

Afrikaans vir Beginners

Volume 1



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Definite and Indefinite Articles

In English we have two articles.

The first of these is the indefinite article, this is “A”, for example

A house

A dog

A book

The indefinite article is used for non specific objects, or when mentioning a noun for the first time. In Afrikaans, the indefinite article is “**n**”, this is pronounced like an ah sound such as the a in father. Note that ‘**n**’ is never capitalized. If it is the start of a sentence, the noun will be capitalised instead.

A house - ‘**n Huis**

A dog - ‘**n Hond**

A book - ‘**n Boek**

The definite article is used for specific nouns or nouns that have been previously mentioned. In English we use “The”

The house

The dog

The book

In Afrikaans the definite article is “**Die**”, pronounced like Dee. Unlike most languages there is no masculine or feminine nouns so **Die** will precede every noun.

The house - **Die huis**

The dog - **Die hond**

The book - **Die boek**

Here are some basic nouns for you to learn, practice using these with the indefinite and definite articles. Remember to check the pronunciation guide for correct pronunciation.

Man/husband - **Man**

Woman - **Vrou**

Cat - **Kat**

Car - **Kar**

Person - **Persoon**

Friend - **Vriend**

First Verb and Adjectives

Before we can continue with our Afrikaans learning, there is one verb that will be very helpful. This verb is "To be". For now we will stick with the third person form of the verb that follows a noun. In Afrikaans this is exactly the same as the English form. "Is", this is pronounced the same way.

Adjectives

Adjectives describe a noun, such as Big, Small, Beautiful, Ugly, Rough, Smooth. Unlike most languages, the adjective always stays the same whether the noun is masculine or feminine, or singular or plural.

Here are two basic adjectives too start with

Small - **Klein**

Big - **Groot (remember to roll the g sound)**

So now we can begin to describe some of the nouns we learned in the previous chapter by using these adjectives and the first verb. The sentence structure is the same as English

The man is small - **Die man is klein**

The woman is big - **Die vrou is groot**

Practice translating these sentences, the answers are on page

The man is big

The woman is small

A cat is big

A car is small

The person is small

The friend is big

Here are some adjectives for you to learn. Practice using these in sentences with the nouns we learnt. Try mixing up using the definite article and the indefinite article.

White - **Vit**

Black - **Swart**

Short - **Kort**

Tall - **Lunk**

Good - **Goed**

Bad - **Slegte**

Dirty - **Vuil**

Clean - **Skoon**

Personal Pronouns

Sometime we don't want to talk about an object, sometime we want to talk about a person. This is where we need a pronoun. In english the pronouns are I, You, He, She, It, We, and They. In afrikaans these become

I - **Ek**

You -**Jy**

He -**Hy**

She -**Sy**

It -**Dit**

We -**Ons**

They -**Hulle**

Afrikaans has an extra pronoun as well and refers to when addressing multiple people, in english we would use "You" or perhaps "You all", in afrikaans we use the pronoun **Julle**.

Often in languages, the verb changes depending on who is doing it. You can see this in the english "I run" vs "He run**S**" or "I eat" vs "He eat**S**" Luckily, in Afrikaans the verb will always stay the same no matter who is talking. This means that, since we learned before that "It is" is "**Dit is**", we can use the "**Is**" for all the pronouns.

I am -**Ek is**

You are -**Jy is**

He is -**Hy is**

She is -**Sy is**

It is -**Dit is**

We are -**Ons is**

They are -**Hulle is**

You all are -**Julle is**

These pronouns are extremely important to learn so make sure you have memorised them fully before continuing on. Here are two example sentences.

I am clean - **Ek is skoon**

You are good - **Jy is goed**

It is white - **Dit is wit.**

Try translating these into afrikaans, the answers are on page

They are dirty

It is black

You are all short

Possessive Adjectives

Possessive adjectives are another useful skill to master in any languages, personal pronouns are words that describe ownership. In English this would be “my, your, his, her, our, their”. In Afrikaans these become

My - **My**

Your - **Jou**

His - **Sy**

Her - **Haar**

Our - **Ons**

Their - **Hulle**

Your (plural) - **Julle**

Note in this that the possessive adjectives for “Their” and “Your(plural)” are exactly the same as the personal pronouns. Also note that the word for “His”, is exactly the same as the word for “She”. They are both “**Sy**”, be careful not to confuse the two. Here are some example sentences

My husband is tall - **My man is lunk**

Our dog is dirty - **Ons hond is vuil**

Your car is small - **Jou kar is klein**

Useful word! The word for “and” in Afrikaans is “**En**”. Now we can make some longer sentences!

