

Tips on using an Esperanto-English dictionary

Most words in Esperanto are composed of a *root*, possibly some *affixes* (prefixes or suffixes) and one or more *grammatical endings*. Take the word **ŝafisto**, for example, which means “shepherd”. It consists of three parts, or *morphemes*:

- ŝaf-** a root for “sheep”
- ist** a suffix denoting “a person habitually/professionally occupied with the subject of the root” (much like the English words *dentist* or *florist*)
- o** the *grammatical ending* for nouns.

Unlike many languages, Esperanto doesn't alter the spelling or pronunciation of its morphemes depending on where they appear: they can be recombined in different combinations to form a wide variety of words.

As a result, the arrangement of an Esperanto dictionary tends to be very compact: Instead of having a unique entry for **ŝafisto**, for example, our dictionary lists this word under its root, **ŝaf-**. The root itself is presented in word form with its “default” grammatical ending, separated by a slash:

ŝaf/o sheep; **~isto** shepherd

The slash is just a dictionary convention; it isn't used in writing. You'll also see the tilde (~) used as a placeholder for the root. Here are some other examples of the sorts of dictionary entries you'll see:

kur/i to run
dimanĉ/o Sunday
rapid/a fast

The “default” ending in each listing reflects the grammatical category of the root's meaning: **kur-** (“run”) denotes an *action*, so the default ending is verbal (**-i**). **dimanĉ-** (“Sunday”) denotes a day of the week, so it takes the default ending for nouns, **-o**. The root **rapid-** (“fast”) denotes a *quality*, so by default it takes the adjective ending, **-a**.

These default endings are just memory aids for learning; roots can form words with other endings, too. For example, **kur-** can take the noun ending **-o** to form **kuro** (“the act of running / a ‘run’”) and **dimanĉ-** can take the adjective ending **-a** to form **dimanĉa** (“of or related to Sunday”). So we can describe “a Sunday run” as **dimanĉa kuro**. Or we can use the adverbial **-e** ending with **rapid-** to make **kuri rapide** (“to run quickly”). And so on.

The following page is a list of words that will come up in class over the next few weeks. Don't worry: you don't have to memorize them all! They're included here just for reference, and to give you an idea of what to expect in a larger Esperanto dictionary.

-a (<i>adjective ending</i>)	ho! oh! (<i>exclamation</i>)	nu now; well... (<i>interjection</i>)
akv/o water	hodiaŭ today	-o (<i>noun ending</i>)
al to; towards (<i>preposition</i>)	-i (<i>infinitive verb ending</i>)	ok eight; ~a eighth (8th)
-as (<i>present tense verb ending</i>)	-il (<i>suffix denoting a tool, implement</i>);	paĉj/o dad, pop, daddy
atlet/o athlete	kovr~o a cover; litkovr~o a blanket	panj/o mom, ma, mommy
Azi/o Asia	-in (<i>suffix denoting a female</i>); fil~o	pasport/o passport
ban/i to bathe; ~tuko washcloth	daughter; patr~o mother	patr/o father; ~ino mother
be! bah! (<i>exclamation</i>)	inform/i to inform, tell; ~o information;	por for (<i>preposition</i>)
bon/a good; ~e well; ~volo goodwill;	~ejo information center	radi/o radio
~venon! welcome!	intervju/o an interview	raport/i to report; ~isto reporter
danc/i to dance; ~o a dance	ir/i to go	re- (<i>prefix indicating repetition</i>);
dank/i to thank; ~o thanks;	-ist (<i>suffix denoting an occupation</i>);	~vidi to see again
~on! thank you!; ~a grateful	danc~o dancer; ŝaf~o shepherd	rigard/i to look (at), watch; ~u! look!
de of; from (<i>preposition</i>)	-j (<i>plural ending</i>)	sak/o bag; sack;
dek ten; ~a tenth (10th)	japan/o Japanese (person);	dorm(o)~o sleeping bag
dekstr/a right (side); ~en to the right	~ujo, ~io Japan	salut/i greet; ~o greeting; ~on hello!
dimanĉ/o Sunday	jen here's...	sap/o soap
dorm/i to sleep; ~o sleep	jes yes	sed but (<i>conjunction</i>)
du two; ~a second (2nd)	juĝ/i to judge; ~isto judge	seĝ/o chair, seat
-e (<i>adverb ending</i>)	ĵus just (a moment ago)	sep seven; ~a seventh (7th)
edz/o husband; ~ino wife	kaj and	serv/i to serve; ~o service
-ej (<i>suffix indicating place</i>); dorm~o	kap/o head (of body); ~kuseno pillow	ses six; ~a sixth (6th)
bedroom; inform~o information	katastrof/o catastrophe;	sid/i to sit
center	~e! What a catastrophe!	sinjor/o, s-ro sir; gentleman; Mr.;
el out of; from (<i>preposition</i>);	kie where	~ino, s-ino madam; lady; M(r)s.
mi venas ~ Nov-Zelando I come	kiel how	skulpt/i to carve, sculpt; ~isto sculptor
from New Zealand	kio what (thing)	son/i [<i>intr.</i>] to sound, ring; sonas la
en in, inside (<i>preposition</i>)	kovr/i to cover; ~ilo cover, lid	telefono! the telephone's ringing!
esper/i to hope; ~o hope	kur/i to run	strat/o street
est/i to be	kusen/o cushion; kap~o pillow	ŝaf/o sheep; ~isto shepherd
Eŭrop/o Europe	kvar four; ~a fourth (4th)	ŝvit/i to sweat
facil/a easy	kvin five; ~a fifth (5th)	telefon/o telephone
famili/o family	la the (<i>article</i>)	terur/o terror; ~e! how terrible!
fart/i to be (fare);	labor/i to work	tie there
kiel vi ~as? how are you?	lac/a tired	tri three; ~a third (3rd)
fil/o son; ~ino daughter	leg/i to read	tuk/o piece of cloth;
filozof/o philosopher	lit/o bed; ~(o)tuko bedsheet	lit(o)~o (bed)sheet;
frat/o brother; ~ino sister	lund/o Monday	ban~o bath towel
fraŭl/o bachelor;	man/o hand; ~tuko hand-towel	tut/a entire, whole
~ino bachelorette; Miss	mi I, me (<i>pronoun</i>); ~a my	-u (<i>imperative verb ending</i>)
gast/o guest	mond/o world	unu one (<i>number</i>); ~a first (1st)
grek/o Greek (person);	naŭ nine; ~a ninth (9th)	urb/o city, town
~ujo, ~io Greece	ne no; not	urg/a urgent
ĝis until; (up)to;	ni we (<i>pronoun</i>); ~a our	ven/i to come
~ (la) revido see you later; ĝis! bye!	nom/o name	vi you (<i>pronoun</i>); ~a your
ĝu/i to enjoy	Nov-Zeland/o New Zealand	vid/i to see; ĝis la re~o! see you later!
ha-lo? Hello? (<i>telephone greeting</i>)		