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## AN EIGHT PAGE COURSE IN ESPERANTO

By DONALD BROADRIBB

A language course in eight pages? I don't guarantee you will know *all* of Esperanto after you have studied this leaflet. But you will know some, and that some will get you a long way.

### LESSON ONE

<i>tablo</i> = table	pronounced:	TAH-blo
<i>libro</i> = book	pronounced:	LEE-bro
<i>estas</i> = is	pronounced:	ESS-tahs
<i>sur</i> = on	pronounced:	soor
<i>la</i> = the	pronounced:	lah

You will notice that all Esperanto words are accented on the next to last vowel. The vowels all have one pronunciation each: *a* sounds like English ah; *e* sounds like English eh; *i* sounds like English ee as in see; *o* as in for; and *u* like oo as in too.

You can now make a sentence: *La libro estas sur la tablo*.

For this course to work it is essential that you memorise every Esperanto word as it is presented.

### LESSON TWO

*mi* = I or me (the Esperanto *mi* is pronounced just like the English me)

New sentence: *Mi estas sur la tablo*.

You will notice that the English words *be*, *am*, *is*, *are* are all just *estas* in Esperanto.

### LESSON THREE

<i>kato</i> - cat	pronounced:	CAH-to
<i>hundo</i> = dog	pronounced:	HOON-do
<i>sub</i> = under	pronounced:	soob
<i>kaj</i> = and	pronounce <i>aj</i> like the <i>igh</i> in <i>high</i>	
<i>skribas</i> = write, writes	pronounced:	SCREE-bahs

New Sentences:

*La kato estas sur la tablo*.

*La hundo estas sub la tablo*.

*La kato estas sur la tablo kaj la hundo estas sub la tablo*.

*Mi skribas sur la tablo*.

### LESSON FOUR

*ĉu* = makes a question

*ne* = no, not

*jes* = yes pronounced: yes

New sentences:

*Ĉu la hundo estas sur la tablo?* “Is the dog on the table?”

*Ne, la hundo estas sub la tablo.*

*Ĉu mi skribas sur la tablo?*

*Jes.*

## LESSON FIVE

*Havas* = have, has pronounced: HAH-vas

Look at this sentence: *Mi skribas libron sur la tablo.*

You will notice that Esperanto does not use any word such as “a” or “an” in English. So the sentence means “I write a book on the table”.

An *-n* has been added to *libro*. This happens whenever the target of an action is expressed. What I am doing is writing. What I am doing it to is the book.

Now look at this sentence: *Mi havas libron sur la tablo.* To put it as a question you say *Ĉu mi havas libron sur la tablo?* In English we would say “Do I have a book on the table?” The answer will be “*jes* or *ne*” depending on which is true. You can put *ĉu* in front of virtually any sentence to turn it into a question. For example, the very common phrase *Ĉu ne?* (“No?”)

Now try this question: *Ĉu mi estas libro sur la tablo* The answer is *ne*, for obvious reasons. (If it is not obvious to you, go back and study lessons 1-4 again.) Notice that there is no *-n* added to *libro* this time. That is because “to be something” is not considered as doing anything.

## LESSON SIX

<i>sidas</i> = sit	pronounced:	SEE-dahs
<i>sidis</i> = sat	pronounced:	SEED-ees
<i>skribis</i> = wrote	pronounced:	SKREE-bees
<i>seĝo</i> = chair	pronounced:	SAY-jo
<i>vi</i> = you	pronounced:	vee

New sentences:

*Mi sidas sur seĝo kaj skribas sur la tablo.*

*Mi sidis sur seĝo kaj skribis sur la tablo.*

*La kato estis sub la tablo, la hundo estis sur la seĝo, kaj mi — mi estis sur la tablo kaj mi skribis leteron sur la tablo.”*

We cannot expect very inspiring dialogue at this stage in our studies, but at

*Miaj libroj estas sur la tablo* = my books are on the table.

But: *Sendu la librojn al mi* = send the books to me. (Why *mi* and not *min*? Because nothing is being done to me. If it were “send me to the table” it would be *sendu min al la tablo*. Got it?)

