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Introduction to Ukrainian Grammar

In English, the meaning of a sentence is determined by the order of its words.   The subject appears before the object.   In the sentence "Bob ate the fish." there is no confusion as to who is doing the eating.   In Ukrainian, sentence meaning is found in word endings, not in word order.   This means that sentence structure is much more unrestricted than in English and that more meaning can be expressed in Ukrainian with fewer words.   It also means that to understand a sentence in Ukrainian it is essential to understand the grammatical context of each word.   For this reason, the discussions of Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives and Numerals will center around grammatical endings.

The terms, case, declension (decline), and agreement will be used throughout the discussions of nouns, pronouns, adjectives and numerals.   There are seven cases in Ukrainian which apply to these parts of speech.   The seven cases tell how a word is being used in a sentence.   These are presented below with their basic meanings.

The seven cases:

Nominative	used for the subject of a sentence
Accusative	used for the direct object of a sentence
Genitive	used to show possession
Dative	used for indirect objects
Instrumental	used to show the means by which an action is performed
Prepositional (or Locative)	used only with prepositions, often showing location
Vocative	used for calling someone

The **Nominative** case is considered the rootword and is the form found in the dictionary.   It is also the only case that is never used with a preposition.

Declension: the seven case endings which are applied to every noun, pronoun, adjective and numeral.   To decline a noun is to apply the seven case endings that form its declension.

Agreement: Because sentence meaning is tied to the case endings of   words, it is important that each word accurately reflect its function.   For this reason, an adjective and the noun it modifies will show the same case endings, or **agree** with each other so that their relationship to each other is clear.

The Root presented on screen for each word in a Ukrainian Title is the dictionary entry for that word. The Ukrainian Grammar Basics (this Help file) explains how words change their endings for different grammatical meanings.   This information will give the beginning student the basis needed to understand and appreciate Ukrainian grammar and syntax.

Because Ukrainian is so different than English in its alphabet, vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, it presents special challenges to the beginning student.   Here are some suggestions for getting started:

1. Start with the alphabet. Repeat this at the beginning of each Ukrainian session until most of the letters are familiar.   When you begin reading your Ukrainian Titles, sound out each word with the help of the Pronunciation Guide in the Alphabet Help and the Word Sound available in each Title on CD.

2. Familiarize yourself with the different case forms of nouns and pronouns.   See how a word is used in different cases with the Search on Rootword command.   This will show you the other occurrences of a word in a Title.   This exercise will help you become familiar with the different case forms of a word and show you how different cases are used to give different meanings in a sentence.   Remember to learn new words by the Root form of the word, not by one of the oblique cases.

3. As you progress, you will notice that the English translation of a Ukrainian sentence may be entirely different in its formation from the Ukrainian.   To see how Ukrainian sentences are formed, read a sentence word-by-word with the   individual English word translations. This step between the two languages lets you experience the logic of Ukrainian grammar with English words.

4. Everyone has their own optimal learning style.   Experiment with the many features of Transparent Language to find what works best for you.

   Note: All words that contain more than one syllable will be presented with a stress mark in the Transparent Language program. Since there are no rules governing stress in Ukrainian, one must practice and memorize the stress of each word.

Ukrainian Alphabet

Àà   **like o in Mom**
Áá   **like b in brother**
Ââ   **like v in vase before vowels;**
          like w in wish before consonanats and at ends of words
Ãã   **like h in how**
Ää   **like d in day**
Åå   **like e in bed**
¯²   **like ye in Yemen**
Ææ   **like s in pleasure**
Çç   **like z in zoo**
Èè   **like i" in kit**
³ ˜   **like ee in feet**
· š   **like yi in Yiddish**
Éé   **like y in toy**
Êê   **like k in kite**
Ëë   **like l in line**
Ìì   **like m in Mom**
Íí   **like n in nose**
Îî   **like o in not**
Ïï   **like p in pit**
Ðð   **a rolled R, as in Spanish or Russian**
Ññ   **like s in sea**
Òò   **like t in tea**
Óó   **like oo in booth between consonants;**
          like w in wish at the beginning of words
Ôô   **like f in fell**
Õõ   **like ch in Bach**
Öö   **like ts in tse-tse fly**
×÷   **like ch in chin**
Øø   **like sh in shop**
Ùù   **like shch in borshch**
Þþ   **like you in youth**
ßÿ   **like ya in yard**
Üü   **the soft sign softens the preceeding consonant**

  Note: You will encounter an apostrophe in written Ukraininan. The apostrophe adds a **é** sound where it appears. Some, but not most, Ukrainian grammars will also show the letter **„›** after the letter **Ãã**. This letter makes a hard g sound, as in the word goose. This sound is found in only a handful of Ukrainian words, most of them of foreign origin.

