



Chapter 8

Grammatical overview

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Introduction

This is an overview of the Esperanto grammar needed for basic communication. If you are already comfortable with Esperanto, we recommend the use of the detailed *lernu!* grammar by Bertilo Wennergren. For even more detail, you can consult his website, *Plena Manlibro de Esperanta Gramatiko* (<http://bertilow.com/pmeg/>) or the book version of that grammar. He also wrote the basis for this grammatical overview.

Grammatical terms

To have a good understanding of Esperanto grammar, it's necessary to know some terms. Below, there is a list of these terms, with short explanations. These explanations are not detailed, but they contain all of the basic information you need to know.

Noun (Substantivo)

A noun is a name of a person, place, thing, quality, or action. A noun answers the question "What is (it/he/she)?" For example: "John", "London", "house", "softness", "running" (as in "Running is fun").

Adjective (Adjektivo)

An adjective describes a noun. An adjective answers the question "What kind / what sort is (he/she/it)?" For example: "pretty", "good", "long" and "big".

Plural (Pluralo)

Plural means that there is more than one thing. For example: "people", "ideas". In Esperanto, adjectives must "agree with" their nouns – that means that if a noun is plural, then an adjective that describes it must also be plural. Although in English, we say "red apple" or "red apples", in Esperanto, the word "red" has a plural form, used when "apples" is plural. It's akin to saying "reds apples", and it helps us correctly match up with adjective describes which noun.

Verb (Verbo)

A verb presents an action or a state of being. Verbs answer the question "To do what?", "What is happening?", "What (are you/is he/are they) doing?" For example: "to sing", "stands", and "was".

Adverb (Adverbo)

Adverbs describe a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or a whole phrase or sentence. Examples of adverbs: "beautifully", "shortly", and "yesterday". In English, adverbs often end in -ly.

Preposition (Prepozicio)

A preposition is a small word that shows what role a phrase plays in a sentence. For example: “on”, “in” and “under”.

Pronoun (Pronomo)

Pronouns are words such as: I, you, she, he, it, us, they, one, himself/herself/itself.

Affix, Prefix, Suffix (Afikso, Prefikso, Sufikso)

An affix is a short set of letters added to a root word, in order to create a compound word with a new but related meaning. Affixes put after a root are called suffixes. Affixes put before a root are called prefixes. An example of a prefix in English is ex- (ex-husband, ex-employee). An example of a suffix in English is -ness (whiteness, foolishness).

Subject (Subjekto)

A subject is the primary word or phrase of a sentence. Usually (but not always) the subject is the thing that performs the action in a sentence. For example, in the sentence “I love you”, “I” is the subject.

Object (Objekto)

An object is the thing that is directly affected by the action in a sentence. For example, in the sentence “I love you,” “you” is the object.

Pronunciation

Esperanto is written and spoken completely regularly and phonetically. Every letter is always pronounced the same way, and every word is pronounced exactly as it is written.

The alphabet

A B C Ĉ D E F G Ĝ H Ĥ I J Ĵ K L M N O P R S Ŝ T U Ŭ V Z

Vowels

| Letter | Pronunciation | Word example |
|--------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| A | like a in father | ami – to love |
| E | like e in pet | egala – equal |
| I | like i in machine | infano – infant |
| O | like o in November | oro – gold |
| U | like oo in moose | urbo – city |

Consonants

| Letter | Pronounced | Word example |
|--------|--|-----------------------------|
| B | like English b | bela – beautiful |
| C | like English ts in mats | celo – goal |
| Ĉ | like ch in church | ĉokolado – chocolate |
| D | like English d | doni – to give |
| F | like English f | facila – easy |
| G | like g in gap | granda – large |
| Ĝ | like g in gem | ĝui – to enjoy |
| H | like English h | horo – hour |
| Ĥ | like ch in Scottish loch or in Bach | ĥoro – choir |
| J | like y in young | juna – young |
| Ĵ | like s in pleasure | ĵurnalo – newspaper |
| K | like English k | kafo – coffee |
| L | like English l | lando – country |
| M | like English m | maro – sea |
| N | like English n | nokto – night |
| P | like English p | paco – peace |
| R | like Spanish r , lightly trilled or flapped | rapida – fast |
| S | like English s | salti – to jump |
| Ŝ | like English sh | ŝipo – ship |
| T | like English t | tago – day |
| Ŭ | like English w | aŭto – car |
| V | like English v | vivo – life |
| Z | like English z | zebro – zebra |

To spell aloud in Esperanto, for vowels, we simply pronounce the sound of the vowel. Therefore, A is pronounced “ah”, E is pronounced “eh”, and so forth. For consonants, we add the letter O. The letter H is pronounced “ho”, M is pronounced “mo”, and so on. The letters Q, W, X, and Y are not used in Esperanto. However, for the purpose of spelling foreign words that include these letters, these are their Esperanto names:

Q – **kuo**

W – **duobla vo, vavo, or ĝermana vo**

X – **ikso**

Y – **ipsilono**

The accent

The accent is always on the next to last vowel of a word:

vojo (VOH-yoh) , **kantado** (kahn-TAH-doh) , **apud** (AH-pood) ,
historio (hees-toh-REE-oh) , **aŭdi** (OW-dee) , **ilia** (ee-LEE-ah)

Diphthongs

The letter **Ŭ** is only found immediately after A or E. The combination **aŭ** or **eŭ** becomes one syllable. Therefore, the word **aŭto** (OW-toh), which means “automobile/car”, is not pronounced the same as **auto** (ah-OOH-toh) (which doesn’t mean anything).

These are the correct pronunciations of Esperanto diphthongs:

aŭ – “ow” like in “cow”

eŭ – “eh-w”; pronounce the letter “e” like in “bed”, then add a “w” sound.

aj – like “y” in “fly”

ej – like “ey” in “they”

oj – like “oy” in “boy”

uj – like “uy” in Spanish “muy”. The sound is similar to the “ooey” in “gooey”, but pronounced as a single syllable, with the “-ey” part greatly reduced. It doesn’t sound the same as **ui**, which has two syllables (oo-ee). It also doesn’t sound like the English word “we”, which would be written as **ŭi** in Esperanto. The common Esperanto word **kiuj** (which) should be pronounced as KEE-ooy, not as “kiwi”.

Every letter is pronounced in Esperanto, even if letters are doubled. Therefore, there is a difference in pronunciation between **Finnlando** (Finland) and **Finlando** (“end country”); the **n** is held longer in **Finnlando**. The word **scii** (to know) can be tricky for English speakers. The **sc** combination is pronounced according to the Esperanto rules for **s** (like English “s”) and **c** (like English “ts”). There are two **i**’s in **scii**, but both must be pronounced. The **sc** sound sounds like “sts” in English; for example, the word “toasts” would be written as **tosc** in Esperanto. Therefore, the correct pronunciation of **scii** is “stsEE-ee” – two syllables. Or two and a half, if you like: “s-tsEE-ee”.

