



A Luganda Grammar

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1. Preface

Before coming to a country you have never been to before it is a widespread habit to google this particular country. When your destination is called Uganda, a not so well-known country, you are indeed very likely to do so. Wikipedia, a widely trusted source, will now tell you that both English and Swahili are the official languages of Uganda. Lucky you, you know English and Swahili lessons are available all over the world and on the web. By the time you actually get to the streets of Kampala you will soon notice: The people of the Buganda Kingdom do not speak Swahili. They do not even speak English when conversing with each other. Most people in this region speak Luganda. If you really want to connect to the people and get to know the culture of this region, you will find this textbook called 'Yiga Oluganda!' (Learn Luganda!) very helpful as it is the only widely available in-depth textbook for Luganda.

It is vital to mention though that this guide is not written by professionals but by a learner and a native speaker of Luganda. Although we might not be able to give you the most adequate grammatical terms we are confident that we managed to combine the perspective of a recent learner of Luganda who is not a linguist and who didn't know any other Bantu-language beforehand and a native speaker who can provide the best ways of expressing things in casual Luganda spoken on the streets and in the homes of Kampala and the Buganda Kingdom.

The guide is not a step-by-step approach to Luganda, it can rather be seen as a bookshelf that provides you with input, information and help according to your needs. Every learner of a language has his or her own way and speed of learning. Furthermore, every person coming to Uganda will find him or herself in a different environment where different terms might be helpful. Thus the guide is not structured in a contingent way and should not be read from the first to the last page.

2. Why learn Luganda

A learner of Luganda will often be confronted with incomprehension. Why are you learning a language that is only spoken by roughly 17 million people? Why are you learning Luganda when close to every Ugandan knows English? You might even have asked yourself these questions which is why we came up with five good reasons for learning Luganda to convince you and people who question your efforts:

Four good reasons for learning Luganda:

1. Learning the people's language is a sign of **interest and respect**. As Mandela once said 'If you talk to a man in a language he knows that goes to his brain. If you talk to a man in his very own language that goes to his heart.' You will find people being highly delighted and

impressed by you learning their language. You might get involved in small talk a whole lot easier than when talking to the people in English. Learning Luganda is certainly not easy, but going through all that struggle means a lot to the people of the Buganda region.

2. **English** is a language that was forced on the Ugandan people during and as **a tool of colonialism**. Until recently speaking Luganda was prohibited and punished in school. When talking about one's culture and heritage the use of a foreign language like English is completely inadequate and insufficient, thus the suppression of the native language means great harm to a people's identity. When describing one's feelings a foreign language cannot do the same as a native language and if that native language is suppressed even personal development is hindered. When giving a speech and conveying a political message to one's own people a foreign language will not allow one to express themselves in an as convincing way as the native language would, which is why the suppression of a native tongue goes far beyond suppression of culture and identity but reaches even a political level. If you are not able to express yourself in order to gather people and to challenge the ruling class, democracy is not granted. Learning the local language Luganda as a foreigner instead of relying on the old colonial language is therefore of great importance.
3. Knowing the local language helps you **understand the people** of a country or region. How do they interact? What do they talk about in the Taxi? What are the neighbors arguing about? What are the people saying about you on the street? What price is he giving this other person in comparison to what he is charging you? You will even be able to be part of this daily interaction of the people in their usual language environment which is certainly the best way to get to know people and make friends. Moreover, language and culture are connected and learning a language gives you unique **insights into a culture**. When saying something is important in Luganda, one might say 'ekyo kya makulu'. The word makulu derives from the adjective -kulu, which means 'old' or 'an elder'. This demonstrates the respect for age and the elderlies in the Bugandan culture. On the other hand when saying somebody is primitive one might say 'alina amaalo', the word amaalo derives from the word ekyaalo = the village, which indicates that the village is considered backwards.
4. Learning a language is always **practice for the mind**. When learning a language your brain is working in so many ways: it is recalling the right vocab, forming sentence structure, going through prefixes and suffixes according to class, etc. It's a common myth that there is a limit as to how much vocab and how many languages one can absorb. The opposite is the case, learning a new foreign language will enable you to pick up any other language (not only other Bantu-languages) a whole lot easier and it will enable you to learn faster in general. You might never come back to Uganda and barely get a chance to speak this language ever again after leaving Uganda, but having studied Luganda is of great value to your brain.

3. General Introduction to Luganda

Luganda is the most widely spoken language in Uganda and the official language of the Buganda Kingdom. Most people in the central region of Uganda speak Luganda as a first or second language and since the administration and most boarding schools are located in the Buganda region lots of people outside Buganda speak Luganda. Thus an approximate number of about 17 million people speak this language.

Luganda belongs to the Bantu-languages of sub-Saharan Africa and thus shows many similarities to other Bantu-languages like Swahili or Kinyarwanda. It is a highly agglutinated language which means that lots of information like time, object, number, place, etc. can be inflicted to a single word. Let's take the single word 'Tanatutwalayo' which translates into seven words in English: 'He has not taken us there yet'. Luganda is also highly focused on classes which means that every adjective and verb has to correspond to the class and number of the noun.

The pronunciation is quite similar to English. Special features include:

| | | | |
|------------|---|----|--|
| c | = | ch | like in English 'child' |
| ki | = | ch | like in English 'child' |
| ky | = | ch | like in English 'child' |
| gi | = | j | like in English 'job' |
| gy | = | j | like in English 'job' |
| ng' | = | ŋ | a nasalized sound that does not exist in English |

There is no distinction between **L** and **R** in Luganda but in written Luganda the R is used after an I or E.

Vowels can be either short or long, a differentiation that will change the entire meaning of a word:

| | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|---|-----------------|---------------|
| okutuma | to send | ≠ | okutuuma | to name |
| bana | four (people) | ≠ | baana | children |
| okusula | to spend the night | ≠ | okusuula | to throw away |

In Luganda consonants are either hit (one letter) or stressed (two letters):

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------|---|---------------|---------|
| mubi | bad person | ≠ | mubbi | thief |
| okuta | to release | ≠ | okutta | to kill |
| muka | wife of | ≠ | mukka | smoke |

4. The Verb

Independent personal pronouns

The pronouns in Luganda exist mainly for the purpose of emphasis. Since the verb contains a person-prefix that makes clear who the person acting is, the independent personal pronoun is dropped. They are yet very important when constructing the possessive and when emphasizing who did something.

| S I N G | Per son | Subject |
|------------------|------------|-------------|
| | 1. | Nze (I) |
| | 2. | Ggwe (You) |
| | 3. | Ye (He/she) |
| P L | 1. | Ffe (We) |
| | 2. | Mwe (You) |
| | 3. | Bba (They) |

Present Conjugation and Person prefixes

Unlike in English but much like in most other languages the conjugation in Luganda depends highly on the subject. While the verb does not necessarily change its form in English even when the subject or the number changes, in Luganda this change is the only indicator of the subject. In English one could say 'I play' 'we play' and 'they play' whereby the verb doesn't change its form. In Luganda on the other hand the subject is only added when stressed, otherwise it is expressed through a prefix: 'nsamba', 'tusamba', 'basamba'. As you can see every person and number has its own prefix that is simply added to the stem. The stem of a verb is found by removing the 'oku' of the infinitive, which is the equivalent of 'to' in English, the suffix '-en' in German (gehen, spielen, sehen), and the several suffixes 'ar', 'er', 'ir', etc. in Spanish (Jugar, ir, vider), and so on:

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|---|----------------|
| okusamba | to play | → | stem: -samba |
| okutambula | to walk | → | stem: -tambula |
| okulya | to eat | → | stem: -lya |
| okusoma | to read/study | → | stem: -soma |
| okugenda | to go | → | stem: -genda |
| okulaba | to see/watch | → | stem: -laba |

The stem of reflexive verbs always starts with an e so that the oku- prefix becomes okw-:

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------|---|---------------|
| okwetaaga | to need | → | stem: -etaaga |
| okwetonda | to apologize | → | stem: -etonda |
| okweraba | to see oneself | → | stem: -eraba |

Table Conjunction Present

| S I N G | Per son | Subject | Person prefix | Example Okusamba (to play) | Prefix (before a vowel) | Example okwetaaga (to need) |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | 1. | nze (I) | n- | nsamba | n- | Neetaaga |
| | 2. | ggwe (you) | o- | osamba | w- | Weetaaga |
| | 3. | ye (he/she) | a- | asamba | y- | Yeetaaga |
| P L | 1. | ffe (we) | tu- | tusamba | tw- | Twetaaga |
| | 2. | mwe (you) | mu- | musamba | mw- | Mwetaaga |
| | 3. | bba (they) | ba- | basamba | b- | Beetaaga |

Examples:

Ng'enda ku ssomero.
Asamba mupiira.
Tulaba firimu.
Batunda ebibala.
Nkola leero.
Tusoma Oluganda.

I'm going to school.
He plays football.
We watch a movie.
They sell fruits.
I work today.
We study Luganda.

To be: 'kuba'

| S I N G | Per son | Kuba | To be | Example | Example Translation |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| | 1. | ndi | I am | Ndi ku ssomero. | I'm at school |
| | 2. | oli | you are | Oli ku ssomero. | You are at school |
| | 3. | ali / - | he/she is | Ali ku ssomero. | He/she is at school |
| P L | 1. | tuli | we are | Tuli ku ssomero. | We are at school |
| | 2. | muli | you are | Muli ku ssomero. | You are at school |
| | 3. | bali / - | they are | Bali ku ssomero. | They are at school |

The negative

In order to form the negative of a verb the prefixes have to be changed. For regular verbs with a stem starting with a consonant the first person singular prefix n- becomes si-, for the 2. and 3. Person Singular a t- and for the plural te- is added. As a general rule te- is added when the person prefix starts with a consonant, when the person prefix starts with a vowel just a t- is added.

| S | Per son | Subject | Negative Prefix | Example okusamba (to kick) | Negative Prefix (vowel) | Example okwetaaga (to need) |
|----------|------------|---------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | 1. | nze (i) | si- | sisamba | s- | seetaaga |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----|-------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|
| I N G | 2. | ggwe (you) | to- | tosamba | tew- | teweetaaga |
| | 3. | ye (he/she) | ta- | tasamba | tey- | teyeetaaga |
| P L | 1. | ffe (we) | tetu- | tetusamba | tetw- | tetwetaaga |
| | 2. | mwe (you) | temu- | temusamba | temw- | temwetaaga |
| | 3. | bba (they) | teba- | tebasamba | teb- | tebeetaaga |

Sigenda mu kibuga.

Tebasamba mupiira.

Talaba firimu.

Temutunda ebibala.

Sikola leero.

Tetusoma Oluganda.

I'm not going to town.

They don't play football.

He doesn't watch a movie.

You (guys) don't sell fruits.

I don't work today.

We don't study Luganda.

Negation of 'to be':

| S I N G P L | Per son | Kuba | To be | Example | Example Translation |
|--|------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| I N G | 1. | siri | I am not | Siri ku ssomero. | I'm not at school |
| | 2. | toli | You are not | Toli ku ssomero. | You are not at school |
| | 3. | tali / - | He/she is not | Tali ku ssomero. | He/she is not at school |
| P L | 1. | tetuli | We are not | Tetuli ku ssomero. | We are not at school |
| | 2. | temuli | You are not | Temuli ku ssomero. | You are not at school |
| | 3. | tebali / - | They are not | Tebali ku ssomero. | They are not at school |

Class Prefixes

As a Bantu-language Luganda is highly orientated on Classes. There are 10 Classes in Luganda that contain different nouns and Class I to 9 also have a plural to them. Noun classes are comparable to gender, i.e. masculine vs. feminine vs. neuter, in European languages, but their meaning is not derived from the natural sex of the objects they refer to and there are more than three of them. The conjugation of a verb depends on the class of the subject of that verb. When talking about a goat eating the verb prefix is different from the verb prefix of a bird eating or a woman eating or even a baby eating: embuzi **erya** (the goat eats), ekinyonyi **kirya** (the bird eats), omuntu **alya** (the person eats), akaana **kalya** (the baby eats). Thus it is not enough to know the conjugation from the 1. Person Singular to the 3. Person Plural like in most languages, but also from Class I Singular to Class 10 Plural. Just like mentioned above, the negative is formed by adding a t- or a te- depending on the Class-prefix: When it starts with a vowel the t- is added, when it starts with a consonant the te- is added.

Table Present Conjunction Classes

| Class | Class Prefix | Example | Translation | Verb Prefix | Example | | Negative Prefix |
|--------|------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| I Sg | - | ffenne | jackfruit(s) | a- | Awooma | It is delicious | ta- |
| I Pl | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| II Sg | (o)mu | omucungwa | orange | gu- | Guwooma | It is delicious | tegu- |
| II Pl | (e)mi | emicungwa | oranges | gi- | Giwooma | They are delicious | tegi- |
| III Sg | (e)n | embuzi | goat | e- | Esamba | It is playing | te- |
| III Pl | (e)n | embuzi | goats | zi- | Zisamba | They are playing | tezi- |
| IV Sg | (e)ki | ekitabo | book | ki- | Kizitowa | It is heavy | teki- |
| IV Pl | (e)bi | ebitabo | books | bi- | Bizitowa | They are heavy | tebi- |
| V Sg | (e)ri/(e) | eryenvu | banana | li- | Liwooma | It is delicious | teli- |
| V Pl | (a)ma | amenvu | bananas | ga- | Gawooma | They are delicious | tega- |
| VI Sg | (a)ka | akatunda | passion fruit | ka- | Kawooma | It is delicious | teka- |
| VI Pl | (o)bu | obutunda | passion fruits | bu- | Buwooma | They are delicious | tebu- |
| VII Sg | (o)lu | olweyo | broom | lu- | Luzitowa | It is heavy | telu- |
| VII Pl | (e)n | enjeyo | brooms | zi- | Zitowa | They are heavy | tezi- |
| IX Sg | (o)ku | okutu | ear | ku- | Kuluma | It hurts | teku- |
| IX Pl | (a)ma | amatu | ears | ga- | Galuma | They hurt | tega- |
| X Sg | (o)tu | tulo | sleep | tu- | Tuluma | It hurts (bothers) | tetu- |

Examples

Caayi **a**wooma.

Omucungwa **gu**wooma.

Embuzi **et**ambula.

Ekinyonyi **kit**ambula.

Eryenvu **li**wooma.

Akaana **kat**ambula.

Obutunda **bu**wooma.

Olunaku **lu**tambula.

Okutu **ku**luma.

Otulo **tu**luma.

The tea is delicious (verb!)

The orange is delicious (verb!)

The goat is walking.

The bird is walking.

The banana is delicious (verb!)

The baby is walking.

The passion fruit is delicious (verb!)

The day is walking (going by).

The ear is hurting.

Sleep is hurting.