Other useful words in most common usage:

*aĉeti* = to buy

*aŭdi* = to hear

*memori* = to remember (so: *memoro* = memory!)

*uzi* = to use

*pordo* = a door

*mono* = money

*meti* = to put

*teni* = to hold

*stari* = to stand

*rapida* = fast, quick

*nova* = new

*aĵo* a thing (so *novaĵo* = a new thing, a novelty, news; *skribaĵo* = something written, a writing; *havaĵo* = something had, a possession; *aĉetaĵo* = something bought, a purchase; etc.)

*ĉefa* = chief, main (so: *ĉefaĵo* = the main thing; *mia ĉefamiko* = my main friend; *li ĉefe aĉetas* = he mainly buys; even *la ĉefaĉetaĵo* = the principal purpose.) You can have fun inventing even more combination words as you like, as long as they make sense. But the longer and more complicated they are, the less you will find them used in everyday writing or speaking.

*Aŭstralio* = Australia

*Usono* = U.S.A.

*Nov-Zelando* = New Zealand

*Irlando* = Ireland

*ano* = a member

*morti* = to die

*klara* = clear

*vivi* = to live

*eco* = a quality

*klareco* = clarity (so: *grandeco* = size; *amikeco* = friendship; *rapideco* = speed; etc.)

*Aŭstraliano* = an Australian (so: *Usonano* = an American; *Novzelandano* = a New Zealander; *La Irlandanoj* = The Irish; etc.)

*aro* = a group, collection (so: *libraro* = a collection of books; *infanaro* = a group of children; *amikaro* = a fellowship; *nomaro* = a list of names; *ĉambraro* = a suite of rooms; *belaĵaro* = a collection of beautiful objects; etc.)

*homo* = a human being

*homaro* = the human race

*ami* to love

*kompreni* = to understand.

By this point you probably would like something bigger and more detailed to learn Esperanto with. Courses are run in every capital city, there are correspondence courses available, there are even Esperanto courses on the Internet! And if you prefer to study entirely on your own, the Australian Esperanto Association's book catalogue lists textbooks and dictionaries available.

## LESSON EIGHT

<i>timi</i>	= to fear	<i>sed</i>	= but
<i>tre</i>	= very	<i>multo</i>	= a large quantity
<i>ĉar</i>	= because	<i>ili</i>	= they
<i>li</i>	= he	<i>ĝi</i>	= it
<i>ankaŭ</i>	= also, too	<i>morgaŭ</i>	= tomorrow
<i>infano</i>	= a child	<i>feliĉa</i>	= happy
<i>granda</i>	= big	<i>helpi</i>	= to help
<i>ŝi</i>	= she (pronounced exactly like the English word!)		

*almenaŭ* = at least (pronounced: ahl-MAY-now)

In English we often use two words where Esperanto uses only one. For example, in English we distinguish between “he” and “him” — “He is a friend” but “I see him”. In Esperanto we need only one word: *Li estas amiko* and *Mi vidas lin*. The ordinary *-n* which we can place on any Esperanto word makes the difference between “he” and “him” without having to learn two words.

Now try these out: *Ŝi estas amika* (“She is friendly”) and *Mi vidas ŝin* (“I see her”).

You have to be consistent, though: *Ĝi estas sur la tablo* (“It is on the table”) and *Mi vidas ĝin* (“I see it”). English is inconsistent, using separate words for I and me, he and him, she and her, we and us, they and them; but not for the two uses of “you” and “it”. Esperanto is completely consistent:

<i>Ĝi estas libro</i> — It is a book	<i>Mi vidas ĝin</i> — I see it
<i>Vi estas amiko</i> — You are a friend	<i>Mi vidas vin</i> — I see you
<i>Ili estas amikoj</i> — They are friends	<i>Mi vidas ilin</i> — I see them
<i>Mi estas amiko</i> — I am a friend	<i>Ili vidas min</i> — They see me

The following are among the most commonly used words in Esperanto. Each of them can, of course, be varied by using them the same way as all the other words we have seen in Esperanto. As long as the resulting word makes sense it is acceptable. It doesn’t matter whether there is an exact English equivalent or not.