Parts of speech

Most words in Esperanto have endings which define their part of speech:

| Nouns | Adjectives | Verbs* | Adverbs** |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| -o | -a | -i | -e |
| domo – house | granda – large | vidi – to see | rapide – quickly |
| knabo – boy | juna – young | kuri – to run | buŝe – orally |
| muziko – music | ruĝa – red | esti – to be | hejme – at home |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| skribo – a writing | skriba – written | skribi – to write | skribe – in writing |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|

*Not counting the basic form (-i), all verbs have five more forms to indicate tense and mood. You can find more in the section *Verb forms*.

**Not all Esperanto adverbs end in -e. You can learn more about that in *Adverbs*.

Definite article

La is the definite article. In English, the definite article is the word “the”. Unlike in some languages, its form never changes.

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| la hundo | – the dog |
| la domo | – the house |
| la knaboj | – the boys |
| la tabloj | – the tables |

There is no indefinite article. In English, the indefinite article is the word “a” or “an”. When you would use “a” or “an” in English, simply say nothing in Esperanto.

| | |
|-------|---------------------------|
| hundo | – dog, a dog, some dog |
| arbo | – tree, a tree, some tree |

Plural

You can make a word plural by adding -j. If a noun is plural, the adjective describing it must also receive the plural -j ending. This convention helps preserve Esperanto’s flexible word order.

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| bela hundo | – a beautiful dog |
| belaj hundoj | – beautiful dogs |
| La knaboj estas junaj. | – The boys are young. |
| blua kuniklo | – a blue rabbit, blue rabbit |
| bluaj kunikloj | – blue rabbits |
| ruĝa kaj blua kunikloj | – red and blue rabbits (a red rabbit and a blue rabbit, together) |
| ruĝaj kaj blua kunikloj | – red and blue rabbits (more than one red rabbit, and one blue rabbit, together) |

Object

The grammatical term “object” has a special meaning; it’s not an object in the sense of a knick-knack sitting on a shelf. A grammatical object shows which thing is directly affected by an action. For example, for the sentence “The boy writes a letter,” you can ask yourself “What is happening? There is someone who is writing.” This is the action, expressed by the verb. Who is writing? – the boy is writing. Therefore, “the boy” is the subject, the one performing the action. What is being written? – A letter is being written; the boy is writing a letter. Therefore, “letter” is

an object, that which is directly affected by an action.

The ending **-n** indicates an object. You should put **-n** at the end of a word which indicates an object of an action.

La knabo vidas la hundon. – The boy sees the dog (obj.)

La hundo vidas la knabon. – The dog sees the boy (obj.)

Use of the **-n** ending to mark the accusative allows us to use flexible word order in Esperanto.

These two sentences have the opposite meanings, but their word order is the same:

La knabo la fiŝon manĝas. – The boy eats the fish. (literally: The boy the fish[object] eats)

La knabon la fiŝo manĝas. – The fish eats the boy. (literally: The boy[object] the fish eats)

An adjective that describes the object of a sentence needs to have the **-n** ending.

La knabo havas belan hundon. – The boy has a beautiful dog

You should also put **-n** after a plural ending **-j** for objects that are plural.

La hundo vidas la belajn katojn. – The dog sees the beautiful cats

English doesn't normally mark the object of a sentence, except for some pronouns (like the pair he [subject] – him [object]), so it can be tricky for native English speakers to decide which word in the sentence is the object, and needs the **-n** ending. One hint is that in English, the word order is normally subject – verb – object. This is also true in Esperanto; the noun that comes right after the verb is normally the object of a sentence. So in the sentence "I eat apples", "apples" is the object. This is no longer the case if there is a preposition between the verb and the second noun; "I live in a house" has the preposition "in" between the verb (live) and the second noun (house), so "house" isn't the object, and wouldn't get the **-n** ending in the Esperanto equivalent of this sentence.

Be careful about using the accusative, since the addition of the **-n** ending can completely change the meaning of the sentence. Take a look at the following sentences and their translations:

Mi ŝatas manĝi tion pli ol vi. – I like to eat that more than you do.

Mi ŝatas manĝi tion pli ol vin. – I like to eat that more than I like eating you.

Mi amas ŝin same forte kiel vi. – I love her as strongly as you do.

Mi amas ŝin same forte kiel vin. – I love her as strongly as I love you.

Vi farbas la domon ruĝan. – You're painting the red house.

Vi farbas la domon ruĝa. – You're painting the house red.

This grammar is by no means comprehensive, but here is a summary of some other uses of the **-n** ending:

-n can be used instead of prepositions to show time or measurement:

Mi dormis **dum** unu horo. – Mi dormis **unu horon**. (I slept for one hour.)

En lundo mi vizitos vin. – **Lundon** mi vizitos vin. (I'll visit you on Monday.)
En la 22-a de junio mi venos. – La **22-an** de junio mi venos. (I'll come on June 22nd.)
Mi estas **je** 20-metra distanco de vi.
– Mi estas 20 **metrojn** for de vi. (I'm 20 metres away from you.)
Li estas alta **je** du metroj. – Li estas du **metrojn** alta. (He's two metres tall.)

-n can show direction or destination of movement:

In limited cases, **-n** can be used after a preposition to show an action that is moving in a direction, as opposed to action occurring in a place. Not every preposition in Esperanto can be used with **-n** to indicate direction of movement. The prepositions that can be used with **-n** are: **sur, sub, en, apud, antaŭ, malantaŭ, post, inter, trans, ekster, super, ĉirkaŭ, and kontraŭ.**

Mi promenas en la arbaro. – I walk in the forest.
Mi promenas en la arbar**on**. – I walk into the forest.
Mia amiko kuras trans la strato. – My friend is running, on the other side of the street.
Mia amiko iras trans la strato**n**. – My friend runs across the street.
(my friend was on this side of the street, but is now crossing to the other side)
Li saltas sur la tablo. – He jumps on the table.
Li saltas sur la tablo**n**. – He jumps onto the table.

-n can also be used to show direction after adverbs that indicate location:

Mi estas hejme. – I'm home.
Mi iras hejmen. – I go home. (hejmen = homewards, toward home)
Vi estas tie. – You're there.
Vi kuras tien. – You are running over there. (to that place, toward that place)

Comparison

Comparisons are made in Esperanto using the words **pli**, meaning "more", and **plej**, meaning "most".

Pli and **plej** can be used with both adjectives and adverbs in Esperanto:

granda – large
pli granda – larger (literally: more large)
plej granda – largest (literally: most large)
Mi deziras **la plej grandan** pecon de kuko. – I want the largest piece of cake.

rapide – quickly
pli rapide – faster (literally: more quickly)
plej rapide – fastest (literally: most quickly)
Mi vidis la ĉevalon kiu kuris **plej rapide**. – I saw the horse that was running the fastest.

