Norwegian may seem like a language of grammatical mysteries, and many questions will inevitably turn up as you are trying to learn how to speak it. Exploring Norwegian Grammar offers an accessible introduction to the rules of the Norwegian language. Grammatical patterns are explained and illustrated with a wealth of examples, all of which have been translated into English. Typical problems are made comprehensible! This book will not only help you finally get to grips with word order, prepositions, and reflexive pronouns, but also hopefully with most of the other questions you have asked yourself. And as if that weren't enough, Exploring Norwegian Grammar even attempts to teach you that difficult thing – how to be polite in Norwegian.

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1.1 The multiple uses of takk

There's one area where Norwegians are more than usually polite: when it comes to thanking others. The word **takk**, or modifications of it, is used in a huge variety of situations: as a form of greeting, a form of saying goodbye, a way of concluding a meal – and of course as a way of thanking someone for something! Norwegians thank each other a lot, and it's quite hard to thank someone too much in Norwegian! Below are some of the ways in which **takk** is used.

**Thanks for services provided**

Takk is, naturally, used in contexts where you thank others, for services, praise, or gifts. There are many ways of saying a simple thank you. The most basic one is **takk**.

Vær så god! **Takk.** There you go! **Thanks.**

On its own, however, **takk** may seem a bit curt, so it is common to use longer phrases:

Takk skal du ha. (Lit.: Thanks shall you have.)
Takk for det. (Lit.: Thanks for that.)

**Tusen takk** (a thousand thanks) involves a degree of friendly enthusiasm, and is the most polite option. This expression may be slightly more common among women.

**Mange takk** (many thanks) is slightly formal, bordering on old-fashioned. The same holds true of **hjertelig takk** (heartily thanks) which many people would consider obsolete. A handy phrase with multiple uses is:

Takk for hjelpen. **Thank you for your help.**

This phrase can be used whenever someone has helped you, regardless of whether or not it is their job to do so. When you've been given information from a clerk, when a co-worker has helped you with a task, when you've asked for directions, when a friend has helped you move – all are situations where this phrase would be appropriate. A common answer is **Bare hyggelig**, which translates directly as *Just nice (to help)*, but is equivalent to **No problem**. Slightly more formal is the response **Ingen årsak**, which literally means **No reason**, presumably an abbreviated form of a phrase insisting that thanks are unnecessary.

You can also expand your thanks into a whole sentence, which will involve the use of the word **at** (that):

**Takk for at**
**Takk for at du kunne ta i mot oss.** Thank you for being able to see us.
**Takk for at**
**Takk for at dere ventet på meg.** Thank you for waiting for me.

Foreigners living in Norway have been known to remark that there’s no point trying to be polite in this country, since Norwegians are inherently rude and don’t appreciate formality or, heaven forbid, gallantry. However, while it is true that Norwegians tend to be matter-of-fact, almost to the extent of it being a natural default, this doesn’t mean there aren’t any ways of being polite, or that politeness would go unappreciated.
Thanking people in a social context

Takk for maten. (Lit: Thanks for the food.)
At the conclusion of a meal it is customary to say Takk for maten. It is usually said when the plates are removed, or when you get up from the table. If you’re a guest somewhere, you say this phrase to your hosts. They are likely to respond with a Vel bekomme, which is an abbreviated version of a now outdated phrase meaning May it do you well.

Expressions using the word takk also crop up in many greetings and goodbyes.
The presence of the word indicates pleasure at your shared time:

Takk for nå. Thank you for now.
Takk for i dag. Thank you for today.

These two expressions would usually be said at the end of a fairly extended period of time together. Both of them indicate that there is some degree of personal connection between yourself and the person you address, and that you have just spent a while together. It can be used after a visit to friends, or at the end of the day in a classroom – and it’s appropriate to say it to fellow students as well as the teacher. Neither of these expressions would be appropriate to use when leaving a shop where you have bought something, or when you have spoken only briefly to someone you know in the street. It would also be rather uncommon to say it to your doctor or someone else that you meet regularly, but where there is no social aspect to your interaction.

A common response to the two expressions above would be:
(Takk) i like måte. (Thanks,) the same.

When you have been invited as a guest somewhere and are taking your leave, you might say:

Takk for meg. Thanks for [having] me.
Takk for invitasjonen. Thanks for the invitation.

Common responses to this also include thanking someone:

Takk for at du kom. Thank you for coming.
Takk for besøket. Thank you for the visit.

But there are also options that don’t actually return the thanks, such as Hyggelig å se deg (Nice to see you – which can also be used in greeting someone). All are equally appropriate.

And the next time you run into the same people, you have the option of showering them with thanks yet again!

Takk for sist. (Lit.: Thank you for the last time.)

This is a greeting, or a way of starting a conversation with someone. When you encounter someone you have met before, Takk for sist is an acknowledgement of the previous meeting, as well as an indication that the last encounter was a pleasant one. However, if your last meeting involved struggling your way out of a burning building – which also coincidentally was caught in a midslide while terrorists were preparing to blow it up – it would not be appropriate to use this phrase. A common reply is I like måte, a quaint phrase which indicates mutual pleasure at the encounter.

Last but not least, takk can have the same function as the word please in responding to an inquiry. Unlike English, it is used both in the affirmative and the negative: Ja takk. / Nei takk.

Vil du ha kaffe? Ja takk. Do you want coffee? Yes, please.
Vil du ha melk i kaffen? Nei takk. Do you want milk in your coffee? No, thanks.

Trenger du pose? Ja takk. / Nei takk. Do you need a bag? Yes please. / No thanks.

Hvem skulle ha laks? Who ordered the salmon?
Her, takk. / Jeg, takk. Here, please. / I did, thank you.

Å takke is also a verb. It is primarily used in formal letters:
Vi takker for henvendelsen, og ... We thank you for your inquiry, and ...

1.2 Meeting and greeting
– and sweet, sweet goodbyes

On meeting someone
Hei is by far the most common greeting. This used to be something said mostly by young people, and some elderly people may still consider it a little too informal or casual, despite the fact that most people now use it on a daily basis. You can also say Hallo when you meet someone.

The traditional greeting for morning / daytime is God dag (Good day), while after 6 o’clock, the traditional greeting becomes God kveld (Good evening). Both are now rather formal, and mostly used in professional or other formal situations, but not usually when greeting friends.

After the initial greeting, Norwegians are quite likely to ask:

Hvordan går det? How are you?
Hvordan står det til? How are things?
Hvordan har du det? How are you doing?

This is not a phrase that simply requires the same thing to be said in return, as similar phrases do in many cultures. It is an actual question, and must be answered. It is important to note, however, that Norwegians are a stoic people, and drama or self-pity is frowned upon. Nobody wants to hear about your indigestion or your headache, so in general you should say that you are well! Common answers are brief and to the point:
Bra, takk.
Takk, bare bra.
Ganske bra.
Ikke så verst.

Good, thank you.
I’m perfectly fine, thank you for asking.
Quite well!
Not too bad.

The last of these may indicate that not everything is as good as it possibly could be, but that you are still coping. This will be as far as anyone goes in admitting that things are less than ideal, unless one is talking to someone one knows very intimately. This exchange is essentially a polite inquiry, not an invitation to unload all your troubles onto the person who asks the question.

It’s acceptable to follow up with a brief mention of your plans or your current activities, to put your state of well-being in context. And while you should never admit trauma and suffering, it is also best not to admit to any excessive feelings of joy, success, or general smugness, since bragging is undesirable too.

You also need to be aware that since these are actual questions that expect an answer, not everyone can be asked them. Do not ask that nice gentleman sitting next to you on the bus how he is doing, and do not ask your boss or your teacher if she is all right this fine morning. It’s probably best not to ask your in-laws the first time you meet them, either; you need to get to know them properly first. It is all a question of levels of intimacy and privacy. Norwegians err on the side of caution, and do not assume – or want to seem to assume – that they have the right to know details of a stranger’s health.

If your boss or your teacher asks you one of these questions, however, this is acceptable, since they are expressing interest in the welfare of someone in their care. Unless you know them really well, or they are already aware that your life is currently unravelling, you should probably tell them that you are fine.

There are exceptions even to this rule, of course. If someone does know you well, or is your friend and cares about you, then their question is probably an expression of real interest in your well-being. They want to hear the truth!

If your friends already know that things are less than perfect, their question might be phrased slightly differently, which will indicate that they are willing to hear the truth:

\[ \text{ Hvordan er det med deg? } \]
\[ \text{ Hvordan har du det, egentlig? } \]

Both of which imply a degree of \textbf{How are you really}? And you should of course always tell your doctor or your psychologist the truth!

If someone has asked you how you are doing, you may respond by expressing a similar interest in their well-being. Thankfully, this is easy. You simply ask:

\[ \text{ Og du? } \]
\[ \text{ Og med deg? } \]

\[ \text{ And you? } \]

\[ \text{ And with you? } \]

Thus, a common exchange would go something like this:

\[ \text{ Hei! Hvordan går det? } \quad \text{Hi! How are you?} \]
\[ \text{ Takk, bare bra. Og du? } \quad \text{Thanks, I’m fine. And you?} \]

\section*{Goodbyes}

When you say goodbye to someone, the most usual way is with the phrase;

\[ \text{ Ha det bra! } \quad \text{(Lit.: Have it good!)} \]

This expression is a gentle hope that things will go well for you, but it is so automatic that a lot of people, especially in the younger generation, would use an abbreviated version:

\[ \text{ Ha det! } \quad \text{Alternative versions of \textbf{Ha det bra} are: \textbf{Ha det fint! Ha det godt!}} \]

Two non-traditional versions of \textbf{Ha det bra} which are becoming more and more common, are:

\[ \text{ Ha en god dag! } \quad \text{Have a good day!} \]
\[ \text{ Ha en hyggelig dag! } \quad \text{Have a pleasant day!} \]

This expression is particularly common among shop assistants, staff at cafés, and people in similar jobs. It is said when a customer leaves, and is a bit stronger than a simple \textbf{Ha det bra}.

\[ \text{ Hei, which used to be used exclusively when you meet someone, is now also being used more and more when someone is leaving. This is more common on the telephone than in other contexts, and is very casual.} \]

If you hope or assume that you will be seeing someone again, you can indicate this in several different ways:

\[ \text{ Ses senere! } \quad \text{See you later!} \]
\[ \text{ Ses snart! } \quad \text{See you soon!} \]
\[ \text{ Ses i morgen! } \quad \text{See you tomorrow!} \]
\[ \text{ Ses! } \quad \text{See you!} \]
\[ \text{ På gjensyn! } \quad \text{See you again! / Au revoir! / Auf Wiedersehen!} \]

Other farewell greetings that contain gentle wishes for another’s well-being:

\[ \text{ God natt! Sov godt! }\quad [\text{Have a] good night! Sleep well!} \]
\[ \text{ Vel hjem! }\quad \text{Safe journey home!} \]
\[ \text{ God tur! }\quad \text{Have a nice trip!} \]

\section*{Farvel and Adjø}

\textbf{Farvel} and \textbf{Adjø} are traditional goodbyes that are so formal they are now mostly obsolete.
1.3 Asking for something

Ordering and requesting
The key word to remember if you want to be polite while requesting something is gjerner, which does not translate directly into English. This is because it modifies the other words in the sentence, instead of having a straightforward meaning itself. It can mean many things depending on context, but when it comes to requests, the phrase Jeg vil gjerne ha can best be translated as I would like. Gjerner is frequently used along with the verb vil as an indication of politeness whenever one orders or buys something, and also whenever one expresses a desire:

Jeg vil gjerner ha en cappuccino.  I would like a cappuccino.
Jeg vil gjerner ha fisk og kokte poteter. I would like fish and boiled potatoes.

Vil gjerner is the most common way of expressing a polite request. Ville gjerner has a similar effect, but is a more restrained request. It implies the speaker's acceptance of the possibility of disappointment:

Jeg ville gjerner ha ris i stedet for poteter. I should really like / would prefer rice instead of potatoes.

Skal (will) cannot be used along with gjerner when ordering something or asking for something, but skulle (should) can be, and has the faint implication that the speaker is apologising for bothering the person they are talking to:

Jeg skulle gjerner ha ... I should like to have ...
Jeg skulle gjerner vite ... I should like to know ...

These phrases, while conveying slightly different nuances, are largely interchangeable. If you prefer to stick to one phrase only, vil gjerner is the most versatile.

Yet again, the word takk is useful:

En kaffee, takk! A coffee, please!
En øl til, takk! Another beer, please!

Do pay attention to your tone when you use this phrase, however. Some people, accidentally or otherwise, turn the request into something sounding unfortunately like a demand.

You will sometimes hear people use skal when ordering / buying something, and this is always used without gjerner:

Jeg skal ha en cappuccino. I'm having a cappuccino.

This, however, can very easily come across as curt and impolite, so it is better to stick to phrases that contain gjerner or takk.

The waiter in the restaurant, on the other hand, can use skal without being impolite.

It occurs in a common, and deliberately impersonal, expression in restaurants. The waiter comes up to you after you have had time to look at the menu, and asks:

Hva skal det være? What may I get you? (Lit: What will it be?)

Despite the bluntness of the question, this is actually correctly polite. It conveys an eager readiness to get you anything you might desire. Other expressions the restaurant staff might use include:

Hva vil dere ha? What would you like?
Hva har dere lyst på? What do you feel like / fancy?

Asking for information
The verb kunne (could) is what you should use to express politeness when asking for information. While the present tense kan (can) is acceptable, the preterite kunne is much more polite, and indicates that the speaker is requesting a favour:

Kan du si meg hvor ...? Can you tell me where ...
Kunne du si meg ...? Could you tell me ...
Kunne du si når neste buss går? Could you tell me when the next bus leaves?

It is also common to start the question with Unnskyld:

Unnskyld, kunne du si meg ... Excuse me, could you tell me ...

Asking for favours
When asking for favours, the verbs kan and vil are used, with no obvious difference in meaning:

Kan du rekke meg saltet? Can you hand me the salt?
Vil du rekke meg saltet? Will you hand me the salt?

Kunne is also an option; it is very polite and it indicates that you are not trying to be pushy:

Kunne dere hjelpe meg litt? Could you help me a little?
Kunne du gjenta det? Could you repeat that?

Litt (a little) modifies requests, making them even more modest and polite:

Vent litt! Wait a little! / Wait a moment!
Kan du hjelpe meg litt? Can you help me a little?
Kunne dere vente litt her? Could you wait here for a moment?

This is also a context in which it might be natural to start your question with Unnskyld:

Unnskyld, kunne du gi meg den der? Excuse me, could you give me that?

In many of the phrases above, it would be natural to add the word please in English. These Norwegian phrases often correspond to English phrases containing please, even though no equivalent word is present in the Norwegian. But Norwegians can add a specific expression that strongly resembles please: er du snill / er dere snille:
Kan du hjelpe meg litt, **er du snill?**
(Can you help me a little, please?)
(Here you are talking to one person.)
Kan dere vente litt, **er dere snill?**
(Can you wait a little, please?)
(Here you are talking to two or more people.)

This brings us to the tricky, but handy, phrase **Vær så snill.**

**Vær så snill = Please**

Norwegian does not have a set phrase that is exactly equivalent to the English *please*. You may be told that the Norwegian equivalent is **Vær så snill** (lit.: *Be so kind*), but this is not quite true.

It's not a set, unchanging phrase. Since you are asking someone to be so kind as to do something, the phrase will change depending on how many people you are talking to. The verb will also change, depending on context. Or in grammatical terms: Vær is the verb **å være** (to *be*), which means it will be conjugated. The adjective **snill** (kind) will also be subject to declension, and can occur in the plural: **snille**.

The most common form uses an auxiliary verb to express a question:

**Vil du være så snill å vente her?**
Will you (sing.) please wait here?

**Kan dere være så snill å hjelpe meg?**
Can you (pl.) please help me?

**Kunne du være så snill å fortelle meg hvor ...?**
Could you be so kind as to tell me where ...

It's also very common to add the phrase onto a request, in which case the **være** is in the present tense, and the verb form is **er**:

**Vent her, er du snill!**
Wait here, please!

**Hjelp meg litt, er dere snille!**
Help me a little, please!

It is important to note that there aren't all that many situations where it is natural to use the phrase **Vær så snill** in a completely unaltered form. It is a humble request for someone to be very kind to you, and the phrase sounds a little childish and submissive.

So if you're caught parking somewhere you shouldn't, it might be natural to say it:

**Ikke skriv ut bonen! Vær så snill!**
Don’t give me a ticket! Please! I’m begging you!

Whereas if you’re asking a co-worker or other peer to do you a favour, you would normally formulate the request in the way we saw above:

**Kunne du være så snill å hjelpe meg?**
Could you please help me?

However, when one wants to modify the impact of a command or order, one may use the unaltered phrase, and would then begin the sentence with: **Vær så snill:**

**Vær så snill å vente utenfor gjerdet.**
Please wait outside the fence.

**Vær så snill å flytte bilen.**
Please move your car.

Tone and context will determine if this is a friendly request or a polite but firm order. If the word **så** vanishes from the phrase, it is almost always an order:

**Vær snill og sett fra deg bagen her.**
Kindly leave your bag here.

When what you’re really doing is giving an order, you may also use **vennlig** which translates as **friendly**, or **kindly**, instead of **snill**:

**Vær vennlig og flytt bilen.**
Kindly move your car.

**Vær vennlig og hold passet klart.**
Please have your passport ready.

Written signs will often use this form.

The phrase has so far perhaps not seemed that different from **please**, despite the grammatical intricacies. However, on several occasions when an English speaker would use **please**, a Norwegian would not use **Vær så snill**, but some other polite form.

It is not natural to use **Vær så snill** when you buy a beer or a cup of coffee, or when you buy a ticket to the cinema or opera. In these situations, Norwegians use specific verbs and adverbs in order to make the request a polite one, as has been explained above, with **gjerne** and **takk** being the key words to remember.

It's also not usually appropriate to respond to offers and questions with **Vær så snill**; Norwegians use **takk** instead, when English speakers would use **please** as we have seen in the section on **takk** above:

**Vil du ha en kake til?**
Would you like another slice of cake?

**Ja takk. / Nei takk.**
Yes please. / No thanks.

**Trenger du hjelp?**
Do you need help?

**Ja takk. / Nei takk.**
Yes please. / No thanks.

**Unnskyld** can also be used in much the same way as **please**:

**Unnskyld, kan du forklare dette?**
Excuse me, could you explain this?

**Unnskyld, kan du hjelpe meg med denne kofferten?**
Excuse me, could you help me with this suitcase?

### 1.4 Apologising

You have just seen above that the word **unnskyld** can be used in polite requests. It may also be used as an opening gambit when talking to someone. Essentially, you’re apologising for inconveniencing someone, just as in the English **excuse me**:

**Unnskyld, er det mulig å ...**
Excuse me, is it possible to ...

**Unnskyld, kan du hjelpe meg med dette skjemaet?**
Excuse me, could you help me with this form?
Unnskyld!
This is also the most common way of apologising or saying sorry, such as when you bump into someone or spill your coffee in someone’s lap.

Occasionally, you may hear an excuse that sounds a lot like “Omfiadlis!”. This is a somewhat truncated version of Om forlattelse! (I beg your pardon!) and while it used to be very common, it may now be about to become obsolete.

Beklager!
This can be used in the same way as Unnskyld!, and may be very slightly more formal. When you apologise for your actions or attitudes, Beklager is very common:

Beklager at jeg er sen! I’m sorry I’m late!
Beklager at jeg glemte å ringe deg. Sorry I forgot to call you.

When someone has accidentally nudged you or spilt coffee on you, the answers are the same, regardless of whether they say Unnskyld, Beklager or Om forlattelse.

Common responses are:
Det er i orden. That’s all right.
Det er ok. That’s ok.
Det går bra/fint. That’s fine.

1.5 Vær så god!

The literal translation of this phrase is Be so good, which makes very little sense given how it is used. This is a phrase that is used whenever one gives something to someone, it can mean both You’re welcome and Here you go.
Hør er vekslepengene. Vær så god! Her er vekslepengene. Vær så god, her er en grammatikk!

Her er din change. You’re welcome!
Here you go, tea with milk and sugar!
Here you go, here’s a grammar book!

Not only that, but it can also be used as an invitation:
Vær så god? What can I do for you?
Vær så god, nesten! Next, please!
Vær så god og sitt her! Please, do sit down!

A natural response to Vær så god is Takk – with variations, as you have seen in chapter 1.1.

Note that, unlike Vær så snill, Vær så god is a fixed phrase, without inflections – it retains its shape, whatever the context. For example, if you are talking to several people, you still say Vær så god.

CHAPTER 2
NOUNS

Masculine:  en mann  a man
Feminine:  ei dame  a woman
Neuter:  et barn  a child

Norwegian nouns have one particular aspect that makes them rather unpopular among those who study them: they have gender! A noun will be either masculine (M), feminine (F) or neuter (N).
The indefinite article varies according to gender, and exists in three forms: en, ei, et.

However, there is no such thing as a definite article for nouns in Norwegian. Instead, the nouns are given a suffix that indicates the definite form. The suffix, like the indefinite article, also depends on the gender of the noun.

2.1 Gender and the indefinite article

The gender of the noun is indicated by its indefinite article.

**Masculine:** en mann, en katt, en kopp, en telefon
en man, a cat, a cup, a telephone

**Feminine:** ei jente, ei dør, ei klokke, ei bok
a girl, a door, a clock/watch, a book

**Neuter:** et eple, et hus, et esel, et vindu
an apple, a house, a donkey, a window

We have three forms of the indefinite article: en, ei and et.

In some cases, the natural sex of what is described will be the same as its gender:

M: en mann, en gutt, en okse, en hane
a man, a boy, a bull/an ox, a cow

F: ei jente, ei tante, ei ku, ei høne
a girl, an aunt, a cow, a chicken/hen

Sadly, however, for the vast majority of nouns, there's no such logical assistance to be had. Obviously, one can try to guess, but it's generally easier to learn the article of each new noun along with the noun itself.

It is important to note that the feminine article, ei, is actually optional: it is entirely possible to drop it and use the masculine en in its place. The degree to which this happens is a partly a matter of regional dialect and partly a matter of style. In Bergen, for example, the feminine article is never used, even for specifically feminine words; they say en jente, en dame (a girl, a woman) etc. If you choose to do the same, bear in mind that this would be seen as uncommonly formal in many other regions, especially when using en as the article for everyday words like:

ei jente, ei hytte, ei klokke, ei dør
a girl, a cabin, a clock/watch, a door

Ei is perceived as more informal than en. Your best bet is to listen carefully to the speech patterns of the people around you, and find out what seems to be the norm in your particular area. If the feminine article is used, you might be better off doing the same, but if it's rarely used, sticking to the more formal masculine article could be an option.

2.2 The use of the indefinite article

Apart from the fact that there are three, and that they are determined by gender, Norwegian articles are not very different from those in English. Their usage is mainly the same:

Jeg har kjøpt ei jakke, en genser og et skjerf.
I have bought a jacket, a sweater, and a scarf.

En lærer må være tålmodig.
A teacher must be patient.

 Hun er gift med en student.
She's married to a student.

Some differences do exist, however. Native English speakers have a tendency to add an article to their Norwegian sentences where no article should be. This applies, in particular, to classifying descriptions:

Jeg er student.
I am a student.

Jeg vil bli oversetter.
I want to be a translator.

Hun er lærer, og han er ingenier.
She's a teacher, and he's an engineer.

Kari er katolikk.
Kari's a Catholic.

Naboen min er svenske.
My neighbour is a Swede.

