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Spelling and pronunciation

Alphabets

Elefen uses the two most widely known alphabets in the world: Roman (or Latin) and Cyrillic.

- **Roman (lowercase)**
  - a b c d e f g h i j l m n o p r s t u v x z
- **Roman (capitals)**
  - A B C D E F G H I J L M N O P R S T U V X Z
- **Cyrillic (lowercase)**
  - а б к д е ф г х и ж л м н о п р с т у в ш з
- **Cyrillic (capitals)**
  - А Б К Д Е Ф Г Х И Ж Л М Н О П Р С Т У В Ш З

K, Q, W, and Y do not appear in ordinary words. They are only used to preserve the original forms of proper nouns and non-Elefen words. The same applies to various additional letters of the Cyrillic alphabet.

H is also not common, but it is found in some technical and cultural terms.

Capital letters

A capital letter is used at the start of the first word in a sentence.

Capital letters are also used at the start of proper nouns. When a proper noun consists of several words, each word is capitalized – apart from minor words like la and de:

- People, real or imagined, as well as personified animals and things
  - Maria, San Paulo, Barack Obama, Jan de Hartog, Seniora Braun, Oscar de la Renta, Mickey Mouse
- Organizations (e.g. companies, societies)
  - Ikea, Nasiones Unida, Organiza Mundal de Sania
- Political entities (e.g. nations, states, cities)
  - Frans, Atina, Site de New York, Statos Unida de America
- Geographical locations (e.g. rivers, oceans, lakes, mountains)
  - la Alpes, Rio Amazon, Mar Atlantic
• Letters of the alphabet
  ▶ E, N

But with titles of works of art and literature, only the first word of the title is capitalized (along with any proper nouns that appear):
  • **Un sonia de un note de mediaestate** – *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*
  • **La frates Karamazov** – *The Brothers Karamazov*
  • **Tocata e fuga en D minor** – *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor*

Sometimes, as in warnings, capitals are used to EMPHASIZE entire words or phrases.

Elefen uses small letters in places where some languages use capitals:

  • Days of the week
    ▶ **lundi**, **jovedi** – Monday, Thursday
  • Months
    ▶ **marto**, **novembre** – March, November
  • Holidays and similar occasions
    ▶ **natal**, **ramadan**, **pascua** – Christmas, Ramadan, Easter
  • Centuries
    ▶ **la sentenio dudes-un** – the twentieth century
  • Languages and peoples
    ▶ **catalan**, **xines** – Catalan, Chinese
  • Abbreviations
    ▶ **lfn**, **pf**

### Letter names

The following syllables are used to name letters in speech, e.g. when spelling a word:

  • **a be ce de e ef ge hax i je ka el em en o pe qua er es te u ve wa ex ya ze**

These are nouns and can be pluralized: **as**, **bes**, **efes**.

In writing, one can simply present the letter itself, capitalized, adding -s for the plural:

  • **La parola “matematica” ave tre As, du Ms** (pronounced **emes**), **e un E**. – The word “matematica” has three As, two Ms, and an E.
Vowels

The letters A, E, I, O, and U are pronounced as in Spanish:

- A [a] as in Spanish or French “papa”; similar to the open front unrounded vowel in “palm”
- E [e] as in Spanish “peso” or French “été”; similar to the vowels in “get” or “gate”
- I [i] the vowel in “feet”
- O [o] as in Spanish “poso” or French “beau”; similar to the vowels in “caught” or “coat”
- U [u] the vowel in “moon”

The vowel sounds allow a degree of variation. For example, A can be pronounced as [α] (as in “car”), E as [ɛ] (“get”) or [ei] (“gate”), and O as [ɔ] (“caught”) or [ou] (“coat”) without causing misunderstanding.

Diphthongs

When one vowel follows another, they are normally pronounced separately.

But when the second vowel is I or U, the two vowels form a diphthong:

- AI [aj] the sound in “aisle”
- AU [aw] the sound in “mouth”
- EU [ew] no corresponding English diphthong; similar to the “ay w” in “bay watch”
- OI [oj] similar to the sound in “coin”

Adding a prefix does not create a diphthong: reuni [re-uni], supraindise [supra-indise]. For similar reasons, two separate syllables are normal in a few other words too: egoiste [ego-iste], proibi [pro-ibi]. Such words are indicated in the dictionary, e.g. “proibi (o-i)”.

The sequence EI is rare. It is normally pronounced as two separate vowels: ateiste [ate-iste], feida [fe-ida], reinventa [re-inventa]. But speakers who find this pronunciation difficult can say [e] or even [e] instead.
When I or U precedes another vowel, it is reduced to a semivowel – like the English Y or W – in the following cases:

- At the start of a word
  - ioga [joga], ueste [weste]
- Between two other vowels
  - joia [ʒoja], ciui [kiwi], veia [veja]
- LI, NI between two other vowels
  - folia [folja], anio [anjo] – but not in the first syllable of a word
- CU, GU before a vowel
  - acua [akwa], cual [kwal], sangue [sangwe]

In other cases – e.g. emosia, abital, plia – the I or U remains a full vowel.

While these rules define the normal pronunciation for diphthongs, they can be ignored without confusion.

**Consonants**

The following letters are consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>[b]</td>
<td>as in “big”</td>
<td>bebe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>[k]</td>
<td>as in “cat”</td>
<td>clica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>[d]</td>
<td>as in “dog”</td>
<td>donada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>[f]</td>
<td>as in “fat”</td>
<td>fotografi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>[g]</td>
<td>as in “get”</td>
<td>garga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>[h]</td>
<td>as in “hot”, or silent</td>
<td>haicu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>[ʒ]</td>
<td>as in “treasure”</td>
<td>jeolojia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>[l]</td>
<td>as in “let”</td>
<td>lingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>[m]</td>
<td>as in “man”</td>
<td>mesma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>[n]</td>
<td>as in “not”</td>
<td>negante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>[p]</td>
<td>as in “pot”</td>
<td>paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>[r]</td>
<td>as in “roll”</td>
<td>rubarbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>[s]</td>
<td>as in “set”</td>
<td>sistemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>[t]</td>
<td>as in “ten”</td>
<td>tota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>[v]</td>
<td>as in “vat”</td>
<td>vivosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>[ʃ]</td>
<td>as in “shop”</td>
<td>xuxa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>[z]</td>
<td>as in “zoo”</td>
<td>zezea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gramatica de Lingua Franca Nova
Note the following points:

- **C** is always as in “call”, never as in “cell”.
- **F** is always as in “off”, never as in “of”.
- **G** is always as in “get”, never as in “gem”.
- **J** has the sound that it has in French and Portuguese: like the S in “treasure”.
- **N** before **G** or **C** has the sound of NG [ŋ] in English: **longa**, **ance**. Final NG, as in **bumerang**, also has this sound: the G is silent.
- **R** has the trilled or rolled sound that it has in Italian and Spanish.
- **S** is always as in “hiss”, never as in “his”.
- **V** never sounds like B, unlike in Spanish.
- **X** is like SH in English, SCH in German, and CH in French and Portuguese.
- **Z** is always as in “zoo”.

As some speakers have difficulty with consonants in certain combinations or positions, Elefen allows the following variations:

- **J**
  - J can also be pronounced [dʒ] like the J in “judge” if preferred.
- **R**
  - Other R sounds (as in French, German, or English) are acceptable, as long as they are clearly distinct from other Elefen sounds.
- **X**
  - X can also be pronounced [tʃ] like the CH in “church” if preferred.
- **Z**
  - Z can also be pronounced [ts] like the ZZ in “pizza” if preferred.
- **haicu**, **bahamas**
  - H can be left silent, if a speaker prefers: [aicu], [ba-amas].
- **blog**, **club**
  - Some international words end in unusual consonants. A trailing E can be added to ease the pronunciation: [bloge], [klube].
- **spada**, **strada**
  - A number of words start with S followed by a consonant. A speaker who finds this difficult can add a leading E: [espada], [estrada].
- **gnostica**, **psicolojia**
  - Some scientific words start with unusual combinations of consonants, such as FT, GN, MN, PS, or PT. The first consonant can be omitted in pronunciation: [nostika], [sikoloʒia].
Non-Elefen letters

When the non-Elefen letters appear in a word, they are normally pronounced as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>[k] like C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>[k] like C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>[u] or [w] like U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>[i] or [j] like I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ё</td>
<td>[jo] like IO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Й</td>
<td>[i] or [j] like I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ц</td>
<td>[ts] like TS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ч</td>
<td>[tʃ] like TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Щ</td>
<td>[ʃtʃ] like XTX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>БЫ</td>
<td>[i] like I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Э</td>
<td>[e] like E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ю</td>
<td>[ju] like IU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Я</td>
<td>[ja] like IA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stress

If a word has more than one vowel, one of the vowels is stressed (pronounced more strongly). The stressed vowels below are marked with a circumflex (^).

The basic rule is to stress the vowel that precedes the last consonant of a word:

- fâlda
- intêgra
- matematîca
- albatrôs
- ranûr

Adding a suffix can move the stress:

- matematîca → matematicâl
- radiogrâf → radiogrâfia (no change)
- radiogrâf → radiografistê

But adding the plural -s does not move the stress:

- un fâlda → du fâldas
- un jovên → tre jovênes
- âmbos – this special word is stressed like a plural
The I or U of a diphthong behaves like a consonant in this regard:

- abàia
- cîui
- bonsâi
- cacâu

If no vowel precedes the last consonant, the first vowel is stressed:

- trâe
- fêa
- tío
- prôa
- júa

Some words have multiple vowels after their last consonant. If the vowels are IA, IE, IO, UA, UE, or UO, the stress still goes on the vowel before the consonant:

- asêntua
- jelôsia
- rítuo
- álio

However, when the final vowels are AE, AO, EA, EO, OA, OE, o UI, the stress goes on the first vowel of the pair:

- conêo
- idêa
- sutrâe
- prodûi

(But in estingui, the U is a semivowel because of another rule.)

Ala, asi, agu, ami, enemi, perce, alo, and ura are often pronounced with the stress on the final vowel rather than on the previous one. Either pronunciation is acceptable.

Compound words such as parario and mediadia retain the original stress of the second component.

Elefen is not a tonal language: words are not distinguished by changes in the pitch of the voice. However, one way to indicate that a sentence is a question is to end on a rise:

- Tu parla portuges? – with a rising pitch in the last word
- Tu no parla portuges. – with a flat or falling pitch
Phonotactics

The forms of ordinary words in Elefen are constrained by certain rules.

Two examples of the same vowel (such as aa) cannot be adjacent, except where this is the result of adding a prefix: “reenvia”, “coopera”. In these cases, both vowels are pronounced.

The sequences ei and ou are invalid. But ei is allowed in words that start with re-, such as reincarne. The two vowels are pronounced individually.

The sequence ei is normally only found in words with a prefix that ends in e (such as preistoria and reincarne) and in words with a suffix that starts with i (such as fein and veida). The standard pronunciation of ei is as two separate vowels, but [ej] and [e] are allowed if a speaker prefers.

The sequence ou is not normally acceptable.

Where a suffix would create an invalid vowel sequence, the second vowel of the sequence is dropped:

- **comedia + -iste → (comediiste) → comediste** – comedian

Only the following 22 consonant clusters are allowed at the start of a syllable:

- bl-, cl-, fl-, gl-, pl-
- br-, cr-, dr-, fr-, gr-, pr-, tr-
- sc-, sf-, sl-, sp-, st-
- **scl-, scr-, spl-, spr-, str.**

Only the following consonants are allowed at the end of a syllable, and they must be directly preceded by a vowel:

- -f, -s, -x
- -m, -n, -l, -r

A consonant cluster in the middle of a word is valid if it can be split over two valid syllables:

- **encontrante = en-con-tran-te**
- mostrablia = mo-stra-bli-a
- instinto = in-stin-to

Proper nouns, along with technical, international, or culture-specific words, are free to break these rules.
Sentences

Most sentences in Elefen contain a verb phrase, typically denoting the occurrence of an action. A verb phrase consists of a verb plus any modifiers such as adverbs or prepositional phrases.

Most sentences also contain at least one noun phrase, typically denoting a person or thing. A noun phrase consists of a noun plus any modifiers such as determiners, adjectives, and prepositional phrases.

Subject and object

The two most important noun phrases are the subject and the object. Their exact meaning depends on the choice of verb, but loosely speaking, the subject is the person or thing that carries out the action, and the object is the person or thing that is directly affected by the action.

In Elefen, the subject always precedes the verb, and the object always follows:

- La gato xasa la scural. – The cat (subject) … chases (verb) … the squirrel (object).
- La xica gusta la musica. – The girl (subject) … likes (verb) … the music (object).
- La can dormi. – The dog (subject) … sleeps (verb).

Most verbs require a subject, but many do not require an object.

Complements

Another common sentence component is the complement. This is an extra description of the subject that can follow verbs like es (be), deveni (become), pare (seem), and resta (remain):

- Computadores es macinas. – Computers (subject) … are (verb) … machines (complement).
- La aira pare umida. – The air (subject) … seems (verb) … damp (complement).
- La comeda deveni fria. – The food (subject) … becomes (verb) … cold (complement).
- La patatas ia resta calda. – The potatoes (subject) … stayed (verb) … hot (complement).
- Nosa taxe es reconstrui la mur. – Our task (subject) … is (verb) … to rebuild the wall (complement: a nested sentence).
- La idea es ce tu canta. – The idea (subject) … is (verb) … that you sing (complement: a nested sentence).
Some languages also allow the object to have a complement, as in “I find this cheese *disgusting*” or “They elected him *president*”. This type of complement does not occur in Elefen.

**Prepositions**

One other major sentence component is the prepositional phrase, which adds detail to a preceding noun or verb, or to the sentence as a whole:

- La om ia cade **tra sua seja**. – The man *(subject)* … fell *(verb)* … through his chair *(prepositional phrase)*.
- **En la note**, la stelas apare. – In the night *(prepositional phrase)* … the stars *(subject)* … appear *(verb)*.
- Me dona esta poma a **tu**. – I *(subject)* … give *(verb)* … this apple *(object)* … to you *(prepositional phrase)*.
- Tu no aspeta **como tua foto**. – You *(subject)* … don’t look *(verb)* … like your photo *(prepositional phrase)*.

**Clauses**

In addition to phrases, some sentences contain clauses, which resemble smaller sentences nested within the larger sentence. They can modify noun phrases, verb phrases, or the whole of the larger sentence:

- La om **ci ia abita asi** ia vade a Nu Iorc. – The man who lived here went to New York.
- El va visita en julio, **cuando la clima es bon**. – He will visit in July, when the weather is good.
- On no ia permite me fa la cosas **como me ia desira**. – I wasn’t allowed to do things as I wanted.
- Me pensa **ce el es bela**. – I think that she is beautiful.
A noun is typically introduced by determiners, and may be followed by adjectives and prepositional phrases, producing a noun phrase. Typical nouns denote physical objects such as people, places, and things, but nouns can also denote more abstract concepts that are grammatically similar.

**Plural**

Adding -s to a noun makes it plural. If the singular noun ends in a consonant, -es is added instead. The plural ending does not affect the word's stress:

- gâto, gâtos – cat, cats
- ôm, ômes – man, men

Adjectives modifying a noun do not change when the noun is plural. But when an adjective is used as a noun, it can be pluralized:

- la bones, la males, e la feas – the good, the bad, and the ugly
- multe belas – many beauties

Some nouns that are plural in English are singular in Elefen:

- El regarda un sisor con un binoculo. – He's looking at a pair of scissors through [a pair of] binoculars.
- On usa un bretela per suporta sua pantalon. – You use suspenders to hold up your pants (US); you use braces to hold up your trousers (Br).
- Me ia compra esta oculo de sol en Nederland. – I bought these sunglasses in the Netherlands.

**Countable and uncountable nouns**

Like many languages, Elefen distinguishes countable and uncountable nouns. A countable noun (or “count noun”) can be modified by a number, and can accept the plural -s. Typical countable nouns represent objects that are clearly individual entities, such as houses, cats, and thoughts. For example:

- un auto; la autos; cuatro autos – a car; the cars; four cars
- un gato; multe gatos; un milion gatos – a cat; many cats; a million cats
By contrast, uncountable nouns (sometimes called “mass nouns”) do not normally accept the plural -s. Uncountable nouns typically denote masses that have no clear individuality, such as liquids (water, juice), powders (sugar, sand), substances (metal, wood), or abstract qualities (elegance, slowness). When they are modified by a number or other quantity word, a unit of measure is often added for clarity. For example:

- la acua; alga acua; tre tases de acua – the water; some water; three cups of water
- lenio; multe lenio; du pesos de lenio – wood; a lot of wood; two pieces of wood

However, uncountable nouns can be used in a countable manner. They then denote particular examples or instances:

- Du cafes, per favore. – Two coffees, please.
- Me ia proba multe cesos. – I’ve tasted many cheeses.
- On no pote compara la belias de Paris e Venezia. – You can’t compare the beauties of Paris and Venice.

