

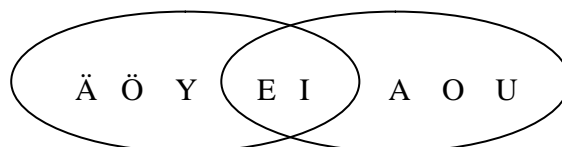
Finnish for Beginners

GRAMMAR

VOWEL HARMONY:

There are 8 vowels in the Finnish alphabet. The vowels **a, o, u** can never occur together with **ä, ö, y** in a single word, unless it is a compound word. This is called **vowel harmony**.

The vowels **e** and **i** can with any vowel. They are neutral vowels. It is important to keep your **a**'s and **ä**'s separate as the meaning as the meaning of the words or sentence can be different – sometimes very different!



CONSONANT CHANGES:

An important issue while trying to learn Finnish is the consonant changes in the words. If you are changing one word to its genitive form or just conjugating the verbs, sometimes you will need to face the consonant changes from strong to weak ones. Here are the major changes you will need to do.

kk – k	rt – rr
tt – t	mp – mm
pp – p	k – -
nk – ng	t – d
nt – nn	p – v
lt – ll	

VERBS:

The verbs in Finnish are divided in 5 main groups plus an additional group for irregular verbs. Depending on the ending of each verb in infinitive form, is the group to which it belongs. For the verbs of each natural group (not irregular) we repeat the endings for each person following the next criteria:

Minä	-n	Me	-mme
Sinä	-t	Te	-tte
		He	-vat

VERB GROUP 1

- Infinitive ends with two vowels (the last one is “a” and you always remove it).
- The first person of singular (minä form) has only one of the vowels at the end.
- There is [change in the consonants](#) so the third person of singular and plural as well as the infinitive form have strong consonants and the rest weak ones.

Infinitive / Person	LUKEA	KIRJOITTA	SOPIA	KERTO
Minä	Lue n	Kirjoitan	Sovian	Kerron
Sinä	Luet	Kirjoitat	Soviat	Kerrot
Hän	Lukee	Kirjoittaa	Sopiaa	Kertoo
Me	Luemme	Kirjoitamme	Soviamme	Kerromme
Te	Luette	Kirjoitatte	Soviatte	Kerrotte
He	Lukevat	Kirjoittavat	Sopivat	Kertovat
<i>Meaning</i>	<i>To Read</i>	<i>To Write</i>	<i>To Agree</i>	<i>To Tell</i>

VERB GROUP 2

- Infinitive ends with “-da/-dä”.
- The first person of singular (minä form) has just one syllable or ends with “-oin”.
- There is no consonant change.

Infinitive / Person	KÄYDÄ	TUODA	JUODA	TUPAKOIDA
Minä	Käyn	Tuon	Juon	Tupakoin
Sinä	Käyt	Tuot	Juot	Tupakoit
Hän	Käy	Tuo	Juo	Tupakoi
Me	Käymme	Tuomme	Juomme	Tupakoimme
Te	Käytte	Tuotte	Juotte	Tupakoitte
He	Käyvat	Tuovat	Juovat	Tupakoivat
<i>Meaning</i>	<i>To Visit</i>	<i>To Bring</i>	<i>To Drink</i>	<i>To Smoke</i>

VERB GROUP 3

- Infinitive ends with two consonants and a vowel (-KKV) “-lla/-llä”, “-nna/-nnä”, “-rra/-rrä”, “-sta/-stä”.

- The first person of singular (mina form) changes the ending to “-len”, “-nen”, “-ren”, “-sen”.
- There is change in the consonants only if the infinitive ending is “-lla/-llä”
- The infinitive form always has a weak consonant, while all the persons have strong consonants.

Infinitive / Person	MENNÄ	PESTÄ	PURRÄ	KUUNNELLA
Minä	Menen	Pesen	Puren	Kuunelen
Sinä	Menet	Peset	Puret	Kuunelet
Hän	Menee	Pesee	Puree	Kuunelee
Me	Menemme	Pesemme	Puremme	Kuunelemme
Te	Menette	Pesette	Purette	Kuunelette
He	Menevat	Pesevat	Purevat	Kuunelevat
<i>Meaning</i>	<i>To Go</i>	<i>To Wash</i>	<i>To Bite</i>	<i>To Listen</i>

VERB GROUP 4

- Infinitive ends with vocal (but no “i”) “-ta/-tä”.
- The ending is removed and you add “-a/-ä” (with the third person of singular you need to repeat the vowel).
- The infinitive form always has a weak consonant, while all the persons have strong consonants.