The comparison word is **ol**.

La tablo estas **pli** granda **ol** la seĝo. – The table is larger than the chair
 La elefanto estas **pli** granda **ol** la kuniklo. – The elephant is larger than the rabbit.

The word **plej** is not used with **ol** – just as in English, we can say that something is “more than” (**pli ol**) something else, but not “most than”.

We use the **mal-** prefix, indicating an opposite, to form the words **malpli** (less) and **malplej** (least).

malpli granda – smaller
malplej granda – smallest

Possession

Esperanto has no direct equivalent of the -’s ending that English uses to show possession. The word **de** is used instead.

La hundo **de** la knabo. – the boy’s dog (literally: the dog of the boy)

La pordoj **de** la domo. – the house’s doors (literally: the doors of the house)

You can also express possession by using possessive pronouns and correlatives ending in **-es** (which will be discussed later in this chapter). Possessive pronouns are constructed by adding the adjective **-a** ending to a pronoun. The **-es** suffix can only be used on other elements of the correlative table; you can’t affix it to anything else. Therefore, it is not possible to say ***Johanes*** to mean “John’s”; you have to say **de Johano**.

mia hundo – my dog
ies hundo – someone’s dog

Pronouns

| Personal pronouns | Possessive pronouns |
|---|--|
| mi – I | mia – my |
| vi – you | via – your |
| ŝi – she | ŝia – her |
| li – he | lia – his |
| ĝi – it | ĝia – its |
| ni – we | nia – our |
| ili – they | ilia – their |
| oni – one, someone, anyone | onia – one’s, someone’s, anyone’s |
| si – himself / herself / itself / themselves | sia – his / her / its / their own |

When a personal pronoun is an object, it takes the **-n** ending.

Mi amas **vin**. – I love you
Ili vidas **ĝin**. – They see it

The possessive pronouns can have the plural ending of **-j** and the object ending of **-n**; they behave exactly like regular adjectives.

Ŝi amas **mian frat^on**. – She loves my brother
Mi vidas **viajn domojⁿ**. – I see your houses

Si

Si is a reflexive pronoun, used with nouns or with third-person pronouns (**ŝi**, **li**, **ĝi**, **ili**, and **oni**). **Si** always refers back to the subject of a sentence, which is performing an action on itself. **Si** is *never* used with first- or second-person pronouns (**mi**, **vi**, and **ni**), and **si** and its possessive form **sia** can never be the subject of a sentence.

Mi pensas pri **mi**. – I think about myself
Vi pensas pri **vi**. – You think about yourself
Li pensas pri **li**. – He thinks about him (another “him”, not the subject)
Li pensas pri **si**. – He thinks about himself
Li promenas kun **sia** hundo. – He walks with his dog.
Mi kun mia fratino venos. – I will come with my sister.

Sia frato pensas pri li. → Ŝia frato pensas pri li. – Her brother thinks about him.

Oni

Oni is an indefinite pronoun, used when you want to talk about any person, many people or some undefined people, or a person whose identity you don't want to reveal, etc. **Oni** is normally singular, but can also be plural. **Oni** does not indicate gender. In everyday English, we often use words like “you” or “they” to express this meaning, a sort of impersonal “you” or “they” that doesn't actually refer to anyone in particular.

Oni pensas pri **si** mem. – One thinks about oneself
/ You think about yourself / People think about themselves.
Oni ne volus esti ekstere dum ŝtormo.
– You wouldn't want to be outdoors during a storm.
Oni diras, ke estos varme morgaŭ.
– They say that it'll be warm tomorrow.

Verb forms

| Ending | Explanation | Examples |
|------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| -i | basic form (infinitive) | esti – to be, skribi – to write |
| -as | present tense (present) | estas – is/am/are, skribas – write/writes |
| -is | past tense (preterite) | estis – was/were, skribis – wrote |
| -os | future tense (future) | estos – will be, skribos – will write |
| -us | conditional form (conditional mood) | estus – would be, skribus – would write |
| -u | command form (volitive mood) | estu silenta – be quiet!, skribu – write! Li estu silenta. – He should be quiet. Vi skribu. – You should write. |

Verb tenses

English uses many complex verb tenses, to express very specific situations; for example, we say not only the simple “I went to the store”, but also the more complex “I had gone to the store”, “I was going to the store”, “I have gone to the store”, etc. We can express all of these tenses in Esperanto, but we usually don’t. Normally, we express verbs as simple past, present, or future tenses, using the endings in the table above. The **-us** ending doesn’t express a particular tense. **Mi ne venus** could be translated as “I wouldn’t come”, but depending on context, it could also mean “I wouldn’t have come” or “I wouldn’t be coming”. Complex verb tenses are used only when the speaker or writer has a special reason to be extremely specific about the timing of an action. The complex tenses are formed using participles, with a form of the verb **esti** (to be). But don’t spend hours puzzling over which compound tense to use to precisely translate an English verb form – just use a simple tense. Trust us, the tense you’re writing about will be perfectly clear through context. It’s considered good Esperanto style, and it’s easier, too!

Complex verb constructions

Complex verb constructions consist of a main verb and another verb with the same subject, which always takes the infinitive form. These complex verb constructions can be used with many different verbs, but they are especially common with the verbs **povi** (to be able), **devi** (to have to), and **voli** (to want).

- Mi **volas** manĝi. – I want to eat.
- Mi ne **povis** veni. – I wasn’t able to come.
- Mi **devos** labori. – I will have to work.

Verbs without a subject

In Esperanto, almost all verbs must have a subject. However, there are also some verbs that can be used without subjects. Therefore, just one of these verbs is needed to make a complete sentence. These verbs are called “verbs without subjects” or “impersonal verbs”. Here are some

sentences using verbs without subjects:

| | |
|--|--|
| Temas ne pri li, sed pri ŝi. | – It's not about him, but about her. |
| Pluvas , fulmas kaj tondras . | – It's raining, and it's thundering and lightning. |
| Estas varme. | – It's hot. |
| Tagiĝas . | – Day is breaking. |

But sometimes even these verbs can be used with subjects. For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| Tiu libro temas pri amo. | – That book is about love. |
| Ĉiuspecaj demandoj pluvis sur ŝin. | – All kinds of questions rained onto her. |

Note that in English, all verbs must have subjects. When we have verbs with no clear subjects, like weather verbs, we use the pronoun "it" as a sort of place holder, a sort of fake subject. We also use "it" in English to refer back to whole phrases; in Esperanto, we use impersonal verbs in these cases. As you can imagine, English uses "it" far more than Esperanto uses **ĝi**!

English – It is raining.

Esperanto – **Pluvas**. (impersonal verb)

English – It is good to see you. (it = to see you)

Esperanto – **Estas** bone vidi vin. (impersonal verb **estas**, no subject)

Use of the -u verb ending

The verb ending **-u** does not show the time of the action. It is used to express a wish or intention of the speaker (whether a command, a request, or a desire).

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Rakontu pri via vojaĝo! | – Tell us about your trip! |
| Diru vian nomon! | – Tell us your name! |

In the above examples, the verbs are used without a subject. In such cases, the second-person pronoun **vi** is understood.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Venu rapide! | = Venu vi rapide! (Come quickly!) |
| Manĝu! | = Manĝu vi! (Eat!) |
| Estu kun mi! | = Vi estu kun mi! (Be with me!) |
| Marko, donu al mi tion. | = Marko, vi donu al mi tion. (Give me that, Mark.) |

You can leave off the pronoun **vi** only in the main clause. In subclauses, you have to use it.

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Legu la libron. | – Read the book. |
| Mi volas, ke vi legu la libron. | – I want you to read the book. |

For the other persons (first and third), both in main clauses and in subclauses, you have to use the verb with the pronoun, otherwise people will think that you mean the second person.

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ni komencu! | – Let's start! |
| Mi estu! | – I should be! |
| Ĉu ni jam iru tien? | – Should we go there already? |

- Ili** mem faru tion! – They should do it themselves!
Kiel **mi** komprenu tion? – How should I interpret that?
Ŝi aĉetu, kion ŝi bezonas. – Let her buy what she needs.

The ending **-u** is used also in subclauses after words like **ke** (that) and **por ke** (so that), if the main clause of the sentence in some way shows will, desire, aim, etc. Note that this rule applies even when the verb of the main clause has some other time.

Ili volas, **ke** vi laboru. – They want you to work.

Mi multe legos, **por ke** poste mi povu bone prelegi.

– I read a lot, so that afterward I can lecture well.

(literally: so that I should be able to lecture well.)

Skribu la leteron tuj, **por ke** ni sendu ĝin ĝustatempe.

– Write the letter immediately, so that we can send it in time.

Ŝiaj gepatroj petis, **ke** li morgaŭ vizitu ilin. – Her parents asked that he visit tomorrow.

To better understand the use of the **-u** ending in subclauses, compare the following sentences:

Ŝi diris, ke ŝi venos morgaŭ. – She said that she will come tomorrow.

Mi petis, ke ŝi venu morgaŭ. – I asked her to come tomorrow.

Mi ĝojas, ke vi bone fartas. – I'm glad you're doing well.

Mi deziras, ke vi fartu bone. – I want you to be well.

Mi kuris tiel rapide, ke li ne povis kapti min. – I ran so fast that he could not catch me.

Mi volis kuri tiel rapide, ke li ne povu kapti min.

– I wanted to run so fast that he could not catch me.

The word **bonvolu** is a **u**-form verb that you will encounter frequently. It is used to express a will or desire in a gentler way. It's like saying "please" in English. After the verb **bonvolu**, always use the infinitive form of the verb.

Bonvolu sidi ĉi tie! – Please sit here!

Bonvolu veni morgaŭ! – Please come tomorrow!

Bonvolu esti ĝentila! – Please be nice!

Adverbs

Adverbs are words that indicate manner, place, time or quantity; for example:

ankoraŭ – still, yet

almenaŭ – at least

apenaŭ – hardly, barely

baldaŭ – soon

preskaŭ – almost

eĉ – even

jam – already

jen – here is, behold

ĵus – just, just now

morgaŭ – tomorrow

hodiaŭ – today

hieraŭ – yesterday

nun – now

nur – only

plu – more, else, further

tre – very

tro – too, too much

tuj – immediately

for – away

It's also possible to create adverbs from other words by using the **-e** ending. The meaning of the base word determines whether it becomes a manner, place, time or quantity adverb.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| rapida – quick | rapide – quickly (adverb of manner) |
| skribi – write | skribe – in writing (adverb of manner) |
| hejmo – home | hejme – at home (place adverb) |
| nokto – night | nokte – at night (time adverb) |
| multaj – many | multe – much (quantity adverb) |

When should I use **-a** (adjective form) or **-e** (adverb form)?

An adjective has the ending **-a**. An adjective describes a noun and indicates quality or a property. It answers the question “what kind?” and it takes the same ending (**-n**, **-j**, **-jn**) as the noun which it describes.

An adverb has the ending **-e**. It describes verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs by telling the manner, location, circumstance, etc. and answers the questions “where?”, “how?”, “when?”, or “to what degree?”.

The difference between an adjective and an adverb is that an adjective can only describe a noun (or a noun and verb at the same time) while an adverb can *not* describe a noun.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Ŝia danco estas bela. | – Her dance is beautiful. |
| Ŝi dancas bele. | – She dances beautifully. |
| Tio estas bona. | – That is good. |
| Estas bone. | – It is good. (literally: is well) |
| La ĉambro estas varma. | – The room is warm. |
| En la ĉambro estas varme. | – It is warm in the room. (literally: in the room is warmly) |
| La koloro de ŝiaj haroj estas bela. | – The color of her hair is beautiful. |
| Ĉi tie estas tre bele. | – It is very beautiful here. (literally: here is very beautifully) |
| Somere estis tre varma vetero. | – In the summer there was very warm weather. (literally: “summer-ly” was very warm weather) |
| Lia amiko estas tute prava. | – His friend is quite right. |

Prepositions

| Preposition | Translation | Example |
|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| al | to | Mi iras al vi. – I’m going to you. |

