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Hujambo - hello! And karibu, or welcome, to the fascinating and beautiful language of Swahili. For many people, learning a second language seems like a daunting endeavor, from the grammar and syntax of another dialect to choosing which of the many languages you want to dive into. However, did you know that many learners find Swahili a relatively
easy language to learn? And with many native speakers and students of Swahili around not only the East African coast and sub-Saharan Africa, but also the world, learning to speak Swahili is a rewarding and rich experience for anyone. The national language of the countries within the East African Community (EAC), Swahili is known as the easiest
African language for English speakers to master. And once you get past the complexity of its grammatical structure, the easy pronunciation and vocabulary will allow you to begin speaking and understanding Swahili speakers, as
well as the basics of Swahili words and resources for further study. With that in mind, tunaweza kuanza--- we can start! Brief history of the Swahili language Origins of Swahili Arabic influence Swahili Written Swahili Swahili structure Grammar Noun classes Noun agreement Sounds of Swahili Written Swahili Swahili words and resource for further study. With that in mind, tunaweza kuanza--- we can start! Brief history of the Swahili language Origins of Swahili words and resource for further study. With that in mind, tunaweza kuanza--- we can start! Brief history of the Swahili language Origins of Swahili words and resource for further study. With that in mind, tunaweza kuanza--- we can start! Brief history of the Swahili words and resource for further study.
resourcesDictionaries and grammarsSwahili schoolsOnline Swahili teachersTV shows and mediaOnline Swahili lessonsPhrasebooksPodcasts for learning Swahili is a widely spoken language today, with over 200 million speakers worldwide. It is an official language
in over a dozen countries of East Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Somalia, with many others on the list. But to fully understand the final product of the Swahili and some of the most important cultural elements of this
fascinating language. The origins of Swahili is a Bantu language spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the lingua franca of the region, or a language spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the lingua franca of the region, or a language spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such, it is referred to as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As such as the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoken along the East African coast. As the linguage spoke
much deeper, and even include Arabic influences, as well as vocabulary from other local language groups, such as Mijikenda, Pokomo, and Taita dialects in East Africa. In fact, the word Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil itself is derived from an Arabic term - sawhil itself is derived fr
directly created from an Arabic word or phrase. For instance, you might encounter the greeting salam aleikum when speaking in Swahili, something that is directly from Arabic as a standard Islamic salutation. Or, you might hear salama as a reply to someone questioning how they are doing, borrowed from the Arabic response salaam. Yet the roots of
the Swahili language extend further. Historians note that this dialect can be dated back to Arab traders initial contact with the original Swahili people in the lands that now stretch from Somalia to Mozambique, and westward to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other influences of the Congo. Other influen
Century AD a naval papyrus called Periplus of Erythrean Sea documented Swahili peoples and possible trade there. These contacts, along with others in the ancient world, are likely where Swahili words had the opportunity to morph and adopt other linguistic traditions into the language itself. And as the native speakers continued to trade and move
around the African continent, the Swahili language was able to spread further. There is evidence of several city-states under various rule dotting the East coast of Africa over the centuries, as well as medieval sultanates that influenced Swahili and Bantu cultural traditions. Swahili language culture Thanks to a strong Arabic and Muslim heritage that
emerged particularly during the Kilwa Sultanate, founded in 957 AD by a Persian prince by the name of Ali ibn al-Hassan Shirazi, Swahili traditions bear the signs of its strong cultural influence to this day. For example, the arts of Swahili traditions bear the signs of its strong cultural influence to this day. For example, the arts of Swahili traditions bear the signs of its strong cultural influence to this day. For example, the arts of Swahili traditions bear the signs of its strong cultural influence to this day. For example, the arts of Swahili traditions bear the signs of its strong cultural influence to this day. For example, the arts of Swahili traditions bear the signs of its strong cultural influence to this day.
designs, without many representations of living persons used in reliefs. Additionally, music within Swahili culture tends to have Arab and Indian-influenced melodies, and the most typical genre that you will run into in terms of traditional music is called Taarab. This style of music has strong ties throughout North Africa, India, and the Middle East,
bringing the continents even closer together in cultural similarities. However, it is important to note that Swahili culture and the people who live within it are very much their own group, not to be confused with or written off as a simple Middle Eastern subset. Swahili dialects The standard Swahili language was able to adapt even further as it spread
across the South and East countries of the African continent, and although it is known as a lingua franca, you can still find several different dialects in use today. These include the three primary local Swahili variations: kiAmu, spoken along the East Coast and the island of Lamu; kiMvita, found in the Mombasa area of Kenya; and kiUnguja, in Zanzibar
and central Tanzania. The structure of Swahili Now that we understand the basic backstory of the Swahili language, lets take some time to discuss some of the main points of Swahili would take more room to explore, but a small taste
of such intriguing linguistics is always a good idea! Basic Swahili grammar for those who first encounter it, Swahili grammar for those who first encounter it, Swahili words, including classes, agreement, and inflection. Lets take a brief sojourn through the basics of Swahili words
structure that students will encounter when learning to speak Swahili. Swahili nouns classes In general, nouns are grouped into several grammatical classes, depending on the prefix m- before a consonant and mw- before a
vowel. This prefix reveals the noun to refer to a single human, animal, or another animate objects in the plural. Thus, watu means people, plural. Other classes denote plants and inanimate objects in both the singular and
plural, abstract nouns, and even locatives. Swahili noun agreement Moving on from the classes of nouns, there are several other methods of creating meaning when crafting a Swahili sentence. For example, there is a further process of attaching other types of words to any given noun known as agreement, which involves matching the meaning and
style of a noun to the verb or adjective that will alter it within a sentence. Simply put, when forming sentences in Swahili, you need to make sure that the inflection of a noun is matched by the subject, verb, and any other modifiers that are required. And while this can sound very confusing and daunting, it becomes quite an easy process once
you get the hang of it!Other parts of the Swahili language include determiners, ornative construction, and pronouns that do not ascribe to formal alterations based on gender. Rather, Swahili pronouns change according to animate or inanimate referral. And these are just some of the interesting complexities of Swahili grammar and syntax! The sounds
of SwahiliWith melodic tones and a rolling vocabulary, the sound of spoken Swahili is a wonderful experience for anyone listening. This is, in part, due to the vowel and consonants are a tricky part of pronouncing Swahili words right. And its not necessarily
the consonant sound itself, as most of them are equated to English consonants--- instead, its how you say it, or the Swahili phonemic system that alters the consonant within a word. Pronunciation of consonants can be aspirated, nasal, trilled, truncated, or even voiceless, depending on the word and the surrounding grammar. In contrast, only five
different phonemes make up the vowels of Swahili, and though they can range in pronunciation depending on the word, each is carried out as long vowels regardless of stressed or unstressed grammar. These sounds include those of /a/, /e/, /i/, o/, and /u/, similar to what English speakers are used to. Written Swahili is written out in the
Latin script, just like English and many of the Romance Languages of Europe. This makes it much easier for people to pick up, without the added stress of learning a new alphabet as well as a new language! But originally, old Swahili was written using Arabic script, where few adaptations were made to accommodate the new language, leading to