<i>sendi</i>	= to send	<i>al</i>	= to
<i>ĉambro</i>	= a hand	<i>flanko</i>	= a side
<i>jaro</i>	= a year	<i>unu</i>	= one
<i>mano</i>	= a hand	<i>du</i>	= two
<i>nomo</i>	= a name	<i>tri</i>	= three
<i>mia</i>	= my, mind	<i>via</i>	= your, yours

(and similarly *ĝia* = its; *lia* = his; *nia* = our, ours; *ilia* = their, theirs; and watch out for *ŝia* = her, hers)

least we can make some sentences. Silly as they may be, these sentences illustrate something important: any action (verb) can be made to refer to the present by using the ending *-as*, and to refer to the past by using the ending *-is*. There are no exceptions. Even if there is no such word in English, it can be done, provided it makes sense.

It is very important not to rely on translating Esperanto sentences into English to see what they mean, but to become familiar enough with the words to understand them directly you see or hear them.

There isn’t much grammar you need to know in order to say most things, provided you learn the words and apply the rules carefully. What you need to know for this purpose is:

**Making plurals** — place *j* after the *o*, and before the *n* if there is one: *libroj*, *librojn*; *tabloj*, *tablojn*; *katoj*, *katojn*; *leteroj*, *leterojn*, etc. *oj* sounds like the *oy* in the English word boy, and *ojn* sounds like the *oin* in coin.

**Adjectives** — *bela* = beautiful. “Beautiful” is an adjective. Adjectives in Esperanto end in *-a*. *Bela kato* = a beautiful cat. *Belaj katoj* = beautiful cats. (Yes. You put the *j* on the *bela* as well as the *kato*!) *Vi skribis belan leteron* = You wrote a beautiful letter. *Vi skribis belajn leterojn* (work out the meaning for yourself, this time).

**Adverbs** — *glorie* = gloriously. “Gloriously” is an adverb, and in Esperanto adverbs end in *-e*. So, *gloria* means... Glorious, yes. And *gloro*? Glory, of course. In most languages you have to learn three separate words to say all of that. In Esperanto once you know *-a*, *-e*, and *-o* (you may have already noticed for yourself that simple nouns end in *-o*) you can create such forms from any word you like, again whether or not there is a simple English equivalent. Try this: *kata* = cattish. And so *kate* = cattishly. How about *hunda*? And *hunde*? Doggish and doggishly. *Amiko* means friend. Can you work out *amika* and *amike*?<sup>1</sup> Try puzzling out *letera* and *letere*.<sup>2</sup>

**Future time** — use *-os* at the end. *Mi skribos* = I shall/will write. *Vi havos* = you will have.

**Conditional** (in English we usually use a separate word such as “may” or “might” of “would” for this) — *Mi skribus* = I might/would write. *Vi havus* = you might/would have. *Mi havus palacon se mi havus monon* = “I would have a palace if I would have money.”

These examples illustrate the point that the Esperanto forms refer to time —

<sup>1</sup> “Friendly” and — for want of a single word in English, “in friendly fashion”. Esperanto is rather more economical than English.

<sup>2</sup> *Letera* has no exact equivalent in English. “In letter form” would be about as close as we can come to it. For *letere* perhaps “by letter”.

the past, the present, the future. You cannot slavishly translate English sentences word for word, you must think of what they mean and then say that same meaning in Esperanto. “The dog sat” and “the dog was sitting” both refer to the past, so Esperanto prefers to use just the one form for both sentences: *sidis* unless there is some special reason for a longer and more complicated sentence.

**Infinitive:** in English this is usually expressed by putting the word “to” before a verb: to go, to say, to see, to write, to have. In Esperanto infinitives end in -i: *iri, diri, vidi, skribi, havi*. *Mi volas iri* = “I want to go”. (You may recognise *vol* from our English word “volition”.) *Diri* = to say; *vidi* = to see; *skribi* = to write; *havi* = to have.

Of course you can use all the other endings to make forms of words that you want to use: *mi diras* = I say; *vi vidis* = you saw; *la kato havis muson* = the cat had a mouse. *La hundo sidis sub la tablo* = the dog sat under the table. (Or, better: “the dog was sitting under the table”.) *Li ricevos leteron* = he will receive a letter.

