



Peace Corps/Burkina Faso

An Introduction to the Moore Language

[Please note: Your success as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Burkina Faso is largely predicated on your knowledge and understanding of local languages. You will find introductory lessons for Moore online. You will surely use it as you move throughout the country, during the course of your Peace Corps service. That said, your primary language will not be decided until after a few weeks in-country. In fact, it may be another, lesser spoken language (such as Dioula or fulfulde). However, Moore is used in almost all parts of the country, as a result, Peace Corps/Burkina Faso encourages you to practice Moore but be prepared and flexible since any language could become you key to success.]

Table of contents

	Page
History of the language (no audio)	3
Lesson 1: Pronunciation	4
Lesson 2: Greetings (vocabulary)	5
Lesson 3: Greetings (typical)	5
Lesson 4: Greetings (short cuts)	6
Lesson 5: Expressions for taking leave	7
Lesson 6: Dialogue on greetings	8
Lesson 7: Expressions	8
Lesson 8: Days of the week and months of the year	9
Lesson 9: Expressions of time	9
Lesson 10: Numbers (1-20)	10
Lesson 11: Numbers (21 through one million)	11
Lesson 12: Money	11
Lesson 13: Vocabulary (food items and market)	12
Lesson 14: Measurements	13
Lesson 15: Asking for prices / Expressing wants	14
Lesson 16: Expressing needs	14
Lesson 17: Dialogue on bargaining	15
Lesson 18: Weather (useful expressions and seasons)	15
Lesson 19: The verb "to be"	16
Lesson 20: The verb "to have"	16
Lesson 21: Past tense	18

The text accompanies the following twenty-one (21) audio tracks:

- BF_Moore_Lesson_1.mp3 (Time: 3:40) (File Size: 4.20 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_2.mp3 (Time: 1:49) (File Size: 2.08 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_3.mp3 (Time: 1:58) (File Size: 2.26 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_4.mp3 (Time: 3:23) (File Size: 3.87 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_5.mp3 (Time: 0:41) (File Size: 812 KB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_6.mp3 (Time: 0:59) (File Size: 1.14 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_7.mp3 (Time: 1:53) (File Size: 2.16 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_8.mp3 (Time: 1:06) (File Size: 1.26 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_9.mp3 (Time: 1:10) (File Size: 1.33 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_10.mp3 (Time: 1:01) (File Size: 1.16 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_11.mp3 (Time: 1:19) (File Size: 1.52 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_12.mp3 (Time: 3:09) (File Size: 3.61 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_13.mp3 (Time: 2:56) (File Size: 3.36 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_14.mp3 (Time: 0:44) (File Size: 3.36 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_15.mp3 (Time: 1:30) (File Size: 1.71 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_16.mp3 (Time: 1:54) (File Size: 2.17 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_17.mp3 (Time: 0:48) (File Size: 951 KB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_18.mp3 (Time: 0:55) (File Size: 1.06 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_19.mp3 (Time: 2:06) (File Size: 2.41 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_20.mp3 (Time: 3:12) (File Size: 3.67 MB)
- BF_Moore_Lesson_21.mp3 (Time: 1:15) (File Size: 1.44 MB)

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An Introduction to the Moore Language

A brief history of Moore Language

Adapted from www.timegenie.com/moore.php

Moore Language (also More) is a language spoken primarily in Burkina Faso by the Mossis. It is spoken by approximately 5 million people in the country plus 50,000 others in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Togo. Dialects of the language include Saremdé, Taolendé, Yaadré, Ouapadoupou, Yaande, Zaore and Yana.

Mossi people:

Mossi is the name of a people living in central Burkina Faso, mostly in the villages of the Volta River Basin. They comprise the largest ethnic group in that country and number approximately 6.2 million. They speak the Moore language.

Lesson 1

Pronunciation

The Moore alphabet

a b d e ε f g h i l k l m n o p r s t u u v w y z

The moore alphabet is composed of 26 symbols: 16 consonants and 8 vowels

Vowels

Letters	Spelling	Illustration in Mooré		English
		Spelling		
a	A	Wa	To come	As in “flag”
e	E	Bedre	Big	
ε	E	Gεla	Eggs	As in “pet”
i	I	Bi	Measles	As in “pity”
l	L	Pcdge	To shell/hull	
o	O	Boko	Hole	As in “cocoa”
u	U	Zugu	Head	As in “book”
u	U	Lure	Green pigeon	As in