Irregular first person singular:

When forming the first person singular the person prefix n- or/and the stem often undergo changes according to these rules:

1. When the stem of a verb starts with an l and the stem is nasalized the first person singular replaces that l with a d.

| | | | | | |
|-----------|----------|------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| -laba | to see | <u>ndaba</u> | I see | Olaba | you see |
| -lowooza | to think | <u>ndowooza</u> | I think | olowooza | you think |
| -longoosa | to clean | <u>ndongoosa</u> | I clean | olongoosa | you clean |
| -laga | to show | <u>ndaga</u> | I show | Olaga | you show |

2. At the same time the l is replaced by another n when the stem is not nasalized.

| | | | | | |
|--------|---------|----------------|-------------|----------|--------------|
| -linda | to wait | <u>nninda</u> | I wait | olaba | you see |
| -limba | to lie | <u>nnimba</u> | I lie | olimba | you lie |
| -lima | to dig | <u>nnima</u> | I dig | olima | you dig |
| -luma | to hurt | <u>kinnuma</u> | it hurts me | kikuluma | it hurts you |

3. When the stem of a verb starts with a w, the nw- becomes mp-.

| | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| -wulira | to hear | <u>mpulira</u> | I hear | owulira | you hear |
| -wa | to give | <u>Mpa</u> | I give | owa | you give |
| -wandiika | to write | <u>mpandiika</u> | I write | owandiika | you write |
| -wubaala | to be bored | <u>mpubaala</u> | I'm bored | owubaala | you are bored |
| -werekera | to accompany | <u>mperekera</u> | I accompany | owerekera | you accompany |

4. When the stem of a verb starts with a g, the ng change its pronunciation to the ng' sound. This is the case in verbs like:

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|----------------|----------|--------|------------|
| -genda | to go | <u>ng'enda</u> | I go | ogenda | you go |
| -gaana | to refuse | <u>ng'aana</u> | I refuse | ogaana | you refuse |

But this is not the case for verbs with a non-nasalized stem. In these cases the g is pronounced as usual.

| | | | | | |
|----------|--------|-----------------|-------|----------|---------|
| -gula | to buy | <u>ngula</u> | I buy | ogula | you buy |
| -gezaako | to try | <u>ngezaako</u> | I try | ogezaako | you try |

5. When the stem of a verb starts with an n the first n is doubled:

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|-----------------------|----------|---------|------------|
| -naaba | to bathe | <u>nnaaba</u> | I bathe | onaaba | you bathe |
| -noonya | to search | <u>nnoonya</u> | I search | onoonya | you search |

6. When the stem starts with a nn the first n changes to nnyi:-

| | | | | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| -nnyonnyola | to explain | <u>nnyinyonnyola</u> | I explain | onnyonnyola | You explain |
|-------------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|

7. When the stem starts with a kk, jj, gg, bb, tt, vv, ss the first person singular changes to nzi:-

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| -kkiriza | to believe | <u>nzikiriza</u> | I believe | okkiriza | you belief |
| -kkuta | to be satisfied | <u>nzikuse</u> | I'm satisfied | okkuse | you are satisfied |
| -jja | to come | <u>nzija</u> | I come | ojja | you come |
| -jjukira | to remember | <u>nzijukira</u> | I remember | ojjukira | you remember |
| -ggalawo | to close | <u>nzigalawo</u> | I close | oggalawo | you close |
| -bba | to steal | <u>Nziba</u> | I steal | obba | you steal |
| -tta | to kill | <u>Nzita</u> | I kill | otta | you kill |
| -vuuunula | to translate | <u>nzivuunula</u> | I translate | ovvuunula | you translate |
| -ssa | to set down | <u>Nzisa</u> | I set down | ossa | you set down |

8. When the stem starts with dd the dd changes to zir:

| | | | | | |
|--------|------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------|-------------|
| -dduka | to run | <u>Nziruka</u> | I run | odduka | you run |
| -dda | to return | <u>Nzira</u> | I return | odda | you return |
| -ddamu | to reply | <u>Nziramu</u> | I reply | oddamu | you reply |
| -ddayo | to go back | <u>nzirayo</u> | I go back | oddayo | you go back |

9. When the stem starts with a y it may be replaced by a j.

| | | | | | |
|-------|----------|---------------------|---------|-------|-----------|
| -yiga | to learn | <u>Njiga</u> | I learn | oyiga | you learn |
|-------|----------|---------------------|---------|-------|-----------|

10. When the stem starts with an m, the n in the first person singular changes to an m:

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| -mala | to finish | <u>mmaze</u> | I finished | omaze | you finished |
| -maliriza | to finish | <u>mmaliriza</u> | I finish | omaliriza | you finish |
| -manya | to know | <u>mmanyi</u> | I know | omanyi | you know |

11. When the stem starts with a b, the n turns into an m.

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----------------|----------------------|---------|--------|-----------|
| -beera | to be / to stay | <u>mbeera</u> | I am | obeera | you are |
| -bala | to count | <u>mbala</u> | I count | obala | you count |
| -buuza | to ask | <u>mbuuza</u> | I ask | obuuza | you ask |

-bula to get lost **mbuze** I'm lost obuze you are lost

True stem starting with a y

When the true stem of a verb starts with a y the prefixes undergo some changes. This is due to the fact, that a vowel cannot meet a different vowel in Luganda and some prefixes are vowels.

| | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| n- | → | nn- |
| o- | → | w- |
| a- | → | y- |
| tu | → | tw- |
| mu | → | mw- |
| Ba | → | b + the vowel the stem starts with. |

12. When the first vowel of the stem is a, e or o and when the stem is nasalized:

- The three singular persons take in a **y**
- The three plural persons **contract**

| Okwambala (true stem: yambala): | Okwongera (true stem yongera): |
|---|--|
| Nnyambala | Nnyongera |
| Oyambala | Oyongera |
| Ayambala | Ayongera |
| Twambala | Twongera |
| Mwambala | Mwongera |
| Bambala | Bongera |

13. When the first vowel of the stem is a, e or o and the stem is non-nasalized

- The first person singular takes **nj**
- The second and third person singular take in a **y**
- The three plural persons **contract**

| okwagala (to love): | okwogera (to speak): | okwoza (to wash): | okwera (to sweep): |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| njagala | njogera | njoza | njera |
| oyagala | oyogera | oyoza | oyera |
| ayagala | ayogera | ayoza | ayera |
| twagala | twogera | twoza | twera |
| mwagala | mwogera | mwoza | mwera |
| baagala | boogera | booza | beera |

Present Continous

The present tense is used not only for regular but even for ongoing actions:

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Nsamba mupiira. | I'm playing football. | / I play football. |
| Olaba ttivvi? | Are you watching TV? | / Do you watch TV? |
| Abayizi basoma amawulire. | The students are reading the newspaper. | / The students read the newspaper. |
| Embuzi terya ennyama. | The goat is not eating meat. | / The goat doesn't eat meat. |

In informal language there is a present tense that describes that somebody is in the process of doing something, which is formed by using the form of 'to be', 'mu' and the infinitive of the respective verb:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Ndi mu kufumba. | I'm cooking. |
| Bali mu kusoma. | They are studying. |
| Ali mu kulya. | He is eating |

5. The Noun

The noun in Luganda is of great importance. Almost every other part of the sentence depends on it: the adjective, the verb, the possessive, even numbers. Just by looking at these sentences this becomes clear:

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ekitabo kino kirungi. | This book is good. |
| Ebitabo byange byonna birungi. | All of my books are good. |
| Obulamu bwange bulungi. | My life is good. |
| Abaana bange bombi balungi. | My children are both good. |
| But: Eddoboozi lyange ddungi. | My voice is good. |

This is why it is so important to get to know the classes and their common prefixes. There are 10 classes and Class I to IX have a plural to them. Since Class XIII is rarely used it will be ignored in this book. These are the general prefixes though there might be exceptions:

| Class | Class Prefix | example | translation |
|--------|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| I Sg | (o)mu | omuntu | person |
| I Pl | (a)ba | abantu | people |
| II Sg | (o)mu | omucungwa | orange |
| II Pl | (e)mi | emicungwa | oranges |
| III Sg | (e)n | ente | cow |
| III Pl | (e)n | ente | cows |
| IV Sg | (e)ki | ekitabo | book |
| IV Pl | (e)bi | ebitabo | books |

| | | | |
|--------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| V Sg | (e)ri/(e) | ettooke | banana |
| V Pl | (a)ma | amatooke | bananas |
| VI Sg | (a)ka | akatunda | passion fruit |
| VI Pl | (o)bu | obutunda | passion fruits |
| VII Sg | (o)lu | olulimi | language |
| VII Pl | (e)n | enimi | languages |
| IX Sg | (o)ku | okutu | ear |
| IX Pl | (a)ma | amatu | ears |
| X Sg | (o)tu | otulo | sleep |

Class I:

Class one contains mainly people and words that do not have a prefix or derive from English. The typical prefix of this class is '(o)mu', the plural prefix is '(a)ba'. Since the vowel u becomes w when meeting another vowel you will see the prefix changing to '(o)mw' like in 'omwana' (child).

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - omusajja (man) | - omugenyi (guest) | - omuyimbi (singer) |
| - omukazi (woman) | - munnabyabufuzi (politician) | - omusubuuzi (business man) |
| - omuwala (girl) | - omuntu (person) | - omukozi (worker) |
| - muganda (sibling) | - omusomesa (teacher) | - omugagga (rich person) |
| - omwana (child) | - omuyizi (student) | - omusawo (doctor) |
| - omulenzi (boy) | - omufumbi (cook) | - omujaasi (soldier) |
| - mukyaala (wife, madam) | - omufumbo (spouse) | - omusambi (player) |
| - omwami (husband, man) | - omuzadde (parent) | - omuliraanwa (neighbor) |
| - omulogo (witch/witchdoctor) | - omuwanguzi (winner) | - omuwuulu (bachelor) |

There are also words (most of them deriving from Arabic, English or Hindi) in this class that do not have a prefix:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| - taata (father) | - caayi (tea) | - balansi (balance) |
| - maama (mother) | - ffenne (jackfruit) | - ovaceddo (avocado) |
| - jjaja (grandparent) | - sabuuni (soap) | - kaawa (coffee) |
| - ssebo (sir) | - kawo (peas) | - kamulali (chilli) |
| - nnyabo (madam) | - ssukaali (sugar) | - ssentebe (chairperson) |
| - katonda (god) | - kabaka (king) | - ssalongo (father of twins) |
| - wakabi (superstar) | - nannyini (owner) | - nnabakyala (queen) |

- **lumonde (sweet potato)**
- **nnamwandu (widow)**
- **gundi (so and so)**
- **ssemwandu (widower)**
- **nnaalongo (mother of twins)**
- **ssemaka (head of the family)**

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---|
| verb prefix singular | a- / y- | omukazi at ambula omukazi ye etaaga |
| verb prefix plural | ba- / b- | abakazi bat ambula abakazi be etaaga |
| adjective prefix singular | mu- | omulenzi mul ungi |
| adjective prefix plural | ba- | abalenzi bal ungi |
| possessive prefix singular | w- | omwana w ange omwana w' omusajja |
| possessive prefix plural | b- | abaana b ange abaana b' omukazi |

Examples:

Omwana wange talya enkoko.
Abasajja basobola okufumba.
Fenne ono awooma.

My child doesn't eat chicken.
The men can cook.
This Jackfruit is delicious.

Class II

This class contains the word 'friend', trees, parts of the body, things and abstract concepts like 'year' and much more. The typical prefix of this class is '(o)mu' and the plural prefix is '(e)mi'.

- **omukwano (friend)**
- **omubiri (body)**
- **omuti (tree)**
- **omutima (heart)**
- **omutwe (head)**
- **omusuwo (muscle)**
- **omusaayi (blood)**
- **omugaati (bread)**
- **omuze (habit)**
- **omukono (arm)**
- **omulimu (job, work)**
- **omupiira (football)**
- **omuceere (rice)**
- **omukolo (function)**
- **omusege (wolf)**
- **omugaso (benefit)**
- **omufaliso (mattress)**
- **omulambo (corpse)**
- **omukisa (luck)**
- **omusolo (tax)**
- **omwaka (year)**
- **omwezi (moon/month)**
- **omunnya (salt)**
- **omuzira (snow, hero)**
- **omuwendo (amount)**
- **omugongo (back)**
- **omuzizi (taboo)**

The nouns of class two can be easily confused with class I because the singular prefix is the same: '(o)mu'. The adjective prefix remains 'mu' as well, everything else differs though:

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------|--|
| verb prefix singular | gu- / gw- | omutima gun numa omutima gwe etaaga |
|----------------------|------------------|--|

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| verb prefix plural | gi- / gy- | emitima ginnuma emitima gyeetaaga |
| adjective prefix singular | mu- | omuti mulungi |
| adjective prefix plural | mi- | emiti mirungi |
| possessive prefix singular | gw- | omupiira gwange |
| possessive prefix plural | gy- | emipiira gyange |

Examples

Omuti guno mwanvu.

This tree is tall.

Mikwano gyange gijja.

My friends are coming.

Omwaka omupya gujja kuba mulungi.

The new year is going to be good.

Class III

This class is characterized by the 'en-' in the beginning and contains mainly things and animals, but it also contains close to all the foreign words, mainly those deriving from English. The singular and the plural are similar, but the prefixes will change. Note that the n changes into an m if the stem starts with a b or p and it is dropped if an m is following.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| - engatto (shoe) | - ensobi (mistake) | - ensiri (mosquito) |
| - ensawo (bag) | - ennyindo (nose) | - emundu (gun) |
| - emmere (food) | - ennyumba (house) | - entamu (sauce pan) |
| - embuzi (goat) | - ensenene (grasshopper) | - entungo (sesame) |
| - embizi (pig) | - etangawuuzi (ginger) | - essowani (plate) |
| - ente (cow) | - ennyaanya (tomato) | - enswa (ant) |
| - enkoko (chicken) | - embwa (dog) | - enswaswa (alligator) |
| - entugga (giraffe) | - enjovu (elephant) | - entebe (chair, bench) |
| - enkima (monkey) | - ensi (land, country) | - ensujju (pumpkin) |
| - ennyama (meat) | - ensalo (border, boundary) | - empuliziganya (communication) |

There are a few exceptions that lack the typical prefix. Moreover, most words deriving from English are integrated into this class.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| - ssente (money) | - kkapa (cat) | - gomesi (traditional wear for women) |
| - palamenti (parliament) | - nnamba (number) | - poliisi (police) |
| - bbaluwa (letter) pl: amabaluwa | - kaloti (carrot) | - ssaati (shirt) |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| verb prefix singular | e- / y- | ente etambula ente yeetaaga |
| verb prefix plural | zi- / z- | ente zitambula ente zeetaaga |
| adjective prefix singular | n- | ensawo nnungi |
| adjective prefix plural | zi- | ensawo zirungi |
| possessive prefix singular | y- | embuzi yange |
| possessive prefix plural | z- | embuzi zange |

Examples:

Ensawo yo nnene.

Enkoko zino zirya nyingi.

ATM eno eganye okukola.

Your bag is big.

These chicken eat a lot

This ATM doesn't work (lit.: refused to).

Class IV

Class four contains most small things, some few (small) animals and concepts.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| - ekintu (thing) | - ekisenge (room) | - ekitanda (bed) |
| - ekizimbe (building) | - ekisolo (animal) | - ekinusu (coin) |
| - ekikopo (cup) | - ekibuuzo (question) | - ekirabo (present) |
| - ekifaananyi (picture) | - ekyama (secret) | - ekibiina (class room) |
| - ekitabo (book) | - ekigambo (word) | - ekibina (butt) |
| - ekinyonyi (bird) | - ekiwuka (insect) | - ekiteeteeyi (dress) |
| - ekirowoozo (opinion) | - ekirooto (dream) | - ekikajjo (sugar cane) |
| - ekibira (forest) | - ekiro (night) | - ekisaawe (field) |
| - ekyaaloo (village) | - ekifuba (chest, caught) | - ekitiibwa (respect) |
| - ekiseera (moment) | - ekisuubizo (promise) | - ekisumuluzo (key) |

The prefixes of the singular are all the same ('ki'), the same goes for the plural ('bi')

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| verb prefix singular | ki- / ky- | ekitabo kizitowa ekitabo kyeetaaga |
| verb prefix plural | bi- / by- | ebitabo bizitowa ebitabo byeetaaga |
| adjective prefix singular | ki- | ekizimbe kinene |
| adjective prefix plural | bi- | ebizimbe binene |
| possessive prefix singular | ky- | ekikopo kyange |
| possessive prefix plural | by- | ebikopo byange |

Examples:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ekitabo ky'ompadde kibi. | The book (that) you gave me is bad. |
| Ebintu byange biri ludda wa? | Where are my things? |
| Ekinyonyi kino tekinywa amazzi. | This bird doesn't drink water. |

Class V

Class five is made up of many different things, parts of the body, concepts, fruits and vegetables and much more. The typical prefix is 'eri' for the singular, even though it is in a lot of cases reduced to an 'e' and '(a)ma' for the plural.

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| - ettooke (banana) | - eddagala (medicine) | - ettaka (land, soil) |
| - eryenvu (sweet banana) | - eddwaaliro (hospital) | - eddungu (desert) |
| - erinnya (name) | - essomero (school) | - ejjuuni (yam) |
| - erinnyo (tooth) | - ejjinja (stone) | - eggumba (bone) |
| - eriiso (eye) | - eggwanga (nation, tribe) | - ettaala (light) |
| - ebbeere (breast) | - etteeka (law) | - ebbugumu (heat) |
| - eggi (egg) | - eddembe (freedom) | - epaapaali (papaya) |
| - ekkubo (road) | - eddinisa (window) | - essanyu (joy) |
| - eddoboosi (voice) | - ebbwa (wound) | - essubi (grass) |
| - evviivi (knee) | - egguggwe (lung) | - essuubi (hope) |

Plural only:

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - amakoloni (pasta) | - amagye (army) | - amaserengeta (south) |
| - amazzi (water) | - amaalo (backwardness) | - amakulu (significance, importance) |
| - amazima (trooth) | - amazina (dance) | - amawulire (news, newspaper) |
| - amaka (family, home) | - amasanyalaze (electricity) | - amazaalibwa (birthday) |
| - amaanyi (power) | - amagezi (intelligence) | - amaduuka (shops) |
| - amata (milk) | - amambuka (north) | - amalusu (saliva) |

Note that sometimes the stem of a noun is not obvious:

| | | | | |
|-----------|--------|---|------------|---------|
| eddoboosi | voice | → | amaloboosi | voices |
| ejjinja | stone | → | amayinja | stones |
| eryenvu | banana | → | amenvu | bananas |
| eriiso | eye | → | amaaso | eyes |

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|---|
| verb prefix singular | li- / ly- | ettooke lizitowa, ettooke ndyeetaaga |
| verb prefix plural | ga- | amatooke gazitowa, amatooke geetaaga |
| adjective prefix singular | li- | ettooke linene |
| adjective prefix plural | ma- | amatooke manene |
| possessive prefix singular | ly- | essomero lyange |
| possessive prefix plural | g- | amaaso gange |

Examples:

Eryenvu lino linene naye si ddungi.

