

Lesson in Papiamento (The Basics)

The language of Papiamento is spoken on the Island of Aruba. It is a mixture of several languages which include Spanish, Dutch, English, Portugess and African and Indian words. Today most Arubans speak English, Dutch and Spanish.

The Alphabet:

A B C Ci Ch D Dj E F G H I J K L M N ñ O P Q R S Sh Si T U V W X Y Z Zj

Single Vowels:

Vowel	Rules	Examples
a	as in paw	awa, caso, tata
	as in cat, yet short with no glide, before l and u	mal, Paula
e	as in they , with no glide	mesa, bela, tela
	as in fix	exacto, examen, extremo
è	as in pet	cèn, pèchi, nèchi
i	as in police	pisò, hilu, fini
	as in fix	for Dutch words: mik, bril
o	as in low, with no glide	bolo, poco, bor
ò	as in not	ròm, còl, bòter, còrá
u	as in fool	un, esun, gustu
	as in book	for Dutch words: krul, bus, truk, stut
ü	as in ??	bergüensa

Combined Vowels:

Vowel	Rules	Examples
aa	as in ??	waak, straat
e	Semivowel when 1st member when followed by a or o	teatro, orea, deseo
ee	as in ??	meneer, meester, geel
i	Semiconstant when 1st member, as in year.	diablo, papia, piesa, bientu, sabio, salario, ciudad
	Semivowel when 2nd member, as in life, they, oi in Spanish hoy, ui in we (???)	paila, feila, Zoila (a name), puiuru



ieu	??	bieu, pieu
oo	as in load	potlood
u	Semiconstant when 1st member, as in wet.	cuadro, quater, cuenta, anguel, cuido, puiro, cuota
	Semivowel when 2nd member, au as foul, eu as they and fool, ou as not and fool	auto, leu, ciudad, trabou, Corsou,
uie	as in ??	quier

Note:

Accented vowels (á é í ó ú) are expressed with stress and when used along with another vowel, each is then expressed as a separate identity (ie; día: dee-ah)

The Constants:

Letter	Rules	Examples
b	as in English	buki, baca, bini, busca
c	like k before a, o, u	cama, come, cuminda
	like s before e and i	cèn, cende, cine
ch	as in English	mucha, chuculati, chumbu
	as Spanish g in gente (roll g in back of throat)	toch
ci	pronounced as sh when proceeded by vowel	cien, cielu, Francia
	exceptions as in:	ciegu, social
d	as in English, less explosive	diki, drenta
	like t when at end of a word	berdad, birtud
dj	as in jaw	djaka, djis
f	as in fine	fini, fraces, friu
g	as in agony, before a, o, u	galiña, gai, gustu, grandi, glas
	as in hole, before e or i	gel, general, página
	to retain g-sound in agony, a u is added	sigui, guepi
h	as in English	huma, hole, haci
j	as in yawn, stonger palatal friction	juni, juli, jan
	like h in:	joropo
k	as in English	kuki, buki, kamber
l	as in lock	lampi, lechi, liber, ala, gel
m	as in many	mama, María, mesa

n	as in English	ni, nada, nunca
	as ng when end of word or syllable	
ñ	blending of n and y; as can you	señor, mañan, soño
	Tongue must be in y position, with n and y sounded at the same time	
p	as in april	pa, pesu, pober
q	only in que and qui combination	quíco, quen
	instead of qu, the symbol k is preferred	quíco > kíko, quen > ken
r	as in English, but rolled as in Spanish	rosa, ricu, pero
s	as in English	sí, soño
	Si is like sh in some words	siete (shete), ansia
t	More vigorous, percise and not pronounced with audible breath, not aspirated as in English	tur, tosa, tata
v	as in English	Victor, Venus
	as f in some words of Dutch origin	veter, vringud
	as soft b in some words of Spanish origin	vence, venenu, varios
w	as in English	warda, wesu, awa
x	as in axle	examen, extra, excepto
y	as in yawn	yesu, yarda, caya, aya, saya
z	as in zone	zumbi, zurú, zoya
zj	like in French juer	zjilea, zjilè

Stressing:

For words involving more than one syllable, the first will be stress longer than the rest of syllable.

Numeric System:

0 cero	10 dies	20 binti	1,000,000 meyon
1 un	11 diesun	30 trinta	
2 dos	12 diesdos	40 cuarenta	
3 tres	13 diestres	50 cincuenta	
4 quater	14 diescuater	60 sesenta	
5 cincú	15 diescincu	70 setenta	
6 seis	16 diesseis	80 ochoenta	
7 shete (siete)	17 diesshete	90 nobenta	
8 ocho	18 diesocho	100 shen (cien)	
9 nuebe	19 diesnuebe	1,000 mil	

Pronouns:

Personal...	Possesive...	Past	Future
Mi I, Me	Mi My, mine	Mi a	Lo mi
Bo You	Bo Your	Bo a	Lo bo
E He, She, It	Su His, Hers, Its	El a	Lo é
Nos We	Nos Our	Nos a	Lo nos
Boso You (plural)	Boso Your (plural)	Bosa a	Lo boso
Nan They	Nan Their	Nan a	Lo nan

Articles:

Definite...	Indefinite...
A book E buki	The book Un buki
A chair E stul	The chair Un stul
A table E mesa	The table Un mesa

Conjugations:

Ta	To Be
Tin	To Have
Haci	To Do

Special Notes:

- Before the past tense indicator **a**, **E** changes to **El**.
- **Bo** is translated according to the person it applies to... Señor, Señorita, Doctor, etc.
- Personal **Mi** and **Bo** changes into **Ami** and **Abo** when pronounced with stress.
- In negative sentences, the word **no** is always placed before the verb.
- The order of words in Papiamento is always **Subject - Verb**.
- Words ending in **NAN** is used when necessary to express plural meaning.
- When preceded by a verb **bo** is pronounced **bu** (mi ta mirabo).
- After **si**, the conjunction **ta** is omitted.
- Order of words in affirmative and interrogative sentences is the same, only the tone changes.
- For days of the week, the **dia** is pronounced like **ja** (j as in jump).

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