FÄEAG ROTUẠM

A primer on reading and speaking the Rotuman language

Ministry for
**Pacific
Peoples**

Reading and speaking Fäeag Rotuạm

Fäeag Rotuạm ta (The Rotuman Language) has five basic vowels: **A E I O U**.

These basic vowels have similar pronunciation to other Pacific Languages including Te Reo Māori.

There are also five variations to these vowels: **Ä Ȧ Ạ Ö Ü**. There are slightly different ways of pronouncing the vowels **A, O** and **U**.

The basic vowels can be short or long with the long vowel sound indicated by a macron above the vowel. Long vowel sounds are slightly dragged out.

A, E, I, O, U Ā, Ē, Ī, Ō, Ū,

It is important to show this distinction as it affects the meaning of words.
For example:

Koko *mischievous / bad*
Kōkō *thorny / prickly*

Toto *blood*
Tōtō *to speak / utter*

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Aa
'a' sound in far / car

Ạạ
'a' sound in paw*

Ȧȧ
Long 'a' sound in cat / bat

Ää
Short 'a' sound in cat / bat

Ee
'e' sound in egg / pet

Ii
'ee' sound in feet / sweet

Oo
'o' sound in core / shore

Öö
'u' sound in fur *(American English)*

Uu
'oo' sound in book / look

Üü
'u' sound in German

These are pronounced as in English with a few differences:

The **G** is pronounced as the **NG** sound in **SING**.

The **R** is slightly **rolled**.

The **J** is pronounced like **CH** in CHURCH and never as J in JUDGE or JUG.

The **['] glottal stop** is the sound made in the middle of the phrase Oh-oh or Uh-oh.

Maf Ne Puku *The Alphabet*

Aa
Ava / Av
Time

Ee
Esu / Es
Pawpaw

Ii
Isu / Is
Nose

Oo
Ono / On
Six

Uu
Usa / Uas
Rain

A̱a̱
A̱fafu / A̱faf
Mist

Ȧȧ
Ȧr'aki / Ȧr'ȧk
To guess

Ää
Äfe / Äf
Thousand / liver

Öö
Ö'fā
Father

Üü
Ül'aki / Ülak
To steer

Pp
Ponapa / Ponap
Pineapple

Tt
Ṯanu / Ṯan
Water

Ff
Fa̱'purou
Hat

Gg
Gasava / Gasav
Week

Hh
Hefu / Hef
Stars

Jj
Juli / Jül
Type of bird

Kk
Kalofi / Kalöf
Eggs

Ll
Lā hapa / Lā hap
Leg

Mm
Magkō
Mangoes

Nn
Niu
Coconut

Rr
Rotu / Rot
Church / Prayer

Ss
Solo / Sol
Mountain / Hill

Vv
Vao
Net

' [Glottal Stop]

'Uhi / 'Üh
Yam

Fa̱'i / Fȧ'
To write

Fäeag 'Es'ao *Useful Words*

Common Phrases

Noa'ia	*Greetings / Hello*
Noa'ia 'e maụri gagaj 'atakoa	*Greetings Everyone*
La' ma aḷalum	*Goodbye – to those who are leaving*
Fu' ma aḷalum	*Goodbye – to those who are staying*
Figalelei	*Please*
Fạiạkse'ea	*Thank you*
Hanis ma röt'ạk	*Sorry*
Turo'	*Excuse me*

Pleasantries

Ka sei ta 'ou asa?	*What is your name?*
'Otou asa le _____	*My name is _____*
Ka 'äe le' ne tei?	*Where are you from?*
Gou le' ne _____	*I am a person from*
Ka 'äe garue 'e tei?	*Where do you work?*
Gou garue 'e _____	*I work at _____*
Ka 'äe tapen?	*How are you (singular)?*
Ka 'aụạr tapen?	*How are you (dual)?*
Ka 'aụs tapen?	*How are you (plural)?*
Gou lelei fạiạkse'ea	*I am fine, thank you*

Fäeag 'Es'ao *Useful Words*

People

Gagaj ne hanua	*Chief*
Fekạu ne Rog Hegu / Fekạu ne Rog Heg	*Church Minister*
Le'e / Le'	*Child*
Ö'fā	*Father*
O'honi / Ö'hön	*Mother*
Sạsiạg hạni / Sạsiạg hạn	*Sister*
Sạsiạg fā	*Brother*
Kạumane'aga / Kạumane'ag	*Friends*

Office Talk

Ka 'äe 'ātē vạh?	*Have you eaten?*
Leu la la' la 'a 'etar te	*Lets go eat*
Se fek gou kat hö'ạk mijif ra se 'äe	*Apologies for the delayed response...*
Fak ma se' pukut ne fạ' mumuaf	*As per my previous email...*
Gou 'oaf la hạifäegag	*Happy to discuss*
Av la la' se ut la ös for ta!	*It's gym time!*
He'em se goua	*Call me*
'Ua'ua'ạki!	*Congratulations!*
'Ạitu iạ lelei!	*God is good!*

Faith is an important aspect of Rotuman culture.

Below is a short prayer and hymn that can be used at the start of your day, to open a meeting or small gathering.

Rotu *Prayer*

'Is la roa'it	*Let us pray*
'Otomis Ö'fā fak la̧gi	*Our heavenly father*
Ạmis far 'ou ạlalum'ạkiga 'e gasav te'	*We ask for your blessings this week*
Se te' ne ạmis tūtū 'atakoa	*To each and every one of us*
'E as 'on Jisu Karisto. 'Emen.	*In Jesus name we pray. Amen*

Maka *Hymn*

Ạitu hanisim se gou	*My God loves me*
'E te' ne terạni	*And all the wonders I see*
Iạ pan'ak se 'asisikäet	*The rainbow shines through my window*
La 'on hanisi.	*My God loves me.*