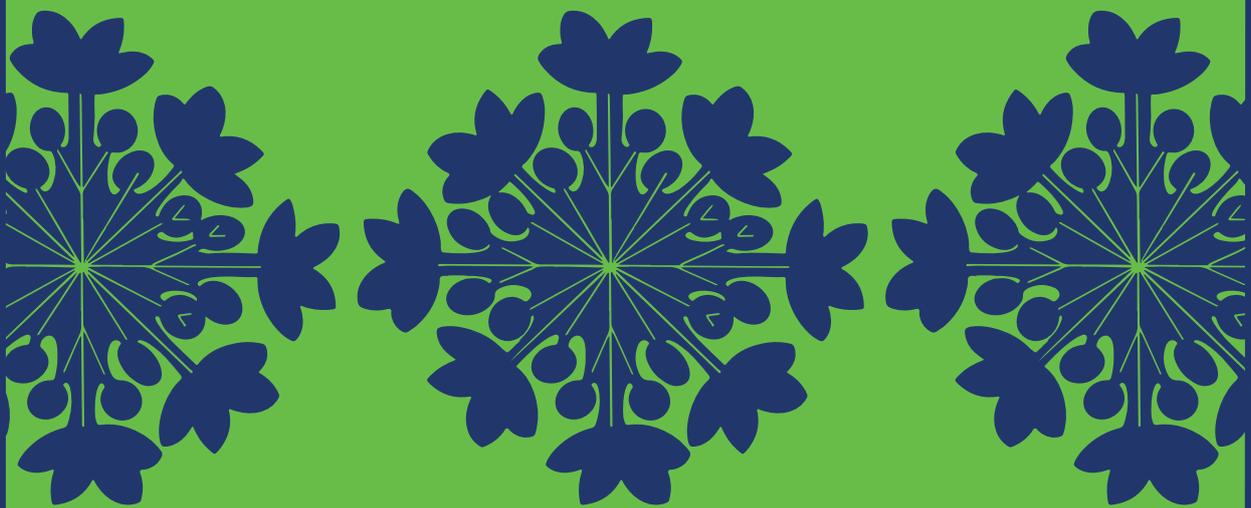


Te Reo Māori Kūki 'Airani

— Orthography Guidelines



Acknowledgements

The Ministry is grateful for the support of the language experts who have contributed to the development of these guidelines – *meitaki ma'ata*.

We apologise for any errors or omissions that may remain despite our best efforts and urge readers to bring any issues to our attention by contacting us at languages@mpp.govt.nz.

Suggested Citation

When citing the te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani orthography guidelines, you may wish to use the following convention:

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Introduction

Due to a range of historical and contemporary factors including migration, population growth, and climate change, there are now more tangata Kūki 'Airani living in the diaspora, predominantly New Zealand, than in the Cook Islands.

The future of te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani in New Zealand, and indeed other languages of the Pacific, is uncertain, and it is for this reason that the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, in collaboration with Pacific communities across the motu and abroad, published the Pacific Languages Strategy 2022-2032 in September 2022. The Strategy, in line with current research on language policy and planning, highlighted *corpus*¹ as a key element of successful language revitalisation, and it is in this context that these orthography guidelines have been developed.

These guidelines outline what the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, in consultation with language experts, consider to be best practice for writing in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani in New Zealand. They are intended as an accessible and easy-to-reference guide, that we hope will be useful to beginners and experts alike. They are part of a series, which also includes guidelines on vagahau Niue, te gagana Tokelau, gagana Samoa, and lea faka-Tonga.

Te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani consists of a range of dialects, localised on each island of origin, with the Rarotonga dialect spoken across the Cook Islands. While these guidelines draw predominantly from literature on the Rarotonga dialect, generally viewed as the standard for writing, it is not the Ministry's intent to conflate the many identities, linguistic or otherwise, across the Cook Islands under that label. To do so would be problematic. Rather, because Rarotonga is the most spoken dialect, the standard for writing, and comparatively well-researched to date, it was methodologically practical to treat it as illustrative for the development of these guidelines. In this view, and because many of the dialects of te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani are mutually intelligible, the Ministry hopes these guidelines will be helpful not just in relation to the Rarotonga dialect, but those of Aitutaki, 'Atiu, Mangaia, Mā'uke, and Miti'aro also.

