LESSON 2
‘This, That’ Demonstratives; more questions

This lesson introduces Gamilaraay demonstratives – words like ‘this’ and ‘that’, and ‘What?’ questions.

Vocabulary

As well as the words below, more words will be introduced in the song and conversations. Develop strategies for learning words, starting with the ones you use more frequently. There may be resources such as Quizlet, but they may not include recent revisions to the text. Be careful with pronunciation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garay</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gaabu!</td>
<td>hush!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wanagidjay!*</td>
<td>leave it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yulunga!</td>
<td>dance!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bawila!*</td>
<td>sing!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wiyayl</td>
<td>pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nguu/biibabiiba</td>
<td>book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaala</td>
<td>mug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bundi</td>
<td>club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gali</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buruma</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dbigaraa</td>
<td>bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dburu</td>
<td>snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garay</td>
<td>Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minya?</td>
<td>what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nhama</td>
<td>that, this, the, there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nhalay</td>
<td>this, here, that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nhamalay</td>
<td>that</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The word *wanagidjay* is almost always used as a one-word expression, something like the English ‘Stop it’, ‘Leave it’ or ‘Quit it’.

*The a in *bawila* is a bit like ‘o’ in ‘pot’.

### Pronunciation

This lesson focuses on *ny* and *dj*. Has some further information on stress when there is a vowel+y or a long vowel+y combination and has comments on variation.

**Play audio:** GGU 2.2.mp3

**ny, dj:** The tongue position for *ny* and *dj* is the tongue tip on the bottom teeth. Similar to the *nh* and *dh* sounds, but with the top of the tongue not touching the teeth. There are similar sounds in English, but they are made with the tongue tip on the top of the mouth. Practise *minya, wanagidjay*.

For now treat **short vowel+y** and **long vowel+y** like a long vowel – that is, it is stressed.

*Nhalay* has the stress on the second syllable, *nhamalay* has the main stress on the last syllable, with some stress on the first.

Later you will meet works with *iy, aay, uy* and *uuy*. Remember to stress these parts of the word.

*Wanagidjay* does not follow the usual rules. The stress is on the first and last syllable: *wanagidjay*. This is likely because it is influenced by the stress in *wanagi* ‘will throw’.
The word Gamilaraay consists of *gamil* ‘no’ and the suffix *-araay* ‘with, having’ (see Lesson 18). Traditional speakers tend to keep those stresses, saying Gamilaraay, with the *a* like ‘o’, or, since *g* and *k* are equivalent and *aay* is occasionally said ‘oy’, Komilaroi. You can hear Arthur Dodd and Fred Reece say the word in sentence 958 in Gayarragi, Winangali.

**Variation**

Sounds are influenced by the other sounds around them. For instance, in English ‘illegal’ is often said something like ‘allegəl’, and ‘a’ in ‘watch’ and ‘yatch’ sounds like ‘o’. In Gamilaraay there is similar variation:

- *a* in *gamil* ‘no’ and *bawili* ‘will sing’ can sound like ‘o’ in ‘pot’.
- *a* in *yanay* ‘will go’ can sound like ‘e’ in ‘bed’.

There is also variation depending on how carefully people are speaking.

**Grammar: Demonstratives**

Demonstratives are words like ‘this, that, then, there’. A simple definition is that they draw the listener’s attention to what is being spoken about. They are a complex area of language, often with a range of options that carry subtle differences in meaning. Here we will be using a simplified version of Gamilaraay demonstratives – partly because this is an introductory course, and partly because we have not been able to clearly describe the actual use of the complex Gamilaraay demonstrative system.

We begin with demonstratives *nhama*, *nhalay* and *nhamalay*.

*Nhama* has many translations in English, including most commonly ‘that/those’ and ‘the’, less commonly ‘there’, as well as other translations. A demonstrative that ends in *-ma* indicates that the speaker assumes that the hearer knows what is being referred to. For example, ‘Bina nhama?’ ‘That is an ear.’ *Nhama* is much more frequently used (around 3,000 occurrences on the Yuwaalaraay tapes) than *nhalay* and *nhamalay*. It is often used to refer to something that is already part of the conversation or that needs no introduction.
In the following, two people are looking at an object:

![Play audio](G GU 2.3.mp3)

A: _Minya nhama?_
   What that?
   What’s that?

B: _Gaala nhama._
   Cup that.
   That’s a cup.

The second line above gives English that indicates the meaning of the Gamilaraay above it. Linguists call this a ‘gloss’ and the line an ‘interlinear gloss’. The gloss is an indication of the meaning of a word, and does not show the detailed meaning or other information. The third line is an actual translation.

