

PAPUA NIUGINI TOK PISIN

A brief guide to using the Papua New Guinea Pidgin language

About Papua New Guinea Tok Pisin

Papua Niugini Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea Tok Pisin) is an English-based creole language in the Melanesian Pidgin group, closely related to Solomon Islands Pijin and Vanuatu Bislama. It is an official language of Papua New Guinea, alongside English and Hiri Motu.

Melanesian Pidgin developed in the 1800s as a trading language through Pacific shipping trade and plantations in Queensland, Fiji, and Samoa. When workers returned to Papua New Guinea, they brought this language with them and it evolved from a trading language to a language used in all settings including religious ceremonies, politics, media and everyday life.

Papua New Guinea is one of the most linguistically diverse places in the world. It has about 800 different *tok ples* (indigenous languages). Tok Pisin is the main language in Papua New Guinea spoken by approximately three-quarters of the population. It has influences from indigenous languages as well as German, Malay and Portuguese. As many people still speak their local *tok ples*, Tok Pisin serves as a unifying language or lingua franca.

The Pidgin Alphabet | Alfabet bilong Tok Pisin

The Tok Pisin alphabet has 21 letters. There are no diacritics (written accents) and the language is very phonetic, meaning that words are spelt the way they sound.

The vowels **A, E, I, O** and **U** have the same pronunciation as in most other Pacific languages, including te reo Māori.

The consonants are **B, D, F, G, H, K, L, M, N, P, R, S, T, V, W** and **Y**. The consonants have the same pronunciation as in English.



Everyday language

ENGLISH	TOK PISIN
Hello	Halo
Good morning	Monin tru
Greetings everyone	Halo olgeta
I'm pleased to meet you	Mi amamas lo mitim yu
Goodbye	Gutbai
How are you?	Yu orait?
I am well, thank you	Mi orait, tenkyu
I am tired	Mi tait
I am sick	Mi sik
I am so-so	Mi orait tasol
I am happy	Mi amamas
And yourself?	Na yu yet?
See you later	Lukim yu bihain
See you tomorrow	Lukim yu tumoro
See you next week	Lukim yu nex wik
Blessings	Planti blesin
Good luck	Gutlak
Call me	Kolim me
Send me a message	Salem mesij lo me
Please	Plis

ENGLISH	TOK PISIN
Thank you (very much)	Tenkyu (tru)
You're welcome	I orait
Excuse me	Eskius
Sorry	Sori / Sore
Have you eaten?	Yu kaikai tu o?
Come and eat with me	Kam yumi kaikai wantaim
Thank you for the food	Tenkyu tru lo ol kaikai
Yes	Yes
No	Nogat
Have a good day	Yu gat gutpela dei
Have a good week	Yu gat gutpela wik
Have a good weekend	Yu gat gutpela wikend
Have a good holiday	Yu gat gutpela holidei
Merry Christmas	Meri Krismas
Happy New Year	Hapi Niu Yia
Happy birthday	Hapi betdei / Hapi bondei
Happy Tok Pisin Language Week	Hapi Tok Pisin Langwis Wik
Lots of love	Laikim yu

Words of encouragement

ENGLISH	TOK PISIN
Great work	Gutpela wok
You can do it	Yu ken mekim dispela
Congratulations (singular)	Bikpela amamas long yu
Congratulations (plural)	Bikpela amamas long yupela
All the best	Mi wisim yu gutlak
Stay strong	Stap stron
Give it a go	Traim dispela na lukim
Excellent	Gutpela tru
Well done	Yu wokim gut tru
God is good	God emi gutpela tru

Relationship-building

ENGLISH	TOK PISIN
What is your name?	Wanem nem bilong yu?
My name is _____	Nem bilong mi em _____
Where are you from?	Yu bilong wanem hap?
I am from _____	Mi bilong _____
Where do you live?	Yu save stap lo we?
I live in _____	Mi save stap lon _____



Email language

ENGLISH	TOK PISIN
I hope you're well	Mi hop olsem yu orait
Thank you for your email	Tenkyu tru lo email bilong yu
Thank you for your response	Tenkyu tru lo bekim bilong yu
Thank you for your clarification	Tenkyu tru lo clarification bilong yu
Thank you for your help	Tenkyu lo helpim bilong yu
That's a good question	Dispela em i gutpela question
I will come back to you tomorrow	Mi bai kam bek lo yu tumoro
I will come back to you next week	Mi bai kam bek lo yu nex wik
I will come back to you soon	Mi bai kam bek lo yu klostu taim
Apologies for the delayed response	Me tok sori olsem bekim bilong mi em ino kam ariap
As per my previous email...	Olsem lo pastaim email bilong mi...
Please see attached document	Plis lukim pepa me putim wantaim
As per our conversation...	Olsem umi bin toktok...
Happy to discuss	Amamas lo toktok moa wantaim yu
I look forward to your response	Mi amamas lo lukim bekim bilong yu
I look forward to seeing you	Mi amamas lo lukim yu behain
Kind regards / Cheers	Tenkyu tru

