

Basic rules of Enga spelling

There are 19 letters in the Enga alphabet

a b d e g i j k l m n ŋ o p s t u w y

The letters a e i o u are called vowels. The others are called consonants.

With the rules below, Enga words may be spelled correctly.

Rule 1. All Enga words end in a vowel. To find out the right vowel, add an ending such as “-ka” or “-me” to the end of the word: anda andaka (to the house), enda endame (the woman does....)

Rule 2. Voiced stops /b/ /d/ /g/ and also /j/ in the middle of a word are written with an /m/ or /n/ in front. Kandenge (see) [not kadenge] anja (where), [not aja]

This does not apply to voiced stops at the beginning of a word: dilyambano (we two are giving you) [not ndilambano]

Non-voiced stops /p/ /t/ /k/ do not have m or n in front

Rule 3. The Enga letter /ŋ/ distinguishes kinji (hand) from kingi (king)

Baby is spelled ŋaŋa

Rule 4. When two vowels come together and they are not the same, then do not put a /y/ between them. Peo (I went) [not peyo], kandeo (I saw) [not kandeyo]

Rule 5. When two vowels that are the same come together at the end of a word, they are written with a double vowel. pii (speech) [not pi], koo (bad) [not ko]

But this doesn't apply if -aka is added to the word piaka [not piiaka]

Rule 6. When three vowels occur together and the last two vowels are not the same, then /y/ will be written after /i/, and /w/ will be written after /u/. /y/ will replace /e/ and /w/ will replace /o/ kaiya (he hit) [not kaia or kaya], koya (left), [not koea or koeya], auwa (spinach) [not aua or awa], aiyomba (head) [not aiomba or ayomba], lawapi (and saying) [not laoapi or laowapi]

Rule 7. When three vowels occur together and the last two vowels are the same, then with some verbs such in as the imperative mood (commanding), the two vowels are kept maii (you give him!) [not mai]. But in the indicative mood) and in the middle of a word, the double vowel is not written mai (give him) [not maii], mailo (I am giving him) [not maiiyo], maimbipi (did you two just give him) [not maiimbipi]

Rule 8. When a consonant is modified by labialization (the rounding of the lips) then a /u/ comes after the **consonant**. mua or muua (let's go plural), unlike maa (taro)

Note - some place names such as *Wabag* do not follow Enga spelling since these words were written by early government officers before Enga spelling was properly developed.