WAMBA WAMBA ACTION WORDS AND SENTENCES

UNDERSTANDING SOME BEGINNING RULES OF WAMBA WAMBA LANGUAGE



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In Wamba Wamba, phrases and sentences are put together in different ways to the English language. There are different rules.

To learn how to speak, read, write and use Wamba Wamba, it is important to understand how the language comes together and what the rules are.

In Wamba Wamba it is easy to make a whole range of changes by simply adding a different ending or endings to one or more words. Learning how to do this makes it possible to say and write sentences in Wamba Wamba.

The best way is to start with 'Action Words' and their endings.

The usual way action words are displayed in the Dictionary is the present tense, singular ending 'a' for example:

- Yangg***a.*** - to walk or 'He, she or it walks.'

This basic or stem form is changed to say when the action happens and who does the action:

- Yangg***in***. - He/she/it walked. (happened before- replace end 'a' with 'in')
- Yangg***inanda***. - I walked. (yangga now has 'in' plus 'anda' for 'I')

(All action words used in these examples can be found listed this way in the online dictionary or word search on Wurrekangurr at www.yarkuwa.org.au/wurrekangurr/words. You can search for the English word or the Wamba Wamba word.
You can search for sample sentences and phrases at www.yarkuwa.org.au/wurrekangurr/phrases

These rules and endings can also be found in short list and grammatical form on pages 72-75 of the Green Book or online in 'Wamba Wamba Word Endings & Bound Forms'.)

Time markers on action words - 'when does an action happen'

1) Action Word - action happens now (present tense) - ends in 'a'

The Wamba Wamba action word 'yangga' means 'to walk' in English.
The '**a**' at the end of '*yangg**a***' shows that a person or animal walks now.

In Wamba Wamba all Action Words that happen now end in 'a'.
(But not all words ending in 'a' are action words, for example, 'kuka' is the Wamba word for 'grandmother or grandchild'.)

A sentence in English where something is done to something is usually arranged
- 'doer word' (subject), 'action word' (verb) , 'done to word' (object).

A sentence in Wamba Wamba can vary but is often
- 'action word' (verb), and then 'do-er word' (subject) and 'done to word' (object)).

'*Yangg**a** kawir*. '
- action word 'yangga' (to walk) and do-er word 'kawir' (emu)
- in English, it means 'E*mu walks*'.

'*Yangg**a** tumikal telkuk.*' is 'To walk home is good.'

'*Yangg**a** wulman tumikal.*' or 'W*ulman yangg**a** tumikal.*' is 'The old man walks home.' or 'The old man is walking home.'

'*Tyak**a** panem.*' is 'He/she/it eats damper.'

'*Tyaka* wulman-ku panem.' 'The old man eats damper.'

(yangga - to walk, tumikal - home or camp, telkuk - good, wulman - old man, wulmanku - old man with 'doer word' ending (ku), tyaka - to eat, panem - bread or damper)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- The boy walks. - ……
- Kangaroo jumps. - ……
- Grandmother cooks in the ashes. - ……

Don't forget to start with the 'action word' and add a different ending when needed.

Need to look up some Wamba words? www.yarkuwa.org.au/wurrekangurr/words

When you look up an action word like 'jumps' or 'jumping', start with 'to jump' or 'jump'

2) Action Word - action happened before (in the past) (past tense)

- **change the 'a' ending to 'in'**
  start with the action word

'*yangg**a***' - 'to walk' or 'he/she/it walks' becomes '*Yangg**in***.' - 'He/she/it **walked**.'

'*Yangg**in** kawir potykal.*' - 'Emu walked through the grass.'

'*Kalp**in** piyal tyelik-tyelik.*' is 'He/she/it broke the branch yesterday.'

*'Pirrityan**in** kurre.'* is 'The grey kangaroo jumped.'

'*Tyak**in*** wulman-ku panem.' 'The old man ate the damper.'

(kalpa - to cut or break, poty - grass, potykal - through the grass, piyal - branch or red gum, tyelik-tyelik - yesterday, kurre - grey kangaroo, pirrityana - to jump, tyaka - to eat, panem - damper)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- The magpie flew. - ……..

- Grandmother cooked in ashes. - ……..

- The teenager ate the damper. - …….

3) Action Word - an action is happening now (present participle)

- **Change the 'a' ending to 'ang'**

In English the present participle usually ends in 'ing', eg, watching, jumping, cooking. It is also usually paired with another verb eg, 'she is swimming', 'we are jumping'.'

In Wamba we simply change the 'a' ending of the action word to '***ang***'.