They will likely be less relevant to the dialects of Manihiki, Rakahanga and Penrhyn, however, and have no bearing on Pukapuka, which is entirely distinct and more closely related to the languages of Tokelau and Samoa. Note also that the term *te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani* is used in New Zealand only, to distinguish from the *te reo Māori* spoken by tangata whenua. In the Cook Islands, people simply say *te reo* followed by the name of the island from which the dialect they are referring to originates.

These guidelines were developed using widely accepted conventions and literature on the orthography of te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani to promote accessibility, consistency, and clarity of meaning and pronunciation, especially for language learners in New Zealand. Given this, there may be instances where the advice in this publication contradicts that of other authoritative texts. Where this occurs, it is recommended these guidelines supersede those in other (especially older) literature.

The Ministry for Pacific Peoples recommends cookislandsdictionary.com as the primary reference for checking how words should be spelled. This website includes dictionaries on the dialects of te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani spoken in Rarotonga, Aitutaki, 'Atiu, Mangaia, Manihiki, Mā'uke, Miti'aro, and Penrhyn, though these are not all yet comprehensive. The site's Rarotongan dictionary is a digitisation of Buse et al's 1995 *Cook Islands Maori Dictionary with English-Cook Islands Maori Findex* (henceforth *Cook Islands Maori Dictionary*), which is underpinned by spelling conventions recommended by the Cook Islands Language Committee. Many of the examples used in these guidelines come from this dictionary.

1 *Corpus* refers to the creation and maintenance of a language's oral and written resources e.g., dictionaries, grammars, orthography guidelines, and pronunciation guides.

Linguistic classification of te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani

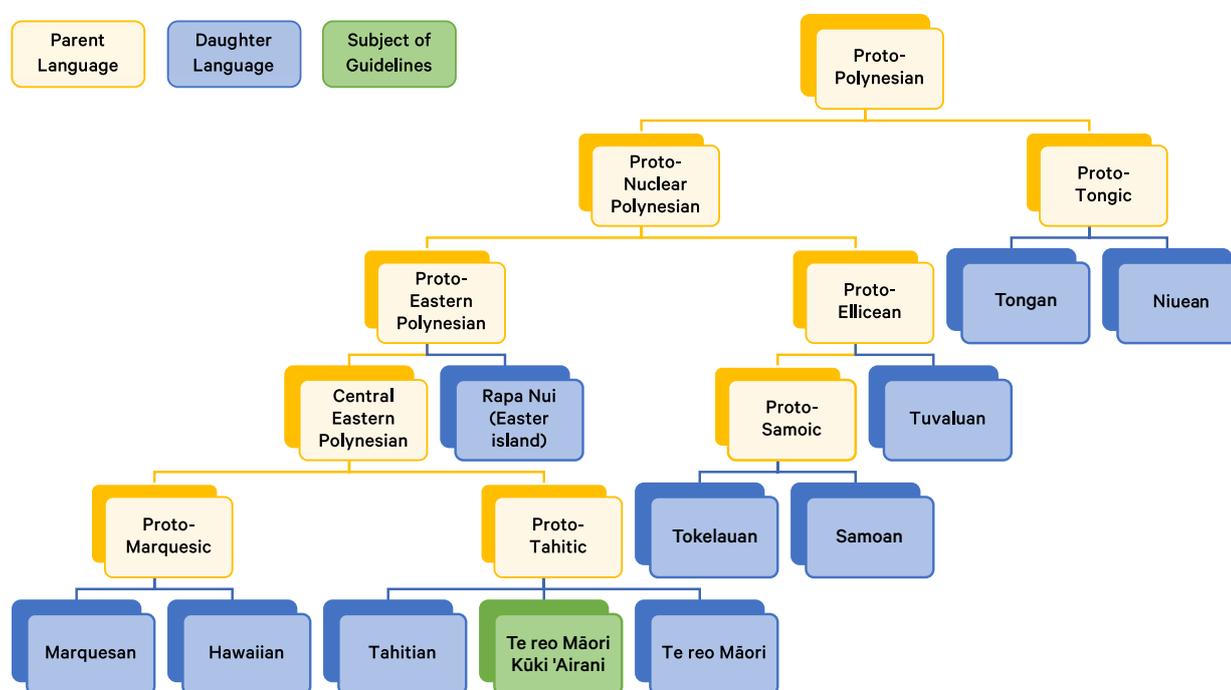
Te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani is a Polynesian language that belongs to the Tahitic subgroup alongside te reo Māori and reo Tahiti. It consists of a number of largely mutually intelligible dialects spoken across the islands of Rarotonga, Aitutaki, 'Atiu, Mangaia, Manihiki, Mā'uke, Miti'aro, Rakahanga and Penrhyn, though there is reasonable evidence to suggest the dialects spoken on Manihiki, Rakahanga and Penrhyn form a distinct subgroup.

