

## Botswana-UPenn Partnership

### **Basic Setswana**

Setswana (Tswana) is a Bantu language and the national and majority language of Botswana; although the official language of government in Botswana is English. In addition to Botswana, there are also Setswana speakers in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, comprising about 4 million Setswana speakers worldwide.

#### Tips on Pronunciation

The basic key differences from English are:

- "G's" are generally pronounced as "h's" in Setswana. (Officially known as a voiceless velar frictave.)
- The final "e" in Setswana words or names is not silent as is the case in English, but is pronounced as a long "e".
- People typically roll their "r's" in Botswana.

Therefore, "Gaborone" is phonetically written as "Hahborrronee."

The following information is more detailed pronunciation keys for the curious, but don't get hung up on this in the beginning.

In Setswana, the vowels are pronounced as in the following English words:

- 'a' as in 'c**a**r'
- 'e' as in 'l**e**t'
- 'i' as in 'm**ee**t'
- 'o' as in 'g**o'**
- 'u' as in 'sch**oo**l'

There are also a few combinations of consonants which are pronounced very differently from English:

- 'g' = an 'h' sound deep in your throat, like the end of "lo**ch**"
- 'kg' = k + an 'h' sound deep in your throat
- 'kh' = k + some air
- 'ph' = p + some air
- 'th' = t + some air (NOT like English "th")
- 'ny' = think of isolating the 'ny' in 'canyon'
- 'tl' = think of isolating the 'tl' in 'Atlanta'
- 'tlh' = 'tl' + some air
- 'ts' think of isolating the 'ts' in 'itself'
- 'tsh' = 'ts' + some air
- 'nts' = n + 'ts' sound
- 'š' = sh

You can hear some basic Setswana phrases being spoken by a native speaker here: <u>http://www.botswanatourism.co.bw/about/language.html</u>

#### The Importance of Greetings

If you only learn one thing in Setswana, you should learn how to properly greet people: Dumela Rra (Hello sir) / Dumela mma (Hello madam). Greetings are very important in Tswana culture. Proper greetings are more important than thanking people. Batswana generally think that Americans say "thank you" too easily and too frequently.

Generally, the appropriate thing to do when greeting a group of people is to simply 'pluralize' the word dumela by adding ...ng at the end – "dumelang". Handshakes are lighter and less firm than an American handshake and often one supports the right elbow with the left hand. This supporting of the extended elbow is also used when giving gifts or handing someone something. (e.g., This is generally how shopkeepers will return change.) Sometimes handshakes are a three-part handshake of "grasp hand-grasp thumb-return to hand." If you don't use too firm a grip, you can follow along should the shake go that way. Handshakes are more common as an official gesture. In a social group or when greeting a group of people in an unofficial manner, [and when it may take forever to shake each person's hand], a slight bow of the leg and putting your hands together is regarded as being very polite!

#### **Basic Words and Terms**

<b>Greetings</b> Hello madam.	Dumela mma.
Hello sir.	Dumela rra.
Are you well? (How did you wake? - More	O tsogile (pronounced TSO-HEELE) jang?
formal)	
How are you?	Le kae?
How's it going? (Casual slang. Not	O a re eng? (pronounced 'wah-reng')
appropriate for patients or elders.)	
l am well.	Ke teng
We are well.	Re teng (Use of the plural shows respect.)
l am fine (more formal), and you?	Ke tsogile sentle. Wena?
My name is	Leina la me ke (your name)
And you are?	Wena mma/rra o mang?
What is your name? (formal)	Leina la gago ke mang?
What did you say your name was?	Leina la go go ke mang, kana?
I am a doctor. I work at Marina.	Ke ngaka. Ke bereka ko Marina
I am a med student. I work at Marina.	Ke ithuta bongaka. Ke bereka ko Marina
I am from Philadelphia in America.	Ke tswa Philadelphia ko America
I'll be here for a month.	Ke tlaabo kele kwano kgwedi
Where are you from?	O tswa kae?
Where is your home (town)?	Gae ke ko kae?
Who are you?	O mang?
(informal - also the name of the national	
identity card and number)	

#### Farewells

Goodbye (generic, also "all is well")	Go siame.
Go well.	Tsamaya Sentle.