necessitated conflations of sound. This includes /e/, /i/, /o/, or, for other sounds specific to Swahili, the nearest sound in the Arabic script was used instead. This is only found in old documents or through researching ancient texts these days, however, leaving written Swahili in Latin script to look just like any other Western languages
alphabet!Resources for Swahili beginnersNow that you have a firm grasp on the origins and history behind the Swahili language, as well as the basics of Swahili grammar and the relationships between Swahili words, you might be even more excited to begin your linguistic journey, and eager to learn about resources available to you. To get you started
and well on your way to speaking Swahili, here are some of the best resources for easy learning and retention of Swahili language skills!Dictionaries and grammars ystems, and sentence structure of the language. To do so, grabbing a good dictionary or
grammatical guide is absolutely essential for a beginner to learn Swahili. To start, the Essential Swahili Dictionary: A Teach Yourself Guide by D. V. Perrott is a great initial step into vocabulary and grammar understanding for nearly every Swahili word. Follow this up with the comprehensive bilingual dictionary Swahili/English - English/Swahili
Dictionary (Hippocrene Practical Dictionary) by Nicholas Awde, which can help you get a better grasp of Swahili when juxtaposed with the English language skills with the aid of handy visuals and guides to proper Swahili pronunciation. Lastly,
there is the 2nd Edition Swahili Learners Reference Grammar by Katrina Daly Thompson as part of the University of Wisconsin-Madisons National African Language Resource Center. Its a mouthful, but given the books professional and academic affiliations, it is one of the best comprehensive references for complete beginners to the language. Brick
and mortar Swahili schoolsFor anyone who is interested in traveling to a different location to learn a language might be the best option for you. The following are some of the top-rated language schools to learn Swahili. Hosted by Pathway Impact, this is a great
opportunity to learn Swahili in Uganda along with native speakers throughout the program. Alternatively, the Anatolio Ed Center offers a Swahili Language Course in Kenya, with focuses on reading, writing, speaking, listening, and general Swahili grammar. Check out the Language Immersion Program in Africa, run by Cross Continental, in order to
fully discover Swahili culture, language, and the intricacies of all aspects therein. ELCT Language and Orientation School also offers a full experience to allow you to learn Swahili within East Africa. Or, if you are interested in learning the Swahili language while giving back to the local community, why not apply to the International Volunteer Travels
Tanzania Swahili Language Program. You have access to beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of the language tutors Tutors are a great way to have a personalized, one-to-one learning plan tailored to your needs and the level of experience you
already have with Swahili.So, if you want to access a tutor for learning Swahili at home with the same quality as a language school, try the many teachers available on italki who specialize in speaking Swahili!Another decent option after you try italki is Verbling, which offers a plethora of teachers and lessons for you to learn Swahili words and proper
pronunciation rules easily and naturally. If you still cannot find a good fit for a native speaker tutor on the previous sites, give Amazing Talker a try--- there are a variety of Swahili teachers and prices available on this platform for learners of every level, from beginners to those wanting to brush up on meaningful sentences. Between movies, TV, and
music, media is a great way to relax. But its also a fantastic method for easily absorbing a widely spoken language like Swahili. Many people enjoy reality TV shows, including The Real Housewives of Kwangware. This version is filmed primarily in Swahili, and also includes many instances of idiomatic language that are great for learners who want to
employ more conversational Swahili skills. Plan B (2019) is filmed mostly in English but still contains Swahili dialogue, so its great for beginners to ease into learning the language with media resources! And for movies in Swahili with either English narration or subtitles, try the drama film Fatuma (2018), the romantic comedy Kiumeni (2017), or the
biographical drama Something Necessary (2013). For anyone who likes listening to music in their target language to pick up some new vocabulary, there are plenty of songs in Swahili that you can add to your daily playlists. Listen to some of the following tracks to supplement your Swahili words! Online Swahili lessons With the plethora of online
learning courses available to everyone today, all you need is a computer and a decent internet connection to access some great educational content. First up, Pimsleur Swahili is unbeatable (tried and tested method thats been around for ages). Glossikas Learn Swahili language course is a great
way to immerse yourself in Swahili too, and learn the speech patterns and meanings without the trouble of translating individual Swahili vocabulary words to understand. I also recommend Cudoo, which offers a decent foundational Swahili vocabulary words to understand. I also recommend Cudoo, which offers a decent foundational Swahili vocabulary words to understand. I also recommend Cudoo, which offers a decent foundational Swahili vocabulary words to understand. I also recommend Cudoo, which offers a decent foundational Swahili vocabulary words to understand.
available during the day or in the evening. Alternatively, Learn Swahili Now offers the fundamentals of language learning and the ability to practice Swahili for a goal of fluency. Swahili phrasebooks are typically used as a crash course for heading to a different country and learning bits of the language quickly, but they can also be an
invaluable tool for people wanting to learn Swahili comprehensively. Use phrasebooks to learn vocabulary easily, connect this new language with English words, or brush up on memorable sentences. Theres Learn Swahili: For Beginners and Travellers by G. O. Oyoo which is a great starting point for many people who are studying Swahili, with many
entries and a variety of additional information included. The Lonely Planet Swahili Phrasebook by Martin Benjamin, Charles Mironko, and Anne Geoghegan is a classic for many travelers and students alike. Lonely Planet remains one of the top informational publications today, so this comprehensive phrasebook is a great resource to rely on. Or, for
smartphone users, you can bring your language learning with you via the Swahili Phrasebook app and reference your grammar anywhere in the world!Podcasts for learning Swahili as a second language and other learning Swahili as a second language learning Swahili as a second language learning Swahili as a second language and other learning Swahili as a second language l
words and phrases. Try these sources to speak Swahili faster than ever! Africa & Beyond is a great option that comes in English and Swahili, along with a Kirundi translation for anyone also interested in the official language of Burundi, and another member of the Bantu language family. Swahili words and the history of East Africa are blended
wonderfully in the Swahili with Mariana podcast, while BONGO Classy introduces Swahili language skills via informational content such as the news, Southeast Africa tourism, and cultural facts. Or, turn on the Kenyan Plug Pod for plenty of host story drama and a fun way to learn Swahili words while also getting an inside look at some particularly
intriguing situations. Pronunciation guides Like most other languages, Swahili is one where pronunciation rules matter. And while it can be difficult to pick up proper pronunciation guides can aid you in learning Swahili. To begin, check out Forvos Swahili pronunciation dictionary
to learn the right speech patterns and audible structures for Swahili vocabulary. Plus, you can listen to native speaker audio clips uploaded to the website, from Kenyan Swahili to Tanzanian Swahili to Tanzanian Swahili pronunciation. All entries
are tailored for easy language retention and high-quality Swahili to English proficiency. Smartphone apps for Swahili with the tiny computer in your pocket, learning Swahili language skills on the go has never been easier. Here are some users favorite picks when it comes to smartphone apps that help you learn Swahili and pursue fluency in this local
language. The Swahili lessons at Ling are a wonderful resource for anyone who wants to learn Swahili, right in your pocket. Alternatively, Duolingo remains a popular app among many language learners that offers free Swahili lessons at Ling are a wonderful resource for anyone who wants to learn Swahili lessons that you can pursue in as little as 5 minutes per day. Another great option is Memrises Swahili courses, providing not
only grammar lessons, but also Swahili word tests, information about Swahili culture, and information about Southeast Africa as a whole. Babel is another very popular smartphone app for language skills, including free Swahili lessons among many other languages. However, the interactive nature of this application makes it one of the best for actually
retaining the Swahili lessons that you get!Textbooks and workbooksSometimes, you need to access a good textbook to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn Swahili or other languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student to learn languages, so the following titles are some of the best options for any linguistic student languages.