Amagi gano gawooma.

Ebbeere lyange linnuma.

This sweet banana is big but not good.

These eggs are delicious.

My breast is hurting.

Class VI

This class contains few own words and is mostly used to express that something is little, similar to the German diminutive -chen (Schachtel → Schächtelchen), the Turkish -cik (biraz → birazcik), the Persian -ak (dokhtar → dokhtarak) or the Spanish -ito or -ita (señor → señorito, señora → señorita).

In order to form the diminutive for any other word, the prefix of that word has to be replaced by the ,(a)ka' or '(o)bu':

| | | |
|---------|---|---------------------------------|
| ekitabo | → | akatabo (little book) |
| enkoko | → | akakoko (little chicken, chick) |
| eryenvu | → | akenvu (little banana) |
| omuwala | → | akawala (little girl) |
| nnyabo | → | akannyabo (little missy) |
| omwana | → | akaana (little child, baby) |

Inherently diminutive

There are some words that do not derive from another noun but exist only in this form:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| - akatungulu (onion) | - akatunda (passion fruit) | - akalevu (chin) |
| - akatungulucumu (garlic) | - akambe (knife) | - akagere (toe; ekigere = foot) |
| - akaveera (plastic) | - akabenje (accident) | - akabonero (sign, label) |
| - akajanja (nosiness) | - akakiiko (commission) | - akabuvubuka (adolescence) |

Like in other classes some nouns of this class only have a plural form to them. At the same time there are a lot of abstract words that only exist in the plural form of this class:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| - obulamu (life) | - obuzibu (issue(s)) | - obugagga (wealth) |
| - obudde (time) | - obulwadde (disease) | - obuwanguzi (success) |
| - obulungi (goodness) | - obuto (childhood) | - obukenuzi (corruption) |
| - obukulu (age) | - obutwa (poison) | - obwenzi (adultery) |
| - obunene (size) | - obufumbo (marriage) | - obusobozi (ability) |
| - obusungu (anger) | - obubaka (message) | - obuyambi (assistance) |
| - obwannanyini (private ownership) | - obwegassi (union) | - obunyiivu (anger) |

Special negation:

When creating a noun that expresses the negation of a verb this class is used. For example 'inaction' (obutakola), 'disagreement' (obutakkiriziganya), 'ignorance' (obutamanya), 'indecisiveness' (obutasalawo) or nouns that do not exist as a single word in English like 'obutagenda' (not-going), 'obutanseera' (not-overcharging), etc. As you can see the 'obu-' is placed in front of the negative third person singular of the respective verb. This can also be done to the verb 'to be': Obutali bwesigwa (infidelity), obutaabawo (absence).

Examples:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Weebale obutanseera. | Thanks for not overcharging. |
| Obutamanya bwa abantu bunnuma. | The ignorance of the people is hurting me. |

'Just'

There is no equivalent of the word 'just' in Luganda as in 'I'm just looking'. Instead the verb used is modified in that it is transformed into a noun of this class' plural. The verb for 'to look' or 'to see' is 'okulaba' thus the noun used to express 'just' becomes 'obulabi', 'okutambula' (to walk) becomes 'obutambuzi', 'okusomesa' (to teach) becomes 'obusomesa', 'okusoma' (to read) becomes 'obusomi'.

An entire sentence could look like this: 'Ndaba obulabi.' (I'm just looking.)

More examples:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Mbadde njagala okulaba obulabi. | I just wanted to see/look. |
| Osoma obusomi oba okola n'okukola? | Are you just studying or are you working too? |
| Tugenda okusirika obusirisi. | We are going to just keep quiet. |

One has to watch out for nouns that look like they belong to this class because they have the typical ka- prefix but they actually belong to class I, most of them being foreign: kaawa (coffee), kamulali (chilli), kawo (peas).

Class seven contains languages, body parts and all sorts of things.

- olulimi (language, tongue)
- olusozi (mountain)
- olubuto (stomach)
- oluganda (Luganda)
- oluzungu (English)
- oluviiri (hair)
- olugero (proverb)
- olukung'aana (meeting)
- olusu (smell)
- oluyimba (song)
- olunaku (day)
- olutalo (battle)
- olugoye (clothes)
- oluguudo (road)
- olugendo (trip, hike)
- olugalo (finger)
- olweyo (broom)
- olugambo (rumour)
- oludda (direction)
- oluwummula (vacation)
- olususu (skin)
- olujji (door)
- olupapula (page, paper)
- olukiiko (meeting)

The prefixes of the singular are all the same ('lu-'), the same goes for the plural ('zi-')

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| verb prefix singular | lu- / lwe- | olubuto lunnuma, olulimi lwetaaga |
| verb prefix plural | zi- / z- | enimi zituluma, enimi zeetaaga |
| adjective prefix singular | lu- | olusozi lunene |
| adjective prefix plural | zi- | ensozi zinene |
| possessive prefix singular | lw- | olubuto lwange |
| possessive prefix plural | z- | enviiri zaffe |

Examples:

Olususu lwo lugonda nnyo.

Enviiri zo tezigonda.

Olugendo lubadde lwanvu.

Your skin is very soft.

Your hair is not soft.

The trip was long.

Class VIII

Class eight is very small. It contains a few body parts and all verbs when used as nouns.

- Okugulu (leg)
- okutu (ear)
- okubala (mathematics)
- okulonda (election)
- okulambula (adventure)
- okubaka (netball)

The prefixes of the singular are all the same ('ku-'), the plural prefix is 'ma-' and 'ga-' just like Class V plural.

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| verb prefix singular | ku- / kwe- | okutu kunnuma, okutu kwetaaga |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| verb prefix plural | ga- / g- | amagulu gannuma, amagulu geetaaga |
| adjective prefix singular | ku- | okutu kunene |
| adjective prefix plural | ma- | amatu manene |
| possessive prefix singular | kw- | okutu kwange |
| possessive prefix plural | g- | amatu gange |

Examples:

Okutu kwo kunene.

Amagulu ge gabadde (oku)muluma.

Okubala si kwangu.

Your ear is big.

His legs were hurting.

Math is not easy.

Class X

Class ten is very small and contains abstract concepts like sleep and small drops of liquids.

- **otulo (sleep)**
- **otuzzi (small drop)**
- **otuta (small drop of milk)**

The prefixes of the singular are all the same ('tu-'), there is no plural for this class.

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| verb prefix singular | tu- / twe- | otulo tunnuma, otulo tweetaga |
| adjective prefix singular | tu- | otulo tulungi |
| possessive prefix singular | tw- | otuzzi twange |

Examples:

Otulo tunnuma.

I'm tired (lit.: Sleep is hurting me).

| Class | Noun | Possessive -ange (my) | Adjective -lungi (good) | Verb | |
|-------|---------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| I | omuntu | wange | mulungi | Omuntu alya matooke. | The person eats matooke. |
| | abantu | bange | balungi | Abantu balya matooke. | The people eat matooke. |
| II | omutima | gwange | mulungi | Omutima gwange gunnuma. | My heart is hurting (me). |
| | emitima | gyange | mirungi | Emitima gyaffe gituluma. | Our hearts are hurting (us). |
| III | engatto | yange | nungi | Embuzi erya kasooli. | The goat eats corn. |
| | engatto | zange | nungi | Embuzi zilya kasooli. | The goats eat corn. |
| IV | ekitabo | kyange | kirungi | Ekitabo kizitowa. | The book is heavy. |
| | ebitabo | byange | birungi | Ebitabo bizitowa. | The books are heavy. |
| V | erinnya | lyange | dungi | Erinnya lyo litegeeza ki? | What does your name mean? |
| | amanya | gange | malungi | Amanya go gategeeza ki? | What do your names mean? |
| VI | akaana | kange | kalungi | Akaana kalya matooke. | The baby eats matooke. |
| | obwana | bwange | bulungi | Obwana bulya matooke. | The babies eat matooke. |
| VII | olulimi | lwange | lulungi | Olulimi lwange lunnuma. | My tongue is hurting (me). |
| | enimi | zange | nungi | Enimi zaffe zituluma. | Our tongues are hurting (us). |
| IX | okutu | kwange | kulungi | Okutu kwange kunuma. | My ear is hurting (me). |
| | amatu | gange | malungi | Amatu gange ganuma. | My ears are hurting (me). |
| X | otulo | twange | tulungi | Otulo tunnuma. | Sleep is hurting me. (I'm sleepy) |

6. The Possessive

In Luganda the possessive particle is placed right after the noun and has to be adjusted in order to correspond to the class and number of the possessed. In English it doesn't matter what the possessed is, the possessive stays the same: 'My husband', 'my name', 'my heart', 'my book'. It remains 'my' all the way through even for the plural: 'My children', 'my books', etc. In Luganda on the other hand the possessive changes in every of these cases: 'mwami wange', 'erinnya lyange', 'omutima gwange', 'ekitabo kyange' and 'abaana bange', 'ebitabo byange', etc. The prefixes of the possessive may resemble the prefixes of the verbs. Since the stem of the possessive always starts with a vowel, the prefix that ends in a vowel might have to be adjusted: 'my heart is hurting': omutima gwange gunnuma. 'My goats are eating': Embuzi zange zirya'.

The possessive prefixes

| Class | Noun | Possessive |
|-------|---------|------------|
| I | omuntu | wange |
| | abantu | bange |
| | omutima | gwange |

| | | |
|-----|---------|--------|
| II | emitima | gyange |
| III | engatto | yange |
| | engatto | zange |
| IV | ekitabo | kyange |
| | ebitabo | byange |
| V | erinnya | lyange |
| | amanya | gange |
| VI | akaana | kange |
| | obwana | bwange |
| VII | olulimi | lwange |
| | enimi | zange |
| IX | okutu | kwange |
| | amatu | gange |
| X | otulo | twange |

The possessive stem

| | | Possessive | Example Class II Pl. |
|-----|----|---------------|----------------------|
| Sg | 1. | -ange | Gyange |
| | 2. | -o | Gyo |
| | 3. | -e | Gye |
| Pl. | 1. | -affe | Gyaffe |
| | 2. | -ammwe | Gyammwe |
| | 3. | -aabwe | Gyaabwe |

Examples:

Omulenzi ono muganda wange.
Kankuwe nnaamba yange.
Olunaku lwo lutambula lutya?
Ennyumba yaabwe teri wala.
Nfumba emmere ya nsi yange.
Oyagala kuyiga olulimi lwaffe?

This boy is my brother.
Let me give you my number.
How is your day? (lit.: walking)
Their house is not far.
I'm cooking food of my country.
Do you want to learn our language?

The strong/independent possessive

When referring to something that has been mentioned before or when it is clear what the subject is the noun doesn't have to be repeated but the possessive has to be slightly adjusted: For the second and the third person singular the possessive prefix is modified. Otherwise the word could be confused with a demonstrative pronoun:

Engatto zange nungi, naye ezizo si nungi. → My shoes are nice, but yours aren't.

But: Engatto zange nungi, naye ezo si nungi. → My shoes are nice, but these aren't.

| | | 1. Sg (Nze) | 2. Sg (Ggwe) | 3. Sg (Ye) | 1. Pl (ffe) | 2. Pl (mwe) | 3. Pl (bbo) |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Cl. I | omuntu | owange | owuwo | owuwe | owaffe | owammwe | owaabwe |
| | Abantu | abange | ababo | ababe | abaffe | abammwe | abaabwe |
| Cl. II | omupiira | ogwange | ogugwo | ogugwe | ogwaffe | ogwammwe | ogwaabwe |
| | emipiira | egyange | egigyo | egigye | egyaffe | egyammwe | egyaabwe |
| Cl. III | engatto | eyange | eyiyo | eyiye | eyaffe | eyammwe | eyaabwe |
| | engatto | ezange | ezizo | ezize | ezaffe | ezammwe | ezaabwe |
| Cl. IV | ekitabo | ekyange | ekikyo | ekikye | ekyaffe | ekyammwe | ekyaabwe |
| | Ebitabo | ebyange | ebibyo | ebibye | ebyaffe | ebyammwe | ebyaabwe |
| Cl. V | essomero | eryange | eriryo | erirye | eryaffe | eryammwe | eryaabwe |
| | amasomero | agange | agago | agage | agaffe | agammwe | agaabwe |
| Cl. VII | olulimi | olwange | olulwo | olulwe | olwaffe | olwammwe | olwaabwe |
| | Enimi | ezange | ezizo | ezize | Ezaffe | ezammwe | ezaabwe |
| Cl. VIII | Akaana | akange | akako | akake | Akaffe | akammwe | akaabwe |
| | obulamu | obwange | obubwo | obubwe | obwaffe | obwammwe | obwaabwe |
| Cl. IX | Okutu | okwange | okuko | okuke | okwaffe | okwammwe | okwaabwe |
| | Amatu | agange | agago | agage | Agaffe | agammwe | agaabwe |
| Cl. X | Otulo | otwange | otutwo | otutwe | otwaffe | otwammwe | otwaabwe |

My place

When referring to somebody's house (awaka, no Class, the 'wa' is referring to a place, see chapter 11), country or the place where the family and relatives live (most likely the village or outside of town), this place is referred to as 'ewange/ewaffe'.

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Ewange | My place |
| Ewo | Your place |
| Ewe | His/her place |
| ewaffe | Our place |
| Ewammwe | Your place |
| Ewaabwe | Their place |

Examples:

Ng'enda kutwala ewaffe.
Mu ewammwe waliyo enenene?
Ayagala kugenda ewo.

I will take you to our house/village.
Are there grasshoppers in your country?
She wants to visit your place

The impersonal possessive

The English 'of' is expressed through the stem -a and the class prefixes:

| Class | Noun | of |
|-------|---------|------------|
| I | Omuntu | wa |
| | Abantu | ba |
| II | omutima | gwa |
| | emitima | gya |
| III | Engatto | ya |
| | Engatto | za |
| IV | Ekitabo | kya |
| | Ebitabo | bya |
| V | Erinnya | lya |
| | Amazzi | ga |
| VI | akaana | ka |
| | obwana | bwa |
| VII | olulimi | lwa |
| | enimi | za |
| IX | Okutu | kwa |
| | amatu | ga |
| X | otulo | twa |

Examples:

Ono ye mukwano wa taata gwange.
 Sirabye engatto za baze.
 Emmere ya Uganda ewooma nnyo.

This is the father of my friend.
 I haven't seen my husband's shoes.
 Ugandan food is very delicious.

When a word is added to the possessum the initial vowel of that class remains while the 'a' of the possessum is dropped (an elision):

| Class | Noun | of | Elision | Translation |
|-------|---------|------------|-----------------------------|--|
| I | omuntu | wa | Omwana w' omusajja | The child of the man / the man's child |
| | abantu | ba | Abaana b' omukazi | The children of the woman / the woman's children |
| II | omutima | gwa | Omutima gw' omukwano | The heart of the friend / the friend's heart |
| | emitima | gya | Emitima gy' abantu | The hearts of the people / the people's hearts. |
| III | engatto | ya | Embuzi y' omulimi | The goat of the farmer. / The farmer's goat. |

| | | | | |
|-----|---------|------------|------------------------------|---|
| | engatto | za | Embuzi z' abalimi | The goats of the farmers. / The farmers' goats. |
| IV | ekitabo | kya | Ekitabo ky' omusomesa | The book of the teacher. / The teacher's book. |
| | ebitabo | bya | Ebitabo by' abayizi | The books of the students. / The students' books. |
| V | erinnya | lya | Erinnya ly' akaana. | The name of the baby. / The baby's name. |
| | amazzi | ga | Amazzi g' okunywa. | Drinking water (lit.: water of drinking) |
| VI | akaana | ka | Akaana k' omusawo | The baby of the doctor. / The doctor's baby. |
| | obwana | bwa | Obwana bw' abagenzi. | The babies of the deceased. / The deceased's babies. |
| VII | olulimi | lwa | Olulimi lw' omugenzi. | The language of the guest. / The guest's language. |
| | enimi | za | Enimi z' abagenzi. | The languages of the guests. / The guests' languages. |
| IX | okutu | kwa | Okutu kw' omulenzi. | The ear of the boy. / The boy's ear. |
| | amatu | ga | Amatu g' omulenzi. | The ears of the boy. / The boy's ears. |
| X | otulo | twa | Tulo tw' omwana. | The sleep of the child. / The child's sleep. |

When saying 'with' a person or 'and' a person the word 'ne' and a possessive ending are combined:

| | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Nange | With me / and I |
| Nawe | With you / and you |
| Naye | With him / and he |
| Naffe | With us / and we |
| Nammwe | With you / and you |
| Nabbo | With them / and them |

A number of nouns for friends or family members include the possessive in a similar way:

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Munnange | My companion | Bannange | My companions |
| Munno | Your companion | Banno | Your companions |
| Munne | His/her companion | Banne | His/her companions |
| Munnaffe | Our companion | Bannaaffe | Our companions |
| Munnammwe | Your companion | Bannammwe | Your companions |
| Munnaabwe | Their companion | Bannaabwe | Their companions |

There is also a special way of saying 'taata wange':

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Kitange | My father | Bakitange | My fathers |
| Kitaawo | Your father | Bakitaawo | Your fathers |
| Kitaawe | His/her father | Bakitaawe | His/her fathers |
| Kitaffe | Our father | Bakitaffe | Our fathers |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Kitammwe | Your father | Bakitammwe | Your fathers |
| Kitaabwe | Their father | Bakitaabwe | Their fathers |

The plural seems to make no sense to somebody with a non-Ugandan or African background, but in Uganda the brothers of the father are considered fathers.

