
Discovering Swedish



EPISODE 1

“Verbs”
and
“Word Order”



Dialogue

Swedish

- José:** Hej! Är du Johanna?
- Anna:** Nej, jag* heter Anna. Jag kommer från Tyskland.
- José:** Åh, på så vis. José**. Trevligt att träffas.
- Anna:** Varifrån kommer du?
- José:** Spanien***.

English

- José:** Hello! Are you Johanna?
- Anna:** No, I'm Anna. I come from Germany.
- José:** Oh, I see. I'm José. Pleased to meet you.
- Anna:** Where are you from?
- José:** I'm from Spain.

Notes: *Swedish pronunciation does not always reflect the spelling. The 'g' in 'jag' is often dropped in casual speech. Thus, when someone says 'jag heter ___', it may sound like 'ja heter'. Although this is common practice today, it is never wrong to pronounce the 'g'.

** When José gives his name, he just says his name and nothing else. The correct, full sentence would be 'Jag heter José', but Swedes often drop the 'jag heter' in spoken introductions. If you introduce yourself in writing, you have to use the full sentence.

*** The complete sentence would read 'Jag kommer från Spanien', but in casual speech 'jag kommer från' can be omitted when answering a direct question. While this is possible in English too, it is in my experience more common in Swedish, than in English.

Key vocabulary

Swedish	English
hej	hello/hi
hej då	good bye/bye
jag	I
du	you
ja/nej	yes/no
Jag heter _____.	I'm (my name is) _____.
Jag kommer från _____.	I come from _____.
Trevligt att träffas.	Pleased to meet you.
Varifrån kommer du?	Where do you come from?

Key sentences

Swedish	English
Kommer du från tyskland?	Are you from Germany?
Nej, jag kommer från estland.	No, I'm from Estonia.
Vad heter du?	What is your name?
Talar du svenska?	Do you speak Swedish?

Grammar Explanations

S V O The **word order** in Swedish is the same as in English, i.e. SVO (subject verb object):

Jag kastar bollen (I throw the ball)
s v obj.

V S ? When asking a question, a different word order is sometimes necessary. This commonly happens when you take a statement and rephrase it as a question.

Consider:

Du är José (you are José).
s v

Är du José? (are you José?).
v s

N/ProN + V + N This is one of the key sentence structures in Swedish, and the first of many that we would like to introduce: Noun or Pronoun + Verb + Noun.

Example:

I	am named	Martin	(I'm Martin)
Jag	heter	Martin	
ProN.	Verb	Noun	
The dog	eats	the food	
Hunden	äter	maten	
Noun	Verb	Noun	

V + N/ProN + N? This is one of the key sentence structures presented in this episode: Verb + Noun or Pronoun + N + question mark.

Example:

Are	you	José?	
Är	du	José?	
Verb	ProN.	Noun	
Drives	José	car?	(does José drive?)
Kör	José	bil?	
Verb	Noun	Noun	

Countries & Languages

Swedish		
<i>Country</i>	<i>Language</i>	English
Australien	Engelska	Australia
Danmark	Danska	Denmark
Finland	Finska	Finland
Frankrike	Franska	France
Grekland	Grekiska	Greece
Italien	Italienska	Italy
Japan	Japanska	Japan
Kina	Kinesiska	China
Nederländerna	Nederländska	The Netherlands
Norge	Norska	Norway
Polen	Polska	Poland
Ryssland	Ryska	Russia
Spanien	Spanska	Spain
Storbritannien	Engelska	The UK
Sverige	Svenska	Sweden
Sydkorea	Koreanska	South Korea
Tyskland	Tyska	Germany
USA	Engelska	The USA

For those of you with a grammatical interest: Here's a table with the most common primary pronouns.

Primary pronouns

person	number and gender	personal subjective	objective	possessive
1st	singular plural	jag vi	mig oss	min/mitt/mina vår/vårt/våra
2nd	singular plural	du ni	dig er	din/ditt/dina er*/ert/era
3rd	masc. singular fem. singular non-pers. singular plural	han hon den/det de	honom henne den/det dem	hans hennes dess deras

Notes: * Sometimes you will hear Swedes say 'eran/erat' instead of 'er/ert', as in 'eran bil' (your car) or 'erat namn' (your name). This is informal Swedish sometimes used in spoken form. It should never be used in writing. The same applies to 'våran/vårat' instead of 'vår/vårt'.

