

# *Peace Corps*

*Setswana*

*There is no word for grammar in Setswana  
Comprehensive grammar*



# THERE IS NO WORD FOR GRAMMAR IN SETSWANA

*A Comprehensive Grammar of the Tswana Language*

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# i. Preface

## Introduction to the Acquisition of Setswana for Peace Corps Volunteers

I know that for many of you, the most daunting aspect of beginning your Peace Corps service here in Botswana is contemplating not so much the immediate task of PST before you, but, rather more so, the following and seemingly insurmountable task of integrating yourself into a community whose culture is so vastly different from your own. I can't say you're wrong for feeling intimidated; indeed, I admit that that was, for me, a concern I grappled with throughout PST and even still at times. But, without belaboring the nuances and subtleties of Setswana culture that you ought to be aware of (I'll save that for PSDN and your LCF's), one and arguably the most integral tool in your repertoire of community-integration stratagems is, of course, *language*—and to be more specific, your *acquisition* of the Setswana language.

Now, I'm sure many if not all of you have studied a second language before. Some of you may even be heritage speakers of a second language. Regardless of the context in which you learned (and possibly acquired) your second language, you are in for a language learning experience I doubt many if any of you have ever before undergone.

## Why Setswana is a difficult language

1. Unlike Spanish and French, which have the Real Academia Española and l'Académie Française respectively, there is no governing board to standardize the Setswana language. Admittedly, neither does the English language have a governing board, but unlike Setswana, which didn't come into official use until the independence of Botswana, English has had a long written tradition spanning centuries during which prescriptive rules of grammar, word usage, proper punctuation, etc. could develop. The lack of a governing board means that everybody governs his or her own language and has a very local concept of what is "proper" Setswana and what is not. Therefore, even if you may say something exactly how your LCF taught you, you may still find yourself being "corrected."
2. Unlike more widely spoken languages like English, Spanish, French, and German, the Setswana language has few learning resources for learners of the language. Being such broadly studied languages, the previously mentioned languages have had considerable research done on the non-native acquisition thereof. As a result, there are a number of approaches and methods to choose from, including a variety of textbooks, listening materials, and even interactive computer programs. Setswana, however, is spoken as a secondary language by few people, and therefore does not have the plethora of learning materials found in more commonly studied languages. Of course, the relationship is bidirectional; that is to say, the poverty of learning materials available in Setswana probably contributes a great deal to the fact that Setswana is a secondary language for so few people.
3. Setswana is a Bantu language, which means it is in an entirely different family from English or any other language most Americans study. Most of us studied Spanish, French, or German as a second language, all of which are in the Indo-European Language Family. While they are vastly different languages from English with no degree of mutual intelligibility, their similarities to English and to each other are admittedly greater than the similarities any Indo-European languages may have with languages in other families.
4. Setswana has something akin to 18 different noun distinctions known as classes. When one compares this to the 4 or at most 6 noun distinctions (2 or 3 genders in the singular + 2 or 3 genders in the plural = 4 or 6 noun distinctions) found in most Indo-European languages, this certainly sounds intimidating.
5. Setswana has tones. Unless you have been exposed to Amerindian, Asian or other African languages possessing tones, the concept of tone as being yet another phonetic variable to consider in speech production may be daunting.

## Why Setswana isn't as difficult as I just made it out to be

1. Your primary aim is to attain a conversational fluency in Setswana, therefore, what does it matter that Setswana isn't standardized? Admittedly, it will be annoying when, after having picked up the habit of simply saying "O tsogile?" every morning to your peers, someone has the audacity to correct you, "Nyaa, bua, 'O tsogile *jang*?" I can't say I've come up with a way to combat this other than simply swallowing your pride

and nodding appreciatively, but, hey, at least now you'll be better prepared, and hopefully, your confidence in speaking will be spared the blow that I know mine experienced when I was first innocently "corrected" by someone only trying to help me out.

2. The poverty of learning materials will discourage you from becoming "book smart" in Setswana, and instead encourage you to seek out your Batswana peers to further your acquisition of Setswana. Okay, so it's not entirely fair to say there are NO learning materials. Peace Corps will provide you with some Setswana learning materials, but I'm sure many of you will find them incomplete and frankly boring. Take this grammar book for instance: boring. In any event, take this as an opportunity to integrate into your community and have your neighbors, coworkers, and friends become your language teachers.
3. Few if any of you have studied a Bantu language; therefore you're all starting from scratch. There won't be anyone for whom the acquisition of Setswana will be a cakewalk. Therefore, step boldly into your language learning. We all sounded like idiots the first time we attempted to say *t!hotse*. What matters most is that we continue trying.
4. The 18 noun classes of Setswana can be best thought of as phonetic distinctions, and reliably so. That is to say, whereas the grammatical gender of nouns in Indo-European languages must be tediously learned with few if any reliable generalizations to be made, the noun classes of Setswana are bound in their prefixes. For example, we know that *setilo* is in Class 7, not because it's an apparatus as most words in Class 7 are, but rather because it begins with the prefix *SE-*. To use German as an example, it may seem obvious that *Mann* (man) is masculine, and *Frau* (woman) is feminine, but is it obvious that *Käse* (cheese) is also masculine and that *Schule* (school) is also feminine? Or, could you have possibly anticipated that *Mädchen* (girl) was in fact in the neuter gender instead of the feminine gender, as one would expect it to be? The point I'm trying to illustrate is that whereas non-native speakers of an Indo-European language struggle to guess the gender of unfamiliar words, non-native speakers of Setswana and other Bantu languages need not guess the appropriate class of a noun but can instead systematically and reliably discern it by simply taking a look at its prefix.
5. Setswana only has two tones. I know many of you may still find this daunting, but whereas many tonal languages have 4 or even as many as 16 distinct tones, Setswana's two tones (low and high) can be compared to the stressed and unstressed syllables of a word in English. Taking the American and British pronunciations of *research* for example (*REsearch* and *reSEARCH* respectively). Now imagine that *REsearch* meant "to try to find something a second or third time" (as in, "Although I've already looked twice, I'm going to REsearch my room a third time.") and that *reSEARCH* meant "to investigate into an inquiry systematically and methodically" (as in "I am going to reSEARCH as much as I can about Botswana.") In this example, it is only stress that differentiates the pronunciation of both words, however, stress alone distinguishes each word with different, albeit related, meanings. Tone plays a similar role in Setswana, but whereas the two definitions in my hypothetical example had relatively similar meanings, two Setswana words differentiated by tone alone can have vastly different meanings (e.g. *mabele* can mean both *sorghum* and *breasts*).

## Some advice to aid you in your personal acquisition of Setswana

1. Expect laughter, and try not to be put off by it. As a foreigner, few Batswana expect you to even attempt their language. Furthermore, while we in America are accustomed to hearing our language spoken by non-native speakers, most Batswana find themselves in the position of being forced to speak English, and often therefore respond enthusiastically upon discovering you are trying to learn their language. I know, the laughter may be embarrassing, but don't let that discourage you from trying.
2. Take your learning materials with you to work. The first couple months out at site can be fairly uneventful. Of course, you could bring in an interesting novel or simply play minesweeper on the office computer to pass the time, but studying at work will 1) give you an easy excuse to start up conversation with that coworker you still haven't gotten to know yet (*Mma? Could you help me with a little Setswana? So, if I want to say, "I'm tired," I say "Ke lapile." But, how do I say, "I'm not tired"?*), 2) show your coworkers how difficult Setswana really is when you ask them grammar questions too difficult to explain (*Wait, so, I can't say, "Ga ke lapile"? I have to say "Ga ke a lapa"? But, I thought...*), and 3) make you coworkers more appreciative of the effort you're putting into your service. Subsequently, they will like you better, which will of course make your community integration all the more effective.
3. Spend more time on grammar than on vocabulary. Don't get me wrong, vocabulary is very important. If some mad scientist gave me the opportunity to have instantaneous knowledge of a language's grammar or vocabulary, I would choose vocabulary, because in knowing the meaning of every single word in a language's lexicon, one could simply figure out the grammar along the way. But the truth is, no such scientist exists, and memorization of strings and matrices of information is something few people besides certain geniuses and autistic savants excel at. Think of grammar as the blueprints of a house, and vocabulary as the building materials. You only need some of the building materials to build the frame, and the blue prints will show you how. Once you've built the frame, it becomes a lot clearer where the wall will be, how many tiles you'll need for the roof, whether or not French windows will be appropriate, etc. Sure, you'll still need to reference the blueprints to learn how to put up the roof, and how to install those fancy windows, but having established that frame makes the task much less daunting. Similarly, a solid grounding of some basic grammar concepts will give you the knowledge of how to piece together the bits of vocabulary you acquire from a variety of sources. By synthesizing vocabulary into sentences instead of memorizing it by rote, you will find better success in recalling these words when it comes time to use them. For every grammar concept you learn, try switching out the vocabulary with some new vocabulary. Does the sentence make sense? If it doesn't, find out how to make sense of it. In this way, your acquisition of Setswana will be an act of exploration and discovery.
4. Related to your acquisition of grammar is the prohibition: don't ask *why*. Why? Why, because few people can actually answer why a grammar construction is what it is. A linguist may give you an accurate albeit convoluted answer, explaining that whereas languages have maybe a couple present tenses and a couple future tenses, there are generally a multitude of various past tenses, all capturing various degrees of continuity and distance into the past. Seeing as how the negation of a past event is logically not an event having occurred in the past and in fact not an event at all, it is illogical to negate the perfect tense (also known as the simple past), particularly

because the perfect tense presumes the action has been in fact completed. A less pretentious language instructor may simply say that in the same way you cannot negate a noun in the perfect form in English (you can't say *I did not ate*), neither can you say *Ga ke jele* in Setswana, but must instead say *Ga ke a ja*. Instead of asking *why*, ask *how*. That is to say, ask, "How do you negate *Ke a ja*?" (*Ga ke je*), and then ask, "How do you negate *Ke jele*?" (*Ga ke a ja*). Now try doing that with some other verbs. Sure, you may not know *why* that construction looks like that, but hey, are you trying to learn linguistics or are you trying to attain a conversational fluency in Setswana? Besides, could any of you explain to an ESL student why the negations of *I eat* and *I ate* are *I don't eat* and *I didn't eat* respectively? In any event, most explanations are a very unsatisfactory, "Because, that's just how it is." Spare yourself the disappointment; don't ask *why*. Ask *how*.

5. Take a break from studying Setswana. I hope some of you experience the Setswana high that overtook me my first couple months in Botswana. But, even if you do, know that that too will pass. You may get to a point where looking at your brown Setswana-English-Setswana dictionary makes you sick. You may feel inclined to talk to Margaret or Tanaka to find out what they would prescribe for an allergic reaction to Setswana, because you tried your epi-pen, but the effect was frankly disappointing. You may find yourself wanting to swear off Setswana, gleefully imagining what it would be like to hurl your learning materials into a bonfire complete with an effigy of Oteng. Don't hate. Back off, take a breather, and put away those Setswana materials for a couple weeks.

I wish you the best of luck in your service.

*Stuart J. Sia (aka "Tshiamo")*



## ii. Orthography and Phonology

### **Introduction:**

The phonology of a language is its inventory of phonemes (units of sound) combined to form words. The phonology of a given language may increase with the influx of foreign words into the language.

The orthography of a language is its graphical representation. For most languages, the orthography is phonetic; that is to say, the orthography makes use of an alphabet to represent the sounds of the language, thus enabling speakers or learners of the language to sound out unfamiliar words. In the case of Setswana, the orthography is reliably phonetic, whereas it is deceptively and often unreliably so in English.

# ORTHOGRAPHY

The Setswana alphabet uses 25 different letters (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, Š, T, U, W, X, Y) to represent 9 distinct vowels, 2 diphthongs, 29 pulmonic consonants, and 3 click consonants.

In the case of the consonants, there is a high degree of reliability between a grapheme and the phoneme it represents, with one grapheme for each phoneme and vice versa. In the orthography presented here, H reliably indicates that a phoneme is aspirated. However, some orthographies use the grapheme SH instead of Š, and CH instead of TŠ and TŠH. In such orthographies, the H becomes a less reliable indicator of aspiration, and the distinction between TŠ and TŠH is lost.

The vowels A, I, and U have a similarly high degree of grapheme to phoneme reliability. The vowels, E and O, however, can each represent two distinct sounds. The circumflex is not a part of standard orthography and only appears in scientific works such as dictionaries and grammar books.

# PHONOLOGY

Because Setswana orthography is so reliably phonetic, we will jump into the phonology of the language, and in doing so, illustrate its orthography.

## Tones

Setswana has two tones: low (or default) and high. Tones differentiate orthographically identical words such as the second person personal subject marker, **o** (low or tone), and the third person personal subject marker, **o** (high tone). The high-intoned syllable of a word in the Tswana language can be likened to the stressed syllable of a word in English.

## Vowels

Vowels are sounds produced with an unobstructed vocal tract. Sequential vowels are never diphthongized except in the case of E and O, which when followed by an A become the consonants Y and W respectively. Vowels form the nucleus of a syllable.

Grapheme	Phonemic approximation (anglicized)	Notes
<b>A</b>	A as in mAma	
<b>E</b>	First vowel of the diphthong EY as in thEy	
<b>Ê</b>	~E as in mEn	Almost pronounced as I
<b>I</b>	EE as in knEE	
<b>O</b>	First vowel of the diphthong OW as in lOw	
<b>Ô</b>	~U as in pUt	Almost pronounced as U
<b>U</b>	U as in tUne	
<b>W / O</b>	W as in aWay	O/U + vowel = W + vowel
<b>Y / E</b>	Y as in cheYenne	E/I + vowel = Y + vowel

Constricted (palate)		←	Open	→	Rounded (labia)	
i	ê	e	a	o	ô	u

## Consonants

**Pulmonic consonants** are produced with air pressure from the lungs. Pulmonic consonants form the onset and/or coda of a syllable in Setswana.

