

Xhosa Phrasebook

Pronunciation guide	
Vowels	
a	like a in hard
e	like e in red
i	like ee in seen
o	like a in all
u	like oo in moon
Consonants	
d, f, h, j, l, m, n	Pronounced as in English
s, sh, v, w, y, z	Pronounced as in English
dl	Similar in sound to hl (see below)
g	always like g in go
hl	Place your tongue to the side of your mouth and expel the air (like Welsh ll sound)
ts	A hissing sound made by placing your tongue just above your teeth and ejecting air.
tsh	similar to dge in judge
ty	similar to dge in judge
r	pronounced like "ch" in Reich
Common diphthongs	
Clicks	
c	Place your tongue at the back of the teeth and suck in, like when expressing annoyance.
q	Place your tongue on the roof of the mouth and suck in, like imitating a clock's ticking.
x	Place your tongue on your upper right jaw and pull it down, as if urging on a horse.

Phrase list	
Basics	
Hello	Molo
Hello (to more than 1)	Molweni
How are you?	Kunjani?
Fine, thank you	Ndiyaphila, enkosi
And how are you?	Kunjani kuwe?
What is your name?	Ngubani igama lakho?
My name is _____	Igama lam ngu _____
Nice to meet you	Ndiyavuya ukukwazi
Please	Ndicela ('Ndiyacela')
Thank you	Enkosi or ('Ndiyabulela')
You're welcome	('wamkelekile')
Yes	Ewe
No	Hayi
Excuse me (getting attention)	('ndicela uxolo) or ('uxolo)
Excuse me (begging pardon)	Uxolo andivanga.
I'm sorry	Xolo ('ndixolele')
Goodbye	Uhambe/Usale kakuhle.
I can't speak Xhosa	Andisithethi isiXhosa
Do you speak English?	Uyasithetha isingesi na?
Is there someone here who speaks English?	('Ukhona apha umntu othetha isiNgesi' ?)
Good morning	Molo
Good evening	('Molo')
Good night	Ulale kakuhle
I don't understand	Andiqondi

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I don't know	Andazi
Where is the toilet?	('Iphi indlu yangasese' ?)

Problems	
My ... have been stolen	I ... yam intshontshiwe. or ('I ... yam ibiwe')
I've lost my ...	Ndilahlekelwe yi ...
handbag	isingxobo or ibhegi
passport	pasipoti ('incwadi yokundwendwela')
luggage	mpahla
wallet	spaji

Numbers	
0	unothi
1	enye
2	zimbini
3	zintathu
4	zine
5	zintlanu
6	zinthandathu
7	zisixhenxe
8	zisibhozo
9	zisithoba
10	lishumi

Time
English expressions for telling the time are commonly used by Xhosa speakers

Duration	
in the morning	kusasa
during the day	emini
in the evening	ngokuhlwa
in the afternoon	emvakwemini
at night	ebsuku
yesterday	izolo
today	namhlanje
tomorrow	ngomso

Days	
Sunday	Cawe
Monday	mvulo
Tuesday	sibini
Wednesday	sithathu
Thursday	sine
Friday	sihlanu
Saturday	mgqibelo

Months	
January	uMdumba (Janyuwari)
February	uMthupha (Februwari)
March	ukwindla (Matshi)
April	uThazimpunzi (Epril)
May	uCanzibe (Meyi)
June	uSilimela (Juni)
July	uNtulikazi (Julayi)
August	eyeKhala (Agasti)

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September	eyoMsintsi (Septemba)
October	eyeDwarha (Oktoba)
November	eyeNkanga (Novemba)
December	eyoMnga (Disemba)

Seasons	
Summer	iHlobo
Autumn	uKwindla
Winter	uBusika
Spring	iNtwasahlobo

Compass Points	
North	uMntla (Node)
East	eMpuma (eMpumalanga)
South	uMzantsi (Sude)
West	eNtshona (eNtshonalanga)

Colors	
black	mnyama
blue	luhlaza
brown	ntsundu
green	luhlaza
orange	orenji
red	bomvu
white	mhlophe
yellow	mthubi

Taxi	
How much is it to...?	Yimalini ukuya e...?
Take me to this address	Ndise kule dilesi
Please stop here	Yima apha

Lodging	
I need a room	Ndifuna igumbi
One room	Igumbi elinye
Two rooms	Amagumbi amabini
Single room	Igumbi lomntu omnye
Double room	Igumbi labantu ababini
Per person	Umntu eminye

Bed and Breakfast	
A meal	Isidlo
Beverages or Drinks	Isiselo
Supper	Isidlo sangokuhlwa
Lunch	Isidlo sasemini
Dinner	Isidlo sasemvakwemini
Kitchen	Igumbi lokuphekela ('Ekhitshini')
Sharing	Kunye ('ukwabelana')?