Goodnight.	Boroko mma/rra.
(both departing and non-departing)	
Goodnight/Sleep well	Robala sentle.
(literally: "Lie well")	
Stay well.	Sala Sentle.
(said to the person/group staying)	
Conord	
General Thank you.	Ke a leboga / Re a leboga (pronounced LE-BO-
	HA)
	Tanki (borrowed from Africaans)
Excuse me.	Sori
I am sorry.	Ke maswabi
No problem.	Ga gona mathata
Absolulely!	Tota!
l like	Ke rata
I would like	Ke ta rata
I would like water, a coke, a castle.	Ke kopa metsi, coka, castle.
I don't like	Ga ke rate
I want	Ke batla
One Hundred	Lekgolo
Let's go!	A re tsamaye!
What time is it?	Ke nako mang?
I need help, please.	Ke kopa thuso, tswee-tswee.
Can you help me? (Help!)	A o ka nthusa? (Thusa!)
May I help you?	A nka go thusa?
I forget.	Ke a lebala.
Do you speak English?	A o bua sekgoa?
I only speak a little Setswana	Ke itse Setswana go le go nnye
I speak Setswana just a little	Ke bua Setswana go le gonnye fela
I don't speak Setswana	Ga ke bue setswana
What is in Setswana?	ke eng ka Setswana?
Do you understand?	A o a tlhaloganya?
lunderstand.	Ke a tlhaloganya
I don't understand.	Ga ke go tlhaloganye
I don't know.	Ga ke itse
Or? (also used as "What?" "Repeat	Kana?
please?")	
Please speak slowly.	Ke kopa gore o bue ka bonya
Can you translate for me	Ke kopa gore o ntolokele
Can you translate for me?	A o ka ntolokela?
Where is the clinic?	Kokelwana e ko kae?
Food	

Vegetables	Morogo
Porridge	Motogo
Meat	Nama
Beans	Dinawa
I'm hungry (literally, 'I'm held by hunger')	Ke tshwerwe ke tlala.
I'm thirsty (literally, 'I'm held by thirst')	Ke tshwerwe ke lenyora.
May I (please) have some water?	(Ke kopa) metsi.

This food is good! Dijo tse di monate.

Dav	vs	and	Ma	onths
-----	----	-----	----	-------

Duys and Monnis		
Monday	Mosupologo	
Tuesday	Labobedi	
Wednesday	Laboraro	
Thursday	Labone	
Friday	Labotlhano	
Saturday	Matlhatso	
Sunday	Tshipi	
January	Ferikgong	
February	Tlhakole	
March	Mopitlo	
April	Moranang	
Мау	Motsheganong	
June	Seetebosigo	
July	Phukwi	
August	Phatwe	
September	Lwetse	
October	Phalane	
November	Ngwanatsele	
December	Sedimonthole (Morule)	
		-

Numbers Note that numbers are often said in Eng	
One	Bongwe
Two	Bobedi
Three	Boraro
Four	Bone
Five	Botlhano
Six	Borataro
Seven	Bosupa
Eight	Borobabobedi
Nine	Borobabongwe
Ten	Lesome

#### Seasons and the Weather

Winter	Mariga
Spring	Dikgakologo
Summer	Selemo
Autumn	Letlhafula
Planting season	Nako ya temo
Hot	Letsatsi
Cold	Tsididi
Warm	Mogote
Windy	phefo
Dust	Lerole
Rain	Pula
Cold	Serame
It's hot	Go letsatsi
It's cold	Go tsididi
It's windy	Go phefo
It's rainy	Go pula