The same applies to 'maama wange':

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Mmange | My mother | Bammange | My mother |
| Nyoko | Your mother | Banyoko | Your mother |
| Nnyina | His/her mother | Bannyina | His/her mother |
| Nyaffe | Our mother | Banyaffe | Our mother |
| Nyammwe | Your mother | Banyammwe | Your mother |
| Nyaabwe | Their mother | Banyaabwe | Their mother |

In Luganda there is a special word for a sibling of the opposite gender. Just like Kitange and Mmange the possessive is included as followed:

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Mwannyinaze | My sister/brother | bannyinaze | My sisters/brothers |
| Mwannyoko | Your sister/brother | bannyoko | Your sisters/brothers |
| Mwannyina | His/her sister/brother | bannyina | His/her sisters/brothers |
| Mwannyinaffe | Our sister/brother | bannyinaffe | Our sisters/brothers |
| Mwannyinammwe | Your sister/brother | bannyinammwe | Your sisters/brothers |
| Mwannyinaabwe | Their sister/brother | bannyinaabwe | Their sisters/brothers |

Also:

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Baze | My husband | Babaze | My husband's brothers |
| Bawo | Your husband | Babawo | Your husband's brothers |
| Bbaawe | His/her husband | Babbaawe | Her husband's brothers |
| Bbaffe | Our husband | Babbaffe | Our husband's brothers |
| Bbammwe | Your husband | Babbammwe | Your husband's brothers |
| Bbaabwe | Their husband | Babbaabwe | Their husband's brothers |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Jjajjange | My grandfather | Bajjajjange | My ancestors |
| Jjajjaawo | Your grandfather | Bajjajjaawo | Your ancestors |
| Jjajjaawe | His/her grandfather | Bajjajjaawe | Her ancestors |
| Jjajjaffe | Our grandfather | Bajjajjaffe | Our ancestors |
| Jjajjammwe | Your grandfather | Bajjajjammwe | Your ancestors |
| Jjajjaabwe | Their grandfather | Bajjajjaabwe | Their ancestors |

7. Adjectives

Adjectives are used to describe a noun. When describing a noun in Luganda the class of the noun has to be taken into consideration. Depending on the class the prefix of the adjective will change as shown as in the table below. Take the adjective 'big' in English. When the noun changes and even when the number changes the adjective remains the same: 'a big man', 'a big house' and 'big men'. In Luganda on the other hand the prefix of the adjective will change every single time depending on the class: 'omusajja munene', 'ennyumba enene', 'abasajja banene'. Thus an Adjective can have multiple different forms and can only be described by dropping the prefixes: -nene (big), -lungi (good), -anvu (long), -gezi (smart), -nafu (lazy).

Special attention:

- For the nouns of Class III and Class VII plural the prefix is n-. Since lots of adjective-stems start with an n there will be no visible prefix: 'enswa nnene', 'embwa nnafu'.
- In Luganda an n cannot be combined with a b or an l (remember: mbala, ndaba, in verbs), in these cases it will change to either an m, l or remain without a visible prefix: 'ensawo mbi', 'embwa nungi'.
- For the nouns of class V the prefix is li-. becomes d: eddobozi dungi (not lirungi), e

| | omuntu (class I) | embuzi (Class III) | eryenvu (Class V) | amenvu (Class V) | olusozi (Class VII) |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| -nene (big) | munene | nene | ddene | manene | lunene |
| -lungi (good) | mulungi | nungi | ddungi | malungi | lulungi |
| -bi (bad) | mubi | mbi | libi | mabi | lubi |
| -yeru (white) | mweru | njeru | lyeru | meru | lweru |
| -kulu (grown, old) | mukulu | nkulu | likulu | makulu | lukulu |
| -tono (small) | mutono | ntono | litono | matono | lutono |
| -to (young) | muto | nto | lito | mato | luto |
| -nafu (lazy) | munafu | nnafu | linafu | manafu | lunafu |
| -nyiiivu (angry) | munyiiivu | nnyiiivu | linyiiivu | manyiiivu | lunyiiivu |
| -sanyufu (happy) | musanyufu | nsanyufu | lisanyufu | masanyufu | lusanyufu |
| -siru (silly, stupid) | musiru | nsiru | lisiru | masiru | lusiru |
| -lalu (mad, insane) | mulalu | nnalu | ddalu | malalu | lulalu |
| -lamu (alive, healthy) | mulamu | nnamu | ddamu | malamu | lulamu |
| -kadde (old) | mukadde | enkadde | likadde | makadde | lukadde |

'To be' or not 'to be'

When describing a noun of the third person singular or any Class no form of 'to be' is added (unlike in English: 'He is tall').

Mulungi.

He/she is good/beautiful.

Omusajja mulungi.
 Omukazi mugezi.
 Timothy mulwadde.
 Abaana basuffu.
 Ekitabo kirungi.

The man is handsome.
 The woman is intelligent.
 Timothy is sick.
 The children are amazing.
 The book is good.

This is not the case though when the adjective does not have an adjective prefix (like mu- for Class I, ki- for Class IV and so on). In these cases the form of 'to be' is needed.

John tali siriyaasi.
 Omusomesa taliwo.
 Ebitabo bino biba bya Isaac.
 Ebyokwerinda biri gulugulu.

John is not serious.
 The teacher is not around.
 The books are Isaac's.
 The security is high (lit.: safe)

Abasajja abawanvu bokka bebazannya basketball
 Yaganye okumpa ensawo enene, naye yampadde eno.
 Lwaki abakazi abakadde basitula ebintu ebinene?

Only the tall men play basketball.
 He refused to give me the big bag but he gave me this one.
 Why do the elderly women carry the big things?

English adjectives as verbs in Luganda

When learning how to form adjectives in Luganda it is important to take into consideration that lots of words that are adjectives in English are verbs in Luganda. Let's take the adjective 'delicious'. While it is perfectly clear that 'delicious' is an adjective in English, in Luganda a verb is used instead: okuwooma, thus 'emmere ewooma'. To understand this is vital when forming sentences because the majority of verb prefixes differ from the prefixes for adjectives. While the adjective prefix of omucungwa, the orange, is 'mu-' (omucungwa munene, a big orange), the verb prefix is 'gu', thus: Omucungwa guwooma, the orange is sweet/delicious. There are a number of English adjectives that are verbs in Luganda, for example:

-wooma to be delicious
-yokya to be hot
-kaluba to be hard
-zitowa to be heavy
-wewuka to be light
-nyogoga to be cold
-gonda to be soft
-mala to be enough
-balagala to be spicy/hot
-soboka to be possible

-ddugala to be dirty
-tukula to be clean

Fenne awooma. The jackfruit is delicious.
Amazzi gokya. The water is hot.
Olubaawo lukaluba. The board is hard.
Ejinja lizitowa. The stone is heavy.
Mpewuka. I'm light.
Omuzira gunyogoga. Snow is cold.
Enviri zigonda. The hair is soft.
Emmere emala. The food is enough.
Kamulali abalagala. Chilly is hot.
Kisoboka. It is possible.
Tekisoboka. It is not possible.
Omwana addugala. The child is dirty.
Ekiibiina kitukula. The classroom is clean.

The negation of adjectives

This information is also very important for forming the negative. When talking about Class I simply forming the negation of the verb 'to be' is sufficient: 'Siri munafu.'; 'Toli mulungi.'; 'Tetuli babi.'. As we have learned when studying the verbs and especially the verb 'to be', the third person singular in Luganda does not require an extra verb ('Patience mugezi', not 'Patience ali mugezi'). While we would say 'the man is not good', 'the student is not smart', 'the dog is not big' in English, in Luganda a simple 'si' can be placed in front of the adjective: 'omusajja si mulungi', 'omuyizi si mugezi', 'omusumesa si mutufu' 'caayi si mulungi' 'engatto si nene' 'eryenvu si dene'. When the adjective is expressed through a verb, the normal way of negating a verb is used: Emmere tewooma, caayi tayokya, ovaceddo takulwa, emicungwa tegikalubwa, enviri tezigonda, etc.

Examples:

| | |
|--|---|
| Ovaceddo ono munene, naye si mulungi. | This avocado is big but not good. |
| Tompa amenvu agatengedde! | Don't give me the bananas that are not ripe! |
| Nali nzitowa/munene nnyo, naye sikyazitowa/sikyali munene. | I used to be very heavy, but I'm not heavy anymore. |
| Toli mugezi naye nange siri mugezi. | You are not smart but I am not smart either. |
| Abayizi si banafu, basuffu. | The students are not lazy, they are awesome. |

'To be of'

Sometimes nouns may be described by using the English equivalent of 'to be of'. When for example saying something or someone is special, the literal translation would be 'to be of difference': Omuwala wa njawulo. A true adjective would require you to use the prefix mu, a verb would require an a or a ya/ye. In this case you need to know the impersonal possessive of each class and place it in front of the noun. The negative of this construct is formed by adding si to the 'of': omuwala si wa njawulo.

Examples:

- Kya **njawulo** (lit.: of difference) → 'special', 'different'

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Oli wa njawulo. | You're special. |
| Kino ekitabo kya njawulo. | This book is special. |
| Lilian omuwala wa njawulo. | Lillian is a special girl. |
| Omupiira guno si gwa njawulo. | This football is not special. |

- Kya **bulijjo** (lit.: of regularity) → 'normal', 'regular'

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Omuwala wa bulijjo | The girl is normal / a normal girl. |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|

Embuzi eno ya bulijjo.
 Embizi zino si za bulijjo.
 Abalenzi bano ba bulijjo.

This goat is normal.
 These pigs are not normal.
 These boys are normal.

- Kya **mugaso** (lit.: of importance) → 'important':

Oli wa mugaso
 Ekirowoozo kyo kya mugaso
 gyendi.

You're important.
 Your opinion is important to me.

Emicungwa gya mugaso mu
 mubiri

Oranges are nutritious (important in the body)

Ekikajjo si kya mugaso mu mubiri

Sugarcane is not nutritious (important in the body)

- Kya **ddala** (lit.: of reality) → 'actual', 'real'

Ekyo ekitabwa kya ddala
 Essimu ya ddala.

This is an actual book.
 The actual phone. / The phone is real. (not to be confused with '-lala' (other): essimu endala)

Omuntu wa ddala.
 Omupiira guno gwa ddala.

The actual person. / The person is real.
 This is a real football.

More examples:

| | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| kya bbeeyi | → | expensive ('of price') |
| kya buseere | → | expensive ('of overcharging') |
| kya layisi | → | cheap ('of cheapness') |
| kya bulyomu | → | public ('of every person') |
| kya buwangwa | → | traditional ('of tribal/country things') |
| kya makulu | → | important ('of significance') |
| kya bulabe | → | dangerous ('of danger') |
| kya ssanyu | → | pleasant ('of happiness') |

| Class | Noun | Adjective -lungi | Adjective -mpi | Adjective negative -bi | 'to be of' Kya mugaso | Verb used as an adjective |
|-------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| I | omuntu | mulungi | mumpi | si mubi | wa mugaso | omuntu azitowa |
| | abantu | balungi | bampi | si babi | ba mugaso | abantu bazitowa |
| II | omucungwa | mulungi | mumpi | si mubi | gwa mugaso | omucungwa guwooma |
| | emicungwa | mirungi | mimpi | si mibi | gya mugaso | emicungwa giwooma |
| III | engatto | nungi | mpi | si mbi | ya mugaso | ensawo ezitowa |
| | engatto | nungi | mpi | si mbi | za mugaso | ensawo zizitowa |
| IV | ekitabo | kirungi | kimpi | si kibi | kya mugaso | ekitabo kizitowa |
| | ebitabo | birungi | bimpi | si bibi | bya mugaso | ebitabo bizitowa |
| V | eryenvu | dungi | limpi | si libi | lya mugaso | eryenvu lyengedde |
| | amenvu | malungi | mampi | si mbi | ga mugaso | amenvu gagengedde |
| VI | akaana | kalungi | kampi | si kabi | ka mugaso | akaana kazitowa |
| | obwana | bulungi | bumpi | si bubi | bwa mugaso | obwana buzitowa |
| VII | oluviiri | lulungi | lumpi | si lubi | lwa mugaso | oluviiri lugonda |
| | enviiri | nungi | nyimpi | si mbi | za mugaso | enviiri zigonda |
| IX | okutu | kulungi | kumpi | si kubi | kwa mugaso | okutu kwange kunnuma |
| | amatu | malungi | mampi | si mabi | ga mugaso | amatu gange gannuma |
| X | otulo | tulungi | tumpi | si tubi | twa mugaso | otulo tunnuma |

8. Intensification and Comparison of Adjectives/Adverbs

Unlike in most European and Indo-Germanic languages, there is no simple rule as to comparing adjectives or adverbs in Luganda. The general rule for these languages is to add a suffix to an adjective:

| | | | | |
|----------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| English: | fast | faster | the fastest | (-, -er, -est) |
| German: | schnell | schneller | am schnellsten | (-, -er, -sten) |
| Persian: | sari | saritar | Saritarin | (-, -tar, -tarin) |

In Luganda on the other hand there are five ways of expressing the comparative mostly by using the verb 'okusinga', which is difficult for native speakers of European languages to get used to.

The intensification

To express the English equivalent of the comparison –er, Luganda simply uses the word ‘nnyo’, which can be translated as ‘very’:

Adduka nnyo.
Batandise okudduka mangu nnyo.

He runs faster (lit.: He runs a lot)
They started running faster.

The comparative

In comparison either the verb ‘okusinga’ may be used, which can be translated as ‘to exceed’ or the preposition ‘ku’. There are several ways of expressing a comparison:

1. Verb + ‘exceeding’

In this version the verb is being conjugated while ‘okusinga’ remains the same and takes in the object prefix it is compared to.

| | |
|--|---|
| Nziruka (oku) <u>kusinga</u> . | I run faster than you. (lit.: I run exceeding you.) |
| Martin adduka okusinga Michael. | Martin runs faster than Michael. (lit.: Martin runs exceeding Michael.) |
| Amanyi oluzungu okusinga oluganda. | She knows English better than Luganda. (lit.: She knows English exceeding Luganda.) |
| Amanyi olugermanyi okun<u>s</u>inga . | She knows German better than me. (lit.: She knows German exceeding me.) |
| Muvuga mpola okut<u>u</u>singa . | You guys drive more slowly than we do. (lit.: You drive slow exceeding us.) |

This version is also used for the adjectives that are verbs in Luganda:

| | |
|---|---|
| Mary azitowa okun<u>s</u>inga . | Mary is heavier than me (lit.: Mary is heavy exceeding me) |
| Caayi ono ayokya okusinga caayi oyo. | This tea is hotter than that one. (lit.: This tea is hot exceeding that tea.) |
| Muzira gunyogoga okusinga amazzi. | Snow is colder than water. (lit.: Snow is cold exceeding water) |

2. Adjective + ‘exceeding’

For this version the adjective has, as always, to be adjusted to the noun while ‘okusinga’ remains unconjugated.

Tatiana mugezi **okusinga**.

Munafu (**oku**)**kusinga**.

Abasajja balwadde (**oku**)**basinga**.

Omutima gwo gunene **okusinga** gwange.

Ekitabo ekyo kyamugaso **okusinga** kino.

Tatiana is smarter than me. (lit.: Tatiana is smart exceeding me.)

He is lazier than you. (lit.: He is lazy exceeding you.)

The men are sicker than you (guys) are. (lit.: The men are sick exceeding you.)

Your heart is bigger than mine. (lit.: Your hard is big exceeding mine.)

This book is more important than that one. (lit.: This book is of importance exceeding that one.)

3. Exceed + verb

In this case the verb 'okusinga' is conjugated and takes in the object prefix while the other verb remains unconjugated.

Patience **ansinga** okudduka.

Embuzi **zisinga** enkoko okuwooma.

Muli **bamusinga** okubala.

Abakazi **batusinga** okweetaga buyambi.

Patience runs faster than me (lit.: Patience exceeds me in running)

Goats are tastier than chicken. (lit.: Goats exceed chicken in being tasty)

You (guys) are better at counting than him. (lit.: You exceed him in counting)

The women need more help than we do. (lit.: The women exceed us in needing help.)

This version can also be used for the adjectives that are verbs in Luganda:

Matooke **gasinga** kuwooma kawunga.