Pukapuka, which is spoken on the island of Pukapuka, is not a dialect of te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani, as it is classified by scholars and speakers alike as a separate language belonging to the Samoic subgroup.

As an Eastern offshoot of the Polynesian language family, te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani shares many characteristics with its closest relative te reo Māori, and is also influenced by other Polynesian languages due to the historical, economic, and religious connections between the islands prior to and during the 19th and 20th centuries.

A visual representation of the Polynesian language family tree is included for reference with an accompanying legend below. Note the diagram is not exhaustive, and that many other languages not included are also part of the Polynesian language family.

Figure 1 – Polynesian Language Family Tree



Timeline of key texts on te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani

There are several texts of historical and linguistic significance written on and in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani that these guidelines draw on directly – many descriptions from Buse et al's 1995 *Cook Islands Māori Dictionary with English-Cook Islands Māori Finderlist*, for example, are referenced throughout. Conversely, other texts merely contextualise the journey of the written language since the publication of Charles Pitman and Papehia's preliminary alphabet, vocabulary, and hymns nearly 200 years ago.

All mark important inflection points in the history and study of written te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani. These key texts are detailed in Appendix 1, noting the timeline is not exhaustive. For a more detailed account of the history of linguistic texts in particular, we recommend the appropriate sections of *Ko te Karāma o te Reo Māori o te Pae Tonga o Te Kuki Airani: A Grammar of Southern Cook Islands Māori*.²

² Nicholas 2016: 7-8

Section 1 – Dialects

Dialects

As noted in early sections, te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani refers to the mutually intelligible dialects spoken across the islands of Rarotonga, Aitutaki, 'Atiu, Mangaia, Mā'uke, Miti'aro, Manihiki, Rakahanga, and Penrhyn.

The main differences between the dialects are in vocabulary, though there are some noteworthy pronunciation differences also, such that “speakers are very aware [...] and can easily identify a person’s origin based on [this]”.³ For example, te reo Mangaia has glottal stops in some places where other dialects would have /k/ sounds, and the dialects of Mā'uke, Miti'aro, and 'Atiu are reported to be spoken much more quickly than others, resulting in the omission of some sounds.⁴

(1) Vocabulary differences between dialects of te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani⁵

ENGLISH	RAROTONGA	AITUTAKI	MANGAIA	'ATIU	MĀ'UKE	MITI'ARO
'to speak'	<i>tuatua</i>	<i>autara</i>	<i>tara</i>	<i>araara</i>	<i>araara</i>	<i>araara</i>
'to tell lies'	<i>pikika'a</i>	<i>tīvarevare</i>	<i>'amo</i>	<i>'āvarevare</i>	<i>'āvarevare</i>	<i>'āvarevare</i>
'beautiful'	<i>mānea</i>	<i>'aka'ie'ie</i>	<i>venu</i>	<i>'aka'ie'ie</i>	<i>'aka'ie'ie</i>	<i>'aka'ie'ie</i>

Section 2 – Vowels and Consonants

Alphabet

Te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani is written with an alphabet of thirteen letters (noting the two letters /ng/ represent one sound). Note all future references to ‘the alphabet’ relate to (2).

