

Grammar for the Marček text, chapters 1-3

- Personal pronouns

The words used in place of persons are called *personal pronouns*. Here are a few to start with:

vi you **mi** I **ŝi** she **li** he

- The verb *to be*: **est-**

Verbs in Esperanto don't vary by person or number. In English, the verb "to be" can become "am", "is", or "are" depending on the pronoun it appears with. But verbs in Esperanto never vary in this way. In the present tense, all verbs end with **-as**. The forms "am", "is", and "are" are all expressed by **estas**:

I am Maria.	Mi estas Maria.
You are Peter.	Vi estas Peter.
She is Silvoja.	Ŝi estas Silvoja.
He is Karlo.	Li estas Karlo.

- **kaj** (*and*)

The word **kaj** rhymes with *sky*.

hundo kaj kato	<i>a dog and a cat</i>
plumo kaj kraĵono	<i>a pen and a pencil</i>

Informally, **kaj** can also mean "plus":

Unu kaj du estas tri. One and two make three.

- Asking yes / no questions: **ĉu**

Yes/no questions are formed by placing **ĉu** at the start of a statement:

Statement	→	Question
Kato estas besto.		Ĉu kato estas besto?
Vi estas Maria.		Ĉu vi estas Maria?
Pomo estas frukto.		Ĉu pomo estas frukto?

Note that in English we sometimes change the word order of a statement when making it into a question. But in Esperanto, no change of word order is necessary; we simply add **ĉu**:

Rozo estas floro.	→	Ĉu rozo estas floro?
<i>A rose is a flower.</i>	→	<i>Is a rose a flower?</i>

- **jes** and **ne**

jes (pronounced just like *yes*) means *yes*.

ne (pronounced like the *ne* in *net*) means *no* or *not*.

Ĉu kato estas besto? —**Jes**, kato estas besto.

Is a cat an animal? —Yes, a cat is an animal.

Ĉu vi estas Peter? —**Ne**, mi **ne** estas Peter. Mi estas Maria!

Are you Peter? —No, I am not Peter. I'm Maria!

- **sed** (*but*)

Kato ne estas homo, **sed** besto.

A cat is not a human, but an animal.

Pomo ne estas floro, **sed** rozo estas floro.

An apple is not a flower, but a rose is a flower.

- **ankaŭ** (*also / too*)

Peter estas homo. **Ankaŭ** Maria estas homo.

Peter is a person. Maria is a person too. (or: Also Maria is a person.)

Plumo estas objekto. Ĉu **ankaŭ** tablo estas objekto?

A pen is an object. Is a table an object too?

- Nouns

All nouns take the grammatical ending **-o**:

tablo *a table*

besto *an animal*

floro *a flower*

- **kio** (*what / what thing*) and **tio** (*that / that thing*)

Kio and **tio** indicate things (nouns) that are unknown until named.

Kio estas tio? asks: *What is that (thing)?*

Ĉu **tio** estas ĉevalo? —Ne, **tio** ne estas ĉevalo.

Is that a horse? —No, that isn't a horse.

Kio estas **tio**? —**Tio** estas hundo!

What is that? —That's a dog!

*Hint: remember that the question **Kio?** is answered by a noun, ending in **-o**.*

- **la** (*the*)

The direct article **la** is just like the English word “*the*”: it names something that has already been mentioned or is already known. There is no indefinite article in Esperanto like “*a*” or “*an*” in English; *an apple* is simply **pomo**.

Tio estas homo.	<i>That is a person.</i>
La homo estas Maria.	The person is Maria.
Rozo estas floro.	A rose is a flower.
Tio estas hundo.	<i>That is a dog.</i>
La hundo estas besto.	The dog is an animal.

- Verb tense: **-as**

As mentioned earlier with the verb **est-**, if something occurs in the present, the verb ends with **-as**:

Tablo estas objekto.	<i>A table is an object.</i>
Peter staras sur la planko.	<i>Peter is standing on the floor.</i>
Maria sidas sur la seĝo.	<i>Maria is sitting on the chair.</i>

Note that **staras** can mean either *sits* or *is sitting*. There is a verb form in Esperanto similar to the English *is —ing* (e.g. *Peter is standing*) but it is rarely used. Both the simple tense (*I stand*) and the continuous tense (*I am standing*) are usually translated using the same ending **-as**. Listeners determine the exact meaning from context.

Mi staras	<i>I stand / I am standing</i>
Li sidas	<i>He sits / He is sitting</i>

When translating verbs into Esperanto, don’t translate literally and use **estas** before another verb. The sentence “Maria is standing” translates as simply **Maria staras**, NOT **Maria estas staras**!

- Adjectives

Words used to describe nouns are called *adjectives*. Adjectives take the ending **-a**:

bon a hundo	<i>a good dog</i>
bela domo	<i>a beautiful house</i>
nigr a kato	<i>a black cat</i>

Adjectives usually precede their nouns, but the order can be reversed with no change in meaning. So to say *a good dog*, you can use either **bona hundo** or **hundo bona**.

- **kia** (*what sort / kind*)

Kia asks about the *quality* or *nature* of a thing or person — it asks for an adjective. There is no one-word translation for **kia** in English. Roughly, it means: *what kind?* (or) *what sort?*

Kia besto estas hundo? **What kind** of animal is a dog?
Kia li estas? **What** is he **like**?

Hint: remember that the question **Kia?** is answered by an adjective ending in **-a**.

- **Prepositions**

Prepositions are the little words used to join parts of a sentence, showing the relationships between them. For example, consider these two sentence parts:

la kato sidas *the cat sits*
la tablo *the table*

We can join them together with a preposition that shows how the sitting cat relates to the table:

La kato sidas **sur** (*on*) la tablo.
La kato sidas **sub** (*under*) la tablo.
La kato sidas **apud** (*near*) la tablo.

The prepositions **sur**, **sub** and **apud** denote where the cat is sitting in relation to the table: they are called *prepositions of place*. Later we'll encounter other sorts of prepositions.

- **More pronouns**

ni *we* **ili** *they* **ĝi** *it* **vi** *you (singular or plural)*

Note that **vi**, which we saw before, can refer to just one person, or a group. The pronoun **ĝi** is typically used to refer to inanimate objects and animals, but also sometimes to people when their gender isn't known.

- **kie** (*where*)

Kie sidas la kato? **Where** is the cat sitting?
La seĝo estas **kie**? **Where** is the chair?

- **kiu** (*who / which one*)

Kiu? can be used to ask: *Who?* Remember the difference between **kio**, **kiu**, **kie**, and **kia**:

Kiu ŝi estas? Ŝi estas Maria.
Kio ŝi estas? Ŝi estas homo.
Kie ŝi estas? Ŝi estas en la domo, sur la seĝo.
Kia ŝi estas? Ŝi estas bela.