



**JAWOYN
ASSOCIATION**
SHARING OUR
COUNTRY

JAWOYN LEARNER'S GUIDE

WITH AUDIO – Francesca Merlan

The audio is referred to by ~ *Audio*. You will find the audio files listed on the website

“Empowering our language, our way!”

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Pronunciation: Sounds and the Spelling System

The following is an **introduction** to pronunciation rules in Jawoyn. The *Jawoyn-English Dictionary & English Finder List* (2022) by Francesca Merlan and Pascale Jacq provides more information.

We use English letters to spell Jawoyn for convenience. But it is important to remember that the sounds the letters represent are somewhat different in Jawoyn words compared to English words. Jawoyn does not sound at all like English, so you have to learn what sounds the letters represent in Jawoyn.

The best way to learn how to read the letters is to hear the words in which the letters are used. This section provides words and accompanying short audio files for you to imitate, covering the sounds you will need to pronounce Jawoyn. There are also explanations about the writing system that clarify why letters are used the way they are.

The first pronunciation rule is that no Jawoyn words begin with a vowel (with one small qualification: sometimes, especially before a noun or adjective, the noun classifier *ngan-* is reduced to *-an*, dropping the *ng-*). That means, with that exception, that all words begin with what's called a consonant rather than a vowel.

Vowels are speech sounds pronounced with an open vocal tract, while consonants are pronounced with some kind of closure or constriction in the vocal tract. Consonants, combined with vowels, produce syllables.

There are different kinds of consonants: **stops**, **nasals**, **laterals**, **rhotics** (or **r-sounds**), and **semi-vowels** (sounds that are somewhere between a vowel and a consonant in terms of closure). A note about each:

Stops: are produced with some quite complete obstruction. There is also a stoppage called 'glottal' stop, explained below and written. For example, **b** is a stop, produced with the lips together (bilabial).

Nasals: produced with the soft palate lowered, allowing air to pass through the nose and creating the sort of 'hum' that nasal consonants involve. For example, **m** is a nasal.

Laterals: involve the tongue making contact somewhere in the roof of the mouth, but still allowing air to flow around it, making a smooth kind of sound. The **l** is a lateral.

r-sounds (rhotics): two different r-sounds are produced in Jawoyn and the most closely related languages; a (Spanish-like) lightly tapped **r**, and an 'American-sounding' **r** (as can be heard in some American speech forms at the ends of words, e.g. 'car', 'bar'; or within words such as 'curly', 'curtain'). The r-sounds are restricted in occurrence: very few words begin with one; and the only r-sound that can occur at the beginning of a word is the 'American-sounding' one, which is written with one **r**. The tapped r (written **rr** to distinguish it) can only occur within or at the end of words. Remember that the tapped **rr** must be pronounced – it is not an 'a' sound but a real **rr**-sound, as in Spanish, for example *perro* 'dog'. The difference between the two is found in the word **rarrk** (for in-fill or cross-hatching in painting).

~ *Audio 1 rarrk*

Semi-vowels: the two sounds intermediate between vowels and consonants are **w** and **y**. Both can occur at the beginning of words, within them, and at the end of words.

Stops

Let's look more closely at the range of stops. These differ by where they are produced in the vocal tract. Each place of stop production is paralleled by a nasal produced at the same place.

Those produced by the closure of both lips like **b** are called 'bilabial' ('two lips').

In English we make a significant difference between two closely related bilabial stops, **b** and **p**. We differentiate words such as 'big' from 'pig', 'pet' from 'bet', ONLY by the difference between p and b.

In Jawoyn, there is only one bilabial stop quality at the beginning of words and it COULD therefore be written either b or p, because there is no contrast between them. The same is true for other consonants which can occur initially, d (which contrasts in English with t, but not in Jawoyn), j (as in the word Jawoyn), in English this contrasts with what we usually write as ch but does not contrast in Jawoyn; and g which in English contrasts with a k-sound (which we often write as c- as in the contrast between 'goat' and 'coat'), but g and k do not contrast initially in Jawoyn.

Based on preferences expressed by Jawoyn people some time ago, we write all of these with what is called the 'voiced' consonant at each place in the mouth where the consonant is produced, that is, **b** instead of p for the 'bilabial' (and, as you will see, **d** instead of t for the 'alveo-dental', **j** instead of tj for the 'palatal' stop, **g** instead of k for what is called the 'velar' position in the mouth). The only stops that can occur at the beginning of words are: **b, d, j**, and **g**.

A somewhat greater number of stop sounds can occur within words, as will be explained below. But at the beginning of words (word-initially), those are the stops you need to use. Illustrated by two words each, these are:

b:

baba

older brother or sister

barran

infant, babe-in-arms

~ Audio 2

d:

denbam

belly, stomach

dilk

sharp edge, blade

~ Audio 3

j:

Jawoyn

name of language, people

jak

Red Meat Ant

~ Audio 4

g:

ganya

uncle, mother's brother

garaj

sand, sugar

[remember, r is used for the 'American r']

~ Audio 5

All the stops can also occur, not only word-initially, but at other positions in the word.

