LESSON 1
Hello, Goodbye, Questions

Lesson 1, like most lessons, has vocabulary, a grammar section, practice exercises and conversations/extra examples. Early lessons also have pronunciation information. The grammar section in this lesson covers greetings and simple questions and answers.

Vocabulary

Each lesson has a vocabulary section – Gamilaraay words that are used in that lesson. The vocabulary is mostly presented as one Gamilaraay word corresponding to one English word. This is a simplified presentation, to gently introduce you to the language. Very rarely does one word in Gamilaraay correspond in meaning to one word in English. Sometimes there are notes following the wordlist. You will get a better idea of the meaning and use of the Gamilaraay word if you also check the information in the dictionary, but even that is not generally a complete description of the use of the word.

Text such as ‘GGU 1.1’ below indicate that there is a sound file of the following Gamilaraay text. The sound files are available online. See Appendix 1: Resources.

In early lessons the vocabulary has verbs in command form, since that is the form that is being used. In later lessons verbs are given in future form, the usual citation form.

Play audio: GGU 1.1.mp3
### Garay* Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>winangala!, winangaldaya!</td>
<td>listen!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garay guwaala!*</td>
<td>speak!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garay guwaaldaya!</td>
<td>look!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngamila!, ngamildaya!*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaama</td>
<td>hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaama</td>
<td>question word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaluu*</td>
<td>goodbye, see ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baayandhu*</td>
<td>goodbye, see ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maliyaa</td>
<td>friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhagaan*</td>
<td>brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baawaa*</td>
<td>sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yawu</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gamil*</td>
<td>no/not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaba*</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biiba*</td>
<td>paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baadhal</td>
<td>bottle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nguu*</td>
<td>book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bina</td>
<td>ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mil</td>
<td>eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mara</td>
<td>hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhina</td>
<td>foot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the pronunciation guide (Appendix 2) at the end of the book for an explanation of how the writing system works.

When you see * in the wordlists, look for extra information below.

**Play audio:** GGU 1.2.mp3

The first three entries in the wordlist are mainly ‘teacher talk’ – for use by the teacher. Two forms of each verb are given here: the first form suggests the action requested is brief and quickly completed. The second form is a continuous verb, which mean the action is ongoing. *Winangaldaya*, for example, means ‘keep listening’ or ‘start listening and keep listening’.

*Garay is most commonly translated as ‘word’ but is also used to translate some related concepts such as ‘statement’, ‘sentence’ and ‘language’.
*Guwaala* by itself means something like: ‘tell’, ‘say’. The use of guwaala will be covered in more detail later.

*!’ after a verb means it is the command form, telling someone to do something. When you look up a verb in the Dictionary you will find the future form. The future form of the verbs/phrase in the list above are: ngami-li, winanga-li and garay guwaa-li.

*Yaluu* actually means ‘again, more’. As a greeting, it is used as an abbreviation of phrases such as: Yaluu ngali ngamilay, ‘We(2) will see each other again’. Baayandhu ‘soon’ has a similar farewell use.

*Baawaa* traditionally meant ‘older sister’, and your mother’s sister’s children and father’s brother’s children were also ‘sister’ and ‘brother’. Baawaa is now used like English/European ‘sister’. Dhagaan also had a different meaning from the current use of ‘brother’. Many Aboriginal people use ‘brother’, ‘sister’ and abbreviations such as ‘bruv’, ‘sis’, ‘cuz’ when greeting each other.

*Gamil* is the same as the English word ‘no’ **in some circumstances.** At other times, it is the same as the English ‘not’:

\[
gamil = \text{‘no’ as a one word statement:} \\
e.g. \ ‘\text{Are you well?}’ \ ‘\text{No.}’ \\
gamil = \text{‘not’ in longer statements:} \\
e.g. \ ‘\text{I did not go.}’
\]

It is not the equivalent of ‘no’ in ‘no + noun’ phrases:

e.g. ‘no money, no water’.

That will be covered in later lessons.

*Gaba* translates many English words such as ‘good’, ‘sweet’, ‘right’, ‘beautiful’ and more.

*Biiba* is from English ‘paper’, and *baadhal* from ...