Infinitive / Person	TAVATA	PAKKATA	VALITA
Minä	Tapaan	Pakkan	Vallian
Sinä	Tapaat	Pakkat	Valliat
Hän	Tapaa	Pakaa	Valliaa
Me	Tapaamme	Pakkamme	Valliamme
Te	Tapaatte	Pakkatte	Valliatte
He	Tapaa vat	Pakkavat	Vallia vat
<i>Meaning</i>	<i>To Meet</i>	<i>To Pack</i>	<i>To choose</i>

VERB GROUP 5

- Infinitive ends with “-ita”.
- The first person of singular (mina form) ends with “-itsen”.

IRREGULAR VERBS

- There are a few irregular verbs that you need to memorize. These are only a couple but watch out for them because you don’t know when are you going to find them.

Infinitive / Person	TEHDÄ	NÄHDÄ	OLLA	JUOSTA
Minä	Teen	Näen	Olen	Juoksen
Sinä	Teet	Näet	Olet	Joukset
Hän	Tekee	Näkee	On	Jouksee
Me	Teemme	Näemme	Olemme	Juoksemme
Te	Teette	Näette	Olette	Juoksette
He	Tekevät	Näkevät	Ovat	Jouksevat
<i>Meaning</i>	<i>To Do</i>	<i>To See</i>	<i>To Be</i>	<i>To Run</i>

GENITIVE:

There are a few rules you need to follow in order to get the genitive form for a word. Mainly you need to check the ending of the word and in some cases try to guess if the word is from old Finnish or a borrowed one. Also don't forget to make any [consonant changes](#) and [vowel harmony](#) necessary.

BASIC FORM STRONG, GENETIVE WEAK

- **“-a”, “-o”, “-u”, “-y”, “-ä”, “-ö”**

In this case you only need to add a “-n” at the end of the word. Some examples are:

- Talo – Talon
- Vessa – Vessan
- Aurinko – Auringon
- Kampa – Kamman

- **“-i” for borrowed words from other languages**

In this case, as above, you only need to add a “-n” at the end of the word. Some examples are:

- Bussi – Bussin
- Tomaatti – Tomaatin
- Äiti – Aidin
- Paperi - Paperin

- **“-i”**

In this case you need to change the last “i” for and “e” and also add a “-n” at the end of the word. Some examples are:

- Nimi – Nimen
- Lapsi – Lapsen
- Kieli – Kielen
- Vuori - Vuoren

- “-si”

Here is very similar to the previous case, but change the “-si” for a “-de” and add a “-n” at the end of the word. Some examples are:

- Vuosi – Vuoden
- Vesi – Veden
- Susi – Suden

- “-e”

For the last case in this section the procedure is to repeat the “e” and add the “-n” at the end. Some examples are:

- Huone – Huoneen
- Perhe – Perheen
- Kirje - Kirjeen

CONSONANT AT THE END OF THE WORD

- “-nen”

For the “-nen” case, the ending changes to “-sen”. Some examples are:

- Nainen – Naisen
- Espanjalainen – Espanjalaisen
- Sininen - Sinisen

- “-us”, “-ys”, “-os”

The change for these endings is a little bit different, becoming “-uksen”, “-yksen” and “-oksen”. Some examples are:

- Kerros – Kerrosken
- Tutkimus – Tutkimuksen
- Mainos - Mainoksen

- “-as”

For the words ending in “-as”, the genitive form changes the last part to “-aan”. You must notice that here you make the consonant change to get a strong one. Some examples are:

- Rakas – Rakkaan
- Rikas – Rikkaan
- Lounas - Lounaan

- “-si”

Here is very similar to the previous case, but change the “-si” for a “-de” and add a “-n” at the end of the word. Some examples are:

- Vuosi – Vuoden
- Vesi – Veden
- Susi – Suden
- Sairas - Saira

- “-in”

In this case you only need to change it for a “-imen” at the end of the word. As in the previous case check the [consonant change](#). Some examples are:

- Paahdin – Paahtimen
- Puhelin – Puhelimen
- Laskin - Laskimen

- “-is”

For this ending the changes goes from “-is” to “-iin”. Some examples are:

- Kaunis – Kauniin
- Kallis – Kalliin
- Valmis – Valmiin

PLURAL

For the plural nouns the methodology is almost the same. The only difference between genitives and plurals is the last ending. Where genitives ends with an “-n” the plurals have a “-t” following the same rules above described.

Noun	Genitive	Plural
Matto	Maton	Matot
Pöytä	Pöydän	Pöydät
Bussi	Bussin	Bussit
Pappi	Papin	Papit

THE DAYS OF THE WEEK:

The days of the week is a subject you will need to deal with while being in Finland, almost all the human activity is related with the time. Days are the most common expression for time. Here are the days of the week and, because of the Finnish grammar, how to say “in” the day.