Course for Beginners by Lutz Marten and Donovan Lee McGrath is a go-to for conversational Swahili lessons and a linguistic look into Swahili culture. Another great pick is Complete Swahili: A Teach Yourself Guide (TY Language Guides) by Joan Russell. With both reading material and audio clips, you can supplement learning to speak Swahili with all-
around understanding and practice! For a full experience of the Swahili language, try Kiswahili Swahili: A Foundation for Speaking, Reading, and Writing by Thomas J. Hinnebusch, Sarah M. Mirza, and Adelheid U. Stein. This is available for Kindle users and in paperback. Or, opt for Pimsleur Swahili Conversational Course - Level One, Lessons 1-
16. This complete course walks students through how to speak and understand Swahili through comprehensive lessons and word lists on every aspect of the language at the level of native Swahili speakers. Finally, try Living Languages Swahili: A Complete Course For Beginners, which comes with both a book and spoken-word audio for a full Swahili
learning experience for this phonetic language. YouTube is one of the best places for free Swahili lessons and ways to learn the original language channel and its playlist of Swahili grammar videos, with 50 episodes in total. The Swahili 101
channel features a host of lessons from colors to numbers, body parts to the calendar. To learn Swahili on a fully interactive YouTube channel, subscribe to Learn Swahili essons that anyone can enjoy and benefit from.Or, for those
learning the language with their children, Swahili AniBooks by BookBox is well-suited to beginners, and a great way to access easy Swahili language skills with English subtitles. Learning to speak Swahili is one of the most fun. Whether this is your first foray into
learning another language, or you are adding another level of knowledge to your already polyglot life, I hope these resources will come in handy. Na bahati nzuri - good luck! Cite article Grab the link to this articleCopy Link This is our full guide to Swahili (aka Kiswahili), including every essential fact you want to know. When thinking about learning a
language, one of the first things we do is learn about the language. For Swahili, this meant learning some basic facts like Where is Swahili pronounced? Is Swahili pronounced? Is Swahili hard for English
speakers? Can Swahili be a unifying African language? And a few other things. Below is a general introduction to Swahili is spoken. Swahili is one of the most spoken languages in Africa. According to varying sources, there are up to
100 million speakers but interestingly, very few of these (as few as five million) are native speakers. Instead, Swahili is a lingua franca, used in communities. Swahili is the second-largest commonly spoken language in the continent, after Arabic. Though the name Swahili comes from Arabic, meaning of
the coast, it refers to both the people and the language. The name comes from the Arabic word sawaahili (), which means of the coasts, which you would use to refer to coastal people. Kiswahili is what we call the language when
referring to the language when speaking (or writing) English. When speaking the language, the language is called Kiswahili. The prefix ki refers to a language with any language with any language. For example, the Swahili name for the English language is Kiingereza. By contrast, the people are referred to as watu waswahili, and the culture is uswahili. Traditionally
English language news sources have referred to the language with the word Swahili. So the trend may change papers in African countries have been using the word Kiswahili is also occasionally spoken well (and
more often spoken somewhat well) in a few other regions and countries including Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, Northern Zambia and Mozambique. If you are learning Swahili for travel or work in a region, then it would be mostly relevant for Tanzania and Kenya, and not so much for other places where its
spoken, where it will be more of a curiosity that you speak it to most people you meet. See our full guide for the best place to learn Swahili. Generally wed recommend Tanzania, and in Tanzania, wed recommend Zanzibar. Swahili is originally an African language of Bantu origin. Bantu refers to people who speak Bantu languages. This is a huge
language group, comprising between 440 and 680 languages (depending on definitions) and with 350 million speakers), Shona (~14M speakers) and Xhosa (20M speakers). The map of countries covered by Bantu languages is quite huge its basically most of
sub-Saharan Africa. The map of Bantu languages of Africa. Swahili is a Bantu language Languages in the Bantu languages in the guestion). But they have related components and structures, just like European or Romance languages do. For example, all Bantu languages
(including Swahili) share the concept of suffixes to denominate class, somewhat like grammatical gender in European language, youre more likely to come across similar words (than if you were studying a completely foreign language). Swahili was born in Zanzibar, grew up in
Tanzania, fell sick in Kenya, died in Uganda, and was buried in Congo. Common saying If youre interested in learning Swahili head to Zanzibar! But if you have other constraints, we wrote a whole article on the best places to learn Swahili head to Zanzibar! But if you have other constraints, we wrote a whole article on the best places to learn Swahili head to Zanzibar! But if you have other constraints, we wrote a whole article on the best places to learn Swahili head to Zanzibar! But if you have other constraints, we wrote a whole article on the best places to learn Swahili head to Zanzibar! But if you have other constraints, we wrote a whole article on the best places to learn Swahili head to Zanzibar! But if you have other constraints, we wrote a whole article on the best places to learn Swahili head to Zanzibar! But if you have other constraints, we wrote a whole article on the best places to learn Swahili head to Zanzibar |
to the hinterlands of East Africa. The origins are a little mixed, but a combination of trade, the impact of missionaries, internal migration and government rulings saw Swahili spread inland from the coast. Swahilis roots are in Zanzibar, a little strip of Africas eastern coastline. In Zanzibar theyre very proud of the way they speak Swahili, saying that
they speak it correctly or purely (according to Daniel Gross in a podcast on PRI, How the Swahili as a language took hold across Africa). This is distinct from speaking standard Swahili, spoken elsewhere in Tanzania and in neighbouring countries. In the late 19th century, German missionaries under the then Kaiser used Swahili as a language to use to
preach the gospel to locals in the n. At the time it was written using Arabic letters. It was the Germans who moved it from Arabic script to Roman script, creating the first dictionary and translating the First dictionary and transla
 The newly installed British wanted a common language across its new territories and picked Swahili. They decided to structure and standardise it, picking one dialect as the baseline Kiunguja the dialect spoken by the Unguja people in Zanzibar, which is part of Tanzania. Where Swahili is spoken in Africa a map. From 1930 onward Swahili expanded
in Tanzania, becoming the official language of the colonial government, and was used for all formal communication in schools, mass media and books. In Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, head of state of Tanzania (and its preceding regions) from an incredible 1961 to 1985 and former anti-colonial activist, had a large role in promoting Swahili as a national
language. He was well-schooled in both, and in fact, had published a translation of Shakespeares Julius Caesar in Swahili is spoken in the home, in government, and is used on street and shop signs. The influence of Swahili has been so great that
younger generations are more likely to be fluent in Swahili is to be the only language used in schools in the future in Tanzania, a move which has attracted as much praise as it has criticism. In Kenya and in Uganda, Swahili is widely spoken. But the official language used in both countries in government and legal
proceedings, plus the language on signs and shopfronts, is English. Swahili in day-to-day life, but they mix it with English and local languages in a mix known as Sheng. You still cant assume that any employee or official speaks Swahili
 fluently enough to express complex thoughts, like report on a news item. Swahili is still important enough in Kenya that long-term businesspeople and dignitaries learn it upon arrival. While this is becoming more common, its still surprising to locals when someone of non-African origin speaks Swahili notable enough to be called out in the news.
