Toki Pona

Toki Pona is a constructed language created by Canadian linguist and translator Sonja Lang in 2001. It's an experiment to see how minimalism a language can get.

This side describes the entire grammar, the other side contains the entire vocabulary.

Cheat sheet by blinry, CC0.

morr.cc/toki-pona-cheat-sheet/

Alphabet

Toki Pona uses nine consonants (j k l m n p s t w) and five vowels (a e i o u). Pronunciation doesn't really matter.

Basic sentences

The particle li separates the subject and the verb:

soweli li moku e telo. = The cat drinks the water.

mi mel e soweli. = I'm washing the cat.

Negation

To negate a word, append ala:

mi lape ala. = I'm not sleeping.

Questions

To ask yes-or-no questions, replace the verb with "(verb) ala (verb)" :

sina moku e seme? = What are you eating?

seme li moku e kili mi? = Who/what ate my fruit?

Providing context using la

To add a context to a sentence, prepend another sentence or expression, followed by la. This often results in a structure like "if (part 1), then (part 2)" or "in the context of (part 1), (part 2)."

mi lape la ali li pona. = When I'm asleep, everything is okay.

Time

You can use a la-clause to add a temporal context to a sentence:

tenpo kama la mi lape. = I will be sleeping in the future.

tenpo pini la mi lape. = I slept in the past.

Commands

To state a command, use o and then what you want the person to do:

o lukin e ni! = Look at this!

To address someone, start a sentence with "(person) o:".

jan Malin o, sina pona lukin. = Malin, you are pretty.

You can also use this together with a command, merging the two o's:

jan San o tawa tomo sina. = Sam, go home.

Numbers

Combine number words to add them up:

wan = 1     tu = 2     luka = 5

luka luka tu wan = 13

And... that's it!