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SWAHILI

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SWAHILI

Introduction

About the Swahili Language

Swahili, or *Kiswahili*, is an African language of the Bantu group (which comprises more than five hundred indigenous tongues). It is spoken in several East African nations, including Burundi, the Central African Republic, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Of these, it is recognized as an official national language in both Kenya and Tanzania, although only in Tanzania is it both spoken and used in government as a language of correspondence. Additionally, citizens of Comoros speak Comoran (a mixture of Swahili and Arabic), and Kingwana (a dialect of Swahili) is spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Swahili is also used as a language of business in commercial centers in Rwanda. In this course, the language and examples used pertain particularly to Kenya; however, with the exceptions noted above, Swahili does not differ widely from country to country.

It is probable that Swahili was first exposed to non-African influence as early as the 2nd century

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About the Swahili Language (continued)

B.C., when Greek explorers and merchants based in Alexandria ventured down the East African coast. Some documents surviving from that time seem to indicate that an early version of the language, perhaps a rough contemporary of Old English or classical Latin, was spoken by those native to the area.

Later, Arab and Persian merchants and traders had a demonstrable effect on the language. In fact, the numbers “six,” *sita*; “seven,” *saba*; “nine,” *tisa*; and the word *saa*, used with time, are all of Arabic origin. Words such as “tea,” *chai*, and “counsel,” *diwani*, were adapted from the Persians. The Swahili language was spread throughout the region first by these traders and later by Christian missionaries. Prior to European influences, Zanzibar (in modern day Tanzania) was both a cultural center and a commercial hub, so it was the Zanzibar dialect which was promoted as the regional standard.

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, the east coast of Africa was largely controlled by the

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About the Swahili Language (continued)

Portuguese, and their influence on the language can be seen in such words as “table,” *meza*; “prison,” *gereza*; and “money,” *pesa*. Since that time, the language has also changed to reflect the influence of later colonial powers, including Britain and Germany. Such words as “bicycle,” *baiskeli*; “pencil,” *penseli*; and “school,” *shule*, are a few examples. In some cases, there may exist two versions of a word: the original Swahili word and an adaptation of a foreign word. “Beer” is one example: you may hear either *pombe* or *bia* used in modern Swahili.

Today, Swahili is spoken throughout East Africa, although usually in conjunction with other languages. It is the most widely-spoken African language, with approximately 50 million speakers in East and Central Africa. It can be heard on such international radio programs as the BBC World News and the Voice of America, and both business and cultural exchange have begun to make it more prominent and useful to outsiders. Swahili is now used in settings ranging from everyday communication to government and commerce.

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Telling Time in Swahili

In order to ask and answer the question, “What time is it?” you must be familiar with how Swahili speakers reckon time. As we do, Swahili speakers divide a 24-hour day into two 12-hour cycles, but rather than going from midnight to noon, the Swahili cycle instead begins at sunrise — 6:00 AM. Therefore, “seven AM,” one hour after sunrise, is “one o’clock in the morning,” *saa moja asubuhi*, in Swahili. At sunset (6:00 PM English time), the cycle begins again. For ease in converting, you can either add six hours to the Swahili time or subtract six hours from the English time to arrive at the equivalent.

Swahili uses time descriptors to specify the time of day in much the same way AM and PM are used when telling time in English. In this course we taught four of these time descriptors, which align with the more secular American/European time period descriptions:

<i>asubuhi</i>	in the morning
<i>mchana</i>	in the afternoon
<i>jioni</i>	in the evening
<i>usiku</i>	at night

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Telling Time in Swahili (continued)

You may also hear additional time descriptors used which conform to Muslim Prayer times:

alfajiri - the dawn prayer (dawn)

early morning, the time before and until sunrise

adhuhuri - the noon prayer (midday)

early afternoon, 12-2 PM

alasiri - the afternoon prayer (late afternoon)

around 3 PM until before sunset

magharibi - the sunset prayer (dusk)

the time around sunset

In addition, you may hear the time descriptor *usiku wa manane*, which means “late night,” used for the hours between midnight and 2 AM.

A time table starts on the next page, showing English times and their Swahili equivalents for one complete day using the time descriptors taught in this course.

