

## LESSON 1

## PRESENT TENSE

1	<b>Mu-nthu</b>	man, person	Pl. <b>A-nthu</b>	-ona	see, look
2	<b>M-tengo</b>	tree	<b>Mi-tengo</b>	-li	be
3	<b>Ch-ingwe</b>	string	<b>Zi-ngwe</b>	-funa	want, look for
4	<b>Nyumba</b>	house, hut	<b>Nyumba</b>	-peza	find
5	<b>Khasu</b>	hoe	<b>Ma-kasu</b>	-siya	leave
6	<b>Uta</b>	bow	<b>Ma-uta</b>	-tenga	take
				-ika	put
				-chotsa	take off, remove
	<b>Pano</b>	here, on this spot			
	<b>Uko</b>	there, over there			
	<b>Umo</b>	in there, inside			
	<b>Bwino</b>	well, all-right, carefully			
			<b>Bwanji?</b>	<b>How?</b>	
			<b>Chiyani?</b>	<b>What?</b>	

THE NOUN consists of a stem and usually a prefix which changes from singular to plural. Nouns are divided into six classes.

Nouns of the 4th class have no prefix, neither in singular nor in plural; they don't change: **Nyumba** Pl. **Nyumba**.

Nouns of the two last classes have no prefix in singular but only in plural: **Uta** Pl. **Mauta**; **Khasu** Pl. **Makasu** (the h is dropped):

In Chicheŵa there is no article in front of nouns: **Chingwe** means "a" or "the" string. **Mitengo** means "some" or "the" trees.

THE VERB also consists of a stem which normally does not change, and a pronoun-prefix which varies with the subject.

Present:

1	<b>Ndi-ona</b>	I see	<b>Ndiona bwino nyumba:</b>	I see the house well.
2	<b>U-ona</b>	You.	<b>Upeza chingwe umo:</b>	You find a string in there.
3	<b>A-ona</b>	He, she.	<b>Asiya khasu pano:</b>	He leaves the hoe here.
1	<b>Ti-ona</b>	We.	<b>T.tenga uta:</b>	We take the bow.
2	<b>Mu-ona</b>	You.	<b>Muli bwanji?</b>	How are you?
3	<b>A-ona</b>	They.	<b>Acna mtengo uko:</b>	They see a tree there.

Infinitive: Note the prefix **ku-**:

**Ku-ona** to see

**Afuna kuona nyumba. Ndifuna kutenga khasu.**

Imperative: No prefix. Note the suffix **-ni** in the plural form.

S.	<b>Ona!</b>	<b>Look!</b>	<b>Ona mtengo uko!</b>	<b>Siya khasu pano!</b>
Pl.	<b>Ona-ni!</b>		<b>Ikani uta umo!</b>	<b>Tengani chingwe!</b>

"you": It is always preferable to use the plural form **Mu-** instead of **U-** out of politeness, unless we address a child:

**Muli bwanji? (Uli bwanji?). Tengani khasu! (Tenga khasu).**

Greetings: It is up to the person approached to greet the visitor.

— <b>Moni</b>	Hello! (common word in salutation)
— <b>Zikomo!</b>	Thanks!
— <b>Muli bwanji!</b>	
— <b>Ndili bwino.</b>	

Interrogation: usually starts with the word **Kodi...?** unless another interrogative is employed in the sentence. Intonation.

**Kodi muli bwino? Kodi uona mtengo? Kodi mufuna kuchotsa mtengo?**

**Bwanji? How? Ali bwanji? Uchotsa hwanji chingwe? (follows the verb)**

**Chiyani? What? Muona chiyani uko? Afuna kutenga chiyani? (follows verb)**

Answer: **Inde! Yes Inde, ndili bwino. Also: Eya! Ee!**

**Iyayi! No! Iyayi, sindili bwino (see next lesson)**

**Zikomo!** This exclamation has various meanings: context, intonation

"Thanks!" —**Moni** —**Zikomo!...**

"Please!" **Zikomo** **chotsani chingwe**

"Excuse-me" **Zikomo, ndifuna kutenga uta.**

**Bwino** well, all-right: —**Kodi ali bwino? —Inde, ali bwino.**

carefully **Ikani bwino makasu umo? (follows the verb)**

- How is she? — She is all-right.
- Look over there! You see some trees.
- What do they want to take? — The bows.
- Take off the strings! Thanks!
- Look in there! You (will) find some hoes.
- What do you see over there? — We see some houses.
- I am here. Excuse-me, I want to leave the hoes here.
- How (will) you remove the tree?
- Leave the bow in there! Do you see the house well?
- What do you want to put in there?
- I want to see the people. How are they?
- Take the string! Leave the bow here!
- They want to leave the trees over there.
- You want a string? (Have a) look in there!
- What do you find there? They are all-right.

