

NAWDM KAALB N HŌORB

LEARN TO READ AND WRITE NAWDM

Ma kpɛlɔa nawdm.

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A guide book with exercises for
learning to read and write Nawdm

Translated and adapted into English from the French version
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SIL Nawdm

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Introduction:

This book is destined for those Nawdba who already know how to read and write English and who desire to learn to read and write their own language. The alphabet used in this book has been approved by the Nawdm Language Committee.

In order to read and write Nawdm, you must first know how words are formed. Words are made up of consonants and vowels.

What are consonants? Compare the following two words:

dagr “quiver” (case for holding arrows)

ragr “medicine”

These two words are distinguished only by the beginning letters, which are consonants: d in the first word, r in the second.

What are vowels? Compare the following two words:

tu ! “carry”

to ! “give”

These two words are distinguished only by the vowels at the end of each word, u in the first word, o in the second.

In the following pages, you will learn the letters of the alphabet, and the rules for reading and writing. These rules and the alphabet make up the orthography of the Nawdm language. Each lesson, or new point, has exercises that will help you become familiar with the orthography. You will learn best through lots of practice.

The exercises give words or phrases in English; you need to write the meaning in Nawdm on the lines provided. Some exercises give other words in parenthesis, to give either an

alternate way of saying the same thing or a fuller explanation of the meaning intended; these words in parenthesis are meant to help you understand, but are not to be translated. As you finish each lesson, you can correct your work by looking at the answers that are given at the back of the book.

After completing this guidebook on Nawdm orthography, you will be able to read and write Nawdm. You only need more practice. Here are some ideas for practicing: write a letter in Nawdm to a friend, write some Nawdm proverbs, or a story about a Nawdm custom to share with friends and family. You can also purchase some of the other booklets that exist in Nawdm in order to practice reading. As you try to read and write, you may think it is too difficult, but don't be discouraged. Learning something new is always difficult at first. Only the person who never learns anything can say he never makes mistakes! The more you practice to read and write Nawdm, the easier it will be.

1. VOWELS

There are 7 vowels in the Nawdm language: a e ε i o ɔ u
Each one will be studied separately in the following pages.
Each vowel also has a long version, when the sound is more prolonged. So there are also 7 long vowels:

aa ee εε ii oo ɔɔ uu

The long vowels will be studied after the short vowels. Each vowel has only one sound in Nawdm, unlike English where each vowel can have several sounds. For example, the “a” is pronounced differently in each of the following English words: bat, cage, ball. The “o” in the following words is also pronounced differently: pole, doll, box. But each vowel has only one sound in Nawdm!

2. THE VOWEL A / a

The vowel **a** in Nawdm has only one sound, it is pronounced like the sound in the English words “but”, “up” (*Ghanaian English pronunciation*).

Example: raga “medicines”

Exercises: On the lines provided, write the Nawdm equivalent for each of the English words. The first one is done for you. Complete the others and then compare your answers with the correct answers given at the back of the book.

1. (one pair of) “scissors” _____
2. “scorpion” _____
3. “palms” (as in the palms of your hands) _____
4. “quivers” (cases for holding arrows) _____
5. “stones” _____

3. THE VOWEL U / u

The vowel **u** in Nawdm is pronounced like the sound in the English words: you, glue, do, too. So be careful to only write the **u** in Nawdm, not the combination of vowels “ou”, “ue”, or “oo”.

Example: dugu “room”

Exercises:

6. “goat” _____
7. “bowl” (or plate, for eating) _____
8. “hut” _____
9. “turtles” _____
10. “shirt” _____

4. THE VOWEL I / i

The vowel i is pronounced like the sound in the words: bead, lead, greed.

Example: nida “person” (human being)

At the end of a word, the i is often pronounced very briefly.

Example: bagi “hunting”

Exercises:

11. “my husband” _____
12. “drums” _____
13. “cloth, material” _____
14. “ribs” _____
15. “partridges” (bush fowl – plural form) _____

5. THE VOWEL E / e

The vowel e is pronounced like the sound in the words: take, date, tape.

Example: kekeᅇa “bicycle”

Exercises:

16. “The goat got out.” _____
17. “The man is full.” (had enough to eat) _____
18. “the man said” _____
19. “The man is coming.” _____
20. “food” _____

6. THE VOWEL O / o

The vowel o is pronounced like the sound in the words: toe, hoe, toll. Be careful to write only o in Nawdm and not more than one vowel like the “oe” in English.

Example: torgu “cast-iron pot (for cooking)”

Exercises:

21. “water hole” (river) _____
22. “baobab tree” _____
23. “yam” _____
24. “they did not put” _____
25. “they run” (they are running) _____

7. THE VOWEL E / e

The vowel e is pronounced like the sound in the words: bed, led, head, dead. The letter e is written the same height as the other vowels, so be careful not to make it bigger when you write it.

Example: B`a r`enan. “They are leaving.”

Exercises:

26. “one hundred” _____
27. “net” _____
28. “they are tasting” _____
29. “bean cake” _____
30. “They moved a step backwards.” _____

8. THE VOWEL ɔ / ɔ

The vowel ɔ is pronounced like the sound in the words: bought, taught, caught. Be careful to write only ɔ in Nawdm and not two vowels like “ou” or “au” in English.

Example: dɔm “animal”

Exercises:

31. “chicken” _____
32. “woman” _____
33. “pail” (bucket) _____
34. “well” (for water) _____
35. “eye” _____

9. TONE IS WRITTEN ON PRONOUNS

Subject pronouns (before verbs) and possessive pronouns (before nouns) are always written separately. Do not join them to the verb or noun that follows them. In order to quickly tell pronouns apart, we write a tone mark above the vowel of the pronoun.

1) A pronoun can have low tone (low voice – nodaar). The low tone mark is written from the upper left to the lower right (`). Examples:

M`a san bina.	“I went to the dance.”
B`a san bina.	“They went to the dance.”
m`a sumga	“my bowl”
t` sumga	“our bowl”

2) A pronoun can have high tone (high voice – noniir). The high tone mark is written from the lower left to the upper right (´). Examples:

bá sumga	“their bowl”
t´ sumga	“their bowl (for pigs)”
Bá san bina !	“(Let them) go to the dance!”
Bá kad !	“(Let them) sit down!”
Bá ked !	“(Let them) go!”