(2) Te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani alphabet⁶

a, e, ng, i, k, m, n, o, p, r, t, u, v,

In consideration of the distinction between long and short vowels in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani, as well as the presence of the glottal stop (ʻ), the *Cook Islands Maori Dictionary* also includes an expanded alphabet for ease of navigation and reading. Specifically, it intersperses the five vowels between the consonants, which follow the order of the English alphabet:

(3) Te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani alphabet (expanded)⁷

(a, 'a, ā, 'ā), (e, 'e, ē, 'ē) ng, (i, 'i, ī, 'ī), k, m, n, (o, 'o, ō, 'ō), p, r, t, (u, 'u, ū, 'ū), v

³ Nicholas 2016: 9

⁴ Nicholas 2016: 11-12

⁵ Dictionary of Cook Islands Languages (cookislandsdictionary.com)

⁶ Buse et al., 1995: vii

⁷ Buse et al., 1995: vii

Vowels

Like most Polynesian languages, te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani has five basic vowels.

(2) Vowels in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani⁸

	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

These vowels come in two distinct types – **short** and **long** – and can be combined to create diphthongs.

- **Short** vowels are unmarked – a, e, i, o, u
- **Long** vowels are marked with a macron – ā, ē, ī, ō, ū
- Diphthongs, which combine two vowels and are pronounced as one syllable, are unmarked sequences – ae, ai, ao, au, etc.,

Consistently marking vowel length with macrons is no longer as controversial as it once was, with most modern literature, resources, and materials observing the practice in acknowledgment of the clarity it provides to language learners. A key exception to this is *Te Bibilia Tapu* (the Bible), which features neither macrons nor glottal stops as it was originally translated in 1851 before these conventions were popularised. Notwithstanding this historical point, macron use now and in the future is *very important*, as vowel length in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani differentiates meaning:

(5) Contrastive word set⁹

VOWEL TYPE	WORD/SPELLING	MEANING
Short	<i>kopa</i>	'dent, depression'
Long	<i>kōpā</i>	'narrow'

The *Cook Islands Māori Language Guidelines* for the New Zealand Curriculum published by the Ministry of Education takes a balanced view of including macrons and glottal stops, observing that “Cook Islands Māori is sometimes printed with macrons and glottal stops and sometimes without them, as they are considered appropriate for some readers and not for others. Learners who speak Cook Islands Māori as their first language do not usually need them when they are learning to read [as they] already know how to say the words [...] Learners who are developing literacy in Cook Islands Māori need to be able to cope with both types of written text because they will generally encounter both. As learners move to higher levels, they need to learn how to [understand] texts both with and without macrons and glottal stops”.¹⁰

While these guidelines agree it is important for learners to understand the written language both with and without macrons and glottal stops, their main purpose remains promoting accessibility, consistency, and clarity of meaning and pronunciation for speakers in New Zealand, many of whom are second language learners. This being the case, it is these guidelines' position that macrons and glottal stops should always be used where appropriate.

⁸ Buse et al., 1995: vi

⁹ Buse et al., 1995: 189

Consonants

There are nine consonant sounds in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani.