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| anstataŭ | instead of | Mi iras anstataŭ vi. – I’m going instead of you. |
| antaŭ | in front of, before | Mi iras antaŭ vi. – I’m going in front of/before you. |
| apud | near, next to | Mi iras apud vi. – I’m going near you. |
| ĉe | at, near, with | Mi sidas ĉe komputilo. – I’m sitting at a computer. |
| ĉirkaŭ | around | Estas muro ĉirkaŭ la domo. – There is a wall around the house. |
| da | of (quantities) | Ni havis multe da gastoj. – We had a lot of guests. |
| de | of, from | Mi iras de la domo. – I’m going from the house. |
| dum | while, during | Ni iris dum tri minutoj. – We went for three minutes. |
| ekster | outside (of) | Mi estas ekster la urbo. – I am outside of the city. |
| el | out of, from within | Mi iras el la urbo. – I’m going out from the city. |
| en | in | Mi ripozas en la domo. – I’m resting in the house. |
| ĝis | until | Mi dormos ĝis mateno. – I will sleep until morning |
| inter | among, between | Mi iras inter la domoj. – I’m going between the houses. |
| je | (no fixed meaning; based on context) | Li kredas je Dio. – He believes in God Mi venos je la tria. – I will come at three o’clock. |
| kontraŭ | against | Mi iras kontraŭ via volo. – I’m going against your wish. |
| krom | except | Ĉiuj krom mi iris. – Everyone, except me, went. |
| kun | together with | Mi iras kun vi. – I’m going with you. |
| laŭ | according to | Mi iras laŭ la vojo. – I’m going along (according to) the way. |
| malgraŭ | in spite of | Mi iras malgraŭ la pluvo. – I’m going in spite of the rain. |
| per | with (by means of) | Mi vojaĝas per trajno. – I’m traveling by train. |
| por | for | Mi eniras por manĝi. – I’m entering to eat. |
| po | at the rate of , each | Ni trinkis po du glasojn – We drank two glasses each. |
| post | after (time) | Mi iras post vi. – I’m going after you. |
| preter | past, beyond | Mi iras preter vi. – I walk past you. |
| pri | about, concerning | Mi pensas pri vi. – I’m thinking about you. |
| pro | for (because of) | Mi eniras pro la pluvo. – I’m entering because of the rain. |
| sen | without | Mi iras sen vi. – I’m going without you. |
| sub | under | Estas ŝuo sub la lito. – There is a shoe under the bed. |
| super | above | Balono ŝvebas super mia domo. – A balloon hovers above my house. |
| sur | on (position) | Birdo staras sur la tegmento. – A bird stands on the roof. |

| | | |
|--------------|---------|--|
| tra | through | Mi vojaĝas tra la urbo. – I travel through the city. |
| trans | across | Mi iras trans la straton. – I’m going across the street. |

Use of De

De is a word used to express many concepts. The base meaning is “of”, but it can sometimes be translated as “from” or “by”. It can indicate movement away from something, possession, origin, cause, time, or composition.

- Mi venas **de** la urbo. – I come from the city.
- Ĝi estas la libro **de** mia frato – It is my brother’s book.
- Mi ricevis kison **de** vi. – I received a kiss from you.
- Mi ridas **de** ĝojo. – I laugh from joy.
- De** nun mi amas vin. – From now on, I love you.
- Glaso **de** biero. – Glass of beer (a glass intended to hold beer, or which now contains beer)

Use of Da

Da is used between a quantity word and the measurement you’re expressing. Some people find it hard to decide when to use **de** or **da**, but there’s a simple rule. If you’re not talking about quantities, don’t use **da**. **Da** links an expression of quantity (an adverb or a noun) with a noun that indicates what it’s a quantity of.

- kilogramo **da** rizo – kilogram of rice
- du litroj **da** lakto – two liters of milk
- multe **da** bananoj – many bananas

Note the difference between:

- glaso **da** biero – a glass of beer (emphasis on the beer, a glass-sized quantity of beer)
- glaso **de** biero – a glass of beer (emphasis on the glass, a glass intended for use with beer)

Use of Je

When no other preposition works, you can use the indefinite preposition **je**.

- Li kredas **je** Dio. – He believes in God.

Another usual use of **je** is in time expressions:

- je** la tria horo – at three o’clock

The ending -n instead of a preposition

Instead of using a preposition, you can use the **-n** ending to express time and measurement.

- En la 22-a de junio mi venos. – La 22-**an** de junio mi venos.
(I will come on the 22nd of June.)
- Mi estas je 20-metra distanco de vi – Mi estas 20 metroj**n** for de vi.
(I am 20 meters away from you.)
- Mi dormis dum ses horoj – Mi dormis ses horoj**n**.

(I slept for six hours.)

Showing direction using -n

After prepositions, use the basic word form without **-n**.

pri la knabo – about the boy
en la domoj – in the houses
al la urbo – to the city

After a preposition that indicates a place, you can use **-n** to show motion toward that location.

Infano saltas sur la lito. – A child is jumping on the bed.
Infano saltas sur la lito**n**. – A child jumps onto the bed.
La infano kuras en la domo. – The child is running in the house.
La infano kuras en la domo**n**. – The child runs into the house.

-n works the same way after adverbs which indicate location.

hejme – at home hejmen – [to] home, homewards
urbe – in the city urben – to the city
kie – where kien – to where
tie – there tien – to there

Numbers

Basic numbers

Numbers in their basic forms are also referred to as “cardinal numbers” in many grammatical texts.

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------------------|
| 0 – nul | 5 – kvin | 10 – dek |
| 1 – unu | 6 – ses | 100 – cent |
| 2 – du | 7 – sep | 1000 – mil |
| 3 – tri | 8 – ok | 1 000 000 – milionoj |
| 4 – kvar | 9 – naŭ | |

Other numbers are created by joining the basic numbers together.

11 – dek unu
12 – dek du
20 – dudek
25 – dudek kvin
237 – ducent tridek sep
1983 – mil naŭcent okdek tri
2002 – du mil du
2 345 678 – du milionoj tricent kvardek kvin mil sescent sepdek ok

Tens and hundreds are joined to form one word.

dudek (20)

tridek (30)

ducent (200)

tricent (300)

Everything else should be spoken and written as separate words, including thousands. The millions and above are treated as regular Esperanto nouns, and are plural when referring to more than one million.

dek unu (11)

du mil (2000)

miliono (1 000 000)

tri milionoj (3 000 000)

Numbers do not receive the **-n** ending when they are in their basic form.

Mi vidas tri domoj**n**. – I see three houses.

Ordinal numbers (numbers in the form of “first”, “second”, etc.) are created by the ending **-a**. They behave like normal Esperanto adjectives, and they can receive grammatical endings accordingly.

unua – first

dua – second

deka – tenth

okdek naŭa / okdek-naŭa – eighty-ninth (correct both with and without the hyphen)

Mi legas la unuan libron. – I am reading the first book.

Numbers can also receive the **-e** ending to indicate an adverb:

unue – firstly

due – secondly

Questions

All questions in Esperanto contain a question word; a few examples are **kio** (what), **kiel** (how), and **ĉu** (is it true that...?)

Kio estas tio? – What is that?

Kiel vi fartas? – How are you?

Kiam vi venos? – When will you come?

Ĉu vi venos? – Will you come?

Ĉu

For questions that are answered with “yes” or “no”, the question word **ĉu** is used. **Ĉu** is easy to use; simply take a statement of fact and add the word **ĉu** to the beginning to turn it into a yes or no question.

Ŝi estas knabino. – She is a girl.

Ĉu ŝi estas knabino? – Is she a girl?

Ĉu la knabino estas juna? – Is the girl young?

Jes, ŝi estas juna. – Yes, she is young

Negation

The word **ne** means “no” or “not”.

Mi **ne** estas juna. – I’m not young

Ne, mi **ne** ŝatas ĝin. – No, I don’t like it.

La hundo **ne** volas veni. – The dog doesn't want to come.

Ne stands in front of the negated word. This is usually the verb, but **ne** can also negate other words.