Han er blitt bestefar.
He has become a grandfather.

This applies to neutral, factual classifications. If you claim to be et geni (a genius), or accuse your spouse of being en pedant – then we are dealing with more subjective characteristics, and in those cases, Norwegian does use the indefinite article:

Jeg er et geni.
I am a genius.

Du er en pedant.
You are a pedant.

Norwegian also uses an article if a descriptive adjective is used before a classifying noun:

Jeg er en flittig student.
I am a hard-working student.

Hun er en dyktig lærer.
She is a skilled teacher.

Articles are also left out in the case of classifying words that follow som (as):

Som lege vil jeg si at ...
As a doctor I would say that ...

Jeg bodde i USA som barn.
I lived in the USA as a child.

Portrett av kunstneren som ung mann
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

(James Joyce)

Though context will generally save you, if you use an article in these expressions that use som, you risk altering the meaning:

Hun uttalte seg som lærer.
She gave her opinion as a teacher.

Hun uttalte seg en som lærer.
She talked like a teacher.

Han gråt mye som barn.
He cried a lot as a child.

Han gråt som et barn.
He cried like a child.
There are also other contexts in which Norwegians have a tendency not to use any articles:

Jeg tar **buss** til jobben.  
Kjører du **bil**?  
Vi skal på **fest**.  
De har fått **katt**.  
Jeg har kjøpt **leilighet**.

I take the bus to work.  
Do you drive?  
We are going to a party.  
They have got a cat.  
I have bought a flat.

In most cases, using these expressions with an article would still be acceptable.

In a few rare situations, Norwegian uses an article when English does not:

Jeg trenger **et råd**.  
For **et vær**!  
Det er **en god nyhet**.

I need some advice.  
What weather we're having!  
That's good news!

### 2.3 Plural

Norwegian uses a suffix to indicate the plural. Most words will end in **-er** in the plural indefinite form. If the word happens to end in an **-e**, that **-e** is removed before the suffix **-er** in the plural:

**Main pattern**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M:</th>
<th>en gutt – gutter</th>
<th>en konge – konger</th>
<th>a boy – boys, a king – kings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F:</td>
<td>ei dør – dører</td>
<td>ei jente – jenter</td>
<td>a door – doors, a girl – girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>et vindu – vinduer</td>
<td>et eple – epler</td>
<td>a window – windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>an apple – apples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As ever, there are alternatives to this main rule. Two patterns are common:

**Other patterns**

Neuter nouns of only one syllable will normally have no suffix at all in the indefinite plural form:

- **et hus** – **hus**  
- **et skjerf – skjerf**  
- **et land – land**  
- **et ord – ord**  
- **et by** – **by**  
- **et jar** – **jar**  
- **et huset** – **huset**  
- **et eple** – **eple**  
- **et vindu** – **vindu**  
- **et epl** – **epl**  
- **et epler** – **epler**  
- **et vinduer** – **vinduer**

Nouns that end in **-er** and describe people and their nationalities or professions, will get an **-e** in the plural:

- **en amerikaner – amerikanere**  
- **en tysker – tyskere**  
- **en baker – bakere**  
- **en lærer – lærere**  
- **en American – Americans**  
- **a German – Germans**  
- **a baker – bakers**  
- **a teacher – teachers**

Many words that indicate currencies and measurements do not have a suffix in the plural:

- **en euro – euro**, **en dollar – dollar**  
- **en meter – meter**, **en liter – liter**  
- **a euro – euros**, **a dollar – dollars**  
- **a meter – meters**, **a litre – litres**

There are additional exceptions from these patterns, and on page 134 you will find a more detailed description of these.

### 2.4 Definite form

**Mordet i prestegården**

The Murder at the Vicarage

As in English, Norwegian has a definite form, but Norwegian has one very crucial difference to most other European languages. Norwegian is in a rather exclusive club of languages that indicate the definite form not by the use of a separate word, like the English the, the French *la/le/les*, or the German *die/der/das*, but instead by opting for the use of a suffix.

**Singular**

In the singular definite form, the suffix depends on the gender of the word in question. Any final **-e** will be removed before the addition of the suffix:

- **M:** **-en:** gutten, kongen, euroen  
  the boy, the king, the euro
- **F:** **-a:** jenta, sola, klokka  
  the girl, the sun, the clock/watch
- **N:** **-et:** huset, eplet, vinduet  
  the house, the apple, the window

Feminine modesty is evident in the definite form, since the masculine ending is acceptable in feminine words. It is entirely acceptable to write and to say **klokken**, **solen** etc., but outside of Bergen and the west end of Oslo, many people would perceive this form as formal and conservative, perhaps too much so.

Please note that in the definite form of the neuter noun, the final **-t** is silent.

**Plural**

In the plural, most words take the suffix **-ene** in the definite form:

- **M:** guttene, koppene, kongene  
  the boys, the cups, the kings
- **F:** dørene, jentene, klokkene  
  the doors, the girls, the clocks
- **N:** husene, eplene, lancene  
  the houses, the apples, the countries

Descriptions of people that end in **-er** (which, as you will remember, take the suffix **-e** in the indefinite plural form), take **-ne** in the definite plural form:

- **bakerne**, **amerikanerne**, **lærerne**  
  the bakers, the Americans, the teachers
All of this leaves us with the following three patterns for the inflection of nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indefinite form</td>
<td>definite form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M:</td>
<td>en bil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en baker</td>
<td>bakeren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F:</td>
<td>ei klokke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en klokke</td>
<td>klokklen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>et vindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et hus</td>
<td>huset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of the definite form

In the main, Norwegian uses the definite form of nouns in much the same way that English does. The form indicates that something is known and identifiable for the listener; you know what is being referred to:

Bilen er på verksted.  
De skal selge huset.  
Her er pizzaen.  
Ølet er godt!

The car is in the garage.  
They are selling the house.  
Here is the pizza.  
The beer is good!

Inevitably there are some differences! It seems that Norwegians are assuming that things are familiar, so the definite form occurs more often. It is particularly common with words for meals, institutions, and seasons:

Middagen er klar!  
Jeg skal på skolen.  
Vi har det hyggelig i klassen.  
De går i kirken.  
Vi kommer tilbake til våren.  
Hvor skal dere være i jula?

Dinner is served!  
I’m off to school.  
We always have a good time in class.  
They go to church.  
We’ll be back in spring.  
Where are you staying for Christmas?

Norwegian also tends to prefer to use the definite form in many contexts where English would use possessive determiners.

Jeg har brukket beinet.  
Jeg har vondt i ryggen.  
Han har mistet nklene.  
Hun skal selge bilen.  
Han stakk hendene i lomma.

I have broken my leg.  
My back hurts.  
He has lost his keys.  
She is selling her car.  
He put his hands in his pockets.

When we are talking about body parts, possessive determiners can come across as slightly childish or peculiar in Norwegian – unless, that is, we are talking about someone else’s:

Han brakk fingeren.  
Han brakk fingeren hans.

He broke his (own) finger.  
He broke his (another person’s) finger.

There are also abstract expressions where Norwegian, along with many other European languages, will prefer the definite form, while English sticks to the indefinite:

Tiden vil vise.  
Livet er godt!  
De tenker ikke på døden.  
Prisene har steget.  
Parlamentarismen ble innført i 1884.  
Historien vil vise ...

Time will show.  
Life is good!  
They don’t think of death.  
Prices have been increasing.  
Parliamentary government was introduced in 1884.  
History will show ...

Norwegian can combine the definite form with other determiners. When a possessive is placed after the noun, the noun has a definite form:

kjæresten min  
huset vårt  
my girlfriend/boyfriend  
our house

After demonstratives, the definite form is used:

denne bilen  
disse guttene  
det huset  
this car  
these boys  
that house

A particular construction that English-speakers and others tend to have trouble with is the way in which Norwegian uses the definite form even in phrases like these:

Det redde huset  
Den nye bilen  
De store guttene  
The red house  
The new car  
The big boys

In some contexts, Norwegian uses expressions where the noun is in the indefinite form, while English is prone to using the definite form:

Jeg har ikke tid til å ...  
De har ikke mulighet til å ...  
Jeg er ikke i humor til å ...  
Jeg hadde ikke mot til å ...  
Jeg tar tog til jobben.  
gå på kino  
spille guitar  
I don’t have the time to ...  
They are unable to ...  
I’m not in the mood to ...  
I didn’t have the courage to ...  
I take the train to work.  
go to the cinema/the movies  
play the guitar

2.5 The Genitive

In order to express ownership or belonging, Norwegian and English both add a suffix to a noun, and it’s even the same one: -s, but there are certain differences in usage:

Toms bil  
jentas bag  
Ibsens forfatterskap  
Tom’s car  
the girl’s bag  
Ibsen’s writings
2.6 Compound nouns

Please note that there is never an apostrophe before the Norwegian -s. Admittedly, you will see many shop names and such that use it in the English way, but this is a source of real irritation for a lot of Norwegians. It's incorrect to add a genitive apostrophe in Norwegian, except in those words that end in an -s, -x, or similar sound. In those relatively few cases, an apostrophe is added, but no final -s:

Thomas' kone
Alex' familie

Genitive is also common in expressions dealing with time and measurements:

to ukers ferie
ten times jobb
fire års utdannelse
en to kilos laks
en tre roms leilighet
Lang dags ferd mot natt
two weeks’ holiday
an hour’s work
a four-year education
a salmon of two kilos
a flat with three rooms
Long Day’s Journey into Night

Norwegian often uses a preposition instead of the genitive (see 11.14). Til would be the most common preposition. Note that the noun is in the definite form when in front of til.

Toms kone > kona til Tom
Toms bil > bilen til Tom
Toms’s wife
Toms’s car

Compound nouns (see 2.6) can also function as, or replace expressions using, the genitive:

barnebøker
kuttelaget
Et dukkehjem
children’s books
the boys’ team
A Doll’s House

There is also a construction with possessives (see 5.4):

Tom sin bil
Tom’s car

Finally, there are also certain set phrases where the preposition til is followed by the noun in the genitive. This is a remnant of Old Norse grammatical patterns:

De satte seg til bords klokka sju.
I helga drar de til fjells.
Hun var syk og gikk til sengs.
They went to dinner at seven o’clock.
This weekend they’re going to the mountains.
She was ill and went to bed.

Jeg ville gjerne ha ei god grammaikkbok! I’d like a good grammar book!

A noun or another word can be placed together with another noun in order to modify (i.e. limit) its meaning. In Norwegian, these words will be written together, with no spaces:

En tur (a trip) can be, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>en ferietur</td>
<td>a holiday trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en familietur</td>
<td>a family trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en båttur</td>
<td>a boat trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en flytur</td>
<td>a plane trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en jentetur</td>
<td>a girls’ trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en billigtur</td>
<td>a low-cost trip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main word, in this case tur, determines the gender of the compound noun, and therefore which article it will have, and how the word is inflected. The first, modifying word remains unchanged.

en båttur – båtturen – båtturer – båtturene

The first, modifying word is often another noun, but can be any type of word:
**-e or -s in the Compound**

When the first word is a noun, it will normally appear in the indefinite form singular, and the words are compounded without any alterations.

- en turistinformasjon a tourist information office
- et elevråd a pupils' council
- en jenteklubb a girls' club

But sometimes a letter is added between the words. A few short words like jul, barn, gutt get the addition of an -e:

- en guttesønder a boy scout
- et juleselskap a Christmas party
- lamme kjott lamb (meat)
- barneklær children's clothing

Some individual words, such as arbeid, sport add an -s. This also applies to words that end in suffixes like: -sjon, -het, -else, -skap, -dom.

- arbeidskår work clothes
- sportsko sport shoes
- ei ungdomsbok a young adult novel
- kjærlighetsorg heartbreak
- et overskuelseselskap a surprise party
- seiskapsmat party food

If three identical consonants meet as a result of the compounded word, one of the three will be dropped:

- ei lue av ull a wool hat
- en politiker i toppen a top politician

It's also possible to use a hyphen if the words are hard to recognise:

- en topp-politiker a top politician

It is quite common to create compounds of more than two words:

- en barnemøbedress a suit for wearing in kindergarten
- en filmskuespiller a film actor
- arbeidsmiljøloven the work environment law
- en fotballkamp a football match
- En Midsummersnatt's drøm A Midsummer Night's Dream

(William Shakespeare)

**When should words be joined into compounds?**

The main rule is that words that modify or specify a noun will be joined to the noun. When the modifying word is another noun, they have to be written as one word.

- bilføreren the car driver
- biltaket the car roof
The generation gap
the shop owner
the party leader
a tea cup
a beer glass

The only occasion when a noun can be placed before another noun with a space between them is when the first noun is a form of measurement:

- en kopp te
- et glass øl
- en sekk poteter
- ei skive ost
- et stykke laks

In such cases, the first word will be inflected:

- to kopper kaffe
- flere skiver ost
- noen stykker laks

- a cup of tea
- a glass of beer
- a bag of potatoes
- a slice of cheese
- a piece of salmon

- two cups of coffee
- several slices of cheese
- some pieces of salmon

INDEX
3.1 Personal pronouns
3.2 Indefinite pronouns
3.3 Sig
3.4 Selv
3.5 Polite form

CHAPTER 3
PRONOUNS

Jeg savner deg også, kjære!
I miss you too, dear!
3.1 Personal pronouns

Subject form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. pers.</td>
<td>jeg</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pers.</td>
<td>du</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. pers.</td>
<td>han</td>
<td>she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>han</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>den</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>det</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pronunciation of some of these words is a bit different from what might be expected. An approximate Anglophone pronunciation of the words jeg, det and de would be yey, deh, dee.

These pronouns are used as the sentence subject. They are the ones performing the action.

It is worth noting that unlike in English, Norwegian does not capitalise the first person singular. Unless the word starts the sentence, it would be jeg, not Jeg.

In the second person, Norwegian differs between the singular and the plural, which makes it easy to tell whether someone is addressing one person or several.

Er du gift? Are you (sing.) married?
Er dere gift? Are you (plur.) married?

For readers who are familiar with the dialect of the Southern United States, dere is the exact equivalent of y'all.

Hun or han?

The third person singular can cause some trouble for those learning the language, since Norwegian has four options, where English has only three.

Hun (she) and han (he) are used primarily about people according to their sex. Hun is used for girls and women, and han is used for boys and men. The words might occasionally also be used for animals, usually where the animal is one to which the speaker has a personal connection, or where the speaker for some other reason wishes to recognise the individual animal. Using hun or han would also be polite when talking about an animal that someone else owns – at least if the owner can hear you!

In casual or jocular speech, some people (mostly men!) choose to refer to their car or their boat as hun. Hun cannot be used to refer to places.

When a person's sex is unknown, the default pronoun would tend to be han. However, using hun is not incorrect, and if you want to avoid the problem, you can use hun / han or hun eller han (he or she):

Rerleggeren kommer i dag.
Når kommer han?
Vi har fått ny lærer.
Hvordan er hun?
Vi søker en ny medarbeider,
Hun eller han må ha gode engelskkunnskaper.

The plumber will be here today.
The plumber will be here today.
We have a new teacher.
What is she like?

We are looking for a new co-worker.
He or she must have good English skills.

In more formal contexts, the gender-neutral vedkommende (the person in question) is also an option:

Vi søker en ny medarbeider, Vedkommende må ha gode engelskkunnskaper.

We are looking for a new co-worker.
The person in question must have good English skills.

Den or det?

Den and det both mean it and are used for all objects and non-humans, so this would also be the usual default to apply to animals.

In choosing between den and det, gender turns up as an issue yet again! The function of a pronoun, after all, is to replace a noun, and the choice between den and det is made by the gender of the replaced noun. If the noun is masculine or feminine, the correct pronoun is den. If the noun is neuter, the correct pronoun is det:

Jeg har kjøpt ei jakke. I have bought a jacket.
Den er moderne. It is modern.
Jeg har kjøpt en genser. I have bought a jumper.
Den er moderne. It is modern.
Jeg har kjøpt et skjerf. I have bought a scarf.
Det er moderne. It is modern.

This also applies to place names. We use den when referring to masculine and feminine words like ei øy, en by (an island, a city). Words in the neuter, like et land (a country), take the pronoun det. If the place names refer to anything in the plural, like f-jellene or -syene (the mountains, the islands) we use de:

Jeg liker godt Stavanger (en by). I like Stavanger (a city).
Den er passe stor. It is just the right size.
Hvor ligger Man (øya)?
\textit{Where is Man (an island)?}
\text{Den ligger mellom England og Irland.}
\textit{It is between England and Ireland.}

Hvor ligger Libya (et land)?
\textit{Where is Libya (a country)?}
\text{Det ligger i Nord-Afrika.}
\textit{It is in Northern Africa.}

Hvor er Kanarieøyerne?
\textit{Where are the Canary Islands?}
\text{De ligger i Atlanterhavet.}
\textit{They are in the Atlantic Ocean.}

\text{Det} also gets used in many other contexts as a general way of referring to something, even without referring back to a word in the neuter. It is also used as a way of introducing someone or something:

\text{Jeg liker Stavanger.}
\textit{I like Stavanger.}
\text{Det er en koselig by.}
\textit{It is a nice town.}

\text{Hvor er Maldivene?}
\textit{Where are the Maldives?}
\text{Det er noen øyer utenfor India.}
\textit{They are some islands outside India.}

\text{Hva slags båt er Stjernen?}
\textit{What sort of boat is the Star?}
\text{Det er en skonert.}
\textit{She is a schooner.}

See also Demonstratives, chapter 4.

\textbf{Object form}

The pronouns have other forms, which are used when they are not the subject of the sentence:

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Singular} & \textbf{Plural} \\
\hline
1. pers. & meg & me & oss & us \\
2. pers. & deg & you & dere & you \\
3. pers. & henne & her & dem & them \\
    & ham/han & him & & \\
    & den & it & & \\
    & det & it & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

The use of the object form is fairly straightforward, and similar to how it is used in English.

\text{Kan du hjelpe \textit{meg}?}
\textit{Can you help me?}
\text{Har du sett \textit{henne}?}
\textit{Have you seen her?}
\text{Jeg skal besøke \textit{dem}.}
\textit{I am going to visit them.}
\text{Vil du bli med \textit{oss}?}
\textit{Do you want to come with us?}

The object form is used in sentences like:

\text{Hei, \textit{det er meg}!}
\textit{Hi, it's me!}
\text{De bor i samme hus som \textit{oss}.}
\textit{They live in the same house as us.}
\text{Han er sterkere enn \textit{meg}!}
\textit{He is stronger than me!}

\section{3.2 Indefinite pronouns}

When we talk about people without referring to specific individuals, we use the indefinite pronoun. The subject form of these is either \textit{man} or \textit{en}. \textit{Man} is probably perceived as slightly more formal than \textit{en} and is the dominant written version:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Man} må ta hensyn til sine naboer.
\textit{One must be considerate of one's neighbours.}
\item \textit{En} kan ikke altid gjøre hva \textit{en} vil.
\textit{One cannot always do what one wants.}
\end{itemize}

Sometimes, Norwegian chooses to use an active sentence with \textit{man} or \textit{en} as the subject, while English opts for the passive:

\begin{itemize}
\item Snakker \textit{man} engelsk der?
\textit{Is English spoken there?}
\item \textit{Be} skal ikke tro alt du hører.
\textit{You must not believe everything you hear.}
\item Folk sier så mye.
\textit{People say so many things.}
\end{itemize}

\textit{Man} can only be the subject of a sentence, while \textit{en} can also be the object form:

\begin{itemize}
\item Folk hører ikke på \textit{en}.
\textit{People don't listen to one.}
\end{itemize}

\section{3.3 Seg}

\text{Den vasker \textit{seg}.}
\textit{It washes itself.}
Reflexive pronouns

**Singular**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. pers.</td>
<td>Jeg vasker meg.</td>
<td>I wash myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. pers.</td>
<td>Han vasker seg.</td>
<td>He washes himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hun vasker seg.</td>
<td>She washes herself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Den (katten) vasker seg.</td>
<td>It (the cat) washes itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Det (barnet) vasker seg.</td>
<td>It (the child) washes itself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plural**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vi vasker oss.</td>
<td>We wash ourselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dere vasker dere.</td>
<td>You wash yourselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De vasker seg.</td>
<td>They wash themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the subject and the object are the same person, reflexive pronouns are used:

- Vi forbereder oss. We prepare ourselves.
- Jeg så meg i speilet. I looked at myself in the mirror.
- Du må forsøke deg. You must defend yourself.
- Vi morer oss. We enjoyed ourselves.

In Norwegian, the reflexive form is identical to the normal object form in the first and the second person. However, in the third person singular and plural, the form seg is used. This particular form does not have an exact equivalent in English. It is independent of gender and number.

- Han forbereder seg. He prepares himself.
- Hun morer seg. She enjoyed herself.
- Dyret forsøkte seg. The animal defended itself.
- De så seg i speilet. They looked at themselves in the mirror.

This means there’s a significant difference between a normal object and a reflexive object:

- Han slo seg. He hurt himself.
- Han slo ham. He hit him.

Norwegian uses reflexive pronouns a great deal. Many everyday expressions consist of a verb and a reflexive pronoun:

- Jeg liker meg her. I like it here.
- Barna legger seg klokka 8. The children go to bed at eight.
- Vi falte oss syke. We felt ill.

The reflexive verbs are always listed in dictionaries with the pronoun in the third person, i.e. they are listed with seg. What this means in practice is that when you look up a word and intend to use it in a sentence, you need to pay attention to the subject. Here are some examples:

- å barbere seg to shave
- Jeg barberer meg. I shave.
- Han barberer seg. He shaves.
- å konsentrere seg to concentrate
- Vi må konsentrere oss. We have to concentrate.
- De konsentrerer seg. They are concentrating.

In chapter 9.11 (reflexive verbs) you will find many more expressions using a verb and a reflexive pronoun.

It is also quite common to include a reflexive pronoun that isn’t strictly necessary:

- Jeg har kjøpt meg bil. I’ve bought a car.
- Han vil gjerne få seg kjæreste. He’d like to have a girlfriend.
- Skal vi ta oss en tur? Should we go for a walk?
- Jeg må ha meg litt mat. I need something to eat.
- Det er vanskelig å finne seg et sted å bo. It’s hard to find somewhere to live.

### 3.4 Selv

Sometimes, the word selv (self) is added to the reflexive pronoun, which makes the resulting sentence resemble the English form. Selv is added when it seems important to stress that the subject of the sentence does something all on their own, with no other people involved.

- Hun snakket med seg selv. She talked to herself.
- Vi får hjelp av oss selv. We shall have to help ourselves.
- De bor for seg selv. They live by themselves.
- Han klarer seg selv. She manages on her own.
- Jeg har klippet meg selv. I have cut my own hair (lit.: cut myself).

**Selv**, on its own, can be the equivalent of English reflexive pronouns:

- Han har bygget huset selv. He has built the house himself.
- Jeg klarte det selv. I managed it myself!
- De underviste barna selv. They taught the children themselves.
3.5 Polite form

When approaching an unknown person, either in writing or in person, it is possible to use a separate polite form of the personal pronoun rather than du and deg. In speech, you naturally can’t hear a capital letter, but if you write, it’s important to remember to capitalise these words. The word De is pronounced in such a way that it sounds like dee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subject form</th>
<th>object form</th>
<th>reflexive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>Dem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kan De hjelpe meg litt?  Could you help me a little?
Kan jeg hjelpe Dem?  May I help you?
Hvordan føler De Dem i dag?  How are you feeling today?

