

Lesson 32:

Interrogative Words

Interrogative Words [vivumishi viulizi]

There are various interrogative words in Kiswahili.

In Swahili, these interrogative words are generally at the end, but they may also appear at the beginning or middle of a sentence.

A). lini [when]

- used to ask questions that inquire about the time when an act takes place
- appears where the answer is placed

Sentensi:

1. Yeye huzungumza lini?	[When does he/she speak?]
Yeye huzungumza asubuhi.	[He/She speaks in the morning.]
2. Wanafunzi hulala lini?	[When do students sleep?]
Wanafunzi hulala usiku.	[Students sleep at night.]
3. Utaimba lini?	[When will you sing?]
Nitaimba Ijumaa.	[I will sing on Friday.]
4. Utasoma Kiswahili lini?	[When will you study Kiswahili?]
Nitasoma Kiswahili kesho.	[I will study Kiswahili tomorrow.]
5. Utaenda nyumbani lini?	[When will you go home?]
Nitaenda nyumbani saa mbili usiku.	[I will go home at 8pm.]

B). -ngapi [how many]

- used only with plural nouns
- answer to the question must be provided in numerical form
- the noun marker is attached to the question word ‘-ngapi’
- works like an adjective, so it is placed after the noun and agrees in class with it

Mifano:

NGELI

[noun class]

JINA

[noun]

KIULIZI -NGAPI

[Question word -NGAPI]

M	simba	-
WA	simba	wangapi
KI	kikombe	-
VI	vikombe	vingapi
M	mlima	-
MI	milima	mingapi
JI	zulia	-
MA	mazulia	mangapi
N	nguo	-
N	nguo	ngapi
U	ukuta	-
U	kuta	ngapi
U	uzuri	-
U	uzuri	-
KU	kucheza	-
KU	kucheza	-
PA	pahali	-
PA	pahali	pangapi
MU	sandukuni	-
MU	sandukuni	-

Sentensi:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Umenunua vitabu vingapi? | [How many books have you bought?] |
| Nimenunua vitabu vitano. | [I bought five books.] |
| 2. Ana kaka wangapi? | [How many brothers does he/she have?] |
| Ana kaka sita. | [He/She has six brothers.] |
| 3. Una miaka mingapi? | [How old are you?] |
| Nina miaka ishirini na minne. | [I am 24 years old.] |
| 4. Ana kaka wangapi? | [How many brothers does he/she have?] |
| Ana kaka sita. | [He/She has six brothers.] |

5. Mna kalamu **ngapi**?

[How many pens do you (pl) have?]

Tuna kalamu kumi.

[We have ten pens.]

C). -pi [which one(s)]

- question words 'where' and 'which' are expressed by attaching '-pi'
- '-pi' takes both singular and plural forms and varies according to the noun class
- works like a pronoun. It can be used by itself or after a noun which it agrees taking a pronominal prefix of agreement

Mifano:

NGELI [noun class]	JINA [noun]	KIASHIRIA [demonstrative]	KIULIZI -PI [question word -PI]
M	mtu	huyu	yupi
WA	watu	hawa	wapi
KI	kichwa	hiki	kipi
VI	vichwa	hivi	vipi
M	mkono	huu	upi
MI	mikono	hii	ipi
JI	jani	hili	lipi
MA	majani	haya	yapi
N	nyota	hii	ipi
N	nyota	hizi	zipi
U	ukuta	huu	upi
ZI	kuta	hizi	zipi
U	ulevi	huu	upi
U	ulevi	huu	upi
KU	kusoma	huku	kupi
KU	kusoma	huku	kupi
PA	pahali	hapa	papi
PA	pahali	hapa	papi
MU	mfukoni	humu	mpi
MU	mfukoni	humu	mpi

Sentensi:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Ni mtoto yupi analala? | [Which child is sleeping?] |
| 2. Unapenda matunda yapi? | [Which fruits do you like?] |
| 3. Utanunua nyumba ipi? | [Which house will you buy?] |
| 4. Ni mti upi ulianguka? | [Which tree fell?] |
| 5. Ni kiti kipi kilianguka? | [Which chair fell?] |
| 6. Ni chakula kipi kilipikwa? | [Which food was cooked?] |

D). nani [who]