They can all occur finally, and within words before other stops. When they do, the pronunciation is more like what is written in English with the corresponding 'voiceless' letters at each position; so for these positions, spellings with p, t, tj, k are used, as in the following examples:

b (word-initial) – **p** (finally and before other consonants)

garap

spider

jap-jiyi-

to stand

~ Audio 6

d– t:

jatmurr

single or unmarried boy

jat

pow! (noise of spearing, a 'sound-word' or ideophone)

~ Audio 7

j:

Tends to have a very similar sound both word-finally and before other stops so is written j everywhere, something like the initial J in the name 'Jay' but a bit softer.

jaj

digging stick

jatbejbej

Northern Rosella (note the b sound after a stop is more like at the beginning of a word)

~ Audio 8

g– k:

Jaruk

Red Bush Apple [remember the single r?]

jokmi

man's child

~ Audio 9

Jawoyn has 'long stops', ones that sound longer and stronger than a single stop at the same position. You can think of it this way: when a stop occurs followed by another stop of the same kind within the word, the result is a long-sounding stop, one that is held longer than the single stop. How do we write those? To best represent the pronunciation, we do so by using the first stop in its 'voiceless' form, in this case p (as it would be preceding another consonant), followed by the stop in its 'voiced' form, in this case b.

For example:

b:

bepba

Hang on! Wait a moment!

Contrast that with the word baba 'older brother or sister' which we have heard above, which has a much shorter, single b.

baba

Older brother or sister

~ Audio 10

d:

jatdi

frog

~ Audio 11

rd:

mardi

tommyhawk

martdarr

crab; handcuff

~ Audio 12

j:

jujja

Mertens' Water Monitor

gujjam

oneself

~ Audio 13

Contrast those with the word jaja 'sister', which has a much shorter, single j.

~ Audio 14

g:

gukgal

paperbark house

bulkgu

in the middle

~ Audio 15

The 'glottal' stop is relatively limited in Jawoyn and specialized in where it occurs. It amounts to a quick blockage of airflow, like what often occurs in the expression uh-uh or uh-oh in English. In Jawoyn, glottal tends to occur at certain word-internal boundaries (Glottal stop is also a feature marking certain grammatical boundaries in verbs). Glottal occurs within certain words where there is a clear boundary between a first segment and an ending, in a number of words one that makes the word a noun.

For example, it occurs in two onomatopoetic words for birds:

boy'mi

Kingfisher

jey'mi

Sacred Kingfisher

~ Audio 16

Very rarely, it occurs word-finally, as in:

weley'

Red-winged Parrot

~ Audio 17

Retroflex Consonants

Another distinction occurs in the consonant series that needs to be explained.

There is a difference between what we can call 'plain' and 'retroflex' consonants. The consonants d/t, n, and l all are produced at the same point of articulation in the mouth (called 'alveo-dental'). Each has a 'retroflex' companion sound. Retroflex means that the tip of the tongue is curved backwards towards the hard palate, producing sounds (that don't exactly correspond to anything in English), that sound something like the combination of an r-sound with the consonantal sound. These sounds are written with two letters: rd (or rt/d word-finally and syllable-finally), rn, and rl. It's important to learn the retroflex consonants because whether a sound is 'plain' or 'retroflex' makes the difference in meaning between words – which an English speaker might not appreciate at first, because we don't have these sounds in English.

Here are some words that differ ONLY between having a 'plain' consonant, or a retroflex one at the same point of articulation:

d – rd: (or t – rt word-finally)

bat stone, money

bart knee

~ Audio 18:

madak man's child

mardawk wild cucumber

~ Audio 19

n – rn:

barran infant, child in arms

barrarn cavity, rockhole

man messenger

marn gum, resin

~ Audio 20

l – rl:

balaj leech

barlaj open plain

~ Audio 21

What about the nasal consonants? M and n are pronounced pretty much the way you think they would be:

makboyn that's all!

mam ghost, white person

~ Audio 22

nabay that, that one

~ Audio 23

The 'palatal' nasal is written both ny (word-initially and within words between vowels); but written yn at the end of words and syllable-finally. It sounds pretty much like n, but with a touch of 'palatalization' on it (meaning the tongue moves towards the hard palate). At the beginning and within words the palatal ny sounds like the combination of -ni- in the English word 'onion':

nyarrang	ours, belonging to all of us
ganya	uncle

~ Audio 24

Why write it 'turned around', as at the end of words? In order to prevent people from pronouncing it like a completely new syllable. For example, listen to the word Jawoyn, the name of the language. It does not have a complete final syllable but just a palatal final consonant! Experience has shown that if you write it -ny, people say 'ja-wonee', which is not correct.

~ Audio 25 (above examples)

The r's: Here are some examples of the two r's, and the difference between them:

gar	old person
jarr	thigh, upper leg
garap	spider
garrang	mother
laruk	cold
larruk	Paperbark

~ Audio 26

Another sound we write with two letters is the sound which occurs at the end of the English word 'sing' – called a 'velar nasal'. While it's easy for English speakers to say at the end of words, it's not easy for them to say at the beginning of words, which happens to be a very common initial sound as well as at the end of words such as garrang 'mother'.