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Telling Time in Swahili (continued)

<u>English Time</u>	<u>Swahili Time</u>
7:00 AM “hour one in the morning” (<i>saa moja asubuhi</i>)	1:00 <i>asubuhi</i>
8:00 AM “hour two in the morning” (<i>saa mbili asubuhi</i>)	2:00 <i>asubuhi</i>
9:00 AM “hour three in the morning” (<i>saa tatu asubuhi</i>)	3:00 <i>asubuhi</i>
10:00 AM “hour four in the morning” (<i>saa nne asubuhi</i>)	4:00 <i>asubuhi</i>
11:00 AM “hour five in the morning” (<i>saa tano asubuhi</i>)	5:00 <i>asubuhi</i>
12:00 PM (noon) “hour six in the afternoon” (<i>saa sita mchana</i>)	6:00 <i>mchana</i>
1:00 PM “hour seven in the afternoon” (<i>saa saba mchana</i>)	7:00 <i>mchana</i>
2:00 PM “hour eight in the afternoon” (<i>saa nane mchana</i>)	8:00 <i>mchana</i>
3:00 PM “hour nine in the afternoon” (<i>saa tisa mchana</i>)	9:00 <i>mchana</i>

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Telling Time in Swahili (continued)

<u>English Time</u>	<u>Swahili Time</u>
4:00 PM “hour ten in the afternoon” (<i>saa kumi mchana</i>)	10:00 <i>mchana</i>
5:00 PM “hour eleven in the evening” (<i>saa kumi na moja jioni</i>)	11:00 <i>jioni</i>
6:00 PM “hour twelve in the evening” (<i>saa kumi na mbili jioni</i>)	12:00 <i>jioni</i>
7:00 PM “hour one in the evening” (<i>saa moja jioni</i>)	1:00 <i>jioni</i>
8:00 PM “hour two at night” (<i>saa mbili usiku</i>)	2:00 <i>usiku</i>
9:00 PM “hour three at night” (<i>saa tatu usiku</i>)	3:00 <i>usiku</i>
10:00 PM “hour four at night” (<i>saa nne usiku</i>)	4:00 <i>usiku</i>
11:00 PM “hour five at night” (<i>saa tano usiku</i>)	5:00 <i>usiku</i>
12:00 AM (midnight) “hour six at night” (<i>saa sita usiku</i>)	6:00 <i>usiku</i>

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Telling Time in Swahili (continued)

<u>English Time</u>	<u>Swahili Time</u>
1:00 AM “hour seven at night” (<i>saa saba usiku</i>)	7:00 <i>usiku</i>
2:00 AM “hour eight at night” (<i>saa nane usiku</i>)	8:00 <i>usiku</i>
3:00 AM “hour nine at night” (<i>saa tisa usiku</i>)	9:00 <i>usiku</i>
4:00 AM “hour ten at night.” (<i>saa kumi usiku</i>)	10:00 <i>usiku</i>
5:00 AM “hour eleven in the morning” (<i>saa kumi na moja asubuhi</i>)	11:00 <i>asubuhi</i>
6:00 AM “hour twelve in the morning” (<i>saa kumi na mbili asubuhi</i>)	12:00 <i>asubuhi</i>

The word *saa* is always included when telling time. Often, however, if the time of the day is not in question, the descriptive words can be dropped from the end, saying, for example, just “Now it’s nine o’clock,” *Sasa ni saa tisa*. (Of course, using

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Telling Time in Swahili (continued)

English time, this would be either “three o’clock in the afternoon” or “three in the morning.”)

Many parts of East Africa operate using both systems. When reading schedules or making appointments, always make sure you know whether the time is English or Swahili. Schedules sometimes list the times using both systems.

Social events usually run behind schedule, sometimes by two or more hours. It is usually expected that people will begin to show up well after the designated time. For business appointments, however, it is generally a good idea to arrive at the scheduled time.

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Swahili Script

Swahili existed for centuries as an oral language. However, foreign influences had a significant effect on written Swahili. The earliest surviving written Swahili manuscript, dated 1728, is an epic poem written in the Arabic alphabet. Later during the 19th century, missionaries introduced the Latin alphabet as a way to distribute religious material in Swahili. These missionaries were also responsible for producing the first Swahili dictionary and for publishing the first Swahili newspaper, in 1895, using the Latin alphabet. In 1930 the Latin alphabet was adopted and standardized. Today the Swahili alphabet consists of 24 letters; the letters “c,” “q,” and “x” are not used and there is an additional letter, “ch.”

After an initial introduction to the spoken language, reading is integrated into the program starting with Unit Eleven. In these Reading Lessons you will learn to sound out the Swahili alphabet, starting with short words or combinations of letters, then progressing to words, word combinations, and short phrases, increasingly building in length until you will be reading complete sentences in context. The Swahili alphabet is systematically introduced

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Swahili Script (continued)

and you will learn to associate each letter with the sounds of the Swahili language. You will not, at first, be reading for meaning, but rather for sound/symbol correlation. Eventually, when the sound system is mastered, you will be able to look at known vocabulary and read for meaning. By the end of this course, you will be reading at the same level as you are speaking.