Money	
Money	Imali
In cash	eziinkozo
Cheque	itsheke ?
Coins	imali eziinkozo
Notes	imali engamaphepa

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Expensive	ixabisa kakhulu or iyabiza
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Driving	
Turn	jika
Left	ekhohlo
Right	ekunene
Stop('stop the car')	misa or ('yima')
Go	hamba
Forward	phambili
Go forward	bheka phambili
Straight ahead	phambili
Gravel road	indlela yomhlaba

Emergency	
Help!	Nceda!
Look out!	Qaphela!
Call the police!	Biza amapolisa!
Get a doctor!	Biza ugqirha!
Go away!	Hamba
I'm ill	Ndiyagula.
I'm lost	Ndilahlekile.
Leave me alone!	Ndiyeke!
Stop thief!	Yima sela!

Communication	
Telephone	Umnxeba
Telegram	Ucingo
Mobile or Cellphone	ifoni
Make a call	tsala umnxeba

Give So&So a call	tsalela u So&So umnxeba
Mail	Iposi
By post	ngeposi
Fast mail	iposi engxamisekileyo

English Words	Amagama esiXhosa
1st born/	indla-lifa
a fly	impukane
air plane	ibalona
an ant	imbovane
army	impi
baby animal (chicken, piglet, ..)	intshontsho
baby goat/sheep/deer	itakane
bean/s	imbotyi/ii--
beg/ask (depends on situation)	-cela
beginning	isiqalo
bird	intaka
blood	igazi
book	incwadi
boy	inkwenkwe
breasts	amabele
bring about peace	xolisa
bus	uduladula
car	inqwelo-mafutha
champion	intshatsheli
cheek	isidlele

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child/baby	umntwana/usana
circumcision	ulwaluko
clan name	isiduko
cliff	iliwa
close by	kufutshane
conspiracy	iyelenqe
country	ilizwe
danger	ingozi
day/date	usuku
dirty person (dwellings and personal)	ixelegu
doctor	ugqirha
dog	inja
ears	indlebe
earth	umhlaba
East	eMpuma
eel	umlenga
elephant	indlovu
eyes	amehlo
fable/tale	intsomi
face	ubuso
far	kude
farm	intsimi
Father	Tata
feet	inyawo
feminine gender	umfazi
fight	umlo

fingers	iminwe
fish	intlanzi
Food	ukutya
forehead	ibunzi
forgiveness/peel	uxolo/ixolo
frog	ixoxo
gift/talent	isipho
God	uThixo/uQamata
government minister	umphathiswa
grand-child	umzukulwane
greet/to greet	-bulisa/ukubulisa
group/organization	umbutho
gum/laughter	intsini
hair	inwele
hand	isandla
hard worker/busy bee	ikhuthala
head/	intloko
health	impilo
Hello	Molo (s) Molweni (pl)
help	uncedo
hero	igokra
hill	ummango
him/her	yena
house	umzi
How are you/How are things?	Kunjani
humanity/he is humane/	ubuntu/unobuntu
in laws (parent)	umkhwe/...kazi

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inheritance	ilifa
insult	isithuko
it	kona
kindness/generosity	ububele
knee	idolo
kraal	ubuhlanti
laughing stock	intlekisa
lazy person	inqenerha
lesson	isifundo
liar	ixoki
look/search	khangela
Love	-thanda
mad/dumb person	isidenge
madness	impambano
man	indoda
marriage/common law marriage	ukutshata/ukwenda
married woman	umfazi
masculine gender	induna
me	mna
meat	inyama
meeting	imbizo
mielies/corn	umbona
milk	ubisi
mine	Lam
mountain	intaba
mouth	umlomo

music	umculo
my brother	mfowethu
my sister	dadewethu
mystery	intsumantsumane
nail	uzipho
name	igama
neck	intamo
neighbour	ummelwane
North	uMntla
nose	impumlo
old man/old woman	ixhego/ixhegwazana
opportunity	inxaxheba
outside	phandle
parent	umzali
person	umntu
pig	ihagu
pillar/headman/ to stir	isibonda/uSibonda/ukubonda
place	indawo
question	Umbuzo
radio	unomathotholo
reason	isizathu
reporter	intatheli
respect	intlonipho
respond to a call	sabela
reward/salary	umvuzo
road/way (direction/law) {constitution}	indlela (umgaqo) {umgaqo-sisekelo}

