**PRONUNCIATION GUIDE**

The pronunciation of Haitian is not a great problem for speakers of English. First, the language has few of the seemingly exotic sounds of French; and secondly, its almost phonetic spelling system is a clear guide.

**HAITIAN IS SPELLED AS IT IS PRONOUNCED - AND PRONOUNCED AS**

**IT IS SPELLED. EACH LETTER IS PRONOUNCED - AND EACH SOUND IS**

**WRITTEN ONLY ONE WAY.**

Sounds which could initially puzzle the speaker of English are:

**ch** - as in **sh**ow: **chache** (to look for) **ò** - as in p**aw**, s**aw**: **fò** (strong)

**e** - as in **ai**m: **ede** (to help) **ou** - as in f**oo**d: **ou** (you, your)

**è** - as in l**e**g: **mèsi** (thank you) **r** - ***not*** rolled, very soft,

pronounced at back of

**g** - always “hard,” as in **g**o: throat: **respire** (to breathe)

**gen** (to have)

**s** - always pronounced as an

**i** - as in b**ee**: **isit** (here) “s,” never like a “z”: **prese**

(in a hurry)

**j** - avoid a “d” in front: **jou** (day)

**y** - as in **y**es: **yon** (a, an),

**o** - as in t**oe**: **yo** (they, their, them) **bagay** (thing)

**NASAL SOUNDS** are pronounced partially through the nose, but ***without the “n” itself***

***pronounced***. There are no real English equivalents, but are close to:

**an** - somewhat like **a**lms: **nan** (in)

**en** - as in the name Chop**in**: **mwen** (I, my, me)

**on** - somewhat like d**on**’t: **bon** (good)

**NOTES:**

1) When a nasal sound is followed by a second “n” or by an “m,” pronounce the nasal sound

as usual, plus the “n” or “m” separately: **senmenn** (week), **chanm** (room).

2) When **an**, **en**, or **on** are ***not*** meant to indicate a nasal sound, a grave accent (**`**) is placed

over the vowel: **pàn** (mechanical breakdown), **Ayisyèn** (Haitian woman), **mòn** (hill, mountain).

3) The combination **in** never indicates a nasal sound: **gazolin** (gasoline) - the last syllable

pronounced like “lean.”

5 **paj senk**

6 **paj sis**

**TO HELP UNDERSTAND THE PHRASES**

Haitian is a beautifully efficient, therefore quite sophisticated, language. It conveys meaning

with a minimum of words, avoiding complicated forms and complex constructions.

1) Haitian words normally have only one form. **NOUNS** have no gender, and their

plural is formed simply by adding **yo** after the word. The term for “a” or “an” is

placed *before* the noun, the term for “the” *after* the noun:

a house - **yon kay**

the house - **kay la**

the houses - **kay yo**

2) There are only five **PRONOUNS**:

**mwen** - I, my, me

**ou** - you, your

**li** - he, she, it; his, her, its; him, her, it

**nou** - we, our, us; you (plural), your (plural)

**yo** - they, their, them

3) **VERB** tenses are expressed in five ways:

Present: I eat - **mwen manje**

Present

Progressive: I am eating - **mwen ap manje**

Past: I ate - **mwen te manje**

Future: I will eat - **mwen pral manje**

Conditional: I would eat - **mwen ta manje**

4) For the **NEGATIVE**, put **pa** in front of the verb forms:

I do not eat - **mwen pa manje**

I did not eat - **mwen pa te manje**

5) **POSSESSION** is shown by placing the person or thing possessed before the

possessor:

**kay David** - David’s house

**papa mwen** - my father

HELLO! / **BONJOU!**

Good morning! **Bonjou!**

Good afternoon! / Good evening! **Bonswa!**

How are you? **Kijan ou ye?**

Not bad. **Pa pi mal.**

And yourself? **E ou menm?**

Great! **Anfòm!**

I’m getting along. **M ap kenbe.**

Hang in there! **Kenbe, pa lage!**

Have a good trip! **Bon vwayaj!**

Bye-bye. **Babay.**

STARTERS / **POU KONMANSE**

Yes. / No. **Wi. / Non.**

Thanks (a lot)! **Mèsi (anpil)!**

No, thanks. **Non, mèsi.**

Please. **Souple.**

You’re welcome. **Merite.**

No problem. **Pa gen pwoblèm.**

OK. **Oke.**

Excuse me. **Eskize.**

I am sorry. **Mwen regrèt sa.**

I did not do it on purpose. **Se pa fòt mwen.**

There is... / There are... **Gen...**

There is not / are not any. **Pa genyen.**

Fine. **Byen.**

That’s right! **Se konsa!**

A little bit. **Yon ti kras.**

A lot. **Anpil.**

There are a lot of... **Gen anpil...**

Here. / There. **Isit. / La.**

Everything OK? **Tout bagay anfòm?**

Isn’t it? (Don’t you? etc.) **Pa vre?**

I can (not). **Mwen (pa) kapab.**

You ready? **Ou pare?**

Me too. **Mwen menm tou.**

(Not) Many. / (Not) Very. **(Pa) Anpil.**

(Not) Now. **(Pa) Kounyeya.**

(Not) Always. **(Pa) Toujou.**

(Not) Often. **(Pa) Souvan.**

(Not) Everything. **(Pa) Tout bagay.**

Everywhere. **Toupatou.**

Nothing. **Anyen.**

Almost. **Prèske.**

Soon. **Talè.**

Sometimes. **Kèkfwa.**

Not at all! **Ditou ditou!**

Exactly! **Se sa menm!**

It is (not) true. **Se (pa) vre.**

HELP! / **ANMWE!**

Help! **Anmwe!**

Watch out! **Atansyon!**

Hurry! **Prese prese!**

Fire! **Dife!**

Help me, please. **Ede mwen, souple.**

Give me a hand, **Ban mwen yon koutmen,**

please. **souple.**

I have lost... **Mwen te pèdi...**

They have stolen... **Yo te vòlò...**

EVERYDAY PHRASES / **SA YO KONN DI**

NEEDS / **BEZWEN**

I need... **Mwen bezwen...**

We would like... **Nou ta vle...**

We are looking for... **Nou ap chache...**

Please give me... **Souple, ban mwen...**

Please bring... for us. **Souple, pote... pou nou.**

May we look at...? **Èske nou mèt gade...?**

MONEY / **KÒB**

Here is a little money for you. **Men yon ti kòb pou ou.**

I don’t have any small change. **Mwen pa gen ti monnen.**

Divide this among you. **Separe sa ant nou.**

TIME / **LÈ**

Yesterday / today / tomorrow. **Yè / jòdi a / denmen.**

For how long? **Pou konben tan?**

Just a moment, please. **Yon ti moman, souple.**

This morning. **Maten an.**

This afternoon. **Apremidi a.**

This evening. **Aswè a.**

Three days ago. **Gen twa jou.**

In four days (from now). **Nan kat jou.**

Each week / month. **Chak senmenn / mwa.**

KNOWING / **KONNEN**

I (do not) know. **Mwen (pa) konnen.**

I (do not) think so. **Mwen (pa) kwè sa.**

I am (not) certain. **Mwen (pa) sèten.**

FEELING / **SA OU SANTI**

I (do not) like that. **Mwen (pa) renmen sa.**

That is (not) good. **Sa (pa) bon.**

We are (not) happy. **Nou (pa) kontan.**

I am hot / cold / tired. **Mwen cho / frèt / fatige.**

I am surprised! **Mwen sezi!**

I hope so. **Mwen swete sa.**

REACTIONS / **SA OU PANSE**

