



UniLang Community



Norwegian for Beginners

Introduction

Welcome to the Norwegian Course for Beginners. In five lessons we'll try to teach you the basics of the Norwegian language.

Norwegian is spoken by over 4 million people in Norway. It is a Germanic language, and it is quite close to Swedish and Danish.

This course will not cover Norwegian pronunciation. We plan to add a Norwegian pronunciation tutorial and also a complete course in the future, we have not done so yet due to the lack of native speakers at Unilang which could record us sound files for these two resources. If you are a native Norwegian speaker or you know any who could help us, send a message to webmaster@unilang.org .

Lesson 1: To Be

The verb **to be** in Norwegian is easy, just like any other verb in Norwegian: it has only one single form for all persons, either plural or singular! Whether it is **I**, **you** or **they** who is performing an action, the verb form will always be the same for that verbal tense, and this is valid for any verb, at any tense! A great incentive for learning Norwegian...

As for the verb "to be", its name in Norwegian is **å være**, and its present tense form is **er** (å is the infinitive marker for the Norwegian verb, just like the English **to** is. It doesn't work as a preposition like the English **to**, though). When we refer to the verb itself, without the **å/to**, we call it **bare infinitive**. Now let's start by teaching you how to introduce yourself:

Jeg er Morten.	I am Morten.
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That is your very first Norwegian sentence, where you introduce yourself as Morten. That's a person; of course you should replace it with your own name.

Although the sentence consists of only three words, we are going to carefully examine each word. The first word **jeg** is the equivalent of the English word **I**, also referred to as the personal pronoun of the first person singular. The second word **er** is a verb. It's the present form of the verb **å være**, which is the equivalent of **to be**, and as we told above it can be used for all persons.

Now we've seen how to introduce yourself using **jeg er**, but we can also introduce other people. Take a look at the following examples:

Jeg er Morten.	I am Morten.
Du er Morten.	You are Morten.
Han er Morten.	He is Morten.
Hun er Anne.	She is Anne.
Det er Morten.	It is/This is Morten.
Vi er Morten og Anne.	We are Morten and Anne.
Dere er Morten og Anne.	You are Morten and Anne.
De er Morten og Anne.	They are Morten and Anne.

That's a lot of new words! But it's all very easy. Now you've seen all personal pronouns in Norwegian, you know how to refer to people. Besides, you've also learned your first Norwegian verb, the irregular verb *å være*, in English *to be*. There is another small word that appeared in this lesson: *og*, which means *and*.

Det is usually employed for things, meaning *it*. It can also be used for *this*, and there are other pronouns with similar usage. You can use it in contexts like Someone has come in. Who is it? It's Morten.

VOCABULARY

In each lesson, we'll ask you to learn a number of new words. This time, we'll give you a couple of very easy words. Learn them in both directions, English-Norwegian and Norwegian-English.

far	father
mor	mother
bestefar	grandfather
bestemor	grandmother

EXERCISES

Each lesson will come with some exercises, so you can practice the grammar and vocabulary of the lesson.

Exercise A: Translate to English

- 1) *Hun er Hilde.*
- 2) *Det er far.*
- 3) *De er Per og Jan.*
- 4) *Hun er mor.*
- 5) *Du er bestemor.*
- 6) *Du er bestefar.*
- 7) *Vi er Marit og Bjørn.*

Exercise B: Translate to Norwegian

- 1) *We are Anne and Ole.*
- 2) *You are father.*
- 3) *I am mother.*
- 4) *She is grandmother.*
- 5) *They are Lars and Kristin.*
- 6) *You are Camilla and Anders.*
- 7) *You are grandfather.*

SOLUTIONS

After you've done the exercises, you can check whether your answer is correct using the following sample solutions:

Exercise A

- 1) *She is Hilde.*
- 2) *It is father.*
- 3) *They are Per and Jan.*
- 4) *She is mother.*
- 5) *You are grandmother.*
- 6) *You are grandfather.*
- 7) *We are Marit and Bjørn.*

Exercise B

- 1) *Vi er Anne and Ole.*
 - 2) *Du er far.*
 - 3) *Jeg er mor.*
 - 4) *Hun er bestemor.*
 - 5) *De er Lars og Kristin.*
 - 6) *Dere er Camilla og Anders.*
 - 7) *Du er bestefar.*
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Lesson 2: Articles and Gender

Apparently you've successfully finished lesson one, so now we can continue with the second lesson. In this lesson you'll learn how to describe certain objects.

GENDER

In Norwegian, every noun belongs to one of three categories: feminine, masculine or neuter. The noun *mor* (mother) is feminine, *far* (father) is masculine, *barn* (child) is neuter.