3) Tone is not written on emphatic pronouns.

Example: **Bee** san bina. “It is they that went to the dance.”

Exercises:

36a. “They are repeating.” _____

36b. “Let them repeat!” _____

37a. “my basin” (large bowl for carrying water or other things) _____

37b. “their basin” _____

38a. “They are squatting.” (crouching down) _____

38b. “Let them squat.” (crouch down) _____

39a. “my scissors” _____

39b. “their scissors” _____

40a. “They did not refuse.” _____

40b. “Let them refuse!” _____

10. OBJECT PRONOUNS

We already learned that subject pronouns and possessive pronouns are always written separately and with tone (see lesson 9). Examples:

t` liln	“we repeat” (are repeating)
mà fɔga	“my wife”
bá dɔm	“their animals”

But object pronouns are joined to the verb with a hyphen, and the tone is not written. Examples:

Si-ma bɛbɛt.	“Give me some bean cakes.”
Si-ma-t.	“Give them to me (bean cakes).”

Exercises:

41. “I gave them some yams.” _____
42. “We killed a goat for them.” _____
43. “Give me my shirt!” _____
44. “It hasn’t rained.” _____
45. “If the child catches the chicken, let him give it to me.” _____

11. REVISION OF VOWELS AND PRONOUNS

Exercises:

46. “I was hungry.” (Hunger killed me.) _____
47. “The goat is red.” _____
48. “We are putting a roof on the bedroom.” _____
49. “My wife served me some yams.” _____
50. “My wife served them my yams.” _____

12. LONG VOWELS

When words have a vowel sound that is longer than normal,

then you must write two vowels, as in the following examples. The two written vowels are not pronounced separately, it just means that the vowel sound is held longer. This distinction is important and allows us to know the difference between **raga** “medicines” and **raaga** “small group of trees”; or **baku** “distance” and **bɔku** “bunch of palm nuts”.

Examples:	raagu	“forest”
	buugu	“granary”
	toom	“ashes”
	fiigu	“mat” (for sleeping)
	feerb	“deer” (female, doe)
	bɛɛra	“young girl”

Exercises:

- 51. “tree” _____
- 52. “dawadawa” (type of tree) _____
- 53. “sheep” _____
- 54. “death” _____
- 55. “I responded.” (I answered.) _____

13. THE IMPERATIVE (COMMANDS)

The imperative (when giving a command or order) is always followed by an exclamation point. In Nawdm there is always a space between the end of the word and the exclamation point.

Example: **Biir biint !** “(You-singular) tell the truth!”

When the imperative is plural, either first or second person, it

is marked by the letter **n** which is joined to the verb with a hyphen.

Examples: Kad-n ! “(You-plural) sit down!”
 Tn kad-n ! “Let us sit down!”

Exercises: sg. = singular form of you; pl. = plural form of you

56. (You-sg.) give! _____
57. (You-pl.) don't fight! _____
58. (You-pl.) go, you chase after my sheep and you catch it for me. _____
59. (You-pl.) serve me some (beer)! _____
-

14. REVISION OF LONG VOWELS

Exercises:

60. “The chicken is scratching the ground.” _____

61. “If there is any beer, I will give them some.” _____

62. “The young people are preparing the food.” _____

63. “My oldest brother is lying down in the courtyard (outside).” _____
64. “The mangoes are ripe.” _____
65. “They are following each other.” (one after the other) _____
-

15. CONSONANTS

As you have seen in the exercises so far, most of the consonants are not difficult. However, there are some

differences between English and Nawdm consonants, and we will look at these differences in the following pages. Nawdm has 24 consonants: (shown in small and capital forms)

b, d, f, g, gb, gw, h, ħ, j, k, kp, kw, l, m, n, ny, ŋ,
B, D, F, G, Gb, Gw, H, Ĥ, J, K, Kp, Kw, L, M, N, Ny, Ņ,

ŋm, r, s, t, v, w, y
Ņm, R, S, T, V, W, Y

The nawdm consonants b, d, f, l, t, are pronounced the same as they are in English, so they will not be studied individually.

16. AUDIBLE RELEASE OF CONSONANTS

1) Between two consonants or at the end of certain words, there is a vibration or sound like a very short vowel when the sound of the consonant stops or is released. This is called an audible release. In all of these words, whether verbs, nouns, or pronouns, this breath sound or short vowel sound that you hear after releasing a consonant is never written.

Examples: dar ! “pull!”
 tab “bow”
 L` difn. “It’s finished.”
 M` ba hɔm. “It is good.”
 T` juln. “We are eating.”

Exercises:

66. “(You-sg.) sit!” _____
67. “(You-sg.) turn (around)!” _____
68. “food” _____

69. “the car that just passed by” _____

70. “the stone that is in your house” _____

2) When two consonants are together in the middle of a word, there is often a small vowel sound between the pronunciation of the two consonants. This sound is not written because it is normal for this sound to occur between releasing the first consonant and pronouncing the second consonant, since each consonant is pronounced separately.

Example: **Nawdba** “the Nawdba (people)”

3) Even when two of the same consonants are together, they are still pronounced separately (except for two **m**). This is different from English where there are lots of words that have double consonants, but they are pronounced as one sound, for example: thinner, butter, ladder, kitten.

Example: **naamtt** “mills”

Take note that the two **t**'s in this word above are pronounced separately.

Exercises:

71. “cooks” _____

72. “blacksmiths” _____

73. “heat” _____

74. “fan” _____

75. “to pluck or pull out feathers” (of a chicken or bird)

17. THE CONSONANT R / r

The consonant r in Nawdm is different than English, because in Nawdm the r is rolled or flapped. It is similar to the sound made in English when the following words are pronounced quickly: sadder, ladder.

Example: burgu “chèvre”

Exercises:

76. “yam” _____
77. “house” _____
78. “chicken” _____
79. “cast-iron pot” (for cooking) _____
80. “squirrel” _____

18. THE CONSONANT H / h

The consonant H is always aspirated in Nawdm, meaning it has a small breath sound when you pronounce it.

