Lesson 5

Grammar: Future, Recent Past, Remote Past

Future Tense:
Positive: ‘zo’ and ‘yo’ (remote future)
Negative: ‘zu’ and ‘yu’ (remote future)
Positive: For the Future Positive the –zo- is used and there is NO change to the verb ending.
   e.g. Umfana uzo dlala phandle namuhla. The boy will play outside today.
       Umfana akazu dlala phandle namuhla. The boy will not play outside today.

       Umfana uyo ya esikoleni ngeviki elizayo. The boy will go to school next week.
       Umfana akayu ya esikoleni ngeviki elizayo. The boy will not go to school next week.

Although the remote future should be used for more than three days in the future, people tend to mix the ‘zo’ and ‘yo’ and the ‘yo’ will be used the same way as the ‘zo’ (as well as the negative).

Past Tense:
In Zulu there are also two kind of past tense, namely the recent past and the remote past tense, also referred to as the ‘A-past tense’ because of the way this is formed.

Positive: It either has an ‘–e’ ending and this is because the verb is not the last word in the sentence or the ‘-ile’ when nothing follows the verb.
   e.g. Umama uhambe nobaba. Mum went with dad.
       Umama nobaba bahambile. Mum and dad went (they left).

For the remote past tense, the ‘-a-’ is used and this is the only indication of the past tense and NO change happens to the verb ending. The only change is the subject concord changing to ‘a’.

Class 1, 1a, 3 and third person singular subject concord changes from ‘u-’ to ‘wa’- (as a result of the two vowels u + a + wa) (Remember it this way: ‘u’ takes ‘w’ and this when said, sounds similar.
Class 4 and 9 subject concord ‘i’- changes the ‘ya-’(as a result of the two vowels i+ a = ya) (Remember it this way: ‘i’ takes ‘y’ and this when said, sound similar.

‘e.g. Umama wahamba nobaba. Mum had gone with dad (more than three days ago)
e.g. Inja yadla ukudla. The dog has eaten the food.
All the other classes only use the consonant + a, e.g. (class 5) Ikati ḫadla ukudla. The cat has eaten the food.
Class 6 will obviously only use the existing ‘a-’ and no extra ‘a’ is added.
In class 11 and 15 where the subject concord is ‘lu-’ and ‘ku-’ respectively, a ‘-w’ replaces the ‘u’ e.g. ‘lwa-, kwa-’ but class 12 is the exception with only ‘ba-’ and NOT ‘bwa-’

The negative for both the recent as well as the remote past tense is the same, namely the verb ending ‘-anga’ and it is not influenced by words following or not following the verb in the recent past tense.
  e.g. Obaba abahambanga