How Faroese sounds Framburður

1 · read it out loud

The trick: Faroese has 29 letters: no c, q, w, x or z, but ð, æ and ø, and five vowels with an accent. The sounds below are close guides, not exact: listen as much as you can.

Letters	Sounds like	Example
a, æ	short: the a in hat; long: e and a in one breath	**fara / læra** go / learn
á	long: o and a in one breath; short: the o in hot	**á / bátur** river / boat
e	the e in bed; long, a pure ay with no y at the end	**eg / seks** I / six
i, y	both the i in sit; long, the ee in see	**vit / systir** we / sister
í, ý	both a quick oo then ee, a bit like the ooey in gooey	**frí / býur** free / town
o	the o in hot; long, a pure oh	**koma / sova** come / sleep
ó	long: oh with a w at the end, as in British go	**bók / sól** book / sun
u	the oo in book; long, the oo in food	**hundur / sonur** dog / son
ú	long: oo with a glide, close to the ew in new	**hús / tú** house / you
ø	say e with rounded lips, like the eu in French bleu	**øl / smør** beer / butter
ei	the eye in my	**nei / eitt** no / one
ey, oy	ey is close to the ay in day; oy is the oy in boy	**keypa / Føroyar** buy / the Faroe Islands
ð, g	between vowels: usually silent, or a soft w, j or v	**góður / dagur** good / day
k, g	before e, i, y, ey: k is the ch in church, g is the j in jam	**kenna / gera** know / do
hj, kj	the ch in church	**hjálp / kjøt** help / meat
sk	before e, i, y, ey, and in skj: the sh in ship	**skip** ship
ggj	close to the j in jam	**oyggj / byggja** island / build
hv	kv, as in quick	**hvat / hvar** what / where
stress	always on the first syllable	**Føroyar / Tórshavn** FØ-roy-ar / TÓRS-havn

ð

written, but usually not said

góður good · **veður** weather · **maður** man

á í ó ú ý æ ø

seven vowels of their own

á river · **hús** house · **øl** beer · **bók** book

Spelling is old-fashioned: Faroese spelling was set in the 1800s to look like the old Norse it comes from, so it often doesn't match the sound. Ð is the clearest case: it's written, but you hardly ever hear it. Learn the patterns above, then trust your ears.

The accent is not stress: á, í, ó, ú and ý are letters of their own, with their own sounds, and í and ý sound the same. The stress is always on the first syllable, accent or not.

How words work Mállæra

The is an ending: Faroese puts the at the end of the word. A is ein, or eitt with neuter words: ein hestur, ein kona, eitt hús.

hestur a horse	hesturin the horse	kona a woman	konan the woman	hús a house	húsið the house

Every noun is masculine, feminine or neuter

masculine

often ends in -ur or -i; the is -in, or -n after -i

hestur, hesturin, horse
bilur, bilurin, car
pápi, pápin, dad

feminine

often ends in -a; the is -in, or -n after -a

kona, konan, woman
mamma, mamman, mum
bók, bókin, book

neuter

often no ending; the is -ið, or -ð after -a

hús, húsið, house
borð, borðið, table
eyga, eygað, eye

Mostly, not always: bók, book, is feminine, but borð, table, is neuter, and barn, child, is neuter too. On the next pages the noun itself wears its gender colour, so you don't have to guess.

A, and describing words, match the noun

ein maður a man	ein kona a woman	eitt barn a child
góður maður a good man	góð kona a good woman	gott barn a good child

Endings change after little words like í, frá and til

Føroyar the Faroe Islands	í Føroyum in the Faroe Islands	frá Føroyum from the Faroe Islands	til Føroya to the Faroe Islands

That's the case system: Faroese has four cases. The start of the word stays, and only the end changes. Learn the dictionary form first; listening brings the rest.

Vera, hava and tosa: be, have and speak

	vera, be	hava, have	tosa, speak
eg	eri	havi	tosi
tú	ert	hevur	tosar
hann, hon, tað	er	hevur	tosar
vit	eru	hava	tosa
tit	eru	hava	tosa
tey	eru	hava	tosa

Tú or tit: say tú to one person, almost anyone: friends, strangers, your boss, older people. Tit is for two or more: Hvussu hevur tú tað? Hvussu hava tit tað? You may hear tygum, an old polite you, but it's rare today. Vit, tit and tey all share one verb form. To say no, put ikki after the verb: eg tosi ikki føroyskt, I don't speak Faroese. To ask, put the verb first: Tú tosar enskt. Tosar tú enskt?

