



## KISWAHILI - A VERY BRIEF INTRO

**OVERVIEW:** Swahili or Kiswahili, is an official language of Tanzania, Kenya (English is the official language the government of Kenya and is widely spoken in urban areas), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Uganda. Swahili speakers can also be found in surrounding countries, such as Burundi, Rwanda, and Mozambique. . . As a part of the Bantu language family, Swahili is related to a variety of languages from Southern Africa to Central to West Africa. While some Bantu languages, like Xhosa and Zulu are click languages, Swahili does not use clicks, so pronunciation is generally not difficult for English speakers.

**VOWELS:** Swahili has five vowels: a, e, i, o, u. If you are familiar with Spanish, (etc.) the vowels are pronounced the same. If not, they are pronounced:

A - ah (Like the "a" in "father")  
E - eh (Like the "e" in "egg" )  
I - ee (Like the "ee" in "see")  
O - oh (Like the "o" in "row" )  
U - oo (Like the "oo" in "doom")

Vowels in Swahili always make the same sounds, even when combined with other vowels. There are no silent letters or diphthongs in Swahili, so vowels will always make the same sound, and it is important that you pronounce each vowel, even when one vowel follows another. For example, in the word "daawa" (lawsuit), you must say "dah-ah-wah", pronouncing both of the a's. Simply saying "dah-wah" (dawa) changes the meaning to "drug/medicine".

## BASIC GREETINGS

**Hujambo? Sijambo.**

*Hello, how are you? I'm fine.*

**Hamjambo? Hatujambo.**

*Hello, how are you all? We're fine.*

**Habari? -or- Habari yako?**

*How are you? (Literally, 'your news?')*

**Habari za . . . (How are you/News of)**

. . . leo?            *today?*  
. . . asubuhi?      *morning?*  
. . . mchana?      *afternoon?*  
. . . jioni?          *evening?*

. . . safari?        *your journey?*

**Nzuri, Safi, Poa**

*Fine, Clean/In Good Order, Cool*

**Jina lako nani?**

*What is your name?*

**Jina langu ni \_\_\_\_\_.**

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_.*

**Unatoka wapi?**

*Where are you from?*

**Ninatoka \_\_\_\_\_.**

*I'm from \_\_\_\_\_.*

**Unafanya nini?**

*What do you do?*

**Mimi ni \_\_\_\_\_.**

*I'm a \_\_\_\_\_.*

## BASIC DEPARTURES

**Kwaheri.**

*Goodbye.*

**Baadaye.**

*Later.*

**Tutaonana baadaye.**

*See you later.*

**Tutaonana kesho.**

*See you tomorrow.*

**Usiku mwema.**

*Good night.*

**Lala salama.**

*Sleep well.*

## NICETIES

**Ndiyo.**

*Yes.*

**Hapana.**

*No.*

**Tafadhali**

*Please*

**Asante (sana).**

*Thank you (very much).*

**Karibu.**

*You're welcome.*

**Samahani.**

*Excuse me (getting attention)*

*Sorry/Pardon me.*

**Pole (sana).**

*(Very) sorry/Expressing Sympathy*

## GOOD TO KNOW

**Sihitaji**

*I don't need. (Useful in Markets)*

**Msaada!**

*Help!*

**Choo kiko wapi?**

*Where is the toilet*

**Siwezi kusema Kiswahili**

*I can't speak Kiswahili*

**Unaweza kusema Kiingereza?**

*Are you able to speak English?*

## NUMBERS

**Moja - One**

**Mbili - Two**

**Tatu - Three**

**Nne - Four**

**Tano - Five**

**Sita - Six**

**Saba - Seven**

**Nane - Eight**

**Tisa - Nine**

**Kumi - Ten**

**Kumi na moja - Eleven**

**Kumi na \_\_\_\_ (Twelve-Nineteen)**

**Ishirini - Twenty**

**Thelathini - Thirty**

**Arobaini - Forty**

**Hamsini - Fifty**

**Sitini - Sixty**

**Sabini - Seventy**

**Themanini - Eighty**

**Tisini - Ninety**

**Mia Moja - One Hundred**

**Mia \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ Hundred**

**Elfu Moja - One Thousand**

**Elfu \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ Thousand**

## TIME

**Sasa - Now**

**Baadaye - Later**

**Kabla ya \_\_\_\_ - Before \_\_\_\_**

**Baada ya \_\_\_\_ - After \_\_\_\_**

**Asubuhi - Morning**

**Mchana - Afternoon**

**Jioni - Evening**

**Usiku - Night**

## QUESTION WORDS

**... nani? ... who?**

**... nini? ... what?**

**... wapi? ... where?**

**... lini? ... when?**

**... kwa nini? ... why?**