Example: hɔm “good”

Exercises:

81. “bambara bean” _____
82. “path” (road) _____
83. “black” _____
84. “They are sweeping the house.” _____
85. “They woke me up.” _____

19. THE CONSONANT M / m

The consonant m is usually the same as in English. However, in certain words the m resonates or vibrates and you must be careful not to write the vowel sound that the vibration makes

before or after the **m**; it is only the vibration of the nasal consonant and not really a vowel.

Example: **Nawdm** “Nawdm”

When the vibration is prolonged, we write **m** two times.

Example: **kimm** “strongly” (firmly)

Exercises:

86. “intelligence” _____

87. “first” (in the first place) _____

88. “fire” _____

89. “beauty” (of a girl) _____

90. “a good beer” _____

20. THE CONSONANT N / n

The consonant **n** also is usually the same as in English, but as with **m**, you must be careful not to write the vowel sound before or after the **n**, as it is only caused by the vibration of the nasal consonant. The consonant **n** can also be a word by itself, meaning “and”.

Example: **Bà haadrn.** “They swept.”

Exercises:

91. “It’s he who is the boss.” _____

92. “We have to let the goats and sheep out.” _____

93. “My wife and I, we are running.” _____

94. "The man has come and is at the house." _____

95. "It is not the beer from my wife." (made by my wife) _____

21. THE CONSONANT S / s

The consonant **s** is pronounced like the "s" in the following words: sun, house, sad, some. This sound is always written with **s**, not like in English where sometimes we write "s" (sit), sometimes "c" (dice, mice, decision, precise), and sometimes "ss" (miss, kindness, possible).

Example: seseegu "pointed"

Exercises:

96. "They ran." _____

97. "bowl" (or plate, for eating) _____

98. "sesame" (agushi) _____

99. "party" _____

100. "kerosene" _____

22. THE CONSONANT W / w

The consonant **w** is pronounced like in the word: water. It never acts like a vowel in Nawdm like it does sometimes in English as in the words: now, know.

Examples: wat or wada "clouds"
 haawr "one type of mouse"

Exercises:

101. "monkey" _____

102. “bones” _____
 103. “thief” _____
 104. “things” _____
 105. “My stomach hurts.” _____

23. THE CONSONANT Y / y

The consonant **y** is pronounced like the sound in the words: yesterday, year. It never acts like a vowel in Nawdm like it does sometimes in English as in the words: boy, may, eye.

Example: **yobr** “rainy season”

Exercises:

106. “market” _____
 107. “marriage” _____
 108. “grandmother” _____
 109. “They are singing the song.” _____
 110. “They see the rat.” _____

24. THE CONSONANT J / j

The consonant **j** sounds like the “j” in the words: Jesus, justice, jam, joke; or like the “g” in the words: giraffe, giant; or like the “dge” in the words: judge, badge. But in Nawdm this sound is always written with **j**.

Example: **jugu** “head”

Exercises:

111. “blood” _____
 112. “flour” _____
 113. “mustard” _____
 114. “knife” _____
 115. “dreams” _____

25. THE CONSONANT K / k

The consonant **k** is pronounced like the “k” in kite, kitten; and like the “c” in cat, car. But in Nawdm this sound is always written with **k**, never with “c”.

Example: **kaku** “millet leaf”

Exercises:

116. “drum” (made from a pottery jar) _____
117. “village” _____
118. “They refuse.” _____
119. “shoulder” _____
120. “They are frying bean flour doughnuts.” _____
-

26. THE CONSONANT Kp / kp

The consonant **kp** is made up of two letters, but these two letters together represent only one sound in Nawdm, and so it is counted as one letter in the Nawdm alphabet. This sound does not exist in English.

Example: **kpam** “field”

Exercises:

121. “guinea fowl” (plural) _____
122. “quarrels” (disputes, arguments) _____
123. “old man” _____
124. “That woman is dead.” _____
125. “The farmer has returned.” _____
-

27. THE CONSONANT G / g

The consonant **g** in the middle or at the end of a word is pronounced like a “hard g”, like in the words: grass, gas, bag, flag, bigger. But at the beginning of a word, the pronunciation varies according to the different dialects. Some pronounce it as a “hard g”, the same as in the middle or end of a word; others pronounce it like the **j** in Nawdm.

Example: goom “sleep”

In order to allow everyone to read according to their pronunciation, we always write **g**, and then each person can apply their own dialect’s rule for reading.

Be careful to never write the vowel **u** between **g** and **i** , or **g** and **e** , like in the English words: guitar, guest. Nawdm doesn’t need this extra letter.

Example: M à magiin. “I tried.”

Exercises:

126. “cricket” _____

127. “one thousand” _____

128. “Digging for gravel is difficult.” _____

129. “It is not my goat.” _____

130. “They prepared the meat.” _____

28. THE CONSONANT Gb / gb (and göb)

The consonant **gb** is made up of two letters, but these two

letters together represent only one sound in Nawdm, so it is counted as one letter in the Nawdm alphabet. This sound does not exist in English.

Example: **gbanu** “body”

Exercises:

131. “to fight” (hit, punch) _____

132. “leather” _____

133. “They are asking.” _____

134. “They played drums.” _____

135. “It’s healed.” _____

Since the consonant **gb** represents only one sound, it is necessary to distinguish it from the sound of **g** followed by **b**. In this latter case, we write two dots over the **g**.

Example: **malha ha**g**b** “banku” (corn meal dough)

Exercises: In the following exercises **gb** and **g**g**** are mixed.

136. “snake” _____

137. “weaving cloths” _____

138. “whips” _____

139. “cow” _____

140. “money” _____

29. THE CONSONANT **ŋ** / **n**

The consonant **ŋ** differs in pronunciation according to dialect. Some dialects pronounce it like the “ng” sound in the words: meeting, singing. Others pronounce it as two sounds “**ŋg**” similar to the sound in the words: longer, stronger, anger. In order to have one alphabet for all Nawdba, we always write **ŋ**,

and then each person can pronounce it according to their own dialect when reading.

Example: baŋa “lizard”

Note that quite a few nouns end with -ŋu.

