

KRIOL

How many people speak Kriol?

There are at least 20,000 Kriol speakers across the Top End. Many people speak it as their first language or as an additional language!

KRIOL	ENGLISH
Wanim yu neim?	What's your name?
Main neim _____.	My name is _____.
Jidan (la met).	Sit down (on the mat).
Gudwan!	Good one!/Great!
Lagijat na.	Like this/that.
Yu sabi wani mi toktok?	Do you understand what I'm saying?

Links and Resources

Meigim Kriol Strongbala is a website dedicated to strengthening the place of Kriol in the Top End. They have compiled and made a number of resources all available on their website <https://meigimkriolstrongbala.org.au/>

Kriol online dictionary: <http://ausil.org/Dictionary/Kriol/>

ABC produces radio news daily in Kriol: <https://soundcloud.com/darwinabc>

The Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages has hundreds of downloadable school-readers in Kriol (plus many other Aboriginal languages). Go to: <https://livingarchive.cdu.edu.au/>

Women from Binjari Community have published a series of children's books in Kriol: <https://binjari.com.au/binjari-books/>

Ngukurr Language Centre offer a quarterly 2-day Kriol Awareness Course: acebook: Ngukurr Language Centre | Twitter: ngukurrLC | YouTube: NgukurrLC

Greg Dickson and Grant Thompson – Public Lecture, **Something lost, something found: Kriol in Northern Australia**, <http://arts.unimelb.edu.au/indiglang/ruil-in-action/public-lectures>

Talking in the Top End, <https://ictv.com.au/video/item/4452>

ILC Curriculum pathways and other teaching resources on Learning Links <https://learninglinks.ntschoools.net/indigenous-languages-and-cultures-nt-schools>

Join our Indigenous Languages and Cultures Yammer group <https://www.yammer.com/ntschoools.net/#/home>



Where is Kriol spoken?

People speak Kriol in the Top End, from the Gulf of Carpentaria to WA, about as far south as Tennant Creek and north to Darwin. You might encounter Kriol speakers in any community, however there are a few communities and towns in which Kriol is the dominant Indigenous language or a major language in the community:

Ngukurr	Numbulwar	Urapunga
Jilkminggan	Minyerri	Borrooloola
Barunga	Beswick	Bulman
Binjari	Katherine	Timber Creek
Bulla Camp	Amanbidji	Manyallaluk



What else do I need to know?

Kriol is a language in its own right. It is a relatively new creole language and gained recognition as a language of the Top End in the last 40 years. The majority of the words in Kriol come from English, while the sound system and grammar are heavily influenced by the traditional languages of the region. This means that there are local varieties of Kriol that express different cultural identities. Kriol, like other Indigenous languages, holds traditional knowledges and cultures of Aboriginal communities. However, not all people who speak Kriol identify as Kriol speakers.

The sounds of Kriol differ from traditional languages in a few ways. One difference is that it has more vowels, than most traditional languages. The consonants of Kriol are a mixture between English and traditional languages. Like English, there is great variation in the way Kriol speakers pronounce words, and even in the words they use for certain things. This is a normal feature of language, and something Kriol speakers often enjoy exploring between dialects of Kriol.

The writing system of Kriol was originally developed by The Australian Summer Institute of Linguistics for the purpose of bible translation. It uses the Latin alphabet to represent the way that words are pronounced. As yet there is no official spelling standard. People use the writing system to represent how they speak, resulting in variation between dialects and communities.



SOUNDS in KRIOL

What are the different kinds of consonants?

We make **stop sounds** by completely blocking the air flow through the mouth for an instant, then releasing it again (p, b, t, d, k, g).

We make **nasal sounds** through the nose (m, n, rn, ny, ng). In English the nasal sound ng (ŋ) only appears in the middle and at the end of words (eg. singer, thong).

We make **fricatives** when we bring two parts of the mouth close together and they restrict the airflow so it rushes through a narrow gap (f, v, s, sh). Fricatives are high frequency sounds that can be difficult for people with hearing loss to hear.

Affricates start as a stop but end as a fricative (English: ch, j, dg).

We make **lateral sounds** by using the tongue to change the direction of the airflow in the mouth, letting it flow around the tongue (l, rl, ly).

We make **taps and trills** by quickly tapping or vibrating the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth (rr). These sounds are common in Aboriginal languages. In informal English, many people make a tap sound instead of a t stop sound between vowels, such as when they quickly say a word like 'butter', as 'bada'.

We make **approximants** by bringing parts of the mouth close together, but not close enough to create noisy airflow like a fricative. Approximants are also called glides (w, r, y).

English and Kriol consonant sounds		both lips		top teeth to bottom lip		tongue to back of teeth		tongue tip behind top teeth		curl tongue back		middle of tongue to roof of mouth		back of tongue to roof of mouth		throat	
stop	voiceless	p	p				th	t	t		rd	tj	k	k			
	voiced	b	b					d	d			j	g	g			
nasal	voiced	m	m					n	n	rn		ny	ng (sing)	ng			
fricative	voiceless			f	f	th (this)		s	s			sh	sh			h	h
	voiced			v	v	th (that)		z	s			s (measure)	sh				
affricate	voiceless											ch					
	voiced											dj					
laterals	voiced							l	l		rl						
trills	voiced								rr								
approximants	voiced	w	w					r			r	y	y				

What is voiced and voiceless?