Young people would say that this polite form has vanished completely. Not all elderly people would agree, but this is not a common pronoun. There is therefore no reason to feel insulted if people call you du.

The polite form exists only in the singular, so if you are making a polite approach to more than one person, the normal dere pronoun would be used, and politeness expressed in other ways.
4.1 Near or remote?

The demonstratives can refer to something that is near or further away, just as in English,

**Den bilen** er super.
**Denne boka** er god.
**Det huset** er pent.
**Dette huset** er vårt.
**De eplene** er fine.
**Disse eplene** er dyre.

That car is super.
This book is good.
That house is pretty.
This house is ours.
Those apples are nice.
These apples are expensive.

As the examples illustrate, the demonstratives are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine/feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>near</td>
<td>den</td>
<td>dette</td>
<td>disse</td>
<td>this/this/these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remote</td>
<td>det</td>
<td>de</td>
<td>that/that/those</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, when things are close enough to be within touching range, the words we use are **denne**, **dette** and **disse**:

**Denne jakka** liker jeg.
I like this jacket.

**Dette skjerfet** liker jeg.
I like this scarf.

**Disse sokkene** liker jeg.
I like these socks.

If the objects are very big, it is not necessary to be close enough to touch them, but they need to feel close:

**Denne elva** renner ut i Trondheim.
This river reaches the sea by Trondheim.

**Disse husene** er gamle.
These houses are old.

When we point to something that is a bit further away, we use the words **den**, **det** and **de**:

**Se på den jakka!**
Look at that jacket!

**Den bilen** liker jeg!
I like that car!

**Liker du det huset?**
Do you like that house?

**Hvem passer på de ungene?**
Who is looking after those children?

The difference in the degree of closeness can also be seen in the adverbs that are often used along with the demonstratives in casual speech. **Her** (here) is usually used with the "near" forms of **denne**, **dette**, **disse**. But with **den**, **det**, **de** we often use **der** (there):

**Jeg liker denne jakka her.**
I like this jacket.

**Jeg liker den jakka der.**
I like that jacket.

4.2 The form of the noun

Based on the examples above, you may have deduced that the noun which follows the demonstratives is in the **definite form**. This is the dominant form in modern Norwegian, for both speech and writing:

**Liker du denne jakka?**
Do you like this jacket?

**Liker du dette huset?**
Do you like this house?

**Disse skoene er supre!**
These shoes are great!

But in older Norwegian, demonstratives used to be followed by the **indefinite form**, so you may run into the indefinite form in certain expressions, like these:

**Denne gang må du være tålmødig.**
This time, you must be patient.

**Disse sporsmål må drøftes nøyde.**
These questions must be discussed carefully.

In formal language you meet the noun in the indefinite form after demonstratives more often than in informal language. However, the definite form is the norm, and is always correct.

4.3 Det and dette as general references

It is possible to use demonstratives independently, without a noun, but these will be prefixed according to the implied noun:

**Denne (jakka) er litt dyr.**
This (jacket) is a bit expensive.

**Disse (skoene) er moderne nå.**
These (shoes) are modern now.

In some cases, we may use demonstratives that do not refer to specific nouns. They refer to objects or situations in general. In these cases, we use the neuter forms **dette** and **det**:

**Dette smaker godt!**
This tastes good!

**Det er bra!**
That's fine!
The neuter form is also used to introduce something independently of gender and number:

Dette er Kari.
Dett er en super bil!
Dette er de bøkene jeg kjøpte.
Dette er mine anbefalinger.

This is Kari.
That's a great car!
These are the books I bought.
These are my recommendations.

So, when you proudly show off pictures of your numerous offspring, you would use the neuter singular form to introduce them:

Dette er barna mine.

Those are my children.

Det + som

Det followed by a som-clause (see 14.7) is a common general reference:

Det som står i boka, er at ...
Det (som) du sier, er noe ordentlig tull.
Jeg skjente ikke det (som) han sa.

What the book says, is that ...
What you are saying is ridiculous.
I didn’t understand what he was saying.

CHAPTER 5

POSSESSIVES

Den moderne familien:  The modern family:
Mine, dine og våre barn My, your, and our children

Possessives, as the name suggests, indicate who owns, or is otherwise closely connected to, a particular noun.

For many foreigners learning Norwegian, it seems natural to place the possessive before the noun:

Han er min helt! He is my hero!

While you can do this in Norwegian, it sounds more natural to place the possessive after the noun – at least in everyday speech about everyday topics:

Hvor er katten din? Where is your cat?
Hvem har spist greten min? Who ate my porridge?

For added excitement, the noun changes its form depending on where the possessive is placed. If the possessive is in front of the noun, the noun is in the indefinite form. If the possessive is after the noun, the noun will be in the definite form:

Dette er min mann. This is my husband.
Dette er mannen min. This is my husband.
5.1 Hans, hennes, deres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner:</th>
<th>he</th>
<th>she</th>
<th>you (pl.)</th>
<th>they</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hans</td>
<td>hennes</td>
<td>deres</td>
<td>deres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These possessives retain their form, regardless of position, gender, and number.

- Jeg liker bilen **hennes** og vennene **hennes**. I like her car and her friends.
- Dette huset er **hennes**.
  - This house is hers.
- Jeg liker katten **hans**. I like his cat.
- Men denne katten er ikke **hans**. But this cat isn’t his.
- Vi skal kjøpe huset **deres** og bilen **deres**. We are buying their house and their car.
- Er dette huset **deres**? Is this house theirs?

**Deres** can also mean *your* – *yours* (plural):

- Husk å ta med dere alle tingene **deres**. Remember to bring all your things.
- Er denne katten **deres**? Is this cat yours?

You may be feeling relieved at how easy this was – but don’t worry, it gets more complicated! Turn to chapter 5.4 to learn about reflexive possessives.

5.2 Possessives with inflections

These possessives change depending on the noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner:</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>you (sing.)</th>
<th>we</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>hytta mi</td>
<td>hytta di</td>
<td>hytta vår</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>bilen min</td>
<td>bilen din</td>
<td>bilen vår</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>huset mitt</td>
<td>huset ditt</td>
<td>huset vårt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>skoene mine</td>
<td>skoene dine</td>
<td>skoene våre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Her er **kaka di** og **kaffen din**.
- Her er **huset vårt**.
- Dette glasset er ikke **mitt**!
- Hvor er **sjokoladene mine**?

Here is your cake and your coffee.
Here is our house.
This glass isn’t mine!
Where are my chocolates?

5.3 Min mann or mannen min?

As you’ve seen in the examples above, it’s common for Norwegian possessives to be placed after the noun they belong to. However, possessives can be placed both before and after the noun.

The possessive itself remains the same regardless of its placement, but the noun is not so lucky. When the possessive is placed after the noun, the noun has to have the definite form. When the possessive is placed before it, the noun has to have the indefinite form:

- Dette er **familien** min. This is my family.
- Dette er **min familie**. This is my family.

Placing possessives after the noun is considered normal in Norwegian, and when you’re talking about practical, everyday things, this is indeed correct:

- klokka mi, bilen din, koppene deres = my watch, your car, their cups

Other contexts leave you with more options. When it comes to family members, both versions are in common use:

- **Min mann** sier at …
- **Mannen min** sier at …

- Du må hilse på **min kone**.
- Du må pilse på **kona mi / konen min**.

- Du må hilse på **min kone**.
- Du må pilse på **kona mi / konen min**.

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- **Min mann** sier at …
- **Mannen min** sier at …

- Du må hilse på **min kone**.
- Du må pilse på **kona mi / konen min**.

- Du må hilse på **kona mi / konen min**.

- Du må hilse på **min kone**.
- Du må pilse på **kona mi / konen min**.

- Du må hilse på **kona mi / konen min**.

- Du må hilse på **min kone**.
- Du må pilse på **kona mi / konen min**.
In these cases, putting the possessive in front of the noun will be perceived as more formal than putting it behind.

Since min used with a feminine word is perceived as the most formal, it would be more common to use that form when the possessive is placed in front: min kone.

When the topic is abstract and the style formal, it is quite common to see the possessive placed in front of the noun.

Min mening er at ... My opinion is that ...
Våre planer går ut på å ... Our plans involve ...

Please note: the challenge in all of these cases is to maintain consistency between the form of the noun, and the placement of the possessive. You can speak affectionately about konen min, konen min and min kone – but never about *min kone. Likewise, while both mannen din and din mann are acceptable, *din mannen is not.

Stress/emphasis
If more emphasis on the possessive is desired, the tendency to put them in front of the noun will increase:

Min far er sterkere enn din!
Du har tatt mine bøker!
My father is stronger than yours!
You’ve taken my books!

Egen
We can also use egen (own) along with the possessives. In this case, the possessives have to be placed before the noun:

Vi kan lage vår egen klubb.
Jeg vil ha mitt eget rom.
Du må gjøre dine egne oppgaver.
We can make our own club.
I want my own room.
You have to do your own tasks.

Egen as we see in these examples becomes eget in the neuter, and egne in the plural.

Neuter
The neuter form of the possessive is used for general, abstract references:

Vi skal gjøre vårt beste.
Barna gjør sitt beste.
Jeg skal gjøre mitt beste!
We will do our best.
The children do their best.
I will do my best.

As suggested earlier, the use of hans, hennes and deres is somewhat more complicated than it might appear. These non-inflectable words share the common trait of being occasionally replaced by a reflexive possessive: sin/si/sitt/sine.

This happens when the subject owns, has, or is somehow connected to the thing we are talking about. Working out the rules surrounding the choice between sin and hans, hennes and deres can cause an alarming amount of excitement in Norwegian classes.

The inflection of sin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han snakker om hytta si</td>
<td>bilen sin</td>
<td>huset sitt</td>
<td>kattene sine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He talks about his cabin</td>
<td>his car</td>
<td>his house</td>
<td>his cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hun snakker om hytta si</td>
<td>bilen sin</td>
<td>huset sitt</td>
<td>kattene sine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She talks about her cabin</td>
<td>her car</td>
<td>her house</td>
<td>her cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De snakker om hytta si</td>
<td>bilen sin</td>
<td>huset sitt</td>
<td>kattene sine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They talk about their cabin</td>
<td>their car</td>
<td>their house</td>
<td>their cats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This reflexive possessive is inflected according to the noun it occurs with. That is to say, the form of the reflexive possessive is determined by the gender and number of the “possessed” thing, not by the gender and number of the owner/owners:

De liker katten sin. They like their cat.
Hun liker kattene sine. She likes her cats.

In the feminine, what applied to mi and di applies again: if you choose the definite form konen you must use si after the noun, while the definite form konen needs to be followed by sin. When the possessive is in front of the noun, sin is the most common:

Han er glad i konen sin. He is fond of his wife.
Han er glad i sin kone. He is fond of his wife.
How do we use *sin*?

That is the question! One that is often repeated in many a Norwegian class!

To use *si/sin/sitt/sine*, the first requirement is that the subject is in the third person. That is to say, the subject needs to be *hun*, *han*, *den*, *det* or *de* – or a word that can be replaced by one of those pronouns:

- **Foreldrene** leker med **sønnen sin**. The parents are playing with their son.
- **Gutten** leker med **bliene sine**. The boy is playing with his cars.
- **De** har solgt **huset sitt**. They have sold their house.

The second requirement is that the subject needs to “own” whatever we are referring to as the object, or after a preposition. This is a standard example that shows the difference between the reflexive and the non-reflexive form of the possessives:

- **Hun elsker sin mann**. She loves her husband.
- **Hun elsker hennes mann**. She loves her husband.

The English translation of the two sentences is identical, but there is a not insignificant difference between them in Norwegian. Since *sin* refers back to the “owner”, the woman in the first sentence has an easy time of it: she loves her own husband. In the second sentence, she loves another woman’s husband.

Similarly, while the action that is unfolding may be the same in the two following sentences, the man in question is merely doing his duty as a parent in the first. In the second, he’s being very kind, and helping another man do an unpleasant task:

- **Han skiftet bleier på** **barnet sitt**. He changed his child’s nappies.
- **Han skiftet bleier på** **barnet hans**. He changed his child’s nappies.

**Lisa har en stor hund.**
**Lisa likes hunden sin.**
**Lisa går tur med hunden sin.**

Lisa has a big dog.
Lisa likes her dog.
Lisa takes her dog for a walk.

If Anne gets to borrow Lisa’s dog, things change. The subject no longer owns the object, and we consequently don’t use the reflexive form of the possessives.

- **Anne** liker **hunden hennes**. Anne likes her (i.e. Lisa’s) dog.
- **Anne** går tur med **hunden hennes**. Anne takes her (Lisa’s) dog for a walk.

The reflexive form is never in the subject. If the dog becomes the subject, or a part of the subject, we do not use the reflexive form:

**Hunden hennes** er stor. Her dog is big.

**Lisa og hunden hennes** går på tur. Lisa and her dog go for a walk.

A sub-clause counts as a separate sentence;

**Lisa sier at hunden hennes** er pen. **Lisa says that her dog is pretty.**

**Lisa er bekymret fordi hunden hennes** er syk. **Lisa is worried because her dog is ill.**

**Jeg ser at Lisa** liker **hunden sin.** **I see that Lisa likes her dog.**

**Lisa ser at Jeg** liker **hunden hennes.** **Lisa sees that I like her dog.**

**Per sin bil**

A dialectal usage of *sin* that has spread so widely as to become common even in writing is a construction using *sin* instead of the genitive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per sin</th>
<th>Per si</th>
<th>Per sitt</th>
<th>Per sine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per’s car</td>
<td>Per’s wife</td>
<td>Per’s house</td>
<td>Per’s problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This has become so common that it may be beyond criticism at this point, and the number of Norwegians that turn up their noses in disgust when they see it in writing is shrinking.
6.1 Inflection by gender and number

-\text{t} in the neuter, -\text{e} in the plural

Most Norwegian adjectives take the suffix -\text{t} in the neuter and -\text{e} in the plural. This applies whether the adjective is placed before a noun, or stands alone:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine/feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ei fin jakke</td>
<td>et finn skjerf</td>
<td>fine voller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a nice jacket</td>
<td>a nice skjerf</td>
<td>nice mitten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en stor by</td>
<td>et stort hus</td>
<td>store byer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a big city</td>
<td>a big hus</td>
<td>big cities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine:</th>
<th>rød</th>
<th>stor</th>
<th>fin</th>
<th>varm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jakka er</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>nice</td>
<td>warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The jacket is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine:</th>
<th>red</th>
<th>stor</th>
<th>fin</th>
<th>varm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genseren er</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>nice</td>
<td>warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sweater is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neuter:</th>
<th>rødt</th>
<th>stort</th>
<th>fint</th>
<th>varmt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skjerfet er</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>nice</td>
<td>warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scarf is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plural:</th>
<th>røde</th>
<th>store</th>
<th>fine</th>
<th>varme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vottene er</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>nice</td>
<td>warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mittens are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjectives that end in -\text{en}, -\text{el} or -\text{er} will get an abbreviated form in the plural, and double consonants are simplified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine/feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>en åpen butikk</td>
<td>et åpent sted</td>
<td>åpne butikker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an open shop</td>
<td>an open place</td>
<td>open shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en gammel film</td>
<td>et gammelt hus</td>
<td>gamle mennesker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an old film</td>
<td>an old house</td>
<td>old people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei lekker jakke</td>
<td>et lekkert skjerf</td>
<td>lekre jakker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a gorgeous jacket</td>
<td>a gorgeous scarf</td>
<td>gorgeous jackets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No -\text{t} in the neuter

Adjectives that end in -\text{ig}, do not take the suffix -\text{t} in the neuter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine/feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>en hyggelig mann</td>
<td>et hyggelig hus</td>
<td>hyggelige damer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a nice man</td>
<td>a nice house</td>
<td>nice ladies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei billig jakke</td>
<td>et billig hus</td>
<td>billig epler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a cheap jacket</td>
<td>a cheap house</td>
<td>cheap apples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adjectives that refer to nationality and end in an -sk, do not take the -t suffix in the neuter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine/feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>en britisk film</td>
<td>et britisk flagg</td>
<td>britiske flagger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a British film</td>
<td>a British flag</td>
<td>British films</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en polsk film</td>
<td>et polsk flagg</td>
<td>polske flagger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a Polish film</td>
<td>a Polish flag</td>
<td>Polish films</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-tt in the neuter
Some short adjectives take the suffix -tt in the neuter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine/feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>en ny bil</td>
<td>et nytt hus</td>
<td>nye votter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a new car</td>
<td>a new house</td>
<td>new mittens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei grå jakke</td>
<td>et grått hus</td>
<td>grått votter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a grey jacket</td>
<td>a grey house</td>
<td>grey mittens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Litten and annen
There is a special inflection pattern for the commonly used adjectives liten (small) and annen (other). If we choose to use the article ei in the feminine, this adjective has a separate feminine form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>en liten bil</td>
<td>ei liten jente</td>
<td>et lite hus</td>
<td>små biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a small car</td>
<td>a little girl</td>
<td>a small house</td>
<td>small cars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en annen bil</td>
<td>ei annen jente</td>
<td>et annen hus</td>
<td>andre biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>another car</td>
<td>another girl</td>
<td>another house</td>
<td>other cars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are yearning for even more details regarding the rules of adjective inflection, you can find some on page 136.

6.2 The neuter form, and how to use it

In addition to describing a neuter noun, the neuter form of the adjectives is used in a few other contexts:

When adjectives are not describing something specific, we use the neuter as a general form:

Jeg liker gult.
I like yellow.
Har du hørt noe nytt?
Have you heard anything new?
Jeg har lyst på noe varmt å drøkke.
I fancy something hot to drink.
Er du glad i sett?
Do you have a sweet tooth?

Vin er dyrt.
Wine is expensive.
Kake er godt.
Cake is good.
Pølser er godt.
Hot dogs are good.

Even though vin is a masculine noun, kake a feminine noun, and pølser a plural form, the adjective is in the neuter form in general statements of this sort, where the noun is in the indefinite form.

As soon as we talk about specific subjects in the definite form, the adjective starts behaving as expected:

Vinen er dyr.
The wine is expensive (a specific wine).
Kaka er god.
The cake is good.
Pølsene er gode.
The hot dogs are good.
### 6.3 Lacking plural form

In some cases, the adjective remains uninflected. This applies to some predicative expressions using adjectives and prepositions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alle er lei av grammatikk.</td>
<td>Everyone is sick of grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De er glad i naturen.</td>
<td>They are fond of nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi ble klar over problemet.</td>
<td>We were alerted to the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De er vant til å jobbe mye.</td>
<td>They are used to working hard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This also applies to the word gift (married) and adjectives consisting of the past participle (see 9.2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De er gift.</td>
<td>They are married.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rørsene er stekt.</td>
<td>The hot dogs are fried.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barna ble skuffet.</td>
<td>The children were disappointed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De ble overrasket.</td>
<td>They were surprised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alle er velkommen!</td>
<td>Everyone is welcome!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.4 Definite form

**Den gamle mannen og havet**  
*The Old Man and the Sea* (Ernest Hemingway)

When the adjective is placed before a noun in the definite form, the adjective will also be in the definite form. Its form will be the same as in the plural, generally ending in -e:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeg liker bilen.</td>
<td>I like the car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeg liker den store bilen.</td>
<td>I like the big car.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hopefully, you remember that the noun in the definite form has a suffix, not an article (the car = bilen, see 2.4). However, when there is an adjective before a noun in the definite form, a definite article is added, so that the entire phrase now resembles the English pattern. (Apart, that is, from the way the article changes based on gender and number.)

**Feminine:**

Jeg liker den gule jakka.  
I like the yellow jacket.

**Masculine:**

Jeg liker den gule bilen.  
I like the yellow car.

**Neuter:**

Jeg liker det gule huset.  
I like the yellow house.

**Plural:**

Jeg liker de gule vottene.  
I like the yellow mittens.

The definite form of the adjective applies when the adjective is before a noun in the definite form. If an adjective appears after verbs like være (be) and bli (be, become), the adjective will follow the normal inflection pattern that we have seen above (6.1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huset er gult.</td>
<td>The house is yellow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This means that when we have adjectives both before and after the noun, the end result is this:

**Det gule** huset er **fint.**  
The yellow house is nice.

**Fint** is the normal indefinite neuter form, while **det gule** is the definite form.

The definite form of adjectives also occurs in other contexts:

**After demonstratives:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>denne gule bilen</td>
<td>this yellow car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dette fine huset</td>
<td>this nice house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**After genitives and possessives:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lærerens gule bil</td>
<td>the teacher's yellow car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jentas nye jakke</td>
<td>the girl's new jacket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min varme genser</td>
<td>my warm sweater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vårt store hus</td>
<td>our large house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keiserens nye klær</td>
<td>The Emperor's New Clothes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these last examples, the noun is in the indefinite form, as we have seen in chapter 5.3. When the possessives are placed after the noun, the definite form markers are used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>den gule bilen til læreren</td>
<td>the teacher's yellow car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>den varme genseren min</td>
<td>my warm sweater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>det store huset vårt</td>
<td>our large house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The noun may occasionally be in the indefinite form when describing names or concepts, and still have an adjective in the definite form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Det hvite hus</td>
<td>The White House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Den norske Bank</td>
<td>The Norwegian Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>den lille mann</td>
<td>the common man / Joe Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>den moderne kvinne</td>
<td>the modern woman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Litene and annen**

In the definite form singular, *liten* has a special form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>den lille jenta</td>
<td>the little girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>det lille huset</td>
<td>the little house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plural:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>de små jentene</td>
<td>the little girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de små husene</td>
<td>the small houses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annen** follows a normal inflection pattern in the definite form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>den andre jenta</td>
<td>the other girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>det andre huset</td>
<td>the other house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de andre bilene</td>
<td>the other cars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When it comes to nationalities, it is not very common to use adjectives this way in Norwegian. It may be tempting to translate English-language sentences that begin with The British ... or The French ... with equivalent Norwegian adjectives:

*De britiske liker te. The British like tea.
*De franske liker kaffe. The French like coffee.

However, it sounds much more natural to use nouns:

Britene liker te. Britons like tea.
Franskemennene liker kaffe. French people like coffee.

### 6.5 Adjectives on their own

Adjectives are not always paired with a noun; they may also occur on their own:

Kjøpte du den røde eller den grønne jakka? Did you buy the red or the green jacket?

**Den grønne. The green one.**

Vil du ha de storb eller de små drueene? Do you want the large or the small grapes?

De små, takk. The small ones, please.

**Det viktige er å stå sammen. The important thing is to stand together.**

Av alt uviktig i verden er fotball *det viktigste.* Amongst all unimportant subjects, football is by far the most important.

A “person” noun is often implied:

**Den gamle ble lyttet til.** The old man was listened to.

**Noen unge har overtatt huset. Some young people have taken over the house.**

This happens more frequently in the definite form, and is most frequent of all in the plural:

**De rike blir rikere. The rich grow richer.**

**De fattige har problemer. The poor have problems.**

**De gamle trives her. Old people are happy here.**

**De unge vil bort. The young people want to leave.**

**De arbeidslose aksjonerte. The unemployed demonstrated.**

**De døde** *The Dead* (James Joyce)

In sentences of this type, the adjectives have the same function as a noun, but must be inflected as adjectives, with an -e in the plural and in the definite form:

Mange unge (personer) drar til utlandet. Many young people go abroad.

