



Fante Handbook for Beginners

by Catherine Flaatten, ProGhana Volunteer 2009-2010

Lesson 5: Verbs in Present Tense

Having mastered some basic vocabulary, we are now going to move into Fante grammar; specifically, we are going to concentrate this section on conjugating verbs in the present tense.

The following table outlines the corresponding pronouns in English and in Fante. The correct choice of a personal pronoun depends on the verb in question, as we will discuss later:

	Singular (English)	Singular (Fante)	Plural (English)	Plural (Fante)
1st Person	<i>I</i>	<i>me, mo, mi, mu</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>ye, yε</i>
2nd Person	<i>you</i>	<i>e, i</i>	<i>you (all)</i>	<i>hom</i>
3rd Person	<i>he/she/it</i>	<i>o, ɔ</i>	<i>they</i>	<i>wo, wɔ</i>

To choose the correct pronoun, one must look to the *first vowel* in the verb being used. The rules are as follows:

1st Vowel	1st P. Singular	2nd P. Singular	3rd P. Singular	1st P. Plural	3rd P. Plural
a, e, ε	<i>me</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ɔ</i>	<i>yε</i>	<i>wɔ</i>
o, ɔ	<i>mo</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ɔ</i>	<i>yε</i>	<i>wɔ</i>
i	<i>mi</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ye</i>	<i>wo</i>
u	<i>mu</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ye</i>	<i>wo</i>

*I omitted second person plural because *hom* is always used, no matter what.



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Pronouns are always attached to the verb except when using second person plural (*hom*), which is always separated from the verb by a space. In the present tense, the base form of the verb does not change. All that must be done is to attach the correct pronoun (identified by the premier vowel in the verb). With this information, let us delve into some examples of how to conjugate regular verbs in the present tense.

Our first verb is *da*, meaning to *sleep*. With only one vowel, this verb is easy to conjugate:

- *meda* (*I sleep*)
- *eda* (*you sleep*)
- *ɔda* (*he sleeps*)
- *yɛda* (*we sleep*)
- *hom da* (*you [all] sleep*)
- *wɔda* (*they sleep*)

Piece of cake! Let's try another verb – *kɔ*, meaning to *go*:

- *mokɔ* (*I go*)
- *ekɔ* (*you go*)
- *ɔkɔ* (*he goes*)
- *yɛkɔ* (*we go*)
- *hom kɔ* (*you [all] go*)
- *wɔkɔ* (*they go*)

Note that the only pronoun different from the conjugation of *da* is first person singular; *mo* is used instead of *me* because of the difference in vowels.

Our next verb is *dzi* (to *eat*):

- *midzi* (*I eat*)
- *idzi* (*you eat*)
- *odzi* (*he eats*)
- *yedzi* (*we eat*)
- *hom dzi* (*you [all] eat*)
- *wodzi* (*they eat*)

And finally, we have *su* (to *cry*):

- *musu* (*I cry*)
- *isu* (*you cry*)
- *osu* (*he cries*)
- *yesu* (*we cry*)
- *hom su* (*you [all] cry*)
- *wosu* (*they cry*)





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Again, the only pronoun differing between these two verbs is the first person singular; all the rest are the same. This pattern makes conjugation easy to remember.

There are irregular verbs that do not follow the rules regarding pronoun selection, however. They are enumerated in the following table:

Irregular Verbs' Beginnings	Conjugation Pattern Followed
we, wε, kwa	<i>verbs with o, ɔ</i>
gy, ny, ke	<i>verbs with i</i>
twa, hwim, por	<i>verbs with u</i>

For instance, you might expect twa (*to cut*) to take the conjugation pattern associated with a: mekwan, ekwan, ɔkwan, etc. But because it is irregular, it actually follows the conjugation pattern associated with verbs whose first vowel is u:

- mutwa (*I cut*)
- itwa (*you cut*)
- otwa (*he cuts*)
- yetwa (*we cut*)
- hom twa (*you [all] cut*)
- wotwa (*they cut*)

Notes:

