How Esperanto sounds La sonoj de Esperanto

1 · read it out loud

The trick: Esperanto is read the way it's written: one letter, one sound, with no exceptions. There is no q, w, x or y; instead, six letters wear a little hat. The stress always falls on the second-to-last vowel.

Letters	Sounds like	Example
a e i o u	a in father, e in bed, i in ski, o in lot, u in rule	**akvo / tago** water / day
c	ts, as in cats, even at the start of a word	**celo / paco** aim / peace
ĉ	the ch in chin	**ĉambro / ĉokolado** room / chocolate
g	always hard, as in go	**granda / longa** big / long
ĝ	the j in jam	**ĝardeno / manĝi** garden / to eat
h, ĥ	h as in hat; ĥ is the ch in Scottish loch, and rare	**hundo / eĥo** dog / echo
j	the y in yes, never the j in jam	**jes / jaro** yes / year
ĵ	the s in pleasure	**ĵurnalo / ĵaŭdo** newspaper / Thursday
s, ŝ	s always as in sun; ŝ is the sh in shop	**suno / ŝipo** sun / ship
ŭ	a short w, almost only after a or e	**aŭto / hodiaŭ** car / today
r	a tapped or rolled r, always said	**rozo / tri** rose / three
aj, oj, ej, uj	aj as in eye, oj as in boy, ej as in hey, uj as oo-y	**kaj / hundoj** and / dogs
aŭ, eŭ	aŭ as in cow; eŭ is e and a quick w, in one beat	**ankaŭ / Eŭropo** also / Europe
no silent letters	every letter is said, the last e too	**bone / kie** well / where
stress	always on the second-to-last vowel	**patro / amiko** PA-tro / a-MI-ko

ĉ ĝ ĥ ĵ ŝ ŭ

six letters with a hat, each one sound

ĉ chin · **ĝ** jam · **ĥ** loch · **ĵ** pleasure · **ŝ** shop · **ŭ** wet

a e i o u

five clear vowels, stress on the second-to-last

familio fa-mi-LI-o · **bonvolu** bon-VO-lu

Never drop a hat: ĉ, ĝ, ĥ, ĵ, ŝ and ŭ are letters of their own, and a missing hat can change the word: ŝi is she, but si means himself or herself. Phones and computers have Esperanto keyboards with the hats built in.

Where the stress goes: always on the second-to-last vowel: LI-bro, book. Add a piece and the stress moves with it: li-BRE-jo, bookshop. J and ŭ aren't vowels, so they don't count: HUN-doj, dogs; ho-DI-aŭ, today.

Whose language is it? Esperanto was published in 1887 by L. L. Zamenhof, an eye doctor, as an easy second language for people of every country. It has no country of its own. Most of its words come from Latin, French, Italian, German and English, so many look familiar: birdo, bird; hundo, dog, like German Hund. That makes it quicker for speakers of European languages than for others.

How words work Gramatiko

The ending shows the job: every noun ends in -o, every describing word in -a, and every verb, in its dictionary form, in -i. Most how-words end in -e. So you can see what a word does before you know what it means.

Each ending has its own colour, on the next pages too

-o
a thing, a noun

hundo, dog
domo, house
amiko, friend

-a
a describing word

granda, big
bela, beautiful
bona, good

-i
a verb, the dictionary form

manĝi, to eat
lerni, to learn
esti, to be

-e and others
how, and the little words

rapide, quickly
bone, well
kaj, and

rapido	rapida	rapide	rapidi
speed	fast	quickly	to hurry

Many: add -j, to the describing word too

hundo	hundoj	granda hundo	grandaj hundoj
a dog, or just dog	dogs	a big dog	big dogs

The thing that gets the action takes -n

La hundo vidas la katon.	La kato vidas la hundon.
The dog sees the cat.	The cat sees the dog.