Grapheme	Phonemic Approximation (anglicized)	Notes
<b>B</b>	B as in a <b>B</b> igail	
<b>D</b>	D as in la <b>D</b> y	
<b>F</b>	F as in de <b>F</b> ame	Dialectically =H
<b>G</b>	CH as in Scottish lo <b>CH</b>	
<b>H</b>	H as in man <b>H</b> attan	
<b>J</b>	J as in nin <b>J</b> a	
<b>K</b>	K as in ca <b>K</b> e	Without aspiration
<b>KG</b>	KCH as in thin <b>K CH</b> anukah	Can be similar to KH
<b>KH</b>	C as in <b>C</b> ake	With aspiration
<b>L</b>	L as in a <b>L</b> oof	
<b>M</b>	M as in la <b>M</b> p	Syllabic before consonant
<b>N</b>	N as in la <b>N</b> d	Syllabic before consonant
<b>NG</b>	NG as in si <b>NG</b> ing	
<b>NY</b>	NY as in ca <b>NY</b> on	
<b>P</b>	P as in po <b>P</b> corn	Without aspiration
<b>PH</b>	P as in <b>P</b> opcorn	With aspiration
<b>R</b>	RR as in Spanish ca <b>RR</b> o	
<b>S</b>	S as in in <b>S</b> ane	
<b>Š / SH</b>	SH as in a <b>SH</b> amed	
<b>T</b>	T as taught <b>T</b>	Without aspiration
<b>TH</b>	T as in <b>T</b> aught	With aspiration
<b>TL</b>	~CL as in <b>CL</b> uck	Without aspiration Dialectically =T
<b>TLH</b>	~CL as in <b>CL</b> uck	With aspiration Dialectically =TH
<b>TS</b>	TS as in tha <b>T'S</b>	Without aspiration
<b>TSH</b>	TS as in tha <b>T</b> Side	With aspiration
<b>TŠ / CH</b>	CH as in chur <b>CH</b> function	Without aspiration
<b>TŠH / CH</b>	CH as in <b>CH</b> urch function	With aspiration
<b>W</b>	W as in a <b>W</b> ay	Consonantal O/U
<b>Y</b>	Y as in che <b>Y</b> enne	Consonantal E/I

**Nonpulmonic Consonants** are produced within the upper vocal tract, without air pressure from the lungs. These consonants are present albeit rare in Setswana and form the onset of a syllable.

Grapheme	Phonemic Approximation (descriptive)	Notes
<b>C</b>	Like the sound of the interjection “tsk”	Interdental click
<b>Q</b>	Like the sound of a bottle being opened	Alveolar click
<b>X</b>	Like the sound made to call a horse	Alveopalatal click

A = aspirated; V = voiced

Point and Manner of Articulation	Labial	Coronal			Dorsal		
	Bilabial; Labiodental	Dental; Alveolar	Postalveolar		Palatal	Velar; Glottal	
<i>Nasal</i>	M	N				NY	NG
<i>Plosive</i>	P	T					K
<i>Plosive (A)</i>	PH	TH					KH
<i>Plosive (V)</i>	B	D					
<i>Affricate</i>		TS	TŠ / CH	TL (lateral)			KG
<i>Affricate (A)</i>		TSH	TŠH / CH	TLH (lateral)			
<i>Affricate (V)</i>			J				
<i>Fricative</i>	F	S	Š / SH				G
<i>Approximant</i>	W (vowel)	R (trill)	L (lateral)		Y (vowel)		H
<i>Click</i>		C (interdental)	Q (alveolar)	X (alveopalatal, lateral)			

The nasal consonants, M and N, are hummed as individual syllables before other consonants (e.g. *nthusa* has three syllables: *n + thu + sa*).

Aspirated consonants release a puff of air upon articulation, whereas unaspirated consonants use only as much air as is necessary to articulate (e.g. the first P in *popcorn* is aspirated whereas the second P is not).

TS/TSH and TŠ /TŠH are nearly identical phonemes, respectively.

In laterally articulated phonemes, the tip of the tongue is held in place, thus forcing air around it as opposed to over it. In the case of TL and TLH, it is not the tip of the tongue but the back of the tongue that moves. In the case of the click consonant X, it is the sides of the tongue that are pulled away from the back molars to produce a sucking sound.

The click consonants are present in only a few interjections in Setswana. We have already mentioned the phoneme X. The phoneme C is produced by pulling the tip of the tongue away from the back of the teeth to make a sucking sound. The phoneme Q is produced by pulling the tip of the tongue down from the roof of the mouth to make the sound of a cork being pulled from a bottle.

# 1. SUBSTANTIVES

## Introduction:

Substantives include nouns, pronouns, and nominal phrases.

Nouns, pronouns, and nominal phrases can function as the subject, object, or direct object of a sentence. They can also function as the possessor or the object of possession.

Nouns represent distinct abstract and concrete concepts. Other parts of speech, when used as the subject, object, or direct object of a sentence, or the possessor or object of possession, can become nouns.

Pronouns take the place of nouns.

Nominal phrases are made up of a noun or pronoun and its qualifiers, which can include adjectives, possessors, and/or verbs. For the construction of nominal phrases, see ADJECTIVES.

Nouns of the same class are governed by the same grammatical rules. Generalizations can be made about the nouns making up each class (e.g. Class 1 & 2 contain people). However, many nouns fall outside these generalizations. The classes are, therefore, better understood to be phonetic distinctions.

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# I. NOUN CLASS SYSTEM

Classes 6 & 14 and Classes 8, 10, & 12 are grammatically identical classes.

Take note that Classes i. & ii. are personal nouns in the first person, Classes iii. & iv. are personal nouns in the second person, and Classes 1 to 18 are personal and nonpersonal nouns in the third person. Furthermore, odd-numbered Classes i. to 13 are singulars, while even-numbered Classes ii. to 14 are their respective plurals. Nouns in Class 15 are verb infinitives. Nouns in Classes 16 to 18 are locative nouns.

Some nouns may not have a singular or plural form. This is especially so with Class 13 nouns, which are mostly abstract nouns and only appear in the singular. Some nouns may have alternative singular or plural forms, particularly when prefixes are phonetically similar. Class 11 (**LO-**) nouns can also take the prefix **LE-**, in which case, they take the same grammatical constructions as Class 5.

Class 1 can take either no prefix (in the case of proper nouns and kinship nouns) or the prefix **MO-**. Class 2 can take either the prefix **BO-** (in the case of proper nouns and kinship nouns) or the prefix **BA-**.

Proper nouns and honorary titles belong in Classes 1 & 2. The prefix **BO-** makes a proper noun plural, which is a reference to either everyone by that name or everyone with that person. For example, *boHilary* could refer to everyone named *Hilary*, but it is more likely to refer to *Hilary and everyone with her*. The possessive marker **GA** follows the possessive preposition when a proper noun is the possessor (e.g. *horn ya ga Hilary*, which means *Hilary's horn* or *the horn of Hilary*).

## Abbreviations:

	Part of Speech
sm	<i>subject marker (of subject)</i>
om	<i>object marker (of object)</i>
p	<i>continuous participle or negative marker (of subject)</i>
dp	<i>definite participle (of subject)</i>
px	<i>prefix</i>

[NOTE: sm = p for all classes but Class 1, for which sm = O and p = A]

## II. MARKERS, PARTICIPLES, & THE POSSESSIVE PREPOSITION

**Personal Nouns** (includes abstract personal pronouns and proper names)

Class	Prefix	Abstract Pronoun	Possess. Pron.	sm	om	p	dp
i.		NNA (I)	- ME	KE	(N-)	KE	KA
ii.		RONA (we)	- RONA	RE			RA
iii.		WENA (you)	- GAGO	O	GO	O	WA
iv.		LONA (you)	- LONA	LE			LWA
1	-	ENE (xe)	- GAGWE	O	MO	A	A
2	Bo-	BONE (they)	- BONE	BA			BA

**Nonpersonal Nouns** (all other nouns)

Class	Prefix	Example	sm	om	p	dp	poss prep
1	MO-	Motho (person)	O	MO	A	A	WA
2	BA-	Batho (people)	BA			BA	
3	MO-	Motse (village)	O			WA	
4	ME-	Metse (villages)	E			YA	
5	LE-	Leina (name)	LE			LA	
6	MA-	Maina (names)	A			A	
7	SE-	Setilo (chair)	SE			SA	
8	DI-	Ditilo (chairs)	DI			TSA	
9	-	Kgomo (cow)	E			YA	
10	DI-	Dikgomo (cows)	DI			TSA	
11	LO-	Lonao (foot)	LO			LWA	
12	DI-	Dinao (feet)	DI			TSA	
13	BO-	Borotho (bread)	BO			BA/JWA	
14	MA-	Marotho (bread)	A			A	
15	GO -	Go ithuta (to learn)	GO			GA	
16	FA -	Fa pele (in front)					
17	KWA-	Kwa ntle (outside)					
18	MO-	Mo teng (inside)					

Take note that abstract pronouns are only used for clarification or emphasis.

The possessive pronoun, which is in agreement with the possessor, follows the possessive preposition, which follows and is in agreement with the object of possession. (E.g. *dikgomo tsa me*, *my cows*.) In this example *tsa* is in agreement with *dikgomo*, and *me* refers to the speaker. The possessive preposition could be accurately translated to mean *of*.

Take note that the subject marker, object marker, and participle are identical for Classes 2 to 18. Similarly, so too are the definite participle and the possessive preposition identical for Classes 2 to 18.

For correct usage of the subject marker, object marker, participle and definite participle, see VERBS.

### III. PRONOUNS

The following pronouns can function as articles or adjectives when following a noun. Because they are pronouns, however, it is perfectly acceptable to use them in place of nouns. Some examples include *mongwe*, *sengwe*, and *gongwe*, meaning *someone*, *something* and *somewhere*. Similarly, *ope*, *sepe*, and *gope*, mean *no one*, *nothing*, and *nowhere*.

#### Demonstratives

Class	This/These [d]	This/These (near me)	That/Those (near you)	That/Those (over there)
1.i.iii	YO	YONO	YOO	YOLE
2.ii.iv	BA	BANO	BAO	BALE
3	O	ONO	OO	OLE
4	E	ENO	EO	ELE
5	LE	LENO	LEO	LELE
6	A	ANO	AO	ALE
7	SE	SENO	SEO	SELE
8	TSE	TSENO	TSEO	TSELE
9	E	ENO	EO	ELE
10	TSE	TSENO	TSEO	TSELE
11	LO	LONO	LOO	LOLE
12	TSE	TSENO	TSEO	TSELE
13	BO	BONO	BOO	BOLE
14	A	ANO	AO	ALE
15	MO	MONO	MOO	MOLE
16	FA	FANO	FOO	FALE
17	KWA	KWANO	KOO	KWA
18	O	ONO	OO	OLE

Demonstrative pronouns replace or immediately follow the nouns they modify (e.g. *motho yo*, *this person*).

Take note that learning the first column of demonstratives will aid in learning the other demonstratives. Furthermore, take note of the similarities and differences between the demonstratives of the first column and the subject markers.

The demonstratives meaning “this/these (near me)” and “that/those (near you)” are used only in situations where more than two objects are referenced. Otherwise, simply use the demonstratives meaning “this/these” of the first column and the demonstratives meaning “that/those (over there)” of the fourth column.

### Enumeratives, Quantitatives, and Abstract Pronouns

Class	Some/Any (-NGWE) Each/Every (-NGWE LE –NGWE) [px]	Not any (-PE) Which? (-FE) Other (- SELE)	All (-TLHE)	Abstract Pronouns
i.	n/a	n/a	n/a	NNA
ii.	n/a	n/a	RO-	RONA
iii.	n/a	n/a	n/a	WENA
iv.	n/a	n/a	LO-	LONA
1	MO-	O-	n/a	ENE
2	BA-	BA-	BO-	BONE
3	MO-	O-	n/a	ONE
4	ME-	E-	YO-	YONE
5	LE-	LE-	n/a	LONE
6	MA-	A-	O-	ONE
7	SE-	SE-	n/a	SONE
8	DI-	DI-	TSO-	TSONE
9	-	E-	n/a	YONE
10	DI-	DI-	TSO-	TSONE
11	LO-	LO-	n/a	LONE
12	DI-	DI-	TSO-	TSONE
13	BO-	BO-	n/a	BONE
14	MA-	A-	O-	ONE
15	GO-	GO-	GO-	GONE
16	GO-	GO-	GO-	GONE
17	GO-	GO-	GO-	GONE
18	MO-	O-	O-	ONE

Like demonstrative pronouns, enumerative and quantitative pronouns replace or immediately follow the nouns they modify (e.g. *batho bangwe, some person*).

Take note that the prefixes of the first column are identical to the prefixes of the nouns themselves. Also take note of the similarities between the second column and the subject markers. Finally, take note of the similarities between the third and fourth columns.

The exclusive quantitative **-SI**, meaning *only* or *alone*, is rarely used in conversation. The enumerative adverbial construction **[p] LE NOSI** is more regularly used.

Abstract pronouns are only used for clarification or emphasis (e.g. *Le nna ke a opela. I also sing.*) For Classes 3 to 18, the abstract pronoun is identical to the possessive pronoun. The possessive pronoun, which is in agreement with the possessor, follows the possessive preposition, which follows and is in agreement with the object of possession (e.g. *bojang ba tsone, their grass*).

## IV. CONCORDS

Concords are used in the construction of nominal phrases.

Take note that the adjective concord is the demonstrative [d] followed by the class prefix [px]. Similarly, the relative concord is the demonstrative [d] followed by the subject marker [sm]. For usage, see ADJECTIVES.