**De unge (personene) vil se seg om i verden. The young people want to see the world.**

### 6.6 Comparison

The **comparative** and **superlative** are adjective forms used for comparison. Here are the patterns that are used for their inflection:

**-ere -(e)st**

Normally, the comparative gets the suffix -ere, while the superlative gets the suffix -est. Adjectives that end in -ig or -som, however, get the suffix -st in the superlative. Words that end in -el, -en and -er will be contracted and double consonants will be reduced to one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pen</td>
<td>penere</td>
<td>penest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trett</td>
<td>trettre</td>
<td>trettest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vanskelig</td>
<td>vanskeligere</td>
<td>vanskeligst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morsom</td>
<td>morsommere</td>
<td>morsomst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enkel</td>
<td>enklere</td>
<td>enklest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sikker</td>
<td>sikre</td>
<td>sikrest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison with **mer** and **mest**

With some words, we use **mer** (more) or **mest** (most) in front of the normal adjective form. **Mer** and **mest** are typically used for some adjectives of a foreign origin, especially those that end in -l[ø]sk. In addition, participles (9.12) are inflected that way, as well as adjectives that end in -ete.

**praktisk** **mer praktisk** **mest praktisk** practical
**berømt** **mer berømt** **mest berømt** famous
**støvete** **mer støvete** **mest støvete** dusty

It may be possible to vary the inflection of one and the same adjective:

Hun er ensomme nå enn før. She is lonelier now than before.

Hun er mer ensom nå enn før. She is more lonely now than before.
Many common adjectives have an irregular inflection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>old</th>
<th>older</th>
<th>oldest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ung</td>
<td>young</td>
<td>younger</td>
<td>youngest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>better</td>
<td>best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ille</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>worse</td>
<td>worst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liten</td>
<td>little/small</td>
<td>smaller</td>
<td>smallest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stor</td>
<td>large</td>
<td>larger</td>
<td>largest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of the comparative
Norwegian uses the comparative to express a comparison using 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian (singular)</th>
<th>Norwegian (plural)</th>
<th>English (singular)</th>
<th>English (plural)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>större (smaller)</td>
<td>større (largest)</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>largest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stort (larger)</td>
<td>størst (largest)</td>
<td>large</td>
<td>largest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

- Er London større enn Paris? (Is London bigger than Paris?)
- Richard Armitage er penere enn David Tennant. (Richard Armitage is prettier than David Tennant.)
- Vi trenger en større leilighet (en ny av dem). (We need a larger flat (than we have).)

The use of the superlative

The superlative is used to denote the highest degree of some quality:

Hun er flinkest i klassen.
Han er eldste i familien.

She's the best in class.
He's the oldest in the family.

This applies even when there are only two alternatives being compared, unlike English which can use the comparative here:

- Hva er best til torsk, øi eller vin? (Which goes better with codfish, beer or wine?)
- Hvem er peneste, Richard Armitage eller David Tennant? (Who is prettier, Richard Armitage or David Tennant?)
- Jeg synes David Tennant er penest. Hvilken by er størst, London eller Paris? (I think David Tennant is prettier. Which city is the larger, London or Paris?)

The superlative is often used in the definite form. That is to say, it can be inflected with an article and the -e suffix:

Jeg liker best de minste butikkene.
De har det fineste huset i gata.

I like the smallest shops best.
They have the nicest house in the street.

Norwegian uses the definite form of the adjective after possessive determinators too:

- Norge er et av verdens dyreste land. (Norway is one of the most expensive countries in the world.)
- Jeg hadde på meg min fineste dress. (I was wearing my best suit.)

When the superlative is placed after the verb, one can usually choose between the indefinite and definite forms:

Denne fisken er størst / den største. (This fish is largest / the largest.)
Dette rommet er størst / det største. (This room is largest / the largest.)

Adjectives that express comparison

**annerledes (enn) and forskjellig (fra)**

Du er annerledes nå enn før. (You are different from before.)
Klimaet er annerledes enn i Australia. (The climate is different than in Australia.)
Tradisjonene deres er forskjellige fra våre. (Their traditions are different from ours.)

Maten er forskjellig fra dag til dag. (The food is different every day.)

**ulik/lik**

De har like meninger. (They have similar opinions.)
Tradisjonene våre er ulike. (Our traditions are different.)
Norsk og engelsk er ikke så ulike. (Norwegian and English aren't that different.)

**like – som**

Like + adjective + som is a common expression used for comparison.
The adjective will be inflected:

- De er like flinke på ski som faren sin. (They are just as good at skiing as their father.)
- Leilighetene er like dyr som huset. (The flat is as expensive as the house.)
- Hun er like gammel som meg. (She is my age.)
- Hun og jeg er like gamle. (She and I are the same age.)
- Vi er like gamle som vennene våre. (We are the same age as our friends.)

**ikke så – som**

The negative version is normally:

- De er ikke så flinke på ski som faren sin. (They are not as good at skiing as their father.)
- Leilighetene er ikke så dyr som huset. (The flat is not as expensive as the house.)
### 7.1 Cardinal numbers

|   | 0   | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 30  | 50  | 60  | 70  | 80  | 90  | 100 | 102 | 200 | 250 | 1000 | 2000 | 1 000 000 | 1 000 000 000 |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|   | null | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 30  | 31  | 40  | 50  | 60  | 70  | 80  | 90  | 100 | 101 | 102 | 200 | 250 | 2000 | 1 000 000 | 1 000 000 000 |
| 1 | en (ett/ei) | trett | fjorten | femten | seksten | sytten | atten | nitten | tjue | tjueen | tjueto | trett | trettien | førti | 40  | 50  | 60  | 70  | 80  | 90  | 100 | 102 | 200 | 250 | 2000 | 1 000 000 | 1 000 000 000 |

The numbers must simply be learnt. When learning a new language, numbers always require a little bit of patience and work. But for English speakers, there may be some comfort in that there are several similarities between the systems. There are, however, a few areas where it's good to be aware of differences.

### The number 1

As the list above indicates, the number 1 can have several variations. As you can see, it corresponds closely to the indefinite articles, and there is often no sharp distinction between them and the number. But when we want to emphasise the number, we can add a diacritical mark and write én in front of masculine or feminine nouns, and add an extra -t to the article et to make ett for neuter nouns. As before, ei can also be used for feminine nouns, but there is no change in the spelling for that article:

- Jeg har bare én feil.  I've made only one mistake.
- De har bare ett barn.  They have only one child.
- Har du bare ei søster?  Do you have only one sister?
- Har du bare én søster?  Do you have only one sister?

En also exists in the definite form:

- De har to biler, men den ene er på verksted.  They have two cars, but one of them is being repaired.
- De har flere hus. Det ene ligger ved sjoen.  They have several houses. One of them is by the sea.
Norwegian does not use en in expressions where the noun is assumed to be understood:
Vi har to biler. Jeg kjører den store. We have two cars. I drive the big one.
Vi er to brødre. Han er den smarte. We are two brothers. He is the smart one,
Så fine epler! Jeg vil gjerne ha de små. What nice apples! I'd like the small ones.

7.2 Years

The number of a year is expressed according to the following pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Norwegian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1660</td>
<td>seksten seksti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>sytten åttini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>atten fjorten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>nitten nittiåtte</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also possible to say atten hundre og fjorten etc., but the most common pattern is the one above, where the number of centuries is mentioned first, followed by the decade,

Some exceptions do exist. When referring to the time period between 1000 and 1100 A.D., we say:
1066 tusen og seksstiseks (not *ti sekstiseks)

For the years after the year 2000, the official pattern is:
2003 to tusen og tre
2010 to tusen og ti
2020 to tusen og tiue

However, another pattern seems to be gaining ground:
2015 tjue femten
2020 tjue tiue

Periods
The Norwegian name for the period from 1900 to 1999 is nittenhundrettallet. Similarly, syttenhundrettallet stretches from 1700 to 1799, the period from 1800 to 1899 attenhundrettallet, and so forth.

You may express these eras in a different way. It's possible to refer to the period from 1700 to 1799 as det attenåhundre or det 18. århundre (with ordinal numbers, see 7.4), but the expressions above are the dominant and recommended version in Norwegian.

For decades, we use both -tallet and -årene/-år:
1920–1929 på (nitten) tjueåttal, i (nitten) tjueårene/-år in the 1920s
1980–1989 på (nitten) åttital, i (nitten) åttiårene/-år in the 1980s

Og after 100
Past the one hundred mark, the word og (and) is used:
230 to hundre og tretti
305 tre hundre og fem
2410 to tusen fire hundre og ti

As for the numbers between one thousand and two thousand, they can be said in two different ways:
1350 ett tusen tre hundre og femti or tretten hundre og femti
1782 ett tusen sju hundre og åttito or sytten hundre og åttito

The numbers above two thousand can only be said in one way:
2300 to tusen tre hundre (so not *tjue tre hundre)
6501 seks tusen fem hundre og en

Hundre and tusen retain their forms in the plural, and do not use the suffix -er. However, both million and milliard use the regular plural form:
2 700 000 to millioner sju hundre tusen
5 800 000 000 fem milliarder åtte hundre millioner

Please note that high numbers are contained in groups of three, but according to the current norm, they do not have any full stop or comma. The use of a full stop is not entirely uncommon, but is incorrect.

Decimal numbers do take a comma:
kr 25,50 normally said as tjue femti
8,2 kg normally said as åtte komma to kilo
20,5 °C tjue og en halv grad (Celsius) or tjue komma fem grader (Celsius)

Addresses
Presumably, you will already have noticed that Norwegian always places the number after the street name in addresses:
Storgata 12
Baker Street 221B
7.3 Counting, the old-fashioned way

Older forms still exist. They are not official, but a lot of people still use them. The forms for specific numbers are limited to these:

- 7: syv
- 20: tyve
- 30: tredve
- 40: førre

However, until 1950, everyone counted the single units before the tens, like the Danes and the Germans still do:
- 25: fem og tyve (Lit. five and twenty)
- 58: åtte og femti (Lit. eight and fifty)
- 96: seks og nitti (Lit. six and ninety)

This way of counting is very common, and you will hear it a lot – it’s just not accepted as official Norwegian, so it is not supposed to be used in the media. It is also quite common to mix up the old style of counting and the new.

7.4 Ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers refer to numbers in a series. They are commonly used when we talk about dates, class and floor level, and similar things. Many of the ordinal numbers end in -ende.

Below are the most used ordinal numbers. A written ordinal number is followed by a full stop, but the next word does not have a capital letter (unless, of course, it starts a new sentence).

1. første
2. andre/annen
3. tredje
4. fjerde
5. femte
6. sjette
7. sjunde
8. åttende
9. niende
10. tiende
11. elleve
12. tolve
13. trettende
14. fjortende
15. femtende
16. sekstende
17. syttende
18. attende
19. nittende
20. tjuende
21. tjeuførste
22. tjejere
23. fjortende
24. tjeuførste
25. tjejere
26. trettende
27. niende
28. tiende
29. elleve
30. tolve
31. trettende
32. niende
33. tiende
34. elleve
35. tolve
36. trettende
37. niende
38. tiende
39. elleve
40. førre

Some comments

Annen (normally pronounced “ah-en”) can be used in many set expressions:
- annen verdenskrig: second world war
- annen klasse: second class
- annen mai: the second of May

However, andre is acceptable as an alternative in all cases, and is becoming more and more common.

The ordinal numbers are used to provide information about floor levels. Norwegian, however, disagrees with English as to how many floors there are in a building! The street-level floor that you first enter is known as første etasje – first floor. There is no “ground floor” in Norwegian, so at least you’ll have the advantage of moving more quickly through the stores! When English speakers have merely progressed to the third floor, Norwegians are already at the fourth.

When we talk about grades/classes and the floors of buildings, the indefinite form is used. But the ordinal numbers can also have a definite form with an article, like adjectives (6.4):
- den første: the first
- det sjette: the sixth

Den tredje: The Third

The noun in these sorts of contexts should normally be in the definite form, according to current language rules (see 6.4), but in some expressions or concepts, the indefinite form of the noun is also used.

Dates are written both ways, but the version without an article would be the most common version:
- 5. mai: femte mai or den femte mai: May 5th/5th May
- 13. mars: trettende mars or den trettende mars: March 13th

The month can also be given with ordinal numbers:
- 20.05: tjuende i femte or tjuende mai: May 20th
- 01.12: første i tolve or første desember: December 1st

Numbers that are less than ten can be written with or without a 0 in front. The style of adding 0 seems to be getting more and more common.
- 1.5: eller 0.05: eller første mai: May 1st

The normal way of writing dates in Norwegian is in the sequence day-month-year, not month-day-year or year-month-day as is common in many other countries.
- 03.06.2014: tredje juni to tusen og fjorten: June third, 2014
- 06.03.2014: sjette mars to tusen og fjorten: March sixth, 2014

In international correspondence, other sequences occur. Unfortunately, you may also see inconsistent usage in Norwegian.
8.1 Noe

Noe is used with uncountable nouns (i.e. nouns that refer to something that cannot really be “counted”):

Vi trenger noe mat.
Kan du kjøpe noe frukt?
Har vi noe kaffe?

We need some food.
Could you buy some fruit?
Do we have any coffee?

For negation, we use ikke noe:

Vi har ikke noe frukt.
Det er ikke noe snø igjen.

We have no fruit.
There is no snow left.

When referring to something that is not concrete or definite, we also use noe:

Vi må gjøre noe!
Jeg har lyst på noe godt.
Har det skjedd noe?
Vi har da noe å drikke?

We have to do something!
I fancy something tasty.
Has anything happened?
Do you want anything to drink?

Additionally, noe is used with countable neuter nouns. Here, noe replaces the article et. In positive statements we use an article:

Hun har et sted å bo.
Det er et vinmonopol her.

She has a place to live.
There is a wine monopoly here.

However, in questions and negative statements, we use noe:

Har du noe sted å bo?
Er det noe vinmonopol i nærheten?
Hun har ikke noe sted å bo.
Det er ikke noe vinmonopol her.

Do you have a place to live?
Is there a wine monopoly somewhere close?
She doesn’t have anywhere to live.
There is no wine monopoly here.

8.2 Noen

Noen is used in front of words in the plural:

De har fått noen venner.
Vi har noen billetter til kampen.
Har du noen småpenger?
Jeg har ikke noen bredre.

They have made some friends.
We have some tickets for the match.
Do you have any change?
I do not have any brothers.

Noen is often used on its own to refer to persons:
Jeg så noen i hagen. Jeg kjenner ikke noen her. Hvis noen vil være med ... Er det noen som vil ha alt?

Noen har spist opp grøten min.

I saw someone in the garden.
I don’t know anybody here.
If anyone wants to join us ... Does anyone want a beer?
Someone’s been eating my porridge.

In the singular, we can use noen instead of an article in the masculine and the feminine.
Positive statements have en or ei:
Det er en kiosk der.
Jeg har ei varm jakke.

For questions and negative statements, we often use noen:
Er det noen kiosk her?
Jeg har ikke noen varm jakke.

8.3 Ingen

Used on its own, ingen means nobody or no one:

Ingen liker dette.
Ingen forteller meg noe.
Jeg kjenner ingen her.
Ingen av elevene er kommet.

Ingen in front of a noun means no. It is mostly used with the plural:
Han har ingen venner.
Jeg har ingen penger.
De har ingen barn.

The singular is possible:
Han har ingen jobb.
Vi har ingen hytte.
Ingen rør uten ild.

It is quite common to use ikke noen instead of ingen:

Han har ikke noen jobb.
Vi har ikke noen hytte.
Han har ikke noen venner.

It is quite common to use ikke noen instead of ingen, because of rules of word order that separate ikke from the object. (See also page 141–142.)

Han har ikke fått noen jobb.

Han vil ikke ha noen jobb.
... selv om han ikke har noen jobb.
He doesn’t want a job.
... even if he doesn’t have a job.

Intet

In the neuter, the form intet is also available:

Intet problem er for lite for oss.
Intet menneske er en øy.

However, this form is only ever used in rather formal contexts. Normally, we would use ikke noe instead:

Jeg har ikke noe sted å bo.
Det er ikke noe badkar i leiligheten. There is no bathtub in the flat.

Ingenting

This word always stands alone:

Ingenting lykkes.
Jeg skjønner ingenting.
Stor ståheii for ingenting

Quite often, it will be replaced by ikke noe:

Jeg skjønner ikke noe.
I don’t understand anything.

Sometimes, we have to use ikke noe because of word order rules. (See above and page 141–142):

Jeg kan ikke se noe.
I can’t see anything.

8.4 All, alt, alle

All and alt are used for uncountable things. All is applied to feminine and masculine nouns, while alt is applied to neuter nouns:

De har drukket opp all melka.
All maten er borte.

All arbeidet var forgjøves.
De har drukket opp alt ølet!

The neuter form alt is also used as a general reference:

Jeg har glemt alt.
Studentene skjønte alt.
Jeg kan motstå alt unntatt fritelser.
I have forgotten everything.
The students understood everything.
I can resist anything except temptation.
**Alle**

Alle is used for words in the plural:

Alle studentene klarte seg.
Vi har gjort alle oppgavene.

Alle is often used alone:

Alle var fornøyde.
Hun kjente alle på festen,

The noun will usually be in the definite form after all, alt and alle, but in general statements the noun will be in the indefinite form:

All maten er borte.
All mat er god.
Alle studenter er kløge.

Everybody was happy.
She knew everyone at the party.

Hele

*Hele* can be used for countable things in the singular:

En hele stek, et hele manuskript

A whole roast, a whole manuscript

In the definite form, hele is used with no article:

De spiste hele steken.
Jeg blir borte hele dagen.
Det er uvær over hele Europa.
... av hele mitt hjerte.

They ate the whole roast.
I'll be gone all day.
There's a storm over all of Europe.
... with all my heart.

In other words, the sentence They ate all the cheese can be expressed in two ways in Norwegian:

De spiste alle ost.
(uncountable amount)

De spiste hele ost.
(one whole cheese)

Hver

*Hver* is used with singular masculine and feminine words, while neuter nouns use the form hvert. *Eneste* after hver / hvert creates emphasis:

Jobber du hver dag?
De kommer hit hvert år.
Hun har lest hvert eneste losen-stykke.

Do you work every day?
They come here every year.
She has read every single losen play there is.

De må jobbe hver fjerte helg.
De har hver sin bil.

They have to work every fourth weekend.
They each have their own car.

Hver sin lyst!

Both of the neighbours are moving.
He has studied both languages.

8.5 Begge

*Begge* can be placed in front of a noun. *Begge* always refers to two:

**Begge** naboene skal flytte.
Han har studert begge språkene.

*Begge* can also be used alone, without a noun:

Hvilken veske kjøpte du? Jeg kjøpte begge. Which bag did you buy? I bought both,

So far, so good. In order to make this a bit more interesting, there are another two expressions that involve the use of **begge; begge to** and **begge deler**:

Skal naboene flytte?
Ja, de skal flytte, begge to.

Hvilken veske kjøpte du?
Jeg kjøpte begge to.

Bruker du melk eller sukker i teen?
* Begge deler, takk. Do you take milk or sugar in your tea?

Snakker han fransk eller tysk?
* Begge deler.

*Begge to* refers to specific people or items.
*Begge deler* can refer to something undefined or general, and can also refer to uncountable things. It means literally “both parts”. These two expressions (begge to, begge deler) are never followed by a noun.

If someone asked you where your two children are, you could answer in several different ways, all equally correct:

**Begge** er på skolen.
**Begge to** er på skolen.
**Begge barna** er på skolen.

They are both at school.
The two of them are at school.
Both of the children are at school.

But *Begge to barna er på skolen* is incorrect.

Både - og

Unfortunately, Norwegian has another word that is corresponds with both, and it is understandably easy for English speakers to get confused.
Both **litt** and **lite** are used with uncountable amounts:

- Jeg har **lite** vin igjen.  I have little wine left.
- Jeg har **litt** vin igjen.  I have a little wine left.
- Vil du ha **litt** mer?  Do you want some more?

In other words, **lite** indicates that the resources are limited, and the guest may be disappointed, while **litt** is more positive and indicates that there might just be enough wine for the moment – at least if the guest is not too thirsty.

As for the sentences below, the first will bring joy to some, while others will prefer the second:

- Det er **litt** snø igjen.  There is some snow left (we can go skiing).
- Det er **lite** snø igjen.  There is little snow left (soon, spring will be here).

**Få** is used in front of words in the plural:

- De har **få** venner og **få** problemer.  They have few friends and few problems.

**Noen** **få** means a few:

- Vi har **fått** noen **få** svar.  We have had a few answers.

**Comparison**

**Lite**, **litt** and **få** may also be used comparatively:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>litt</td>
<td>mindre</td>
<td>minst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ligg</td>
<td>mindre</td>
<td>minst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>få</td>
<td>færre</td>
<td>færrest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Positive**  **Comparative**  **Superlative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mye</th>
<th>mer</th>
<th>mest</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>more</th>
<th>most</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mange</td>
<td>flere</td>
<td>flest</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>most</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we see, Norwegian has two different forms for the English **more** and **most**. The distribution is the same as with mye and mange:

**Mer – mest** applies to uncountable phenomena.

**Flere – flest** applies to countable ones:

- Vi trenger **mer** bensin.  We need more petrol.
- Vi trenger **flere** stoler.  We need more chairs.

- Hvilket land produserer **mest** olje?  Which country produces the most oil?
- Hvilk en har **fleist** innbyggere?  Which town has the largest number of inhabitants?
Superlative often occurs in the definite form, with an article (see 6.6):

Uncountable:

Jeg forstår det meste. I understand most of it.
Det meste av maten vår er importeret. Most of our food is imported.

Plural:

Jeg kjenner de fleste. I know most of them.
De fleste studentene er norske. Most of the students are Norwegian.

Nouns will generally appear in the indefinite form after noe, noen, mye, mange and ingen, but when it comes to a part of a larger amount, we use the definite form after av (of):

Spar noe av vinen til meg. Save some of the wine for me.
Mange av vennene hennes har flyttet. Many of her friends have moved.
Ingen av studentene strøk. None of the students failed.

More on countable and uncountable words

The difference between countable and uncountable words may not always be entirely clear-cut. Even though a word may appear in the plural and can therefore be counted, we might nevertheless perceive it as a mass, and therefore use words like mye to describe it:

Det var mange / mye mennesker ute. There were many people out.
De har brutt mange / mye penger. They have spent a lot of money.

You may have been in a situation where beer was being discussed, and heard sentences along the lines of: Vi tok en eller to (We had a beer or two) and this despite the fact that beer, being a liquid mass, is practically the definition of uncountable. However, it refers to individual units of beer, in the form of glasses/bottles. It is therefore possible to encounter people who drink mange øl (many glasses of beer) – not just mye øl (much beer).

In Norwegian, the verb can be a simple thing. Unlike in most European languages, the verb has the same form no matter who is doing the action. Nor does Norwegian have a separate progressive form. Han drikker is equivalent to both: He drinks and He is drinking.
De drikker is used for both: They drink and They are drinking.
9.1 Verb forms

| Infinitive | å kjære | to drive |
| Present tense | jeg kjære | I drive/am driving |
| Preterite | jeg kjørte | I drove/was driving |
| Present perfect | jeg har kjørt | I have driven/have been driving |
| Preterite perfect | jeg hadde kjørt | I had driven/had been driving |
| Present future | jeg skal kjøre | I will drive/am going to drive |
| Preterite future | jeg skulle kjøre | I should drive/was going to drive |
| Imperative | Kjør! | Drive! |
| Past participle | kjørt | driven |
| Present participle | kjørende | driving |

9.2 Infinitive

In the infinitive, most verbs end in -e:
å kjøpe, å reise, å søve
to buy, to travel, to sleep

A very short form is å være or ikke være; det er spørsmålet.
To be, or not to be, that is the question.