Nouns

As in English, a Ukrainian noun names a person, place, thing, or abstract idea. However, every noun will also reflect with its ending its gender (masculine, feminine or neuter), number (singular or plural), and its case (one of seven cases as described in the topic, Introduction to Ukrainian Grammar). Unlike in English, there are no articles in Ukrainian.

Gender
All nouns in Ukrainian belong to one of three gender groups: masculine, feminine and neuter. Nouns in Ukrainian are also divided into animate and inanimate. All animals and persons belong to the animate group, while all objects and abstract nouns are considered inanimate.

Masculine nouns end in a consonant, -é or the soft sign:

áðàò	(brother)
ä˜ì	(house)
ñ¡ðïåíü	(August)
÷àé	(tea)

Sample declension of an animate   **Masculine Noun**
Note: Inanimate masculine nouns retain the nominative case ending in the accusative case.

Case	Singular	Plural	Translation
Nominative	áðàò	áðàò£	brother(s)
Accusative	áðµòà	áðàò—â	brother(s)
Genitive	áðµòà	áðàò—â	of the brother(s)
Dative	áðµòó/áðµòîâ˜	áðàòµìè	to/for the brother(s)
Instrumental	áðµîîì	áðàòµì	with the brother(s)
Prepositional	áðµòîâ˜	áðàòµõ	on the brother(s)

Feminine nouns end in -à or -ÿ. A small number can also end in a soft consonant.

â†ëÿ	(freedom)
ì£øà	(mouse)
ì˜öü	(power)
ï—	(midnight; North)
âí˜÷	

Sample declension of a **Feminine Noun.**
Note: Animate and inanimate feminine nouns have the same endings in the accusative case when they are singular. Plural inanimate feminine nouns have the nominative ending, while plural animate feminine nouns have the genitive ending.

Case	Singular	Plural	Translation
Nominative	ì£øà	ì£øè	mouse/ mice
Accusative	ì£øó	ìèø¡é	mouse/ mice

Genitive	ì£øè	ìèø¡é	of the mouse/ mice
Dative	ìèø—	ì£øàì	to/for the mouse/ mice
Instrumental	ì£øîþ	ì£øàìè	by/with the mouse/ mice
Prepositional	ì£ø˜	ì£øàõ	on the mouse/ mice

Neuter nouns end in -î or -å, and sometimes -ÿ

ñåë†	(village)
ñ¡ðöå	(heart)
˜ì'•	(name)

Sample declension of a **Neuter Noun.**
Note: Neuter nouns retain the nominative case ending in the accusative case.

Case	Singular	Plural	Translation
Nominative	˜ì'•	˜ìåíµ	name (s)
Accusative	˜ì'•	˜ìåíµ	name(s)
Genitive	—ìåí˜	˜ì¡í	of the name(s)
Dative	—ìåí˜	˜ìåíµì	to/for the name(s)
Instrumental	—ìåíàì	˜ìåíµìè	with/by the name(s)
Prepositional	—ìåí˜	˜ìåíµõ	on the name(s)

Ukrainian Names
A person's name in Ukrainian consists of 3 parts: the first name, the patronymic, indicating that the person is the son or daughter of the father, and the surname or family name. For example:

Áîãäµí Îëåêñµíäðîâè÷ Ïåòð¡íêî
(Bohdan, son of Oleksandr, Petrenko)

Îêñµíà Îëåêñµíäð˜âíà Ïåòð¡íêî
(Oksana, daughter of Oleksandr, Petrenko)

Ukrainian first names decline like common nouns with similar endings.   The patronymics decline like adjectives. Surnames that end with a consonant decline like nouns when they refer to a man, but do not decline at all when they refer to a woman. The polite form of address among acquaintances is the first name and patronymic. Among intimate friends or relatives, only the first name is used. When calling someone, you must use the vocative case.