### Adjective and Relative

Class	Adjective Concord	Relative Concord
i.	YO MO-	YO KE
ii.	BA BA-	BA RE
iii.	YO MO-	YO O
iv.	BA BA-	BA LE
1	YO MO-	YO O
2	BA BA-	BA BA
3	O MO-	O O
4	E ME-	E E
5	LE LE-	LE LE
6	A MA-	A A
7	SE SE-	SE SE
8	TSE DI-	TSE DI
9	E -	E E
10	TSE DI-	TSE DI
11	LO LO-	LO LO
12	TSE DI-	TSE DI
13	BO BO-	BO BO
14	A MA-	A A
15	MO GO-	MO GO
16	FA GO-	FA GO
17	KWA GO-	KWA GO
18	O MO-	O O

## 2. COPULAE

Copulae are parts of speech that link the subject of a sentence with a predicate. If we recall our grammar lessons from our primary and secondary education, the predicate of a sentence is everything following the subject of a sentence.

In the case of English, the verb *to be* is the primary copula, although other verbs like *become*, *feel*, and *seem* can also function as copulae. In Setswana, however, copulae are primarily embodied as markers, although verbs such as *go nna* and auxiliary verbs such as *[sm] ne [p]* also function as copulae.

Copular sentences are sentences wherein the predicate does not contain any active verbs. These sentences are concerned with identity, and the copula serves to connect the subject with any part of speech other than an active verb. In Setswana, copulae differ between subjects identified with nouns, adjectives, and numbers. We will call these various forms of *to be* Nominal Identity, Adjectival Identity, and Enumerative Identity. Furthermore, due to its close relation to the verb *to be*, we will also take a look at the verb *to have*.

# TO BE

[NOTE: sm = p for all classes but Class 1 for which sm = O and p = A]

## Nominal Identity:

The following constructions are used in identifying the subject with another noun or pronoun. Take note that for the present tense, all nouns in the third person take the copula **KE**, whereas nouns in the first and second person take their respective subject markers as copulae.

### Present

Class	Positive Construction	Negative Construction
i.-iv.	[sm]	GA [sm]
1-18	KE	GA SE

### Past

Class	Positive Construction	Negative Construction
i.-iv.	[sm] NE [sm] LE	[sm] NE [sm] SA
1-18	E NE E LE	E NE E SA

### Future

Class	Positive Construction	Negative Construction
i.-18	[sm] TLA A NNA	GA [p] KAKE [dp] NNA

## Adjectival Identity:

To identify the subject with a strong adjective, simply use the subject marker followed by the adjective (e.g. *Dikgomo di bogale. The cows are fierce.*). To identify the subject with a weak adjective, follow the subject marker with the adjective prefix (same as class prefix) affixed to the adjective (e.g. *Dikgomo di dintle. The cows are beautiful.*).

### Present

<b>Strong Construction</b>	[subject marker] [strong adjective]
<i>Example:</i>	<i>di bogale</i>
<i>Sentence:</i>	<i>Dikgomo di bogale. The cows are fierce..</i>
<b>Weak Construction</b>	[subject marker] [adjective prefix]-[weak adjective]
<i>Example:</i>	<i>di di-ntle</i>
<i>Sentence:</i>	<i>Dikgomo di dintle (DI-ntle). The cows are beautiful.</i>

### Past

Class	Positive Construction	Negative Construction
i.-18	[sm] NE [p] LE	[sm] NE [p] SA

### Future

Class	Positive Construction	Negative Construction
i.-18	[sm] TLA A NNA	GA [p] KAKE [dp] NNA

## Enumerative Identity:

To state the enumerative existence of a noun, use the existential verb GO NA LE or the possessive verb NA LE with the following concord.

<b>Strong Construction (Classes 8, 10, 12)</b>		<b>NA LE [noun] [sm] LE [strong number]</b>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>NA LE dikgomo di LE pedi</i>	
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>Go na le dikgomo di le pedi.</i> There are two cows.	
<b>Weak Construction (Classes 2, 4, 6, 14)</b>		<b>NA LE [noun] [sm] LE [prefix]-[weak number]</b>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>NA LE bana ba LE ba-bedi</i>	
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>O na le bana ba le babedi.</i> He has two children.	

Take note that Classes 8, 10, and 12 take strong forms of all numbers. English numbers are frequently used in place of Setswana numbers and are considered strong. Also acceptable in place of DI LE is TSE. See ENUMERATIVES under SUBSTANTIVES.

Class	Construction	2	3	4	5
2	BA LE BA-	-bedi	-raro	-ne	-tlhano
4	E LE ME-				
6/14	A LE MA-				
8/10/12	DI LE -	pedi	tharo	nne	tlhano

For other tenses see the following section on the verb TO HAVE.

## TO HAVE

### Present

	Construction	English
<b>Positive</b>	<b>[sm] NA LE</b>	<i>have/has</i>
<b>Negative</b>	<b>GA [p] NA</b>	<i>do/does not have</i>

### Past

	Construction	English
<b>Positive</b>	<b>[sm] NE [p] NA LE</b>	<i>did have</i>
<b>Negative</b>	<b>[sm] NE [p] SE NA</b>	<i>did not have</i>

### Future

	Construction	English
<b>Positive</b>	<b>[sm] TLA A NNA LE</b>	<i>will have</i>
<b>Negative</b>	<b>GA [p] KAKE [dp] NNA LE</b>	<i>will not have</i>



# 3. VERBS

## Introduction:

The following chapter is on noncopular predicates and is concerned specifically with verbs, which form the nucleus of most predicates. A verb can be altered in several ways. A verb in its regular form can be preceded by the infinitive marker **GO**, is in the infinitive form, is in the active voice, and takes no verb extensions. All verbs have a regular form. All verbs have an infinitive and perfect form. However, not all verbs can be in the passive voice and not all verbs can be extended.

Auxiliary verbs are verbs that modify another main verb. Auxiliary verbs can also modify other auxiliary verbs. Some subject markers become affixed to the auxiliary verb, thus becoming a part of the verb. Auxiliary verbs are discussed in this section, although they may be technically and perhaps more appropriately understood to be copulae.

The two sections covering verb tenses and the verbs *to be* and *to have* are fundamentally a synthesis of verb form, voice, and extension and auxiliary verbs.

The final section on object markers clarifies the placement of objects and object markers around the verb. Some object markers are affixed to the verb, thus becoming a part of the verb.

## Abbreviations:

	Part of Speech
sm	<i>subject marker (of subject)</i>
om	<i>object marker (of object)</i>
p	<i>continuous participle or negative marker (of subject)</i>
dp	<i>definite participle (of subject)</i>

[NOTE: sm = p for all classes but Class 1, for which sm = O and p = A]

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# I. INFINITIVE and PERFECT FORM

The infinitive form of a verb usually takes the suffix **-A**. Preceding it with the infinitive marker **GO** forms the infinitive.

The perfect form of a verb always takes the suffix **-E**. It cannot be preceded by the infinitive marker **GO**, but must instead take the same infinitive as the infinitive form.

There are regular and irregular perfect forms.

Take note that almost all verbs take **-ILE** or **-TSE** as a suffix in the perfect form. Irregular forms occur when the penultimate phoneme, the consonant or consonant cluster preceding the **-A** suffix, is a nasal consonant (M, N), liquid consonant (L, R), or the **-TS** phoneme. Irregular forms can also occur with one syllable and two syllable verbs.

Because verbs taking the suffix **-TSA** and **-LA** have reliably predictable perfect forms, we will include them with the regular forms.

## Regular Forms

Infinitive Suffix	Perfect Suffix	Examples	NOTES
<b>-A</b>	<b>-ILE</b>	<i>dira, dirile</i>	Most verbs
<b>-AYA</b>	<b>-AILE/-EILE</b>	<i>tsamaya, tsamaile</i>	
<b>-SA</b> <b>-WA</b> <b>-TSA</b>	<b>-SITSE</b> <b>-WITSE</b> <b>-DITSE</b>	<i>dirisa, dirisitse</i> <i>tlhatswa, tlhatswitse</i> <i>bitsa, biditse</i>	
<b>-LA</b>	<b>-DILE</b>	<i>kwala, kwadile</i>	2 syllables
<b>-ALA/-ELA</b> <b>-OLA</b>	<b>-ETSE</b> <b>-OTSE</b>	<i>direla, diretse</i> <i>simolola, simolotse</i>	>2 syllables

## Irregular Forms

Infinitive Suffix	Perfect Suffix	Examples	NOTES
<b>-NA</b>	<b>-NNE/-NYE</b>	<i>gana, ganne</i>	2 syllables
<b>-NA</b>	<b>-NE</b>	<i>omana, omane</i>	>2 syllables
<b>-NA</b>	<b>-NYE</b>	<i>dirana, diranye</i>	rec. ext.
<b>-NYA</b>	<b>-NTSE/-NYE</b>	<i>baakanya, baakantse</i>	
<b>-MA</b>	<b>-MILE</b>	<i>adima, adimile</i>	
<b>-AMA</b>	<b>-AME</b>	<i>sima, siame</i>	
<b>-ARA</b>	<b>-ERE</b>	<i>apara, apere</i>	

## II. ACTIVE and PASSIVE VOICE

The (active) infinitive form and (active) perfect form of the verb can also be made passive. However, some verbs cannot be made passive (e.g. reciprocal and reflexive stems), simply because it is semantically nonsensical to make such verbs passive.

In the passive voice, the agent of the action is denoted with the copula **KE** (e.g. *O opiwa KE tlhogo; He is killed by the head [He has a headache]*).

### Infinitive:

Active Suffix	Passive Suffix	Example
<b>-A</b>	<b>-WA</b>	<i>dira; dirwa</i>
<b>-AYA</b>	<b>-EWA</b>	<i>apaya; apewa</i>
<b>-SA</b>	<b>-SIWA</b>	<i>dirisa; dirisiwa</i>
<b>-WA</b>	<b>-WIWA</b>	<i>tlhatswa; tlhatswiwa</i>
<b>-TA</b>	<b>-TWA/-TIWA</b>	<i>feta; fetwa</i>
<b>-TLA</b>	<b>-TLWA/-TLIWA</b>	<i>putla; putlwa</i>
<b>-TLHA</b>	<b>-TLHWA/-TLHIWA</b>	<i>fetlha; fetlhwa</i>
<b>-TSA</b>	<b>-DIWA/-TŠWA</b>	<i>bitsa; bidiwa</i>
<b>-FA</b>	<b>-FIWA/-ŠWA</b>	<i>alafa, alafiwa</i>
<b>-BA</b>	<b>-JWA/-BIWA</b>	<i>roba; rojwa</i>
<b>-GA</b>	<b>-GWA/-GIWA</b>	<i>tsoga; tsogiwa</i>
<b>-PA</b>	<b>-PIWA/-TŠWA</b>	<i>opa; opiwa</i>
<b>-MA</b>	<b>-NGWA/-MIWA</b>	<i>palama; palangwa</i>
<b>-NA</b>	<b>-NWA/-NIWA</b>	<i>gana, ganwa</i>
<b>-NYA</b>	<b>-NNGWA</b>	<i>baakanya; baakanngwa</i>

### Perfect:

Active Suffix	Passive Suffix	Example
<b>-ILE</b>	<b>-ILWE</b>	<i>dirile; dirilwe</i>
<b>-TSE</b>	<b>-TSWE</b>	<i>feditse; feditsewe</i>
<b>-ME</b>	<b>-NGWE</b>	<i>palame; palangwe</i>
<b>-NE/-NYE</b>	<b>-NYWE/-NGWE/-NWE</b>	<i>bonye; bonywe</i>

### III. VERB EXTENSIONS

Many Tswana verbs are derivations of a simpler verb. Sometimes, the resulting verb takes on a more specific meaning than suggested by the verb stem. For example, *go dirisa* can mean *to cause or help someone to do*, or it can simply mean *to use*. In another example, *go dirisana*, which could mean *to help each other to do something*, more accurately translates into *to cooperate*.

Take note that each of these extended verbs are verbs unto themselves, and can therefore be preceded by the infinitive marker **GO** to form the infinitive. For the perfect form and passive voice of extended verbs, see the sections on form and voice respectively.

Verb Stem	Verb Stem		English Example
Simple	<b>-A</b>	<b>-NA</b>	<i>To do</i>
Applicative	<b>-ELA</b>	<b>-NELA</b>	<i>To do for</i>
Causative	<b>-ISA</b>	<b>-NYA</b>	<i>To cause or help to do</i>
Neutral	<b>-EGA</b>		<i>To be done; become done; be doable</i>
Extensive	<b>-AKA</b>		<i>To do a lot</i>
Reversal	<b>-OLOLA</b>		<i>To undo</i>
Reciprocal	<b>-ANA</b>		<i>To do to each other</i>
Reflexive (prefix)	<b>I-</b>		<i>To do to oneself</i>

Phonetic note on the reflexive prefix: the first letter of verbs beginning with the following letters change with the inclusion of the reflexive prefix, **I-**.

E.g. **i-** + **R-uta** = **ITH-uta** = *ithuta* (to teach oneself; to learn)

Initial Phoneme	Reflexive Prefix
<b>A-</b>	<b>IKA-</b>
<b>E-</b>	<b>IKE-</b>
<b>I-</b>	<b>IKI-</b>
<b>O-</b>	<b>IKO-</b>
<b>U-</b>	<b>IKU-</b>
<b>G-</b>	<b>IKG-</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>IP-</b>
<b>D-</b>	<b>IT-</b>
<b>L-</b>	<b>IT-</b>
<b>R-</b>	<b>ITH-</b>
<b>S-</b>	<b>ITSH-</b>

The **Simple** verb extension generally suggests a relationship between a subject and an object.

The **Applicative** verb extension introduces an indirect object, a recipient of the action.

The **Causative** verb extension can suggest that the subject is helping the object in doing the action, or that the subject is the cause of the action being done (which can be in many respects similar if not identical to the verb's passive form).

The **Neutral** verb extension is the most variable in suggested meaning. It could mean the action has been done to the subject and is complete (which is, once again, similar if not identical to the verb's passive form). It could also mean that it is possible to complete the action. Essentially, the Neutral verb stem turns the verb into a state of being, comparable to an adjective.

The **Extensive** verb extension suggests that the action is done often, a lot, with energy, or excessively.

