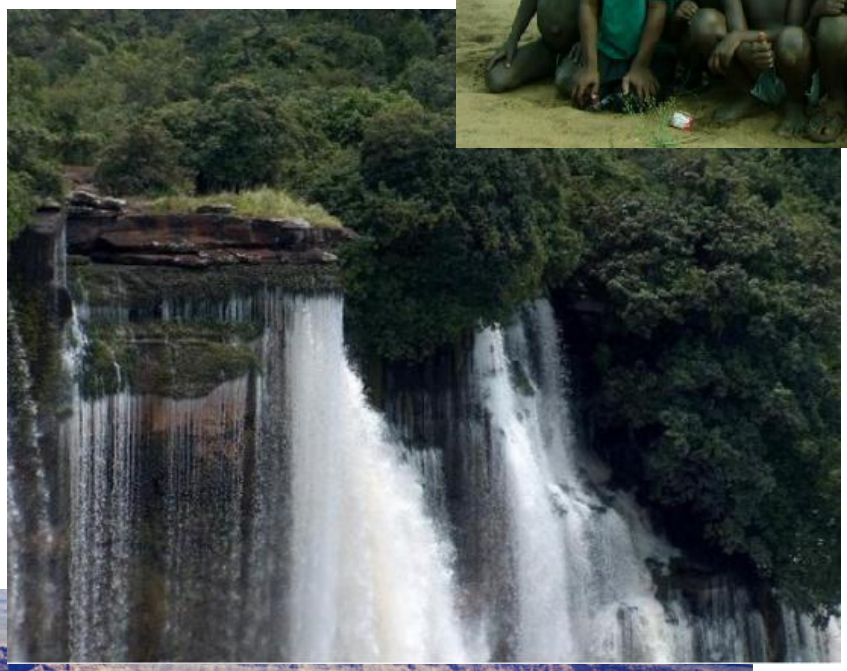
A Beginner's Guide to Oshikwanyama







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Introduction

If you want to learn Oshikwanyama
But you find that it makes you ehama
Don't give up so diva!
With this book, you will shiiva
Your lips will move smooth like Rama.

Congratulations! You have, in your hands, the product of two years of love, sweat, tears, and copious amounts of coffee. 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 Oshikwanyama. It's a wonderful journey, and we're glad to join you on the road.

But now, down to business. As someone immersed in a new 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 Oshikwanyama, but is most appropriate for people who go to stay among Oshikwanyama 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 lele po?

A: Ongula

Tate: Wa lele po, Meme Liina?
Meme: Ehee.
Tate: Nawa tuu?
Meme: Ehee. Ove wa lele po, Tate Petrus?
Tate: Ehee.
Meme: Nawa tuu?
Tate: Ehee, onawa.

B: Ongula

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

C: Komatango

Meme: Wa uhala po, Tate Landu?
Tate: Ehee.
Meme: Nawa tuu?
Tate: Ehee. Ove wa uhala po, Meme Estera?
Meme: Ehee.
Tate: Nawa tuu?
Meme: Ehee, onawa.

D: Onguloshi

Meme: Wa tokelwa po, Tate Josefa?
Tate: Ehee.
Meme: Nawa tuu?
Tate: Ehee. Ove wa tokelwa po, Meme Maria?
Meme: Ehee.
Tate: Nawa?
Meme: Ehee, onawa.

E: Ookaume

Beata: Ongaipi, Andreas?
Andreas: Onawa, kaume. Ongaipi?
Beata: Onawa.

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English	Oshikwanyama
Good	Nawa
Morning	Ongula
Afternoon (mid-day heat)	Omutenya
Afternoon (late afternoon)	Komatango
Evening	Onguloshi
Night	Oufiku
Friends	ooKaume
Yes	Ehee / Ee / Heeno
No	Ahowe / Aaye
OK	Eewa
Good morning	Wa lele po?
Good afternoon	Wa uhala po?
Good evening	Wa tokelwa po?
Hello (and other informal greetings)	Ongaipi / Ongiini
Go well	Enda po nawa
Stay well	Kala po nawa
Sleep well (someone leaving for bed)	Ka nangale po nawa
Sleep well (someone you're leaving)	Nangala po nawa

Exercise 1

Translate the following conversation into English:

A: Wa uhala po Meme .....?
B: Ehee.
A: Nawa tuu?
B: Ehee, ove wa uhala po Meme .....?
A: Ehee.
B: Nawa tuu?
A: Ehee, Onawa.

Exercise 2

Fill in the missing words in the following conversation:

A: Wa ..... po Meme .....?
B: .....
A: Nawa tuu?
B: Ehee, ... Wa lele po Tate .....?
A: Ehee.
B: Onawa tuu?
A: .....

Exercise 3

Fill in the missing words in the following conversation:

A: Wa..... po Meme.....?
B: .....
A: Onawa .....?
B: Ehee, wa ..... po Meme .....?
A: Ehee.
B: Nawa tuu?
A: Ehee, onawa.

Exercise 4

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

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Eyoka lakula itali ku hange u na odibo. ~

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 *Meekulu* (grandmother) and *Tatekulu* (grandfather) show respect and are just as important as the greeting itself.
- Touch your right elbow to show extra respect.
- Literally, if someone says *Wa lele po*, they are asking if you laid down last night. *Wa 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 *Ehee*.

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 Oshikwanyama:

English	Oshikwanyama
I	Ame
You	Ove
He/She	Ye
We	Fye
You all	Nye
They	Vo

Oshikwanyama 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".*

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:
~ Okuti kwa dala. ~
The forest has delivered (you).
(Welcome home, after a long journey.)

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Grammar Corner: Numbers

Here are the counting numbers in Oshikwanyama.

English	Oshikwanyama
One	Imwe
Two	Mbali
Three	Nhatu
Four	Nhee
Five	Nhano
Six	Hamano
Seven	Heyali
Eight	Hetatu
Nine	Omuwoi
Ten	Omulongo
Eleven (Ten and one)	Omulongo na imwe
Twelve (Ten and two)	Omulongo nambali
Twenty (Two tens)	Omilongo mbali
Twenty-five (Two tens and five)	Omilongo mbali nanhano
Thirty (Three tens)	Omilongo nhatu
One hundred	Efele
Two hundred	Omafele avali
Three hundred	Omafele atatu
One thousand	Eyovi
Two thousand	Omayovi avali

Counting things (e.g. two goats, fifteen people) is a bit trickier, and is explained in *Grammar Corner: Counting*. The Oshikwanyama number *Omafele avali* (two hundred) literally means "two hundreds".

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2 Onda fya ondjala!

Onda fya ondjala.	Ihandi li ombelela.
Onda fya enota.	Kandi udite ko...
Onda kuta.	Aame ..... Oove lye?
Onda mana.	Oikulya inyenye!
Onda loloka, onda hala okukofa.	Tangi unene.
Omeva oku li peni?	Okandjuwo oke li peni?

English	Oshikwanyama
I'm hungry.	Onda fya ondjala.
I'm thirsty.	Onda fya enota.
I'm full.	Onda kuta.
I'm finished.	Onda mana.
I'm tired, I want to go to sleep.	Onda loloka, onda hala okukofa.
Where is the water?	Omeva oku li peni?
I don't eat meat.	Ihandi li ombelela.
I don't understand...	Kandi udite ko...
I'm ..... What's your name?	Aame ..... Oove lye?
The food is very good!	Oikulya inyenye! / Oikulya iwa
Thank you very much.	Tangi unene.
Where is the latrine?	Okandjuwo oke li peni?

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English	Oshikwanyama
I need ……..	Onda pumbwa ……..
I want …….. (polite)	Onda hala ……..
May I have ..... (very polite)	Kwafe nge / Kwafele nge .....
Give me ..... (informal)	Pe nge .....
Water	Omeva (often "omeya")
Basin	Oshiyaxa
To sleep	Okukofa
To eat	Okulya
To bathe	Okulikosha
Body soap	Ofewa (yokulikosha)
Candle	Okalexita
Cup	Okakopi
Beer	Obiila
Help (noun)	Ekwafo
Key	Oshapi / Oshipatululo
And / With	Na
Also / Still / Again	Natango
Or	Ile
I don't know	Kandi shi shii

Exercise 1

Translate the following requests into Oshikwanyama.

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

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 Oshikwanyama*
- *There is no literal translation for "please" in Oshikwanyama. To express politeness, put* kwafe nge *or* kwafelenge *("help me / help for me") before what you want to say.*
- Alikana*, a word commonly translated as "please", adds a sense of urgency or exasperation to a request.*

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Kape na okadila ihaka tilyana 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 dja peni?

Zach: Wa uhala po nawa Meme?
Saima: Ehee. Wa uhala po Tate?

Zach: Ehee. Oshi li ngaipi?
Saima: Oshi li nawa. Edina loye olye?

Zach: Edina lange oZach. Edina loye olye?
Saima: Edina lange oSaima. Zach, owa dja peni?

Zach: Onda dja koAmerika.
Saima: O.K… Oto ningi shike moNamibia?

Zach: Ame omulongi ouliyambi.
Saima: Oto ka longa shike apa?

Zach: Ohandi ka longa omwaalu, oshiingilisa, nounongononi.
Saima: Oto ka kala mo efimbo li fike peni?

Zach: Ohandi ka kala mo eedula mbali.
Saima: Eewa. Oshi liwete nale, kaume.