For example:
Áîãäµí**å** Îëåêñµíäðîâè÷**ó**!
Îêñµí**î** Îëåêñµíäð˜âí**î**!

Diminutive forms of nouns are commonly used in Ukrainian to express not only smallness, but also different emotional nuances.   Diminutive forms of first names often express endearment:

Adjectives

An adjective modifies a noun or pronoun.   In Ukrainian, adjectives agree with the nouns they modify.   If the noun is singular, then the adjective will agree with the noun in gender, number (singular), and case.   If the noun is plural, the adjective will agree only in number (plural) and case.   Plural adjectives do not reflect gender.

Presented below are the declensions for the adjective white. Remember the animate/inanimate accusative rule as you look at these declensions.   The accusative form of the masculine singular adjective and the plural forms of all genders will be like the nominative for inanimate objects and like the genitive for animate beings.

Case	Masculine singular	Feminine Singular	Neuter Singular	Plural
Nominative	á—ëèé	á—ëà	á—ëå	á—ë˜
Animate Accusative	á—ëîãî	á—ëó	á—ëîãî	á—ëèõ
Inanimate Accusative	á—ëèé	á—ëó	á—ëå	á—ë˜
Genitive	á—ëîãî	á—ëîš	á—ëîãî	á—ëèõ
Dative	á—ëîìó	á—ë˜é	á—ëîìó	á—ëèì
Instrumental	á—ëèì	á—ëîþ	á—ëèì	á—ëèìè
Prepositional	á—ëîìó	á—ë˜é	á—ëîìó	á—ëèõ

Comparative Degree
The comparative degree of an adjective is formed in Ukrainian with the addition of the inffix -˜ø or -ø.

êðàñ£âèé > êðàñ£â˜øèé
beautiful > more beautiful

Superlative Degree
The superlative degree is formed with the addition of the preffix Íàé- to the comparative form, or with the addition of the word for most.

Íàé + êðàñ£â˜øèé
prefix + more beautiful > the most beautiful

Or:

íàéá—ëüø   êðàñ£âèé
the most + beautiful   > the most beautiful

Pronouns

Personal Pronouns
These pronouns refer to a person or thing that has been previously mentioned.   For example, "Pam went to the game.   I met her there."   The pronoun 'her' refers to 'Pam.' 'Pam' is the antecedent of 'her.'   Pronouns agree in gender and number with their antecedents. The case of a pronoun is determined by its use in the sentence.

In Ukrainian, the nominative forms of the personal pronouns are as follows:

Person	Singular	Translation	Plural	Translation
1st person	ÿ	I	ìè	we
2nd person	òè	you	âè	you
3rd person	â˜í/ âîíµ/ âîí†	he/ she/ it	âîí£	they

Presented below are the personal pronouns in their six cases.
Note: Unlike in English, the equivalent of 'I' is not capitalized in Ukrainian.

Case	I	you (singular)	he	she	it	we	you (plural)	they
Nominative	ÿ	òè	â˜í	âîíµ	âîí†	ìè	âè	âîí£
Accusative	ìåí¡	òåá¡	éîã†	šš	éîã†	íàñ	âàñ	šõ
Genitive	ìåí¡	òåá¡	éîã†	šš	éîã†	íàñ	âàñ	šõ
Dative	ìåí—	òîá—	éîì‰	šé	éîì‰	íàì	âàì	šì
Instrumental	ìížþ	òîážþ	íèì	í¡þ	íèì	íµìè	âµìè	í£ìè
Prepositional	ìåí—	òîá—	íütìó		íütìó	íàñ	âàñ	íèõ

The Reflexive Pronoun
The reflexive pronoun   **ñåá¡** always refers back to the nearest subject.   Since it can't be a subject itself, there is no nominative form.   It expresses the idea of 'myself, yourself, himself/herself/itself, themselves.'   The reflexive pronoun does not show gender or number, but it does decline.

Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns are used to show possession of something.   They answer the question - whose?   In English, these are: my, our, your, his/her/its, their.   In Ukrainian, there are possessive pronouns for my, our, your (singular and plural) and ones own.   These agree with the noun they modify in gender, number and case.   As with adjectives, the plural possessive pronouns for our and your (plural) are the same for all three genders, they only show number (plural) and case.

