mno
adj	enough	tosha
v	enquire	uliza
v	enter	ingia
v	entertain	burudisha
n	entertainment	burudisho/tamasha
n	entrance	mlango
n	entry	kiingilio
n	envelope	bahasha
n	environment	mazingira
adj	equal	sawa
n	equator	ikweta
n	equipment	kifaa
	escape	
n	1. an act of escaping	toroka/ponyoka
v	2. get away	kutoka/pona
adj	even (divisible by two)	gawika/sawa sawa
n	evening	jioni
n	event	tukio
adj	every	kila
abbrev	exam *see examination	
n	examination	mtihani
	example	
n	1. illustration	mfano
abbrev	2. e.g.	
adj	excellent	mzuri sana/bora

exchange – factory

n	exchange	1. act of exchanging	badilisha
v		2. give up for an equivalent	biashara
v	excite		chochea
adj	excited		furahia
n	excitement		furahisho/msisimko
adj	exciting		furahisha
n	excursion		matembezi
	excuse		
n		1. justification	sababu
v		2. pardon	samehe/radhi
int		3. Excuse me!	tafadhali!/samahani!
	exercise		
n		1. physical work	mazoezi
n		2. class work	zoezi
n		3. exercise book	daftari
	exit		
n		1. way out	kutoka
v		2. go out	toka inje
v	expect		tazamia
adj	expensive		ghali
	experience		
n		1. thing undergone	tajiriba
v		2. undergo	pitia
	experiment		
n		1. science trial	jaribio
v		2. try something	jaribu
v	explain		eleza
n	explanation		maelezo/hoja
v	explode		lipusha
v	explore		vumbua/peleleza
	express		
adj		1. fast	haraka
v		2. say	sema
	expression		
n		1. on face	kauli
n		2. in words	kwa maneno
adj	extra		ziada
n	eye		jicho
n	eyebrow		nywele za jicho/unyuzi
F			
	face		
n		1. part of body	uso
phrase		2. face the front	angalia/tazama mbele
colloq phr		3. Face it! (believe it)	amini!
n	fact		jambo
n	factory		kiwanda

fade – fence

v	fade	parara/fifia
v	fail	anguka/kosa
	faint	
adj	1. not dark	dimu
v	2. become unconscious	poteza fahamu/zimia
	fair	
adj	1. just	adili
adj	2. light	nuru
adv	fairly (quite)	vikamilifu
n	fairy	vizuri
v	fall	anguka
adj	false	uwongo
adj	familiar	kawaida
	family	
n	1. kin	ndugu
n	2. family tree	jamii
adj	famous	mashuhuri
	fan	
n	1. great admirer	shabiki
n	2. equipment to blow air	fani
adj	far	mbali
n	fare (cost for trip)	nauli
n	farm	shamba
n	fashion	fashoni
adj	fashionable	kuwa fashoni
	fast	
adv	1. quick	haraka
adv	2. forward in time	bila kuchelewa
v	3. go without food	kuwa na njaa
v	fasten	harakisha
adj	fat	nono
n	father	baba
n	fault	kosa
n	favour	upendeleo
adj	favourite	pendeleo/chaguo
n	fax	nakunishi
	fear	
n	1. feeling of impending danger	woga
v	2. be afraid	ogopa
n	feather	ubawa/unyoya
v	feed	lisha
	feel	
v	1. as emotion	hisia
v	2. touch	guza
pt v	fell *see fall	
pt v	felt *see feel	
adj	female (of gender)	mke/kike
n	fence	ua

ferry – flashing

n	ferry	feri/vusha
n	festival	sherehe
n	fever	joto/homa
adj	few	chache
	field	
n	1. where sport is played	uwanja
n	2. open land	kiwanja
adj	fierce	kali
	fight	
n	1. battle	vita
v	2. engage in battle	pigana/vitani
	figure	
n	1. number	namba
n	2. person	mtu
phr v	3. figure out (understand)	waza
v	fill	jaza
n	film	filamu
adj	final	mwisho
v	find	pata
	fine	
adj	1. not raining	tulia
adj	2. opposite thick	nyembamba
adj	3. well (healthy)	mzima
n	finger	kidole
	finish	
n	1. end point	mwisho
v	2. end	mwisho
	fire	
v	1. cease to employ	vuta kazi
v	2. shoot	piga risasi
n	3. something burning	chomeka
n	fireworks	fataka
adv	first	kwanza
n	first aid	huduma ya kwanza
	fish	
n	1. water creature	samaki
v	2. catch fish	vua samaki
n	fishing rod	kijiti cha kuvulia samaki
	fit	
adj	1. healthy	afya njema
n	2. size	ukubwa
phrase	3. fit in with (match well)	linganisha
v	fix	rekebisha/tengeneza
n	flag	bendera
n	flame	ulimi wa moto
n	flash (bright light)	mwangaza/nuru
adj	flashing	angaza

flat – form

	flat	
n	1. dwelling	nyumba
adj	2. shape	mfano
n	flavour	aina/ladha
pt v	flew *see fly	
n	flight	ndege
v	float	elea
n	flood	gharika/mafuriko
	floor	
n	1. part of a room	chumba
n	2. level of a building	gorofa
n	floppy disk	diski laini
v	flow	tiririka
n	flower (plant)	maua
abbrev	flu *see influenza	
	fly	
n	1. insect	nzi
v	2. move through the air	angaa/ruka
n	fog (weather condition)	ukungu/unyevu
adj	foggy	ukungu
v	fold	kunja
n	folder	folda
v	follow	fuata
n	font	ukubwa
n	food	chakula
n	fool	mjinga
adj	foolish	ujinga
n	foot	mguu/wayo
n	football	mpira wa miguu
n	footwear	viatu
	for	
phrase	1. for us	yetu
phrase	2. for NSW	ya NSW
phrase	3. for \$5	ya dola 5
	force	
n	1. strength	nguvu
v	2. impose on	lazimisha
adj	foreign (not native)	geni
n	foreigner	mgeni
n	forest	msitu
pt v	forgave *see forgive	
v	forget	sahau
v	forgive	samehe
pt v	forgot *see forget	
n	fork	uma
	form	
n	1. paper you fill in	fomu
v	2. make	muundo

