



# Te Taetae ni Kiribati

## Kiribati Language

**PACIFIC**  
*LANGUAGE*  
**WEEKS**



  
Ministry for  
**Pacific  
Peoples**  
Te Manatū mō ngā Iwi o te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa

# Te taetae ni Kiribati | Kiribati Language



## The Kiribati Alphabet consists of 13 letters.

The Vowels have the same pronunciation as other Pacific Languages including Te Reo Māori (Maori Language).

Special Consonants

**Nasals - M N Ng**

Like the vowels, the nasal sounds may also occur lengthened, which may provide some difficulty for English speakers.

This is another area in which spelling systems do not agree, often failing to indicate the additional length. For the most part these sounds are similar to those occurring in English.

In the **'NG'** consonant, we can start, end, and use it in the middle of a word. E.g. **Ngare** (laugh), **kangakang'** (delicious) and **'eng'** (yes). In the English language, **NG** is used in and at the end of a word. E.g. **'singing'** and **'sing'** but never start a word with **NG** except for nouns.

**R** - In te taetae ni Kiribati we roll the letter 'r'. For example 'Kiribati' is pronounced as 'g-i-dd-y-b-a-s'.

**K** - The letter 'k' is softened to a hard 'g' sound, as in 'gift'. Again, this is demonstrated well in the word 'Kiribati'.

**T** - The letter 't' makes a 'd' sound like when we say the word please - 'taiaoka' the english phoneme equivalent would be 'd-ay-o-g-a'.

**I** - When an 'i' follows a 't', it changes the 't' to an 's' sound.

Vowels	Short Sound	Long Sound
<b>A</b>	Sound in 'ask' and 'dark'	March
<b>E</b>	Sound in 'elephant' and 'enter'	Egg
<b>I</b>	Sound in 'pit' and 'in'	Meat
<b>O</b>	Sound in 'ocean' and 'oat'	Door
<b>U</b>	Sound in 'blue' and 'you'	Moon

## The consonants consist of 8 letters

<b>M</b> as in 'number'	<b>N</b> as in 'in'	<b>NG</b> as in 'sing'
<b>B</b> as in 'be'	<b>K</b> as in 'gift'	<b>R</b> as in 'tree'
<b>T</b> as in 'sea'	<b>W</b> as in 'we'	



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## Additional Consonants

<b>mw</b>	<b>mwa</b>	<b>mwe</b>	<b>mwi</b>
<b>bw</b>	<b>bwa</b>	<b>bwe</b>	<b>bwi</b>

### These consonants are used to differentiate the sounds in:

'maku' (scared) 'umwa' (kitchen) 'bangke' (bank)  
'bwatere' (dance).

As in English 'ma' in 'madam' 'mwa' in 'mother' 'ba' in  
'badminton' 'bwa' in 'bar'.

Please note that in some parts of the Kiribati islands, these  
consonants cannot be used with the 'o' and 'u' vowels.

### Kiribati Alphabet / A na man ni koroboki Kiribati

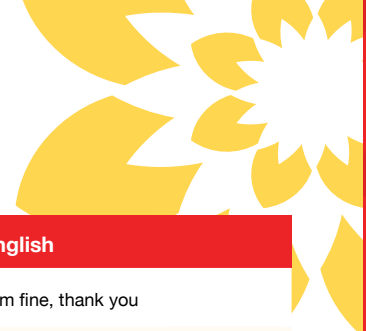
A E I O U

M, N, NG, B, K, R, T, W (**Nasals M N NG**)

