

maasai

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE & GLOSSARY

The Maa language has a lot of sounds we don't have in English. It's a **tone language**, so you need to **sing it**, like Mandarin or Thai. Sing the higher parts high, and the low parts low. Click "listen" to hear Kimeli himself pronounce each word or phrase!

Like this: **high** **low**

súpa: "Hello!" when you're talking to a man (*"Hello," Kimeli hears again and again. p.9*)

soo-pah: **soo** **pah** ▶listen

takúényà: "Hello!" when you're talking to a woman

tah-kwehn-yah: **tah** **kwehn** **yah** ▶listen

enkáng: The fence around a Maasai village. It's made from acacia thorns to protect the people and animals inside. (*His eyes find his mother across the enkáng, the ring of huts with their roofs of sun-baked dung. p.9*)

ehng-kahng: **ehng** **kahng** ▶listen

aakúa: This is a special word of welcome in Kimeli's dialect of Maa, il-Wuasinkishu Maa. This little word means a lot of things. An entire paragraph could be devoted to describing what this word means. What is basically conveyed is: "Oh, I'm so happy to see you! Come here close and let me give you a big hug!" (*"Aakúa. Welcome, my son." p.9*)

ah-kwah: **ah** **kwah** ▶listen

Enkarûs: The name of Kimeli's cow, the first one the Maasai donated to the Americans. (*Kimeli offers his only cow, Enkarûs. p.19*)

en-kah-rohs: **eng** **kah** **rohs** ▶listen

Maasai: Members of the Maasai tribes. Maasai literally means "the people who speak Maa."

mah-sai ▶listen

Maa: The Maasai language. Most Maasai speak Swahili in school, but Maa at home.

mah ▶listen

more on page 2

Be careful how you sing it!

Éár olmurraní olngátúny means “The warrior will kill the lion.”

BUT

Éár olmúrraní olngátúny means “The lion will kill the warrior.”

“The warrior will kill the lion.”: eh ar ol moh ra ni ol nga tu nee ▶listen

“The lion will kill the warrior.”: eh ar ol moh ra ni ol nga tu nee ▶listen

The only difference is how you sing it. That’s how important tone can be!

Names from Kimeli’s note and picture captions at the end of the book follow

These names start with *Ole-*, which means “son of” in Maa. Kimeli Naiyomah is the son of Naiyomah.

Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah; Ole-Naiyomah: The protagonist of the story and cultural consultant for the book.

Wilson kih-meh-lee nai-yoh-mah; oh-leh nai-yoh-mah ▶listen

Ole-Ng’ong’ote: The senior chief in Kimeli’s village, Enoosaen. Say the **ng** as in **sing**. We don’t start words with this sound in English, but they do in Maa!

oh-leh ngoh-ngoh-teh ▶listen

Ole-Meleji: The elder in charge of the warrior camp in Enoosaen.

oh-leh meh-leh-jee ▶listen

Mzee: This is a title in Swahili, not Maa. It means “elder” or “older man.”

m-zay ▶listen

Mzee Ole-Yiampoi: The respected elder who is the caretaker for the American cows.

m-zay oh-leh yahm-poy ▶listen