'pirrityan***a***' 'to jump' becomes 'pirrityan***ang***' 'is jumping'

'Nirnak pirrityan***ang***.' - 'The frog is jumping.',
'Nirnak pirrityan***ang*** payalkal.' - 'A frog is jumping in the swamp.'

'*Nyenggin wulman marrakal pirrityan**ang** karnd**ang**.*' Is 'The old man sat on a meat ant. He is jumping and crying out.'

(pirityana - to jump, wirrika - to swim, wulman - old man, nyenga - to sit, marra - meat ant, karnda - to shout, pirrpa - to hop)

Now it's your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- The swamp wallaby is hopping. - …….

- The boy is swimming.- ……..

- Dad is cooking meat. - ……..

4) Action Word - action will happen in the future (future tense)

- **change the 'a' ending to 'iny'**

'yangg**a**' becomes 'Yangg**iny.**' - 'He/she/it will walk.'

'*Yangginy tumikal.*' - She/he/it will walk home.'

'K*alpiliny panem kiluwity.*' is 'He will cut the damper today.'

'*Nyanginy poty kiluwity.*' is 'She will burn grass today.'

'*Pangginy lerrk mirrwanka.*' is 'The woman will dig yam daisies.'

(pangga - to dig, *kerrk - woman, mirrwan - yam daisy, wirrwanka - yam daisy with 'ka' the 'done to ending')*

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- The girl will cook tomorrow. - ……

- The sun will rise .- ……

- The children will play a ball game. - ……..

5) Action Word - action happening all the time (continuative-frequentative)

- **change the 'a' ending to 'ila'**

'*Yangg**ila** kawir kumikal.*' is 'Emu is always walking through the camp.'

'*Kalp**ila** mityuk kiluwity.*' is 'He is cutting tree bark today.'

'*Kalp**ila** mameku mityuk kiluwity.*' is 'My father is cutting tree bark today.'

*'Wirr**ila** kolety.'* is 'The river is always flowing.'

(mityuk - bark of a tree, mam - father, mamek - my father, mameku - my father with 'ku' as do-er of action, kiluwity - today, kumikal - camp or home, wirra - to flow, kolety - the Edward River)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- Fathers always love their children. - ……

- Blood always flows. -……

- Birds are always singing in the morning now. ……..

Got to here? Well done. Telkuk-min. You're making good progress. Don't forget to ask if there is anything you don't understand.

It's good to practice saying your Wamba Wamba sentences out loud as well. There is a pronunciation guide at the end of this document.

6) Action Word - a completed action (past participle)

- change the ‘a’ ending to ‘ən’

‘*nyanga*’ (to burn) becomes ‘*nyangən*’, (burnt)

yanggən (walked), kalpən (cut), pirrityanən (jumped) wirrakən (swum)

‘Nyangən *poty.’* is ‘The grass is burnt’.

‘Wariwən *wuthu* wirrakən *Kolety*.’ ‘The man has gone away. He has swum the Edward River.’

(wariwa - go away, wuthu - man, wirraka - to swim, Kolety - Edward River)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- The tree was cut down. - ……

- Grandma has walked home. - ……

Work out and write in the English meaning for this Wamba Sentence

- …… Kungayən kiluwity.

7) Action word - ordering one person to act (imperative singular)

- if the order is meant to be done to something

- change the ‘a’ to ‘ak’

eg kalpa - to cut becomes ‘Ngin kalpak poty.’ means ‘You! Cut the grass!’
- taka - to hit becomes ‘Wemba takakarr kinjam wirrengən.’ - ‘Don’t you hit this dog!’

- if the order is not meant to be done to something
change the ‘a’ to *‘i’*

’*kungaya*’ ‘to keep quiet’ becomes ‘K*ungayi*!’ It now means ‘Quiet!’ Or ‘Shut up!’

‘*werrka*’ ‘to hurry’ changes to ‘W*errki!*’ meaning ‘Quickly! Hurry up!’

(kalpa - to cut, gin - you, kungaya - to keep quiet, werrka - to hurry, werrki - quickly)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- Catch that dog! - ……

- Sit! - ……..

- Go away! - ……..

Write in the English meaning for this Wamba Sentence

- …… Wirpi! Werrki!

8) Action Word - ordering people to act (imperative plural)

- akaty when the ordered action is meant to be done to something
change the 'a' to 'akaty'

eg Karrk***akaty*** kinmer nirnak-para. (You lot catch those frogs.)

Werrek**akaty** kinmer yawirr-para wanapka. (You lot carry the fish to the fire.)

- atiaty or -iaty when the ordered action is not meant to be done to something
change the 'a' to 'iaty' or 'atiaty'

'kungaya' becomes 'K*ungay**iaty***!' meaning 'Shut up you lot!'

'*Pirrityan**iaty***!' 'Everybody jump!'