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 Oshikwanyama, 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 *ame* (I) and *li* (eat), we must put the first-person subject concord, *ohandi*: *Ame ohandi 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: *ame ohandi nu* (I am drinking) versus *ame 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
Ame	+	Onda	Ohandi / Ohai	Ohandi ka
	−	Inandi	Itandi	Itandi ka
Ove	+	Owa	Oto	Oto ka
	−	Ino	Ito	Ito ka
Ye	+	Okwa	Ota	Ota ka
	−	Ina	Ita	Ita ka
Fye	+	Otwa	Ohatu	Ohatu ka
	−	Inatu	Itatu	Itatu ka
Nye	+	Omwa	Otamu	Otamu ka
	−	Inamu	Itamu	Itamu ka
Vo	+	Ova	Otaa / Otava	Otaa ka / Otava ka
	−	Inaa / Inava	Itaa / Itava	Itaa ka / Itava ka

Subject Concords for Stative Verbs

Person		Past	Present	Future
Ame	+	Onda li ndi	Ondi	Ohandi ka kala ndi
	−	Kanda li ndi	Kandi / Nghi	Itandi ka kala ndi
Ove	+	Owa li u	Ou	Oto ka kala u
	−	Kwa li u	Ku	Ito ka kala u
Ye	+	Okwa li e	Oku	Ota ka kala e
	−	Ka li e	Ke	Ita ka kala e
Fye	+	Otwa li tu	Otu	Ohatu ka kala tu
	−	Katwa li tu	Katu	Itatu ka kala tu
Nye	+	Omwa li mu	Omu	Otamu ka kala mu
	−	Kamwa li mu	Kamu	Itamu ka kala mu
Vo	+	Ova li ve	Ove	Otava ka kala ye
	−	Kava li ve	Kave	Itava ka kala ve

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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	lilonga	lilongo	lilonga
Sleep	kofa	kofa	kofa
Go	ya	i	ya
Look	tala	tale	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	***	udite	***
Understand	***	udite 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 *shiiva*.

*** The past and future tenses of "feel / understand" are expressed with the active verb, *uda* / *uda 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 (*ame*, *ove*, etc.). For example:

I am eating	→	(I, present tense, active verbs) + (eating, present tense) Ohandi + li Ohandi li
I ate	→	Onda lya
I ate meat	→	Onda lya ombelela
I am not working	→	Itandi longo
He is speaking Oshikwanyama	→	Ota popi Oshikwanyama
We will go tomorrow	→	Ohatu ka ya mongula

It is the same with the stative verbs:

I like traditional porridge!	→	Ondi hole oshifima!
Do you have a pen?	→	Ou na opena?
I do not know Afrikaans.	→	Kandi shi shii 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.

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English	Oshikwanyama
How is it going?	Oshi li ngaipi?
It is going well.	Oshi li nawa.
What is your name?	Edina loye olye?
My name is _____	Edina lange o_____
Where are you from?	Owa dja peni?
I am from _____	Onda dja ko_____
What are you doing in Namibia?	Oto ningi shike moNamibia?
I am a volunteer teacher.	Ame omulongi omuliyambi.
I am a teacher trainer.	Ohandi deula ovalongi.
I am an IT volunteer.	Ohandi longo eekompiuta.
What will you teach here?	Oto ka longa shike apa?
I will teach maths, English, and science.	Ohandi ka longa omwaalu, noshiingilisa, nounongoni.
For how long will you be here?	Oto ka kala mo efimbo li fike peni?
I will be here for two years.	Ohandi ka kala mo eedula mbali.
See you later, friend.	Oshi liwete nale, kaume.
How old are you?	Ou na eedula ngapi?
I am _____ years old.	Ondi na eedula _____.

Quick Tip : What's the deal with stative verbs?

Stative verbs are a small group of frequently-used verbs in Oshikwanyama. (You won't hear too many that aren't listed in the above chart.) They are often referred to as non-action verbs because they do not involve as much action on the part of the subject as, say, running or cooking. As you can see, they have their own set of concords, which must be memorized. Don't worry too much about past or future forms; they are used infrequently, and you'll be in a better position to learn them later.

Exercise 1

Translate the following sentences to Oshikwanyama:

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

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Exercise 2

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

1. [Ame] ..... na epulo.
2. [Vo] ..... wete oshikombo.
3. [Ye] ..... hole okulonga mepya.
4. [Ove] ..... hole okulonga mepya.
5. [Fye] ..... li moNamibia.

Exercise 3

Change the following sentences to the indicated tenses.

1. Ame ohandi nyola.
   (past) .....
   (future) .....
2. Onda lesha embo.
   (present) .....
   (future) .....
3. Ohandi ka pwilikina.
   (present) .....
   (past) .....
4. Ame ohandi ka dima oshipelende.
   (present) .....
   (past) .....
5. Onda patulula ekende.
   (present) .....
   (future) .....

Exercise 4

Fill in the missing words in the following conversation:

1. Edina lange oJuliusa. ..... loye olye?
2. Edina ..... oHileni.
3. Onda ..... kEtilashi. Ove owa dja peni?
4. ..... dja kOnanghulo.

Exercise 5

Translate the following questions to Oshikwanyama 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 Oshikwanyama and vice-versa.

Owa dja peni?	How old are you?
What is your name?	Eumbo loye, oli li peni?
Where is your home?	Edina loye olye?
For how long will you be here?	Ame omukwatakanifi womukifi wo HIV/AIDS.
Owu na eedula ngapi?	Oto ka kala mo efimbo li fike peni?
I am a volunteer teacher.	Where are you working?
Oto longo peni?	Where are you from?
I am an HIV/AIDS coordinator.	Ame omulongi omuliyambi.

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.

Eimbilo lovaliyambi

Fy'ovalongi valiyambi
'Twa dja koAmerika
Tu kwafele Namibia
Ehongo li xume ko

vaNamibia vaholike
Tu longeni nombili
Tu kwafele Namibia
Ehongo li xume ko

Quick Tip

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

Quicker Tip

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

Aame → It's me.

Ha*ame* → *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.*

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:
~ Hamutwe u ha tila mbudi. ~
A trouble-maker is not afraid of causing problems.
(You are causing problems everywhere you go.)

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4 Oshifima oshinyenye

Tula omeva mombiya na tula ombiya pediko. Fulukifa omeva nde to tula mo oufila. Pilula noluko ominute omilongo mbali. Tula oshifima poshiyaxa noluko. Teelela ile oto pi. Lya nombelela ile nombidi. Oshifima oshinyenye!

English	Past	Present	Future
Put (in/on/...)	Tula (mo/po/...)	Tula (mo/po/...)	Tula (mo/po/...)
Boil	Fulukifa	Fulukifa	Fulukifa
Stir	Pilula	Pilula	Pilula
Wait	Teelela	Teelele	Teelela
Burn yourself	Pya	Pi	Pya
Cook	Teleka	Teleke	Teleka
Bring	Eta	Eta	Eta
Pound	Twa	Tu	Twa
Take (from someone)	Tambula	Tambula	Tambula
Pick (from many)	Kufa	Kufa	Kufa

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English	Oshikwanyama
Traditional porridge	Oshifima / Oifima
Meat	Ombelela
Cabbage / Spinach	Ombidi
Dried spinach	Evanda
Goat	Oshikombo
Beef	Ombelela yongobe
Chicken	Oxuxwa
Dog	Ombwa
Fish	Oshi
Field mouse	Omhuku
Frog	Efuma
Soup	Oshopa
Pasta	Omakoloni
Rice	Olwiishi
Oil	Omaadi
Tomato / Tomato sauce (Ketchup)	Etama / Edama
Salt	Omongwa
Fat cakes	Oukuki
Apple	Oshiyapela / Eyapela
Flour	Oufila
Sugar	Osuuka
Millet	Omahangu
Traditional non-alcoholic drinks	Oshikundu / Oshinwa
Traditional alcoholic drinks	Omalodu, Otombo, Ombike
Bread	Omboloto
Jam	Ongema
Butter	Ombuta
Beans	Omakunde
Tea	Otee
Coffee	Okofi
Cooldrink	Onamunate
Pot	Ombiya
Bowl / Basin	Oshiyaxa
Plate	Okayaxa
Traditional clay pot	Etiti
Spoon	Olunguto
Fork	Ofoloka
Knife	Ombele
Hand	Eke / Eenyala
Cooking stick	Oluko
Fire	Omundilo
Cooking fire	Ediko
Match	Okapalwa

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Lya odididi u didilike. Lya okadila u diladile. Lya omhuku u pukuluke. Lya ongungu u ngungumane. ~

Eat an ant and remember. Eat a bird and think. Eat a mouse and be alert. Eat a bulb and be calm.
(It is important to remember, think, be alert, and be calm.)

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Infinitives

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

English	Oshikwanyama
To sleep	Okukofa
To eat	Okulya
To sing	Okwiimba

On the left side, we have infinitive verbs in English. On the right, we have infinitive verbs in Oshikwanyama. Fortunately, they are used in the same way in both languages. Notice that the Oshikwanyama infinitive verbs are the past/future verb forms with the prefix *oku-*. The only exceptions are those verbs beginning in vowels. For these, change *oku-* to *okw-* and double the vowel, e.g. *oku + imba → okwiimba.*

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 kofa, ohandi kofa, ohandi ka kofa.* Because this is the case, we will stop writing verbs in past / present / future tables, and just write (in this case) *kofa*. For verbs like "eat", we will write *lya (li)*: *Onda lya, ohandi li, ohandi ka lya*. The present form is put in parentheses.

Commands

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

Put the flour in the pot.	→	Tula oufila mombiya.
Eat meat!	→	Lya ombelela!
Wait ten minutes.	→	Teelela 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 said: 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:

Meme Sylvia ota li ombelela.	→	Meme Sylvia is eating meat.
Meme Sylvia oha li ombelela.	→	Meme Sylvia eats meat.
Oho li ombidi?	→	Do you eat cabbage?
Iha li oshi.	→	S/he does not eat fish [in general].
Ita li oshi.	→	S/he is not eating fish [right now].

Like in English, the present simple tense in Oshikwanyama 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* when applicable.

Exercise 1

Respond to the following questions in Oshikwanyama.

1. Ou hole okunwa obiila?
2. Oho li oshifima?
3. Oho li oshikombo?
4. Owa hala okunwa onamunate?
5. OvaNamibia ove hole okulya ombelela. Naave, ou hole?
6. Oho nu okofi ile otee?
7. Oho li ombwa?
8. Ondi hole okulya oukuki. Ove ou hole?

Exercise 2

Translate the following commands into Oshikwanyama.

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 oshifima and ombidi.
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 Oshikwanyama, 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	Oshikwanyama
How do you say ... in Oshikwanyama?	... otashi ti ngaipi mOshikwanyama?
What does ... mean?	... otashi ti ngaipi?
Word	Oshitya
What is this/that?	Eshi / Osho oshike?

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	Oshikwanyama
Say	Tya (Ti)
He/she/they said that	Va ti
He/she says that	Ota ti kutya
Hey! / I say!	Ohandi ti! / Ohai ti! / Hai ti!
What did he/she/they say?	Okwa ti ngaipi?

Quick Tip

Va ti *(literally, "they said") can also carry the sense of "supposedly" or "allegedly".*

Exercise 3

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

Friend: Wa uhala po, Meekulu?