We make **voiced sounds** by tightening and vibrating the vocal folds. Hold your fingers against your throat and say "zzz". The vibration indicates the sound is voiced. For English voiced stop sounds the vocal folds stay tight.

We make **voiceless sounds** by allowing air to pass through the vocal folds (hold your fingers against your throat and say "sss", the lack of vibration indicates the sound is voiceless). In English voiceless stop sounds are made with a puff of air, which you can feel by putting your hand in front of your mouth and saying a word such as 'peak'. This puff of air doesn't occur when the stop sound comes straight after another consonant, as in 'speak'.

Traditional Aboriginal languages don't distinguish voiced and voiceless stops in the same way as English. This pattern is also found in Kriol. Kriol speakers may pronounce voiced and voiceless stops, depending on the situation.

Which parts of the mouth do we use?

Both lips come together (m, b, p).

Top teeth rest on the bottom lip (f, v).

The middle of the tongue is pressed behind the teeth (th).

The tongue tip touches the ridge behind the top teeth (n, t, d, l, rr).

The tongue curls back towards the roof of mouth (r, rn, rd, rl). These sounds are found in Aboriginal languages but not in Standard English.

The middle of the tongue rises up towards the roof of the mouth (English ch, j, dg, Kriol dj, ny, ly).

The back of the tongue rises towards the back of the roof of the mouth (k, g, ng).

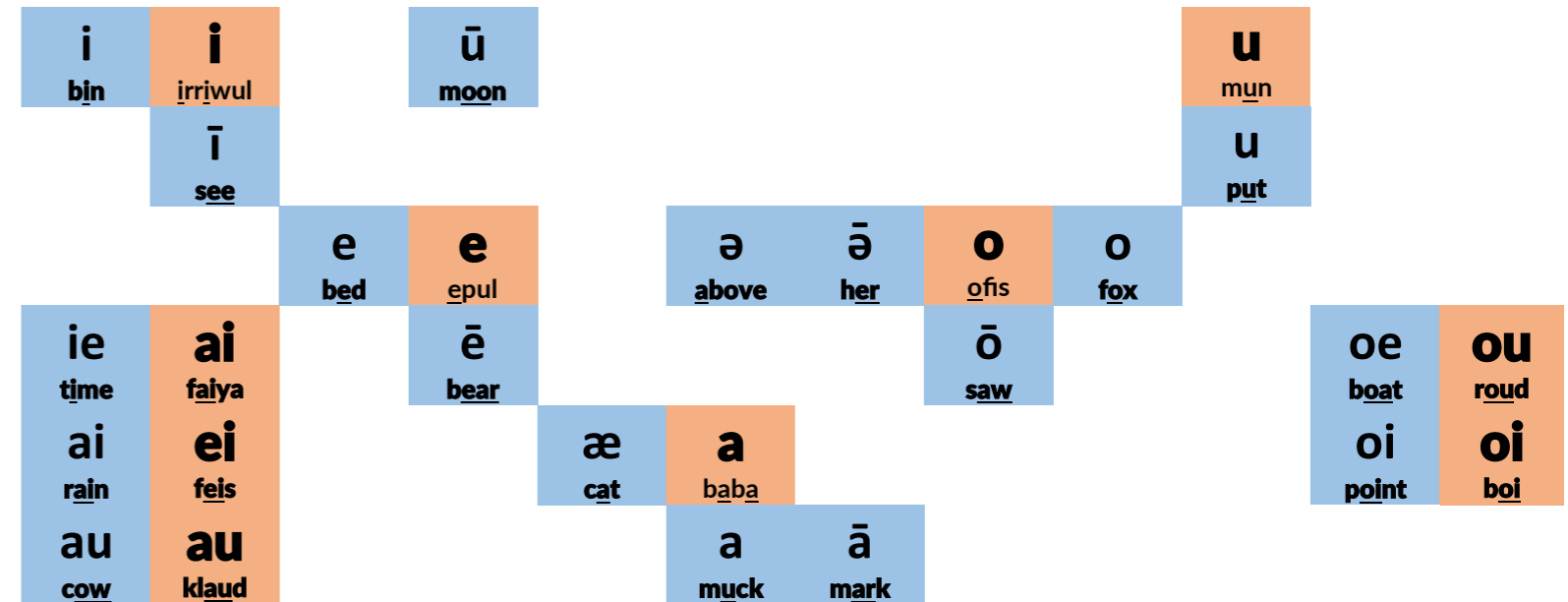
We push air through the throat (h).



Sound is made with the lips unrounded and a lifted jaw.

English and Kriol vowels

Sound is made with the lips rounded and a lifted jaw.



Orange vowel sounds appear in Kriol. Blue vowel sounds appear in English.

Long vowels are shown with a line above them. Try saying the example words to hear the difference between long and short vowels in English.



Sound is made with the mouth open and a dropped jaw.

Long vowels in Kriol are not shown, however for i, e, a, o, u there are long equivalents in many Kriol dialects. Kriol words:

irriwul 'ear', faiya 'fire', feis 'face', klaud 'cloud', epul 'apple', baba 'brother/sister', ofis 'office', mun 'moon', roud 'road', boi 'boy'