



An Introduction to Bambara



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The text accompanies the following thirteen audio (13) tracks:

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Lesson 1: The Alphabet

Bambara alphabet	As in
a	Ah-ha
b	Book
c	Chair
d	Door
e	Day
ε	Met
f	Foot
g	Game
ɗ	Sing
h	Hair
i	Tea
j	Jail

k	Kit
l	Lock
m	Meat
n	Net
ɲ	Onion
o	Soda
ɔ	Long
p	Put
r	River
s	See
Sh	Shame
t	Termite
u	Shoe
w	War
y	Year
z	Zebra

Lesson 2: Vocabulary 1

n	I
i	You (singular)
a	He or she
an	We
aw	You (plural)
u	They
Sɔɔma	The morning
Sɔɔma/Sɔɔmadafɛ	In the morning
Tile	Noon
Tilefɛ	At noon
Wula	The afternoon
Wulafɛ	In the afternoon
Su	The night
Sufɛ	At night
Daraka	Breakfast
Tilelafana	Lunch
Surɔfana	Dinner
Denbaya	Family
Somɔɔw	Family (lit people of the house)
Muso	Woman or wife
Musow	Women
Cɛ	Man or husband
Cɛw	Men

Den	Child
Denw	Children
Ba	Mother
Fa	Father

Lesson 3: Greetings

Nba	Reply to a greeting (used only by men)
Nse	Reply to a greeting (used only by women)
I ni sɔgɔma	Good morning
Nba, i ni sɔgɔma	Good morning (males reply)
Nse, i ni sɔgɔma	Good morning (females reply)
I ni wula	Good afternoon
I ni su	Good evening
I ni tile(n)	Good afternoon (from noon until 2 PM)
I ka kɛɛ?	Are you fine?
Tɔɔro tɛ	No problems/trouble
Tɔɔro si tɛ	No problems at all
I fa ka kɛɛ?	Is your father fine?
Tɔɔro t'a la	He is fine
I ba ka kɛɛ?	Is your mother fine?
Tɔɔro t'a la	She is fine
I denw ka kɛɛ?	Are your children fine?
Tɔɔro t'u la	They are fine
Somɔgɔw ka kɛɛ?	Is your family fine?
Tɔɔro t'u la	They are fine
Hɛɛ sira?	Was the night peaceful?
Hɛɛ dɔɔn	Peace only
Hɛɛ tilenna?	Was the day peaceful?

Here dɔɔn	Peace only
Bob ka kɛɛ?	Is Bob fine?
Tɔɔ t'a la	He is fine
Jennifer ni Mark ka kɛɛ?	Are Jennifer and Mark fine?
Tɔɔ t'u la	They are fine
I bɛ di?	How are you?
Somɔɔw bɛ di?	How is your family?
I bisimila!	Welcome! (Singular)
Aw bisimila!	Welcome! (Plural)
Saha!	Thanks! (a reply to bisimila)

Lesson 4: Numbers (1...20)

Kelen	One
Fila	Two
Saba	Three
Naani	Four
Duuru	Five
ƆƆƆ	Six
Wolonfila	Seven
Segin	Eight
ƆƆƆƆƆ	Nine
Tan	Ten
Tan ni kelen	Eleven
Tan ni fila	Twelve
Tan ni saba	Thirteen
Tan ni naani	Fourteen
Tan ni duuru	Fifteen
Tan ni ƆƆƆ	Sixteen
Tan ni wolonfila	Seventeen
Tan ni segin	Eighteen
Tan ni ƆƆƆƆƆ	Nineteen
Mugan	Twenty

Lesson 5: Introducing Self/Someone

N tɔɔ Bubakar	My name is Bubakar
N jamu Jalo	My last name is Jalo
I tɔɔ?	What's your name?
I jamu?	What's your last name?
N bɛ bɔ Mali la	I am from Mali
N muso bɛ bɔ Mauritanie	My wife is from Mauritania
I bɛ bɔ min?	Where are you from?
I muso bɛ bɔ min?	Where is your wife from?
A bɛ bɔ min?	Where is she or he from?
A tɔɔ Mark	His name is Mark
A jamu Humphrey	His last name is Humphrey
Mark tɛ bɔ Mali la, a bɛ bɔ Ameriki	Mark is not from Mali. He is from America
I bɛ bɔ Ameriki wa?	Are you from the America?
Ayi, n tɛ bɔ Ameriki	No, I am not from the States.
I bɛ bɔ Mali la wa?	Are you from Mali?
ɔwɔ, n bɛ bɔ Mali la	Yes, I am from Mali
N ye karamɔɔ ye	I am a teacher
N muso tɛ karamɔɔ ye	My wife is not a teacher
Mark ye wolɔntɛri ye	Mark is a volunteer
A muso tɛ wolɔntɛri ye	His wife is not a volunteer
Mark muso ye kalanden ye	Mark's wife is a student