Maanantai	Monday	Maanantaina	in Monday
Tiistai	Tuesday	Tiistaina	in Tuesday
Keskiviikko	Wednesday	Keskiviikkona	in Wednesday
Torstai	Thursday	Torstaina	in Thursday
Perjantai	Friday	Perjantaina	in Friday
Lauantai	Saturday	Lauantaina	in Saturday
Sunnuntai	Sunday	Sunnuntaina	in Sunday

THE FAMILY:

When introducing yourself with a Finn or just to fill paper work and applications is important to remember the family. The family in Finnish is called “perhe” and includes the basic members.

Isä	Father	Isoisä	Grandfather
Äiti	Mother	Isoäiti	Grandmother
Veli	Brother	Isoveli	Big Brother
Sisko	Sister	Isosisko	Big Sister

You can continue to add the prefix “pikku” like “iso” but this time to mean is the little brother or sister (of course there is no little mother).

THE TIME:

A basic part of every language is the time and how to ask and answer questions about it. Finnish language is not so different from others, you can also say “quarter after” and “quarter to”. The only difference is that fins use the “half before” instead the classical “half past”. Now, some ways to manage the time are:

Mitä kello on? What time is it? Kello on ...

8:00 Kahdeksan	8:05 Viisi <u>yli</u> kahdeksan	8:15 Varttia <u>yli</u> kahdeksan	8:30 <u>Puoli</u> yhdeksän
Eight o'clock	Five <u>past</u> eight	Quarter <u>past</u> eight	<u>Half</u> past eight
8:35 Kaksikymmentä viisi <u>vaille</u> yhdeksän	8:45 Varttia <u>vaille</u> yhdeksän	8:55 <u>Vähän</u> vaille yhdeksän	9:00 <u>Tasan</u> yhdeksän
Twenty-five <u>to</u> nine	Quarter <u>to</u> nine	<u>A bit</u> to nine	<u>Exact</u> nine o'clock

Some important vocabulary in this area is related with the numbers and time words. Below are some words you will need to know.

Sekunti – Second	Viiko – Week	Yli - Past	Varttia – Quarter
Minutti – Minute	Kuukausi – Month	Puoli - half	Vähän – A little
Tunti – Hour	Vuosi - Year	Vaille - to	Tasan - Exactly
Vuorokausi – 24 hrs (day)			

Also, there are some other ways to ask the time like: “**Kuinka paljon kello on?**” (**Paljonko?**). When the question is trying to know at what time (exact time) the question is:

Mihin aikaan? At what time?

In this case the answer is the same than before but with the difference that you need to add the ending “**-lta**” to the exact and half hours.

1	yksi + lta	-	yhdeltä
2	kaksi + lta	-	kahdelta
3	kolme + lta	-	kolmelta
4	neljä + lta	-	neljältä
5	viisi + lta	-	viideltä
6	kuusi + lta	-	kuudelta
7	seitsemän + lta	-	seitsemältä
8	kahdeksan + lta	-	kahdeksalta
9	yhdeksän + lta	-	yhdeksältä
10	kymmenen + lta	-	Kymmeneltä
11	yksitoista + lta	-	yhdeltätoista
12	kaksitoista + lta	-	kahdeltatoista

THE WEATHER:

The weather “ilma” is something that Finns like to talk about, so it is important to know how to blame all kind of Finnish weathers.

Kylmä	Cold
Lämmin	Hot (warm)
Tuulee	Windy
Aurinko paista	The sun shines (well not in winter)
On pilvistä	It's cloudy
Ulkoilma	Thunderstorm
Salamoida	It's lighting

It is important to notice the way Finnish deals with the things that came from the sky. Finnish language has specific verb to say when things came form the sky and as you can suppose is used with the rain, sleeting and snow. This verb is “SATAA” and when using with another word (water, snow) indicates what is falling.

Sataa (vettä)	It's raining (water)
Sataa räntää	It's sleeting
Sataa lunta	It's snowing
Sataa rakeita	It's haling (ice?)

QUESTIONS:

Another important topic to discuss when trying to learn Finnish are the questions, because before mastering the language you'll make a lot of questions to get some meanings and with interact with Finnish speaking people. The guideline to ask questions is:

QUESTION WORD + NOUN + CONJUGATED VERB ?

The most difficult are the questions related to places, since when answering to those questions you will need to transform the word and its adjectives to the correct place and direction. Next are some of the most usual question words and useful/example questions too.