Meekulu: Okwa ti ngaipi?

You: *Okwa ti wa uhala po nawa, kuku?*

Meekulu: Oh, onda uhala po nawa. Owa dja peni kaume?

Friend: Onda dja koAngola.

Meekulu: Okwa ti ngaipi?

You: .....

Meekulu: Oh, koAngolaaaa! Oto ningi shike moNamibia?

Friend: Ohandi landifa eengodi dopeke. (cell phones)

Meekulu: Okwa ti ngaipi?

You: .....

Meekulu: Ooooooh, oho landifa eengodi dopeke. Owa kala mo efimbo li fike peni?

Friend: Onda kala mo eedula nhano.

Meekulu: Okwa ti ngaipi?

You: .....

Meekulu: Ooh, eedula mbali...

Friend: Eewa, Meekulu. Kala po nawa.

Meekulu: Okwa ti ngaipi?

You: .....

Meekulu: Eewa kaume, enda po nawa. U etela nge ouleke!

Friend: Eewa Meekulu.

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Grammar Corner: In / On / At

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

1. There are three important prepositions of place in Oshikwanyama, *mo*, *po*, and *ko*. These can be roughly translated as follows:

English	Oshikwanyama
In / Inside	Mo
On / On top of	Po
At / To / By	Ko

2. When you have a phrase like "in the pot", you might think of writing ***mo ombiya*, but it is actually written (and said) *mombiya*. The same thing goes for *po*, *ko*, and *na* ("and/with").

Somewhat confusingly, *mo*, *po*, and *ko* are also used on their own 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 oshifima with your right hand only.
- Take meat with your right hand, but put it in your left hand to hold and eat it.
- The word for "meat" in Oshikwanyama was originally *onyama*. *Ovakwanyama*, the Kwanyama people, are literally "the people of the meat." due to traditional beliefs about names, the word *onyama* became taboo and replaced by the word *ombelela*, which comes from the verb *okuvelela*, to dip. (Zimmermann et. al., 28)

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ 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 Ovaneumbo vange

Edina lange oSalom. Onda dja kOshikwiyu. Ondi na eedula omilongo mbali na hetatu. Ohandi kala novakulunhu vange.

Meme wange edina laye oSaima. Oku na eedula omilongo nhano na nhano.

Tate wange edina laye oTangeni. Oku na eedula omilongo hamano na imwe.

Ondi na ovamwameme yatatu, omumwamemekadona umwe novamwamememati vavali. Ame onowele.

Omumwamemekadona edina laye oTresia. Oku na eedula omilongo nhatu. Ye oshiveli. Oha kala nomushamane waye kOshakati.

Omumwamememati edina laye oNangolo. Oku na eedula omilongo mbali nanhano. Oha kala novakulunhu yetu kOshikwiyu. Naye onowele.

Onghelo yetu oFrans oku na eedula omilongo mbali nambali. Oha kala kOvenduka kouniveesiti.

Meekulu wange oha kala nafye. Oku na eedula omilongo hetatu na imwe.

Naave, oove lye?

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English	Oshikwanyama
Family	Ovaneumbo / Edimo
My father	Tate
Your father	Xo
His/her father	Xe
My mother	Meme
Your mother	Nyoko
His/her mother	Ina
My sibling	Omumwameme
My brother	Omumwamememati
My sister	Omumwamemekadona
Your sibling	Omumwanyoko
His/her sibling	Omumwaina
Little brother or sister	Okandenge
Grandmother	Me(m)ekulu
Grandfather	Tatekulu
Child	Okaana (plural: Ounona)
Baby	Okaana / Okahanana
First-born	Oshiveli
Middle-born (neither first nor last)	Onowele
Last-born	Onghelo
Friend	Kaume
Female friend	Kahewa
Visitor	Omweenda / Omutalelipo
Neighbor	Omushiinda
Husband / Man	Omus(h)amane
Wife / Woman	Omukulukadi
Fiancé (man)	Omuvaleki
Fiancée (woman)	Omuvalekwa
I am engaged. (woman)	Onda valekwa.
Parents	Ovakulunhu
Young person	Omunyasha
Younger person (than you)	Omunini
Elder person	Omukulunhu
Who's that?	Olye oo?

Quick Tips

- *As you can see, the Oshikwanyama 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 waye *(literally, "his 'my mother'").*

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Oshififinwa ohashi shikula omhadi. ~

The heel follows the foot.
(You follow the behavior of your family.)

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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 Oshikwanyama, 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-	ova-
1a**	(none)	oo-
2***	omu-	omi-
3	e-	oma-
4	oshi-	oi-
5****	o-	ee-
6	olu-	omalu-
7	oka-	ou-
8*****	ou-	omau-
9	oku-	omaku- / oma -

* 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.

*** Noun class 2 has nouns that begin with omu- but do not refer to people.

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

***** Ou- as a singular prefix generally refers to abstract concepts, e.g. *oufiku* (night) and *outalala* (cold). The plural form is used rarely.

You will probably begin to notice that certain noun prefixes are used for certain kinds of things. For example, names of trees have the prefix *omu-* (class 2), and small things start with *oka-*.

Exercise 1

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

Example: Omumwameme → Sibling → Ovamwameme

Oshikwanyama Noun	English Meaning	Plural in Oshikwanyama
Omumwamemekadona		
Tate		
Omushiinda		
Kaume		
Omumwaina		
Etanga		
Okayaxa		
Omulongo		
Ongobe		
Oshikombo		

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Listed below are some common question words.

English	Oshikwanyama
Where?	Peni?
When? (which day)	Naini?
When? (what time)	Efimbo peni?
Who?	(O)lye?
Why?	Omolwashike? / Oshike?
What?	(O)shike?
How?	(O)ngaipi? / (O)ngahelipi
How many?	-ngapi?
Which?	-lipi?

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 i 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 *hano,* as in *oto i peni, hano?* There is a tendency to drop the final *o*, so it is often pronounced *'to i penyan?*

Translations of "how many" and "which" are given here for your information. Using them is a bit tricky. For more information, see chapter six.

Exercise 2

Answer the following questions about Salom's family.

1. Salom oku na ovamwaina vangapi?
2. Meekulu waye oku na eedula ngapi?
3. Omumwainakadona waye oha kala peni?
4. Salom okwa dja peni?
5. Frans ota ningi shike kOvenduka?
6. Oshike Tresia iha kala na Salom?

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Oshi ya twa mumwe noshima. ~

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

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Take another look at the beginning of this chapter: *Edina lange oSalom*. Literally, "My name is Salom." At the end of the same paragraph, we have *ovakulunhu vange*, "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 *lange*, or *yange*, or even other words. The root of all these words, *-ange*, denotes "my". The prefix must agree with the possessed object.

Noun prefix	Possessive pronoun prefix
omu-	w-
ova-	v-
omu- (not people)	w-
omi-	d-
e-	l-
oma-	-
oshi-	sh-
oi-	y-
olu-	l(w)-
oka-	k-
ou- (plural)	v-
ou- (singular)	w-
oku-	kw-
o- (anything else - group 5 singular)	y-
ee- (group 5 plural)	d-

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	Oshikwanyama person	Possessive Root
My	Ame	-ange
Your	Ove	-oye
His/Her/Its	Ye	-aye
Our	Fye	-etu
Your (plural)	Nye	-eni
Their	Vo	-avo

For now, focus on groups 1 and 5 and "my" and "your". Use *w-/v-* with people and *y-/d-* 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 *w-ange*
Your elders	→	*ova*kulupe *v-oye*
My pen	→	opena yange
Your pens	→	eepena doye

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)	loye
ongobe (your)	wange
kaume/kahewa (his/her)	vaye
omatako (my)	yange
okaana (our)	yavo
oihauto (their)	yoye
omiti (y'all's)	ange
ovanhu (his/her)	yoye
omhadi (my)	koye
olukaku (your)	ketu
omakutwi (their)	letu
oikombo (their)	yavo
okayaxa (your)	kaye
ohema (your)	deni
eumbo (our)	avo

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 *Mee'ku* or *Tatee'ku*. Otherwise, say *ee*.

Oshikundu Shetu *by Papa François*

Oshikundu shetu
Omalodu etu
Omaongo etu
Oikulya yo moNamibia

Oshifima shetu
Omungome wetu
Omahola etu
Oikulya yo moNamibia

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6 kOkamba

A: Wa uhala po, tate?
B: Heeno, meme.
A: Nawa tuu?
B: Ehee, ondi li nawa. Ove wa uhala po, meme?
A: Heeno, tate.
B: Nawa tuu?
A: Ehee, onawa.
B: Owa hala shike?
A: Tate, onda hala okulanda ofewa. Omu naa?
B: Ehee, omu na. Owa hala ofewa youlikosha ile yokukosha?
A: Ofewa yokulikosha. Oi na ingapi?
B: Eedola omulongo.
A: Ooh, ondilo unene. Hmm... omu na oukuki?
B: Ehee.
A: Ove na ingapi?
B: Oifilinga itano.
A: Eewa, tate. Pe nge oukuki vavali nobiila imwe.
B: Eewa.
A: Oimaliwa yoye oyo, tate.
B: Eewa, meme.
A: Eewa, tate, oshi liwete nale...
B: Oh! Tambulaa oshendja yoye.
A: Ah, tangi meme. Oshi li nawa.

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English	Oshikwanyama
Cuca shop	Okamba
Store	Ofitola
Proletarian revolution	Elunduluko lovanailonga
Right-wing reactionary	Omukalunduluka wolulyo
Money	Oimaliwa
Change	Oshendja
Expensive	Ondilo
Cheap	Ombilixa
Coins	Oimaliwa ikukutu
Bills	Oimaliwa yomafo
Enough! (interjection)	Opuwo!
To be enough (verb)	Wana
Receipt	Okasilepa
Price	Odado/ Opulaisa
Customer	Okasitoma
Dollar	Odola
Rand	Olanda
10c coin / coins	Oshifilinga / Oifilinga
Buy	Landa (Lande)
Sell	Landifa
Give	Pa (Pe)
Pay	Futa (Futu)
How much?	Ingapi?
It is too expensive.	Ondilo unene
I only have ...	Ondi na ... ashike
Don't cheat me.	Ino nyokoma nge.
I don't have enough money.	Kandi na oimaliwa ya wana.

