



buildOn Mission Statement

Breaking the cycle of poverty, illiteracy and low expectations through service and education.



Chichewa | Chitumbuka

Phrase book

Malawi



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In case of Emergency		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Please go get... (Trek Leader's name)	Chonde pitani mukatenge...	Chonde lutani mukatole...
Help!	Thandizeni!	Nowwireni!
I need help	Ndikufuna thandizo	Nhukhumba wowwiri
I am injured	Ndavulala	Napwetekeka
I am sick	Ndadwala	Nalwala

NOTES:

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Introduction

Chichewa language is spoken in almost all parts of Malawi. For buildOn regions we use Chitumbuka or Chichewa. It should be emphasized here that the basic grammatical structure is almost the same for both of these languages. The difference is in terms of vocabulary, intonations and pronunciation. This booklet is designed to give you the basic structure, terms, phrases and greetings while you spend time in your community on Trek.

Ls and Rs

In Chichewa Ls and Rs are interchangeable and pronounced differently than they would in the English language. You may see something spelled in **Engrish** where the L has been replaced by an R. Please ask you translator to pronounce 'phiri' to give you an example.

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Vowels

Chichewa language has only 5 vowel sounds: a, e, i, o and u pronounced as follows:

A Sounds as in the English word: Father. Examples: Kaya (what about), Ana (children).

E sounds as in the English word; made, weigh. Examples: bwera (come), chemwali (sister).

I sounds as in the English word; Easy. Examples: ichi (this), liti (when)

O sounds, as in the English word: only, over. Examples: moni (hello), Zikomo (thank you)

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Song Zikamatele tere tere

Leader: Zikamatele tere tere

All: lyayi

Leader: Zikamatele tere tere

All: Zosowa

Leader: Zikamatele tere tere

All: lyayi

Leader: Zikamatele tere tere

Leader: Zosowa

Chorus

All Lero limenero lero

Lero limenero lero

Lero limenero lero (School Name) yabeba

Meaning of the song:

If things were like today everyday, things would be good, today is a special day for this community/school

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Negative Sentence Structure

Negation	Verb	Add it on	
Si- (Prefix)	Kudya (to eat)	Sindimadya nyama	I don't eat meat
	Kumwa (to drink)	Simumamwa madzi	You don't drink water
	Kukonda (to like)	Samakonda masamba	He doesn't like vegetables
	Kusangalala (to be happy)	Sakusangalala	She is not happy

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Personal Pronoun Subject

All these personal pronouns are used as subject prefixes in a sentence.

English	Chichewa/Chitumbuka
I	Ndi
You	Mu (formal)
	U (informal)
We/Us	Ti
He/She/They	A

Note that "a" can be used in contexts as "he/she" or "they" and that "u" is not commonly used in Chichewa if anything you only use it when addressing young children.

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Basic Phrases

English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Yes	Inde	Enya
No	Ayi	Yayi
Please	Chonde	Chonde
Thank you (very much)	Zikomo (kwambiri)	Yewo (chomene)
Hi (very casual)	Wawa (to someone older) Bobo (to someone same age or younger)	Wawa
Greetings (all)	Moni (nonse)	Monile
Sorry	Pepani	Phepani

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Forming Sentences

A structural summary in Chichewa or Chitumbuka goes like this:

Subject + Tense + Verb= one word

I (Ndi) + now (ku) + want (kufuna) = Ndikufuna

First subject prefix		Second (tense markers) (infix)		Third (verb)		Put it together	
Mu	You	-ku-	Now infinitive	Kudya	To eat	Mukudya	You are eating
Ndi	I	-ma-	Always happens	kuchokera	To come from	Ndimachokera	I am from (America)
Ti	We	-na-	Happened already	Kupita	To go	Tinapita	We went
A	He/She/They	-dza-	Future	Kubwera	To come	Adzabwera	They will come

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Temp/Weather		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
It is hot (weather)	Kukutentha	Kukotcha
It's hot (object)	Chikutentha	Chakuthukira
It is cold (weather)	Kukuzizira	Kukuzizima
Rain	Mvura	Vula
Thunder/ Lightning	Mphezi/ Chiphaliwali	Leza
Moon	Mwezi	Mwezi
Wind	Mphepo	Mphepo
Water	Madzi	Maji
Sun	Dzuwa	Zuwa

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Greetings		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
General Greeting (Used when meeting someone for the first time.)		
Person 1: How are you	Muli Bwanji?	Muli uli?
Person 2: I am fine and what about you?	Ndili bwino kaya inu?	Nili makola kwali imwe?
Person 1: I am fine, thank you.	Ndili bwino, zikomo.	Nili makola, yewo.
Morning Greeting		
Person 1: You woke up how? (How did you sleep?)	Mwadzuka bwanji?	Mwauka uli?
Person 2: I woke up well and what about you?	Ndazuka bwino, kaya inu?	Nauka makola, kwali imwe?
Person 1: I woke up well, thank you.	Ndazuka bwino, zikomo.	Nauka makola, yewo.

