A Beginner's Guide to Oshindonga

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Introduction

If you're trying to learn Oshindonga
But you find that it's too much iilonga,
Nyanyukwa, ino geya!
With this book, you will tseya
It will guide you through all oshiponga.

Congratulations! You have, in your hands, the product of two years of love, sweat, tears, and a fair number of G&Ts. We wrote this language guide while serving in Owambo as volunteer teachers. Our reasons were partly self-serving – writing about the language helped us to understand it better ourselves – but we hope it will be of use to anyone else who wants to embark on the adventure of learning Oshindonga. It's a wonderful journey, and we're glad to join you on the road.

But now, down to business.

As someone immersed in an alien culture, possibly for the first time, your linguistic needs are twofold. First, you need to learn how to function. This book tackles this objective by presenting a series of content-oriented chapters that will familiarize you with the vocabulary and phrases of daily life.

The second need is to understand the structure of the language so that you can build your own statements and truly communicate. To this end, a series of *Grammar Corner* sections are interwoven through the chapters. Because we wanted to provide a reasonably complete grammar reference, you may find that the grammar sections advance at a faster pace than the corresponding vocabulary lessons. If you don't understand them the first time around, you can always come back to them later.

This book began as a revision of a training manual for Peace Corps volunteers, but its scope has broadened over time. It should be useful for anyone trying to learn Oshindonga, but is most appropriate for people who go to stay among Oshindonga speakers in Owambo.

You can access this book in its entirety over the internet at http://www.schoolnet.na/language/. The web site also has a glossary of words appearing in the book, as well as an answer key to the exercises.

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1 Wa lala po?

A: Ongula

Tate: Wa lala po, Meme Liina?
Meme: Ee-ee.
Tate: Nawa ngaa?
Meme: Ee-ee. Ngoye wa lala po, Tate Petrus?
Tate: Ee-ee.
Meme: Nawa ngaa?
Tate: Ee-ee, onawa.

B: Ongula

Tate: Kala po nawa, Meme Liina.
Meme: Eewa, inda po nawa Tate Petrus.

C: Komatango

Meme: Wu uhala po, Tate Landu?
Tate: Ee-ee.
Meme: Nawa tuu?
Tate: Ee-ee. Ngoye wu uhala po, Meme Estera?
Meme: Ee-ee.
Tate: Nawa ngaa?
Meme: Ee-ee, onawa.

D: Ongulohi

Meme: Wa tokelwa po, Tate Josefa?
Tate: Ee-ee.
Meme: Nawa ngaa?
Tate: Ee-ee. Ngoye wa tokelwa po, Meme Maria?
Meme: Ee-ee.
Tate: Nawa?
Meme: Ee-ee, onawa.

E: Ookuume

Beata: Ongiini, Andreas?
Andreas: Onawa, kuume. Ongiini?
Beata: Onawa.

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English	Oshindonga
Good	Nawa
Morning	Ongula
Afternoon	Komatango / Omutenya
Evening	Ongulohi
Night	Uusiku
Friends	ooKuume
Yes	Ee-ee / Eeno
No	Aawe / Aaye / Aa-ee
OK	Eewa
Good morning	Wa lala po?
Good afternoon	Wu uhala po?
Good evening	Wa tokelwa po?
Hello (and other informal greetings)	Ongiini / Ongaipi
Go well	Inda po nawa
Stay well	Kala po nawa
Sleep well	Ka lale po nawa

Exercise 1

Translate the following conversation into English:

A: Wu uhala po Meme .....?
B: Ee-ee.
A: Onawa tuu?
B: Ee-ee, ngoye wu uhala po Meme .....?
A: Ee-ee.
B: Onawa ngaa?
A: Ee-ee, Onawa.

Exercise 2

Fill in the missing words in the following conversation:

A: Wa ..... po Meme .....?
B: .....
A: Nawa ngaa?
B: Ee-ee, ... wa lala po Tate .....?
A: Ee-ee.
B: Onawa ngaa?
A: .....

Exercise 3

Fill in the missing words in the following conversation:

A: Wu..... po Meme.....?
B: .....
A: Onawa .....?
B: Ee-ee, wu ..... po Meme .....?
A: Ee-ee.
B: Nawa tuu?
A: Ee-ee, onawa.

Exercise 4

Have a friend greet you for all of the times of day. Practice until you can do it without thinking.

ANIWA:

~ Eyoka enene itali ku adha wu na omdhimbo. ~

A big snake will not find you if you have a stick.
(If you are always ready you will not have problems.)

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CULTURAL INFORMATION

- Greet first before asking or saying anything, even in a shop or on the telephone.
- Always take time and shake hands when greeting.
- Always greet elders first.
- When greeting, females should bend their knees and males should nod their heads.
- Greeting passersby is considered very polite. It is often expected in the villages, but in town it is not necessary.
- It is normal for the person who comes to a group of people to initiate greeting.
- Words like *Meme* (mother), *Tate* (father), and especially *Kuku* (grandparent) show respect and are just as important as the greeting itself.
- Touch your right elbow to show extra respect.
- Literally, if someone says *wa lala po*, they are asking if you laid down last night. *Wu uhala po* asks if you spent the afternoon, and *wa tokelwa po* asks if the sky became white for you at dusk. For the record, the answer is always *ee-ee*.

Grammar Corner: Personal Pronouns

In English, we have three different persons: I, you, and he/she/it, as well as their plural counterparts: we, you all, and they. It is very similar in Oshindonga:

English	Oshindonga
I	Ngame (often said "Ngaye")
You	Ngoye (often said "Ngweye")
He/She	Ye
We	Tse
You all	Ne
They	Yo

Oshindonga makes no distinction between "he" and "she" – they are both referred to as *ye*.

Quick Tip

Ngaa *and* tuu *are used quite often for emphasis and carry a meaning similar to "really" or "rather".*

ANIWA:
~ Okuti kwa vala. ~
The forest has delivered (you).
(Welcome home, after a long journey.)

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2 Onda sa ondjala!

Onda sa ondjala.	Ihandi li onyama.
Onda sa enota.	Kandi uvite ko...
Onda kuta.	Ongame ..... Ongoye lye?
Onda mana.	Iikulya iitoye!
Onda vulwa, onda hala okukotha.	Tangi unene.
Omeya oge li peni?	Okandjugo oke li peni?

English	Oshindonga
I'm hungry.	Onda sa ondjala.
I'm thirsty.	Onda sa enota.
I'm full.	Onda kuta.
I'm finished.	Onda mana.
I'm tired, I want to go to sleep.	Onda vulwa, onda hala okukotha.
Where is the water?	Omeya oge li peni?
I don't eat meat.	Ihandi li onyama.
I don't understand...	Kandi uvite ko...
I'm ..... What's your name?	Ongame ..... Ongoye lye?
The food was very good!	Iikulya iitoye!
Thank you very much.	Tangi unene.
Where is the latrine?	Okandjugo oke li peni?

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English	Oshindonga
I need ……..	Onda pumbwa ……..
I want ……. (polite)	Onda hala …….
May I have ..... (very polite)	Kwatha ndje .....
Give me ..... (informal)	Pe ndje .....
Water	Omeya
Basin	Oshiyaha
To sleep	Okukotha
To eat	Okulya
To bathe	Okwiiyoga
Body soap	Othewa (yokwiiyoga)
Candle	Okalehita
Cup	Okakopi
Beer	Ombiila
Help (noun)	Ekwatho
Key	Oshapi / Oshipatululo
And / With	Na
Also / Still / Again	Natango

Exercise 1

Translate the following requests into Oshindonga.

Example: I want to eat meat → Onda hala okulya onyama

1. I need a candle.
2. I want to sleep.
3. May I have a cup?
4. I want to bathe. I need water, a basin, and body soap.
5. I am hungry, I want to eat.
6. I need a beer.

Quick Tips

- *There are no articles (a, an, the) in Oshindonga*
- *There is no literal translation for "please" in Oshindonga. To express politeness, put* kwatha ndje *("help me") before what you want to say.*
- Alikana*, a word commonly translated as "please", adds a sense of urgency or exasperation to a request.*

ANIWA:

~ Kapu na okadhila ihaka tiligana komulungu. ~

There is no bird that never gets ripe fruit on its lips.
(Everyone is served [someday/somehow]. [Where's mine?])

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3 Owa za peni?

Zach: Wu uhala po Meme?
Saima: Ee-ee. Wu uhala po Tate?

Zach: Ee-ee. Oshi li ngiini?
Saima: Oshi li nawa. Edhina lyoye olye?

Zach: Edhina lyandje oZach. Edhina lyoye olye?
Saima: Edhina lyandje oSaima. Zach, owa za peni?

Zach: Onda za koAmerica.
Saima: O.K… Oto ningi shike moNamibia?

Zach: Ngame omulongi omwiiyambi.
Saima: Oto ka longa shike mpaka?

Zach: Otandi ka longa omwaalu, oshiingilisa, nuunongononi.
Saima: Oto ka kala mo ethimbo li thike peni?

Zach: Otandi ka kala mo oomvula mbali.
Saima: Eewa. Oshi iwete nale, kuume.

Zach: Eewa. Kala po nawa.
Saima: Eewa.

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Grammar Corner: Verbs

In English, verbs change to agree with the subject of the sentence. For example, I *run*, but he *runs*. In Oshindonga, verbs are made to agree with their subjects by the use of a linking word. These linking words are called *subject concords*. For example, between *ngame* (I) and *li* (eat), we must put the first-person subject concord, *otandi*: *Ngame otandi li.*

There are two sets of subject concords, one for the so-called "active verbs" and one for the "stative verbs". In addition, there are different subject concords for positive and negative statements: *ngame otandi nu* (I am drinking) versus *ngame itandi nu* (I am not drinking).

The negative subject concords are listed below their positive counterparts in the following tables.

Subject Concords for Active Verbs

Person		Past	Present	Future
Ngame	+	Onda	Otandi	Otandi ka
	−	Inandi	Itandi	Itandi ka
Ngoye	+	Owa	Oto	Oto ka
	−	Ino	Ito	Ito ka
Ye	+	Okwa	Ota	Ota ka
	−	Ina	Ita	Ita ka
Tse	+	Otwa	Otatu	Otatu ka
	−	Inatu	Itatu	Itatu ka
Ne	+	Omwa	Otamu	Otamu ka
	−	Inamu	Itamu	Itamu ka
Yo	+	Oya	Otaa / Otaya	Otaa ka / Otaya ka
	−	Inaa / Inaya	Itaa / Itaya	Itaa ka / Itaya ka

Subject Concords for Stative Verbs

Person		Past	Present	Future
Ngame	+	Onda li ndi	Ondi	Otandi ka kala ndi
	−	Kanda li ndi	Kandi	Itandi ka kala ndi
Ngoye	+	Owa li wu	Owu	Oto ka kala wu/u
	−	Kwa li wu	Ku	Ito ka kala wu/u
Ye	+	Okwa li e	Oku	Ota ka kala e
	−	Ka li e	Ke	Ita ka kala e
Tse	+	Otwa li tu	Otu	Otatu ka kala tu
	−	Katwa li tu	Katu	Itatu ka kala tu
Ne	+	Omwa li mu	Omu	Otamu ka kala mu
	−	Kamwa li mu	Kamu	Itamu ka kala mu
Yo	+	Oya li ye	Oye	Ota(y)a ka kala ye
	−	Kaya li ye	Kaye	Ita(y)a ka kala ye

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Common Active Verbs

English	Past	Present	Future
Eat	lya	li	lya
Drink	nwa	nu	nwa
Work / Teach	longa	longo	longa
Study / Learn	ilonga	ilongo	ilonga
Sleep	kotha	kotha	kotha
Go	ya	yi	ya
Look	tala	tala	tala

Common Stative Verbs

English	Past	Present	Future
See	*	wete	*
Be	li	li	li
Love / Like	hole	hole	hole
Have	na	na	na
Know	**	shi	**
Feel / Hear	***	uvite	***
Understand	***	uvite ko	***

* The past and future tenses of "see" are expressed with the active verb *mona*.

** The past and future tenses of "know" are expressed with the active verb *tseya*.

*** The past and future tenses of "feel / understand" are expressed with the active verb, *uva* / *uva ko*.

To form a sentence with an active verb, put the proper subject concord in front of the verb you want. Since the subject concords are different for each person, it is not necessary to state the subject (*ngame*, *ngoye*, etc.). For example:

I am eating	→	(I, present tense, active verbs) + (eating, present tense) Otandi + li Otandi li
I ate	→	Onda lya
I ate meat	→	Onda lya onyama
I am not working	→	Itandi longo
He is speaking Oshindonga	→	Ota popi Oshindonga
We will go tomorrow	→	Otatu ka ya ongula

It is the same with the stative verbs:

I like traditional porridge!	→	Ondi hole oshimbombo!
Do you have a pen?	→	Owu na opena?
I do not know Afrikaans.	→	Kandi shi shi Oshimbulu.

You might have noticed a few patterns in the subject concords:

- For active verbs, the future is just the present concord + *ka*.
- For active verbs, the negative present concords are the same as the positive concords, but with the first O changed to an I.

There are a number of other patterns to the charts. Naming them all is left as an exercise for the reader. Don't worry about stative verbs in past or future; they are infrequently used and you will be in a better position to learn them later.

