

How to write Mandinka - instructions those who are used to write in English

WEC /JJ

1) Mandinka vowels are **a, e, i, o, u**.

Mandinka is a phonetic language, these sounds don't change like in English.

2) The vowels are either short or long:

("a" in "kanoo", but "aa" in "kaanoo")

3) In a single Mandinka word there is **always** a consonant between two different vowels.

Specially note the semi-vowels "w" and "y".

4) Remember the differences between English and Mandinka consonants: Mandinka has two "new" consonants, **ŋ** and **ñ**.

The "missing" consonants are: g, q, v, x, z:

"Ñiŋ bankoo too mu Kambiya le ti"

5) The only double consonants are: **ll, mm, nn**

6) The only accepted digraphs are:

mb mf mp nc nd nj nk ns nt ŋñ ny

7) High or low pitch is marked only for certain pronouns, so "wuloo" means either "dog" or "bush".

8) Write also the short "small" words separately.

These are pronouns, conjunctions, connections, particles and helping (auxiliary) words

9) There are some suffixes as well: -bali, -lu, -yaa, -ta

They are written together with the main word.

10) **In Mandinka text each word should be written as it were there all alone!**

However, in spoken language certain phrases can omit the words (specially pronouns) and change the sounds. Make sure, that you have written all the pronouns and then check the spelling of the surrounding words.

12) Likewise you write the combined words as you hear them. The words on the left are not combined words.

13) Know the few words with the hyphen. Note the one-word verbs without hyphen like "sukusuku, kisikisi!"

A like "Adama" (compare the English word "army")

E like "Ensa" (compare the English word "end")

I like "Ismayila" (compare the English word "in")

O like "Omaru", (compare the English word "off")

U like "Usuman" (compare the English word "guru")

w - kuwo, kewo, Hawa

y - moyi, liyo, jiyo, tiyo, tiyoo, tiyateyo

ŋ - ŋa, ŋalasoo, beŋo, miŋ

ñ - ñaa, ñewo

kullo, kummaayaa, fannaa

kumboo, kamfaa, kandoo, ninsoo, silaŋña

I / we: n, m, ŋa / ñ, ò, ò

you / they: i / ì

wo, ñiŋ, aniŋ, bari, fo, ko, niŋ, le / ne,
buka, ka, ye, be, te, la / na, to, ma, fee

M pasita moolu la beteya**abaliyaa** la le.

Intransitive verbs need a subject:

N naata. M maluta. A faata le.

Transitive verbs need both subject and object:

A ye a loŋ ne. M maŋ a je. A ye a faa.

Ì ye a fo ko meŋ Kaliilu. A ka a domo.

A command can be one-word sentence: (Taa!)

karaj betoo - karambuŋo - karannaa

musoo diŋo - dimmusoo - dinkewo

ninsoo siŋo - ninsisiŋo - ninsibuwo

waati-wo-waati, moo-wo-moo, kuntuŋ-kuntuŋ,

saayiŋ-saayiŋ, foloo-foloo, fula-fula