The **Reversal** verb extension suggests that the action is either being repeated or that it is being undone.

The **Reciprocal** verb extension is a commonly used verb stem that suggests that the members of a collective subject are doing the action to one another. Therefore, the subject must be plural. Furthermore, the verb cannot be put into the passive voice.

Finally the **Reflexive** prefix, **I-**, suggests that the action is being done to the subject by the subject. Therefore, the verb cannot be put into the passive voice. Take note of the phonetic changes made to the first letter of the verb being modified.

## IV. AUXILIARY VERBS

Auxiliary verbs are helping verbs that modify a main verb. Many auxiliary verbs in Setswana translate into adverbs in English.

There are three general types of auxiliary verbs: simple, objective and participial.

Some auxiliary verbs can function as regular verbs and are in those instances constructed as such.

### SIMPLE AUXILIARY VERBS:

These auxiliary verbs are most similar to auxiliary verbs in English. However, their negatives are found among the participial auxiliary verbs.

<b>Construction</b>	<b>[sm] [auxiliary verb] [main verb]</b>
<b>Examples</b>	Ke tla a tsamaya. <i>I will go.</i> Ke ka tsamaya. <i>I can go.</i>

### OBJECTIVE AUXILIARY VERBS:

Some verbs can take other verbs as objects. Objective auxiliary verbs take the main verb as an object, thus requiring the Class 15 subject marker **GO** to precede the main verb to create its infinitive form. See Verb Tenses for negation thereof.

<b>Construction</b>	<b>[sm] [auxiliary verb] [GO] [main verb]</b>
<b>Examples</b>	Ke ratile go tsamaya. <i>I almost went.</i> Ke kgona go tsamaya. <i>I can go. I am able to go.</i> Ke tshwanetse go tsamaya. <i>I must go. I have to go.</i> Ke leka go tsamaya. <i>I am trying to go.</i>

## PARTICIPIAL AUXILIARY VERBS:

Every noun has an indefinite and definite participle (see MARKERS & PARTICIPLES).

Because participial auxiliary verbs often reflect concepts of circumstance, most can only be found in either the indefinite or definite past tense. Furthermore, all participial auxiliary verbs are positive or negative in nature, meaning an auxiliary verb is not negated, but instead has a complementary auxiliary verb that is its opposite.

When compounded with other auxiliary verbs, take note that it is the auxiliary verb itself and the participle that follows it that comprise the construction.

### **Indefinite**

In the indefinite (continuous) past tense, the indefinite participle follows the auxiliary verb. Take note that the indefinite participle is the same as the subject marker for all classes except Class 1, for which the participle is **A**.

Take note that in the positive construction, use of the infinitive form of the main verb denotes continuous action, whereas use of the perfect form suggests the action has been completed.

<b>Positive Construction</b>	<b>[sm] [auxiliary verb] [p] [main verb]</b>
<b>Examples</b>	Ke setse ke tsamaya. <i>I am already going.</i> O setse a tsamaile. <i>He has already gone.</i>
<b>Negative Construction</b>	<b>GA [p] [auxiliary verb] [p] [main verb]-e</b>
<b>Examples</b>	Ga ke ise ke tsamaye. <i>I have not yet gone.</i> Ga a ise a tsamaye. <i>He has not yet gone.</i>

### **Definite**

In the definite (narrative) past tense, the definite participle follows the auxiliary verb. The definite participle (or simply participle) is the same as the possessive preposition for all classes except Classes i-iv. (which have no possessive preposition) and Class 1.

<b>Positive Construction</b>	<b>[sm] [auxiliary verb] [dp] [main verb]</b>
<b>Examples</b>	Ke kile ka tsamaya. <i>I have gone before./ I once went.</i> O kile a tsamaya. <i>He has gone before./ He once went.</i>
<b>Negative Construction</b>	<b>GA [p] [auxiliary verb] [dp] [main verb]</b>
<b>Examples</b>	Ga ke kake ka tsamaya. <i>I will not go.</i> Ga a kake a tsamaya. <i>He will not go.</i>

### **Phonetic Note:**

For auxiliary verbs beginning with a **K-**, the first person subject marker and auxiliary verb are contracted, becoming **NK-** instead of **ke k-**.

Examples: *ke ka* = **nka** (*I can*); *ke kile ka* = **nkile ka** (*I once ...*)

## V. TENSES

Take note, that the following verb tenses are in the forms most commonly cited by other Tswana learning resources. The present tense in the positive and the negative is universal for all verbs and all dialects of Tswana. The past tenses and the future tense in the positive make use of the auxiliary verbs **ne** and **tla** respectively and are similarly reliable.

It is, however, in the negative where these tenses become less universal with possible regional and even individual variation in the auxiliary verbs chosen to create these tenses. With a thorough familiarity of the auxiliary verbs, Tswana learners should be able to recognize the other variations and the tenses suggested there from.

### INFINITIVE VERB TENSES:

The following tenses use the infinitive form of the verb. The object marker always immediately precedes the verb.

#### **Present**

The long present tense is used when the verb stands alone or when it takes an object marker. The short present tense is used when the verb takes an object. They are both negated with the negative marker **GA** preceding the participle, and the verb taking the suffix **-E**.

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>PRESENT (long)</b>	<b>[sm] A (om) [verb]</b>	<b>GA [p] (om) [verb]-e</b>
Example:	O a ja. E a ja. O a di ja. E a di ja.	Ga a je. Ga e je. Ga a di je. Ga e di je.
English:	- eats. - eats them (food).	- does not eat. - does not eat them (food).
<b>PRESENT (short)</b>	<b>[sm] [verb] [object]</b>	<b>GA [p] [verb]-e</b>
Example:	O ja dijo. E ja dijo.	Ga a je dijo. Ga e je dijo.
English:	- eats food.	- does not eat food.

### ***Indefinite Past (continuous)***

The indefinite past tense uses the auxiliary verb **NE** to indicate that an action was begun in the past and continued or continues to be done. It is negated with the negative marker **SA** preceding the verb, and the verb taking the suffix **-E**.

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>INDEFINITE PAST (continuous)</b>	<b>[sm] NE [p] [verb]</b>	<b>[sm] NE [p] SA [verb]-e</b>
Example:	O ne a ja. E ne e ja.	O ne a sa je. E ne e sa je.
English:	- <i>was eating.</i>	- <i>was not eating.</i>

### ***Definite Past (narrative)***

The definite past tense uses the auxiliary verb **NE** to tell a story or report a sequence of events taking place and completed in the past. Oftentimes, speakers will drop the initial **[sm] NE**, simply using the **[dp]** before the verb. The negative is formed with the addition of the negative auxiliary verb **SEKA**.

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>DEFINITE PAST (narrative)</b>	<b>[sm] NE [dp] [verb]</b>	<b>[sm] NE [dp] SEKA [dp] [verb]</b>
Example:	O ne a ja E ne ya ja.	O ne a seka a ja. E ne ya seka ya ja.
English:	- <i>did eat.</i>	- <i>did not eat.</i>

### ***Future***

The future tense uses the auxiliary verb **TLA A** to indicate that an action will take place in the future. It is negated with the negative auxiliary verb **KAKE**.

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>FUTURE</b>	<b>[sm] TLA A [verb]</b>	<b>GA [p] KAKE [dp] [verb]</b>
Example:	O tla a ja. E tla a ja.	Ga a kake a ja. Ga e kake ya ja.
English:	- <i>will eat.</i>	- <i>will not eat.</i>

## PERFECT VERB TENSES:

The following tenses are completed with the perfect form of the verb. Take note, however, that the negative is formed using the verb's infinitive form.

### **Perfect**

The perfect tense indicates that an action has been completed. Take note that the long perfect tense is used when the verb stands alone or when it takes an object. The short perfect tense is used when an object marker is taken. They are both negated with the negative marker **GA** preceding the participle, and with the infinitive form of the verb.

	Positive	Negative
<b>PERFECT (long)</b>	<b>[sm] [verb] (object)</b>	<b>GA [p] A [infinitive] (object)</b>
Example:	O jele. E jele. O jele dijo. E jele dijo.	Ga a a ja. (pronounced, <i>ga aa ja</i> ) Ga e a ja. (pronounced, <i>ga ya ja</i> ) Ga a a ja dijo. Ga e a ja dijo.
English:	- ate. - ate food.	- did not eat. - did not eat food.
<b>PERFECT (short)</b>	<b>[sm] [verb]</b>	<b>GA [p] [om] [infinitive]</b>
Example:	O di jele. E di jele.	Ga a di ja. Ga e di ja.
English	- ate them (food).	- did not eat them (food).

### **Past Perfect**

The past perfect tense uses the auxiliary verb **NE** to emphasize that an action has been completed. It is negated with the negative marker **SA** preceding the infinitive form of the verb.

	Positive	Negative
<b>PAST PERFECT</b>	<b>[sm] NE [p] [verb]</b>	<b>[sm] NE [p] SA [infinitive]</b>
Example:	O ne a jele. E ne e jele.	O ne a sa ja. E ne e sa ja.
English:	- had eaten.	- had not eaten.

### **Future Perfect**

The future perfect tense uses the auxiliary verb **TLA A BO** to indicate that an action will have taken place in the future.

	Positive	Negative
<b>FUTURE PERFECT</b>	<b>[sm] TLA A BO [p] [verb]</b>	<b>[sm] TLA A BO [p] SA [infinitive]</b>
Example:	O tla a bo a jele E tla a bo e jele.	O tla a bo a sa ja. E tla a bo e sa ja.
English:	- will have eaten.	- will not have eaten.

O tla a bo a setse a jele  
- Will have eaten already

O tla a bo a ise a je  
- Will not have eaten yet

## VI. OBJECT MARKERS

Objects follow the verb. However, object markers (which are, in reality, pronouns taking the place of the object) precede the verb and are in some instances affixed to the verb (see following Phonological Note).

Object markers can be used in conjunction with the objects they are representing for emphasis.

The presence or absence of objects (not object markers) bears influence on whether the present tense is in its long or short form (See Tenses).

### Direct versus Indirect Object

The direct and indirect object markers are one in the same. Most verbs that take an indirect object (the recipient of the action; for whom the action is being done) take the applicative verb extension, **-ELA**.

Object markers (direct or indirect) precede the verb, whereas objects (direct or indirect) follow the verb.

Indirect object markers are in some instances actually affixed to the verb (see following Phonological Note).

The following constructions are in the present tense. For other tenses and for use with auxiliary verbs, apply constructions to the main verb. Where ambiguities may arise, use asterisked constructions.

CONSTRUCTION	Example
* [sm] [verb] [indirect object] [object] *	Ke rokela mama mosese. <i>I am sewing for mom a dress.</i>
[sm] [om] [verb] [indirect object]	Ke o rokela mama. <i>I am sewing it for mom.</i>
[sm] [iom] [verb] [object]	Ke mo rokela mosese. <i>I sew for her a dress.</i>
* [sm] a [om] [iom] [verb] *	Ke a o mo rokela. <i>I sew it for her.</i>

## The First-Person and Third-Person Object Marker

It is only the first person and personal third person object marker that are sometimes affixed to the verb.

### *Phonological Note:*

The first person object marker, **N-**, is affixed to the verb and may phonetically change the verbs initial phoneme. **N-** becomes **M-** when the verb begins with bilabial (B-, P-, PH-) or labiodental (F-) phoneme.

Initial Phoneme	1 <sup>st</sup> Person Obj Prefix
-	<b>N-</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>NKA-</b>
<b>E-</b>	<b>NKE-</b>
<b>I-</b>	<b>NKI-</b>
<b>O-</b>	<b>NKO-</b>
<b>U-</b>	<b>NKU-</b>
<b>G-</b>	<b>NKG-</b>
<b>D-/L-</b>	<b>NT-</b>
<b>R-</b>	<b>NTH-</b>
<b>S-</b>	<b>NTSH-</b>
<b>B-/P-</b>	<b>MP-</b>
<b>F-/PH-</b>	<b>MPH-</b>

The personal third person object marker **MO-** is contracted as **M-** and becomes affixed to verbs beginning with **B-**. The **B-** becomes **-M-**.

Initial Phoneme	3 <sup>rd</sup> Person Obj Prefix
<b>B-</b>	<b>MM-</b>

# 4. ADJECTIVES

## Introduction:

Adjectives are parts of speech that qualify nouns or pronouns to construct nominal phrases. Other parts of speech, when used to qualify nouns or pronouns, can become adjectives. For usage of nominal phrases as the subject, object, or indirect object of a sentence, see VERBS.

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39	II. Concords (Adjective, Enumerative, Relative)

# I. IDENTITY

## Adjectival Identity:

In the present tense. To identify a noun with a strong adjective, simply use the subject marker followed by the adjective (e.g. *Dikgomo di bogale. The cows are fierce.*). To identify a noun with a weak adjective, follow the subject marker with the adjective prefix (same as class prefix) affixed to the adjective (e.g. *Dikgomo di dintle. The cows are beautiful.*). For other tenses, use constructions for TO BE under IDENTITY. (See Verbs.)

<b>Strong Construction</b>	<b>[subject marker] [strong adjective]</b>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>di bogale</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>Dikgomo di bogale. The cows are fierce.</i>
<b>Weak Construction</b>	<b>[subject marker] [adjective prefix]-[weak adjective]</b>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>di di-ntle</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>Dikgomo di dintle (DI-ntle). The cows are beautiful.</i>

## Enumerative Identity:

To state the enumerative existence of a noun, use the existential verb GO NA LE or the possessive verb NA LE with the following concord. For other tenses, use constructions for TO HAVE under IDENTITY

<b>Strong Construction</b>	<b>NA LE [noun] [p] LE [strong number]</b>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>NA LE dikgomo di LE pedi</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>Go na le dikgomo di le pedi.</i> There are two cows.
<b>Weak Construction (all other classes)</b>	<b>NA LE [noun] [p] LE [prefix]-[weak number]</b>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>NA LE bana ba LE ba-bedi</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>O na le bana ba le babedi.</i> He has two children.