Consonants

Letters	Spelling	Illustration in Mooré		English
		Spelling		
b	Be		There	As in “boy”
d	De	Daare	Day	As in “day”
f	Fe	Foom	Toi you	As in “fred”
g	Ge	Gare	Indigot	As in “girl”
h	He	Hato	Sunday	As in “hot”
k	Ke	Ko	To cultivate	As in “kind”
l	Le	Lebse	To give back	As in “lot”
m	Me	Mane	To do	As in “man”
n	Ne	Noaaga	Chicken	As in “new”
p	Pe	Fore	Back	As in “poor”
r	Re	Roogo	House	As in “rock”
s	Se	Suuga	Knife	As in “sweet” But notice in “please”
v	Ve	Vccm	Life	As in “vital”
w	We	Woko	Long	As in “wrong”
y	Ye	Yaaga	Basket	As in “young”
z	Ze	Zoodo	Friendship	As in “zoom”

Above all, it is essential that you take advantage of the native speakers and LISTEN carefully.

This is the best pronunciation guide.

Lesson 2

Vocabulary on Greetings

Person	Neda
Teacher/trainer	Karemsaamba
Heat	Tuulga
Tiredness	Yaamse
To greet	Puuse
Greetings!	puusgo
Good Morning	Ne y yibeoogo
To pass the day	Y sōsga
Family/home	Zak rāmba
Body	Yiisi
To be	Yaa
Work	Tuuma
Coldness	Waoodo
Evening/night	Yungo
Until, only	Hal n ti tāag
Sleep	Gūsi
All	Fāa
Student/trainee	Karembiiga
How?	Wān wān toto
Response to “Ne y yibeoogo”	Y yibeoog kibare?
Problem	Yelle
Okay	Yel ka ye/yaa sōma
Midday	Ne y wīndga
House/family	Zak rāmba
Good afternoon	Ne y zaabre
Children	Koamba

Lesson 3

Typical Greetings

Good morning did you sleep well?	Ne y yibeoogo y gūsa soma?
Yes my health is good.	Laafi bala
How is your house or your family?	La y zak rāmba?
Every one in my house is well.	Ub keemame / ub yaa laafi
How are you feeling ?	La y yīins gāase?
I'm feeling good.	Laafi bala
How is your work?	La y tuum kibare?
No problem.	Yel ka ye
Okay, see you later.	Yaa sōma, wēnd na kō-d bilfu

- Don't undertake anything without greeting people first.
- Greet everybody in a group with appropriate gestures for the greetings.
- Make a difference between formal and informal greetings.

- Always give positive answers (in greetings) even if you are not well. (You can always thank God, it could be much worse)

Whenever someone asks (in greetings), “*Laafi beeme _____?*”
Respond, “*Laafi bala*”

“*bala*” is just a term that adds emphasis to any statement.

Examples: In good health *Laafi*
In very good health *Laafi bala*

Introducing oneself

My name is Jake	Mam yuur la a Jake
What is your name?	Fo yuur la a boë?
My name is Mariam	Mam yuur la a Mariam
I am Burkinabè	Mam yaa Burkinabè
And you?	La foo?
I am American	Mam yaa Amerikë
I am a teacher, and you?	Mam yaa karemsaamba la foo?
I am a doctor/nurse	Mam yaa logfore

Lesson 4

Benedictions

Traveling	So këndre puusgo
May God protect you	Wënd na gu fo
May God let you get off in health	Wënd na sik f laafi
May God show us each other	Wënd na wilg-d taaba
May God take you in health	Wënd na taas-f laafi
Comforting the ill	Bãad puusgo
May God bring betterness	Wënd na yolse
May God add to your betterness	Wënd na paas laafi
May God bring health	Wënd na kō laafi
Celebrations	Ti ga
May God show us next year	Wënd na kō-d vëere
May God show us next year in health	Wënd na kō-d vëer ne laafi
Weddings	Kãadem
May God give them long life	Wënd na lugl ko yū songo
May God bring them children	Wënd na kō-b bark koamba
Baptisms	Zu-lukri / soobo

May God make the child live	Wënd na guula n kō-yā
May God give the child long life	Wënd na kō-a yō wooko
May God bless the child	Wënd na kit ti a yi bark biiga
Funerals	Kuure
May God pardon them	Wënd na yaafa
May God bless them	Wënd na manega a reeg taoore
May God bring heaven to earth for him	Wënd na reega arzēna
General	
Congratulations on your coming from a trip	Yεε la
Yearly Celebrations	Yūum tiga
Congratulation on the changing year	Ne y taabo
Congratulations on the Party	Ne y taabo
Congratulations on drinking water (Ramadan)	Ne y taabo
Weddings/Baptisms	Kāa dem / zu-lukri (soobo)
Congratulations on the wedding	Ne y paogo
Congratulations in general	Ne faogo
Congratulations on giving birth (baptism)	Yeel ne moogo
Escaping death/misfortune**	N pōs yelle
Congratulations in general	Wënd na maan zū-noogo

* On certain occasions, you may use “ne y zunoogo” or, literally, good luck.