_Nhalay_ also has many translations, but is most commonly ‘this, these, here’. It is generally used to introduce something new. Use _nhalay_ when something **new** is being **emphatically pointed out** or **focused on**. When referring to objects, _nhalay_ is only used for things that are **close**. It usually occurs before the noun in statements like ‘This is a knife’. In storytelling or narratives _nhalay_ is often used to introduce a new character. Later reference to the character can be with _nhama_ or other demonstratives. It is much less common than _nhama_ (around 200 occurrences on the Yuwaalaraay tapes – see Appendix 1).

The _-lay_ part of the word indicates that the speaker is drawing attention to the object, pointing it out physically or saying ‘notice this’ about some new topic in the conversation.

Once you have pointed out something using _nhalay_ you can then refer to it using _nhama._

A: _Nhalay buruma ngay._
   This dog mine.
   This is my dog.

B: _?Gaba nhama buruma?_
   Good that dog?
   Is that a good dog.
Lesson 2. ‘This, That’ Demonstratives; More Questions

A:  Yawu, gaba. // Yawu, gaba nhama.
    Yes, good.
    Yes, it is good.

_Nhamalay_ is used to introduce and draw attention to something that is not close to the speaker:

Wiyayl _nhamalay_. (pointing to the pen that is not near you)
pen that
That is a pen.

Once you have pointed out something using _nhamalay_ you can then refer to it using _nhama_.

A:  _Nhamalay buruma ngay._
    That (distant, pointed to) dog mine.
    That is my dog.
B:  _Gaba nhama buruma?_
    Good that dog?
    Is that a good dog?
A:  _Yawu, gaba._
    Yes, good.
    Yes, it is good.

The description of demonstratives in this version of _Garay Guwaala 1_ has been substantially changed from earlier versions, following further investigation of the sources, the most important of which are the Yuwaalaraay tapes. In previous versions, _nhalay_ was defined as ‘close to the speaker’ and _nhama_ as ‘not close’, and _nhamalay_ was not discussed.

It is to be expected that as we learn more about them and work out better how to teach about them that the sections on demonstratives will change – more than most other sections of the grammar.
Word order

Notice that demonstratives most commonly occur in second position in a sentence or clause:

*Gaba nhama nguu.*  
Good that book.  
That’s a good book.

*Gagil nhalay nguu.*  
Bad this book.  
This book is no good.

(However, pronouns also mostly occur in second position, and they take precedence over demonstratives, which then move to third position – see later lessons.)

The exception is when the demonstrative is being emphasised. The demonstrative then goes first. (In general what is being emphasised in a statement goes first.) *Nhalay* is relatively common in first position, as are other demonstratives that end in -*lay*, since they are often pointing out something new.

*Nhalay bigibila.*  
**This** is an echidna.  
**Here’s** an echidna.

A different word order changes the emphasis:

*Bigibila nhalay.*  
This is an echidna.

If you point to an eye – your own or someone else’s – you can say:

*Nhalay mil.*  
This is an eye.

(This can also be translated ‘Here is an eye’.)
If you are talking about any eye(s), but without strongly drawing attention to it, you can say:

*Nhama mil.*
That is an eye. (Those are eyes.)

(This can also be translated ‘There is an eye’.)

You would use this for instance if you are naming a series of body parts – *Nhama mil, nhama ngaay, nhama muru.* ‘That’s an eye, that’s a mouth, that’s a nose’.

Often there is no singular/plural distinction in Gamilaraay – in other words:

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nhalay</th>
<th>this, these</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nhama</td>
<td>that, those</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhinawan</td>
<td>emu, emus, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below are some more sentences including demonstratives.

**Play audio:** GGU 2.5.mp3

*Nhalay dhinawan.*
This is an emu. These are emus.

*Nhalay mil.*
This is an eye. These are eyes.

*Nhamalay biiba.*
That is paper. Those are papers.

*Ngamila! Bigibila nhama.*
Look. That is a porcupine/echidna. // There’s an echidna there.

*Winangala! Dhinawan nhama.*
Listen. That is an emu. Those are emus.

To practise your Gamilaraay you might like to combine English words in the Gamilaraay structures you know, e.g. Car *nhama, Nhalay* Mary, etc. As you learn more Gamilaraay you can use less English.
Grammar: Yaama Questions

In Lesson 1 we used intonation to ask yes/no questions. You can also use *yaama* for this. (This is the older use of *yaama*. It seems the use of *yaama* as a greeting began after colonisation.)