Verbs: one ending for the time, the same for every person

lerni	lernas	lernis	lernos
-i: to learn, the dictionary form	-as: learn, learns, now	-is: learned, in the past	-os: will learn

mi lernas	vi lernas	li lernas	ŝi lernas	ni lernas	ili lernas
I learn	you learn	he learns	she learns	we learn	they learn

Build a word from pieces

malbona	lernejo	dentisto	patrino
bad: mal- makes the opposite of bona, good	school: -ej- a place, from lerni, learn	dentist: -ist- a job, from dento, tooth	mother: -in- female, from patro, father

La is the only word for the, and it never changes: la hundo, la hundoj, la hundon. There's no word for a: hundo is a dog. There's no gender either: a table is never he or she. For a woman or a female animal, add -in-, as in patrino.

Me and you: mi, I; vi, you, one person or more; li, he; ŝi, she; ĝi, it; ni, we; ili, they; oni, people in general. Add -a for my, your: mia, via, lia, ŝia, nia, ilia. Add -n when it gets the action: Mi amas vin. I love you.

No and questions: ne goes before the word it denies: Mi ne komprenas. I don't understand. Ĉu turns a sentence into a yes or no question: Ĉu vi parolas Esperanton? Do you speak Esperanto? Jes, mi parolas. Yes, I do.

The first 260 words La unuaj vortoj

How: learn five a day and say them out loud. The colour shows the ending: **-o, a thing**, **-a, a describing word**, **-i, a verb**, **purple, everything else**. Set phrases stay black. *Pink italics* say how a word is used, not what it means.

Greetings and survival

Saluton!
hello! hi!

Bonan matenon!
good morning

Bonan tagon!
hello, good day

Bonan vesperon!
good evening

Bonan nokton!
good night

Ĝis!
bye! *(it means until)*

Ĝis revido!
goodbye *(it means until seeing again)*

Ĝis morgaŭ!
see you tomorrow

Dankon!
thank you

Ne dankinde
you're welcome *(it means not worth thanks)*

Bonvolu
please *(it means be so kind)*

Pardonu!
sorry! excuse me!

Bonvenon!
welcome!

Kiel vi fartas?
how are you?

Bone, dankon. Kaj vi?
fine, thanks. And you?

Kiel vi nomiĝas?
what's your name? *(it means how are you called?)*

Mi nomiĝas ...
my name is ...

Ĉu vi parolas Esperanton?
do you speak Esperanto?

Mi ne komprenas
I don't understand

Mi ne scias
I don't know

Question words

kio?
what? *(Kio estas tio? What's that?)*

kiu?
who? which? *(kiu libro? which book?)*

kie?
where? *(Kie vi estas? Where are you?)*

kiam?
when?

kial?
why?

kiel?
how?

kiom?
how much? how many? *(Kiom kostas? How much is it?)*

ĉu
starts a yes or no question *(Ĉu vi venas? Are you coming?)*

Me and you

mi
I, me *(mia, my)*

vi
you, one person or more *(via, your)*

li
he *(lia, his)*

ŝi
she *(ŝia, her)*

ĝi
it, also for an animal *(ĝia, its)*

ni
we *(nia, our)*

ili
they *(ilia, their)*

oni
people in general *(oni diras, people say)*

ĉi tiu / tiu
this / that *(ĉi tiu libro, this book)*

Little words

kaj
and

sed
but

aŭ
or

jes / ne
yes / no; ne is also not

tre
very *(tre bona, very good)*

ankaŭ
also, too

nur
only, just

ĉi tie / tie
here / there

kun / sen
with / without

en
in

al
to *(al la urbo, to the town)*

de
of, from *(la libro de Anna, Anna's book)*

ĉar
because

eble
maybe

ĉiam / neniam
always / never

Ki- asks, ti- points: kie? where? tie, there. kiam? when? tiam, then. kio? what? tio, that. Add ĉi to bring it near: ĉi tie, here.