The dog is big and dirty - **Die hond is groet en vuil**

My car is black and your car is white - **My kar is swart en jou kar is wit**

Her husband is tall and my husband is short - **Haar man is lunk en my man is kort**

A cat is small and clean - **'n Kat is klein en skoon**

Try translating these sentences into Afrikaans, the answers are on page

The dog is small and white and good.

Your cat is dirty and his cat is clean.

My house and my car are big

Our dog is bad and our book is big and our house is small and dirty.

Nice work!! You've completed the first chapter of basic grammar. This page is filled with useful nouns and adjectives for you to learn. Try to learn them all and practice using them in sentences before moving on. If you can learn them all, that's an enormous amount of things you can talk about! There are a whole lot of questions on the next page to practice with and answers on page . We're going to take a break from grammar now and move into some basic greetings, numbers, and days of the week.

Animals

Fish **Vis**
 Bird **Voel**
 Cow **Koei**
 Pig **Vark**

Transport

Train **Trein**
 Plane **Vliegtuig**
 Bicycle **Fiets**

Places

City **Stad**
 Hotel **Hotel**
 Restaurant **Restaurant**
 School **Skool**
 Hospital **Hospitaal**

Clothes

Shirt **Hemp**
 Hat - **Hoed**
 Pants **Broek**
 Shoe **Skoen**
 Socks **Sokkie**

People

Mother **Moeder**
 Father **Pa**
 Brother **Broer**
 Sister **Suster**

Jobs

Teacher **Onderwyder(male) Juffrou(female)**
 Doctor **Dokter**
 Lawyer **Prokureur**
 Student **Student**

Adjectives

Slow/Fast **Stadig/Vinnig**
 Wide/Narrow **Wye/Smal**
 Hot/Cold **Warm/Koue**
 Young/Old **Jong/Ou**
 Wet/Dry **Nat/Droë**
 Sick/Healthy **Siek/Gesonde**
 Loud/Quiet **Hard/Stil**
 Happy/Sad **Gelukkig/Hartseer**
 Pretty/Ugly **Mooi/Lelike**
 Rich/Poor **Ryk/Swak**
 Expensive/Cheap **Duur/Goedkoop**
 Strong/Weak **Sterk/Swak**

Practice sentences

- 1.The fish is cheap
- 2.The school is old and ugly
- 3.My bicycle is wet
- 4.His school is expensive
- 5.My brother is strong
- 6.My teacher is sick and weak
- 7.The plane is white and loud
- 8.The city is narrow and young
- 9.Our doctor is rich
- 10.Your shoe is dirty
- 11.Her restaurant is cold
- 12.His lawyer is cheap and bad
- 13.The bird is black and fast
- 14.My father is happy and his father is sad
- 15.Our bike is dry and clean
- 16.The student and the teacher are happy
17. I am sad and my pig is sick
18. Their cow is big and happy
19. We are loud
20. You are cold and wet
21. The house is cheap and cold, and I am sad
22. My brother and sister are tall
23. My shirt is white and my hat is black
24. I am weak

If you can translate these sentences with relative ease then you're ready for the next chapter! Remember to practice your vocabulary every day, and practice the pronunciation by reading out loud.

Chapter 2

Introductions

Obviously when you meet someone for the first time you want to introduce yourself. In Afrikaans, saying hello is said in the exact same way as English. You can say “**Hallo**” or “**Haai**”. This is commonly followed by “**Hoe gaan dit met jou?**” which means “How are you?” or literally “How goes it with yourself?”. This will normally be responded by “**Goed dankie, en met jou?**” meaning “Good thank you, and yourself?”. Here are some other greetings and farewells.

Goodmorning **Goeie more**

Good afternoon **Goeie middag**

Good evening **Goeienaand**

Good night **Goeienag** (this is often abbreviated to just “**Nag**”)

Goodbye **Totsiens**

Here is some important basic vocabulary you should learn before continuing on, it includes basic phrases and words.

Yes **Ja**

No **Nee**

Thank you **Dankie**

Sorry **Jammer**

Excuse me **Verskoon my**

My name is... **My naam is**

What is your name? **Wat is jou naam**

And you? **En jy?**

I come from.. **Ek kom van**

Where are you from? **Waar vandaan kom jy?**

I speak... **Ek praat**

Do you speak...? **Praat jy**

English **Engels**

Afrikaans **Afrikaans**

Here is a conversation between two strangers in South Africa in Afrikaans, try and translate the conversation into English. The transcript is on page

John: Hallo! Hoe gaan dit met jou?

Mary: Goed dankie, en met jou?

John: Goed dankie, wat is jou naam?

Mary: My naam is Mary, en jy?