That does not matter. **Sa pa fè anyen.**

Too bad! **Donmaj!**

How beautiful! **Ala bèl!**

REQUESTS / **DEMANN**

Come in! / Sit down! **Antre, wi! / Chita, wi!**

Come! / Look! **Vini, non! / Gade, non!**

Let’s go! **Ann ale!**

Listen! / Hear! **Koute! / Tande!**

Wait for me! / Stop! **Tann mwen! / Rete!**

Do not worry! **Pa chaje tèt ou!**

Do not forget! **Pa bliye, non!**

PROBLEMS / **PWOBLÈM**

There is a (little) problem. **Gen yon (ti) pwoblèm.**

This is broken. **Sa a kase.**

Can they fix it? **Èske yo ka ranje li?**

QUESTIONS? / **KÈSYON?**

How much? / How many? **Konben?**

Why? **Poukisa?**

Where? **(Ki) kote?**

What? **Kisa?**

When? **(A) kilè?**

Who? **Ki moun?**

How? **Kijan?**

Which? **Kilès?**

Is / Are there...? **Èske gen...?**

Do you have...? **Èske ou gen...?**

Can you help us, please? **Èske ou ka ede nou, souple?**

Where can we find...? **(Ki) kote nou ka jwenn...?**

Where can we buy...? **(Ki) kote nou ka achte...?**

Can you tell me...? **Èske ou ka di mwen ...?**

give me...? **ban mwen...?**

show me...? **montre mwen...?**

Who is there? **Ki moun ki la?**

What do you want? **Kisa ou vle?**

What are you doing there? **Kisa ou ap fè la?**

What is that? **Kisa sa a ye?**

What do they do with that? **Kisa yo fè ak sa?**

What’s going on? **Sa k pase?**

What’s the matter? **Sa k genyen?**

What must we do? **Kisa pou nou fè?**

Have you seen...? **Èske ou te wè...?**

DO YOU SPEAK...? / **ÈSKE OU PALE...?**

Do you speak English / French? **Èske ou pale angle / franse?**

Who here speaks...? **Ki moun isit ki pale...?**

We need an interpreter. **Nou bezwen yon entèprèt.**

I am / We are American. **Mwen se / Nou se Ameriken.**

We are Canadian. **Nou se Kanadyen.**

I do not speak Haitian. **Mwen pa pale kreyòl.**

I speak only **Mwen pale sèlman**

a little Haitian. **yon ti kras kreyòl.**

I have problems **Mwen gen pwoblèm**

understanding Haitian. **konprann kreyòl.**

Repeat, please. **Repete, souple.**

Slowly, please. **Dousman, souple.**

You understand? **Ou konprann?**

I (do not) understand. **Mwen (pa) konprann.**

What does... mean? **Kisa... vle di?**

What do they call that **Kijan yo rele sa**

in Haitian? **an kreyòl?**

How do they say... in Haitian? **Kijan yo di... an kreyòl?**

WHICH WAY? / **KI KOTE?**

Where is..., please? **(Ki) kote..., souple?**

the toilet, please? **twalèt la, souple?**

Where are we? **(Ki) kote nou ye?**

Where must we turn? **(Ki) kote pou nou vire?**

We turn left or **Nou vire agòch oubyen**

right? **adwat?**

Straight ahead? **Tou dwat?**

It’s far? **Li lwen?**

SOME ANSWERS / **KÈK REPONS**

Turn left / right. **Vire agòch / adwat.**

Go straight ahead. **Ale tou dwat.**

Go this way. **Fè sa.**

Go back to... **Tounen jouk...**

GETTING TO KNOW YOU / **POU KONNEN OU**

What is your name? **Kijan ou rele?**

My name is... **Mwen rele...**

What is his / her name? **Kijan li rele?**

I am happy to know you. **Mwen kontan konnen ou.**

This is my friend. **Se zanmi mwen.**

Where do you live? **(Ki) kote ou rete?**

How old are you? **Ki laj ou?**

