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Overview of Norwegian

The purpose of Norwegian Grammar Basics is to provide the user with very basic information on Norwegian Grammar. To this end, the topics are limited to the alphabet, pronunciation and basic parts of speech.

Norwegian is spoken by the approximately four million inhabitants of Norway. It is related to Danish and Swedish and is part of the Indo-European family of languages.

Norwegian has two official variants, Bokmål and Nynorsk. The Norwegian presented by Transparent Language is Bokmål. Bokmål is the standard for urban areas as well as being the standard for radio and television broadcasts and newspapers. Nynorsk is generally used in rural, western Norway and is based on the spoken dialects of Norway. In learning Bokmål, one will be able to understand Nynorsk.

Transparent Language has chosen to present the polite form of address in Norwegian. The polite form employs the pronouns De/Dem instead of the familiar pronouns du/deg/dere. The polite form is used less frequently in modern Norwegian, but may be seen in the written language. As a language learner and possible visitor to Norway, using the polite form is guaranteed not to offend anyone when you first meet!

Alphabet

The Norwegian Alphabet is similar to English, with the addition of a few vowels.

A	a
B	b
C	c
D	d
E	e
F	f
G	g
H	h
I	i
J	j
K	k
L	l
M	m
N	n
O	o
P	p
Q	q
R	r
S	s
T	t
U	u
V	v
W	w
X	x
Y	y
Z	z
Æ	æ
Ø	ø
Å	å

Most Norwegian words are stressed on the 1st syllable. In this stressed syllable, either the vowel or the consonant will be long. In the unstressed syllables, both the vowels and consonants are short.

Long vowels are usually followed by a short consonant, a single consonant.

dag

Short vowels are usually followed by a long consonant, a double consonant.

hatt

Pronunciation Guidelines

Vowels

a	as in "car" more open than in "car"	dag hatt
e	as in "fan" as in "jet" as in "glad" (only before 'r') as in "see"	pen sitte verdt De

i	as in " see "	mil
	as in " fit "	sit
o	as in " pool " but rounder lips and further back in the mouth	bok
	mouth a little more open than above	rom
	as in " saw " (only before 'v')	sove
u	as in " through "	gul
y	as in " see ", but with rounded lips	lys
æ	as in " glad "	være
ø	as in " serve ", but more closed	snø
å	similar to " mall "	bår

Consonants

Consonants are pronounced much the same as they are in English. A few special instances follow:

d	silent	after a vowel; after 'r', 'l', 'n'; or at the end of a word
g	like in " yes "	before 'ei', 'l' and 'y'
	silent	before 'j' and words ending in '-ig'
h	silent	before 'j' and 'v'
j	like in " yes "	
k	aspirated as in " huge "	before 'j', 'y', 'ei', and 'l'
r	slightly rolled	
s	as in " short "	before 'j', 'kj', 'ki', 'kei', 'ky', and 'køy'
t	aspirated as in " huge "	before 'j'
	silent	in det and other definite singular neuter nouns
v	silent	at the end of a word or after 'l'

Nouns

A noun is a word that names a person, place, thing or idea.

Kari	Kari
Oslo	Oslo
tog	train
kjærlighet	love

In Norwegian, nouns decline. The form of a noun will change to express its grammatical function. This change in form depends on whether a noun is:

Masculine, Feminine or Neuter (Gender)
Singular or Plural (Number)
Definite or Indefinite

Main Pattern of Declension of Masculine Nouns: gutt (boy)

<u>Singular Indefinite</u>	<u>Singular Definite</u>	<u>Plural Indefinite</u>	<u>Plural Definite</u>
en gutt	gutten	gutter	guttene

Main Pattern of Declension of Feminine Nouns: jente (girl)

<u>Singular Indefinite</u>	<u>Singular Definite</u>	<u>Plural Indefinite</u>	<u>Plural Definite</u>
ei jente	jenta	jenter	jentene

Main Pattern of Declension of Neuter Nouns: hus (house) representative of one syllable nouns

vindu (window) representative of two syllable nouns

<u>Singular Indefinite</u>	<u>Singular Definite</u>	<u>Plural Indefinite</u>	<u>Plural Definite</u>
et hus	huset	hus	husene
et vindu	vinduet	vinduer	vinduene

Nouns also have case. The Nominative Case denotes the noun is being used as the subject. There are no special endings to express the Nominative Case.

The Genitive Case expresses possession. The Genitive Case adds an "s" to the nominative form. (Note: if the nominative form already ends in a "s", then an apostrophe represents the genitive.)

Min kjole og min **manns** dress trenger å bli presset.
(My dress and my **husband's** suit need to be pressed.)

See Also:

Gender and Agreement
Number and Agreement
Articles

Gender and Agreement

The GENDER of a Norwegian noun, pronoun, adjective and article can be **masculine**, **feminine**, or **neuter**.

kjole (dress)	masculine
natt (night)	feminine
enkeltrom (room)	neuter

Gender should be learned with each noun as there are few guidelines to determine a noun's gender.