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English	Oshindonga
How is it going?	Oshi li ngiini?
It is going well.	Oshi li nawa.
What is your name?	Edhina lyoye olye?
My name is _____	Edhina lyandje o_____
Where are you from?	Owa za peni?
I am from _____	Onda za ko_____
What are you doing in Namibia?	Oto ningi shike moNamibia?
I am a volunteer teacher.	Ngame omulongi omwiiyambi.
I am a teacher trainer.	Ohandi dheula aalongi.
I am an IT volunteer.	Ohandi longo ookompiuta.
What will you teach here?	Oto ka longa shike mpaka?
I will teach maths, English, and science.	Otandi ka longa omwaalu, oshiingilisa, nuunongoni.
For how long will you be here?	Oto ka kala mo ethimbo li thike peni?
I will be here for two years.	Otandi ka kala mo oomvula mbali.
See you later, friend.	Oshi iwete nale, kuume.

Exercise 1

Translate the following sentences to Oshindonga:

1. I will sleep.
2. We love to eat meat.
3. I am studying Oshindonga.
4. She will go to Oshakati.
5. They drank water.

Exercise 2

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate present-tense stative subject concords.

1. [Ngame] ..... na epulo.
2. [Yo] ..... wete oshikombo.
3. [Ye] ..... hole okulonga mepya.
4. [Ngoye] ..... hole okulonga mepya.
5. [Tse] ..... li moNamibia.

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Exercise 3

Change the following sentences to the indicated tenses.

1. Ngame otandi nyola.
   (past) .....
   (future) .....
2. Onda lesha embo.
   (present) .....
   (future) .....
3. Otandi ka pulakena.
   (present) .....
   (past) .....
4. Ngame otandi ka paleka oshipelende.
   (present) .....
   (past) .....
5. Onda patulula ekende.
   (present) .....
   (future) .....

Exercise 4

Fill in the missing words in the following conversation:

1. Edhina lyandje oJuliusa. ..... lyoye olye?
2. Edhina ..... oHileni.
3. Onda ..... kOshitayi. Ngoye owa za peni?
4. ..... za kOnalulago.

Exercise 5

Translate the following questions to Oshindonga and answer in complete sentences:

1. What is your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. For how long will you be in Namibia?
4. What will you do in Namibia?
5. How old are you?

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Exercise 6

Correspond phrases in English to Oshindonga and vice-versa.

Owa za peni?	How old are you?
What is your name?	Egumbo lyoye, oli li peni?
Where is your home?	Edhina lyoye olye?
For how long will you be here?	Ngame omukwatakanithi gwomukithi gwo HIV/AIDS.
Owu na oomvula ngapi?	Oto ka kala mo ethimbo li thike peni?
I am a volunteer teacher.	Where are you working?
Oto longo peni?	Where are you from?
I am an HIV/AIDS coordinator.	Ngame omulongi omwiiyambi.

Okwiimba

The following song was written for American volunteer teachers. It is sung to the tune of "My Darling Clementine". It's fun to sing and can easily be adapted to your situation.

Imbilo yaayiyambi

Tse aalongi aayiyambi
'Twa za koAmelika
Tu kwathele Namibia
Ehongo li hume ko

aaNamibia aaholike
Tu longeni nombili
Tu kwathele Namibia
Ehongo li hume ko

Quick Tip

In spoken Oshindonga, the initial o- *on subject concords is not emphasized very much. Where it says* 'Twa za ko ... *in the song, you can read it as* Otwa za ko...

Quicker Tip

Putting ha *in front of a word negates that word.*

oNgame → *It's me.*

*ha*Ngame → *It's not me.*

okwiimba → *to sing*

oku*ha*imba → *not to sing*

This is frequently used in the expression Hasho? → *Is it not so?, answerable by* Osho. → *It is so.*

ANIWA:

~ Namutse gwaa tila mbuthi. ~

A trouble-maker is not afraid of causing problems.
(You are causing problems everywhere you go.)

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4 Oshimbombo oshitoye

Tula omeya mombiga na tula ombiga pomulilo. Fulukitha omeya e to tula mo uusila. Pilula noluko ominute omilongo mbali. Tula oshimbobo poshiyaha nolusindo. Tegelela nenge oto pi. Lya nonyama nenge nomboga. Oshimbobo oshitoye!

English	Past	Present	Future
Put (in/on/...)	Tula (mo/po/...)	Tula (mo/po/...)	Tula (mo/po/...)
Boil	Fulukitha	Fulukitha	Fulukitha
Stir	Pilula	Pilula	Pilula
Wait	Tegelela	Tegelele	Tegelela
Burn yourself	Pya	Pi	Pya
Cook	Teleka	Teleke	Teleka
Bring	Eta	Eta	Eta
Pound	Tsa	Tsu	Tsa
Take	Taamba	Taamba	Taamba
Pick (from many)	Kutha	Kutha	Kutha

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English	Oshindonga
Traditional porridge	Oshimbobo / Oshithima
Meat	Onyama
Cabbage / Spinach	Omboga
Dried spinach	Ekaka
Goat	Oshikombo
Beef	Onyama yongombe
Chicken	Ondjuhwa
Dog	Ombwa
Fish	Ohi
Field mouse	Ombuku
Frog	Efuma
Soup	Osopa
Pasta	Omakaloni
Rice	Olwiishi
Oil	Omagadhi
Tomato / Tomato sauce (Ketchup)	Etama
Salt	Omongwa
Fat cakes	Uukuki
Apple	Eyapula
Flour	Uusila
Sugar	Osuuka
Millet	Omahangu
Traditional non-alcoholic drinks	Oshikundu / Ontaku
Traditional alcoholic drinks	Omalovu, Otombo, Ombike / Olambika
Bread	Omboloto
Jam	Ondjema
Butter	Ombuta
Beans	Omakunde
Tea	Otee
Coffee	Okoofi
Cooldrink	Onamunate
Pot	Ombiga
Plate / Bowl / Basin	Oshiyaha
Spoon	Olusindo / Okasindo
Fork	Ofoloka
Knife	Ombele
Hand	Eke / Oshikaha
Cooking stick	Oluko
Fire	Omulilo
Match	Okapalwa

ANIWA:

~ Momeya ihamu ingenge owala. ~

Water does not move by itself.

(Things do not happen without a cause.)

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Infinitives

Recall the verbs we saw in Chapter 2, Exercise 1:

English	Oshindonga
To sleep	Okukotha
To eat	Okulya
To bathe	Okwiiyoga

On the left side, we have infinitive verbs in English. On the right, we have infinitive verbs in Oshindonga. Fortunately, they are used in the same way in both languages. Notice that the Oshindonga infinitive verbs are the past/future verb forms with the prefix *oku-*. The only exceptions are those verbs beginning in vowels, like *iyoga*, whose prefix is instead *okwi-*.

By now, you've probably noticed that the past and future forms of verbs (not the subject concords) are always the same. Often the present tense is the same as the past and future: *Onda kotha, otandi kotha, otandi ka kotha.* Because this is the case, we will stop writing verbs in past / present / future tables, and just write (in this case) *kotha*. For verbs like "eat", we will write *lya (li)*: *Onda lya, otandi li, otandi ka lya*. The present form is put in parentheses.

Commands

To form a command in Oshindonga, just say the past / future tense of the verb without a subject concord:

Put the flour in the pot.	→	Tula uusila mombiga.
Eat meat!	→	Lya onyama!
Wait ten minutes.	→	Tegelela ominute omulongo.
Stay well.	→	Kala po nawa.

There are only a few irregular commands:

Go (away)!	→	Inda!
Come!	→	Ila!

If you are talking to a group of people, take off the last *a* and put on *-eni*:

Come (many people)	→	Ileni!
Stay well (many people)	→	Kaleni po nawa.
		Also: Kalii po nawa.

To make a negative command, put *ino* or *inamu* before the command:

Don't be afraid!	→	Ino tila!
Don't go! (many people)	→	Inamu ya!

Note that for negative commands, you use the past / future tense of the verb, not any irregular forms, and without adding *-eni*.

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Observe the following translations:

Otandi li onyama.	→	I am eating meat.
Ohandi li onyama.	→	I eat meat.
Oho li omboga?	→	Do you eat cabbage?
Iha li ohi.	→	S/he does not eat fish [in general].
Ita li ohi.	→	S/he is not eating fish [right now].

Like in English, the present simple tense in Oshindonga is used to talk about actions that are ongoing. This kind of subject concord is formed from the normal present tense, but replacing the first *t* with an *h*.

Exercise 1

Respond to the following questions in Oshindonga.

1. Owu hole okulya onyama?
2. Oto li oshimbombo?
3. Oho li oshikombo?
4. Owa hala okunwa onamunate?
5. moNamibia, aantu oye hole okunwa ombiila. Na ngoye, owu hole?
6. Oho nu okoofi nenge otee?
7. Oho li ombwa?
8. Ondi hole okulya uukuki. Owu hole?

Exercise 2

Translate the following commands into Oshindonga.

1. Boil water!
2. You (plural) come now.
3. Please bring bread.
4. Eat fat cakes.
5. Cook frog!
6. Bring beans.
7. Go to the toilet.
8. Please give me the oshimbombo and omboga.
9. Bring the apple!
10. Please give me the tea.
11. Help me one dollar.

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While this book should give you a good foundation in Oshindonga, there are going to be situations in which you will need to ask native speakers for more information about their language. Here are some useful words and phrases to help you get started:

English	Oshindonga
How do you say ... in Oshindonga?	... otashi ti ngiini mOshindonga?
What does ... mean?	... otashi ti ngiini?
Word	Oshitya

Another basic aspect in communication is telling someone what another person has said. Below is a table of some phrases that come in handy when relating a story:

English	Oshindonga
Say	Tya (Ti)
He/she/they said that	Aniwa
He/she says that	Ota ti kutya
Hey! / I say!	Otandi ti! / Ote ti! / Te ti!
What did he/she/they say?	Aniwa ngiini? / Okwa ti ngiini?

Exercise 3

You and a friend go to visit your kuku. She can't hear all that well, so after your friend speaks, you need to repeat what he said. Use words like aniwa, ota ti kutya, etc. Don't forget to change the subject concord, if needed. The first one has been done for you.

Friend: Wu uhala po, kuku?

Kuku: Aniwa ngiini?

You: *Aniwa wu uhala po nawa, kuku?*

Kuku: Oh, ondu uhala po nawa. Owa za peni kuume?

Friend: Onda za koAngola.

Kuku: Aniwa ngiini?

You: .....

.....

Kuku: Oh, koAngolaaaa! Oto ningi shike moNamibia?

Friend: Ohandi landitha ooselula. (cell phones)

Kuku: Aniwa ngiini?

You: .....

.....

Kuku: Ooooooh, oho landitha ooselula. Owa kala mo ethimbo li thike peni?

Friend: Onda kala mo oomvula ntano.

Kuku: Okwa ti ngiini?

You: .....

.....

Kuku: Ooh, oomvula ntano...

Friend: Ee-wa, kuku. Kala po nawa.

Kuku: Aniwa ngiini?

You: .....

.....

Kuku: Ee-wa kuume, inda po nawa. Etela ndje uuleke!

Friend: Ee-wa kuku.

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Grammar Corner: In / On / At

Perhaps after reading the recipe for oshimbombo you are wondering what *mombiga* means. *Ombiga* is "pot", but *mombiga*? Two things to note:

1. There are three important prepositions of place in Oshindonga, *mo*, *po*, and *ko*. These can be roughly translated as "in/inside", "on/on top of", and "at/to".
2. When you have a phrase like "in the pot", you might think of writing ***mo ombiga*, but it is actually written (and said) *mombiga*. The same thing goes for *po*, *ko*, and *na* ("and/with").

Somewhat confusingly, *mo*, *po*, and *ko* are also used as pronouns of place. That is, *mo* can mean "in there", *po* can mean "there", and *ko* can mean "over there". *Po* usually refers to a place you can see, whereas *ko* is far away. See *Grammar Corner: In / On / At, Part Two* for more information.

CULTURAL INFORMATION

- Don't smell food.
- Don't sing while eating.
- It is rude to refuse food. Refuse politely e.g "Thank you but I'm full. I just ate."
- It is traditional (as well as hygenic) to wash your hands before eating.
- Do not pass food or drink behind someone's back.
- When offering home-made food or drink always taste it first, in the presence of the person. This is to show that the comestible is *nawa*.
- Eat oshimbombo with your right hand only.
- Take meat with your right hand, but put it in your left hand to hold and eat it.

ANIWA:

~ Sha na kulya osha na kulonga. ~

If you want food, you must work.
(If you want something, you have to work for it.)

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5 Aanegumbo yandje

Edhina lyandje oSalom. Onda za kOmbalantu. Ondi na oomvula omilongo mbali na hetatu. Ohandi kala naakuluntu yandje.

Meme gwandje edhina lye oSaima. Oku na oomvula omilongo ntano nantano.

Tate gwandje edhina lye oTangeni. Oku na oomvula omilongo hamano na yimwe.

Ondi na aamwameme yatatu, omumwamemekadhona gumwe naamwamememati yaali. Ngame ontowele.