# Clinical Words and Terms The Medical Interview/Exam

The Medical Interview/Exam	
Hello ma'am/sir, I'm	Dumela mma/rra, ke nna (your name)
I'm Dr from America.	Ke nna Ngaka tswa Amerika
Do you speak English?	A o bua sekgoa?
I don't speak Setswana.	Ga ke bue setswana
I don't understand.	Ga ke thaloganye.
I only speak a little Setswana.	Ke itse Setswana go le go nnye
What is your name?	Leina la gago ke mang?
Why are you here?	Gorileng?
Where is the problem?	Mathata a fa kae?
Where does it hurt / where is the pain?	Go bothloko fa kae?
Does it hurt here? (pointing)	A go botlhoko fa?
Does it hurt if I push like this?	A go botlhoko fa ke tobetsa jaana?
Does "x" hurt?	A "x" e botlhoko?
Does "x" ache?	A "x" e opa?
When did it start to hurt?	Go simolotse go nna botlhoko leng?
Would you please/ I would like you to	Ke kopa gore o
please	
Touch your toes (lit: you must / touch / your	Tshwara menwana ya maoto
/ toes)	,
Please touch your toes	Ke kopa gore o tshware menwana ya maoto
May I take a picture of you?	Ke kopa go go tsaya senepe.
Are you feeling better today?	A o ikutlwa botoka Tsatsijeno?
	A o ikutlwa sentle gompieno?
May I examine you now?	Ke kopa gore go go tlhatlhoba jaaong.
I am going to examine you now.	Ke tsile go go tlhatlhoba jaanong.
I am looking at your eyes.	Ke lebile matlho a gago.
I need to look in your ears.	Ke tlhoka go go leba mo ditsebeng.
Watch my finger.	Lebelela monwana wame.
Look this way.	Leba kwa.
Turn this way.	Retelogela ka fa. (pointing)
May I listen to your heart?	Ke kopa go reetsa pelo ya gago.
Please sit up / Please get up	Ke kopa gore o tsoge/ ke kopa gore o kotame.
Breathe deeply.	Hema ka thata
Take a deep breath.	Hemela ko teng
Hold your breath.	Tshwara mowa.
Does it hurt here? (pointing)	A go botlhoko fa?
Does it hurt if I push like this?	A go botlhoko fa ke tobetsa jaana?
Squeeze my hand.	Tamola / gatelela seatla same
Relax your (arm, leg)	Repisa (letsogo, lenao)
Don't move .	Se itshikhinye.
Don't move, be brave now.	Se itshikhinye, o itshoke jaaong.
You must.	O tshwanetse.

#### **Clinical Terms**

Hospital	Sepatele	
Doctor	Ngaka	
Doctors	Dingaka	

Nurse	Nnese / Mooki
Matron	Mmeiterone
Patient	Molwetse
Ambulance	Emelense/Ambulense
Bandage (noun)	Bandeiji / Sefapo
Breathlessness	Go hupela
Clinic	Kokelwana / Tleliniki
Cough / chest / phlegm	Sehuba
Disinfectant	Sebolayaditwatsi
Dizziness	Sedidi
Drugs / medication	Melemo
Feel sick/nausea	Go feroga sebete / Go selelega
Fever / to have a high temperature	Go gotela
Hospital	Kokelo
Illness	Bolwetse
Injection	Mokento
Inoculate	Enta/Kenta
Intestines / stomach	Mala
Massage (verb)	Sidila
Medical aid	Kalafo thuso
Medicine	Molemo/SetIhare
Operation/surgery	Karo
Out-patient	Mookelwantle/baokelwantle
Oxygen	Okosijene
Pain / painfull	Botlhoko
Pain-killer	Sebolayaditlhabi
Pill	Pilisi
Pimples / sores	Diso
Prescription	Ditaelo
Problem	Mathata
Sharp pain	Setlhabi
Sickness	Bolwetse
Tests (exams)	Ditlhatlhobo
Tiredness	Letsapa
Traditional healer	Ngaka ya Setswana
Vaccinate	Enta
Waiting room	Phaposi ya boletelo
Ward	Phaposi ya kokelo
Weak / weakness	Bokoa
Wounds / sores	Dintho
Verbs	

Breathe	Нета	
Close	Tswala	
Cough	Gotlhola	
Cough (also chest)	Sefuba	
Deep breath (breathe well)	Hema thata	
Do this (and demonstrate)	Dira jaana	
Get up	Tsoga	
Lie down	Robala/rapama	
Lift/raise	Tsholetsa	
Lower	Diga	