Nkusinga okwewuka.

Matooke is more delicious than posho. (lit.: Matooke exceeds posho in being delicious.)

I'm lighter than you. (lit.: I exceed you in being light)

4. Exceed + noun

In this case the verb to exceed is conjugated and takes in the compared object infix while the subject of comparison is expressed through a noun, most of the time this noun belongs to Class VIII plural and derives from an adjective.

Patience **asinga** Martin obukulu.

Patience **amusinga** obukulu.

Ekitabo kyange **kisinga** amakulu ekikyoo.

(Patience is older than Martin – Patience exceeds Martin in age.)

(Patience is older than him – Patience exceeds him in age.)

My book is more important than yours.

Oluganda **lusinga** oluzungu obuzibu.

Tati **ansinga** amagezi.

Ggwe **asingayo** obukulu mu famire?

Luganda is more difficult than English. (lit.: Luganda exceeds English in difficulty.)

Tatiana is more intelligent than me. (lit.: Tatiana exceeds me in intelligence)

Are you the oldest in the family? (lit.: Are you the one who exceeds in age in the family?)

5. 'ku'

Oli mukulu kunze.

Omuti mukulu ku ggwe.

Martin muto ku Patience.

Ndi mukulu kuye.

Emiti mikulu kuffe.

Abasajja bakulu kumwe.

Abakazi bano bakulu kubbo.

You are older than me.

The tree is older than you.

Martin is younger than Patience.

I'm older than him.

The trees are older than us.

The men are older than you guys.

These women are older than them.

There is another quite similar construction when referring to age: Anne muto wa Peter. In this case 'muto' / 'mukulu' is not an adjective, but the noun: 'younger sibling' / 'older sibling' and 'wa' is the preposition 'of'. Thus 'ono muto wa Peter' means 'Anne is the younger sibling of Peter / Peter's younger sibling'.

Examples:

Ono muto waffe.

Mukulu wo ali ludda wa?

Mbadde njagala kulaba omuto wo.

This one is our youngest/younger sibling.

Where is your older sibling?

I wanted to see your younger sibling.

Full table comparison

| | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Verb + okusinga | Nziruka (oku) <u>kusinga</u> | I run faster than you | I run exceeding you. |
| 2. | Adjective + okusinga | Ndi mulungi (oku) <u>musinga</u> . | I'm prettier than him/her. | I am pretty exceeding him/her. |
| 3. | Okusinga (conjugated) + verb | Nkusinga okudduka. | I run faster than you. | I exceed you in running. |
| 4. | Okusinga (conjugated) + noun | Mbasinga obulungi. | I'm prettier than you (guys) / them. | I exceed them in beauty. |
| 5. | Adjective + ku | Ndi mukulu ku ggwe. | I'm older than you | |

Favorites + Okusinga

'Okusinga' is also used for talking about 'favorites':

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Emmere ki esinga kuwoomera? | What's your favorite food? (lit.: What food exceeds in being sweet to you?) |
| Emmere eno esinga kumpoomera. | This food is my favorite food. (lit.: This food exceeds in being sweet to me.) |
| Osinga kuwoomerwa emmere ki? | What's your favorite food? (lit.: What food do you exceed in being delighted by?) |
| Nsinga kuwoomerwa matooke n'enkoko. | My favorite food is matooke and chicken. (lit.: I exceed in being delighted by matooke and chicken.) |
| Osinga kwagala kulya ki? | What is your favorite food? (lit.: What do you exceed in loving to eat?) |
| Omuzannyo ki gusinga kunyumirira? | What's your favorite game? (lit.: What game exceeds in being enjoyable to you?) |
| Musinga kwagala kusoma ki? | What is your favorite subject? (lit.: What do you (guys) exceed in loving to read?) |

'To prefer'

| | |
|---|---|
| Njagala okusoma ebitabo okusinga kulaba ttiivi. | I prefer reading books to watching TV. (lit.: I like reading books exceeding watching TV) |
| Oyagala okugenda okusinga okusigala? | Do you prefer going out to staying? (Do you like going exceeding staying?) |
| Ayagala amenvu okusinga emiyembe. | He prefers bananas over mangos. (lit.: He likes bananas exceeding mangos) |
| Osinga kwagala ki? | What's your preference? (lit.: What do you exceed in liking?) |
| Sirina kye nsinga kwagala. | I don't have a preference. (lit.: I don't have anything that I exceed in liking.) |

The superlative

For the superlative the past tense of okusinga (modified stem: sinze) might be used:

| | |
|---|---|
| Gw'asinga! | You're the best! (lit.: you are the one exceeding) |
| Asinga omutindo | Best quality (lit.: the one exceeding in quality) |
| Abayizi abasinga bokka bagenda okuyingira yunivasite. | Only the best students are going to get into university. (lit.: the students who exceed only are going to enter university) |
| Y'asinga okudduka. | She is the best runner. (lit.: she is the one exceeding in running) |
| Omusajja ono y'asinze mu basatu. | This man is the best out of the three. |
| Luno lwe lunaku olusinze mu bulamu bwange. | This day is the best day in my life. |
| Ani asinga? | Who is the best? |

9. Adverbs

Adverbs in Luganda are far rarer than in most other languages. They are mostly expressed through adjectives or particles.

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| bubi | = | badly | Oyimba bubi. | You sing badly. |
| bulungi | = | well | Alabika bulungi. | He looks well. |
| mpola | = | Slowly | Tuvuga mpola. | We are driving slowly. |
| mangu | = | quickly | Ogenze mangu. | You left quickly. |

To express the word 'how' the class and number of the subject have to be taken into consideration:

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ntya | Ndabika ntya? | How do I look? |
| Otya | Oli otya? | How are you? |
| Atya | Atambula atya? | How is he walking? |
| tutya | Tukola tutya? | What (how) should we do? |
| mutya | Mugamba mutya? | How are you (lit.: saying)? |
| batya | Basoma batya? | How are they studying? |
| bitya (class IV) | Bitambula bitya? | How are things going? |
| gitya (class II) | Gitambula gitya? | How is (work) going? |
| zitya (class III) | Zirya zitya? | How are they (e.g. chicken) eating? |

The response too depends on the subject:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------|
| bwe nti | } | like this | Bwe ntyo | } | Like that |
| Bw'oti | | Botyo | | | |
| Bw'ati | | Bw'atya | | | |
| Bwe tuti | | Bwe tutyo | | | |
| Bwe muti | | Bwe mutyo | | | |
| Bwe bati | | Bwe batyo | | | |
| Bwe biti (Class IV) | | Bwe bityo (Class IV) | | | |
| Bwe biti (Class II) | Bwe bityo (Class II) | | | | |
| Bwe ziti (Class III) | Bwe zityo (Class III) | | | | |

To express that somebody is doing something on his or her own or it is only this person –kka is used:

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Nzekka | Only me | Mbeera nzekka | I live alone. |
| Wekka | Only you | Okola wekka? | Do you work on your own? |
| Yekka | Only he/she | | |

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Ffekka | Only we |
| Mmwekka | Only you |
| Bokka | Only they |

-nna (together)

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Ffenna | All of us |
| Bonna | All of them |

-mbi (the two of)

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Ffembi | The two of us |
| Bombi | The two of them |

More adverbs:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Buli | Every |
| Buli muntu | Everybody |
| Buli omu | everybody |
| Buliwamu | Everywhere |
| Buli kimu | Everything |
| Tewali | Nothing/nobody |

10. Objects

Specifically mentioned object

When referring to a specifically mentioned object, the word that makes up the object does not undergo changes and is placed right behind the verb. For example 'The man sees the woman' is 'Omusajja alaba omukazi'.

Examples:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Nasomye ekitabo jjo e kiro. | I read the book last night. |
| Olabye omuwala mu taxi? | Did you see the girl in the taxi? |
| Tayagala makaloni ga wooteri ono. | He doesn't like the pasta of this restaurant. |
| Sirya ensenene. | I don't eat grasshoppers. |
| Balabye firimu munju. | They watched a movie in the house. |
| Kankuwe ekirabo kino. | Let me give you this present. |

Double

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Awadde omwala ekirabo. | He gave the girl a present. |
| Otunzizza omusajja ebibajje? | Did you sell the furniture to the man? |
| Yabuulidde omukazi ekyama. | I told the woman a secret. |

The previously mentioned (anaphoric) object

In English and in most other languages even the undefined object remains separate from the verb. For example, you could say: 'I see the man, do you see him?' In Luganda on the other hand, the previously mentioned object is placed inside the verb as a prefix right after the time indicator. Since the time indicator is sometimes missing (present tense or command), it might be placed right behind the personal indicator: 'Ndaba omusajja, **omulaba?**' The -mu- is referring to the musajja, when we change the object to another class, the object-syllable will change as well: 'Ndaba omucungwa, **ogulaba?**' 'Ndaba ekitabo, **okiraba?**'

| Class | Example | Previously mentioned Object |
|-------|---------|-----------------------------|
| I | Omuntu | omulabye? |
| | Abantu | obalabye? |
| II | Omutima | ogulabye? |
| | Emitima | ogirabye? |
| III | Engatto | ogirabye |
| | Engatto | ozirabye? |
| IV | Ekitabo | okirabye? |
| | Ebitabo | obirabye? |
| V | Erinnya | orimanyi? |
| | Amanya | ogamanyi? |
| VI | Akaana | okalabye? |
| | Obwana | obulabye? |
| VII | Olulimi | olumanyi? |
| | Enimi | ozimanyi? |
| IX | Okutu | okulaba? |
| | Amatu | ogalabye? |

Examples:

Sometimes the object is stated and yet the unspecified prefix is added.

Oluganda olumanyi?
Omusajja ono tebamumanyi.
Ekitabo kino takyaagala.

Do you know Luganda?
They don't know this man
He doesn't like this book.

Omanyi oluganda?
Tebamanyi omusajja ono.
Tayagala ekitabo kino.

If two objects are given, the direct object is stated before the indirect one, exactly the opposite way it is done when both objects are stated.

Nkimuwadde.
Katonda **yamu**mpa.
Yakitusuubizizza.

I gave **it** to **him**.
God gave **him** to **me**.
He promised **it** to **us**.

For some verbs a suffix has to be added in order to express the English 'for' (see chapter 25). When talking about cooking one can't say 'nkufumba' (which would mean 'I cook you'), but instead one has to say 'nkufumbira' which means 'I cook for you'. When the object is specifically mentioned no object

prefix is needed but the person is placed right behind the verb with the prepositional suffix while the other object is placed behind the first object:

Nfumbira mukyala wange emmere.
Tagulira omwana we keeki.
Basambira eggwanga lyabwe mupiira.

I cook the food for my wife.
He doesn't buy his child cake.
They play football for their country.

When both objects are unspecified:

Ngukufumbira. (muceere)
Olingulira? (eryenvu)
Bagibaleetera. (embuzi)

I'm cooking it (the rice) *for you.*
Do you buy it (the banana) *for me?*
They bring it (the goat) *to them.*

11. Questions

In Luganda, a question without a question participle is only a question due to the intonation, just like in Spanish or Persian the word order doesn't change.

Word order changes:

English: He plays football. → Does he play football?
German: Er spielt Fußball. → Spielt er Fußball?

Word order doesn't change, but intonation:

Spanish: Antonio juega el fútbol. → Antonio juega el fútbol?
Persian: Futbal bazi mikonad. → Futbal bazi mikonad?
Luganda: Asamba mupiira. → Asamba mupiira?

Examples:

| Statement | English | Question | English |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Omanyi oluganda. | You know Luganda. | Omanyi oluganda? | Do you know Luganda? |
| Anaagenda mu katale enkya. | He is going to the market tomorrow. | Anaagenda mu katale enkya? | Is he going to the market tomorrow? |
| Emmere ewooma. | The food is delicious. | Emmere ewooma? | Is the food delicious? |
| Enkuba etonnya. | It is raining. | Enkuba etonnya? | Is it raining? |

Question participles

The question participle in Luganda is most often placed at the end of the sentences, but not always (see 'who').

Where – wa?

Ova wa?
Olaga wa?
Mumusanze wa?

Akatale kali ludda wa?
Eddwaliro liri ludda wa?

Where are you from?
Where are you going?
Where did you guys find/meet him (as in: where did you stumble upon him?)
Where is the market?
Where is the hospital?

When – ddi?

Watuuka wano ddi?
Ogenda okukomawo ddi?
Omuzannyo gutandika ddi?

When did you get here?
When are you coming back?
When is the match starting?

Who – Ani

In English the 'who' is always the object of a sentence, otherwise it would turn into a 'whom' or 'whose'. In Luganda no such difference is manifested in the word itself, it remains 'ani', but the difference can be assessed in the word order: If the 'ani' is the subject of the sentence it is placed at the beginning of the sentences (except for personal pronouns which are placed in front), if it is the object it is usually placed at the end.

On'ani?
Gw'ani?
Ani amanyi ekyokuddamu?
Ani abeera wano?
Ani yalidde eryenvu?
Ani agenda kunyamba ko?
Ono ani ansumbuwa?

Who is this?
Who are you?
Who knows the answer?
Who lives here?
Who ate the banana?
Who is going to help me?
Who is this person that is disturbing me?

Whom – Ani / N'ani

Obeera n'ani?
Okibuulidde ani?
Ofumbira ani?
Olabye abadde ayogera n'ani?

Whom do you stay with?
Whom did you tell this?
Whom are you cooking for?
Did you see whom he talked to?

Whose? – Ky'ani?

Ompadde ekitabo ky'ani?
Omanyi ensawo eno y'ani?
Neerabidde essowani eno y'ani.

Whose book did you give me?
Do you know whose bag this is?
I forgot whose plate this is.

How - -tya?

When how is referring to a verb the how has to be adjusted so the verb-prefix and the prefix of the how (-nty) match:

Ofumba otya matooke?
Otunda otya amenvu?

Bakitya batya?

Ndabika ntya?
Embeera y'obudde eri etya?
Olunaku lutambula lutya?
Mikwano gyo giri gitya?

How do you cook matooke?
For how much do you sell bananas? (lit.:
How do you sell bananas?)
What is this called? (lit.: How do they call
this? The how is referring to the act of calling
and since it is performed by many the third
person plural prefix is used)
How do I look?
How is the weather?
How is the day going?
How are your friends?

How + adjective – enkana / -tya

Ennyumba y'enkana etya?
Oluguudo lwanvu lutya?
Ekibuga kinene kitya?

How big is the house?
How long is the road?
How big is the town?

How long? – Bbanga ki?

When talking about a period of time in Luganda the term for period, interval or timeframe is used:
Ebbanga.

Omaze wo bbanga ki?
Ogenda kumala wo bbanga ki?
Ebula bbanga ki Martin ajje.
Kitwala bbanga ki okuva wano paka jjinja.

How long have you been around for? (lit.: What
period of time have you finished around here?)
How long will you stay for? (lit.: What period of
time are you going to terminate here?)
How long will it take until Martin gets here?
(lit.: What period of time is remaining until
Martin comes?)
How long does it take to get from here to Jinja?

How often – emirundi emeka?

When talking about how often something happens in Luganda you literally say “how many times”,
even though not a precise answer is expected.

Jjaja wo omukyalira emirundi emeka?
Onoojja emirundi emeka e Kampala?

How often do you visit your grandmother?
How often will you be coming to Kampala?

How far – Olwanvu ki?

‘How far’ in Luganda is expressed through the expression ‘what distance’.

Okuva e Makerere okutuuka Mengo waliyo
lwanvu ki?

How far is Makerere from
Mengo? (lit.: Coming from
Makerere reaching Mengo what
distance is there?)

How much/ how many? - Meka

Muli bameka?
Ssente mmeka?

How many (people) are you?
How much money do you
charge? (lit.: How much
money?)

Oyagala obutunda bumeka?

How many passion fruits do you
want?

Why – (Ku)lwaki?

Lwaki togenze mukyaalo?
Lwaki oyiga oluganda?
Omanyi lwaki agenze?

Why didn't you go to the village?
Why do you learn Luganda?
Do you know why she left?

What – Ki/Kiki?

Ekyo kiki?
Kiki ekikuluma?
Ogambye ki?
Ffenne kye kiki?
Ekyo kitegeeza ki?
Essowani ki gy'oyagala?

What is that?
What are you suffering from?
What did you say?
What is a jackfruit?
What does that mean?
Which plate do you want?

Relative pronouns

Present tense Positive

In Luganda there are two ways of expressing relative pronouns like ‘who’ or ‘that’. The most common way is to simply continue the sentence:

Omusajja anyamba ennyo agenze.

The man who helps me a lot left. (lit.: The man
helps me a lot left)

Another way is to insert the word ‘gwe’:

Omusajja gwe anyamba ennyo agenze.

The man who helps me a lot left.

If the verb prefix starts with a consonant the respective vowel has to be added:

Abasajja abanyamba ennyo bagenze.

The men who help me a lot left.

Examples:

Omuwubuka agambibwa okubba embuzi bamukubye.