John: John, waar vandaan kom jy?

Mary: Ek kom van New Zealand? Praat jy engels?

John: Nee jammer, ek praat afrikaans, totsiens

Mary: Totsiens!

Plurals, Numbers and Our Second Verb

As discussed earlier, we know how to talk about singular nouns. "A dog, a teacher, a hat". But what happens if we want to talk about plural nouns "Dogs, Teacher's, Hats". In English this is just formed by placing an "s" on the end (there are exceptions to this of course e.g Goose-Geese. Forming plurals in Afrikaans can get quite complex but for now we will stick with the basics which should be enough for you at the moment. The majority of words in Afrikaans are pluralised by adding an "e" to the end.

Book - **Boek**

Books - **Boeke**

Dog - **Hond**

Dogs - **Honde**

Some nouns take an "s" at the end instead of an "e". These are most commonly loan words from English. Thus if a word is the same in English as Afrikaans, it is most likely going to take an "s". However there is no set rule to this and you will have to learn them off by heart as you come to them. Here are some words that take an "s" in the plural.

Arm - **Arm** Arms - **Arms**

Bird - **Voel** Birds - **Voels**

Brother - **Broer** Brothers - **Broers**

Doctor - **Dokter** Doctors - **Dokters**

Daughter - **Dogter** Daughter **Dogters**

Key - **Sleutel** Key - **Sleutels**

Son - **Seun** Sons - **Seuns**

Television - **Televisie** Televisions - **Televisies**

Some nouns are completely irregular and don't have any logic too them. You must learn these by heart.

Eye **Oog** Eyes **Oe**

Day **Dag** Days **Dae**

Night **Nag** Nights **Nagte**

Flight **Vlug** Flights **Vlugte**
Woman **Vrou** Women **Vrouens**
Child **Kind** Children **Kinders**

As we learned before, the verb stays the same no matter who is talking. Here is another verb which in English is "To have". In Afrikaans this is "Het", so

I have **Ek het**
You have **Jy het**
He has **Hy het**
She has **Sy het**
We have **Ons het**
They have **Hulle het**
You have(plural) **Julle het**

Last but not least we will learn the numbers from 0-10

One **Een**
Two **Twee**
Three **Drie**
Four **Vier**
Five **Vyf**
Six **Ses**
Seven **Sewe**
Eight **Agt**
Nine **Nege**
Ten **Tien**

Awesome! Let's make some pluralised sentences!

I have three brothers **Ek het drie broers**
They have five keys **Hulle het vyf sleutels**
We have two arms **Ons het twee arms**
She has two books and four dogs **Sy het twee boeke en vier honde**
The nights are black and cold **Die nagte is swart en koue**

Note: When using an adjective in a sentence where "Is" is used, the adjective stays the same no matter if the noun is pluralised. For example

The dog is white **Die hond is wit**
The dogs are white **Die honde is wit**
As you can see, in both cases it is "Wit".

Practice Sentences Answers on page

1. We have five children
2. The doctors are rich
3. We have three shirts and they are white
4. My dogs are big
5. I have two houses and they are dirty
6. My eye is black and his eyes are white.
7. The cars are clean and expensive
8. They have nine birds
9. She has three bicycles and he has a small hat

Verbs in Afrikaans

Verbs in Afrikaans are very easy compared to most languages as they are not conjugated. As we talked about before this means that the verb stays the same no matter who is talking. When you are learning a new verb I am going to write it in the infinitive which is “**Om te + verb**”. Don’t worry about the “**Om te**” at the moment, we’ll get to that in a later chapter, for now just focus on the last word which is what we will be using. Here is a good verb to start with

To read - **Om te leer**

So

I read **Ek leer**

You read **Jy leer**

He reads **Hy leer**

She reads **Sy leer**

We read **Ons leer**

They read **Hulle leer**

Y’all read **Julle leer**

Note: Unlike English, there is no difference between the present tense (I read) and the present participle (I am reading). You say the same thing in Afrikaans

I read **Ek leer**

I am reading **Ek leer**

Note 2: We will get to question words in a later chapter, but for now an easy way to ask a question in Afrikaans is to invert the subject and verb, for example

Do you read? **Leer jy?**

Does he read? **Leer hy?**
Am I? **Is ek?**
Are they? **Is hulle?**

Here are some example sentences

I read a book **Ek leer 'n boek**

She is reading three books **Sy leer drie boeke**

Are we big? **Is ons groet?**

We are reading a book and it is good **Ons leer 'n boek en dit is goed**

Your book is black - **Jou boek is swart**

Is your book black? **Is jou boek swart?**

She is reading the books - **Sy leer die boeke**