

# Shona Speaking Children in Hampshire Schools

## Overview

### Population

Zimbabwe's estimated population is 15,000,000. Shona is the main language spoken in three quarters of the country with the other quarter speaking Ndebele. Shona has 5 major dialects, some of which differ slightly in pronunciation and vocabulary. Historically Shona has been taught in six of Zimbabwe's eight provinces, with Ndebele being taught in the other two.

### Climate

- Summer temperatures are usually between 17°C - 45°C.
- Winter temperatures range from 5°C to 16°C. (June, July, August)
- The dry season last from April to October, the wet season is November to March.

### Education System (for children from Zimbabwe)

- Ages 3-6: ECD 1-2 (Early Childhood Development)
- Ages 7-13yrs: Primary School
- At 12/13yrs final primary school examinations (Grade 7)
- From 13yrs – 16/17: Secondary School
- At 16/17yrs O Level examinations equivalent to GCSE
- At 18/19yrs A Level examinations

Education is not free, and prices range from \$20 for government primary schools and \$50 for government secondary schools.

There are several types of schools:

- Government Schools
- Former group A schools (multiracial schools)
- Rural schools
- Private schools
- Church schools

**SEN:** Children with special needs of any kind usually attend a different school or a special class in a mainstream school.

**EAL:** Learning English is compulsory from grade 1 and passing English at O level is the requirement to enter A level, colleges or the job market.

## Education System – main differences and implications for schools

### School starting age

- Most children attend nursery school and the emphasis in most nurseries is on play until the children get to 5 or 6 years old when they are getting ready to go to school.
- Since 2010 when Grade 0 was introduced, education has been compulsory from the age of 4. After Grade 0, children continue to grade 1 from 6/7 years of age.

### School day

- In Primary schools in towns the school day starts around 7am and finishes at 1pm or if the school is big and the pupils share classrooms, another group will attend from 11 am until 4pm.
- Children generally walk to and from school or use public transport by themselves.
- All subjects except Shona are taught in English, although most of the time teachers in government schools tend to mix English with Shona for better understanding.
- English is studied from year 1 and in some nurseries with more emphasis on reading and speaking depending on the type of school.
- Children do not leave the school grounds during the school day and food is not provided unless it is a boarding school.

### Curriculum

- At Primary school, children are mainly taught English, Shona, maths, PE, music, content (comprising geography, history, home economics and science) and in some schools ICT.
- Tests are taken each term in each year group and children are given a ranking according to the test score.
- There is a lot of writing that takes place in the classroom on a daily basis and the teacher does the talking most of the time.
- There is no carpet time and children are expected to learn in silence (model of sponges taking in knowledge) but there is group work and collaborative work involved.
- Parents tend to leave teaching and learning to teachers and schools, but they do help with homework, which is given daily.

## Literacy

- The Shona alphabet is the same as the English alphabet and writing follows the same patterns.
- Reading, writing and spelling start from grade 1.
- Children are not expected to join their letters until they get to grade 3 and it is not compulsory to do so even then.
- Children are encouraged to read a lot outside school but the libraries are not well equipped and generally books are expensive.

## Maths

- Many concepts e.g. multiplication are taught from Grade 3.
- Methods used for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are generally the same but some differ from English methods e.g. there isn't a lot of emphasis on using a number line or partitioning.

## Cultural sensitivities

- Children do not maintain eye contact when talking to adults as a form of respect.
- Children are expected to learn quietly and to only speak when asked to do so as classes are large (42-50 pupils) and there is only one teacher.
- Generally, there is little talk amongst the children in class; most of the talking is done by the teacher (the model is the teacher dishing out knowledge with children receiving it).
- Generally, educating a child is the role of the teacher or school so parents tend to offer support from a distance.
- If a child has done something wrong and an adult confronts them about it, they usually smile as a way of saying 'I am sorry' or being remorseful (ie they are not being rebellious if they do this).
- There are high expectations from the parents and teachers alike.
- Generally, children are not supervised during playtimes.
- Learning is individualistic and competitive in nature at every level and at the end of each term pupils are given positions according to marks awarded during tests.
- Children are encouraged to deal with playground squabbles themselves and only report serious ones.