Talking about work

ENGLISH	TOK PISIN
Where do you work?	Yu save wok lo wanem hap?
I work at _____	Mi wok lo _____
I have worked here for _____ (months / years)	Mi wok lo hia lo _____ (mun / yia)
What is your job?	Yu save mekim wanem lo hia?
I am a _____	Mi wanpela _____
Teacher	Tisa
Student	Sumatin
Nurse	Nes
Doctor	Dokta
Librarian	Laibrerien
Manager	Meneja
Musician (male / female)	Man bilong mekim musik / Meri bilong mekim musik
Police officer	Polis ofisa
Advisor	Advaesa
Where do you study?	Yu stadi lo wanem hap?
I study at high school / I study at the University of _____	Mi stadi lo hai skul / Mi stadi lo Univesiti blo _____

Numbers

0 Zero	1 Wan	2 Tu	3 Tri	4 Foa	5 Faiv	6 Sikis	7 Seven	8 Et	9 Nain
10 Ten	11 Wanpela ten wan	12 Wanpela ten tu	13 Wanpela ten tri	14 Wanpela ten foa	15 Wanpela ten faiv				
16 Wanpela ten sikis	17 Wanpela ten seven	18 Wanpela ten et	19 Wanpela ten nain	20 Tupela ten					



Proverbs

Taim yu planim diwai, bihain bai yu kaikai kaikai bilong en.

Meaning When you plant a tree, later you will eat its fruit.

Application Good actions today create future benefits (similar to the phrase “You reap what you sow”).

Wara contana save buruk long aus doa.

Meaning The water container broke right at the front door.

Application Never be complacent or rest prematurely before reaching your goal.

Wanpela lakatoi i no save karim olgeta man.

Meaning One canoe cannot carry everyone.

Application One person cannot do all the work; teamwork matters.

Cultural note

Bilum

Bilum is a Tok Pisin word commonly translated as “string bag” or “carry bag.” A bilum is a handmade bag traditionally made with natural plant fibres and today commonly made with wool or string, using a looping technique. Bilums are used to carry food, tools, personal belongings, and even babies.

Bilums represent culture, identity, and connection to place. The handicraft is passed down through generations, particularly among women. Colours and patterns reflect personal stories, community ties, and important life events. Bilums are part of everyday life in Papua New Guinea and are worn by people of all ages and walks of life, from villagers to urban workers, to national leaders.



Yumi wan solwara | We are one ocean

Each Melanesian nation has its own unique identity but the phrase *Yumi wan solwara* emphasises the region's commonalities and unity. Its literal meaning is “You and me, one saltwater” but it is usually translated as “We are one ocean.” You may also hear the variation *Mipela wan solwara* used by people from Papua New Guinea.

Prayers

TOK PISIN	ENGLISH
Beten Yumi beten Papa blo mipela i stap long heven Mipela askim long ol blesin bilong yu long dispela wik Long mipela olgeta wan wan Long nem blo Jisas mipela beten Tru / Amen	Prayer Let us pray Our heavenly father We ask for your blessings this week To each and every one of us In Jesus' name we pray Amen
Beten kaikai Papa God, mipela tok tenkyu long kaikai yu bin givim long mipela Blesim han bilong ol i bin redim dispela kaikai Blesim mipela taim mipela kaikai wantaim Mekim dispela kaikai i givim strong long bodi bilong mipela Long nem bilong Jisas Amen	Blessing of food Father God, we thank you for the food you have given us Bless the hands that prepared it Bless us as we eat together Let this food give strength to our bodies In Jesus' name Amen
He Kaikōhau Below is a traditional Te Reo Māori karakia or kaikōhau used in the Aotearoa context. <i>Nau mai ngā hua. Nau mai ngā pai. Nau mai kia nui. Kia hāwere ai. Tihei mauri ora.</i> A kaikōhau is an expression of hope welcoming all things positive – including bountiful harvests, good health and work or study achievements. It can be used during Matariki celebrations as you prepare for the new year ahead, before you share a meal, or to open or close a meeting. Here is an adaptation of this kaikōhau in Tok Pisin, with an English translation.	
<i>Welkamim olgeta samtin i bin kamap Welkamim olgeta samtin i gutpela Em i ken kamap planti moa Na i pulap moa tru Blessin bilong laif</i>	<i>Welcome all that has grown Welcome all that is good May it be plentiful And in abundance Lifeforce blessings</i>