Omumwamemekadhona edhina lye oSelma. Oku na oomvula omilongo ndatu. Ye osheeli. Okwa kala nomusamane gwe kOshakati.

Omumwamememati edhina lye oNangolo. Oku na oomvula omilongo mbali nantano. Oha kala naakuluntu yetu kOmbalantu. Naye ontowele.

Onkeelo gwetu oFillepus oku na oomvula omilongo mbali nambali. Okwa kala kOvenduka kouniveesiti.

Kuku gwandje oha kala natse. Oku na oomvula omilongo hetatu na yimwe.

Nangoye, ongoye lye?

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English	Oshindonga
Family	Aanegumbo / Ezimo
My father	Tate
Your father	Ho
His/her father	He
My mother	Meme
Your mother	Nyoko
His/her mother	Ina
My sibling	Omumwameme
My brother	Omumwamememati
My sister	Omumwamemekadhona
Your sibling	Omumwanyoko
His/her sibling	Omumwaina
Grandmother	Kuku / Me(m)ekulu
Grandfather	Tatekulu / Kuku
Child	Okanona
Baby	Okanona / Okahanona
First-born	Sheeli
Middle-born (neither first nor last)	Ontowele
Last-born	Onkelo
Friend	Kuume
Visitor	Omuyenda / Omutalelipo
Neighbor	Omushiinda
Husband / Man	Omusamane
Wife / Woman	Omukulukadhi
Fiancé / Fiancée	Omuyaleki
I am engaged.	Ongame omuyalekwa.
Parents	Aakuluntu
Young person	Omugundjuka
Younger person (than you)	Omushona
Elder person	Omukuluntu
Who's that?	Olye ngono?

Quick Tips

- *As you can see, the Oshindonga words for "sister" and "brother" are just specialized forms of "sibling". So to make "his brother", you would say* omumwaina + mati = omumwainamati.
- *The words for "mother" and "father" depend on the person to whom you are referring. However, it is acceptable to use* meme *and* tate *to speak of any mother or father. For example, to say "his mother", you can say* ina*, or you can simply say* meme gwe *(literally, "his mother").*

ANIWA:

~ Oshithi ohashi landula ompadhi. ~

The heel follows the foot.

(You follow the behavior of your family.)

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Grammar Corner: Noun Classes: Singular and Plural

In English, nouns can be divided into two groups, singular and plural. In Romance languages, nouns can have genders, and adjectives have to agree with nouns in gender and number. In Oshindonga, there are many different classes of nouns, which are determined by the prefix that the noun has. Each class makes plurals in a different way, as shown in the chart below.

Noun class	Prefix of singular nouns	Prefix of plural nouns
1*	omu-	aa-
1a**	(none)	oo-
2	omu-	omi-
3	e-	oma-
4	oshi-	ii-
5***	o-	oo-
6	olu-	omalu-
7	oka-	uu-
8	uu-	omau-
9	oku-	omaku-

* Noun class 1 only contains nouns that refer to people.

** Noun class 1a only contains nouns that refer to people, but that do not begin with *omu-*, e.g. *Tate, Meme, Kuku*, as well as people's names.

*** If a noun cannot be a member of any other class, it belongs to noun class 5.

Grammar Corner: Questions

Listed below are some common question words.

English	Oshindonga
Where?	Peni?
When? (which day)	Uunake?
When? (what time)	Ethimbo peni?
Who?	Lye?
Why?	Omolwashike? / Oshike?
What?	Shike?
How?	Ngiini?

Questions are formed in two ways. The first way is to put the question word at the end of the sentence:

Where are you going?	→	Oto yi peni?
What are you doing?	→	Oto ningi shike?
Where is Meme Sylvia?	→	Meme Sylvia oku li peni?

The second way is to put the question word at the beginning of the sentence. In this case, the initial *o* on the subject concord shifts to go in front of the question word:

Who is singing?	→	Olye ta imbi?
Why are you crying?	→	Omolwashike to lili?

Informal questions are often followed by *ano,* as in *oto yi peni, ano?* There is a tendency to drop the final *o*, so it is often pronounced *'to yi penyan?*

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Exercise 1

Translate the following Oshindonga words into English, then form their plural in Oshindonga.

Example: Omumwameme → Sibling → Aamwameme

Oshindonga Noun	English Meaning	Plural in Oshindonga
Omukulukadhi		
Omumwamemekadhona		
Tate		
Omushiinda		
Omumwamememati		
Omumwanyokomati		
Kuume		
Omumwaina		
Meme		
Omuyenda		
Omukuluntu		
Omusamane		
Okanona		
Omushona		
Kuku		
Tatekulu		

Exercise 2

Answer the following questions about Salom's family.

1. Salom oku na aamwaina yangapi?
2. Kuku gwe oku na oomvula ngapi?
3. Omumwamemekadhona oha kala peni?
4. Salom okwa za peni?
5. Fillipus ota ningi shike kOvenduka?
6. Oshike Selma iha kala na Salom?

ANIWA:

~ Oondjamba mbali melundu, oondjila mbali posikola. ~

Two elephants in the field, two paths to school.
(Make the best of a bad situation.)

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Take another look at the beginning of this chapter: *Edhina lyandje oSalom*. Literally, "My name is Salom." At the end of the same paragraph, we have *aakuluntu yandje*, "my parents". You may already see that the words that indicate possession ("my", "your", etc.) depend on what is being possessed: "my" can translate as *lyandje*, or *yandje*, or even other words. The root of all these words, *-andje*, denotes "my". The prefix must agree with the possessed object.

Noun prefix	Possessive pronoun prefix
omu-	gw-
aa-	y-
omi-	dh-
e-	ly-
oma-	g-
oshi-	sh-
ii-	y-
uu-	w-
olu-	l-
oka-	k-
oku-	kw-
oo-	dh-
anything else (group 5 singular)	y-

To form a possessive pronoun, select the proper prefix from the chart above and combine it with the root of the person you want:

English	Oshindonga person	Possessive Root
My	Ngame	-andje
Your	Ngoye	-oye
His/Her/Its	Ye	-e
Our	Tse	-etu
Your (plural)	Ne	-eni
Their	Yo	-awo

For now, focus on groups 1 and 5 and "my" and "your". Use *gw-/y-* with people and *y-* with things. This is a lot of information right now, so try to break it into the pieces that you will use most often. With enough practice, this will come to you naturally.

My learner	→	*omu*longwa *gw-andje*
Your elders	→	*aa*kulupe *y-oye*
My pen	→	opena yandje
Your pens	→	oopena dhoye

Exercise 3

a. Draw up your own family tree. Present it to a friend.

b. Ask who the members of an Owambo family are and how they relate to each other. Then draw up their family tree. Good lucky!

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Exercise 4

Match each noun with the correct possessive concord.

meme (my)	lwoye
ongombe (your)	gwandje
kuume/kahewa (his/her)	ye
omatako (my)	yandje
okanona (our)	yawo
iihauto (their)	yoye
omiti (y'all's)	gandje
aantu (his/her)	yoye
ompadhi (my)	koye
olukaku (your)	ketu
omakutsi (their)	lyetu
iikombo (their)	yawo
okasindo (your)	ke
ohema (your)	dheni
egumbo (our)	gawo

CULTURAL INFORMATION

- Having many members in the family is regarded as a good thing, because the workload in the household can be divided amongst everyone.
- All my mother's sisters (aunts) are my mothers.
- All my father's brothers are my fathers.
- Cousins are sometimes known as brothers and sisters.
- If you can figure out how everyone on a homestead is related, you are a genius. Or, the family speaks very good English.
- If a meme calls you, you should respond *Meem'*. If you are summoned by your Tate, say *Taat'*. If it is by an older person, say *Kuuk'*. Otherwise, say *ee*.

Oshikundu Shetu *by Papa François*

Oshikundu shetu
Omalovu getu
Omagongo getu
Iikulya yamoNamibia

Oshithima shetu
Omungome gwetu
Omahola getu
Iikulya ya moNamibia

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6 kOndingosho

A: Wu uhala po, tate?
B: Eeno, meme.
A: Nawa tuu?
B: Ee-ee, ondi li nawa. Ngoye wu uhala po, meme?
A: Eeno, tate.
B: Nawa tuu?
A: Ee-ee, onawa.
B: Owa hala shike?
A: Tate, onda hala okulanda othewa. Omu na?
B: Ee-ee, omu na. Owa hala othewa yokwiiyoga nenge yokuyoga?
A: Othewa yokwiiyoga. Oyi na ingapi?
B: Oodola omulongo.
A: Ooh, ondilo unene. Hmm... omu na uukuki?
B: Ee-ee.
A: Owu na ingapi?
B: Iithilinga iitano.
A: Eewa, tate. Pendje wo uukuki wuyali nombiila yimwe.
B: Eewa.
A: Iimaliwa yoye oyo mbika, tate.
B: Eewa, meme.
A: Eewa, tate, oshi iwete nale...
B: Oh! Taamba oshendja yoye.
A: Ah, tangi meme. Oshi li nawa.

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English	Oshindonga
Cuca shop	Ondingosho / Okandingosho
Store	Ositola
Proletarian revolution	Elunduluko lyaaniilonga
Right-wing reactionary	Omukaalunduluka gwolulyo
Money	Iimaliwa
Change	Oshendja
Expensive	Ondilo
Cheap	Ombiliha
Coins	Iimaliwa iikukutu
Bills	Iimaliwa yomafo
Enough! (interjection)	Opuwo!
To be enough (verb)	Gwana
Receipt	Okasilepa
Price	Ondando
Customer	Okositoma
Dollar	Odola
Rand	Olanda
10c coin / coins	Oshithilinga / Iithilinga
Buy	Landa
Sell	Landitha
Give (involving me or you)	Pa (Pe)
Pay	Futa (Futu)
How much?	Ingapi?
It is too expensive.	Ondilo unene
I only have ...	Ondi na ... owala
Don't cheat me.	Ino nyokoma ndje.
I don't have enough money.	Kandi na iimaliwa ya gwana.
One	Yimwe
Two	Mbali
Three	Ndatu
Four	Ne
Five	Ntano
Six	Hamano
Seven	Heyali
Eight	Hetatu
Nine	Omugoyi
Ten	Omulongo
Eleven (Ten and one)	Omulongo na yimwe
Twelve (Ten and two)	Omulongo nambali
Twenty (Two tens)	Omilongo mbali
Twenty-five (Two tens and five)	Omilongo mbali nantano
Thirty (Three tens)	Omilongo ndatu
One hundred	Ethele
One thousand	Eyovi

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Exercise 1

Answer in complete sentences, in the language of the question.

1. Okwa landa shike kositola?
2. Othewa oyi na ingapi?
3. Did the customer want body soap or laundry detergent?
4. Uukuki owu na ingapi?
5. Okositoma okwa futa oolanda hetatu. Ombiila ingapi?
6. Okositoma okwa landa ohi?
7. Okositoma okwa futa noshiimaliwa shomilongo mbali. Oku na oshendja ingapi?

Exercise 2

1. Owu na oodola omilongo ntano. Oto futu oodola omilongo ndatu na hamano. Paife, owu na ingapi?
2. Otandi landa oshikombo shoye. Otandi ku pe oodola omathele gatatu nomilongo hamano. Owu na ingapi?

CULTURAL INFORMATION

Paife means "now". However, *paife* in Namibia is far from the American version of *paife*, as you may have already noticed. Experimental observations have shown that the American sense of *paife* is certainly not universal, as West Africa Internal Time (also known as WAIT) also prevails here in Namibia. *Paife* can mean anything from "in five minutes" to "sometime today".

You can string together many *paife*s, with the increased number of *paife*s meaning closer to the American sense of now. For example, *paife paife* is less immediate than *paife paife paife paife*.

The word *paife* is actually from Oshikwanyama. Though this has been adopted by Oshindonga speakers, there exists an Oshindonga word for "now" as well – *ngashingeyi*. Similar to the stringing together of paifes, this word can also be used multiple times to indicate a time closer to the present. *Ngashingeyi* is much less urgent then *ngashingeyingeyingeyingeyi*.

Alternatively, you can use the word *mbala* to indicate that something will happen in the near near future. *Mbala* is also strengthened by repetition.

ANIWA:

~ Ondjugo yomoshiheke nando komba. ~

A hut in the forest is always being swept.
(You can't change some things.)

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Grammar Corner: Counting

Just as the possessive pronouns depend on noun classes, so do the numbers. When we count objects in Oshindonga, we must pay attention to what object is being counted. Again, this depends on the prefix of the noun:

Noun prefix	Numerical prefix
omu-	gu-
aa-	ya-
omi-	dhi-
e-	li-
oma-	ga-
oshi-	shi-
ii-	ii-
uu-	wu-
olu-	lu-
oka-	ka-
oku-	ku-
anything else (group 5, singular and plural)	use normal numbers

Match the appropriate prefix with the suffix of the number you want to form the *numerical concord* of a noun:

Number	Numerical suffix
Yimwe	-mwe
Mbali	-ali
Ndatu	-tatu
Ne	-ne
Ntano	-tano
Hamano	-hamano
Heyali	-heyali
Hetatu	-hetatu
Omugoyi	Omugoyi (no prefix needed)
Omulongo	Omulongo (no prefix needed)

So, if you are a farmer counting animals:

One goat	→	Oshikombo *shi+mwe*	→	Oshikombo shimwe
Two goats	→	Iikombo *ii+ali*	→	Iikombo iyali
Three goats	→	Iikombo *ii+tatu*	→	Iikombo itatu
Nine goats	→	Iikombo *omugoyi*		(omugoyi needs no prefix)
One cow	→	Ongombe *yimwe*		(group 5 uses regular numbers)
Two cows	→	Oongombe *mbali*		(group 5 uses regular numbers)
One frog	→	Efuma *li+mwe*	→	Efuma limwe
Two frogs	→	Omafuma *ga+ali*	→	Omafuma gaali

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Exercise 3

Write a passage describing a family you know in Oshindonga. If you are not living on a homestead, ask a friend to take you to theirs. Describe family members, number of houses, and the animals that are kept by your family.