**Gender**

Nouns do not normally indicate their gender. To distinguish the sexes, the adjectives mas and fema are used:

- un cavalo mas – a male horse, a stallion
- un cavalo fema – a female horse, a mare

But there are a few words for family relations that mark females with -a and males with -o:

- ava, avo – grandmother, grandfather
- fia, fio – daughter, son
- neta, neto – granddaughter, grandson
- sobrina, sobrino – niece, nephew
- sposa, sposo – wife, husband
- tia, tio – aunt, uncle
- xica, xico – girl, boy
There are also a few pairs that use different words for the two sexes:

- **dama, cavalor** – dame, knight
- **diva, dio** – goddess, god
- **fem, om** – woman, man
- **madre, padre** – mother, father
- **rea, re** – queen, king
- **seniora, senior** – lady, Mrs; gentleman, Mr
- **sore, frate** – sister, brother

The rare suffix -esa forms the female variants of a few historical social roles:

- **abade, abadesa** – abbot, abbess
- **baron, baronesa** – baron, baroness
- **conte, contesa** – count, countess
- **duxe, duxesa** – duke, duchess
- **imperor, imperoresa** – emperor, empress
- **marci, marcesa** – marquess, marchioness
- **prinse, prinsesa** – prince, princess
- **tsar, tsaresa** – czar, czarina

**Noun phrases**

A noun phrase consists of a noun and its modifiers: determiners, which precede the noun, and adjectives and prepositional phrases, which follow it.

The two most important noun phrases in a sentence are the **subject** and the **object**. The subject precedes the verb, and the object follows the verb. Other noun phrases are normally introduced by prepositions to clarify their function.

A noun phrase must normally contain a determiner – perhaps just the plural marker -s. But this rule does not apply to proper nouns, to the names of weekdays, months, and languages, and to uncountable nouns:

- **Desembre es calda en Australia.** – December is warm in Australia.
- **Nederlandes es me lingua orijinal.** – Dutch is my original language.
- **Me gusta pan.** – I like bread.
The rule is also often relaxed when the noun phrase follows a preposition, particularly in fixed expressions:

- El es la comandor de polisia. – He is the chief of police.
- Me no gusta come bur de aracide. – I don’t like eating peanut butter.
- Nos vade a scola. – We are going to school.
- Acel es un problem sin solve en matematica. – That is an unsolved problem in mathematics.
- Un virgula pare nesesada per claria. – A comma seems necessary for clarity.

An adjective or determiner can be modified by a preceding adverb. Because adverbs look like adjectives, multiple adjectives are normally separated by commas or e. In speech, intonation makes the difference clear:

- Sola un poma multe putrida ia resta. – Only a very rotten apple remained.
- Me ia encontra un fem bela inteligente. – I met a beautifully intelligent woman.
- Me ia encontra un fem bela, joven, e inteligente. – I met a beautiful, young, and intelligent woman.

Sometimes a noun is just a token for any member of its class. In such cases, it makes little difference whether la or un is used, or whether the noun is plural or singular:

- La arpa es un strumento musical. – The harp is a musical instrument.
- Un arpa es un strumento musical. – A harp is a musical instrument.
- Arpas es strumentos musical. – Harps are musical instruments.

A pronoun is a special case of a noun phrase. Pronouns cannot normally be modified.

**Apposition**

Two noun phrases are said to be in apposition when one directly follows the other and both refer to the same entity. In most cases, the second phrase identifies the entity:

- la rio Amazon – the Amazon River
- la mar Pasifica – the Pacific Ocean
- la isola Skye – the Isle of Skye
- la Universia Harvard – Harvard University
- la Funda Ford – the Ford Foundation
- Re George 5 – King George V
- San Jacobo major – St. James the Elder
- Piotr la grande – Peter the Great
• me ami Simon – my friend Simon
• la parola “inverno” – the word “inverno”
• la libro La prinse peti – the book *The Little Prince*
• un arbor eucalipto – a eucalyptus tree

Acronyms and single letters can directly follow a noun to modify it:

• La disionario es ance disponable como un fix PDF. – The dictionary is also available as a PDF file.
• El ia porta un camisa T blu de escota V. – She was wearing a blue V-necked T-shirt.

Occasionally, two nouns apply equally to an object or person. In these cases, the nouns are joined by a hyphen:

• un produor-dirijor – a producer-director
• un primador-scanador – a printer-scanner

In all cases, the plural -s or -es is applied to both nouns:

• la statos membros – the member states
• produores-dirijores – producer-directors

A special case involves the verb nomi (name):

• Nos ia nomi el Orion. – We named him Orion.
• Me nomi esta forma un obelisce. — I call this shape an obelisk.
Determiners

A determiner is a word that modifies a noun to express the noun’s reference, including its identity and quantity. Apart from the plural marker -s (which is considered a determiner in Elefen), the determiners always precede the noun.

There are several different classes of determiner. Typical examples of each class are: tota, la, esta, cual, cada, mea, multe, otra.

Predeterminers

Tota means “all”. It indicates the entire quantity of the noun’s referent, which must be plural if countable. Unlike cada, tota refers to the whole thing, rather than the separate individuals that comprise it:

• Tota linguas es asurda. – All languages are absurd.
• Me va ama tu per tota tempo. – I will love you for all time / the whole of time.
• La lete ia vade a tota locas. – The milk went everywhere.

Ambos means “both”. It can be used in place of tota when the entire quantity is known to be only two. The noun must be plural:

• Ambos gamas es debil. – Both legs are weak.

Semantically, tota and ambos are no different from quantifiers, but they are treated as a separate class because of their syntax: they precede all other determiners in a noun phrase, including la.

They can also be used as pronouns.
Articles

Elefen has two articles – the definite article la, and the indefinite article un. “Definite” here means that the noun’s referent is “already defined”, as opposed to being something new.

La introduces a noun that denotes someone or something that the listener is already aware of. It is used in the following types of situation:

- The thing has already been mentioned:
  - Me ia compra un casa. La casa es peti. – I’ve bought a house. The house is small.
- The listener can easily guess that the thing exists:
  - Me ia compra un casa. La cosina es grande. – I’ve bought a house. The kitchen is large.
- The rest of the sentence specifies the thing well enough:
  - El ia perde la numeros de telefon de sua amis. – She’s lost the phone numbers of her friends.
- The listener can perceive the thing directly:
  - La musica es bela, no? – The music is lovely, isn’t it?
- The thing is well known to everyone. This includes fields of study and abstract nouns:
  - La luna es multe distante de la tera. – The moon is a long way from the earth.
  - Me no comprende la matematica. – I don’t understand mathematics.
  - El ama la cafe. – She loves coffee.
  - La felisia es plu importante ca la ricia. – Happiness is more important than wealth.

Un introduces a singular noun that refers to something the listener is not yet aware of. It is not used with plural or uncountable nouns. (It also serves as a quantifier meaning “one”.)

- Me vole leje un libro. – I want to read a book.
- Un gato ia veni en la sala. – A cat came into the room.

Some languages have a partitive article that indicates an indefinite quantity of an uncountable noun. Elefen uses la, or no article at all:

- Me gusta la cafe. – I like coffee / I like the coffee.
- Me gusta cafe. – I like coffee.
- Me bevi cafe. – I drink coffee.
Demonstratives

The demonstratives point to the noun’s referent, locating it in time or space or the discourse itself.

**Esta** means “this”. It is similar to **la**, but points to an item that is near the speaker, either physically or metaphorically:

- Me posese **esta casa**. – I own this house.
- **Esta libros** es merveliosa. – These books are wonderful.
- Me gusta **esta cafe**. – I like this coffee.
- **Esta mense** ia es difisil. – This month was difficult.
- **Esta frase** conteni sinco parolas. – This sentence contains five words.

**Acel** means “that”. It is also similar to **la**, but points to an item that is distant from the speaker, or at least more distant than **esta**:

- **Acel xico** regarda **acel xicas**. – That boy is looking at those girls.
- Atenta denova en **acel modo**. – Try that way again.
- **Acel torta** es noncomable. – That cake is inedible.

**Esta** and **acel** can be converted to pronouns.

Interrogatives

The interrogative determiners are one way to create questions.

**Cual** asks “which” or “what”:

- **Cual animal** es acel? – What animal is that?
- **Cual vejetales** es la plu bon? – What vegetables are the best?
- Tu veni de **cual pais**? – What country do you come from?
- **Cual fenetras** es rompida? – Which windows are broken?
- **Cual pintas** tu prefere? – Which paint do you prefer?

**Cuanto** asks “how many” with a plural countable noun, and “how much” with an uncountable noun:

- **Cuanto casas** es en tua strada? – How many houses are on your street?
- **Cuanto pan** tu pote come? – How much bread can you eat?

**Cual** and **cuanto** are also used as pronouns.
Selection determiners

The **selection determiners** pick out specific individuals from the whole set:

- **cada** – each, every
- **cualce** – whichever, any
- **alga** – some, a few, a little, any
- **no** – no
- **sola** – only

**Cada** means “each” or “every”, considering all the items separately as individuals. The noun must be countable but singular:

- Cada cane ave un nom. – Each dog has a name.
- Me no ia leje la cada parola. – I didn’t read every word.
- Tu fa la mesma era a cada ves. – You make the same mistake every time.

**Cualce** means “any”, i.e. it doesn’t matter which. The noun is normally countable. “Any” with an uncountable noun is usually “alga”:

- Prende cualce carta. – Pick any card.
- Cualce contenadores va sufisi. – Any containers will do.

**Alga** indicates that the identity of the noun’s referent is unspecified:

- Me ia leje acel en alga libro. – I read that in some book (or other).
- Cisa me va reveni a alga dia. – Maybe I will come back some day.
- Alga cosa es rompeda. – Something is broken.

When used with a noun that is uncountable, or a noun that is countable and plural, **alga** indicates that not only is the referent’s identity unspecified, but its quantity is too. The quantity is often understood to be fairly small – otherwise you would say **multe** – but not as emphatically small as with **poca**:

- Me va leje alga libros. – I’m going to read some books / a few books.
- Alga polvo ia cade de la sofito. – Some dust fell from the ceiling.
- El ave alga pan en sua sesto. – She has some bread in her basket.

**No** means “no”. It indicates that the noun’s referent is absent or non-existent:

- Me ave no arbores en me jardin. – I have no trees / I don’t have any trees in my garden.
- Tu va senti no dole. – You will feel no pain.
- No arbor es plu alta ce la tore Eiffel. – No tree is taller than the Eiffel tower.
- Me ia encontra no person en la parce. – I met nobody in the park.

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**Sola** means “only”, i.e. just this and no others:

- El es *la sola dotor* en la vila. – He is the only doctor in town.
- Estas es *la sola du parolas* cual nos no comprende. – These are the only two words we don’t understand.
- Me va destrui la mur con *un sola colpa*. – I shall destroy the wall with a single blow.

These determiners, with the exception of *no* and *sola*, can also be used as pronouns. They also form the special pronouns *cadun*, *cualcun*, *algun* and *nun*, which refer to *people*. To refer to *things*, the determiners are simply followed by *cosa*.

**Possessives**

The possessive determiners are *mea*, *tua*, *nosa*, and *vosa*:

- *Mea gato* ia come un mus. – My cat ate a mouse.
- Me gusta multe *tua dansa*. – I like your dance very much.
- *Nosa ecipo* va gania la premio. – Our team will win the prize.

Possession can also be indicated with a phrase like *de me*:

- Acel es *la casa de tu*. – That is your house.

The third-person possessive is *sua*, regardless of whether the equivalent pronoun would be *el*, *lo*, *los*, *on*, or *se*:

- La ipopotamo abri *sua boca*. – The hippopotamus opens its mouth. *(reflexive)*
- Nos regarda *sua dentes*. – We look at its teeth. *(not reflexive)*

**Quantifiers**

Quantifiers are determiners that help express the amount or quantity of the noun’s referent:

- *-s – -s* *(plural marker)*
- *un* – one, a
- *du, tre, cuatro…* – two, three, four…
- *multe* – many, much
- *poca* – few, little
- *plu* – more
- *la plu* – most
- *min* – fewer, less
- *la min* – least
The plural marker -s is the most basic quantifier. A noun phrase that includes a plural noun does not require any other determiner:

- Me va leje libros. – I’m going to read [some] books.
- Me va leje la libros. – I’m going to read the books.

As well as being the indefinite article, un is the number “one”. It indicates a single quantity of the noun’s referent. The noun must therefore be countable but singular:

- Me ave un frate e du sores. – I have one brother and two sisters.

The other cardinal numbers – du, tre, cuatro, etc – are likewise quantifiers.

- Me ave tre gatos obesa. – I have three fat cats.
- Me ave cuatro plu anios ca mea frate. – I am four years older than my brother.

Multe indicates a large quantity of the noun’s referent. It means “many” with a plural countable noun, and “much” with an uncountable noun:

- Esta casa ia sta asi per multe anios. – This house has stood here for many years.
- La pijones come multe pan. – The pigeons eat a lot of bread.

Poca is the opposite of multe, and indicates a small quantity. It means “few” with a plural countable noun, and “little” with an uncountable noun:

- Me reconose poca persones ca el. – I recognize few people. (really not many)
- El pote dona poca aida. – He can give little help. (really not much)
- Compare: Me pote leje alga parolas. — I can read a few words. (a small number)

Plu means “more”. It indicates a larger quantity of the noun’s referent, and can be used with plural and uncountable nouns. La plu means “most” – the largest quantity:

- Tu ave plu libros ca me. – You have more books than me.
- La plu linguas es bela. – Most languages are beautiful.
- Plu pan es en la cosina. – There’s more bread in the kitchen.
- La plu fango es repulsante. – Most mud is revolting.

Min is the opposite of plu, and means “less” or “fewer”. It indicates a smaller quantity, and can be used with plural and uncountable nouns. La min means “least” or “fewest”:

- Me desira min vejetales ca el. – I want fewer vegetables than her.
- Tu ia leje la min libros de cualcun ci me conose. – You have read the least books of anyone I know.
- El ave min interes a cada dia. – He has less interest every day.

With the exception of no, the quantifiers can all be converted to pronouns.
**Similarity determiners**

Four additional determiners are concerned with similarity and difference:

**La mesma** means “the same”. The word la cannot normally be omitted, although it can be changed to esta or acel:

- Tu porta la mesma calsetas como me. – You’re wearing the same socks as me.
- La gera ia comensa en la mesma anio. – The war began in the same year.
- Nos va reveni a esta mesma tema pos un semana. – We will come back to this same topic in a week’s time.

**Otra** means “other”:

- Nos ave aora esta tre otra problemes. – We have these three other problems now.
- La otra solve ia es plu bon. – The other solution was better.
- Tu ave otra pan? – Do you have any other bread?

**Tal** means “such”, i.e. of this or that kind:

- Me construi un macina de tempo. – I’m building a time machine.
  - Tal cosas es nonposible. – Such things are impossible.
- Me xerca un abeor. – I’m looking for a beekeeper.
  - Me no conose un tal person. – I don’t know such a person.
- Tu vole jua futbal con nos? – Do you want to play football with us?
  - Me prefere evita tal eserse. – I prefer to avoid such exercise.
- Tu ave plu libros como estas? – Do you have more books like these?
  - Si, me ave du otra tal libros. – Yes, I have two other such books.

**Propre** means “own”, as in “my own”, emphasizing the possessor of the noun. It is particularly useful after the determiner sua to clarify that the meaning is reflexive, i.e. that the noun belongs to the subject of the sentence:

- Mea propre idea es an plu strana. – My own idea is even stranger.
- El ia trova la xarpe de sua sposo e ia pone lo sirca sua propre colo. – She found her husband’s scarf and put it round her (own) neck.
Order of determiners

The determiners follow a certain order:

• The predeterminers tota and ambos, if present, precede all others.
• Next comes an article, a demonstrative, an interrogative, a selection determiner, or a possessive. There is normally no more than one such determiner in a noun phrase.
• After that, there can be one or more quantifiers or similarity determiners.
• The adjectives bon and mal, while not themselves determiners, usually precede the noun, following any determiners.

For example:

• El ia colie sua poca posesedas e parti. – She gathered her few possessions and left.
• Nos no ia tradui ancora acel outra cuatro frases. – We still haven’t translated those other four sentences.
• Tota la omes ia vade a la costa. – All the men went to the coast.
Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that replaces a longer noun phrase.