Swahili is a compulsory subject from primary school, even in international schools, but this doesnt mean that people will feel comfortable communicating to an article in The East African: In Kenya, Sheng, the oft-maligned working language of
Kenyas youth that has its origin in Nairobis Eastlands, is often blamed for the poor mastery of Kiswahili among Kenyan students. It is also interesting to note how Kiswahili demarcates sharp divisions in socio-economic status, and one can tell which side of the divide a person falls in by the language others use to address them. Middle and upper
middle class children in Kenya, for example, are socialised to speak Kiswahili specifically to domestic workers, drivers and gardeners included the so-called ordinary wananchi, and are less likely to speak the language among themselves. Kiswahili specifically to domestic workers, drivers and gardeners included the so-called ordinary wananchi, and are less likely to speak the language among themselves. Kiswahili specifically to domestic workers, drivers and gardeners included the so-called ordinary wananchi, and are less likely to speak the language among themselves.
quite dramatically from the one spoken in Tanzania and Kenya. In fact, some speakers have commented that they find it unintelligible. Swahili remains secondary after French and Lingalese but is still spoken by half the population. That said, the local version of Swahili in Congo is heavily influenced by Lingalese and French vocabulary. In Uganda,
Swahili is in third place, despite being one of the two official languages, along with English. The most widely spoken local language of inter-ethnic communication, of wider communication and as a linguage franca. Luganda in Uganda is Luganda is Luganda
used everywhere: education, in the media, urban hip-hop, trading and in church. In 2005, after the Ugandan government identified a need to adopt an African official language, Swahili and Luganda were the two front-running options. While Luganda is more widely spoken, its association with an ethnic group ruled it out; it excludes people outside the
ethnic group. Swahili is less politically contentious in Uganda and therefore was more widely well-received, even though its spoken by far fewer people. So the government picked Swahili. The main group of people in Uganda that speak Swahili is the military. But even within that group, aside from those who invested time into studying it, most
members of the military arent generally considered to speak it well by the standards of Kenyans, let alone Tanzanians. Iddi Amin, the military dictator who ruled Uganda in the seventies, was the first proponent of Swahili as a national language, though his proposal was never taken seriously. Swahili is also spoken in Rwanda, though not as widely as
in Kenya and Tanzania. This may begin to change. In 2017, Rwanda moved to adopt Swahili as its fourth official language, and with French and English, which are used in official communication. Swahili is also spoken by smaller numbers in Burundi, Northern Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. The
structure of Swahili is undeniably Bantu, a lot of the vocabulary has been borrowed from English, Arabic and Persian cultures had a great influence on Swahili culture and language. For a basic example, look at the numbers. See here for an analysis of the impact of Arabic on Swahili numbers, the wordsmoja (one), mbili
(two),tatu (three),nne (four),tano (five),nane (eight) andkumi (ten) are of Bantu origin. On the other handsita (six),saba (seven) andtisa (nine) are of Arabic origin. Beyond numbers, further evidence of Persian influence is in the Swahili words chai (tea),achari (pickle),serikali (government),diwani (councillor),sheha (village councillor) are borrowed from
old Persian through connection with merchants. Swahili also absorbed words from the Portuguese who controlled the Swahili also borrowed some
words from languages of the later colonial powers on the East African coast, including English and German. Other than Arabic and Farsi, Swahili has been influenced and taken some words from English, for example: polisi, police boksi, box hoteli, hotel televisheni, television baiskeli, bicycle hospitali, hospital soksi, socks picha, picture muziki, music
redio, radio The word safari means journey in Swahili. In English it has taken on the meaning you and I are familiar with: an expedition to observe, hunt animals in their natural habitats e.g. National Parks. Overall, Swahili has a fairly uncomplicated grammatical structure. A few things that make Swahili grammar easy are There is no grammatical
gender (though the noun class system can be considered one) There are no case endings (unlike e.g. Russian, German, or MSA) Conjugation is pretty straightforward with few irregular verbs The things that make Swahili grammar a little difficult for English speakers are Conjugation. English speakers arent used to the idea of conjugating verbs (there
are so few conjugations that most of us do it subconsciously). So introducing ideas like subjunctives is hard for many English monoglots. The noun class system is a somewhat diabolical concept for non-Bantu speakers. It is like having 10-20 grammatical genders. The noun class system is a somewhat diabolical concept for non-Bantu speakers. It is like having 10-20 grammatical genders. The noun class system is a somewhat diabolical concept for non-Bantu speakers.
around it. See here for an overview of the noun class system in Swahili. You can learn it, but it is an unfamiliar concept to many language learners. The Swahili alphabet and how to pronounce it. Aa: a as in far Bb: be as in best Cc: ch
as in church Dd: de as in desk Ee: e as in bed Ff: ef as in far Gg: ge as in get Hh: h as in hint Ii: ee as in get Hh: h as in pen Rr: re as in rep Ss: se as in set Tt: te as in take Uu: oo as in cool Vv: ve as in vet Ww: we as in went Yy: ye as in yet Zz: ze as in zoo
Standard Swahili has five vowels: a, e, i, o and u. These vowels are always pronounced the same, regardless of stress (see the examples above). Missing letters: You might have noticed that there is no Q and X in the Swahili were written in its own script, these would be individual letters. Combined consonants are always
pronounced in the same way. However, as it stands, these are not considered as separate letters of the alphabet: CH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the th sound in this, but not in think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the th sound in this, but not in think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the the sound in this, but not in think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the the sound in this, but not in think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the the sound in this, but not in think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the the sound in this, but not in think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the the sound in this, but not in think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the the sound in this, but not in think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, and similar to the think GH as in the word dhahabu, gold, 
sound in the Scottish word loch NG as in the word ngombe, cow NG as in the word ngombe, cow NG as in thamani, worth, similar to the th sound in think. When giving an email or website address the conventions are: @ kwa, at . nukta, dot / mkwaju, slash kuunga, hyphen For example, you can contact us at since the conventions are: @ kwa, at . nukta, dot / mkwaju, slash kuunga, hyphen For example, you can contact us at since the conventions are: @ kwa, at . nukta, dot / mkwaju, slash kuunga, hyphen For example, you can contact us at since the conventions are: @ kwa, at . nukta, dot / mkwaju, slash kuunga, hyphen For example, you can contact us at since the conventions are: @ kwa, at . nukta, dot / mkwaju, slash kuunga, hyphen For example, you can contact us at since the conventions are: @ kwa, at . nukta, dot / mkwaju, slash kuunga, hyphen For example, you can contact us at since the conventions are: @ kwa, at . nukta, dot / mkwaju, slash kuunga, hyphen For example, you can contact us at since the conventions are since the
hello kwa discoverdiscomfort nukta com. Its useful to have a few phrases in the back of your pocket. There is more of this to come, and weve covered a few more in our Swahili study plan. After learning Swahili, we had a good think about what the most important Swahili phrases would be, and we put them down in this master article here. Hello/his
Habari. (See our whole article on saying Hello in Swahili it aint easy!) Goodbye/bye: Kwaheri Please: Tafadhali Thank you: Asante Im not well: Sisikii vizuri Do you speak English?: Unazungumza Kiingereza? Pleased to meet you: Nimefurahi kukufahamu I need help,
please: Nahitaji msaada, tafadhali Im sorry: Samahani My name is: Jina langu ni I dont understand: Sielewi See you later!: Baadae! Great!: Nzuri! Congratulations! Hongera! Overall, I would rate Swahili being roughly as difficult as Spanish for native English speakers. In other words, easier than most languages but of course, there are no easy
 languages. The hardest things about Swahili for English speakers are Verb conjugation verbs change on person, number, and tense Noun classes like having many grammatical genders The lack of homophones every word is new The thing that makes Swahili quite easy is that because its a lingua franca for most speakers, Swahili speakers are quite