Example: toŋu “rain, nature”

Exercises:

141. “place” _____

142. “scarf” _____

143. “bicycle” _____

144. “machete” (cutlass) _____

145. “idiot” (crazy person) _____

30. THE CONSONANT Ny / ny (and ñy)

The consonant **ny** is made up of two letters, but these two letters together represent only one sound in Nawdm, so it is counted as one letter in the Nawdm alphabet. The consonant **ny** at the beginning of Nawdm words is pronounced like the sound in the middle of the words: onion, domininon,

Examples: nyaalm “water”

nyunyuudu “thirst”

Exercises:

146. “straw” _____

147. “teeth” _____

148. “porridge” _____

149. “my mother’s house” _____

150. “It sparkles.” _____

In some cases, this sound as in “onion” also comes in the middle of words, and so we also write **ny** in these words; however there are not very many of these.

Exercises:

151. “palm nuts” _____

152. “I am repairing.” _____

153. “crab” _____

Since the consonant **ny** represents only one sound, it is necessary to distinguish it from the sound of **n** followed by **y**. In this latter case, we write two dots over the **n̈**.

Example: tañyalmr “the large rock”

In the following exercises **ŋ** and **ny** are mixed.

Exercises:

154. “caterpillar” (worm) _____

155. “They drank some water.” _____

156. “(You-sg.) look at my suffering.” _____

157. “They prepared the ground.” _____

158. “They greet you-(plural).” _____

159. “(You-sg.) get out of here!” _____

160. “God is here.” _____

31. THE CONSONANT Ĥ / ĥ

The **ĥ** sound is an abrupt stop of air, and it gives the impression that the vowel before it is stronger. Since the air is cut off, the **ĥ** doesn’t allow this vowel to have any direct connection with the next letter or word. It is a real consonant,

having the same role as all the other consonants. We will look at each of the different positions where the consonant **h** can appear in a word.

- 1) In the middle of a word. In this case, the **h** usually follows a vowel. And often it seems that we can hear a short identical vowel after it. But this is only because the **h** makes an abrupt cut off of air and then when the air is released, it sounds like the preceding vowel. You must be careful **not** to write this released air as a vowel after the **h** (*bii saḥalan*); **nor** to write two identical vowels without the **h** (*bii saalan*), because that would just make a long vowel. The correct form is below.

Example: bii saḥlan “The children are playing.”

In some cases, there is a long vowel after the consonant **h**.

Example: m̀à jaḥaan “I’m sifting.” (to winnow/sift grain)

Exercises:

161. “sieve” (used to sift flour; for making beer) _____

162. “I bought.” _____

163. “I’m sifting (flour).” _____

164. “advice” _____

165. “It’s finished.” _____

166. “I’m clearing/preparing” (the land) _____

167. “sickness” _____

168. “ground nut” _____

- 2) At the end of a word. Some verbs end with an abrupt cut-off, and when the air is released, it seems to create a vowel sound, but this sound must not be written.

Example: Bà mug burgu n bañ-ku.
 “They took the goat and tied it up.

Exercises:

169. “They are not serving beer today.” _____

170. “They did not call me.” _____

171. “Do not buy quickly!” _____

172. “I’m not going to burn the guinea fowl.” _____

173. “They pushed (shoved) each other.” _____

174. “They tied up the goat.” _____

At the end of other words that have this **ñ** sound, or cut-off of air, there is no releasing of the sound. In these cases, we write the **ñ** followed by an accent mark to show that the air is not released.

Example: Bà sira-ma malña hağb sumga keñ’.
 “They served me a bowl full of banku.” (corn meal dough)

Exercises:

175. “Wait first!” _____

176. “It’s close.” (It is near.) _____

177. “I drink a little.” _____

178. “They don’t exist anymore.” (They are not here.) _____

179. “two women” _____

180. “three men” _____

3) At the beginning of a word. There are many words that begin with the consonant **ñ**.

Example: ɦafaaju “pig”

When a word (or phrase) begins with **ɦ**, it is hard to hear it; but if another word comes before it then you can notice or hear the abrupt cut-off sound.

Example: mà ɦafaaju “my pig”

But the **ɦ** is written in each case even when the word is alone. Unlike English, Nawdm words never begin with a vowel.

Exercises:

181. “my banana” _____
182. “horns of a cow” _____
183. “I am writing Nawdm.” _____
184. “wind” _____
185. “He yawned.” _____
186. “He didn’t do anything.” _____
187. “The mouse is gone (has left).” _____
-

In the following phrases, all the possible positions where the consonant **ɦ** can be found are mixed up.

Exercises:

188. “He built the house.” _____
189. “The farmer took his hoe.” _____

190. “The roads are ruined.” _____
191. “He served me three bowls of beer.” _____

192. “The scorpion bit me.” _____

193. “Her mother was dead already (before).” _____

194. “The chicken covered” (the eggs) _____

195. “He bought €3000.00 worth of pork.” _____

32. THE CONSONANT Kw / kw

The consonant **kw** has different pronunciations according to the different villages. Some do not make any distinction between **kw** and **k**; others pronounce it as **k** followed by a small **u** sound; and others pronounce it like an **f**.

Example: kwifr “ten”

In order to have just one way of writing Nawdm, we must always write **kw** for this sound. But everyone reads it according to the pronunciation of their own dialect.

Exercises:

196. “It has cooled off.” (gotten cold) _____

197. “riches” (wealth) _____

198. “my little brother” _____

199. “peel” (for example, the peel of an orange) _____

200. “forty” _____

33. THE CONSONANT Gw / gw

The consonant **gw**, just like the consonant **kw**, is pronounced in various ways according to the different villages. Some pronounce the consonant **gw** like a simple **g**, others

pronounce it as **g** followed by a little **u**; others pronounce it as **b**; and still others pronounce it as **gb**.

Exemple: **gweedmta** “seller, vendor”

In order to have just one way of writing Nawdm, we must always write **gw** for this sound. But everyone reads it according to the pronunciation of their own dialect.

Exercises:

201. “sand” _____
202. “lip” (of the mouth) _____
203. “stories” (words) _____
204. “the act of speaking” (to speak) _____
205. “the act of painting” (to paint) _____

34. THE CONSONANT ηm / ηm (and $\ddot{\eta} m$)

The consonant **ηm** is made up of two letters, but these two letters together represent only one sound in Nawdm, so it is counted as one letter in the Nawdm alphabet. This sound does not exist in English. However, some of the Nawdm dialects pronounce it as a simple **m**.