Personal pronouns

- me – I, me
- tu – you (one person)
- el – he, she, him, her
- lo – it
- nos – we, us
- vos – you (more than one person)
- los – they, them

Tu is singular and vos is plural in all situations, both formal and casual.

El is used to refer to people, and to animals such as mammals and birds. It can be metaphorically applied also to other creatures, robots, the moon, storms, etc.

Lo is used to refer to things, simple creatures, ideas, concepts, etc.

Los is used as the plural of both el and lo.

Elefen does not normally distinguish “he” and “she”. The forms elo (“he”) and ela (“she”) are rare, but can be used to avoid excessive repetition of people’s names when talking about a man and a woman in the same context.

A personal pronoun can be followed by a relative clause. If the meaning remains clear, the pronoun can be omitted, leaving the relative pronoun to do double duty:

- El recorda sempre la nomes de los ci el ia encontra. – He always remembers the names of those he has met.
- Me respeta tu, ci es tan saja. – I respect you, who are so wise.
- El ci osa, gania. – He/she who dares, wins.
- Ci osa, gania. – Who dares, wins.

On is a general indefinite pronoun, like “on” in French or “man” in German. It means “people in general” or “an arbitrary person” – or, in idiomatic English, “they” or “you”. It often avoids the need for a passive verb:

- On dise ce tu va parti. – They say you are going to leave.
- On debe repete la verbo. – You should repeat the verb. / The verb should be repeated.

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Se is the reflexive pronoun for the third person, both singular and plural. It refers to the subject of the current verb, but is never the subject itself:

- El limpi se. – It cleans itself.
- Los lava se. – They wash themselves.

The possessive pronouns (“mine”, “yours”, etc) are the same as the possessive determiners (“my”, “your”, etc), preceded by la:

- Me ia trova me libros, ma tu no ia trova la tuas. – I have found my books, but you haven’t found yours.
- Lo es ance plu grande ca la mea. – It is also bigger than mine.
- No toca acel jueta! Lo no es la tua. – Don’t touch that toy! It isn’t yours.

**Determine pronouns**

Just as an adjective can be converted to a noun, so most determiners can be converted to pronouns. The pronouns esta, acel, and otra always add -s when plural. A few other pronouns may also take -s if this makes things clearer.

- tota, totas – all
- ambos – both
- esta, estas – this, these
- acel, aceles – that, those
- cualce, cualces – any, whichever, whatever
- cada – each
- alga, algas – some
- cual – which
- multe, multes – much, many
- poca, pocas – little, few
- plu – more
- la plu – most
- min – fewer, less
- la min – fewest, least

Examples:

- Estas aspeta bela! – These looks nice!
- Prende cualce. – Take any (from a selection).
- Me no vole judi, car me gusta egal cada. – I don’t want to judge, because I like each one equally.
• Me vole grasia **cada de esta persones**. – I want to thank each of these people.
• **Alga(s)** pensa ancora ce la mundo es plata. – Some (people) still think that the world is flat.
• Tu ia versa mal la vino. **Alga** es sur la table. – You’ve poured the wine badly. Some (of it) on the table.
• **Multe(s)** de nos es programores. – Many of us are programmers.
• Me no ia regarda **multe(s) de acel filmas**. – I haven’t watched many of those films.
• Me reconose **poca(s)** de la persones en la fola. – I recognize few of the people in the crowd.
• **Plu** va ariva pronto. – More will arrive soon.
• Alga parolas es clar, ma on no pote leje fasil **la plu**. – Some words are clear, but most can’t easily be read.
• Tu ave **min** ca me. – You have less than me.
• Me vole bonveni **tota(s) de vos**. – I want to welcome you all.
• Me ia compra sinco libros nova, ma me ia lasa **tota(s) en la bus**. – I bought five new books, but I left them all on the bus.
• **Ambos** de la enfantes jua felis. – Both of the children are playing happily.

The cardinal numbers can be used as pronouns denoting groups of a specified size. These pronouns do not normally take the plural -s and do not require determiners:

• **Tre** de mea amis va ariva a esta sera. – Three of my friends will arrive this evening.
• **Cuanto pizas tu ia come?** – How many pizzas have you eaten?
  ▶ **Cuatro!** – Four!
• La **cuatro** de nos va come en junta. – The four of us will eat together.
• **Un** de mea gatos manca. – One of my cats is missing.
• La **tre** ia abita en la mesma aparte. – The three lived in the same flat.

To indicate indeterminate multiples of numbers such as **sento, mil**, or **milion**, the plural -s is added:

• On ia vide **miles** de persones a la conserta. – There were thousands of people at the concert.
• A cada anio, **miliones** migra a otra paises. – Every year, millions immigrate to other countries.
• On ia vacui **miles de plu** persones de locas inondada par la deluvias. – Thousands more people were evacuated from areas inundated by the floods.
• On pote fatura **plu sentos** per servi. – You can be charged additional hundreds for service.
La cannot be converted to a pronoun. El, lo, and los are used instead:

- La casa de mea padre es plu grande ca lo de mea frate. – My father’s house is larger than my brother’s.
- Lo es ane plu grande ca lo cual me intende compra. – It’s also larger than the one that I intend to buy.

No cannot be used as a pronoun, but it does form nun and no cosa. The number zero can also be used as a pronoun.

The idiomatic expression la un la otra means “one another” or “each other”. It has variants such as la un o la otra (one or the other), la un pos la otra (one after another), and la un sur la otra (one on top of the other):

- La xicos colpa la un la otra. – The boys are hitting each other.
- Me pila me crepes la un sur la otra. – I stack my pancakes one on top of the other.

In some sentences, a pronoun is immediately followed by a verb and risks being misunderstood as a determiner followed by a verb reused as a noun. For example, out of context, one can’t be sure whether acel veni de Italia means “that action of coming from Italy” or “that comes from Italy”. In most cases, the context makes the meaning entirely obvious. But beginners in Elefen, and those who wish to avoid all risk of ambiguity, can add a simple noun – such as person or cosa – after the determiner instead of converting it to a pronoun:

- Acel cosa veni de Italia. – That thing comes from Italy.
- Recorda ce alga persones (o algas) abita en sua auto. – Remember that some people live in their cars.

In some cases, one wants to make it clear that the verbal noun is not a verb. With words like alga, multe, and poca, one can add de between the determiner and the noun; the determiner then becomes a pronoun, but the noun doesn’t become a verb. With other determiners, such as esta and acel, one can add la before the determiner:

- La profesor ia demanda alga de atende. – The professor asked for some attention.
- Multe de labora pote es evitada. – A lot of work can be avoided.
- La esta deside no es un bon resulta. – This decision is not a good outcome.
**Interrogative pronouns**

Elefen has two pronouns that are used to create direct questions:

- **cual?** – which? / what? (= **cual cosa**)?
- **ci?** – who, whom? (= **cual person**)?

Ci is only used as a pronoun and should not be used as a determiner.

**Cual** is primarily a determiner, but it’s often also used as a pronoun, accepting the small risk of expressions such as **cual veni de Italia** being misunderstood.

Examples:

- **Cual** tu gusta? – Which do you like?
- **Cual** tu prefere, la rojas o la verdes? – Which do you prefer, the reds or the greens?
- Ci vole es un milionor? – Who wants to be a millionaire?
- Tu vade a la sinema con ci? – Who are you going to the movies with?
- **Cual** es en la caxa? – What is in the box?
- Vos prefere **cual**? – What do you prefer?

Ci and **cual** are also used in reported questions.

**Relative pronouns**

**Cual** and **ci** also serve as relative pronouns, introducing relative clauses:

- **cual** – that, which
- **ci** – who, whom ( = **la person cual**...)

The relative pronoun for a person or animal is **ci**. The relative pronoun for other things is **cual**:

- Esta es la fem de **ci** me ia compra mea auto. – This is the woman from whom I bought my car.
- La fem de **ci** me ia oblida sua nom es denova a la porte. – The woman whose name I’ve forgotten is at the door again.
- A, vide la patetas **ci** segue sua madre! – Ah, look at the ducklings who are following their mother!
- La libro **cual** me leje es tro longa. – The book that I’m reading is too long.
- La casa en **cual** nos abita es tro peti. – The house in which we live is too small.
- La superstisios – me gusta esta parola! – **cual** me ia investiga es riable. – The superstitions – I like that word! – that I have investigated are ridiculous.
• El espera un sonia cual el teme. – She experiences a dream of which she is afraid.
• Compare: El espera un sonia ce el teme. – She experiences a dream (and the dream is) that she is afraid.

With some relative clauses, the main sentence omits the noun that the clause relates to. The relative pronoun itself appears in the place of that noun. In such cases, to avoid confusion, cual can be expanded to lo cual, and ci to el ci:

• Acel es lo cual me ia comprende. – That is what I understood.
• Me comprende lo sur cual on ia instrui me. – I understand the information I’ve been taught about.
• Me no recorda (el) ci me ia vide. – I don’t remember the person who I saw.
• Me no recorda (el) a ci me ia parla. – I don’t remember the person I spoke to.

Other pronouns

There are four special pronouns that refer to people. They are only used in the singular:

• algun – somebody, someone (= alga un, alga person)
• cualcun – anybody, anyone, whoever (= cualce un, cualce person)
• cadun – everybody, everyone, each person (= cada un, cada person)
• nun – nobody, no one (= no un, no person)
• lunlotra – each other (= la un la otra)

Examples:

• Algun entre nos es la asasinor. – Someone among us is the murderer.
• Dise acel broma a cualcun, e el va rie. – Tell that joke to anybody, and they will laugh.
• Cadun debe reseta un premio. – Everyone must get a prize.
• Me senta en la atrio per un ora, e nun ia parla a me. – I’ve been sitting in the lobby for an hour, and nobody’s spoken to me.
• Los sposi lunlotra. – They married each other.

The equivalents of algun, cualcun, cadun, and nun for things are alga cosa (something), cualce cosa (anything), cada cosa (everything), and no cosa (nothing).
Pronoun phrases

Pronouns are not normally modified by determiners or adjectives, but they can be modified by prepositional phrases:

• Nos en la sindicato esije plu diretos. – We in the union demand more rights.
• Tota de la lenio es danada. – All of the wood is damaged.
• La plu de esta linguas es difisil. – Most of these languages are difficult.
Adjectives

An adjective is a word that modifies the meaning of a noun. Typical adjectives denote the qualities, properties, or attributes of the referents of their nouns.

In Elefen, adjectives do not change to indicate number or gender.

Position

Most adjectives follow the noun they modify. However, bon (“good”) and mal (“bad”) normally precede the noun, unless they are themselves modified:

- un bon can – a good dog
- un can plu bon – a better dog (*modified by plu*)
- la mal enfante – the bad child
- un mal can bon instruida – a bad dog well trained
- bon enfantes mal comprendeda – good children poorly understood

In most cases, it’s possible to add more than one adjective after the noun without causing confusion. But in some cases, one of the adjectives may also be understood as an adverb modifying the meaning of the following adjective. E can be placed between adjectives to avoid the confusion:

- la nara vera longa – the really long story (*vera = averbo*)
- la nara vera e longa – the true (and) long story (*vera = ajetivo*)
- la om grande, forte, e stupida – the big, strong, stupid man (*tre ajetivos*)

In some cases, an adjective is placed before the noun: for style in poetry or stories, o when two adjectives of similar weight are involved:

- la peti casa bela – the lovely little house
- un fea arbor vea – an ugly old tree

The most suitable adjectives for use before the noun are the simplest and shortest ones, such as bela, fea, nova, vea, grande, and peti.
Comparison

Comparative adjectives are formed by adding the adverbs **plu** (“more”) and **min** (“less”). “Than” is **ca**:

- La cosina es **plu calda ca** la jardin. – The kitchen is hotter than the garden.
- Esta leto es **min confortosa ca** me ia previde. – This bed is less comfortable than I expected.

Superlative adjectives are formed by adding the adverbs **la plu** (“most”) and **la min** (“least”):

- La sol es la ojeto **la plu calda** en la sistem solal. – The sun is the hottest object in the solar system.
- El ia ave un fia **la plu bela** en la mundo. – She had a daughter, the most beautiful (of daughters) in the world.

Ordinal numbers can be combined with the superlative construction:

- Vega es la stela **sinco la plu briliante** en la sielo de note. – Vega is the fifth brightest star in the night sky.
- El ia deveni la om **tre de la plu ricas** en la mundo. – He became the third richest man in the world.

Equality comparisons use the combination **tan… como…** (“so… as…”):

- La arbor ia es **tan alta como** un casa. – The tree was as tall as a house.
- On es **tan joven como** on senti. – You’re as young as you feel.

Adjectives as nouns

Any adjective can be reused unchanged as a noun, whose meaning is a person or a thing that has that adjective’s quality. The resulting noun obeys the normal rules for nouns – it takes -s when plural, requires a determiner, and can be modified by adjectives of its own:

- Esta anelo es perfeta sirculo. Lo es **un sirculo perfeta**. – This ring is perfectly circular.
  It is a perfect circle.
- Marilyn es un blonde, e seniores prefere **blondes**. – Marilyn is a blonde, and gentlemen prefer blondes.
Adverbs

Just as adjectives are words that modify nouns, so adverbs are words that modify almost anything else, such as verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, determiners, prepositions, noun phrases, and even whole sentences. Typically, adverbs give information about place, time, circumstance, cause, manner, or degree.

**Position**

In Elefen, adverbs and adjectives have the same form. The difference is made clear by positioning: adjectives follow nouns; adverbs follow verbs and precede other words:

- La om **ia studia atendosa** la testo. – The man studied the text carefully. (*modifying a verb*)
- Me ia veni asi en un tren **riable** lenta. – I came here on a ridiculously slow train. (*modifying an adjective*)
- La tren ia move **asurda** lenta. – The train moved absurdly slowly. (*modifying another adverb*)
- Me no **oia multe bon** tu. – I can’t hear you very well. ("multe" modifying "bon", and "multe bon" modifying "oia")
- **Cuasi** sento persones ia espeta sur la plataforma. – Almost a hundred people were waiting on the platform. (*modifying a quantifier*)
- On ia escava un buco **direta** ante me porte. – They’ve dug a hole right in front of my door. (*modifying a preposition*)
- **Sola** la manico es rompeda. – Only the handle is broken. (*modifying a noun phrase*)
- **Strana**, el ia porta un balde de pexes. – Strangely, he was carrying a bucket of fish. (*modifying a sentence*)

An adverb (or adverbial phrase) that modifies a verb (or the whole sentence) can also be placed at the beginning of the sentence. And if it doesn’t cause confusion, an adverb can be placed at the end of the sentence too: * El dansa **bon**. – He dances well. * **Pronto** el va cade. – Soon he will fall. * **Surprendente**, el es un xico **mulse** bon. – Surprisingly, he is a very good boy. * Me leje **felis** la libro. – I read the book happily.
In some cases, an adverb preceding an adjective can be joined to it with a hyphen to clarify the meaning:

- la parolas **nova-creada** – the newly created words

Another way to make an adverbial meaning clear is to say **en modo** or **a grado**:

- La melodia es bela **en modo** surprendente. – The tune is surprisingly good.

**Comparison**

Comparison of adverbs is exactly like comparison of adjectives.

**Primary adverbs**

In addition to the huge number of adverbs derived from adjectives, Elefen has a few words that are only adverbs:

- **cisa** – perhaps
- **cuasi** – almost
- **tan** – so (to such an extent)
- **tro** – too (excessively)
- **asi** – here
- **ala** – there
- **an** – even (contrary to expectation)
- **ance** – also
- **ancora** – again, still
- **aora** – now
- **alora** – then (at that time)
- **ja** – already
- **nunca** – never
- **sempre** – always
- **pronto** – soon
- **ier** – yesterday
- **oji** – today
- **doman** – tomorrow

**Tan** is used in exclamations:

- **Un vista tan bela!** – What a lovely view!
- **Tan stonante!** – How amazing!

**Quantifier adverbs**

Certain quantifiers can be converted to adverbs, indicating the extent or degree to which something is the case.

- **no** – not
- **alga** – some
- **multe** – much
- **poca** – little
- **plu** – more
- **min** – less
- **la plu** – most
- **la min** – least
No as an adverb means “not”, “to no extent”. It negates what it modifies. As a special case, when it modifies a verb, it precedes the verb: * Los no va comprende. – They won’t understand. * Nos ave no sola un orania, ma ance du bananas. – We’ve got not only an orange, but two bananas as well. * O, no esta problem denova! – Oh, not this problem again!

Alga as an adverb means “some”, “somewhat”, “fairly”, “to some extent”: * Acel es un caso alga spesial. – That’s a rather special case. * Alga confusada, el ia cade en la lago. – Somewhat confused, he fell into the lake.