(6) Consonants in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani¹¹

	BILABIAL	LABIO-DENTAL	ALVEOLAR/ DENTAL	VELAR	GLOTTAL
STOP/PLOSIVE	p		t	k	ʔ
FRICATIVE		v			
NASAL	m		n	ŋ	
FLAP			r		

All consonant sounds in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani are represented in spelling as they are in the above table, with the following exceptions:

- /ʔ/ is represented as a single inverted comma (‘)
- /ŋ/ is represented as /ng/
- /r/ is represented as /r/

Note that /t/ can undergo allophonic variation in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani such that it is realised as $/t̪/$ (as in English **chat** and **chuck**) when followed by an /i/ or, to a lesser degree, /u/¹²

(7) Allophonic variation of /t/¹³

WORD/SPELLING	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
tiaki	chee-ah-kee	‘to guard, wait for’
tiare	chee-ah-reh	‘flower’
tiaokereti	chee-ao-keh-reh-tee	‘chocolate’

Section 3 – Word Division

Affixes

Te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani has two types of affixes: prefixes and suffixes. Reduplication is not considered a type of affix by these guidelines. All affixes are *directly attached to the root words they modify*. The exceptions to this are the suffixes *-ia* and *-anga*, which can be split away from their root word in certain circumstances, such that both components are written separately. More detail on this phenomenon is provided in the dedicated *Suffixes* section below:

¹¹ Ministry of Education 2012: 15

¹² Nicholas 2016: 19

¹³ Nicholas 2016: 21

Prefixes

Te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani utilises a range of prefixes. Some examples are described in the table below:

(8) Prefixes¹⁴

PREFIX	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
'aka-	Many functions, including denoting 'to cause,' or 'to make happen'.	'aka + pae 'division' = 'akapae 'to divide'
ma/mā-	Combines with verbs to denote spontaneous occurrence.	ma + tara 'to loosen, undo, unravel' = matara 'to come loose or undone'
na-	Combines with specific nouns to denote past time.	na + kōnei 'today' = nakōnei 'earlier today'

Suffixes

Te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani has many suffixes also, some of which are listed in the table below:

(9) Suffixes¹⁵

SUFFIX	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
-ngia	Combines with verbs to form the passive.	kata 'to laugh' + ngia = katangia 'to be laughed at'
-ngū	Denotes intensity.	kava 'bitter' + ngū = kavangū 'very bitter'
-manga	Combines with verbs to form related nouns.	inu 'to drink' + manga = inumanga 'place where there is drink'

-ia

The *-ia* suffix changes active verbs (e.g., the chef *cooks* the food) into passive verbs (e.g., the food *is cooked* by the chef) in a process called *passivisation*. While it is usually attached directly to the verb it modifies, it is written as a separate word if that verb is immediately followed by an adverb. Take the following sentences for example:

(10) *-ia* attachment¹⁶

<i>Kua</i>	<i>raveia</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>uipā'anga</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>nanai</i>
'(completed action)'	'was done'	'the'	'meeting'	'(on)'	'yesterday'
verbal particle	verb + passive suffix	definitive article	noun	preposition	adverb

'The meeting was done yesterday'

(11) *-ia* attachment where an adverb is present¹⁷

<i>Kua</i>	<i>rave</i>	<i>poitirere</i>	<i>ia</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>uipā'anga</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>nanai</i>
'(completed action)'	'do'	'surpris(ngly)'	'(was done)'	'the'	'meeting'	'(on)'	'yesterday'
verbal particle	verb	adverb	passive suffix	definitive article	noun	preposition	adverb

'The meeting was surprisingly done yesterday'

¹⁴ Buse et al., 1995: 12, 205, 263

¹⁵ Buse et al., 1995: 112, 113, 210

¹⁶ Rere 1966: 7

¹⁷ Rere 1966: 7

-anga

The *-anga* suffix turns verbs (e.g., to achieve, to tell) into nouns (e.g., the achievement, the telling) in a process called nominalisation. While it is usually attached directly to the verb it modifies, it is written as a separate word if the verb already has a passive suffix, such as *-ia*, attached to it. Take the following sentences for example:

(12) *-anga* attachment

<i>I</i>	<i>toku</i>	<i>aere'anga</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>Avarua</i>	<i>nanai</i>
'on'	'my'	'(go) way'	'to'	'Avarua'	'yesterday'
locational particle	determiner	verb + nominalising suffix	nominalising suffix	proper noun	adverb

'On my way to Avarua...'

