

WAMBA WAMBA VERBS AND SENTENCES

UNDERSTANDING SOME BEGINNING RULES
OF WAMBA WAMBA LANGUAGE



Wamba Wamba verbs and sentences

- 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, write and use Wamba Wamba it is important to understand how the language comes together and what the rules are.

'*Wamba Wamba verbs and sentences*' shows how to work with endings that are added to verbs (action words) and gives examples for each rule. It covers tense endings (when the action happens) and person endings (who is doing the action) and both tense and person endings in the same verb.

(All verbs used in these examples can be found the third person singular form in the online dictionary or word search on Wurrekangurak at culture.yarkuwa.org.au/words/word_search)

These rules can be found in list form in the Green Book or in '*Wembawemba Dictionary Section - Bound Forms*' in the Document section of Wurrekangurak at culture.yarkuwa.org.au/documents)

1) Present Tense (the action happens in the present - now)

- ends in 'a'

The Wamba Wamba verb 'yannga' means 'to walk' in English.

The 'a' at the end of 'yannga' is an indicator of present tense. Present tense is when the action is happening now. All present tense verbs in Wamba Wamba end in 'a'.

(But not all words ending in 'a' are present tense.)

In Wamba it is easy to make a whole range of changes by simply adding a different ending to the word. Learning how to do these is a good way to learn, and use, more Wamba Wamba. It also makes it possible to say and write sentences in Wamba Wamba.

'kawir yannga' is 'emu walks'

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

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

'kuthun payika puyikalang tern' is 'brolga flies south'

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

(note: in English these examples are usually called 'Present Simple Tense'.)

(yannga - to walk, payika - to fly, tumikal - home or camp, telkuk - good, wulman - old man, kuthun - brolga, puyikalang tern - south, tyaka - to eat, panem - bread or damper)

2) Past Tense (the action happened in the past)

- change the 'a' ending to 'in'

'yangga' - 'to walk' or 'it is walking' becomes 'yanggin' - 'it walked'

'kawir yanggin poty' - is 'emu walked through the grass'

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

(kalpa - to cut or break, poty - grass, piyal - branch or red gum, tyelik-tyelik - yesterday)

3) Continuative Tense (the action is happening regularly or frequently)

- change the 'a' ending to 'ila'

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

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

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

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

4) Future Tense (the action will happen in the future)

- change the 'a' to 'iny'

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

'yangginy tumikal' - 'she will walk home'

'kalpiliny panem kiluwity' is 'he will cut the damper today'

'nyanginy poty kiluwity' is 'she will burn grass today'

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

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

5) Present Participle (continuous action happening now)

- change the 'a' to 'ang'

In English 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 present tense verb to 'ang'.

'pirityana' 'to jump' becomes 'pirityanang' 'is jumping'

'wirrakang telkuk' is 'swimming is good'

'wulman nyenggin marra. pirityanang, karndang.' Is 'The old man sat on a meat ant. He is jumping and crying out.'

(note: it is likely that, in Wamba Wamba, the use of the Present Participle ending replaces the need for the English 'Present Continuous Tense'.)

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

6) Past Participle (describes a completed action) change the 'a' to '-n'

In English the past participle usually ends in 'ed' eg jumped, walked, cooked. Other verbs have irregular past participles, eg, the past participle of 'break' is 'broken', of 'swim' is 'swum', of 'fly' is 'flown', of sit is 'seated'.

'nyanga' (to burn) becomes 'nyang'n', (burnt)
yangg'n (walked), kalp'n (cut), pirityan'n (jumped) wirrak'n (swum)

'poty nyang'n' is 'the grass is burnt'

'wuthu wariw'n. wirrak'n Kolety.' 'The man has gone away. He has swum the Edward River.'

(wariwa - go away, Kolety - Edward River)

7) Imperative Singular (a demand for the listener to act now) - change the 'a' to 'i' or 'ak'

'kungaya' 'to keep quiet' can be changed to the imperative single as 'kungayi!' It now means 'Quiet!' Or 'Shut up!'