How old is he / she? **Ki laj li?**

How many brothers and sisters **Konben frè ak sè**

do you have? **ou genyen?**

Where were you born? **(Ki) kote ou te fèt?**

Are you a student? **Èske ou se yon elèv?**

Do you have a **Èske ou gen**

girl friend / boy friend? **mennaj?**

You are very nice. **Ou janti anpil.**

Your hair is beautiful. **Cheve ou bèl.**

What a beautiful place! **Ala yon bèl kote!**

EATING AND DRINKING / **MANJE AK BWÈ**

knife, **kouto,**

fork, **fouchèt,**

spoon, **kiyè,**

soup spoon, **gwo kiyè,**

napkin, **sèvyèt,**

paper napkin, **napkin,**

plate, **asyèt,**

cup, **tas,**

saucer, **soukoup,**

straw, **chalimo,**

I need salt, please. **Mwen bezwen sèl, souple.**

pepper, **pwav,**

It is dirty. **Li sal.**

A small / large glass of..., please. **Yon ti / gwo vè..., souple.**

A bottle of..., please. **Yon boutèy..., souple.**

The same thing, please. **Menm bagay la, souple.**

HOW / **KIJAN**

Hot / cold. **Cho / frèt.**

ILLS AND PILLS / **MALADI AK GRENN**

Where is the restroom, please? **Kote twalèt la, souple?**

I need toilet paper. **Mwen bezwen papye ijenik.**

You OK? **Ou byen?**

I am not (too) well. **Mwen pa (twò) byen.**

I am sick. **Mwen malad.**

He / She is (very) sick. **Li malad (anpil).**

There was an accident. **Te gen yon aksidan.**

He / She is hurt (badly). **Li blese (anpil).**

Do not move him / her. **Pa deplase li.**

We need a doctor / **Nou bezwen yon dòktè /**

a nurse right away. **yon mis touswit.**

Where does it hurt you? **(Ki) kote li fè ou mal?**

That hurts me (a little / **Sa fè mwen mal (yon ti jan /**

a lot). **anpil).**

It is not serious. **Sa pa grav.**

It is better now. **Sa pi bon kounyeya.**

I am having my period. **Mwen gen règ mwen.**

I have menstrual cramps. **Mwen gen kolik mwen.**

She is pregnant. **Li ansent.**

Do you have something for **Ou gen bagay kont**

I have a headache / earache / **Mwen gen maltèt / malzòrèy /**

sore throat. **malgòj.**

I have pain in my arm / **Mwen gen doulè nan bra mwen /** in my

leg / here. **nan janm mwen / isit.**

I have something **Mwen gen yon bagay**

in my eye. **nan je mwen.**

My nose is bleeding. **Nen mwen ap senyen.**

I cannot eat / sleep. **Mwen pa ka manje / dòmi.**

DIGESTION / **DIJESYON**

I have no appetite. **Mwen pa gen apeti.**

I ate too much. **Mwen te manje twòp.**

I have indigestion. **Mwen gonfle.**

I have diarrhea. **Mwen gen djare.**

I feel nauseated. **Mwen anvi vonmi.**

I vomited. **Mwen te vonmi.**

I have a stomach ache. **Mwen gen vantfèmal.**

I am allergic to that. **Mwen alèji ak sa.**

I am a diabetic. **Mwen fè sik.**

I have hay fever. **Mwen gen lafyèv sezon.**

He / She has a (bad) cold. **Li anrimen (anpil).**

I have the flu. **Mwen gripe.**

FEVER / **LAFYÈV**

My whole body is hot. **Tout kò mwen cho.**

I have fever. **Mwen gen lafyèv.**

I am dizzy. **Mwen toudi.**

He / She fainted. **Li endispoze.**

**Se mèt kò ki veye kò.**

It is the owner of the body who looks out for the body.

(Take care of yourself. / Take care of that which is yours.)