Take note that Classes 8, 10, and 12 take strong forms of numbers. English numbers are frequently used in place of Setswana numbers and are considered strong. See ENUMERATIVES under SUBSTANTIVES.

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8/10/12	n/a	pedi	tharo	nne	tlhano	thataro	supa
(all other classes)	-ngwe	-bedi	-raro	-ne	-tlhano	-rataro	-supa

Take note that the adjectives –NNYE (few) and NOSI (alone) are treated as weak and strong numbers respectively (e.g. *batho ba le bannye, few people*).

## II. CONCORDS

Concords are used in the formation of nominal phrases. Concords connect adjectives, numbers, and verbs to the nouns they describe.

### Adjective Concords:

To create a nominal phrase using an adjective to qualify a noun, use the appropriate adjective concord. The weak adjective concord is merely the demonstrative pronoun followed by the adjective prefix. The strong adjective concord is merely the demonstrative pronoun followed by the subject marker, which makes it identical in construction to the relative concord (see RELATIVE CONCORDS). The concord comes between the noun being qualified and the adjective:

<b>Strong Construction</b>	<b>[noun] [strong adjective concord] [strong adjective]</b> <i>[demonstrative] [subject marker]</i>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>dikgomo [tse di] bogale</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>Ke na le dikgomo tse di bogale.</i> <i>I have cows that are fierce. I have fierce cows.</i>
<b>Weak Construction</b>	<b>[noun] [weak adjective concord] [weak adjective]</b> <i>[demonstrative] [prefix]-</i>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>dikgomo [tse di]-ntle</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>Ke na le dikgomo tse dintle.</i> <i>I have cows that are beautiful. I have beautiful cows.</i>

Class	Strong Adjective Concord	Weak Adjective Concord
i.	YO KE	YO MO-
ii.	BA RE	BA BA-
iii.	YO O	YO MO-
iv.	BA LE	BA BA-
1	YO O	YO MO-
2	BA BA	BA BA-
3	O O	O MO-
4	E E	E ME-
5	LE LE	LE LE-
6	A A	A MA-
7	SE SE	SE SE-
8	TSE DI	TSE DI-
9	E E	E -
10	TSE DI	TSE DI-
11	LO LO	LO LO-
12	TSE DI	TSE DI-
13	BO BO	BO BO-
14	A A	A MA-
15	MO GO	MO GO-
16	FA GO	FA GO-
17	KWA GO	KWA GO-
18	O O	O MO-

## Enumerative Concords:

To create a nominal phrase using a number to enumerate a noun, use the enumerative concord. Take note the Enumerative Concord is the same as the Adjective Concord for all classes except Classes 8, 10, and 12.

<b>Strong Construction</b>	<b>[noun] [demonstrative] [strong number]</b>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>dikgomo tse pedi</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	Dikgomo tse pedi di a ja. <i>The two cows are eating.</i>
<b>Weak Construction</b>	<b>[noun] [demonstrative] [prefix]-[weak number]</b>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>baba ba ba-bedi</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	Ke bone baba ba babedi. <i>I saw two enemies.</i>

Take note that Classes 8, 10, and 12 take strong forms of numbers. English numbers are frequently used in place of Setswana numbers and are considered strong. See ENUMERATIVES under SUBSTANTIVES.

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8/10/12	n/a	pedi	tharo	nne	tlhano	thataro	supa
(all other classes)	-ngwe	-bedi	-raro	-ne	-tlhano	-rataro	-supa

Take note that the adjective –NNYE (few) is treated as a weak number (e.g. *batho ba le banye*, few people).

NOSI (alone) acts as a strong number in an adverbial construction using the participial of the subject (e.g. *ke nna ke le nosi*, i live alone; *o ja a le nosi*; he is eating alone).

## Relative Concords:

### Nominative

To create a nominal phrase using a verb where the qualified noun is the subject of the qualifying verb, use the nominative relative concord. The concord is merely the demonstrative pronoun followed by the subject marker. The concord comes between the noun being qualified and the verb. The verb must take the suffix **-NG**:

Nominative Construction	[noun] [nominative relative concord] [verb]-NG [d] [sm]
<b>Example:</b>	<i>mosetsana [yo o] opela-NG</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>Mosetsana yo o opelang ke tsala ya me. The girl who is singing is my friend.</i>

Class	Nominative Relative Concord
i.	YO KE
ii.	BA RE
iii.	YO O
iv.	BA LE
1	YO O
2	BA BA
3	O O
4	E E
5	LE LE
6	A A
7	SE SE
8	TSE DI
9	E E
10	TSE DI
11	LO LO
12	TSE DI
13	BO BO
14	A A
15	MO GO
16	FA GO
17	KWA GO
18	O O

### Accusative

To create a nominal phrase using a verb where the qualified noun is the object of the qualifying verb, use the accusative relative concord. The concord is merely the demonstrative pronoun followed by the participle (of subject) followed by the object marker of qualified noun. The concord comes between the noun being qualified and the verb. The verb must take the suffix **-NG**. Take note that the participle and subject marker are identical for all classes, except Class 1, for which the participle is **A** and the subject marker is **O**.

Accusative Construction	[noun] [accusative relative concord] [verb]-NG <i>[d] (subject) [p] [om]</i>
<b>Example:</b>	<i>mosetsana [yo mosimane a mo] rata-NG</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	<i>Mosetsana yo mosimane a mo ratang o montle</i> <i>The girl who the boy loves is beautiful</i>

Class	Accusative Relative Concord
i.	YO [p] N-
ii.	BA [p] RE
iii.	YO [p] GO
iv.	BA [p] LE
1	YO [p] MO
2	BA [p] BA
3	O [p] O
4	E [p] E
5	LE [p] LE
6	A [p] A
7	SE [p] SE
8	TSE [p] DI
9	E [p] E
10	TSE [p] DI
11	LO [p] LO
12	TSE [p] DI
13	BO [p] BO
14	A [p] A
15	MO [p] GO
16	FA [p] GO
17	KWA [p] GO
18	O [p] O

# 5. ADVERBS

## Introduction:

Adverbs are parts of speech that qualify verbs, adjectives, or even other adverbs. Other parts of speech, when used to qualify verbs, adjectives, or adverbs, can become adverbs.

There are adverbs of location, time, frequency, circumstance, and manner. Location and time will be discussed in the next chapter. Many English adverbs of frequency and circumstance translate into auxiliary verbs in Tswana.

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45	II. Comparatives (Indefinite, Definite)

# I. DESCRIPTIVES:

## Independent Adverbs:

Tswana adverbs of manner, as well as some adverbs of frequency and circumstance, can stand alone. Unlike adverbs in English, which can often go almost anywhere in the sentence, Tswana adverbs generally come at the end of the sentence.

Construction	[adverb]
<b>Example:</b>	<i>sentle</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	Mosetsana yo o bua Sekgoa sentle. <i>This girl speaks English well.</i>

## Instrumental Adverbs (nouns used as adverbs):

Many adverbs are constructed using the instrumental preposition **KA** followed by an adverbial noun (usually abstract nouns in Class 13, **bo-**). Adverbs of manner, frequency, and circumstance in this construction come at the end of the sentence. We call this construction an instrumental adverb.

Construction	KA [adverbial noun]
<b>Example:</b>	<i>KA bonya</i>
<b>Sentence:</b>	Mme, o bua ka bonya. <i>But, she speaks slowly.</i>

## II. COMPARATIVES:

Adjectives and verbs used as adverbs are typically used in comparison

### Indefinite Comparative Adverbs:

Some English adverbs translate into adjectives or verbs in Setswana. This is especially so with adverbs of comparison. To qualify a verb, the adjective or verb is preceded by the concord for Class 15, **MO GO**.

The prefix **GO** is affixed to weak adjectives. The suffix **-NG** is affixed to verbs.

Construction	MO GO [adjective/verb-NG]
Example:	MO GO <i>botoka</i>
Sentence:	Mosetsana yo, o bua Sekgoa mo go botoka. <i>This girl speaks English better.</i>
Example:	MO GO <i>gaisa -NG</i>
Sentence:	Mosetsana yo o montle mo go gaisang. <i>This girl is prettier.</i>

### Definite Comparative Adverbs:

Take note that the following construction requires the explicit statement of both objects of comparison.

Construction	GO [adjective/verb] [object of comparison]
Example:	GO <i>gaisa mosetsana yoo</i>
Sentence:	Mosetsana yo, o montle go gaisa mosetsana yoo. <i>This girl is prettier than that girl.</i>



# 6. LOCATION AND TIME

## Introduction:

Although location or time can sometimes be the subject (*The bottom of my soles are dirty. Decembers are cold.*), the object (*We painted the outside of the house red. I love Fridays.*), or even the indirect object (*We gave the inside of my car a good clean. Give tomorrow a chance.*) of a sentence, they are usually parts of speech unto themselves, merely attaching themselves to sentences. Few grammatical rules govern their placement, that is to say, they can usually be thrown into or removed from a sentence without affecting the sentence structure.

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# I. LOCATION

Location answers the question of **Kae?** (or *Where?*). As its own part of speech, the location of a sentence can come at the beginning or end of a phrase or the beginning or end of a sentence without affecting the sentences structure.

## *Locative Prepositions*

Preposition	English	Description
FA	<i>here</i>	within visible range or specific; static
KWA/KO	<i>there;</i> <i>from, to</i>	not within visible range or general; expresses motion away from or toward
MO	<i>in, herein;</i> <i>into</i>	enclosed spaces; encompassing spaces; expresses motion inward or motion within
LE	<i>to, from;</i> <i>with, along</i>	expresses proximity and distance; expresses togetherness in motion or stativity

## *Adverbial Location (LE)*

The locative preposition **LE** can be used alone as in the example, *O ile le noka*, meaning *He went along the river*.

The locative preposition **LE** is used with locative adverbs like **gaufi**, which means *near*, and **kgakala**, which means *far*, and locative verbs like **bapa**, which means *to be parallel*. The preposition **LE** serves to relate the locative adverb or verb to a point of reference. We can call this construction an **adverbial location**:

Construction:	[locative adverb/verb] LE [point of reference]		
Example:	<i>gaufi</i> <i>near</i>	<i>LE</i> <i>to</i>	<i>tuba</i> <i>the tuba</i>

## *Nominal Location (FA, KWA, & MO)*

Note that the first three prepositions, **FA**, **KWA**, and **MO**, can become nouns (Classes 16-18) and become, in essence, the prefix of a locative noun. Locative prepositions in English often translate to locative nouns in Tswana. Because they are Classes 16-18, locative nouns take the possessive marker **GA** followed by the possessor, the object functioning as the point of reference. However, as prefaced, this construction usually functions as a location and when it does so, we call it a **nominal location**:

Construction:	[locative preposition] [locative noun] GA [point of reference]			
Example:	<i>fa</i> <i>on</i>	<i>godimo</i> <i>top</i>	<i>GA</i> <i>of</i>	<i>tafole</i> <i>the desk</i>

Nonlocative nouns can be turned into nominal locations with a locative preposition and the suffix **-NG**:

Construction:	[locative preposition] [nonlocative noun]-NG	
Example:	<i>mo</i> <i>in</i>	<i>ofisi-NG</i> <i>the office</i>

## Locative Demonstrative Pronouns

As nouns, nominal locations can also take demonstrative pronouns referencing an object's relative proximity to the speaker or listener. While it may seem paradoxical for **fale** to mean *over there* while **fa** means *here*, take note that what it really means is *there within visible range*. Therefore, it can mean *here* in the sense that everything in visible range is *here*. In another example, the command **tla kwano** means *come here*, though **kwa** means *there*. Once again, what it really means is *come towards me to a place near me*.

The locative demonstrative pronouns can stand alone, just as any pronoun can.

Class		Here (near me)	There (near you)	There (over there)
16	FA	FANO	FAO	FALE
17	KWA	KWANO	KWAO	KWALE
18	O	ONO	OO	OLE

## Location as a Noun

To use a locative nominal phrase as a noun, follow the grammatical rules of Classes 16 to 18. Therefore, when used as the subject or object of a sentence, a locative nominal phrase will use **GO** as its subject marker and object marker.

To use a locative nominal phrases constructed from a nonlocative noun as a noun is rare, because the nominal phrase is usually simply reverted back to a nonlocative noun. For example, after having said *Ke tsene mo ntlong*, meaning *I went into the house*, one could say *E ne e le ntle*, meaning *It was beautiful*. However, one may want to emphasize that it is the inside of the house that was beautiful (i.e. the outside of the house looks like shit), in which case, one would say, *Mo ntlong go ne go le gontle*, meaning *The inside of the house was beautiful*. To say *The inside of his house was beautiful*, one would say *Mo ntlong ya gagwe go ne go le gontle*. In this example, take note that both *go*'s in *go ne go* refer to *mo ntlong*, whereas *ya* is in agreement with *ntlo*.

## II. TIME

Time answers the question of **Leng?** (or *When?*). As its own part of speech, the time of a sentence can come at the beginning or end of a phrase or the beginning or end of a sentence without affecting the sentences structure.

To be clear, when we refer to time, we are referring to the answer to the question of *When?*, not the question of *How often?*, which is really a question of frequency and habit. That is to say, *forever* is a concept of time whereas *always* is a concept of frequency. Questions of frequency are typically answered by adverbs in English, which come in the form of adverbs and auxiliary verbs in Setswana. Concepts of circumstance, such as *already*, *not yet*, or *almost*, are also often confused to be concepts of time. They, similarly, appear in Tswana as adverbs and auxiliary verbs.

Times often stand alone without the use of a preposition. However, when a preposition is used, it is the adverbial preposition **KA**.

### Other Questions Answered by Time:

Take note of the use of *mang*, *efe*, *bokae*, and *di kae* in the following questions in reference to time.