A few shorter verbs end in other vowels:
å gá, å få, å br, å bo
to go, to get, to propose, to live

After many verbs and after expressions with a preposition, we use the infinitive form, including the å (which is more or less corresponds to the English to). This also applies in cases where English uses the -ing form instead of the infinitive form:
Han nektet å si noe. He refused to say anything.
Hun har tenkt å studere. She plans to study.
Det begynte å regne. It started raining.
Jeg liker å synge. I like singing.
Hun var lei av å høre på ham. She was tired of listening to him.
De gikk uten å si noe. They left without saying anything.
Vi ser frem til å se deg igjen. We look forward to seeing you again.

Infinitive with an å can also be a subject, often using det as the formal subject:
Å slutte å røyke er ikke lett. To stop smoking is not easy.
Det er ikke lett å slutte å røyke. It is not easy to stop smoking.

9.3 Present tense

The majority of verbs will have the suffix -r in the present tense. This -r is added to the infinitive form, and the present tense has always the same form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Present tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>å snakke</td>
<td>to talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>å gå</td>
<td>to go/walk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A limited number of verbs do not follow this pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Present tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>å gjøre</td>
<td>to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>å si</td>
<td>to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>å spørre</td>
<td>to ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>å vite</td>
<td>to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>å være</td>
<td>to be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously mentioned, Norwegian does not differ between the simple present and the progressive tense (present continuous):

De snakker norsk hjemme. They speak Norwegian at home.
Vi snakker engelsk akkurat nå. Right now, we are speaking English.
Hva sier han? What is he saying?
If there is a need to emphasize the continuity of an action, Norwegian uses separate expressions to compensate for the lack of the progressive tense. Another verb is placed in front of the main verb, one that – so to speak – shows the position, or the imagined position, of those who do the action. These verbs are usually sitter, ligger, står, går (sit, lie, stand, go/walk):

| De sitter og spiser. | They are eating. | (Lit.: They sit and eat.)
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------------
| Hun ligger og hviler. | She's resting. | (Lit.: She lies and rests.)
| Hun står og venter. | She's waiting. | (Lit.: She stands and waits.)
| Han går og tenker. | He's thinking. | (Lit.: He goes and thinks.)

Another way of saying the same sort of thing is to use holde på:

| Jeg holder på å gjøre oppgaver. | I am in the process of doing exercises. |

Or one may use words like akkurat (just now, at this precise moment) and nå (now) to emphasize the ongoing aspect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vi sitter akkurat og spiser.</th>
<th>We're eating just now.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hun hviler nå.</td>
<td>She is resting now.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Present tense to express future time**

The present tense is often applied to express a future action. The verbs usually describe a change, or a motion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Når drar dere?</th>
<th>When are you leaving?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Filmen begynner klokka sjus</td>
<td>The film begins at seven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Når kommer snøen?</td>
<td>When will the snow be here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det blir snart kaldere.</td>
<td>It will soon get colder.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9.4 Preterite and Present Perfect

Verbs are divided into groups according to their form in the preterite. Regular verbs will have the suffixes -et, -te, -de or -dde. The present perfect is created using the auxiliary verb har and the past participle.

**Weak verbs**

- **-et**

Many verbs with two different consonants (or a double consonant before -e in the infinitive form) follow the same inflection pattern. Verbs with -t or -d in the stem also have this pattern. The past participle is identical to the preterite:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Present perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>danse</td>
<td>danset</td>
<td>dance danced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vente</td>
<td>ventet</td>
<td>wait waited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snakke</td>
<td>snakket</td>
<td>talk talked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hate</td>
<td>hatet</td>
<td>hate hated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In spoken Norwegian, as well as in writing that's been affected by dialectal usage, all of these verbs might use the suffix -a:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Present perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>snakke</td>
<td>snakka</td>
<td>talk talked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vente</td>
<td>venta</td>
<td>wait waited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **-te**

Many verbs with one consonant in front of -e, will take the suffix -te in the preterite, and -t in the present perfect tense. This also applies to many verbs with a double consonant in front of -e – they drop one of the consonants before the suffix -t. In the three following groups, the past participle is identical to preterite minus -e:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Present perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lese</td>
<td>lest</td>
<td>read read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kjøre</td>
<td>kjørte</td>
<td>drive drove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>begynne</td>
<td>begynnte</td>
<td>begin begun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drømme</td>
<td>drømte</td>
<td>dream dreamt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some common verbs will take the suffix -te, but have a vowel change in the stem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Present perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fortelle</td>
<td>fortalte</td>
<td>tell told</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sperre</td>
<td>sparte</td>
<td>ask asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sette</td>
<td>satte</td>
<td>place placed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **-de**

Many verbs with -g or -v or -ei in the stem will follow this pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Present perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bygge</td>
<td>bygde</td>
<td>build built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prøve</td>
<td>prøvde</td>
<td>try tried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leve</td>
<td>leved</td>
<td>live lived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greie</td>
<td>greide</td>
<td>manage managed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **-dde**

Some shorter verbs that generally end in vowels other than -e, follow this pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Present perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tro</td>
<td>trodd</td>
<td>believe believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sna</td>
<td>snadd</td>
<td>snow snowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bo</td>
<td>bodde</td>
<td>live lived</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mixed patterns

Some common verbs partly follow one pattern, partly another:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Present perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>døe</td>
<td>døde</td>
<td>die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gjøre</td>
<td>gjorde</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ha</td>
<td>hadde</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strong verbs

Many verbs have no suffix in the preterite. They may be called strong verbs. They often, but not always, experience a vowel change:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bli</th>
<th>ble</th>
<th>have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dra</td>
<td>dro</td>
<td>leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drikke</td>
<td>drakk</td>
<td>drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>få</td>
<td>fikk</td>
<td>get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gå</td>
<td>gikk</td>
<td>go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>komme</td>
<td>kommet</td>
<td>come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>løpe</td>
<td>løpt</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sі</td>
<td>sa</td>
<td>say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta</td>
<td>tok</td>
<td>take</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On page 138–140, there's a more extensive list of verbs.

Use of the preterite

The preterite is used about events and conditions in the past that have reached their conclusion. Norwegian does not differentiate between simple preterite and preterite progressive (also called past continuous):

Jeg **møtte** Ola i går.  
I met Ola yesterday.

Hvor **møtte** du ham?  
Where did you meet him?

Vi **bodde** i Frankrike i to år.  
We lived in France for two years.

**Bodde** dere lenge i utlandet?  
Did you live abroad for long?

**Klarte** du førerprøven?  
Did you pass the driving test?

Vi **drikke** kaffe da de **kom.**  
We were drinking coffee when they arrived.

De **ordnet** alt mens jeg **sov.**  
They fixed everything while I was sleeping.

Hun **kom** mens jeg **avde.**  
She arrived while I was practising.

We can also use some of the same expressions that were mentioned when we discussed the present tense (9.3).

Vi **satt** og **drakk** kaffe da de **kom.**  
We were drinking coffee when they arrived.

De **ordnet** alt mens jeg **la og sov.**  
They fixed everything while I was asleep.

**Jeg holdt** på å lage mat da hun **ringte.**  
I was cooking when she called.

The preterite is concerned with an event in the past, and a sentence with the preterite often specifies the time of the event:

De **kom** klokka to.  
They arrived at two o'clock.

Hun **brakk** armen i forrige uke.  
She broke her arm last week.

**Han bodd** der i 2012.  
He lived there in 2012.

**Han gikk** for fem minutter siden.  
He left five minutes ago.

Hvor lenge **var du der?**  
How long were you there?

Other uses of the preterite

The preterite is often used as a polite form:

**Jeg lute** på om du kunne ...  
I wondered if you could ...

**Hadde** du mulighet for å ...  
Would you be able to ...

In hypothetical expressions:

Hvis jeg **var** deg, ...  
If I were you ...

Hvis jeg **var** yngre, ...  
If I were younger ...

Bare jeg **hadde** bedre tid!  
If only I had more time!

Hvis jeg **var** en nik man  
If I Were a Rich Man

In some spontaneous expressions of emotion, Norwegian uses the preterite in a rather special way:

Så fin du **var!**  
How nice you look!

Dette **var** hyggelig!  
This is lovely!

Det **smakte** nydelig!  
This tastes great!

Det **var** en god idé!  
That's a good idea!

Use of the present perfect

**Jeg har mistet** nøkkelen!  
I have lost the key!

The present perfect is partly connected to the past, partly to the present. We can use it to refer to something that happened at an unspecified time in the past, while we are preoccupied with the current consequences:

**Jeg har sluttet** i jobben.  
I have quit my job.

Ola **har brukket** armen.  
Ola has broken his arm.

**Jeg har mistet** nøklene.  
I have lost my keys.

The present perfect can also describe a condition that began in the past and which may be over or may still be ongoing:

**Hun har vært** syk i ei uke.  
She has been ill for a week.

**Jeg har ventet** i en time.  
I have been waiting for an hour.

**Jeg har bodd** her siden 2012.  
I have lived here since 2012.
9.5 Auxiliary verbs

Ha — have
We use ha to create present perfect and preterite perfect (9.7). The main verb, in the past participle form, follows ha:

Vi har kjøpt bil.
De hadde bodd i USA før de kom hit.

We have bought a car.
They had lived in the US before they came here.

Være — be
In the present perfect and preterite perfect it is possible to use være instead of ha for verbs that refer to change and movement/motion:

Du er vel ikke blitt syk?
De var gått da jeg kom.

You haven’t fallen ill.
They had left when I arrived.

Since it is always correct to use ha in these contexts, you do not need to expend too much effort worrying about this form. However, it’s useful to know it’s not incorrect when you hear others using it.

Være can also be used as an auxiliary verb in the passive (9.9):

Hun er skutt.
Han er arrestert.

She has been shot.
He has been arrested.

Bli — be
Bli is used as an auxiliary verb in the passive form (9.9):

Huset blir malt.
De blir invitert.

The house is getting painted.
They were invited.

When combined with the present participle, bli can mean to continue to. The verbs refer to a condition, a state:

Bare bli sittende!
Hun ble liggende med feber i ei uke.

Just remain seated!
She was down with fever a whole week.

Få — may, should.
Få is a verb with a wide variety of uses in Norwegian. As an auxiliary verb, få is sometimes followed by the infinitive form:

Vi får selv.
Jeg får gøre det.
Jeg fikk høre noe interessant.

We shall see.
I had better do it.
I was told something interesting.

The meaning of the word may be to be allowed:

Får jeg låne boka din?
Dere får gøre som dere vil.
Jeg fikk malt huset.

May I borrow your book?
You should have your eyes checked.
I got the house painted (did it myself, or got it done by a painter).

Få can also be followed by the past participle, and may mean succeed at something, or to complete something:

Vi fikk ikke solgt huset.
Du bør få sjekket synet.
Jeg fikk malt huset.

We couldn’t sell the house.
You should have your eyes checked.
I got the house painted (did it myself, or got it done by a painter).

Modal verbs
The modal verbs are primarily used in the present and the preterite.

Infinitive | Present tense | Preterite
---|---|---
kanne | kan | kunne
skulle | skal | skulle
ville | vil | ville
måtte | mā | måtte
burde | bør | burde

The meaning of these verbs can vary depending on context, but they generally express attitudes like desires, ability, possibility or necessity. The main verb is in the infinitive:

Jeg kan hjelpe deg.
Hun kan tegne.
Dere kan ta fri.
Jeg skal bytte jobb.
Skal vi ta en tur?
Jeg må bytte jobb.
Jeg bør bytte jobb.
Jeg vil bytte jobb.
Alt vil gi dem seg.

I can help you. (offer, possibility)
She can draw. (skill)
You can take the day off. (permission)
I am changing jobs. (plan)
Should we go for a walk? (suggestion)
I have to change jobs. (necessity)
I should change jobs (would be good)
I want to change jobs. (desire)
Everything will be fine. (assumption)

These verbs can in some cases be used without being followed by an infinitive. This applies to skal and må in the case of places, and kan in the case of languages or other areas of knowledge.
9.6 The Future

Future time is expressed using a variety of methods in Norwegian. The form that involves using skal or vil + infinitive, can be referred to as present future:

Skal + infinitive

Skal + infinitive can be used whenever a sentence expresses a plan or an intention – a situation where someone can make a specific decision:

Når skal dere dra?
Naboen skal flytte til sommeren.
Hun skal ta eksamen i morgen.
Han skal maike meg i morgen.
Jeg skal hjelpe deg.

When are you leaving?
The neighbour is moving this summer.
She's sitting her exam tomorrow.
He's going to send me an e-mail tomorrow.
I'll help you.

We're going to Ireland for our holidays.
What do you really want?
I have to get home!
Do you speak Spanish?
He knows a lot about Norwegian history.

The preterite form is used to express past time:

De kunne ikke komme i går.
Jeg måtte bytte jobb i fjor.
Hun ikke snakke med meg.

They couldn't come yesterday,
I had to change job last year.
She wouldn't talk to me.

Ville is common in hypothetical expressions:

Hva ville du gjøre hvis du ble rik?
Hvis jeg var deg, ville jeg ta den jobben.

What would you do, if you got rich?
If I were you, I'd take that job.

The preterite is used as a more careful or polite form:

Det kunne være lurt.
Kunne du hjelpe meg litt?
Du burde/skulle ta tran.

That might be a good idea.
Could you help me a little?
You ought to take cod liver oil.

Burde and skulle are used interchangably for such rather annoying advice.

Sometimes, Norwegian may also use the modal verbs in forms other than the present and preterite. It is also possible to use more than one verb in the same sentence:

Vi har måttet selge huset.
Det burde kunne gå bra til eksamen.
Du skulle kunne få den jobben.

We have had to sell the house.
The exam ought possibly to go well.
You should be able to get that job.

9.7 Preterite Perfect and Preterite Future

These tenses are formed very like the present perfect and present future tenses, but with the auxiliary verb in the preterite. The preterite perfect (or past perfect) says something about an event that happened before another event in the past. The preterite future ("future-in-the-past"), on the other hand, says something about an event that was supposed to happen after another event in the past:

Alle hadde sovnet da jeg kom.
Butikken skulle stenge da jeg kom.

Everyone had fallen asleep when I arrived.
The shop was about to close when I arrived.

These forms are often used in indirect speech following a verb in the preterite:

Direkte tale: Har dere fått svar?
Jeg spurte om de hadde fått svar.
Direkte tale: Vi skal flytte.
De sa at de skulle flytte.

Direct speech: Have you had an answer?
I asked if they had had an answer.
Direct speech: We are going to move.
They said that they were going to move.

These forms are also used a lot to express wishes, hypotheses, etc.:

Jeg skulle så gjøme hjelpe deg.
Hva ville du gjøre hvis du ikke klarte eksamen?
Hadda jeg bare visst dette!

I would really like to help you.
What would you do if you didn't pass your exam?
If only I had known this!
9.8 Some special verbs

Here is a selection of verbs that you may have noticed or been confused by, or maybe you have used them only to be corrected by a Norwegian!

Kunne, kjenne, vite - know

These verbs all express different aspects of the English to know:

Kjenner du mange her?  Do you know many (people) here?
Jeg vet ikke noe om fysikk.  I do not know anything about physics.
Han kan litt spansk.  He knows some Spanish. (about skills)

Bli - become, be, stay, get

As the main verb, bli can describe an ongoing condition:

Hvor lenge kan du bli her?  How long can you stay here?
De ble sittende og prate hele natta.  They kept talking through the night.

Usually, bli refers to a change, an alteration:

Jeg ble syk i ferien.  I fell ill during my holidays.
De ble siste.  They got angry.
Det blir varmere.  It's getting hotter.
Hun har blitt lege.  She's become a doctor.
Hun blir stadig eldre.  She's growing older all the time.

The verb være is used when a condition is permanent.

Han ble syk i mai og var syk hele sommeren.  She fell ill in May, and was ill all summer.

Bli often functions as the future of være:

Det er kaldt i dag.  It is cold today.
Det blir varmere i morgen.  It will be warmer tomorrow.

Bli can also be used as a passive auxiliary:

Hun blir hjulpet i dag.  She will be helped today.
Hun ble oppsagt.  She was fired.

Få - get, have, receive

The verb få can have several meanings. The most frequent is receive, obtain, begin to have:

Han fikk mange gaver.  He got many presents.
De fikk gode resultat.  They achieved good results.
De fikk barn i fjor.  They had a child last year.
Jeg får ferie fra fredag.  I get a holiday from Friday onwards.

When something is permanent, the word ha is generally used instead.

Hun fikk nye venner på skolen.  She got new friends at school.
Nå har hun mange venner.  Now she has many friends.

The verb få will often be used about the future where ha is used about the present:

Jeg har ingen penger nå.  I have no money now.
Men jeg får noen i morgen.  But I'll have some tomorrow.

Legge, sette, ligge, stå - put, place, lay, lie, stand

When we put something in a place, we use the verb legge when the item is placed flat against the surface, while sette is used whenever it is more upright:

Kan du legge klærne i skuffen?  Could you put the clothes in the drawer?
Kan du legge duk på bordet?  Could you lay the tablecloth on the table?
Kan du sette gryta på komfyren?  Could you set the pot on the range?
Jeg setter maten på bordet.  I will put the food on the table.

When it comes to plates and trays, sette is the correct verb, despite the fact that plates are flat. However, a plate can only be set down in one correct way; it cannot be laid down with different sides pointing up or down.

When we have put things in their places using the verb sette, they står:

Han setter bilen i garasjen.  He puts the car in the garage.
Bilen står i garasjen.  The car is in the garage.
Jeg settet glassene på bordet.  I set the glasses on the table.
Glassene står på bordet.  The glasses are standing on the table.

Sitte (sit) is only used about living things:

Han settet barnet i vogna.  He puts the child in the buggy.
Barnet sitter i vogna.  The child is sitting in the buggy.

When we have laid something down using the verb legge, it ligger:

Han legger kotelettene i stekepanna.  He puts the pork chops in the frying pan.
Kotelettene ligger i stekepanna.  The pork chops are lying in the frying pan.
Vi legger barnet i senga.  We lay/put the child in bed.
Barnet ligger i senga.  The child lies in bed.
Despite the fact that they are generally upright, Norwegian buildings *ligger*:

Huset *ligger* utenfor byen. *The house is outside the town.*

Den nye operan *ligger* i sjøkanten. *The new opera is by the seaside.*

This also applies to other places:

Bergen *ligger* på Vestlandet. *Bergen is in western Norway.*

Firenze *ligger* i Toscana. *Florence is in Tuscany.*

Hvor *ligger* Marokko? *Where is Morocco?*

Those of a grammatical persuasion may have noticed that:

**Sitte**, **ligge** and **stå** are intransitive verbs and do not take an object.

**Sette** and **legge** are transitive verbs and will have an object.

**Synes and tro - think**

At a football match, the following exchange might occur:

Jeg *synes* det er flinke. *I think they’re good.*

Jeg *tro* det er vinner. *I think they’ll win.*

As the examples indicate, both verbs can be translated into *think*; however, their meaning is slightly different. Most foreigners have a tendency to *synes* too much when they speak Norwegian.

*Synes* is used only to express a subjective opinion; you can use *synes* if you think that something is pretty, ugly, warm, cold, excellent or dire. The verb is used to express your personal likes and dislikes, and someone else might *synes* something entirely different. It is not possible to say that one person is right and the other wrong. *Synes* could also be translated as *to be of the opinion that*.

Jeg *synes* vinteren er flott. *I think the winter is wonderful.*

Jeg *synes* ikke menn skal bruke sminke. *I don’t think that men should wear makeup.*

The verb *tro* can also be used to express an opinion, but this verb is used in contexts where someone does not or cannot know all the facts about something. We can *tro* that Oslo has a population of more than a million, that the first snow of the year will fall tomorrow, or that the Norwegian football team will win its next match! Someone else may *tro* the opposite. In the case of Oslo’s population there is a correct answer – you can look it up on Wikipedia; in the case of tomorrow’s weather and the next football match you have to wait and see what happens. The point is that there is an answer. *Tro* could often be translated as *believe.*

This can be contrasted with the verb *synes*, which is used when you have actually experienced something.

Jeg *synes* det er pent her. *I think it’s pretty here (I have seen it myself).*

Jeg *tro* det er pent der. *I think it’s pretty there (somewhere I haven’t been).*

### 9.9 Passive

**Active**: Enstein traff Ola. *A rock hit Ola.*

**Passive**: Ola ble truffet av en stein. *Ola was hit by a rock.*

The verb in a sentence can occur in either the active or the passive form. When we are preoccupied by “the doer”, active would be the natural form to choose. When we are preoccupied by whoever or whatever gets the action done to them, or by a general situation, the passive form is used.

The active sentence answers the question: What did the rock do?  
The passive sentence answers the question: What happened to Ola?

A passive structure can be created by the use of the auxiliary verb *bli* + the past participle of the main verb:

Posten *blir* levert klokka tolv. *The mail is delivered at twelve o’clock.*

Huset *ble* solgt i går. *The house was sold yesterday.*

While the auxiliary verb *bli* changes tense, the main verb in the past participle does not change.

**Passive using bli**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Filmen <em>blir</em> vist på Saga.</th>
<th>The film is shown at Saga.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>Filmen <em>ble</em> vist på Saga.</td>
<td>The film was shown at Saga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Perfect</td>
<td>Filmen <em>har blitt</em> vist på Saga.</td>
<td>The film has been shown at Saga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite Perfect</td>
<td>Filmen <em>hadde blitt</em> vist på Saga.</td>
<td>The film had been shown at Saga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Future</td>
<td>Filmen <em>vil bli</em> vist på Saga.</td>
<td>The film will be shown at Saga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite Future</td>
<td>Filmen <em>ville bli</em> vist på Saga.</td>
<td>The film would be shown at Saga.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Være + past participle**

A common passive structure is the combination of the auxiliary verbs er/var + past participle. In most cases, it is natural to consider this as present perfect tense:

**Active:**
- De har solgt huset. They have sold the house.
- Hun hadde sendt brevet. She had sent the letter.

**Passive:**
- Huset er (blitt) solgt. The house has been sold.
- Brevet var (blitt) sendt. The letter had been sent.

Please note that in this case, var does not correspond to was:

**Preterite:**
- Han ble truffet. He was hit.

**Preterite Perfect:**
- Han var truffet. He had been hit.

Also note the present form er in:

- Hvor er du født? Where were you born?
- Sønnen min er født i 2009. My son was born in 2009.

If the subject is no longer alive, or you want to focus on the event of the birth itself, we use the preterite:

- Ibsen ble født i 1828. Ibsen was born in 1828.
- Jeg ble født i Bodø, men flyttet til Tromsø da jeg var to år. I was born in Bodø, but moved to Tromsø when I was two years old.

**Whodunnit?**

If, having chosen to use a passive structure, it is considered necessary or interesting to inform the listener or reader who or what the agent of the action was, this is most commonly expressed by using the preposition av (by):

- Han ble truffet av en stein. He was hit by a rock.
- Alt blir forklart av læren. Everything will be explained by the teacher.
- Hun ble arrestert av politiet. She was arrested by the police.
- Ola ble undersøkt av legen. Ola was examined by the doctor.
- Et dukkehjem er skrevet av Henrik Ibsen. A Doll's House was written by Henrik Ibsen.

---

**-s passive**

There is also another passive form. It is created by adding an -s to the active infinitive. We use -s passive primarily in the infinitive and in the present tense, and the two forms are identical. The modal verbs skal, kan, må and bør often precede -s passive:

- Noe må gjøres. Something must be done.
- Huset skal males. The house is to be painted.
- Denne kan nok ikke repareres. This probably can't be repaired.
- Vannet bør kokes. The water should be boiled.
- Troll kan temmes. The Taming of the Shrew

When using the modal verb ville, we mostly use bli-passive in the future tense (see page 87).