Exercise 4

Translate the following English phrases into Oshindonga.

1. I want to buy four loaves of bread.
2. We need to buy three beers.
3. He wants to buy fifteen frogs.
4. They have five chickens to sell.
5. I need to buy one bar of soap and four candles.

Quick Tip

We already know how to ask "how much" for money: iimaliwa ingapi*. To ask "how much" or "how many" for other things, use* -ngapi *with the counting prefix:* aamwameme yangapi*,* oongombe ngapi*.*

ANIWA:
~ Okuna oonyala oonde. ~
He has long fingers.
(He is a thief.)

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Grammar Corner: Some / Each / All

Now we know how to talk about specific quantities of things. It is also practical to be able to refer to "some", "each", or "all" of something.

"Some" is formed with the singular suffix *-mwe* and the plural counting prefix:

Some frogs → Omafuma *ga+mwe* → Omafuma gamwe

To say "each," simply put the word *kehe* in front of the singular noun.To say "each one" of a specific thing, use *kehe* with the word for one of that thing:

Each frog → Kehe efuma → Kehe limwe

To talk about "all" of something, insert the counting prefix betwen *a-* and *-he.* An *a* in the counting prefix changes to an *e*.

All the frogs → Omafuma *a + ge + he* → Omafuma agehe
All the cows → Oongombe *a + dhi + he* → Oongombe adhihe

Quick Tip

- *"All of us" is* atuhe*; "all of them" is* ayehe*; "all of you" is* amuhe.
- *For "everything", just use* ayihe *(*iinima ayihe*).*
- *For information on "many" and "few", refer to* Grammar Corner: Adjectives.

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7 Owu uka peni?

Ngoye: Oshi li ngiini?
Taxi driver: Oshi li nawa. Ongiini?
Ngoye: Onawa.
Taxi driver: Owa hala peni?
Ngoye: Onda hala popepi nopoosa. Oshi li nawa?
Taxi driver: Eewa. Londa.
Ngoye: Ingapi, tate?
Taxi driver: Oodola ntano. Tu ye!
Ngoye: Eewa, tu ye.

(driving, approaching destination)

Ngoye: Tate, goyoka kolulyo komalobota.
Taxi driver: Eewa.
Ngoye: Goyoka kolumoho kostalata.

(approaching destination)

Ngoye: Otandi zi mo mpaka.
Taxi driver: Mpaka?
Ngoye: Eeno, tate.
Taxi driver: Eewa.
Ngoye: Eewa, owu na oshendja?
Taxi driver: Eeno, tate... Taamba.
Ngoye: Eewa. Tangi unene, tate.

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English	Oshindonga
Head (somewhere)	Uka (uku)
Get in	Londa
Get out/off	Za (zi) mo
Stop	Thikama
Here	Mpaka
There	Mpoka
Near	Popepi na
Far	Kokule
Turn	Goyoka
Car	Oshihauto/Ohauto
Lift	Olefa
Hitchhike	Kwata olefa
Bus	Ombesa
Combi	Okambesa
To the left	Kolumoho
To the right	Kolulyo
Directions	Oombinga
Town	Ondolopa
Church	Ongeleka / Omambo
Police station	Opolisi
Post office	Opoosa
Office	Ombelewa
Petrol station	Omahooli / Oseevisa
Stop light	Omalobota
Road	Opate
Street	Ostalata
Path	Ondjila
I need a lift.	Onda pumbwa olefa.
Where are you going?	Oto yi peni?
Do you have change for . . . ?	Owu na oshendja y_____
Where is my change?	Oshendja yandje? (oyi li peni?)
Stop here/ there.	Thikama mpaka/mpoka.
I am getting out here/ there.	Otandi zi mo mpaka/mpoka.
Stop for my friends.	Thikamena ookuume kandje.

Exercise 1

Construct a dialogue between yourself and a friend who you have not seen in a long while. This occurs at a hitch-point while waiting for a lift. Discuss where you are going, what you will do there, how things are at home, etc.

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"To come" and "to go" are expressed with the same verb, *okuya*. For the first person *ngame*, it is written as follows:

	Past	Present	Future
To go	Onda ya – I went	Otandi yi – I am going	Otandi ka ya – I will go
To come	Onde ya – I came, or I am coming (familiar)	Otandi ya – I am coming	Otandi ke ya – I will come

In the present tense, "go" is written *yi* and "come" is written *ya*. In the past and future tenses, they are both *ya*. In all tenses, for "to come", if the last vowel of the subject concord is an *a*, it changes to an *e*. Thus, "He is coming" is said *Ote ya* and "He is going" is said *Ota yi*.

In addition, there are some more going-and-coming verbs:

English	Oshindonga
Go back	Shuna
Come back	Galuka
Come from	Za (Zi)
Arrive	Thika (Thiki)

In English, the word "return" can be used for both "go back" and "come back", but in Oshindonga you must be specific.

Exercise 2

Translate the following statements into Oshindonga:

1. Y'all come back now, y'hear?
2. I am going back to America after two years.
   Tip: "After", in this case, translates to konima.
3. I am from Angola.
4. I am going to Zimbabwe.
5. Where are you coming from?
6. Go to hell.

ANIWA:

~ Ohi ya tsa mumwe nohima. ~

A fish is cooked with a tortoise.
(You have to take the bad things with the good.)

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At this point, we know the subject concords for people only – that is, only for noun class 1. The other noun classes have corresponding sets of subject concords, but only for the third person of course. In the table below, we organize the subject concords according to the noun prefixes:

Noun prefix	Past Subject Concord	Present Subject Concord	Future Subject Concord
omu-	okwa	ota	ota ka
aa-	oya	otaya / otaa	otaya ka / otaa ka
omi-	odha	otadhi	otadhi ka
e-	olya	otali	otali ka
oma-	oga	otaga	otaga ka
oshi-	osha	otashi	otashi ka
ii-	oya	otayi	otayi ka
oo-	odha	otadhi	otadhi ka
uu-	owa	otawu	otawu ka
olu-	olwa	otalu	otalu ka
oka-	oka	otaka	otaka ka
oku-	okwa	otaku	otaku ka
anything else (group 5, singular)	oya	otayi	otayi ka

There is also a table for the stative verb subject concords, which we also put here for the sake of completeness:

Noun prefix	Past Subject Concord	Present Subject Concord	Future Subject Concord
omu-	okwa li e	oku	ota ka kala e
aa-	oya li ye	oye	otaa ka kala ye
omi-	odha li dhi	odhi	otadhi ka kala dhi
e-	olya li li	oli	otali ka kale li
oma-	oga li ge	oge	otaga ka kala ge
oshi-	osha li shi	oshi	otashi ka kala shi
ii-	oya li yi	oyi	otayi ka kala yi
oo-	odha li dhi	odhi	otadhi ka kala dhi
uu-	owa li wu	owu	otawu ka kala wu
olu-	olwa li li	olu	otalu ka kala lu
oka-	oka li ke	oke	otaka ka kala ke
oku-	okwa li ku	oku	otaku ka kala ku
anything else (group 5, singular)	oya li yi	oyi	otayi ka kala yi

We will talk more about these later; for now perhaps you can concentrate on the present tense only. Not all of this is used all of the time – you will probably not master the past and future stative subject concords until at least a few months down the line. As we said before, they are only here in the hopes that they might be useful to you in the future.

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8 Uundjolowele

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English	Oshindonga
Head	Omutse
Hair	Omafufu
Eyes	Omeho
Nose	Eyulu
Ears	Omakutsi
Mouth	Okana
Shoulder	Epepe
Back	Ombunda
Arms	Omaako
Hands	Omake / Iikaha
Chest	Ontulo
Breast	Egundji
Stomach	Epunda
Buttocks	Omatako
Legs	Omagulu
Knee	Ongolo
Feet	Ompadhi
Toes / Fingers	Ominwe
Teeth	Omayego
Beard	Ombezi
Pills	Oopela
Medicine	Omiti
Shot	Owenda
Clinic	Okapangelo
Hospital	Oshipangelo
Doctor	Ndohotola
Cough	Omukolo
Running nose	Ekunku / Eshikisha
Diarrhea	Oshimela
Toothbrush	Okati kokomayego / Okakombe kokomageyo
Toothpaste	Omuti gwokomayego
Dental floss	Ongodhi yomayego
Hairbrush	Oshikamule
Razor	Okambi / Okatezi
Sunscreen	Omagadhi gomuteya
Lotion	Omagadhi gokolutu
Lip balm	Omagadhi gokomilungu
Condom	Okoondoma / Ongumi
Sick / In pain	Ehama
Burn (yourself)	Pya (pi)
Shave	Kulula
Vomit	Kunga (kungu)

Exercise 1

Label the drawing on page 41 using the words in the preceding list.

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English	Oshindonga
What part of you is hurting?	Oto ehama shike/peni?
When did you get sick?	Owa tameka okweehama uunake?
Can you call ... for me?	Kwatha ndje wu dhengele ...?
I want to go to the hospital.	Onda hala okuya koshipangelo.
I want to see the doctor.	Onda hala okumona ondohotola.
The doctor said I have to go to Windhoek.	Ndohotola okwa ti ondi na okuya kOvenduka.
I need a condom.	Onda pumbwa okoondoma.
Use a condom.	Longitha okondoma.
Take some condoms.	Kutha ookondoma.
Protect yourself.	Igamena.

Quick Tip

As you see from the previous word list, ehama *is the Oshindonga word for pain. So, to express pain in a certain part of the body, you do as follows:*

- *headache:* Otandi ehama omutse.
- *stomach ache:* Otandi ehama mepunda. *(i.e., "in the stomach")*
- *back ache:* Otandi ehama ombunda.

Exercise 2

Read the dialogue. Answer the following questions in Oshindonga.

Jeff: Wa lala po nawa, meme?
Meme: Eeno, Jeff. Ngoye wa lala po?
Jeff: Ee...
Meme: Nawa tuu?
Jeff: Aa-ee Meme. Otandi ehama.
Meme: Oto ehama shike?
Jeff: Otandi ehama mepunda.
Meme: Owa tameka okweehama unake?
Jeff: Onda tameka ohela.
Meme: Owa pumbwa shike?
Jeff: Onda hala okumona ndohotola.
Meme: Eewa, tuye koshipangelo.

1. Jeff oku li ngiini? Oshike?
2. Jeff ota ehama peni?
3. Jeff okwa li e li nawa ohela?
4. Jeff na Meme otaa ka ninga shike?
5. Otaa ka ya peni?

ANIWA:
~ Ngu ta ti sa. Ngu ta ti kala ko. ~
Someone says die, another says stay.
(Everyone has friends and enemies.)

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In English, we say "I am sick." In Oshindonga, as we have seen, we say *otandi ehama*. *Otandi* is a subject concord, linking the (unstated) subject to the verb, which in this case is *ehama*. It seems that "to be sick" is a verb in Oshindonga. As it turns out, most statements about one's state of being are expressed with verbs in Oshindonga. Where in English you would use the verb "to be", in Oshindonga it is unnecessary.

To express other feelings, such as "happy" or "angry", we use the past tense subject concord. For example, *onda nyanyukwa* means "I am happy". It may be helpful to think that these "feeling verbs" express an idea of becoming: because *geya* means "to become angry", *onda geya* means "I have become angry", or more simply "I am angry".

Therefore, when talking about how someone feels in the present, we use the past tense. It is possible to use other tenses. *Oho geya* can be translated as "You (always) get angry" and *Tate ota ka nyanyukwa* means "Tate will be happy". *Ehama* is the only exception. So, to say "I am sick", you can say either *otandi ehama* or *onda ehama*.

The past tense of these verbs is similar to that of stative verbs: "I wanted a beer" is said as *onda li nda hala ombiila*. "He was angry" is *okwa li a geya*.

Here are some examples of the sort of verb that is used in this manner:

English	Oshindonga
Happy	Nyanyukwa
Full / Satisfied	Kuta
Angry / Mad	Geya
Want	Hala
Need (to be lacking)	Pumbwa
Tired	Vulwa / Loloka
Dying (of)	Sa (si)
Sleepy	Sa (si) oomposi
Hungry	Sa (si) ondjala
Afraid	Tila

Exercise 3

How are you feeling today? Why?

Example: I am hungry because I did not eat today → Onda sa ondjala shaashi inandi lya nena.

ANIWA:

~ Amakali olufo. ~

Amakali (a proper name) is chance.
(Have sympathy for someone in difficult times – next time it might be you.)