'werrka' 'to hurry' can be changed to imperative singular as 'werrkak!' or 'werrki!' meaning 'Quickly! Hurry up!'

'pirityana' 'to jump' can be changed to the imperative as 'pirityanak! werrki!' meaning 'Jump! Quickly!'

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

8) Imperative Plural (a demand for the listeners to act now)

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

'kungayakaty!' Is 'Shut up you lot!'

'pirriyanakaty!' 'Everybody jump!' Or 'Jump to it you lot!'

'manmulakaty!' 'Shame on you!'

(kungaya - to keep quiet, pirriyana - to jump)

Person markers on verbs - '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 verbs. We can consider the basic 'a' ending as the third person singular ending. There are eight more different person markers on Wamba Wamba verbs.

(Tense markers come before person markers if both are added.)

1) Singular (one person or thing), third person

- 'a' - he, she, it

an 'a' ending is used when one person (other than the speaker or the listener) or thing is doing the action

(note: this 'a' ending is also used for the 'present tense, third person')

'yangga' (to walk) or 'nyanga' (to burn) are both singular, third person and present tense

In English you have to add the 'he' or 'she' or 'it' before the verb, 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'.

2) Singular (one person or thing), first person, (the person speaking)

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

'nyanganda poty' is 'I burn the grass'

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

'tyilekanda' is 'I am sick'

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

3) Singular (one person or thing), second person, (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

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

4) Plural (more than one), first person (we), inclusive (the action is being done by all of the group)

- Change the 'a' ending to 'angurr' - we (inclusive or all of us)

'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)

5) Plural (more than one), first person (we), exclusive
(the action is being done by only some of the group)
Change the 'a' ending to 'angurrang' - we plural (exclusive)

'*karri-kurk-pula yanggangurrang tumikal*'

is 'Two of the teenage girls are walking home' (only 2 out of the group)

'*karri-kurk-pula yanggangurrang tumikal. nyunya yenggila kunekal piyal*'.

is 'Two of the teenage girls are walking home. That one over there is sitting under a tree.

'*wulman-pula werrpanangurrang. nyunya tyileka*.'

is 'Two of the old men are fishing. That one over there is sick.

Or: '*werrpanangurrang. nyuna tyeleka*.'

is 'We 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)

6) Plural (two people), first person - we two inclusive
(includes the person being spoken to)
Change the 'a' ending to 'angal' - we two

'*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)

7) Plural (two people), first person - we two exclusive
(does not include the person being spoken to)
Change the 'a' ending to 'angalang' - we two

'*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)

8) Plural, second person - you

(includes all of the people being spoken to)

Change the 'a' ending to 'aty'

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

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

'nyetenyaty 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)

9) Plural, third person - they

(includes the people being spoken about)

Change the 'a' ending to 'an'

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

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

'nyangan poty, nyakamunan' is 'They burn the grass. They are careful.

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

Combining tense and person markers in the same verb

In Wamba Wamba we can say when the action happens and how many are doing the action by adding first a tense marker and then a person marker to the end of the same verb.

For example, in English we say - *'I walked.'*

- *I* - first person singular, only me
- *walked* - past tense with 'ed' marker

In Wamba Wamba we say *'yangginanda'*.

- *yangg-in-anda*
- *the verb 'yangga' (to walk)*
- *past tense marker 'in'*
- *first person singular marker 'anda'*

(Note: If you were literally translating to English this would read as *'walked I'*. However it is probably easier to approach Wamba Wamba by simply remembering the rules explained above and not comparing to English.)

'We walked' is 'yangginangal' or 'yangginangalang' depending on whether the 'we' includes the hearer (inclusive) or not (exclusive).

'Kuka. Yangginangalang Kolety!'

Is 'Grandmother. We walked to the Edward River!'

All of the variations in adding tense and person markers will be added to the Wamba Wamba website 'Wurrekangurak'. Look for a document in the Documents section. Look for a 'Verb tense and person demonstrator' in the menu.

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