Example: **$\eta milgr$** “python” (type of snake)

In order to have just one way of writing Nawdm, we must always write **ηm** for this sound. But everyone reads it according to the pronunciation of their own dialect.

Since the consonant **ηm** represents only one sound, it is necessary to distinguish it from the sound of **η** followed by **m**. In this latter case, we write two dots over the **$\ddot{\eta}$** .

Example: ranmɔlga “red partridge”

Exercises:

206. “okro” (okra) _____

207. “bird” _____

208. “The lemon is bitter.” _____

209. “(You-sg.) come back!” _____

210. “courage” _____

35. THE CONSONANT V / v

The consonant **v** is pronounced in two different ways according to the various dialects. Some pronounce it as **v** like in the English words “victory”, “vase”, etc., others pronounce it as **b**.

Example: vadb “hole”

In order to have just one way of writing Nawdm, we must always write **v** for this sound. But everyone reads it according to the pronunciation of their own dialect.

Exercises:

211. “small pad” (rag round up in circle on top of head to carry things on) _____

212. “owl” _____

213. “(You-sg.) get up!” (stand up) _____

214. “glutton” (love of food) _____

215. “breath” _____

36. NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

The simple nouns in Nawdm consist of two parts: the root,

which gives the meaning of the word; and the suffix, which tells us if it is singular or plural. This suffix also shows which pronoun to use in place of the noun, since each noun is part of a set or group of nouns called a noun class.

<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>		
<u>noun</u>	<u>pronoun</u>	<u>noun</u>	<u>pronoun</u>	
nida	fi/wu	nidba	ba	“person, human”
haḡb	b	hagni	fi	“banku”
taamb	b	taamt	t	“mango tree”
burgu	ku	buri	fi	“goat”
gbuḡgu	ku	gbuḡt	t	“mushroom”
huru	fi	huri	fi	“road, path”
sumga	ka	sumii	hi	“bowl”
rond	d	rona	fi	“yam”
nyaalm	m	- - - -	- -	“water”

The noun class group of “**fi** singular”, meaning the nouns that take the suffix **-a**, is special because it can have three different singular forms (the part that changes is underlined in the examples below).

- Examples: M̀a mara kool kpamb.
 “My older brother is cultivating a field.”
- M̀a kool m̀a maru kpamb.
 “I’m cultivating a field for my older brother.”
- M̀a beda m̀a mar na ma koora-wu.
 “I told my older brother that I cultivated (a field) for him.”

Exercises:

216. “She served me beer, it is good.” _____

217. “My boss (employer) is gone on a trip.” _____

218. “They bought my father’s goat.” _____

219. “They bought the goat for my father.” _____

220. “My father and my mother are here.” _____

The suffixes and pronouns also have another form with a lengthened vowel. These forms are used when referring to a person or thing that has already been referred to previously. The long vowel form of the pronoun is also used at the end of a relative clause.

Examples: H̀a hoh fɔgwii.
 “He called the woman in question.”

 H̀a hoh fɔg huraa nn bed na h́a bag wii.
 “He called the woman whom the chief had told him to find.”

Exercises:

221. “Good morning.” _____

222. “Good evening.” _____

223. “These guinea fowl are white.” _____

224. “I don’t know what happened.” _____

225. “He drank the beer that was served to him.” _____

37. COMPOUND NOUNS

In Nawdm there are two kinds of compound nouns.

- 1) There are nouns with a compound stem (two roots together) and only one class suffix. In this case, we write it all together as one word.

Example: **ban**kpaam “palm oil”

In this example there are the two roots **ban-** et **kpa-** ; and the class suffix is **-m**.

Another example with two roots and one suffix:

bɛntia “sick person”

- 2) There are also noun phrases made up of two separate words, meaning that each word is complete in itself. In this case, the two words that make up the compound noun are written separately.

Example: **Nyam**tgua tia. “a person from Niamtougou.”

Be careful! Note that all noun phrases that consist of two separate words in Nawdm are always written separately, even if the translation in English is only one word.

Example: **saama** lan**kp**adga “pineapple”

Exercises:

226. “person from Baga” _____

227. “person from Koka” _____

228. “drunkard” _____

229. “junction” (corner where two roads cross each other) _____

230. “owner of the house” _____

38. ADJECTIVES

In Nawdm, an adjective usually comes between the noun root and the suffix. So it is all written together as one word. The adjective that describes the noun is underlined in the example below.

Example: burjeengu “another goat”

However, there are a few adjectives that come after the noun and suffix; in these cases the adjective is written separately.

Example: burgu mɔmgu “the goat itself” (the
very same goat)

Exercises:

231. “the first cock” (male chicken) _____

232. “a laying (brooding) hen” _____

233. “a black sheep” _____

234. “everyone” (all people) _____

235. “She served me the beer made only from sorghum.”

39. DEMONSTRATIVES

In Nawdm, the demonstratives are written joined together with the noun that they designate.

Example: nidbambena “these people”
 nidnwuna, nidwunwuna “this man”

Exercises:

236. “this goat” _____

237. “this bowl” _____

238. “these quivers” _____
 239. “these children” _____
 240. “this arrow” _____

40. INDEFINITE ADJECTIVES

The indefinite adjective in Nawdm is usually a repetition of the class suffix marker, so it is written separately.

Example: fəg̃ba biiba “certain women”

But for the singular nouns indicating people (nouns from the singular class suffix **fa**), the indefinite adjective is the suffix **-hii** which is written joined to the noun.

Example: fəghii “a woman”

Exercises:

241. “a certain chicken” _____
 242. “certain children” _____
 243. “certain men” _____
 244. “certain yams” _____
 245. “a certain friend of mine” _____

41. VERBS

All verbs in Nawdm have a conjugated form which is marked by various suffixes. The main contrast in verbs is between the completed form (which indicates an action as a whole from the beginning to the end) and the incomplete form (which indicates an action in progress either at the beginning, middle or end).

Examples: **Bà nyira daam.** “They drank beer.”
Bà nyil daam. “They are drinking beer.”
“**They drink beer regularly.**”

All conjugated verb forms at the end of a phrase are followed by the suffix **-n** which is written joined to the verb.

Example: **Bà nyiran.** “They drank.”
Bà nyiln. “They are drinking.”

Verbs can also be preceded by various small words called particles which change the meaning. In the following examples, the particles are underlined.