Two languages: most Faroese people also speak Danish, and many speak good English.

The first 259 words Fyrstu orðini

How: learn five a day, then listen for them in Faroese films and series. Each noun wears its gender colour: blue, pink or green. *Pink italics* say how a word is used, not what it means.

Me and you

eg
I

tú
you *(one person, almost anyone)*

hann / hon
he / she

tað
it; also that

vit
we

tit
you all

teir / tær / tey
they *(men / women / a mix)*

mín, mítt
my *(mítt with neuter words: mítt hús)*

tín, títt
your, to one person

hetta
this *(Hetta er Anna. This is Anna.)*

hatta
that

Question words

hvør
who

hvat
what

hvar
where

hvaðani
where from

nær
when

hví
why

hvussu
how

hvussu nógv
how much, how many

Hvat kostar hetta?
how much is this?

Little words

og
and

men
but

ella
or

eisini
also, too

ikki
not *(after the verb)*

sera
very *(sera gott, very good)*

nógv
a lot, much, many

eitt sindur
a bit, a little

bara
just, only

her / har
here / there

við
with

uttan
without

í
in

á
on; also a river

til
to

frá
from

tí
because

kanska
maybe

Family

mamma
mum

móðir
mother

pápi
dad

faðir
father

bróðir
brother *(in everyday talk often beiggi)*

systir
sister

sonur
son

dóttir
daughter

omma
grandma

abbi
grandpa

foreldur
parents *(plural)*

barn
child *(børn, children)*

People

maður
man; also husband

kona
woman; also wife

drongur
boy

genta
girl

vinur
friend *(a woman: vinkona)*

lækni
doctor

lærari
teacher

fólk
people *(one word for many)*

He, she and they: hann is he and hon is she. For they, say teir for men, tær for women and tey for a mixed group. Hetta is this and hatta is that: Hetta er Anna.

Time and things Tíð og ting

When

í dag
today

í morgin
tomorrow

í gjár
yesterday

nú
now

altíð
always

ofta
often

ongantíð
never

morgun
morning

kvøld
evening

nátt
night

dagur
day

tíð
time

tími
hour; also lesson

vika
week

vikuskifti
weekend

mánaður
month

ár
year

Days of the week

mánadagur
Monday

týsdagur
Tuesday

mikudagur
Wednesday

hósdagur
Thursday

fríggjadagur
Friday

leygardagur
Saturday

sunnudagur
Sunday

Weather

veður
weather

sól
sun

vindur
wind

Tað regnar
it's raining

Things

bók
book

pengar
money *(plural)*

lykil
key

bilur
car

gluggi
window

hurð
door

borð
table

stólur
chair

Getting around

bussur
bus

bátur
boat

ferja
ferry

flogfar
plane

flogvøllur
airport

vegur
road

til vinstru / til høgru
to the left / to the right

beint fram
straight on

Describing words

góður / ringur
good / bad

stórur / lítil
big / small

heitur / kaldur
hot / cold

nýggjur / gamal
new / old

lættur / tungur
easy / hard *(tungur also means heavy)*

vakur
beautiful

trøttur
tired

glaður
glad, happy

stuttligur
fun

reyður / bláur / grønur
red / blue / green

hvítur / svartur
white / black

Numbers

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	20	30	100	1,000
null	ein	tveir	tríggir	fýra	fimm	seks	sjey	átta	níggju	tíggju	ellivu	tólv	trettan	tjúgu	tríati	hundrað	túsund

One and two change: with the gender of the noun: ein, ein, eitt is one, and tveir, tvær, tvey is two. When you just count, you say them as above.

Days are small: days take no capital letter, and they all end in dagur, day, so they're all masculine.

Describing words agree: the list shows the masculine form. The ending changes with the noun: stórur bilur, a big car; stór bók, a big book; stórt hús, a big house.