*Yaama* is the first word of a question. You may need to reorganise the rest of the sentence to keep demonstratives (and pronouns) second.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>Yaama nhama dhinawan?</th>
<th>Is that an emu?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Yawu, dhinawan nhama.</td>
<td>Yes, that is an emu.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>Yaama nhama mil?</th>
<th>Is this an eye?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Gamil nhama mil.</td>
<td>That is not an eye.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Yes/no answers**

The answer to a yes/no can be a simple *yawu* ‘yes’ or *gamil* ‘no’. (We will not do ‘maybe/don’t know’ answers now.)

![Play audio: GGU 2.6.mp3](https://example.com/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>Yaama nhama wiyayl?</th>
<th>Is that a pen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Yawu.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Gamil.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After *yawu* ‘yes’ you can pause, and add confirmation by repeating part of the question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>Yaama nhama wiyayl?</th>
<th>Is that a pen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Yawu, wiyayl nhama.</td>
<td>Yes, that is a pen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are more possibilities if the answer is *gamil* ‘no’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>Yaama nhama gali?</th>
<th>Is that water?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Gamil.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Gamil nhama gali.</td>
<td>That is not water. (no pause after gamil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Gamil, gamil nhama gali.</td>
<td>No, that is not water. (pause after first gamil)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The presence or absence of pauses in the speech makes a big difference to the meaning. The pause is shown by a comma when writing. In the next lesson, you will learn another way to answer this type of question.

Q. Yaama nhama mil? Is this an eye?
A. Gamil nhama mil. That is not an eye.
Q. Yaama nhalay mil? Is this an eye?
A. Gamil. No.
Q. Yaama nhalay mil? Is this an eye?
A. Gamil, gamil nhama mil. No, that is not an eye.

Learning to use *yaama* and *gamil*.

You might find it easy to use the following process:

- First write a Gamilaraay statement,
- Then put *yaama* or *gamil* at the front,
- Then make sure the word order is correct – demonstrative second.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mil nhama.</th>
<th>That/this is an eye.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yaama nhama mil?</td>
<td>Is that/this an eye?</td>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the ‘interlinear writing’ below, the second line shows words corresponding to the first line, but not in Gamilaraay word order.

So, to translate ‘This is not paper’ or ‘Is this paper?’ first translate ‘This is paper’.

This is paper.

*Biiba nhalay.*

Then add *yaama* or *gamil*, and change the word order if needed.

*Yaama nhalay biiba?*
Is this paper?

*Gamil nhalay biiba.*
This is not paper.
Grammar: *Minya?* ‘What?’ questions

In Lesson 1 we considered yes/no questions. They expect the answers ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘don’t know’.

‘What?’ questions look for a descriptive answer, often a name.

‘What’s that?’ ‘A car.’ ‘A tree.’

This is an example of a ‘content’ or ‘information’ question. The ‘information’ questions in this lesson all begin with *minya?* ‘what?’. In later lessons, you will learn to ask other information questions: Who? Where? etc.

Remember the tongue position for the *ny* – tongue tip on the bottom teeth.

![Play audio: GGU 2.8.mp3](/content/2/8.mp3)

*Minya nhama?* is much more common than *minya nhalay?*

*Minya nhama?*  
What is that? / What are those?

The answers can vary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biiba.</th>
<th>Paper.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Biiba nhama.</em></td>
<td><em>It’s paper.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nhama biiba.</em></td>
<td><em>That is paper.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice

![Play audio: GGU 2.9.mp3](/content/2/9.mp3)

By now you know many nouns, and perhaps the names of people in the class. Introduce people and objects using *nhalay* and *nhamalay*, then talk about them using *nhama*.

A:  
*Nhalay bina, nhamalay girrinil.*  
This is an ear, and that is a door.

B:  
*Yawu, bina nhama, girrinil nhama.*  
Yes, that is an ear and that is a door.
A: Mary nhamalay?
B: Yawu, Mary nhama. or
    Gamil, Dhagaan nhama, Harry nhama.

In pairs or groups (or by yourself, taking both roles), ask and answer questions. Ask about body parts, the objects in the Lesson 2 vocabulary, and people’s names.

**Yaama**

A: Yaama nhama bina?
    Is this is an ear?
B: Yawu, bina nhama.
    Yes, that is an ear.

or

B: Gamil, milbala nhama.
    No, that is an eye.
A: Yaama nhalay Harry?
    Is this is Harry?
B: Yawu, Harry nhama.
    Yes, that is Harry.

or

B: Gamil, Kim nhama.
    No, that is Kim.