Examples:
Bà da nyira daam. “They had drunk beer.”
Bà ba nyi. “They did not drink.”
Bá daa nyi ! “They must not drink!”
Bà la nyiran. “All the same (despite all), they did drink.”
Hà nyi ban kpen. “He is still not back yet.”

These particles are always written separately.

Attention! Do not automatically try to establish an exact correspondence between the English verb tenses and the Nawdm translation; they are not exactly the same. The verb tenses in English mainly show the difference in time, but the Nawdm mainly shows the different manners in which the action of the verb is done.

The infinitive verb form in Nawdm is actually a noun form along with a class marker. Examples:

deb “to eat” (root **de-** suffix **-b**)
daanm “to come” (root **daan-** suffix **-m**)

Exercises:

246. “A Nawda does not eat snails.” _____

247. “The day before yesterday we covered the house.” (put on the roof) _____

248. “That satisfied me. I can’t add anymore.” (I’m full, I can’t eat anymore.)

249. “I was tired, yet I did not sleep.” _____

250. “I run returning home.” (I hurry to go home.) _____

42. ADVERBS (USED FOR EMPHASIS)

Adverbs are often used in the Nawdm language for emphasis.

1) Some of these adverbs have a particularly long vowel, so these words are written with 3 of the same vowel.

Example: ḷ` weer-wu **biii**

“It has hurt him very much.” (It upset/saddened him a lot.)

2) Other adverbs are repeated two or more times.

a) If it is a short repetition, for example, one consonant followed by one vowel, then this repetition can be written as one word.

Example: kagakakaka, tututututu

b) In other cases, we write a hyphen between the repeated form.

Example: Ĥà ĥena ηmεεḡb kpid-kpid.

Exercises:

251. “She gave him some beer, he drank it all at once.” _____

252. “Just before night, the sun is very red. _____

253. “The widow’s body is shining brightly.” _____

254. “Run really fast!” _____

255. “My thoughts are completely wandering.” _____

43. PUNCTUATION SIGNS

The following are the signs used for punctuation in Nawdm:

- 1) The period (point) (.) is used at the end of a sentence; that is, when there is a pause in speaking.
- 2) The comma (,) is used to divide a sentence at the point where one naturally takes a short breath.

Example:

Fɔgwii nn gbudg fiá buga lee, ká bañ n ka mɔɔ kimm.

“When that woman beat her son, he started crying loudly.”

- 3) The question mark (?) is used to show a question. In Nawdm, an upside down, reversed question mark is used to show the beginning of a question (¿), and the regular question mark (?) is used at the end. This helps us to read the sentence or phrase with the correct melody.

Example: ¿ Mâ miil kann ? “Do I know over there?”

When the question is in the middle of a sentence, the question mark at the end must be followed by another punctuation sign, generally a comma, before continuing the rest of the sentence. Example:

Hâ gbaam-wu na ¿ fɔgwii ba tee ?, n gɛt ka ked.

He asked him where this woman is and he continued on his way.

Exercises:

256. "You (sg.) came?" _____

257. "Did he serve him?" _____

258. "He served him." _____

259. "Is he tired or is he sick?" (It tired him, or is he sick?)

260. "You (pl.) refused the beer, have you drunk somewhere else?" _____

- 4) The exclamation point (!) is used after interjections and at the end of an imperative phrase (a phrase that gives a command).

Example: Hai mà sa ! "Excuse me, Father!"
 Si-ma huru ! "Let me pass!"

- 5) Quotation marks (" ... " or « ... ») are used to show direct discourse, meaning the actual words that someone is saying. In most cases, the quotation is preceded by a verb like "say, respond, ask." The quotation is also preceded by a colon mark or two points (:). Be careful to distinguish between direct and indirect discourse, because quotation marks are not used with indirect speech.

Examples:

Indirect speech:

Noogrwii t gbaam-ma na ı mi na mà ked tee ?

The first one asked me where I am going.

Direct speech:

Volwii t bəhəw-wu na : "Lag v` retn !"

The other one told him: "It's none of your business!"

Exercises:

261. The woman in question responded to him: “I can’t go to the market.” _____

262. The woman in question responded to him that she could not go to the market. _____

263. The woman in question responded to him: “No.” _____

264. The woman in question responded to him that I can’t go to the market. _____

265. The man in question responded to the woman: “Go to the market anyway!” _____

44. REVISION OF THE USE OF THE HYPHEN (-) IN NAWDM

The hyphen is used in the following situations:

1) Between a verb and the object pronoun (see lesson 10).

Example:

Bà sira-ma kpaangu. “They served me guinea fowl.

2) With the plural imperative [command] (see lesson 13).

Example: Jum-n ! “(You-pl.) eat!”

3) Between the repeated parts of an adverbial expression used for emphasis (see lesson 42).

Example: kpir-kpir “very black”

4) Since the hyphen is used for these three grammatical reasons above, in order not to cause confusion, it should not be used to divide a word at the end of a line of text. So when writing a text, if there is not enough room at the end of a line to write the whole word, then you should begin the word on

Answers to the exercises:

1. saka	(one pair of) scissors
2. namga	scorpion
3. natara	palms (of your hands)
4. daga	quivers (cases to hold arrows)
5. tana	stones
6. burgu	goat
7. sumga	bowl (or plate, for eating)
8. suku	hut
9. kura	turtles
10. tuku	shirt
11. mà sida	my husband
12. bina	drums
13. dimgu	cloth, material
14. fidi	ribs
15. rai	partridges (bush fowl)
16. Burgu redan.	The goat got out.
17. Nida tegràn.	The man is full.
18. nida bedan	the man said
19. Nida kenan.	The man is coming.
20. deb	food

21. kol	water hole (river)
22. tod	baobab tree
23. rond	yam
24. bà ba lo	they did not put
25. bà soln	they run (they are running)
26. lɛmu	one hundred
27. bɛdb	net
28. bà lɛman	they are tasting
29. bɛbɛdgu	bean cake
30. Bà kɛdgn.	They moved a step backwards.
31. kɔrga	chicken
32. fɔga	woman
33. tɔka	pail (bucket)
34. lɔku	well (for water)
35. nɔmb	eye
36a. Bà liln.	They are repeating.
36b. Bá lil !	Let them repeat!
37a. mà sarga	my basin
37b. bá sarga	their basin
38a. Bà suntn.	They are squatting.
38b. Bá sunt !	Let them squat!