Initially in Jawoyn words:

ngarrk	l
ngani	language

~ Audio 27

The ng also occurs very commonly within words, and it is very important NOT to pronounce the words as if they contain an English 'g'-sound – they DO NOT. Using the ng combination to write the sound is the best way to represent it, but it does NOT correspond to an English 'g'-sound anywhere.

Listen to the examples:

gangay	he/she went
jangay	slingshot
Barunga	name of community, commonly mispronounced! As in ba-roong-ga but there is no g-sound!

~ Audio 28

Before other consonants, ng is the same as in the English final 'sing', e.g.:

langka

billabong

benggowan

understand (verb)

~ Audio 29

The semi-vowels w and y are as one might expect, but the w is pronounced with the lips slightly more spread, and less rounded, than in English. It occurs at the beginning AND end of words (where English speakers might not expect it), as well as in the middle of words and in combination with following consonants:

woyal

Black Plum

dewdew

Dollarbird

wowoj

Rock Ringtail Possum

yawk

Cheeky Yam

~ Audio 30

Y is initially and between vowels like the 'y' in 'yes'. Like w, it occurs initially, finally and within words. For example:

yenang

what?

goray

bamboo spear

giyowk

fish

~ Audio 31

The five vowels a, e, i, o, u have clear, open values as in (for example) Italian. The vowels are especially clear in 'open' (vowel-final) syllables. For example:

baba

sister

bemarrk

frost, dew

bidort

Water Chestnut

bododo

last born, youngest

Bulu

clan name

(Ngalkbon, neighbours of Jawoyn and married in)

A number of important words have retroflexion on an r which can extend over the entire syllable. This means that the entire syllable can sound like the 'American r'. The most common example of this is the word for 'bad', which is often pronounced in one or other of the following two ways:

berkgu

brekgu

~ Audio 32

There are other key words that have the same pattern. For example:

wirk

Northern Brushtail Possum

~ Audio 33

There is one other 'pronunciation rule' that will help you to sound more like a Jawoyn speaker. Some of the sections below will explain how to form certain kinds of constructions by adding prefixes and suffixes to noun and verb forms – little parts that are required before and after the main word-form, or stem. But at many boundaries between such small elements and the main stem, where the prefix is vowel-final and the following stem begins with d, n, or l (an 'alveo-dental' consonant), the stem-initial consonant is made retroflex in that environment.

Let's take a basic verb to illustrate, the verb na- 'see'. If you want to say, 'I see it', you express 'I' by the prefix nga- (called 'first person singular'). Listen to what goes on between the vowel-final prefix nga- and the verb stem na- 'see' (here followed by the present tense ending -n):

Nga-na-n 'I see it'

~ Audio 34

What you hear is a degree of retroflexion at the boundary. This does not occur when the prefix is consonant-final, e.g.:

ngiyn-na-n 'you (singular) See it'

~ Audio 35

But it does occur wherever the prefix is vowel final. For example:

nya-na-n 'we (all of us) see it'

nu-na-n 'you (plural) see it'

gawu-nan 'they see'

~ Audio 36

Prefix-verb boundary: Where a verb stem begins in a stop consonant (b, d, j, g), there are other changes that must occur at the same boundary between prefix and verb stem that make the 'join' between them different from retroflexion described above. Let's take a very common verb and show what happens at certain boundaries:

nga-budiyi 'I am sitting, camping, living'

ngiyn-budiyi 'you (one person) are sitting'

ga-budiyi 'he/she is'

nyi-budiyi 'you and I are sitting'

nyirri-m-budiyi 'we (but not you) are'

nya-m-budiyi 'we (all of us, including you) are'

gawu-m-budiyi 'they are sitting, camping'

~ Audio 37

As this example shows, all stop initial verbs require that a nasal be put between vowel-final plural prefixes and the verb stem. This means for verbs that are b-initial as above, the bilabial nasal -m-; for verbs that are d-initial -rn- (retroflex nasal); for verbs that are j-initial the palatal ny; and for verbs that are g-initial the velar nasal -ng). For example: gawu-rn-dip-mang 'they are bathing, swimming'; gawu-yn-japjiyi 'they are standing'; gawu-ng-gan 'they are going'. It's hard to remember to do, you just have to get used to doing it! NOTICE that the insertion of a nasal consonant does NOT occur after the first person inclusive dual ('you and me') form nyi-. Look back above and check that.

Another spelling rule is used here to make correct pronunciation of written words easier. That concerns how to pronounce combinations of the sounds n + g, where these are separate sounds. Above, we showed that ng written as such equals the final sound of the English word siNG, a nasal consonant (as in Barunga, ba-roo-nga NOT Ba-rung-ga). But sometimes actual n occurs before the sound g and therefore needs to be distinguished from the 'single sound' represented by ng. In order to do that, after n (or rn), a next-occurring g-sound is written as k.

Examples: Jawoyn speakers often double the verb 'to go'. They can say either nga-gan 'I am going', or also commonly, nga-gan-gan, which means the same thing. In order to make clear how to pronounce it, that doubled form is written nga-gankan, so you know to pronounce the second 'g' and not mistake it for an ng combination.

~ *Audio 38*

Also, there are some very common forms in which the retroflex nasal written as rn occurs before a g (as in the word meaning 'here', ni-yarn-gula). In order to make sure the 'g-sound' is pronounced and not mistaken for the ng this kind of form is written niyarnkula.