forgiving. In our experience, people didnt correct us unless they were our teachers (or we were asking them to). This relaxed approach of Swahili speakers find it difficult to speak to non-fluent speakers and switch to English, which they often speak quite well. (Here
is a discussion on the switch to English phenomenon.) Swahili is not just easy to pronounce, its very easy on the ear. Like Italian, Swahili is rich in vowel sounds. For example, I dont know what to say here is kwa mfano, sijui kusema nini hapa. Every word in that sentence ends in a vowel! Swahili is already mostly a lingua franca, rather
than a language indigenous to one ethnic group. So some proponents of the language want it to be an African language rather than one for just a few countries, and an optional one in others (such as South Africa). According to The East African though, for people to
adopt Swahili across Africa, people need to be less jittery about local slang and variances. Textbook Swahili, spoken in East Africas commercial centres, that used in the arts such as music, and that spoken in the various refugee camps
spread across the region that binds the region together. The essence of a lingua franca is its ability to survive a stripping down of vocabulary, and its receptiveness to external influences. For a language to survive the times, it must be adaptable. In 2004, the then-president of the African Union gave his farewell address the Union in Swahili. He
surprised the audience, and even the conference organisers, who had to scramble to find live translators. He did it to urge Africans to adopt a national language of the African Union or not Wikipedia says it isnt because it wasnt ratified by two-thirds
of member states, but various articles suggest it is. The thing is, becoming a lingua franca means overcoming some pretty significant hurdles. It would mean people would put regional pride ahead of the economic interest of making English a lingua franca (which is itself fraught with some of the same problems), especially in the countries where it
would displace English. Accepting a lingua franca would imply accepting that many local languages will die away over time, something many are not willing to accepting the language of one region above that of many others. Finally, it would mean overcoming a lot of prejudices associated with Swahili in regions, like associations
with it being a lower-class language, or one spoken by the military. One thing were sure of is that of all African languages, Swahili has come the closest to being a lingua franca, and that it is invaluable for travelling to Tanzania and Kenya. Swahili (also called Kiswahili; see below for derivation) is a Bantu language of the Sabaki subgroup of
Northeastern Coast Bantu languages. Swahili is the mother tongue of the Swahili people (or Waswahili) who inhabit several large stretches of the Indian Ocean coastlines from southern Somalia as far south as Mozambique's border region with Tanzania.[2] Although only 5-10 million people speak it as their native language,[1] it is spoken as a second
language by around 80 million people in Southeast African lingua franca, making it the most widely spoken language of sub-Saharan Africa. It is now the only African language among the official working languages of the African Union. Swahili is also taught in the major universities in the world, and several international media outlets, such as the
BBC, Voice of America, and Xinhua, have Swahili programs. In common with all Bantu languages, Swahili programs. In common with all Bantu languages, Swahili programs arranges nouns into a number of affixes (mostly prefixes) which can be attached to express grammatical persons, tense and many clauses that would
require a conjunction in other languages (usually prefixes). OverviewSwahili, spoken natively by various groups traditionally inhabiting about 1,500 miles of the East African coastline, has become a second language spoken by tens of millions in three countries, Tanzania, Kenya, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where it is an official national
language. The neighboring nation of Uganda made Swahili a required subject in primary schools in 1992although this mandate has not been well implemented language in 2005. Swahili, or another closely related language, is also used by relatively small numbers of people in Burundi, Rwanda, Mozambique, Somalia, and
Zambia, and nearly the entire population of the Comoros. Swahili is a Bantu languages of Ilwana, Pokomo, and Mijikenda (Digo, Giryama, Duruma, and so on), which are spoken in the Kenya coastal hinterland, and to Comorian
(Ngazija, Nzuani, Mwali, and Maore) of the Comoro Islands. Other members of the group include Chimwiini of Barawa, Somalia, and Mwani of the Kerimba Islands and northern coastal Mozambique. Many second language speakers of swahili are native speakers of a Nilotic or Cushitic language. In the Guthrie nongenetic
classification of Bantu languages, Swahili is included under Bantoid/Southern/Narrow Bantu/Central/G. One of the earliest known documents in Swahili, dated 1728, is an epic poem in the Arabic script titled Utendi wa Tambuka (The History of Tambuka). Under the influence of European colonial powers, the Latin alphabet became standard for
written Swahili. Although originally written in Arabic script, Swahili orthography is now based on the Latin alphabet that was introduced by Christian missionaries and colonial administrators. NameThe name "Kiswahili" comes from the plural of the Arabic word sahel: sawahil meaning "boundary" or "coast" (used as an adjective to mean "coastal
dwellers" or, by adding 'ki-' ["language"] to mean "coastal language"]. (The word "sahel" is also used for the border zone of the Sahara ("desert")). The incorporation of the final "i" is likely to be the nisba in Arabic (of the coast ), although some believe it is added for phonetic reasons. "Ki-" is a prefix attached to nouns of the noun class that includes
languages (see Noun classes below). Kiswahili refers to the "Swahili Language;" Waswahili refers to the "Swahili r
either the Swahili language or the Swahili language or the Swahili ethnicity emerged. Nevertheless, it is assumed that the Swahili speaking people have occupied their present territories, hugging the Indian Ocean, since well before 1000 C.E.[3]Derek Nurse and Thomas J. Hinnebusch, Swahili and Sabaki: A Linguistic History (University of California Press, 1993, ISBN
0520097750). Arab invaders from the Oman conquered and Islamicized much of the Swahili territories, in particular the twin islands of Zanzibar and Pemba to the northern half, though today Zanzibar is considered the center of Swahili culture
Starting about 1800, the rulers of Zanzibar organized trading expeditions into the interior of the mainland, up to the various lakes in the continent's Great Rift Valley. They soon established permanent trade routes and Swahili-speaking merchants settled in villages along the new trade routes. Generally, this process did not lead to genuine colonization
except for in the area west of Lake Malawi, in what is now Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where a highly divergent dialect arose. However, trade and migration helped spread the Swahili dialect of Congo, Central African
Rebublic, and Mozambique. Later, Christian missionary was prepared by a missionary, and the first Swahili newspaper, Habari ya Mwezi, was published by
missionaries in 1895.[4]After Germany seized the region known as Tanganyika (present day mainland Tanzania) as a colony in 1886, it took notice of the wide (but shallow) dissemination of Swahili, and soon designated Swahili as an official administrative language. The British did not follow suit in neighboring Kenya, though they made moves in that
direction. The British and Germans were both anxious to facilitate their rule over colonies where dozens of languages were spoken, by selecting a single local language that could be well accepted by the natives. Swahili was the only possible candidate. In the aftermath of Germany's defeat in World War I, it was dispossessed of all its overseas
territories. Tanganyika fell into British hands. The British authorities, with the collaboration of British Christian missionary institutions active in these colonies, increased their resolve to institute Swahili as a common language for primary education and low-level governance throughout their East African colonies (Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, and
Kenya). Swahili was to be subordinate to English: university education, much secondary education, and governance at the highest levels would be conducted in English. In order to establish Swahili as an official language it was necessary to create a standard written language. In June 1928, an interterritorial conference was held at Mombasa, at which
the Zanzibar dialect, Kiunguja, was chosen to be the basis for standard swahili. [3] The version of standard swahili, though there are minor discrepancies between the written standard and the Zanzibar vernacular. Foreign loan words thousand years of contact between
Indian Ocean peoples and Swahili resulted in a large number of borrowed words entering the languages. At different periods Swahili also borrowed words is comparable to the
proportion of French, Latin, and Greek loans used in English. Although the proportion of Arabic loans may be as high as fifty percent in classical Swahili poetry (traditionally written in Arabic script), it amounts to less than twenty percent in classical Swahili poetry (traditionally written in Arabic script).
