

Swahili Worksheet

Language Learning builds relationships which build ministry. A formal classroom strategy would say “Learn the language in order to start ministry”. Surveys show that missionaries who used this strategy tend to have few friends among the nationals. However, you can use language learning as a tool to build lots of friendships and minister in the process. You will be surprised at not only the amount of Swahili you may learn, but also the depth of friendships you will build in the process!

“I went to where the people were, and I sat down.” - Tom and Betty Sue Brewster, authors of Language Acquisition Made Practical

Some tips to get you started:

- Make up a text to get started and find out the translation in Swahili so you can say it to people you meet. e.g. Praise the Lord! My name is _____.
- Listen and practice what you have been taught. Repeating stuff to yourself really helps!
- Practice on real people! Do this a lot. It’s the best way to remember what you have learned. Use it as much as you can!
- Increase your vocabulary. Once you have some phrases down, don’t stop! Move onto the next word or phrase.

Kiswahili Grammar

Unlike English, Swahili words mostly change at the beginning of a word rather than at the end.

i.e. mtoto = child watoto = children

Personal Pronoun (subject)

ni	I
u	you
a	he, she
tu	we
m	you (pl)
wa	they

Tense

na	Present
li	Past
ta	Future
me	Present Perfect (has)

Verbs (If the verb has more than two syllables, it drops the ‘ku’ when it is the main verb.)

kutaka	to want
kupenda	to love
kutoka	to come from
kula	to eat
kuenda	to go
kujifunza	to learn
ni	is / are (connective)

Object

maji	water
chakula	food
jina	name (takes an L verb-prefix)
kitabu	book

Put it all together: In Kiswahili, the verb is not conjugated. When you make a simple sentence, you only need to worry about four parts.

Personal Pronouns (Subject) + Tense + Verb + Object

I am eating.

Ni + na + kula = Ninakula

You wanted water.

U + li + taka maji = Ulitaka maji

They will want to eat food.

Wa + ta + taka kula chakula = Watataka kula chakula

He has come.

A + me + kuja = Amekuja

Possessive and Connectives (possessives take the verb-prefix of the noun they qualify, and they come after the noun)

-angu my

lakini but

-ako your

na and

Worksheet

Try translating these sentences into Swahili using the above words, and your Swahili Vocabulary list.

My name is _____.

I will learn Swahili (Kiswahili).

We love Jesus.

He has come from America (Marekani).

They loved to eat food.

You wanted food and water.

He will want a book.

I love water but you wanted food.

He has eaten.

You (pl) will go to America (Marekani).