~ *Audio 39*

Now let's get to saying some things!

Introducing Yourself: Who am I and Who are You?

The sections that follow are going to concentrate on making it possible for you to say a few everyday things and understanding how you might expand from the examples to saying other things of similar kind.

Ngiyn na-yenang?

'Who are you?' (to one person)

~ *Audio 40*

Ngiyn ngal-yenang?

'Who are you?' (to one female person)

~ *Audio 41*

What part of the two sentences above expresses that the person asked is female?

Answer:

~ *Audio 42 ngal-yenang*

Given your answer, what do you think the prefix na- expresses?

Answer:

The 'demonstrative' or 'pointing' word for 'that' is formed on the stem -bay. But it requires a prefix. How would you say, 'that one' (male, or non-feminine)?

Answer:

~ *Audio 43*

How would you say, 'that one' (female)?

Answer:

~ *Audio 44*

Question words in Jawoyn, as you have seen, require prefixation (ngiyn na-yenang? Or ngal-yenang?). How would you say, 'Who is that?' (man, masculine).

Answer:

~ *Audio 45*

How would you say, 'Who is that?' (woman, feminine).

Answer:

~ *Audio 46*

For many Jawoyn (and other Indigenous) people one's 'skin name' is important. There are eight 'skin' names, and in each category a male and a female are distinguished by the prefixes above, na- and ngal-. So, a person of murnayn skin is either na-murnayn or ngal-murnayn. See page 5 *Jawoyn-English Dictionary & English Finder-list*, Francesca Merlan and Pascale Jacq, (2022) for an explanation of how these work to categorize people.

Here's how to ask another person the question about which skin they are:

Gurni ngiyn-wik?

'What is your skin?'

~ Audio 47

Notice that gurni literally means 'where', but the meaning is as given; wik means 'skin'. In answer, if you are a man, you preface the skin term with na-; if you are a woman, with ngal-. For example:

Ngarrk ngal-bayjayiyn

'I am bayjayiyn skin'

~ Audio 48

Ngarrk na-ngamayang

'I am ngamayang skin'

~ Audio 49

Ask where someone has been or come from:

Gurni-wa ngiyn-ganay?

'Where have you come from?'

~ Audio 50

Gurni ngiyn-budiyi?

'Where do you live?'

~ Audio 51

Gurni lerr-ngiyngu?

'Where is your home?'

~ Audio 52

Note on Parts of Speech

There are three 'open' word classes in Jawoyn: noun, verb and adjective. 'Open' classes are ones to which new words could be added – for example, the verb wurgi'-mang 'to work' has been added from English and behaves like a regular verb.

There are also 'closed' classes: question words, free pronouns, demonstratives (pointing words 'this', 'that', 'yonder'); adverbs, particles, conjunctions, interjections ('hey!'), and ideophones (like 'splat' in English). 'Closed' means that new words cannot be freely added to these classes.

The next sections will illustrate a few of these classes: nouns, verbs, pronouns, demonstratives – and how to put these together to make sentences.

Also, audio examples are given of typical interjections and ideophones.

Questions: What, Who, When, Why (for What?)

Yenang nabay?

'What is that?'

~ Audio 53

Na-yenang nabay?

'Who is that?'

~ Audio 54

Ngal-yenang ngalbay?

'Who is that?' (woman, girl)

~ Audio 55

Ngiyn na-yenang?

'Who are you?' (to a man)

How would you say: 'Who are you?' To a woman

Answer:

~ Audio 56

'Where?'

Gurni ngiyn-gan?

'Where are you going?'

~ Audio 57

Gurni ngiyn-gankan?

'Where are you going?'

~ Audio 58

These are both correct and have the same meaning.

Gurni-wa ngiyn-ganay?

'Where have you come from?'

~ Audio 59

Gurni-wayen ngiyn-gan?

~ *Audio 60*

'When are you going?'

Yenang-gu ngiyn-gan?

~ *Audio 61*

'Why are you going?'

Yenang-gu ngiyn-ganay?

~ *Audio 62*

'Why did you go? (What did you go for?)'

Nga-ganay bat-gu

~ *Audio 63*

'I went for (to get) money'

Nga-ganay giyowk-gu

Nga-ganay may-wu

Nga-ganay lay-wu

~ *Audio 64*

'I went for fish'

'I went for food'

'I went for meat (kangaroo)'

Nouns, Noun Classes and Noun 'Cases'

As in English, a 'noun' is a kind of word that names something: camp, stone, river and so on. A noun is the part of speech that names a person, place, thing, or idea.

In English we mainly make nouns do their work in sentences with prepositions: 'to the camp', 'from the camp', and so on. In Jawoyn you do this by adding markers on the front and back of the noun. So, in order to use a noun in Jawoyn, you have to know how to use extra small parts of speech with it, that express what you want to say.

Further, nouns in Jawoyn belong to 'classes', three of which are explicitly marked by a prefix form, and one class, the largest one, does not take a prefix.

