



Chitumbuka

Vocabulary: Volume 1

A big pile of words to get you started

Default
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Introduction

Here is an expanded list of vocabulary to help get you started. By no means does it contain everything, so please let me know if you have suggestions for additions. Or we could make volume 2!

This list of words originated from me brainstorming all the words I could think of when I was first learning Chitumbuka and asking a friend for help. This document only exists because of Alex Mwakikunga, whose endless patience translated most of what follows. Some words have been updated since then but there still might be some errors, depending on who you ask. There are many different languages and dialects spoken in the north, and they often blend together in ways that make it difficult to pinpoint where one language ends and another begins. There is often disagreement on how a particular word is spelled for example, but I think most people will still pick up what you're trying to say, even if the word isn't spot on. I think. Good luck with learning Chitumbuka and please let me know if you have any feedback on the usefulness of this or on possible improvements!

Key Adjectives

English	Chitumbuka
Small	Pachoko/Chichoko
Big	Chikulu
Fresh	Chiwisi
New	Chasono
Old	Chakale
Beautiful	Chakutowa
Dangerous	Chakofya
Good	Chiwemi
Hot	Kocha
Cold	Chakuzizima
Slowly	Pachokopachoko
Fast/quickly	Mwaluwiro

Colours

English	Chitumbuka
Black	Chifipa
White	Chituwa
Green	Biriwiri
Grey	Chotu
Red	Uswesi
Pink	Khofi

Location

English	Chitumbuka
On top of	Pachanya pa
At the bottom (floor)	Pasi
Outside	Pawalo
In the middle of	Pakati
In front	Pathanzi
Behind, after	Panyuna
First (time)	Pakwamba
Then	Mbwenu
Afterwards, then	Panyunapakhe
Finally	Paumalilo

Key Expressions

English	Chitumbuka
I've gone	Naluta
See you later	Tiwonanenge
Let's go	Tilutenge/Tiyeni
Often	Pafupi pafupi
It's nothing	Paliye kanthu
Is it true?	Mbunesho
Maybe/perhaps	Panyakhe
But	Kweni
These days	Madazi ghano
This year	Chaka chino
Last year	Chaka chamala
Next year	Chaka chanamachero/chikwiza
No problem	Paliye Suzgo
That's enough	Mbwenu
Like this	Nthena
The same as	Nthenathena
Together	Limoza

Useful Parts of Speech

Memorizing all of this isn't essential, but being able to say things like "my village", "my friend", and "me too" is very helpful.

Subject	To "be with"	All	Alone	The Same; As Well	Home/Village (Possessive)	Friend (Possessive)
I	Naine	Naneso	Nekha	Naneso	Kwinthu	Munyane
You (sing./informal)	Nayo	Wsose	Nekha	Wemwe	Kwawo	Munyako
She/he	Nayo	Yose	Nekha	Iyoyemwe	Kwake	Munyake
We	Nase	Tose	Tekha	Namwe	Kwinthu	Munyako
You (pl./formal)	Namwe	Mose	Mwekha	Namwenso	Kwinu	Munyithu
They	Nawo	Wose	Wekha	Namwe	Kukwawo	Munyawo

Verbs

All verbs are presented in the infinitive form. Verbs beginning with "kw" are irregular.

English	Chitumbuka
To go	Kuluta
To be	Kukhala
To have	Kuli na (lit. to be with)
To think	Kughanaghana
To know	Kumanya
To try	Kuyezga
To wash	Kusuka / kuchapa
To eat	Kulya
To drink	Kumwa
To sit	Kukhala
To stay	KuKhazikika
To stop	Kuleka/ Kwimilila
To start	Kwamba
To go up	Kukwera
To come down	Kukhira
To ride	Kutchova/kukwera
To carry	Kuyeya
To arrive	Kufika/kwiza
To depart	Kunyamuka
To go away	Kufumapo
To open	Kujula
To close	Kujala
To wear	Kuwala
To cut	Kudumula/kucheketa
To break	Kuswa
To fix	Kunozga
To cook	Kuphika
To drive	Kwendetsa
To follow	Kulondezga
To go in front	Kuluta panthazi
To sew	Kupanda/kusona
To tie	Kukaka
To untie	Kufwatula
To call	Kuchema
To build	Kuzenga
To dig	Kugima
To plant	Kupanda
To rise	Kuwuka
To sleep	Kugona
To see	Kujulika/kuwona
To look	Kubeka
To watch	Kubekerera
To say	Kuyowoya