1	Mw-ana	child	Pl. A-	-gwira	catch, hold, grip
2	M-peni	knife	Mi-	-taya	drop, lose, throw away
3	Ch-itseko	door	Z-	-sunga	keep
4	Ntchito	work, job		-dula	cut
5	Dengu	basket	Ma-	-tseka	Close, shut
6	Udzu	grass	Ma-	-tsegula	open
	Kanthu	something		-gwira	ntchito work (verb)
1	Bambo	father, sir; Mr.		-chita	do

THE NOUN: It is very important to know the class of every new noun  
We can identify them through the initial letter:

1	M-, Mu-, Mw-	(persons) . . . Pl. A-	This is a general rule; we shall mention some exceptions in the next lessons. So, from now on, try to discover the class and the plural form of every new noun.
2	M-, Mu-, Mw-	(objects) . . . Mi-	
3	Ch-	.....	
4	N-, Mb-, Mph- Mv-, I- . . .	.....	
5	any other letter	.....	
6	U-	.....	

THE VERB: The negative form is expressed by the prefix:

Si- in front of a consonant: Si-ndi-li-bwino.

Present	S-in front of a vowel	s-a-li bwino.
1	Si-ndi-ona	Sindipeza dengu Sinditsegula chitseko.
2	S-u-ona	Sutenga mpeni Sudula bwino mtengo.
3	S-a-ona	Sagwira ntchito Satsaka bwino chitseko.
4	Si-ti-ona	Sitisiya ana pano Sitifuna kugwira ntchito.
2	Si-mu-ona	Simuona kanthu Simugwira bwino dengu.
3	S-a-ona	Sachita kanthu Sasunga bwino ana.

Infinitive: Note the infix -sa- negative: Ku-sa-ona not to see.

Imperative: Note the infix -sa- and the last vowel -e. (subjunctive)

U -sa-one!	Usasiye uta pano!	Usadule mitengo!
Mu-sa-one!	Musatseke chitseko!	Musaike makasu umo!

Interrogation: Avoid the negative form in questioning, because the answer will be ambiguous: Kodi simugwira ntchito?

—Inde!	here means "No!"	(sindigwira ntchito).
—Iyayi!	here means "Yes!"	(ndigwira ntchito).

Ichi ndi chiyani? — What is this? (a most useful question)  
Ichi ndi chiyani pa Chichewa? — What do you call this in Chichewa?

Greetings: When approaching a person or the entrance of a house:

—Zikomo! or Odi!	May I come near, or pass? Excuse-me!
—Ee	(sometimes Odini) ... Moni Bambo!
—Zikomo!	Paying a visit to somebody, it is up to him to start
—Muli bwanji?	the salutations. Wait! But receiving a visitor, it is
—Ndili bwino.	up to you to greet him first: Moni!

Chabwino!	All-right! Exclamation.	Musatseke chitseko!	—Chabwino!
Pepani!	Sorry! Exclamation.	Sindili bwino.	—Pepani!

PRESENT CONTINUOUS: When an action is taking place right now at this moment, we use the verb -li followed by Infinitive; or simply the infix -ku- (contracted form):

Muli kuchita chiyani?	What are you doing?	Ndili kutseka chitseko.
Muli kufuna chiyani?	What do you want?	Mukufuna chiyani?
Ali kugwira ntchito.	He is working.	Akugwira ntchito.

The ordinary Present tense is less precise and often expresses an immediate Future. Note the difference between these sentences:

Ndikutseka chitseko (at this moment). Nditseka chitseko. I will close.  
Sakugwira ntchito. He is not working. Sagwira ntchito. He does not work.  
Simupeza ntchito pano. You won't find any job here. Sindikupeza mpeni.

From now on, let us make a clear distinction between the two tenses.

1. Do not cut the string! Leave the knife here!
2. Please, open the door! I want to put the basket in there.
3. Look! You do not hold the basket well.
4. I don't want to work over there. I am not well.
5. I don't find the children. Are they in there?
6. Excuse-me! How do you open the door?
7. Hold the string well! Don't drop (it)!
8. Look! What do you call this in Chichewa?
9. Do you want a job? All-right, take a hoe!
10. She is not well. She wants to leave the job.
11. I don't want to leave anything here.
12. Sorry, you don't work well. Leave the hoe here!
13. What are you doing here? She does not want to do anything.
14. I want to see (your) father. — He is working over there.
15. Please, do something! — All-right! I (will) cut the trees.

