



You represent the driving force of a civilization that lives in a marshy, tree-lined rainforest. Two large rivers to the east and west serve as your main sources of fresh water. To the immediate north is a large mountainous region (the source of the two rivers) where your people have never been; to the northwest (beyond the river) is a rocky arid region of little interest to you.



Epoch 1

To begin with, you will need some sounds. Enclosed you will find an IPA chart. Use it to create a list of sounds (not phonemes) that (minimally) meet these requirements:

Stops: At least four.

Fricatives: At least four.

Places of Articulation: At least three.

Nasals: At least three.

Approximants/Taps/Trills: At least: one lateral, one rhotic, two glides.

Vowels: At least six; one must be central; rest balanced.

Special: Include a uvular series.

Once you have your sound system, use it to create some words. Create roots for the words below, and for seven or eight other basic words (flora, fauna, actions, etc.) that relate to your region. When creating words, use the following max syllable:

(C)V(V)(C) where coda C = nasal or glide only

(a) speaking, speech

(f) land

(k) eye

(b) tongue

(g) sky

(l) sleeping, sleep

(c) person

(h) water

(m) ear

(d) man

(i) sun

(n) nose

(e) woman

(j) moon

(o) making, make

Note to Group Leader: Please ignore morphology of any kind right now, and don't worry about verbal stems vs. nominal stems. The maximum allowable vowel sequence for this set is two. Be sure to explain rhotics and glides. Nasals don't assimilate to the place of the following C.

Epoch 2

Your people have been in existence for some time, and have recently encountered a boat on the shore to the south with a rider who hailed you in a strange language. You are now aware of the presence of others in the world. Your people and language will need names to distinguish themselves, but first, you may need some pronouns. Adhere to the following:

Number: Four numbers (singular, dual, paucal and plural).

Person: Three persons (first, second and third).

Gender/Class: At least four genders in the third person.

Clusivity: Inclusive/exclusive in the first person.

Using what you have, come up with a name for your language and your people (though if you need to coin another noun or two, feel free). You may need to decide on strategies for modification and possession. To do so, answer the following questions:

1. Do modifiers precede or follow the nouns they modify?
2. Are modifiers marked (to indicate they modify something), or are nouns marked to indicate that they're being modified—or both?
3. Do possessors precede or follow the nouns they possess?
4. Are possessors marked (to indicate they possess something), or are nouns marked to indicate that they're possessed—or both?
5. How are possessors (or possessed nouns) and modifiers (or modified nouns) marked: suffix? prefix? preposition? postposition?

Note to Group Leader: The answers to 1 and 3 need not be identical, but for the sake of this exercise, the answer to 5 should serve for both modification and possession. This language does *not* distinguish singular and plural on nouns.

Epoch 3

Time has passed, and your latest generation of speakers speaks in a way that differs in certain respects from generations past. The following changes have occurred (in order):

1. Syncope: V[-front, -back] > Ø / C[-voice]_C[-voice]
2. Post-Nasal Voicing: C > [+voice] / C[+nasal]_
3. Nasal Assimilation: C[+nasal] > [αplace] / _C[αplace]
4. Stop Assimilation: C[+stop] > [αplace, βvoice] / _C[+stop, αplace, βvoice]
5. Create Your Own:

Apply the changes to your words and see what happens. Also create forms for the following words, applying the above changes after you've coined the forms in the old way:

(p) flower

(t) bird

(x) pouch

(q) tree

(u) fish

(y) hat

(r) animal

(v) food

(z) mat, towel

(s) rock

(w) stick

(æ) cloth

Note to Group Leader: A central vowel is defined as [-front, -back]. Alpha notation works as follows: The Greek letters are variables, and will be identical to variables of the same type anywhere else in the rule. Thus, if a /p/ changes to [αplace] with respect to the next consonant, it will become [k] if it precedes a [g], [k] or [ŋ], and become a [t] if it precedes [d], [t] or [n].

Epoch 4

Your people have developed specialized knowledge of the surrounding area. They've begun to cultivate several plants and create tools and clothing unique to their region. Enclosed you'll find pictures of several plants, animals and tools. Create words for them using some of the strategies discussed, including:

- Novel Root Creation
- Reduplication
- Affixation
- Compounding
- Metaphorical Extension

In addition, your people have acquired a new ability: the ability to use verbs! Your verbs will encode the same number categories as your nouns (not your pronouns), and then will make distinctions based on chance. You can use the space below to note the distinctions being made:

- Number Encoding: None.
- Tense / Aspect Distinction:
- Person Encoding:
- Exponence:
- Wild Card:

Note to Group Leader: The realization/exponence need not be compositional. Just as long as it encodes what it's supposed to encode, that's fine. Don't worry about infinitives, commands, sub/ conjunctives or participles (unless there's time and you feel like it).

Epoch 5

Your people have come into regular and steady contact with a nearby civilization. Furthermore, you've discovered that they're in possession of certain items which your people would put to good use if they had a steady supply. Perhaps they would be interested in trading with you for something that you have in abundance...?

Items of Interest

- You've learned of a large, deep sea fish which is both tasty and healthful (or so you've heard).
- You've learned of a large, yellow fruit that grows in trees native to the southern islands—quite a treat for after dinner!
- The island folk are excellent sailors, and they've created a sturdy boat for use specifically in rivers and streams—perfect for navigating your territory!

In order to communicate with others, you'll need some greetings. Consider what's been discussed about greetings and coin some useful phrases to facilitate your exchange. You might consider coming up with strategies to cover the following:

Hello!	Yes!	Do you have...?
Goodbye!	No!	Will you give me...?
Thank you!	I need...	Repeat, please...?

Note to Group Leader: Your sound changes are no longer synchronic (i.e. current). They may have changed your phonological inventory, but they no longer apply to novel (i.e. borrowed) forms. Older forms, yes.

Epoch 6

Due to advancements in modern travel, you are now able to trade with all the peoples of the world. See what they have to offer! Trade around to get at least three manmade implements, three animals and three plants. But note that, yet again, your people have begun to speak their language in a slightly different way. The following changes have taken place (in order):

1. Intervocalic Voicing: $C > [+voice] / V_V$
2. Degemination: $C_1C_1 > C_1$

Note to Group Leader: The subscript 1 simply indicates that the consonants are identical.

Epoch 7

As a final challenge: Attempt to translate the Article I of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Namely:

“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.”

Good luck, and thanks for participating!