Quick Tip

To ask how much something costs, you ask how much it has. Thus, "How much is the soap?" is Ofewa oi na ingapi? *See chapter seven for more information on stative subject concords.*

People will also understand you if you just name the item and say, "Ingapi?"

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Exercise 1

Answer the following questions about the dialogue in complete sentences, in the language of the question.

1. Okwa landa shike kofitola?
2. Ofewa oi na ingapi?
3. Did the customer want body soap or laundry detergent?
4. Oukuki ove na ingapi?
5. Okasitoma okwa futa eelanda hetatu. Obiila oi na ingapi?
6. Okasitoma okwa landa eeshi?
7. Okasitoma okwa futa noshiimaliwa shomilongo mbali. Oku na oshendja ingapi?

Exercise 2

1. Ou na eedola omilongo nhano. Oto futu eedola omilongo nhatu na hamano. Paife, ou na ingapi?
2. Ohandi lande oshikombo shoye. Ohandi ku pe eedola omafele atatu nomilongo hamano. Ou 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*.

Paife is used in all Oshiwambo dialects, but Oshindonga has a fun 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*.

You may also hear the Oshindonga word *mbala,* which indicates that something will happen in the near near future. *Mbala* is also strengthened by repetition.

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Onghulungubu hai pwa makiya. ~

An old briar fence always has thorns (even if you try to remove it).
(Old people always have wise things to say.)

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

Noun prefix	Numerical prefix
omu-	u-
ova-	va-
omu- (not people)	u-
omi-	use normal numbers (or i-)
e-	li-
oma-	a-
oshi-	sh-
oi-	i-
olu-	li- / lu-
oka-	ka-
ou- (plural)	va-
ou- (singular)	u-
oku-	ku-
o- (group 5 singular)	use normal numbers
ee- (group 5 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
Imwe	-mwe
Mbali	-vali
Nhatu	-tatu
Nhee	-ne
Nhano	-tano
Hamano	-hamano
Heyali	-heyali
Hetatu	-hetatu
Omuwoi	Omuwoi (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	→	Oikombo *i+vali*	→	Oikombo ivali
Three goats	→	Oikombo *i+tatu*	→	Oikombo itatu
Nine goats	→	Oikombo *omuwoi*		(omuwoi needs no prefix)
One cow	→	Ongobe *imwe*		(group 5 uses regular numbers)
Two cows	→	Eengobe *mbali*		(group 5 uses regular numbers)
One frog	→	Efuma *li+mwe*	→	Efuma limwe
Two frogs	→	Omafuma *a+vali*	→	Omafuma avali

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Exercise 3

Write a passage describing a family you know in Oshikwanyama. 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 Oshikwanyama.

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: oimaliwa ingapi. *To ask "how much" or "how many" for other things, use* -ngapi *with the counting prefix:* ovamwameme vangapi, eengobe ngapi.

To ask "which", put the counting prefix before -lipi.

Takamifa! Ngeenge owa eenyofi, oto ka xuxwila pombete yoye.

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:
~ Okuna eenyala dile. ~
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 *a+mwe* → Omafuma amwe

Nouns with the prefixes *omi-* and *-ee*, which you count using normal numbers, are exceptions. They use the prefix *di-*:

Some cattle → Eengobe *di+mwe* → Eengobe dimwe

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

Each person → Keshe omunhu → Keshe umwe
Every day → Keshe efiku → Keshe limwe

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

All the frogs → Omafuma *a + (a→e) + she* → Omafuma aeshe
All the cows → Eengobe *a + di + she* → Oongombe adishe

Quick Tip

- *"All of us" is* atushe*; "all of them" is* aveshe*; "all of you" is* amushe.
- *For "everything", just use* aishe *(*oinima aishe*).*
- *For information on "many" and "few", refer to* Grammar Corner: Adjectives.

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7 Owa uka peni?

Ove: Oshi li ngaipi?
Taxi driver: Oshi li nawa. Ongaipi?
Ove: Onawa.
Taxi driver: Owa hala peni?
Ove: Onda hala popepi nopoosa. Oshi li nawa?
Taxi driver: Eewa. Londa.
Ove: Ingapi, tate?
Taxi driver: Eedola nhano. Tu ye!
Ove: Eewa, tu ye.

(driving, approaching destination)

Ove: Tate, ngolyoka kolulyo komalobota.
Taxi driver: Eewa.
Ove: Ngolyoka kolumosho kostalata.

(approaching destination)

Ove: Ohandi di mo apa.
Taxi driver: Apa?
Ove: Heeno, tate.
Taxi driver: Eewa.
Ove: Eewa, ou na oshendja?
Taxi driver: Heeno, tate... Tambula.
Ove: Eewa. Tangi unene, tate.

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English	Oshikwanyama
Head (somewhere)	Uka (uku)
Get in	Londa
Get out/off	Dja (di) mo
Stop	Fikama
Here	Apa
There	Opo / Penya
Near	Popepi na
Far	Kokule
Turn	Ngolyoka
Car	Oshihauto/Ohauto/Otuwa
Lift	Olefa
Hitchhike	Kwata olefa
Bus	Ombesa
Combi	Okambesa
To the left	Kolumosho
To the right	Kolulyo
Directions	Eembinga
Town	Odolopa
Church	Ongeleka / Omambo
Police station	Opolifi
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 i peni?
Do you have change for . . . ?	Ou na oshendja y_____
Where is my change?	Oshendja yange? (oi li peni?)
Stop here/ there.	Fikama apa/opo.
I am getting out here/ there.	Ohandi di mo apa/opo.
Stop for my friends.	Fikamena ookaume kange.
I want to go to	Onda hala (okuya) ko _____.

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 similar verbs:

English	Oshikwanyama
Come	Uya
Go	Ya (I)

For the first person *ame*, it is written as follows:

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

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 i*. "He will come" is *Ote ke uya*. The *u* in *uya* is often left off, both in speech and in modern writing (*Onde ya)*.

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

English	Oshikwanyama
Go back	Shuna
Come back	Aluka
Come from	Dja (Di)
Arrive	Fika (Fiki)

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

Exercise 2

Translate the following statements into Oshikwanyama:

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

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:
~ Mweenda-nakanya iha puka. ~
A traveller with a mouth doesn't get lost.
(Ask directions.)

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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- (person)	okwa	ota	ota ka
ova-	ova	otava / otaa	otava ka / otaa ka
omu- (not people)	owa	otau	otau ka
omi-	oda	otadi	otadi ka
e-	ola	otali	otali ka
oma-	okwa	otaa	otaa ka
oshi-	osha	otashi	otashi ka
oi-	oya	otai	otai ka
olu-	ola / olya	otali / otalu	otali ka / otalu ka
oka-	oka	otaka	otaka ka
ou – (plural)	ova	otava	otava ka
ou- (singular)	owa	otau	otau ka
oku-	okwa	otaku	otaku ka
o- (anything else – group 5 singular)	oya	otai	otai ka
ee- (group 5 plural)	oda	otadi	otadi ka

There are also subject concords for stative verbs:

Noun prefix	Past Subject Concord	Present Subject Concord	Future Subject Concord
omu- (person)	okwa li e	oku	ota ka kala e
ova-	ova li ve	ove	otava ka kala ve
omu- (not people)	owa li u	ou	otau ka kala u
omi-	oda li di	odi	otadi ka kala di
e-	ola li li	oli	otali ka kala li
oma-	okwa li ku	oku	otaa ka kala ku
oshi-	osha li shi	oshi	otashi ka kala shi
oi-	oya li i	oi	otai ka kala i
olu-	olwa li lu / ola li li	olu / oli	otalu ka kala lu
oka-	oka li ke	oke	otaka ka kala ke
ou- (plural)	ova li ve	ove	otava ka kala ve
ou- (singular)	owa li u	ou	otau ka kala u
oku-	okwa li ku	oku	otaku ka kala ku
o- (anything else – group 5 singular)	oya li i	oi	otai ka kala i
ee- (group 5 plural)	oda li di	odi	otadi ka kala di

We will talk more about these later; for now 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 hope that they might be useful to you in the future.

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8 Oundjolowele

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English	Oshikwanyama
Head	Omutwe
Hair	Eexwiki
Eyes	Omesho
Nose	Eyulu
Ears	Omakutwi
Mouth	Okanya
Shoulder	Epepe
Back	Ombuda
Arms	Omaoko
Hands	Omake / Eenyala
Chest	Onulo
Breast	Omavele
Stomach	Edimo
Buttocks	Omatako
Legs	Omaulu
Knee	Ongolo
Foot	Omhadi
Toes / Fingers	Ominwe
Teeth	Omayo
Beard	Eendjedi
Pills	Eepela
Medicine	Omiti
Shot	Ovenda
Clinic	Okapangelo
Hospital	Oshipangelo
Doctor	Ndokotola / Omupangi
Cough	Omukolo
Running nose	Eshikisha
Diarrhea	Oshimela
Toothbrush	Okati kokomayo / Okakombe kokomayo
Toothpaste	Omuti wokomayo
Dental floss	Ongodi yomayo
Hairbrush	Omendu
Razor	Okambi / Okashina
Sunscreen	Omaadi omutenya
Lotion	Omaadi okolutu
Lip balm	Omaadi okomilungu
Condom	Okondoma / Ongumi
Sick / In pain	Vela (Vele) / 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	Oshikwanyama
What part of you is hurting? / How are you sick?	Oto vele shike/peni?
When did you get sick?	Owa tameka okuvela naini?
Can you call ... for me?	Kwafe nge u dengele ...?
I want to go to the hospital.	Onda hala okuya koshipangelo.
I want to see the doctor.	Onda hala okumona Ndokotola.
The doctor said I have to go to Windhoek.	Ndokotola okwa ti ondi na okuya kOvenduka.
I need a condom.	Onda pumbwa okondoma.
Use a condom.	Longifa okondoma.
Take some condoms.	Kufa(mo) eekondoma.
Protect yourself.	Liamena.

Quick Tip

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

- *headache:* Ohandi vele omutwe.
- *stomach ache:* Ohandi vele medimo. *(i.e., "in the stomach")*
- *back ache:* Ohandi vele ombuda.
- *Caution: If you say,* Ohandi vele momutwe*, you are saying "I am sick in the head", i.e. "I am crazy."*

Exercise 2

Read the dialogue. Answer the following questions in Oshikwanyama.

