

Yorùbá *(native name èdè Yorùbá, 'the Yoruba language')*

Yorùbá is one of the four official languages of Nigeria, a dialect continuum of West Africa and is a member of the Niger-Congo family of languages. It is spoken by about 28 million people in southwest Nigeria, Benin, Togo, the UK, Brazil and the USA. Yoruba is the third most spoken native African language.

Yorùbá first appeared in writing during the 19th century. The first Yorùbá publications were a number of teaching booklets produced by John Raban in 1830-2. The person who made the biggest contribution to Yorùbá literacy was Bishop Ajayi (Samual) Crowther (1806-1891), who studied many of the languages of Nigeria, including Yorùbá, and wrote and translated in some of them. Crowther was also the first Christian bishop of West African origin. A Yorùbá orthography appeared in about 1850, though it has undergone a number of changes since then.

Yorùbá is a tonal language with three tones: high, mid and low. The high tone is indicated by an acute accent (á, é, ê, í, ó, ô and ú). The mid tone is not marked and the low tone is marked with a grave acute (à, è, è, ì, ò, ò and ù).

The Yorùbá alphabet (Alufabẹ̀ṣi/ABD Yorùbá)

A a	B b	D d	E e	Ẹ ẹ	F f	G g	GB gb	H h	I i	J j	K k	L l
ah	bi	di	hay	hen	fi	gi	gbi!	in	he!	ji	ki	li
[a]	[b]	[d]	[e]	[ɛ]	[f]	[g]	[gb̩]	[h]	[i]	[j]	[k]	[l]
M m	N n	O o	Ọ ọ	P p	R r	S s	Ş ş	T t	U u	W w	Y y	
mi	ni	oh	or!	pi	ri	si	shi	ti	uh!	wi	yi	
[m]	[n]	[o]	[ɔ]	[kp̩]	[r]	[s]	[ʃ]	[t]	[u]	[w]	[j]	

Nasal vowels (Awon Fawẹ̀li Aranmupe)

an	en	in	on	un
[ã]	[ẽ]	[ĩ]	[õ]	[ũ]

You can hear the sounds of the Yorùbá alphabet at:
<http://www.africa.uga.edu/Yoruba/alphabet.html>

Numbers (Cardinal)

- (1) ọkan/mení
- (2) méjì
- (3) mẹta
- (4) mẹrin
- (5) màrún
- (6) mẹfà
- (7) méje
- (8) mejọ
- (9) mẹsan
- (10) mewa

Numbers (Ordinal)

- (1st) èkíní
- (2nd) èkejì
- (3rd) ẹkẹta
- (4th) ẹkẹrin
- (5th) ẹkarùn
- (6th) ẹkẹfà
- (7th) ẹkeje
- (8th) ẹkejo
- (9th) ẹkesàn
- (10th) ẹkewà

Sample text

Gbogbo èniyàn ni a bí ní òmìnira; iyì àti ẹto kọ̀ọ̀kan sì dọ̀gba. Wọ̀n ní ẹ̀bùn ti làákàyè àti ti ẹ̀rì-ọ̀kàn, ó sì yẹ kí wọ̀n ó máa hùwà sí ara wọ̀n gẹ́gẹ́ bí ọ̀mọ̀ iyá.

Translation

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

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