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Greetings		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Afternoon Greeting (Anytime after lunch)		
Person 1: How is the day?	Mwaswera bwani? (Mwatandala)	Mwatandala uli?
Person 2: My day is fine and what about you?	Ndaswera bwino kaya inu?	Natandala makola kwali imwe?
Person 1: The day is fine, thank you.	Ndaswera bwino, zikomo. (Ndatandala)	Natandala makola, yewo
What is your name?	Dzina lako ndani	Zina lako ndiwe njani?
My name is...	Dzina langa ndine	Zina lane ndine...
How old are you?	Uli ndi zaka zingati	Uli na vyaka vilinga?
I am ____ years old.	Ndili ndi zaka...	Nili na vyaka...
Where do you stay?	Umakhala kuti?	Ukukhala nkhuhi?

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Time		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Now	Tsopano	Sono
Next week	Sabata ya mawa	Sabata yikwiza
Next year	Chaka cha mawa	Chaka chikwiza
Morning	M'mawa	Mulenji
Afternoon	Masana	Namuhanya
Evening	Madzulo	Namise
Night	Usiku	Usiku

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Days of the Week		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Sunday	La Mulungu	Sabata
Monday	Loremba	Mande
Tuesday	Lachiwiri	Pachiwiri
Wednesday	Lachitatu	Pachitatu
Thursday	Lachinayi	Pachinayi
Friday	Lachisanu	Pachinkhonde
Saturday	Loweruka	Pachisulo
Today	Lero	Mwahuno
Tomorrow	Mawa	Namachelo
Yesterday	Dzulo	Mayilo

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Farewell Greetings		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
See you later	Tiwonana	Tiwonanenge
See you tomorrow	Tiwonana mawa	Tiwonanenge machero
Goodbye (only said by person leaving)	Dapita	Nkhuluta
Good night	Usiku wabwino	Usiku uweme
Have nice dreams	Ugone bwino/Mugone bwino (Respect)	Muwe namaloto yawemi

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Family Vocabulary		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Family	Banja	Banja
Mother	Amayi	Amama
Father	Abambo	Bambo/Adada (respectful)
Sister	Achemwali	M'longosi
Brother	Achimwene	M'bale
Aunt	Azakhali	Ankhazi
Uncle	Amalume/ Atsibweni	Asibweni
Grandmother	Agogo akazi	Agogo
Grandfather	Agogo amuna	Agogo

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Animals		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Dog	Galu	Ntchewe
Cat	Mphaka	Chona
Chicken	Nkhuku	Nkhuku
Goat	Mbuzi	Mbuzi
Pig	Nkhuma	Nkhumba
Cow	Ng'ombe	Ng'ombe
Donkey	Bulu	Bulu
Mosquito	Udzuzu	Nyimbu

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Food/Agriculture		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Eggplant	Mabilinganya	MaBilinganya
Squash/Pumpkin	Dzungu	Jungu
Squash/Pumpkin Leaves	Mnkhwani	Mphangwe ya nyungu
Apple	Apozi	Apozi
Mango	Mango	Yembe/Mango
Banana	Nthochi	Nthochi
Pineapple	Chinanadzi	Chinanazi
Watermelon	Chimwera	Chimwamaji
I don't eat...	Sindikudya...	Ine nikurya yayi...
I like to eat...	Ndimakonda kudya....	Nkhutemwa kulya...

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Family Vocabulary (Continued)		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Cousin	Msiweni	Asweni
Children	Ana	Wana
Twins	Mapasa	Maphaska
Friend	Zanga	Munyane
Husband (of)	Mwamuna (wa)	Asweni/afumu wane
Wife (of)	Mkazi (wa)	Awoli
In-law	Mulamu	Mlamu
This is my...	Uyu ndi...	Uyu ni...

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Husband (of)	Mwamuna (wa)	Asweni/afumu wane
Wife (of)	Mkazi (wa)	Awoli
In-law	Mulamu	Mlamu
This is my...	Uyu ndi...	Uyu ni...

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Basic Phrases to Host Family		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
You have a beautiful family/home	Muli ndu banja labwino	Muna banja liweme
Can I help you cook?	Ndingathandize kuphika?	Ningamuovwirani i kuphika
The food is delicious	Chakudya chokoma	Chakulya chikunowa
Can you help me wash my clothes?	Mungandichapi re zovala?	Ningamuovwirani kuchapa vakuvwala
How many years have you been married?	Mwakhala pa banja zaka zingati?	Mwakhala pa banja kwa vyaka vilinga
Where is <u> </u> (person) <u> </u> ?	<u> </u> alikuti?	<u> </u> alin khuni?
Where is <u> </u> (house) <u> </u> ?	<u> </u> ilikuti?	<u> </u> ilinkuni?