Noun classes

Noun class	prefix	Nouns in this group
I	Na-	Male human and higher (including spirit) beings.
II	Ngal-	Female human and higher beings; also emu.
III	Ngan-	Part-whole nouns: parts of the body, locational, topographic and other nouns.
IV	Zero (no prefix)	Remaining largest group of nouns.

How you add the extra parts to a noun, before and after it, depends on what class the noun is (as well as its function in a sentence). Some important examples are given below. As in many languages, some nouns can belong to more than one class, that is, can be marked either masculine or feminine, e.g. na-barran 'the infant boy', ngal-barran 'the infant girl'.

What we call 'subject' and 'object' in English are quite easy to express – the doer in a sentence and the object to which something is done – because they do not take extra markers. For example, the word for 'man, Aborigine' is mungguy and the word for 'woman' is ngalmukga. (Notice that this word contains the feminine prefix ngal-, which is not separable in this word; we can say the basic form now contains the prefix).

Mungguy nga-nanay

'I saw a man'

~ Audio 65

Ngalmukga nga-nanay

'I saw a woman'

~ Audio 66

To reverse subject and object above, you use the same form of the noun but change the prefix in the verb to ngan- which expresses 'he' or 'she' saw me.

Mungguy ngan-nanay

'The man saw me'

~ Audio 67

Ngalmukga ngan-nanay

'The woman saw me'

~ Audio 68

The other meanings one frequently expresses with nouns involve 'place to or at', 'place from', 'with what' (instrumental), purpose (for what) and 'along, around'. The following illustrate some of those meanings and how to form them with nouns of the classes that generally express them.

Here's how to say going 'to' or being 'at' or 'in' somewhere with the noun *lerr* 'camp, place':

lerr-luk 'to camp, at camp'

~ *Audio 69*

Nga-gan lerr-luk 'I'm going to camp'

~ *Audio 70*

Gurni ngiyn-gan? 'Where are you (singular) going?'

Nga-gan lerr-luk 'I'm going to camp'

~ *Audio 71*

Nga-goyindin lerr-luk 'I'm going back to camp'

~ *Audio 72*

Gurni ngiyn-ganay? 'Where did you go?'

~ *Audio 73*

Nga-ganay lerr-luk 'I went to camp'

~ *Audio 74*

Nga-goyinay lerr-luk 'I went back to camp'

~ *Audio 75*

Now try saying 'in', 'at', 'on' with the following nouns (and the few extra words you need to say something meaningful with them): *layn* 'tree'

layn-luk 'in the tree'

~ *Audio 76*

Ga-weyn-jiyi lany-luk 'It's hanging up in the tree'

~ *Audio 77*

Yenang nabay ga-weyn-jiyi layn-luk? 'What's that hanging up in the tree?'

~ *Audio 78*

Burrirt ga-weyn-jiyi layn-luk 'Flying foxes are hanging up in the tree'

~ *Audio 79*

Ngan-class 'in', 'on', 'at'

ngan-garlarr

'river'

~ Audio 80

Nga-nan goymarr ni-garlarr

'I see (a) crocodile in the river'

~ Audio 81

Yenang nabay ni-garlarr?

'What's that in the river?'

~ Audio 82

Nabay goymarr ni-garlarr

'That's a crocodile in the river'

~ Audio 83

WITH NGAN-CLASS NOUNS: to form the meaning 'in', 'to', 'at' with these nouns, use a prefix ni and OMIT the -luk -luk occurs with zero-class and other nouns, like wak 'water', a zero-class noun.

Nga-nan goymarr wak-luk

'I see a crocodile in the water'

~ Audio 84

Nga-nan ngart wak-luk

'I see a turtle in the water'

~ Audio 85

Goymarr ga-nekjang wak-luk

'A crocodile is soaking in the water'

~ Audio 86

How to say 'from' somewhere? You use the suffix -wa (or, after stops and nasals, -ba) which means 'from':

lerr-wa

'from camp'

~ Audio 87

Nga-goyindin lerr-wa

'I'm coming back from camp'

~ Audio 88

Goyinay lerr-wa

'He (or she) came back from camp'

~ Audio 89

Ngiyn-goyinay lerr-wa

'You came back from camp'

~ Audio 90

Nga-wayinay layn-ba

'I fell from the tree'

~ Audio 91

Na-walkwalk wayinay layn-ba

~ Audio 92

'The child fell from the tree'

Nga-goyindin ni-garlarr-wa

~ Audio 93

'I am coming back from the river'

NOTICE that to say 'from' with a ngan-class noun, you need to use the prefix ni- together with 'from' expressed here by -wa. Zero-class nouns like lerr ('camp', above) do not require the ni- prefix, but only the 'from' ending.

Na-walkwalk goyinay lerr-luk ni-garlarr-wa 'The child came back to camp from the river'

~ Audio 94

Goyinay na-walkwalk ni-garlarr lerr-wa

~ Audio 95

'The child returned to the river from camp'

NOTICE that Jawoyn word order is freer than English; you can put 'returned' or 'child' first, and both are perfectly good.

Wayinay na-walkwalk ni-garlarr layn-ba

~ Audio 96

'The child fell in the river from the tree'

Another 'place' concept illustrated here means 'around, along, up to', as in:

Ga-budiyi goymarr ni-garlarr-mut

~ Audio 97

'Crocodiles live at/around the riverside'

NOTICE again that with a ngan-class noun, you need to prefix the ni- before the noun and the ending -mut.