39a. mà saka	my scissors
39b. bá saka	their scissors
40a. Bà ba kir.	They did not refuse.
40b. Bá kir !	Let them refuse!
41. Mà sira-ba rona.	I gave them some yams.
42. T` kura-ba burgu.	We killed a goat for them.
43. To-ma mà tuku !	Give me my shirt!
44. Kù ba ni.	It hasn't rained.
45. Ka buga t mug kɔrga, ká to-ma-ka !	If the child catches the chicken, let him give it to me.
46. Kɔm kura-ma.	I was hungry.
47. Burgu ba mɔlgu.	The goat is red.
48. T` fil dugu.	We are putting a roof on the bedroom.
49. Mà fɔga sira-ma rona.	My wife served me some yams.
50. Mà fɔga sira-ba mà rona.	My wife served them my yams.
51. tiib	tree
52. doob	dawadawa
53. fɛɛgu	sheep
54. kuum	death
55. Mà leedgn.	I responded. (I answered.)

56. To !	Give!
57. Daa gbuu-n taa !	Don't fight!
58. San-n !, n` tag mà fεεgu n` mug-ma-ku.	Go, you chase after my sheep and you catch it for me.
59. Si-n-ma-m !	Serve me some (beer)!
60. Kɔrga fεε tant.	The chicken is scratching the ground.
61. Ka daam bee, mà si-ba-m.	If there is any beer, I will give them some.
62. Kaaba duuga diit.	The young people are preparing the food.
63. Mà maara doora duun.	My oldest brother is lying down in the courtyard.
64. Taama biiran.	The mangoes are ripe.
65. Bà tagda taa kaa.	They are following each other.
66. Kad !	Sit!
67. Bidg !	Turn (around)!
68. deb	food
69. lɔɔr d´ gεtg dii	the car that just passed by
70. tand d´ ba naa dii	the stone that is in your house
71. dugdba	cooks
72. kudtba	blacksmiths
73. tulgu	heat

74. fugdgu	fan
75. kowdrb	to pluck or pull out feathers
76. rond	yam
77. haar	house
78. kɔrga	chicken
79. toргу	cast-iron pot (for cooking)
80. kirga	squirrel
81. hirma	bambara bean
82. huru	path (road)
83. hoolgu (hoolm)	black
84. Bà haadra haar.	They are sweeping the house.
85. Bà himii-ma.	They woke me up.
86. rarm	intelligence
87. noogrm	first
88. bogm	fire
89. bærm	beauty
90. dahəmm	a good beer
91. Wii nnii berma.	It's he who is the boss.
92. L` ba na t` ree buri n fɛi.	We have to let the goats and sheep out.
93. Man n mà fɔga t` soln.	My wife and I, we are running.

94. Taa maara daan n ka ba haaga.	The man has come and is at the house.
95. Lag mà fɔga daamn.	It is not the beer from my wife.
96. Bà selan.	They ran.
97. sumga	bowl (for eating)
98. kusuka	sesame (agushi)
99. kasant	party
100. karasm	kerosene
101. waamgu	monkey
102. kowa	bones
103. bawda	thief
104. want	things
105. Mà raawt weeran.	My stomach hurts.
106. yaku	market
107. yaala	marriage
108. yɔga	grandmother
109. Bà yuuma yumga.	They are singing the song.
110. Bà yul yuuga.	They see the rat.
111. jiim	blood
112. joom	flour
113. junga (jini)	mustard (seed used to make “junga”)

114. juuga	knife
115. jaamiit	dreams
116. kamgu	drum (made from pottery jar)
117. kɔrgu	village
118. B̀a kirn.	They refuse.
119. baku	shoulder
120. B̀a kakra kakaarii.	They are frying bean flour doughnuts.
121. kpaani	guinea fowl (plural)
122. kpala	quarrels (disputes, arguments)
123. kpalma	old man
124. Fɔgwii kpiiran.	That woman is dead.
125. Kpamb kpaada kpenn.	The farmer has returned.
126. baaga	cricket
127. ruugu	one thousand
128. Jigi tiib ba gemm.	Digging for gravel is difficult.
129. Lag mà burgun.	It is not my goat.
130. B̀a dig namt.	They prepared the meat.
131. gbuut	to fight (hit, punch)
132. gband	leather
133. B̀a gbaaman.	They are asking.

134. Bà gbura bina.	They played drums.
135. L` gbaadn.	It's healed.
136. waağb	snake
137. dima ruuğb	weaving cloths
138. tangbanii	whips
139. naağb	cow
140. liğbiir	money
141. kaalaᅇa	place
142. kateegᅇa	scarf
143. kekeᅇa	bicycle
144. kpasaᅇu	machete (cutlass)
145. joojoᅇu	idiot (crazy person)
146. nyii	straw
147. nyina	teeth
148. nyaam	porridge
149. mà nya haar	my mother's house
150. L` nyinwan.	It sparkles.
151. banyana	palm nuts
152. M̀ manyaan.	I am repairing.
153. gonyand	crab
154. jonjoᅇu	caterpillar (worm)

155. Bà nyira nyaalm.	They drank some water.
156. Nyaan mà kunyɔŋu !	Look at my suffering.
157. Bà manyii baŋu.	They prepared the ground.
158. Bà seeŋa-n.	They greet you.
159. Nyab kan !	Get out of here!
160. Saŋgband bee.	God is here.
161. kuŋdr	sieve
162. Mà daŋran.	I bought.
163. Mà kuŋln.	I'm sifting. (flour)
164. baŋlb	advice
165. L` diŋn.	It's finished.
166. Mà waŋaan.	I'm clearing/preparing. (land)
167. beŋii	sickness
168. feŋma	ground nut
169. Jana bà kpaa saŋ daam.	They are not serving beer today.
170. Bà ba hoŋ-ma.	They did not call me.
171. Daa daŋ weem !	Do not buy quickly!
172. Mà kpaŋ mà heŋ kpaangu.	I'm not going to burn the guinea fowl.
173. Bà heŋ taa.	They pushed each other.

