

# WAMBA WAMBA ACTION WORDS AND SENTENCES

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UNDERSTANDING SOME BEGINNING RULES  
OF WAMBA WAMBA LANGUAGE





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## UNDERSTANDING SOME BEGINNING RULES OF WAMBA WAMBA LANGUAGE

In Wamba Wamba, phrases and sentences are put together in different ways to the English language. There are different rules.

To learn how to speak, read, write and use Wamba Wamba, it is important to understand how the language comes together and what the rules are.

In Wamba Wamba it is easy to make a whole range of changes by simply adding a different ending or endings to one or more words.

Learning how to do this is a good way to learn, and use, more Wamba Wamba. It makes it possible to say and write sentences in Wamba Wamba.

The best way is to start with 'Action Words' and their endings, for example:  
yangga, payika, tyaka, kalpa, kalina  
(to walk, to fly, to eat, to cut, to love)

This is the usual way action words are displayed in the Dictionary - it is the version that is happening now and being done by another person or thing.

(All action words used in these examples can be found listed this way in the online dictionary or word search on Wurrekangurr at [culture.yarkuwa.org.au/words/word\\_search](http://culture.yarkuwa.org.au/words/word_search))

These rules can be found in short list and grammatical form on pages 72-75 in the Green Book or in 'Wembawemba Dictionary Section - Bound Forms' in the Document section of Wurrekangurr at [culture.yarkuwa.org.au/documents](http://culture.yarkuwa.org.au/documents) .)

# Time markers on action words

## - 'when does it happen'

### 1) Action Word - Happening now

#### - ends in 'a'

The Wamba Wamba action word 'yannga' means 'to walk' in English. The 'a' at the end of 'yannga' shows someone walks now.

In Wamba Wamba all Action Words that happen now end in 'a'.  
(But not all words ending in 'a' are action words.)

A sentence in English is usually

- 'doer word' (subject), 'action word' (verb) , 'done to word' (object).

A sentence in Wamba Wamba is usually

- 'action word' (verb), and then 'do-er word' (subject) and 'done to word' (object).

'yannga kawir' is

- action word 'yannga' (to walk) and do-er word 'kawir' (emu)

In English, it means 'emu walks'.

'yannga tumikal telkuk' is 'to walk home is good'

'yannga wulman tumikal' is 'the old man walks home'

'tyaka panem' is 'he/she eats damper'

(yannga - to walk, tumikal - home or camp, telkuk - good, wulman - old man, tyaka - to eat, panem - bread or damper)

### Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- kangaroo jumps - .....

- grandmother cooks damper in ashes - .....

Don't forget to start with the 'action word'.

(Need to look up some Wamba Wamba words?)

Search here - [https://culture.yarkuwa.org.au/words/word\\_search](https://culture.yarkuwa.org.au/words/word_search)

When you look up an action word like 'jumps' start with 'to jump'.)

## 2) Action Word - Happened in the Past

- **change the 'a' ending to 'in'**

start with the action word

'*yangga*' - 'to walk' or 'it walks' becomes '*yanggin*' - 'it walked'

'*yanggin kawir potykal*' - 'emu walked through the grass'

'*kalpin piyalkal tyelik-tyelik*' is 'he/she/it broke the branch yesterday'

'*pirrityanin kurre*' is 'grey kangaroo jumped'

(kalpa - to cut or break, poty - grass, potykal - through the grass, piyal - branch or red gum, tyelik-tyelik - yesterday, kurre - grey kangaroo, pirrityana - to jump)

### Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- magpie flew - .....

- grandmother cooked damper in ashes - .....

## 3) Action Word - Happening All the Time

- **change the 'a' ending to 'ila'**

start with the action word

'*yangga*' becomes '*yanggila*' ie 'it is always walking'

'*yanggila kawir kumikal*' is 'emu is always walking through the camp'

'*kalpila mityuk kiluwity*' is 'he is cutting bark from the trees today'

'*wirrila kolety*' is 'the river is always flowing'

(mityuk - bark of a tree, kiluwity - today, kumikal - camp or home, wirra - to flow)

### Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- fathers always love their children - .....

- blood always flows - .....