Lesson 6: Leave - Taking Expressions

K'an b'u fo!	Good-bye! (Lit we greet them)
U n'a mɛn	They will hear your greetings
K'an bɛn!	See you!
Ka tile hɛrɛ caya	Have a good day
Ka su hɛrɛ caya	Have a good night
Ka dugu ɲuman jɛ	May we have a good night
K'an kelen kelen wuli	May we have a good night
Amiina!	Amen!
K'an bɛn sɔgɔma	See you in the morning
K'an bɛn wulafɛ	See you in the afternoon
K'an bɛn tilefɛ	See you around noon
K'an bɛn sufɛ	See you in the evening
K'an bɛn sinin	See you tomorrow
K'an bɛn sɔɔni	See you soon
K'an bɛn kɔfɛ	See you later

Lesson 7: Dialogue

A: I ni sɔgɔma	Good morning!
B: Nse, I ni sɔgɔma	Good morning!
A: I ka kɛɛ?	Are you fine?
B: Tɔɔ si tɛ	No problems at all
A: Somɔɔw bɛ di?	How is your family?
B: Tɔɔ t'u la	They are fine
A: I bisimila!	Welcome!
B: Saha!	Thanks!
A: I tɔgɔ?	What's your name?
B: N tɔgɔ Mariam. E dun?	My name is Mariam. And you?
A: N tɔgɔ Mamadu	My name is Mamadu
B: I ye karamɔgɔ ye wa?	Are you a teacher?
A: ɔwɔ, n ye “Corps de la Paix” karamɔgɔ ye	Yes, I am a Peace Corps teacher
B: Foli don. N bɛ taa so	I was just greeting. I am going home.
A: Ayiwa, k'an b'u fo	Ok! Good-bye! (we greet them)
B: U n'a mɛn	They will hear your greetings
A: Ka tile hɛɛ caya	May we have a good day
B: Amiina	Amen

Lesson 8: Vocabulary 2 (Common Objects)

Tabali	A table
Səsi	A chair
Sigilan	A stool
Biki	A pen
Kiriyon	A pencil
Kaye	A notebook
Liburu	A book
Saki	A bag
Lakere	Chalk
Tabulo	Chalk board
Aseti	A plate
Kutu	A spoon
Muru	A knife
Furalan	A broom
Dilan	A bed
Birifini	A blanket
Dara	A bed sheet
Deben	A mat
Fini	Clothes
Doloki	A shirt
Kulusi	Pants
Sabara	Shoes
Negeso	Bike

Nunɛti	Eye glasses
Ji	Water
Kafe	Coffee
Nɔnɔ	Milk
Sukaro	Sugar
Kɔkɔ	Salt

Lesson 9: Vocabulary 3 (Names of Places)

So	House
Kalanso	Classroom
ŋɛɛn	Toilet
Gwabugu	Kitchen
Dumunikeɣɔɔ	Eating area/place
Gwa	Straw roof that you sit under
Lakɔli	School
Dɔɔɔɔɔɔɔ	Hospital
Sugu	Market
Butiki	Shop
Biro	Office
Baji	River
Kɔɔn	A well
Ponpu	Pump
Nakɔ	Garden
Foro	Field
Baaraɣɔɔ	Working place
Misiri	Mosque
Egilisi	Church
Banki	Bank
Tɛɛn gari	Train station
Abiyon jigin kɛɛ	Airport

Oto gari	Bus station
Posu	Post office

Lesson 10: Numbers (20...2000)