Multe as an adverb means “much”, “very”, “to a large extent”: * Me es multe coler. – I am very angry. * El ama multe la femes. – He loves women a lot.

Poca as an adverb means “little”, “not much”, “to only a small extent”: * Me es poca interesada. – I’m not very interested. * El core poca. – He runs only a little.

Plu and min as adverbs mean “more” and “less”, “to a greater extent” and “to a lesser extent”: * Tu aspeta plu joven ca me. – You look younger than me. * No parla plu. – Don’t talk any more. * Me es min contente con la resulta ca me ta prefere. – I’m less pleased with the result than I would like.

La plu and la min as adverbs mean “most” and “least”, “to the maximum extent” and “to the minimum extent”: * “Pardona” es la parola la plu difisil. – “Sorry” is the hardest word. * El es la om la min interesante en la mundo. – He is the least interesting man in the world. * A la min, nos ave ancora la un la otra. – At least we still have each other.

**Interrogative and relative adverbs**

The following adverbs can be used in several ways:

- **cuando** – when
- **do** – where
- **como** – how
- **cuanto** – how many, how much
- **perce** – why

They create direct and indirect questions, and they introduce relative clauses. As an extension of their relative use, they also behave like conjunctions introducing adverbial clauses – **cuando**, for example, is then short for **a la tempo quando**. They can also be introduced by prepositions.
Cuando means “when” (a cual tempo, en cual tempo):

- Cuando nos va come? – When are we going to eat?
- La enfante demanda cuando nos va come. – The child is asking when we are going to eat.
- En la anio cuando me ia nase, la clima ia es multe calda. – In the year when I was born, the weather was very hot.
- Cuando nos ariva, me va dormi. – (At the time) when we arrive, I will sleep.
- Nos va canta ante cuando nos dansa. – We will sing before we dance.
- Nos va dansa pos cuando nos canta. – We will dance after we sing.
- Nos va dansa asta cuando nos adormi. – We will dance until we fall asleep.

Do means “where” (a cual loca, en cual loca). When used with a verb of movement, do often means “to where”:

- Do es la can? – Where’s the dog?
- Me no sabe do nos vade. – I don’t know where we’re going.
- En la pais do me ia nase, la clima es multe calda. – In the country where I was born, the weather is very hot.
- El ia dormi do el sta. – He slept where he stood.
- Me veni de do tu ia visita me. – I’m coming from where you visited me.
- La polisior ia desinia un circulo sirca do el ia trova la clave. – The policewoman drew a circle around where she found the key.

Como means “how” (en cual modo). It also serves as a preposition meaning “like”, “as”:

- Como tu conose mea nom? – How do you know my name?
- Me no comprende como tu conose mea nom. – I don’t understand how you know my name.
- La manera como tu pasea es riable. – The manner in which you walk is ridiculous.
- Me parla como me pensa. – I speak as/how I think.
- La descrive ia difere multe de como la loca aspeta vera. – The description differed greatly from how the place really looks.
- Tua oios es como los de un falcon. – Your eyes are like those of a hawk.
**Cuanto** means “how much” or “how many” (*en cual cuantia*). It also serves as a quantifier with the same meaning:

- **Cuanto** la orolojo custa? – How much does the watch cost?
- **Cuanto** tu ia compra? – How many/much did you buy?
- **Cuanto** tu desira esta torta? – How much do you want this cake?
- Me va demanda **cuanto** ia ariva. – I will ask how many have arrived.
- Nos va aida **cuanto** nos pote. – We will help as much as we can.
- Tu sabe **cuanto** me ama tu? – Do you know how much I love you?

**Perce** means “why” (in various senses: *par cual causa, per cual razona, con cual intende*). The corresponding conjunctions are *car* (“because”, “for the reason that”) and *afin* (“so that”, “with the intention that”). The special word **perce** is always used, not **per cual**:

- **Perce** tu core? – Why are you running?
- La fem ia demanda **perce** la fenetra es rompeda. – The woman asked why the window was broken.
Verbs

A typical verb denotes the occurrence or abandonment of an action (run, stop), a relationship (have, lose), or a state (stand, melt). In Elefen, verbs do not change to indicate such things as tense or mood. Instead, adverbs are used – especially the three preverbs ia, va, and ta. Any verb can be reused without change as a noun.

Tense

The future tense is marked with va (a word of French origin). Past tenses, including perfect and pluperfect, are marked with ia (of Chavacano origin). These are special adverbs that precede the verb. The present tense is unmarked:

- Me canta. – I sing / I am singing.
- Me va canta. – I will sing / I am about to sing.
- Me ia canta. – I sang / I was singing / I have sung / I had sung.

Stories often describe events that take place in the past (or an imagined past), or whose location in time is of no concern to the reader. In such cases, the ia may be omitted.

Elefen does not distinguish perfect and imperfect aspects of the verb (e.g. “I ate”, “I used to eat”, “I have eaten”, “I had eaten”). However, one can easily clarify the temporal sequence of two actions by marking the earlier one with ja (“already”):

- Cuando tu ia encontra nos, nos ia come ja. – When you met us, we had (already) eaten.
- Si tu reveni doman, me va fini ja la labora. – If you come back tomorrow, I will have (already) finished the work.
- Sempre cuando me ateni la fini de un capitol, me oblida ja la titu. – Whenever I reach the end of a chapter, I’ve (already) forgotten the title.

There are other ways to clarify the temporal sequence:

- Me ia come ante aora. – I ate before now.
- Me ia come plu temprana. – I ate earlier.
- Me ia fini come. – I finished eating.
- Me va come pronto. – I will eat soon.
• Me **comensa** come. – I start to eat.
• Me va come **pos acel**. – I will eat after that.
• Me va come **plu tarda**. – I will eat later.
• Me ia **abitu** come en la note. – I used to eat during the night.
• Me ia come **abitud** en la note. – I used to eat during the night.

Elefen has an optional “irrealis” particle **ta** (of Haitian origin) that can be used to indicate that something is unreal, or in doubt, or merely possible or desired. A sentence with **ta** addresses an alternative reality. In sentences using **si** (“if”), **ta** is added in the main clause, but it is usually omitted in the “if” clause – although including it there is not prohibited. It can suggest a future that is less probable than one using **va**. **Ta** can also convey a polite request. It can be used in various situations where many languages would use subjunctive or conditional moods, and it often corresponds to the English word “would”:

- Si me **ta rena** la mundo, cada dia ta es la dia prima de primavera. – If I ruled the world, every day would be the first day of spring.
- Si lo no esiste, on **ta debe** inventa lo. – If it didn’t exist, you’d have to invent it.
- Si tu canta, me va escuta. – If you sing, I will listen.
- Si tu va canta, me va escuta. – If you will sing, I will listen.
- Si tu canta, me **ta escuta**. – If you sing, I would listen.
- Si tu **ta canta**, me **ta escuta**. – If you were to sing, I would listen.
- Me duta ce tu **ta dise** acel. – I doubt you would say that.
- Tu **ta dona** la sal, per favore? – Would you pass the salt, please?

Normally, only one of **va**, **ia**, and **ta** can be used with each verb. An exception is **ia ta**, which has the same meaning as the past conditional in the Romance languages and “would have” in English. An example is an amusing comment by Richard Nixon:

- Me **ia ta** es un bon pape. – I would have made a good pope.

Unlike in English, reported speech in Elefen retains the tense of the original utterance:

- El ia dise ce la sala **es** fria. = El ia dise: “Oji, la sala **es** fria.” – He said the room was cold. = He said: “The room is cold today.”
- El ia demanda esce la sala **es** fria. = El ia demanda: “Esce la sala **es** fria?” – He asked if the room was cold. = He asked: “Is the room cold?”
- El ia pensa ce la sala **ia es** fria. = El ia pensa: “Ier, la sala **ia es** fria.” – He thought the room had been cold. = He thought: “The room was cold yesterday.”

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**Imperative**

The imperative, or command form of the verb, is unmarked. It differs from the present tense in that the subject is omitted. The subject would normally be **tu** or **vos**, i.e. the person addressed. **Ta** or **ta ce** can be used if a subject has to be included:

- **Para!** – Stop!
- **Pardona me.** – Excuse me / Sorry.
- **Toca la tecla de spasio per continua.** – Press the spacebar to continue.
- **Vade a via, per favore!** – Please go away!
- **Ta ce tua rena veni!** – May thy kingdom come!, would that thy kingdom come!
- **Ta ce nos dansa!** – Let’s dance!

**Negation**

Verbs are negated with the adverb **no**, which *precedes* both the verb and **va**, **ia**, or **ta**:

- **Me no labora oji, e me no va labora doman.** – I’m not working today, and I won’t be working tomorrow.
- **El no ia pensa ce algun es asi.** – He didn’t think anyone was here.
- **No traversa la strada sin regarda.** – Don’t cross the street without looking.

**Participles**

A **participle** is a verb used as an adjective or adverb. Verbs form active participles in **-nte**, and passive participles in **-da**. These are adjectives equivalent to those in “-ing” and “-ed” (or “-en”) in English, and can be used equally well as adverbs and nouns. The active participle normally also implies an ongoing action, while the passive participle suggests that the action occurred in the past:

- **Un ruido asustante ia veni de la armario.** – A frightening noise came from the cupboard. (*adjective*)
- **La om creante scultas es amirable.** – The man creating sculptures is admirable. (*adjective; = la om ci crea scultas*)
- **El ia sta tremante en la porta.** – She stood shivering in the doorway. (*adverb*)
- **Nos ia colie tota de la composantes.** – We have collected all of the components. (*noun*)
• Per favore, no senta sur la seja **rompeda**. – Please do not sit on the broken chair. *(adjective)*

• El ia cade **embarasada** tra la seja. – He fell, embarrassed, through the chair. *(adverb)*

• Sua novela va es un **bonvendeda**. – Her novel will be a bestseller. *(noun)*

The active participle can have an object. Furthermore, it can be used as a complement of the verb **es** to convey a progressive sense:

• Me **es** lenta **asorbente** la informa. – I am slowly absorbing the information.

• Me no ia disturba tu, car tu **ia es laborante**. – I didn't disturb you, as you were working.

But a participial construction is often unnecessary, as there are others ways to express this meaning:

• Me **asorbé lenta** la informa. – I slowly absorb / am slowly absorbing the information.

• Vade a via, me **labora**. – Go away, I'm working.

• Me **continua** come. – I continue to eat.

• Me come **continual**. – I eat continually.

• Me come **tra la dia intera**. – I eat throughout the day.

The passive participle can be used as a complement of the verbs **es** or **deveni**, producing a passive sense. **Par** (“by”) introduces the agent of a passive action: * Esta sala **ia es pintida par** un bufon. – This room was painted by a clown. * La sala **deveni pintida**. – The room is being painted. * Acel ponte **ia es desiniada par** un injenior famosa. – That bridge was designed by a famous engineer. * Lo **ia deveni conoseda** ce el ia es un om perilosa. – It became known that he was a dangerous man.

An active sentence with **on** or **algun** as its subject is often an elegant alternative to a passive sentence:

• **On** pindi la sala. – The room is being painted.

• **On** no conose cuento persones teme aranias. – It's not known how many people are afraid of spiders.

• **Algun** ia come lo. – It was eaten by someone.

The active participle of **es** is **esente**:

• **Esente** un bufon, el ia senta sur la seja rompeda. – Being a clown, he sat on the broken chair.
**Transitivity**

A **transitive verb** is one that can be directly followed by a noun phrase (an **object**), with no intervening preposition. An **intransitive verb** does not have an object. For example:

- Me *senta*. – I am sitting. (*senta* is intransitive)
- La patatas *coce*. – The potatoes are cooking. (*coce* is intransitive)
- El *usa* un computador. – She’s using a computer. (*usa* is transitive)
- Los *come* bananas. – They’re eating bananas. (*come* is transitive)

Transitivity is flexible in Elefen. For example, if you add an object after an intransitive verb, the verb becomes transitive. The object corresponds semantically to the intransitive subject, and the verb now means “causes (the object) to …”:

- Me *senta* la enfantes. – I seat the children. (= *Me causa ce la enfantes senta*)
- Me *coce* la patatas. – I cook the potatoes. (= *Me causa ce la patatas coce*)

The object of a transitive verb can be omitted if it’s obvious from the situation or the context:

- El *canta* un melodia. – She’s singing a tune. > El *canta*. – She’s singing. (= *El canta alga cosa*)

When a verb’s object and subject are the same thing, you can use a reflexive pronoun as the object:

- Me *senta* me. – I seat myself / I sit down. (= *Me deveni sentante*)
- La porte *abri se*. – The door opens (itself). (= *La porte abri – but emphasizing that nobody seems to be opening it; it’s opening by itself*)

And to make it clear that a verb is being used transitively, you can use expressions with *fa* or *causa*:

- Me *fa* ce la enfantes senta. – I make the children sit. (= *Me senta la enfantes*)
- Me *causa* ce la fango adere a mea botas. – I cause the mud to stick to my boots. (= *Me adere la fango a me botas*)

In some languages, the object of a transitive verb can have a complement. Elefen uses other constructions instead:

- Los ia eleje el a presidente. – They elected him president. (*preposition of resulting state*)
- Me ia pindi la casa a blanca. – I painted the house white. (*preposition of resulting state*)
- Me ia fa ce el es felis. – I made him happy. (*noun clause*)
- El ia dise ce me es stupida. – He called me stupid. (*noun clause*)

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The one exception involves the verb nomi, and is regarded as an example of apposition:

- La esplorores ia nomi la rio la Amazon. – The explorers named the river the Amazon.
  (= los ia dona la nom “la Amazon” a la rio)

**Verbs with dummy subjects**

Every finite verb in Elefen must have a subject, even if only as a placekeeper.

In some languages, it’s possible to omit the subjects of verbs that refer to the weather or the general environment. In Elefen, lo (“it”) is used:

- **Lo neva.** – It’s snowing.
- **Lo va pluve.** – It’s going to rain.
- **Lo es tro calda en esta sala.** – It’s too hot in this room.
- **Lo es bon.** – It’s good.

Another example is when the subject is effectively a trailing noun clause. Because it comes after the verb, lo is used as a dummy subject:

- **Lo pare ce tu es coreta.** – It seems that you are correct.
- **Lo es importante ce me no oblida esta.** – It’s important that I don’t forget this.

Likewise, with the verb es, if the subject is a pronoun (typically el, lo, or los) followed by a relative clause, the real subject can be moved to the end of the sentence and substitute lo as a dummy subject:

- **Lo es me ci ama Maria. = El ci ama Maria es me.** – It’s me who loves Mary. = The one who loves Mary is me.
- **Lo es Maria ci me ama. = El ci me ama es Maria.** – It’s Mary that I love. = The one that I love is Mary.
- **Lo es la bal blu cual me ia perde. = Lo cual me ia perde es la bal blu. = La bal blu es lo cual me ia perde.** – It’s the blue ball that I’ve lost = What I’ve lost is the blue ball. = The blue ball is what I’ve lost.

**On ave** indicates the presence or existence of something:

- **On ave** un serpente en la rua. – There is a snake in the road.
- **On no ave** pexes en esta lago. – There aren’t any fish in this lake.
- **On ave** multe persones asi oji. – There are many people here today.
**Verbs as nouns**

Elefen has two ways to use verbs as nouns: the *infinitive* and the *verbal noun*. Both use the verb unmodified. The infinitive does not accept a subject or an indicator of tense or mood, but it can accept adverbs and an object. It usually follows another verb or a preposition. The verbal noun is a real noun, and is preceded by *la* or another determiner. It can accept adjectives, but a preposition (most commonly *de*) must be used if an object needs to be included.

One use of the infinitive is as the object of another verb. In Elefen, this forms what is known as a *verb chain*. The subject of the first verb must be the subject of the second as well, and the object is placed after the second verb. The first verb can be followed by adverbs that modify it, as well as by *no* to negate the second verb:

- Me *espera ariva* ante tua parti. – I hope to arrive before you leave.
- Me *ia gusta* multe escuta oji mea musica. – I greatly enjoyed listening to my music today.
- On *pote* nunca *spele* coreta mea nom. – People can never spell my name correctly.
- El *teme* no *velia* en la matina. – He fears not waking up in the morning.

In addition to serving as the object of the main verb, a verb can also appear after a preposition. Such a verb can still take *no* before it and adverbs after it:

- Me viaja *per vide* la mondo. – I'm travelling (in order) to see the world.
- El ia mori *pos nomi* sua susedor. – She died after naming her successor.
- El ia abri la noza *par colpa* lo forte con un martel. – He opened the nut by hitting it hard with a hammer.
- On no pote pasea tra la mondo *sin lasa* impresas de pede. – You can’t walk through the world without leaving footprints.