## LESSON 3

## PREPOSITIONS

Chimanga	maize	Pl.	-lima	hoe, cultivate, grow
Fodya I	tobacco		-dziwa	know
Munda	garden, field		-iwala	forget
Sukulu 4	school		-sewera	play
Mayi	mother		-pita	go
Nkhokwe	bin, garner		-chokera	come from (ku)
Ufa	flour		-yenera	must, should (ku)
Khomo	entrance		-ngathe	can, may (ku)

Pakhomo at the entrance, outside, in front of the house.

Ali pakhomo. Pita pakhomo! Tsekani pakhomo!

Kuti? Where? Muli kuti? Akupita kuti? Ukuchokera kuti?

PREPOSITIONS: Corresponding to the three Adverbs *pano, uko, umo*, here are three prepositions:

Pa on upon: Siya chingwe pachitseko! Ali kusewera pakhomo.

Kodi muli pantchito? Chatsani makasu pakhomo!

Ku at, in, to: Ali kusukulu. Ali kuti? — Ali kuntchito.

Ndikuchokera kumunda. Akupita ku Lilongwe.

Mu in, inside: Ikani khasu munyumba! Usachotse kanthu mudengu!

Akuchita chiyani munyumba umo? also m'nyumba umo.

CONNECTIONS between words and clauses:

ndi and : Muyenera kulima chimanga ndi fodya. Bambo ndi mayi ali umo.

Musasiye makasu ndi madengu pakhomo!

with : Usasewere ndi mpeni! Sungathe kudula mtengo ndi mpeni. Ali kupita ndi ana ku Lilongwe.

ndipo and : Tengani makasu ndipo pitani kumunda!  
Tsegula chitseko ndipe ika dengu munyumba!

koma but : Sindilima fodya koma chimanga.  
Musaike dengu pakhomo koma munyumba.

kapena perhaps : Ali bwanji? Sindidziwa. Kapena ali bwino.  
Ali kuti? ... Kapena ali m'nyumba umo.

either or Akuchokera kuti? ku Lilongwe kapena ku Salima?  
Mungathe kulima fodya kapena chimanga.

THE VERB: When the subject is a noun, the verb still takes a pronoun-prefix:

Bambo ali kuti? Ana ali bwanji? Ama yi akupita uko.

Greetings: Moni Bambo!

Muli bwanji?

Ine sindili bwino.

Mukupita kuti?

Chabwino, pitani!

— Zikomo!

— Ndili bwino. Sindidziwa inu?

— Pepani!

— Ndikupita ku Lilongwe.

— Zikomo!

TO HAVE: There is no verb corresponding to "have"; we must use a special construction with the verb *-li* followed by the preposition *ndi*: "to be with."

Kodi muli ndi ana? — Inde. Bambo ali ndi nkhokwe

Ali ndi khasu, koma sadziwa kulima. Tili ndi munda uko.

In the negative form "have not", instead of the prefix *si-*, the verb takes the suffix *-be* : *-libe*.

Ndilibe fodya. Kodi muli ndi dengu? — Iyayi, ndilibe.

Akufuna kudula chingwe, koma alibe mpeni

Ndikupita kumunda, koma ndilibe khasu.

Musaiwale kutseka chitseko!

Mungathe kusewera pakhomo.

Ana ayenera kupita kusukulu.

Bambo ndi mayi ali kumunda.

Pepani sindidziwa chichewa.

Musaike kanthu mudengu umo!

Usasiye kanthu pakhomo!

Sitingathe kulima, tilibe makasu.

Ana akusewera ndi chiyani?

Pitani bwino! Have a good journey!

- Where do you come from? Do you know Chichewa?
- Where are they going? — They are going to (their) work.
- Leave the string on the door! don't take (it) off!
- Sorry, I cannot open the door. Have you a knife?
- You should not go to Lilongwe, but to Salima.
- You (will) not find anybody (people) in the garden.
- Don't leave anything outside, and close the door!
- I don't know (how) to cultivate tobacco.
- Please, put the baskets in the house, and close the door well!
- Do you want same work? — Yes! — All-right, take a hoe and go there!
- The child is playing outside; he does not want to go to school.
- You can leave the basket in the house or at the entrance.
- Don't forget to close the door! With what are you playing?
- What is Father doing in the garden? — I don't know.
- He has some maize, but no garner. You must know Chichewa well.