People and time Homoj kaj tempo

Family

patrino
mother *(panjo is mum)*

patro
father *(paĉjo is dad)*

gepatroj
parents *(ge- means both, men and women)*

infano
child

filo / filino
son / daughter

frato / fratino
brother / sister

edzo / edzino
husband / wife

avo / avino
grandfather / grandmother

onklo / onklino
uncle / aunt

familio
family

People

homo
person, human

viro / virino
man / woman

knabo / knabino
boy / girl

amiko
friend

instruisto
teacher *(instrui, teach, and -ist-)*

kuracisto
doctor *(kuraci, treat, and -ist-)*

lernanto
pupil *(it means one who learns)*

Things

libro
book

mono
money

telefono
phone

vestoj
clothes

pordo
door

fenestro
window

tablo
table

seĝo
chair

When

hodiaŭ
today

morgaŭ
tomorrow

hieraŭ
yesterday

nun
now

tago
day

semajno
week

monato
month

jaro
year

horo
hour

mateno
morning

vespero
evening

nokto
night

Kioma horo estas?
what time is it?

Weather

suno
sun

pluvo
rain

neĝo
snow

vento
wind

Estas varme
it's warm *(no it: just is warm)*

Pluvas
it's raining *(one word: rains)*

Getting around

strato
street

vojo
road, way

aŭto
car

buso
bus

trajno
train

aviadilo
plane

biciklo
bicycle

maldekstre / dekstre
on the left / on the right

proksime / malproksime
near / far

Numbers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	20	21	30
unu	du	tri	kvar	kvin	ses	sep	ok	naŭ	dek	dek unu	dek du	dudek	dudek unu	tridek

40	50	60	70	80	90	100	1,000
kvardek	kvindek	sesdek	sepdek	okdek	naŭdek	cent	mil

Counting: numbers never change, and the noun after them takes -j: du hundoj, two dogs; tri libroj, three books. Bigger numbers are built like sums: dek du, twelve, is ten and two; dudek, twenty, is two tens.

Telling the time: Kioma horo estas? What time is it? Estas la tria. It's three o'clock (it means it's the third). Je la oka means at eight.

Food, places, verbs Manĝi, trinki, lerni

Food and drink

akvo
water

teo
tea

kafo
coffee

lakto
milk

manĝaĵo
food *(manĝi, eat, and -aĵ-, a thing)*

pano
bread

fromaĝo
cheese

viando
meat

fiŝo
fish

ovo
egg

frukto
fruit

pomo
apple

legomoj
vegetables

rizo
rice

salo
salt

kuko
cake

matenmanĝo
breakfast *(it means morning meal)*

Mi malsatas
I'm hungry

Mi soifas
I'm thirsty

Places

domo
house

hejme
at home

lernejo
school *(lerni, learn, and -ej-, a place)*

vendejo
shop *(vendi, sell, and -ej-)*

merkato
market

urbo
town, city

vilaĝo
village

lando
country

hotelo
hotel

kafejo
café *(kafo and -ej-)*

restoracio
restaurant

hospitalo
hospital

necesejo
toilet *(it means the place of need)*

maro
sea

rivero
river

monto
mountain

lingvo
language

Verbs, in the -i form

esti
be *(mi estas, I am)*

havi
have

iri
go

veni
come

manĝi
eat

trinki
drink

vidi
see

aŭdi
hear

fari
do, make

diri
say

paroli
speak, talk

labori
work

dormi
sleep

kompreni
understand

scii
know a fact *(mi scias, I know)*

koni
know a person or place *(mi konas lin, I know him)*

aĉeti
buy

legi
read

skribi
write

lerni
learn

loĝi
live, have your home

ami / ŝati
love / like

voli
want

povi
can, be able

helpi
help

Describing words

bona / malbona
good / bad

granda / malgranda
big / small

longa / mallonga
long / short

nova / malnova
new / old, for things

juna / maljuna
young / old, for people

varma / malvarma
warm / cold

facila / malfacila
easy / difficult

bela
beautiful, lovely

bongusta
tasty *(it means good-tasting)*

feliĉa
happy

From the -i form, swap the ending: manĝi, to eat; mi manĝas, I eat; mi manĝis, I ate; mi manĝos, I'll eat. There are no irregular verbs, not even esti, to be: mi estas, I am; ŝi estis, she was.

