

▀ The Past Tense in Nkwen Language Mènyù ma mə tɛ nchya

- 1 . Today Past (P1)
- 2 . Yesterday Past (P2)
- 3. Remote Past (P3)

Markers		
P1	P2	P3
tɛ̃, ghɛ̃ + verb	Kə + verb	Lyə + verb

The Today Past (P1)

Mènyù ma mə chya senè

This tense marks actions or situations which took place earlier than the moment of speaking on the same day and may be translated into English as **the Present Perfect Tense**.

- There are two markers, (**tě** and **ghě**) that stress the time of action or just **tonal differences** on verbs and nouns with the **low tone** dominating. E.g.
- Ngə̀là kwùrè nnà. **Ngela has eaten meat.**
- Ngə̀là **tě** nkwurè nna. **Ngela has already eaten meat.**
- Ngə̀là **ghě** nkwurè nna mbàʔa-mbàʔà. **Ngela ate meat in the morning.**
- Mma yì **ghě** nla məjyè mbàʔambàʔà. **Her mom cooked in the morning.**
- Ɔ̀t̀àa wì **ghě** nghè mətanè ntenùṅè. **Our father went to the market in the afternoon .**

The Today Past (P1) Mènyù ma mə chya senè.

More Examples

1. Ngə̃nchə kwùrə məkú Ngenche has eaten/ate beans.
2. Ngə̃tsə̃ nyə məlùʔù. Ngeche had a drink.
3. Ngə̃nəfə̃mè tɛ̃̃ nghə mətanə. Ngeniform has already gone to the market.
4. Ngə̃laʔà tɛ̃̃ nzhã̃ atyē̃ zhi. Ngela has already combed her hair.
5. Ə̃təa wwà ghə̃̃ nzũ nna mbàʔambàʔà. Their father bought meat in the morning.
6. Tankă wà ghə̃̃ nyĩ ntenù̃̃̃. My friend came in the afternoon.
7. Mma wwò ghə̃̃ nghə̃̃ adi'i afaʔa mbàʔambàʔà? Did your mother go to work in the morning?
8. Ndì wà ghə̃̃ nghə̃̃ məghantənə̃̃ mbàʔambàʔà. My older sister/brother went for a walk in the morning.
9. Ə̃təa Ala'a/Ə̃təa Ə̃tyē̃ ghə̃̃ nyii ntenù̃̃̃. The President/Head of service/king came in the afternoon.

The Today Past (P1) Mènyù ma mə chya senə.

The question form.

1. Ngə̃nchə kwùrə məkú? Has Ngenche eaten/ate beans?
2. Ngə̃tsə̃ nyə məlù? Has Ngeche a drink?
3. Ngə̃nəfə̃mè tɛ̃ nghə mətanə? Has Ngeniform gone to the market already?
4. Ngə̃laʔà tɛ̃ nzhã atyē̃ zhi? Has Ngela combed her hair already?
5. Ətəa wwà ghə̃ nzũ nna mbàʔambàʔà? Did their father buy meat in the morning?
6. Tankă wà ghə̃ nyĩ ntenùṇə? Did my friend come in the afternoon?
7. Mma wwò ghə̃ nghə adi'i afaʔa mbàʔambàʔà? Did your mother go to work in the morning?
8. Ndì wà ghə̃ nghə məghantənə̃ mbàʔambàʔà? Did my older sister/brother go for a walk in the morning.
9. Ətəa Ala'a/Ətəa Ətyē̃ ghə̃ nyii ntenùṇə? Did the President/Head of service/king come in the afternoon?

Periods of the day

1. Tankă wà ghě nyĩ
My friend came

2. Bii ghě nghə adi?i nədore
We went to the park

3. Ətəa wì ghě nghə afa?a
Our father went to work

ntə?wu?u - at mid night

fə?ə njwe - at dawn

mba?amba?à - in the morning

ntenù?ə - in the afternoon

fə?ə nkwîfò - in the evening

ndèntə-dì?i - at twilight

nkwifò/nətwu?u - in the night

senə - today

The Yesterday Past (P2)

➤ Mènyù ma mḕkè chya ɛzô

The yesterday past tense is sequentially lexicalized by a marker **kè**. This tense marks actions which took place not only yesterday but as far back as last year. E.g.