Mi manĝas **ne** pomon, sed piron. – I'm eating not an apple, but a pear
Ne mi manĝas pomon. – I'm not the one who is eating an apple.
 (someone else is eating an apple)

For negation you can also use the correlatives that start with **neni-**:

Mi komprenas **nenion**. – I understand nothing.
 Mi **neniam** estis tie. – I was never there.

Neni-words always negate the whole sentence. A double negative can make the sentence positive.

Mi **ne** faras **nenion**. – I am not doing nothing. (I am doing something)
 Mi **ne** povas **ne** veni. – I cannot help but come.

Sometimes after another negative word, we use the conjunction **nek**, which means "nor".

Mi **ne** vidis lin, **nek** lian patron. – I did not see him, nor his father.
Neniu leciono **nek** prelego plaĉis al ŝi. – No lesson or lecture pleased her.

A double **nek** means "neither... nor".

Mi vidis **nek** lin, **nek** lian patron. – I saw neither him, nor his father.
 Mi ŝatas **nek** drinki **nek** fumi. – I like neither drinking nor smoking.

You will find more **neni-**words in the section on *Correlatives*.

Participles

A participle is a word that presents an action as a quality or state of something: writing, beaten, closed, etc. In English there are two types of participles: present participles, which are usually formed with the ending -ing (e.g. writing, doing, seeing), and past participles, which are usually formed with the endings -en or -ed (e.g. given, closed, written). In Esperanto, there are six types of participles.

| Active Participles | Example | Passive Participles | Example | Meaning |
|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| -ant- | konstruanta = building | -at- | konstruata = being built | Happening now |
| -int- | konstruinta = having built | -it- | konstruita = having been built | Already happened |
| -ont- | konstruonta = going to build | -ot- | konstruota = going to be built | Will happen |

(Note the similarity to the present, past, and future tense endings **-as**, **-is**, **-os**.)

Active Participles

The active participles describe the state of the action's subject; that is, of the thing or person doing the action.

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| skrib anta | – writing |
| skrib inta | – having written |
| skrib onta | – going to write |
| skrib anta knabo | – a boy who is writing |
| skrib inta knabo | – a boy who has written |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mi estis skrib anta . | – I was writing. |
| Ili estos skrib antaj . | – They will be writing. |
| Ŝi estis skrib onta . | – She was going to write. |

With the **-o** ending, we indicate the person who performs the action:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| skrib anto | – writer (one who writes, or is writing now) |
| skrib into | – one who wrote |
| skrib onto | – one who is going to write |

Participles can also be used as adverbs, usually to indicate an action that occurred at the same time as another action. The usual translation of “**___-ante**” is “while **___-ing**”; “**___-inte**” is usually translated as “having **___-ed**”, and “**___-onte**” would normally be translated as “when about to **___**”

| | |
|---|--|
| Skrib onte leteron, li serĉis paperon. | – When about to write a letter, he looked around for some paper. |
| Skrib ante li pensis pri ŝi. | – While writing, he thought about her. |
| Skrib inte al ŝi, li legis libron. | – After having written to her, he read a book. |

Passive participles

The passive participles express a quality of the action's object; that is, of the person or thing that is being acted upon by something else.

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| skrib ata | – being written |
| skrib ita | – been written |
| skrib ota | – going to be written |
| skrib ata letero | – a letter which is being written |
| skrib ita letero | – a letter which has been written |

| | |
|---|--|
| La letero estas skrib ata de mi. | – The letter is being written by me. |
| La letero estis skrib ata de ŝi. | – The letter was being written by her. |
| La letero estis skrib ita de li. | – The letter was written by him. |

Correlatives

Correlatives are created using a special table of “word beginnings” and “word endings”. Each correlative word is created using one of five beginnings, with one of nine endings (described in the tables below). The correlatives can be used for question and answer words, for nouns and adverbs expressing time and quantity, and for linking two parts of a sentence, where a certain word is used as a subject in one part, and as an object in another. This may sound confusing, but take a look at the complete correlative table below, and you’ll soon understand.

| Beginning | Meaning |
|--------------|-------------------|
| ki- | what ___, which |
| ti- | that ___ |
| i- | some ___, any ___ |
| ĉi- | every ___ |
| neni- | no ___ |

| Ending | Meaning |
|------------|--|
| -o | ___thing |
| -u | ___one, individual; can also be used as an adjective |
| -a | ___kind of, sort of |
| -el | ___manner, in ___ way |
| -e | ___place, in ___ place |
| -am | ___time, at ___ time |
| -om | ___quantity (amount) |
| -al | ___reason, for ___ reason |
| -es | ___one’s |

Together they form a table:

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| ki – what, what thing | tio – that, that thing | io – something, anything | ĉio – everything, all things | nenio – nothing |
| kiu – who, which one | tiu – that person, that one | iu – someone, somebody | ĉiu – everyone, everybody | neniu – no one, nobody |
| kia – what kind of, what (a) | tia – that kind of, such a | ia – some kind of, any kind of | ĉia – every kind of, all kinds of | nenia – no kind of |
| kiel – how, in what way | tiel – that way, thus, like that, so | iel – somehow, in some way | ĉiel – in every way | neniel – in no way |
| kie – where, in what place | tie – there, in that place | ie – somewhere, anywhere, in some place | ĉie – everywhere, in every place | nenie – nowhere, in no place |
| kiam – when, at what time | tiam – then, at that time | iam – sometime, anytime, ever | ĉiam – always, at all times | neniam – never, at no time, not ever |

| | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| kiom – how much, how many, what quantity | tiom – so much, as many, that quantity | iom – some, some quantity | ĉiom – the whole quantity, all of it | neniom – not a bit, none, no quantity |
| kial – why | tial – for that reason | ial – for some reason | ĉial – for every reason | nenial – for no reason |
| kies – whose | ties – that one’s | ies – someone’s | ĉies – everyone’s | nenies – no one’s |

Ĉi

The word **ĉi** expresses closeness and is used with the **ti-** and **ĉi-**words, either before or after them.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| tie ĉi / ĉi tie | – here |
| tiu ĉi / ĉi tiu | – this one |
| ĉio ĉi / ĉi ĉio | – all of this |

Ĉi can also be used with nouns and adverbs. Note the differing use of hyphens for the noun and adverb usages:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| ĉi -somere | – (in) this summer |
| ĉi -foje | – at this time, on this occasion |
| ĉi -nokte | – tonight (on this night) |

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| ĉi somero (= ĉi tiu somero) | – this summer |
| ĉi nokto (= ĉi tiu nokto) | – this evening, this night |

Ajn

The word **ajn** means “...ever”:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| kiam ajn | – whenever |
| kiu ajn | – whoever |
| neniam ajn | – never ever (stronger version of “neniam”) |

Relative pronouns

The **ki-**words are also used as relative pronouns. They introduce subclauses, and are called “relative” because they relate directly back to something that is mentioned in the main sentence.