fortnight – funeral

n	3. shape	umbo
n	fortnight	wiki mbili
adj	fortunate	bahati
adv	fortunately	kwa bahati
	fortune	
n	1. large amount of money	pesa nyingi
n	2. luck	bahati/nasibu
pt v	fought *see fight	
pt v	found *see find	
n	fountain	chemichemi
n	fraction	sehemu
n	frame	upande
	free	
adj	1. costing nothing	bure/bila malipo
adj	2. unoccupied	hakuna mtu
v	3. let go	tupilia mbali/sare
n	freedom	uhuru
v	freeze	weka barafu
n	freezer (appliance)	mchini ya barafu
adj	frequent	mara nyingi
adj	fresh	mpya
abbrev	fridge *see refrigerator	
n	friend	rafiki
adj	friendly	kirafiki
n	fright	hofu/woga
v	frighten	kusitua/ogofya
	from	
phrase	1. from Sydney	kutoka Sydney
phrase	2. from my grandmother	kutoka kwa nyanya yangu
phrase	3. from \$10	kutoka dola 10
	front	
adj	1. opposite back	mbele
prep	2. in front of	mbele ya
n	front door	mlango wa mbele
n	front steps	hatua za mbele
v	frown	kunja uso/chukia
pt v	froze *see freeze	
n	fruit	tunda
	full	
adj	1. opposite empty	kujaa
adj	2. not hungry	kushiba
n	full stop (punctuation mark)	kituo/nukta
	fun	
n	1. mirthful amusement	furahi
colloq phr	2. make fun of (ridicule)	kijeli
n	funeral	mazishi

funny – girl

adj	funny	1. humorous	furahisha
adj		2. strange	geni
n	fur		mayoya
n	furniture		vifaa/fenicha
adj	further		zaidi
n	future		usoni/wakati ujao
G			
v	gamble		karata/cheza kamari
n	game		mchezo
n	gaol *see jail		
n	gap		mwanya
n	garage (of house)		geraji
n	garden		shamba/bustani
n	garlic		kitunguu saumu
n	gas		hewa
n	gate		mango
v	gather		kusanya
pt v	gave *see give		
	gay		
adj		1. happy	furaha
adj		2. homosexual	shoga
n	gender		uzazi/jinsia
	general		
adj		1. usual	kawaida
n		2. rank in army	generali/mkuu wa majeshi
adv	generally		kwa kawaida
n	generosity		fadhili/ukarimu
adj	generous		mkarimu
adj	gentle		pole
	get		
v		1. become	kuwa/pata
v		2. receive	pokea
v		3. possess	hifadhi/miliki
v		4. arrive	fika
v		5. obtain	kupata
phr v		6. get on with (like)	kumbatiana/kabiliana
phr v		7. get out (leave)	toka nje/ondoka
phr v		8. get together (meet)	kutana
phr v		9. get up (arise)	amka
phr v		10. get rid of (dispose of)	tupilia mbali/tupa
	giant		
n		1. huge mythical being	jitu
adj		2. very big	kubwa sana
n	gift		zawadi
n	girl		msichana

give – grain

	give	
v	1. hand to	mpatie
phr v	2. give in (hand in)	leta
colloq phr	3. give in (surrender)	salimisha
phr v	4. give out (distribute)	patiana/sambaza
phr v	5. give up (surrender)	jisalimishe
phr v	6. give up (stop as for smoking)	wacha
adj	glad	faraha
	glass	
n	1. window material	dirisha
n	2. drinking vessel	kikombe cha ya maji
n	glasses (for eyesight)	miwani
n	glove	mpira ya mikono
	go	
v	1. move	songesa
phrase	2. go by bus	safari kwa basi
phrase	3. go out with	tembea na
phr v	4. go wrong	kwenda mrama
phr v	5. go on with (continue)	endelea
phr v	6. go well	enenda salama
phr v	7. go over (check)	tazama
phr v	8. go through (check)	pitia
phr v	9. go after (chase)	kimbiza
n	god	mungu
n	gold	dhahabu
adj	golden	ya dhahabu
	good	
adj	1. opposite bad	mzuri
phrase	2. vegetables are good for you	mboga ni mzuri kwako
colloq phr	3. Good for you! (congratulations)	pongezi!
int	4. Good afternoon (greeting)	habari ya jioni
int	5. Goodbye	kwaheri
int	6. Good day (greeting)	siku njema
int	7. Good morning (greeting)	habari ya asubuhi
int	8. Good night (farewell)	lala salama/usiku mwema
	goodness	
n	1. virtue	uzuri
int	2. My goodness! (expression of surprise)	kumbe!/kweli!
	goods	
n	gossip	bidhaa
pt v	got *see get	sengenya
v	govern	tawala
n	government	serekali
n	governor	gavana
v	grab	nyakua
adv	gradually	pole pole
n	grain	mbegu

grand – habit

adj	grand	kubwa
n	grandchild	mjukuu
n	granddaughter	mjukuu
n	grandfather	babu
n	grandmother	yanya/bibi
n	grandparent	mababu
n	grandson	mjukuu
n	grape	zabibu
n	graph	mchoro
n	grass	nyasi
adj	grateful	shukuru
n	grave	kaburi
adj	great	kubwa
n	greed	tama
adj	greedy	mwenye tama
adj	green	manjano
v	greet	salimu
n	greeting	salamu
pt v	grew *see grow	
adj	grey	rangi
n	grief	huzunika
v	grieve	huzuni
v	grill (cooking)	choma
	gross	
adj	1. total	jumla
colloq	2. disgusting	chukiza
	ground	
n	1. earth	arhi
adj	2. bottom (as for ground floor)	chini/sakafuni
n	group	kundi/kikundi
phrase	group of students	kikundi cha wanafunzi
v	grow	kuwa/endelea
n	grown-up	kuwa ki umri/zeeka
v	guard	linda
n	guardian	mlinzi
v	guess	kisia
n	guest	mgeni
	guide	
n	1. leader	kiongozi
v	2. show the way	onyesha njia
n	guilt	hatia
adj	guilty	uaili/mwenye hatia
n	guitar	gitaa/zeze
n	gum tree	muti wa gamu
abbrev	gym *see gymnasium	
n	gymnasium	chumba cha mazoezi
	H	
n	habit	mazoea/desturi/tabia