** If you have a near death experience and survive, you have reached “zu-noogo”.

Lesson 5

Expressions for taking leave

See you later (lit. until later)	Wënd na kō-d bilfu
See you tomorrow (lit. until tomorrow)	Wënd na kō-d beogo
See you some day/another day	Wënd na kō-d nindaare
Until your return	Wënd na lebg laafi
See you in a year	Wënd na kō-d vēere
May we sleep in health (Good Night)	Wënd na kit ti-d neked toore
May we sleep with a blessing	Wënd na gāaneg-d laafi

* Any greeting starting with “Wënd na ...” is answered with “Amina”

Lesson 6

Dialogue on greetings

Abdou: Good morning	Abdou: Ne y yibeoogo
Souley: Good morning	Souley: Y yibeoogo kibare?
A: Did you sleep well?	A: Laafi bala. Y gūsa soma?
S: Fine, thank you.	S: Laafi
A: How is the family?	A: La y zak ramba?
S: They are all fine.	S: U b yaa laafi
A: How is your work?	A: Y tuum kibare?
S: No problems at all.	S: Laafi bala/ yel ka ye
A: How are you feeling?	A: Y yīis gāase?
S: I'm feeling well	S: Laafi bala
A: Good. How's your wife?	A: Y pag keemame?
S: She is fine. And yours?	S: A keemame. La yāmb me nengē
A: Fine she is doing well.	A: Yel ka ye A yaa laafi
S: Okay, See you later.	S: Wēnd na kō-d bilfu
A: OK, with blessings.	A: Amina

Lesson 7

Expressions

I'm fine	Laafi beeme
See you later (lit. until later)	Wēnd na kō-d bilfu
See you tomorrow (lit. until tomorrow)	Wēnd na kō-d beoogo
See you some day/another day	Wēnd na kō-d nindaare
Until your return	Wēnd na lebg laafi
May we sleep in health (Good Night)	Wēnd na ganeg laafi
May we sleep with a blessing (Response to IMKB)	Wēnd na gāneg-d laafi
Happy new year	Wēnd na kō-d vēere
Response to Wēnd na kō-d vēere (lit. same time next year)	Amina

Greetings according to different moments of the day

How did you sleep? (i.e. How is your morning)	Y gūsa soma?
How's the morning?	Y ybeoog kibare?
How's the day going by?	Y sōsga?
How's the late afternoon (just around sunset)?	Y zaabr keema?
How's the evening?	Y yung yaa laafi?
How are you?	Laafi beeme?
How's the body? (i.e. your health)	Y yīis gāase?
How's the household?	La y zak rāmba
How's the court yard?	La y zaka?

How's work?	La y tuum kibare?
How is business ?	Y tuum yaa soma?
How's life ?	Yel bog n be ?

- **La y** in Mooré means "how"
- Remember to answer with Laafi bala/beeme to each of the above greetings
- Out of the first six sentences for greetings, the three important times are *yibeogo* in the morning, *zaabre* in the afternoon, and *yungo* in the evening.

Lesson 8

Days of the week / Months of the year

Days of the Week

Monday	Tēnē
Tuesday	Talaato
Wednesday	Arba
Thursday	Alkamusa/Lamusa
Friday	Arzūma
Saturday	Sibri
Sunday	Hato

Months of the Year

January	Yūun-Vēkre
February	Wao-fugdgu
March	Tuulgo
April	Tuul-nifu
May	Sig-noy
June	Sigri
July	Sēoogo
August	Sa-sika
September	Bon-biuungo
October	Zi-likri
November	Sipaolgo
December	Yuum-sare

Asking for the date

What day is it?	Rūnda yaa bōe daare?
Today is Monday	Rūnda yaa tēnē

Lesson 9

Expressions of time

Time = Wakato

When? = Wakat bogo?