174. Bà bah burgu.	They tied up the goat.
175. Hɔdg sah' !	Wait first!
176. L` ba nyoh'.	It's close.
177. Mà nyil jah'.	I drink a little.
178. Bà kpah'.	They don't exist anymore.
179. fɔg̃ba bareh'	two women
180. daba batah'	three men
181. mà hayabr	my banana
182. naag̃b fiili	antlers of a cow
183. Mà hɔora nawdm.	I am writing nawdm.
184. ham	wind
185. Hà hamtrn.	He yawned.
186. Hà ba he bii.	He didn't do anything.
187. Hɔnr nyabn.	The mouse is gone.
188. Hà mɛhra haar.	He built a house.
189. Kpamb kpaada lɔgra hà kɔnfirga.	The farmer took his hoe.
190. Huri kohln.	The roads are ruined.
191. Hà sira-ma daam wombii hitah'.	He served me three bowls of beer.
192. Namga nyahɔdg-ma.	The scorpion bit me.

193. Hà nya da kpiira sah'.	Her mother was dead already.
194. Kɔrga hogn.	The chicken covered (eggs).
195. Hà dafra hafaaŋu namt ruuni hitah'.	He bought €3000.00 worth of pig meat.
196. L` kwiiran.	It has cooled off. (gotten cold)
197. kwεgdm	riches (wealth)
198. mà nyakwεεla	my little brother
199. kwεku	peel (of an orange)
200. kwεhnaa	forty
201. gwihiiim	sand
202. gwiiir	lip (of the mouth)
203. gwεεt	stories (words)
204. gwεεlb	to speak
205. gwεhnb	to paint
206. ηmeeni	okro (okra)
207. ηmenga	bird
208. Leemdaaga ba ηmiigu.	The lemon is bitter.
209. ηmetgn !	(You-sg.) come back!
210. ηmeenm	courage
211. valgu	small pad (on head to carry things)
212. viigu	owl

213. Vidg !	(You-sg.) get up ! (stand up)
214. vuurm	glutton (love of food)
215. vofoom	breath
216. Hà sira-ma daam, m` ba hom.	She served me beer, it is good.
217. Mà berma san huru.	My boss is gone on a trip.
218. Bà dafra mà sa burgu.	They bought my father's goat.
219. Bà dafra mà sawu burgu.	They bought the goat for my father.
220. Mà sawu n mà nya bà bee.	My father and my mother are here.
221. V` rorbii.	Good morning.
222. V` jabrii.	Good evening.
223. Kpaanfii ba feeli.	These guinea fowl are white.
224. Mà kpaam mi bii b` getg bii.	I don't know what happened.
225. Hà nyira daam ban sir-wu mii.	He drank the beer that was served to him.
226. Baatia	person from Baga
227. Koka tia	person from Koka
228. dakuuda	drunkard
229. hurfegr	junction

230. haar tia	owner of the house
231. kɔdanoogrgu	the first cock (male chicken)
232. kɔrhogmga	a laying (brooding) hen
233. fɛɛhoolgu	a black sheep
234. nidba mɛmba	everyone (all people)
235. Hâ sira-ma jowa hɛna daam.	She served me the beer made only from sorghum.
236. burgunkuna	this goat
237. sumgankena	this bowl
238. daganhɛna	these quivers
239. biihinhina	these children
240. fiimhɛnhuna	this arrow
241. kɔrga kiiga	a certain chicken
242. bii hiihi	certain children
243. daba biiba	certain men
244. rona hiiha	certain yams
245. mà tuurhii	a certain friend of mine
246. Nawda kpaa ju welnt.	A Nawda does not eat snails.
247. Tɔgdaa bà da fila haar.	The day before yesterday we covered the house.
248. L` tegra-ma. Mà kpañ mà bee mà mɔɔg.	That satisfied me. I can't add anymore.

249. L` da gira-ma, mà ka la ba gor.	I was tired, yet I did not sleep.
250. Mà sol ka kulaa haaga.	I run returning home.
251. Hà sira-wu daam, há nyim tuuu.	She gave him some beer, he drank it all at once.
252. Jabr jugun, muunu ba sii.	Just before night, the sun is very red.
253. Kunfoga gbanu nyinwa nyin-nyin.	The widow's body is shining brightly.
254. Solm weem-weem !	Run really fast!
255. Mà diila ligwa lig-lig.	My thoughts are completely wandering.
256. ¿ Daann ?	You (sg.) came?
257. ¿ Hà sira-wun ?	Did he serve him?
258. Hà sira-wu.	He served him.
259. L` gira-wu ¿ laa hà ba n beñii le ?	Is he tired or is he sick?
260. N` kida daam, ¿ n` nyira riin ?	You (pl.) refused the beer, have you drunk somewhere else?
261. Fəgwii t leed-wu na : "Mà kpañ mà bee mà san yaku."	The woman in question responded to him: "I can't go to the market."

262. Fɔ̄gwii t leed-wu na fà kpañ fà bee fà san yaku.	The woman in question responded to him that she could not go to the market.
263. Fɔ̄gwii t leed-wu na : "H̄aai !"	The woman in question responded to him, "No."
264. Fɔ̄gwii t leed-wu na, man kpañ mà bee mà san yaku.	The woman in question responded to him that I can't go to the market.
265. Daawii t leed fɔ̄gwii na : "La san yaku !"	The man in question responded to the woman: "Go to the market anyway!"

THE NAWDM ALPHABET

A	a	mà maara
B	b	bab
D	d	dind
E	e	meer
Ɛ	ε	bεera
F	f	figm
G	g	gelmga, haġb, liġwerga, fəġwii
Gb	gb	gbanu
Gw	gw	gwεεt
H	h	haar
Ĥ	ħ	ħafaanju, fəħmbiim, nyəħ'
I	i	fiimi
J	j	jit
K	k	kərgu
Kp	kp	kpaṃkpaangu
Kw	kw	kwεεla
L	l	ləku
M	m	muunu
N	n	nanawdr, tañyalmr
Ny	ny	nyaalm

Ŋ	ŋ	baŋa, raɪŋmɔlga
Ŋm	ŋm	ŋmɛnga
O	o	goroona
ɔ	ɔ	hɔm
R	r	raagu
S	s	sumga
T	t	tiib
U	u	buugu
V	v	valgm
W	w	waaḡb
Y	y	yaku

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