Pronouns, adjectives and articles generally agree with a noun's gender. Having learned the gender of a noun, one can easily use the appropriate pronoun, adjective or article.

See also:

[Nouns](#)

[Adjectives](#)

[Articles](#)

[Pronouns](#)

Number and Agreement

There are two numbers in Norwegian: **singular** and **plural**.

Most **nouns** in Norwegian have singular and plural forms:

reisesjekk (traveler's check)

reisesjekker (traveler's checks)

Pronouns also have singular and plural forms:

jeg (I)

vi (we)

Adjectives and articles agree with nouns in both number and gender:

Vi har et veldig **fint enkeltrom**. (We have a very **nice single room**.)

Verbs agree with the subject of the sentence in number:

Jeg heter Kari. (My name is Kari.)

See Also

[Nouns](#)

[Pronouns](#)

[Adjectives](#)

[Articles](#)

[Verb Inflection](#)

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that stands for a previously mentioned (or understood) noun.

The house was badly damaged when **it** was hit by the hurricane.

The pronoun **it** refers back to the noun **house**.

Pronouns can be used in various ways: as the **subject of a verb**, as the **object of a verb**, or they can **refer back to the subject (reflexive)**.

Subject Pronouns

jeg (I)

du/De* (you)

han (he), hun (she), den/det (it)

vi (we)

dere/De* (you)

de (they)

Object Pronouns

meg (me)

deg/Dem*(you)

han/ham* (him), henne (her), den/det (it)

oss(us)

dere/Dem* (you)

dem (them)

Reflexive Pronouns

meg (myself)

deg/Dem* (yourself)

seg (him/her/it/one - self)

oss (ourselves)

dere/Dem* (yourselves)

seg (themselves)

Possessive Pronouns decline according to number and gender:

When referring to Singular Nouns:

	<u>Masculine</u>	<u>Feminine</u>	<u>Neuter</u>
(my/mine)	min	mi	mitt
(you.yours)	din/Deres*	di/Deres*	ditt/Deres*
(his), (her/hers), (its)	hans, hennes, dens/dets	hans, hennes, dens/dets	hans, hennes, dens/dets
(our/ours)	vår	vår	vårt
(your/yours)	deres/Deres*	deres/Deres*	deres/Deres*
(their/theirs)	deres	deres	deres

When referring to Plural Nouns:

mine (my/mine)
dine/Deres* (you.yours)
hans (his), hennes (her/hers), dens/dets(its)

våre (our/ours)
deres/Deres* (your/yours)
deres(their/theirs)

* indicates the formal

Articles

Norwegian uses two types of articles: **definite** and **indefinite**. Articles agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify.

The indefinite article (a, an) functions in Norwegian as it does in English. It is used only in reference to singular nouns, and is placed before the noun.

Masculine	en	en gutt	(a boy)
Feminine	ei/en	ei/en by	(a town)
Neuter	et	et hus	(a house)

The Norwegian definite article (the) is always attached to the end of the noun.

	Singular	Plural		
Masculine	-en	-ene/-ne	gutten (the boy)	guttene (the boys)
Feminine	-a	-ene/-ne	jenta (the girl)	jentene (the girls)
Neuter	-et	-ene/-ne/-a	huset (the house)	husene (the houses)

**Definite Articles in relation to adjectives

If a definite noun is preceded by an adjective, an additional definite article is placed before the adjective. The definite article in relation to the adjective has a different form.

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	den	de
Feminine	den	de
Neuter	det	de

Hunden er stor. **Den** store hunden løper. **De** store hundene løper.
(The dog is big.) (The big dog is running.) (The big dogs are running.)

Jakka er brun. **Den** brune jakka er varm. **De** brune jakkene er varme.
(The coat is brown.) (The brown coat is warm.) (The brown coats are warm.)

Huset er stort. **Det** store huset er gult. **De** store husene er gule.
(The house is big.) (The big house is yellow.) (The big houses are yellow.)

See Also:

[Nouns](#)

[Gender and Agreement](#)

[Number and Agreement](#)

[Adjectives](#)

Adjectives

An ADJECTIVE agrees in gender and number with the noun it modifies. Norwegian adjectives are also declined.

Vi har et veldig **fint enkeltrom**. (We have a very **nice single room**.)

Main pattern of Declension for adjectives: stor (big)

	Singular Indefinite	Singular Definite	Plural Indefinite	Plural Definite
Masculine	stor	store	store	store
Feminine	stor	store	store	store
Neuter	stort	store	store	store

There are some irregular adjectives whose forms need to be learned.