Jeff: Wa lele po nawa, meme?
Meme: Heeno, Jeff. Ove wa lele po nawa?
Jeff: Ayee Meme. Ohandi vele.
Meme: Oto vele shike?
Jeff: Ohandi vele medimo.
Meme: Owa tameka okuvela naini?
Jeff: Onda tameka onghela.
Meme: Owa pumbwa shike?
Jeff: Onda hala okumona Ndokotola.
Meme: Eewa, tuye koshipangelo.

1. Jeff oku li ngaipi? Omolwashike?
2. Jeff ota vele peni?
3. Jeff okwa li e udite nawa onghela?
4. Jeff na Meme otava ka ninga shike?
5. Otava ka ya peni?

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:
~ Ou ta ti fya. Ou 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 Oshikwanyama, as we have seen, we say *ohandi vele*. *Ohandi* is a subject concord, linking the (unstated) subject to the verb, which in this case is *vele*. It seems that "to be sick" is a verb in Oshikwanyama. As it turns out, most statements about one's state of being are expressed with verbs in Oshikwanyama. Where in English you would use the verb "to be", in Oshikwanyama it is unnecessary.

To express other feelings, such as "happy" or "angry", we use the past tense subject concord. For example, *onda hafa* means "I am happy". It may be helpful to think that these "feeling verbs" express an idea of becoming: because *handuka* means "to become angry", *onda handuka* 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 handuka* can be translated as "You (always) get angry" and *Tate ota ka hafa* means "Tate will be happy".

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

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

English	Oshikwanyama
Happy	Hafa / Nyakukwa
Full / Satisfied	Kuta
Angry / Mad	Handuka
Want	Hala
Need (to be lacking)	Pumbwa
Tired	Loloka
Dying (of)	Fya (Fi)
Sleepy	Fya (Fi) emofi
Hungry	Fya (Fi) ondjala
Afraid	Tila

Exercise 3

How are you feeling today? Why?

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

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Etembo olufo. ~

Moving (eg to another house) is chance.
(Have sympathy for someone in difficult times – next time it might be you.)

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English	Oshikwanyama
If	Ngeenge
If (unreal situations)	Ngeno
Then	Ndele / Ndee
Maybe	Mbela / Kashimba
It's possible	Otashi shiiva / Otashi dulika
About	Kombinga
After / Behind / Backwards / In the back	Konima
Forward / In front	Komesho
Before / While	Manga
Because	Shaashi / Osheshi
But	Ndee / Ndele / Ashike
Probably	Pamwe

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

Ngeenge

For positive statements, 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.	Ngeenge onda li ombelela, ohandi vele.

For negative statements, the verb is also in the past tense:

If I do not speak, it is okay.	Ngeenge inandi popya, oshi li nawa.

Ngeno

Ngeno is used to talk about unreal or improbable situations. You have to put the word *ngeno* in both parts of the sentence.

If you had studied, you wouldn't have failed.	Ngeno owa leshele, ngeno ino dopa.
If it were me (ie if I were you), I would...	Ngeno aame, ngeno ohandi...

Mbela

Used as in English.

Maybe we will be rained on.	Mbela ohatu ka lokwa.

Otashi dulika / Otashi shiiva

Also used as in English:

Will you go to Ongwediva?	Oto i kOngwediva?
It's possible.	Otashi shiiva.

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If you want to say it's possible *that* something will happen, you have to use the subjunctive voice (see *Grammar Corner: Subjunctive Verbs*).

It's possible that I'll go.	Otashi shiiva ndi ye.

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*ofikola?
I am talking about you.	Ohandi popi kombinga yoye.
We are talking about Tate.	Ohatu popi kombinga yaTate.

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

I stay somewhere that side.	Ohandi kala kombinga kwii.

Konima

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

I will go after church.	Ohandi ka ya konima yongeleka.
We will go later (after time).	Ohatu ka ya konima yefimbo.

Komesho

The opposite of kombinga with regards to space, but not used for time. Literally, "to the eyes".

Sit in front, Tate.	Inda komesho, Tate.
Go forward, Tate.	Inda komesho, 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 keumbo manga inandi ya kOndangwa.
I bathe before I go to school.	Ohandi likosho manga inandi ya kofikola.

Shaashi / Osheeshi

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

Ndee(But / Then) / Ashike

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

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I wanted to go, but I didn't get the money.	Okwa li nda hala okuya, ndee inandi mona oimaliwa
I went to Endola, then I went to Oshakati.	Onda ya kEndola ndee onda ya kOshakati..

Exercise 4

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

"Ooooh, meme. Ohai ku lombwele kombinga yokakadona kange. Okwa hala tu hombolwe, ndee ame onda hala okuya kOmbaye ndi ka kale novakulunhu vange. Uuh, onda tila, man. Otashi shiiva ina hala okuya naame nondi mu hole unene. Mbela ohandi ka kala apa, ngeenge ina hala okuya."

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Okakuwena ke dule 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 tomatoes.	→	Okwa landa omatama.
He bought them (tomatoes).	→	Okwe a landa.
I am eating porridge.	→	Ohandi li oshifima.
I am eating it (porridge).	→	Ohandi 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 Oshikwanyama 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-	mu
ova-	va
omu- (not people)	u
omi-	di
e-	li
oma-	a
oshi-	shi
oi-	i
olu-	li / lu
oka-	ka
ou- (plural)	va
ou- (singular)	u
oku-	ku
o- (group 5 singular)	i
ee- (group 5 plural)	di

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 i denga! (ombwa)
Bring it! (a thing)	→	Shi eta! (oshinima)

Like in English, personal pronouns have special object pronouns:

English	Oshikwanyama
Me	nge
You (singular)	ku
Her / Him	mu
Us	tu
You (plural)	mu
Them	va

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

You make me sick.	→	Oto ehameke nge.
Don't accuse me!	→	Ino lundila nge!

For positive commands with *nge*, the last *a* in the verb changes to an *e*.

Help me!	→	Kwafe nge!
Tell me!	→	Lombwele nge!

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-	ou	oo	winya / wii*
ova-	ava	ovo	venya / vee
omu- (not people)	ou	oo	winya / wii
e-	eli	olo	linya / lii
oma-	aa	oo	enya / ee
oshi-	eshi	osho	shinya / shii
oi-	ei	oyo	inya / ii
olu-	olu / eli	olwo / olo	lwinya / lwii / linya / lii
oka-	oko	aka	kenya / kee
ou- (plural)	ava	ovo	venya / vee
ou- (singular)	ou	oo	winya / wii
oku-	oku	oko	kwinya / kwii
o- (group 5 sing.)	ei	oyo	inya / ii
ee- (group 5 pl.)	edi	odo	dinya / dii
pa / pu **	apa	opo	penya / pee
ku **	oku	oko	kwiinya / kwii
mu **	omo	omo	mwiinya / mwii

* The second version of "yonder" is used for extra emphasis.

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

A few examples might be necessary:

This goat	→	*oshi*kombo *eshi*
That person	→	*omu*nhu oo
That thing	→	*oshi*nima *osho*
This place	→	*apa*
That donkey over there	→	*ondoongi inya / ii*

It's probably frustrating to see the massive prefix list. Don't worry about it. Just remember *eshi* and *osho* for unnamed things, *ou* and *oo* for people (singular), and *ei* and *oyo* for class 5 nouns, 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	***Oshikwanyama***	***This***	***That***	***Yonder***
People	Ovanhu	Ava	Ovo	Venya
Things				
	Eengobe			
Goat				
Food				
	Ounona			
	Oshinima			
Girl				
	Omumati			
Rag / Cloth	Elapi			
Learners	Ovalongwa			
Key				
Car				
Books	Omambo			
House				
Place	Oshilongo			
Beer				
Cooldrink				
Lift				

Exercise 6

Translate the following sentences into Oshikwanyama.

1. What is this?
2. Who is that?
3. Did you see that goat?
4. I want those books over there.
5. This porridge is delicious.
6. I love you.
7. I want it (the thing).

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ 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 *popifa* Ndahafa.
Ndahafa is being greeted by Koto.	→	Ndahafa ota *popifwa* ku Koto.
Sylvia told me.	→	Sylvia okwa *lombwela* nge.
I was told by Sylvia.	→	Onda *lombwelwa* ku Sylvia.
The boys are going to ask the teacher.	→	Ovamati otava ka *pula* omulongi.
The teacher is going to be asked by the boys.	→	Omulongi ota ka *pulwa* kovamati.

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 Oshikwanyama 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* oukuki.
The meat will be eaten up.	→	Ombelela otayi ka *liwa* po.

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9 Omafiku nomafimbo

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English	Oshikwanyama
Monday	Omaandaxa
Tuesday	Etivali
Wednesday	Etitatu
Thursday	Etine
Friday	Etitano
Saturday	Olomakaya
Sunday	Os(h)oondaxa
January	Januali
February	Febululali
March	Maalitsa
April	Apilili
May	Mei
June	Juni
July	Juli
August	Aguste
September	Septemba
October	Kotoba
November	Novomba
December	Desemba
Day	Efiku
Week	Oshivike
Weekend	Owikenda
Month	Omwedi
Year	Odula
Time	Efimbo
Minute / Minutes	Omunute / Ominute
Hour	Otundi
Clock	Ovili
Watch	Ovili
Meet	Shakena (Shakene)
Meeting	Oshihongi / Oshongalele
Holiday / Vacation	Efudo
Workshop	Oshihongiilonga/ Owekshopa
What day is it?	Nena etingapi?
What time is it?	(Ovili) ongapi?
When (what day)?	Naini?
At what time (of day)?	Efimbo peni?
At what time (hour)?	Pongapi?
At what sun position?	Etango peni?
What is the date?	Omafiku angapi?

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Omunwe umwe ihau litombola na. ~

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

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In Oshikwanyama, 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": *oshivike sha dja 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": *oshivike tashi (u)ya*. Like the last example, *tashi* is just the present subject concord without the *o-*. To say "This week", you say, well, "this week": *oshivike eshi*. *Eshi* 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"
Omaandaxa	Oma-	otaa	(okw)a	aa
Etivali	E-	otali	ola	eli
Etitatu	E-	otali	ola	eli
Etine	E-	otali	ola	eli
Etitano	E-	otali	ola	eli
Olomakaya	Olu-	otalu / otali	olwa/ ola	eli
Osoondaxa	Oshi-	otashi	osha	eshi
Oshivike	Oshi-	otashi	osha	eshi
Omwedi*	Omu-	otau	owa	ou

*Even though the prefix of *omwedi* is *omu-*, its plural is *eemwedi*.