*Biibabiiba* was a word developed in the 1990s for ‘book’ from biiba ‘paper’. It was decided for two reasons to generally translate ‘book’ with nguu, originally ‘paperbark tree’: first, a move away from English borrowings, and second because biibabiiba implies that reduplication
(doubling) indicates plurality: ‘many of’, ‘many of’. Generally, GY reduplication is like English ‘-ish’, so traditionally biibiaba would mean ‘paperish’ rather than ‘lots of paper’.

Word development: Active languages constantly develop new words – sometimes for new things, sometimes replacing existing words. These new words fit into the existing patterns of the language because the speakers instinctively know the patterns of their language, and make sure the words fit them. In language revival no one is an instinctive speaker of the language so new words will only fit into the traditional patterns of the language to the extent that those developing them know the patterns of the traditional language.

Each lesson has a grammar section that introduces Gamilaraay language rules. Language learners can easily assume that the rules of their main language applies to other languages. Traditional Gamilaraay is very different from English and traditional features will only be retained if speakers learn and adopt them.

Grammar: Greetings

In traditional Aboriginal societies, where people mostly lived in small groups, the sorts of greetings and farewells used today were not common. However, as people have moved into different social settings, greetings and farewells have been developed. Below are some current simple examples. No doubt, in time people will develop more greetings, perhaps based more on traditional patterns.

Play audio: GGU 1.3.mp3

When meeting people:

Yaama maliyaa. Hello friend/mate.
Yaama baawaa. Hello sister.
Yaama dhagaan. Hello brother.
When leaving:

Yaluu maliyaa. Goodbye friend/mate.
Yaluu baawaa. Goodbye sister.
Yaluu dhagaan. Goodbye brother.

Yaluu is ‘again’ and when used as a greeting is short for ‘see you again’, ‘talk again’, etc. Use baayandhu ‘soon’ in the same way:

Baayandhu maliyaa. Goodbye friend/mate.
Baayandhu baawaa. Goodbye sister.
Baayandhu dhagaan. Goodbye brother.

Try to use them. It is good if you can find people who will reply to you. It may be easier to use the greetings with babies or your pets – they won’t be struggling to understand or answer you.

Yugal ‘Song’

‘Bina Mil’ winangala! ‘Listen to “Bina, Mil”’, and then sing along.

Garay ngadaa. ‘The text is below’ (and sound, in the electronic edition), with all three verses. The yugal/song is also on the CD Yugal (Giacon, 2002) and in Gayarragi, Winangali (which also has Yuwaalaraay versions). There is a more recent GR version by Loren Ryan (tinyurl.com/gyresources). Winangala ‘listen’ and then bawildaya ‘sing along’.

Bina mil – ‘Ears, eyes (hands and feet)’

Play audio: GGU 1.4.mp3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bina Mil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bina, mil, mara, dhina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mara, dhina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mara, dhina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bina, mil, mara, dhina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yulunga, yulunga, yulunga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Grammar: Questions and answers

We now learn how to ask some yes/no questions using intonation, and some answers to these. Other questions are covered in later lessons.

An intonation question has the same words as a statement, but with a rising tone, a rising pitch at the end of the sentence.

Say these English sentences as statements and questions.

You eat fish
This is the best you can do
You went to the festival
Water

Use the same intonation pattern to ask questions in Gamilaraay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A: (pointing to book)</th>
<th>?Nguu?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B:</td>
<td>Yawu, nguu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: (pointing to book)</td>
<td>?Mil?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B:</td>
<td>Gamil, nguu.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There has been no study of the actual question intonation pattern used on the Yuwaalaraay tapes, so for the present we assume the pattern is the same as English.

My impression is that intonation questions are more common in spoken language than they are in written. They are certainly very common in the Yuwaalaraay tapes.

Gamilaraay generally uses English punctuation – a very convenient practice. GY people could decide to do some things differently, for example by using a ? at the start of questions, or at the start of intonation questions. This practice has been adopted above.

**Practice**

Repetition is essential in learning language. You need to develop ways of doing this that work for you. For this section go around the class saying **Yaama** and **Yaluu/baayandhu** to others. Then expand the greetings, adding **baawaa**, **dhagaan** or **maliyaa**.