Question	Direct Translation	English
Ke nako <b>mang?</b>	<i>Who is the time?</i>	What time is it?
Ke kgwedi/ngwaga <b>efe?</b>	<i>Which month/year is it?</i>	Which month/year is it?
Go (letsatsi) la <b>bokae?</b>	<i>Of which place is the day?</i>	What day is it?
Go (dingwaga di le) <b>di kae?</b>	<i>How many years is it?</i>	What is the date?

Time can be understood to be cyclical, and therefore, discrete insofar as we have broken up our years into months, months into weeks, weeks into days, and days into hours, minutes and seconds. To that end, time has been given names (e.g. 2009, November, and 6:30), making some sense of the use of the questions, *who* and *which*.

However, time is also continuous insofar as we order one point after the other, as the days of the week are ordered in Tswana, and the years have been ordered starting at 0 Anno Domini *Nostris Iesu Christi* according to the Gregorian calendar, making some sense of the use of the questions, *of which place* (*1<sup>st</sup>*, *2<sup>nd</sup>*, etc) and *how many*.

**PRONOUNS OF TIME:**

**Abstract**

<b>No Time</b>	<b>All Time</b>
<b>ka gope</b>	<b>ka metlha</b>
<i>never</i>	<i>always</i>

**Relative**

<b>Past</b>		<b>Present</b>	<b>Future</b>	
<b>bogologolo</b>	<b>kgantele</b>	<b>jaanong</b>	<b>kgantele</b>	<b>isago</b>
<i>in the past</i>	<i>earlier</i>	<i>now</i>	<i>later</i>	<i>in the future</i>

**Calendar**

<b>Past</b>		<b>Present</b>	<b>Future</b>	
<b>maloba</b>	<b>maabane</b>	<b>gompieno</b>	<b>kamoso</b>	<b>kamoso o mongwe</b>
<i>the other day/week</i>	<i>yesterday</i>	<i>today</i>	<i>tomorrow</i>	<i>day after tomorrow</i>
	<b>beke e e fetileng</b>	<b>beke e</b>	<b>beke e e tlang</b>	
	<i>last week</i>	<i>this week</i>	<i>next week</i>	
	<b>kgwedi e e fetileng</b>	<b>kgwedi e</b>	<b>kgwedi e e tlang</b>	
	<i>last month</i>	<i>this month</i>	<i>next month</i>	
<b>ngogotlola</b>	<b>ngogola</b>	<b>mono ngwaga / ngwaga e</b>	<b>ngwaga e e tlang</b>	<b>isago</b>
<i>year before last</i>	<i>last year</i>	<i>this year</i>	<i>next year</i>	<i>in the future</i>

## NOUNS OF TIME:

### Quantities of Time

<b>motsotso (metsotso)</b>	minute(s)
<b>oura (dioura)</b>	hour(s)
<b>letsatsi (matsatsi)</b>	day(s) / sun(s)
<b>beke (dibeke)</b>	week(s)
<b>kgwedi (dikgwedi)</b>	month(s) / moon(s)
<b>ngwaga (dingwaga)</b>	year(s)

### Times of the Day

<b>makuku</b>	<i>dawn</i>
<b>phakela</b>	<i>morning</i>
<b>motshegare</b>	<i>afternoon</i>
<b>maitseboa</b>	<i>evening/dusk</i>
<b>bosigo</b>	<i>evening/night</i>

### Days of the Week

<b>Mmantaga</b>	<i>Monday</i>
<b>Labobedi</b>	<i>Tuesday</i>
<b>Laboraro</b>	<i>Wednesday</i>
<b>Labone</b>	<i>Thursday</i>
<b>Labotlhano/Freitaga</b>	<i>Friday</i>
<b>Sateretaga/Matlhato</b>	<i>Saturday</i>
<b>Sontaga/Tshipi</b>	<i>Sunday</i>

### Months/Seasons of the Year

<b>Firikgong</b>	<i>January</i>	<b>selemo ↓</b>	<i>summer ↓</i>
<b>Tlhakole</b>	<i>February</i>		
<b>Mopitlwe</b>	<i>March</i>		
<b>Moranang</b>	<i>April</i>	<b>lethlafula</b>	<i>autumn</i>
<b>Motsheganong</b>	<i>May</i>		
<b>Sleetebosigo</b>	<i>June</i>	<b>mariga</b>	<i>winter</i>
<b>Phukhwi</b>	<i>July</i>		
<b>Phatwe</b>	<i>August</i>		
<b>Lwetse</b>	<i>September</i>	<b>dikgakologo</b>	<i>spring</i>
<b>Phalane</b>	<i>October</i>		
<b>Ngwanatsele</b>	<i>November</i>		
<b>Morule/Sedimothule</b>	<i>December</i>	<b>selemo ↓</b>	<i>summer ↓</i>

**Cultural Note:** Whereas most Americans would respond to a question such as, “When did you study in Germany?” with an answer such as, “About 6 years ago,” Batswana tend to answer such questions with an exact or approximate date. Similarly, when asked a person’s age, Batswana tend to give the date of birth of the person in question.

# 7. CONJUNCTIONS (and some adverbs)

Conjunctions are parts of speech that connect sentences, phrases, and other parts of speech. As in English, many conjunctions are constructed from two or more words. Such examples from English include *nevertheless*, *notwithstanding*, and *inasmuch*.

The following chapter will be, admittedly, short. As in English, conjunctions in Setswana are parts of speech difficult to comprehend outside of context and difficult to categorize into groups with discernable and reliable rules. Therefore, examples will be given to effectively illustrate usage.

What differentiates conjunctions and adverbs is unimportant to discuss, but it must be said that many of the following examples are perhaps best described as adverbs. However, due to the similarity in constructions shared by many conjunctions and adverbs in Setswana, they will nevertheless be illustrated in the following chapter.

## LE (and / with)

This conjunction can translate to mean the English conjunction, *and*, and the preposition, *with*. Unlike English, it cannot be used to combine sentences.

Ke rata nama ya koko **le** nama ya kgomo.  
I like chicken **and** beef.

Ke ile **le** Naledi kwa London.  
I went **with** Naledi to London.

## MME (but / and)

This conjunction can translate to mean the English conjunction, *but*. It is used to combine contrasting sentences.

Examples:

Ga ke a mmona gompieno, **mme** ke tla a mmona kamoso.  
I did not see him today, **but** I will see him tomorrow.

Leina la me ke Stuart Sia, **mme** ke bidiwa Tshiamo mo Botswana.  
My name is Stuart John Sia, **but** I am called Tshiamo in Botswana.

## KANA/KGOTSA (or)

These two conjunctions are used interchangeably and can translate to mean the English conjunction, *or*. As in English, these conjunctions can be used between parts of speech or complete sentences.

A o batla go ja nama ya kgomo **kgotsa** ya koko?  
Do you want to eat beef **or** chicken?

A ke Thabang **kana** Mpho yo o berekang kwa sekolong?  
Is it Thabang **or** Mpho who works at the school?

## FA (if / when)

This conjunction can be translated to mean *if* or *when*. As in English, it introduces a subordinate clause. Take note that the subject of a subordinate clause is represented by the participle instead of the subject marker. Furthermore, to mean *if*, the subordinate clause must be in the subjunctive mood, utilizing the auxiliary verb, **KA**.

Mpolelela **fa** a tsamaya.  
Tell me **when** he leaves.

**Fa** ba **ka** tsamaya, ga ke kake ka apaya.  
**If** they leave, I will not cook.

## **GORE (that / so that)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *that* or *so that*. As in English, it introduces a subordinate clause. Take note that the main verb of the subordinate clause is in the subjunctive mood and must therefore take the suffix, -E.

Ke batla **gore** o nthuse.  
I want **that** you help me.

Ga ke itse **gore** o kae.  
I don't know where he is.

Mmolelela **gore** ke ne ke le fa.  
Tell her **that** I was here.

Ba a mo thusa, **gore** a fetse ka pele.  
They are helping him, **so that** he finishes quickly.

## **GONGWE (maybe / perhaps)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean the English adverbs *maybe* and *perhaps*.

**Gongwe** re tla a tsamaya gompieno.  
**Maybe** we will go today.

## **JAAKA (like / as / such as)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *like*, *as*, or *such as*.

Ke rata nama, **jaaka** seswaa.  
I like meat, **like** pounded meat.

## **NTSWA (although / though)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *although* or *though*.

Ke tla a ja seswaa, **ntswa** ke sa tswarwa ke tlala,  
I will eat pounded meat, **though** I am not hungry,

## LE GONE (also)

This conjunction can be translated to mean *also*, and is used in negative contexts.

O modumo, **le gone** o tsene morago.  
You are noisy, and you **also** came late.

## LE GALE (anyway)

This conjunction can be translated to mean *anyway*.

Ga ke a tshwarwa ke tlala, **le gale** ke tla a ja seswaa.  
I am not hungry, but I will eat seswaa **anyway**.

## LE FA (even though / although)

This conjunction can be translated to mean *even though* and *although*.

Ke tla a ja seswaa, **le fa** ke sa tshwarwa ke tlala.  
I will eat seswaa, **even though** I am not hungry.

**Le fa** ke sa tshwarwa ke tlala, ke tla a ja seswaa.  
**Although** I am not hungry, I will eat seswaa.

## LE FA E LE (even / either)

This conjunction is used in a variety of circumstances.

**Le fa e le** metsi a siame.  
**Even** water is fine.

**Le fa e le** Thabang kana Mpho o ka bereka kwa ofising.  
**Either** Thabang or Mpho work in an office.

**Le fa e le** kamoso go siame.  
**Even** tomorrow is okay.

## LE [abstract pronoun] (too / also)

This conjunction can be translated to mean *too* and *also*,

**Le nna**, ke rata nama thata!  
**Me too**, I looooooove meat!

**Le ene** ke moithaopi wa Peace Corps.  
She is **also** a Peace Corps Volunteer.

## **E BILE (and also / furthermore)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *and also* and *furthermore*.

Beke e e tletse **e bile** e bokete.  
This bag is full **and also** heavy.

## **E KETE / E KARE (as if / it seems as if)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *as if*.

O opela **e kete** o a lela.  
She sings **as if** she is crying.

A mosetsana yo montle yole ke Hermione? **E kare** ke ene.  
Is that beautiful girl Hermione? **It seems as if** it is her. (It seems to be her.)

## **E SENG (not)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *not*.

O tla a ya kwa Maun, **e seng** nna.  
You are going to Maun, **not** me.

Thabang o rata nama ya kolobe **e seng** ya koko.  
Thabang likes pork **not** chicken.

## **E A RE (whenever)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *whenever*.

**E a re** ba tsena, ke boife.  
**Whenever** they enter, I get scared.

## **GATWE E RILE (once / once upon a time)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *once* or *once upon a time*. The following sentence must be in the definite past tense.

**Gatwe e rile** go ne go na le mosimane a rata mosetsana thata.  
**Once upon a time** there was a boy who loved a girl very much.

## **KA GORE (because)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *because*.

Ke rata seswaa, **ka gore** ke nama.  
I like pounded meat, **because** it is meat.

## **KA JALO (therefore)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *therefore*.

Seswaa ke nama. **Ka jalo**, ke a se rata.  
Pounded meat is meat. **Therefore**, I like it.

## **KA FA (as / while)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *as* or *while*.

Ba a bua **ka fa** ba a ja.  
They are a speaking while they eat.

## **KA LESEGO (fortunately)**

This conjunction can be translated to mean *fortunately*.

**Ka lesego** o tsile.  
**Fortunately** you have come.

# 8. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

In Setswana, all sentences are comprised of a subject, a predicate, and a copula, which serves to connect the two. In many instances, the subject is implicit. In other instances, both the subject and copula are implicit. Take a look at the following dialogue, in which the subjects have been underlined and the predicates have been bolded:

A: Koko! (Knock knock!)

B: **Tsena!** (Come in!)

A: A Mpho le Katlego ba **teng?** (Are Mpho and Katlego present?)

B: Nnyaa. Ga ba **yo.** (No. They are not present.)

A: Mpho o **kae?** (Where is Mpho?)

B: O **ile ko sekolong.** Ke **moithuti.** (She went to school. She is a student)

A: **Mmolelela gore ke ne ke le fa.** (Tell her that I was here.)

B: Ga go **na mathata.** (No problem.)

In the above dialogue we find 3 different types of sentences: Declarative Sentences, Interrogative Sentences, and Imperative Sentences.

This chapter will explore the sentence structures of declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences.

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# I. Declarative Sentences

The inherent construction of declarative sentences expects no response, although admittedly, the speaker may presuppose an opinion or bias. Declarative sentences serve to provide information, whether affirmatively or negatively.

In Setswana, a complete declarative sentence includes an explicit copula and an explicit predicate. Because copulae in Setswana inherently agree with the subject, the subject may be explicit or implicit.

**SUBJECT (explicit or implicit) → COPULA → PREDICATE**

Here are the declarative sentences from the previous dialogue:

Ga ba **yo**. (They are not present.)

O **ile ko sekolong**. (She went to school.)

Ke **moithuti**. (She is a student.)

Ga go **na mathata**. (No problem.)

In each of the above examples, the subject is implicit, and understood by both context and the agreement of the copula with the implicit subject. Of course, we could make the subject explicit in each of these sentences as well:

Mpho le Katlego ga ba **yo**. (Mpho and Katlego are not present.)

Mpho o **ile ko sekolong**. (Mpho went to school.)

Mpho ke **moithuti**. (Mpho is a student.)

Ga go **na mathata**. (No problem.)

Take note, however, of the last case, in which no subject can be made explicit. The affirmative **GO** and negative **GA GO** are what are known in grammar as expletives, which means they serve to complete the subjectless sentence without adding any semantic value. These two markers are known as existential markers and can be accurately translated in English to mean *there is/are* and *there isn't/aren't*.

Because copulae seem to best translate as pronouns in some instances and auxiliary or conjunctive verbs in other instances, it will be best to understand copulae as the link between the optionally explicit or implicit subject and the always explicit predicate.