A verbal noun also has the same form as the verb, but it must be introduced by *la* or another determiner, or be plural. The noun denotes either an occurrence of the verb’s action, or its immediate result:

- *Sua condui* ia es vera xocante. – His behaviour was really shocking.
- La vals la samba es *dansas*. – The waltz and the samba are dances.
- Esta va es *un ajunta* bela a la ragu. – This will be a fine addition to the stew.
- Me ia prepara *du traduis* de la testo. – I’ve prepared two translations of the text.
- “LFN” es *un corti* de “Lingua Franca Nova”. – “LFN” is an abbreviation of “Lingua Franca Nova”.
- La universo ia es estrema peti a la momento de *sua crea*. – The universe was extremely small at the moment of its creation.
With a verb such as *ajunta*, there is little difference between *un ajunta* and *un ajuntada*. But *la traduida* is the original text from which *la tradui* is produced, and *un crea* is an act of creating *un creada*. This follows from the meaning of the objects of the verbs themselves: *-da* always refers to the object. With *crea*, the object is also the result of the action; but with *tradui*, the object and the result are two different things. With a few verbs, such as *dansa*, where the object and the action are the same thing, we say *un dansa*, not *un dansada*.

A verb used as the subject of a sentence can be confused with a command. One can avoid this by changing the verb to a verbal noun by adding *la* or another determiner before the verb, or by using the plural:

- *La nada* es un bon eserse. – Swimming is good exercise / To swim is good exercise.
- *La scrive de un bon libro* es multe difisil. – Writing a good book is very difficult / To write a good book is very difficult.
- *La era es umana, la pardona es divin*. – To err is human, to forgive is divine.
Prepositions

A preposition is a special word that introduces a noun phrase, forming a preposition phrase. A preposition phrase typically modifies a preceding noun, pronoun, adjective, or adverb — or it can modify a whole sentence. The preposition indicates how the noun phrase relates to the containing structure, showing the role it plays in the modification.

LFN has 22 prepositions.

\(a\)

A means “at”. It presents a place or a time as a simple point, or as a general space or period, ignoring its internal structure:

- Nos senta \(a\) la table. – We are sitting at the table.
- Me va encontra tu \(a\) la crus de vias. – I'll meet you at the crossroads.
- La scala apoia \(a\) la mur. – The ladder is leaning on the wall.
- Tua casa es \(a\) lado de mea casa. – Your house is next to mine.
- El reposa \(a\) casa. – He's resting at home.
- Sudan es \(a\) sude de Misre. – Sudan is to the south of Egypt.
- La barco es \(a\) mar. – The ship is at sea.
- El ia fini la labora \(a\) la comensa de la anio. – She finished the work at the start of the year.
- A medianote, on va vide focos de arte. – At midnight, there will be fireworks.
- Me debe parti \(a\) la ora des-ses. – I have to leave at four o'clock.

By metaphorical extension, \(a\) introduces the point of reference in a relationship:

- Tu sta tro prosima \(a\) la borda. – You’re standing too close to the edge.
- La forma de Italia es simil \(a\) un gama. – The shape of Italy is similar to a leg.
- Esta pen parteni \(a\) me. – This pen belongs to me.
- Cual aveni si on no conforma \(a\) la regulas? – What happens if you don’t conform to the rules?
- A la mín treedes persones espeta. – At least thirty people are waiting.

In addition, \(a\) can express movement towards a point. This includes metaphorical movements such as transfers to recipients, and changes into new states:

- Me viaja \(a\) New York. – I am travelling to New York.
- Pone tua libros \(a\) via. – Put your books away.
• El leva sua oios a la sielo. – He raises his eyes to the sky.
• El ia dona un oso a la can. – She gave a bone to the dog / She gave the dog a bone.
• La sorsor ia cambia se a un capra. – The wizard changed himself into a goat.
• La seja ia cade a pesos. – The chair fell to bits.
• La xico ia ajunta sua nom a la lista. – The boy added his name to the list.
• Dise a me tua nom. – Tell me your name.
• Me no va responde a acel demanda. – I will not answer that question.
• Nos desira a tu un bon aniversario. – We wish you a happy birthday.
• Tua idea pare asurda a me. – Your idea seems absurd to me.
• Me pasea longo la strada, de un fini a la otra. – I walk down the street, from one end to the other.
• Tu irita me de tempo a tempo. – You annoy me from time to time.
• La note progresa a la lus prima. – The night is progressing towards dawn.
• De lundi a jovedi es cuatro dias. – From Monday to Thursday is four days.

In fact, any preposition that indicates a location can also indicate movement towards that location. For example, in **me pone mea libros en mea saco** (“I put my books in my bag”), **en** obviously implies motion “into”. When extra clarity is needed, **a** can be placed before the preposition to clarify the sense of movement towards:

• Core a la casa. – Run to the house.
• Core en la casa. – Run in the house.
• Core a en la casa. – Run into the house.
• La gato salta sur la table. – The cat jumps on the table.
• La gato salta a sur la table. – The cat jumps onto the table.

A special use of **a** is before another preposition, to create an adverb. If the preposition denotes a place, the combination suggests movement in the direction indicated. **A ante** and **a pos** are also used to denote earlier or later times:

• La can core a ante. – The dog runs forward.
• Tu pote pone tua saco a supra. – You can put your bag overhead.
• La sumerjor ia vade a su. – The diver went down.
• Vide a su. – See below.
• Me ia visita esta vila a ante. – I have visited this town before.
• Nos pote reveni a pos. – We can return later.
Another special use of **a** is to add a complement to the object in a sentence. (In some cases, other prepositions can also be used for this purpose.)

- El ia pinti sua casa **a** blanca. – He painted his house white.
- Me va servi la gambas **a/en** fria. – I will serve the shrimp cold.
- Los ia eleje Maria **a/per** presidente. – They elected Maria (as) president.

The complement can be an infinitive. “Per” can be used instead of “**a**”, but then the meaning is that the subject of the main verb intends to perform the action of the infinitive verb. **A** indicates that the subject intends the object to do it:

- El comanda la soldatos **a** ataca la fortres. – He orders the soldiers to attack the fort.
- Me va instrui vos **a** parla la lingua. – I will teach you to speak the language.

**ante**

**Ante** means “before” or “in front of”. Its opposite is **pos**.

In space, **ante** indicates a location at the more important side of a specified object. Which side is more important depends on the object and its context. Many things have an obvious front side with which they face the world; in other cases **ante** just means “at the nearer side of”:

- Mea peto es **ante** mea dorso. – My chest is in front of my back.
- La jornales es **ante** la libros. – The magazines are in front of the books.
- Lo es tan oscur ce me no pote vide mea mano **ante** mea oios. – It’s so dark that I can’t see my hand in front of my eyes.
- Un can reposa **ante** la boteca. – A dog is lying in front of the shop.
- Nos ave multe labora **ante** nos. – We have a lot of work ahead of us.

In time, **ante** indicates a point that precedes a specified time:

- Janero veni **ante** febrero. – January comes before February.
- Los intende fini la labora **ante** la reposa de sol. – They intend to finish work before sunset.
- Verje a sinistra **ante** la fini de la strada. – Turn left before the end of the street.
- Nos esperia la lampo **ante** la tona. – We experience lightning before thunder.

**Ante** can also indicate movement to a point in front of something ( = **a** **ante**):

- On ia pone un monton de libros **ante** me. – They put a pile of books in front of me.
- Me veni **ante** tu per demanda per tua pardona. – I come before you to apologize.
Ante quando means “before” as a conjunction ("before the time when"):

- Nos vide la lampo ante quando nos oia la tona. – We see lightning before we hear thunder.

asta

Asta means “up to” or “as far as” a specified object or location:

- El ia acompania me asta mea auto. – She accompanied me to my car.
- La terea es covreda con neva asta la montania. – The ground is covered in snow as far as the mountains.
- Me es empapada asta mea pel. – I am soaked to the skin.
- La preso ia cade asta sola un euro. – The price fell to just one euro.
- El ia visita cada pais de Andora asta Zambia. – He’s visited every country from Andorra to Zambia.
- Studia pajes dudes-sinco asta cuatrodes-du. – Study pages 25 to 42 (inclusive).

This leads to the temporal sense of asta, which is “until”:

- El labora asta medianote. – He works until midnight.
- Espeta asta la estate. – Wait until the summer.
- Asta doman! – Until tomorrow / See you tomorrow!

cá

Ca means “than”. It indicates the reference point for an inequality comparison:

- Mea can es plu intelijente ca me. – My dog is more intelligent than me.
- Acel es multe min interesante ca esta. – That is much less interesting than this.
- La sielo e terea ave cosas plu ca tu imagina en tua filosofia. – There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
como

Como means “as” or “like”. It indicates the reference point for an equality comparison:

- El rie como un iena. — He laughs like a hyena.
- Tua cor es dur como petra. – Your heart is hard as stone.
- Iogurte es como crema. – Yoghurt is like cream.
- Tu ia veni a la mesma conclui como me. – You’ve reached the same conclusion as me.
- Me pote salta tan alta como tu. – I can jump as high as you.
- Condui como un adulte. – Behave like an adult.

con

Con means “with”. Its opposite is sin.

It introduces an accompanying person, thing, or state:

- Me vide la xica con sua padre. – I see the girl with her father.
- Los vole come con nos. – They want to eat with us.
- Nos bevi cafe con lete. – We are drinking coffee with milk.
- On ia misca la zucar con sal. – The sugar has been mixed with salt.
- Los batalia con la elementos. – They are battling with the elements.
- No multe parolas comensa con X. – Not many words start with X.
- El ia dona a me un libro con multe fotos. – She’s given me a book with many photos.
- Elena es un xica con capeles roja. – Elena is a girl with red hair.
- La om vea senta con un pipa en sua boca. – The old man sits with a pipe in his mouth.
- Sua sposa regarda el con stona. – His wife looks at him in amazement.
- Compara esta con la clima de ier. – Compare this with yesterday’s weather.
- Tota cambia con la pasa de tempo. – Everything changes with the passage of time.
- A cada dia, me leva con la sol. – Every day I get up with the sun.
- E con acel parolas, el ia desapare. – And with those words he disappeared.

Con can also mean “by means of”, presenting something that is used as a tool:

- Me scrive con un pen. – I write with a pen.
- Nos oia con nosa oreas. – We hear with our ears.
- La cavalo colpa con sua pede. – The horse kicks.
- El ia compra un casa con la mone cual el ia erita. – He bought a house with the money he inherited.
When an action happens by means of something more abstract or less tool-like, par is preferred.

**An con** means “despite”:
- Nos va fali an con tu aida. – We will fail even with your help.

**contra**

**Contra** means “against”. It introduces something that faces or moves in the opposite direction, either for real or metaphorically:
- Clui tua oios contra la lus. – Close your eyes against the light.
- Esta camera es secuir contra acua. – This camera is waterproof.
- La elinicas antica ia batalia contra Parsa. – The ancient Greeks fought against Persia.
- La scala es contra la sepe. – The ladder is against the fence.
- El lisca e cade contra la mur. – He slips and falls against the wall.
- Nada contra la flue es difisil. – Swimming upstream is hard.
- Me es contra la gera. – I am against the war.
- Tu ia ata contra mea desiras. – You have acted against my wishes.

**de**

**De** means “from”. It presents something as an origin:
- Me es de New York. – I am from New York.
- Me viaja de Paris a London. – I’m traveling from Paris to London.
- La paperes ia cade de la fenetra. – The papers fell from the window.
- Me ia reseta un letera de la re. – I have received a letter from the king.
- La furor asconde sua fas de la cameras. – The robber hides his face from the cameras.
- La acua difere de la asida par sua cimica. – Water differs from acid in its chemistry.
- La resulta depende de la metodo usada. – The result depends on the method used.
- Nos labora ja de la lus prima. – We’ve been working since dawn.
- Multe anios ia pasa de la gera. – Many years have passed since the war.
- La table es fada de lenio. – The table is made of wood.
- Tu gusta carne de oveta? – Do you like lamb?
By extension, *de* introduces the person or thing that something belongs to:

- Acel es la auto *de* mea frate. – That is my brother’s car.
- Me gusta escuta la canta *de* la avias. – I like listening to the singing of the birds.
- El ia es impresada par la cuietia *de* la foresta. – She was impressed by the stillness of the forest.
- Dona un peso *de* torta a me, per favore. – Give me a piece of cake, please.

More abstractly, *de* often indicates a general relationship between two things, or between a quality or action and a thing:

- Me ave tre caxas *de* libros per vende. – I have three boxes of books to sell.
- El ia presta a me un tela *de* un color fea. – She lent me an ugly-colored towel.
- La tore ave cuatro metres *de* altia. – The tower is forty metres high.
- Esta balde es plen *de* pexes. – This bucket is full of fish.
- Nos vole es libre *de* vos. – We want to be free of you.
- La ora ia veni per parla *de* multe cosas. – The time has come to talk of many things.

What would be a compound noun in some languages is commonly expressed as two nouns joined by *de* in LFN:

- Mea oculo *de* sol es rompeda. – My sunglasses are broken.
- La gavota es un avia *de* mar. – The seagull is a seabird.
- Esta va es tua sala *de* dormi. – This will be your bedroom.
- Tu ia oblida aplica la freno *de* mano. – You forgot to apply the handbrake.
- Per sua come *de* matina, el bevi sola cafe. – For his breakfast, he just drinks coffee.
- El es la campion *de* mundo *de* tenis *de* table – He is the world table-tennis champion.

*De* occurs as the second element in a number of fixed expressions that function as complex prepositions:

- Los ia ajunta tota ingredientes con *eseta de* la sal. – They added all the ingredients except the salt.
- Los ia usa zucar en *loca de* sal. – They used sugar instead of salt.
- Me es tarda par *causa de* un conjesta de trafica. – I’m late because of a traffic jam.
- La campaneria es a *destra de* la catedral. – The belltower is to the right of the cathedral.

*De* can be placed before another preposition to indicate motion away from:

- La gato salta *de sur* la seja. – The cat jumps off the chair.
- Un arania rampe *de pos* la orolojo. – A spider creeps from behind the clock.
- La pasaros asende *de entre* la arbores. – The sparrows climb from among the trees.
Like a, de can convert a preposition to an adverb. The adverb means “from the location suggested by the context”:

- La monstro ia veni de su. – The monster came from below.
- La gidor ia cria de ante, ma me no ia pote oia. – The leader was shouting from the front, but I couldn’t hear.

De quando means “since” as a conjunction (“from the time when”):

- De quando me ia es un enfante, me desira sta sur la luna. – Since I was a child, I’ve wanted to stand on the moon.

en

En means “in”. Its opposite is estra.

It indicates a location in space or time that is wholly or partly contained in something else:

- Mea cor es en mea peto. – My heart is in my chest.
- La sol es en la sielo. – The sun is in the sky.
- Nos espeta en la auto. – We are waiting in the car.
- La plantas es en vasos. – The plants are in pots.
- Sua ditos es fisada en la manico de un tas. – His fingers are stuck in the handle of a cup.
- Me ave alga pensas en mea mente. – I have some thoughts in my mind.
- Gatos no gusta es en acua. – Cats don’t like being in water.
- Nos no vide la stelas en la dia. – We don’t see the stars in the day.
- Beethoven ia nase en 1770. – Beethoven was born in 1770.
- Nos ia visita la museo en febrero. – We visited the museum in February.
- El ia scrive la libro en tre semanas. – She wrote the book in three weeks.

Metaphorically, the location can be a state, or an activity, or a manner:

- Me no vole viaja en esta clima. – I don’t want to travel in this weather.
- La construida es en foco. – The building is on fire.
- Nos es en peril. – We are in danger.
- Esce nos es en acorda? – Are we in agreement?
- En ajunta, me vide un problem nova. – In addition, I see a new problem.
- En fato, me vide du problemes. – In fact I see two problems.
- Nos ia pasa un ora en conversa. – We spent an hour in conversation.
- La enfantes senta en un sirculo. – The children are sitting in a circle.
- Me va repete esta en eclinica. – I will repeat this in Greek.
- La presos es en euros. – The prices are in euros.
En can also mean “into” (= a en):

• El ia cade en la rio. – He fell into the river.
• Pone la dejeto en la baldon. – Put the rubbish in the bin.
• Un bon idea ia veni en sua testa. – A good idea came into her head.
• Me ia tradui la article en franses. – I’ve translated the article into French.
• Nos pasa en un eda nova. – We are passing into a new era.

