



GAGANA SAMOA

*A primer on reading and speaking the
Samoa language*

PACIFIC LANGUAGE WEEKS



Reading and speaking

Gagana Samoa

The core Samoan alphabet is comprised of 14 letters:

The consonants (konesane):

F, G, L, M, N, P, S, T and **V**

The vowels (vauelei):

A, E, I, O and **U** (as in the English language: **are**, **there**, **three**, **or**, **too**).

These vowels have the same pronunciation as other Pacific languages, including te reo Māori (Māori language).

The letters **K, H** and **R** are also used, but usually for foreign loanwords and/or for colloquial language. Vowels can be long or short.

Long vowels are marked with a macron (e.g. ā).

ā, ē, ī, ō, ū

(as in the English language: **father**, **egg**, **feet**, **thought**, **loot**)

It is important that the short and long vowel sounds are used, as they distinguish between different words e.g. *ava* (respect) versus *āvā* (wife).

The glottal stop (') is also used in Samoan and is treated as a consonant.

It creates a pause between two vowels or creates a sharper sound when used at the start of a word, as the sound made in the English word *uh-oh*. Using the glottal stop, distinguishes different words such as *fa'i* (banana) and *fai* (to do), or *'ulu* (breadfruit) and *ulu* (head).

O LE PI FAITAU THE SAMOAN ALPHABET

Aa

Ato Bag

Ee

Elefane Elephant Ipu Cup

Ii

Ipu Cup

Oo

Ofu Clothes

Uu

Uati Watch

Ff

Fagu Bottle

Gg

Gata Snake

Ll

Logo Bell

Mm

Moa Chicken

Nn

Nafoa Chair

Pp

Pusi Cat

Ss

Solofanua Horse Ta'avale Car

Tt

Ta'avale Car

Vv

Va'a Boat

Hh

*Helikopa
Helicopter*

Kk

Kirikiti Cricket

Rr

Rāpiti Rabbit

Gagana o aso uma *Everyday phrases*

Common Phrases

Tālofa lava	<i>Greetings / Hello</i>
Tōfā	<i>Goodbye</i>
Fa'amolemole	<i>Please</i>
Fa'afetai	<i>Thank you</i>
Malie / Fa'amalie atu / Fa'amālūlū atu	<i>Sorry</i>
Tulou	<i>Excuse me</i>

Pleasantries

O ai lou igoa?	<i>What is your name?</i>
O lo'u igoa o _____	<i>My name is _____</i>
O fea e te sau ai?	<i>Where are you from?</i>
Ou te sau mai _____	<i>I am from _____</i>
O fea e te faigaluega ai?	<i>Where do you work?</i>
Ou te faigaluega i _____	<i>I work at _____</i>

Gagana o aso uma *Everyday phrases*

In Conversation

O ā mai oe?	<i>How are you (singular)?</i>
O ā mai oulua?	<i>How are you (dual)?</i>
O ā mai outou?	<i>How are you (plural)?</i>
O lea ou te manuia fa'afetai	<i>I am good, thank you</i>
Ua e 'ai? Sau ta a'ai	<i>Have you eaten? Come eat with me</i>
Fa'amalie atu i le tuai atu o se tali...	<i>Apologies for the delayed response...</i>
I la'u imeli talu ai...	<i>As per my previous email...</i>
Ou te fiafia e fa'atalanoa atili lenei mataupu	<i>Happy to discuss</i>
Uo o'o i le taimi o le fa'amalosi tino!	<i>It's gym time!</i>
Vili mai / Vala'au mai	<i>Call me</i>
Fa'amālō atu!	<i>Congratulations!</i>
E lelei le Atua!	<i>God is good!</i>

Gagana o aso uma *Everyday phrases*

People

Matai	<i>Chief / Orator</i>
Faife'au	<i>Church Minister</i>
Tamaitiiti / Teineitiiti	<i>Child</i>
Tamā	<i>Father</i>
Tinā	<i>Mother</i>
Tuafafine (male to female) Uso (female to female)	<i>Sister</i>
Tuagane (female to male) Uso (male to male)	<i>Brother</i>
Uō	<i>Friends</i>

Faith is an important aspect of Samoan culture.

Below is a short prayer and hymn that can be used at the start of your day, to open a meeting or small gathering.

Tatalo Prayer

Tātou tatalo

Let us pray

Lo matou Tamā o i le lagi

Our heavenly father

la e fa'amanuia mai,
i lenei vaiaso

*We ask for your blessings
this week*

la te i matou uma ta'ito'atasi

To each and every one of us

I le suafa o Iesu, Āmene.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Pese Hymn

E alofa le Atua ia te a'u

My God loves me

Ma mea matagofie ua ou va'aia

And all the wonders I see

Le nuanua e susulu mai
i lo'u fa'amalama

*The rainbow shines
through my window*

E alofa le Atua ia te a'u

My God loves me.

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