Look for ways to keep the practice interesting, for instance A calls M ‘**baawaa**’ (M = Male), or say **Baayandhu** when **Yaama** is needed.

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**A:** **Yaama baawaa**  
**M:** **Gamil, dhagaan.**  
**A:** **Yawu, Yaama dhagaan.**  
**M:** **Yaluu A.**  
**A:** **Yaluu Bill.**

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If you are by yourself have pictures of people and take both sides of conversations like that above.

**Questions**

One person indicates something and then says a word with question intonation, a rising tone. Another person answers.

**Play audio:** GGU 1.5.mp3
For example, point to your ear and with rising inflection say:

?Bina? An ear?

The answer will be:

Yawu. Yes.
Or Yawu, bina. Yes, an ear. (be sure to pause after Yawu)

Or point to an eye and say:

?Bina? An ear?

The answer will be:

Gamil. No.
Or Gamil, mil. No, it’s an eye. (be sure to pause after Gamil)

Repeat this with other body parts and with the words Dhagaan and Baawaa.

Then, move around, greet the new person, ask and answer questions, farewell each other and move on. Below is a sample conversation between A and B:

B: Yaama Baawaa. Hi sister.
A: ?Mara? (Is this a) hand? (holding our or pointing to a hand)
B: Yawu, mara. Yes, it’s a hand.
B: ?Mil? (Is this an) eye? (pointing to an ear)
B: Gaba. Good.
B: ?Mary? (Are you) Mary? (indicating A)
A: Yawu, Mary. Yes, I am Mary.
A: Yaluu Dhagaan. See ya brother.

Remember: you need to keep speaking and hearing Gamilaraay.
Pronunciation

It is always a challenge to learn the sound system of a new language, and Gamilaraay is no exception. It has sounds you are not used to making, some differences that matter in English do not matter in Gamilaraay and some differences that matter in Gamilaraay will not be noticed by an English speaker.

One help to good Gamilaraay pronunciation is listening to the sound files. Sound is incorporated in the electronic edition and is also available at yuwaalaraay.com and tinyurl.com/gymoodle. Some of the sound files may not be updated to the current version of the text. You can also hear relatively fluent speakers on Gayarragi, Winangali, but they are often speaking fairly casually, so with some different pronunciation. Think of the difference between formal English ‘I’m going to’ and more casual, more common ‘I’m gunna/guwana’.

It takes a while to learn how to interpret the letters – if you are only used to reading English you will need to give letters new meaning. You will do better if you are used to reading languages like Italian or Japanese where there is generally a ‘one letter’ = ‘one sound’ system (or a pair of letters = one sound).

For this lesson we will focus on vowels, the GY use of ‘h’ and stress.

Vowels

In Gamilaraay, as in many Aboriginal languages, there are three vowels, written ‘a, i, u’. Each is found as short: ‘a, i, u’ and long: written ‘aa, ii, uu’.

Vowels are sounds that are made with relatively free airflow through the mouth; e.g. the middle sounds in ‘pit, pet, pat, put, pot, putt’.

Most other sounds used in words are consonants, where the airflow is not free. Sometimes airflow is restricted: ‘f, v, s’; sometimes air comes out of the nose: ‘n, m, ng’; sometimes airflow is stopped: ‘d, p, g, t’, etc.

Wikipedia is a good source for more comprehensive information about vowels and consonants.
Short vowels

a  is mostly like the sound in ‘putt’
i  is mostly like the sound in ‘pit’
u  is mostly like the sound in ‘put’

Long vowels

aa is mostly like the sound in ‘Karl’
ii is mostly like the sound in ‘keel’
uu is mostly like the sound in ‘cool’

Don’t neutralise vowels

In English speech many vowels are ‘neutralised’, i.e. you can’t tell which vowel it is. The highlighted sections in the following words can sound the same, especially in relaxed speech: Harold, barrel, National, cheerful and in bottle (linguists would write əl to indicate the sound, ə is called schwa).

