



TE REO MĀORI KŪKI 'AIRANI

*A brief guide to reading and speaking
the Cook Islands Māori language*

PACIFIC LANGUAGE WEEKS

 Ministry for
Pacific Peoples

Reading and speaking

Te Reo Māori Kūki 'Airani

Te au reo 'ō te Kūki 'Airani –

The languages of the Cook Islands

Cook Islands Māori is an Eastern Polynesian language belonging to the same language family as New Zealand Māori, Hawaiian and Tahitian.

Pukapuka of the Cook Islands is a Western Polynesian language belonging to the same language family as the languages of Samoa, Tuvalu, and Tokelau.

Palmerston Island has its own distinctive mixture of Cook Islands Māori and English.

English is an official language of the Cook Islands.

Te au reo 'enua tātakita'i – Dialects

There are several distinct dialects in the Cook Islands: Mangaia, Rarotonga, Ngāpūtoru (made up of Atiu, Ma'uke and Miti'āro, Aitutaki, Manihiki, Rakahanga, Tongareva, Pukapuka and Palmerston), however the main dialect being taught is the Rarotongan dialect – Rarotonga being the capital of the Cook Islands.

Vōvera – Vowels

The vowels in Cook Islands Māori are pronounced the same as many other Pacific languages, including New Zealand Māori.

Using the 2 distinctive signs, the Mākarōna (macron) and 'Āmata (glottal stop), changes the sound and meaning of each word, mākarōna (ā) giving it a long sound and 'Āmata (glottal stop) ('a), a quick sound – e.g. marama (moon) and mārama (daylight/understand).

'a, 'e, 'i, 'o, 'u as in the English: **a**bout, **e**xpress, **i**nk, **o**pt, or **u**t

ā, ē, ī, ō, ū as in the English: **f**ather, **b**ed, **f**ee**t**, **t**hought, **l**oot

Consonants – Kōnitinena

ng, k, m, n, p, r, t, v

Consonants must always be followed by a vowel and are pronounced like in English. The 'ng' sound is as in the English word 'sing.' 'T' with the vowels a, e, and o added has a slight 'D' sound.

The Tongareva alphabet has two additional consonants: s and h; the Manihiki and Rakahanga dialects also have a f and h. Pukapuka is even more distinct, with the letters l, w, and y in its alphabet.

Te Ara Reta Māori Kūki 'Airani

Cook Islands Māori Alphabet

Aa

Anu
Cold

Ee

'Ei
Garland

Ng

Ngūtupa
Door

Ii

'Imene
Song

Kk

Kerekere
Black

Mm

Marama
Moon

Nn

Nira
Needle

Oo

Ora kanga
Playtime

Pp

Pereue
Coat

Rr

Rekareka
Happy

Tt

Tāne
Man / Husband

Uu

'Ura
Dance

Vv

Vai
Water



Au Tuatua Rā 'Ua Nei *Everyday phrases*

Common Phrases

Kia orāna	<i>Greetings / Hello</i>
Kia orāna kōtou kātoatoa	<i>Greetings to you all</i>
'Aere rā / 'Aere atu rā	<i>Goodbye to those who are leaving (only if it applies)</i>
'Ē no'o rā / No'o ake rā	<i>Goodbye – to those who are staying (only if it applies)</i>
'Inē?	<i>Please</i>
Meitaki	<i>Thank you</i>
Tatarā'ara	<i>Apologies / Sorry</i>
Inā / Inā ake ana	<i>Excuse me</i>
Ko'ai tō'ou ingoa?	<i>What is your name?</i>
Ko _____ tōku ingoa	<i>My name is _____</i>
Nō'ea mai koe?	<i>Where are you from?</i>
'E tangata au nō _____ mai.	<i>I am a person from _____</i>
Nō _____ mai au.	<i>I am from _____</i>
'Ē 'anga'anga ana koe ki 'ea?	<i>Where do you work?</i>
'Ē 'anga'anga ana au ki _____	<i>I work at _____</i>
Pē'ea kōrua?	<i>How are you both?</i>
Meitaki ma'ata au	<i>I am very well</i>
Kua kaikai koe? 'Aere mai kaikai	<i>Have you eaten? Come and eat</i>

Au Tuatua Rā 'Ua Nei *Everyday phrases*

People

Ariki	Chief
'Orometua	Church Minister
Tamāroa	Boy
Tamāine	Girl
Pāpā, 'Akapāpā, Pāpā rū'au	Father, uncle, grandfather
Māmā, 'Akamāmā, Māmā rū'au	Mother, auntie, grandmother
Tua'ine	Sister to a brother
Tungāne	Brother to a sister
Au 'Oa	Friends

Office Talk

Mei tāku 'īmēre 'i tuku atu 'i mua ake...	<i>As per my previous email...</i>
Ka mataora au 'i te 'uri'uri tuatua	<i>Happy to discuss</i>
'E taime 'akaketaketa kōpapa teia	<i>It's time to stretch out the body / It's gym time</i>
Rīngi mai iāku	<i>Ring me</i>
'Akararangi'anga / 'Akangateitei'anga	<i>Congratulations!</i>
Meitaki te Atua!	<i>God is good!</i>

Faith is an important aspect of Cook Islands Māori culture.

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

Pure Prayer

Ka pure tātou

Let us pray

‘Ē to mātou Metua ‘i runga ‘i te
rangi teitei

Our heavenly father

Tē pati atu nei mātou ‘i tā‘au
‘akameitaki‘anga ‘i teia ‘epetoma.

*We ask for your blessings
this week*

Kia mātou tātakita‘i

To each and every one of us

Nā roto ‘i te ingoa ‘ō Iesu
‘i pure atu ei mātou.

In Jesus name we pray.

‘Āmene

Amen

‘Īmene Hymn

Aro‘a mai te Atua iāku

My God loves me

‘E te au mea tāku e kite nei

And all the wonders I see

Tē anuanua kua
‘iti mai ki roto iāku

*The rainbow shines
through my window*

Aro‘a mai te Atua iāku.

My God loves me.

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