Ga-gara-yindin bilirrng ni-garlarr-mut

~ Audio 98

'River wattle grows along the river'

A zero-class noun like wak 'water' requires only the ending:

Wak-mut nga-gan

~ Audio 99

'I am going along the water'

Another meaning with nouns is the instrumental, 'with what?' or 'by means of', which requires a prefix gun- before the noun:

Nga-ber'may gun-mardi

~ Audio 100

'I chopped it with an axe'

Nga-dokbunay wang gun-jimirndi

~ Audio 101

'I cut the meat with a knife'

Which word means 'cut'? Which part means 'I'? which part means 'meat'? Which part means 'knife'? Which part means 'by means of'?

Dative or Genitive: Belonging to or Regarding Whom?

To express the idea of 'about' or 'belonging to whom', one uses an ending -wun (or following stops and nasals) -gun with the noun designating the person to or for whom something is done, or to whom something belongs, as in this example with durrk 'emu':

Nabay durrk-gun may-ngayu 'That is (its) food for emu' (That is emu food)

~ Audio 102

Nawula may-ngayu mungguy-wun 'This is man's (human) food'

~ Audio 103

For possessives like -ngayu, see below. There are other ways of expressing doing something for or involving someone else that require an addition to the verb (not shown here).

Free Pronouns

How do you say 'I', 'you', 'we' and so on in Jawoyn? There are two places in a sentence where the doer of an action (like 'I') and the receiver or object (like 'you') can be expressed. The first is with 'free' pronouns, below. They are usually not obligatory but for clarity or emphasis.

The second place is on the verb itself, expressed by prefix combinations which express the subject and object of a sentence ('you looked at me', etc.). These combinations are obligatory – they have to be there; you can't make the sentence meaningful without them; you can't just use free pronouns.

The free pronouns are:

	Minimal		Augmented
'I', first person	ngarrk	'we' (not including you)	nyirrang
'you and me', 'we two'	nyiyarrk	'we' (all of us, including you)	nyarrang
'you', second person	ngiyn	'you', (all of) you	nurrang
'he, she'	ngayu	'they'	burrang

The non-singular 'you' and 'they' pronouns can be made 'dual', relating to two people, by adding the ending -jarrk (after the nasals): nurrang-jarrk 'you two', burrang-jarrk 'they two'. (The 'you and me' form nyi-yarrk contains this element, which is y – initial following a vowel).

Ngarrk nga-gankan 'I am going'

~ Audio 104

Ngiyn ngiyn-gankan 'You are going'

~ Audio 105

Ngayu ga-gankan 'He/she is going'

~ Audio 106

NOTICE that he/she forms (and also third person plural forms, below, in the present tense require the 'third' prefix ga-).

Nyirrang nyirri-ng-gankan

'We (us, not you) are going'

~ Audio 107

(Remember the illustration above regarding putting nasal consonant after vowel-final prefix; the nasal is at the same 'point of articulation' in the mouth as the following stop).

Nyarrang nya-ng-gankan

'We (all) are going'

~ Audio 108

Burrang ga-wu-ng-gankan

'They are going'

~ Audio 109

NOTICE two things: this, like the third person 'he/she', has an obligatory ga- in the present tense. As mentioned above, a nasal is required in some of these forms. The verb 'go' begins in g. Therefore, the required nasal is the 'velar' ng, which occurs (as above) in all non-singular forms except the 'you, me' (first person inclusive).

To review: verbs that begin in b require an m:

Nya-m-budiyi lerr-luk

'We are sitting in camp'

~ Audio 110

Ga-wu-m-budiyi lerr-luk

'They are sitting in camp'

~ Audio 111

Ga-wu-m-burruyu

'They are sleeping'

~ Audio 112

Verbs that begin in d, like dong-ma- 'cry', require the retroflex nasal rn:

Nya-rn-dong-mamang

'We are crying'

~ Audio 113

Ga-wu-rn-dong-mamang

'They are crying'

~ Audio 114

Verbs that begin in j like jap-jiyi- 'stand', require the palatal yn-:

Nya-yn-jap-jiyi

'We are standing'

~ Audio 115

Ga-wu-yn-jap-jiyi

'They are standing'

~ Audio 116

Verbs that begin otherwise do not require the inserted nasal.

For example:

Nya-meren

'We are sitting conversing'

~ Audio 117

Ga-wu-meren

'They are sitting conversing'

~ Audio 118

Possessive Pronoun Endings

Possession is expressed by pronouns suffixed to nouns that express the possessor, and by independent possessive pronouns.

The first set are:

Possessive suffixes			
'mine', first person	-ngakgu	'ours' (not yours)	-nyirrang
'ours' (yours and mine)	-nyiwu	'ours' (all of us, including you)	-nyarrang
'yours'	-ngiyngu	'yours' (plural)	-nurrang
'his, hers'	-ngayu	'theirs'	-burrang

Examples of how to use these:

Nawula lerr-ngaku

'This is my camp'

~ Audio 119

Gurni lerr-ngiyngu?

'Where is your camp?'