The reading items in the lessons have been selected especially to give you practice in the Swahili sounds and sound combinations. Your vocabulary acquisition will begin after you've learned the new, different sound system. You should read aloud, as directed. The process of saying the words out loud will reinforce and enhance your Swahili language acquisition and will help lodge the sounds of the Swahili language in your memory. In these Reading Lessons, you will learn to look at the Swahili alphabet with Swahili eyes.

There are twenty Swahili Reading Lessons which start at the end of Unit Eleven. These lessons are also combined and provided at the end of the

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Swahili Script (continued)

course. You may choose to do the Readings along with the units, or you may wait until you have completed the course and do them all together. Repeat the Reading Lessons as often as you wish. Instructions on how to proceed with the Readings are contained in the audio.

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Unit Eleven

1. baba
2. bibi
3. bado
4. basi
5. dada
6. dola
7. gani
8. kidogo
9. hapa
10. hapana
11. habari
12. Habari gani?
13. iko
14. huko
15. juma
16. jana
17. kiko
18. kitu
19. katika
20. kilomita

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Unit Twelve

1. la
2. lakini
3. lini
4. kulipa
5. Fatuma
6. fahamu
7. ninafahamu
8. juba
9. maji
10. moja
11. Marekani
12. mume
13. nane
14. ninataka
15. ninakupa
16. nitakulipa
17. pale
18. pesa
19. jioni
20. upesi

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Unit Thirteen

1. sasa
2. sana
3. sikiliza
4. za
5. tano
6. tisa
7. tayari
8. tunaweza
9. tuonane
10. vizuri
11. Si vizuri sana.
12. wako
13. wewe
14. wakubwa
15. yako
16. yetu
17. siyo
18. siwezi
19. zozote
20. zinatosha

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Unit Fourteen

1. aa
2. baada
3. chakaa
4. cheo
5. leo
6. chai
7. faida
8. Faida ya chai.
9. fedha
10. tafadhali
11. yangu
12. Fedha yangu.
13. mtu
14. mfano
15. Mfano wa mtu.
16. Mmarekani
17. Yeye ni Mmarekani.
18. nyanya
19. nyama
20. Nyanya ni Mmarekani.

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Unit Fifteen

1. au
2. dau
3. sauti
4. dhaifu
5. sauti dhaifu
6. kununua
7. mwaka
8. mwisho
9. mwisho wa mwaka
10. mwalimu / mfalme
11. mbele ya
12. Mbele ya mfalme.
13. choo
14. kiko
15. Choo kiko pale.
16. njoo
17. jogoo
18. njoo na jogoo.
19. Shikamoo.
20. Shikamoo mwalimu.

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Unit Sixteen

1. kuu
2. juu
3. Juu au kuu?
4. mjukuu
5. Mjukuu ni mwalimu.
6. ghali
7. bei
8. bei ya chai
9. Bei ya chai ni ghali.
10. ghafla
11. kwa
12. Bei ya chai ni ghali kwa ghafla.
13. mzazi
14. mzuri
15. nzuri
16. mzazi mzuri / chai nzuri
17. lugha
18. Kiingereza
19. Kiingereza ni lugha.
20. Kiingereza ni lugha nzuri.

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Unit Seventeen

1. kuna
2. ngazi
3. kuna ngazi
4. nguo
5. nguo nzuri
6. ng'ombe
7. ng'ambo
8. ngoma
9. ng'ombe / ngoma
10. Ng'ambo kuna ng'ombe?
11. hakuna
12. Ng'ambo hakuna ngoma.
13. nguo ghali
14. Mgeni wa ng'ambo.
15. unaongea
16. Ana nguo nzuri.
17. Mgeni wa ng'ambo ana nguo ghali.
18. arobaini
19. Hana ng'ombe.
20. Mgeni wa Marekani hana ng'ombe.

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Unit Eighteen

1. mti
2. ng'oa
3. chungwa
4. mchungwa
5. mngwana
6. Ng'oa mchungwa.
7. Mchungwa ni mti.
8. Mngwana ni mtu mzuri.
9. ugonjwa
10. Ugonjwa wa mti.
11. Mngwana ni mgonjwa.
12. maharagwe
13. yana
14. mchanga
15. Maharagwe yana mchanga.
16. bei ya maharagwe
17. Bei ya maharagwe ni ghali.
18. maji ya chupa
19. mtoto mchanga
20. Mtoto mchanga ni mgonjwa.