Sitolo 4	store, shop	-gula	buy
Katundu 1	luggage	-gulitsa	sell
Thebulo	table	-panga	make, fabricate
Mpando	chair	-manga	tie, bind, build
Chinthu	thing, object	-masula	untie
Ndalama	money	-konza	repair, prepare
Chovala	clothes, garment	-yamba	begin, start
Mwamuna	man, husband	-leka	stop, desist

Ndani? Who? Ndani ali munyumba? — Sindidziwa

Ndani ali kusewera pakhomo?

Chifukwa chiyani? Why? Chifukwa chiyani simugwira ntchito?

Ana sapita kusukulu chifukwa chiyani?

Chifukwa because Sindingathe kalima chifukwa ndilibe khasu.

Ana sapita kusukulu chifukwa tilibe ndalama.

SEPARATE PRONOUNS: Besides the personal pronouns joined to the verb as subject-prefixes, here are other pronouns used separately. They reinforce the identity of a person or show some contrast between two different persons.

1 Ine I, me	Bambo ndi mayi ali bwino, koma ine iyayi.
2 Iwe you	Mwana iwe, usawere ndi mpeni! (Mwanawe...)
3 Iye he, him	Ine ndikupita kusukulu, koma iye akupita kusitiro.
1 Ife we, us	Ife tili ndi zovala, koma iye alibe.
2 Inu you	Ana inu, mukuchita chiyani m'nyumba umo?
3 Iwo they	Inu mungathe kupita, koma iwo iyayi.

ADVERBS: Ndithu really, indeed Ndili bwino ndithu.

Ndithu, sindipita ku Lilongwe.

Pang'ono a little: Akudziwa Chichewa pang'ono. Ali bwino pang'ono.

Ndili ndi ndalama pang'ono; koma sindigula kanthu.

Kwambiri much: Musatsegule chitseko kwambiri!

very: Ndili bwino kwambiri.

Pang'onopang'ono little by little: Pang'onopang'ono mudziwa Chichewa.

slowly: Tsegulani chitseko pang'onopang'ono!

Msanga quickly: Pitani msanga ku Lilongwe! Mangani msanga katundu!

Sinupeza ntchito msanga pano.

Kaya! I don't know! Ali bwanji? kaya! Bambo akupita kuti? Kaya!

What about...? Ine ndili bwino ndithu. Kaya inu!

THE VERB: Whenever the subject is a noun, the verb still takes a pronoun prefix: Bambo ali kuti? Ana ali bwanji?

Since we have six classes of nouns, the pronoun-prefix must correspond to the class of the noun subject:

Sing. Pl.			
1 A-	A-	Mwana ali munyumba.	Katundu ali musitiro.
2 U-	I-	Mpeni uli pathebulo.	Mpando uli pakhomo.
3 Chi-	Zi-	Chingwe chili mudengu.	Chimanga chili munkhokwe.
4 I-	Zi-	Nyumba ili kuti?	Ndalama zili pampando.
5 Li-	A-	Khasu lili kumunda.	Thebulo lili munyumba.
6 U-	A-	Uta uli pankhokwe.	Ufa uli mudengu.

These verbal prefixes are called "Concordial Prefixes." Now we understand better the importance of identifying the class of every new noun. All the words (verbs or adjectives) which follow the noun, take a prefix which must agree with the class of that particular noun.

Go back to the vocabulary contained in the previous lesson, and build up a short sentence with every single noun (question and answer), first in the singular form, then the plural:

"Where is the man?... the tree?... the string... etc."  
 "Where are the people?... the trees?... etc."

- Who can untie the luggage? I don't want to cut the string.
- She has no husband, but she has children.
- What are you making, a chair or a table?
- I must stop the work, because I am not well.
- Why don't you buy some clothes? —Sorry, I have no money.
- You children, start the work quickly! What are you doing there?
- We cannot buy anything, because he does not want to open the store.
- Don't forget to repair the chairs: they are in front of the house.
- You are going to school, because you have money; but I have not.
- Don't play with the things (which) are on the table!
- Father is building a garner outside. But mother is in the garden.
- Where does he want to build the store? I don't know, but you know.
- I leave a little money on the table; you can buy some clothes.
- We children, we don't know (how) to make a table; but he does.
- Sell the maize, and little by little you (will) make -peza money.

Proverb: Pang'onopang'ono ndi mtolo.

