Te Reo Māori

Te reo Māori is an official language of New Zealand. Use Te Aka Māori Dictionary to check spelling and use of macrons.

Te Aka Māori Dictionary

Greetings and farewells

For emails, use a greeting and farewell that match the tone of the greeting and farewell of the person who sent the original email.

If you use te reo Māori greetings, also use te reo Māori farewells.

Kia ora	Hello / Hi
Ata mārie	Good morning
Ahiahi mārie	Good afternoon
Tēnā koe	Hello to one person
Tēnā kōrua	Hello to two people
Tēnā koutou	Hello to three or more people
Nā	From
Ngā mihi	Thank you
Hei konā mai	Goodbye for now
Mā te wā	Bye for now / See you later
Noho ora mai	Stay well
Nāku noa, nā	Yours sincerely
Hei āpōpō	until tomorrow
Mauri ora	Be well

Praise or compliments

Tino pai	Very good
Tūmeke	Choice
Ka wani kē	Awesome
Ka mau te wehi	Awesome
Kei runga noa atu	Great / It's above our expectations
Tau kē hoki	Excellent / Great
Kino kē koe	You are great
Pai mutunga	Very good
Ahakoa iti, he pounamu	Although small, it is a treasure

Other

Kia pai ō rā whakatā	Have a great weekend
Tau kē	Cool
He pārekareka ki	Enjoy or have fun
Ora mai rā [name]	Stay safe [name]
Koretake	I didn't enjoy this

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A pērā tonu	So, so
Meri Kirihimete	Merry Christmas
Ngā mihi o te Aranga	Happy Easter

People and education

Tamariki	children
Tamaiti	child
Ākonga, tauira	learner, student
kaiako, pouako	teacher, instructor
kura	school
Wānanga	Māori Tertiary Education Institution
Whare wānanga	university
akomanga	classroom
aromatawai	assessment
whānau	family group, extended family
Iwi	tribe
Tumuaki	principal
wānanga	to meet and discuss, deliberate, consider

Guidelines for spelling and writing te reo Māori

Proper names: capitalisation

The first letter of the name is capitalised. If there is an initial 'Te' the first letter is capitalised, and the first letter of the next word is also capitalised.

Capitalisation

Use upper case 'T' in the definite article 'Te':

where it is the first word of the name of a person, tribe, place, region or constellation

where it is the first word of the name of an organisation, school or movement etc.

Use lower case 'te' where it precedes:

- the name of a book, article, act or document (excluding Te Tiriti o Waitangi)
- a person's title or position
- the name of an institution, where the 'te' is not part of the actual title (te Aotearoa Cafe)
- the name of a festival, celebration etc.
- the days of the week
- the name of a month.

National, ethnic or religious groups: as nouns and adjectives, these words are capitalised.

Where a kinship term is used in front of or in place of a personal name, it is capitalised.

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Where kinship and other terms of address follow ‘e’ or ‘kei’, they’re not capitalised.

Where a title is used in front of a personal name, it is capitalised.

Where ‘ngāi’ and ‘ngāti’ are used to preface something other than a recognised iwi or hapū, they are not capitalised. Nor are the accompanying words that complete the expression.

Common errors

Don’t add ‘s’ to make a Māori word plural, even if the word appears in a dictionary as an English word.

Two kiwi
Three waka

You don’t need ‘the’ before ‘te’ or ‘ngā’. And you don’t need ‘a’ or ‘an’ before ‘he’.

Capitalise the words ‘Māori’ and ‘Pākehā’.

When referencing ‘Te Tiriti o Waitangi’, all words should be upper case excluding the ‘o’.

Macrons — Mahinga Tohutō

Macrons show a long vowel sound in te reo Māori.

Ōtautahi
Ngāi Tahu
Māori
Pākehā
hapū
tēnā koe

Macrons can change the meaning of a word.

kaka (clothing)
kākā (large native forest parrot)
kakā (hot, inflamed)
kāka (brown bittern — a rare bird living in swamps)

To create a macron, press and release the tilde key (~) on the upper left of your keyboard below the esc key. Then immediately type the vowel.

Use Te Aka Māori Dictionary to check where macrons are needed.

Te Aka Māori Dictionary

If you’re using Citrix remotely, you won’t be able to automatically create macrons in Word.

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Education terms

The Education Review Office website has a list of education terms in te reo Māori and English.

He Kupu Arotake: List of Māori-English education terms

Our website has a glossary of terms used by Ka Hikitia, the Māori education strategy.

Ka Hikitia glossary of terms

Māori names

Refer to all place names by their official names. The LINZ website has information on official names.

Gazetteer of place names

The National Library website explains how to describe material relating to iwi and hapū consistently.

Iwi-Hapū names list

Māori place names: regions and cities

Tai Tokerau	
Tāmaki-makau-rau	Auckland
Te Moana-a-Toi	Bay of Plenty
Waikato	
Kirikiriroa	Hamilton
Taranaki	
Te Matau-a-Māui	Hawke's Bay
Te Whanga-nui-a-Tara	Wellington
Whakatu	Nelson
Waitaha	Canterbury
Ōtautahi	Christchurch
Ōtepoti	Dunedin
Otakou	Otago

Translation and interpretation services for te reo Māori

Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori can refer you to certified interpreters and translators for te reo Māori.

National Translators' and Interpreters' register

A te reo Māori and Māori Medium Panel has been set up to help us work with the Māori medium education sector.
The panel is made up of 33 external providers that can help you with **translations** and **professional support**. These providers went through an evaluation process before they were selected and are contracted to the panel for three years.

Translations into te reo Māori and professional support

Learning te reo Māori and tikanga

Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori's website has resources for people who would like to learn and use te reo Māori or tikanga.

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Te reo resources

Further guidance on using te reo Māori within the Ministry

All public facing documents (e.g. Annual Report, Statement of Intent etc) as a minimum will have the foreword and executive summary in te reo Māori.

If documents are primarily for a Māori audience, and have a Māori purpose, they need to be fully translated into te reo Māori

If you receive an email or letter in te reo Māori, also respond in te reo Māori.

The Ministry is committed to promoting te reo Māori and its place in New Zealand society. As part of this commitment, it is important that we use te reo Māori authentically and appropriately in our communications. This means we need to use Māori words in an appropriate context to add meaning to the narrative. It is important that the meaning we intend to convey through using Māori words is understood by the author and the reader in order to ensure accurate and meaningful communication. This is a matter of judgement in the preparation of documents.

Design guidelines

We have a Ministry Māori Medium Visual Identity Guide which gives guidelines for graphic designers to ensure consistency of our brand.

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