

## Contents

The following Help Topics are available:

[Overview of Tagalog](#)

[Alphabet](#)

[Nouns](#)

[Number and Agreement](#)

[Articles](#)

[Pronouns](#)

[Adjectives](#)

[Adverbs](#)

[Verbs](#)

[Prepositions](#)

[Conjunctions](#)

[Negatives and Interrogatives](#)

[Particles](#)

[Ligatures](#)

For Help on Help for Windows, press F1.

For Help on Help for Macintosh, select Help with Quick Help from the  menu.

## Overview of Tagalog

Tagalog (ta-GA-log) is the national language of the Republic of the Philippines. It was officially renamed Pilipino in 1961. Today, it is taught in the elementary and secondary schools of the Philippines where it is spoken by some 45 million people. In the United States, there are approximately 900,000 speakers of Tagalog.

Tagalog is a member of the Western Group of Malayo-Polynesian languages. The Malayo-Polynesian languages are unique and do not appear to be related to any other language group. Other Malayo-Polynesian languages include Malagasay, Malay and Indonesian.

The Tagalog alphabet consists of 20 letters: 15 consonants and 5 vowels. Tagalog had a written form long before the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines in 1541. Tagalog has adopted many words from Malay, Spanish and English. The Tagalog grammar has retained its original form, however, and has remained unchanged as new words are incorporated.

# Alphabet

The Tagalog alphabet or **ABAKADA** has twenty letters.

**A,B,K,D,E,G,H,I,L,M,N,Ng,O,P,R,S,T,U,W,Y**

The vowels are **A, E, I, O** and **U**.

The consonants are **b, k, d, g, h, l, m, n, ng, p, r, s, t, w,** and **y**.

The following letters are **not** found in Tagalog: **c, f, j, q, v, x** and **Z**.

## Nouns

A noun is a word that names a person, place, thing or idea.

<b>klerk</b>	(clerk)
<b>gabi</b>	(evening)
<b>pangalan</b>	(name)

A proper noun names a specific person, place, thing or idea and is written with a capital letter.

<b>Patricio</b>	(Patricio)
<b>Manila</b>	(Manila)
<b>Pilipinas</b>	(Philippines)

Most nouns in Tagalog are neuter, however, some of the nouns which have been borrowed from Spanish are gender specific. Of these, the masculine nouns almost always end in o and the feminine nouns almost always end in a.

<b>blusa</b>	(blouse - feminine)
<b>amo</b>	(boss - masculine)

Many of the nouns borrowed from Spanish can be either masculine or feminine. The feminine form usually ends in a and the masculine form generally ends in o.

<b>sekretarya</b>	(secretary feminine)
<b>sekretaryo</b>	(secretary masculine)

## Number and Agreement

There are two numbers in Tagalog: **singular** and **plural**. Often, the plural form of a noun is expressed by the use of the particle **mga**.

**ang bata**  
(the child)

**ang mga bata**  
(the children)

**ang tanda**  
(the sign)

**ang mga tanda**  
(the signs)

## Articles

The names of persons, places and things are almost always preceded by **articles** when they are used as **subjects**. In Tagalog, these words may be referred to as markers or noun markers.

**Si** (singular) and **sina** (plural) are used with names of persons:

<b>Si</b> Stephanie ay babae.	(Stephanie is a woman.)
<b>Sina</b> Patricio at Sergio ay mababait	(Patricio and Sergio are good.)

**Ang** (singular) is used with things and places.

<b>Ang</b> mesa ay malaki.	(The table is big.)
<b>Ang</b> Puerto Galera ay maganda.	(Puerto Galera is beautiful.)

**Ang mga** (plural) is used with things. Note that **ang** acts as the **definite article** and **mga** is often referred to as a **pluralizing particle**.

<b>Ang mga</b> mesa ay maliit.	(The tables are small.)
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And **ang** (plural) is used with places.

<b>Ang</b> Manila at New York ay malalaki.	(Manila and New York are big.)
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## Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that stands for a previously mentioned or understood noun. ( That noun is called the antecedent of the preposition.)

In the sentence:

**The car** was damaged when **it** rolled into the tree.  
the pronoun **it** refers back to the noun **car** (the antecedent).

Pronouns can be used in many ways.

A pronoun can be the subject of a verb:

**Ako** ay babae.                      **I** am a woman.  
**Sila** ay magkaibigan.            **They** are friends.

A pronoun can also be the object of a verb, the indirect object of a verb, or the object of a preposition.

Here is a chart of **Personal Pronouns**.

<b>English</b>	<b>Subject (ang)</b>	<b>Direct Object (ng)</b>	<b>Indirect Object (sa)</b>
Singular			
I	<b>ako</b>	<b>ko</b>	<b>akin</b>
you	<b>ikaw or ka</b>	<b>mo</b>	<b>iyo</b>
he, she	<b>siya</b>	<b>niya</b>	<b>kaniya</b>
Plural			
we (he and I)	<b>kami</b>	<b>namin</b>	<b>amin</b>
we (you and I)			
(you, he and I)	<b>tayo</b>	<b>natin</b>	<b>atin</b>
you	<b>kayo</b>	<b>ninyo</b>	<b>inyo</b>
they	<b>sila</b>	<b>nila</b>	<b>kanila</b>

Note that there is no inanimate third person pronoun to correspond with the English pronoun it or its.