In the present tense, -s passive is used in many different types of rules and in giving information:

- Derene låses klokke ni. The doors will be closing at nine.
- Billett kjøpes på forhånd. A ticket must be purchased ahead of time.
- Fiskens stekes i ti minutter. The fish is to fry for ten minutes.

It is also quite common to use the content-less subject (formal subject) det (14.6) in passive sentences:

- Det snackes engelsk på hotellet. English is spoken at the hotel.
- Det gjøres for lite. Too little is done.
- Det eksporteres mye fisk. A lot of fish is exported.

---

**9.10 -s verbs**

Some verbs end in -s without having a passive meaning.

- synes
- trives
- finnes
- lykkes
- skiller
- høres
- kjenner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>synes</td>
<td>Jeg synes det er gøy.</td>
<td>I think it's fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trives</td>
<td>Vi trives her.</td>
<td>We are happy here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finnes</td>
<td>Finnes det isbjørn i Norge?</td>
<td>Are there polar bears in Norway?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lykkes</td>
<td>Jeg håper vi lykkes.</td>
<td>I hope we will succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skiller</td>
<td>Skal de skiller?</td>
<td>They are getting divorced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>høres</td>
<td>Dette høres interessant ut.</td>
<td>This sounds interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kjenner</td>
<td>Hvordan kjenner det?</td>
<td>How does it feel?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some -s verbs require the subject to be in the plural and is equivalent to expressions using hverandre (each other).

- Vi møtes ofte. Vi møter hverandre ofte. We meet often.
9.11 Reflexive verbs

Norwegian has a great number of verbs that use a reflexive pronoun (3.3).

- barber seg: Jeg barber meg hver morgen. I shave every morning.
- bevege seg: Bilen beveger seg ikke. The car does not move.
- forberede seg: De forbereder seg godt til timen. They prepare well for the lesson.
- forlove seg: De har forlover seg. They have got engaged.
- forte seg: Nå må dere forte dere. You need to hurry now.
- føle seg: Hvordan føler du deg? How do you feel?
- gitse seg: Når skai du gitse deg? When are you getting married?
- glede seg: De gleder seg til jul. They look forward to Christmas.
- grue seg: Hun gruer seg til ny jobb. He dreads his new job.
- klippe seg: Jeg klipper meg. I need to get a haircut.
- komme seg: Nå har han kommet seg. He has recovered now.
- konsentre seg: Dere må konsentriere dere. You need to concentrate.
- legge seg: Jeg leger meg før middag. I go to bed before midnight.
- like seg: De liker seg visst der. They seem happy there.
- ordne seg: Jeg håper det ordner seg. I hope it will be all right.
- sette seg: Skal vi sette oss her? Should we sit here?
- skynde seg: Nå må vi skynde oss. We need to hurry now.
- sminke seg: Han sminker seg. He is putting his make-up on.
- snu seg: Hun snudde seg bort. She turned away.

Vi ses!

These verbs are used primarily in the infinitive and present tense, which are identical in form. Some of the verbs can be used in the preterite, and some can also be used in the present perfect. (See page 140.)

A skiller er å da litt. To part is to die a little.

(Edward Horacourt)

9.12 Participles

Past participle

As we have seen, the past participle is used to form an active verb in the present perfect and preterite perfect tenses:

- Vi har malt huset. We have painted the house.
- Vi hadde malt huset. We had painted the house.

The past participle is also used as a verb in the bli-passive (See 9.9 above):

- Veggene ble malt. The walls were painted.
- Veggene vil bli malt. The walls will be painted.

The past participle often functions as a descriptive adjective:

- Kjøttet var sterkt krydret. The meat was heavily spiced.
- Grønsakene var sterkt krydret. The vegetables were heavily spiced.

Jenta var sminket. The girl was made up.
Alle var pyntet. Everyone was beautifully dressed.

For such usage, the participle remains unchanged. When the participle is used as an adjective before a noun, however, it gets the suffix -e in the plural and in the definite form:

De serverte kotte poteter til de stekte pølseene. They served boiled potatoes with the fried hot dogs.

(For more, see 136.)
Present participle
The present participle ends in -ende and is generally used as an adjective. It remains unchanged.

Jeg leser ei gripende bok.
Bildet viste et gråtende barn.
Resultatene var imponerende.

I am reading a gripping book.
The picture showed a crying child.
The results were impressive.

The present participle after bli can be used to describe an ongoing situation:

Hun ble sittende og lese grammatikk hele natta.
Han ble gående og tenke på saken.

She stayed up reading grammar all night.
He kept pondering the case.

The present participle after komme can describe an action:

Hun kom løpende mot meg.
Bilen kom kjørende uten lys.

She came running towards me.
The car was driving with no lights on.

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10.1 Ut or ute?
10.2 What do nok and visst mean?
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10.6 Adjective or adverb?
10.7 Comparison of adverbs

CHAPTER 10
ADVERBS

De vil ikke ut.
De vil være inne.
Katten vil inn.
Den vil ikke være ute.

They don't want to go out.
They want to stay in.
The cat wants to come in.
It does not want to stay outside.

The function of an adverb is, among other things, to provide extra information pertaining to where, when and how an action happens.
**10.1 Ut or ute?**

Many foreigners find it particularly difficult to get a handle on some small adverbs that denote place and directions. Norwegian has many such adverbs, and they tend to appear in two versions. The first is for whenever you explain that something is happening in a specific location, and the second is for explaining that something is moving in the direction of somewhere.

The most important of these adverbs are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement in a direction</th>
<th>At the speaker's location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ut</td>
<td>ute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inn</td>
<td>inne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opp</td>
<td>oppe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ned</td>
<td>nede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hjem</td>
<td>hjemme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dit</td>
<td>der</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hit</td>
<td>her</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from the last two sets, the form to use while you're relaxing somewhere ends in an -e, while the brief version without the final -e is for hurrying off!

In other words:
- Jeg må gå **ut**.
- Jeg liker å være **ute**.
- Jeg kommer **hjem** klokka fem.
- Jeg skal være **hjemme** i kveld.

**Opp and ut** occur in many set expressions:
- Jeg gir **opp**.
- Vi pusser **opp** leiligheten.
- *Han har vært opp* litt i dag.

- Når skal han **legge opp**?
- Se **opp** for sneras.
- Vi slipper **opp** for øl.
- *Han stiller opp* for unge.
- Nå må du holde **opp**!
- *Han var opp* til eksamen i går.
- *Han ser ut* som en idrettsmann.
- Jeg kan **legge ut** for deg.
- Har du **lest ut** boka?
- Hvordan **holder** du **ut**?
- Vi må **fylle ut** et skjema.

- I must go **outside**.
- I like being outside.
- I'll be home at five.
- I'll be at home tonight.

**10.2 What do nok and visst mean?**

Norwegian can modify expressions by using a wide selection of short adverbs with little or no stress, that can express doubt, politeness, irritation, etc. The success or otherwise with which you use these adverbs is one of the things that will indicate your degree of fluency in Norwegian.

The lady's marital status in the examples below doesn't actually change; the adverbs merely indicate what the speaker believes that status to be:

- Hun er **sikkert** gift.
- Hun er **nok** gift.
- Hun er **vel** gift.
- Hun er **visst** gift.
- Hun er **kansje** gift.
- Hun er **neppe** gift.

- I'm sure she's married.
- She's probably married.
- I'd guess she's married.
- I've heard she's married.
- Maybe she is married.
- I doubt she's married.

These unaccented adverbs have a fairly regular position in the sentence; they follow immediately after the verb.

The same adverb can sometimes indicate slightly different nuances of meaning, depending on tone of voice and the context.

**Nok**

**Nok** normally indicates that the speaker has an opinion or conviction that something is true, but isn't completely certain:

- Det slutter **nok** snart å regne.
- De kommer **nok** i morgen.

It will probably stop raining soon.
I think they'll be here tomorrow.

A statement or a demand can be made to sound less harsh by the inclusion of **nok**:

- Du har **nok** misforstått.
- Dere må **nok** vente litt til.

You have probably misunderstood.
I'm afraid you'll have to wait.

**Vel**

**Vel** can express the same kind of uncertainty as **nok**. **Vel** often implies a slightly greater degree of uncertainty, and/or a greater degree of hope:

- Det slutter **vel** snart å regne.
- De kommer **vel** i morgen.

Presumably [hopefully], it will stop raining soon.
They might turn up tomorrow.

**Vel** is also common in suggestions. Its inclusion in a question will demonstrate which answer the speaker is hoping to get:

- Du kommer **vel** i morgen?

You will be here tomorrow, right [hoping for a positive answer]?
Han kommer vel ikke i morgen? He won't be here tomorrow, will he [hoping for a negative answer]? 

**Sikkert**
The adverb *sikkert* can also express a degree of uncertainty, despite the fact that the corresponding adjective means sure or certain! The following sentence doesn't contain any more certainty than the sentences using *nok* above:

Det slutter **sikkert** snart å regne. It will surely stop raining soon.

Very often, sentences that include *sikkert* express the speaker's desire that something should be true:

Du klarer det **sikkert**! I'm sure you'll manage!
Hun ringer **sikkert** i morgen! I'm sure she'll call tomorrow!

**Visst**
*Visst* is yet another word that suggests that the speaker has some reservations. But by using *visst* rather than, for example, *nok*, the speaker indicates that their information comes from someone else, and that they are merely repeating what they've heard.

Han kommer **visst** i morgen. He'll be here tomorrow, apparently
[Someone said so].
Det skal **visst** bli pent vær. The weather is supposed to be nice tomorrow
[According to the weather report].

All these words can be used negatively, by adding *ikke* after the adverb:

Han kommer **nok ikke** i morgen. He probably won't be here tomorrow.
Jeg klarer det **sikkert ikke**. I'm sure I won't manage it.

**Neppe**
There is also a separate word that means *probably not*; *neppe*:

Han kommer **neppe** i morgen. He probably won't be here tomorrow.
Jeg klarer det **neppe**. I doubt I'll make it.

**Jo**
*Jo*, as a modifying adverb, often means something along the lines of as you ought to know/remember, and refers to something that either is, or is assumed to be, a shared knowledge between speaker and listener:

Det blir ikke noe møte. There won't be a meeting.
Petter har **jo** meldt forfall. Petter said he won't be able to make it, after all.
De kan ikke komme. They can't come.
De skal **jo** reise til utlandet. They're going abroad, remember?

Often, usage of this word can imply irritation with the listener for not remembering or being considerate of the shared knowledge:

Dette har jeg **jo** sagt tusen ganger! But I've told you this a thousand times!
Det er **jo** din tur til å ta gulvasken! But it's your turn to wash the floors!

A sentence containing *jo* can also imply an invitation to agree with the speaker:

Vi kan **jo** utsette møtet! Well, we could always postpone the meeting!
Vi kan **jo** ordne dette over telefonen. We can always sort this out over the phone.

Yet another meaning of the word is to express surprise that something wasn't quite the way you expected it to be:

Dette var **jo** lett! Oh, but this was easy!

10.3 **Faktisk, egentlig and nemlig**

*Faktisk, egentlig* and *nemlig* are three adverbs that might be a bit difficult to use correctly.

**Faktisk** implies that the listener is assumed to be unaware of the information they are being told, and that this information might be a bit surprising:

Jeg har **faktisk** eksamen i Økonomi. I have a degree in economics, actually.
Jeg kommer **faktisk** fra Australia. I'm actually from Australia.

**Egentlig** means originally, initially:

Jeg har **egentlig** eksamen i økonomi. Well, my main degree is in fact in economics.
**Egentlig** kommer jeg fra Australia. I come from Australia originally.

**Nemlig** emphasises that the sentence is an explanation of something that has happened earlier:

Jeg skal såke på den jobben – jeg har **nemlig** eksamen i økonomi. I am going to apply for that job, seeing as I have a degree in economics.

Det er dyrt for meg å reise hjem. Jeg kommer **nemlig** fra Australia. It's expensive for me to go home, since I come from Australia.

10.4 **Gjerne – eller – helst**

By adding *gjerne* to a sentence, the implication is usually that the speaker sees something as desirable:

Jeg vil **gjerne** lære å gå på ski. I would like to learn how to ski.
Vil du bli med på kino?
Ja, gjerne.

It can also imply a friendly offer:
Du kan gjerne låne mine ski.
Jeg kan gjerne hjelpe deg.

Would you like to go and see a film?
Yes, with pleasure.

You’re welcome to borrow my skis,
I’d be happy to help you.

Heller and helst are comparative and superlative forms of gjørne:
Jeg vil heller svømme enn gå på ski.
Vil du bli med på kino?
Nei, jeg vil heller være hjemme enn gå på kino.
Nei, jeg vil helst være hjemme.

I would rather go swimming than go skiing.
Would you like to go and see a film?
No, I’d rather stay at home than go to see a film.
No, I’d prefer to be at home.

Gjørne can also be used to indicate what, as a rule, happens. The following sentence doesn’t provide any information about the “desires” of snow, but expresses more or less the same as often or usually would express:

Snøen kommer gjørne i november her.

Here, the snow usually comes in November.

10.6 Adjective or adverb?

Some adverbs describe the nature of an action, and they can look like adjectives. If you think it is a bit difficult to differentiate between them in some contexts, you’re not alone! Simply put, the adjectives tell us something about people and things, whereas adverbs tell us something about the action. Adverbs modify the verb – they are called ad-verbs for a reason. In Norwegian, adverbs can have the same form as a neuter adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Du er fin.</td>
<td>You look nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du synger fin.</td>
<td>You sing nicely/well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dere er fine.</td>
<td>You look nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dere skriver fin.</td>
<td>You write nicely/well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alt er fin.</td>
<td>Everything is fine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alt gikk fin.</td>
<td>Everything went well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.7 Comparison of adverbs

Some adverbs can show different degrees of comparison, just like adjectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fin</th>
<th>finere</th>
<th>finest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>godt</td>
<td>bedre</td>
<td>best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>langt</td>
<td>lengre</td>
<td>lengst (distance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lenge</td>
<td>lengre</td>
<td>lengst (time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Du synger fin, men hun synger finere.
Hun arbeider godt, men du arbeider bedre.
Jeg har gått langt, nesten 1 kilometer lengre enn i går.
Jeg har ventet lenge, lengre enn jeg pleier.

You sing well, but she sings better.
She works well, but you work better.
I have walked far, almost 1 kilometer further than yesterday.
I have waited for a long time, longer than I usually do.

Også (also/too) can only be used in positive sentences in Norwegian.
Også (also/too) can only be used in positive sentences in Norwegian.
Jeg skal lage fiskekaker til middag.
Ola skal også lage fiskekaker.
Også (also/too) can only be used in positive sentences in Norwegian.
Jeg skal lage fiskekaker til middag.
Ola skal også lage fiskekaker.
Også (also/too) can only be used in positive sentences in Norwegian.
Jeg skal lage fiskekaker til middag.
Ola skal også lage fiskekaker.

When the sentence is negative, we have to use heller rather than også:
Jeg skal ikke lage fiskekaker til middag.
Ola skal heller ikke lage fiskekaker.
Heller ikke (also not) is used to indicate that something is not happening.
Også (also/too) can only be used in positive sentences in Norwegian.
Jeg skal lage fiskekaker til middag.
Ola skal også lage fiskekaker.

The position of også and heller is more flexible than the adverbs discussed in 10.2–10.4. In spoken, relatively informal language, it is quite common to place også and heller at the end of the sentence:
Jeg har vært i Bergen, og jeg har vært i Trondheim også.
Jeg har ikke vært i Bergen, og jeg har ikke vært i Trondheim heller.
I have been to Bergen, and I have been to Trondheim also.
I haven’t been to Bergen, and I haven’t been to Trondheim, either.
CHAPTER 11

PREPOSITIONS

For those who speak English, many of the prepositions are recognisable, but the development of their usage has been different. It is not always possible to provide a direct translation of a preposition — i.e. it would be inaccurate to say that av means of, since it is sometimes used in the way English uses from and by as well.

As if that wasn’t confusing enough, there are some cases where Norwegian uses prepositions and English doesn’t, and vice versa.

Here is an overview of the most common Norwegian prepositions and their regular usage.

11.1 Av

Av can tell us what something consists of, or is made of:

Lasagnen er laget av grensaker.
The lasagna is made of vegetables,
Middagen er laget av rester.
The dinner is made of leftovers.

It can also express a reason, a source, and an origin:

Han lider av hodepine.
He is suffering from a headache.
Hvem kjøpte du den av?
Who did you buy it from?
De skal av kulde.
They shivered with cold.
Jeg ble grått av misunnelse.
I was green with envy.
Han var redd for å dø av kret.
He was afraid of dying of cancer.
Hun lænte av spille av sin mor.
She learnt to play from her mother.
De ville se et stykke av Shakespeare.
They wanted to see a play by Shakespeare.

Belonging or connection:

Tom er en venn av meg.
Tom is a friend of mine.
Er han en kollega av deg?
Is he a co-worker of yours?
Eieren av huset vil selge.
The owner of the house wants to sell it.
Det er snilt av deg.
That is kind of you.

Av can be used to express that something is a part of something else:

Slutten av filmen var elendig.
The ending of the film was really bad.
Bilen står på baksida av huset.
The car is behind the house.
Mange av studentene skal ta eksamen.
Many of the students are going to sit their exams.
En del av oss skal dra på skitur.
Some of us are going skiing.
To av ti mener at ...
Two out of ten are of the opinion that ...

When you ask a foreigner what they find difficult about Norwegian grammar, the answer is quite likely to be "prepositions". This even applies to people whose language is quite closely related to Norwegian.
If the verb is in the passive, a preposition phrase containing av indicates who performs the action:

Løpet ble vunnet av Kari.
Han drømte om å bli kysset av prinsessen.
Tatt av vinden

The race was won by Kari.
He dreamt of being kissed by the princess.
Gone with the Wind

(Margaret Mitchell)

11.2 Etter

after, according to, for

Etter can be used to mean later than, or behind:

Vi ses etter middag.
Han var trøtt etter reisen.
De gikk etter hverandre.
Etter å ha ventet i en time gikk han.
It can also be used to mean on the basis of:

Klassene ble delt inn etter alder.
Etter meningssmålingene å domme ...
Etter min mening ...

Intention can also be expressed using this preposition:

Vi må ringe etter hjelp.

We’ll meet after dinner.
He was tired after his journey.
They walked one behind the other.
After waiting for an hour, he left.
The classes were divided according to age.
Going by the results of the opinion poll ...
In my opinion ...

We have to call for help.

11.3 For

for, to, by, in order to

This preposition can be used to mean regarding, when it comes to, with reference to:

Det virker lett for meg.
Er det vanskelig for deg?
Dette var interessant for meg!
Trening er godt for helsa.
Han gjør det for din skyld.
For min del ...
Det er i orden for meg.

It seems easy to me.
Is it difficult for you?
This was interesting to me!
Exercising is good for you.
He is doing it for your sake.
As far as I am concerned ...
It’s okay by me.

For can also be used to express reciprocity:

De fikk 100 kroner for jobben.

They were given 100 kroner for the job.

De fikk lenn for strevet.
Øye for øye, tann for tann.

They were rewarded for their efforts.
An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

For can express being in favour of something, often pronounced with some degree of emphasis:

Stemte du for eller mot EU?
Jeg er for de reglene.
It can occur in positive and negative outbursts:

For et deilig sted!
For noe sludder!
For en bart!
For combines with a and the infinitive of a verb to express an intention:

De gikk til byen for å handle.
 Hun begynte på kurs for å lære mer.
 Jeg ringte barn for å si at jeg elsker deg.

They went into town to go shopping.
She went to a course to learn more.
I just called to say I love you.

(Stevie Wonder)

For - siden ago

This preposition has the meaning of ago. The time phrase is placed between for and siden.

De fikk barn for to år siden.
Bussen gikk for fem minutter siden.
Hun kom hit for noen uker siden.

They had a child two years ago.
The bus left five minutes ago.
She got here some weeks ago.

11.4 Fra

from, of

Fra can be used in connection with places, origins and distance:

Hvor kommer du fra?
De er fra Irland.
Hun har flyttet fra USA til Norge.
Hytta ligger 10 meter fra sjøen.
Hun var fra seg av fortvilelse.
Trollmannen fra Oz

Where do you come from?
They are from Ireland.
She has moved from the US to Norway.
The cabin is 10 metres from the sea.
She was frantic with despair.
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

(L.F. Baum)
It can also be used to describe time and starting points:

De bodde her fra 2010 til 2012.
Vi har stengt fra og med mandag.
Reglene gjelder fra og med 1. mai.
Fra tid til annen

They lived here from 2010 to 2012.
We are closed from Monday on.
The rules come into force on May 1st.
From time to time

11.5 Hos

Hos means at the house of, at.

Hun bor hos onkelen sin.
Vi vil spise middag hos oss?
Han er hos legen i dag.

She lives with her uncle.
Do you want to eat dinner at our place?
He is at the doctor's today.

11.6 I

I is often used to describe where something is localised, where you do something, etc.: 

De bor i London.
Vi ferierte i Nord-Norge.
Har du vært i Irland?
Jeg har ikke vært i Australia.
De bor i kjelleren.
Vi bor i overste etasje.

They live in London.
We had our holiday in northern Norway.
Have you been to Ireland?
I haven't been to Australia.
We live in the basement.
We live on the top floor.

See also 11.12.

I is used in a series of set expressions to indicate when something is happening, especially in expressions dealing with the time of the day or the time of the year:

Jeg ser deg i morgen.
Hva gjorde du i går?
Hva skal vi gjøre i kveld?
Jobbet du i ettermiddag?
I fjor flyttet de til Vestlandet.
Jeg har eksamen i vår.
I høst skal jeg trene mye.

I'll see you tomorrow.
What did you do yesterday?
What are we doing tonight?
Did you work this afternoon?
Last year, they moved to western Norway.
My exam is this spring.
This autumn, I intend to exercise a lot.

(See also 11.9 and 11.11.)

11.7 Med

Med can mean with, in the sense of together with:

Kari var på kino med Ola.
Går du med (meg) til byen?
Jeg skal gifte meg med Ola.

Kari went to the cinema with Ola.
Are you coming with me to town?
I am marrying Ola.

Per er gift med Grete.

Per is married to Grete.

It can also describe a condition, an explanation of what someone has:

Hun går med lue og vitter.
Han snakker med engelsk aksent.
De gjorde det med kaldt blod.
De vil ha kaffe med sukker.
De har et hus med fem rom.

She is wearing a hat and gloves.
She speaks with an English accent.
They did it in cold blood.
They want coffee with sugar.
They have a house with five rooms.

It also provides information about what means one uses:

De kommer med fly.
Hun skriver fremdeles med penn. 
Du kan ta det med ro.

They are travelling by plane.
She still writes with a pen.
You can take it easy.

It's also used in expressions dealing with time:

fra og med søndag

til og med fredag

from Sunday onwards
until (and including) Friday
11.8 Mot

**Mot** can refer to motion towards somewhere or something:
- De kjørte mot Drammen.
- Det var tungt å sykle mot vinden.
- Det går mot høst.

It can also refer to how one relates to others:
- Han er snill mot barna.
- Sjefen var ubehagelig mot de ansatte.

**Mot** can be used in connection with preventing something:
- Han tar medisiner mot diabetes.
- Du bør forsikre deg mot innbrudd.
- Hun ble gjenvalgt – mot all forventing.