MW, BW



# Taeka aika a bongana | Useful words

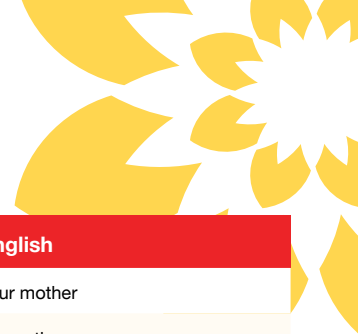


Kiribati	English
<b>Mauri</b>	Greetings / Hello
<b>Kam na bane ni mauri</b>	Greetings Everyone
<b>Ti a bo</b>	Goodbye
<b>Ti a bo, tekeraoi te mwananga</b>	Goodbye, have a safe trip / nice trip
<b>Taiaoka</b>	Please
<b>Ko rabwa (singular) Kam rabwa (plural)</b>	Thank you
<b>Kabwara te bure</b>	Sorry
<b>Ko matauninga</b>	Excuse me
<b>Antai aram?</b>	What is your name?
<b>Arau _____</b>	My name is _____
<b>Kaain ia ngkoe?</b>	Where are you from?
<b>Ngai kaain _____</b>	I am from _____
<b>Ko mwakuri ia?</b>	Where do you work?
<b>I mwakuri i (I makuri n te _____ ) _____</b>	I work at _____
<b>Ko uara? Kam uara?</b>	How are you (singular)? How are you (dual / plural)?

Kiribati	English
<b>Ko rabwa, I marurung (I marurung ko rabwa)</b>	I am fine, thank you
<b>Ko a tia n amwarake? Ti a nako n amwarake</b>	Have you eaten? Let's go eat
<b>Kabwara te bure ni iremwen te reitaki rikaaki...</b>	Apologies for the delayed response...
<b>Ni kaineti ma au meeri are ma i mwaina...</b>	As per my previous email...
<b>I kukurei ni maroroakinna</b>	I am happy to discuss
<b>Te tai ni kamarurung!</b>	It's gym time!
<b>Ko a reitaki nako iu n te tarebon / Ko a tareboniai</b>	Call me
<b>Tekeraoi n am tokanikai!</b>	Congratulations!
<b>Te Atua n tangira</b>	God of love
<b>Te karo/te Tama</b>	Father
<b>Mitinare/Minita</b>	Church Minister
<b>Te Tama</b>	Father/Priest (Catholic)
<b>Te nati/te ataei</b>	Child
<b>Naati/ataei</b>	Children



# Taeka aika a bongana | Family Words



Kiribati	English
<b>Tamara</b>	Our father
<b>Tamau</b>	My father
<b>Tamami</b>	their fathers
<b>Tamaia</b>	their father
<b>Kaaro nakon te nati te mwane/ aine</b>	Parents to children; boy/girl
<b>Natiu</b>	My children
<b>Natiu te aine</b>	My daughter
<b>Natiu te mwane</b>	My son
<b>Natim</b>	Your child
<b>Naati/Natimi</b>	Children/Your children
<b>Te Tina</b>	Mother
<b>Tinaia</b>	Their mothers
<b>Tinara</b>	Our mother
<b>Tiina</b>	Mothers

Kiribati	English
<b>Tinami</b>	Your mother
<b>Tinau</b>	My mother
<b>Boy to girl/Girl to boy</b>	
<b>Mwanem</b>	your brother/Your sister
<b>Mwanera</b>	Our brother/Our sister
<b>Mwaneu</b>	My brother/My sister
<b>Mwanena</b>	His sister/Her brother
<b>Mwaneia</b>	Their brother/Their sister
<b>Boy to boy/Girl to girl</b>	
<b>Tariu</b>	My sister/My brother
<b>Tarim</b>	Your brother/Your sister
<b>Tariia</b>	Their brother/Their sister
<b>Taari</b>	Sisters/Brothers
<b>Tarimi</b>	Your sisters/Your brothers
<b>Tarina</b>	Her sister/His brother



# Faith is an important aspect of the Kiribati 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.

## Tataro | Prayer

Kiribati	English
<b>Ti na tataro</b>	Let us pray
<b>Tamara are i karawa</b>	Our heavenly father
<b>Ti bubutiko am kakabwaia n te wiki aei</b>	We ask for your blessings this week
<b>Nakoira n tatabemanira nako</b>	To each and every one of us
<b>Ti tataro n aran Iesu. Amen</b>	In Jesus name we pray. Amen

## Anene | Hymn

Kiribati	English
<b>E tangirai Atuu</b>	My God loves me
<b>Ao I nori kamimi ni kabane</b>	And all the wonders I see
<b>E raititi nei Wirara n au winto</b>	The rainbow shines through my window
<b>E tangirai Atuu</b>	My God loves me