Neutralised vowels are rare in Gamilaraay, so English speakers need to be careful to pronounce vowels correctly. It is common for them to pronounce the il in gamil and the al in mubal as əl. Be careful to maintain the vowel sound, i and a.

Beware: The letter ‘u’ in English can indicate two main sounds: in ‘but’ and ‘put’. In GR it only represents the sound in ‘put’.

b: In Gamilaraay ‘h’ occurs only in db and nb. The b indicates that the tongue tip is on the bottom teeth or between the teeth, and the tongue is pressed up, so that the top of the tongue is on the top teeth. In db, as in d, the airflow stops and then is released. In nb, as in n, the air comes out your nose.

Try the sounds dha, nha, dhi, nhi, dhu, nhu, then alternate with da/na, etc.: e.g. dha, da, nha, na …

It is generally easy to distinguish db and d, but harder to distinguish nb from n.
Stress

It is common to emphasise parts of a word – some English examples, with the stressed part **bolded** are:

**English, Italian, inform, invest, photo, Sahara desert, ice cream dessert.**

![Play audio: GGU 1.6.mp3](image)

A simple introduction to Gamilaraay stress rules is:

If there are only **short vowels**, the first syllable is stressed and then put minor stress on every second syllable after that. In the examples below, the underlined-bold syllables have the main stress, plain **bold** secondary stress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bina</th>
<th>bi-na</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mara</td>
<td>ma-ra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gamil</td>
<td>ga-mil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>winangala</td>
<td>wi-na-nga-la</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If there are **long vowels**, they are all stressed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yama</th>
<th>yaa-ma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>baawaa</td>
<td>baa-waa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dha gaan</td>
<td>dha-gaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaluu</td>
<td>ya-luu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Maliyaa** has the main stress on the long vowel, which is last, and secondary stress on the syllable two away from the main stress.

Be especially careful of words that end with a long vowel, e.g. yaluu, maliyaa. It is common for learners to shorten the final long vowel.

Practise the difference between **long** and **short vowels** (a and aa, i and ii, u and uu) by listening to and saying the words below and notice the difference (only some of them are real words).

![Play audio: GGU 1.7.mp3](image)
Being creative

It is great if you can use Gamilaraay in new situations. However, be aware that the patterns of Gamilaraay are often very different from the patterns of English, and since what most learners know is English, they often put English patterns into their Gamilaraay. This can happen with pronunciation: it is easy to say ‘n’ instead of ‘nb’; it is very easy to shorten the second part of yaluu and say yalu, with the stress on the ‘ya’.

Winangala, garay guwaala, yawala. Listen, say and read.

This section of the lesson has extra text and sound that you can listen to, read and repeat. When sound files have been made you can download them from the website and use them on your phone, in the car and elsewhere. Repetition, including repeated listening, is essential in language learning.

![Play audio: GGU 1.8.mp3](audio-url)

More greetings, family words

This contains more kin terms that may make it easier for you to practise Gamilaraay.

| Yaama gunii. | Hello mum. |
| Yaluu gunii. | Goodbye mum. |
| Yaama bubaa. | Hello dad. |
| Baayandhu bubaa. | Goodbye dad. |
| Yaama walgan. | Hello aunt. |
| Yaluu walgan. | Goodbye aunt. |
| Yaama garruu. | Hello uncle. |
Lesson 1. Hello, Goodbye, Questions

Baayandhu garruu.  Goodbye uncle.
Yaama dhaadhaa.  Hello pop.
Yaluu dhaadhaa.  Goodbye pop.
Yaama badhii.  Hello gran.
Baayandhu badhii.  Goodbye gran.
Yaama birraliidhuul.  Hello baby.
Baayandhu birraliidhuul.  Goodbye baby.
Yaama buruma.  Hello dog.
Yaluu buruma.  Goodbye dog.

Play audio: GGU 1.9.mp3

Listen to the text below on the sound file.

Winangala!
Biiba?
Listen!
(Is that) paper?
Yawu, biiba.
Yep, paper.

Winangala!
Mara?
Listen!
(Is that) hands?
Yawu, mara.
Yep, hands.

Winangala!
Baadhal?
Listen!
(Is that) a bottle?
Yawu, baadhal.
Yep, a bottle.