Resistance, contrast, or opposition can also be expressed using **mot**:
- Er det forbud mot røyking her?
- Flertallet er mot EU-medlemskap.

11.9 Om

**Om** is often used to mean **regarding**.
- De fortalte oss om turnen.
- Hva tror du om dette?
- Hva synes du om ham?
- Her er en bok om Norge.
- De ba om hjelp.
- Vi ble enige om å si nei.

It's used in expressions dealing with time. When we are talking about how long it is until a future event takes place, we use **om**:
- Hun skal ta eksamen om et år.
- Filmen begynner om fem minutter.
- They told us about the trip.
- What do you think of this?
- Here is a book about Norway.
- They asked for help.
- We agreed to say no.

**Om** is also used to talk about repetitions that happen seasonally or daily:
- Det er kaldt her om vinteren.
- De liker seg best om våren.
- Hun jobber ofte om natta.
- Jeg dricker alltid kaffe om morgenen.
- It's cold here in winter.
- They like spring best.
- She often works at night.
- I always drink coffee in the mornings.

11.10 Over

**Over** can be used to indicate that one thing is higher than another:
- De har et bilde over senga.
- Byen ligger 1000 meter over havet.
- Det er prikken over i-en.

More than:
- Fiskeren veide over fem kilo.
- Klokka er fem over ti.

**Over** can indicate that something is done with or completed:
- Kampen er over.
- Han er kommet over sorgen.
- The match is over.
- He has worked through his grief.

It can mean across:
- Barnet løp over gata.
- The child ran across the street.

It can describe that something is covering something else:
- Elva flommet over jordene.
- Han har utslutt over hele kroppen.
- Vi fikk et kart over byen.
- The river flooded the fields.
- He has rashes over his entire body.
- We got a map of the city.

It can express emotional reactions:
- Hun er skuffet over resultatet.
- Jeg var overrasket over svaret.
- De gledet seg over den nyføde.
- She's disappointed with the result.
- I was surprised at the answer.
- They rejoiced in the newborn.
11.11 På

På can be used about places:

Boka ligger på bordet.
Du finner regelen på neste side.
Fuglen sitter på taket.
De bor på landet.
Hun er på skolen nå.
De sá på hverandre.
De bor på Vestlandet.

The book is on the table.
You will find the rule on the next page.
The bird is sitting on the roof.
They live in the countryside.
She’s at school now.
They looked at each other.
They live in western Norway.

It can be used to refer to the way in which something is done:

Kan du si det på norsk?
Vi gjør det alltid på denne måten.
Could you say that in Norwegian?
We always do it in this way.

Time can also be expressed using på:

På can be used about centuries. The period from 1800 to 1899 is normally referred to as på attenhundretallet.

Norge hadde noen store forfattere på attenhundretallet. Norway had some great writers during the eighteen hundreds.

Det var to verdenskriger på nittenhundretallet. There were two world wars during the nineteen hundreds.

We often also use på when referring to days, but the preposition can also be skipped entirely:

Vi får besøk (på) lørdag. We will get a visit on Saturday.

When we talk about how long it takes to finish something, we often use på:

Han skrev oppgaven sin på to uker. She wrote her paper in two weeks.
Han lærte spansk på et år. He learned Spanish in a year.

When used in conjunction with a verb in the present perfect, på can express how long it has been since an event occurred:

Jeg har ikke vært i USA på tre år. I have not been to the US in three years.
Vi har ikke sovet på 20 timer. We haven’t slept for 20 hours.

På can sometimes express a characteristic or aspect of something.

Hva er prisen på billetten?
Hva er nummeret på bussen?
Jeg liker fargen på jakka.
What’s the price of the ticket?
What’s the number of the bus?
I like the colour of the jacket.

11.12 Where are you – på or i?

Both i and på are used to describe places, and in some cases, it can be a little hard to know which one to use.

The use of i and på can seem straightforward. We use i for something that is inside something else, while på is for whatever is on top, or on the surface:

Boka ligger på bordet. The book is on the table.
Bildet henger på veggen. The picture is on the wall.

Boka ligger i skuffen. The book is in the drawer.
Det var stille i klassen. There was silence in the class.

You can bathe i vannet (in the water), but the boat is på vannet (on the water).

The sun is high på himmelen (in the sky) in Norwegian, possibly indicating that the sky was once perceived as a cupola with a surface. If you use the preposition i Norwegians will tend to think about religious matters, since i himmelen means in heaven.

The same logic is applied to the body, so we use i whatever is happening on the inside, while external events are described using på:

Han har vondt i kneet. His knee hurts.
Han slo seg på kneet. He hit his knee.

Han har vondt i magen. His stomach hurts.
Han har et arr på magen. He has a scar on his stomach.

However, once you start describing other locations, it is harder to find some sort of internal logic in the choice of preposition. There may be some comfort in knowing that even native Norwegian speakers don’t entirely agree about these matters, with some claiming that they are i badet (in the bathroom) while others say they are på badet (in the bathroom). Here, however, is a rough overview:

De er i huset, i banken, i kirka, i kantina, i kjelleren. They are in the house, at the bank, at church, in the cafeteria, in the basement.
11.14 Til

Til indicates movement towards a goal, a destination:

De kommer til Norge i morgen.  They'll arrive in Norway tomorrow.
Vi dro fra sted til sted.     We travelled from place to place.
De kan se helt til sjøen.  They can see all the way to the sea.

When someone receives something, we use til:

Hun sendte brev til meg.  She sent a letter to me.
Jeg har en gave til deg.  I have a gift for you.
Jeg kan sende en sms til deg.  I can send you a text message.

Til is the most common preposition used to express that someone possesses something—often where the genitive could also be used:

Jeg snakket med læreren til barna. I talked to the children's teacher.
Kjenner du mannen til Eva? Do you know Eva's husband?
Vi fikk låne båten til Kari. We could borrow Kari's boat.
Hyetta til Ola ligger ved sjøen. Ola's cabin is by the sea.

Til indicates a wider sense of belonging, or connection:

Vi tar hvitvin til fiskeren.  We'll have white wine with the fish.
Hvor er nøkkelen til døren? Where's the key to the door?
Hva skal vi ha til middag? What are we having for dinner?
Jeg drikker tre kopper kaffe til frokost.  I drink three cups of coffee for breakfast.
Han leser til eksamen.  He is studying for his exam.

The preposition can also indicate the addition of something in the sense of one more of the same:

Ta en kjeks til.  Have another biscuit.
Det kommer en gjest til.  There will be another guest.

In expressing periods of time, we use til along with fra (from) and med (with):

Det er pause fra elleve til tolv.  There's a break from eleven until twelve.
Vi har åpent fra mandag til fredag.  We're open Monday to Friday.
De blir her til og med onsdag.  They'll stay until and including Sunday.

Til is also often used about the future in connection with seasons and holidays:

Til høsten skal han begynne å studere.  This autumn, he will start his studies.
Hun reiser ofte hjem til jul.  She often goes home for Christmas.
Seasons
Please note the pairing of prepositions and the definite or indefinite form of the nouns:
I høst har han fri. This (current or coming) autumn, he has time off.
Om høsten er det pent her. It is pretty here during autumn (as a rule).
Til høsten skal hun studere. This (coming) autumn, she will start her studies.

11.15 Under
under, during

Under can indicate place:
Det er støv under sofaen. There is dust underneath the sofa.
Hun kan svømme under vann. She can swim under water.

It can also be used to indicate an amount:
Fisker veier under en kilo. The fish weighs less than a kilo.
Alle barna er under fem år. All the children are under five.

Also, it can have the meaning of during:
De bodde der under krigen. They lived there during the war.
Han sovnet under teaterforestillingen. He fell asleep during the theatrical performance.
Det ble bråk under fotballkampen. Trouble broke out during the football match.

However, with words that in themselves express periods of time, Norwegian prefers i or i løpet av, though under is beginning to sneak in, probably influenced by Swedish and English:
Han jobbet i helgen. He worked during the weekend.
Han gjorde mye i løpet av uka. He got a lot done during the week.

11.16 Uten
without

Uten refers to what you don’t have:
Hun går uten lue og vetter. She is without hat and gloves.
De drikker kaffe uten sukker. They drink coffee without sugar.

It can be followed by an infinitive:
De gikk uten å si et ord. They left without saying a word.
Hun ville klare seg uten å ta medisin. She wanted to do without medicine.

11.17 Ved
by, at, near

Ved is used to explain where someone or something is:
Huset ligger ved sjøen. The house is by the sea.
Hun satte seg ved vinduet. She sat down by the window.
De bor like ved skogen. They live next to the forest.

Ved is also used in time phrases to mean at or around:
Det slutter ved tidtiden. It ends around ten o’clock.
De møttes ved soloppgang. They met at dawn.
Ved dagens slutt var hun utkjørt. At the end of the day, she was exhausted.

11.18 Prepositional expressions

A compound expression consisting of several words may often function as a preposition:
Huset ligger til høyre for parken. The house is to the right of the park.
Huset ligger til venstre for parken. The house is to the left of the park.
Huset ligger ved siden av parken. The house is next to the park.
Huset ligger i nærheten av parken. The house is near the park.

Han slutet på grunn av sykdom. He left because of an illness.
Hun fortsatte til tross for sykdom. She stayed despite an illness.
De klarte det ved hjelp av familien. They managed because their family helped.
Han kommer i stedet for meg. He is coming instead of me.
Hun lærte å svømme i løpet av ferien. She learned to swim during the holidays.

Set phrases often consist of a preposition and a verb and often other words:

av

Jeg er lei av vinteren. I’m sick of the winter.
Hun tok seg av foreldrene. She took care of her parents.
Hun tok av seg skjerf og lue. She took off her scarf and hat.
Vi må slå av lyset. We have to turn the lights off.
Du må ikke le av ham. You mustn’t laugh at him.
Han er opptatt av politikk. He is interested in politics.
**etter**

De lengter etter familien.
Vi må ringe etter legen.
Hvem skal jeg spørre etter?
Jeg leter etter en pen kjole.
Kan du se etter om vi har olje?

De har behov for hjelp.
Du må se deg for!
Hva er du redd for?
Hun var lei for at de skulle dra,
Jeg er glad for at dere kan komme.
Hun har bestemt seg for å flytte.

Hun er glad i å lage mat.
Jeg er interessert i sport.
Han er forelsket i læreren.

**for**

They yearn for their family.
We must call for the doctor.
Who shall I ask for?
I’m looking for a nice dress.
Could you check if we’ve got oil?

They have need of help.
You need to watch where you’re going!
What are you afraid of?
She was sorry that they were leaving.
I am glad that you can come.
She has decided to move.

She enjoys cooking.
I’m interested in sports.
He’s in love with the teacher.

**over**

Dere får ikke lov til å gå ut nå.
Vi har ikke råd til å kjøpe hus.
Jeg er nødt til å jobbe mer.
Du er for ung til å gå alene.

You are not allowed to go outside now.
We can’t afford to buy a house.
I have to work more.
You’re too young to go alone.

I’m disappointed with the result.
Are you aware it’s too late?
You must think about it.
Who can take over the responsibility?
He hasn’t recovered from the shock.
They came across a nice sofa on the flea market.
It’ll pass!

As the examples have illustrated, both infinitive and subordinate clauses using at (that) are common after prepositions.

Jeg glider meg til å se filmen.
Jeg ser frem til å hjelpe dem.
Jeg er redd for at det er sant.
Jeg er sikker på at det går bra.

I look forward to seeing the film.
I look forward to helping them.
I’m afraid it’s true.
I’m sure it will be fine.

**på**

Jeg har lyst på en kopp te.
Jeg er sikker på at det går bra.
Hvem skal passe på hunden?
Jeg er oppmerksom på at det er ulovlig.
Hva venter du på?
De tar vare på gamle ting.
Jeg lurer på om det er riktig.
Ta på dere varme klær!
Ikke hør på henne!

I fancy a cup of tea.
I’m sure it will be fine.
Who’s going to look after the dog?
I’m aware it’s illegal.
What are you waiting for?
They take care of old things.
I wonder if it’s right.
Put on warm clothes!
Don’t listen to her!

**til**

Hva har dere lyst til å gjøre?
Har du tid til å komme hit litt?
Jeg glider meg til vinteren.
Jeg gruer meg til vinteren.
Vi har ikke anledning til å hjelpe.
Hun er flink til å skrive.
Jeg er ikke vant til å snakke norsk.
De har ingen grunn til å klage.

What do you feel like doing?
Do you have the time to come here for a bit?
I look forward to the winter.
I dread the winter.
We can’t help.
She is good at writing.
I am not used to speaking Norwegian.
They have no reason to complain.
CHAPTER 12

INTERROGATIVES

Generally, Norwegian and English use the same type of question-words.

- Hvem er du? = Who are you?
- Hva er det? = What is it?
- Når kommer du? = When are you coming?
- Hvor bor du? = Where do you live?
- Hvorfor spør du? = Why do you ask?
- Hvilkens buss må vi ta? = Which bus do we need to take?

But some of them might require a bit of extra explanation and elaboration.

12.1 Hvilkens

Hvilkens is inflected according to the noun it precedes, so it is important to remember gender:

Masculine/feminine

- Hvilkens by kommer du fra? = Which town are you from?
- Hvilkens klokke er riktig? = Which clock is right?

Neuter

- Hvilket land kommer du fra? = Which country do you come from?
- Hvilket kapittel skal vi lese? = Which chapter should we read?

Plural

- Hvilke byer har du bodd i? = Which cities have you lived in?
- Hvilke oppgaver skal vi gjøre? = Which exercises should we do?

12.2 Hvem

Hvem has no inflection – it is invariable for number and gender. If there is a preposition in the question, it usually comes at the end of the sentence.

- Hvem bor her? = Who lives here?
- Hvem har du fortalt det til? = Who did you tell it to?
- Hvem bor hun sammen med? = Who does she live with?
- Hvem ga du den til? = To whom did you give it / Who did you give it to?

In practice, Norwegian lacks an equivalent of whose. The word hvis was used in that sense in the past, but now it’s used in this sense only rarely, and in extremely formal texts. To avoid the problem, the sentence is usually altered in such a way that one can use hvem instead:

- Hvem er han sann til? = Whose son is he?
- Hvem fikk den ideen? = Whose idea was that?

Hvem sin / hvem sitt / hvem sine (5.4) is also a possible option:

- Hvem sin bil er dette? = Whose car is this?
- Hvem sitt kort er dette? = Whose card is this?
- Hvem sine bøker er dette? = Whose books are these?

(For who in relative clauses see 14.7.)
12.3 **Hvordan**

Hvordan is generally translated into how in English, but not always:

- Hvordan har du det?  
  How are you?
- Hvordan er de?  
  What are they like?
- Hvordan så han ut?  
  What did he look like?

12.4 **Hvor + adverb/adjective/quantifier**

- Hvor mye koster denne?  
  How much does this cost?
- Hvor mange rom er det i huset?  
  How many rooms are there in the house?
- Hvor lenge har du vært her?  
  How long have you been here?

Adjectives must be inflected according to gender and number:

- Hvor gammel er hun?  
  How old is she?
- Hvor gammelt er huset?  
  How old is the house?
- Hvor gamle er barna?  
  How old are the children?

- Hvor stor er stua?  
  How big is the sitting room?
- Hvor stor er badet?  
  How big is the bathroom?
- Hvor store er soverommene?  
  How big are the bedrooms?

Question words can also begin subordinate clauses, see 14.7.
13.1 Coordinating conjunctions

Conjunctions connect words, clauses and sentences.

**og**
Du må ta på deg **skjerf og lue.**
Det er kaldt i dag, **og det snør.**

and
You have to put on a scarf and a hat.
It is cold today, and it is snowing.

**men**
Jeg har **skjerf, men ikke lue.**
Det er kaldt i dag, **men sola skinner.**

but
I have a scarf, but no hat.
It is cold today but the sun is shining.

**eller**
Skal vi være ute **eller inne?**
Vi kan gå på ski, **eller vi kan gå til fots.**

or
Should we be outside or inside?
Do you want to go skiing, or should we go on foot?

**både – og**
Du trenger **både skjerf og lue.**

both – and
You need both a scarf and a hat.

**enten – eller**
Vi kan **enten gå på ski,**
eller **vi kan gå til fots.**

**verken – eller**
Hun har **verken lue eller**
skjæft på seg.

**for**
De ville være inne, **for det var kaldt ute.**

**så**
Det var kaldt ute, **så de ville være inne.**

13.2 Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions connect a subordinate clause to a main clause.

**At and om**
Indirect statements are introduced by **at.** The word **at** can, in many cases, be omitted, especially after verbs like **sier, tror, synes.**

**at**
(De kommer.)
Jeg tror **at de kommer.**
Jeg vet **at de kommer.**
Jeg er glad for **at de kommer.**
Jeg er sikker på **at de kommer.**

that
(They are coming.)
I think (that) they’re coming,
I know (that) they’re coming,
I’m glad they’re coming,
I’m sure they’re coming.

Indirect questions without a question word are introduced by **om:**

**om**
(Kommer de?)
Hun spør **om de kommer.**
Jeg vet ikke **om de kommer.**
Jeg lurer på **om de kommer.**
De aner ikke **om de kommer.**

if, whether
(Are they coming?)
She’s asking if they’re coming,
I don’t know if they’re coming,
I wonder whether they’re coming,
They don’t know if they’re coming.

Jeg vet ikke **om jeg tør.** I don’t know if I dare.
If can also be translated as hvis, but in a different context altogether (see “Condition” below). So it is advisable to note the use of om in interrogative subordinate clauses like the ones above.

Question words

Questions that use question words can be made into subordinate clauses by using the question word as a subordinate conjunction:

(Hva gjør de?) Jeg vet ikke hva de gjør. (What are they doing?) I don’t know what they are doing.

(Hvør bor hun?) Jeg aner ikke hvør hun bor. (Where does she live?) I have no idea where she lives.

Subordinate clauses can also tell us more about:

**Time**

**da**

Da jeg var ung, bodde jeg i England. When I was young, I lived in England.

**når**

Når det var varmt, badet vi i elva. When it was hot, we bathed in the river.

Når jeg får jobb, skal jeg flytte. When I get a job, I’ll move.

As seen, **da** and **når** are both translated as when. **Da** refers to an event in the past. **Når** refers to repeated events, as well as future events.

It is wise to note the word order whenever a subordinate clause precedes the main clause: the verb in the main clause immediately follows the subordinate clause.

**etter at**

De sovnet etter at filmen hadde begynt. They fell asleep after the movie had started.

**idet**

De kom til stranden idet det begynte å regne. They got to the beach just as it started to rain.

**mens**

De satt i bilen mens det regnet. They sat in the car while it rained.

Mens hun vasket huset, laget han mat. While she washed the house, he cooked.

**for**

Vi kom hjem før det begynte å regne. We came home before it started to rain.

**til**

Vi venter til det slutter å regne, We’ll wait until it stops raining.

**så lenge**

Jeg kan vente så lenge du vil. I can wait as long as you want.

**siden**

Jeg har ikke sett dem siden de flyttet. I haven’t seen them since they moved.

**Condition**

**hvis/dersom**

Vi kommer hvis det blir varmere. We’ll come if it gets warmer.

Dersom det blir regn, If it starts raining, blir vi hjemme. we’ll stay home.

Hvis jeg ikke står til eksamen, If I don’t pass my exam ...

med mindre

Vi kan ikke gjøre det med mindre loven endres. We can’t do it unless the law is changed.

**Concession**

**selv om**

Vi kan dra selv om det snør. We can go even if it’s snowing.

De gikk ut selv om det var kaldt. They went out even though it was cold.

Selv om han er gammel, er han i god form. Although he’s old, he’s in good shape.

**Cause**

**fordi**

Læreren ble sur fordi de kom for sent. The teacher was angry because they were late.

**siden**

Siden han har feber, må han være hjemme. Since he has a temperature, he must stay home.
Purpose

for at / så
De flyttet for at barna skulle få det bedre.
Hun vil skifte jobb så hun skal få mer fri.

Consequence

slik at
De pusset opp slik at huset ble penere.

så – at
Hun var så trett at hun sovnet i stolen.

Please note that there is a word, in this case trett, between the two parts of the conjunction.

Comparison

enn
Det var kaldere enn jeg trodd at.

som
Jeg er like skuffet som du er.

jo – jo /
jo – desto /
dess – dess
Jo før du kan komme,
desto bedre er det.
Jo flere kokker, jo mer søl!
Jo flere – dess bedre.

than
It was colder than I thought.

as
I am just as disappointed as you are.

the – the
The sooner you can come, the better.
Too many cooks spoil the broth.
(Lit.: The more cooks, the more mess.)
The more the merrier.

as, like
I did as you said.
She is as old as you.
You’ve made your bed, now lie in it.

Som also introduces relative clauses (See 14.7):

Jeg har en nabo som er lege.
De lette etter katten som var borte.

so
They moved so the children would be happier.
She wants to get a new job so she can have more time off.

so, so that
They refurbished the house so it became much nicer.

so
She was so tired she fell asleep in the chair.

CHAPTER 14

WORD ORDER

Norwegian word order follows a fairly strict pattern, and there are limitations to where you can place each word. These limitations are not the same as in English, and certain errors are very common among people with English as their starting point. On the plus side, even if you do use the wrong word order, you’re unlikely to cause confusion, since the meaning of the sentence generally will not change. Therefore, the weather will unfortunately not improve, even if you use the correct word order:

I dag er det kaldt.

Today it is cold.

Rather than the incorrect, perhaps English-influenced, word order: *I dag det er kaldt.
However, the wrong word order is one of the most obvious indications that you speak Norwegian as a second/foreign language, and if you wish to blend in with the locals, it's worthwhile to try to get it right. In theory, the rules are not very difficult, though remembering them in conversation is of course another matter. But take heart! The Norwegian system for sentence creation is actually quite tidy and predictable.

14.1 Statements

Norwegian is a V2 language, which means that the verb will be the second element in a statement/declarative sentence. Someone who speaks English will often say and write sentences like *Nå jeg bor i Norge*, but this is incorrect Norwegian. Normally, there can only be one sentence element in front of the verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERB</th>
<th>i Norge nå.</th>
<th>Jeg</th>
<th>bor</th>
<th>I live in Norway now.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nå</td>
<td>bor jeg</td>
<td>jeg</td>
<td>i Norge</td>
<td>Now I live in Norway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min far</td>
<td>besøker meg</td>
<td>hver sommer</td>
<td>My father visits me every summer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hver sommer</td>
<td>besøker</td>
<td>min far</td>
<td>jeg</td>
<td>Every summer, my father visits me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the verb consists of several words, it's the auxiliary verb that assumes the prominent second place in the sentence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jeg skal</th>
<th>dra</th>
<th>til Paris i april.</th>
<th>I will go to Paris in April.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeg</td>
<td>skj</td>
<td>jeg</td>
<td>dra til Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Til Paris</td>
<td>skal</td>
<td>jeg</td>
<td>dra i april.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated, the first sentence element can consist of several words, and sometimes (just to make things easy!) it can be an entire clause. When you start your statement with a subordinate clause, the second element should still be a verb:

| Da jeg var ung, bodde jeg i England. | When I was young, I lived in England. |
| Når jeg er full, liker jeg å klemme folk. | When I am drunk, I like to hug people. |

Also note how the verb is placed when you use expressions like jeg tror or jeg synes at the end of the sentence:

| Det er kaldt i dag, synes jeg. | It's cold today, I think. |
| I april skal jeg til Paris, tror jeg. | I'm going to Paris in April, I think. |
| Dr. Livingstone, formoder jeg? | Dr. Livingstone, I presume? |

14.2 Questions

Norwegian questions can use question words, or you can create questions without the use of them – just as in English. However, the use of "do", which is very common in English (as in: Where do you work? Do you like coffee?) does not have an equivalent in Norwegian.

