
Discovering Swedish



EPISODE 5

“Weekdays”
and
“Time”



Dialogue

Swedish

- José:** Anna, har du en klocka?
- Anna:** Nej.
- José:** Mm... Vet du vad klockan är?
- Anna:** Nej.
- José:** Vad tror du att klockan är?
- Anna:** Skärp dig nu!* Jag vet inte vad klockan är!
- José:** Ah! Johanna! Ursäkta, vet du vad klockan är?
- Johanna:** Ja.
- José:** Vad är hon**?
- Johanna:** Vem då?
- José:** Klockan! Jag skulle träffa en vän klockan sju. Onsdag klockan sju, men hon är inte här ännu.
- Johanna:** Jaså... Ja, klockan är halv åtta***, men det är tisdag idag, inte onsdag.
- José:** Eh?!

English

- José:** Anna, do you have a watch?
- Anna:** No.
- José:** Mm... Do you know what time it is?
- Anna:** No.
- José:** What time do you think it is?
- Anna:** Get a grip on yourself! I don't know what time it is!

José: Ah! Johanna! Excuse me, do you know what time it is?

Johanna: Yes.

José: What is it?

Johanna: Who?

José: The time! I was supposed to meet a friend at seven. Wednesday at seven, but she's not here yet.

Johanna: Oh, I see... Well, she's half past seven, but today is Tuesday, not Wednesday.

José: Eh?!

Notes: * Skärp dig nu roughly translates into 'pull yourself together' or 'get a grip on yourself'. It is a phrase used when you are frustrated by someone's obviously silly or stupid behaviour, for instance when someone does not understand something that should be obvious. In this dialogue, Anna gets frustrated with José's failure to understand the obvious, namely that Anna does not know the time. This phrase should be used with caution, and only with people you know well.

** In Swedish, time is a she.

*** In Swedish we do not use the 'half past' construction. Instead of 'half past seven', we say 'half (to) eight' (halv åtta). The 'to' is sort of inferred. In fact, adding the 'to' (halv till åtta) makes the sentence ungrammatical. This is covered in greater detail later in this compendium.

Key vocabulary

Swedish	English
ursäkta mig	excuse me
vem	who
vad	what
träffa	meet
var	where
(en) vän	friend
skärp dig nu	get a grip on yourself, pull yourself together.
ännu	yet
(en) minut	minute
(en) kvart	quarter (15 minutes)
halv	half (as in 'half past one'*)
i/över	to/past (used when talking about time).
(en) klocka	watch, clock

Key sentences

Swedish	English
Jag ska träffa en vän på onsdag.	I'll meet a friend on Wednesday.
När ska vi träffas?	When should we meet?
Var ska vi träffas?	Where should we meet?

Months, Dates and Days

Days of the Week		Dates of the Month			
Måndag	Monday	1	Första	17	Sjuttonde
Tisdag	Tuesday	2	Andra	18	Artonde
Onsdag	Wednesday	3	Tredje	19	Nittonde
Torsdag	Thursday	4	Fjärde	20	Tjugonde
Fredag	Friday	5	Femte	21	Tjugoförsta
Lördag	Saturday	6	Sjätte	22	Tjugoandra
Söndag	Sunday	7	Sjunde	23	Tjugotredje
Months of the Year		8	Åttonde	24	Tjugofjärde
Januari	January	9	Nionde	25	Tjugofemte
Februari	February	10	Tionde	26	Tjugosjätte
Mars	March	11	Elfte	27	Tjugosjunde
April	April	12	Tolfte	28	Tjugoåttonde
Maj	May	13	Trettonde	29	Tjugonionde
Juni	June	14	Fjortonde	30	Trettionde
Juli	July	15	Femtonde	31	Trettioförsta
Augusti	August	16	Sextonde		
September	September				
Oktober	October				
November	November				
December	December				