Now comes the difficult part. Every noun has a gender, and this can seem quite arbitrary. A Norwegian bottle is feminine, an ambulance is masculine and a human being is neuter. There is no logic behind, you must learn the gender with every new noun.

FEMININE GENDER x COMMON GENDER

As you can see, the genders are three, **masculine**, **feminine** and **neuter**. The gender is determined by the article which follows (or precedes) the noun. As for a practical usage, though, the **masculine** and **feminine** genders are grouped into a **common gender**, thus sharing the same articles. This is valid for the written language, but some dialects keep making the three gender's distinction quite clear. Most feminine nouns accept either the masculine or the feminine article, and we recommend you to use the masculine one. But there are some feminine nouns which can't be grouped into the common gender and thus will always use the feminine article, and these you will have to memorize. Don't worry, they are not so many. And you just have to use the same articles and pronouns for all other masculine and feminine nouns.

ARTICLE

In the first lesson you learned how to say "He is father" but that sounds a little bit tarzan-like, wouldn't it sound better if you could say "He is a father" or "He is the father" ? That's what you'll learn now. Take a look at these Norwegian sentences:

Han er en far.	He is a father.
Det er ei jente.	It is a girl.
Det er et hus.	It is a house.

Have you guessed what are the indefinite articles in the sentences above? If you said **en** for the masculine, **ei** for the feminine and **et** for the neuter you are right. Remember that the feminine nouns may be grouped into the common gender, so the indefinite article for the feminine nouns is said to be **en/ei**.

Now with the definite articles. Take a look at the sentences below:

Han er faren.	He is the father.
Det er jenta.	It is the girl.
Det er huset.	It is the house.

You didn't see any word between the verb **er** and the noun in the Norwegian sentences, but all the English translations come with **the**, which is the definite article in English. How come is it possible?

To answer this, you will have to look at the nouns. Notice that the same nouns in the first three sentences, have a different form in the last three. They have got **endings**. And these endings are the definite articles! So, in Norwegian, the definite article does not come before the noun. **The definite article in Norwegian is attached to the end of the noun.** Then we say that the noun is in the **definite form**. If the noun ends in an **unstressed e**, this **e** is dropped before attaching the article, as it happened with the word **jente**, which became **jenta**.

Now the endings. They are: **en** for the masculine, **en/a** for the feminine and **et** for the neuter nouns. The same as the indefinite articles except for the feminine nouns, which add the ending **a** and not **ei**, as would be expected. The final **t** in definite neuter nouns is not pronounced.

VOCABULARY

Learn the following words. The words of the previous lesson are mentioned again, but this time we also show what article(s) to use (remember that the definite feminine article is *-a*, and not *ei*..

far (en)	father
mor (en/ei)	mother
bestefar (en)	grandfather
bestemor (en/ei)	grandmother
hus (et)	house
hund (en)	dog
katt (en)	cat
barn (et)	child
dyr (et)	animal
bord (et)	table
bok (en/ei)	book
lekse (en/ei)	homework
avis (en/ei)	newspaper
har	have (present tense)
leser	read (present tense)
på	on, at
hjemme	at home

EXERCISES

Exercise A: Translate to English:

- 1) *En katt er et dyr.*
- 2) *Det er et hus.*
- 3) *Moren har en hund.*
- 4) *Boken er på bordet.*
- 5) *Barnet har en lekse.*
- 6) *Bestemoren og bestefaren leser avisa.*
- 7) *Faren er hjemme.*

Exercise B: Translate to Norwegian:

- 1) *The grandmother has a cat.*
- 2) *A dog is an animal.*
- 3) *The table has a book.*
- 4) *The grandmother and the grandfather have a dog.*
- 5) *The mother has a dog and the father has a cat.*
- 6) *We have a table.*
- 7) *They have the house.*

SOLUTIONS

Exercise A:

- 1) *A cat is an animal.*
- 2) *This is a house.*
- 3) *The mother has a dog.*
- 4) *The book is on the table.*
- 5) *The children have homework.*
- 6) *The grandmother and the grandfather read the newspaper.*
- 7) *The father is at home.*

Exercise B:

- 1) *Bestemoren har en katt.*
 - 2) *En hund er et dyr.*
 - 3) *Bordet har en bok.*
 - 4) *Bestemoren og bestefaren har en hund.*
 - 5) *Moren har en hund og faren har en katt.*
 - 6) *Vi har et bord.*
 - 7) *De har huset.*
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Lesson 3: The Present of the Verbs

So far you have met three verbal forms in Norwegian: **er**, **har** and **leser**. All of them end in **r**. Coincidence?! Absolutely not! This is the ending for the present tense of the Norwegian verbs!