had – have

pt v	had *see have	
n	hail (weather condition)	garika
n	hailstorm	mvua ya garika
n	hair	nywele
n	haircut	nyolewa
adj	halal	nyama ya kuchinjwa
	half	
adj	1. equal part of	nusu
phrase	2. half-past eight	saa mbili unusu
n	hall	ukumbi
n	hallway	ukumbini
v	halve	nusu
n	hamburger	nyama
n	hammer	nyundo
	hand	
n	1. body part	mkono
n	2. hand-out	patiana
phr v	3. hand in	leta
n	handbag	mkoba wa mkono
n	handball	mpira wa mkono
	handle	
n	1. thing that may be held	kishikio
v	2. touch	guza
adj	handsome	mrembo
n	handwriting	mwandiko
	hang	
v	1. suspend	aherisha/nyonga
phr v	2. hang around (loiter)	randa randa
phr v	3. hang onto (hold)	shikilia
phr v	4. hang up (put receiver down)	weka simu chini
int	5. Hang on! (wait)	subiri
v	happen	tukia
n	happiness	furaha
adj	happy	furahi
n	harbour	bandari
	hard	
adj	1. difficult	ngumu
adj	2. not soft	ngumu
adv	hardly (rarely)	haipatikani
v	harm	umiza
n	harvest	vuna
n	hat	kofia
v	hate	dharau
	have	
v	1. own	pata/miliki
phrase	2. have a headache	maumivu ya kichwa
phrase	3. have dinner	kula chakula cha mchana
phrase	4. have a hair cut	kunyolewa
phr v	5. have on (wear)	kuvaliya/kuvaa

have to – his

phr v pron	have to (be compelled to) he head	ni lazima yeye
n	1. body part	kichwa
n	2. leader	kiongozi
n	headache	kuumwa na kichwa
n	heading (title)	kichwa
n	health	afya
adj	healthy	mwenye afya
n	heap (pile)	rundiko
v	hear	sikia
pt v	heard *see hear	
n	heart	roho/moyo
v	heat	
v	1. warm	joto
n	2. warmth	joto/moto
n	heater (appliance)	jiko
adj	heavy	mzito
n	height	urefu
pt v	held *see hold	
n	helicopter	helicopta
int	hello	jambo
n	help	
n	1. aid	msaada
phrase	2. help yourself (serve yourself)	jisaidie
colloq phr	3. I can't help it (I have no control over it)	siwezi/sina uwezo
adj	helpful	saidia
n	hemisphere	angani
phrase	her	
phrase	1. ask her	mulize yeye
adv	2. her book	kitabu chake
n	here	hapa
v	hero	sujaa
v	hesitate	sita sita
n	hexagon	pembe sita
int	hi	jambo
pt v	hid *see hide	
v	hide	kuficha
adj	high	
adj	1. tall	mrefu
phrase	2. as for musical note	sauti ya juu
n	high-heeled shoe	vitu virefu
n	high school	sekondari/shule ya upili
n	hill	mlima
pron	him	yeye
n	hip	yingi/tako
v	hire	agiza
pron	his	yake

history – however

n	history	historia
	hit	
v	1. strike	gonga
colloq	2. winner	shinda
v	hitch-hike	pata/pewa lifti
n	hobby	furahisho
	hold	
v	1. grasp	shika
n	2. hold-up (robbery)	wizi
n	3. hold-up (delay)	chelewesha
int	4. Hold it! (stop)	wacha/simamisha
colloq phr	5. hold on (wait)	subiri/gojea
n	hole	shimo
n	holiday	likizo
adj	hollow	kavu
adj	holy	safi/bila mawaa
n	home	nyumbani
adj	homesick	kumbuka nyumbani sana
n	homework (school work you do at home)	kazi ya kufanya yumbani
n	honest	myofu
	hook	
n	1. curved piece of metal	ndoano
v	2. catch	shika
	hope	
n	1. expectation	tazamiyo
v	2. wish	tarajiyo
n	horizon	upeo
	horn	
n	1. animal part	pembe
n	2. car part	honi
adj	horrible	kutisha/kuogofya
n	horror	kutisha
n	horse	farasi
n	hospital	hospitali/mathabahu
n	host	mwenyeji
n	hostel	bweni
	hot	
adj	1. very warm	moto sana
colloq	2. very good	mzuri sana
n	hotel	hoteli
n	hotplate	chombo cha kupikia
n	hour	saa
n	house	nyumba
n	housework (domestic work)	kazi ya nyumbani
	how	
adv	1. in what way	kivipi
colloq phr	2. how come? (why)	kwanini? kwa njia gani?
conj	however	hata hivyo

huge – industry

adj	huge	kubwa
	human	
adj	1. of people	ya watu
n	2. human being	binadamu
n	humour	furahisha
n	hung *see hang	
adj	hungry	njaa
v	hunt	winda
	hurry	
v	1. move quickly	tembea haraka
colloq phr	2. hurry up	harakisha
	hurt	
v	1. injure	dhuru/umiza
adj	2. wounded	umia/jilaha
n	hut	kibanda/nyumba
I		
pron	I	mimi
n	ice	barafu
n	ice-cream	icekrimu
adj	ideal	kipekee/saawa
conj	if	iwapo/kama
adj	ill	mgonjwa
adj	illegal	siofuata sheria
n	illness	ugonjwa
n	illustration	eleza kwa mifano
v	imagine	waza
adj	immediate	mara moja
adv	immediately	sasa hivi
n	immigrant	mhamiaji
adj	important	muhimu
adj	impossible	haiwezekani
v	improve	nafuu/stawisha
	in	
prep	1. indicates enclosed place	ndani
phrase	2. in Australia	nchini Austarlia
phrase	3. in January	mwezi wa Januari
phrase	4. in English	kwa lugha ya kingereza
phrase	5. in pencil	kwa penseli
phrase	6. in love	kupendana
phrase	7. in danger	hatarini
phrase	8. in time (not late)	kwa wakati/saa
v	include	pamoja
n	income	pato
adj	incorrect	siyo sawa
v	increase	kwa wingi/zidisha/ongeza
n	index	kielezi
adj	indoor	ndani
n	industry	kiwanda