Exercise 1

Translate the following statements into Oshikwanyama:

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 Oshikwanyama to English:

1. Oshivike sha dja ko, onda li handi vele medimo.
2. Ondi na edalo omwedi tau uya.
3. Etine tali uya, ohandi i kodolopa.
4. Molomakaya la dja ko, omumati wange okwa dana etanga.
5. Itandi i kongeleka mosoondaxa eshi.

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

To tell the hour, just say the number with an *o-* in front of it, e.g. *Ombali* means "It's two o'clock".

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

Oshikwanyama 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 *wa pita*. So 9:20 becomes *omuwoi wa pita omilongo mbali*, and 12:45 is *omulongo nambali wa pita omilongo nhee nanhano*. 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 lomuwoi*. Broken into pieces, this is *etata lo-omugoyi*, but the first *o* is elided. Likewise, 10:30 is said *etata lomulongo na imwe.*

The same things happens with other times: 1:30 becomes *etata lombali* (*etata lo-*mbali) and 5:30 is said as *etata lohamano*.

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 Oshikwanyama.

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 oshifima 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 Oshikwanyama.

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OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Kaxuxwena, hadela nyoko. Nyoko onale e ku hadele. ~

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 Oshikwanyama. 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 Oshikwanyama translation of the holiday. Below the table are some common holiday phrases.

Date	Holiday	Oshikwanyama
1 January	New Year's	Efiku lotete lodula
21 March	Independence Day	Efiku lomanguluko
	Easter	Opaasa
1 May	Worker'sDay	Efiko lovanailonga
4 May	Cassinga Day	Efiku laKassinga
	Ascension Day	Efiku lelondo
25 May	Africa Day	Efiku laAfrika
26 August	Hero's Day	Efiku lomapendafule
28 September	Namibia Children's Day	Efiku lokanona okaNamibia
10 December	Human Rights Day	Efiku loufembawomunhu
25 December	Christmas	Okrismesa
26 December	Family Day	Efiku lovaneumbo

English	Oshikwanyama
Merry Christmas	Okrismesa ya yambekwa
Did you celebrate the new year?	Owa dana odula ipe?
Did you arrive well (in the new year)?	Owa fika mo nawa?
Did you have a nice holiday / vacation?	Owa fuda po nawa?

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10 Ohema iwa

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English	Oshikwanyama
Clothes	Oikutu
T-shirt	Okambidja
Shirt	Ohema
Blouse	Ohema / Okabuluse
Trousers	Ombulukweva
Jersey / Sweater	Ombidja
Dress	Ohema (yoomeme) / Oshikutu
Skirt	Oufulukweva
Jacket	Ondjafa / Ombaikifa
Shoes	Eenghaku / Omalukaku
Flip-flops	Eetapa
Socks	Oikafino
Hat	Embale
Belt	Omuya
Slip	Okadjalifo
Glasses	Omakende okomesho
Tie	Otae
Watch	Ovili
Bra	Okamanga
Underwear	Okapendi / Okadolombuluku
Laundry	Oikutu yakaka / Oikoshomwa
Clean	Yela
Dirty	Kaka
Bucket	Oshiyemele / Evela
Soap	Ofewa
Clothesline	Ongodi yoikutu
Clothespins	Oukalamala
Iron	Oshikangule
Basin	Oshiyaxa / Ombaali
Wash (clothes or dishes)	Kosha (Kosho)
Wash (your body)	Likosho (Likosho)
Iron	Kangula
Where can I hang my clothes?	Openi hai tulike oikutu yange?
You look nice.	Oto monika nawa.
I was born like that.	Osho nda lwa.

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	Oshikwanyama
Red	-tilyana
Orange	-tilyanaoushunga
Yellow	-shunga
Green	-ziza
Blue	-mbulau
Purple	-tilyanembulau
Black	-laula
White	-toka
Brown	-mbudu
What color is your shirt?	Ohema yoye oi li ngahelipi?

Grammar Corner: Adjectives

To tell the truth, Oshikwanyama lacks adjectives. Because states of being can be expressed with verbs, adjectives are less necessary in daily usage. However, you will still hear them.

Once again, adjectives have their own set of concords that must agree with noun prefixes. Fortunately, they are nearly identical to the counting prefixes. Here is a table. Prefixes that differ from counting prefixes are italicized.

Noun prefix	Adjective prefix
omu-	*mu-*
ova-	va-
omu- (not people)	*mu-*
omi-	*di-*
e-	li-
oma-	*ma-*
oshi-	sh-
oi-	i-
olu-	li- / lu-
oka-	ka-
ou- (plural)	va-
ou- (singular)	u-
oku-	ku-
o- (group 5 singular)	*i-*
ee- (group 5 plural)	*di-*

So:

red t-shirt	→	*oka*mbinja *ka*tiliyana
blue t-shirt	→	*oka*mbinja *ka*mbulau
black pants (trousers)	→	*om*bulukweva *i*laula
stupid goat	→	*oshi*kombo *shi*lai
hot water	→	*ome*va *ma*pyu
good food	→	*oi*kulya *i*wa

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

English	Oshindonga
Good / Nice	-wa
Bad	-i
Stupid	-lai
Really nice	-walela
Clever	-ndunge
Big	*
Small	-shona
Hot	-pyu
Cold	-talala
Many	**
Few	-shona
Sweet / Delicious	-nyenye
Sour	-lula
Easy / Light	-pu
Difficult / Heavy	-ndjuu
Short	-hupi
Long	-le

* "Big" is usually expressed with the past tense of the verb *kula* (to grow). Thus, "big goat" is *oshikombo sha kula*.
** "Many goats" is said o*ikombo ihai pu* (goats that don't finish). For other nouns, you will need to choose the right subject concord.

Grammar Corner: More Adjectives

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.

meme dress → *o*hema *y*oomeme

bedroom (sleep room) → *o*ndunda *y*okunangala

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 Oshikwanyama.

English	Oshikwanyama
nice red shirt	
school books	
stupid goats	
blue trousers	
difficult exam	
cold water	

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Just as Oshikwanyama 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 d*ule* (surpass, exceed).

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

I am happier than Rebecca.	→	Onda hafa *ndi dule* Rebecca.
You pound mahangu better than I do.	→	Oho tu omahangu *u dule* nge.
Beef is tastier than goat meat.	→	Ombelela yongobe oiwa *i dule* yoshikombo.
He is stronger than you. ("He surpasses you in strength.")	→	*Oku* ku *dule* eenghono.

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 hafa *ndi dule aveshe*.
Beef is the best meat.	→	Ombelela ongobe *oi dule* ombelela *aishe*.

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 handuka.
She runs like a cheetah.	→	Oha tondoka a fa etotono.

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

Exercise 3

Lombwele nge, oto djala shike nena?

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11 mEumbo

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English	Oshikwanyama
House	Eumbo
Toilet	Okandjuwo
Bedroom	Onduda yokunangala
Kitchen (outside)	Epata
Kitchen / Food storage area	Okambifa
Shower area	Okalikoshelo
Sitting room	Osheti / Oshinyanga
Hut / Room	Onduda
Homestead	Eumbo lomiti / loshiwambo
Grain storage	Eshisha / Okaanda
Garden	Oshikunino
Corral	Oshuunda
Gate / Door	Oshivelo / Omuvelo
Fence	Ekoye / Odalate
Fire	Omundilo
River	Omulonga
Seasonal (water) pan	Oshana
Dirty water	Omeva (m)a kaka
Water tap	Opomba / Okapomba
Animal	Oshinamwenyo
Cow	Ongobe
Goat	Oshikombo
Chicken	Oxuxwa
Donkey	Ondoongi
Cat	Okambishi
Dog	Ombwa
Lizard	Ekoko
Snake	Eyoka
Spider	Eluviluvi
Scorpion	Ondje
Millipede	Ongongololo
Pig	Oshingulu
Duck	Ombaka
Horse	Onghambe
Bird	Okadila
Mouse	Omhuku
Ant	Ohedi / Onhenda
Fly	Odi
Mosquito	Omwe
Bat	Elimalima
Owl	Exuvi
Dove	Onguti
Cockroach	Epenzi / Ekakalate
Bug	Epuka / Okapuka

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Nekwa litoka 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	Oshikwanyama
Bed	Ombete
Fridge	Okiila / Ofilidja
Stove	Efiga
Trash	Oimbodi
Window	Ekende
Table	Oshitafula
Chair	Oshipundi
Roof	Eembuli / Mombada
Candle	Okalexita
Paint	Opainda
Lock	Ekumba
Key	Oshipatululo / Oshapi
Break	Teka (Teke)
Fix	Pangela
Lock / Latch	Pata
Open / Unlock	Yuulula / Patulula
Close	Edila / Pata
Sweep	Komba (Kombo)
Look for	Konga (Kongo)
Rake	Halaka
Hoe / Cultivate	Lima (Limi)
Plant	Twika (Twike)
Sow	Kuna (Kunu)
Plough	Pulula
Harvest	Teya
Slaughter / Kill	Dipaa
Skin	Yuva (Yuvu)
Fetch water	Teka (Teke)
Collect wood	Tyava (Tyave)
Throw away	Ekelashi
Meet	Shakaneka (Shakaneke) / Mona (Mono)
Visit	Talela po (Talele po)
Greet (on behalf of)	Kundila po (Kundile po)
Wake up	Penduka
Wake someone up	Pendula
Where do I put my trash?	Openi handi ekelashi oimbodi?
It is broken.	Osha teka.
Can I paint my room?	Nandi painde onduda yange?
What's wrong?	Oshike sha puka?
Can I help you?	Nandi ku kwafe?
Where can I plant a garden?	Openi handi dulu okuninga oshikunino?

Exercise 1

Label the drawing on page 65. 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 Oshikwanyama, this subordination is made by using a different subject concord: not *Ovanhu otava i kofitola*, but *Ovanhu* tava *i kofitola*.