#### 4) Action Word - will happen in the future

- change the 'a' ending to 'iny'

'yangga' becomes 'yangginy' - 'he will walk'

'*yangginy tumikal*' - she will walk home'

'*kalpiliny panemka kiluwity*' is 'he will cut the damper today'

'*nyanginy potyka kiluwity*' is 'she will burn grass today'

'*pangginy karə-karə-kurk mirrwanka perrpuk*' is 'the young women will dig yam daisies tomorrow'

(karə-karə-kurk - number of young women, mirrwan - yam daisy, perrpuk - tomorrow)

**Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?**

- the girl will cook tomorrow - .....

- the sun will rise - .....

#### 5) Action Word - a continuing or ongoing action

- change the 'a' ending to 'ang'

In English this is called the 'present participle' usually ends in 'ing', eg, watching, jumping, cooking. It is also usually paired with another verb eg, 'she is swimming', 'we are jumping', or 'cooking is good', 'I am watching you.'

In Wamba we simply change the 'a' ending of the word to 'ang'.

'pirrityana' 'to jump' becomes 'pirrityanang' 'is jumping'

'pirrityaninang' 'was jumping'

'*wirrakang telkuk*' is 'swimming is good'

'*nyenggin wulman marrakal pirrityanang karndang.*' Is 'The old man sat on a meat ant. He is jumping and crying out.'

(pirityana - to jump, wirrika - to swim, wulman - old man, nyenga - to sit, marra - meat ant, karnda - to shout)

**Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?**

- fishing is good - .....

- the boy is eating - .....

## 6) Action Word - a completed action

- change the 'a' ending to ən

'nyanga' (to burn) becomes 'nyangən', (burnt)

yanggən (walked), kalpən (cut), pirrityanən (jumped) wirrakən (swum)

'nyangən' poty is 'the grass is burnt'

'wariwən wuthu wirrakən Kolety.' 'The man has gone away. He has swum the Edward River.'

(wariwa - go away, wirraka - to swim, Kolety - Edward River)

**Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?**

- the tree was cut down - .....
- the damper was eaten by the boy - .....

## 7) Action word - demanding a listener does something

- change the 'a' to 'i' or 'ak'

'kungaya' 'to keep quiet' becomes 'kungayi!' It now means 'Quiet!' Or 'Shut up!'

'werrka' 'to hurry' changes to 'werrkak!' or 'werrki!' meaning 'Quickly! Hurry up!'

'pirrityana' 'to jump' can be changed to demanding someone jumps

'pirrityanak! werrki!' meaning 'Jump! Quickly!'

(kungaya - to keep quiet, werrka - to hurry, pirrityana - to jump, werrki - quickly)

**Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?**

- Sit! - .....
- Go away! - .....

## 8) Action Word - demanding listeners act now

- change the 'a' to 'akaty', atiyaty, or 'iyaty'

'kungaya' becomes '*kungayakaty!*' Is 'Shut up you lot!'

'*pirrityanakaty!*' 'Everybody jump!' Or 'Jump to it you lot!'

'*wirrəkakaty!*' 'Everybody run!'

(*kungaya* - to keep quiet, *pirrityana* - to jump, *wirrəka* - to run)

### Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- Everybody sit! - .....

- Everybody help! - .....

# Person markers on action words

## - 'who is doing' or 'how many are doing'

In Wamba Wamba we can describe 'who' and 'how many' are doing an action by adding different endings to action words called Person Markers.

Person markers are added after Time markers.

### 1) He, she or it is doing

#### - 'a'

an 'a' ending is used when one person or thing (but not the speaker or the listener) is doing the action

(note: this 'a' ending is also used for the 'time ending - happening now')

for example - 'yangga' (to walk) or 'nyanga' (to burn )

In English you have to add the 'he' or 'she' or 'it' before the action word, for example 'he is walking home' or 'she walks home every day'.

In Wamba Wamba we use context or what has already been talked about to show which is the right meaning. For example:

*'nyanga poty' can mean*

- *'to burn grass'*

- *'he burns grass' or 'she burns grass' or 'it burns grass' depending on what else has been talked about*

*'ngunyim-kurk pakaya-puk nyanga poty'*

- *'That old woman is wise. She burns the grass.'*

Because we've talked about the old woman 'nyanga' means 'she burns'.

### Now it's your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- That old woman is wise. She walks home. - .....

- He ties up the dog - .....

- He tied up the dog - .....

(Hint: put the time ending (happened in the past) before the person ending.)