En cuando means “while”, “at a point during the time when”:

• Lo ia comensa pluve forte en cuando la reportor ia parla. – It started raining heavily while the reporter was talking.

entre

Entre means “between”. It indicates that one place or time is surrounded by two or more others:

• Mea testa es entre mea oreas. – My head is between my ears.
• La table es entre la seja e la mur. – The table is between the chair and the wall.
• Txesco es entre Deutxland, Osterai, Slovenia, e Polsca. – The Czech Republic is between Germany, Austria, Slovenia, and Poland.
• El viaja entre Paris e Madrid a cada semana. – She travels between Paris and Madrid every week.
• Tu es entre amis asi. – You are among friends here.
• La bal ia cade entre la flores. – The ball fell among the flowers.
• Cual es la difere entre un mur e un sepe? – What is the difference between a wall and a fence?
• Elefen promove comunica entre poplas. – LFN promotes communication between peoples.
• On va ave un interval de des minutos entre la du atas. – There will be a ten-minute interval between the two acts.
• El ia nase entre la geras. – He was born between the wars.
• Me velia usual entre sete e oto. – I usually wake up between seven and eight.
• On debe paia entre des e dudes euros. – You have to pay between ten and twenty euros.
**estra**

Estra means “outside”. Its opposite is **en**.

It indicates a location that is *not* contained in something else:

- Mea sapato es *estra* mea calseta. – My shoe is outside my sock.
- El abita *estra* la site. – She lives outside the city.
- On no ave aira *estra* la barcon. – There is no air outside the ship.
- Tu es aora *estra* peril. – You are out of danger now.
- No telefoni *estra* la oras de labora. – Don’t phone outside work hours.

Estra can also indicate movement towards such a location (= *a estra*):

- La enfantes core *estra* la casa. – The children ran outside the house.

Metaphorically, *estra* can mean “except for”:

- El recorda no cosa *estra* sua nom. – He remembers nothing except for his name.

**longo**

Longo means “along”. It indicates the route that something follows as it moves:

- Me pasea *longo* la strada. – I walk along the street.
- La balsa ia flota *longo* la rio. – The raft floated down the river.
- La xico lisca *longo* la ramo. – The boy slides along the branch.
- Un arania rampe *longo* mea gama. – There’s a spider crawling up my leg.

By extension, it can also mean “according to” what someone has said or written:

- *Longo* la predise, oji va es an plu calda. – According to the forecast, tomorrow will be even warmer.
- La viaja tra tempo es posible, *longo* esta fisiciste. – Time travel is possible, according to this physicist.
**par**

**Par** means “by”. It indicates the agent of a passive verb, or the author of a creation:

- El ia es colpada par un bal de neva. – He was hit by a snowball.
- Me es surpreendeda par tua reata. – I am surprised by your reaction.
- Suiz es ensircada par otra paises. – Switzerland is surrounded by other countries.
- *Hamlet* es un teatral par Shakespeare. – *Hamlet* is a play by Shakespeare.

By extension, it also indicates an action or method by which something is done:

- Me ia viaja asi par tren. – I travelled here by train.
- Roberto es mea fio par sposi. – Roberto is my son-in-law.
- La botelas es codigida par color. – The bottles are color-coded.
- Nos ia descovre tua secretas par nos spiores. – We discovered your secrets via our spies.
- La prisonida ia evade par desembla se como un porte. – The prisoner escaped by disguising himself as a door.
- Me va destrui la sepe par sola un colpa de pede. – I shall destroy the fence with a single kick.
- On no pote solve esta problem par negosia. – This problem cannot be solved by negotiation.

When a transitive verb is converted into a noun, and the verb’s subject and object are of a similar nature (e.g. they’re both people), **par** is used to indicate the subject and **de** or **a** to indicate the object:

- La ama par la madre. – The mother’s love. *(The mother loves)*
- La ama de/a la madre. – The love of/for the mother. *(The mother is loved)*
- La ataca de la troianes par la elinicas. – The attack of/on the Trojans by the Greeks. *(The Greeks attack the Trojans)*

**per**

**Per** means “for”. It introduces an intended goal or recipient:

- Nos labora per mone. – We work for money.
- Tases es usada per bevi. – Cups are used for drinking.
- Me viaja per vide la mundo. – I’m travelling (in order) to see the world.
- Tu es vestida per un sera de dansa. – You’re dressed for an evening of dancing.
- Me va vade a la botecas per tu. – I will go to the shops for you.
• El ia scrive la libro per sua madre. – She wrote the book for her mother.
• La viaja va es per losa per tu. – The journey will be dangerous for you.
• Me batalia per mea vive. – I’m fighting for my life.
• Per esta razona, me no pote parla longa. – For that reason, I can’t talk for long.
• Per esempio, considera la balena. – For example, consider the whale.

By extension, it also indicates an item exchanged for another:
• Tu ia paia tro per acel computador. – You paid too much for that computer.
• Me ia compra lo per mil euros. – I bought it for a thousand euros.
• Gracias per tua carta postal. – Thank you for your postcard.

It can indicate an intended period of time:
• Nos vade a Colorado per un semana. – We are going to Colorado for a week.
• Me no va retarda tu per plu ca un minuto. – I won’t delay you for more than a minute.

As a special case, per introduces something that is favoured or represented:
• Me ia vota per la proposa, ma tu ia vota contra lo. – I voted for the proposal, but you voted against it.
• Car tu no ia es ala, me ia parla per tu. – Because you weren’t there, I spoke on your behalf.

pos

Pos means “after” or “behind”. Its opposite is ante.

In space, it indicates a location at the less important side of a specified object:
• Mea dorso es pos mea peto. – My back is behind my chest.
• La aparatos es pos un porte securida. – The equipment is behind a locked door.
• La xicos turbosa ia asconde pos la cabana. – The naughty boys hid behind the shed.

In time, pos indicates a point that follows a specified time:
• Desembre veni pos novembre. – December comes after November.
• Los va comensa bevi pos la reposa de sol. – They will start drinking after sunset.
• Verje a destra pos la eglesa. – Turn right after the church.
• Me va reveni pos tre dias. – I will come back in three days.

Pos can also indicate movement to a point behind something (= a pos):
• La serpente ia desapare pos la arbor. – The snake disappeared behind the tree.
**Pos cuando** means “after” as a conjunction (“after the time when”):

- Nos oia la tona *pos cuando* nos vide la lampo. – We hear thunder after we see lightning.

**sin**

**Sin** means “without”. It indicates something that is absent:

- Tua sposa gusta sua cafe *sin* lete. – Your wife likes her coffee without milk.
- Me ia pasea tra la pluve *sin* parapluve. – I walked through the rain with no umbrella.
- On ave no fuma *sin* foco. – There’s no smoke without fire.
- Me va decora la casa intera *sin* aida. – I shall decorate the entire house without help.
- Tu es toda *sin* compatia. – You are totally without mercy.
- El ia adormi *sin* intende. – He fell asleep without meaning to.
- La rexercor ia sorti *sin* descovre la responde. – The researcher left without discovering the answer.
- La depinta ia cade *sin* causa evidente. – The painting fell down for no apparent reason.

**sirca**

**Sirca** means “around”. It indicates a position that surrounds or encloses something else:

- La campores fa cantas *sirca* la foco. – The campers sing songs around the fire.
- Mea mano es cluida *sirca* mea diton. – My hand is closed around my thumb.
- Edera crese *sirca* la tronco. – Ivy grows around the trunk.
- On ave pinta verde *sirca* la fenetras. – There is green paint around the windows.

It can also indicate movement along a surrounding path:

- La luna vade *sirca* la tera, e la tera vade *sirca* la sol. – The moon goes around the earth, and the earth goes around the sun.
- Nos intende viaja *sirca* la mundo par cavalo. – We intend to travel round the world on horseback.
- El vaga *sirca* la jardin e ole la flores. – She wanders round the garden and smells the flowers.
With expressions of time and quantity, *sirca* indicates that the value is approximate – the actual value is somewhere in the surrounding range:

- Me ave *sirca* sincodes anios. – I am about 50 years old.
- Me pote pensa a *sirca* sento razonas per no revela mea eda. – I can think of about a hundred reasons not to reveal my age.
- La conserta ia comensa *sirca* dui pos dudes. – The concert began at about half past eight.
- *Sirca* la lus prima, me ia oia tua can abaiante. – Around dawn, I heard your dog barking.

**su**

*Su* means “under”. It indicates a location that is lower than another, either physically or metaphorically:

- La neva craci *su* mea pedes. – The snow crunches under my feet.
- La solo es *su* la sofito. – The floor is below the ceiling.
- Antilopes ia reposa *su* la arbores. – Antelopes were resting under the trees.
- Ave un table de sanduixes *su* la fenetra. – There’s a table of sandwiches under the window.
- Tu pare es *su* la influe de la vino. – You appear to be under the influence of the wine.
- Me no pote labora *su* tua regulas. – I can’t work under your rules.

By extension, *su* can also indicate any location that is physically covered by something, whether it’s actually lower or not:

- La color vera de la sofito es apena vidable *su* esta pinta fea. – The real color of the ceiling is scarcely visible under this nasty paint.
- Me ave un paceta *su* mea braso. – I have a parcel under my arm.
- El ia porta un sueter *su* sua jaca. – He wore a sweater under his jacket.

*Su* can also indicate motion to a location below something (*= a su*):

- La acua ia vade *su* la mobilas. – The water went under the furniture.

**supra**

*Supra* means “above”. It indicates a location that is higher than another, either physically or metaphorically:
• La nubes es **supra** mea testa. – The clouds are above my head.
• La teto es **supra** la sofito. – The roof is above the ceiling.
• El ia apoia **supra** la table per ateni la sal. – She leaned over the table to reach the salt.
• Un tempesta enorme developa **supra** la mar. – A huge storm is brewing over the sea.

**Supra** implies a gap between the two items. If there is no gap, **sur** is used instead.

By extension, **supra** can also indicate anything that physically covers something else, whether it’s actually higher or not:

• La montania lansa un ombra **supra** nosa casa. – The mountain casts a shadow over our house.
• El ia porta un covretota **supra** sua otra vestes. – He was wearing overalls on top of his other clothes.

**Supra** can also indicate motion to a location above (= **a supra**):

• La sol leva **supra** la tera. – The sun rises over the earth.

**sur**

**Sur** means “on”. It indicates a location at the surface of something, either held on top of it by gravity, or fixed to it in some other way:

• Mea xapo es **sur** mea testa. – My hat is on my head.
• No senta **sur** la seja rompeda. – Don’t sit on the broken chair.
• Si on sta **sur** la balcon, on vide la mar. – If you stand on the balcony, you can see the sea.
• La asfalto **sur** la strada fonde en la caldia. – The tarmac on the road is melting in the heat.
• Esce la vive esiste **sur** Marte? – Is there life on Mars?
• Me va pende esta depinta **sur** la mur. – I’ll hang this painting on the wall.
• La om ia besa la fem **sur** sua jena. – The man kissed the woman on her cheek.

**Sur** can also mean “onto” (= **a sur**):

• Pone tua cartas **sur** la table. – Put your cards on the table.
• Un roca cual cade **sur** la tera es nomida un meteorite. – A rock that falls onto the earth is called a meteorite.
• El ia pone un dital **sur** sua dito. – She put a thimble onto her finger.
Metaphorically, **sur** means “concerning” or “on the subject of”:

- La teatral es **sur** la gera. – The play is about the war.
- Me ia leje multe libros **sur** la tema. – I’ve read many books on the subject.
- La xica plora **sur** sua popa perdeda. – The girl is crying over her lost doll.

**tra**

**Tra** means “through”. It indicates a location within which movement occurs, passing from one end to the other:

- Acua flue **tra** la tubos. – Water flows through the pipes.
- La enfantes ia core **tra** la vileta. – The children ran through the village.
- La pluve ia trova un via **tra** mea saco. – The rain has found a way through my bag.
- La tren vade de Milano a Roma **tra** Bologna. – The train goes from Milan to Rome via Bologna.
- Un rueta gida **tra** la campos a la lago. – A lane leads through the fields to the lake.
- Me regarda la stelas **tra** la fenetra abrida. – I look at the stars through the open window.
- Los ia resta juntada **tra** la anios. – They’ve stayed together through the years.
- El ia senta en un sejon **tra** la note. – He sat in an armchair throughout the night.
- On ia oia la esplode **tra** la site. – The explosion could be heard throughout the city.

**ultra**

**Ultra** means “beyond”. It indicates a location on the other side of something:

- La scola es **ultra** la eglesa. – The school is beyond the church.
- **Ultra** la ponte es un vista merveliosa. – (To be seen from) across the bridge is a wonderful view.
- Esta taxe es **ultra** mea capasia. – This task is beyond my talents.

It can also indicate movement towards such a location ( = **a ultra**):

- La esplorores ia viaja **ultra** la montanias. – The explorers journeyed beyond the mountains.
- Los ia remi un barceta **ultra** la lago. – They rowed a dinghy across the lake.
Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word that joins two things together. There are two kinds: coordinating and subordinating.

Coordinating conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction joins two components of the same type, producing a larger component of that type. For example, two noun phrases joined by e form a larger noun phrase.

There are four coordinating conjunctions:

- e – and (both components are equally valid)
- o – or (one of the components is valid; possibly both are)
- no – not, and not, but not (the first component is valid; the second one isn’t)
- ma – but (both components are equally valid, but contrast with each other)

Examples:

- La om e la fem vade a la casa. – The man and the woman go to the house.
- Tu es multe vea e saja. – You are very old and wise. (probably very wise, otherwise the sentence would be tu es saja e multe vea)
- El ia labora ante e pos sua vacanse. – He worked before and after his vacation.
- Sua aniversario es en marto o april. – Her birthday is in March or April.
- Tu desira cafe o te? – Do you want coffee or tea?
- On pote visita la museo a lundi o jovedi. – You can visit the museum on Monday or Thursday (or both).
- On ia eleje tu, no me. – They elected you, not me.
- Me ia conta no sola la oveas ma ance la capras. – I counted not only the sheep but also the goats.

With lists of more than two items, the conjunction is normally replaced by a comma except between the final pair. A comma is often included before the conjunction too, in such a list:

- Nos va viaja tra Italia, Suiz, Osteraic, e Deutxland. – We will travel through Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Germany.
For emphasis, e, o, and no can be doubled up, with the extra instance placed before the first component. A double o rules out the possibility of both components being valid:

- e... e – both... and
- o... o – either... or
- no... no – neither... nor

Examples:

- E Luis e Maria vade a scola. – Both Luis and Maria go to school.
- O tu o me gania, ma no ambos. – Either you or I will win, but not both.
- Me ave no la tempo no la desira per leje plu. – I have neither the time nor the desire to read on.

E, o, and ma can also join two clauses or sentences:

- Me ia vade a la biblioteca, e tu ia visita la museo. – I went to the library and you visited the museum.
- O nos solve esta problem, o la mundo va fini. – Either we solve this problem, or the world will end.
- Ma acel es difisil. – But that’s difficult.

The adverb donce is also used in this way, as a shorthand for e donce:

- Me pensa, donce me esiste. – I think, therefore I am.
- Nos no ave un mapa, donce nos es perdeda. – We don’t have a map, so we’re lost.

Subordinating conjunctions

A subordinating conjunction joins a clause to the containing sentence, indicating its role in that sentence.

There are three types: pronoun subordinators, adverb subordinators, and special subordinators.

Pronoun subordinators

The interrogative pronouns cual and ci can also serve as subordinating conjunctions (relative pronouns) to introduce relative clauses:

- La om ci ia abita asi ia vade a New York. – The man who lived here went to New York.
- La poma cual ia cade de mea saco es aora noncomable. – The apple which fell from my bag is now inedible.
• La fem de ci nos parla labora a mea ofisia. – The woman of whom we speak works at my office.
• Tua libro, en cual me ia scrive sua nom, es sur la table. – Your book, in which I wrote her name, is on the table.

They normally relate to a preceding noun. Sometimes, that noun is omitted. In such cases, a pronoun can be added to clarify the meaning:
• Esta es lo cual parteni a tu. – This is what (“that which”) belongs to you.
• La auto blu es lo en cual nos vole viaja. – The blue car is the one in which we want to travel.
• Acel es el ci me ia vide. – That’s who I saw / That’s the one I saw / That’s the person I saw.
• Tu es el a ci me ia parla ier. – You’re who I spoke to yesterday.
• Ci osa, gania. – Who dares, wins.

The use of cual and ci en reported questions is very similar.

Adverb subordinators

The interrogative adverbs – do, quando, cuanto, como, and perce – can serve as conjunctions introducing adverbial clauses:
• Nos parla como nos pensa. – We speak as (= in the way in which) we think.
• Me dormi cuando me pote. – I sleep when I can.
• Me va esplica cuanto me comprende. – I will explain as much as I understand.
• Nos abita do la du rios encontra. – We live where the two rivers meet.
• Me ia fini la taxe en cuando tu ia parla a me. – I finished the task while you were talking to me.
• Nos va core a do la vias encontra. – We will run to where the roads meet.