infect – is

v	infect	ambukiza
n	infection	maradhi
v	influence	onyesha
n	influenza	homa
v	inform	fahamisha/julisha
n	information	julisho/habari
prep	in front of	mbele ya
v	inhabit	kaa/ishi
n	inhabitant	mkaazi
	initial	
adj	1. first	mwanzo
n	2. first letter of name	herufi
n	injection	sindano
v	injure	dhuru/umiza
n	injury	jelaha
adj	inner	ndani
adj	innocent	bila hatia
n	insect	mdudu
v	insert	weka/tia ndani
prep	inside	ndani
v	insist	sisitiza
	instant	
n	1. moment	kitambo kidogo
adj	2. immediate	mara moja
adv	instead	badala
v	instruct	funza
n	instruction	funzo
n	instrument (musical)	chumbo cha uimbaji
n	insurance	bima
adj	intelligent	enye akili
v	intend	kusudia
n	interest	faida/penda
adj	interested	pendezeka
adj	interesting	pendesha
n	Internet	mtandao
v	interrupt	tatiza
n	intersection	makutano
n	interview	hoji
prep	into	katika
v	introduce	tanguliza
n	introduction (of a book)	uanzilishi
v	invent	vumbua
n	invitation	mwaliko
v	invite	alika
	iron	
n	1. metal	chuma
n	2. household appliance	vyumbo
v	3. as for clothing	pasi
prt v	is *see be	

island – keyboard

n	island	inchi kavu kati ya ziwa
	it	
pron	1. subject	ilikuwa
pron	2. object	kitu
pron	its (possessive)	yake

J

n	jacket	koti
n	jail	jela
n	jar	chungu
adj	jealous	wivu
n	jeans	vazi la jeans
n	jet	jeti
n	jewel	mawe ya dhamana
n	jewellery	mikufu/mawe ya dhamana
n	job	kazi
v	jog	kimbia
n	jogger	mkimbiaji
	join	
v	1. unite	shikanisha
v	2. as a club	jiunge/ungana
adj	joint	unganisho/shikanisho
n	joke	cheza
n	journey	safari
n	joy	furaha
	judge	
n	1. person in court	hakimu
v	2. make a decision about	hukumu
n	judgment	hukumu/maamuzi
n	judo	mweleka
n	juice	kinywaji
v	jump	ruka
n	jumper (clothing)	sweta/koti
	just	
adv	1. only	pekee
adj	2. fair	vizuri

K

n	kangaroo	kangaroo
	keep	
v	1. hold on to	shikilia/kamata
phr v	2. keep away	tupilia/weka mbali
phr v	3. keep going	endelea
phr v	4. keep out	weka nje
phr v	5. keep up	fanya bidii
colloq phr	6. The teacher kept us in	mwalimu alitukalisha/chelewesha
pt v	kept *see keep	
n	key	funguo
n	keyboard	kibao

keyring – large

n	keyring	mkufu wa funguo
n	keyword	neni kamili
v	kick	piga teke
colloq	kid (child)	mtoto
v	kill	angamiza/ua
n	killer	muuwaji
	kind	
adj	1. good hearted	mkalimu
n	2. type	mfano
n	kindness	uzuri
n	king	mfalme
v	kiss	busu
n	kitchen	jikoni
n	knee	goti
v	kneel	piga magoti
pt v	knelt *see kneel	
pt v	knew *see know	
n	knife	kisu
v	knit	shona
n	knob	nobu
v	knock	bisha
n	knot	fungo
	know	
v	1. understand	fahamu
v	2. be acquainted with	fahamika
phrase	3. Let me know (tell me)	ni julishe/fahamize
n	koala	koala
n	kookaburra	kookaburra
L		
abbrev	lab *see laboratory	
n	label	katambulisho
n	laboratory	laboratori
n	labour	kazi
v	lack	upunguvu
n	lad	mvulana
n	ladder	ngazi
pt v	laid *see lay	
n	lake	ziwa
n	lamp	taa
	land	
n	1. opposite of sea	ardhi
n	2. country	nchi
v	3. as for plane	tua
n	language	lugha
	lap	
n	1. body part	goti/magoti
n	2. distance in a pool	urefu/upeo
adj	large	kubwa

last – less

	last	
adj	1. opposite of first	mwisho
v	2. endure	dumu
adv	lastly	hatimae
adj	late (opposite of early)	chelewa
adv	lately	hivi karibuni
adv	later	baadaye
v	laugh	cheka
n	laughter	kicheko
n	laundry	kuvua nguo
n	law	sheria
n	lawn	kuanikia nguo
n	lawyer	wakili
	lay	
v	1. as for eggs	tega
v	2. put	weak
adj	lazy	mvivu
	lead	
v	1. go first	tangulia/enenda mbele
n	2. holder for a dog	kamba/nyororo ya kungoza umbwa
n	leader	kiongozi
n	leadership	uongozi
n	leaf	tawi
v	leak	vuja
	lean	
v	1. incline	egemea
adj	2. thin	nyebamba
v	leap	ruka
n	leap year	mwaka wa kurukia
v	learn	soma
pt v	learnt *see learn	
adj	least	kidogo
n	leather	ngozi
	leave	
v	1. separate from	tenganisha
n	2. time off	wacha/simamisha
phr v	3. leave alone	kuishi pekeyako
phr v	4. leave on	endelea
phr v	5. leave out	sahau
pt v	led *see lead	
pt v	left *see leave	
adj	left (opposite of right)	kushoto
adj	left-handed	wa kushoto
n	leg	mguu
n	lemon	ndimu
v	lend	azima
n	length	urefu
pt v	lent *see lend	
adv	less	punguza

lesson – lizard

n	lesson	somo
	let	
v	1. allow	kubalisha
v	2. rent	agiza
	letter	
n	1. as of alphabet	anuani
n	2. correspondence	mbarua
n	letterbox	sanduku la barua
n	lettuce	mboga
adj	level	sawa sawa/sabamba
n	liar	muongo
n	library	ukumbi
n	licence	liseni
v	lick	onja
n	lid	kifuniko
	lie	
v	1. tell untruths	danganya
phr v	2. lie down	lala
n	life	maisha
n	lifesaver	muokoaji/mwokozi
	lift	
v	1. raise	inua/kuinua
n	2. elevator	ngazi ya sitima
n	3. car ride	beba
	light	
n	1. opposite of darkness	giza
n	2. as for electric light	stima
adj	3. not dark	mwangaza
adj	4. not heavy	nyepezi
n	lighter (as for cigarettes)	kiberiti
n	lightning	radi
	like	
v	1. be fond of	pendezwa
prep	2. similar to	sawa na
n	limit	umbali
n	line	laini
n	lip	mdomo
n	liquid	maji maji
n	list	taja
v	listen	sikiliza
pt v	lit *see light	
n	litter	taka taka
adj	little	kidogo
	live	
v	1. exist	kuishi
adj	2. opposite of dead	ishi
n	living (job)	kazi
n	living room	sebule
n	lizard	mjusi

