

# LEA FAKA-TONGA

A brief guide to reading and speaking the Tongan language

PACIFIC LANGUAGE WEEKS



## Reading and speaking Lea Faka-Tonga

#### Vowels

The Tongan language is phonetic in nature. It is important that when you see diacritics attached to vowels (i.e., 'a, ā, á), you are aware that the pronunciation and the meanings of the words can change. For example – kaka (to climb) or kākā (to cheat).

The fakau 'a (') or glottal stop, always comes before a vowel. This changes the pronunciation of the vowel to a shorter, sharper sound. This also changes the meanings of the words. For example – anga (behaviour) and 'anga (shark).

'a, 'e, 'i, 'o, 'u as in the English language: ah ha, elephant, inn, orange, ooh la la 'ā, 'ē, 'ī, 'ō, 'ū as in the English language: amen, egg, easy, oh no, soup

#### Consonants

Lea Faka-Tonga has twelve konisonānite (consonants):

f h k l m n ng p s t v including the ['] fakau'a (glottal stop).

The pronunciation of the consonants is similar to English. However, the 'ng' is pronounced like the 'nga' sound in Te Reo Māori, or the 'ng' sound from the English word 'song'.

The Tongan language also uses fakamamafa pau (stress marks).
The stress mark (á, é, í, ó, ú) seen at the end of a word tells us to make the vowel sound more exaggerated.
For example, when we say the word Tongá it tells us to emphasise the 'a' sound at the end.

**'Alafapeti Faka-Tonga** Tongan Alphabet

Aa	Ee	II	00	Ou
Afi Fire	Efu <i>Dust</i>	lpu <i>Cup</i>	Ono Six	Ukamea <i>Iron</i>
Ff	Hh	Kk	LI	Mm
Fale House	Hala <i>Road</i>	Kahoa Necklace	Lele Run	Mango Mango
Nn	Ng	Рр	Ss	Tt
Niu Coconut	Ngatu <i>Tapa</i>	Peleti <i>Plate</i>	Sote Shirt	Tamai Father

Vv ['] Fakau'a Glottal stop

Vaka Canoe 'Umata Rainbow

#### Lea Faka-Tonga 'e 'aonga kiata koe Useful / Everyday words

**Common Phrases** Mālō e lelei Greetings / Hello Mālō e lelei Greetings everyone Goodbye - to those who are leaving 'Alu ā (only if it applies) Goodbye – to those who are staying Nofo ā / Goodbye on the phone Fakamolemole / Kātaki Please Thank you very much Mālō 'aupito Fakamolemole Sorry Tulou / Kātaki fakamolemole Excuse me

∼ Pleasantries <del></del>			
	i icasaiitiics		
	Ko hai ho hingoá?	What is your name?	
	Ko hoku hingoá ko	My name is	
	'Okú ke ha'u mei fē? Ko ho'o ha'u mei fē?	Where are you from?	
	Koʻeku haʻu mei	I am from	
	'Okú ke ngāue 'i fē?	Where do you work?	
	'Oku ou ngāue 'i	I work at	

### Lea Faka-Tonga 'e 'aonga kiata koe Useful / Everyday words

_	In Conversation ———	
	'Okú ke fēfē hake?	How are you (singular)?
	'Okú mo fēfē hake?	How are you (dual)?
	'Oku mou fēfē hake?	How are you (plural)?
	'Oku ou sai pē, mālō	I am fine, thank you
	'Okú ke 'osi kai? Ta 'alu 'o kai	Have you eaten? Let's go eat
	Fakamolemole 'i he tuai 'eku fetu'utaki atú	Apologies for the delayed response
	Hangē ko 'eku 'imeili atú	As per my email
	'Oku ou fiefia ke ta talanoa	I'm happy to discuss
	Taimi fakamālohisino	It's gym time It's exercise/training time
	Tā mai angé	Ring me
	Fakafeta'i	Thanksgiving, Giving praise
	'Oku lelei 'a e 'Otua	God is good!

## **Lea Faka-Tonga 'e 'aonga kiata koe** *Useful / Everyday words*

∼ People <del></del>	
. 556.5	
Matāpule	Talking Chief or Orator
Faifekau / Taki Lotu	Church Minister / Church Leader
Tama	Child
Tamai	Father
Fa'ē	Mother
Tuofefine / Tokoua	Sister / Sister (same gender)
Tuonga'ane / Tokoua	Brother / Brother (same gender)
Kaungāme'a	Friends

## Faith is an important aspect of the Tongan 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.

#### Lotu Prayer

Ke tau lotu

Ko 'emau Tamai 'oku 'i hēvani

'Oku mau kole ke ke tāpuaki'i

'a e uike' ni

Mo kimautolu hono kotoa

Ko 'emau lotu ia, 'ia Sisu Kalaisi ko homau 'Fiki

'Fmen

Let us pray

Our Father in Heaven

We ask for your blessings

this week

And over each and every one of us

That is our prayer,

in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

#### **Himi 114** Hymn 114

'Eiki ko e 'ofa 'a 'au

Ko e moana loloto

Pea ngalo hifo ki ai

'Eku ngaahi angahia

Pea kuo 'ufi'ufi

'Eku kovi kotoa pe

Lord your love

Is likened to the depths of the ocean

And lost in it are

All my sins

Covering all

Of my transgressions

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