The verb **er**, **to be**, is irregular: its infinitive is **å være**. But the other two verbs are regular. Based on this, what would be the rule for making the present tense of a regular Norwegian verb? You got it right if you said: just add an **r** to its **bare infinitive**. So, **ha** becomes **har**, and **lese** becomes **leser**. And these forms can be used for all persons! It couldn't be easier, could it? In fact, most of the Norwegian verbs end in **e** (**kjenne**, **bade**, **sove**) and make the present form by adding **r** (**kjenner**, **bader**, **sover**). Norwegian doesn't have continuous tenses like English (I am doing, I am working), so the Norwegian present tense works for both simple present and present continuous tenses in English.

Of course there are irregular verbs. The verb to be is irregular in most languages, and Norwegian is no exception, as we saw above. But these regular verbs are no menace at all! Below are the most important irregular verbs:

være (be)	er
gjøre (do)	gjør
vite (know)	vet
si (say)	sier
spørre (ask)	spør

Some modal verbs, like **kunne** (can), **ville** (will, want), **måtte** (must, have to) and some very few verbs which end in **s**, like **finnes** (exist) and **synes** (think) are irregular as well.

VOCABULARY

å skrive	to write
å prøve	to try
å snakke	to speak
å spise	to eat
å hjelpe	to help
å se	to see
å like	to like
engelsk	English
tysk	German
brev (et)	letter
tomat (en/ei)	tomato
bror (en)	brother
søster (en/ei)	sister
sønn (en)	son
datter (en/ei)	daughter
is (en)	ice, ice-cream
språk (et)	language

EXERCISES

Exercise A: Translate to English:

- 1) *Kan du hjelpe meg?*
- 2) *Jeg snakker tysk.*
- 3) *Hun prøver å snakke norsk.*
- 4) *Vi spiser tomat.*
- 5) *Faren skriver et brev.*
- 6) *Bestemoren leser brevet.*
- 7) *Brøren ser søsteren.*

Exercise B: Translate to Norwegian:

- 1) *The son is trying to speak Norwegian.*
- 2) *A dog is eating the ice-cream.*
- 3) *They like to read the book.*
- 4) *The grandfather and the daughter see a cat.*
- 5) *The brother tries to help the cat.*
- 6) *The father and the son speak a language.*
- 7) *You are brother and sister.*

SOLUTIONS

Exercise A:

- 1) *Can you help me?*
- 2) *I speak German.*
- 3) *She tries to speak Norwegian.*
- 4) *We eat tomato.*
- 5) *The father writes a letter.*
- 6) *The grandmother reads the letter.*
- 7) *The brother sees the sister.*

Exercise B:

- 1) *Sønnen prøver å snakke norsk.*
 - 2) *En hund spiser isen.*
 - 3) *De liker å lese boken.*
 - 4) *Bestefaren og datteren ser en katt.*
 - 5) *Brøren prøver å hjelpe katten.*
 - 6) *Faren og sønnen snakker et språk.*
 - 7) *Dere er bror og søster.*
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Lesson 4: Plural of Nouns

The most important thing to know about the Norwegian plural of nouns is that there are two forms: the **indefinite plural** and the **definite plural**. "Why so?", you might be asking.

Well, you have seen in Lesson 02 that the definite article is attached to the end of the Norwegian noun. If this happens in the singular, why wouldn't this also happen in the plural? So, in addition to the indefinite plural, Norwegian also has a definite plural, which is the plural of those words which carry the definite article.

The general rule is to add **-er** for the indefinite form and **-ene** for the definite form, regardless the gender of the noun.

Thus we have:

sønn (son)	sønner (sons)/sønnen (the son)	sønnene (the sons)
jente (girl)	jenter (girls)/jenta (the girl)	jentene (the girls)
problem (problem)	problemer (problems)/problemet (the problem)	problemene (the problems)

You've seen in Lesson 02 that in the singular the feminine nouns can either use the ending **-en** or the ending **-a** for the definite article, and that **-en** is more common in the written language, while **-a** is more informal. This happens more or less with the neuter nouns, they can make the plural form by adding **-ene** or **-a**. So, if you see **barna** somewhere, remember that this means **the children**. This usage is also informal, and even less common in written language than it is for the definite feminine nouns. Some words, though are only used with the **-a** ending, being **barna (the children)** an important example.

Now let's list the most important irregularities for making the plural of Norwegian nouns:

- Most monosyllabic neuter nouns don't take any ending for the indefinite plural, but they do take **-ene** for the definite plural: thus, the indefinite plural of **hus (house)** will remain **hus**, but the definite form will be **husene**;
- If the noun ends in an unstressed **e**, it just takes the endings **-r** for the indefinite and **-ne** for the definite plurals: **bilde (picture)** becomes **bilder** in the indefinite and **bildene** in the definite plurals; however, if the final **e** is stressed (this usually happens with foreign words), the noun will take the full endings: **idé (idea)** becomes **idéer** in the indefinite and **idéene** in the definite forms;
- Some nouns have irregular forms: we have **far/fedre**, **mor/mødre**, **bror/brødre**, **bok/bøker** and so on.