load – lunch

v	load	mzigo
n	lobster	samaki
	local	
n	1. person from a particular area	mkaaji wa
adj	2. pertaining to an area	ya nchini
n	location	sehemu
v	lock	kifuli/kifungio
n	log (wood)	kuni
n	lolly	peremende/switi
adj	lonely	pweke
	long	
adj	1. opposite of short	ndefu
phr v	2. long for (want)	tarajia/tazamia
phrase	3. How long? (as time)	lini?
phrase	4. How long? (as length)	ni mrefu?
phrase	5. long ago	zamani
	look	
n	1. glance	tazama
phr v	2. look at	angalia
phr v	3. look after	linda/tunza
phr v	4. look for	tafuta
phr v	5. look forward to	tazamia
phr v	6. look up to	tegemea
phrase	7. look like (resemble)	kama
adj	loose	regea
	lose	
v	1. opposite of find	poteza
v	2. opposite of win	shindwa
phrase	3. she lost her mother (her mother died)	mama yake alifariki/mama yake aliaga dunia/mama yake alikufa
n	loss	poteza
pt v	lost *see lose	
	lot	
n	1. destiny	nyumbani
phrase	1. a lot of	nyingi
adj	loud	kwa sauti
n	lounge room	chumba cha makaribisho
	love	
n	1. passionate affection	mapenzi
v	2. feel passionate	pendo
adj	low	chini
n	lower case	herufi ndogo
adj	loyal	tulivu
n	luck	bahati
adj	lucky	bahatika
n	lump	kundi
n	lunch	chakula cha mchana

machine – match

M

n	machine	mashini
	mad	
adj	1. angry	kasirika
adj	2. insane	enda wazimu
colloq phr	3. mad about (loves)	penda kupindukia
n	madam	mama
pt v	made *see make	
n	magazine	gazeti
n	magic	ugaga
n	magpie	mkusanaji/muokoaji
	mail	
n	1. correspondence	barua
v	2. send	tuma
adj	main	kamili
	make	
v	1. manufacture	unda
phrase	2. make the bed	tandika kitanda
phrase	3. make friends	fanya urafiki
phr v	4. make up (reconcile)	samehe
n	make up (cosmetics)	rembesh
adj	male	mume
n	mammal	mnyama mwenye kunyonyesha
n	man	mwanamume/kiume
v	manage	tunza
n	manager	manaja
n	mandarin	sandara
n	mango	maembe
n	manner (way)	jinsi
n	manners (pertaining to polite behaviour)	jinsi/namna/tabia
v	manufacture	tengeneza/unda
adj	many	nyingi/mingi
n	map	ramani
n	margin (of a book)	laini ya kando
n	marijuana	bangi/ganja
	mark	
v	1. correct	rekebisha
n	2. numerical value for work	alama
n	3. spot	weka alama
n	market	soko
n	marriage	harusi
v	marry	kua/olewa
n	mat	mkeka
	match	
v	1. suit	lingana
n	2. implement for lighting	kiberiti

mate – midday

n	3. game	mchezo
n	mate (friend)	rafiki
n	material	chombo
n	mathematics	hesabu
abbrev	maths *see mathematics	
	matter	
n	1. substance	jambo
phrase	2. What's the matter?	ni shida gani?
phrase	3. It matters a lot	ina jalisha sana
v	may (allowed to)	tafadhali
adv	maybe	engine
pron	me	mimi
n	meal	chakula
	mean	
v	1. intend	tazamiyo/kusudi
n	2. average	katikati/kadiri
phrase	3. I didn't mean it (accidental)	ni kwa bahati mbaya/ siku maanisha hivyo
n	meaning	maana
n	means (resources)	upato
pt v	meant *see mean	
adv	meanwhile	kwa muda
v	measure	pima
n	measurement	kipimo
n	meat	nyama
n	meat pie	sambusa
n	mechanic	muunda vyuma
n	medication	matibabu
n	medicine	dawa
adj	medium	katikati
v	meet	kutana
n	melon	matunda
v	melt	kuwa maji maji
n	member	mwenyeji/memba
v	memorise	kumbuka
n	memory	kumbukumbu
v	mend	rekebisha
adj	mental	mawazo/akili
v	mention	taja
	menu	
n	1. list in restaurant	yaliyomo/menu
n	2. list on a computer	yaliyomo
n	mess	haribika
n	message	ujumbe
pt v	met *see meet	
n	metal	chuma
n	method	jinsi
n	microscope	darubini
n	microwave (oven)	jiko la stima
n	midday	saa sita ya mchana

middle – moist

adj	middle	1. central	katikati
n		2. centre	katikati
adj	middle-aged		umri wa kadiri
n	midnight		usiku wa manane
	might		
v		1. express possibility	pengine
n		2. strength	nguvu
n	migrant		mhamiaji
adj	mild		kadili
n	military		jeshi
n	milk		maziwa
n	milkbar		duka la kuuzia maziwa
	mind		
n		1. consciousness	fahamu
phrase		2. Keep in mind	kumbuka/tia maanani
phrase		3. Never mind (don't worry)	usijali
phrase		4. I don't mind	sijali
phrase		5. Mind the step (be careful of the step)	tahadhali/tazama
	mine		
pron		1. possessive	yangu
n		2. underground excavation	chumbua
n	mineral		madini
n	minister (government)		waziri
prep	minus		punguza/toa
	minute		
n		1. unit of time	dakika
adj		2. very small	kidogo
n	mirror		kioo
adj	miserable		maskini
v	misplace		poteza
	miss		
n		1. woman's title	bibi/bi
v		2. long for	tazamia/tarajia
v		3. opposite of hit	poteza/ponyoka
adj	missing		kutopatikana/kukosekana
n	Missus		haribu/tumia vibaya
n	Mister		bwana
n	mistake		kosa
v	misunderstand		kutoelewana
v	mix		mchanganya
n	mixture		changanyo
n	mobile phone		simu ya mkono
	model		
n		1. representation	uwakilishi
n		2. person who shows clothes	tarakibu
adj	modern		mtulifu/muangalifu
adj	modest		kisasa
adj	moist		nyevu

