

# What's Yours Is Yours, What's Mine Is Mine

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The puzzle is all about possession: In Rapa Nui, a person can possess things in two different ways, which require different ways of writing possessive pronouns and the word “of.”

To make the question clearer, here are the sample phrases grouped by person.

## First person:

*tā'aku hau*            my rope

*tō'oku vārua*        my spirit

*tā'aku kūmara*     my sweet potato

## Third person:

*tō'ona mata*        his/her eye

*tō'ona māramarama* his/her wisdom

*vak 'a Taka*         Taka's canoe

*'iŋoa o Puakiva*    Puakiva's name

*kete 'a Kava*        Kava's basket

*kōkoma o Tiare*    Tiare's intestine

It is fair to assume that the words *tā'aku/tō'oku* mean “my,” and the word *tō'ona* means “his” or “her.” We can further posit that *'a/o* means “of,” as in the “canoe of Taka.”

We see can see that all of these words denoting possession contain either have an *a* or *o* in the middle. Next we have to deduce what determines which one will be used.

We can see more by grouping them this way:

*a* words: rope, sweet potato, canoe, basket

*o* words: spirit, eye, wisdom, name, intestine

Can you see the difference? The *a* list refers to things that belong to you only in the sense that you have them at that time, but it is entirely possible for the same rope, sweet potato, canoe, or basket to belong to someone else. The *o* list refers to things that are inherently part of you and cannot belong to anyone else. In linguistic terminology, the *a* list represents “alienable possession,” and the *o* is “inalienable possession.”

The question asks about the possession of a microphone, one's body, and one's smell. A “microphone” is clearly an alienable possession, while the other two—“body” and “smell”—have possession that cannot be transferred. So we're looking for a series of Rapa Nui words that goes *a*, *o*, *o*— so **the answer is c**.