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hullo! 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 words in no time. Read on for a full exploration of the history behind the Swahili language, its culture, and native 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 SwahiliAfrican influenceOther influencesSwahili language and cultureSwahili dialectsSwahili structureGrammarNoun classesNoun agreementSounds of Swahili Written SwahiliSwahili resourcesDictionaries and grammarsSwahili schoolsOnline Swahili teachersTV shows and mediaOnline Swahili lessonsPhrasebooksPodcasts for learning SwahiliPronunciation guidesMobile appsSwahili TextbooksYouTube channelsSummarySwahili is a widely spoken language today, with over 200 million speakers worldwide. It is an official language in several countries, including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Swahili is also a lingua franca in many other parts of East Africa, where it is used for trade, communication, and education. The language has a rich history and a vibrant culture, and it is a source of pride for many Swahili speakers. 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 adopted between different groups of native speakers with contrasting dialects. But Swahili origins are actually much deeper, and even include Arabic influences, as well as vocabulary from other local language groups, such as Mijikenda, Pokomo, and Taifa dialects in East Africa. In fact, the word Swahili itself is derived from an Arabic term - swahil, or of the coast. Arabic influences on SwahiliAlong with its name, Swahili continues to contain many terms that are directly created from an Arabic word or phrase. For instance, you might encounter the greeting salaam aleikum when speaking in Swahili, something that is directly from Arabic as a standard Islamic salutation. Or, you might hear salaama 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. 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published a successful modern science thriller, Simu ya Kifo (Death Call), in 1965, after which the volume of works published in Swahili grew steadily. 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 Abdulla (April 25, 1918) TanzaniaPera Ridhiwani (1917-1997) TanzaniaMay M Balisidya (?-1987) TanzaniaMzee Hamis Akida (November 22, 1914-) TanzaniaSaid Khamis (December 12, 1947-), ZanzibarAbdilatif Abdalla (April 14, 1946-), KenyaEuphrase Kezilahabi (April 13, 1944-), TanzaniaMohammed S. Mohammed (1945-), TanzaniaEbrahim Hussein (1943-), TanzaniaPenina O. Muhandu (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 from the Swahili word Uhuru meaning "freedom." Also, the word "Imzadi" used in Star Trek: The Next Generation has a derivative in Swahili. It means "beloved."Swahili LiteratureBertoncini-Zbkov, Elena. Vamps and Victims - Women in Modern Swahili Literature. An Anthology. Rdiger Kppe Verlag, 1996. ISBN 3927620742Bertoncini-Zbkov, Elena. Outline of Swahili Literature: Prose, Fiction and Drama. Brill, 1989. ISBN 9004085041Knappert, Jan. Epic poetry in Swahili and other African languages. Leiden: Brill, 1983. ISBN 9004068775Mazrui, Ali A., and Alamin M. Mazrui. The Political Culture of Language: Swahili, Society and the State, Global Academic Publishing, 1999. ISBN 1883058066Notes 1.0 1.1 L. Marten, "Swahili," in Keith Brown, (ed.), Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics (Elsevier Science, 2005), A.H.J. Prins, The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast (Arabs, Shirazi and Swahili) (Routledge, 2019. ISBN 978-1138233195), 3.0 3.1 Wilfred Whiteley, Swahili: The Rise of a National Language (Routledge, 2023. ISBN 978-1032618838), 4.0 4.1 Swahili (Kiswahili / Retrieved December 18, 2024. Birgit Brock-Utne, "Education for allin whose language?" Oxford Review of Education 27(1) (2001): 115-134. Jan Knappert, Four Centuries of Swahili Verse: A Literary History and Anthology (Heinemann, 1979. ISBN 978-0435917036). Alamin Mazrui and Ibrahim Noor Shariff, The Swahili: Idiom and Identity of an African People (Africa World Press, 2016. ISBN 0865433100). Ashton, E O. Swahili Grammar: Including Intonation. Essex: Longman House, 1947. ISBN 058262701XBrown, Keith (ed.). Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics. Elsevier Science, 2005. ASIN B00D8GA4C2Knappert, Jan. Four Centuries of Swahili Verse: A Literary History and Anthology. Heinemann, 1979. ISBN 978-0435917036Mazrui, Alamin, and Ibrahim Noor Shariff. The Swahili: Idiom and Identity of an African People. Africa World Press, 2016. ISBN 0865433100Nurse, Derek, and Thomas J. Hinnebusch. Swahili and Sabaki: A Linguistic History. University of California Press, 1993. ISBN 0520097750Prins, A.H.J. The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast (Arabs, Shirazi and Swahili). Routledge, 2019. ISBN 978-1138233195Whiteley, Wilfred. Swahili: The Rise of a National Language. Routledge, 2023. ISBN 978-1032618838 All links retrieved December 18, 2024. Dictionaries: Swahili is a Bantu 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 native speakers of Swahili, and between 83 million and 183 million people who speak it as a second or foreign language. 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 official languages of the African Union, the East African Community, and the Southern 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 dwellers". The prefix ki- is attached to nouns in the noun class that includes languages, so Kiswahili 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 Swaihili 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 newspaper, Habari ya Mwezi, was published by missionaries in 1895. Arabic script for 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 wamezaliwa huru, hadhi na haki zao ni sawa. 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.co.uk [affiliate links] [top] Links Information about the Swahili language Information about the Arabic script for Swahili Online Swahili lessons Learn Swahili online with SwahiliPod101 | Learn Swahili with Glossika | Learn Swahili with Ling Swahili phrases Online Swahili dictionaries Online Swahili radio and news Learn Swahili: For Beginners and Travellersby G. O. Oyoo- includes details of the Swahili alphabet and pronunciation; a guide to Swahili pronouns, sentence structure and 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, Bembe, Bena, Benga, Bhaca, Bila, Bube, Budu, Bujeba, Bukusu, Bulu, Bushong, Central Kilimanjaro, Central Teke, Chichewa, Chokwe, Chuwabu, Comorian, Dciriku, Digo, Duala, Eton, Ewondo, Fang, Fuliiru, Ganda/Luganda, Gogo, Gusii, Gwere, Gyele, Haya, Hehe, Herero, Ibinda, Idaxo-Isuxa-Tiriki, Ikizu, Ikoma, Jita, Kabwa, Kako, Kamba, Kanyok, Kiga, Kikuyu, Kimbundu, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Kisi, Kogo, Komo, Kongo, Konjo, Koti, Kukuya, Kunda, Kuria, Kwambi, Kwasio, Lambya, Lengola, Lingala, Loma, Lozi, Luba-Katanga, Luchazi, Lunda, Luvale, Luyana, Makaa, Makonde, Makuwa, Mandekan, Maore, Masaaba, Mbama, Mbere, Mbosi, Mbukushu, Mbunda, Mbuun, Mende, Mongo, Mpiemo, Mushungulu, Mwani, Myene, Nambya, Nande, Ngoni, Ngwii, Njebi, Nkore, North Teke, Northern Ndebele (South Africa), Northern Ndebele (Zimbabwe), Northern Sotho, Nyamwezi, Nyakyusa, Nyemba, Nyole, Nyoro, Nyungwe, Nzadi, Oroko, OshiWambo, Pagibete, Punu, Ronga, Safwa, Seki, Sena, Sengele, Shona, Soga, Songe, Southern Ndebele, Southern Sotho, Sukuma, Swahili, Swati, Tanga, Tembo, Tetela, Tonga, Tooro, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswa, Tswana, Tumbuka, Umbundu, Venda, Vili, Vwanji, Xhosa, Yakam, Yansi, Yao, Yasa, Yeyi, Zigula, Zinza, Zulu Languages written with the Arabic script Adamaua Fulfulde, Afrikaans, Arabic (Algerian), Arabic (Bedawi), Arabic (Chadian), Arabic (Egyptian), Arabic (Gulf), Arabic (Hassaniya), Arabic (Hejazi), Arabic (Lebanese), Arabic (Libyan), Arabic (Modern Standard), Arabic (Moroccan), Arabic (Najdi), Arabic (Sudanese), Arabic (Syrian), Arabic (Tunisian), Arwi, ynu, Azeri, Balanta-Ganja, Balti, Baluchi, Beja, Belarusian, Bosnian, Brahui, Chagatai, Chechen, Chittagonian, Comorian, Crimean Tatar, Dargwa, Dari, Dhatki, Dogri, Domari, Gawar Bati, Gawri, Gilaki, Hausa, Hazaragi, Hindko, Indus Kohistani, Kabyle, Kalkoti, Karakalpak, Kashmiri, Kazakh, Khovar, Khorasani Turkic, Khwarezmian, Konkani, Kumzari, Kurdish, Kyrgyz, Lezgi, Lop, Luri, Maba, Maguindanao, Malay, Malay (Terengganu), Mandinka, Marwari, Mazandarani, Mogholi, Morisco, Mozarabic, Munji, Noakhaila, Nubi, Ormuri, Palula, Parkari Koli, Pashto, Persian/Farsi, Punjabi, Qashgai, Rajasthani, Rohingya, Salar, Saraiki, Sawi, Serer, Shabaki, Shina, Shughni, Sindhi, Somali, Soninke, Tatar, Tausg, Tawallammat Tamajaq, Tayart Tamajeq, Ternate, Torwali, Turkish, Urdu, 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 use the buttons below to share it with people you know. 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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.