Use your practice pattern with Minya?. This is easy for the questioner since they don’t need to know the name of the object asked about. Often in class it is more productive to ask when you can’t remember a name, so use Minya nhalay and Minya nhamalay? frequently.

Kim: Yaama Kath, minya nhama?
Kath: Nguu nhama, Kim.
Kim: Yaama Kath, minya nhamalay?
    Hi Kath, what’s that (over there)?
Kath: Girrinil nhama, Kim.
    That’s a door, Kim.
Translation

In the early stages, it is often a good idea to do translations in these two steps – word by word and then into sentence structure. Below are some more examples.

---

Garay guwaala, baawaa!
word tell sister!
Talk, sister!

---

Minya nhalay?
what this
What is this? or What’s this?

---

Nhama bigibila.
that porcupine.
There is a porcupine.

---

Yaama nhalay bigibila?
question this porcupine
Is this a porcupine? (porcupine is close and pointed out)

---

Yawu, bigibila nhama.
yes, porcupine that
Yes, that is an echidna.

---

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

Use the text and sound to build your familiarity with Gamilaraay, to develop fluency.

Play audio: GGU 2.10.mp3

B: Yaama baawaa. Hello sister.
Lesson 2. ‘This, That’ Demonstratives; More Questions

A: *Minya nhama, Bobby?* What is that, Bobby?

Play audio: GGU 2.11.mp3

Q. *Minya nhalay?* What is this?
A. *Wiyayl nhama.* That is a pen.
Q. *Minya nhama?* What is this?
A. *Nhama biibiiba.* That is a book.
Q. *Minya nhalay?* That is water.
A. *Gali nhama.* That is water.
Q. *Minya nhamalay?* What is that? (distant)
A. *Buruma nhama.* That is a dog.
Q. *Minya nhamalay?* That is a snake.
A. *Nhama dhuru.* That is a snake.
Q. *Minya nhama?* That is a mug.
A. *Gaala nhama.* That is a mug.
Q. *Minya nhama?* That is a hitting stick.
A. *Bundi nhama.* That is a hitting stick.

Play audio: GGU 2.12.mp3

Q. *Nhama nguu?* or *Yaama nhama nguu?* Is that a book?
A. *Yawu, nguu nhama.* Yes, that is a book.
Q. *Dhigaraa nhama?* or *Yaama nhama dhigaraa?* Is that a bird?
A. *Yawu, dhigaraa nhama.* Yes, that is a bird.
Q. *Nhamalay gali?* or *Yaama nhamalay gali?* Is that water?
A. *Yawu, gali nhama.* Yes, that is water.
Q. Buruma nhama? or Yaama nhama buruma?
   Is this a dog?
A. Yawu, buruma nhama.
   Yes, that is a dog.
Q. Biiba nhamalay? or Yaama nhama biiba?
   Is that paper?
A. Yawu, biiba nhama.
   Yes, that is paper.
Q. Wiyayl nhama? or Yaama nhama wiyayl?
   Is that a pen?
A. Yawu, wiyayl nhama!
   Yes, that is a pen.
Q. Dhuru nhama? or Yaama nhama dhuru?
   Is that a snake?
A. Yawu, dhuru nhama.
   (Yes,) that is a snake.

---

Play audio: GGU 2.13.mp3

Q. Winangala maliyaa, nhama biiba?
   Listen friend, is that paper?
Q. Winangala maliyaa, yaama nhama biiba?
   Listen friend, is that paper?
A. Yawu, biiba nhama maliyaa.
   Yes, that is paper friend/mate.
Q. Winangala maliyaa, nhalay gali?
   Listen friend, is this water?
Q. Winangala maliyaa, yaama nhalay gali?
   Listen friend, is this water?
A. Yawu, gali nhama maliyaa.
   Yes, that is water friend/mate.
Q. Winangala baawaa, biibiiba nhama?
   Listen sister, is that a book?
Q. Winangala baawaa, yaama nhama biibiiba?
   Listen sister, is that a book?
A. Yawu dhagaan, biibiiba nhama.
   Yes brother, that is a book.
Q.  *Winangala gunii, nhamalay dhaadhaa?*  
Listen mum, is that granddad?

Q.  *Winangala gunii, yaama nhama dhaadhaa?*  
Listen mum, is that granddad?

A.  *Yawu baawaa, dhaadhaa nhama.*  
Yes sister, that is granddad.
This text is taken from *Wiidhaa: An Introduction to Gamilaraay*, by John Giacon, published 2020 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.