'Wirrək**atiaty**!' 'Run! Everyone!'

(*kungaya* - to keep quiet, *pirrityana* - to jump, *wirrəka* - to run)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- Everybody sit! - .....
- Everybody help! - .....
- Run and hide! Quickly! Hurry up! - .....

Person markers on action words
- ‘who is doing’ or ‘how many are doing’

In Wamba Wamba we can describe ‘who’ and ‘how many’ are doing an action by adding different endings to action words called Person Markers.

Person markers are usually added after Time (or tense) markers. The exception is the first example where the ‘a’ ending is both the ‘time marker’ and the ‘person marker’.

1) He, she or it is doing
- ‘a’

an ‘a’ ending is used when one person or thing (but not the speaker or the listener) is doing the action

(note: this ‘a’ ending is also used for the ‘time ending - happening now’)

for example - ‘*yangga*’ (to walk) or ‘*nyanga*’ (to burn)

In English you have to add the ‘he’ or ‘she’ or ‘it’ before the action word, for example ‘he is walking home’ or ‘she walks home every day’.

In Wamba Wamba we use context or what has already been talked about to show which is the right meaning. For example:

‘Nyanga poty.’ can mean

- ‘To burn grass.’

- ‘He burns grass.’ or ‘She burns grass.’ or ‘It burns grass.’ depending on the situation or what else has been talked about.

‘Ngunyim-kurrk pakaya-puk. Nyanga poty.’

- ‘That old woman is wise. She burns the grass.’

Because we’ve talked about the old woman, this time ‘*nyanga*’ means ‘she burns’.

Now it’s your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- That old woman is well. She walks home. - ……

- The old man is careful. He ties up his dog. - ……

- Look - a swamp wallaby. It jumps the log. - ……

2) I am doing the action

- Change the 'a' ending to 'anda'

'N*yang**anda** poty.*' is 'I burn the grass.'

'*Yangg**anda** malamerr*.' is 'I am walking way over there.'

'*Tyilek**anda**.*' is 'I am sick.'

'T*yilek**inanda**.*' is 'I was sick.'

- (In 'tyilekinanda' 2 endings have been added '**in**' (already happened) and '**anda**' (I)

(nyanga - to burn, yangga - to walk, tyileka - to be sick, malamerr - over there, far away)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- I swim in the Edward River. - ……
(clue - the action word for 'swim' needs the 'person ending' and the word for Edward River needs the ending for 'in' - see https://www.yarkuwa.org.au/wurrekangurr/resources/14/document page 2)

- I dance tonight. - ……

- We all danced yesterday. - ……..

(Hint: put the time ending (eg happened in the past) before the person ending.)

3) You are doing the action
(the person listening)

- Change the 'a' ending to 'arr' - you

*'Nyang**arr** poty.'* is 'You burn the grass.'

'*Yangg**arr** lar.*' is 'You are walking home.'

'*Kalpin**arr** panem.*' is 'You have cut the bread.'

'*Kalpiny**arr** perrpuk poty.*' is 'You will cut the grass tomorrow.'

(nyanga - to burn, yangga - to walk, lar - camp, home or bark shelter, panem - bread, damper, perrpuk - tomorrow)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- You swim in the Edward River. - ……

- You love your grandchild. - ……
- You will pack up camp tomorrow. - ……

4) We are all doing the action.

- Change the ‘a’ ending to ‘angurr’

‘*yangga*’ becomes ‘*Yangg**angurr.***’, it now means ‘We walk.’ or ‘We are all walking.’
‘*Kalp**angurr** poty.*’ is ‘We are all cutting grass.’

‘*Yangg**angurr** tumikal*’. is ‘We are all walking to the camp or home.’

‘*Yangg**angurr** nyawi-kata Kirrkundity.*’ is ‘We (all of us) are walking in the light of God.’

(yangga - to walk, kalpa - to cut or break, tumikal - camp or home, Kirrkundity - God)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- We all love children. - ……

- We all speak. - ……

- We all went home at sunset. - …….

5) Some but not all are doing the action

Change the ‘a’ ending to ‘angurrang’

‘*Yangg**angurrang** karri-kurk-pula tumikal.*’
is ‘Two of the teenage girls are walking home.’

‘*Yangg**angurrang** karri-kurk-pula tumikal. Nyunya yenggila kunekal piya*l’.
is ‘Two of the teenage girls are walking home. That one over there is sitting under a tree.’

‘*Werrpan**angurrang** wulman-pula. Nyunya tyileka*.’
is ‘Two of the old men are fishing. That one over there is sick.