	Singular Indefinite	Singular Definite	Plural Indefinite	Plural Definite
Masculine	liten	små	små	små
Feminine	lita	små	små	små
Neuter	lite	små	små	små

See Also:

[Gender and Agreement](#)
[Number and Agreement](#)
[Articles](#)

Adverbs

Many ADVERBS are formed from adjectives. The form of the adverb is that of the neuter adjective.

god (good) **godt** (good/well)

Adverbs that are not derived from adjectives include:

her (here)
hvor (where)
aldri (never)
alltid (always)
overalt (everywhere)

See Also:

[Adjectives](#)

Verbs

A verb expresses action or a state of being.

In the dictionary, you will find a verb listed in its INFINITIVE form. The infinitive is the basic form of the verb without inflection. Sometimes the infinitive may be preceded by **å**, this is equivalent to the English "to".

å bli (to be)

The infinitive can be inflected to show mood and tense.

Moods:

Imperative: expresses a command

Indicative: expresses objective statements and questions.

*Subjunctive: once used to express a wish or request, now the subjunctive is used only in certain idioms.

To form the IMPERATIVE:

infinitives ending in "-e", drop the "-e": **komme (infinitive) kom (imperative)**

infinitives not ending in "-e", use the the same form as the infinitive

gå (infinitive) gå(imperative)

The INDICATIVE mood has a variety of tenses.

Present: expresses something happening presently.

Past (imperfect): expresses an event that occurred at a particular time in the past.

Perfect: expresses an event that occurred in the past, without a fixed time to it.

Pluperfect: expresses a past event that preceded another event, also in the past.

Future: expresses an event that will happen.

Future Perfect: expresses an action in the future that will end by the time another event occurs.

Conditional: expresses a future event from an orientation in the past

Conditional Perfect: expresses something that should have been done, but hasn't yet.

PARTICIPLES:

Present Participle: The present participle is not used very often in modern Norwegian. However, you will see it used as an adjective, adverb or noun.

Past Participle: The past participle is used in the formation of the indicative perfect tenses mentioned above.

See Also:

[Verb Inflection](#)

Verb Inflection

Inflection is a change in the form of a verb to show grammatical function. A verb is inflected when it is changed from the infinitive to the imperative, participles or any of the indicative tenses.

komme (infinitive) kom (imperative)

To form the IMPERATIVE:

infinitives ending in "-e", drop the "-e" **komme (infinitive)** **kom (imperative)**

infinitives not ending in "-e", use the the same form as the infinitive

gå (infinitive) **gå(imperative)**

To form the PRESENT PARTICIPLE:

add "-ende" to the verb stem **kostende (costing)**

To form the PAST PARTICIPLE:

use the indicative past tense, minus the final "-e", for regular verbs. For irregular verbs, consult your dictionary.

kostet(cost)

To form the INDICATIVE:

Present: infinitive + r **koster (costs)**

Past: Whether a verb is regular or irregular in conjugation, defines how it is inflected in these tenses. As a language learner it may be helpful to consult a dictionary to determine if a verb is regular or irregular. For regular verbs you can generally use the following rules:

1. The infinitive ends in a stressed vowel:
past tense is formed by adding "-dde" **bodde (lived)**
2. The verb stem ends in a diphthong, "-g" or "-v":
past tense is formed by adding "-de" **prøvde (tried)**
3. The verb stem ends in a single consonant:
past tense is formed by adding "-te" **lekte (played)**
4. The verb stem ends in more than one consonant:
past tense is formed by adding "-et" **kostet (cost)**

Perfect: auxiliary verb (har) + past participle

Pluperfect: auxiliary verb --hadde-- + past participle

Future: auxiliary verb --skal, vil, or kommer til å-- + infinitive

Future Perfect: auxiliary verb --skal or vil-- + ha + past participle

Conditional: Auxilliary verb --skulle or ville-- + infinitive

Conditional Perfect: auxiliary verb --skulle or ville-- + (ha) + past participle

Prepositions

PREPOSITIONS are the connecting words that show the relationships between words in the sentence. Nouns, pronouns, noun phrases, gerunds or noun clauses can be the complement of the prepositions:

Simple prepositions in Norwegian include the following:

av	of, by
blant	among
etter	after
for	for
før	before
fra	from
hos	with
i	in
med	with
mellom	between
mot	against
om	about
over	over
på	at, on
til	to

Jeg vil gjerne veksle noen amerikanske dollar **til** norske kroner.
(I would like to exchange some American dollars **to** Norwegian Krona.)

The rules of using prepositions are not consistent. However there are many prepositional phrases that can easily be learned.

Conjunctions

CONJUNCTIONS join words, phrases and clauses together.
The most commonly used conjunction in Norwegian is **og** (and).

Jeg beklager, det er ingen vindusplasser igjen, **men** jeg kan gi deg et sete ved midtgangen.
(I'm sorry, there are no window seats available, **but** I can give you an aisle seat.)

Other commonly used conjunctions:

eller	or
men	but
for	for
at	that
fordi	because
så	so