moment – naked

n	moment	wakati
n	money	pesa
n	monitor (computer)	monita
n	month	mwezi
n	mood (frame of mind)	hali ya mawazo
n	moon	mwezi
adj	moral	enye maadili/nyofu
adv	more	zaidi
n	morning	asubuhi
n	mosque	musikiti
adj	most	nyingi
n	mother	mama
n	motor	gari
n	motor bike	piki piki
n	motor scooter	piki piki
	mouse	
n	1. animal	panya
n	2. computer part	mkono wa kompiuta
phrase	mouse button (computer)	kiungo cha kompiuta
n	mousepad	padi ya kompiuta
n	moustache	ndevu
n	mouth	mdomo
v	move	songeza
n	movement	maandamano
n	movie	sinema
abbrev	Mr *see Mister	
abbrev	Mrs *see Missus	
n	Ms	bi
adv	much	zaidi
adj	multicultural	makabila mbali mbali
n	multiplication	ongezeko
v	multiply	piga mara
abbrev	mum *see mother	
	murder	
n	1. unlawful killing	mauwaji
v	2. kill unlawfully	kuuwa
n	muscle	misuli
n	mushroom	mboga
n	music	mziki/nyimbo
v	must	lazima
pron	my	yangu
n	mystery	haifahamiki
N		
v	nag	sumbua
	nail	
n	1. body part	kucha
n	2. metal spike	msumari
adj	naked	uchi

name – nobody

n	name	1. title	mamlaka/jina la heshima
phrase		2. given name	jina lingine
phrase		3. family name	jina la familia
adj	narrow		nyembamba
adj	nasty		mbaya
n	nation		nchi
adj	nationality		nchi ya kuzaliwa
adj	native		mzaliwa
	nature		
n		1. person's character	tabia
n		2. environment	mazingira
prep	near		karibu
adv	nearby		karibuni
adv	nearly		karibia
adj	neat		safi/nadhifu
adj	necessary		lazima
n	neck		shingo
v	need		hitaji
n	needle		shindano
	negative		
n		1. film	filamu ya picha
adj		2. opposite of positive	kinyume
v	neglect		wachilia/uzembe
n	neighbour		jirani
adv	neither		yeyote
n	nerve		nafsi/shipa
adj	nervous		wasi wasi/uwoga
n	nest		kiota
	net		
n		1. trap	mtego
n		2. sport equipment	neti
abbrev	Net * see Internet		
n	netball (game)		mchezo wa neti boli
adv	never		kamwe
adj	new		mpya
n	newspaper		gazeti
	next		
adv		1. after this	baadaye
adj		2. following	kufuatilia
phrase		3. next door	mlango mwingine
adj	nice		mzuri/nzuri
n	night		usiku
n	nightclub		kilabu cha usiku
n	night dress		vazi la jioni
	no		
int		1. opposite yes	la
det		2. not at all	siyo kamwe/hapana
pron	nobody		si yeyote

nocturnal – obvious

adj	nocturnal	usiku
v	nod	kubali/tikisa kichwa
n	noise	kelele
adv	noisily	makelele
adj	noisy	kelele
pron	none	hakuna
n	noon	mchana/adhuhuri
pron	no-one	hakuna
conj	nor	wala
adj	normal	kawaida
n	north	kaskazini
n	nose	pua
n	nosebleed	toa ndumu kwenye pua
adv	not	siyo
	note	
n	1. money	pesa
n	2. short piece of writing	nakala
phrase	3. take note (be careful)	tahadhari
phrase	4. take notes	nakili
pron	nothing	bila
n	notice	tangazo
n	notice board	ubao wa matangazo
n	noun	nomino
n	novel	kitabu cha hadithi
adv	now	sasa
adv	nowadays	siku hizi
adv	nowhere	hakuna popote
adj	nude	uchi
	number	
n	1. numeral	namba
v	2. count	hesabu
phrase	3. a number of	idadi
abbrev	4. no. (see number)	namba
n	nurse	muuguzi
	nut	
n	1. fruit	tunda
colloq	2. mad person	mwenda wazimu
n	nutrition	viakula/ulaji
O		
adj	obedient	mtiifu
v	obey	tii
	object	
n	1. thing	chombo
n	2. aim	kusudi/lengo
v	3. be against	kinyume
n	objection	pingamizi
v	obtain	pata/pokea
adj	obvious	wazi wazi/dhahiri

occasion – only

n	occasion	sherehe/wakati/kisa
adv	occasionally	sio kila wakati
n	occupation	kazi
n	ocean	ziwa
adv	o'clock	saa
	odd	
adj	1. strange	siyo kawaida/geni
phrase	2. odd number	namba isiyo gawanyika na mbili
prep	of	ya
int	of course	kwaida/ndiyo
	off	
adv	1. away from	mbali na
prep	2. opposite on	ondoka
colloq phr	3. Off you go!	enenda sasa/ondoka sasa
n	offence	hatia/kosa
	offer	
n	1. proposal	pendekezo/azimio
v	2. present for approval	kubalisha
n	office	offisi
n	officer	offisaa
adj	official	halali
adv	often	wakati mwingi/mara kwa mara
int	oh!	ah!
	oil	
n	1. of petroleum	petroli
v	2. grease	mafuta
int	okay	sawa
	old	
adj	1. opposite new	nzee
adj	2. opposite young	mzee
n	old age	uze
adj	old-fashioned	ya zamani
	on	
prep	1. representing location	kwenye
adj	2. opposite off	washa
phrase	3. on fire	motoni
phrase	4. on foot	kwa miguu
phrase	5. on time	kwa saa
phrase	6. on holidays	likizoni
phrase	7. on the left	kushoto
phrase	8. on the right	kulia
phrase	9. on top	juu
	once	
adv	1. one time	wakati moja
phrase	2. at once	mara moja
phrase	3. once a week	mara moja kwa wiki
adj	one	moja
n	onion	kitunguu
adv	only	pekee