Omanyi omuwala ayimba?

Abakazi abalina ssente nyingi bagula ebiteeteyi bino.

They beat the teenager who is said (suspected) to have stolen a goat.

Do you know the girl who is singing?

Women who have a lot of money buy these dresses.

Present tense negative

Muganda wange omuntu atagaba.

Tompa ovaceddo agateyongedde.

Abayizi abatakola bulungi tebayingira essomero lino.

My sister/brother is a person who doesn't share.

Don't give me the avocados that are not ripe.

The students who did not perform well do not get into this school.

Past tense

For the past tense an extra vowel is placed before the verb:

Omukazi yafumba emmere.

The woman cooked food.

Omukazi eyafumba emmere agenze.

The woman who cooked food left.

Examples:

Omanyi omusajja eyayimbye ku mbaga?

Omusajja eyampadde ebisumuluzo yagenze. Benjamin eyafunnye 27 ayagala kusomera e Buddo SS.

Abasajja abagambiddwa okubba emmotoka batwaddwa ku police.

Do you know the man who sang at the wedding?

The man who gave me the keys left.

Benjamin who got a 27 wants to study at Buddo SS.

The men who are said (suspected) to have stolen a car have been taken to the police.

'Gye' and 'we' are used as a relative 'where':

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| gyendi | (That's) where I am |
| gyoli | (That's) where you are |
| gyali | (That's) where he/she is |
| gyetuli | (That's) where we are |
| gyemuli | (That's) where you are |
| gyebali | (That's) where they are |

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| gyembeera | (That's) where I live |
| gyobeera | (That's) where you live |
| gyabeera | (That's) where he/she lives |
| gyetubeera | (That's) where we live |
| gyemubeera | (That's) where you live |
| gyebabeera | (That's) where they live |

Examples:

‘Mwami Mukwaya gyali?’ – ‘Gyali’
 ‘Njagala kugenda Kasubi.’ – ‘Gy’obeera?’ - ‘Nedda,
 gye nkola.’
 Sirina we nsula ne gye mbadde nsula bangobye.

Tuula w’oyagala / Tuula gy’oyagala.

Is Mr. Mukwaya there? – ‘He is there.’
 ‘I want to go to Kasubi.’ - ‘Is that where you
 live?’ - ‘No, it’s where I work.’
 I don’t have anywhere to sleep and they
 chased me away from where I had been
 sleeping.
 Sit where you want.

Interrogative particle ‘whether’ – ‘oba’

Simanyi **oba** ajja.
 Tagambye **oba** bagenze.
 Omanyi **oba** alya kawunga?

I don’t know whether he is coming or not.
 He didn’t say whether they had left.
 Do you know whether he eats Posho?

| Luganda | English | Example | Translation |
|------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| (Ku)lwaki? | Why? | Lwaki togenda mukatale? | Why don’t you go to the market? |
| Ddi? | When? | Ogenda okukomawo ddi? | When are you coming back? |
| Wa? | Where? | Ova wa? | Where do you come from? |
| Ani? | Who? | Ani akugambye? | Who told you? |
| N’ani? /Ani? | Whom? | Obeera n’ani? | Whom do stay with? |
| Ky’ani? | Whose | Essowaani eno y’ani? | Whose plate is that? |
| Ki? | What? | Ogambye ki? | What did you say? |
| Ku saawa meka? | What time? | Tusisinkana ku saawa meka? | When are we meeting? |
| Ki? | Which? | Oyagala ssowaani ki? | Which plate would you like? |
| -tya? | How? | Atambula atya? | How does he walk? |
| Banga ki? | How long? | Omazze wo banga ki? | How long have you been here for? |
| (-)Mmekaka? | How many / much? | Abantu bameka bagenda kujja? | How many people are going to come? |
| Emirundi emeka? | How often? | Emirundi emeka ogenda mu kibuga? | How often do you go to town? |
| Olwanvu ki? | How far? | Okuva e Makerere okutuuka Mengo waliyo lwanvu ki? | How far is Makerere from Mengo? |

12. Auxiliary Verbs

Okuba

Bw'oba olina obudde, jangu onyambe.

If you happen to have time, come and help me.

Bwe baba baasoma ebyafayo okufunna emirimu kyangu.

If they happen to have studied history getting a job is easy.

Bwe mba sirina ssente, ntunda amaka gange.

If I happen not to have money, I should sell my house

Bw'oba olina kye weemulugunya, mwattu kuba ku nnamba eno.

If you happen to have something to complain about, please call this number.

okugenda

,okugenda' on its own means ,to go', as an auxiliary it expresses that something is going to happen in the future similar to 'going to' in English. Okugenda is to be conjugated while the second verb is placed right after in its infinite form. Note that in informal language the 'oku' of the infinitive is often dropped

Ng'enda (oku)soma ekitabo kino.

I'm going to read this book.

Ogenda kumpa omupiira?

Are you going to give me the football?

Agenda (oku)komawo mangu.

He is going to come back soon.

Tetugenda (oku)kikola.

We are not going to do that.

Okujja

'okujja' on its own means 'to come'. The auxiliary is used just like 'okugenda'.

Njja kuwa ebifaananyi byaffe.

I will give you the pictures of us.

Mujja kujja?

Will you guys come?

Bajja (oku)kyeerabira.

They will forget it.

Sijja (oku)laba firimu eno.

I'm not going to watch this movie.

Okulina

'okulina' on its own means 'to have'. As an auxiliary it is used as 'to have to' or 'must'. Notice that this is far less often used than in English.

Nina kugenda kati kati.

I have to go right now.

Mulina kubasasula.

You (guys) have to pay them.

Tulina okumugamba nti tetugenda kujja.

We have to tell her that we are not going to come.

Okutera

1.) Present tense → ,usually'

Ntera okugenda mu kibuga.

I usually go to town.

Abaganda batera okulya matooke.

Baganda usually eat matooke.

Ente zitera okubeerawo.

The cows are usually here..

2.) Future → ,about to‘

Nnaatera okugenda.
Akaana kanaatera kuyimirira.
Abayizi banaatera okuwandiika ebigezo.
Enkoko zinaatera okulya.

I'm about to go.
The baby is about to (be able to) stand.
The students are about to write an exam.
The chicken are about to eat.

Okuyinza

Nyinza (oku)kufumbira emmere enkya.
Ayinza komawo mu eddakiika taano.
Bayinza okwerabira.

I might cook food for you tomorrow.
He might come back in five minutes.
They might forget.

13. Conjunctions

| Luganda | English | Example | Translation |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| ne | and | Azannya ne Patience ne Mark. | He is playing with Patience and Mark. |
| ate | and, in addition | Fumba emmere ate teeka mu kamulali. | Cook the food and add some chili. |
| era | and, in addition, also, too | Alya era nga anyway. | He eats as he drinks. |
| naye | but | Oluganda olulimi lulungi naye si lwangu. | Luganda is a nice language but it is not easy. |
| kyokka | but, just | | |
| kubanga | because | Sirya enanaansi kubanga sizagala. | I don't eat pineapples because I don't like them |
| n'olwekyo | therefore | Yafunna akabenje n'olwekyo atidde okuvuga. | She was in an accident therefore she fears driving. |
| nga | When, while | Mbadde nfumba nga ankubira ku simmu. | I was cooking when he called me. |
| | as though/like | Olya nga embizi. | You eat like a pig |
| | never | Siryangako mbizi. | I have never eaten pork. |
| | always, for ever | Mulabiriranga. | I always take care of her. |
| | expression of surprise/admiration | Nga mulungi! | Like, he is handsome. |
| buli lwe | whenever | Buli lw'andaba ambuza. | Whenever he sees me he greets me. |
| wabula | while, but | Anjagala wabula simwagala. | He loves me but I don't love him. |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---|--|
| oluvannyuma (lwe) | after | Genda oluvannyuma okomewo. | Go and come back after. |
| newankubadde or newaakubadde | although | Newankubadde sakoze bingi nkooye. | Although I didn't do much I'm tired. |
| wadde | though, although | Mwagala wadde munene. | I love him although he is fat. |
| paka/okutuuka | until | Mwagale paka bukadde. | Love him until old age. |
| okuva lwe | ever since | Okuva lwe yatandika okusoma ebitabo akola bulungi mu class. | Ever since he started reading books he is doing well in class. |
| kasita | as long as | Kasita gabanga amazzi gokka. | As long as it's just water. |

14. The very near Past

The very near past is used for events that happened approximately within the last hour. In order to form the very near past a modified stem is used while the person prefixes remain. Fortunately and unlike in most languages like German, Persian or English, there are certain rules which are to follow in order to modify the stem and only a few exceptions. The last syllabus of the stem determines this modification:

The modified stems:

- 1) a) When the stem ends in –ba, –ma, –pa, or –na the last a becomes –ye:

| | | | | | |
|--------|-------------|---|----------------|---------|------------------------|
| -samba | To play | → | -sambye | nsambye | I played |
| -fumba | To cook | → | -fumbye | nfumbye | I cooked |
| -nyuma | To be smart | → | -nyumye | nnyumye | I'm smart ¹ |
| -vuma | To abuse | → | -vumye | nvumye | I abused |
| -funna | To get | → | -funnye | nfunnye | I got it |
| -gana | To refuse | → | -ganye | Ng'anye | I refused |

- b) When the stem ends in –wa or –ya this last syllabus becomes –ye:

| | | | | | |
|----------|----------|---|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| -kyaawa | To hate | → | -kyaaye | nkukyaye | I hate ² you |
| -keerewa | To delay | → | -keereye | nkeereye | I'm late ³ |
| -tonnya | To rain | → | -tonnye | Enkuba etonye | It rained |

¹ Used in it's past tense to express the present

² See one above

³ See above

- 2) When the stem ends in –la or –ra and consists of more than four letters the –la or –ra changes to –dde (and a long vowel before the –la or –ra short)

| | | | | | |
|----------|---------------|---|------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| -tambula | To walk | → | -tambudde | ntambudde | I walked |
| -swala | To be ashamed | → | -swadde | nswadde | I'm ashamed |
| -tegeera | To understand | → | -tegedde | nkitegedde | I understand ⁴ it |
| -keera | To be early | → | -kedde | nkedde | I'm early |

- 3) When the stem ends in –da, –ga, –ja or when the stem ends in –la and consists of four letters these prefixes change to –ze

| | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---|---------------|---------|---------------------|
| -genda | To go | → | -genze | Ng'enze | I'm going (I'm off) |
| -kola | To do | → | -koze | nkoze | I made |
| -saaga | To joke | → | -saaze | nsaaze | I was joking |

- 4) When the stem ends in –sa or –za and before that a long vowel can be found the a changes to –izza.

| | | | | | |
|----------|---------------|---|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| -sanyusa | To make happy | → | -sanyusizza | onsanyusizza | You made me happy |
| -buuza | To ask | → | -buuzizza | mbuuzizza | I asked |

Exceptions (mainly monosyllabic verbs):

| <u>Stem</u> | <u>Meaning</u> | | <u>Modified stem</u> | <u>1. Person Sg.</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| -ba | To be | → | -badde | mbadde |
| -fa | To die | → | -fudde | nfudde |
| -ggwa | To come to an end | → | -wedde | mpedde |
| -gwa | To fall | → | -gudde | ngudde |
| -kwata | To touch, catch | → | -kutte | nkutte |
| -lwa | To delay | → | -ludde | ndudde |
| -lya | To eat | → | -lidde | ndidde |
| -manya | To know | → | -manyi | manyi |
| -nywa | To drink | → | -nywedde | nywedde |

⁴ See above

| | | | | |
|--------|---------------|---|---------------|--------|
| -teeka | To put, place | → | -tadde | ntadde |
| -twala | To take | → | -tutte | ntutte |
| -tya | To fear | → | -tidde | ntidde |
| -va | To come | → | -vudde | nvudde |
| -wa | To give | → | -wadde | mpadde |

Very near past on-going:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Mbadde nsamba | I was playing |
| Obadde osamba | You were playing |
| Abadde asamba | He/She was playing |
| Tubadde tusamba | We were playing |
| Babadde basamba | They were playing |
| Kibadde kirya (Class X) | It was eating |
| Zibadde zirya (Class X) | They were eating |

Past for Present

There are certain verbs that are used in their past tense but actually describing a present status.

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|--|-----------------------|---|
| Ntudde | = | I'm sitting (as in 'I'm seated'). | From: Okutuula | 'ntuula' would mean: 'I'm in the process of sitting down.' |
| Ntidde | = | I'm scared | From: Okutya | While somebody might ask you 'totya?' which would mean: 'Don't you fear?' and describes a general attitude. |
| Mmanyi | = | I know | From: Okumanya | But: Mbadde mmanyi = 'I thought', e.g.: 'Mbadde mmanyi ogenda kujja.' – 'I thought you were coming.' |
| Ng'enze | = | I'm leaving (as in: I'm off), literally: I have left)) | From: Okugenda | It's perfectly fine to say 'ng'enda waka.' (I'm going home) |
| Nkooye | = | I'm tired | From: Okukoowa | While somebody might ask you 'tokoowa?' which means 'don't you get tired?' |
| Mmaze | = | I'm done, I have finished | From: Okumala | 'mmala' is never used when talking about the present |
| Mbuze | = | I'm lost, lit.: I have gotten lost | From: Okubula | While 'mbula' refers to regularly getting lost. |

15. The near Past

The near past is used for events that happened today or yesterday. Just like for the very near past the modified stem is used, but in addition to that an ‘-a-’ is placed inbetween the person prefix and the stem.

Okusamba → nsamba (present) → nsambye (very near past) → **nasambye (near past)**

person prefix + a + modified stem

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|----------|---|-------------|--------------|
| Nn | + | a | + | Genze | → | Nnagenze | i left |
| W | + | a | + | Zze | → | wazze | you came |
| Y | + | a | + | guze | → | yaguze | he bought |
| Tw | + | a | + | komyewo | → | twakomyewo | we came back |
| Mw | + | a | + | gambye | → | mwagambye | you said |
| Ba | + | a | + | buuzizza | → | baabuuzizza | they asked |

16. The distant Past

The distant past is used for events that happened more than a day ago. It is formed by using the present stem of a verb and simply inserting an a between the subject-prefix and the stem:

person prefix + a + present stem

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|--------|---|-----------|--------------|
| nn | + | a | + | genda | → | Nnagenda | I left |
| w | + | a | + | Jja | → | wajja | you came |
| y | + | a | + | gula | → | yagula | he bought |
| tw | + | a | + | komawo | → | twakomawo | we came back |
| mw | + | a | + | gamba | → | mwagamba | you said |
| ba | + | a | + | buuzia | → | baabuza | they asked |

17. The near Future

person prefix + naa + present stem

The near future is used for actions that will take place approximately within the next 18 hours. This tense is formed with the prefix ‘-naa-’ (which becomes -noo- for the second person singular for reasons of sound harmony):

Regular verbs:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| naakola | I will do |
| onookola | you will do |
| anaakola | he/she will do |
| tunaakola | we will do |
| munaakola | you will do |
| banaakola | they will do |

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| zinaakola (class iii) | they will do |
| lunaakola (class vii) | it will do |

For reflexive verbs it becomes -nee-:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| nneetaaga | I will need |
| oneetaaga | you will need |
| aneetaaga | he/she will need |
| tuneetaaga | we will need |
| muneetaaga | you will need |
| baneetaaga | they will need |

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| zineetaga (class iii) | they will need |
| luneetaaga(class vii) | it will need |

Note that the auxiliary verbs ‘okujja’ and ‘okugenda’ are far also very common when forming the future.

18. The far Future

The far future is used for actions that will take place after the next 18 hours. This tense is formed with the prefix ‘-li-’:

person prefix + li + present stem

Regular verbs:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Ndikola | I will do |
| Olikola | you will do |
| Alikola | he/she will do |
| tulikola | we will do |
| mulikola | you will do |
| balikola | they will do |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| zirikola (class iii) | they will do |
|-----------------------------|--------------|

For reflexive verbs it becomes -ly-:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| ndyetaaga | I will need |
| olyetaaga | you will need |
| alyetaaga | he/she will need |
| tulyetaaga | we will need |
| mulyetaaga | you will need |
| balyetaaga | they will need |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| ziriyetaaga (class iii) | they will need |
|--------------------------------|----------------|

lulikola (class vii)

it will do

lulyetaaga(class vii)

it will need

Note that the auxiliary verbs 'okujja' and 'okugenda' are far also very common when forming the future.

19. The Subjunctive

Form

The subjunctive is simply formed by changing the last a of a verb to an e.

| | | | | | | |
|------------|---|----------|---|----------|---|---------------|
| okugenda | → | ng'enda | → | ng'ende | = | I shall go |
| okugezaako | → | ogezaako | → | ogezeeko | = | you shall try |
| okukola | → | akola | → | akole | = | he shall do |
| okulaba | → | tulaba | → | tulabe | = | we shall see |
| okulya | → | mulya | → | mulye | = | you shall eat |
| okugamba | → | bagamba | → | bagambe | = | bagambe |

Usage

a) As an ordinary subjunctive

Angambye nti **ntunde** amaka gange.
Amagye gayingiddewo **gayambe** omuntu.