The nominative, singular forms of these possessive pronouns are:

ì˜é	1st person, singular (my)
òâ˜é	2nd person, singular (your)
íàø	1st person, plural (our)

âàø	2nd person, plural (your)
éîãž, š¼	3rd person singular (his/its, her)
šõ	3rd person (their)
ñâ˜é	"one's own" - all persons and genders

Note: The possessive pronouns for "his, her, its and their" are borrowed from the genitive form of the personal pronoun.   These do not agree with the noun they modify.   Instead, they reflect the gender and number of their antecedent (as in English).

Interrogative/Relative Pronouns

These pronouns can either ask a question or act as the subject of a clause in a sentence. The interrogative/relative pronouns decline like adjectives.

The interrogative/relative pronouns include:

õòî	who
ùî	what
÷èé	whose
êîòð£é	which
ÿê£é	what kind of

Demonstrative Pronouns

The demonstrative pronouns, shown here in the masculine nominative form, are:

öåé	this
òîé	that
òàê£é	such

Negative Pronouns

These act as they do in English with one important exception.   Negative pronouns in Ukrainian require the use of the equivalent of 'not.'   A literal translation of a sentence including a negative pronoun would be, "No one cannot come in."

The most commonly used negative pronouns are:

í˜õòž	no one
í˜ùž	nothing

Indefinite Pronouns

The most commonly used negative pronouns are:

õòî-í¡áóäü	someone, anyone
ùî-í¡áóäü	something, anything

Numerals

Ordinal Numerals
All ordinal numerals act as adjectives and agree with the noun they modify in gender, number and case.   For example, first, second, third are presented below in masculine, nominative, singular form:
ï¡ðøèé, äð‰ãèé, òð¡òèé

Cardinal Numerals
The cardinal numeral 1 agrees with the noun it modifies in gender, number and case.   The nominative singular of nouns is used after this numeral when it is in the nominative or inanimate accusative case.

The masculine, feminine, and neuter forms in the nominative case are:
îä£í, îäíµ, îäí¡

The numeral 2 has both a masculine/neuter and a feminine form:
äâà masculine/neuter

äâ˜   feminine
The nominative plural of nouns is used after the cardinal numerals 2, 3, and 4 when these are in the nominative or inanimate accusative case.

Verbs

Verbs express action, existence or occurrence.   A sentence is not complete without a verb, or implied verb.   In Ukrainian, the present tense of the verb 'to be - is, are' is usually omitted, replaced by a dash or merely implied.   In general, Ukrainian verbs act as verbs do in English.   There is, however, one important concept that must be understood to understand the use of Ukrainian verbs:

Verbal Aspect - Perfective or Imperfective

Every verb in Ukrainian has either the imperfective or the perfective aspect.   The imperfective verb denotes the process of an action or a state without any reference to its completion, or refers to repeated action.   The perfective verb denotes an action which has been completed in the past or will be completed in the future.   Perfective verbs have only two tenses, the past and the future. Usually, the imperfective form is unprefixed and the perfective form has a prefix.   This is the basic concept of verbal aspect. Pay attention to the many shades of meaning that can be expressed through the imperfective and perfective aspects of different verbs.

Imperfective: ðîá£òè (to make, do)

Perfective: çðîá£òè (to finish making, doing)

Infinitive

The infinitive is considered the rootword of a verb.   In English, the infinitive is expressed as 'to read, to eat,' etc. as in the sentence "I love to read."   Infinitives are recognized in Ukrainian by the ending   **-òè**:

á‰òè   to be

ïðîñ£òè   to request

ñ—ñòè   to sit down

Reflexive Verbs

Some verbs in Ukrainian have a reflexive form which is formed by adding the ending -ñÿ to the infinitive:

Reflexive verbs are intransitive verbs where the the subject and object of the verb are the same.   For example:

  ì£òè   to was (something)

  ì£òèñÿ   to wash oneself

The reflexive ending is applied to all verb forms.

Present Tense

The present tense exists for only imperfective verbs.   This is logical since perfective verbs are used for completion of an action which has only a past or future meaning.   Imperfective verbs, on the other hand, express the process of carrying out an action.

1st Conjugation and 2nd Conjugation

A verb conjugation consists of the six forms of a verb in the present tense that correspond to 1st, 2nd and 3rd person, singular and plural (in English, 'I, you, he/she/it, we, you, they). Ukrainian verbs generally fall into one of two conjugation patterns.