Open	Bula
pull up / down	Goga godimo / fatshe
Push up / down	Kgarameletsa ko godimo/ fatshe
Remove	Tlosa
Rest	Ikhutsa
See	Bona
Sit down	Nna fa fatshe
Sleep well.	O robale sentle.
Stand up	Emelela
Stick out	Ntsha
Touch	Tshwara
Wait	Leta/ema
We are done	Re feditse
Breathe	Hema
	Adverse la
Parts of the Body	Mmele
Ankle	Lenyenyana/lengenana
Arm	Letsogo
Armpit	Legwafa
Back	Mokwatla/Marudi
Big toe	Kgonotswe
Breast	Sehuba
Buttock	Lerago
Calf	Letlhafu
Cheek	Lerama/Lesama
Chest	Sefuba/Sehuba/Kgara
Chin	Seledu
Ear	Tsebe
Elbow	Sekgono/sejabana
Eye	Leitlho
Eyebrow	Losi
Eyelash	Ntshi
Eyelid	Losi
Eyes	Maitlho/Matlho
Face	Sefatlhego
Finger	Monwana
Fingernail	Lonala
Fist	Letswele/lebole
Foot	Lenao
Forehead	Phatla
Gums	Marinini
Hair	Moriri
Hand	Seatla
Head	Tlhogo
Heel	Serethe/Mokobe
Hip	Noka
Knee	Lengole
Knuckle	Nook
Left	Molema
Leg	Leotlo/maoto
Lip	Pounama
Little finger	Monnyennye/potsana
	Monnyennye/poisunu

Middle finger	Monogare/thabadiamela
Mouth	Molomo
Neck	Molala
Nose	Nko
Palm	Legofi
Right	Моја
Shin	Momo/mosetlase
Shoulder	Legetla
Shoulders	Magetla
Stomach	Мра
Tear	Keledi
Tears	Dikeledi
Teeth	Meno
Thigh	Serope
Throat	Mometso
Thumb	Monwana wa kgonope/kgonojwe
Тое	Monwana
Toes	Maoto/menwana
Tongue	Loleme
Tooth	Leino
Torso	Karolo e e kwa godimo ya mmele
Waist	Lotheka
Wrist	Makopanelo a seatla le letsogo/letlhalela
Internal organs	Dirwe tsa ka fat eng
Artery	Seisamadi
Bladder	SetIha
Blood	Madi
Bone	Lerapo
Brain	Boko
Heart	Pelo
Intestines	Mala
Kidney	Philo
Liver	Sebete
Lung	Lekgwalo
Muscle	Mosifa
Rib	Legopo
Skin	Letlalo
Stomarch	

AIDS	eitsi	
Asthma	asema	
Blindness	bofofu	
Cancer	kankere	
Chest pain	ditlhabi tsa mafatlha	
Chicken- pox	thutlwa	
Cold (illness)	mofikela	
Cough (noun)	kgotlholo	
Disease	botlhoko/bolwetse	
Earache	setlhabi sa tsebe	
Fever	letshoroma	
Flu	mokgotlhwane	

Мра

Stomach

Headache	opiwa ke tIhogo
Heart-attack	bolwetse ba pelo
Heartburn	lesokolela
High blood pressure	High blood (madi a magolo in Setswana, but they use the English, although it has more traditional meanings about "hot" and "passionate" blood as well as the biomedical ones)
Labor pains	ditlhabi tsa pelego
Measles	mmoko/mmokwana
Mumps	makidiane/mauwe
Pain	botlhoko/setlhabi
Polio	pholio
Pregnant	ima/imile
Scar	lebadi
Stomach ache	o tshwerwe ke mala
Virus	megare

#### Setswana Names

In Botswana, children may be named for some circumstance related to their birth and also given a pet name by which they are known at home. Students often give themselves nicknames for use at school. Upon the birth of her first child, a woman may thereafter be referred to as the mother of that child (for example, *Mma Dintle*). Here are some of the most popular Setswana names and their English meanings. Whether the name is use predominantly for men, women or both, is indicated. (F = Female, M = Male).