They can also be used after a noun, as conjunctions introducing relative clauses:
• Me labora en Paris, do me abita. – I work in Paris, where I live.
• El va visita en Julio, cuanto la clima es bon. – He will visit in July, when the weather’s nice.
• Acel es la razona perce Juan ia parti. – That’s the reason why John left / That’s the reason John left.

And they are also used in reported questions (a type of noun clause).
**Special subordinators**

The special subordinating conjunctions *ce* and *esce* introduce noun clauses. *Ce* introduces a reported statement, and *esce* introduces a reported question about the truth of a statement.

- Me pensa *ce* tu nesesa un vacanse. – I think (that) you need a vacation.
- Me no sabe *esce* el va veni. – I don’t know if/whether he’ll come.

They can be used after certain nouns, adjectives, and prepositions to complete the meaning:

- La idea *ce* la Sol orbita la Tera es un era. – The idea that the Sun orbits the Earth is a mistake.
- Nos es surprendeda *ce* vos no ia cexa. – We are surprised (that) you didn’t complain.
- Me es felis *ce* tu ia susede. – I’m glad (that) you succeeded.
- Los no ia es serta *esce* la tren ia parti ja. – They weren’t sure if/whether the train had already left.
- La gato ia entra a la sala sin *ce* algun vide el. – The cat entered the room without anyone seeing it.

*Ce* can also be used to introduce a clause that expresses a result:

- El ia es tan fatigada *ce* el no ia pote pensa. – She was so tired (that) she couldn’t think.
- El ia es tan fame *ce* el ia pote oia la ronca de sua stomaco. – He was so hungry (that) he could hear his stomach rumbling.

The special subordinators *afin*, *car*, *si*, and *ca* introduce adverbial clauses:

- Me va veni *si* tu clama. – I will come if you call.
- Me labora *afin* mea enfantes pote come. – I work so that my children can eat.
- Lo es calda *car* la sol brilia. – It is hot because the sun is shining.
- Esta es plu labora *ca* me ia espeta. – This is more work than I expected.
Questions

There are three kinds of question: those that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”, those that present a range of options to choose from, and those that ask for a particular piece of information.

Additionally, questions can be direct (“Where are we going?”) or indirect (“I asked you where we are going”, “I don’t know who I am”). Direct questions end in a question mark (?)

Yes/no questions

A sentence can be turned into a yes/no question by adding esce (“is it the case that…”) at the start:

• Esce tu parla deutx? – Do you speak German?
• Esce tu ia come la salada? – Did you eat the salad?

There are two other ways. In speech, in questions that present a possibility and merely ask for confirmation, si? or no? can be added at the end of the sentence. And in very simple questions, a speaker can simply raise the pitch of their voice at the end:

• Tu ia come la salada, si?
• Tu ia come la salada, no?
• Tu ia come, si?
• Nos es perdeda, no?
• Vos comprende?

The answer to a yes/no question is si (“yes”) or no (“no”). Si states that the possibility expressed in the question is true; no states that it is false:

• Tu desira bir? – Do you want beer?
  ▶ Si, per favore. – Yes, please. (I do want beer)
  ▶ No, gracias. – No, thanks. (I don’t want beer)

If the question was phrased in the negative, si and no convey the same meanings as they would if the question had not been negative. But this can be confusing, so it can be clearer to answer with a full sentence:
• Tu no desira bir? – Don’t you want beer?
  ▶ Si. – Yes. *(I do want beer)*
  ▶ No. – No. *(I don’t want beer)*
  ▶ Si, me desira bir. – Yes, I want beer.
  ▶ No, me no desira bir. – No, I don’t want beer.

**Alternative questions**

An alternative question simply asks the listener to pick one of a number of options, usually expressed as a list joined with the conjunction o:

• Tu desira te, cafe, o bir? – Do you want tea, coffee, or beer?
  ▶ Cafe, per favore. – Coffee, please.
• Tu ia veni par auto, o par bisicle, o tu ia pasea? – Did you come by car, or by bicycle, or did you walk?
  ▶ Par auto, probable. – By car, probably.

**Other questions**

Other questions use interrogative determiners, pronouns, or adverbs such as **cual**, **ci**, **cuando**, **cuanto**, **como**, **do**, and **perce**. The interrogative word is usually moved to the start of the sentence, but it can also appear in the place where its answer would fit:

• **Cual** libro tu leje? = Tu leje **cual** libro? – Which book are you reading?
• Ci es tua autor prefereda? = Tu autor prefereda es **ci**? – Who is your preferred author?
• **Cual** es acel musica fea? = Acel musica fea es **cual**? – What is this ugly music?
• **Cuando** tu dormi? = Tu dormi **cuando**? – When do you sleep?
• **Cuanto** tu ia paia? = Tu ia paia **cuanto**? – How much did you pay?
• **Como** vos ia evade? = Vos ia evade **como**? – How did you escape?
• **Do** nos es? = **Do** es nos? = Nos es **do**? – Where are we?
• **Perce** tu core? = Tu core **perce**? – Why are you running?
• **Con cual** tu come la salada? = Tu come la salada **con cual**? – What do you eat the salad with?
• **Cual force** tu usa per come la salada? = Tu usa **cual force** per come la salada? – Which fork do you use to eat the salad?
• **Con cual force** tu come la salada? = Tu come la salada **con cual force**? – Which fork do you eat the salad with?

• **Como rapida** tu pote come la salada? = Tu pote come la salada **como rapida**? – How quickly can you eat the salad?

**Reported questions**

Reported questions (also known as “indirect questions”) are expressed as noun clauses, which normally contain the same series of words as a direct question would have, including the same verbal tense. In a reported question, the question word is always placed at the start of the subordinate clause:

• Vos va demanda: “Ci tu ia vide?” → Vos va demanda ci me ia vide.
  ▶ You will ask: “Who did you see?” → You will ask who I saw.

• Me no recorda: “A ci me ia parla?” → Me no recorda a ci me ia parla.
  ▶ I don’t remember: “To whom did I speak?” → I don’t remember to whom I spoke.

• Los no sabe: “Cual nos va fa?” → Los no sabe **cual cosa** los va fa.
  ▶ They don’t know: “What are we going to do?” → They don’t know what they are going to do.

• Me vide: “Do me va senta?” → Me vide do me va senta.
  ▶ I see: “Where will I sit?” → I see where I will sit.

• Me no ia sabe: “Cuando nos va parti?” → **Cuando** me va parti, me no ia sabe.
  ▶ I didn’t know: “When will we depart?” → When I would depart, I didn’t know.

Yes/no questions, when reported, always use **esce**:

• El no sabe: “Esce los ia parti?” → El no sabe **esce** los ia parti.
  ▶ He doesn’t know: “Did we depart?” → He doesn’t know whether we departed.

• El ia demanda: “Esce tu pote aida?” → El ia demanda **esce** me pote aida.
  ▶ He asked: “Can you help?” → He asked whether I could help.

In some cases, the difference between a reported question and an relative clause is very subtle:

• (a) Me ia descovre **cual cosa ia es en la caxa**. – I discovered what had been in the box. (a reported question)

• (b) Me ia descovre lo **cual ia es en la caxa**. – I discovered the thing that had been in the box. (a relative clause)

In example (a), I discovered the *identity* of the thing in the box, even if I didn’t see or touch it directly. In example (b), I discovered *it*, the physical thing itself.
Clauses

Like a sentence, a clause contains a subject and a verb, but it forms part of a larger sentence. Every sentence contains a main clause. This can be modified in a variety of ways by one or more subordinate clauses. If a subordinate clause modifies a noun phrase, it is called a relative clause. If it modifies a verb or the entire main clause, it is called an adverbial clause. And if it plays the part of a noun, it is called a noun clause.

In addition, a sentence can contain more than one main clause.

Relative clauses

A relative clause is a clause that modifies a noun. Relative clauses follow the nouns they modify, and they usually start with one of the relative pronouns ci and cual:

• La om ci ia abita asi ia vade a New York. – The man who lived here went to New York.
• La poma cual ia cade de mea saco es aora noncomable. – The apple which fell from my bag is now inedible.

For clarity, a relative clause can be separated from the rest of the sentence by commas, especially if it's long or complicated:

• La poma, cual ia cade de mea saco en la fango a matina ier, es aora noncomable. – The apple, which fell from my bag into the mud yesterday morning, is now inedible.

Some relative clauses are not essential to the meaning of the sentence, but simply add a comment in passing. Such clauses are always set off by commas:

• La can, ci ave manxas negra, ia morde la polisior. – The dog, which has black markings, bit the policeman.
• Mea padre, ci ia jubila, abita en Mexico. – My father, who is retired, lives in Mexico.
• Esta jus, cual Ana ia fa, ave un bon sabor. – This juice, which Anna made, tastes good.

Ci and cual can behave as either the subject or the object of the relative clause. Objects normally follow the verb, but when one of these is the object, it precedes both the subject and the verb:

• La fem ci me ama veni de Frans. – The woman (whom) I love comes from France.
• La robot cual me ia construi no opera. – The robot I built doesn’t work.
• Nos ta vade a mea casa, cual es prosima. – Let’s go to my house, which is nearby.
When the relative pronoun is the object of a preposition, the preposition comes first:

- La fem de ci nos parla labora a mea ofisia. – The woman of whom we speak works at my office.
- Tua libro, en cual me ia scrive sua nom, es sur la table. – Your book, in which I wrote her name, is on the table.

When de ci or de cual introduces a possessed noun within the relative clause, that noun is usually introduced by sua for clarity:

- Esta fem, de ci sua sposo labora en la banco, es un cocor eselente. – This woman, whose husband works at the bank, is an excellent cook.
- La fem, de ci tu conose sua sposo, labora a me ofisia. – The woman, whose husband you know, works at my office.
- La fem, de ci tu ia dona la letera a sua sposo, es encantante. – The woman, whose husband you gave the letter to, is charming.
- Mea auto, de cual sua motor es rompeda, es aora dejetada. – My car, whose motor is broken, is now garbage.

In some languages, a relative clause can modify the whole of the preceding clause. In Elefen, if that would be ambiguous, an expression such as e lo, e esta, or e acel can be used instead:

- El pote salta a un metre alta, e esta ia surprende me. – He can jump a meter high, which surprised me.
- Los studia la pragmatica, e acel es per dise la rol de contesto en la comprende de frases. – They’re studying pragmatics, which is to say the role of context in the understanding of sentences.

Another way to start a relative clause is with a relative adverb:

- Me labora en Paris, do me abita. – I work in Paris, where I live.
- El va visita en julio, cuando la clima es bon. – He will visit in July, when the weather is good.
- Acel es la razona perce Juan ia parti. – That’s the reason why Juan left.

Such relative clauses are often similar to adverbial clauses:

- Me labora do me abita. – I eat where I live.
- El va visita cuando la clima es bon. – He will visit when the weather is good.
Adverbial clauses

An **adverbial clause** modifies either the verb of the main clause or the main clause itself. An adverbial clause is introduced by one of the adverb subordinators (como, quando, cuanto, do) or one of the special subordinators si, car, afin, and ca:

- Me no teme la can, **car** el es multe peti. – I am not afraid of the dog, because it is very small.
- **Si** los redui tro rapida sua pesa, los va regania lo. – If they lose weight too quickly, they will regain it.
- Me core **afin** la rineros no catura me. – I’m running so that the rhinos don’t catch me.
- Esta es plu labora **ca** me ia previde. – This is more work than I expected.
- El ia scrive **cuando** sua madre ia demanda. – He wrote when his mother asked.
- El dise ce el es felis **do** el abita. – He says that he is happy where he lives.
- On no ia permete ce me fa la cosas **como** me ia desira. – I wasn’t allowed to do things as I wanted.

An adverbial clause introduced by a adverb subordinators (como, cuando, cuanto, do) can be thought of as an abbreviated relative clause. For example, the last three examples above can also be expressed as follows:

- El ia scrive **a la ora cuando** sua madre ia demanda. – He wrote at the time his mother asked.
- El dise ce el es felis **a la loca do** el abita. – He says that he is happy at the place where he lives.
- On no ia permete ce me fa la cosas **en la modo como** me desira. – I wasn’t allowed to do things in the way I wanted.

Noun clauses

A **noun clause** functions like a noun: it can be the subject or object of a verb or preposition. Noun clauses are introduced by the special subordinators ce or esce, by one of the pronoun subordinators ci and cual, or by one of the adverb subordinators.

To see if a clause is really a noun clause, substitute “he”, “she”, “it”, or “they” for the clause. If that produces a good sentence, the clause is a noun clause. Noun clauses are typically objects of verbs of thinking, sensing, or emotion:
• Me vide do tu es. – I see where you are.
• Cuando me va parti, me no sabe. – When I will depart, I don’t know.
• Me sabe de do tu veni. – I know where you come from.
• Me sabe ci ia dise acel. – I know who said that.
• Me ia oia cual tu ia dise. – I heard what you said.
• Me pote divina cual el leje. – I can guess which one he’s reading.

Many noun clauses are introduced by the special subordinators ce (“that”) or esce (“whether”):
• Me pensa ce el es bela. – I think that she is beautiful.
• Me pensa ce el pote salta a un metre alta. – I think that he can jump a meter high.
• Me pensa ce si. – I think so.
• Me duta esce el pote salta a un metre alta. – I doubt whether/that he can jump a meter high.

Noun clauses often report what someone has said, thought, or asked. In all cases, the tense of the verb in the noun clause remains the same as that in the original speech, thought, or question:
• Me ia dise: “Me veni de London.” → Me ia dise ce me veni de London.
  ▶ I said: “I come from London.” → I said that I came from London.
• El pensa: “La tren ia es tarda.” → El pensa ce la tren ia es tarda.
  ▶ She thinks: “The train was late.” → She thinks the train was late.
• El ia demanda: “Cuando nos va parti?” → El ia demanda cuando nos va parti.
  ▶ He asked: “When are we going to leave?” → He asked when we would leave.
• Me va vole sabe: “Do la selebra es?” → Me va vole sabe do la selebra es.
  ▶ I’ll want to know: “Where’s the party?” → I’ll want to know where the party is.

Relative and adverbial clauses can sometimes be confused with noun clauses. To clarify that a relative or adverbial clause is meant, add a noun or pronoun before cual or ci:
• Me no comprende la ata cual tu intende. – I don’t understand the action you intend.
• Me ia oia lo cual tu ia dise. – I heard what you said.
• Me no conose el ci tu ia indica. – I don’t know the person who you pointed to.
• Me vide la loca do tu es. – I see the place where you are.
• Me no sabe la ora quando me va parti. – I don’t know the hour when I will leave.
Coordinated clauses

Two main clauses can be linked together into a single sentence by means of coordinating conjunctions. A comma is often included before the conjunction:

- Me ia desira la auto, ma me no ia ave la mone. – I wanted the car, but I didn’t have the money.
- Me desira un bon carera e me vole ance trova un sposa bela. – I want a good career and I also want to find a beautiful wife.

Such clauses can stand as independent sentences, with or without conjunctions:

- El ia vole canta e el ia vole dansa, ma el ia teme. – He wanted to sing and he wanted to dance, but he was afraid.
- El ia vole canta. E el ia vole dansa. Ma el ia teme. – He want to sing. And he wanted to dance. But he was afraid.
- El ia vole canta. El ia vole dansa. El ia teme. – He wanted to sing. He wanted to dance. He was afraid.
Numbers

Cardinal numbers

The basic cardinal numbers are:

- zero – zero
- un – one
- du – two
- tre – three
- cuatro – four
- sinco – five
- ses – six
- sete – seven
- oto – eight
- nove – nine
- des – ten
- sento – hundred
- mil – thousand
- milion – million

Numbers up to 999 are written as single words containing up to three components, hyphenated together. Each component represents a digit, and consists of a cardinal number between un and nove, with des or sento appended if the digit represents a multiple of ten or a hundred. Single multiples of ten and a hundred are expressed as just des and sento, with no mention of un. The components for zero multiples (such as the “0” in “209”) are omitted entirely.