## 2) I am doing the action

### - Change the 'a' ending to 'anda'

'nyanganda poty' is 'I burn the grass'

'yangganda malamerr' is 'I am walking way over there'

'tyilekanda' is 'I am sick'

'tyilekinanda' is 'I was sick'

(nyanga - to burn, yangga - to walk, tyileka - to be sick, malamerr - over there, far away)

### Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- I swim in the Edward River. - .....
- I dance tonight. - .....
- I danced yesterday. - .....

(Hint: put the time ending (happened in the past) before the person ending.)

## 3) You are doing the action

(the person listening)

### - Change the 'a' ending to 'arr' - you

'nyangarr poty' is 'you burn the grass'

'yanggarr lar' is 'you are walking home'

'kalparr panem' you cut the bread

'kalpinyarr perrpuk poty' you will cut the grass tomorrow

(nyanga - to burn, yangga - to walk, lar - camp, home or bark shelter, panem - bread, damper, perrpuk - tomorrow)

### Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- You swim in the Edward River. - .....
- You love your grandchild. - .....
- You will pack up camp tomorrow. - .....

#### 4) We are all doing the action.

##### - Change the 'a' ending to 'angurr'

'*yangga*' becomes '*yanggangurr*', it now means 'we are walking' or 'we are all walking'  
'*kalpangurr poty*' is 'we are all cutting grass'

'*yanggangurr tumikal*' is 'we are all walking to the camp or home'

'*yanggangurr nyawi-kata Kirrkundity*' is 'we (all of us) are walking in the light of God'

(yangga - to walk, kalpa - to cut or break, tumikal - camp or home, Kirrkundity - God)

##### Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- We all love children. - .....
- We all speak. - .....
- We all went home at sunset. - .....

#### 5) Some but not all are doing the action

##### Change the 'a' ending to 'angurrang'

'*yanggangurrang karri-kurk-pula tumikal*'  
is 'Two of the teenage girls are walking home'

'*yanggangurrang karri-kurk-pula tumikal. nyunya yenggila kunekal piyal*'.  
is 'Two of the teenage girls are walking home. That one over there is sitting under a tree.

'*werrpanangurrang wulman-pula . nyunya tyileka.*'  
is 'Two of the old men are fishing. That one over there is sick.

(werrpana - to catch a fish, tyileka - to be sick, wulman - old man, nyuna - that one over there)

##### Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- Two of the teenagers are swimming. That one over there is sleeping. -  
.....
- Two of the teenagers were swimming. That one over there was sleeping. -  
.....

## 6) We two are doing the action

(includes the person being spoken to)

Change the 'a' ending to 'angal'

'werrpanangal' is 'We two (you and I) are catching fish'

'yanggangal tumikal' is 'We two (you and I) are walking home'.

'perrəpangal' is 'We two (you and I) climb trees'

(perrəpa - to climb trees)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- We two laugh loudly.

.....

- We two are always eating.

.....

(Hint: put the time ending - happens all the time - before the person ending - we two.)

## 7) We two are doing the action

(does not include the person being spoken to)

Change the 'a' ending to 'angalang'

'werrpanangalang yanggarr tumikal' is 'We two (she and I) are catching fish, you walk home'

'yanggangalang tumikal, nyenggarr nyula' is 'We two are walking home, you sit right here'

'perrəpangalang kumbarr' is 'We two are climbing trees, you lie down to sleep'

(nyengga - to sit down, nyula - right here, kumba - to sleep)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- We two will help for Grandma. You go to work.

.....

- We two are packing up. You look for the dog.

.....

## 8) You are doing the action

(the people being spoken to)

Change the 'a' ending to 'aty'

'werrpanaty yanggangalang tumikal' is 'You lot go fishing, we two are walking home'

'nyetenaty tarn, larrpangalang wanuk' is 'You lot play football, we two are throwing his (or her) boomerang.'

'nyetenaty tarn malamerr' is 'You lot play football over there.

(nyetenya - to play, tarn - team ball game played with possum skin ball, larrpa - to throw, wan - boomerang)

**Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?**

- You all keep quiet. I will sneak up on the emu.

.....

- You were all sitting in the shade. I cut the grass.

.....

## 9) They are all doing the action

(the people being spoken about)

Change the 'a' ending to 'an'

'nyetenyan tarn' is 'They (all) play football.'

'werrpanan withewangalang' is 'They are all going fishing, we two are returning home'

'nyanginan poty, nyakamuninan' is 'They all burnt the grass. They were careful.

(nyakamuna - to be careful, withewa - to return, to go home)

**Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?**

- They are all speaking Wamba Wamba.

.....

- They all came home.

.....