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English	Oshindonga
If	Ngele
Then	Ndele
Maybe	Ngiika
It's possible	Otashi vulika
About	Kombinga
After / Behind / Backwards / In the back	Konima
Forward / In front	Komeho
Before / While	Manga
Because	Shaashi / Oshoka
But	Ihe

Some of these words are used differently than they are in English, so we should look at them one-by-one.

Ngele

The conditional part of the sentence is placed in the past tense, but the verb is in the present-tense form:

If I eat meat, I will be sick.	Ngele onda li onyama, otandi ehama.
If I do not speak, it is okay.	Ngele inandi popi, oshi li nawa.

Ngiika

Used as in English.

Maybe we will be rained on.	Ngiika otatu ka lokwa.

Otashi vulika

Also used as in English:

Will you go to Ongwediva?	Oto yi kOngwediva?
It's possible.	Otashi vulika.

Kombinga

Used as in English, but with a twist: the word is really *ko* + *ombinga*, literally "to the side". To make a full phrase, you must say "to the side of", and that "of" translates as *y*-. Some examples:

Is he talking about school?	Ota popi kombinga *y*osikola?
I am talking about you.	Otandi popi kombinga yoye.
We are talking about Tate.	Otatu popi kombinga yaTate.

Also used in the sense of "this side" or "that side":

I stay somewhere that side.	Ohandi kala kombinga hwii.

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Konima

Same as kombinga, this one is literally "to the back":

I will go after church.	Otandi ka ya konima yongeleka.
We will go later (after time).	Otatu ka ya konima yethimbo.

Komeho

The opposite of kombinga with regards to space, but not used for time. Literally, "to the eyes". This is komesho in Oshikwanyama.

Sit in front, Tate.	Inda komeho, Tate.
Go forward, Tate.	Inda komeho, Tate.

Manga

This word translates better as "while", although it is used for "before". The phrase after *manga* must be given in the negative past tense. Look carefully at the following examples:

I went home before I went to Ondangwa.	Onda ya kegumbo manga inandi ya kOndangwa.
I bathe before I go to school.	Ohandi iyogo manga inandi ya kosikola.

Shaashi / Oshoka

These are used as they are in English (see exercise 3).

Ihe

Used as in English. Sometimes the Afrikaans-derived *maala* is used instead. See exercise 4.

Exercise 4

Hafeni just came home and is telling you about a problem he has. Translate what he is saying into English.

"Ooooh, tate. Otandi ku lombwele kombinga yomukadhona gwandje. Okwa hala okuhokanwa, ihe ngame onda hala okuya kOmbaye ndi ka kale naakuluntu yandje. Uuh, onda tila, man. Otashi vulika ina hala okuya nangame, nondi mu hole uunene. Ngiika otandi ka kala mpano, ngele ina hala okuya."

ANIWA:

~ Okakwiya okashona oke vule to tende onguma. ~

A small axe cuts better than pounding with a rock.
(Something is better than nothing.)

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Grammar Corner: Object Pronouns

Consider the following translations:

He bought those tomatoes.	→	Okwa landa omatama ngoka.
He bought them (tomatoes).	→	Okwe ga landa.
I am eating porridge.	→	Otandi li oshimbombo.
I am eating it (porridge).	→	Otandi shi li.

The first statement of each pair states the object of the sentence directly: "the porridge", "the tomatoes". In the second statements, the noun objects are replaced with their corresponding object pronouns: "it", "them". In English, object pronouns must agree with the kind of noun they replace ("her", "it", "them"). Object pronouns in Oshindonga agree with the class (prefix) of noun they replace. A complete table of prefixes and object pronouns can be seen below:

Noun prefix	Object pronoun
omu- (not people)	gu
omi-	dhi
e-	li
oma-	ga
oshi-	shi
ii-	yi
uu-	wu
olu-	lu
oka-	ka
oku-	ku
anything else (group 5, singular and plural)	yi

As we see from the first examples, the object pronoun goes between the subject concord and the verb. If the last vowel in the subject concord is *a*, it changes to *e*. For example, *ota* changes to *ote* in *ote shi mono* (he/she sees it).

For commands, the object pronoun goes before the verb:

Don't beat it! (the dog)	→	Ino yi dhenga! (ombwa)
Bring it! (a thing)	→	Shi eta! (oshinima)

Like in English, personal pronouns have special object pronouns:

English	Oshindonga
Me	ndje
You (singular)	ku
Her / Him	mu
Us	tu
You (plural)	mu
Them	ya

ndje, as a special case, is always put after the verb, even for commands.

You make me sick.	→	Oto ehameke ndje.
Don't accuse me!	→	Ino londila ndje!

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Grammar Corner: Demonstratives

"This", "that", and "the other" all answer the question, "Which one?". They demonstrate to the listener which object out of a group the speaker is referring to, and so we call them *demonstratives*. There is a different set of demonstratives for each noun class; the suffixes are the same, but the prefixes vary. Listed below are the prefixes for the different noun classes:

Noun Class	"This"	"That"	"Yonder"
omu-	ngu-	ngo-	ngwi-
aa-	mba-	mbo-	mbe-
omi-	ndhi-	ndho-	ndhi-
e-	ndi-	ndyo-	ndi-
oma-	nga-	ngo-	nge-
oshi-	shi-	sho-	shi-
ii-	mbi-	mbyo-	mbi-
uu-	mbu-	mbo-	mbwi-
olu-	ndu-	ndo-	ndwi-
oka-	nka- / ha-	nko- / ho-	nke- / he-
oku-	nku- / hu-	nko- / ho-	nkwi- / hwi-
o-	ndji-	ndjo-	ndji-
oo-	ndhi-	ndho-	ndhi-
pa / pu *	mpa-	mpo-	mpe-
ku *	nku- / hu-	nko- / ho-	nkwi- / hwi-
mu *	mu-	mo-	mwi-

* Pa / pu, ku, and mu are not prefixes, but actual nouns.

Select the proper prefix and join it with one of the following suffixes:

Demonstrative	Suffixes
"This"	-no, -ka, *
"That"	-no, -ka, *
"Yonder"	-ya, -yaka, -yano, **

* The prefixes for "this" and "that" can be used on their own.

** The prefixes for "yonder" can be used on their own if the last vowel is doubled: *nge- →ngee*

A few examples might be necessary:

This goat	→	*oshi*kombo *shino* / *shika* / *shi*
That person	→	*omu*ntu *ngono* / *ngoka* / *ngo*
That thing	→	*oshi*nima *shono* / *shoka* / *sho*
This place	→	*mpano* / *mpaka* / *mpa*

It's probably frustrating to see the massive prefix list, and even more so to see that there are three or four possibilities for the actual word to use, all used slightly differently by native speakers. Don't worry about it. Just remember *shino* and *shono*, *nguno* and *ngono*, and *ndjino* and *ndjono* and you will be understood.

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Exercise 5

Fill in the demonstratives for the words in the table below. The first one has been completed for you.

English	***Oshindonga***	***This***	***That***	***The other***
People	Aantu	Mbaka	Mbono	Mbeyaka
Things				
	Oongombe			
Goat				
Food				
	Uunona			
	Oshinima			
Girl				
	Omumati			
Rag / Cloth	Elapi			
Learners	Aalongwa			
Key				
Car				
Books	Omambo			
Side				
Place	Oshilongo			
Beer				
Cooldrink				
Lift				

ANIWA:

~ Waa na mutanda ku na ngombe. ~

If you don't have a calf, you don't have a cow.
(You must plan for the future. / If you don't have children, you have no nation.)

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Grammar Corner: The Passive Voice

Consider the following examples:

Koto is greeting Ndahafa.	→	Koto ota *popitha* Ndahafa.
Ndahafa is being greeted by Koto.	→	Ndahafa ota *popithwa* ku Koto.
Sylvia told me.	→	Sylvia okwa *lombwela* ndje.
I was told by Sylvia.	→	Onda *lombwelwa* ku Sylvia.
The boys are going to ask the teacher.	→	Aamati otaa ka *pula* omulongi.
The teacher is going to be asked by the boys.	→	Omulongi otaa ka *pulwa* kaamati.

The second statement in each pair is in the passive voice. The subject of those sentences is the person or thing being acted upon. For most Oshindonga verbs, simply take off the final vowel and add *-wa* to form the passive voice.Thus, *pula* (ask) becomes *pulwa* (be asked).

For one syllable verbs, add the ending *-wa* to the present form of the verb. For example, *pe* (give) becomes *pewa* (be given):

I was given fat cakes.	→	Onda *pewa* uukuki.
The meat will be eaten up.	→	Onyama otayi ka *liwa* po.

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9 Omasiku nomathimbo

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English	Oshindonga
Monday	Omaandaha
Tuesday	Etiyali
Wednesday	Etitatu
Thursday	Etine
Friday	Etitano
Saturday	Olyomakaya
Sunday	Osoondaha
January	Januali
February	Februali
March	Maalitsa
April	Apilili
May	Mei
June	Juni
July	Juli
August	Aguste
September	Septemba
October	Kotoba
November	Novomba
December	Desemba
Day	Esiku
Week	Oshiwike
Weekend	Owikenda
Month	Omwedhi
Year	Omvula
Time	Ethimbo
Minute / Minutes	Omunute / Ominute
Hour	Otundi
Clock	Otundi / Owili
Watch	Otundi / Owili
Meet	Tsakanena (Tsakanene)
Meeting	Oshigongi
Holiday / Vacation	Efudho
Workshop	Oshigongiilonga / Oshigongipukululo / Owekshopa
What day is it?	Nena etingapi?
What time is it?	Owili ongapi?
When?	Uunake?
At what time (of day)?	Ethimbo peni?
At what time (hour)?	Pongapi?
At what sun position?	Etango peni?

ANIWA:

~ Omunwe gumwe ihagu itompola na. ~

One finger cannot catch a louse.
(Sometimes you need help.)

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Grammar Corner: Days of the Week

In Oshindonga, the words to describe a particular day of the week – this Friday, last Tuesday, next week – are, as you might have guessed, dependent on noun classes. To say "last week", you say "the week that went by": *oshiwike sha zi ko*. In this example, *sha* is the past subject concord for oshi- words, without the o-.

To say "next week", you say "the week that is coming": *oshiwike tashi ya*. Like the last example, *tashi* is just the present subject concord without the o-. To say "This week", you say, well, "this week": *oshiwike shika*. *Shika* is the "this" word for the *oshi-* class of nouns.

Because you might not have everything in your head quite yet, we've collected all of this information in the following table. None of this information is new; it has only been gathered here for convenience.

Word	Noun Class	Pres. Subj. Conc.	Past Subj. Conc.	"This"
Omaandaha	Oma-	otaga	oga	ngaka
Etiyali	E-	otali	olya	ndika
Etitatu	E-	otali	olya	ndika
Etine	E-	otali	olya	ndika
Etitano	E-	otali	olya	ndika
Olyomakaya	Oma-	otaga	oga	ngaka
Osoondaha	O-	otayi	oya	ndjika
Oshiwike	Oshi-	otashi	osha	shika
Omwedhi	Omu-	otagu	ogwa	nguka

Exercise 1

Translate the following statements into Oshindonga:

1. Next Sunday we will go to Oshakati.
2. Last Thursday Natanael went to the hospital.
3. This Friday I will go to town to buy food and see friends.
4. They will go to Etosha next week.
5. We went to Windhoek last Saturday.

Exercise 2

Translate the following statements from Oshindonga to English:

1. Oshiwike sha zi ko, onda li nda ehama mepunda.
2. Ondi na evalo omwedhi tagu ya.
3. Etine tali ya, otandi yi kondolopa.
4. Molyomakaya ga zi ko, omumati gwandje okwa dhana etanga.
5. Itandi yi kongeleka mosoondaha ndjika.

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In chapter six, we learned how to count in Oshindonga. To tell time, we just need to add some phrases like "thirty minutes past".

The easiest way to tell time is to state the hour first, followed by "past", then the minutes. 8:30 is *hetatu ya pita omilongo ndatu*, and 6:15 is said *hamano ya pita omulongo nantano*. Here, *ya pita* means "past".

Oshindonga always adds a bit of spice to keep things interesting, of course. To say "past" for the hours nine to twelve, it is no longer *ya pita* but *gwa pita*. So 9:20 becomes *omugoyi gwa pita omilongo mbali*, and 12:45 is *omulongo nambali gwa pita omilongo ne nantano*. This is because the numbers nine through twelve all start with *omu-*, and the subject agrees with the verb by using the correct subject concord.

A second way to tell time is to say 8:30 as "half till nine", *etata lyomugoyi*. Broken into pieces, this is *etata lyo-omugoyi*, but the first *o* is elided. Likewise, 10:30 is said *etata lyomulongo na yimwe.*

As the numbers one through eight in Oshindonga do not begin with a vowel, they will keep the *o* from *lyo*: 1:30 becomes *etata lyombali* and 5:30 is said as *etata lyohamano*.

Exercise 3

Look at Jane's program for the day below, and say what she did during the day and what time she did those activities, in Oshindonga.