(13) *-anga* attachment where a suffix is already present

<i>I</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>tuatuaia</i>	<i>anga</i>	<i>teia</i>	<i>tuatua</i>
'at'	'the'	'(is told)'	'telling (of)'	'this'	'story'
locational particle	definitive article	verb + passive suffix	nominalising suffix	demonstrative adjective	noun

'At the telling of this story...'

Compound words

Orthographic convention around compound words in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani is inconsistent. They are *most often* written as single words without spaces or hyphens, though there are exceptions. If in doubt, consult cookislandsdictionary.com to determine how a compound word should be written. If that fails to provide an answer, it is the position of these guidelines that *compounds should always be written as one word*, unless doing so would impact clarity of meaning.

(14) Compound words¹⁸

WORD COMPONENTS	COMPOUND WORD
<i>iri'iri</i> 'to weave' + <i>kapua</i> 'to conceive' >>>	<i>iri'irikapua</i> 'workshop' (i.e., brainstorm)
<i>ngutu</i> 'lips' + <i>'are</i> 'house' >>>	<i>ngutu'are</i> 'household, home'
<i>pa'i</i> 'ship' + <i>rere</i> 'fly' >>>	<i>pa'irere</i> 'aeroplane'

Loanwords and word creation

Te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani has many loanwords, many of them from English.

(15) English loanwords in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani¹⁹

ENGLISH	TE REO MĀORI KŪKI 'AIRANI
'rice' >>>	<i>raiti</i>
'lemon' >>>	<i>rēmene</i>
'sugar' >>>	<i>tuka</i>

¹⁸ Buse et al., 1995: 73, 114, 303

¹⁹ Buse et al., 1995: 378, 389, 521

Loanwords, especially those introduced a long time ago, were generally integrated into the language through the passive process of *transliteration*. Newer terms, however, especially those relating to science and technology, often have to be incorporated through intentional *word creation*. A number of strategies, including *transliteration*, can be employed to support this process. These are outlined below:

(16) Word creation strategies

STRATEGY	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
<i>Borrowing</i>	The most basic strategy – simply use a word from another language as-is, same spelling, same pronunciation.	
<i>Transliteration</i>	Changing the spelling (and pronunciation) of a word from another language to conform to the spelling conventions of te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani.	'Cake' is realised as <i>kēke</i> 'Hymn' is realised as <i>imene</i> 'Nurse' is realised as <i>neti</i>
<i>Meaning Extension</i>	Extending the meaning of an existing word(s) in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani to encompass the meaning of a word(s) in another language.	The meaning of <i>uira</i> 'lightning' is extended to include 'electricity'.
<i>Phrase Formation</i>	Using a group of words in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani to capture the meaning of a word from another language.	'Ambulance' is realised as <i>torōka 'apai maki</i> , literally 'truck that carries the sick' 'Plantation' is realised as <i>ngā'i tanutanu</i> , literally 'place where planting occurs' 'Surgeon' is realised as <i>taote va'i</i> , literally 'doctor that opens'
<i>Compounding</i>	Combining existing words in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani to form new words.	'Submarine' is realised as <i>pa'iruku</i> , literally 'ship that dives under water'. 'Hospital' is realised (in older use) as <i>'are maki</i> , literally 'sick house'. 'Horse' is realised <i>'oro'enua</i> , literally 'that which runs across the land'

The following factors should be considered (in the order they are presented) when determining which word creation strategies to employ:

- **Precedent** – If there is already an established word or phrase that conveys the meaning you are trying to capture, use it! Don't create something new if there's no need to.
- **Language Status** – Think about how the word creation strategy might affect people's view of the language. Don't resort to borrowing or transliteration just because it's easier, as this can send the message that te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani is not complex or sophisticated enough to capture meaning in the modern world.
- **Effectiveness** – How well does the new word or phrase capture the meaning of the original, and how obvious would that meaning be at first glance?
- **Workability** – How efficient is the strategy? For example, while phrase formation might initially seem like the best way to capture meaning, if the phrase in question would be ten or more words long, it's unlikely to catch on and be used widely and frequently as intended.