open – overcrowded

adj	open	1. opposite of closed	fungua
phrase		2. in the open (outside)	nje/wazi wazi
n	opening		kufungua
	operate		
v		1. work	kazi
v		2. carry out surgery	upasuaji
n	operation		oparesheni
n	opinion		wazo
n	opportunity		nafasi
v	oppose		pinga
n	opposite		kinyume
	orange		
adj		1. colour	rangi
n		2. fruit	tunda
n	orchestra		waimbaji
	order		
n		1. numerical sequence	mapangilio wa nambari
n		2. direction for a supply	njinsi yaku oda
v		3. put in sequence	panga kwa mpagilio
v		4. arrange supply of	fanya oda
adj	ordinary		kawaida
	organ		
n		1. musical instrument	chombo
n		2. body part	kiungu
n	organisation		kikundi
v	organise		tayarisha
n	origin		mwanzo
pron	other		nyingine
conj	otherwise		vingine
pron	our		yetu
	out		
adv		1. opposite in	nje
prep		2. out of	kati ya
phrase		3. Lights out!	zima
phrase		4. made out of	kutoka kwa
phrase		5. out of bounds	kaa kando/hujaruhusiwa
phrase		6. out of date	nzee
phrase		7. out of order	haribika
phrase		8. out of work	bila kazi/kutoka kazini
adv	outside		nje
adj	oval (shape)		mviringo
	over		
adv		1. finished	kamilisha
prep		2. pertaining to location	pahali
phrase		3. over and over	mara nyingi
phrase		4. over there	pale
phrase		5. fall over	tengana
adj	overcrowded		jaa watu

overdo – pass

v	overdo	zidisha
adj	overdue	pita wakati
n	overhead projector	mashini ya kuonyesha picha
v	overhear	kusikia
adj	overnight	usiku kucha
adv	overseas	ngambo/ulaya
v	oversleep	kulala kupindukia
v	overtake	pita mbele
v	owe	dai
phrase	owing to (due to)	ni ya
	own	
v	1. have	pata
phrase	2. his own money	pesa zake
n	owner	mwenyewe
n	oxygen	pumzi/hewa

P

v	pack	panga
phrase	pack of cards	furushi la kadi
n	packet	paketi
n	pad (as note-pad)	kitabu
n	paddock	kifuli
n	page	kurasa
pt v	paid *see pay	
n	pain	uchungu/maumivu
v	paint	rangi
n	painting	kupaka rangi
n	pair	mbili
adj	pale	hafifu
n	pan	sufuria
n	pants	suruari
n	pantyhose	shika
n	paper	karatasi
n	paragraph	paragrafu
adj	parallel	sabamba
n	parallelogram	umbo la uru
n	parent	mzazi
	park	
n	1. green space	uwanja
v	2. as a car	agiza gari
n	part	sehemu
n	participle (grammar)	tenzi
adj	particular	hasa/maalum
n	partner	mwenzangu/mshirika
adj	part-time	wakati wa saa
n	party (gathering)	sherehe
	pass	
v	1. go by	kupitia
v	2. opposite of fail	pita

passage – persuade

v	3. hand over	patiana
phrase	4. train pass	pasi ya gari la moshi
n	passage	kifungo
n	passenger	abiria
n	passport	pasipoti
	past	
n	1. time gone by	zamani
phrase	2. walk past	pitia
phrase	3. half past three	saa sita unusu
phrase	4. past tense	yaliyo pita
n	pasta	chakula
	paste	
n	1. glue	shikisha/gundi
v	2. stick with paste	paka
n	path	kichoro choro/njia
	patient	
n	1. a person under medical treatment	mgonjwa
adj	2. calm under stress	tulia
n	pause	tulia
n	paw	kucha
	pay	
n	1. earnings	ujira/pato
v	2. provide with money	lipa
n	pea	njugu
n	peace	amani
adj	peaceful	kwa amani
n	pen	kalamu
n	pencil	penseli
n	pencil case	mfuko wa penseli
n	penguin	pengwini
n	pentagon	pembe tano
n	pepper	pilipili
adv	per cent	kwa mia
n	percentage	kwa mia
adj	perfect	sawa
v	perform	fanya
n	perfume	manukato
adv	perhaps	pengine
	period	
n	1. school day division	mhula
n	2. pertaining to menstruation	damu ya uke ya mwezi
n	3. amount of time	wakati
n	permission	ruhusa
	permit	
n	1. licence	leseni
v	2. allow	ruhusu
n	person	mtu
v	persuade	pembeleza/uliza

pet – plate

n	pet	mnyama rafiki
n	petrol	petroli
abbrev	phone *see telephone	
n	photocopy	nakala
	photograph	
n	1. picture	picha
v	2. take a picture	piga picha
n	phrase	usemi
adj	physical	asili
n	pianist	mcheza/mpiga piano
n	piano	piano/kinanda
	pick	
v	1. choose	chagua
colloq phr	2. pick on (bully)	chukia
colloq phr	3. pick up some English	fahamu lugha ya kingereza
phrase	4. take your pick	chaguo lako
n	picnic	pikiniki
n	picture	picha
n	piece	sehemu
n	pile	kusanya
n	pill	dawa/tembe
n	pillow	sehemu ya kweka kichwa
n	pilot	rubani
n	pin	pini
n	pineapple	nanasi
n	pipe	mfereji
	pity	
n	1. shame	aibu
v	2. feel sorry for	hurumia
	place	
n	1. location	pahali
v	2. put	weka
phrase	3. take place (occur)	tendeka
phrase	4. my place (home)	nyumbani/kwangu
	plain	
n	1. field	uwanja
adj	2. ordinary	kawaida
phrase	3. It's plain (clear)	ni kavu
	plan	
n	1. scheme	mpango
v	2. organise	panga
abbrev	plane *see aeroplane	
n	planet	sayari
n	plant	mumea
	plastic	
adj	1. resinous substance	plastiki
n	2. mouldable	undika/umbika
n	plate (household item)	sahani

platform – pool

n	platform	1. on station	jukwaa
n		2. for diving	jukwaa
n	platypus		ndege wa majini/bata
	play		
n		1. drama	mchezo wa kugiza
v		2. have fun	furahia
phrase		3. play a game	cheza mchezo
phrase		4. play a CD	cheza cd/mziki
n	playground		uwanja
adj	pleasant		mzuri
int	please		tafadhali
adj	pleased		furahishwa
n	pleasure		nafasi
n	plenty		nyingi
	plug		
n		1. stopper	simamizi
n		2. electrical	sitima
phr v		3. plug in	weka kwenye sitima
	plural		
adj		1. more than one	zaidi ya moja
n		2. grammar form	hali ya utenzi
prep	plus		ongeza
	pocket		
n		1. pouch	mkufu/mfuko
n		2. pocket money	mkufu/mfuko wa pesa
n	poem		msemo
n	poet		msemi
n	poetry		usemi
	point		
n		1. sharp end	makali
n		2. reason	sababu
n		3. numerical value	nambari
v		4. gesture with finger	onyesha
phr v		5. point out	elekeza
phrase		6. point of view	wazo
v	poke		choma
n	pole		nguzo
n	police		askari/polisi
	polish		
n		1. substance used for shining	brashi
v		2. make glossy	paka
adj	polite		mpole
n	politics		siasa
v	pollute		haribu
n	pollution		uharibifu
n	pool (of water)		ziwa