Today	Rūnda
Later on	Sēn yi bilfu
At noon	Wintoogo
After sunset	Zaabre
Ago	Sēn looge
A while ago	Rasm a wān sēn looge
Two weeks ago	Rab pig la nune
A long time ago	Sēn kaoose
Not so long ago	Sēn ka kaoose
Next month	Poorē kiuugu
Next year	Vēerre
Soon	Sēn ka kaoose
Yesterday	Zaame
The day before yesterday	Rabitē
At that moment	Wakat kānga
Last year	Rīēe
The year before last	Yuum -bitē
Tomorrow	Beoogo
The day after tomorrow	Rayita
Two days from now	Rabtāta

Lesson 10

Numbers = Gεεla

All numbers inferior to ten are preceded by the personal pronoun “a”

1	A yembre (ye)
\$2	A yiibu (yi)
3	A tāabo (tā)
4	A naase
5	A nu
6	A yoobe
7	A yopoe
8	A nii
9	A wε
10	Piiga
11	Pig la a ye
12	Pig la a yi
13	Pig la a tā
14	Piig la a naase
15	Piig la a nu
16	Piig la a yoobe
17	Piig la a yopoe
18	Piig la a nii
19	Piig la a wε
20	psi

Lesson 11

Numbers: 20-1,000,000

20	Pisi / pisiibu
21	Pisi la a ye
22	Pisi la a yi
30	Pistā
40	Pis nasse
50	Pis nu
60	Pis yooobe
70	Pis yopoe
80	Pis nii
90	Pis wε
100	Koabga
101	Koabg la a ye
102	Koabg la yi
110	Koabg la piiga
111	Koabg la piig laaye
120	Koabg la pisi
200	Kobisi
250	Kobisi la pisnu
1000	Tusri
1001	Tusr la a ye
1200	Tusr la kobisi
2001	Tus a yi la a ye
2010	Tus a yi la piiga
999,999	Kobiswε la piswε la a wε
1,000,000	Million a ye

Lesson 12

Money = Ligdi

Change	Bāoonego
To buy	N ra
To sell	N koose
Money	Ligdi
Rich person	Rakāare
Poor person	Talga
To spend	N ri ligdi
Coins	Bāoonego

The money system in Moore is not at all difficult if you have learned the regular numbers, and if you keep in mind that where the French count by 5's (5 francs, 10 francs, etc.), the Mossi count by 1's. The name for the 5 franc piece in Moore is *wakir(a ye)*: Actually, the best way to get it straight is to avoid mathematics and think only of the Moore system. If you see a 100F coin, think "*wakir pisi!*" It may seem difficult but it will come in time.

5 fr.	Wakir a ye	90 fr.	Wakir piig la a nii
10 fr.	Wakir a yiibu	95 fr.	Wakir piig la wε
15 fr.	Wakir a t̄āabo	100 fr.	Wakir pisi
20 fr.	Wakir a naase	105 fr.	Wakir pisi la a ye
25 fr.	Wakir a un	110 fr.	Wakir pisi la a yi
30 fr.	Wakir a yoobe	125 fr.	Wakir pisi la a nu
35 fr.	Wakir a yopoe	150 fr.	Wakir pistā
40 fr.	Wakir a nii	175 fr.	Wakir pistā la a nu
45 fr.	Wakir a wε	200 fr.	Wakir pisnaase
50 fr.	Wakir piiga	250 fr.	Wakir pisnu
55 fr.	Wakir pig la a ye	300 fr.	Wakir pisyoobe
60 fr.	Wakir pig la a yi	350 fr.	Wakir pisyopoe
65 fr.	Wakir pig la a t̄ā	400 fr.	Wakir pisnii
70 fr.	Wakir piig la a naase	450 fr.	Wakir pis wε
75 fr.	Wakir pig la a nu	500 fr.	Wakir koabga
80 fr.	Wakir pig la a yoobe	1000 fr.	Wakir kobisi
85 fr.	Wakir pig la a yopoe	5000 fr.	Wakir tusri

* **Note:** The “each” or “a piece”, as in “five francs each” is expressed in Moore by repeating the number twice:

How much a piece? *Yaa wān- wāna?*
 5 fr. each *yaa nu nu*
 10 fr. each *yaa yiib yiibu*
 15 fr. each *yaa t̄āab t̄āabo*
 et cetera ad infinitum

