

Northern Sotho

Theme1: Greetings and Courtesies

TRACK 1: Greetings

Hello!	Dumelang!
Good evening.	Dumelang!
How are you?	Le kae?
I am well.	Re gona.
Good night.	Robalang gabotse!
Goodbye!	Gabotse!
See you soon.	Re tlo bonana ka pela.
See you later.	Re tlo bonana ka morago ga lebakanyana.

TRACK 2: Courtesies

Thank you.	Ke a leboga.
Thank you very much.	Ke leboga kudu.
Please.	Ka kgopelo.
You are welcome.	Go leboga rena.
Excuse me.	Ntshwarele.
It doesn't matter.	Ga go na molato.
Sorry/excuse me.	Ntshwarele.
It's my pleasure.	Go leboga rena.
Yes.	Ee.
No.	Aowa.
Please repeat.	Boeletša, hle!
Please speak slowly.	Ke kgopela gore o bolele ka go iketla.

Comments:

Greeting:

The most important and effective way to reach out to a person is to greet him/her in his/her own language. In true Northern Sotho tradition greeting is a very important procedure. It is a structured encounter and it is considered ill-mannered not to greet either a friend or a stranger in passing. *Ubuntu* (humanity towards others) plays a prominent role in the African culture. It is therefore not sufficient to merely say *Dumelang!* You should also take the time to enquire about the other person's well-being.

Dumêlang! can be used at any time of the day or night. It is literally a command, which is given to someone to 'agree', in other words to answer the greeting. The singular form, viz. *Dumêla!* is nowadays regarded as too commanding and impolite, and therefore the plural form *Dumêlang!* is preferred even when one person is addressed.

Le kae? is actually a plural form, which indicates that you are inquiring about the person and his/her family members. It is also an indication of respect. It literally means 'Where are you?'. The reply *Re gôna* 'We are here', means 'We are fine'.

Who greets first?

The person who arrives somewhere is supposed to greet those present first - status or seniority does not play a role. Should it happen that two people arrive at the same place simultaneously, e.g. if they meet in town, it does not matter who greets first.

Forms of address:

When greeting a person older than yourself (more or less your parents' age), **tate** 'father' would be used for a man and **mma** 'mother' for a woman. For

greetings of people of your grandparents' age **rakgolo**, 'grandfather', and **koko** 'grandmother' are used as forms of address. Greeting someone of your own age you would address her as **sesi**, 'sister', and **buti**, 'brother' for the male counterpart or **kgatšedi** specifically to address the opposite gender.

Saying goodbye:

The person leaving first should be the first to say goodbye. It would be impolite of the other person(s) to terminate the conversation first. When saying goodbye to one person you would say **Sepela gabotse** ('Go well') or **Šala gabotse** ('Stay/remain well'). When saying goodbye to more than one person, **Sepelang gabotse** or **Šalang gabotse** would be used. You can also end the conversation by merely saying **Gabotse!**

Video 1: Greetings and courtesies

A: Dumelang!	Hello!
B: Ee, dumelang!	Yes, hello!
A: Le kae?	How are you?
B: Re gona. Re ka ra lena?	I am fine. How are you?
A: Le rena re gona.	I am also fine.
B: Re tlo le bona ka pela.	See you soon.
A: Boeletša, hle!	Can you please repeat?
B: Re - tlo - go le bona - ka - pela.	See – you – soon.
A: Ke a leboga. Sepelang gabotse!	Thank you. Go well!
B: Šalang gabotse!	Stay well!