For almost all of the subject concords, just drop the initial *o* and there you are: *otashi* → *tashi*, *ova* → *va*, 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. 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 ovamati tava kombo.	I see the boys [who are] sweeping.
oMaria a teleka oukuki.	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-)	opa / opwa	otapu / otapa	otapu ka / otapa ka	opu / ope
ko (ku-)	okwa	otaku	otaku ka	oku
mo (mu-)	omwa	otamu	otamu ka	omu

For example:

Omu na ofewa?	Is there soap [in] there?
Kape na sha. / Kapu na sha.	There is nothing [there].
koAmelika, oku na eembwa?	Are there dogs in America?
koAmelika, ohaku liwa eembwa?	Are dogs eaten in America?
Omu na ovanhu 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 /Opo nda li* means "I just ate", and *Otu li pokumana* means "We're about to finish, yo."

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Consider the following sentences:

I want you to go to school.	→	Onda hala u ye kofikola.
The teachers want the learners to stand up.	→	Ovalongi ova hala ovanafikola va fikame.
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 Oshikwanyama.

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
Ame	ndi
Ove	u
Ye	a
Fye	tu
Nye	mu
Vo	va

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 twe *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 oikombo *i dje* ko.

English words like "let" and "should" often indicate a desire that something occur: "Let's go", "Should we buy?", etc. Again, in Oshikwanyama, 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 wapaleke?

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!*

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:

~ Ino londa omukwa neenghaku. ~

Don't climb a baobab with shoes.

(Don't enter a difficult situation ill-prepared.)

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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- *or* oha- *to the subjunctive concord. Hence,* ame ohandi nu*;* fye ohatu 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 Oshikwanyama language patterns. See also the final grammar corner, "Making it Simple".*

Exercise 2

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

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

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 Oshikwanyama* (Fivaz 2003) for more information.

Extension	Meaning	English	Oshikwanyama
-afana	... each other	We saw each other.	Otwa monafana.
-ela	... for / on behalf of	I bought some sweets for her.	Onde mu landela ouleke.
-ifa	to make ...	Don't make me angry.	Ino handukifa nge.
li-	... itself / each other	Did you wash yourself?	Owe likosha?

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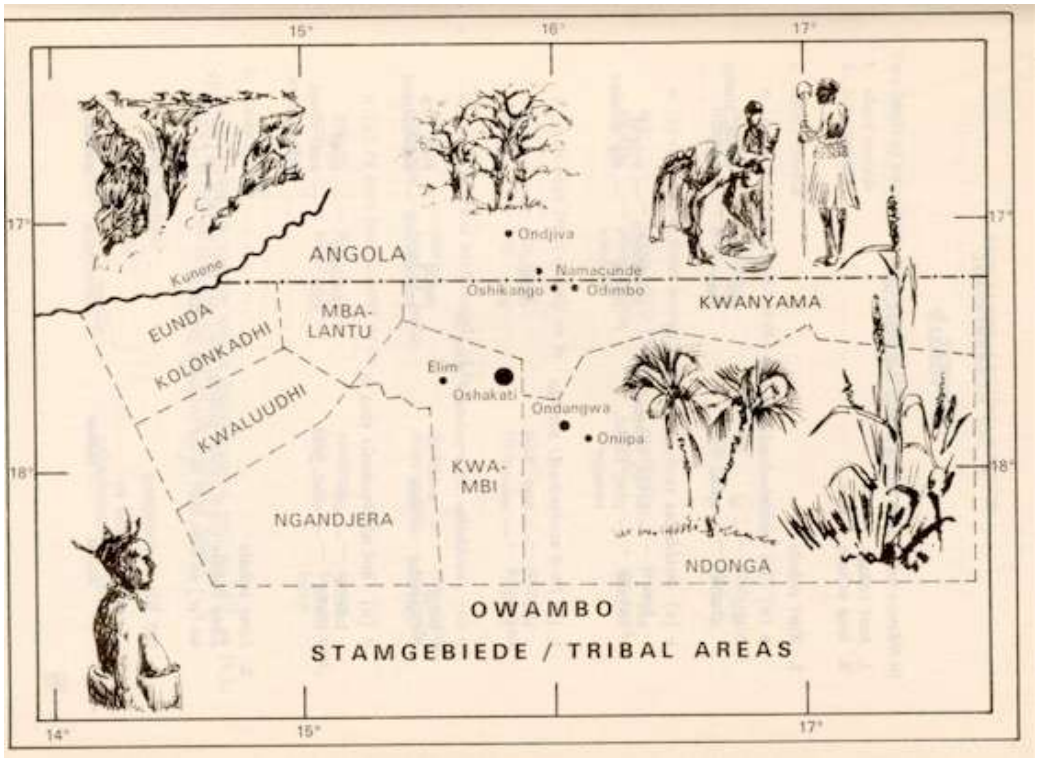
12 mOshiwambo!



A: Oove lye hano, mumati wange?
B: Ngame Pandu ya Shiwedha. Edhina lyoye olye?
A: Aame Meekulu Nelao. Owa dja peni, Pandu?
B: Onda dja kElombe.
A: Ooh, kElombe koNdonga! Oku li nawa?
B: Heeno, oku li nawa.
A: Neengobe, odi li nawa?
B: Ee-ee, oongombe odhi li nawa.
A: Nounona?
B: Eeno, uunona owu li nawa.

A: Oto ningi shike mouKwanyama?
B: Otandi longo osikola.
A: Ooh, ove omulongifikola... Owa tambulwa nawa momukunda wetu.
B: Iyaloo, Kuku.
A: Natu lyeni oikulya yoshikwanyama...oshifima nevanda. Natango ope na ombelela yoxuxwa.
B: Ooh, ekaka nonyama yondjuhwa! Iikulya iiwanawa! Onda panda, Kuku!

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As you probably noticed, the teacher and the meekulu in the above dialogue are not speaking exactly the same language. The meekulu is speaking Oshikwanyama, while the teacher, who comes from Elombe, speaks Oshindonga. 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, Oshingangera, 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. When you speak to people, especially young people, you will most likely hear a mixture of dialects.

After learning a few key patterns and words, you will begin to understand other dialects of Oshiwambo, too. For example, *f* in Oshikwanyama becomes *th* in Oshindonga. Thus, *Aa*ndonga eat *oshithima*, while *Ova*kwanyama sup on *oshifima*. A few of the more common substitutions are listed in the table below.

Oshikwanyama	Oshindonga	Oshikwambi
sh – o*sh*i li nawa	*sh*	*tsh*
d – edina	*dh*	*dh*
-nge – kwafe *nge*	*ndje*	*-nge*
nothing – omaongo	*g* – omagongo	*g*
d – omalo*d*u	*v*	*v*
x/sh - oxju*x*wa	deep *h*	*sh*

The structure of the noun classes is the same, but some of the prefixes and object pronouns are different. It is useful to familiarize yourself with them. Readers especially interested in Oshindonga should see the companion to this book, *Te ti!*

Okwiimba:

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

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Okwiimba:

Owambo

Twa dja kokule
Kedi lomatale
Twe ya kuoove Owambo

Wambo yetu wambo yetu
Twe ya kuoove Owambo

Mu na Ovandonga
Mu na Ovakwanyama

Twe ya kuoove Owambo

Mu na Ovakwambi

Mu na Ovangangera

Twe ya kuoove Owambo

Mu na Ovakwaluudhi
Mu na Ovambalantu

Twe ya kuoove Owambo

Mu na Ovakolonkadhi
Mu na Ovandonga

Twe ya kuoove Owambo

OMUKWANYAMA TA TI:
~ Lumosho lilonga manga lulyo e li po. ~
The left hand learns while the right exists.
(Learn from your elders while they are still around.)

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Let's face it: noun classes make learning Oshikwanyama 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
omu	omunhu	mu
ova-	ovalongi, ovalongi	va
omu- (not people)	omuti, omulongo	u
omi-	omiti, omilunga	di
e-	etango, efimbo	li
oma-	omafimbo, omeva	a
oshi-	oshikombo, oshifima	shi
oi-	oikulya, oikombo	i
olu-	olukaku, olutu	lu
oka-	okaana, okayaxa	ka
ou- (plural)	ounona, ouyaxa	va
ou- (singular)	oufiku, oupyu	u
oku-	okutwi	ku
o-	ongobe	i
ee-	eengobe	di

While it might not be easy to memorize 150 things, a list of 15 is possible. From this list one is able to derive all of the rest, albeit with quite a number of rules. The rules read as complicated, but with a little time and practice, will become natural for you. However, people and their nouns resist derivation and so must be memorized.

Possessives

The object pronoun is essentially the prefix for possessives. Drop the final *i*, unless the *i* is by itself. In that case, change it to *y*. Change a final *u* to a *w* (say *ua* and you'll see why).

my child	→	okaana *ka*+ange	→	okaana kange
our time	→	efimbo *li*→*ly*+etu	→	ethimbo lyetu
your ear	→	okutwi *ku*→*kw*+oye	→	okutwi kwoye
their goats	→	oikombo + *i*→*y*+avo	→	oikombo yavo

Numbers

For groups with prefixes *o-, ee-,* and *omi-*, the numbers have no prefixes. For the other ones, the object pronoun is the prefix.

eight cows	→	eengobe *+hetatu	→	eengobe hetatu (often eengobe *di li* hetatu)
seven children	→	ounona *va*+heyali	→	ounona vaheyali
six goats	→	oikombo *i*+hamano	→	oikombo ihamano

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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-*.

Eengobe ota+*di*	→	Eengobe otadi...
Oikombo ota+*i*	→	Oikombo otai...
Okaana ita+*ka*	→	Okaana itaka...

Subject concords: past action

Add *o-* to the object pronoun. Drop the final *i,* unless it is by itself – then change it to *y*. Change *u* to *w*. Add an *-a* to the end if there is not already one in the object pronoun.The negative is just the object pronoun with a prefix of *ina-* (no changes).

Okaana o+*ka*	→	Okaana oka...
Okaana ina+*ka*	→	Okanona inaka...
Eengobe (o+*di*+a→*oda*)	→	Eengobe oda...
Eengobe ina+*di*	→	Eengobe inadi...
ikombo (o+*i*→*y*+a)→oya	→	Oikombo oya

Subject concords: future action

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

Oikombo otai + *ka*	→	Oikombo otai ka...
Ovalongi otava + *ka*	→	Ovalongi otava 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-*. Again, *oma-* is a special case (*oku, kaa*)

Etango o+*li*	→	Etango oli...
Okayaxa (o+k*a*→*ke*)	→	Okayaxa oke...
Oshifima ka+*shi*	→	Oshifima kashi...
Omeva *oku*	→	Omeva oku... (Sometimes *ome*...)