VOCABULARY

From now on the information for making the indefinite plural of a noun will come in the brackets after the information about its gender, and will be separated by a comma. If the plural is the same as the singular, a **-** will be used, and if there's no indication for the plural, we'll have one of these two situations: either the word is used only in these singular, or it is used only in the plural.

barn (et,-)	child
språk (et,-)	language
foreldre	parents
gutt (en,-er)	boy
to	two
tre	three
mange	many
aldri	never
alltid	always
å besøke	to visit
å kjøpe	to buy

EXERCISES

Exercise A: Translate to English:

- 1) *Barna snakker mange språk.*
- 2) *Hundene spiser tomater.*
- 3) *Han besøker aldri foreldrene.*
- 4) *De liker å kjøpe bøker.*
- 5) *En datter skriver brevene.*
- 6) *Bestemødre hjelper barna.*
- 7) *Brødrene ser alltid dyr.*

Exercise B: Translate to Norwegian:

- 1) *Mothers like children.*
- 2) *The dogs see the table.*
- 3) *He has many ideas.*
- 4) *The grandfathers are buying two cats.*
- 5) *A boy is seeing three girls.*
- 6) *The sons and the daughters likes the father.*
- 7) *The boy visits the parents.*

SOLUTIONS

Exercise A:

- 1) *The children speak many languages.*
- 2) *The dogs eat tomatoes.*
- 3) *He never visits the parents.*
- 4) *They like to buy books.*
- 5) *A daughter writes the letters.*
- 6) *Grandmothers help the children.*
- 7) *The brothers always see animals.*

Exercise B:

- 1) *Mødre liker barn.*
 - 2) *Hundene ser bordet.*
 - 3) *Han har mange idéer.*
 - 4) *Bestefedrene kjøper to katter.*
 - 5) *En gutt ser tre jenter.*
 - 6) *Sønnene og døtrene liker faren.*
 - 7) *Gutten besøker foreldrene.*
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Lesson 5: Personal Object Pronouns

So far you've used the **personal pronouns** I, you, he, they etc. in Norwegian only as the **subject** of a sentence. It is time to learn how to use them as the **object** of a sentence. In other words, it's time to learn how to say me, him, her and them in Norwegian.

The Norwegian object pronouns are very easy. Their form resembles the English equivalents a lot, and, as in English, they can be used both as direct and indirect objects, even when preceded by a preposition. There's no special form for the indirect object as it does in German, for example.

Below we have the Norwegian object pronouns:

meg (me)

deg (you)

ham (him)

henne (her)

det/den (it)*

oss (us)

dere (you)

dem (them)

- Den is another word which can mean it, and may also be translated as that.

VOCABULARY

å vente	to wait
å gi	to give
å glemme	to forget
å treffe	to meet
venn (en, er)	friend
med	with

EXERCISES

Exercise A: Translate to English:

- 1) *Hundene hjelper ham.*
- 2) *Hun venter på deg!*
- 3) *Moren gir meg en bok.*
- 4) *Jeg besøker dem alltid.*
- 5) *Bestemoren liker oss.*
- 6) *Vi glemmer den aldri.*
- 7) *Kan jeg hjelpe deg?.*

Exercise B: Translate to Norwegian:

- 1) *The cats are seeing us.*
- 2) *The grandmothers like him.*
- 3) *He likes it.*
- 4) *The friends never visit her.*
- 5) *Morten and Anne, can I help you?*
- 6) *The sons and the daughters always forget it.*
- 7) *The grandfather is reading with them.*

SOLUTIONS

Exercise A:

- 1) *The dogs help him.*
- 2) *She is waiting for you!*
- 3) *The mother gives me a book.*
- 4) *I always visit them.*
- 5) *The grandmother likes us.*
- 6) *We never forget it.*
- 7) *Can I help you?*

Exercise B:

- 1) *Kattene ser oss.*
 - 2) *Bestemødrene liker ham.*
 - 3) *Han liker det.*
 - 4) *Vennene besøker henne aldri.*
 - 5) *Morten og Anne, kan jeg hjelpe dere?*
 - 6) *Sønnene og døtrene glemmer den alltid.*
 - 7) *Bestefaren leser med dem.*
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End Of Part One

This is the end of the basic Norwegian course. Now you've learned some of the basics of this fascinating language. In the future we might create a part two of this course but for now this is all. But you can learn more by visiting the UniLang Public Bookmarks or the resources available on the main page.

Thanks for your interest in this course! If you discovered any mistakes or you just want to say something then please [let us know](#).

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