poor – preparation

	poor	
adj	1. opposite rich	masikini
adj	2. not very good	mbaya
colloq	3. pitiable	hurumia
abbrev	pop *see popular	
adj	popular	mashuhuri
n	population	idadi
	position	
n	1. location	pahali
n	2. viewpoint on	maoni
	positive	
adj	1. opposite negative	dhahiri
adj	2. sure	hakika
v	possess	kuwa
n	possession	mali
adj	possible	wezekana
n	possum	lala
v	post	tuma
n	postage stamp	stampu ya kutuma barua
n	postcard	postkadi
n	post office	posta
n	poster	matangazo
n	pot (container)	nyungu/sufuria/kopo
n	potato	viazi
n	pot plant	chungu cha mimea
n	pouch	mkufu
n	powder	poda
	power	
n	1. strength	nguvu
phrase	2. in power (in charge)	mwenye mamlaka/nguvuni
adj	powerful	yenye nguvu
n	power point	sehemu ya nguvu
adj	practical	mazoezi
n	practice	mazoezi
v	practise	fanya/zoeza
	praise	
n	1. approval	pendekaza
v	2. express approval	pendekezo
v	pray	omba
n	prayer	ombi
adj	precious	manufaa
v	prefer	chaguo
adj	pregnant	mjamzito
n	prejudice	upendeleo
	premier	
n	1. state government leader	gavana
adj	2. leading	ongoza
n	preparation	tayarisha/maandalizi

prepare – progress

v	prepare	tayarisha
n	preposition	kuhusisha
n	prescription (doctor's)	barua ya dawa
	present	
n	1. gift	zawadi
v	2. give out	peyana
adj	3. opposite absent	kuwepo
phrase	4. at present (now)	sasa
n	president	raisi
	press	
n	1. media	wakusanya habari
v	2. push	bonyeza
v	pretend	kujifanya
adj	pretty	mrembo/mzuri
v	prevent	zuiya
adj	previous	awali
n	price	bei
v	prick	gwaruza
n	pride	furaha/majivuno
adj	primary	mwazo/msingi
n	primary school	shule ya msingi
n	prime minister	waziri mkuu
	principal	
n	1. school head	mwalimu mkuu
adj	2. leading	ongoza
n	principle	mkuu wa chuo
	print	
v	1. of handwriting	andika
v	2. of machine	piga chapa
n	printer (computer)	printa/machini ya piga chapa
n	prison	jela
adj	private	binafsi
n	prize	tuzo
n	probability	wezekano
adj	probable	pengine/labda
adv	probably	huenda
n	problem	shida/tabu
v	proceed	endelea
n	process	njinsi
n	procession	maandamano
	produce	
n	1. yield	mavuno
v	2. make	tengeneza
n	product	mazao
n	profession	kazi
n	professor	msomi/profesa
n	profit	faida
n	program	programu
n	progress	endelea

project – pyjamas

n	project (as school project)	programu
	promise	
n	1. assurance	hakikisho
v	2. vow	ahadi
n	pronoun	tamshi
v	pronounce	tamko
n	pronunciation	matamshi
n	proof	ushahidi
adj	proper	sawa sawa
adv	properly	vizuri
n	property	mali
v	protect	tunza
n	protection	ulinzi
	protest	
n	1. objection	pingamizi
v	2. object	pinga
adj	proud	kiburi/furahia
v	prove	zibitisha
v	provide	toa
n	pub	bar/nyumba ya pombe
adj	public	watu wote
n	public school	shule ya watu wote
phrase	public transport	magari ya abiria
	pull	
v	1. tug	vuta
phr v	2. pull down (demolish)	bomoa
phr v	3. pull up (stop)	simama
colloq phr	4. pull oneself together	kuji kuyata
n	pump	weka pumzi
adj	punctual	kwa saa
v	punish	adhibu
n	punishment	adhabu
	pupil	
n	1. eye part	jicho/macho
n	2. school student	mwanafunzi
adj	pure	bila mchanganyo
adj	purple	rangi
	push	
v	1. exert force	sukuma
phr v	2. push in (go before your turn)	sukumana
	put	
v	1. place	pahali
phr v	2. put away (pack up)	weka kando
phr v	3. put off (delay)	chelewesha
phr v	4. put on (dress in)	valia/vaa
phr v	5. put out (as fire)	zima
phr v	6. put up with (endure)	vumilia
n	puzzle	hekaya/msemo/ficho
n	pyjamas	nguo ya kulala

pyramid – realise

n	pyramid	piramidi
Q		
v	qualify (make competent)	hitimu/boresha
adj	quality	uzuri
n	quantity	kiwango
v	quarrel	fanya vita/gombana
n	quarter	robo
n	queen	malkia
n	question	shwali
n	queue	piga laini/msitari
adj	quick	haraka
adv	quickly	haraka
adj	quiet	nyamaza/tulia
adv	quietly	kwa utulivu
v	quit	wacha/ondoka
adv	quite	achilia mbali
R		
	race	
n	1. competition	mashindano
n	2. ethnicity	kabila
v	3. compete	shindana
n	racism	ukabila
n	radio	redio
n	radius	ukubwa/unene
n	railing	kazi ya reli
n	railway	njia ya gari la moshi
n	rain	mvua
n	rain coat	koti la mvua
v	raise	inua
pt v	ran *see run	
pt v	rang *see ring	
n	range	umbali
v	rank	mamlaka
adj	rapid	haraka/upesi
adj	rare	haba
n	rash (skin eruption)	upele
adv	rather (to a certain extent)	vinginevyo
adj	raw	mbichi
	reach	
v	1. arrive at	fika
phrase	2. out of reach (unobtainable)	mbali/pungufu
v	react	jibu
n	reaction	jibu
v	read	soma
adj	ready	tayari
adj	real	ilioko
v	realise	ng'amua/timiza