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Unit Nineteen

1. baba watoto
2. pamoja
3. huyu
4. mzee
5. Tunaishi hapa.
6. Mzee ana papa.
7. papai
8. anang'oa
9. Mzee anang'oa papai.
10. panda / banda
11. bandani
12. shamba
13. shambani
14. liko
15. Baba anapanda maharagwe.
16. Mzee anapanda juu ya banda.
17. Baba anapanda maharagwe bandani.
18. Baba yuko bandani.
19. Baba yuko bandani anapanda juu ya papai.
20. Baba na mzee wanapanda shambani.

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Unit Twenty

1. changa
2. janga
3. Mtoto ni mchanga.
4. jangwa
5. changwa
6. Jangwa la janga.
7. Mchanga wa jangwa.
8. Mtoto mchanga ana mchanga.
9. chanja
10. chanjwa
11. chanja / chanjwa
12. Mtoto mchanga alichanjwa.
13. Pesa zilichangwa.
14. toa
15. Toa doa.
16. Poa sana.
17. Baba anatoa doa kwa nguo.
18. thamini
19. dhamini
20. Baba alidhamini mzee.

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Unit Twenty-One

1. kuku
2. asubuhi
3. yuko
4. kikombe
5. Kuku yuko nyumbani.
6. Gugu liko shambani.
7. Kuna gugu na kuku shambani.
8. maneno
9. Kuku na gugu si maneno sawa.
10. kupata
11. haba / hapa
12. Hapa kuku ni haba.
13. adimu / hadimu
14. Kupata hadimu mzuri ni adimu.
15. uhaba
16. Hapa kuna uhaba wa hadimu.
17. ajali
18. hajali
19. Kuna ajali hapa.
20. Yeye hajali hata akipata ajali.

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Unit Twenty-Two

1. chache
2. tunachukua
3. Mchezo umechacha.
4. sisi
5. zizi
6. Sisi tuna zizi.
7. Ng'ombe wachache tu wako zizini.
8. Sisi tunachukua ng'ombe zizini.
9. fuka / vuka
10. fuma / vuma
11. Fuma wamevuma hapa.
12. Alimfuma nywele.
13. Jiko lilifuka moshi.
14. Mzee anafuga fuma zizini.
15. Tulipovuka mto tulifuka mvuke.
16. nafasi
17. mavazi
18. yanayofaa
19. Tukipata nafasi tutavaa mavazi yanayofaa.
20. Sisi tulivaa mavazi yaliyofaa.

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Unit Twenty-Three

1. pekee
2. Mzee alikuwa peke yake.
3. alinunua
4. nyeusi
5. Mwalimu alinunua nguo nyeusi.
6. mbuyu
7. mbuyu
8. Mbuyu anapanda mbuyu.
9. kimya
10. myahudi
11. Myahudi amekaa kimya.
12. raia
13. zuia
14. ghasia
15. Yeye ni raia wa Marekani.
16. Raia walizuia ghasia.
17. Raia walikaa kimya.
18. Sikiliza na urudie.
19. kulikuwa
20. Baada ya ghasia kulikuwa na kimya.

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Unit Twenty-Four

1. Mna watoto?
2. Ndiyo, tuna watoto watatu.
3. vijana
4. Vijana wawili na binti mmoja.
5. Watoto wangapi?
6. Tuna watoto watatu.
7. Kijana wa kwanza ni mkubwa tayari.
8. Kijana wa pili ni mkubwa sana.
9. Binti bado ni mdogo sana.
10. Mume wako yuko wapi?
11. Sijui, penye yuko.
12. Yeye hayuko hapa Kenya.
13. Yeye yuko Marekani.
14. Hatuishi Washington.
15. Hatuna watoto.
16. mwana wa kiume
17. Kijana yuko wapi?
18. Kijana anasafiri.
19. Anasafiri nchini Kenya.
20. Ameenda safari ndefu.

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Unit Twenty-Five

1. Una motokaa?
2. Ndiyo, mimi nina motokaa ndogo.
3. Nina motokaa kubwa ...
4. na familia kubwa.
5. Familia yako iko Kenya?
6. Hapana, mke wangu ...
7. na watoto wetu watatu ...
8. wote wako jijini New York.
9. Ninahitaji mafuta ya gari.
10. Tutahitaji mafuta ya gari.
11. Zaidi ya lita kumi.
12. Tuna motokaa mpya ...
13. na tunasafiri mpaka Naivasha.
14. Ni kilomita ngapi?
15. Mpaka Naivasha ni kilomita sabini tu.
16. Hapo si mbali sana.
17. Utakuja na mimi?
18. Unaweza kuja na mimi?
19. Ningependa sana ...
20. lakini leo haiwezekani.