the feature of lexical tone (with the exception of the Mijikenda dialect group that includes the numerically important Mvita dialect, the dialect of Kenya's second city, the Indian Ocean port of Mombasa). VowelsStandard Swahili has five vowel phonemes: //, //, //, and /u/. They are very similar to the vowels of Spanish and Italian, though /u/ stands
between /u/ and /o/ in those languages. Vowels are never reduced, regardless of stress. The vowels are pronounced like the "a" in father// is pronounced like the "i" in ski// is pronounced like the "i" in ski// is pronounced like the "a" in father// is pronounced like the "i" in ski// is pronounced like the "a" in father// is pronounced like the "a" in father/ is pronounced like the "
"lot"/u/ is pronounced between the "u" in rude and the "o" in rote. Swahili word for "leopard," chui, is pronounced /tu.i/, with hiatus. Consonants Bilabial Labio-dental Dental Alveolar Post-alveolar Palatal Velar Glottal Nasal stopm /m/n /n/ny //ng
//Prenasalized stopmb /mb/nd /nd/nj //~/nd/ng //Implosive stopp /p/t /t/ch /t/k /k/Aspirated stopp /p/t /t/ch /t/k /k/Prenasalized fricative /v/(dh //)z /z/(gh //)Voiceless fricative f/(th //)s /s/sh //(kh /x/)h /h/Trillr /r/Lateral approximanty /j/w /w/Notes:The nasal stops are pronounced as
separate syllables when they appear before a plosive (mtoto [m.to.to] "child," nilimpiga [ni.li.m.pi.a] "I hit him"), and prenasalized stops are decomposed into two syllables, [ndi.zi], as does nenda [ne.nda] (not *
[nen.da]) "go."The fricatives in parentheses, th dh kh gh, are borrowed from Arabic. Many Swahili orthography does not distinguish aspirate from tenuis consonants. When nouns in the N-class begin with plosives, they are aspirated (tembo [tembo] "palm wine," but tembo [tembo] "elephant")
in some dialects. Otherwise aspirate consonants are not common. Swahili l and r are confounded by many speakers, and are often both realized as //Noun classes. The ancestral system had twenty-two classes, counting singular and plural as distinct
according to the Meinhof system, with most Bantu languages sharing at least ten of these. Swahili employs sixteen: Six classes that usually indicate singular nouns, a class for verbal infinitives used as nouns, and three classes to indicate location
classnominal prefixex ampletranslation 1 m-mtupers on 2 wa-watupers on 2 w
meaning "person" (plural watu), and mdudu, meaning "insect" (plural 
refer to hand tools and other artifacts. This ki-/vi- alteration even applies to foreign words where the ki- was originally part of the root, so vitabu "books" from kitabu "books" from kitabu "books" from kitabu been a separate class in earlier stages of
Bantu. Words beginning with u- are often abstract, with no plural, for example, utoto "childhood." A fifth class begins with n- or m- or nothing, and its plural is the same. Another class has ji- or no prefix in the singular, and takes ma- in the plural; this class is often used for augmentatives. When the noun itself does not make clear which class it belongs
to, its concords do. Adjectives and numerals commonly take the noun prefixes, and verbs take a different set of prefixes, singular plural motor monitor and numerals commonly take the noun prefixes, and verbs take a different set of prefixes and numerals commonly take the noun prefixes.
is enoughTwo books are enoughTwo books are enoughThe same noun root can be used with different noun-class prefixes for derived meanings: Human mtoto (watoto) "child (children)," abstract utoto "childhood," diminutive kitoto (vitoto) "infant(s),"
augmentative toto (matoto) "big child (children)." Also vegetative mti (miti) "tree(s)," artifact kiti (vijii) "stick(s)," augmentative jiti (majiti) "large tree," kijiti (vijiti) "stick(s)," augmentative jiti (majiti) "large tree," kijiti (vijiti) "stick(s)," ujiti (njiti) "tree(s)," artifact kiti (viti) "stool(s)," augmentative jiti (majiti) "large tree," kijiti (vijiti) "stick(s)," ujiti (njiti) "tree(s)," augmentative jiti (majiti) "large tree," kijiti (vijiti) "stick(s)," ujiti (njiti) "tree(s)," augmentative jiti (majiti) "large tree," kijiti (vijiti) "stick(s)," ujiti (njiti) "tree(s)," ujiti (njiti) "tree(
in Swahili, the class assignments of nouns is still largely semantically motivated, whereas the European systems are mostly arbitrary. However, the classes cannot be understood as simplistic categories such as "people" or "trees." Rather, there are extensions of meaning, words similar to those extensions, and then extensions again from these. The
end result is a semantic net that made sense at the time, and often still does make sense, but which can be confusing to a non-speaker. For example, the ki-/vi- class was originally two separate genders: artifacts (Bantu class 7/8, utensils & hand tools mostly) and diminutives (Bantu class 12). Examples of the first are kisu "knife;" kiti "chair, stool,"
from mti "tree, wood;" chombo "vessel" (a contraction of ki-ombo). Examples of the latter are kitoto "infant," from mtoto "child;" kitawi "frond," from mtoto "child;" kitawi "frond," from myumba "house." It is the diminutive sense that has been furthest extended. An extension common to many languages is approximation and
resemblance (having a 'little bit' of some characteristic, like -y or -ish in English). For example, there is kijani "green," from uvuli "shade." A "little bit" of a verb would be an instance of an action, and such instantiations (usually not very active ones) are
also found: Kifo "death," from the verb -fa "to die;" kiota "nest" from -ota "to brood;" chakula "food" from kula "to eat;" kivuko "a ford, a pass" from -limia "to farm with," from its role in guiding planting. A resemblance, or being a bit like something, implies marginal status in a category, so things that are
marginal examples of their class may take the ki-/vi- prefixes. One example is chura (ki-ura) "frog," which is only half terrestrial and therefore marginal as an animal. This extension may account for disabilities as well: Kilema "a cripple," kipofu "a blind person," kiziwi "a deaf person." Finally, diminutives often denote contempt, and contempt is
sometimes expressed against things that are dangerous. This might be the historical explanation for kifaru "rhinoceros," kingugwa "spotted hyena," and kiboko "hippopotamus" (perhaps originally meaning "stubby legs"). Another class with broad semantic extension is the m-/mi- class (Bantu classes 3/4). This is often called the 'tree' class, because mti
miti "tree(s)" is the prototypical example, but the class encompasses much broader meaning. It seems to cover vital entities which are neither human nor typical animals: Trees and other plants, like mkeka "mat"); supernatural and natural forces, such as mwezi
"moon," mlima "mountain," mto "river;" active things, such as moto "fire," including active body parts (moyo "heart," mkono "hand, arm"); and human groups, which are vital but not themselves human, such as mji "village," perhaps msikiti "mosque," and, by analogy, mzinga "beehive." From the central idea of tree, which is thin, tall, and spreading,
comes an extension to other long or extended things or parts of things, such as mwavuli "umbrella," moshi "smoke," msumari "nail;" and from activity there even come active instantiations of verbs, such as mfuo "hammering," from -fua "to hammer," or mlio "a sound," from -lia "to make a sound." Words may be connected to their class by more than
one metaphor. For example, mkono is an active body part, and mto is an active hoth long and thin. Things with a trajectory, such as mpaka "border" and mwendo "journey," are classified with long thin things in many languages. This may be further extended to anything dealing with time, such as mwaka "year" and
perhaps mshahara "wages." Also, animals which are exceptional in some way and therefore don't fit easily in the other classes may be placed in this class. Verb affixationSwahili verbs consist of a root and a number of affixes (mostly prefixes) which can be attached to express grammatical persons, tense and many clauses that would require a