Lesson 13

Vocabulary

Things = *Teedo*

Woman’s headscarf	Peende
Matches	Makēse
Beggar	Bōaasa
Hat	Zug-peoogo/ pugla
“Canari” (clay water jug)	Yuure
Market	Raaga
Rope	Futu
Shirt	Fu-yorgo
Pants/underwear	Kurga
Batteries (fr. pile)	Pili
Soap (fr. Savon)	Safande
Shoes	Noeda
Perfume	Parfē

Food and ingredients = riib la zē-biisi

Onions	Gābdo/jaba
Candy	Bombom
Bread	Buri
Fried bean ball, bean flour beignets	Samsa
Salt	Yamsem
Dates	Tamaro
Peanuts	Naguri
White yam	Busa
Beans	Beenga
Fritters, wheat flour beignets	Bur-maasa
Manioc flour	Bandaku zom
Calabash	Wamde
Kola nut	Guure
Egg	Gelle
Meat	Nemdo
Fish	Zim
Millet	Kazui
Water	Koom
Oil	Kaam
Corn	Kamaana
Sweet potato	Nayū-noodo
Okra	Maana
Orange	Lemburi
Lemon	Lembur-miisga
Mango	Mangoro
Pancakes, millet flour beignets or galettes	Māas beda
Rice	Mui
Manioc	Bandaku
Lettuce	Salaade
Bigger fried millet beignets	Maasa
Sugar	Sikare
Tomatoes	Tomaate
Hot pepper	kipare
Milk	Bīisem
Honey	Siido

Lesson 14

Measurements = Magbo

Qualities= Somblem

Expensive	Toogo
Nice	Sōma/neere
New	Paale
Old	Kudre
Shining	Sēn pinde

Quantities= Wooglem

HUGE!!!	Wusg wusgo
Big	Bedre
A lot	Wusgo
A little/small	Bilfu/kidga
Thin	Bāanega
Medium	sēn zemse

Lesson 15

Asking for prices / Expressing want

I don't want anything	M pa rat bafui
I am having a look	M getame bala
How much is this one?	Yaa wān la kada soaba ?
How much is...?	Yaa wān la
How much really?	Yaa wān la hakiika
It's expensive	Yaa toogo
It's cheap (price, not, quality)	Yaa nana
Gimme some more (lit. fix it for me)	Maneg ne kō-ma
Cash (lit. white money)	Vēenega
Reduce the price please	Boog a ligda
I agree	M sakame
Here is the money	Ad li g dā
I am penniless (lit. I don't even have 5 F)	M ka tar baa wakire
It is bitter (or expensive)	A ligda yaa toogo
Where?	Yeene ?
I can't afford it (lit. I am unable)	M ligda ka ta ye
I can afford it (lit I am able)	M ligda taame
Go and come back	M kēng la m lebg n wa
Different types	Buud toor - toore

Lesson 16

Expressing needs

I want...../I'd like.....	Mam, rata.....
I don't want...../I wouldn't like.....	M ka rat.....
I need.....	Mam rata.....
I want to.....	M rat n....
Give me.	Kō-ma
Give me (lit. "let's see")	Ti m gese
To be happy (lit. feel happiness)	M sūur noomame
To be uncomfortable/unhappy	M sūur ka noom ye
Kind person	Nin-sōngo
Bad person	Nin-yoogo
Childish	Yāadre
Happiness	Sū-noogo
Unhappiness/anger	Sū-sāanga
Good for nothing	Nin-yaalega

To be intelligent/clever	Yam-soaba
Unhappiness/sorrow	Sū ka noonga
Happiness/joy	Sū-noogo
You are wrong	F ka tar buum ye
I am angry with you	M sūur ka noom ne f ye
He is the strongest	Yaa nin-kegenga
He is charismatic	Yaa nin tirga
He is not charismatic	Ka nin-tirg ye
I have recovered	M sāoome
You are right	F tara buum

Lesson 17

Dialogue on Bargaining

A:	Good morning, shopkeeper.	Ne y yibeogo Butika soaba
B:	Good morning Binta, what do you want ?	Y yibeogo kibare, Binta, bōe la f rata ?
A:	I want soap, how much is it ?	M rata safande, yaa wān la a ligdā?
B:	Hundred and fifty francs	Yaa pistā
A:	Ok, here are two-hundred francs, give me change	Woo, ad pisnaase, ko-ma m bāoonega
B:	There is your change	Hane f bāoonega
A:	See you later	Wēnd na lok raaga
B:	See you later	Amina