5:30- woke up

5:45- bathed

6:30- ate breakfast with her family

7:15- walked to school

13:00- ate lunch

16:00- went to the cuca shop to have a beer with her friend Simon

20:30- ate dinner with her family- they ate oshimbombo and goat meat

21:30- went to bed

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Exercise 4

Create a program about your typical day, starting with the time you wake up until the time that you go to bed, in Oshindonga.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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.....

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.....

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.....

ANIWA:

~ Kayuhwena, hadhela nyoko. Nyoko onale e ku hadhele. ~

Young chick, scratch for your mother. Your mother has already scratched for you.
(Help your parents; they helped you as a baby.)

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Exercise 5

Below is the diary of Meme Hileni for the month of December. Translate her agenda into Oshindonga. Include what she is going to do, stating the days, and the time she will do those activities. Read it out loud, to practice telling time.

Friday 07: 14h00: Lunch with Tate Max	
Saturday 08: 10h00: Wedding of Tate Andreas	
Wednesday 12: 16h00: Go to Peace Corps office	
Friday 14: Workshop on HIV/AIDS	
Sunday 16: 11h30: Go to Etosha with learners.	

CULTURAL INFORMATION

There are various national holidays in Namibia- they are listed below in a table, along with the Oshindonga translation of the holiday. Below the table are some common holiday phrases.

Date	Holiday	Oshindonga
1 January	New Year's	Esiku lyomumvo omupe
21 March	Independence Day	Esiku lyemanguluko
	Easter	Opaasa
1 May	Worker'sDay	Esiku lyaanilonga
4 May	Cassinga Day	Esiku lyaKassinga
	Ascension Day	Esiku lyelondo
25 May	Africa Day	Esiku lyAfrika
26 August	Hero's Day	Esiku lyomapendafule
28 September	Namibia Children's Day	Esiku lyokanona okaNamibia
10 December	Human Rights Day	Esiku lyuuthembawomuntu
25 December	Christmas	Okrismesa
26 December	Family Day	Esiku lyaanegumbo

English	Oshindonga
Merry Christmas	Okrismesa ya yambekwa
Did you celebrate the new year?	Owa dhana po (omvula) ompe?
Did you arrive well (in the new year)?	Owa thika mo nawa?
Did you have a nice holiday / vacation?	Owa fudha po nawa?

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10 Ohema ombwanawa

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English	Oshindonga
Clothes	Iikutu
T-shirt	Okambindja
Shirt	Ohema
Blouse	Ohema / Okambuluse
Trousers	Ombulukweya
Jersey / Sweater	Ombindja
Dress	Ohema (yoomeme) / Oshikutu
Skirt	Ohulukweya
Jacket	Ondjatha / Ombaikitha
Shoes	Oongaku
Flip-flops	Iitapatapa
Socks	Iikaisino
Hat	Embale / Egala
Belt	Omuya / Epaya
Slip	Okazalitho
Glasses	Omakende gokomeho
Tie	Otae
Watch	Owili
Bra	Okamanga
Underwear	Okapendi / Okadholombuluku
Laundry	Iikutu yakaka / Iiyogomwa
Clean	Yela
Dirty	Kaka / Luudha
Bucket	Oshiyemele
Soap	Othewa
Clothesline	Ongodhi yiikutu
Clothespin	Uukalamala
Iron	Oshikangule
Basin	Oshiyaha / Ombaali
Wash (clothes or dishes)	Yoga (Yogo)
Wash (your body)	Iyoga (Iyogo)
Iron	Kangula
Where can I hang my clothes?	Openi tandi tsilike iikutu yandje?
You look nice.	Oto monika nawa.
I was born like that.	Osho nda valwa.

Quick Tip

- *For Americans: "Pants" means "underwear" in Namibian English. Say "trousers" to refer to the things you wear on your legs.*

Exercise 1

Label the drawing on the previous page. Use words from the above list, or ask some friends.

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English	Oshindonga
Red	-tiligane
Orange	-tiliganeshunga
Yellow	-shunga
Green	-zizi
Blue	-mbulau
Purple	-tiliganembulau
Black	-luudhe
White	-tokele
Brown	-mbundu
What colour is your shirt?	Ohema yoye ongeleni?

Grammar Corner: Adjectives

To tell the truth, Oshindonga lacks adjectives. Because states of being can be expressed with verbs, adjectives are less necessary in daily usage. However, you will still hear them infrequently. They can be formed as follows:

red t-shirt	→	*oka*mbindja *oka*tiligane
blue t-shirt	→	*oka*mbindja *oka*mbulau
black pants (trousers)	→	*om*bulukweya *ond*uudhe
stupid goat	→	*oshi*kombo *oshi*goya
big head	→	*omu*tse *omu*nene

Just make the prefixes agree. For noun class 5, the "catch-all" noun class, there are some irregularities. Consider the word for "nice", *-wanawa*. "Nice shirt" becomes *ohema* omb*wanawa* – sometimes you have to put in some more consonants.

Some common adjectives, other than the colours, include the following:

English	Oshindonga
Good / Nice	-wanawa
Bad	-nayi
Stupid	-goya / -layi
Really nice	-nawalela
Clever	-ndunge
Big	-nene
Small	-shona
Hot	-pyu
Cold	-talala
Many	-indji
Few	-shona
Sweet / Delicious	-toyi
Sour	-lula
Easy / Light	-pu
Difficult / Heavy	-dhigu
Short	-fupi
Long	-le

"First" is *tango*, but the other ordinals (second, third, etc.) are made like adjectives: *-tiyali*, *-titatu*, *-tine*, etc. Tuesday is the second day, so it's *esiku etiyali*, or just *etiyali*.

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Note that all the previous adjectives are abstract – for example, only blue *things* exist in the world, not blue itself. Concrete adjectives, those that relate a noun to something else that exists in the world, are formed a bit differently.

school teacher	→	*omu*longi *gw*osikola
meme dress	→	*o*hema *y*oomeme
bedroom (sleep room)	→	*o*ndunda *y*okulala

The dress is for *oomeme*, so we use the possessive prefix to link the two nouns together.

Exercise 2

Translate the following phrases from English into Oshindonga.

English	Oshindonga
nice red shirt	
key for the post office	
school books	
stupid goats	
blue trousers	
clever learner	
cold water	

Exercise 3

Lombwela ndje, oto zala shike nena?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Quick Tip

- Takamitha! Ngele owa yalula oonyodhi, oto ka sitaama pombete yoye.

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Just as Oshindonga tends to use verbs where English would have adjectives (e.g. "happy") , it uses verbs to express comparative (e.g. "happier") and superlative (e.g. "happiest") forms.

Both the comparative and the superlative form use the verb *vule* (surpass, exceed).

To use the comparative form, combine [stative concord] + *vule* with whatever attribute you want to compare, e.g.

I am happier than Rebecca.	→	Onda nyanyukwa *ndi vule* Rebecca.
You pound mahangu better than I do.	→	Oho tsu omahangu *wu vule* ndje.
Beef is tastier than goat meat.	→	Onyama yongombe ombwanawa *yi vule* yoshikombo.
He is stronger than you. "He surpasses you in strength."	→	*Oku* ku *vule* oonkondo.

The superlative form is similar to the comparative. Just add the word for "all".

I am the happiest person. "I am happier than all."	→	Onda nyanyukwa *ndi vule ayihe*.
Beef is the best meat.	→	Onyama yongombe *oyi vule* onyama *ayihe*.

Another useful verb for comaparing things is *fa* (look like, be like, seem like). It is used in the same way as the "feeling" verbs (see *Grammar Corner: Feelings*).

You look like your mother.	→	Owa fa nyoko.
You all seem angry.	→	Omwa fa mwa geya.
She runs like a cheetah.	→	Oha matuka a fa etotono.

Note the need for the subordinate subject concords in many of the above examples.

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11 mEgumbo

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English	Oshindonga
House	Egumbo
Toilet	Okandjugo
Bedroom	Ondunda yokulala
Kitchen (outside)	Elugo
Shower area	Okiiyogelo
Sitting room	Oseti / Oshinyanga
Hut / Room	Ondunda
Homestead	Egumbo lyomiti / lyoshiwambo
Grain storage	Eshisha / Oshigadhi
Garden	Oshikunino
Corral	Oshigunda
Gate / Door	Omweelo
Fence	Ekoye / Odhalate
Fire	Omulilo
Animal	Oshimuna
Cow	Ongombe
Goat	Oshikombo
Chicken	Ondjuhwa
Donkey	Ondoongi / Okasino
Cat	Okambishi
Dog	Ombwa
Lizard	Ekoko
Snake	Eyoka
Spider	Ewiliwili
Scorpion	Ondje
Millipede	Ongongololo
Pig	Oshingulu
Duck	Ombaka
Horse	Okakambe
Bird	Okadhila
Mouse	Ombuku
Ant	Ondhindhi / Ohwa / Ontenda
Fly	Ondhi
Mosquito	Omwe
Bat	Elimalima
Owl	Ehwiyu
Dove	Onguti
Cockroach	Epenzi / Ekakalate

ANIWA:

~ Nekwa lyatsima oye ngaa nyoko. ~

If your mother is poor, she is still your mother.
(You have to accept people as they are.)

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English	Oshindonga
Bed	Ombete
Fridge	Okila
Stove	Esiga
River	Omulonga
Water tap	Opomba / Okapomba
Dirty water	Omeya ga kaka
Trash	Iiyagaya
Window	Ekende
Table	Oshitaafula
Chair	Oshipundi
Roof	Oombuli / Mombanda
Candle	Okalehita
Paint	Opainda
Lock	Ekumba
Key	Oshipatululo / Oshapi
Break	Teka
Fix	Pangela
Lock / Latch	Pata
Open / Unlock	Egulula / Patalula
Close	Edhila
Sweep	Komba (Kombo)
Look for	Konga (Kongo)
Rake	Yalaka / Halaka
Hoe / Cultivate	Lima (Limi)
Plant	Tsika (Tsike)
Plough	Pulula
Harvest	Teya
Slaughter / Kill	Dhipaga
Skin	Yuya (Yuyu)
Throw away	Ekelahi
Meet	Tsakaneka (Tsakaneke) / Mona (Mono)
Visit	Talela po (Talele po)
Greet (on behalf of)	Kundila po (Kundile po)
Wake up	Penduka
Where do I put my trash?	Openi tandi tula iiyagaya?
It is broken.	Osha teka.
Can I paint my room?	Nandi painde ondunda yandje?
What's wrong?	Oshike sha puka?
Can I help you?	Nandi ku kwathe?
Where can I plant a garden?	Openi tandi vulu okuninga oshikunino?

Exercise 1

Label the drawing on page 63. Try your hand at drawing more common homestead scenes and objects!

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Grammar Corner: Subordinate Subject Concords

Consider the English phrase, "People who go to the store". The important part of the phrase is the noun, "people". The verb that appears in the phrase is subordinated to the noun by the word "who". In Oshindonga, this subordination is made by using a different subject concord: not *Aantu otaya yi kositola*, but *Aantu* taya *yi kositola*.

For almost all of the subject concords, just drop the initial *o* and there you are: *otashi* → *tashi*, *oya* → *ya*, etc. So, when you want to describe nouns that do something, or generally want to emphasize the noun and not the action, use the subordinate subject concord.

The only irregular subordinate subject concord is for the third person with stative verbs. For present tense, rather than *oku* → ***ku* it is *e*. For past tense, rather than *okwa* → ***kwa*, it is *okwa* → *a*.

Some examples:

Ondi wete aamati taa kombo.	I see the boys [who are] sweeping.
oMaria a teleke uukuki.	It is Maria who cooked the fat cakes.
Olye ta imbi?	Who is singing? (It is who that is singing?)

Grammar Corner: In / On / At, Part Two

When *mo, po,* and *ko* are used in the subject of a sentence, they have their own subject concords.

Pronoun of Place	Subject Concord			
	Past Active	Present Active	Future Active	Present Stative
po (-pu)	opwa	otapu	otapu ka	opu
ko (-ku)	okwa	otaku	otaku ka	oku
mo (-mu)	omwa	otamu	otamu ka	omu

For example:

Omu na othewa?	Is there soap [in] there?
Kapu na sha. (*also* Kape na sha.)	There is nothing [there].
koAmelika, oku na oombwa?	Are there dogs in America?
koAmelika, ohaku liwa oombwa?	Are dogs eaten in America?
Omu na aantu mongeleka.	There are people in the church.

Be careful not to confuse these concords with the subject concords for people.

[Mongulu] omwa kaka.	It is dirty [in the room]. (NOT "You all are dirty")

Mo, po, and *ko* are also used frequently in fixed expressions.

Johanna omo e li?	Is Johanna in there?

You will undoubtedly discover many more as you listen to native speakers.

Po is also useful for expressing the ideas of "just" and "about to." For example, *Opo nda lya* means "I just ate", and *Otu li pokumana* means "We're about to finish, yo."

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Grammar Corner: Subjunctive Verbs

Consider the following sentences:

I want you to go to school.	→	Onda hala u ye kosikola.
The teachers want the learners to stand up.	→	Aalongi oya hala aalongwa ya thikame.
I don't want her to talk.	→	Inandi hala a popye.

These sentences express desires that something occur. We already know how to express a desire to do something using *hala*. When the subject of the sentence (I, the teachers, etc.) wants someone else to do something, the second part of the sentence – the part that tells what the subject wants to happen – requires a special subjunctive voice in Oshindonga.