Ulendo	journey, trip	-yenda	walk, travel
Mlendo	traveller, visitor	-lma	stop, stay
Msewu	road	-choka	go-away, leave
Mudzj	village	-bwera	come, come back
Nyanja	lake, sea	-fika	arrive
Phiri	hill, mountain	-dikira	wait, wait for
Dambo	marsh, swamp, river	-gwa	fall, collapse
Mkazi	woman, wife	-oneka	be visible

CONCORDIAL PREFIXES: To become familiar with the Concordial prefixes, let us make some more sentences:

1 A-	A-	Mlendo ali munyumba umo.	Mkazi ayenera kuchoka.
2 U-	I-	Msewu uli bwino.	Mudzj uli paphiri.
3 Chi-	ZI-	Nyanja ili kuti? Kaya!	Chinthu chili kugwa.
4 I-	ZI-	Chovala chili pachingwe.	Ndalama zili pampano.
5 Li-	A-	Phiri likoneka.	Dambo lili uko.
6 U-	A-	Ufa uli mudengu.	Uta uli pakhomo.

Now put the sentences in the negative form, remembering the general rule: prefix *si-* in front of a consonant; prefix *s-* in front of a vowel.

Mudzj suoneka chifukwa chamitengo.      Mkazi safuna kudikira.  
 Ndalama sizili pathebulo.                      Msewu supita kunyanja.  
 Akazi sadziwa kumanga nkhoekwe.          Alendo safuna kutima.

Kutali far :Kodi mukupita kutali? Nyanja ili kutali pang'ono.  
 far from... ndi: Kodi sitoro ili kutali ndi msewu?

pafupi near: Ana inu, bwerani pafupi! Ikani dengi pafupi!  
 near, close to... ndi: Sukulu ili pafupi ndi msewu.  
 nearly, about to... ku-: Mtengo uli pafupi kugwa (:ufuna kugwa)  
 Gwirani dengi msanga! Likufuna kugwa (:lili pafupi kugwa)

RELATIVE PRONOUN "who" or "which": -MENE. It takes the concordial prefix corresponding to the class of the noun:

Musaiwale kugulitsa chimanga chimene chili mudengu!  
 Muyenera kukonza mpando umene uli pakhomo.  
 Nyumba imene ili pafupi ndi msewu ilibe chitseko.  
 Mungathe kutenga zovala zimene zili pachingwe.  
 Musataye zinthu zimene zili mudengu umo!

Greetings — Kodi muli bwino?  
 —Inde, ndili bwino ndithu. Kaya innu?  
 —Ine ayi sindili bwino.  
 —Kedi! intonation (Koodi) "Really? Is that so?"  
 exclamation showing surprise.

## Expressions

Kodi mpeni agula bwanji? How much does the knife cost?  
 Tiye! pl. Tiyeni! Come along! Let us go! Mwana iwe, tiye kunyumba!

Mukufuna kupita kusitoro? Chabwino, tiyeni!

-li ndi ntchito be of some use: Usataye chingwe! Chili ndi ntchito!  
 -libe ntchito be of no use: Masu'ani chingwe chifukwa chilibe ntchito.  
 -bwera ndi come with, bring: Bwerani ndi mpando!  
 Dikirani pang'ono! a moment.

Mwana alibe chovala nothing to put on (-vala wear, put on)

-pita kuulendo go on a journey: -panga ulendo.  
 Tili paulendo be on a journey: Ali kuulendo means "he is not here"  
 Tili pantchito Ali kuntchito " " " "  
 Ali pasukulu Ali kusukulu " " " "

Usaime kutali! Bwera pafupi! Ndani ali kuyenda pamsewu?  
 Pepani, muyenera kudikira. Ana inu, chokani, pitani uko!

- The visitors are about to arrive. Prepare the house quickly!
- The road does not go to the hill but to the swamp.
- Let us go to the lake! — All-right, I am coming, wait a moment!
- The lake is not far, but it is not visible because of (cha) the hill.
- The village is close to the road, but the stores are far away.
- Don't leave the maize in the garner; because it is going to fall.
- You children, don't play on the road! Go quickly to the village!
- He will not arrive quickly at the lake because he walks slowly.
- The village is not visible because of (chifukwa cha) the trees.
- We have a house near the road, but it has no door.
- Are the clothes on the string? — No, they are in the basket.
- The men are building a school near the road. Where are the women?
- Leave the knife on the table; it is of no use.
- All-right, I will wait for the children. What are they doing?
- Why does the child not go to school? — He cannot walk. — Really?

Proverb: Mlendo ndi mame.