English	Chitumbuka
To tell	Kuphala
To call	Kuchema
To invite	Kuchema kwapadera
To fish	Kuweja
To hold	Kukola
To work	Kugwira
To hunt	Kuzengera
To bite	Kuluma
To run away	Kutchimbira
To run	Kuchimbira
To laugh	Kuseka
To cry	Kulira
To want	kukhumba
To look for	Kupenja
To find	Kusanga
To bathe	Kugeza
To pronounce	Kuzunula
To roast	Kotcha
To fry	Kukazinga
To walk	Kwenda
To trample	Kukandilizga
To chat	Kuchezya
To be well dressed	Kuchena
To pass	Kukwera
To Fail	Kutondeka
To be soft	Kuzika
To be hard/dry up	Komila
To be bad (mean)	Kuwamuheni
To be angry	Kukwiya
To be happy	Kukondwa / kusekelera
To be pretty/beautiful	Kutowa
To be strong	Kuwawakhongono
To wait	Kulindizya
To hide	Kubisama
To be careful	Kuchenjera
To take care of	Kupwelelera
To welcome/receive	Kupokerera
To get	Kupoka
To take	Kutola
To put	Kuwika
To be lost	Kuzgewa
To lose	Kutaya
To use	Kugwirisha ntchito
To change	Kusinthu/kuzgola

English	Chitumbuka
To choose	Kusankha
To dream	Kulota
To sing	Kwimba
To play	Kusewera
To buy	Kugula
To sell	Kuguliska
To catch	Kukola
To hear/feel	Kupulika
To understand	Kupulikisha
To fall	Kuwa
To break	Kuphyola
To be broken	Kunangika/Kuphyoka
To pour	Kuthila
To like	Kukhumba
To love	Kutemwa
To go in	Kunjila
To come out	Kufuma
To pray	Kupemphera
To ask	Kufumba
To answer	Kuzgola
To beg	Kupepha
To dance	Kuvina
To read	Kuwazga
To write	Kulemba
To worry	Kusuzgika
To be born	Kuwako / kubabiwa
To steal	Kwiba
To be drunk	Kulowera
To lie	Kuteta
To come	Kwiza
To see	Kuwona
To explain	Kuphalira
To be visible	Kuwonekera
To be sick	Kulwala
To be healthy	Kuwawankhono
To turn	Kung'anamuka
To obey	Kulondezyadango
To be soaked	Kunyewa
To iron	Kustita
To wash clothes	Kuchapa
To be satisfied	Kukhutira
To die	Kufya/Kupotera
To kill	Kukoma
To lose	Kutaya
To win	Kuwina
To complain	Kudandaula

Nouns

English	Chitumbuka
Accident	Ngozi
Airplane	Ndege
Aunt	Ankhazi
Axe	Mbavi
Basket	Chitete
Bathroom	Chimbuzi
Beans	Nchunga
Beard	Mwenbe
Beer	Mowa/Phele
Belt	Mukuzi/bande
Bird	Kayuni
Blood	Ndopa
Boat	Boti (Canoe – <i>wato</i>)
Body	Thupi
Bone	Chiwangwa
Book	Buku
Borehole	Dilawo
Boy	Munyamata
Brick	Njerwa
Brother	Wakulu
Bush	Thondo
Car	Galimoto
Cassava flour	Kondowole
Chair	Mpando/kabwatiko/Chipuna
Chicken	Nkhuku
Chief	Fumu
Church	Chalichi
Clothing	Malaya
Clouds/sky	Mwingo/Kuchanya
Cold	Kuzizima
Cold	Chikhoso
Corn cob	Mugamu
Country	Chalo
Cow	Ngombe
Dad	Wadada
Darkness	Chisi
Day	Dazi
Dirt	Chuvu
Dispute	Zawe/Mbembe
Drum	Ngoma
Electricity	Magesi
Eye	Jiso
Face	Chisho
Farmer	Mulimi