To use the subjunctive voice, we use a subjunctive concord and change the final vowel in the verb to an *e*. Listed below are the subjunctive concords for people:

Person	**Subjunctive concord**
Ngame	ndi
Ngoye	u
Ye	a
Tse	tu
Ne	mu
Yo	ya

Thus, the sentence "Do you want me to eat?" is translated as *Owa hala* ndi lye*?* "Rebecca wants Johanna to pound mahangu." is *Rebecca okwa hala Johanna* a tse *omahangu.*

For other kinds of nouns, use the object pronoun as the subjunctive concord:

Meme Foibe wants the goats to get out.	→	Meme Foibe okwa hala iikombo *yi ze* ko.

English words like "let" and "should" often indicate a desire that something occur: "Let's go", "Should we buy?", etc. Again, in Oshindonga, we use the subjunctive voice. The prefix *na-* is often added to the concord for emphasis.

Shall I buy for you?	→	Nandi ku landele?
Let's go!	→	Natu ye!
Should I clean?	→	Nandi opaleke?

Note: If you are in a group of more than two people, instead of *-e*, you must end the verb with *-eni*. "Let's go!" is then *Natu yeni!* "Let's eat!" is *Natu lyeni!*

ANIWA:

~ Londa omukwa noongaku. ~

Climb a baobab with shoes.

(You will encounter problems with what you are doing.)

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Quick Tip *(for the grammar fiends)*

Comparing the list of subjunctive concords with the list of personal subject concords, you may notice a pattern: the present continuous concord is – with some exceptions due to vowel changes and contractions – formed by adding the prefix ota- to the subjunctive concord. Hence, ngame ota*ndi* nu*; tse* ota*tu* nu*; and so on.*

In fact, the subjunctive concords listed above may be considered the true subject concords, while pre- and post-fixes such as ota *mark things like verb tense and aspect. The same, of course, is true for all noun classes. This understanding of subject concords can be very useful in discovering Oshindonga languge patterns. See also the final grammar corner, "Making it Simple".*

Exercise 2

Translate the following sentences into Oshindonga. Use correct subjunctive forms..

Example: I want you to buy me a beer → Onda hala u landele ndje ombiila.

1. The principal wants the learners to pass (*pita*).
2. He does not want them to fail. (*dopa*).
3. Paulus wants Shaalu to fetch water.
4. Let's (two people) go to Oshakati!
5. Let's (large group) buy some meat!

Grammar Corner: Verb Extensions

As you recall, we form the passive voice by removing the verb's final vowel and appending *-wa.* This *-wa* can be considered a verb "extension" – it extends both the verb and its meaning. There are a number of other extensions that can change the meaning of a verb. Some of them are given in the table below, along with brief explanations and an example. Interested readers should consult *A Reference Grammar of Oshindonga* (Fivaz 2003) for more information.

Extension	Meaning	English	Oshindonga
-athana	... each other	We saw each other.	Otwa monathana.
-ela	... for / on behalf of	I bought some sweets for her.	Onde mu landele uuleke.
-itha	to make ...	Don't make me angry.	Ino geyitha ndje.
i-	... itself	Did you wash yourself?	Owi iyoga?

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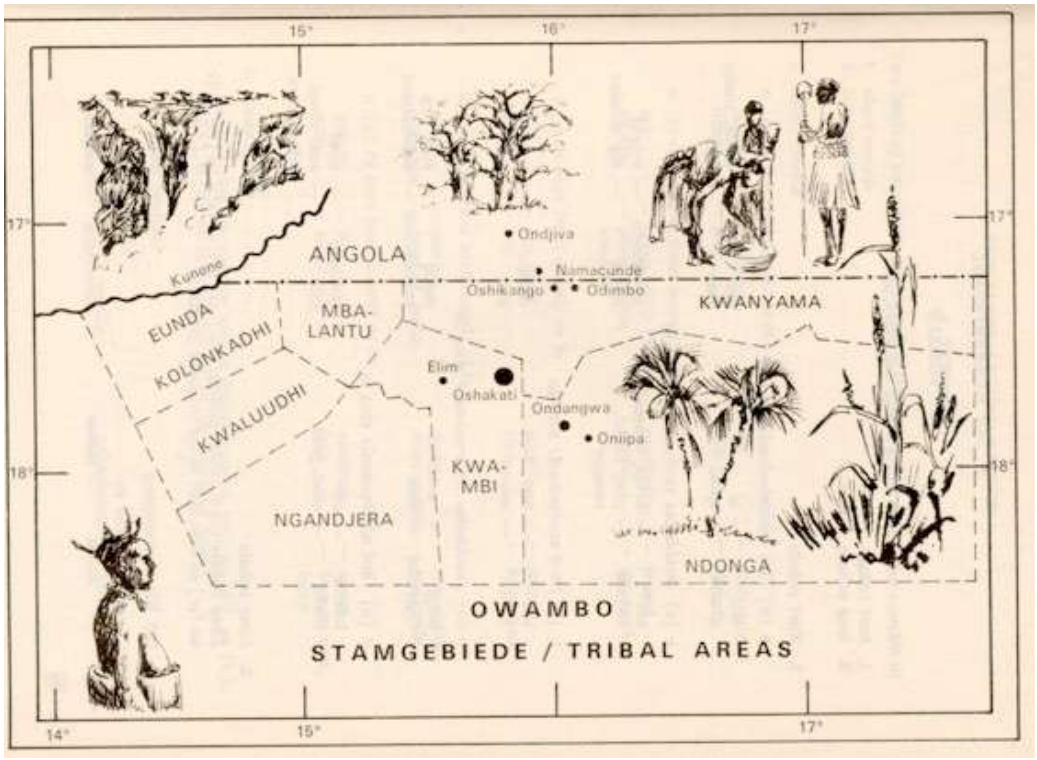
12 mOshiwambo!



A: Ongoye lye ano, mumati gwandje?
B: Aame Haufiku ya Hailulu. Edina loye olye?
A: Ngame Kuku Nelago. Owa za peni, Haufiku?
B: Onda dja kEndola.
A: Ooh, kEndola kuuKwanyama! Oku li nawa?
B: Heeno, oku li nawa.
A: Noongombe, odhi li nawa?
B: Ehee, eengobe odi li nawa.
A: Nuunona?
B: Heeno, ounona ove li nawa.
A: Oto ningi shike moNdonga?
B: Ohandi longo ofikola.
A: Ooh, ngoye omulongi gwosikola... Owa taambwa nawa momukunda gwetu.
B: Iyaloo, Meekulu.
A: Natu lyeni iikulya yoshindonga...oshimbobo nekaka. Natango opu na onyama yondjuhwa.
B: Ooh, evanda nombelela yoxuxwa! Oikulya iwa! Onda pandula, Meekulu!

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As you probably noticed, the teacher and the kuku in the above dialogue are not speaking exactly the same language. The kuku is speaking Oshindonga, while the teacher, who comes from Endola, speaks Oshikwanyama. Because these native speakers can understand each other, we can think of both Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga as *dialects* of the Oshiwambo language. Seven different dialects of Oshiwambo are spoken in Namibia: Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Oshikolonkadhi, Oshimbalantu, Oshikwaluudhi, Oshingandjera, and Oshikwambi. Only Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga have standard written forms and are taught as subjects in schools.

Oshiwambo is a relative newcomer to Namibia. Records of Khoisan speakers dating almost as far back as 30 000 BC have been found in southern Africa. The Khoisan family of languages is best known for its unique "click" sounds. Oshiwambo, on the other hand, is a member of the Bantu language family, which originated around what is now Nigeria. Speakers of proto-Bantu began migrating in search of better farmland five thousand years ago, and arrived in Namibia around 1000 BC. The most widely-spoken languages in Southern and East Africa developed from proto-Bantu, among them Swahili in Kenya and Tanzania, Shona in Zimbabwe, and Zulu in South Africa.

The Oshiwambo dialects have many differences, but native speakers understand all of them without much difficulty. After learning a few key patterns and words, you will begin to understand other dialects of Oshiwambo, too. For example, *th* in Oshindonga becomes *f* in Oshikwanyama. Thus, *Aa*ndonga eat *oshithima*, while *Ova*kwanyama sup on *oshifima*. A few of the more common substitutions are listed in the table below.

Oshindonga	Oshikwanyama	Oshikwambi
sh – o*sh*i li nawa	*sh*	*tsh*
dh – e*dh*ina	*d*	*dh*
-ndje – kwatha *ndje*	*nge*	*-ndje*
g – omagongo	nothing – Omaongo	*g*
v – *o*malo*v*u	*d*	*v*
deep *h* - ondju*h*wa	*x* / *sh*	*sh*

The structure of the noun classes is the same, but some of the prefixes and object pronouns are different. Readers especially interested in Oshikwanyama should see the companion to this book, *Hai ti!*.

Okwiimba:

Okanona kameme (mOshindonga)	**Okaana kameme** (mOshikwanyama)
Okanona ka meme	Okaana ka meme
Egumbo olyo ndyo	Eumbo olo lo
Otandi zi po paife	Ohai di po paife
Takamitha ayihe	Takamifa aishe
Egumbo, egumbo	Eumbo, eumbo
Egumbo olyo ndyo	Eumbo olo lo
Otandi zi po paife	Ohai di po paife
Takamitha ayihe	Takamifa aishe

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Okwiimba:

Owambo

Twa za kokule
Kevi lyomatale
Twe ya kungoy'Owambo

Wambo yetu wambo yetu
Twe ya kungoy'Owambo

Mu na Aandonga
Mu na Aakwanyama

Twe ya kungoy'Owambo

Mu na Aakwambi

Mu na Aangandjera

Twe ya kungoy'Owambo

Mu na Aakwaluudhi
Mu na Aambalantu

Twe ya kungoy'Owambo

Mu na Aakolonkadhi
Mu na Aandonga

Twe ya kungoy'Owambo

ANIWA:

~ Kumoho ilonga manga kulyo e li po. ~

The left hand learns while the right exists.
(Learn from your elders while they are still around.)

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Grammar Corner: Making It Simple

Let's face it: noun classes make learning Oshindonga difficult. Not only do you have to recognize the existence of fourteen different kinds of nouns, but you also have to remember fourteen different kinds of possessives, numbers, subject concords, object pronouns, demonstratives, and adjective formations. Ough, Meme. What the Oshiwambo student needs is a mental structure, like a filing cabinet, in which to store all of these linguistic odds and ends. This final grammar corner offers one such model; yours will undoubtedly be different.

Let us recall the different object pronouns:

Noun Class	Examples	Object Pronoun
(any third person)	Silas, Tate	mu
aa-	aalongi, aantu	ya
omu- (not a person)	omuti, omulongo	gu
omi-	omiti, omilunga	dhi
e-	etango, ethimbo	li
oma-	omathimbo, omeya	ga
oshi-	oshikombo, oshithima	shi
ii-	iikulya, iikombo	yi
uu-	uunona, uusiku	wu
olu-	olukaku, olutu	lu
oka-	okanona	ka
oku-	okutsi	ku
o-	ongombe	yi
oo-	oongombe	dhi

While it might not be easy to memorize 140 things, a list of 14 is possible. From this list one is able to derive all of the rest, albeit with quite a number of rules. However, people and their nouns resist derivation and so must be memorized.

Possessives

The object pronoun is essentially the prefix for possessives. If the final vowel is *i* or *u* and is preceded by a hard consonant (*g*, *l*, *k*), change it to a *y (*after *l*) or *w* (after *g* and *k*). Otherwise, drop the final vowel.

my child	→	okanona *ka*+andje	→	okanona kandje
our time	→	ethimbo *li*→*ly*+etu	→	ethimbo lyetu
your ear	→	okutsi *ku*→*kw*+oye	→	okusti kwoye

Numbers

For group 5, the numbers have no prefixes. For the other ones, the object pronoun is the prefix, with the minor change *yi*→*ii*.

eight cows	→	oongombe *+hetatu	→	oongombe hetatu
seven children	→	uunona *wu*+heyali	→	uunona wuheyali
six goats	→	iikombo *yi*→*ii*+hamano	→	iikombo ihamano

Subject concords: present action

In most cases, subject concords are formed by putting *ota-* before the object pronoun. The negative is the same as the positive, but with *ita-* instead of *ota-*.

Oongombe ota+*dhi*	→	Oongombe otadhi...
Iikombo ota+*yi*	→	Iikombo otayi...

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Oongombe ota+*dhi*	→	Oongombe otadhi...
Okanona ita+*ka*	→	Okanona itaka...

Subject concords: past action

Add *o-* to the object pronoun. Add an *-a* to the end if there is not already one in the object pronoun, and change *li→ly*, *ua→wa,* and *ia→a*. The negative is just the object pronoun with a prefix of *ina-* (no changes).

Okanona o+*ka*	→	Okanona oka...
Okanona ina+*ka*	→	Okanona inaka...
Oongombe (o+*dhi*+a→*odha*)	→	Oongombe odha...
Oongombe ina+*dhi*	→	Oongombe inadhi...

Subject concords: future action

Add *ka* to the end of the present subject concord, as a separate word.

Iikombo otayi + *ka*	→	Iikombo otayi ka...
Aalongi otaya + *ka*	→	Aalongi otaya ka...