Mugan	Twenty
Mugan ni kelen	Twenty-one
Mugan ni fila	Twenty-two
Mugan ni saba	Twenty-three
Mugan ni naani	Twenty-four
Mugan ni duuru	Twenty-five
Mugan ni ƙƙƙ	Twenty-six
Mugan ni wolonfila	Twenty-seven
Mugan ni segin	Twenty-eight
Mugan ni ƙƙƙƙƙ	Twenty-nine
Bi saba	Thirty
Bi saba ni kelen	Thirty-one
Bi naani	Forty
Bi duuru	Fifty
Bi ƙƙƙ	Sixty
Bi wolonfila	Seventy
Bi segin	Eighty
Bi ƙƙƙƙƙ	Ninety
ƙεεε	One- hundred
Ƙεεε ni bi saba	One hundred thirty
Ƙεεε ni bi duuru	One hundred fifty
Ƙεεε fila	Two hundred
Ƙεεε saba	Three hundred

Kεmε naani	Four hundred
Kεmε duuru	Five hundred
kεmε wɔɔɔ	Six hundred
Wa kelen	One thousand
Wa kelen ni kεmε fila ni bi duuru	One thousand-two hundred and fifty
Wa fila	Two thousand

Lesson 11: Some Useful Expressions and Phrases

N sɛgɛnnɛn don	I am tired
Sunɔŋɔ bɛ n na	I am sleepy
Kɔŋɔ bɛ n na	I am hungry
Kɔŋɔ tɛ n na	I am not hungry
Minɔŋɔ bɛ n na	I am thirsty
Minɔŋɔ tɛ n na	I am not thirsty
Funteni bɛ	It's hot
Funteni tɛ	It's not hot
Nɛnɛ bɛ	It's cold
Nɛnɛ tɛ	It's not cold
Hakɛto	Excuse me
Hakɛ t'i la	You are excused
I bɛ taa min?	Where are you going?
N bɛ taa so	I am going home
N bɛ taa lakɔli la	I am going to school
Mark bɛ taa biro la	Mark is going to the office
A bɛ taa ɲɛgɛn na	He or she is going to the toilet
N tɛ taa biro la	I don't go to the office
I bɛ Bamanakan fɔ?	Do you speak Bambara?
ɔwɔ, n bɛ Bamanankan fɔ dɔɔni	Yes, I speak Bambara a little bit
Mark tɛ Bamanankoan fɔ	Mark doesn't speak Bambara
N tɛ tubabukan fɛ	I don't like French

N tɛ kafe fɛ	I don't like coffee
Jennifer bɛ Bamanankan fɛ	Jennifer likes Bambara
N bɛ kalanɛ	I study
N bɛ dumunike	I eat
N bɛ baarakɛ	I work
A tɛ kalanɛ	He doesn't study
A tɛ dumunike	He doesn't eat
A tɛ baarakɛ	He doesn't work
N bɛ n ko	I bathe
N tɛ n ko sisan	I don't bathe now
N b'a fɛ ka n lafiɲɛ	I want to rest

Lesson 12: Family

Fa	Father
Ba	Mother
Bangebaw	Parents
Den	Child
Denw	Children
Denbaya	Family
N ka denbaya	My family
Kɔrɔɔɛ	Elder brother
Kɔrɔmuso	Elder sister
Dɔgɔɔɛ	Younger brother
Dɔgɔmuso	Younger sister
Benke	Uncle
Tɛnɛmuso	Aunt
Balima	Sibling
Mɔke	Grand father
Mɔmuso	Grand mother
Mɔden	Grand child
Mark ye san mugan ni duuru ye	Mark is twenty-five years old
N ye san bi saba ye	I am thirty years old
I ye san joli ye?	How old are you?
Mark sigilen bɛ Gao	Mark is living in Gao
A sigilen tɛ New York	He is not living in New York
Dɔgɔmuso fila bɛ n fɛ	I have two younger sisters

Dɔgɔcɛ tɛ n fɛ	I don't have a younger brother
Kɔrɔmuso bɛ Suzan fɛ	Suzan has an elder sister
Kɔrɔcɛ t'a fɛ	She doesn't have an elder brother

Lesson 13: Days of the Week and Some Expressions of Time

Tɛnɛn	Monday
Tarata	Tuesday
Araba	Wednesday
Alamisa	Thursday
Juma	Friday
Sibiri	Saturday
Kari	Sunday
Don go don	Every day
Sɔɔma o sɔɔma	Every morning
Wula o wula	Every afternoon
Su o su	Every night
Tɛnɛn o tɛnɛn	Every Monday
Juma o juma	Every Friday
Dɔɔkɔn	Week
Kalo	Month
San	Year
Dɔɔkɔn o dɔɔkɔn	Every week
Kalo o kalo	Every month
San o san	Every year