Ferocious beast	Chirwrani
Fever	Phuzu
Malaria	Malungo
Field	Chalo
Field (farmers's field)	Munda
Fingers	Njowe
Fire	Moto
Fish	Somba
Flies	Membe
Flour	Ufu
Football	Bola
Friday	Chikhonde
friendship	Ubwezi
Fuel	Mafuta
Funeral	Nyifa
Garden	Munda
Girl	Msungw
Goat	Mbuzi
God	Chiuta
Grandmother/grandfather	Babuya/Basekulu
Grass	Utheke
Grasshopper	Mpazi
Green maize	Dowe
Groundnuts	Shawa
Gun	Futi
Hair	Sisi
Head	Mutu
Heart	Mtima
Hill	Mtunda / Phiri
Hoe	Jenbe
Hospital	Chapatala
House	Nyumba
Hyena	Chimbwe
Idea	Ghanoghano
Islam	Chisilamu
Kindness	Mtima uwemi
Knife	Chimayi
Lake	Nyanja
Lamp	Nyale
Law	Dango
Laziness	Ulesi
Left	Kumazere
Leg	Lundi
Letter	Kalata
Lie	Utesi
Life	Umoyo
Lion	Nkhalamu
Lizard	Mutondori

Maize	Ngoma
Marsh	Dambo
Meat	Nyama
Medicine	Munkhwala
Milk	Mukaka
Mom	Amama
Monday	Mande
Money	Chuma
Month	Mwezi
Moon	Mwezi
morning	Mulenji
Mosquito	Nyimbo
Motorcycle	Muthuthuthu
Mud	Mathipa
Music	Sumu
News	Makani
Night	Usiki
Older brother	Wakulu
Pants	Kabunthu
Path	Nthowa
Peace	Mtende
Pen	Chakulembera
Pepper	Sabola
Phone	Foni
Picture	Chithuzithuzi
Pig	Nkhumba
Pit	Mbuna
Plate	Mbale
Pot	Chiwiya
Price	Mtengo
Problem	Suzgo
Pumpkin	Jungu
Punishment	Chilango
Rain	Mvula
Relish	Dende
Rice	Mpunga
Right	Manyelo
River	Mronga
Road	Mseu
Roof	Mtenje
Sale	Guliska
Salt	Mchere
Sand	Mchenga
Saturday	Chisulu
Shirt	Shati/Malaya
Shoes	Shapato
Shorts	Kabunthu

Sibling (opposite sex)	Mdumbuwane
Sickness	Ulwari
Sister	Mdumbu
Snake	Njoka
Soldier	Msilikali
Song	Sumu
Sore	Chilonda
Soul/sprit	Mzimu
Space	Malo
Stars	Nyenyenzi
Storage bin	Chizala
Strength	Nkhongono
Sugar Cane	Mjuwa
Sun	Zuwa
Sunday	Sabata
Table	Thebulo
Tears	Masozi
The day after tomorrow	Macheloghala
The day before yesterday	Juzi
Thunder	Leza
Thing	Chinthu
Thursday	Chinayi
Time	Nyengo
tobacco	Hona
Today	Muhanya uno
Tomorrow	Namachero
Truth	Unesho
Tree	Khuni
Tuesday	Chibiri
Uncle	Sibweni
Veranda	Konde
Visitor	Mlendo
War	Nkhondo
Water	Maji
Wedding	Ukwati
Wednesday	Chitatu
Week	Sabata
Well	Chitsime
Wheat	Tiligu
Wind	Mphepo
Wisdom	Vitumbiko /mahala / vinyeru
Work	Ntchito
Year	Chaka
Yesterday	Mayiro
Younger brother	Munung'una