conjunction in other languages (usually prefixes). As sometimes these affixes are sandwiched in between the root word and other affixes, some linguists have mistakenly assumed that Swahili uses infixes which is not the case. Most verbs, the verbs of Bantu origin, will end in "-a." This is vital to know for using the Imperative, or Command, conjugation
form. In most dictionaries, verbs are listed in their root form, for example -kata meaning "to cut/chop." In a simple sentence, prefixes for grammatical tense unless stated otherwise. Verb Conjugationni--na-kata1sqDEF. TIMEcut/chop." I am cutting (it) "Now
this sentence can be modified either by changing the subject prefix or the tense prefix, for example:u--na-kata2sgPERFECTcut/chop"You have cut"The simple present is more complicated and learners often take some of the phrases for slang before they discover the proper usage. Nasoma means "I
read." This is not short for ninasoma ("I am reading"). -A- is the indefinite (gnomic tense) prefix, used for example in generic statements such as "birds fly," and the vowel of the prefix ni- is assimilated. It may be simpler to consider these to be a single prefix: 1st PERSONna-twa-2nd PERSONwa-mwa-3rd PERSONa-wa-"I read""You (pl) read"The
complete list of basic subject prefixes is (for the m-/wa- or human class):SINGULARPLURAL1st PERSONNi-Tu-2nd PERSONU-M-3rd PERSO
sense used in the English language, but also to articulate conjunctions. For example ki- is the prefix for the sentence, "nikinunua nyama wa mbuzi sokoni, nitapika leo," means "If I buy goat meat at the market, I'll cook today." The conjunction "if" in this sentence is simply represented by -ki. A third prefix can be added, the object prefix. It is placed just
before the root and can either refer to a person, replace an object or emphasize a particular one, for example:a-na-mw-onamtoto1sqDEF.T.3sq.OB[see'He (is) see(inq) him/her"ni-na-mw-onamtoto1sqDEF.T.3sq.OB[see'He (is) see(inq) him/her"ni-na-mw-onamt
vowel is also an affix. The suffix a on the root words provided by Swahili dictionaries indicates the indicative form of each word. Other forms also occur; for instance, with negation: In the word sprovided by Swahili dictionaries indicates the indicative form of each word. Other forms also occur; for instance, with negation: In the word sprovided by Swahili dictionaries indicates the indicative form of each word. Other forms also occur; for instance, with negation: In the word sprovided by Swahili dictionaries indicates the indicative form of each word.
this change of the final vowel include the conjunctive, where an -e is implemented. This rule is true only for Bantu verbs ending with -a; ones derived from Arabic follow more complex rules. Other suffixes, which once again look suspiciously like infixes, are placed before the end vowel, such aswa-na-pig-w-a3plDEF.T. hitPASSIVEIND. "They are being
hit"Swahili time(East African) Swahili time (East African) Swahili time runs from dawn (at six a.m.) to dusk (at six p.m.), rather than midday are six o'clock. Words such as asubuhi "morning," jioni "evening," and usiku "night" can be used to demarcate periods of the day, for
example:saa moja asubuhi ("hour one morning") 7:00 a.m.saa tisa usiku ("hour nine night") 3:00 a.m.saa mbili usiku ("hour two evening") 8:00 p.m.More specific time demarcations include adhuhuri "early afternoon," alasiri "late afternoon," alasiri "late
some overlap of terms used to demarcate day and night; 7:00 p.m. can be either saa moja jioni or saa m
five past ninesaa mbili kasorobo ("hour two less a quarter") 7:45saa tatu kasoro ("a few minutes to nine") Swahili time derives from the fact that the sun rises at around six a.m. and sets at around six p.m. everyday in the equatorial regions where most Swahili speakers reside. Dialects Dialects of Swahili Modern standard Swahili is based on Kiunguja,
the dialect spoken in Zanzibar town. There are numerous local dialects of Swahili, including the following: Kiunguja: Spoken in Zanzibar town and environs on Zanzibar town. There are numerous local dialects of the island. Kitumbatu and Kimakunduchi is a recent renaming of "Kihadimu;"
the old name means "serf," hence it is considered pejorative.Kimrima: Spoken around Kilwa and to the south.Kipemba: Local dialect of the island. Formerly spoken around Muita island. Includes Kimvita, the other major
dialect alongside Kiunguja.Kingare: Subdialect of the Mombasa area.Chijomvu: Subdialect of the Mombasa area.Chijomvu: Subdialect of the southern Kenya coast.Kiumba: Dialect of the southern Kenya coa
languages spoken in and around Nairobi in informal settings. Sheng originated in the Nairobi slums and is considered fashionable and cosmopolitan among a growing segment of the population. Languages similar to SwahiliKimwani: Spoken in the Kerimba Islands and northern coastal Mozambique. Kingwana: Spoken in the eastern and southern
regions of the Democratic Republic of the Comoros Islands, which form a chain between Tanzania and the northern tip of Madagascar. Chimwiini was traditionally spoken around the Somali town of Barawa. In recent years,
most of its speakers have fled to Kenya to escape civil war. Linguists specializing in Swahili, Chimwiini speakers, and speakers of other Swahili dialects all debate whether Chimwiini is Swahili, [5] Kenya's
population is comparable, but the prevalence of Swahili is lower, though still widespread. The eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo are Swahili speaking. Nearly half the Congolese speak it, and it is starting to rival Lingala as the most important national language of that country. In Uganda, the Baganda generally do not speak
Swahili, but it is in common use among people elsewhere in the country, and is currently being implemented in schools nationwide in preparation for the East African Community. The usage of Swahili in other countries is commonly overstated, being common only in market towns, among returning refugees, or near the borders of Kenya and Tanzania
Even so, Swahili possibly exceeds Hausa of West Africa as the sub-Saharan indigenous language with the greatest number of speakers. Swahili literature was written in the Arabic script. Jan Knappert considered the translation of Arabic
poem Hamziya from the year 1652 to be the earliest Swahili written text. Starting in the nineteenth century, western scholars began to study Swahili literature, and a few of them tried to establish a canon of Swahili
writing.[6] Because of this orientalist exploration and interest in the Swahili culture and language, it much of the analysis and commentary on Swahili literature is the relative heterogeneity of the Swahili language. Works are written in Kiamu, Kimvita
Kipemba, Kiunguja, Kimrima, Kimtang'ata, Ki-Dar-es-salaam and Ki-Nairobi. Swahili literature has sometimes been characterized as Islamic by western scholars such as Jan Knappert, but others such as Alamin Mazrui and Ibrahim Noor Shariff point out that Swahili poetry includes many secular works by such poets as Muyaka bin Ghassany and
Muhammad Kijuma. [7] Swahili literature is classified into three genres: Riwaya (the novel), tamthilia (drama) and shairi (from Arabic: Shir, poetry). Fiction in Swahili literature mainly consisted mostly of stories inspired
by indigenous oral narrative traditions, Arabic tales, and translations of works by European writers. An important exception was James Mbotela's 1934 historical novel Uhuru wa Watumwa (Freedom for the Slaves). Swahili poetry or "shairi" is generally derived from Arabic poetry and is still written in the traditional manner. It began in the northern
Kenya coastal towns of Lamu and Pate before spreading to Tanga Region, Zanzibar and other nearby areas. There are, however, fundamental differences of life on the African subcontinent. Traditional poetry can be classified into different groups, epic, lyrical, or
didactic, according to its form and content; it can be further classified as religious or secular. Examples of narrative poetry, known as utenzi, include the Utenzi wa Shufaka. Until recently, Swahili prose was restricted to practical uses such as the dissemination of information or the