➤ 'nani' is only used to inquire about people

Sentensi:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Mtoto huyu ni nani? | [Who is this child?] |
| 2. Jina lako ni nani? | [What is your name?] |
| 3. Nani anataka kitabu? | [Who wants the book?] |
| 4. Ni nani alikula chakula? | [Who ate the food?] |
| 5. Kaka yako anaitwa nani? | [What is your brother's name?] |
| 6. Yeye anaitwa nani? | [What is his/her name?] |
| 7. Unaitwa nani? | [What is your name?] |

E). wapi [where]

➤ 'wapi' is used to inquire about places

Sentensi:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Wewe unaishi wapi? | [Where do you live?] |
| 2. Wewe unatoka wapi? | [Where do you come from?] |
| 3. Brian amekwenda wapi? | [Where has Brian gone to?] |
| 4. Wewe unaenda wapi sasa? | [Where are you going now?] |

F). nini [what]

➤ used to inquire about things that are being done or will be done

Sentensi:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Wewe unakula nini? | [What are you eating?] |
| 2. Wewe unaandika nini? | [What are you writing?] |
| 3. Hii ni nini? | [What is this?] |
| 4. Wewe umeleta nini? | [What have you brought?] |
| 5. Utafanya nini baada ya darasa? | [What will you do after class?] |
| 6. Wewe unataka nini? | [What do you want?] |

G). gani [which / what sort / what kind]

- used to inquire about specific things
- its meaning varies depending on the context

Sentensi:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Wewe unatoka nchi gani ? | [Which country do you come from?] |
| 2. Wewe unasoma kitabu gani ? | [Which book are you reading?] |
| 3. Wewe unapenda chakula gani ? | [What kind of food do you like?] |
| 4. Mananasi bei gani ? | [What is the price of the pineapples?] |
| 5. Unasoma masomo gani ? | [What subjects are you studying?] |
| 6. Unapenda kinywaji gani ? | [What drink do you like?] |

H). je [how]

- usually affixed to the verb, meaning 'what' or 'how'

Sentensi:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Je , unakwenda maktabani? | [Are you going to the library?] |
| 2. Wewe uliendaje shuleni leo? | [How did you go to school today?] |
| 3. Je , utasoma Kiswahili jioni? | [Are you going to study Kiswahili in the evening?] |
| 4. Je , unatoka Missouri? | [Do you come from Missouri?] |

I). na wewe je [how about you]

- used to inquire about the other person

Sentensi:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Ninakwenda hotelini. Na wewe je ? | [I am going to the restaurant. How about you?] |
| 2. Ninasoma historia. Na wewe je ? | [I study history. How about you?] |

J). kwa nini [why]

- seeks reason for doing something

Sentensi:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Kwa nini unasoma Kiswahili? | [Why are you studying Kiswahili?] |
| 2. Kwa nini unapenda pombe? | [Why do you like alcohol?] |
| 3. Kwa nini unataka kazi? | [Why do you want a job?] |
| 4. Kwa nini ulienda maktabani baada ya darasa? | [Why did you go to the library after school?] |
| 5. Kwa nini unapenda pombe? | [Why do you like alcohol?] |

K). mbona [why]

➤ seeks reason for doing something

Sentensi:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Mbona unasoma Kiswahili? | [Why are you studying Kiswahili?] |
| 2. Mbona unapenda pombe? | [Why do you like alcohol?] |
| 3. Mbona unataka kazi? | [Why do you want a job?] |
| 4. Mbona ulienda maktabani
baada ya darasa? | [Why did you go to the library after school?] |
| 5. Mbona ulikula chakula? | [Why did you eat food?] |

L). kwa sababu gani [for what reason]

➤ inquires about the reason for doing things

Sentensi:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Kwa sababu gani unakula kila siku? | [For what reason do you eat every day? / Why do you eat every day?] |
| 2. Unapenda mama yako kwa sababu gani? | [For what reason do you like your mother?] |
| 3. Kwa sababu gani unasoma Kiswahili? | [For what reason are you studying Kiswahili?] |
| 4. Unapenda matunda kwa sababu gani? | [For what reason do you like fruits?] |
| 5. Kwa sababu gani unaenda Kansas City? | [For what reason are you going to Kansas City?] |