1. Ndĩ wà **kè** làa ngwàsaŋə ɛzo. **My older sister/brother cooked corn yesterday.**
2. Mma wì wu ntĩnkàŋə **kè** yìi ɛzo. **Our grandmother came yesterday.**
3. Ndəmə wà **kè** ghə adiʔi nədorə nghà. **My brother/sister went to the park last week.**
4. Bìi **kè** gaŋə nkùŋsə nghà. **We held a meeting last week.**
5. Ndəmə wà wu mènɣye **kè** zòʔo ngùʔu. **My sister got married last year.**
6. Ndəmə ətàa wà **kè** kwo ngùʔu. **My paternal uncle/aunt died last year.**

The Yesterday Past - More examples

1. Àzòṅə kə ghə zə moo yi nghà. Azong visited his son last week.
2. Bii kə ghə aghanə nghà. We went for a visit last week.
3. Atā kə zǔ nəlɔṅə zhi ɲorə yi. Atah bought his radio/guitar last month.
4. Asòṅgwè kə ghə mə dzwinè bwo ndəmə yi ngù'u. Asongwe went to live with his bother/sister/relative last year.
5. Afonè kə twinə ətàa yi ngù'u. Afong buried his father last year.
6. À bə nghà bya tsətsoṅnə ma Akenè kə ghə zǎ məngyǎ yě. It's two weeks now since Akene went to see his wife.
7. A bə àlùṅə nə akəmè tsətsòṅnə ma bi kə yii ndzwi fĩ. It's one and a half years now since we settled here.
8. A bə bènɔrə bə tarə tsətsoṅnə ma moo yi kə jwě. It is three months now that his/her daughter gave birth.

The Remote Past (P3)

Mènyù ma mə tsoʔo nchyã

- This tense marks events which took place in the **distant past** or at a period when the definiteness of the time is not of great consequence at the moment of speaking. It is lexicalized by a marker '**lyə**' or only by a tone melody. E.g.
- Mma tsə **lyə** nko afonə nə mbwo nguʔu tsə̃.
Mma tsə kỗ afonə nə mbwo nguʔu tsə̃. **A long time ago a woman caught a lion bear handed.**
- 2. Dù-nchyangbi **lyə** kə dzwi a məmə məfuʔu mənɡòʔò. **The early man lived in caves.**
- Bè bā̃ nchyangbi **lyə** kə jyə a mən̄tə mə tyi ñkə nkwurə ñnà mbə̃. **The early men lived on fruits and raw meat.**
- Tangə̃ŋə wā̃ nkoʔòndzə̃mè zhi zhəzhə. **Tangang killed his cow alone.**

The Remote Past- More examples

1. A bə ɛlɯŋə tanə tsətsɔŋnə ma Àzòŋə lyə ghə zə moo yɛ. It's been five years since Azong visited his son.
2. A bə ɛlɯŋə nəghəmə tsətsɔŋnə ma Ata lyə zũ nəlonə zhi zĩ. It's been ten years since Atah bought this his radio/guitar.
3. Asòŋgwe lyə ghə mə dzwinə bwo ndəmə yi a ngù'u wu ma nfò bye. Asongwe went to live with his bother/sister/relative the year the king died.
4. Afonə lyə twinə ətàa yi a ndzəmə ɛlɯŋə sàmba tsətsɔŋnə. Afong buried his father seven year ago.
5. À bə ɛlɯŋə nchə-nəfǎ tsətsɔŋnə ma Akenə lyə nzoʔo məngyǎ yɛ. It's been eighteen years since Akene got married.
6. A bə ɛlɯŋə nəbwùʔù nə akəmə tsətsòŋnə zhitə ma bi lyə nyii ndzwi fĩ. It's been nine and a half years since we settled here.