First Conjugation (the 3rd person singular ends in å or ²)
Infinitive: ìµòè (to have)

Person	Verb	Translation
1st person singular	ìµþ	I have
2nd person singular	ìµ²øü	You have
3rd person singular	ìµ²	He/She/It has
1st person plural	ìµ²ìè	We have
2nd person plural	ìµ²òå	You have
3rd person plural	ìµþòü	They have

Second conjugation (the 3rd person singular ends in èòü or šòü)
Infinitive: ñòî•òè (to stand)

Person	Verb	Translation
1st person singular	ñòî	I stand
2nd person singular	ñòî¼ø	You stand
3rd person singular	ñòî¼òü	He/She/It stands
1st person plural	ñòî¼ìî	We stand
2nd person plural	ñòî¼òå	You stand
3rd person plural	ñòî•òü	They stand

Past Tense

The past tense is formed by removing the infinitive ending and adding the correct past tense ending to denote that the subject of the verb is masculine, feminine, neuter, or plural.   Past tense verbs can show gender and number, but not person. For example:

Infinitive: ñïµòè (to sleep)

Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular	Neuter Singular	Plural
ñïàâ	ñïµëà	ñïµëî	ñïµëè

Future Tense

The future tense of a perfective verb is formed exactly like the present tense of an imperfective verb. The future tense of an imperfective verb is formed with the addition of the future form of the verb 'to be' plus the imperfective infinitive.

The conjugation of the verb á‰òè (to be):

Person	Verb	Translation
1st person singular	á‰äó	I will
2nd person singular	á‰äåø	You will

3rd person singular	á‰äå	He/She/It will
1st person plural	á‰äåìî	We will
2nd person plural	á‰äåòå	You will
3rd person plural	á‰äóòü	They will

Gerunds

Gerunds are also called verbal adverbs in Ukrainian because they act as adverbs and are formed from verbs.   Imperfective gerunds have the meaning in English of the 'ing' form of a verb.   'She sat, reading her book.'   Perfective gerunds have the meaning found in 'having (done something).'   'Having finished the book, she went to the store.'   Gerunds are not formed from all verbs or in both aspects.   Like adverbs, gerunds are indeclinable.   They do not change their form.

Imperfective gerunds, sometimes called present gerunds, are formed by replacing the 3rd person present tense plural ending -òü   with the ending -÷è:
ñòî•òü > ñòî•÷è
(they stand   >   while standing)

Perfective gerunds, sometimes called past gerunds, are formed by adding the ending -øè to the past tense masculine singular form of the verb:
çð†áèâ > çð†áèâøè
(he did   > having done)

Adverbs

As in English, Ukrainian adverbs modify a verb, adjective or another adverb.   Adverbs do not decline in Ukrainian and are usually easy to spot by the ending **-Î** or -å:

øâ£äêî   quickly
ë¡ãêî   easily
ä†áðå   fine, well

Some may have a different ending:

Interrogative adverbs:
êóä£   to where
÷îì‰   why
êîë£   when

Indefinite adverbs:
äåñü   somewhere
•êîñü   somehow
—íîä˜   sometimes

Prepositions

Prepositions are used with nouns in every case except the nominative. They affect the case of the nouns, adjectives, and pronouns following them. Many prepositions can be followed by different cases to give different meanings.

Some of the most common preposions in Ukrainian are:

Preposition	Meaning	Case
ó	into	accusative
ïðî	about	accusative
ç	from, of	genitive
äî	to, up to	genitive
ç	with	instrumental
íà	on, at	prepositional

Particles

Particles are words which add different shades of meaning to other words in a sentence or to the sentence as a whole.

Some of the most commonly used particles in Ukrainian are:

òàê   yes
÷è   whether, if
íå   not
í˜   no

Conjunctions

Conjunctions join words, phrases, clauses and sentences:

˜ and

àë¡ but

àáž or

àá£ in order that

äžêè while

Interjections

An interjection is a word or expression which is often given emotional value in the stream of speech. In print an interjection is usually followed by an exclamation mark. Interjections can express awe, disgust, gratitude and pain, and they can also incite others to action. Most linguists agree that interjections comprise the earliest parts of speech.
Some of the most frequently used Ukrainian interjections:

Interjection	Meaning
îé	awe; surprise; pain
îõ	surprise; complaint
òüõó	disgust