Building Sentences

Knowing those primary pronouns and the SVO word order, let's see how easy it is to form a Swedish sentence...

Subject Use any noun (more on nouns in another lesson), name or subjective pronoun.

Verb Good news: each tense only has **ONE** conjugation. The subject doesn't matter, the conjugated verb is the same for all subjects!

Object Use any noun, name or objective pronoun. With some verbs of course an object just doesn't fit.

More on Verbs

The general, unconjugated form of the verb is the infinitive. Swedish infinitives often end in –a. To use the verb **vara (to be)** in English you'd say *I am*, *you are*, *s/he is*, etc. In Swedish it's always **är** in present tense, almost like saying "I is, you is, s/he is..." see, easy!

There is only one present tense. So comparing it to English, *Jag läser* can be translated as both *I read* and *I am reading*.

Now that you don't have to memorize any conjugation patterns you can get a list of verbs and learn them! There are a few different types of verbs (different endings, as you'll see below) but they are mostly very easy to remember! We will start off here with present and past (preteritum) tenses:

FIRST CONJUGATION			
Infinitive/Infinitiv (-a)	Present/Presens (-ar)	Past/Preteritum (-ade)	English
Arbeta	Arbetar	Arbetade	Work (formal)
Bada	Badar	Badade	Bathe
Börja	Börjar	Började	Begin
Fråga	Frågar	Frågade	Ask
Hitta	Hittar	Hittade	Find
Jobba	Jobbar	Jobbade	Work (informal)
Plugga	Pluggar	Pluggade	Study (informal)
Prata	Pratar	Pratade	Talk
Sluta	Slutar	Slutade	End
Spela	Spelar	Spelade	Play
Stanna	Stannar	Stannade	Stop, Stay
Studera	Studerar	Studerade	Study (formal)
Svara	Svarar	Svarade	Answer
Tala	Talar	Talade	Speak
Titta	Tittar	Tittade	Look, Watch
Träffa	Träffar	Träffade	Meet
Öppna	Öppnar	Öppnade	Open
SECOND CONJUGATION			
Infinitive/Infinitiv (-a)	Present/Presens (-er, -)	Past/Preteritum (-de, -te)	English
Behöva	Behöver	Behövde	Need
Glömma	Glömmer	Glömde	Forget
Hjälpa	Hjälper	Hjälpte	Help
Hända	Händer	Hände	Happen
Höra	Hör	Hörde	Hear
Känna	Känner	Kände	Feel, Know (person)
Köpa	Köper	Köpte	Buy

Köra	Kör	Körde	Drive
Lära	Lär	Lärde	Learn*
Läsa	Läser	Läste	Read
Resa	Reser	Reste	Travel
Ringa	Ringer	Ringde	Ring, Call
Ställa	Ställer	Ställde	Put, Set
Stänga	Stänger	Stängde	Close
Tycka	Tycker	Tyckte	Think (opinion)
Tänka	Tänker	Tänkte	Think
Åka	Åker	Åkte	Go

THIRD CONJUGATION

Infinitive/Infinitiv (-)	Present/Presens (-r)	Past/Preteritum (-dde)	English
Bo	Bor	Bodde	Live
Tro	Tror	Trodde	Believe, Think

FOURTH CONJUGATION (IRREGULAR – FIND THE PATTERNS)

Infinitive/Infinitiv	Present/Presens	Past/Preteritum	English
Bära	Bär	Bar	Carry
Dricka	Dricker	Drack	Drink
Flyga	Flyger	Flög	Fly
Få	Får	Fick	Get, May
Ge	Ger	Gav	Give
Gå	Går	Gick	Go (walk)
Göra	Gör	Gjorde	Do, Make
Ha	Har	Hade	Have
Njuta	Njuter	Njöt	Enjoy
Se	Ser	Såg	See
Sitta	Sitter	Satt	Sit
Skriva	Skriver	Skrev	Write
Stå	Står	Stod	Stand
Säga	Säger	Sa	Say
Ta	Tar	Tog	Take
Vara	Är	Var	Be
Veta	Vet	Visste	Know (a fact)
Vinna	Vinner	Vann	Win

In Swedish the verb *lära* (to learn) is reflexive, so when you "learn" you actually "learn yourself." Use this verb with *reflexive pronouns* which we will introduce to you in another lesson. Ex. I am learning Swedish= Jag lär mig svenska.