## Parental involvement and attendance in Zimbabwe

- Generally, in Zimbabwe it is acceptable for children to repeat a year if they do not pass their end-of-year tests. The responsibility to pass lies with the teacher and the child, which is why sometimes corporal punishment is administered.
- Attendance is not an issue in Zimbabwe as parents understand that success comes from education, so they encourage their children to be in school daily.
- Parents are used to termly feedback through reports indicating performance by test scores e.g. maths 43 out of 50 and if the score is below what is expected, it is written in red.
- Generally, text books and exercise books are kept in school, except in secondary schools where they are taken home every day.

## Language differences that may cause problems with Literacy

### Alphabet/Script

It is the same as English but has a few extra consonants e.g.

dz - dzavo, tsv - tsvaira  
Bh – bhara nzv - nzvenzvana  
Ngw – ngwarira ts - tsoka

### Spelling

Shona sounds are written as they are heard e.g.  
chikoro Chi-ko-ro  
Amai a-ma-i

### Punctuation

Punctuation is the same as in English.

## Modal verbs

Shona verbs consist of a combination of three elements:

Subject prefix + tense maker + verb stem  
Although it contains three elements, the verb phrase is a single word  
Eg: Ndi -cha -enda = Ndichaenda  
I (future) will go = I will go

## Word order

Word order in Shona is sometimes the same as in English, i.e. subject –verb –object. However, in Shona, it can also sometimes be subject –object –verb e.g.

*-(I have a dog) Ini ndine imbwa (subject – verb object).*

*-(I am writing) Ini ndiri kunyora (subject – object – verb).*

## Articles

The Shona language has no articles ('a', 'an' and 'the').

## Gender/Pronouns

In Shona peers can be addressed casually whilst adult members of the family or strangers are addressed with respect and in a formal way. As such, the pronouns for you and he or she change depending on how senior the person is.

E.g.

Iwe, iye (singular to a peer)  
Imi, avo (singular/plural to adults)  
Ini (me)  
Iye (he/she)  
Isu (us)

## Vocabulary

The Shona language is relatively easy to pronounce because vowel sounds do not alter from word to word. All words end in a vowel. Shona is a phonetic language – spelling indicates how the word sounds. Shona does not have the letters L, Q, X and C except in Ch.

## Useful classroom words

### Greetings

Welcome titambire  
Hello kwaziwai  
Thank you ndinotenda/ndatenda

Morning mamuka sei/mangwanani  
Afternoon masakati/maswera sei  
Are you OK? Ndingakubatsirai nei?

### School Routine

Most of the words and phrases below are used in English in Zimbabwean schools

School playground  
School office  
Hall  
School  
Assembly  
Toilets  
Classroom  
Tutor group -grade/form  
Break time  
Outside -panze  
Inside -mukati  
Packed lunch  
School nurse  
First aid room  
Staffroom  
Lunchtime  
School uniform  
Library  
Reading book  
Library book  
Label  
Colour  
Pen  
Pencil  
Yes -hongu  
No -kwete

## Days of the week

Monday Muvhuro  
Tuesday Chipiri  
Wednesday Chitatu  
Thursday China  
Friday Chishanu  
Saturday Mugovera  
Sunday Svondo

## Numbers

Zero Zero  
One motsi  
Two piri  
Three tatu  
Four ina  
Five shanu  
Six tanhatu  
Seven nomwe  
Eight sere  
Nine pfumbamwe  
Ten gumi

## Instructions/Questions

Work with a partner  
-ita neumwe wako  
Use your dictionary  
-shandisa dictionary  
Do you understand?  
-wanzwisisa here?  
Talk about this at home  
-mozonotaura izvi kumba  
Translate these words at home  
-monoisa izvi muchiShona kumba  
You can write in German  
-Unogona kunyora German here?  
Write in sentences  
-isa mazwi aya mumutsetse / mumutsara  
Fill in the blanks  
-zadzisa pakashama  
Please be quiet  
-nyararai please  
Come here please  
-huya pano please  
Where does it hurt?  
-Ndepapi pari kurwadza?  
Well done  
-wagona