**Commands:** In English we usually make commands by our tone of voice, and this tone of voice is usual in Esperanto too. But sometimes in English we use extra words to emphasise that we mean a command: “You must go now!” and the like. In Esperanto the ending -u is always used in commands: *Iru nun!* = Go now! (If you want to add in the word *vi* you may: *Vi iru nun!* but since the *u* of *iru* already shows it’s a command, adding *vi* is not required, though it does give more emphasis.)

This is not *all* the grammar there is in Esperanto. There’s plenty more, and you’ll want it for your intimate conversations with a friend. But it is enough to let you say pretty much everything you want to say in a simple fashion, provided you learn the word. In the following lessons apart from words you will meet a few more bits of grammar thrown in when you aren’t quite expecting it. You’ll find them useful.

## LESSON SEVEN

<i>viro</i>	= a male	<i>viando</i>	= meat
<i>ino</i>	= a female	<i>kafo</i>	= coffee
<i>mangi</i>	= to eat	<i>teo</i>	= tea
<i>lakto</i>	= milk	<i>amiko</i>	= a friend
<i>trinki</i>	= to drink	<i>vidi</i>	= to see

It will be assumed that you are pronouncing all these words carefully. Remember that Esperanto is written phonetically, so it is important to make sure your spoken words conform to the written words. You may be tempted to give an English sound to Esperanto words that look a lot like English words, but resist that temptation. *Labor-Partio* looks like, and means, “Labor Party”, and it is true that the second word sounds almost

like English: “party-o” but remember to accent the next to last vowel: pronounce it as par-TEA-o. And though the first word looks identical to the English *Labor* it is pronounced quite differently. It is a shortened form of the word *laboro* which is pronounced lah-BORE-o. (Be sure to pronounce the *r* clearly!) In *Labor-partio* where two words have been combined with a hyphen between them, it is allowable to leave out the final *o* on the first words, unless you feel the *o* makes it easier for you to pronounce the word. Actually the hyphen can be dispensed with altogether if you like: *Laborpartio* or *Labor-partio* are equally good words.

Here are a few useful points: *La virkato trinkis la lakton* = “the male cat (tomcat) drank the milk”.

*La katino mangis la viandon* = “The female cat ate the meat”.

If you want to emphasise the sex of something that is how you do it. Usually just a simple *kato* (“cat”) is enough.

Of course you can do exactly the same thing with *hundo* or any other appropriate word: *La virhundo mangas viandon, la hundino trinkas lakton*. But it is not usual to emphasise the sex unless there is some special reason to do so. By the way, notice:

*La viro trinkas kafon* = “the man (male) is drinking coffee.

*La ino trinkas teon* = “the female is drinking tea”.

If it is appropriate to the circumstances, *viro* and *ino* are presumed to refer to people.

An important curiosity: Though *ino* (“a female”) is perfectly good Esperanto, the peculiar combination word *virino* is more commonly used to mean “a woman”. Esperanto is not always logical!

If you want to emphasise that both sexes are involved, you can put the word *ge* in front:<sup>1</sup> *gekatoj, gehundoj*, etc. This can be useful in saving time when speaking: *geamikoj* is easier and shorter than the English equivalent “male and female friends”.

Unfortunately in an eight page language course there is not room to put in a lot of model sentences. So try your hand at making as many sentences as possible with the words and rules of grammar you are given. You can’t go far wrong. It is better to learn thoroughly and get well accustomed to using what you have had presented to you than to try to make your sentences too complicated even though that might be fun.

<sup>1</sup> In other learning aids you will read a lot about “prefixes” and “suffixes”, and you will be told “ge” is a prefix, that “in” is a suffix, etc. By “prefix” is meant that it goes at the start, “suffix” that it goes at the end, when you are making words. There is not much more to be said about these two categories, although most textbooks manage to stretch them out so as to cover many pages. Don’t be frightened off Esperanto merely because textbook writers like to give fancy grammatical names to simple, everyday things.