He told me to sell my house.
The army entered to help a person.

b) Invitation:

Tugende tulye.
Jangu tusome.

Let's go and eat.
Come and we shall read.

c) Permission

Ka + person prefix + (object prefix) + subjunctive stem

Ka + n + ku + buuze

Kankubuuze

Kanzijje.
Kankomewo.
Kankubuulire...
Kankugambe...
Kankuwe ekyokulabirako...

Let me come.
Let me come back.
Let me tell you...
Let me tell you...
Let me give you an example...

Kankubuuze..
Kambaleete essowaani.
Kansooke mukubira.

Let me ask you...
Let me bring you a plate
Let me first call him.

d) 'okusooka'

sook'ojje
sook'okiddemu ekyo
sook'olinde ko
sook'omale kulya

First come
First repeat that
First wait
First finish eating

e) 'to seem like'

In combination with 'okulabika' (to look like, to appear, to seem) it can be used to express that something seems like it happened:

Alabika agende
Balabika baveemu

She seems to be leaving
They seem to be getting out.

f) As an imperative (see chapter 21)

20. If and the Conditional

1) Bwe- If

Enkuba **bwe** egenda kutonnya ng'enda kusigala mu nnyumba.

Bwe mulya ennyo mugejja.

Bwe twesiiga ebizigo ebirungi, ensusu zaffe zinyirira.

Mujja keerewa **bwe** mulinnya takisi.

Tetujja genda mu maaso **bwe** twesosola.

Bwe tukola obulungi mu bigezo byaffe tugenda ku yunivasiti.

If it starts to rain I will stay inside the house.

If you eat a lot of food you will gain weight.

If we apply good moisturizer our skin becomes shiny.

You will be late if you take a taxi.

We won't make progress if we discriminate each other.

If we do well on our exams we will go to university.

Since bwe ends in a vowel the e is likely to be dropped:

Bw'ofunna obudde nkubira.

Bw'agenze mu kibuga asaana gula mata.

Bw'amata gaweddewo ntegeeza.

If you find the time call me.

If he is going to town he ought to buy milk.

If the milk is over inform me.

When bwe is followed by to- or ta- the e will change into the respective vowel:

Bwotofunna obudde tokikola.
Bwatayogera amazima mukutta.

If you don't find the time don't do it.
 If he doesn't tell the truth kill him.

2) The Conditional - Counterfactuals

person prefix + **andi** + modified stem

'okukola

'Okuba'

nnandikoze I would do
wandikoze you would do
yandikoze he/she would do
twandikoze we would do
mwandikoze you would do
bandikoze they would do

nnandibadde I will need
wandibadde you will need
yandibadde he/she will need
twandibadde we will need
mwandibadde you will need
bandibadde they will need

zandikoze (class III) they would do
Lwandikoze (class VII) it would do

zandibadde (class III) they will need
lwandibadde (class VII) it will need

In a sentence it is used with the word 'ssinga' (if):

Nnandibadde bulungi nnyo ssinga KCCA
 tensumbuwa.
 Mary abantu bandimuyise muganda ssinga
 tabadde mweru.
 Ssinga nfuna ssente ezimalira ddala nandibadde
 mugagga nnyo.
 Ensi yandibadde nsanyufu nnyo ssinga temuli
 busosoze.

I would be doing very well if the KCCA wasn't
 disturbing me.
 People would treat Mary like a sister if she
 wasn't white.
 If I would have enough money I would be a rich
 man.
 The world would be a happy place if it wasn't
 for racism.

21. The Imperative

In order to form the imperative in Luganda, much like in other languages like German and Latin, the stem of the verb is central.

German 'to go': gehen
 Latin 'to go': ire

stem: geh
 stem: i

→
 →

Imperative: **Geh!**
 Imperative: **!!**

Luganda 'to go': Okugenda stem: genda → Imperative: **Genda!**

Singular

For the imperative singular simply the stem is used:

| | | | |
|------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Okuy <u>iga</u> | → | Yiga Oluganda! | Learn Luganda! |
| Okuk <u>wata</u> | → | Kwata ko! | Hold it (for a second)! |
| Okusigala | → | Sigala wano! | Stay here! |
| Okukomawo | → | Komawo mangu! | Come back quickly! |
| Okusamba | → | Samba omupiira! | Kick the ball! |

When the true stem has to be used:

| | | | |
|-----------|---|-------------------------|----------------|
| Okwogera | → | Yogera Oluganda! | Speak Luganda! |
| Okuwaata | → | Waata ! | Peel! |
| Okwongera | → | Yongera | Add! |
| Okwogera | → | Mwogere nnyo! | Speak up! |

Plural

The imperative plural is formed by using the 2. Person Plural Subjunctive (with the Prefix 'mu' and the suffix 'e' instead of an 'a'):

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Oku <u>genda</u> | → | Mugende mu kyaalo! | Go to the village! |
| Oku <u>wulira</u> | → | Muwulire ! | Listen! |
| Okusoma | → | Musome bulungi! | Study well! |
| Okulongoosa | → | Mulongoose ekibiina! | Clean the classroom! |
| Okudduka | → | Mudduke mangu! | Run fast! |

Object

When including an indirect object in a command, the object is simply added in the usual way (in front of the stem).

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Oku <u>gamba</u> | → | Mugambe ! | Tell her/him ! |
| Okubuulira | → | Tubuulire ! | Tell us ! |
| Oku <u>wa</u> | → | Mumpe ko! | Give her to me |
| Oku <u>wuliriza</u> | → | Mpuliriza bulungi | Listen to me carefully! |

| | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Okutta | → | Kitte ! (ekiwuka) | Kill it ! (the insect) |
| Okuwerekera | → | Mutuwarekere ko! | (You guys) Accompany us ! |
| Okutwala | → | Mugitwale ! (ensawo) | (You guys) Take it ! (the bag) |
| Okukweka | → | Mumukweke ! | (You guys) Hide him ! |

For the negative both of the singular and the plural the usual te- prefix is added to the present tense, not the imperative singular:

Present tense: Okola (you do) → tokola! (don't do!)

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ok <u>u</u> wa | → | Tok <u>i</u> tuwa! | Don't give <i>it</i> to us ! |
| Okug <u>e</u> nda | → | Tog <u>e</u> nda! | Don't go! |
| Okule <u>k</u> a | → | Tonde <u>k</u> a wano! | Don't leave me here! |
| Okutunulira | → | Tomutunulira! | Don't look at her! |
| Okuzan <u>n</u> ya | → | Temuzan <u>n</u> ya! | (You guys), don't play! |
| Okutuul <u>a</u> | → | Temutuul <u>a</u> ! | (You guys), don't sit here! |
| Okuseer <u>a</u> | → | Temumuseer <u>a</u> ! | Don't overcharge her ! |
| Okusekerer <u>a</u> | → | Temunsekerer <u>a</u> ! | Don't make fun of me ! |

Reflexive verbs

For reflexive verbs (a stem starting with e) the imperative is slightly different. The second person singular subjunctive is used:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------|
| Okwer <u>a</u> ba | → | Weer <u>a</u> be! | Look at yourself! |
| Okwetond <u>a</u> | → | Weetond <u>e</u> ! | Apologize! |
| Okwegulir <u>a</u> | → | Weegulir <u>e</u> ! | Buy it yourself! |
| Okweyongeray <u>o</u> | → | Weeyongerey <u>o</u> ! | Step back! |

Reflexive plural

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| Okwer <u>a</u> ba | → | Mwer <u>a</u> be! | Look at yourself! |
| Okwetond <u>a</u> | → | Mwetond <u>e</u> ! | Apologize! |

Two imperatives

When two imperatives follow another in Luganda first the imperative then the subjunctive is used:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Genda olye emmere! | Go and eat food! |
| Jangu onyambe! | Come and help me! |

22. The Passive, the Reflexive, Reciprocal and the Reversive form

Generally the final a is changed into ibwa or ebwa. If the last vowel of the stem is a, i or u, the final a becomes –ibwa, when the last vowel of the stem is e or o, the final a becomes –ebwa:

| | | | | | |
|--------|----------|---|-----------|---------------|---------------------|
| -kola | to make | → | -kolebwa | to be done | -koled <u>dd</u> wa |
| -gamba | to say | → | -gambibwa | to be said | -labidd <u>wa</u> |
| -bala | to count | → | -balibwa | to be counted | -balidd <u>wa</u> |
| -kwata | to catch | → | -kwatibwa | to be caught | -kwatidd <u>wa</u> |

Fixed passive constructions:

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| okunyumirwa | to enjoy | okufumbirwa | to wed |
| okutikkirwa | to graduate | okusubwa | to lose, to miss |
| okufiirwa | to lose, to miss | okuvunaanyizibwa | to be responsible |
| okuganyulwa | to gain | okulwa | to delay |
| okusuubirwa | to be supposed/expected to | okuwunywa | to smell |

Reflexive

The reflexive is formed by inserting an e between the person prefix and the stem.

| | | | | |
|-------------|----------|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| okulaba | to see | → | okweraba | to see oneself |
| okutunda | to sell | → | okwetunda | to sell oneself |
| okuyigiriza | to teach | → | okweyigiriza | to teach oneself |
| okubuuza | to ask | → | okwebuuza | to ask oneself |
| okulowooza | to think | → | okwerowooza | to think to oneself |

The conjunction is performed as usual:

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Neebuuza | I ask myself | Seebuza | I don't ask myself |
| Weebuza | You ask yourself | Tweebuza | You don't ask yourself |
| Yeebuza | He asks himself | Teyeebuza | He doesn't ask himself |
| Twebuza | We ask ourselves | Tetwebuza | We don't ask ourselves |
| Mwebuza | You ask yourselves | Temwebuza | You don't ask yourselves |
| Beebuza | They ask themselves | Tebeebuza | They don't ask themselves |

Fixed / derived meaning:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| okwebaka | to sleep | okweyagala | to enjoy oneself |
| okweralikirira | to worry | okwekanga | to be shocked |
| okwesiga | to trust | okwemulugunya | to complain |
| okwetaaga | to need | okweyambula | to undress |
| okwerabira | to forget | okweyambala | to dress/wear |
| okwetonda | to apologize | okwesanyusa | to be delighted |
| okweewala | to avoid | okweyazika | to borrow |
| okweyambula | to get dressed | okwenyumiriza | to be proud |
| okwegendereza | to be careful | okwekizirizamu | to be confident |
| Okwetta | to commit suicide | okwewuunya | to be surprised |
| okweerabira | to forget | okweyazika | to borrow |

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| okwejusa | to regret | okwematira | to be self-confident |
| okweesiima | to be lucky | okwemalirira | to be independent |
| okwekengera | to be scared, reluctant | okwekakasa | to be confident |
| Okwetikka | to carry | okwetamirwa | to be disgusted by |
| Okwewulira | to be conceited | okwenyamira | to be depressed |
| Okwefuula | to pretend | okwekukuma | to hide |

Examples:

Neeraba mu endabirwamu.
Weegulire! (omuyembe)
Weeyagala?

Weerowooze!
Yeewulira.
Neebuuza lwaki agenze.
Yeefuula ayagala okugenda.

I see myself in the mirror.
Buy it (the mango) yourself!
Are you enjoying (lit.: liking) yourself (as in: are you having a good time?)
Think for yourself!
He is conceited (lit.: He listens to himself)
I'm asking myself why she left.
He pretends he wants to go

The reciprocal form

In order to express that.. the suffix 'gana', 'ganya', 'na' or less common 'ng'ana' is added to the verb and the verb is conjugated as usual.

| | | | |
|-------------|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Okulaba | → | Okulabagana | to see each other |
| Okulwana | → | Okulwanagana | to fight/battle (with each other) |
| Okusonyiwa | → | Okusonyiwagana | to forgive each other |
| Okufaanana | → | Okufaanagana | to resemble |
| okwagala | → | okwagalana | To love each other |
| Okuwuliriza | → | Okuwuliriziganya | to listen to each other |
| Okuwulira | → | Okuwuliziganya | to communicate |
| okukkiriza | → | Okukkiriziganya | to agree (with each other) |
| Okutta | → | Okuttang'ana | To kill each other |
| okubba | → | Okubbang'ana | To steal from each other |

Examples:

Tulabagane!
Tuyambagana.
Balabaganye.
Twagalana.

We shall see each other
We help each other
They saw each other
We love each other.

The reversion form

In Luganda the meaning of a verb can be reversed by changing the last -a to -ula:

If the verb ends in –ala the –ala is replaced by the –ula:

| | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|---|-------------|------------|
| -(e)yambala | To dress/to wear | → | -(e)yambula | To undress |
| -ggala | To shut | → | -ggula | To open |

In all other cases the last a is replaced by –ula:

| | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| -ziika | To bury | → | -ziikula | To exhume |
| -simba | To plant | → | -simbula | To uproot |
| -kweka | To hide | → | -kwekula | To reveal |
| -ekweka | To hide oneself | → | -ekwekula | To come out of hiding |
| -tikka | To carry | → | -tikkula | To unload, to remove |
| -yimba | To combine | → | -yimbula | To release |

23. Demonstrative Pronouns

As a student of Luganda can imagine, even the demonstrative pronouns of Luganda highly depend on the class of the noun the pronoun is referring to. Every class and number has its own pronoun. In order to form this pronoun, the adjective prefix is added to –no. The exception is the first Class singular (people), where ‘ono’ or ‘oyo’ is used. ‘Ono’ is referring to a person within sight or being close to the speaker (‘omukazi ono’, ‘this woman’) while ‘oyo’ is referring to somebody more distant or absent (‘omukazi oyo’, ‘that woman’). In Luganda it is common to drop the noun: ‘on’ani?’ ‘who is this?’; ‘on’agambye..’ (this one said..). As we have learned, there are some objects in the first class that don’t have the prefix ‘mu’ and are certainly not people: Caayi (tea), Ffene (jackfruit), balansi (balance), . Even in this case ‘ono’ or ‘oyo’ is used:

| Class | Noun | close | distant | both |
|-------|---------|-------|---------|------|
| I | omuntu | ono | oli | oyo |
| | abantu | bano | bali | abo |
| II | omutima | guno | guli | ogwo |
| | emitima | gino | giri | egyo |
| III | engatto | eno | eri | eyo |
| | engatto | zino | ziri | ezo |
| IV | ekitabo | kino | kiri | ekyo |
| | ebitabo | bino | biri | ebyo |
| V | erinnya | lino | liri | eryo |
| | amanya | gano | gali | agwo |
| VI | akaana | kano | kali | ako |
| | obwana | buno | buli | obwo |
| | olulimi | luno | luli | olwo |

| | | | | |
|-----|-------|------|------|------|
| VII | enimi | zino | ziri | ezo |
| IX | okutu | kuno | kuli | okwo |
| | amatu | gano | gali | agwo |
| X | otulo | tuno | tuli | otwo |

Examples:

Mbadde njogera n’ono naye oyo abadde atusumbuwa.
Engatto zino zirungi, naye ziri mbi.
Obutunda buno buwooma.
Ono muganda wo?
Zino (embuzi) zirya nyingi, naye ziri tezirya.
Caayi ono mulungi.

I was talking to this one but that one was disturbing us.
These shoes are good but those ones are bad.
These passion fruits are delicious.
Is this your sibling?
These goats eat a lot but those ones don’t eat.
This tea is good.

24. Prepositions

| Luganda | Translation | Example | Translation |
|-----------|-----------------------|---|---|
| ku | in, at, to, on, about | Kiri ku meeza. | It (the book) is on the table. |
| | | Ndi ku ssomero. | I’m at school |
| | | Oyogera kunze ? | Are you talking about me? |
| e | in, from | Okuve e Hoima kitwala banga ddene. | Coming from Hoima it takes a long time. |
| | | Tuli e Uganda. | We are in Uganda. |
| mu | in, inside | Ndi mu taxi. | I’m in the taxi. |
| | | Ng’enda munju . | I’m going inside. |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| kumpi ne | close, near, next to | Atudde kumpi n’omuti . | He is sitting next to the tree. |
| wala | Far | Atudde wala okuva ku muti . | He is sitting far away from the tree. |
| mu maaso ga | in front of | Ali mu maaso ga meeza. | He is in front of the table. |
| wakati (wa x ne y) | in the middle, between x and y | Ayimiridde wakati waabwe . | She is standing between them. |
| | | Essomero liri wakati wa Nakulabye ne Mengo . | It is between Nakulabye ne Mengo. |
| Okutunuligana | Opposite | Ebizimbe bitunuluganye . | The buildings are opposite to each other (lit.: looking at each other). |
| wabweru / ebweru | Outside | Teri/Tewali muntu wabweru . | There is nobody outside. |
| | | Tosula ebweru . | Don’t sleep outside. |
| mabega wa | Behind | Ziri mabega w’emiti . | They (the goats) are behind the trees. |
| wansi wa | Under | Guli wansi w’emmeeza . | It (the football) is under the table. |
| waggulu wa | Above | Eri waggulu w’ekizimbe . | It (the airplane) is above the building. |

25. The Prepositional

The prepositional is a modification of the verb suffix in order to express that something is done at a certain place or for somebody. Sometimes it can change the entire meaning of the verb.