Telling the time

Sharp on the hour					
Brittish time	Swedish time (in writing)	Swedish time (in speech)	Brittish time	Swedish time (in writing)	Swedish time (in speech)
8:00 AM	8:00	Åtta	8:00 PM	20:00	Tjugo (in common speech often 'åtta')
9:00 AM	9:00	Nio	9:00 PM	21:00	Tjugoett (in common speech often 'nio')
10:00 AM	10:00	Tio	10:00 PM	22:00	Tjugotvå (in common speech often 'tio')
11:00 AM	11:00	Elva	11:00 PM	23:00	Tjugotre (in common speech often 'elva')
12:00 PM	12:00	Tolv	12:00 AM	0:00	Midnatt/tolv på natten
1:00 PM	13:00	Tretton (in common speech often 'ett')	1:00 AM	1:00	Ett (på natten)
2:00 PM	14:00	Fjorton (in common speech often 'två')	2:00 AM	2:00	Två (på natten)
3:00 PM	15:00	Femton (in common speech often 'tre')	3:00 AM	3:00	Tre (på natten)
4:00 PM	16:00	Sexton (in common speech often 'fyra')	4:00 AM	4:00	Fyra (på morgonen)
5:00 PM	17:00	Sjutton (in common speech often 'fem')	5:00 AM	5:00	Fem (på morgonen)
6:00 PM	18:00	Arton (in common speech often 'sex')	6:00 AM	6:00	Sex (på morgonen)
7:00 PM	19:00	Nitton (in common speech often 'sju')	7:00 AM	7:00	Sju (på morgonen)
Other times					
a quarter past ____.		Kvart över ____.	xx:01-xx:29		____ minut/–er över ____. Ex: tio minuter över fyra (ten minutes past four)
a quarter to ____.		Kvart i ____.	xx:31-xx:59		____ minut/–er i ____. Ex: tio minuter i fyra (ten minutes to four)
half to (30 min to __)		Halv ____.			

Grammar Explanations

'Måndag' first day of the week

In many countries, Sunday is considered the first day of the week. This is reflected in calendars where Sunday usually occupies the left-most column. In Sweden and Swedish calendars, however, Monday is the first day of the week. Thus you will find Monday in the left-most column in Swedish calendars.

Expressions of time

Halv, kvart, i and över are all words used to tell time. Here we will cover them one at a time.

Halv

As touched upon briefly in the commentary to the dialogue, 'half' (halv) is of used quite the same way in Swedish, as it is in English. In English, the 'half past' construction is used to express that half an hour (30 minutes) have passed since the last full hour. In Swedish, however, 'half' (halv) is used to express that that there is still a half hour (30 minutes) until the next hour sharp.

Example:

Half past six = Half (to) seven
Halv sju

I and Över

To and past are expressed using the Swedish preposition counterparts 'i' and 'över'. When expressing time, they are used in the same way as their English counterparts.

Example:

Ten to four = Ten to four
Tio i fyra

Ten past four = Ten past four
Tio över fyra

Kvart i/kvart över

The quarter construction works the same in Swedish as it does in English. Thus, combining a 'quarter' (kvart) with the prepositions for 'to' (i) and 'past' (över) will result in 'a quarter to' (kvart i) and 'a quarter past' (kvart över).

Example:

A quarter to four = A quarter to four
Kvart i fyra

A quarter past four = A quarter past four
Kvart över fyra

A.M and P.M

Sweden technically operates on a 24 hour basis, similarly to US military time. Thus, 3PM and commonly written as 15:00, whereas 3AM would be written as 3:00. In common speech, however, we usually say 3 o'clock (klockan 3) regardless of if it is in the day or the night. The context will usually inform us on whether the speaker is referring to 3AM or 3PM. In the odd instances when the context does not make it explicit, or if the speaker wishes to put extra emphasis on the time, expressions like 'in the morning' (på morgonen), 'in the evening' (på kvällen), 'in the night' (på natten) and 'in the day' (på dagen) may be added after the time.

Example:

3PM = 3 in the day
3 på dagen

3AM = 3 in the night
3 på natten

7PM = 7 in the evening
7 på kvällen

7AM = 7 in the morning
7 på morgonen

Note: The Swedish preposition 'på' (Eng. 'on') is used in these expressions of time, instead of the 'i' (Eng. 'in').

The written 24hr form will be covered in the next episode.