Describing words take -j and -n with their noun: bona amiko, a good friend; bonaj amikoj, good friends; Mi havas bonajn amikojn. I have good friends. Swap -a for -e and you get how: bona, good; bone, well.

Show words Esprimoj kaj proverboj

Sayings and wishes

Ne gravas
it doesn't matter, never mind

Ne zorgu
don't worry

Kun plezuro
with pleasure

Mi ĝojas renkonti vin
pleased to meet you *(it means I'm glad to meet you)*

Bonan apetiton!
enjoy your meal

Sanon!
bless you! cheers! *(it means health)*

Bonan vojaĝon!
have a good journey

Bonŝancon!
good luck

Feliĉan naskiĝtagon!
happy birthday

Dankegon!
thanks a lot! *(-eg- makes it bigger)*

Ĉio en ordo
everything's fine *(it means all in order)*

Dormu bone
sleep well

Pli bone malfrue ol neniam
better late than never

Ne ĉio estas oro, kio brilas
not everything that shines is gold

Reactions

Ĉu vere?
really? is that true?

Bonege!
great! *(bone, well, with -eg-)*

Mirinde!
wonderful! amazing!

Kompreneble!
of course!

Certe!
sure! certainly!

Brave!
well done! bravo!

Gratulon!
congratulations!

Ho ve!
oh no! oh dear!

The big scenes

Mi amas vin
I love you

Atentu!
look out! careful!

Kuru!
run!

Rapide!
quick! hurry!

Venu ĉi tien!
come here!

Ni iru!
let's go!

Helpu!
help!

Kio okazis?
what happened?

Ne timu
don't be afraid

Silentu!
be quiet!

Trankviliĝu!
calm down!

What to call people

sinjoro
Mr, sir

sinjorino
Mrs, Ms, madam

kara amiko
dear friend, to start a letter

mia kara
my dear, darling

samideano
a fellow Esperanto speaker *(it means a person of the same idea)*

Karaj geamikoj!
dear friends! *(to a group of men and women)*

Where you'll hear it: Esperanto has no country of its own, so its speakers find each other: online, in local clubs, at yearly congresses, and through Pasporta Servo, a list of speakers who put up travellers for free.

Orders end in -u: Venu! Come! Atentu! Look out! Bonvolu, please, is the same ending on bonvoli, to be so kind: Bonvolu sidiĝi. Please sit down.

Bigger and smaller: -eg- makes a word bigger and -et- smaller: domo, house; domego, mansion; dometo, cottage. Dankon, thanks, becomes dankegon, thanks a lot.

Practice Ekzercoj

How: cover the grey lines with a strip of paper. Read the Esperanto out loud, then slide it down to check. Can you read every line without peeking? You've got it.

Questions: start with ĉu for a yes or no question: Ĉu vi parolas Esperanton? Do you speak Esperanto? Question words go first: Kie vi loĝas? Where do you live?

Saying no: put ne before the verb: Mi trinkas teon. Mi ne trinkas kafon. I drink tea. I don't drink coffee.

Like and want: Mi ŝatas teon. I like tea. Mi volas akvon. I want water. The thing you like or want takes -n.

Read these sentences

1. Saluton! Mi nomiĝas Anna.
   Hello! My name is Anna.

2. Kie vi loĝas? Mi loĝas en Londono.
   Where do you live? I live in London.

3. Pardonu, kie estas la vendejo?
   Excuse me, where is the shop?

4. Kiom kostas la pomoj?
   How much are the apples?

5. Akvon, mi petas.
   Some water, please (it means water, I ask).

6. Mi parolas iomete Esperanton.
   I speak a little Esperanto.

7. Hodiaŭ la suno brilas.
   The sun is shining today.

8. Morgaŭ ni iros al la maro.
   Tomorrow we'll go to the sea.

9. Ĉi tiu kuko estas tre bongusta!
   This cake is very tasty!

10. Ne zorgu, ni havas tempon.
    Don't worry, we have time.

Meet a word you don't know? In Kitsumi, hover any word in subtitles to see what it means.