

# Grammar for the Marček text, chapter 12–13

## Impersonal verbs

In English we have sentences like “It is old”, or “It is beautiful”, where the word “it” stands for some specific thing (a house, a book, etc.)

But sometimes the “it” doesn’t stand for anything in particular. For example: “It is raining.” The “it” in this sentence is just a grammatical placeholder—sort of an artificial subject. In Esperanto we simply omit it:

*It is raining* = Pluvas.

Simple, no?

When verbs are used without a subject, we call them *impersonal verbs*:

Pluvas.	<i>It is raining.</i>	Neĝas.	<i>It is snowing.</i>
Pluvis.	<i>It was raining.</i>	Neĝis.	<i>It was snowing.</i>
Pluvos.	<i>It is going to rain.</i>	Neĝos.	<i>It is going to snow.</i>
Frostras.	<i>It is freezing.</i>	Hajlas.	<i>It is hailing.</i>
Frostis.	<i>It was freezing.</i>	Hajlis.	<i>It was hailing.</i>
Frostos.	<i>It will be freezing.</i>	Hajlos.	<i>It’s going to hail.</i>

You can make these sentences into negatives or questions by placing **ne** or **ĉu** in front of them:

Ne neĝis. *It wasn’t snowing.*      Ĉu pluvos? *Is it going to rain?*

In the same way, we can say:

Estas varme.	<i>It is warm.</i>	Estas malvarme.	<i>It is cold.</i>
Estas sune.	<i>It’s sunny.</i>	Estas bele.	<i>It’s beautiful.</i>

But note: because there’s no subject, **estas** is followed not by an adjective, but by an adverb, with **-e**. Compare: in a sentence with a subject, we use an *adjective* to describe the *subject*:

**Fajro** estas varma.

But in a sentence without a subject, we use an *adverb* to describe the *verb*:

**Estas** varme.

## The diminutive suffix **-et**

The suffix **-et** is used to denote a small size or degree:

domo	<i>house</i>	dometo	<i>cottage</i>
varma	<i>warm</i>	varmeta	<i>lukewarm</i>
malvarma	<i>cold</i>	malvarmeta	<i>cool</i>
dormas	<i>sleeps</i>	dormetas	<i>dozes</i>
ridas	<i>laughs</i>	ridetas	<i>smiles</i>

## The augmentative suffix **-eg**

The suffix **-eg** is the opposite of **-et** and shows a great size or degree:

dome**ego** mansion  
var**mega** hot  
dorm**egas** sleeps heavily  
rid**egas** guffaws

## **-il**

The suffix **-il** is used to denote an instrument by which an action is carried out:

tranĉi to cut	tranĉ <b>ilo</b> knife
ŝlosi to lock	ŝlos <b>ilo</b> key
kombi to comb	komb <b>ilo</b> a comb
boligi to boil (something)	bolig <b>ilo</b> boiler, kettle
kuri to cook	kur <b>ilo</b> cooking utensil
flugi to fly	flug <b>ilo</b> wing
aviado aviation	aviad <b>ilo</b> aircraft, plane

## **ek-**

The prefix **ek-** is used to denote the beginning of an action, or a momentary action:

vidi to see	<b>ek</b> vidi to catch sight of
iri to go	<b>ek</b> iri to set off, start
dormi to sleep	<b>ek</b> dormi to fall asleep
bruli to be burning	<b>ek</b> bruli to catch fire
posedi to possess	<b>ek</b> posedi to take possession of
flugi to fly	<b>ek</b> flugi to take flight
brili to shine	<b>ek</b> brili to flash
rigardi to look (at)	<b>ek</b> rigardi to glance (at)
scii to know	<b>ek</b> scii to find out

## Correlatives with **-es**

The **-es** words show possession: **kies** – whose (what person's); **ties** – that one's (of that person); **ies** – someone's; **ĉies** – everyone's; **nenies** – no one's.

**Kies** libro estas tiu?  
**Whose** book is that?

Jen **ies** biciklo.  
There's **someone's** bike.

Li estas **nenies** malamiko.  
He is **no one's** enemy.

**Kies** may also serve as a relative pronoun: “whose”. **Kies** never changes; only the noun which follows it may change:

La virino, kies sako estis sur la tablo.    *The woman whose bag was on the table.*  
La virino, kies sakon li ŝtelis.            *The woman whose bag he stole.*

## The indefinite pronoun **oni**

When we're not referring to any person in particular, we use the indefinite pronoun **oni**, which is similar to the English “one”:

**Oni** ripetas, kion **oni** legas.    *One repeats what one reads.*

In English we also use “they,” “it” or even “you” to convey the same idea, depending on the sentence:

**Oni** diras, ke vi estas malfeliĉa.  
**They** say that you are unhappy.

**Oni** diras, ke vi estas riĉa.  
**It** is said that you are rich.

Kiam **oni** estas riĉa, **oni** baldaŭ trovas amikojn.  
When **you** are rich, **you** soon find friends.

Li estas tiel malgranda, ke **oni** ne rimarkas lin.  
He is so small that **you** don't notice him.

## More about adverbs

Esperanto is rich in adverbs; any root can be made into an adverb with the **-e** ending, provided the result makes sense. As a result, adverbs are more widely used in Esperanto than in English, and we can often use Esperanto's adverbs to express ideas that require two or three words in English!

Generally speaking, we can use an adverb in Esperanto where we'd use a *preposition and noun* in English:

Li parolas saĝ**e**.    *He speaks wisely (with wisdom).*  
Mi dormas nok**te**.    *I sleep at night (during the night).*  
Li laboras tag**e**.    *He works by day (during the day).*  
maten**e**            *in the morning*  
vesper**e**            *in the evening*  
fakt**e**              *in fact; as a matter of fact*  
ceter**e**              *as for the rest; moreover*  
ekzempl**e**          *for example*

## Time

So far we've used **-n** to mark a direct object in a sentence. But it has other uses: for example, it can be used in place of a preposition. We often see this in expressions of time, where **-n** is added to replace a missing **je** or **dum**:

Mi iros lundon.	=	Mi iros <b>je</b> lundo.
<i>I will go Monday.</i>		<i>I will go on Monday.</i>
Mi atendos semajnon.	=	Mi atendos <b>dum</b> semajno.
<i>I will wait a week.</i>		<i>I will wait for a week.</i>

Note that **lundon** means *on Monday*—a single day. If we wish to indicate repetition, we need to use the adverb form: **lunde** = *on Mondays*.

Mi iris lundon, kvankam kutime mi iras marde.  
*I went on Monday, although I usually go on Tuesdays.*

In accordance with this use of **-n**, when writing the date (at the top of a letter, for instance), we write:

Dimanĉon, la duan (2-an) de Marto

or simply:

La 2-an de Marto

## Weights and Measures

Here again we can use **-n** to replace a preposition, making the sentence more concise:

La monto estas mil metrojn alta. (La monto estas alta **je** mil metroj.)  
*The mountain is a thousand meters high.*

La pakaĵo pezas du kilogramojn. (La pakaĵo pezas **je/ĝis** du kilogramoj)  
*The package weighs two kilograms.*

If **-n** is already used to show the object, however, it might be ambiguous to have two **-ns** together. In that case, put the expression of time or measure first, or just use a preposition. Instead of *Mi atendis lin du semajnojn*, it might be better to say *Du semajnojn mi atendis lin*, or *Mi atendis lin dum du semajnoj*.