## Adjectives

Adjectives are the words that are used to describe nouns. They may describe a condition, a state or a quality.

**Maganda** si Teresa.

Teresa is beautiful.

**Maliit** ang mesa

The table is small.

Si Donna ay **marunong**.

Donna is intelligent.

## Adverbs

In Tagalog, **adverbs** are words that modify verbs. Here are a few examples:

**na** (now or already)  
Ang lahat ay maayos **na**. Everything is fine **now**.

**mabilis** (fast)  
Si Patricio ay kumakain nang **mabilis**. Patricio is eating **fast**.

**pa** (yet)  
Hindi **pa** ako nagkaroon ng pagkakataon. I have not **yet** had the opportunity.

Other adverbs include:

<b>dahan-dahan</b>	(slowly or softly)
<b>mabilis</b>	(fast)
<b>kaunti</b>	(a little)
<b>marami</b>	(much, many)

## Verbs

Verbs are the action words in sentences. In Tagalog, verbs have different affixes which stress aspect (tense), the type of action and the focus of the action.

Verbs with um and mag affixes are most similar to common verbs in English. Um and mag affixes are used when the actor or the action is stressed. Here is an example of a verb with an um affix:

Root:	<b>bili</b>	(to buy)
Present	<b>bumibili</b>	(buy)
Past:	<b>bumili</b>	(bought)
Future:	<b>bibili</b>	(will buy)

Here is an example of a verb with a mag affix:

Root	<b>salita</b>	(to speak)
Present:	<b>nagsasalita</b>	(speak)
Past:	<b>nagsalita</b>	(spoke)
Future:	<b>magsasalita</b>	(will speak)

There are a number of helping verbs in Tagalog, here are some examples:

<b>may</b>	(to have, there is, there are)
<b>mayroon</b>	(there exists, there is, to have something)
<b>puwede</b>	(can, could, may)
<b>dapat</b>	(must, to have to)
<b>gusto or ibig</b>	(like)
<b>ayaw</b>	(do not like)

## Prepositions

**Prepositions** are the connecting words that show the relationships between words in the sentence. Most prepositions show a relationship of time or space. In Tagalog, the word **sa** is often used for the English prepositions from, to into, in, for, through, on, etc..

Some other prepositions include:

**para sa** (for)

and

**mula sa** (from).

When a noun is used as an object it is often preceded by **ng** (singular) or **ng mga** (plural).

**Ng** is sometimes translated as the English prepositions of, by, with, for or in.

Gusto ko **ng** dobleng kuwarto. (I would like a double room.)

Bumili **ng** aklat si Rosa. (Rosa bought the book.)

Bumili **ng** mga silya si John. (John bought the chairs.)

## Conjunctions

Conjunctions join words, phrases and clauses together.

The most commonly used conjunction in Tagalog is **at** (and).

Other commonly used conjunctions are:

<b>ngunit</b>	but
<b>o</b>	or

## Negatives and Interrogatives

**Interrogatives** or questions are often formed with words such as:

<b>magkano</b>	(how much)
<b>bakit</b>	(why)
<b>sino</b>	(who)
<b>ano</b>	(what)

In addition, the particle **ba** is used for emphasis and clarity in an interrogative sentence. Please note that **ba** cannot be translated into English.

Here are some examples:

<b>Magkano ba</b> ang palitan?	(What is the rate of exchange?)
<b>Ano ba</b> ang mga oras ng bangko?	(What are the banks hours?)

Here are some examples of questions which do not contain interrogative pronouns. Again, **ba** is used for emphasis and clarity.

Huli <b>ba</b> tayo?	(Are we late?)
Gusto ninyo <b>ba</b> ng pampagana?	(Would you like an appetizer?)

### Negatives

**Negatives** are formed using words such as **hindi** and **wala**. **Hindi** is comparable to no and not in English, **wala** is comparable to doesnt or dont; there isnt or there arent. Here are some examples:

<b>Hindi</b> ko maintindihan.	(I do not understand.)
<b>Hindi</b> ko gusto ito.	(I do not like this.)
<b>Wala</b> ba sa inyo ang aking reserbasyon.	(Dont you have my reservation?)
<b>Wala</b> nang window seat.	(There are no window seats.)

### Particles

Particles are short words in Tagalog that really cannot be translated into English. They perform many different functions. For example, particles may complete a preposition (**sa**), express an interrogative (**ba**) or express the plural of a noun (**mga**).

The particle **po** is used to express respect for the person being addressed. It is similar to sir and ma'am in English. It would not be used with friends or children.

Magandang umaga <b>po</b> .	Good morning, (sir or ma'am).
Hindi <b>po</b> ako nagsasalita ng Ingles	I do not speak English, sir.

## Ligatures

Ligatures are used to connect two words. They cannot be readily translated into English. They may be used to connect two nouns, an adjective and a noun, a noun and a pronoun or a pronoun and an adjective. Here are some examples:

Dala ko ang aking internasyonal **na** lisensiya sa pagmamaneho.  
(I have my international drivers license.)

Gusto ko ng dobleng kuwarto **na** may banyo.  
(I would like a double room with a bath.)

Ito ba ay walang tigil **na** biyahe?  
(Is it a non-stop flight?)