By and large, Norwegian and English use the same sort of question words. According to the rules of grammar, the verb immediately follows the question word:

| Hvem er du? | Who are you? |
| Hva er det? | What is it? |
| Når skal du dra til Paris? | When are you going to Paris? |
| Hvor bor du? | Where do you live? |
| Hvordan staver du det? | How do you spell it? |

Questions without question words start with the verb, followed by the subject:

| Er du sulten? | Are you hungry? |
| Har du sett ham? | Have you seen him? |
| Kan du komme idag? | Can you come today? |
| Drikker du aldri kaffe? | Do you never drink coffee? |
| Bor du i Norge nå? | Do you live in Norway now? |
| Kjøpte du vin? | Did you buy any wine? |

Other ways in which to ask questions

It's also possible to convey a question without placing the verb first or using question words, simply by using the right tone of voice. Often, the word **vel** will be added to a sentence in order to emphasise that the utterance is a question. The meaning of the word **vel** is roughly equivalent to / suppose/ I guess / I assume.  

| Du liker vel kaffe? | I assume/hope you like coffee? |
| Du er vel sulten? | I guess you're hungry? |

You can also add the questioning expression **ikke sant** to the end of a sentence. The meaning of this expression is roughly equivalent to right in English.

| Du bor i Norge nå, ikke sant? | You live in Norway now, right? |
| Du skal til Paris, ikke sant? | You're going to Paris, right? |

14.3 Answers

Naturally, it is not always easy to predict the answers to questions like:

| Hvem er du? | Who are you? |
| Hvor går du? | Where are you going? |
But questions without question words at least have a certain pattern when it comes to their answers. For one thing, repeating all the words in a question would rarely be desirable or necessary. Many verbs are replaced by gjøre (do), while other parts of the sentence change to the word det (it/that):

Snakker hun norsk?
Ja, det gjør hun.

Gikk preven bra?
Ja, det gjorde den.

Gikk dere ikke ut?
Nei, det gjorde vi ikke.

Snør det ikke?
Jo, det gjør det.

As the examples illustrate, Norwegian has two ways in which to say yes: ja and jo.
Ja is the normal, affirmative answer. However, if the question contains ikke (not) or another negative word, the correct affirmative answer is jo:

Kjerer du ikke selv? Jo, det hender.
Kommer de aldri hit?
Jo, jeg ser dem ofte.
Du jobber her, ikke sant?
Jo, det gjør jeg.

However, if the truth is equally as negative as the question implies, then naturally, you may answer nei:

Kjerer du ikke selv?
Nei, jeg gjør ikke det.
Du jobber her, ikke sant?
Nei, det gjør jeg ikke.

Some verbs cannot be replaced by gjøre, but need to be repeated in the answer. This applies to auxiliary verbs and to ha and være as main verbs:

Skal dere flytte? Ja, det skal vi.
Kan du komme i dag?
Nei, det kan jeg ikke.
Har du betalt regningen?
Ja, det har jeg.
Er det kaldt ute?
Nei, det er det ikke.
Har dere ikke bil? Jo, det har vi.
Hadde hun ikke billett?
Jo, det hadde hun.

Does she speak Norwegian?
Yes, she does.

Did the test go well?
Yes, it did.

Did you not go out?
No, we didn’t.

Is it not snowing?
Yes, it is.

As with English, the position of the negative adverb ikke is governed by a rule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hun skal ikke dra til Paris.</td>
<td>She will not be going to Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hvorfor skal hun ikke dra til Paris?</td>
<td>Why will she not be going to Paris?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liket du ikke kaffe?</td>
<td>Don’t you like coffee?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeg liker ikke kaffe.</td>
<td>I don’t like coffee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hun bor ikke her nå.</td>
<td>She does not live here now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nå bor hun ikke her.</td>
<td>Now she does not live here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many other adverbs are placed in the same way as ikke.

Jeg drinker aldri kaffe. | I never drink coffee. |
I dag kommer hun visst for sent. | It seems she will be late today. |
Har dere alltid bodde her? | Have you always lived here? |
Vi kan vel hjælpe hverandre? | We could help one another, couldn’t we? |

**14.4 The position of ikke**

Norwegian uses the word ikke to create negation, unlike the English use of to do plus not. Ikke would normally be placed after the first part of the verb and the subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ikke fortell det til noen.</td>
<td>Don’t tell anybody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikke hør på ham!</td>
<td>Don’t listen to him!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In writing, particularly formal writing, one may sometimes observe ikke placed after the imperative verb:

Parker ikke foran porten. | Do not park in front of the gate. |
14.6 Det as a subject

Det is frequently used as the formal subject in Norwegian sentences. It can replace both it and there in English sentences, and sometimes English does not use an equivalent impersonal subject.

We use det as the formal subject when there is no other subject:

Det er sent. It is late.
I dag snør det. It is snowing today.
Det ringte. The telephone rang.

Det will also introduce a logical subject in the indefinite form:

Det går ingen fly så sent. There are no planes that late.
Det står ikke noen buss på holdeplassen. There is no bus at the bus stop.
Det kommer noen kunder. Some customers are coming.
Det er noe råttent i kongeriket Danmark. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

14.7 Subordinate clauses

In complex sentences you may find one or more subordinate clauses.

Hun spurte om det var sant. She asked if it was true.
hvorfor de klagede. why they were complaining.
når de ville komme. when they wanted to come.
hva de skulle gjøre. what they should do.

De gikk hjem etter at de hadde fôtt middag. They went home after they had eaten dinner.
da de hadde drukket opp vinen. when they had drunk the wine.
fordi de var tøtte etter at de hadde trennet. because they were tired after exercising.
selv om det var tidlig. even though it was early.

In subordinate clauses the word order is even more strict than in main clauses. It is usually introduced by a subordinating conjunction, followed by the subject.
So far so good. But when one comes to the position of ikke and other such adverbs, one must pay extra attention, since the adverbs are placed before the verb in subordinate clauses:

... om historien ikke var sann. ... if the story was not true.
... tvivlor vi aldri klaget. ... why we never complained.
... fordi det ikke er mer vin igjen. ... because there is no wine left.
... selv om det ikke var sent. ... even if it wasn't late.

Subordinate clauses can be the equivalent of the English -ing form:

Siden jeg var trett, la jeg meg på sofaen. Being tired, I laid down on the sofa.
Han gikk gate langs mens han sang. He walked along the street singing.
Etter at jeg hadde sagt mitt, gikk jeg. After having said what I had to say, I left.
De gikk uten at vi merket det. They left without our noticing it.
Mens vi venter på Godot Waiting for Godot

Relative clauses

Spionen som kom inn fra kulden The Spy Who Came in from the Cold

Now we finally arrive at an example of Norwegian being significantly simpler than English! Som can be used in place of the English who, that, whose, whom, which and what in relative clauses.

Jeg har en venn som er tysk. I have a friend who is German.
Jeg har en venn som jeg jobber sammen med. I have a friend with whom I work.
Vi kjøpte bøkene som fikk så god kritikk. We bought the books which got such good reviews.
De måtte selge bilen som de hadde kjøpt. They had to sell the car that they had bought.
De kjøpte en bil som hadde en defekt motor. They bought a car whose motor was defective.
Det som læren sa, er riktig. What the teacher said, is correct.

It is possible to omit som when it is not the subject:

Jeg likte boka (som) du kjøpte. I liked the book (which) you bought.
De fant en sekk som inneholdt pengene. They found a bag containing money.

Note that adjectives in the subordinate clause introduced by som will be inflected according to which word is represented by som:

De har en bil som er stor. They have a car which is big.

De har et hus som er stort. They have a house which is big.
De har noen hunder som er store. They have some dogs which are big.

Noe som is used for something that refers back to an entire clause:

Krigen tok slutt, noe som fikk dem til å flytte tilbake. The war ended, which made them move back.

Another possibility is to use og and simply join two sentences together:

Krigen tok slutt, og det fikk dem til å flytte tilbake. The war ended, and that made them move back.

Den + som

We have previously seen that den (it) usually does not refer to persons, but when followed by a som-clause, den refers to an (unknown) person:

Den som kommer først på jobben, må skru av sikkerhetsalarmen. Whoever arrives at work first, must switch off the alarm.

Many proverbs have this form:

Den som graver en grav for andre, faller selv i den. Whoever digs a grave for others, will fall into it themselves.
Den som ler sist, ler best. Having the last laugh.
Lit.: Whoever laughs last, laughs best.
Den som kommer først til melia, får færst malt. First come, first served. (Lit.: Whoever gets to the mill first, gets their grain ground first.)

(You will find more information about word order on page 141–143.)
GRAMMATICAL OVERVIEW

- inflection patterns

Nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indefinite</strong></td>
<td><strong>Definite</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 en bil</td>
<td>bilen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en unge</td>
<td>ungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei/en sol</td>
<td>sola/solene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei/en dame</td>
<td>dama/damen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et eple</td>
<td>eplet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> et glass</td>
<td>glasset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et barn</td>
<td>barnet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et bein</td>
<td>beinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 en baker</td>
<td>baken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en tykker</td>
<td>tykkeren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en genser</td>
<td>genseren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 en gaffel</td>
<td>gaffelen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en onkel</td>
<td>onkelen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et mester</td>
<td>mesteret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ei/en skulder</td>
<td>skulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei/en søster</td>
<td>søster/søsteren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en vinter</td>
<td>vinteren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 en dam</td>
<td>dammen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et studium</td>
<td>studiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et museum</td>
<td>museet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exceptions

1 et sted | stedet | steder | stedene | a place |
2 en feil | feilen | feil | feilene | a mistake |
| en ting | tingen | ting | tingene | a thing |
| en ski | skien | ski | skiene | a ski |
3 en euro | euroen | euro | euroene | a euro |
| en dollar | dollaren | dollar | dollarene | a dollar |
| en liter | literen | liter | literne | a litre |

1 Et sted is steder in the plural, despite having only one syllable.
2 Some feminine and masculine words with only one syllable will not have a suffix in the indefinite form plural, including: en laks, en torsk, ei sild, ei mus (a salmon, a codfish, a herring, a mouse).
3 Most words describing measurements do not have a suffix in the indefinite form plural: to kilo, fem meter (two kilos, five meters).

Irregular inflections

Many nouns have a plural form that involves a change of vowel, and occasionally other irregularities:

**o > a in the plural**
- en bror | broren | brødre | brødrene | a brother
- ei mor | mora | madre | medrene | a mother
- ei bok | boka | baker | bokene | a book
- en fot | foten | fatter | fattene | a foot
- ei rot | rota | røtter | røtene | a root
- ei klo | kloa | klar | klørene | a claw
- en bonde | bonden | bønder | bandene | a farmer

**a > e in the plural**
- en far | faren | fedre | fedrene | a father
- en mann | mannen | menn | mennene | a man
- ei tann | tanna | tenner | tennene | a tooth
- ei natt | natta | netter | netene | a night
- ei strand | strand | strender | strendene | a beach
- ei stang | stanga | stenger | stengene | a pole
- en hovedstad | hovedstaden | hovedsteder | hovedstede | a capital city

Patterns for the inflection of nouns

1 Main pattern: (e)ir – (e)ine in the plural.
2 Single-syllable neuter words: no suffix in the indefinite plural.
   Other neuter words have the suffix-free form as an optional form.
3 Masculine words that end in -er and refer to people, take the endings -e/-ne in the plural.
   Some other words that end in -er will also follow this pattern.
4 Words that end in -el, and some words that end in -er, have a truncated form in the plural.
5 Some words that end in -er can get truncated forms with or without -r in the indefinite form plural.
### Adjectives

#### Indefinite form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ei fin hytte</td>
<td>en fin bil</td>
<td>et fint hus</td>
<td>fine biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ei ny hytte</td>
<td>en ny bil</td>
<td>et nytt hus</td>
<td>nye biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ei grønn hytte</td>
<td>en grønn bil</td>
<td>et grønt hus</td>
<td>grønne biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ei vakker jente</td>
<td>en vakker gutt</td>
<td>et vakkert sted</td>
<td>vakre steder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ei åpen hytte</td>
<td>en åpen bil</td>
<td>et åpent hus</td>
<td>åpne biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ei gammel hytte</td>
<td>en gammel bil</td>
<td>et gammelt hus</td>
<td>gamle biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ei praktisk hytte</td>
<td>en praktisk bil</td>
<td>et praktisk hus</td>
<td>praktiske hus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ei hyggelig hytte</td>
<td>en hyggelig bil</td>
<td>et hyggelig hus</td>
<td>hyggelige biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ei moderne hytte</td>
<td>en moderne bil</td>
<td>et moderne hus</td>
<td>moderne biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>ei brukket nese</td>
<td>en brukket arm</td>
<td>et brukket bein</td>
<td>brukne armer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>ei savnet jente</td>
<td>en savnet gutt</td>
<td>et savnet barn</td>
<td>savnede personer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Main pattern: -t in the neutral, -e in the plural.
2. Some short adjectives that end in a long vowel, take the suffix -tt in the neutral. Other words; fri, blå, grå (free, blue, grey). Blå and grå have an optional -e in the plural: blå(e), grå(e).
3 and 5 A double consonant becomes a single consonant before a new consonant. Exceptions: fullt, visst.
4 and 5 Words that end in -en, -el and -er get a truncated form in the plural.
5. Some words do not take a -t suffix in the neutral. This applies to those words that end in -ig, multisyllabic words that end in -isk, nationality words that end in -sk (norsk, tysk, polsk) (Norwegian, German, Polish) etc.
6. Some words remain unchanged, this applies especially to words that end in -e and -s: ade, ekte, stilte, gratis, stakkars, annerledes (remote, genuine, silent, free, pitiable, different). It also applies to the present participle: spennende, fascinerende (exciting, fascinating).
7. The perfect participle of strong verbs that end in -et get a truncated form using -n in the plural: skrevne tekster, frosne varer, stjælne biler (written texts, frozen goods, stolen cars).

#### Definite form

The form is identical to the plural form, but there is usually an article in front:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>den fine bilen</td>
<td>det fine huset</td>
<td>de fine bilene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Liten and annen

Liten and annen are two adjectives whose patterns are slightly different from those outlined above. They have a separate feminine form if the article ei is used, (2.1). If we use the article en, the feminine and masculine forms are identical. The adjective liten is also special, in that the plural form is irregular, while the definite form singular is not identical to the plural form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>indefinit</td>
<td>ei liten jenta</td>
<td>en liten gutten</td>
<td>et lite hus</td>
<td>små biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definit</td>
<td>den lille jenta</td>
<td>den lille gutten</td>
<td>det lille huset</td>
<td>de små biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indefinit</td>
<td>ei annen jenta</td>
<td>en annen gutten</td>
<td>et annet hus</td>
<td>andre biler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definit</td>
<td>den andre jenta</td>
<td>den andre gutten</td>
<td>det andre huset</td>
<td>de andre biler</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Comparative and superlative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>pen</th>
<th>penere</th>
<th>penest</th>
<th>pretty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>vennlig</td>
<td>vennligere</td>
<td>vennligst</td>
<td>friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>grusom</td>
<td>grusommere</td>
<td>grusomst</td>
<td>gruesome, terrible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>vakker</td>
<td>vakrere</td>
<td>vakrest</td>
<td>beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>gimmel</td>
<td>eldre</td>
<td>eldst</td>
<td>old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>god</td>
<td>bedre</td>
<td>best</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>lang</td>
<td>lengre</td>
<td>lengst</td>
<td>long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>liten</td>
<td>mindre</td>
<td>minst</td>
<td>little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>stor</td>
<td>større</td>
<td>størst</td>
<td>big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>tung</td>
<td>tyngre</td>
<td>tyngst</td>
<td>heavy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>ung</td>
<td>yngre</td>
<td>yngst</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>vond</td>
<td>verre</td>
<td>verst</td>
<td>painful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Main pattern: -ere / -est.
2. Adjectives that end in -ig and -som take the suffix -st in the superlative.
3. Words that end in -el, -en and -er are contracted and double consonants become single before -r.
4. Some common adjectives have an irregular inflection pattern.
# Verbs

## Main patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Present Perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fiske</td>
<td>fiset</td>
<td>har fissett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>høre</td>
<td>hørte</td>
<td>har hørtet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lytte</td>
<td>lytte</td>
<td>har lyttet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spille</td>
<td>spillet</td>
<td>har spillet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spørre</td>
<td>spurre</td>
<td>har spurtet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slappe</td>
<td>slappet</td>
<td>har sluppet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some verbs have the suffix -te og -de in the preterite, but will have other irregularities:

| bringe     | brakte    | har brakte      |
| døe        | døde      | har døde        |
| fortelle   | fortalte  | har fortalt     |
| fortsette  | fortsatte | har fortsatt    |
| følge      | fulgte    | har fulgte      |
| gjøre      | gjorde    | har gjort       |
| ha         | hadde     | har hatt        |
| selge      | solgte    | har solgt       |
| sette      | satte     | har satt        |
| spørre     | spurre    | har spurt       |
| velge      | valgte    | har valgt       |
| vite       | visste    | har visst       |
| bide       | bandt     | har bundet      |
| bite       | bet/beit  | har bitt        |
| brekke     | brakk     | har brukket     |
| bære       | bar       | har båret       |
| dra        | dro       | har dradd/dratt |
| drikke     | drakk     | har drukket     |
| drive      | drev      | har drevet      |
| øte        | øt         | har øtt         |
| falle      | falt      | har falt        |
| finne      | fant      | har funnet      |
| fly        | fløy      | har flydd       |
| flyte      | fløt      | har flytt       |
| forsvinne | forsvant  | har forsvunnet  |

## Strong verbs

| bind | bind | | freeze | get, receive |
|------|------| | freeze | get, receive |
| bitte | bite | | sleep | sleep |
| brekke | break | | hit | hit |
| dør | door | | leave | leave |
| drive | conduct, run | | step upward | step upward |
| øde | eat (greedily) | | pierce, stab | pierce, stab |
| falle | fall | | steal | steal |
| finne | find | | stroke, iron, fail an exam | stroke, iron, fail an exam |
| fly | fly | | sing | sing |
| flyte | float | | sink | sink |
| forsvinne | | | take | take |
-s verbs

- synes
  - syntes
  - har syntes
  - think, believe, be of the opinion that
- finnes
  - fantes
  - har funnes
  - exist
- trives
  - trivdes
  - har trivdes
  - thrive, enjoy oneself
- lykkes
  - lyktes
  - har lyktes
  - succeed
- møtes
  - møttes
  - har møttes
  - meet
- skyldes
  - skyldtes
  - har skyldes
  - be caused by
- skilles
  - skilles
  - har skilles
  - divorce
- ses
  - sås
  - meet

Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject form</th>
<th>object form</th>
<th>reflexive form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jeg</td>
<td>meg</td>
<td>meg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>du</td>
<td>deg</td>
<td>deg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>han</td>
<td>ham/han</td>
<td>seg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hun</td>
<td>henne</td>
<td>seg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>den</td>
<td>den</td>
<td>seg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>det</td>
<td>det</td>
<td>seg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi</td>
<td>oss</td>
<td>oss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dere</td>
<td>dere</td>
<td>dere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de</td>
<td>dem</td>
<td>seg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possessives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner:</th>
<th>jeg</th>
<th>du</th>
<th>han</th>
<th>hun</th>
<th>vi</th>
<th>dere</th>
<th>de</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M (car)</td>
<td>bilen</td>
<td>din</td>
<td>hans</td>
<td>hennes</td>
<td>vár</td>
<td>deres</td>
<td>deres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (jacket)</td>
<td>jakka mi</td>
<td>di</td>
<td>hans</td>
<td>hennes</td>
<td>vár</td>
<td>deres</td>
<td>deres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (house)</td>
<td>huset mitt</td>
<td>ditt</td>
<td>hans</td>
<td>hennes</td>
<td>vår</td>
<td>deres</td>
<td>deres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl. (cats)</td>
<td>kattene mine</td>
<td>dine</td>
<td>hans</td>
<td>hennes</td>
<td>vår</td>
<td>deres</td>
<td>deres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner:</th>
<th>han</th>
<th>hun</th>
<th>de</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive</td>
<td>bilen</td>
<td>sin</td>
<td>sin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jakka</td>
<td>si</td>
<td>si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>huset</td>
<td>sitt</td>
<td>sitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kattene</td>
<td>sine</td>
<td>sine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demonstratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>near</th>
<th>remote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>denne (this)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>dette (this)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>disse (these)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sentences

The clause elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Per ler. Den gamle damen har gått. Per laughs. The old lady has left.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>Per ler. Den gamle damen har gått. Per laughs. The old lady has left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complement</td>
<td>Per er lærer. Den gamle damen ble sint. Per is a teacher. The old lady was angry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main clause

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nå (Now)</td>
<td>vil</td>
<td>jeg</td>
<td>ikke</td>
<td>bo</td>
<td>her lenger. (here longer.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeg</td>
<td>kan</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>aldri</td>
<td>stay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>can</td>
<td></td>
<td>never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hun</td>
<td>er</td>
<td></td>
<td>alltid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>is</td>
<td></td>
<td>always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hvorfor (Why)</td>
<td>ler</td>
<td>du</td>
<td>av meg?</td>
<td>of me?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laugh</td>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kan</td>
<td>dere</td>
<td>hjelpe</td>
<td>meg</td>
<td>i morgen?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>help</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>tomorrow?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This is how the words are most commonly placed in the sentence:
1. Subject or adverbial
2. Verb in the present tense or preterite
3. Subject if it is not placed in place number 1
4. Simple adverbs like ikke, nok, altid (not, probably, always)
5. Verb; infinitive or past participle
6. Object, complement
7. Adverbials for place, time and others.

Alternative placement of ikke
In some cases, ikke moves up ahead in the sentence, and comes before the subject. This is quite common when the subjective is a noun or has particular emphasis:
Nå bor ikke familien i Norge. Now the family does not live in Norway.
Dessverre kan ikke min far besøke meg. Unfortunately my father can not visit me,
Skal ikke Petter dra til Paris? Will Petter not be going to Paris?

Sentences with det as the subject
When the clause has two subjects, a formal det as well as a logical subject, det is in the normal subject position, while the logical subject is placed in the same position as an object.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Det</td>
<td>har</td>
<td>visst</td>
<td>vært</td>
<td>uvaer</td>
<td>i natt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There</td>
<td>has</td>
<td>apparently</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>a storm</td>
<td>tonight.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I natt</td>
<td>har</td>
<td>det</td>
<td>visst</td>
<td>vært</td>
<td>uvaer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tonight)</td>
<td>has</td>
<td>there</td>
<td>apparently</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>a storm.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subordinate clauses
In subordinate clauses the word order is even more strict than in main clauses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>de</td>
<td>ikke</td>
<td>kan</td>
<td>komme</td>
<td>i dag.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(that)</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>can</td>
<td>come</td>
<td>today.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>selv om</td>
<td>hun</td>
<td>aldrig</td>
<td>vil</td>
<td>innremme</td>
<td>det.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even if</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>never</td>
<td>will</td>
<td>admit</td>
<td>it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hvis</td>
<td>det</td>
<td>blir</td>
<td>uvaer</td>
<td>stormy</td>
<td>in natt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>becomes</td>
<td>i natt.</td>
<td>tonight.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>