- Mikä/Mitä? – What?

Mikä sinun nimesi on?	What is your name?
Mikä sinun puhelinnumero on?	What is your phone number?
Mitä kello on?	<u>What time is it?</u>
Mikä viikonpäivä tänään on?	<u>What day of the week is today?</u>
Mitä <i>flower</i> on soumeksi?	What is <i>flower</i> in Finnish?

Mitä ... tarkoittaa?

What does ... means?

- **Kuinka? – How?**

Kuinka vanha sina olet?
Kuinka monta astetta on?
Kuinka paljon ... maksaa?

How old are you?
[How many degrees are?](#)
How much ... cost?

- **Kuka? – Who?**

Kuka hän on?
Kuka on kiire?

Who is he?
Who is on a hurry?

- **Kenen? – Whose?**

Kenen tämä on?
Kenen tuo kello on?

Whose is this?
Whose that clock?

To answer this question you need to check the [genitive](#) form of the persons and nouns. For the persons are:

Minun	My/Mine	Meidän	Our/Ours
Sinun	Your/Yours	Teidän	Your/Yours
Hänen	His/Her	Heidän	Their/Theirs

- **Miksi? – Why?**

Miksi hän asuu Helsingissä?

Why is he living in Helsinki?

- **Milloin? – When?**

To answer this question normally you need to transform the [day](#), [time](#) or whatever to the “in” form. For example “in the afternoon” where afternoon is “ilta” but it changes to “illalla” (“-lla” suffix to mean in). For the days you will need to add “na” at the end on the word.

Milloin nukut?
Milloin menet töihin?

When do you sleep?
When do you go to work?

- **Mihin aikaan? – At what time? (Exact hours)**

Mihin aikaan bussi lähtee?
Mihin aikaan juna saapuu?
Mihin aikaan suomen tunti loppu?

At what time does the bus leave?
At what time does the train arrives?
At what time does Finnish lesson ends?

When using the time to answer, you add the ending “-lta/-ltä” to the hour but only when answering exact times or half past.

- **Millainen/Minkälainen? – How is it/What it looks like?**

Millainen tämä mies on?	How is this man?
Millainen tuo kirja on?	What does that book look like?
Minkälainen ilma tänään on?	What is the weather today?

- **-Ko/-Kö? Questions**

This is different way to ask questions, actually it uses the [conjugated verb](#) to ask adding the suffix “-ko/kö” (check [vowel harmony](#)) at the end. The formula to use these kind of questions is:

CONJUGATED VERB + KO/KÖ + NOUN + COMPLEMENT ?

Onko hän kaunis nainen?	Is she a beautiful woman?
Puhutteko Unkaria?	Do you speak Hungarian?
Ymmärränkö sinua?	Do I understand you?

It is important to mention that you can skip the person when asking but only for first and second persons. You must ALWAYS put it when talking about third persons.

The adjectives are written in the same way the word they affect.	MIHIN? Where to?	MISSÄ? Where in?	MISTÄ? Where from?
<p>S – CASES In, inside “Closed Places”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vowel + n Words ending in 1 vowel (not e) or in two different vowels nen – se + en i – e + en • seen Words ending in long vowel or “e”, “is” or “as” e – ee + seen is – ii + seen as – aa + seen • h + vowel + n 3-letter words ending in 2 vowels. The vowel of the ending is the same as the last 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ssa / ssä Same rules are the genitive, but change the “n” for the correct ending. i – e + ssa e – ee + ssa is – ii + ssa as – aa + ssa uusi – uude - ssa nen – se + ssa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sta / stä Same rules are the genitive, but change the “n” for the correct ending. i – e + ssa e – ee + ssa is – ii + ssa as – aa + ssa uusi – uude - ssa nen – se + ssa

	vowel of the word.		
L – CASES On, on the top “Open Places”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lle Places where you can not go in, used for streets, squares, markets, stations, bus stops Venäjä – Venäjälle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lla / illä Same rules are the genitive, but change the “n” for the correct ending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lta / ltä Same rules are the genitive, but change the “n” for the correct ending.

Some examples for different endings are shown below:

Mihin? = Where to?

Kauppa + an	Huone + seen	Maa + han	Tori + lle
Pankki + in	Lontoo + seen	Työ + hön	Asema + lle

Missä? = Where in?

Posti + ssa	Huone – Huone essa	Tori + lla
Työ + ssä	Kallis – Kalli issa	Kioski + lla

Mistä? = Where from?

Teatteri + sta	Huone – Huone esta	Tori + lta
Työ + stä	Kallis – Kalli ista	Kioski + lta