Food/Agriculture		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Salt	Mchere	Mchere
Sauce	Msuzi	Sauce
Tomato	Tomato	Tomato
Green Peppers	Tsabola ozizila	Green pepper
Spicy Peppers	Tsabola owawa	Sabola
Onion	Anyezi	Hanyezi
Okra	Therere	Delele
Cabbage	Kabichi	Kabichi
Potatoes	Mbatata	Mboholi
Corn	Chimanga	Chingoma
Peanut	Sawa/mtedza	Syawa

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Food/Agriculture		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Food	Chakudya	Chakurya
Water	Madzi	Maji
Chicken	Nkhuku	Nkhuku
Beef	Nyama	Nyama
Fish	Nsomba	Somba
Pork	Nyama ya-nkhubma	Nyama ya nkhumba
Goat meat	Mbuzi	Mbuzi
Rice	Mpunga	Mpunga
Beans	Nyemba	Ntchungu
Eggs	Mazila	Masumbi

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Other words		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
House	Nyumba	Nyumba
Shower	Bafa	Bafa
Toilet	Chimbudzi	Chimbudzi
School	Sukulu	Sukulu
Where is the ___?	___ilikuti (prefix changes depending on object)	Kasi __ Ilinkhuni?

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Food/Agriculture		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Food	Chakudya	Chakurya
Water	Madzi	Maji
Chicken	Nkhuku	Nkhuku
Beef	Nyama	Nyama
Fish	Nsomba	Somba
Pork	Nyama ya-nkhubma	Nyama ya nkhumba
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Rice	Mpunga	Mpunga
Beans	Nyemba	Ntchungu
Eggs	Mazila	Masumbi

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Other words		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
House	Nyumba	Nyumba
Shower	Bafa	Bafa
Toilet	Chimbudzi	Chimbudzi
School	Sukulu	Sukulu
Where is the ___?	___ilikuti (prefix changes depending on object)	Kasi __ Ilinkhuni?

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Question Words		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Who?	Ndani?	Njani?
What?	Chiani?	Vichi?
When?	Liti?	Pa uli?
Where?	Kuti?	Nkhuni?
Why?	Chifukwa chiani?	Chifukwa nchivichi?
How ?	Bwanji?	Uli?
How much?	Ndalama zingati	Ndalama zilinga?
How many?	Zingati	Zilinga?

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Worksite		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Shovel	Fosholo	Fosholo
Wheelbarrow	Wilibala (Chikuku)	Wilibala
Pick Axe	Piki	Piki
Sand	Mchenga	Mchenga
Cement	Simenti	Simenti
Brick	Njerwa	Njerwa
Bucket/Pail	Chitini or Ndowa	Chithini/ndowa
Rock	Thanthwe	Libwe/jalawe
Hammer	Hamala	Nyondo

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What?	Chiani?	Vichi?
When?	Liti?	Pa uli?
Where?	Kuti?	Nkhuni?
Why?	Chifukwa chiani?	Chifukwa nchivichi?
How ?	Bwanji?	Uli?
How much?	Ndalama zingati	Ndalama zilinga?
How many?	Zingati	Zilinga?

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Cement	Simenti	Simenti
Brick	Njerwa	Njerwa
Bucket/Pail	Chitini or Ndowa	Chithini/ndowa
Rock	Thanthwe	Libwe/jalawe
Hammer	Hamala	Nyondo

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Worksite		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Strong	Mphanvu/ Nyonga	Nkhongono
Weak	Kufoka	Kufoka
Good Work!	Ntchito yabwino!	Ntchito iwemi!
Can I help you?	Ndikuthandizeni?	Nimovwirani?
Can you help me?	Thandizeni	Nuowwirani
Let's work together	Tigwire ntchito pamodzi	Tiyeni tigwire ntchito lumoza

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More Basic Phrases		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
Pardon me (when entering a house or bathroom)	Odi	Taodila
Speak slowly, please	Chonde lankhula pang'onopang'ono	Yowoyani pachokopachoko
Please repeat that	Chonde bwelenzanso	Welezganiso

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Worksite		
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English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
I understand	Ndamva	Napulika
		Tapulika (plural)
I don't understand	Sindikumva	Nindapulike
Do You Understand?	Ukumva?	Wapulika?/ Mwapulika? (plural)
How do you say _____ in Chichewa/ Chitumbuka?	Ichi _____ ndi chiyani mchichewa?	Kasi ichi _____ mukuti uli mchitumbuka?

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More Basic Phrases		
English	Chichewa	Chitumbuka
I'm tired	Ndatopa	Navuka
I'm hungry	Ndili ndi njala	Nili na njala
I'm full	Ndakhuta	Nakhuta
I want to...	Ndikufuna...	Nkhukhumba...
I'm lost	Ndasokera	Nasowa
I'm happy	Ndasangalala	Nili wakukondwa

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