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recording of events. However, the traditional art of oral expression, characterized by its homiletic aspects, heroic songs, folklore ballads and humorous dialogues which accurately depict Swahili life, cultural beliefs and traditions, has produced a number of valuable works. Shaaban Robert (190962), a Tanganyikan poet, novelist, and essayist, wrote works in the new Standard Swahili that gained wide circulation in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s and are highly esteemed in East Africa today. Another important writer from this period was the Zanzibari, wrote a series of detective adventures, the first of which, Mzimu wa Watu wa Kale (1960; Shrine of the Ancestors), marked the beginning of a Swahili fiction reflecting the modern East African experience of industrialization, westernization, the struggle for self-government and the development of post-independence society. Tanzanian Faraji Katalambulla

published a successful modern crime thriller, Simu ya Kifo (Death Call), in 1965, after which the volume of works published in Swahili grew dramatically. Romances, detective fiction, and traditional tales continue to be the mainstay of the literature, but there are several novels and plays that examine historical events and contemporary social and political problems in a sophisticated and stylistically elegant manner. Swahili-language translations now also include works by African as well as Western writers. Authors who have received local and international acclaim include the novelists Notable literary peopleFarouk TopanTanzaniaEbrahim Hussein (1943-) TanzaniaMuhammed Said Abdullae (April 25, 1918) TanzaniaPera Ridhiwani (1917-1997) TanzaniaMay M Balisidya (?-1987), TanzaniaMzee Hamis Akida (November 22, 1914-), TanzaniaPera Ridhiwani (1917-1997) TanzaniaMohammed S. Mohammed (1945-), TanzaniaEbrahim Hussein (1943-), TanzaniaPenina O. Muhando (1948-), TanzaniaPenina O. Muhando (1948-), TanzaniaAli Jemaadar Amir, KenyaKatama Mkangi (19442004), KenyaP.M. Kareithi, KenyaSwahili in non-African popular cultureIn Civilization IV, the title music is a rearrangement of the Lord's Prayer in Swahili, sharing the same name "Baba Yetu" ("Our Father"). In Michael Jackson's 1987 single, "Liberian Girl," the repeated intro is the Swahili phrase "Nakupenda pia, nakutaka pia, mpenzi wee!" which translates "I love you too, and I want you too, my love!"Disney's animated film The Lion King contains several Swahili references. "Simba," the main-character's name, means lion, "Rafiki" means friend, and the name of the popular song "Hakuna Matata" means "no problems." Bungie Studios uses this language in some of its games (Halo 2). Gene Roddenberry took the name of Lieutenant Uhura in Star Trek: The Next Generation has a derivative in Swahili. It means "beloved." Swahili LiteratureBertoncini-Zbkov, Elena. 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Swahili: The Rise of a National Language spoken mainly in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, and also in Burundi, Mozambique, Oman, Somalia the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa. Estimates for the total number of Swahili speakers range from 88 million to 200 million. There are between 5 million and 16 million and 16 million native speakers of Swahili at a glance Native name: Kiswahili [kiswahili] Language family: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Benue-Congo, Southern Bantoid, Bantu, Northeast Coast Bantu, Sabaki Number of speakers: c. 200 million Spoken in: Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and many other countries First written: AD 1711 Writing system: Arabic script, Latin script Status: official language in Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda Swahili is an official language of Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya, and is one of the African Development Community. It is recognised as a minority language in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique and Zambia. The majority of people in Tanzania and Kenya speak Swahili as a second language, and most educated Kenyans are fluent in the language, as it is compulsory in schools, and also taught in universities. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Swahili is spoken in the five eastern provinces, and overall almost half of the population speak it. In Uganda Swahili is widely spoken among non-Baganda people, and is taught in schools. The name Swahili comes from the Arabic word (sawil), the plural of (sil - boundry, coast) and means "coastal language". Swahili includes quite a bit of vocabulary of Arabic origin as a result of contact with Arabic-speaking traders and and inhabitants of the Swahili Coast - the coastal area of Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique, and islands such as Zanzibar and Comoros. There are also words of German, Portuguese, English, Hindi and French origin in Swahili due to contact with traders, slavers and colonial officials. [top] Written Swahili The earliest known pieces of writing, in the Arabic script, in Swahili are letters dating from 1711, and the earliest known manuscript, a poetic epic entitled Utendi wa Tambuka (The History of Tambuka), dates from 1728. During the 19th century Swahili was used as the main language of administration by the European colonial powers in East Africa and under their influence the Latin alphabet was increasingly used to write it. The first Swahili Source: Swahili alphabet (alfabeti ya kiswahili) and pronunciation Hear a recording of the Swahili alphabet by EasySwahili Download alphabet charts for Swahili (Excel) [top] Sample text (Latin alphabet) Watu wote wamejaliwa akili na dhamiri, hivyo yapasa watendeane kindugu. Sample text (Arabic script) Arabic script text provided by Ahmed Elshikh Hear a recording of this text by EasySwahili Translation All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. (Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) Sample videos in Swahili Information about Swahili | Phrases | Numbers | Time | Tower of Babel | Books about Swahili on: Amazon.com and Amazon.com radio and news Learn Swahili: For Beginners and Travellersby G. O. Oyoo- includes details of the Swahili pronouns, sentence construction; useful words and phrases in various scenarios, and an English-Swahili dictionary. Buy from: Payhip.com Bantu languages Aka, Bafaw-Balong Bangi, Bangubangu, Basaa, Bemba, Bemba, Bemba, Bemba, Bemba, Bemba, Benga, Bhaca, Bila, Bube, Budu, Bujeba, Bukusu, Bulu, Bushong, Central Kilimanjaro, Cent Jita, Kabwa, Kako, Kamba, Kanyok, Kiga, Kikuyu, Kimbundu, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Kisi, Kogo, Komo, Kongo, Ko Mbunda, Mbuun, Mende, Mongo, Mpiemo, Mushungulu, Mwani, Myene, Nambya, Nande, Ngoni, Ngwii, Njebi, Nkore, Northern Ndebele (Zimbabwe), Northern Ndebele (Zimbabwe Shona, Soga, Songe, Southern Ndebele, Southern N (Bedawi), Arabic (Chadian), Arabic (Chadian), Arabic (Chadian), Arabic (Moroccan), Arabic (Moroccan), Arabic (Moroccan), Arabic (Syrian), Arabic (Syrian), Arabic (Moroccan), Arabic (Mo Chittagonian, Comorian, Crimean Tatar, Dargwa, Dari, Dhatki, Dogri, Domari, Gawar Bati, Gawri, Gilaki, Hausa, Hazaragi, Hindko, Indus Kohistani, Kumzari, Kurdish, Kyrgyz, Lezgi, Lop, Luri, Maba, Maguindanao, Malay, Malay (Terengganu), Mandinka, Marwari, Mazandarani, Mogholi, Morisco, Mozarabic, Munji, Noakhailla, Nubi, Ormuri, Palula, Parkari Koli, Pashto, Persian/Farsi, Punjabi, Qashqai, Rajasthani, Rohingya, Salar, Saraiki, Sawi, Serer, Shabaki, Shina, Shughni, Sindhi, Somili, Somil Uyghur, Uzbek, Wakhi, Wanetsi, Wolof, Xiao'erjing, Yidgha Languages written with the Latin alphabet Page last modified: 27.04.24 [top] You can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and if you like what you see on this page, you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and you can support this site by Buying Me A Coffee, and you can support making a donation via PayPal or Patreon, or by contributing in other ways. 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Is swahili a real language. Swahili language spoken. Is swahili a good language to learn. What language do swahili speak. Swahili speaking. Swahili svenska. Swahili spoken.