## THE SUBJECT (substantives)

We understand the subject of a sentence to be the protagonist of a sentence (except, of course, in subjectless sentences employing expletives). In the case of sentences in the active voice, the subject is the agent of the predicate, whereas in the passive voice the subject is the recipient. In any event, the subject plays the primary role, and the sentence is drawn up from the perspective of the subject.

The subject can be very specific, as in a proper name such as *Mpho*, which refers to the single entity in the universe known as *Mpho* about whom the speaker is thinking. Or, the subject can be very general, as in *dilo*, which means *things*, and can of course refer to any number and any type of things. The subject could be a person, place, thing, or abstract concept. In other words, the subject is a substantive (noun, pronoun, or nominal phrase), and definitively so, because when words that we are otherwise inclined to categorize as verbs, adjectives, or other parts of speech are used as the subject or protagonist of a sentence, they thusly become substantives.

However, as we will discover in the chapter on SUBSTANTIVES, the Setswana Noun Class System categorizes substantives into 18 grammatically distinct categories, which have correspondingly distinct copulae in reference to each category. Therefore, the ability of copulae to implicate the subject allows them to perform a function similar to the function only pronouns can perform in English.

The subject of a sentence is a substantive, that is to say, it is a noun, a pronoun, or a nominal phrase.

## THE COPULA (markers, participles, & auxiliary verbs)

Copulae serve to connect the subject of a sentence to the predicate. As said above, copulae, in many instances perform a function similar to pronouns. Take a look at the following sentences derived from our dialogue:

O **ile ko sekolong.** (She went to school.)

Mpho o **ile ko sekolong.** (Mpho went to school.)

Ke **moithuti.** (She is a student.)

Mpho ke **moithuti.** (Mpho is a student.)

Take note how in the first sentence it seems most obvious to take the copula, *o*, to mean the pronoun, *she*. In the second sentence, although not similarly smooth a translation, it once again seems most appropriate to take the copula to mean *she*.

However, in the third sentence, the most obvious translation of the copula, *ke*, is the combination, *she is*, whereas in the fourth sentence, it seems best to translate *ke* as simply *is*. For an explanation on why the copula is *o* in the first instance and *ke* in the second instance, please see the chapter on COPULAE.

This is the crux of my argument that it is perhaps best to view copulae as neither a part of the subject nor as part of the predicate of a sentence, and is instead the connective tissue in between.

For those of you who have studied Spanish, whose various forms of *ser* (one of two verbs meaning *to be*) are distinct enough to render pronouns unnecessary, this insight may make more sense. For example, although it is grammatically correct to say “*yo soy estudiante,*” meaning, “*I am a student,*” a speaker is much more likely to say “*soy estudiante.*” Similarly in Setswana, one could indeed say “*nna ke moithuti.*” also literally meaning “*I am a student,*” but one is more likely to say “*ke moithuti.*” In fact, many people would prefer to translate *nna* as *myself*, arguing that the sentence “*nna ke moithuti*” is most accurately translated to mean “*myself, I am a student*” or “*as for me, I am a student.*” While I do not disagree with this translation, because it does indeed most accurately capture the intended semantics of the sentence, it can mislead one to understand *nna* to be a reflexive pronoun, as in the sentences, “*I wash myself*” and “*I saw myself in the mirror.*”

Therefore, we must unbound ourselves by the categories in which we divide our language of English, and be open to the possibility that other languages are categorized in other ways more illustrative of the language. When approached through the minds of English speakers, these categories may in some instances lump several of our categories together, and in other instances, dissect one of our categories into several further distinctive categories.

Let’s take a look at a couple more derivations of our previous sentences:

Mpho o ile ko sekolong. (She went to school.)

Mpho o setse a ile ko sekolong. (She already went to school.)

Mpho ke ngaka. (She is a doctor.)

Mpho e setse e le ngaka. (She is already a doctor.)

The first and third sentences are nearly identical to our sentences from the dialogue, and more clearly illustrate how the copula serves to connect the subject and predicate of a sentence. In the second and fourth examples, however, we employ the participial auxiliary verb *setse*, which conveys the concept expressed in English as the adverb, *already*. In these sentences, one may be tempted to include everything after the initial copula, *o*, as a part of the predicate. But if we compare, for example the third sentence and the fourth sentence (whose meanings are fundamentally the same, though the fourth sentence admittedly expresses an air of emphasis), we can see that the subject is Mpho, the predicate is **ngaka**, and therefore the copula must be everything in between.

The copula of a sentence can include markers, participles, and auxiliary verbs.

## THE PREDICATE (substantives, adjectives, verbs, and location & time)

The predicate is often the most complicated part of the sentence, given the ability of nearly every part of speech to play that role. Take note that whereas a substantive, adjective, verb, or location/time can each potentially function as the predicate in isolation, other parts of speech, such as adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions cannot, and are therefore not listed as potential predicates, though they can indeed be found within the predicate. Substantives can serve as the direct or indirect object (Barack Obama is the President of the United States of America). Adjectives can serve to identify the subject (He is eloquent). And verbs describe a variety of states of being, relationships, actions, etc the subject may experience (Obama addressed Congress). In the case of concrete and metaphorically present subjects, locations can serve as predicates (Obama is in Washington DC.). And in the case of temporally bound subjects, even time can serve as a predicate (His meeting with the Cabinet is tomorrow.) Let's look at some examples in Setswana:

<u>Mpho</u> ke <b>ngaka</b> . (Mpho is a doctor.)	<i>PREDICATE SUBSTANTIVE</i>
<u>Mpho</u> o <b>montle</b> . (Mpho is beautiful.)	<i>PREDICATE ADJECTIVE</i>
<u>Mpho</u> o <b>jele dijo</b> . (Mpho ate food.)	<i>PREDICATE</i>
<u>Mpho</u> o <b>mo ntlong</b> . (Mpho is in the house.)	<i>PREDICATE LOCATIVE</i>
<u>Pati ya gagwe</u> e <b>kamoso</b> . (Her party is tomorrow.)	<i>PREDICATE TEMPORAL</i>

In the case of substantives, adjectives, locations, and times functioning as predicates, see the chapter on COPULAE, which covers this in further depth. In the case of verbs functioning as predicates, see the ever-extensive chapter on VERBS.

## II. INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

The inherent structure of interrogative sentences pose questions, subsequently expecting answers in response. Interrogative sentences serve to elicit information.

In Setswana, as in English, the structure of interrogative sentences is fairly similar and in many instances, nearly identical to the structure of declarative sentences.

Native speakers of English must keep in mind, however, that there is no general rising in tone that often accompanies interrogative sentences in English. In fact, such intonation is likely to confuse Setswana speakers for whom tone is a distinct variable in the morphology of words.

### Affirmation/Negation (yes/no)

For example, yes/no questions are formed by simply preceding a declarative sentence with the question marker, **A** as in the following example from the dialogue:

A Mpho le Katlego ba **teng**? (Are Mpho and Katlego present?)

Ee. Mpho le Katlego ba **teng**. (Yes. Mpho and Katlego are present.)

**A → SUBJECT → COPULA → PREDICATE ?**

## Interrogative Pronouns

Many question, however, ask for more specific information, fundamentally expecting the listener to fill in the blanks. The blanks, or the unknown information, are denoted with interrogative pronouns:

Pronoun	Part of Speech	Example
<b>MANG BOMANG (pl)</b>	personal noun	Re etela mang/bomang? <i>Who are we visiting?</i> Re etela tsala/ditsala. <i>We are visiting friend(s).</i>
<b>ENG / -NG</b>	impersonal noun	Re apaya eng? / Re apayang? <i>What are we cooking?</i> Re apaya merogo. <i>We are cooking vegetables.</i>
<b>[px]-FE</b>	adjective/pronoun	Re batla dibuka dife? <i>Which books do we want?</i> Re batla dibuka tsele. <i>We want those books.</i>
<b>KAE</b>	number (discrete)	Re na le baithuti ba le kae? <i>How many students do we have?</i> Re na le baithuti ba le bararo. <i>We have three students.</i>
<b>BOKAE</b>	amount (aggregate)	Buka e ke bokae? <i>How much is this book?</i> Buka e ke P20. <i>This book is P20.</i>
<b>JANG</b>	adverb	Le robetse jang? <i>How did you all sleep?</i> Re robetse sentle. <i>We slept well.</i>
<b>KAE</b>	location	Re ya kae? <i>Where are we going?</i> Re ya ko ofising. <i>We are going to the office.</i>
<b>LENG</b>	time	Re kopana leng? <i>When are we meeting?</i> Re kopana makuku. <i>We are meeting before daybreak.</i>
<b>KA GORENG</b>	subordinate clause	Re kopana makuku, ka goreng? <i>Why are we meeting before daybreak?</i> Re kopana makuku, ka gore re tshwanetse go goroga kwa Francistown ka 2. <i>We are meeting before daybreak, because we must arrive in Francistown by 2.</i>

In the above examples, take note of how nearly identical the question and the answer are, with the previously unknown bit of information taking the place of the interrogative pronoun. Also take note, however, that for many of these examples, posing the interrogative pronoun in isolation would suffice in conversation. For example, if someone said, “re batla dibuka,” meaning “we want books,” we could clarify, “dibuka dife?” or even more simply “dife?” meaning “which ones?” Or in the example, “re kopana makuku,” we could have simply asked “ka goreng?” instead of the long-winded “re kopana makuku, ka goreng?”

## Predication

Just as interrogative pronouns in English must be brought to the initial position of subject, interrogative pronouns in Setswana must be brought to the final position of predicate, which is easy in most instances as illustrated before, but can be challenging in other instances. Let us look at another example derived from the dialogue:

Mpho o **kae**? (Where is Mpho)

Mpho o **ko sekolong**. (Mpho is at school.)

In this instance, the location is unknown. Because the location is already found in the predicate, the sentence does not need to be restructured in any way, but can simply replace the unknown element with the appropriate interrogative pronoun, *kae*. However, in instances where it is the subject of the sentence that is unknown, the sentence must be restructured to make the subject the predicate. Because the subject of a sentence is always a substantive, this process can only every occur with the interrogative pronouns, **MANG/BOMANG**, **ENG**, and **-FE**. We will call this process predication.

### Predication with a Predicate Substantive

*SUBJECT (unknown)* → **COPULA** → **PREDICATE**

becomes...

**[original predicate]** → **COPULA** → **[mang/eng/-fe] ?**

Let us look at a small dialogue derived from our previous dialogue:

A: Ke **moithuti**. (She is a student.)

B: Moithuti ke **ofe**? (Who of you is a student?)

In the first sentence the implied subject is unclear to the listener, who must then clarify to whom the speaker was referring. It would not be grammatically sound to say, “Ofe ke moithuti?” since the interrogative pronoun must be in the predicate, and never in the subject of a sentence.

## Predication with a Predicate, Predicate Adjective, or Predicate Locative/Temporal

SUBJECT (unknown) → COPULA → PREDICATE

becomes...

**COPULA → [mang/eng/-fe] [concord] [original predicate] ?**

Lets us look at a small dialogue derived from our previous dialogue:

A: O ile ko sekolong. (She went to school.)

B: Ke mang yo o ileng ko sekolong? (Who went to school?)

In the first sentence, the implied subject is unclear to the listener, who must then clarify to whom the speaker was referring. It would not be grammatically sound to ask “Mang o ile ko sekolong?” because as said before, interrogative pronouns must be found in the predicate and never in the subject of a sentence. A similar construction would be employed if the listener wanted clarity on whether it was *Mpho* or *Katlego* to whom the speaker was referring:

A: O ile ko sekolong. (She went to school.)

B: A ke **Mpho kana Katlego** yo o ileng ko sekolong? (Is it Mpho or Katlego who went to school?)

Essentially, the subject, copula, and predicate become a nominal phrase in which the subject is the noun, the copula is the concord, and the predicate is the adjective or verb qualifying the noun. For a more in depth look at the construction of concords, see CONCORDS under ADJECTIVES.

### III. IMPERATIVE SENTENCES

The inherent construction of imperative sentences pose requests or commands, subsequently expecting compliance. Imperative sentences serve to elicit behavior.

In Setswana, as in English, the structure of imperative sentences is vastly different from both declarative and interrogative sentences. Whereas declarative and interrogative sentences require an explicit copula and can have nearly any part of speech as its predicate, imperative sentences have an implicit copula and must have a verb as its predicate. Furthermore, unlike declarative and interrogative sentences, which can appear in any person, imperative sentences only appear in the second person, *you* or *you (plural)*. The singular *you* is implied when the verb appears as is. The plural *you* is implied when the plural suffix **-NG** is affixed to the verb.

**SUBJECT (implicit) → COPULA (implicit) → (verb-I-NG)**

Because commands and requests are directed towards people (and sometime animals), there is often a recipient or indirect object of the action.

**Mmolelela gore ke ne ke le fa.** (Tell her that I was here.)

In the above excerpt from the dialogue, *mmolelela* comes from the Class 1 object marker, *MO*, and the verb meaning *to tell*, *bolelela*. As discussed in the section on OBJECT MARKERS in the chapter on PREDICATES, for verbs beginning with the consonant B-, the Class 1 object marker, *MO*, becomes the prefix, M-, and is affixed to the verb, whose initial consonant B- now also becomes -M- (i.e. MO + bolelela = M- + -M- + olelela = mmolelela)

Similar phonetic changes occur when the indirect object is the 1<sup>st</sup> Person singular (Class i.). The command, *tell me*, is translated as, *mpolelela*. And because commands and requests always have implicit subjects in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person, the reflexive prefix, *I-*, is used in the case of indirect objects in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person. In such cases, the prefix is affixed to the verb, which undergoes similar phonetic alterations (e.g. *tell yourself* = ipolelela). A more thorough lesson on this process is discussed in the section on OBJECT MARKERS mentioned before and the section on VERB EXTENSIONS.

In all other instances, the verb remains unchanged and the object marker remains unattached. However, because the object marker is in all other instances identical to the subject marker, another change must occur to make the sentence unambiguously a command.