Lesson 18

Weather

Useful expressions

Today it's hot and humid	Rūnda zīiga yaa tuulg la zisgo
Today it's hot	Rūnda zīiga yaa tuulgo
Today it's cold	Rūnda yaa waodo
Today it's sunny	Rūnda yaa wintoogo
Today it's windy	Rūnda yaa sebgo
Today it's stormy	Rūnda yaa saaga

Seasons

Rainy season	Sēoogo
Dry season	Tuulg kiuug
Harvest season	Bon-biuungo
Hot muggy season before the rains come	Sig-noy

Lesson 19

The Verb "to be"

I am a Volunteer	Mam yaa volöoteere
You are a teacher	Fo yaa karemsaamba
I am a forester	Mam yaa tiisnaaba
I am American	Mam yaa amerikē
I am Burkinabe	Mam yaa Burkinabe
Moussa is a nice person	A Moussa yaa nin-songo
Ali is a short person	A Ali yaa nin-koεga
Adamou is a tall person	A Adamu yaa nin-woko
Sara is at home	A Sara bee zakē
I am at the office	Mam bee tuuma ziigē
You are at New York	Fo bee New Yorke
Aissa is in the house	A Aissa bee rooga pogā
The children are at school	Koaamba bee kareng zakewā
We are in the car	Tōnd bee kara pogē
They are on motobike	Bamb bee motεera zugu
There is money	Ligd beeme
Kimberly is there	A k imberly bee ka
There are Volunteers in Bobo	Volootεr lamb n be Bobo

The different forms of the verb to be are:

"Yaa"..... which is used when you speak of your nationality, your profession, or character or description.

The second form of the verb to be is "bee" it is used for location.

The third form of the verb to be is "beeme", which means there is.

Lesson 20

The Verb "to have"

The Moore equivalent of the verb "to have" is "*tara*" for its affirmative form. It has the same conjugation for all the nominative pronouns.

I have a book	Mam tara sebre
You have a car	Fo tara mobili
He/she has a house	A tara zaka/roogo
I have money	Mam tara ligdi
He has a horse and a donkey	A tara wed-moaaga la boanga

The negative form of the verb to have is "ka tar...ye" and it has the same conjugation for all the nominative pronouns.

I don't have any money	Mam ka tar ligd ye
They don't have a car	Ub ka tar mobil ye
You lack strength	Fo ka tar pāng ye
I have no money	Mam ka tar ligd ye
He has not a horse	A ka tar wed-moaag ye

Some useful structures:

I would like to...	Mam rat n....
I would like to go to Bobo	Mam rat n kenga Bobo
I would like you to eat banana	Mam rat n rii barende
I would like to see you	Mam rat n yāa foo
I would like to rest	Mam rat n vuusame
Negation	
I don't want to go to Bobo	M ka rat n kēng Bobo ye
You don't want to rest	Fo ka rat n vuus ye
I don't want to leave	M ka rat n loog ye

The negative form of "rat n" "ka rat n"

Expressing needs:

John needs to study	A John rat n karemane
We need to sleep	Tond rat n gusame
You need a coke	Fo rat n yūu koka
He needs to rest	A rat n vuusame
Negation	
I don't need to play	Mam ka rat n reem ye
Omar doesn't need a beer	A Omar ka rat bεεr ye
Amina doesn't need a book	A Amina ka rat sebr ye
You don't need a cigarette	Fo ka rat cigaar ye

The form of "rat n":

"rat n" is a form that is used to express needs. It is "rat n" (to want) plus a verb, plus a noun or "rata" plus a noun.

Lesson 21

Past tense

Joe bought a hat in the market	A Joe raa pugl raagě
Moussa fell into a hole	A Moussa lui bok pogě
Jennifer went to Ouaga yesterday	A Jennifer kěnga wodogo zaame
The kids entered the court yard	Koamba kě zaka poga

The negative form of past tense is: “*ka*” + *verb* + *object* + “*ye*”

Yesterday, I didn't go to the market	Zaame m ka kěng raagě ye
Fred didn't go into the class	A Fred ka kěng kareng ye
Jennifer did not go to Ouaga yesterday	A Jennifer ka kěng wodogo zaame ye
The kids did not enter the court yard	Koamba ka kě zaka pogě ye

Congratulations! *Barka!* You are now well on your way to speaking Moore and your training will be all that much easier because of it. We look forward to seeing you in Burkina Faso!