(werrpana - to catch a fish, tyileka - to be sick, wulman - old man, nyuna - that one over there)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- Two of the teenagers are swimming. That one over there is sleeping. -

……..

- Two of the teenagers were swimming. That one over there was sleeping. -

……..

6) We two are doing the action

(includes the person being spoken to)

Change the 'a' ending to 'angal'

'*Werrpan**angal**.*' is 'We two (you and I) are catching fish.'

'*Yangg**angal** tumikal.*' is 'We two (you and I) are walking home.

'*Perrəp**angal.***' is 'We two (you and I) climb trees.'

(*perrəpa - to climb trees)*

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- We two laugh loudly.

……..

- We two are always eating.

……..

(Hint: put the time ending - happens all the time - before the person ending - we two.)

7) We two are doing the action

(does not include the person being spoken to)

Change the 'a' ending to 'angalang'

'*Werrpan**angalang** yanggarr tumikal.*' is 'We two (she and I) are catching fish, you walk home.'

'*Yangg**angalang** tumikal, nyenggarr nyula.*' is 'We two are walking home, you sit right here.'

'*Perrəp**angalang** kumbarr.* ' is 'We two are climbing trees, you lie down to sleep.'

(*nyengga - to sit down, nyula - right here, kumba - to sleep)*

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- We two will help for Grandma. You go to work.

……..

- We two are packing up. You look for the dog.

……..

8) You are doing the action

(the people being spoken to)

Change the ‘a’ ending to ‘aty’

‘*Werrpan**aty** yanggangalang tumikal.*’ is ‘You lot go fishing, we two are walking home’

‘*Nyetenyaty tarn, larrpangalang wanuk.’ is* You lot play football, we two are throwing his (or her) boomerang.’

‘Nyetenyaty tarn malamerr.’ is ‘You lot play football over there.

(*nyetenya - to play, tarn - team ball game played with possum skin ball, larrpa - to throw, wan - boomerang)*

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- You all keep quiet. I will sneak up on the emu.

……..

- You were all sitting in the shade. I cut the grass.

……..

9) They are all doing the action

(the people being spoken about)

Change the ‘a’ ending to ‘an’

‘*Nyetenyan tarn.*’ is ‘They (all) play football.’

‘*Werrpanan withəwangalang.*’ is ‘They are all going fishing, we two are returning home’

‘*Nyanginan poty, nyakamuninan.’* is ‘They all burnt the grass. They were careful.

(nyakamuna - to be careful, withəwa - to return, to go home)

Now your turn. How would you write in Wamba Wamba?

- They are all speaking Wamba Wamba.

……..

- They all came home.

……..

Pronunciation Guide

In normal Wamba Wamba speech, we usually place the emphasis on the first and third syllables with the first being strongest. In day to day speech, traditional fluent speakers speak and pronounce sounds quite quickly and don't normally draw out sounds.

Standard sounds include:

Vowels

'a' as in 'car'	**'e' as in 'pet'**	**'i' as in 'sit'**	
'u' as in 'put'	**'o' as in 'on'**	**'ə' - neutral sound like the 'e' in 'the'**	

Variation - 1) when '**a**' follows an initial 'w' and is followed by an 'r', 'ng' or 'n' , eg 'w**a**ripa', 'w**a**rrang' or 'w**a**nap' then it is pronounced as for 'a' in 'water' or 'war' (Note the second 'a' in each of the words above is pronounced 'a' as in 'car')
Variation - 2) the first 'a' in W<u>a</u>mba W<u>a</u>mba is pronounced as the 'a' in 'c<u>a</u>tch'.

Consonants

- '**rr**' - roll or trill double 'rr's (if you can) but not single 'r',

- '**ty**' is a palatal stop - say 'ty' with your tongue touching your palate
e.g. *<u>ty</u>*aka, Kole*<u>ty</u>*. (If you are having trouble with the 'ty' sound then 'tch' as in 'fetch' is close but it is good to persist with the 'ty'.)

- '**ny**' is a palatal and nasal sound. It is made by touching the top of the tongue to the top of the mouth behind your teeth and adding some nasal vibration while saying 'ny'. Eg *<u>ny</u>enggin <u>Ny</u>*akili

- '**th**' is a hard sound like the English 'd' eg ku*<u>th</u>*anganda (say <u>kuud</u>-ahn-<u>gahnd</u>ah)

- '**ng**' is a soft sound as in the English 'so*<u>ng</u>*' eg warrangga*<u>ng</u> (singing), kalpa<u>ng</u>*
(note - the first 'a' in 'warranggang' is an example of the variation 1 'a' as in 'war')
- '**ngg**' soft 'ng' followed by a hard 'g' eg nye*<u>ngg</u>*in, warra*<u>ngg</u>*ang

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