~ Audio 120

Nga-nay lerr-ngayu

'I saw his/her camp'

~ Audio 121

Lerr-nyirrang gawak

'Our camp is far away'

~ Audio 122

Lerr-nyarrang gaya

'Our (all of us) camp is close'

~ Audio 123

Lerr-burrang gawak-marrk

'Their camp is really far'

~ Audio 124

Free Possessive Pronouns

There are independent possessive pronouns:

	Minimal		Augmented
1st person, 'mine'	ngakgurlung	'ours' (but not yours)	nyirranggurlung
'yours and mine'	nyiyarrkurlung	'ours' (all of us)	nyarrangurlung
2nd person, 'yours'	ngiyngurlung	'yours'	nurraggurlung
3rd person, 'his, hers'	ngayurlung	'theirs'	burranggurlung

Nawula ngakgurlung

'This is mine'

~ Audio 125

Nawula lerr ngakgurlung

'This camp is mine'

~ Audio 126

NOTICE that this contrasts with the possessive-suffixed sentence as the difference in English translation suggest:

Nawula lerr-ngakgu

'This is my camp' (versus 'This camp is mine')

~ Audio 127

Nabay burranggurlung

'That is theirs'

~ Audio 128

NOTICE that these forms are like the possessive suffixes but with an ending (-rlung). As in the examples, they are 'free' in that they can express that something is someone's; such sentences, as in many languages, do not need a verb.

Demonstratives

Some of the examples above have used the most common demonstratives: nawula 'this' (or ngalwula to modify a feminine noun), and nabay/ ngalbay 'that'. There are other demonstratives that are most similar to English 'yonder', but they are much less common and are not illustrated here.

Nawula lerr-ngakgu

'This is my camp'

~ Audio 129

Nabay lerr-burrag

'That is their camp'

~ Audio 130

The demonstratives are the basis for a large number of common adverbs, including *niwula* 'here', *nibay* 'there'; *gula* 'this way' (indicating where to go from here). There are many others. Also very common are two demonstrative-based forms that contain an element *-warn-* (or *-yarn-*) which typically conveys a sense of 'place mutually known' to speaker and hearer: *niyarnkula* 'here'; *niyarnbay* 'there'.

Niyarnkula ga-budiyi

'He is sitting here'

~ *Audio 131*

Niyarnbay bu-ng-ganay

'They went there'

~ *Audio 132*

Verbs

Verbs are words expressing actions and states of being. In Jawoyn, as in many languages, they have the most complex structure. The basic form is:

PERSON + Verb + TIME

As explained above, who is doing something, and the object of action are obligatorily marked before the verb by prefix combinations. That is the reason the independent pronouns are used more for emphasis and clarity but are not needed in every sentence. The PERSON above can be the sole actor in a sentence which has no direct object.

For example:

Burrirt layn-luk ga-wenyjiyi

'Flying foxes hang in trees'

~ *Audio 133*

Or the PERSON element may be a subject-object combination, as in:

Nga-bu-m

'I hit him/her'

~ *Audio 134*

Ngan-bu-m

'He hit me'

~ *Audio 135*

When 'I' is subject, the prefix is *nga-* (*nga-goyindin* 'I am returning'). When 'I' is the object and the subject is another person, the prefix combination required is *ngan-*, as above.

The example above also shows that many verbs in Jawoyn are composed of (often analysable) parts. For now, let's note that the past tense is marked for the verb **bu** by *-m*. The past tense marker is different for other verbs.

Quite a number of other elements can occur between PERSON and the verb, that contribute meanings that qualify the nature of an object or mark the involvement of another object person.

Let us just illustrate those two ideas.

An element -yuk- is commonly incorporated into the verb, with reference to the object. It conveys the meaning that the object is animate, alive or living, and often a higher animate object like a person or animal. For example:

Nga-yuk-nan

'I see it, him, her'
(alive, whether person or animal)

~ Audio 136

The verb is na- 'see', in present tense with -n.

Nga-yuk-nanay gupbu

'I saw the kangaroo'

~ Audio 137

The verb 'see' here is past tense, nanay, and the object gupbu 'kangaroo' is referenced by -yuk- which indicates that it is living.

-yuk- contrasts with another very similar element, -guk- which occurs in the same place before the verb, and references something which is 'dead' or an inanimate mass.

Nga-guk-nanay gupbu

'I saw the (dead) kangaroo'

~ Audio 138

Another important element which occurs between PERSON and the verb is -bi-. The addition of -bi- enables the adding of an object noun in a sentence which otherwise does not have one.

For example:

Ga-burruyu

'He/she/it is lying down' (or sleeping)

~ Audio 139

The above has only a subject, but no object. Putting -bi- into a verb of this kind enables reference to be made to an experiencer or involved person:

Ga-bi-burruyu

'It is lying there for him/her'

Ga-bi-burruyu ngan-mele-ngayu

'Her/his swag is lying there for her/him'

This element may be added to a verb which already takes an object and adds another object. Compare:

Giyowk ga-mang

'He/she is getting (a) fish'

~ Audio 140

Giyowk ga-bi-mang ngal-garrang-ngayu-wun 'He/she is getting (a) fish for his/her mother'

~ Audio 141

The -bi- here refers to the 'extra' object (not the fish), the person for whom the fishing is being done (garrang 'mother' + -ngayu possessive + marker -wun person for whom).