Section 4 – Capitalisation

Proper nouns

Proper nouns in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani always begin with capital letters.²⁰ Guidance around common types of proper nouns are provided in the sections below.

Personal names

All components of personal names – i.e., first names, any middle names, and surnames – are capitalised.

(17) Personal names

TE REO MĀORI KŪKI 'AIRANI	ENGLISH
<i>Terepai Maoate</i>	Prime Minister (former)
<i>Nikorima Te Miha</i>	Footballer

Days of the week

The days of the week are always capitalised. Also note the exact name for each day can vary from dialect to dialect.

(18) Days of the week²³

TE REO MĀORI KŪKI 'AIRANI	ENGLISH
<i>Mōnitē / Mōnidē</i>	'Monday'
<i>Ru'irua</i>	'Tuesday'
<i>Ru'itoru</i>	'Wednesday'
<i>Paraparau</i>	'Thursday'
<i>Varaire</i>	'Friday'
<i>Āonga / Ma'anākai</i>	'Saturday'
<i>Tapati / Sabati</i>	'Sunday'

Religious titles

As in English, religious titles are capitalised when they refer to a specific person and lowercase when used generally – e.g., '**Orometua** Tere' 'Pastor Tere' as opposed to *Kāre au i manako ē I 'orometua ana 'aia ki Pāpua* 'I don't think that he has been to Papua as a pastor'.²¹

The above rule also applies to references to the Christian God as opposed to other gods – e.g., *Ko te **Atua** tō tātou 'akapu'anga ē te māro'iro'i* '**God** is our refuge and our strength' as opposed to *kua pūpū rātou I te karakia ki tō rātou **atua** kiā Rongo* 'they offered up their prayer to their **god** Rongo'.²²

Months of the year

The Cook Islands follow the Gregorian calendar, with each month's name transliterated into te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani. All months are capitalised.

(19) Months of the year²⁴

TE REO MĀORI KŪKI 'AIRANI	ENGLISH
<i>Tiānuare</i>	'January'
<i>Pēperuare</i>	'February'
<i>Māti</i>	'March'
<i>Āperirā</i>	'April'
<i>Mē</i>	'May'
<i>Tiūnu</i>	'June'
<i>Tiurai</i>	'July'
<i>'Aukute</i>	'August'
<i>Tepetema</i>	'September'
<i>'Okotopa</i>	'October'
<i>Noema</i>	'November'
<i>Tītema</i>	'December'

²⁰ Rere 1966: 9

²¹ Buse et al., 1995: 293

²² Buse et al., 1995: 83, 156

²³ Buse et al., 1995: 255, 405, 320, 555, 63, 447

²⁴ Buse et al., 1995: 488, 337, 240, 66, 244, 501, 87, 483, 282, 272-273, 499

Place names

Place names, including geographic features, are separated either by spaces or hyphens, with all words capitalised except prepositions. There are exceptions to this, however, and digital maps do not always align with traditional maps that have been used previously. This being the case, traditional maps should be considered authoritative in the first instance. However, if you do not have access to traditional maps, or someone with knowledge of the place names contained therein, a digital resource such as Google Maps is acceptable – just be consistent, and reference sources where appropriate.

(20) Place names

TE REO MĀORI KŪKI 'AIRANI

'Auau Enuā (Mangaia)

Araura-enuā-o-Ru-ki-te-moana (Aitutaki)

Enuamanu (Atiu)

Arorangi (Puaikura)

Country names

Country names are separated by spaces with all words capitalised.