Tio, **kion** li diris, estas bona. – What he said is good (literally: “That, which he said, is good”)

La knabino, **kiu** staras tie. – The girl, who stands there.

La hundo **kiu** kuras estas bruna. – The dog which is running is brown.

Ki- correlatives in more detail

You will use the **ti-** and **ki-** correlatives very frequently when speaking Esperanto.

The **ki-** correlatives can serve to repeat the idea of a noun, a pronoun, or even a whole phrase from the main sentence. They can be used to ask a direct question, or to form an indirect question in the middle of a sentence. You will see **ki-**words used for all of these purposes in the examples

below.

Here are some examples of those concepts:

Correlative:

Mi faras **ion**, **kion** mi faris antaŭe. – I am doing something that I have done before.

Direct question:

Kion vi faras? – What are you doing?

Indirect question:

Mi ne scias, **kion** li faras. – I don't know what he is doing.

Here is some guidance on how to use individual **ki-** words:

Kiu

Kiu replaces a previously expressed noun or pronoun and typically is used for definite people or things. In English, it is often translated as “which”, “who”, or “that”.

Mi vidis knabon, **kiu** manĝis torton. – I saw a boy who was eating a pie.

Ŝi aĉetis la plej belan robon, **kiu** estis en la vendejo.

– She bought the prettiest dress that was in the store.

When **kiu** is the direct object in the subclause, the **-n** ending is added to it.

La filmo, **kiun** ni spektis hieraŭ, estis tre interesa.

– The film that we saw yesterday was very interesting.

Montru al mi la libron, **kiun** vi ĵus aĉetis. – Show me the book that you just bought.

The **-j** ending shows that the word is plural.

Mi vidis knabojn, **kiuj** manĝis torton. – I saw boys who were eating pie.

Montru al mi la librojn, **kiujn** vi ĵus aĉetis. – Show me the books that you just bought.

Kio

Kio is used to replace the idea of the main clause or to present something indefinite. If you are replacing an entire phrase, not just a noun, use **kio**, rather than **kiu**. In English, **kio** is normally translated as “what”. Since **kio** is used to represent indefinite, nonspecific ideas, it is never plural; therefore, you will never see the form *kioj*. It is never used to describe a noun, so is never used to say *kio domo* or *kio ideo*; instead, use **kiu domo** or **kiu ideo**.

Tio, pri **kio** li parolis, ŝajnis nekredebla. – What he was talking about seemed unbelievable.

Mi tre bone scias, **kio** ĝojigas vin. – I know very well what makes you happy.

When **kio** acts as an object in the clause, the **-n** ending is added to it.

Mi faros ĉion, **kion** mi povos. – I will do everything that I can.

Vi rakontis al mi ion, **kion** mi neniam forgesos.

– You told me something that I will never forget.

Kies

Kies introduces a clause which shows possession or ownership. It is normally translated as “whose” in English.

Ĉi tien venos kantistoj, **kies** kantoj estas tre popularaj.

– Singers whose songs are very popular will come here.

La knabino, **kies** haroj estas tre belaj, venis al mia frato.

– The girl, whose hair is very pretty, came to my brother.

Kiam

Kiam introduces a clause which describes time. It is normally translated as “when”.

En tiu tempo, **kiam** mi manĝis, ŝi televidis.

– In that time while I was eating, she was watching TV.

Kiam mi venis al li, li dormis.

– When I came to him, he was sleeping.

Kie

Kie introduces a clause which describes location. It is normally translated as “where”.

Mi volis resti tie, **kie** mi estis. – I wanted to remain (there) where I was.

Apud tiu loko, **kie** li loĝas, estas granda arbaro.

– Next to the place where he lives is a large forest.

The **-n** ending is added to **kie** to show direction of movement; the meaning becomes “to where?”.

En tiu loko, **kien** mi venis, estis multe da homoj.

– In the place that I came to, there were many people.

Kia

Kia introduces a clause which describes properties or qualities. It is often translated as “what sort of”, “what kind of”, or “how”.

Li estis tia, **kia** li devus esti. – He is how he had to be.

Hodiaŭ ne estas tia bela tago, **kia** estis hieraŭ.

– Today is not the kind of pretty day that it was yesterday.

When **kia** acts as an object in the clause, the **-n** ending is added to it.

Li manĝis tian bongustan viandon, **kian** li ankoraŭ neniam antaŭe manĝis.

– He ate the kind of tasty meat that he had never before eaten.

The **-j** ending shows that the word is plural.

Mi aŭskultis tiajn kantojn, **kiajn** mi kutime neniam aŭskultas.

– I heard the kind of songs that I usually never hear.

Kiel

Kiel introduces a clause which describes manner or degree. It is often translated as “like” or “how”.

- Neniam estos tiel, **kiel** estis antaŭe. – It will never be like how it was before.
Li volis nin helpi tiel, **kiel** li povis. – He wanted to help us in the way that he could.

Kiom

Kiom introduces a clause which describes a quantity or measure. It is often translated as “how much”, “as much” or “as many”.

- Manĝu tiom multe, **kiom** vi volas. – Eat as much as you want.
Mi donis al ili tiom da bombonoj, **kiom** mi havis. – I gave them as many candies as I had.

Kial

Kial introduces a clause which describes a cause or motive. It is often translated as “why”.

- Unu el la ĉefaj kaŭzoj, **kial** homoj lernas Esperanton, estas tio, ke ĝi estas facile lernebla.
– One of the main reasons why people learn Esperanto is that it is easy to learn.

Word building

One root in Esperanto can make many words when combined with various grammatical word endings, or with Esperanto’s system of affixes. That means that you don’t need to memorize as many words as in other languages, yet you can still express yourself easily.

Esperanto’s word endings, which mark grammatical function, can also be used to increase your vocabulary:

Root word = **skrib-**

- skribo – (the act of) writing
skriba – written
skribi – to write
skribe – in writing

Root word = **interes-**

- intereso – an interest
interesa – interesting
interesi – to interest [someone]
interese – interestingly, in an interesting way

You can also increase your vocabulary through the creation of compound words. When you create a compound word, you can keep or drop the word ending of the first word, depending on which is easier to pronounce.

skrib- + **tabl-** → **skribotablo** / **skribtablo** – writing table, desk

Using Esperanto’s many prefixes and suffixes, you can construct new words that all Esperanto speakers will understand, using roots you already know. The next section, *Affixes*, talks about that.

Affixes

Affixes (prefixes and suffixes) are very important in Esperanto. They are the foundation of the creation of new vocabulary in Esperanto, and they are your ticket to expressing ideas that you don't know another word for. There are 10 prefixes and 32 suffixes. It may seem like a lot to memorize, but fluent use of Esperanto's system of affixes will make a big difference in your ease of communication.