Some Common Commands and Phrases

Nga-marriyi

~ Audio 142

'I am hungry'

Nga-marri

~ Audio 143

'I am hungry'

'Be hungry' in the present often occurs in the short form illustrated, or in the longer form.

Ngiyn-marriyi ngarra?

~ Audio 144

'Are you hungry?'

(ngarra expresses something like 'maybe?' or a question)

Nga-marri-joyin

~ Audio 145

'I am very hungry'

(-joyin literally means 'die' or 'suffer'; so, marri-joyin means to be really hungry).

Ga-wu-marri

~ Audio 146

'They are hungry'

May nga-jay

~ Audio 147

'I ate tucker' (may = 'vegetable food')

Lay nga-jay

~ Audio 148

'I ate meat' (especially kangaroo!)

May ngan-wo

~ Audio 149

'Give me tucker' (command to one person)

Bega ngan-wo

~ Audio 150

'Give me tobacco'

Bat ngan-wo

~ Audio 151

'Give me money'

May nyanu-wo

~ Audio 152

'You (plural) give us food'

Nga-wak-joyindin

'I'm really thirsty' ('perishing')

~ Audio 153

Notice this has the -joyin or -joyindin 'die, suffer' element.

Waruk ga-wak-joyindin

'The dog is perishing'

~ Audio 154

Wak borna-lakwo

'Bring water'

~ Audio 155

Wak bi-borna-lakwo waruk-gun

'Bring water for the dog'

~ Audio 156

NOTICE that wak means 'water', but the element -borna- also refers to water (or liquid). It is 'usual' in Jawoyn for this combination of both the free noun and the incorporated noun for water -borna- to occur; wak may be optional.

(Wak) Bi-borna-lakwoy waruk-gun 'He/she got water for the dog'

~ Audio 157

Buding

'Sit down' (to one person)

~ Audio 158

Bu-m-buding

'Sit down' (to a number of people)

~ Audio 159

Bengjang

'Listen!' (to one person)

~ Audio 160

Ngan-bengjang

'Listen to me!' (to one person)

~ Audio 161

Bu-m-bengjang

'Listen!' (to a number of people)

~ Audio 162

Wak wukgang

'Bring water'

~ Audio 163

Wak bi-wukgang

'Bring water (for him or her)'

~ Audio 164

Nga-budi-wu, nga-dol'mayn

'I want to sit down, I'm tired'

~ Audio 165

-budi- is a short form of budiyi 'sit, live, camp', which occurs before the -wu, which means 'going to' or 'want to' (and has the form -gu after nasal consonants).

Nga-dol'mayn nga-ganay gen gawak-ba 'I'm tired, because I've walked a long way'

~ Audio 166

Above, the word gen means 'because' and occurs following the verb. Which element means 'far'? Which element means 'from'?

Nga-denbam-borr'mayn

'I'm full up' (denbam = 'stomach')

~ Audio 167

Nga-may-gorre

'I don't want food'

~ Audio 168

NOTICE that may means 'food', and gorre expresses 'to not want'.

Nga-goyin-gu lerr-luk

'I want to go back to camp'

~ Audio 169

NOTICE that here 'want to' occurs after a nasal consonant and so has the form -gu.

Bat nga-mang-gu

'I want to get money'

~ Audio 170

NOTICE bat means 'stone' and also 'money'. muyuk means 'having'

Nga-wol-muyuk nga-goyin lerr-luk

'I have a fever; I'm going back to camp'

~ Audio 171

Nga-wol-muyuk nga-goyin-gu lerr-luk

'I have a fever, I want to/will go back to camp'

~ Audio 172

Nga-jaweyin

'I am tired'

~ Audio 173

NOTICE this is another word for 'tired'; nga-dol'-mayn is more like 'I am tired out', whereas nga-jaweyin is simply 'tired'.

Ngan-yuk-wonga nga-jaweyin

'Leave me alone, I am tired'

~ Audio 174

NOTICE -yuk- before -wonga 'leave'.

Gerrung wa-gan nga-jaweyin 'I'm not going, I'm tired'

~ *Audio 175*

In Jawoyn, gerrung is 'not', but you need other prefix forms besides the usual ones to make a negative sentence. The form for 'I' in the negative is wa- instead of nga-, as above:

Gerrung wa-gan 'I'm not going, 'I won't go'

~ *Audio 176*

Nya-ng-gan ni-garlarr 'Let's all go to the river'

~ *Audio 177*

Nga-goyin bonyi, nga-burru-wu 'I'm going back now; I want to sleep'

~ *Audio 178*

NOTICE the ending -wu after a short form of the verb burruyu 'sleep'.

Ga-mirrng'mirrng-mamang mowe, 'The sun is burning, let's sit in the shade!'
nya-m-budiyi juwul-luk

~ *Audio 179*

What word means 'shade'? What do you think mowe means?

The verb mirrng'mirrng-ma- means 'be burning, scorching'. Like a lot of reduplicative verbs, its reduplicated parts are separate by glottal stop. Listen to the audio.



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