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rope	intambo
rope/phoneline	umnxeba
sack	ingxowa
sea	ulwandle
shadow/shade	isithunzi/umthunzi
sheep	igusha
short person/San	umthwa
shoulders/	amagxa
show	-veza
sin	isono
site	isiza
situation/circumstance	ubume/isimo
snake	inyoka
son-in-law	umkhwenyana
sour milk	amasi
tail	umsila
talent/career/call (as in becoming a priest)	ubizo
tallness	ubude
teacher/priest	umfundisi
television/binoculars	umabona-kude
the answer	impendulo
the end	isiphelo
the one	eyona
the South	uMzantsi
theirs	Yabo
them	bona

thigh/pumkin	ithanga
time	ixesha
to be pregnant	ukukhulelwa
to bury/hide	ukufihla
to cause a fight while not fighting	thelekisa
to clean	ukucoca
to close	ukuvala
to cook	ukupheka
to cry	ukulila
to die	ukufa
to fall	ukuwa
to get mad/angry	ukucaphuka
to give birth	ukuzala
to kill	ukubulala
to laugh	ukuhleka
to open	ukuvula
to play	ukudlala
to rape	ukudlwengula
to show/reveal	ukuveza
to swim/duck	ukudada/idada
to write	ukubhala
tongue/language/gossip	ulwimi
tornado	inkanyamba
train	uloliwe
tree	umthi
unmarried woman/girl	intombi/intombazane

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ups and downs	amahlandenyuka
visitor	undwendwe
voice	ilizwi
wake/to wake	vusa/ukuvusa
wall	udonga
water	amanzi
We are fine/We are here	Sikhona
West	eNtshona
whistle	umlozi
white meat	umkhwepha
white person	umlungu
wing	iphiko
wish	umnqweno
witch/witchcraft	igqwirha/ubugqwirha
wood	inkuni
wound	inxeba
xhin	isilevu
you	wena
yours	Yakho

Phrases to warm your heart

birds of a feather	amaphuth' ahlathinye
Greetings to you listeners	Molweni baphulaphuli
H/She is excited	uphethwe yimincili
He/She is full of him/herself	uyazithanda
I LOVE YOU	Ndiyakuthanda
please write home	nceda bhalela ekhaya

Thank you very much	Enkosi kakhuli
to take part/to participate	ukuthatha inxaxheba
you are a man amongst men	uyindoda emadodeni

Daily Conversation

and so on	njalo-njalo
beef	inyama yenkomo
bend over	dunusa
Beware of the dog	Lumkelainja
blow your nose	finya
Day and night	Imini nobusuku
Do not sleep again	musa ukulala kwakhona
Dogs out!	Inja phandle
fat as a pig	utyebe okwehagu
fisherman	abalobi bentlanzi
He/She has a broken heart	Waphukelwe yintliziyo
he/she wants to pee	utshiswa ngumchamo
human mistake	impazamo eyenziwe ngumntu
I am busy	ndixakekile
I am tired now	ndidiniwe ngoku
I saw a white man	ndibone umlungu
I want food	Ndifuna ukudla
I want food with nourishment	Ndifuna ukutya okunesondlo
I want to ride in/on a bus	Ndifuna ukukhwela uduladula
I want to sleep	ndifuna ukulala
it is raining	imvula iyana
kneel	guqa ngamadol

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Men inside	Amadoda endlini
mielie meal	umgubo wombona
move forward	hambela phambili
mutton	inyama yegusha
One who appears last	Uvelemva
play the music	ndlala/khalisa umculo
Please show me the house of ...	Ndicela undibonise umzi ka...
pork	inyama yehagu
quiet music	umculo opholileyo
red coal	amalahle abomvu
see you	izakubonana
serve food	phaka ukudla
sit down	hlala phantsi
stand up	yima ngenyawo
stay well	sala kakuhle
sweetened water	amanzi aneswekile
thank you very much	ndiyabulela kakhulu
The winter is here	ubusika bufikile
undress	khulula impahla
wash your face	hlamba ubuso
weather forecast	uqikelelo lwemozulu
what do you want?	ufuna ntoni?
where are the girls	aphi amantombi?
Where are the older people of the house	Baphi abantu abadala/abakhulu
where do you go to school?	ufunda phi?
where is my girl friend?	iphi intokazi yam?

Where is the meeting?	Iphi imbizo?
where is the sea?	luphi ulwandle?
who do you want?	ufuna bani?
wipe your tears	sula inyembezi
you smell	uyanuka