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Unit Twenty-Six

1. Mke wangu yuko pale.
2. Mume wako yuko wapi?
3. Yuko hapa?
4. Mke wako hayuko hapa.
5. Mke wako angependa kunywa nini?
6. Yeye hajui.
7. Kuja hapa ndani!
8. Nimefurahi kukutana na wewe.
9. Unaishi mjini Nairobi pia?
10. Hapana, tunaishi mjini Mombasa.
11. Mume wangu hayuko hapa Kenya.
12. Amesafiri kwenda Afrika Kusini.
13. Anafanya kazi huko ...
14. na shirika lisilo la kiserikali.
15. Shirika hilo ni kubwa sana.
16. Na wewe? Unafanya nini?
17. Na shirika gani?
18. Unafanya kazi na shirika gani?
19. La Kimarekani.
20. Na shirika la Kimarekani?

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Unit Twenty-Seven

1. Barabara gani ...
2. inaenda mpaka Naivasha?
3. Ni barabara gani?
4. Nenda moja kwa moja.
5. Na kisha pinda kulia.
6. Hapana, pinda kwenda upande wa kushoto.
7. Chukua barabara ya mkono wako wa kulia.
8. Ninarudia tena.
9. Ni kilomita ngapi mpaka Nakuru?
10. Mimi sijui.
11. Ngoja kidogo!
12. Hiyo siyo barabara sawa.
13. Chukua ile barabara nyingine.
14. Na naenda moja kwa moja.
15. Hiyo inaenda moja kwa moja mpaka mjini Nakuru.
16. Mimi nina rafiki huko.
17. Nina marafiki wengi huko.
18. Ningependa kuwatembelea.
19. Wameishi mjini Nakuru kwa mda mrefu.
20. Karibu miaka kumi sasa.

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Unit Twenty-Eight

1. Leo siwezi kusafiri nawe ...
2. mpaka mjini Naivasha, ...
3. kwa sababu sina pesa, ...
4. kwa sababu sina nafasi, ...
5. kwa sababu sina motokaa mpya, ...
6. kwa sababu ningependa kufanya kazi, ...
7. kwa sababu siko peke yangu, ...
8. kwa sababu mkubwa wangu yuko hapa, ...
9. kwa sababu saa hizi ...
10. ningependa kula kitu, ...
11. kwa sababu leo jioni ...
12. bado ningependa kununua kitu, ...
13. kwa sababu sisikii vizuri, ...
14. kwa hivyo singependa kusafiri.
15. Lakini ... unasafiri lini?
16. Kama utasafiri kwenda ...
17. Naivasha kesho, ...
18. basi mimi ninaweza ...
19. kusafiri na wewe.
20. Nipigie simu baadaye!

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Unit Twenty-Nine

1. Ungependa kupiga simu?
2. Inawezekana?
3. Unaweza kunisaidia?
4. Kweli.
5. Mimi ninaweza kukusaidia.
6. Namba ya simu ni saba, sufuri, sita ...
7. mbili, tatu, tisa.
8. Nitarudia tena.
9. Mimi sina nafasi ...
10. ya kupiga simu.
11. Lazima ufanye kazi saa hizi?
12. Saa hizi siyo lazima.
13. Lakini...
14. kwa vyovyote ...
15. sina nafasi.
16. Pole!
17. Kutoka saa moja ya asubuhi ...
18. niko shuleni ...
19. kusoma, kusema, na kuandika.
20. Wewe unafanya kazi nyingi sana!

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Unit Thirty

1. Ningependa kununua kahawa ...
2. lakini leo siwezi.
3. Leo maduka yamefungwa.
4. Kwa nini yamefungwa?
5. Mimi sijui.
6. Lakini kesho ...
7. maduka yatafunguliwa.
8. Ugependa kununua nini?
9. Kahawa na vitabu.
10. Ningependa kununulia mke wangu na watoto wangu ...
11. zawadi pia.
12. Ninaweza kuchukua teksu ...
13. mpaka mjini Nairobi.
14. Kwa sababu saa hizi mjini, ...
15. maduka bado yamefunguliwa.
16. Lakini mji wa Nairobi uko mbali sana kutoka hapa.
17. Ni mwendo wa saa moja na teksu!
18. Ni kilomita nyingi!
19. Sawa basi, ...
20. nitangoja mpaka kesho!