Amogelang ---- receive; accept (pl.) [F/M] Akanyang ---- think (pl.) [F] Baboloki ---- saviours; people who save [F/M] Barulaganye ---- they come immediately one after the other [F/M] Boikanyo ---- dependence [F/M] Boitumelo ---- happiness; joy [F/M] Bontle ---- beauty [F] Botshelo ---- life [F/M] Dikeledi ---- tears [F] Dineo ---- gifts [F] Dipuo ---- talks [F/M] Ditiro ---- acts [F/M] Gaone ---- of His (God) [F/M] Godiraone ---- it is Him (God) who acts or who does [F/M] Gofaone ---- it is Him (God) who gives [F] Goitsemang ---- who knows? [F/M] Goitsemodimo ---- it is God who knows [F/M] Goitseone ---- it is him (God) who knows [F] Gosego ---- lucky is he [F/M] Itumeleng ---- be happy; celebrate; rejoice

[F] Kabelo ---- a gift [M] Kabo ---- that which has been given [F/M] Kagiso ---- peace [F/M] Karabo ---- answer [F/M] Keabetswe ---- I have been given [M] Kealeboga ----thank you; I am thankful [F/M] Keamogetse ---- I have received; I have been paid [F/M] Kedibonye ---- I have seen them [F] Kefilwe ---- I have been given [F] Keitumetse ---- I am happy; I am thankful [F/M] Kelebogile ---- I am thankful [F] Keneilwe ---- I have been given [F] Kenosi ---- I am alone [M] Kgomotso ---- comfort [F] Kgosi ---- chief; king [M] Kgosiemang ---- who is the chief [M] Khumo ---- wealth; riches [F/M] Khumoetsile ---- wealth has come [F/M] Lebogang ---- be thankful [F/M] Lesedi ---- light [F]

Lesego ---- luck; a blessing [F/M] Lorato ---- love [F] Malebogo ---- thanks (noun) [F] Marea ---- Mary [F] Masego ---- blessings [F] Matlho ---- eyes [F/M] Matshidiso ---- condolences [F] Mmoloki ---- a saviour [M] Mmusi ---- governor; a ruler [M] Moagi ---- a builder; a resident [M] Modise ---- herdboy [M] Moeng ---- a guest; a visitor [M] Mogapi ---- one who confiscates [M] Mogorosi ---- one who brings the animals into the kraal in the evening [M] Mogotsi ---- the builder of fire [M] Mokgosi ---- a loud call for helpM Molatlheai ---- the lost one [M] Molefe ---- pay damages for her [M] Molefi ---- one who pay damages to another [M] Mompati ---- one who accompanies me [M] Mooketsi ---- one who increases [M] Morapedi ---- one who prays [M] Moremi ---- one who cuts with an axe [M] Moseki ---- one who appears before a court [M] Mosetsanagape ---- a girl again [F] Mosimanegape ---- a boy again [M] Mosweu ---- the light colored [M] Mothibi ---- one who drives animals [M] Mothusi ---- a helper [M] Motlalepula ---- one who brings rain [F] Motsumi ---- a hunter [M] Mpho ---- a gift; a present [F/M] Neo ---- a gift; a present; that which is given [F/M] Oaitse ---- he knows [F/M] Obonye ---- he has seen [F/M] Odirile ---- he has done, created, made [M] Oduetse ---- he has paid [M] Ofentse ---- he has conquered; he is victorious [M] Olebile ---- he is watching [M] Olebogeng ---- thank Him (God) [F/M] Onalenna ---- He (God) is with me [F/M] Onkemetse ---- he is representing me; he is awaiting me [F/M] Ontibile --- God is watching over me [F/M] Ontlametse ---- He (God) has protected me; He (God) has taken care of me [F/M] Oteng ---- He is there [F/M]

Othusitse ---- He has helped [F/M] Otsile ---- He has come [M] Palesa --- Flower [F] Phenyo --- Victory [M] Pono ---- sight [M] Pule ---- rain [M] Reneilwe --- given [F/M] Segomotso ---- a comfort [F] Sethunya ---- a flower [F] Tapologo ---- relaxation [F/M] Tebogo ---- a gift (noun) [F/M] Thapelo ---- prayer [F/M] Thatayaone ---- His (God) strength [F/M] Thato ---- Will; desire; love [F/M] Tsheaofatso ---- Grace; Blessina [F] Tshenolo ---- Revelation [F/M] Tshepo ---- Trust; to have faith and hope [F/M] Tshepiso --- a promise [F/M] Tsholofelo ---- Expectation [F/M] Tuelo ---- Payment [F/M]