Form:

- 1) If the verb does not end in –sa or –za and the last vowel of the stem is a, i or u, the final a is changed into ‘ira’:

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|---------------------|
| Okufumba | To cook | → okufumbira |
| Okumanya | To know | → okumanyira |
| Okulaga | To show | → okulagira |
| Okulinda | To wait | → okulindira |

- 2) If the verb does not end in –sa or –za and the last vowel of the stem is e or o the final a is changed into ‘era’:

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|---------------------|
| Okukola | To work | → okukolera |
| okuleeta | To bring | → okuleetera |
| okusoma | To read | → okusomera |

- 3) If the verb ends in –sa or –za and the last vowel of the stem is a, i or u, the final a is changed into -iza:

| | | |
|---------------|----------|--------------------|
| Okuwas | To marry | → okuwasiza |
|---------------|----------|--------------------|

- 4) If the verb ends in –sa or –za and the last vowel of the stem is e or o the final a is changed into –eza:

| | | |
|------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Okusomesa | To teach | → okusomeseza |
| okwoza | To wash | → okwozeza |

Usage:

- 1) To give the idea that something is done for somebody

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Okufumba | Nfumbidde maama wange emmere eno. | I cooked this food for my mother. |
| okuleeta | Baabindeetera (ebitabo). | They brought these (books) for me. |
| okuwandiika | Yamuwandiikira bbaluwa. | He wrote her a letter. |
| okugula | Ongulira muyembe? | Are you buying me a mango? |
| okukyala | Onkyalirako ddi? | When are you paying me a visit? |
| Okukola | Nekolera ssente zange. | I work for myself (in order to have) my own money. |

- 2) In combination with a preposition or a locative (wano, wa, wali, etc) it expresses that something happened at a specific place

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Okukola | Nkolera e ssomero. | I work at school. |
| Okutya | Bamutidde ku Jinja Road. | They killed him on Jinja road. |
| Okulinda | Lindira wano! | Wait here! |
| okusoma | Osomera wa? | Where do you study at? |
| Okukula | Wakulira wa? | Where did you grow up? |
| Okuwasa | Bawasirizza e Mukono. | They got married in Mukono. |

Derived meaning / double prepositional:

| | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---|---------------------|--|
| okutunula | to be awake | → | okutunulira | to stare at something/somebody |
| okuwulira | to hear | → | okuwuliriza | to listen to |
| okulaga | to show | → | okulagira | to direct; to command |
| okumanya | to know | → | okumanyira | to be used to something/somebody |
| okweraba | to see oneself | → | okwerabira | to forget |
| okudda | To run | → | okuddirira | to come after somebody; to decline |
| okugenda | to go | → | okugenderera | to intend |
| okulaba | to see | → | okulabirira | To watch over somebody; to take care of somebody |
| okugoba | to chase away | → | okugoberera | to follow |

| | | | | |
|----------------|----------|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| okuseka | to laugh | → | okusekerera | to make fun of |
| okuwa | to give | → | okuweerera | to pay fees for |

26. The Causative

The causative is a verb modification that expresses that something or somebody caused something to occur to something or somebody. A good example is 'okujukira' which means to remember. The causative of this verb is 'okujukiza' and can be translated as: To make somebody remember. In English simply another verb is used: to remind.

1. When the last syllable of a verb is a -la, -da, ga, ja or -ra this syllable becomes -za:

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| -lwa <u>ala</u> | To get sick | → | -lwa <u>aza</u> | To make sick |
| -lem <u>ala</u> | To become crippled | → | -lem <u>aza</u> | To cripple someone |
| -tege <u>era</u> | To understand | → | -tege <u>eza</u> | To let somebody know |
| -mat <u>ira</u> | To be satisfied | → | -mat <u>iza</u> | To satisfy |
| -juk <u>ira</u> | To remember | → | -juk <u>iza</u> | To remind |
| -eraliik <u>irira</u> | To worry | → | -eraliik <u>iriza</u> | To make somebody worried |
| -yimir <u>ira</u> | To stand | → | -yimir <u>iza</u> | To stop, make stand |
| -swala | To be ashamed | → | -sw <u>aza</u> | To embarrass somebody |
| -tambula | To walk | → | -tambu <u>za</u> | To move, to make flow |
| -yingira | To enter | → | -ying <u>iza</u> | To make somebody enter |
| -galamira | To lie down (intransitive) | → | -galam <u>iza</u> | To lay something/somebody down |
| -tuula | To sit | → | -tu <u>uza</u> | To make sit/rest |
| -kaabira | To cry about/for | → | -kaab <u>iza</u> | To make somebody cry |
| -kula | To grow (up) | → | -ku <u>za</u> | To raise |
| -sembera | To come close | → | -sembe <u>za</u> | To bring close |
| -nniyogoga | To be cold | → | -nniyogo <u>za</u> | To freeze |
| -nyiiga | To get annoyed | → | -nyi <u>iiza</u> | To annoy somebody |

2. When the last syllable of a verb is -ta or -ka this syllable becomes -sa:

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|---------------|-----------------------|
| -yit <u>a</u> | To call/pass | → | -yis <u>a</u> | To treat |
| -kyuuk <u>a</u> | To change (oneself) | → | -kyuusa | To change (something) |

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| -ekw <u>a</u> | To hide oneself | → | -ekw <u>a</u> s a | To make excuses |
| -seka | To laugh | → | -se s a | To cause to smile, to make laugh, to be funny |

3. When the last syllable of a verb is –sa and the last vowel of the stem is a, i or u, the final a becomes –iza,:

| | | | | |
|--------------------|----------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| -longoo <u>s</u> a | To clean | → | -longoo <u>s</u> e z <u>a</u> | To cause cleaning |
|--------------------|----------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------|

4. When the last syllable of a verb is –za and the last vowel of the stem is a, i or u, the final a becomes –iza, when the last vowel of the stem is e or o, the final a becomes –eza:

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|---|-----------------------------|---------------|
| -lowooza | To think | → | -lowooz e s <u>a</u> | To make think |
|----------|----------|---|-----------------------------|---------------|

5. When the last syllable of a verb is –wa the w becomes y

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---|----------------|---------------|
| -koow <u>a</u> | To be tired | → | -kooy <u>a</u> | To make tired |
|----------------|-------------|---|----------------|---------------|

6. When the last syllable of a verb is –ba, –ma, –na, –pa or –ya the final a changes to –isa or –esa (see 3. and 4.)

| | | | | |
|---------|-----------|---|-----------------------------|------------------|
| -lwaana | To fight | → | -lwaany i s <u>a</u> | To fight against |
| -ewunya | To wonder | → | -ewuny i s <u>a</u> | To surprise |
| -noonya | To search | → | -noonyere s <u>a</u> | To make research |

Examples:

| Normal | | Causative | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Agenda kulwa <u>a</u> la! | She is going to get sick. | Emmere eno emulwa az <u>a</u> . | This food makes her sick. |
| Omwana wange alem <u>a</u> la. | My child is becoming crippled. | Omusomesa amulem az <u>a</u> . | The teacher crippled her. |
| Njagala kutege <u>e</u> ra. | I want to know/understand you. | Njja kutegee ez <u>a</u> . | I will inform you/let you know. |
| Onzijuk <u>i</u> ra? | Do you remember me? | Ogenda kunzijuk iz <u>a</u> ? | Are you going to remind me? |
| Maama akuy <u>i</u> ta. | Mum is calling you. | Maama amuyi s <u>a</u> bubi. | Mum treats her badly. |
| Tokoow <u>a</u> ? | Don't you get tired? | Tekikukooy a? | Doesn't it make you tired? |
| Abaana abato balwaana buli lunaku. | The young childred fight every day. | Balwaanyis a okufumbiza abaana abato | They are fighting against child marriage. |

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Nswadde nnyo. | I'm very ashamed. | Ayagala kunswaza . | He wants to embarrass me. |
| Bayingidde ennyumba. | They entered the house. | Bamuyingizza ennyumba. | They made him enter the house. |
| Totuula wansi. | Don't sit down. | Totuuzza bwongo bwo. | Don't make your brain rest. |

| <u>Normal</u> | <u>Meaning</u> | | <u>Causative (e.g. of prepositional)</u> | <u>meaning</u> |
|---------------|----------------|---|--|------------------|
| -genda | To go | → | -egendereza | To be careful |
| -yiga | To learn | → | -yigiriza | To teach |
| -kola | To do | → | -kozesa | To use |
| -mala | To end | → | -maliriza | To finish off |
| -wa | To give | → | -weereza | To send to |
| -noonya | To search | → | -noonyereza | To make research |

27. Still

Since Luganda is highly verb-focused, even the word 'still' is expressed through a modification of the verb. This modification adds the syllabus '**kya**' to the present time stem, right after the prefix of the subject. Let's take the verb '-soma'. 'Nsoma' means 'I'm reading' and when wanting to say 'I'm still reading' it becomes '**nkyasoma**'. 'Osoma' becomes 'Okyasoma', 'tusoma' 'tukyasoma', and so on.

Okusoma

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Nkyasoma | I am still reading |
| Okyasoma | You are still reading |
| Akyasoma | He/She is still reading |
| Tukyasoma | We are still reading |
| Mukyasoma | You are still reading |
| Bakyasoma | They are still reading |

Examples:

Nkyatambula mu kibuga.
Okyalabika bulungi.

I'm still walking in town.
You're still looking good.

Bakyali bato.
Okjaliwo?
Tukyali beeralikirivu.
Nkyali mu takisi.

They are still young.
Are you still around?
We are still worried.
I'm still in the taxi.

The **object prefix** is inserted after the kya prefix:

Okyamujukira?
Bakyakisoma. (ekitabo)
Ente zikyamulya. (kasooli)
Akaana kakyaabaagala.

Do you **still** remember him?
They are **still** reading it. (the book)
The cows are **still** eating it. (the maize)
The baby **still** loves them.

The translation of the **negative** is 'not any more' or 'no longer':

Sikyasobola kusamba mupiira.
Tokyamanyi oluganda?
Takyaliwo.
Oluyimba telukyanyuma.

I can't play football **anymore**.
Don't you know Luganda **anymore**?
He is **no longer** around.
The song is **no longer** enjoyable to me.

When the verb starts with an a and the the ki-object-prefix is used the form might look confusing:

Sikyagala.
Sikyakyagala.

I don't like it.
I don't like it **anymore**.

When wanting to express that you're still not doing something (e.g 'I still don't know Luganda), the equivalent of 'yet' is used (just like in English: 'I don't know Luganda yet.'): Sinaba okuyiga oluganda / Sinayiga oluganda. See chapter 28 for more information.

28. Yet

In Luganda, just like the word ,still', the word ,yet' is expressed through a syllabus added to a verb: -**na**-. This one can either be added to the negation of the verb 'kuba' ('to be') and the infinitive of the verb is placed after:

Sinaba kusalawo.
Tonaba kujja?
Tanaba kutuuka.
Tetunaba kulya.
Temunaba
Tebanaba

I haven't decided yet.
You have not come yet?
He has not arrived yet.
We have not eaten yet.

Another option is to insert the na into the negative verb between the Person Prefix and the stem:

Sinnasalawo
Tonnagezaako.
Tannazaala/Tannafuna baana

Tetuneetegeese

I haven't decided yet.
You haven't tried yet?
She hasn't given birth/gotten any children yet.
I'm not ready yet.

29. 'Is there'

There are two ways of expressing 'there' in Luganda depending on the distance to the subject that is referring to:

Around the speaker: **waliwo**

Waliwo amanyi oluzungu?
Waliwo ekitabo ku meeza.
Waliwo abantu abatali basanyufu bangi mu Kampala.

Is there anyone who knows English?
There is a book on the table
There are lot's of unhappy people in Kampala

In a distance to the speaker: **waliyo**

Waliyo emmere ki?
Waliyo abantu bangi.
Waliyo empologoma mu bulaaya?

What food is there?
There are lot's of people.
Are there any lions in Europe?

30. Counting

1-10

The numbers one to ten are very close to Swahili. A learner of Luganda should keep in mind that the figures one to five are adjusted to the noun as explained below.

| | |
|---|----------------|
| 0 | Ziiro |
| 1 | Emu |
| 2 | Biri |
| 3 | Ssatu |
| 4 | Ennya |
| 5 | Taano |
| 6 | Mukaga |
| 7 | Musanvu |
| 8 | Munaana |
| 9 | Mwenda |

10-20

The numbers ten to twenty are described as 'x na x' (x and x).

| | |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 10 | Kumi |
| 11 | Kumi n'emu (kumi ne emu) |
| 12 | Kumi na biri |
| 13 | Kumi na ssatu |
| 14 | Kumi na nnya |
| 15 | Kumi na taano |
| 16 | Kumi na mukaga |
| 17 | Kumi na musanvu |
| 18 | Kumi na munaana |
| 19 | Kumi na mwenda |

20-40

The numbers twenty to forty and all the following tens are described in a slightly different way: x mu x (x in x).

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 20 | Abiri | 30 | Asatu |
| 21 | Abiri mu emu | 31 | Asatu mu emu |
| 22 | Abiri mu biri | 32 | Asatu mu biri |
| 23 | Abiri mu ssatu | 33 | Asatu mu ssatu |
| 24 | Abiri mu nnya | 34 | Asatu mu nnya |
| 25 | Abiri mu taano | 35 | Asatu mu taano |
| 26 | Abiri mu mukaga | 36 | Asatu mu mukaga |
| 27 | Abiri mu musanvu | 37 | Asatu mu musanvu |
| 28 | Abiri mu munaana | 38 | Asatu mu munaana |
| 29 | Abiri mu mwenda | 39 | Asatu mu mwenda |

| The tens | | Examples | | The hundreds | | Examples | |
|----------|----------------|----------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|----------|--|
| 10 | Kumi | 15 | Kkumi na tano | 100 | Kikumi | 111 | |
| 20 | Abiri | 28 | Abiri mu munaana | 200 | Bibiri | 222 | |
| 30 | Assatu | 31 | Assatu mu emu | 300 | Bisatu | 333 | |
| 40 | Anna | 44 | Anna mu nna | 400 | Binna | 444 | |
| 50 | Atano | 59 | Atano mu mwenda | 500 | Bitano | 555 | |
| 60 | Nkaga | 66 | Nkaga mu mukaga | 600 | Lukaaga | 666 | |
| 70 | Nsanvu | 73 | Nsanvu mu ssatu | 700 | Lusanvu | 777 | |
| 80 | Kinaana | 87 | Kinaana mu musanvu | 800 | Lunaana | 888 | |
| 90 | Kyenda | 92 | Kyenda mu biri | 900 | Lwenda | 999 | |

The thousands

| | |
|------|-------------|
| 1000 | Lukumi |
| 2000 | Nkumi bbiri |
| 3000 | Nkumi ssatu |
| 4000 | Nkumi nna |
| 5000 | Nkumi taano |
| 6000 | Kakaaga |
| 7000 | Kasanvu |
| 8000 | Kanaana |
| 9000 | Kenda |

Omutwalo

| | |
|-------|---|
| 10000 | Omutwalo |
| 15000 | gumu (<i>omutwalo implied</i>) (ne) kitundu |
| 20000 | emitwalo ebiri |

above

| | |
|---------|------------|
| 100000 | akasiriivu |
| 1000000 | akakadde |

Slang

| | |
|-------|--------|
| 500 | Budo |
| 1000 | Lwaasa |
| 1000 | Kaasa |
| 50000 | Ziike |

Measurements

| | |
|-----|---------------------|
| 1/2 | ekitundu |
| 1/3 | Eky'okusatu |
| 1/4 | Eky'okuna |
| 1/6 | Eky'omukaaga |
| 2/3 | Eby'okusatu bibiri |
| 3/7 | Eby'omusanvu bisatu |

Note that for some Classes the numbers one to five have to be adjusted to the noun:

| | omuntu abantu | omutima emitima | engatto engatto | ekitabo ebitabo | erinnya amannya | akaana obwana | olulimi ennimi | okutu amatu |
|----------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 | omu | gumu | emu | kimu | limu | kamu | lumu | kumu |
| 2 | babiri | ebbiri | ebbiri | bibiri | ebbiri | bubiri | ebbiri | ebbiri |
| 3 | basatu | esatu | essatu | bisatu | essatu | busatu | essatu | essatu |
| 4 | banna | ennya | ennya | binna | ennya | bunna | ennya | ennya |
| 5 | bataano | etaano | etaano | bitaano | etaano | butaano | etaano | etaano |
| 6 | Mukaaga | | | | | | | |