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...
Ounona ova + li + (*ove*→*ve*)	→	Ounona ova li ve...
Oikulya inai + li + →(*oi*→*i*)	→	Oikulya inai li i....

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Demonstrative prefixes

For "this": Add *a-* to the beginning of object pronouns that end in *-a*, *o-* to pronouns that end in *-u,* and *e-* to those that end in *-i*.

this porridge	→	oshifima *e+shi*	→	oshifima eshi
these people	→	ovanhu *a+va*	→	ovanhu ava

For "that": Add an *o* at the beginning and end, dropping the final vowel. Drop *-i* or change it to *y*.

that house	→	*o+li+o*	→	eumbo olo
those children	→	ounona *o+ va+o*	→	ounona ovo
that cow	→	ongobe *o+i→y+o*	→	ongobe oyo

For "yonder": Just add *-nya* / *-inya*, changing *a* to *e*.

yonder trees	→	omiti *di+nya*	→	omiti dinya
yonder folk	→	ovanhu *va→ve+nya*	→	ovanhu venya

Adjective formation

The adjective prefixes are the object concords, except the “concrete adjectives” which use the possessive prefix. Again, *oma-* is a special case (*ma-*)

stupid cow	→	ongobe *i*+lai	→	ongobe ilai
small children	→	ounona *va*+shona	→	ounona vashona
bedroom	→	onduda *y*+okunangala	→	onduda yokunangala

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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.

GRAMMARS:

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

> This slim volume has lots of useful, fascinating, and relatively readable information about the language and its grammar. However, as it was written more as a reference for linguists than a language guide, its organization does not always behoove beginning learners, and has been compared to a novel of the choose-your-own-adventure variety.

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.

DICTIONARIES:

> Unfortunately, the easiest to find are for Oshindonga. But because the languages are so similar, they can still be useful for you, with a little help from your Kwanyama-speaking friends.

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 Oshikwanyama. 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	Oshikwanyama
Chalkboard	Oshipelende
Chalk	Omya
Pen	Opena
Pencil	Opena yekala
Paper	Ombapila
Book	Embo
Exam	Ekonaakono
Report / Certificate	Odjapo
Workshop	Oshihongiilonga / Owekshopa
Science (esp. Physical Science)	Ounongononi
Mathematics	Omwaalu
English	Oshiinglisa
Afrikaans	Oshimbulu
German	Oshindowishi
Portuguese	Oshiputu
Spanish	Oshispania
Computers	Eekompiuta
Principal	Omukulunhufikola
Secretary	Hamushanga
Grade	Ondodo
Bag	Ondjato
Learners	Ovalongwa / Ovanafikola
Calculator	Okashina
Electricity	Olusheno
School Fund	Oshikefa shofikola
Prepare	Lilongekida
Invigilate / Proctor	Kalela
Sit down	Kala omutumba
Mark	Talela
Stand up	Fikama
Be quiet	Mwena
Speak louder	Popya mokule / muule
Speak softer	Popya kashona / pedu
Read aloud	Lesha mokule
Be late	Laata
You are correct	Ou li mondjila
You are not correct	Ku li mondjila / Owa puka
Put that axe down	Tula ekuva pedu

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Appendix B: nOvakalimo

English	Oshikwanyama
Volunteer	Omuliyambi
Trainer	Omudeuli
Community	Ovanhu vomomukunda / Ovakalimo
Development	Ehumokomesho
Observe	Talela
Project	Opoloyeka
Work (noun)	Oilonga
Meeting	Oshihongi
Parents' meeting	Oshihongi shovadali
School Board	Etonatelofikola
Clinic	Okapangelo / Okilinika
Headman	Omwene womukunda
Fundraising	Ekongo loimaliwa
Chairperson	Omunashipundi
Treasurer	Omudiinini woiniwe
Vote	Hoolola
We came to this meeting to ...	Otwe ya poshihongi eshi sho ...
Thank you for the opportunity ...	Tangi kompito ...
Where can we get ... ?	Openi hatu dulu okumona ... ?
Is there someone who can give us ...?	Opu na omunhu umwe ta dulu oku tu pa ... ?
What does this community need?	Ovanhu vomomukunda ova pumbwa shike?
Opens at	Otashi patulula po ....
Closes at	Otashi pata po ....
I train teachers.	Ohandi deula ovalongi.
I am an HIV counsellor.	Ame omuhungimwenyo wo HIV.

Eshiivo loshongalele:

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

Oto indilwa nefimaneko opo u uye koshingalele sho.....
Oshongalele otashi ningwa mo ..... potundi ..... Ohatu ka popya kombinga yo ..... .

Weni,

.....

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

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Appendix C: Efe nge!

Some useful expressions for women dealing with unwanted suitors:

English	Oshikwanyama
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.	Efe nge!
He is bothering me.	Ota hepeke nge.
I am already married.	Onda hombolwa nale.
I already have a man; I don't want two.	Ondi na omusamane nale; inandi hala vavali.

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 woye oku li peni? *(Where is your husband?), just say,* kEumbo. *(At home.)*

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Appendix D: Grammar Reference

Person		Subject Concords					Possess. Suffix	Object Pronoun
English	Kwanyama		Past Active	Present Active	Future Active	Present Stative	Present Habitual		
I	Ame	+	Onda	Ohandi	Ohandi ka	Ondi	Ohandi	-ange	nge
		−	Inandi	Itandi	Itandi ka	Kandi	Ihandi		
You	Ove	+	Owa	Oto	Oto ka	Ou	Oho	-oye	ku
		−	Ino	Ito	Ito ka	Ku	Iho		
He/She/It	Ye	+	Okwa	Ota	Ota ka	Oku	Oha	-aye	mu
		−	Ina	Ita	Ita ka	Ke	Iha		
We	Fye	+	Otwa	Ohatu	Ohatu ka	Otu	Ohatu	-etu	tu
		−	Inatu	Itatu	Itatu ka	Katu	Ihatu		
You all	Nye	+	Omwa	Otamu	Otamu ka	Omu	Ohamu	-eni	mu
		−	Inamu	Itamu	Itamu ka	Kamu	Ihamu		
They	Vo	+	Ova	Otava	Otava ka	Ove	Ohava	-avo	va
		−	Inava	Itava	Itava ka	Kave	Ihava		

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

Number	Numerical Suffix	Normal Number
1	-mwe	imwe
2	-vali	mbali
3	-tatu	nhatu
4	-ne	nhee
5	-tano	nhano
6	-hamano	hamano
7	-heyali	heyali
8	-hetatu	hetatu
9	none	omuwoi
10	none	omulongo

Some stative verbs:

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

Noun Prefix	Possessive Prefix	Numerical Prefix	Adjective Prefix	Subject Concord		Object Pronoun
				Present Active	Present Stative	
omu- (things)	w-	u-	u-	otau	ou	u
omi-	d-	- (i-)	di-	otadi	odi	di
e-	l-	li-	li-	otali	oli	li
oma-	-	a-	ma-	otaa	oku	a
oshi-	sh-	shi-	shi-	otashi	oshi	shi
oi-	y-	i-	i-	otai	oi	i
olu-	l-	li-/ lu-	li-/ lu-	otali /otalu	oli / olu	lu
oka-	k-	ka-	ka-	otaka	oke	ka
ou- (plural)	v-	va-	va-	otava	ove	va
ou- (singular)	w-	u-	u-	otau	ou	u
oku-	kw-	ku-	ku-	otaku	oku	ku
o-	y-	-	i-	otai	oi	i
ee-	d-	-	di-	otadi	odi	di
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	Kwanyama		Past Active	Present Active	Future Active	Present Stative	Present Habitual		
I	Ame	+	Onda	Ohandi	Ohandi ka	Ondi	Ohandi	-ange	nge
		−	Inandi	Itandi	Itandi ka	Kandi	Ihandi		
You	Ove	+	Owa	Oto	Oto ka	Ou	Oho	-oye	ku
		−	Ino	Ito	Ito ka	Ku	Iho		
He/She/It	Ye	+	Okwa	Ota	Ota ka	Oku	Oha	-aye	mu
		−	Ina	Ita	Ita ka	Ke	Iha		
We	Fye	+	Otwa	Ohatu	Ohatu ka	Otu	Ohatu	-etu	tu
		−	Inatu	Itatu	Itatu ka	Katu	Ihatu		
You all	Nye	+	Omwa	Otamu	Otamu ka	Omu	Ohamu	-eni	mu
		−	Inamu	Itamu	Itamu ka	Kamu	Ihamu		
They	Vo	+	Ova	Otava	Otava ka	Ove	Ohava	-avo	va
		−	Inava	Itava	Itava ka	Kave	Ihava		

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

Number	Numerical Suffix	Normal Number
1	-mwe	imwe
2	-vali	mbali
3	-tatu	nhatu
4	-ne	nhee
5	-tano	nhano
6	-hamano	hamano
7	-heyali	heyali
8	-hetatu	hetatu
9	none	omuwoi
10	none	omulongo

Some stative verbs:

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

Noun Prefix	Possessive Prefix	Numerical Prefix	Adjective Prefix	Subject Concord		Object Pronoun
				Present Active	Present Stative	
omu- (things)	w-	u-	u-	otau	ou	u
omi-	d-	- (i-)	di-	otadi	odi	di
e-	l-	li-	li-	otali	oli	li
oma-	-	a-	ma-	otaa	oku	a
oshi-	sh-	shi-	shi-	otashi	oshi	shi
oi-	y-	i-	i-	otai	oi	i
olu-	l-	li-/ lu-	li-/ lu-	otali /otalu	oli / olu	lu
oka-	k-	ka-	ka-	otaka	oke	ka
ou- (plural)	v-	va-	va-	otava	ove	va
ou- (singular)	w-	u-	u-	otau	ou	u
oku-	kw-	ku-	ku-	otaku	oku	ku
o-	y-	-	i-	otai	oi	i
ee-	d-	-	di-	otadi	odi	di
ku	-	-	-	otaku	oku	ko
mu	-	-	-	otamu	omu	mo
pu	-	-	-	otapu	opu	po

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