Food, places, verbs Eta, fara, gera

Food and drink

vatn
water; also lake

kaffi
coffee

te
tea

mjólk
milk

øl
beer

vín
wine

matur
food

breyð
bread

smør
butter

ostur
cheese

kjøt
meat

fiskur
fish

laksur
salmon

toskur
cod

egg
egg

epli
potato *(yes, potato)*

súrepli
apple

kaka
cake

skerpikjøt
wind-dried mutton, a Faroese speciality

morgunmatur
breakfast

døgurði
lunch

kvøldmatur
dinner

Eg eri svangur
I'm hungry *(a woman says svong)*

Places

hús
house

heima
at home

heim
home, going home

skúli
school

arbeiði
work

handil
shop

matstova
restaurant

sjúkrahús
hospital

býur
town

bygd
village

gøta
street

sjógvur
sea

fjall
mountain

dalur
valley

vík
bay

fossur
waterfall

oyggj
island

land
country

Føroyar
the Faroe Islands *(plural)*

Tórshavn
the capital, often just Havn

føroyskt
Faroese, the language

Verbs, in the to-form

vera
be

hava
have

fara
go

koma
come

ganga
walk

eta
eat

drekka
drink

síggja
see

hyggja
look

hoyra
hear

gera
do, make

arbeiða
work

sova
sleep

tosa
speak, talk

siga
say

skilja
understand

vita
know *(a fact)*

kenna
know *(a person)*; also feel

vilja
want

kunna
can

lesa
read

skriva
write

búgva
live *(somewhere)*

keypa
buy

læra
learn; also teach

hjálpa
help

bíða
wait

koyra
drive

spæla
play

elska
love

The to-form ends in -a: tosa, to speak; vera, to be. Many verbs follow tosa on page 2: eg tosi, tú tosar, vit tosa.

Phrases and show words Hey og farvæl

Hello and goodbye

Hey
hi, hello *(the everyday hello)*

Góðan morgun
good morning

Góðan dag
good day, hello *(a bit more formal)*

Gott kvøld
good evening

Góða nátt
good night

Farvæl
goodbye

Vit síggjast
see you *(it means we see each other)*

Hvussu hevur tú tað?
how are you? *(it means how do you have it?)*

Eg havi tað gott
I'm fine *(it means I have it good)*

Hvat eitur tú?
what's your name?

Eg eiti ...
my name is ... *(it means I'm called)*

Hvaðani ert tú?
where are you from?

Góða ferð!
have a good trip!

Please, thanks and help

Ja
yes

Nei
no

Takk
thanks

Takk fyri
thank you

Ja takk
yes please

Nei takk
no thanks

Einki at takka fyri
you're welcome *(it means nothing to thank for)*

Orsaka
sorry, excuse me

Ver so góður
please, here you are *(to a woman: ver so góð)*

Tosar tú enskt?
do you speak English?

Eg skilji ikki
I don't understand

Eg veit ikki
I don't know

Mær dámar ...
I like ... *(it means ... pleases me)*

Skál!
cheers!

Reactions

Gott
good, fine

Frálíkt!
great! excellent!

Stuttligt!
fun! that's fun!

Avgjørt
definitely, of course

Eg eisini
me too

Tað ger einki
never mind, it doesn't matter

Til lukku!
congratulations!

The big scenes

Eg elski teg
I love you

Eg sakni teg
I miss you

Hjálp!
help!

Kom her!
come here!

Hygg!
look!

Hvat hendi?
what happened?

Eg eri heima!
I'm home!

Hey, the everyday hello: you'll hear it from everyone, young and old. Góðan morgun and Góðan dag are the more formal hellos.

Ver so góður: this changes with who you speak to: ver so góður to a man, ver so góð to a woman. And to say you like something, Faroese turns it round: Mær dámar kaffi, coffee pleases me.

Practice Venjingar

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

The verb comes second: start with í dag or í morgin and the verb jumps ahead of the person: Í dag er tað kalt. Í morgin fara vit.

Saying no: ikki goes after the verb: Eg drekki kaffi. Eg drekki ikki kaffi. I don't drink coffee.

Read these sentences

1. Hey, eg eiti Anna.
   Hi, I'm Anna.

2. Orsaka, hvar er handilin?
   Excuse me, where is the shop?

3. Hvat kostar bókin?
   How much is the book?

4. Eitt kaffi, takk.
   One coffee, please.

5. Eg tosi eitt sindur føroyskt.
   I speak a little Faroese.

6. Tað er sera kalt í dag.
   It's very cold today.

7. Í morgin fara vit til Tórshavnar.
   Tomorrow we're going to Tórshavn.

8. Fiskurin er sera góður!
   The fish is really good!

9. Mær dámar kaffi.
   I like coffee.

10. Tað ger einki, vit hava tíð.
    Never mind, we have time.

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