Prefixes

| | | | |
|-------------|--|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| bo- | related by marriage | patro – father | bopatro – father-in-law |
| dis- | in several directions | doni – to give | disdoni – to distribute |
| ek- | (suddenly) begin | vidi – to see | ekvidi – to catch a first glimpse |
| eks- | former, ex- | reĝo – king | eksreĝo – ex-king |
| fi- | bad (in principle referring to character) | ŝerco – joke | fiŝerco – dirty joke |
| ge- | the two sexes together | patro – father | gepatroj – parents |
| mal- | inverse; opposite | bona – good | malbona – bad |
| mis- | not rightly; in error | uzi – to use | misuzi – to abuse |
| pra- | prehistoric or great- (when talking about descendants) | tempo – time | pratempo – ancient times |
| re- | again, another time; back (in the reverse direction) | veni – to come | reveni – to return |

Suffixes

| | | | |
|--------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| -aĉ- | bad in quality | skribi – to write | skribaĉi – to scrawl |
| -ad- | continuous or repeated action | kanti – to sing | kantado – singing |
| -aĵ- | a concrete example of a quality, or the product of an action | alta – high konstrui – to build | altaĵo – a height, high place konstruaĵo – a building |
| -an- | member of a group | Kristo – Christ | kristano – Christian |
| -ar- | many taken as a whole | arbo – tree | arbaro – forest |
| -ĉj- | informal form of male names (after a syllable or two of the name) | patro – father Davido – David | paĉjo – Dad Daĉjo – Dave |
| -ebl- | can be done, -able | legi – to read | legebla – legible |
| -ec- | quality as an abstract idea, -ness | rapida – fast | rapideco – speed |
| -eg- | very large; very strongly | varma – warm | varmega – hot |

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--|--|
| -ej- | place | kuiiri – cook | kuirejo – kitchen |
| -em- | inclination or tendency | dormi – to sleep | dormema – sleepy |
| -end- | must be done, required | legi – to read | legenda – must be read |
| -er- | fragment, one of many similar pieces, a small piece of a whole | sablo – sand kuko – cake | sablero – grain of sand kukero – cake crumb |
| -estr- | person who guides or rules; a leader | lernejo – school | lernejestro – principal/head teacher |
| -et- | very small; very weakly | varma – warm | varmeta – lukewarm |
| -id- | offspring | hundo – dog | hundo – puppy |
| -ig- | cause ___ to be, cause ___ to do | labori – to work alta – high | laborigi – to put to work altigi – to raise (something) up |
| -iĝ- | become | ruĝa – red sidi – to sit | ruĝiĝi – to blush (to become red) sidiĝi – to sit down (to become seated) |
| -il- | instrument, tool | tranĉi – to cut | tranĉilo – knife |
| -in- | female version | knabo – boy | knabino – girl |
| -ind- | good to do, worthy of | legi – to read | leginda – worth reading |
| -ing- | a holder for something | kandelo – candle | kandelingo – candlestick |
| -ism- | way of thought, belief system | kristano – Christian | kristanismo – Christianity |
| -ist- | practitioner of a profession, continued hobby or way of thinking, -ist | biciklo – bicycle kuraci – to cure | biciklisto – bicyclist kuracisto – doctor |
| -nj- | informal form of female names (after a syllable or two of the name) | patrino – mother | panjo – Mom/Mum |
| -obl- | multiplication; times | du – two | duoblo – double |
| -on- | fraction | du – two | duono – half |
| -op- | group of | du – two | duopo – a pair |
| -uj- | container | mono – money | monujo – wallet, change purse |
| -ul- | person | juna – young | junulo – a youth |
| -um- | no fixed meaning; -um- words have a fixed, well-known meaning, or one that can be easily understood from the context | komuna – common kolo – neck malvarma – cold cerbo – brain | komunumo – community kolumo – collar malvarmumo – a cold (sickness) |

| | | | |
|--|--|---------------|--|
| | | kafejo – cafe | cerbumi – to brainstorm kafejumi – to relax in a cafe with friends |
|--|--|---------------|--|

Several prefixes and suffixes can be used together. The meaning is determined through the logical order in which the affixes appear.

patro – father → **bogepatroj** – parents-in-law
labori – to work → **mallaborema** – lazy

ludi – to play → ludilo – toy
ludileto – small toy; ludilujo – toy box
ludiletujo – toy box for small toys; ludilujeto – a toy box which is small

Many prefixes and suffixes can be used as independent words, combined with an appropriate grammatical ending:

ilo – tool
ekas – begins, starts

Use of **-iĝ-** and **-ig-**

Many students have difficulties when deciding when to use the endings **-ig-** and **-iĝ-**. These explanations will help you choose the right word.

A **transitive verb** is a verb which can have a direct object. That is, it acts directly on some person or thing, and if you want to make the sentence precise, you can name the thing it acts on. These verbs convey the action from the subject to the object.

An **intransitive verb** is a verb which cannot have a direct object and does not act directly on any person or thing.

The suffix **-ig-** is a common suffix for verbs. It means “to cause (the object) to do something or become something”. The root, which sits before the suffix, shows the final result of the action. The object of an **-ig-** verb is the person or thing that ends up changing its state or doing the specified action. The subject is the person or thing that causes that to happen.

A verb with the suffix **-ig-** is always **transitive**. That is, it is always used with a direct object, without a preposition.

Ŝi pur**ig**is la plankon. – She cleaned the floor. (= made the floor clean)
Li daŭr**ig**is sian laboron. – He continued his (own) work. (= caused his work to continue)
Ŝi dorm**ig**is sian infanon. – She put her child to sleep. (= caused the child to sleep)
Ni ord**ig**is la ĉambron. – We put the room in order. (= caused the room to be orderly)
La gepatroj edz**ig**is lin, kiam li havis 16 jarojn.
– The parents married him off when he was 16 years old. (= caused him to marry)

The suffix **-iĝ-** means “to become”. The suffix is mostly used to form verbs. The part of the word which sits before the suffix **-iĝ-** shows the result of the transition or change. The subject is the thing which undergoes the change.

A verb with the suffix **-iĝ-** is always **intransitive**. That is, after the verb, you can *never* use a direct object.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Ĉiuj homoj finfine maljuniĝas. | – All people grow old in the end. (= become old) |
| Hodiaŭ mi vekigiĝis je la sepa horo. | – Today, I woke up at seven o'clock. (= became awake) |
| La koncerto komenciĝis ĝustatempe. | – The concert started on time. (= became started) |
| La pordo malfermiĝis mallaŭte. | – The door opened quietly. (= became opened) |
| Lia vizaĝo tre ruĝiĝis pro frosto. | – His face turned very red because of the cold. (= became red) |