**Mosetsana o tshwerwe ke tlala. Mo fe borotho.**  
(The girl is hungry. Give her bread.)

**Dikgomo di tshwerwe ke tlala. Di fe dijo.**  
The cows are hungry. Give them food.

In these instances where the object marker is unattached to the verb, the verb's final vowel – **A** becomes an **-E**.

**[object marker] → (verb-E/-ENG)**

## Other constructions posing requests or commands

In English, requests or commands can be posed as “dummy” questions or statements for the sake of being polite or unpresumptuous.

Could you please pass the bread? (Give me the bread.)

I would like another glass of water. (Give me another glass of water.)

Similarly, in Setswana, the following auxiliary verbs pose requests, commands, or prohibitions, and some can be understood to be more polite.

**Ke kopa gore...**o a nthusa. (I am asking that...you help me. / Help me.)

**O ka...**nthusa. (You can...help me. / Help me.)

**O tshwanetse go...**nthusa. (You must...help me. / Help me.)

**O seka wa...**nthusa. (You must not...help me. / Don't help me.)



# APPENDIX

The following vocabulary lists and grammar charts are intended to comprehensively and illustratively organize the concepts explored in this grammar.

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## VOCABULARY LIST OF AUXILIARY VERBS (Part 1 of 2)

### Positive Participial Auxiliary Verbs

<b>Indefinite Participial Auxiliary Verbs – [sm] [auxiliary verb] [p] [verb]</b>
<b>SETSE – have already done (perfect)</b>
Ke <u>setse</u> ke badile buka ya me. I already read my book.
<b>NTSE – have been doing</b>
O <u>ntse</u> a bala buka ya gagwe. He has been reading his book.
<b>NE – was doing</b>
Re <u>ne</u> re bala buka ya rona. We were reading our book.
<b>SANTSE – still doing</b>
Ba <u>santse</u> ba bala buka ya bone. They are still reading their book.
<b>BO – then do</b>
Tsamaya o ye ko motlobong wa dibuka. O <u>bo</u> o bala buka. Go to the library. Then read a book.
<b>KA BO – should have done (perfect)</b>
Le <u>ka bo</u> le badile dibuka tsa lona. You all should have read your books.
<b>ETLE – usually do (subjunctive), sometimes do</b>
Ke <u>etle</u> ke bala dibuka. I usually read books.
<b>TLHOLA – always do, spend the day doing</b>
O <u>tihola</u> a bala dibuka. He always reads books.
<b>TLOGA – be about to do</b>
Re <u>tloga</u> re bala buka ya rona. We are about to read our book.

<b>Definite Participial Auxiliary Verbs – [sm] [auxiliary verb] [dp] [verb]</b>
<b>KILE – have done before, have once done</b>
Ke <u>kile</u> ka bala buka e. I have read this book before.
<b>NE – did do, had done</b>
Re <u>ne</u> ra bala buka e. We did read this book.
<b>KA NNA – might do</b>
Ba <u>ka nna</u> ba bala buka e. They might read this book.

## VOCABULARY LIST OF AUXILIARY VERBS (Part 2 of 2)

### Negative Participial Auxiliary Verbs

<b>Indefinite Participial Auxiliary Verbs – GA [p] [auxiliary verb] [p] [verb]</b>
<b>TLHOLE – no longer do</b>
<i>Ga ke <b>tlhole</b> ke bala dibuka.</i> <i>I no longer read books.</i>
<b>ISE – not have yet done</b>
<i>Ga a <b>ise</b> a bale ele.</i> <i>He has not yet read that one.</i>
<b>KE – never do</b>
<i>Ga re <b>ke</b> re bala dibuka.</i> <i>We never read books.</i>

<b>Definite Participial Auxiliary Verbs – GA [p] [auxiliary verb] [dp] [verb]</b>
<b>A KA – not have done</b>
<i>Ga ke <b>a ka</b> ka bala dibuka.</i> <i>I did not read books.</i>
<b>KAKE – might not do; will not do</b>
<i>Ga re <b>kake</b> ra bala buka ele.</i> <i>We will not read that book.</i>
<b>SEKA – must not do</b>
<i>Le <b>seka</b> la bala dibuka tse.</i> <i>You all must not read these books.</i>

### Simple Auxiliary Verbs

<b>[sm] [auxiliary verb] [verb]</b>
<b>KA – can do</b>
<i>Ke <b>ka</b> kopana le wena ka 4.</i> <i>I can meet with you at 4.</i>
<b>TLA A – will do</b>
<i>Re <b>tla a</b> le bona kamoso.</i> <i>We will see you all tomorrow.</i>

### Objective Auxiliary Verbs

<b>[sm] [auxiliary verb] GO [verb]</b>
<b>KGONA – be able to do</b>
<i>Ke <b>kgona</b> go bala ka Setswana.</i> <i>I can read in Setswana.</i>
<b>TSHWANETSE – must do; have to do</b>
<i>O <b>tshwanetse</b> go bala buka eo.</i> <i>You must read that book.</i>
<b>RATILE – have almost done</b>
<i>Re <b>ratile</b> go fetsa go bala buka ele.</i> <i>We almost finished reading that book.</i>

## VOCABULARY LIST OF ADVERBS

[adverb]
<b>SENTLE – well</b>
<i>O opela <u>sentle</u>.</i> <i>You sing well.</i>
<b>THATA – a lot; very; very much</b>
<i>Ke rata nama <u>thata</u>.</i> <i>I like meat a lot.</i>
<b>TOTA – completely; utterly; really</b>
<i>Ke a go rata <u>tota</u>.</i> <i>I really love you.</i>
<b>GAPE – again</b>
<i>A o ya ko Molepolole <u>gape</u>?</i> <i>Are you going to Molepolole again?</i>
<b>FELA – just; only</b>
<i>Re amogela madi a go itshetsa <u>fela</u>.</i> <i>We only receive a living allowance.</i>
<b>RURI – truly; for good</b>
<i>O tsamaetse <u>ruri</u>.</i> <i>He went away for good.</i>
<b>BONOLO – easily; gently; softly</b>
<i>O ntshameketse katara <u>bonolo</u>.</i> <i>She softly played guitar for me.</i>

KA [adverb]
<b>KA BONYA – slowly</b>
<i>Ke kopa gore o bue <u>ka bonya</u>.</i> <i>Please speak slowly.</i>
<b>KA BOFEFO / BONAKO – fast; quickly</b>
<i>O siana <u>ka bonako</u>,</i> <i>He runs fast.</i>
<b>KA BOMO – deliberately; on purpose</b>
<i>Le dirile jalo <u>ka bomo</u>!</i> <i>You did that on purpose!</i>
<b>KA SEWELo – rarely; irregularly</b>
<i>Re mmona <u>ka sewelo</u>.</i> <i>We rarely see him.</i>
<b>KA THELELO – fluidly; eloquently</b>
<i>O tlhalosa dilo <u>ka thelelo</u>.</i> <i>He explains things eloquently.</i>



COMPREHENSIVE NOUN CLASS CHARACTERS (Part 1 of 2)

Class	Prefix	Example:	Pronoun	Possessive Pronoun	Subject Marker [sm]	Object Marker [om]	Indefinite Participle, Negative Marker [p]	Definite Participle [dip]	Possessive Preposition
i	-	1 <sup>st</sup> person [I]	NNA	- MF	KF	(N-)	KF	KA	n/a
ii	-	1 <sup>st</sup> person pl [we]	RONA		RF			RA	n/a
iii.		2 <sup>nd</sup> person [you]	WENA	GAGO	O	GO	O	WA	n/a
iv		2 <sup>nd</sup> person pl [you]	IONA		IF			IWA	n/a
1		1 <sup>st</sup> person [name]	INA	- GA name - GAGWE	O	MO	A		WA
2	MO-	Motho (person)	BONE		BA			BA	
3	BO-	Bohilary (name)							
4	RA-	Ratho (prefix)							
5	MO-	Motse (village)	ONE		O			WA	
6	MF-	Mebe (village)	YONF		F			YA	
7	IF-	Irina (name)	IONF		IF			IA	
8	MA-	Mama (names)	ONE		A			A	
9	SE-	Seilo (chair)	SONE		SE			SA	
10	DI	Ditilo (chairs)	TSONF		DI			TSA	
11	DI	Kgomo (cow)	YONF		F			YA	
12	DI	Dikgomo (cows)	TSONF		DI			TSA	
13	IO	I onao (foot)	IONF		IO			IWA	
14	DI	Dinao (feet)	TSONF		DI			TSA	
15	BO-	Borotho (bread)	BONF		BO			BA	.IWA/BA
16	MA	Marotho (bread)	ONE		A			A	
17	GO	Go ithuta (to learn)			GO			GA	
18	GA	Fa pele (in front)							
19	KWA	Kwa ntle (outside)							
20	MO -	Mo ntlony (in the house)							

**COMPREHENSIVE NOUN CLASS CHART (Part 2 of 2)**

Class:	DEMONSTRATIVES		FINIMERATIVES		CONCORDS		QUANTITATIVES	
	this <i>thus near me:</i> that near you that over there	-NO -O LL	some -NGWŦ	not any -ŦE which -ŦE either -ŦE	Adjective Concord	Relative Concord (subi)	:all	-ŦI ŦIŦ
Example:	[d]	[d]	[px]	[em]	[d] [px]	[d] [sm]		
i 1 <sup>st</sup> person [I]	(YO-) n/a	(MO-)	(KE) n/a		YO MO	YO KF	NNA	
ii 1 <sup>st</sup> person pl [we:]	(ŦA-) n/a	(DA-)	(RE) n/a		BA BA	BA KE	KO-	
iii 2 <sup>nd</sup> person [you]	(YO-) n/a	(MO-)	(O) n/a		YO MO	YO O	WENA	
iv. 2 <sup>nd</sup> person pl [you]	(BA-) n/a	(ŦA)	(ŦA) n/a		DA DA	DA LE	LO-	
1 Mollo (person)	YO-	MO	O		YO MO	YO O	E	
2 Batho (people)	BA-	HA-	RA-		DA DA	DA DA	BO-	
3 Moleze (village)	O-	MO	O		O MO	O O	O	
4 Metze (villages)	L	ME-	E-		EMF	FF	YO-	
5 Leina (name)	LE-	LF-	ŦF-		ŦŦF	LELE	LO-	
6 Mairra (names)	A	MA-	A-		AMA	AA	O-	
7 Setilo (chair)	SE-	SE-	ŦF-		ŦF ŦF	SESE	SO-	
8 Dittio (chairs)	ŦŦF-	ŦI-	ŦI		TSE DI	TSE DI	ŦSO-	
9 Kijunna (cow)	F		E-		E	EF	YO	
10 Dikgomo (cows)	ŦŦF-	ŦI-	ŦI		TSE DI	TSE DI	ŦSO-	
11 Lonao (tool)	ŦO	LO	LO-		LO LO	LO LO	ŦO	
12 Dinao (feet)	TSE	ŦI-	ŦI-		ŦŦF ŦI	ŦŦF ŦI	ŦSO	
13 Borotho (bread)	BO-	HO-	HO-		DO DO	DO BO	BO-	
14 Marollo (barca)	A-	MA	A		A MA	AA	O-	
15 Go ithuta (to learn)	MO-	GO-	GO-		MO GO	MO GO	CO-	
16 Fa pele (in iron)	FA-	GO	GO		ŦA GO	ŦA GO	GO	
17 Kwa ntle (outside)	KWA	GO-	GO-		KWA GO	KWA GO	GO	
18 Mo ntlong (at home)	O-	GO-	GO-		O GO	O GO	GO-	

**CONCISE NOUN CLASS CHART**  
**Impersonal Nouns in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Person**  
**(Part 1 of 2)**

I. CLASS

II.

- a. NOUN PREFIX, ADJECTIVE PREFIX [**px**]  
(affixed to noun stem or adjective; determines noun class)
- b. ENUMERATIVES
  - i. *-NGWE* (SOME)
  - ii. *-NGWE LE -NGWE* (EVERY; EACH)

III.

- a. SUBJECT MARKER, OBJECT MARKER, INDEFINITE PARTICIPLE  
(used to construct verb tense) [**sm**][**om**][**p**]
- b. ENUMERATIVES
  - i. *-FE* (WHICH?)
  - ii. *-PE* (NOT ANY; NONE)
  - iii. *-SELE* (DIFFERENT)

IV.

- a. DEMONSTRATIVES (qualify noun as proximal or distal to you or me)
  - i. *-* (THIS) [**d**]
  - ii. *-NO* (THIS NEAR ME)
  - iii. *-O* (THAT NEAR YOU)
  - iv. *-LE* (THAT OVER THERE)
- b. RELATIVE/ADJECTIVE NOMINAL PHRASES  
(used to construct nominal phrase)
  - i. [**IV**] [**II**]-[weak adjective]
  - ii. [**IV**] [strong adjective]
  - iii. [**IV**] [**III**] [verb-NG]

V.

- a. PRONOUNS (takes the place of a noun; emphasizes noun)
  - i. *-NE* (IT)
- b. QUANTITATIVES (qualifies noun inclusively)
  - i. *-TLHE* (ALL & THE WHOLE)

VI.

- a. POSSESSIVE PREPOSITION  
(qualify noun as object of possession by connecting it to its possessor; of)
- b. DEFINITE PARTICIPLE (used to construct narrative verb tense) [**dp**]

**CONCISE NOUN CLASS CHART**  
**Impersonal Nouns in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Person**  
**(Part 2 of 2)**

<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>
	[px]	[sm] [om] [p]	[d]		[dp]
3	MO-	O-			WA
4	ME-	E-		YO-	YA
5	LE-			LO-	LA
6/14	MA-	A-		O-	A
7	SE-			SO-	SA
8/10/12	DI-		TSE-	TSO-	TSA
9	-	E-		YO-	YA
11	LO-				LWA
13	BO-			JO-/BO-	JWA/BA
15	GO -		MO-	GO-	GA