(21) Country and continent names²⁵

TE REO MĀORI KŪKI 'AIRANI

ENGLISH

Nū Tirēni

'New Zealand'

'Āmoa

'Samoa'

Marike

'(United States of) America'

Demonyms

Demonyms are the words used to denote the inhabitants of a particular country, state, city, region etc. In English, demonyms are formed with a number of suffixes, most notably /-n/ or /-an/ e.g., Samoan, Niuean. In te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani, however, lowercase *tane* 'man', *va'ine* 'woman', or *tangata* 'person' is combined with the relevant capitalised country name as below:

(22) Demonyms

TE REO MĀORI KŪKI 'AIRANI

ENGLISH

tane / va'ine / tangata Nū Tirēni

'New Zealand man / woman / people'

tane / va'ine / tangata 'Āmoa

'Samoan man / woman / people'

tane / va'ine / tangata Marike

'American man / woman / people'

Language names

Language names are always formed with *te reo* ('the language [of]') and the name of the country where the language originates, generally speaking. *Te* is capitalised only if it is at the beginning of a sentence, *reo* is never capitalised.

(23) Language names²⁶

TE REO MĀORI KŪKI 'AIRANI

ENGLISH

te reo Māori (Kūki 'Airani)

'(Cook Islands) Māori language'

te reo Paratane

'the language [of] Britain (i.e., English)'

te reo 'Āmoa

'the language [of] Samoa'

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Appendices

Appendix 1 — Timeline of key texts on and in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani

YEAR	TEXT	SIGNIFICANCE
1827	Papehia and Pitman's alphabet, vocabulary, and hymns	London Missionary Society evangelists Charles Pitman and Papehia, arriving in Rarotonga in 1823 and 1827 respectively, utilised their existing knowledge of Tahitian to learn te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani (or 'Rarotongan' as it was termed at the time), devising a thirteen-letter alphabet, written vocabulary, and several hymns (through translation) in the process.
1851	<i>Te Bibilia Tapu</i> (Cook Islands Bible)	Missionary John Williams began translating the Bible into te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani in 1828, completing the work over two decades later in 1851. <i>Te Bibilia Tapu</i> remains the most comprehensive published body of literature in te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani to this day.
1854	<i>Te Akataka Reo Rarotonga</i> or, Rarotongan and English grammar	Aaron Buzacott arrived in the Cook Islands in 1828 and set about writing a more detailed grammar than the earlier vocabulary produced by Papehia and Pitman. <i>Te Akataka Reo Rarotonga</i> was first published in 1854, stayed in print until 1869, and for a long time after remained an authoritative grammatical resource.
1918	Rarotongan-English Dictionary	Compiled by Reverend G.H. Eastman during his five-year residence in Rarotonga from 1913-1918, the Rarotongan-English Dictionary consisted of 323 annotated pages describing words in ordinary use at the time of collection. Unfortunately, however, the work was never published.
1962	A Dictionary of Maori Language of Rarotonga	Stephen Savage first began compiling his dictionary in the early 1900s, though the original draft was lost in a house fire. He continued working on the dictionary until he passed away in 1941. The unfinished manuscript, which included a number of cultural notes as well as vocabulary entries, was purchased by the New Zealand Government in 1950, and ultimately published by the Department of Island Territories in Wellington in 1962.
1995	Cook Islands Maori Dictionary with English-Cook Islands Maori Finderlist	Preceded by the publication of several articles on grammatical aspects of the language, Dr. Jasper Buse and Raututi Taringa began work on an updated Cook Islands Māori dictionary in the 1960s. With every letter up to K being written by the time of Buse's death in 1985, the draft was completed and digitised in 1987, and further edited by Bruce Biggs and Rangi Moeka'a over the next eight years. The long-awaited Cook Islands Māori Dictionary was finally published in 1995, and remains the most authoritative linguistic text on the language to date.
2016	Online Dictionary of Cook Islands Languages	A website housing searchable, online dictionaries for the Rarotonga, Aitutaki, 'Atiu, Mangaia, Manihiki, Mā'uuke, Miti'aro, and Penrhyn dialects of te reo Māori Kūki 'Airani. The site was first launched in 2016 as a collaboration between Auckland University of Technology's Te Ipukarea Research Institute and the University of the South Pacific in Suva.