Subject concords: present stative

Add *o-* to the object pronoun. If the last letter is *a*, change it to *e*. The negative is the same as the positive, except with *ka-* rather than *o-*.

Etango o+*li*	→	Etango oli...
Omeya (o+*ga→ge*)	→	Omeya oge...
Oshithima ka+*shi*	→	Oshithima kashi...

Subject concords: past stative

Take the past tense action subject concord (positive or negative) and add *li* as a separate word. Then add on, as a separate word again, the positive past action subject concord, without the initial *o-*.

Oshikombo osha + li + (*oshi→shi*)	→	Oshikombo osha li shi...
Uunona owa + li + (*owu→wu*)	→	Uunona owa li wu...
Iikulya inayi + li + →(*oyi→yi*)	→	Iikulya inayi li yi....

Demonstrative prefixes

For the "this" words, note first that the *oshi-* class has *shi-* as its prefix, and that the class 5 prefix is *ndji-*. Otherwise, if the object pronoun starts with a consonant (not *y* or *w*), prefix it with *n-*. Change it so it can be pronounced, *nli→ndi* and *nlu→ndu*. For the rest, those beginning with *y* or *w*, replace the initial *y-* or *w-* with *mb-*.

"That" words are the same, except that they end in *-o* or *-yo*.

this porridge	→	oshithima *shi*+no	→	oshithima shino
that shoe	→	olukaku (*n*+*lu→ndu*)→*ndo*+ka	→	olukaku ndoka
these goats	→	iikombo+ *yi→mbi* + no	→	iikombo mbino

Adjective formation

The adjective prefixes are the same as the noun prefixes, except for class 5 which is very special, and the "concrete adjectives" which use the possessive prefix.

stupid cow	→	ongombe *+goya	→	ongombe ongoya
big sun	→	etango *e*+nene	→	etango enene
school teachers	→	aalongi *y*+osikola	→	aalongi yosikola

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Grammar Corner: Further Reading

There are actually quite a number of books out about Oshiwambo, although none of them with the sparkling wit of the present one. Listed below are those we found to be most useful and/or in print. Most can be purchased in *The Bookstore* in Oshakati. We frequently consulted these books as we wrote this guide.

The Green Book: *Fivaz (D.) & Shikomba (S.) A Reference Grammar of Oshindonga. Second revised edition, Windhoek: Academy, (1986) 2003.*

> The only comprehensive Oshindonga grammar in English, this pithy tome is ideal for the budding linguist, or the died-in-the-wool masochist.

The Yellow Book: Zimmerman (W.) & Hasheela (P.) Oshikwanyama Grammar. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan, 1998.

> Although its subject is Oshikwanyama, this slim volume is often relevant to our language as well. Caveats: Kwanyama differs significantly in some ways from Ndonga, and the book's organization resembles a novel of the choose-your-own-adventure variety.

The ELCIN Dictionaries:

> *English-Ndonga Dictionary. Compiled by ELCIN Church Council Special Committees Resolution 292/92. Ondangwa: ELCIN Printing Press, 1996.*
>
> *Tirronen (T.) Ndonga-English Dictionary. Ondangwa: ELCIN, 1986.*
>
> A bit outdated – most people don't have drawing-rooms these days, for instance – but still the most comprehensive.

The Bilingual Dictionary: Viljoen (J.J.), Amakali (P.) & Namuandi (M.) Oshindonga/English English/Oshindonga Embwiitya Dictionary. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan, (1984) 2001.

> A great resource for learners of both Oshindonga and English, this abridged dictionary contains most of the basic words you'll need in everyday Oshindonga. Plus, it goes both ways, so you can look up both words you've heard and words you'd really like to know. There is also a short grammar reference in the front.

Grade School Texts:

> These can often be found in school storerooms. Although they are all in Oshiwambo, they are easy enough to be useful for the intermediate and advanced students.

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Appendix A: mOngulu

English	Oshindonga
Chalkboard	Oshipelende
Chalk	Ompya
Pen	Opena
Pencil	Opena yekala
Paper	Ombapila
Book	Embo
Exam	Ekonakono
Report / Certificate	Onzapo
Workshop	Oshigongiilonga / Owekshopa
Science (esp. Physical Science)	Uunongononi
Mathematics	Omwaalu
English	Oshiinglisa
Afrikaans	Oshimbulu
German	Oshindowiishi
Portuguese	Oshiputu
Spanish	Oshispania
Computers	Ookompiuta
Principal	Omukuluntusikola
Secretary	Omushangi
Grade	Ondondo
Bag	Ondjato
Learners	Aalongwa / Aanasikola
Calculator	Okashina
Electricity	Olusheno
School Fund	Oshiketha shosikola
Prepare	Ilongekidha
Invigilate / Proctor	Kalela
Sit down	Kuutumba
Stand up	Thikama
Be quiet	Mwena
Speak louder	Popya mokule / muule
Speak softer	Popya kashona / pevi
Read aloud	Lesha mokule
Be late	Laata
Put that axe down	Etha ekuya ndyoka

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Appendix B: nAakalimo

English	Oshindonga
Volunteer	Omwiiyambi
Trainer	Omudheuli
Community	Aantu yomomukunda / Aakalimo
Development	Ehumokomeho
Observe	Talela
Project	Opoloyeka
Work (noun)	Iilonga
Meeting	Oshigongi
Parents' meeting	Oshigongi shaavali
School Board	Elelonongelo
Clinic	Okapangelo / Okilinika
Headman	Omukunda
Fundraising	Ekongo lyiimaliwa
Chairperson	Omunashipundi
Treasurer	Omukwatekeki gwiimaliwa
Vote	Hogolola (Hogalolo)
We came to this meeting to ...	Otwe ya poshigongi shika ko ...
Thank you for the opportunity ...	Tangi kompito ...
Where can we get ... ?	Openi tatu vulu okumona ... ?
Is there someone who can give us ...?	Opu na omuntu gumwe ta vulu oku tu pa ... ?
What does this community need?	Aantu yomomukunda oya pumbwa shike?
Opens at	Otashi patulula po ....
Closes at	Otashi pata po ....
I train teachers.	Ohandi dheula aalongi.
I am an HIV counsellor.	Ngame omuhungimwenyo gwo HIV.

Ehiyo lyoshigongi nehogololo lyelelonongelo:

(Modify this letter for your own purposes.)
Omusimanekwa ..... ,

Oto hiywa kesimaneko opo wu hogolole aantu yelelonongelo. Oshigongi shika otashi ningwa mo ..... potundi ..... Otatu ka popya kombinga yo ..... .

Gweni,

.....

(Invitation to a meeting for the election of the school board:
Dear.....,
You are respectfully invited to elect school board members. The meeting will take place on ..(date)... at ...(time)... We are going to talk about.....
Yours faithfully,)

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Appendix C: Etha ndje!

Some useful expressions for women dealing with unwanted suitors:

English	Oshindonga
I don't want you. (*works well and gets a laugh from all)*	Inandi hala. / Inandi ku hala.
Let go of me. / Leave me alone.	Etha ndje!
He is bothering me.	Ota hepeke ndje.
I am already married.	Onda hokanwa nale.
I already have a man; I don't want two.	Ondi na omusamane nale; inandi hala yaali.

Quick Tips

- *It is usually best* not *to insult.* Inandi hala *is strong enough, and doesn't make people angry or defensive of their pride.*
- *An effective approach is to say* aaye *to everything and suck your teeth ('tsk) to show your disgust.*
- *If he asks,* Omusamane gwoye oku li peni? *(Where is your husband?), just say,* kEgumbo. *(At home.)*

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Appendix D: Grammar Reference

Person		Subject Concords					Possess. Suffix	Object Pronoun
English	Ndonga	Past Active	Present Active	Future Active	Present Stative	Present Habitual		
I	Ngame	+ Onda – Inandi	Otandi Itandi	Otandi ka Itandi ka	Ondi Kandi	Ohandi Ihandi	-andje	ndje
You	Ngoye	+ Owa – Ino	Oto Ito	Oto ka Ito ka	Owu Ku	Oho Iho	-oye	ku
He/She/It	Ye	+ Okwa – Ina	Ota Ita	Ota ka Ita ka	Oku Ke	Oha Iha	-e	mu
We	Tse	+ Otwa – Inatu	Otatu Itatu	Otatu ka Itatu ka	Otu Katu	Ohatu Ihatu	-etu	tu
You all	Ne	+ Omwa – Inamu	Otamu Itamu	Otamu ka Itamu ka	Omu Kamu	Ohamu Ihamu	-eni	mu
They	Yo	+ Oya – Inaya	Otaya Itaya	Otaya ka Itaya ka	Oye Kaye	Ohaya Ihaya	-awo	ya

Noun Class	Singular Prefix	Plural Prefix
1	omu-	aa-
1a	(none)	oo-
2	omu-	omi-
3	e-	oma-
4	oshi-	ii-
5	o-	oo-
6	olu-	omalu-
7	oka-	uu-
8	uu-	omau-
9	oku-	omaku-

Number	Numerical Suffix	Normal Number
1	-mwe	yimwe
2	-ali	mbali
3	-tatu	ndatu
4	-ne	ne
5	-tano	ntano
6	-hamano	hamano
7	-heyali	heyali
8	-hetatu	hetatu
9	none	omugoyi
10	none	omulongo

Some stative verbs:

hole	like/love
na	have
uvite	feel
uvite ko	hear/understand
wete	see
shi	know

Noun Prefix	Possessive Prefix	Numerical Prefix	Subject Concord		Object Pronoun
			Present Active	Present Stative	
omu- (things)	gw-	gu-	otagu	ogu	gu
omi-	dh-	dh-	otadhi	odhi	dhi
e-	ly-	li-	otali	oli	li
oma-	g-	ga-	otaga	oge	ga
oshi-	sh-	shi-	otashi	oshi	shi
ii-	y-	yi-	otayi	oyi	yi
uu-	w-	wu-	otawu	owu	wu
olu-	l-	lu-	otalu	olu	lu
oka-	k-	ka-	otaka	oke	ka
oku-	kw-	ku-	otaku	oku	ku
oo-	dh-	dhi-	otadhi	odhi	dhi
anything else (gr. 5 sing.)	y-	none, use normal numbers	otayi	oyi	yi
ku	-	-	otaku	oku	ko
mu	-	-	otamu	omu	mo
pu	-	-	otapu	opu	po

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Appendix E: Grammar Reference (handy tear-out)

Person		Subject Concords					Possess. Suffix	Object Pronoun
English	Ndonga	Past Active	Present Active	Future Active	Present Stative	Present Habitual		
I	Ngame	+ Onda – Inandi	Otandi Itandi	Otandi ka Itandi ka	Ondi Kandi	Ohandi Ihandi	-andje	ndje
You	Ngoye	+ Owa – Ino	Oto Ito	Oto ka Ito ka	Owu Ku	Oho Iho	-oye	ku
He/She/It	Ye	+ Okwa – Ina	Ota Ita	Ota ka Ita ka	Oku Ke	Oha Iha	-e	mu
We	Tse	+ Otwa – Inatu	Otatu Itatu	Otatu ka Itatu ka	Otu Katu	Ohatu Ihatu	-etu	tu
You all	Ne	+ Omwa – Inamu	Otamu Itamu	Otamu ka Itamu ka	Omu Kamu	Ohamu Ihamu	-eni	mu
They	Yo	+ Oya – Inaya	Otaya Itaya	Otaya ka Itaya ka	Oye Kaye	Ohaya Ihaya	-awo	ya

Noun Class	Singular Prefix	Plural Prefix
1	omu-	aa-
1a	(none)	oo-
2	omu-	omi-
3	e-	oma-
4	oshi-	ii-
5	o-	oo-
6	olu-	omalu-
7	oka-	uu-
8	uu-	omau-
9	oku-	omaku-

Number	Numerical Suffix	Normal Number
1	-mwe	yimwe
2	-ali	mbali
3	-tatu	ndatu
4	-ne	ne
5	-tano	ntano
6	-hamano	hamano
7	-heyali	heyali
8	-hetatu	hetatu
9	none	omugoyi
10	none	omulongo

Some stative verbs:

hole	like/love
na	have
uvite	feel
uvite ko	hear/understand
wete	see
shi	know

Noun Prefix	Possessive Prefix	Numerical Prefix	Subject Concord		Object Pronoun
			Present Active	Present Stative	
omu- (things)	gw-	gu-	otagu	ogu	gu
omi-	dh-	dh-	otadhi	odhi	dhi
e-	ly-	li-	otali	oli	li
oma-	g-	ga-	otaga	oge	ga
oshi-	sh-	shi-	otashi	oshi	shi
ii-	y-	yi-	otayi	oyi	yi
uu-	w-	wu-	otawu	owu	wu
olu-	l-	lu-	otalu	olu	lu
oka-	k-	ka-	otaka	oke	ka
oku-	kw-	ku-	otaku	oku	ku
oo-	dh-	dhi-	otadhi	odhi	dhi
anything else (gr. 5 sing.)	y-	none, use normal numbers	otayi	oyi	yi
ku	-	-	otaku	oku	ko
mu	-	-	otamu	omu	mo
pu	-	-	otapu	opu	po

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