



# Esperanto

The International Language

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## Introduction

**Esperanto** is an international language developed in 1887 by Dr. L.L. Zamenhof. It is designed to act as a common, neutral, second language to allow speakers of different languages to communicate with each other. Esperanto is not meant to replace any national language; it serves only as a culturally neutral second language. Esperanto is currently spoken by about 2 million people worldwide.

Esperanto was designed to be particularly easy to learn, and can be learned in much less time than any other language. In particular:

- Spelling is completely phonetic: words are spelled as pronounced, and pronounced as spelled.
- The grammar is simple, logical, and completely regular. There are just sixteen rules of grammar, and they have no exceptions.
- Vocabulary: a relatively small stock of root words is combined with a variety of prefixes, suffixes, and grammatical endings to form a large vocabulary of possible words. This allows speakers to understand a large number of words with a minimum amount of effort. Roots, prefixes, suffixes, and grammatical endings may be combined in any way that makes sense. Roots are taken from words that are most common in national languages, so many words are easily recognized.

## Alphabet

a b c ĉ d e f g ĝ h ĥ i j ĵ k l m n o p r s ŝ t u ŭ v z

The vowels (a e i o u) are pronounced as they are in Spanish or Italian (*ah eh ee oh oo*). Most consonants are pronounced as in English, except for:

- c is pronounced as English *ts*
- ĉ is pronounced as English *ch*
- g is pronounced as a "hard" English *g* ("gum")
- ĝ is pronounced as a "soft" English *g* ("gene")
- ĥ is pronounced as in Scottish "loch"
- j is pronounced as English *y*
- ĵ is pronounced as in the English word "pleasure"
- r is trilled (as in Spanish or Italian)
- ŝ is pronounced as English *sh*
- ŭ is pronounced as English *w*

Accent is always on the next-to-last syllable.

## Grammar

- Nouns end in **-o**
- Adjectives end in **-a**
- Adverbs end in **-e**
- Plural ending: **-j**
- Accusative ending: **-n**

### Verb endings

|                |            |              |            |
|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Past tense:    | <b>-is</b> | Infinitive:  | <b>-i</b>  |
| Present tense: | <b>-as</b> | Conditional: | <b>-us</b> |
| Future tense:  | <b>-os</b> | Imperative:  | <b>-u</b>  |

### Participle Endings

|          | <i>Active</i> | <i>Passive</i> |
|----------|---------------|----------------|
| Past:    | <b>-int-</b>  | <b>-it-</b>    |
| Present: | <b>-ant-</b>  | <b>-at-</b>    |
| Future:  | <b>-ont-</b>  | <b>-ot-</b>    |

## Sample Text

La Eternulo estas mia paŝisto; mi mankon ne havos.  
 Sur verdaj herbejoj Li ripozigas min,  
 Apud trankvilaj akvoj Li kondukas min.  
 Li kvietigas mian animon;  
 Li kondukas min laŭ vojo de la vero, pro Sia nomo.  
 Eĉ kiam mi iros tra valo de densa mallumo,  
 Mi ne timos malbonon, ĉar Vi estas kun mi;  
 Via bastono kaj apogiĝilo trankviligos min.  
 Vi kovras por mi tablon antaŭ miaj malamikoj;  
 Vi ŝmiris per oleo mian kapon, mia pokalo estas plenigita.  
 Nur bono kaj favoro sekvos min en la daŭro de mia tuta vivo;  
 Kaj mi restos en la domo de la Eternulo eterne.

— Psalm 23

## Uses

Esperanto has many uses, including:

- **Books:** There are thousands of books written in Esperanto. They include literature (both original and translated) from all over the world.
- **Correspondence:** Corresponding with a pen-pal in another country gives interesting insights into people from other cultures.
- **Travel:** Esperanto speakers live all over the world. You can visit them when traveling overseas, or meet them during one of the many Esperanto conferences held around the world.

## Pronouns

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| I           | mi  |
| you         | vi  |
| he          | li  |
| she         | ŝi  |
| it          | ĝi  |
| we          | ni  |
| they        | ili |
| thou        | ci  |
| indefinite: | oni |
| reflexive:  | si  |

## Numbers

|   |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|
| 1 | unu  | 6    | ses  |
| 2 | du   | 7    | sep  |
| 3 | tri  | 8    | ok   |
| 4 | kvar | 9    | naŭ  |
| 5 | kvin | 10   | dek  |
|   |      | 100  | cent |
|   |      | 1000 | mil  |

## More Information

For more information, contact the Esperanto League for North America:

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<http://www.esperanto-usa.org>