

# Oshiwambo Common Phrases and Expressions



**English**  
**Oshindonga**



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@ Petrus Angula Mbenzi  
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## Introduction

*We ya po?* You have made a right choice to learn the useful phrases and idioms in Oshiwambo.

This Oshiwambo-English Phrases is a long overdue contribution as its usefulness to the wider community in Namibia and beyond speaks volumes. It is a part of the project which spanned several years. Oshiwambo is an easy language and it is spoken by more than 60% percent of the Namibians. It consists of several dialects, but you simply need to learn one dialect in order to communicate effectively with any speaker of Oshiwambo. The differences between Oshiwambo dialects are very minimal.

This pocket guide contains survival phrases that you need when chatting to Oshiwambo speakers. The phrases in the booklet are used in every day conversations, therefore it is easy to memorize them as you will hear them quite often. Do not be shy to pronounce the phrases. You simply have to pronounce the words the way you see them on paper. People feel proud when you say one or two phrases in their language.

The phrases are presented according to various themes such as greetings, introductions, love, birthday wishes, sympathy, condolences, telephone, best wishes, time, taxi, gas station, health care, responses to bad and good news, expressing goodwill, encouragement and reassurance and proverbs. They are presented in the spoken language to facilitate the learning process, therefore the sound influence has been adhered to as strictly as possible. The silent 'u' has been omitted in words to facilitate the pronunciation.

Although efforts have been made to provide equivalent phrases in English, there are Oshiwambo phrases which are culture specific and have no equivalents in English. In such cases, explanations have been provided in English to demonstrate when and how such phrases may be used.

The pocket guide is suitable for tourists, business people and families who intend touring Namibia. It is very portable and user-friendly. Enjoy it!

This pocket guide is available in Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, Khoekhoegowab, Otjiherero, Silozi and Rukwangali.

*NB: The words of respects as they appear on page 22-23 of the booklet are very important in Oshiwambo conversation. It is very important to always put them at the end of the phrase to show respect and admiration to the addressee.*

*Abbreviations: sg = singular*

*pl = plural*

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