- des-un – 11
- des-du – 12
- des-nove – 19
- dudes – 20
- dudes-un – 21
- dudes-sinco – 25
• sento-un – 101
• sento-des-du – 112
• tresento-dudes-un – 321
• cuatrocento – 400
• novesento-sinco – 905

Mil and milion are always written as standalone words, separating each group of three digits:
• mil setesento-sesdes-tre – 1763
• du mil un – 2001
• tre mil des-cuatro – 3014
• cuatrodus-sinco mil sesente-setedes-oto – 45 678
• novesento-otodes-sete milion sessento-sincodes-cuatro mil tresento-duedes-un
  balones roja – 987 654 321 red balloons

When writing numbers in digits, Elefen uses a space between each group of three digits, as shown above. The decimal point is written as either a period (a dot) or a comma, according to preference, and likewise pronounced as either punto or virgula. Digits following the decimal point are simply listed:
• tre punto un cuatro un ses – 3.1416
• du virgula zero nove – 2,09

Negative numbers are expressed with min:
• min sinco grados – minus five degrees

**Thousands of millions**

The word “billion” can mean either a thousand million or a million million, depending on culture. Similar problems affect “trillion”, “quadrillion”, etc. To avoid confusion, Elefen prefers to spell such numbers out explicitly:
• mil milion – 1 000 000 000 (one with nine zeroes, 10⁹)
• milion milion – 1 000 000 000 000 (10^{12})
• mil milion milion – 1 000 000 000 000 000 (10^{15})

The words bilion, trilion, cuadrilion, etc do exist in Elefen, but a speaker who uses them should take care to clarify the meaning.
In scientific writing, the clearest option is to use the international prefixes:

- **deca-** (da) – 10
- **hecto-** (h) – 100
- **cilo-** (k) – $10^3$
- **giga-** – $10^9$
- **tera-** – $10^{12}$
- **peta-** – $10^{15}$
- **exa-** – $10^{18}$
- **zeta-** – $10^{21}$
- **iota-** – $10^{24}$

**Ordinal numbers**

When a number *precedes* a noun, it is a cardinal number, indicating a quantity:

- tre omes e **cuatro** femes – three men and four women

But when a number *follows* a noun, it is an ordinal number, indicating a position in a sequence:

- la **om tre** – the third man
- la **pato ses** – the sixth duck
- la **paje un** – the first page, page one

**Prima** is a common alternative to ordinal **un**, but it can’t be used for higher ordinals that happen to end in “1”:

- la **paje prima** – the first page
- sala **sento-un** – room 101

**Numero** can be used as a dummy noun to support an ordinal number:

- El es **numero tre**. – He is number three / He is third.
- A cual paje tu es? Me es a **numero setedes**. – What page are you on? I’m on number seventy.
- **Numero tre**, me vole grasia la furnores de come. – Thirdly, I want to thank the caterers.

**Fractions**

One use of the suffix -i is to form words for fractional numbers:

- **dui** – half
- **tri** – third
• **cuatri** – quarter, fourth
• **desi** – tenth
• **des-dui** – twelfth
• **cuatrodesi** – fortieth
• **senti** – hundredth
• **tresento-sesdes-sinci** – 1/365
• **mili** – 1/1000
• **dudes-mili** – 1/20,000

Fractions follow the rules for ordinary nouns:
• **un tri** de la tarte – a third of the pie
• **du tris** de la tarte – two thirds of the pie
• **esta tri ardeda** de la tarte – this burnt third of the pie
• **un cuatri** de un sentenio – a quarter century
• **tre tredes-duis** de un diton – three thirty-seconds of an inch

There are also other ways to express fractions:
• **tre e un dui** oras – three and a half hours
• tre oras e **un dui** – three hours and a half
• **sete e un dui** milion anios – seven and a half million years
• **des persentos** de la popla = ten percent of the people
• **des sentis** de la popla = ten percent of the people
• **du punto sete sinco oto** metres = 2.758 meters

For scientific writing, international prefixes are available:
• **desi-** (d) – 1/10
• **senti-** (c) – 1/100
• **mili-** (m) – 10⁻³
• **micro-** (µ) – 10⁻⁶
• **nano-** (n) – 10⁻⁹
• **pico-** (p) – 10⁻¹²
• **femto-** (f) – 10⁻¹⁵
• **ato-** (a) – 10⁻¹⁸
• **zepto-** (z) – 10⁻²¹
• **iocto** (y) – 10⁻²⁴
Multiples

The suffix -uple forms words for numeric multiples:

- **duple** – double, duo, pair, couple
- **truple** – triple, trio
- **cuatruple** – quadruple

Phrases with *ves* or *veses* express how many times something happens:

- **a un ves** – once, one time
- **a du veses** – twice, two times
- **a tre veses** – thrice, three times

*Ves* does not express arithmetic multiplication.

Arithmetic

Addition is expressed with **plu** or **e**:

- Un **plu** un es du. – One plus one is two.
- Du **e** du no es sinco. – Two and two are not five.

Subtraction is expressed with **min**:

- Ses **min** tre es tre. – Six minus three is three.

Multiplication is expressed with **multiplida par**, often simplified to just **par**:

- Du **multiplida par** tre es ses. – Two multiplied by three equals six.
- Ses **par** cuatro es dudes-cuatro. – Six times four is twenty-four.

Division is expressed with **divideda entre**, often simplified to just **entre**:

- Des **divideda entre** du es sinco. – Ten divided by two is five.
- Sinco **entre** du es du e un dui. – Five over two is two and a half.
- Sinco **entre** du es du punto sinco. – Five over two is 2.5.
- Sinco **entre** du es du virgula sinco. – Five over two is 2.5.

Powers are expressed with **a potia** and an ordinal number. **Cuadrida** and **cubida** are alternatives for “squared” and “cubed”:

- Tre **a potia du** es nove. – Three to the power of two is nine.
- Tre **cubida** es dudes-sete. – Three cubed is twenty-seven.
- **des a potia min nove** – $10^{-9}$
- **des a potia sento** – $10^{100}$

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Roots are expressed with a **radis** and an ordinal number:

- 256 a **radis cuatro** es 4. – The fourth root of 256 is 4.
- La **radis cuadral** de 64 es 8. – The square root of 64 is 8.
- La **radis cubo** de 27 es 3. – The cube root of 27 is 3.

**Measurements**

Physical measurements can be expressed in a variety of ways:

- **Cuanto alta es** la tore? – How high is the tower?
- **Cuanto de altia** la tore ave? – How much height does the tower have?
- La tore **es cuanto alta**? – The tower is how high?
- La tore **ave cuanto de altia**? – The tower has how much height?
- La tore **es 40 metres alta**. – The tower is 40 meters high.
- La tore **ave 40 metres de altia**. – The tower has a height of 40 meters / The tower is 40 meters in height.
- La tore **es un metre plu alta ca** la casa. – The tower is one meter higher than the house.
- La tore **ave un metre plu de altia ca** la casa. – The tower has a height one meter more than the house.
- La tore **es du veses plu alta ca** la casa. – The tower is two times higher than the house.
- La tore **ave du de la altia de** la casa. – The tower has two times the height of the house.
- La casa **ave un dui de la altia de** la tore. – The house has half the height of the tower.
- La tore **es duple plu alta ca** la casa. – The tower is twice as high as the house.
- La tore **ave duple la altia de** la casa. – The tower has double the height of the house.

A basic principle is that one *has* height (**ave altia**) but is high (**es alta**).

**40 metres alta** literally means “40 high meters” (i.e. the meters themselves are high), but by natural extension it comes to mean “40 meters in height”.

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The same options apply to other measurements, such as:

- larga, largia
- grande, grandia
- pesosa, pesa
- longa, longia
- longa, tempo
- vea, eda
- basa, basia
- profunda, profundia
- frecuente, frecuentia
- rapida, rapidia
- densa, densia
Word formation

In Elefen, new words can be formed by adding prefixes or suffixes to existing words, or by combining two existing words as a compound noun.

It’s also possible to reuse adjectives as nouns, and verbs as nouns, without adding an affix.

Prefixes

Anti- means “anti-”. It forms adjectives and nouns that indicate opposition:

- sosia → antisosial – anti-social
- avion → antiavion – anti-aircraft
- proton → antiproton – anti-proton

Auto- means “self-” or “auto-”. It forms nouns, verbs, and adjectives that indicate reflexive or automatic actions:

- respeta – respect → autorespeta – self-respect
- flue – flow → autoflue – to wordwrap
- adere – adhere → autoaderente – self-adhesive

Des- means “un-” or “dis-” in the sense of undoing an action. It forms verbs. It simplifies to de- before S, Z, X, or J:

- botoni – to button → desbotoni – to unbutton
- infeta – to infect → desinfeta – to disinfect
- jela – to freeze → dejela – to thaw
- sifri – to encode → desifri – to decode

Inter- means “inter-”. It forms nouns, verbs, and adjectives that indicate mutual actions or states:

- cambia – to change → intercambia – to exchange
- nasional – national → internasional – international

Media- means “mid-”. It forms nouns that indicate the midpoint of something:

- note – night → medianote – midnight
- estate – summer → mediaestate – midsummer
- punto – point → mediapunto – midpoint
Non- means “un-”, “non-”. It forms adjectives and nouns indicating opposites. It simplifies to no- before N:

- justa – just → nonjusta – unjust
- ativa – active → nonativa – inactive
- nativa – native → nonativa – non-native
- nesesada – necessary → nonesesada – unnecessary
- crede – belief → noncrede – disbelief

Pos- means “post-”. It forms nouns, verbs, and adjectives that refer to a time (or place) that lies after or behind (pos) another:

- graduada – graduate → posgraduada – postgraduate
- media – middle → posmedia – afternoon
- alveolo – alveolus → posalveolal – postalveolar

Pre- means “pre-”. It forms nouns, verbs, and adjectives that refer to a time (or place) that lies before or in front of (ante) another:

- graduada – graduate → pregraduada – undergraduate
- istoria – history → preistoria – prehistory
- judi – judge → prejudi – prejudge

Re- means “re-”. It forms verbs indicating a repeated action, or an action in the reverse direction:

- comensa – to begin / to start → recomensa – to begin again / to restart
- pleni – to fill → repleni – to refill / to replenish
- paia – to pay → repaia – to pay back / to repay
- veni – to come → reveni – to come back / to return

Su- means “sub-” or “under-”. It forms nouns, verbs, and adjectives that indicate a lower point in a hierarchy:

- teninte – lieutenant → suteninte – sublieutenant
- divide – to divide → sudivide – to subdivide
- consensa – conscious → suconsensa – subconscious
- indise – index figure → suindise – subscript
- campion – champion → sucampion – runner-up
Supra- means “super-” or “over-”. It forms nouns, verbs, and adjectives that indicate a higher point in a hierarchy:

- computador – computer → supracomputador – supercomputer
- pasa – to pass → suprapasa – to surpass
- dramosa – dramatic → supradramosa – overdramatic / sensational
- fem – woman → suprafem – superwoman
- natural – natural → supranatural – supernatural

Vis- means “vice-”. It forms nouns indicating deputies:

- presidente – president → vispresidente – vice-president
- re – king → visre – viceroy

Bon- and mal- form good and bad (or mistaken) versions of adjectives and verbs, sometimes metaphorically. Mal- is often equivalent to “mis-” in English:

- parla – speak → bonparlante – eloquent
- vende – sell → bonvendeda – bestselling
- dise – say → bondise – bless
- veni – come → bonveni – welcome
- acusa – accuse → malacusa – libel / slander
- comprende – understand → malcomprende – misunderstand
- nomida – named → malnomida – misnamed
- odorosa – smelly → malodorosa – foul-smelling

Numbers and fractions are used as prefixes on certain words. With family members, numbers denote increasingly distant generations, like sequences of “great-” in English:

- avo – grandfather → duavo – great-grandfather
- neta – granddaughter → treneta – great-great-granddaughter
- pede – foot → cuatropede – quadruped(al)
- sore – sister → duisore – half-sister
- galon – gallon → cuatrigalon – quart
Suffixes

Many suffixes start with a vowel. When such a suffix is added to a word that already ends in a vowel, the existing vowel is dropped, unless it was the only vowel in the original word:

- **fruta** – fruit → **frutosa** – fruity
- **jua** – game → **jueta** – toy
- **fe** – fairy → **fein** – fairy-like

Where a suffix would create an invalid vowel sequence, the second vowel of the sequence is dropped:

- **comedia** + **-iste** → (comediiste) → **comediste** – comedian

There are two exceptions to these rules:

- **tre** + **-i** → **tri**
- **tre** + **-uple** → **truple**

Suffix forming verbs

Just like other verbs, the verbs produced by this suffix can be used both transitively and intransitively, or as nouns.

- **-i** is added to nouns and adjectives to form verbs meaning “to become …”, “to change into …”.
- As a special case, this also includes verbs meaning “to emit a substance or a new part”:

  - **arco** – arch → **arci** – to arch
  - **roja** – red → **roji** – to redden
  - **umida** – damp → **umidi** – to humidify
  - **duple** – double → **dupli** – to double
  - **saliva** – saliva → **salivi** – to salivate
  - **flor** – flower → **flori** – to blossom

- **-i** also makes verbs meaning “to use …” (typically as a tool or device), or “to apply …” (a substance or a convention):

  - **boton** – button → **botoni** – to button
  - **telefon** – telephone → **telefoni** – to telephone
  - **sponja** – sponge → **sponji** – to sponge
  - **pinta** – paint → **pinti** – to paint
  - **nom** – name → **nomi** – to name
Suffixes forming adjectives

Just like other adjectives, the adjectives produced by these suffixes can be reused as nouns denoting people or things that have the specified quality.

-in is added to a noun to create an adjective meaning “similar to …”, “-like”, “-ish”:

- ami – friend → amin – friendly
- enfante – child → enfantin – childlike / childish
- fantasma – ghost → fantasmin – ghostly
- menta – mint → mentin – minty
- monstro – monster → monstrin – monstrous
- serpente – snake → serpentin – snakelike / serpentine

-osa is added to a noun to make an adjective meaning “full of …” or “made of …”:

- zucar – sugar → zucarosa – sugary
- oro – gold → orosa – made of gold
- capel – hair → capelosa – hairy
- festa – holiday → festosa – festive
- melma – slime → melmosa – slimy
- jua – game → juosa – playful
- caos – chaos → caososa – chaotic

-al is added to a noun to form a general adjective meaning “pertaining to …” or “to do with …”:

- fotografia – photography → fotografial – photographic
- nasion – nation → nasional – national
- siensa – science → siensal – scientific
- averbo – adverb → averbal – adverbial
- erita – inheritance → erital – hereditary
- mito – myth → mital – mythical
- monce – monk → moncal – monastic

-iste is added to a noun denoting a belief, such as a religion or a philosophy, to make a general adjective. If the noun ends in -isme, then -iste takes its place. In some words where the root is a proper noun, the noun’s final vowel is retained if this produces a more international word:

- bigamia – bigamy → bigamiste – bigamous
- otimisme – optimism → otimiste – optimist
- puria – cleanliness → puriste – puristic
- Mitra – Mithras → mitraiste – Mithraist
-an is added to a few nouns denoting extents of space or time (places and eras) to form general adjectives:

- **suburbe** – suburb → **suburban** – suburban
- **Victoria** – Victoria → **victorian** – Victorian

-an is also one of the five standard suffixes for forming adjectives that denote languages and peoples. The other four are -es, -ica, -i, and -sce. For these adjectives, Elefen uses words that sound as similar to the native names as possible: as a result, some names use a special suffix of their own, or no suffix at all, and the root is sometimes modified too:

- **Africa** – Africa → **african** – African
- **Frans** – France → **frances** – French
- **Elas** – Greece → **elinica** – Greek
- **Arabia** – Arabia → **arabi** – Arabian
- **Rusia** – Russia → **rusce** – Russian
- **Europa** – Europe → **european** – European
- **Deutxland** – Germany → **deutx** – German
- **Britan** – Britain → **brites** – British

But those who prefer it can simply add -an to any country name:

- **Frans** – France → **fransan** – French
- **Elas** – Greece → **elas** – Greek
- **Arabia** – Arabia → **arbian** – Arabian
- **Rusia** – Russia → **rusian** – Russian
- **Deutxland** – Germany → **deutxlandan** – German
- **Britan** – Britain → **britanan** – British

-ica is added to a noun denoting a medical, psychological, or similar problem, to form an adjective that describes a person who has the problem:

- **catalesia** – catalepsy → **catalesica** – cataleptic
- **xenofobia** – xenophobia → **xenofobica** – xenophobic

-nte is added to a verb to create the active participle, an adjective that means “-ing”, i.e. “such that it does (the specified action)”. The active participle of es is esente:

- **ama** – to love → **amante** – loving
- **depende** – to depend → **dependente** – dependent
- **dormi** – to sleep → **dorminte** – asleep
- • **obedi** – to obey → **obedinte** – obedient
  - • **pare** – to appear / to seem → **parente** – apparent
  - • **es** – to be → **esente** – being

Nouns ending in **-nte** are not used as names of actions:
  - • La **covrente** es sur la caxa. – The lid/covering is on the box.
  - • **Covre** la caxa es un bon idea. – Covering the box is a good idea.

- **da** is added to a verb to form the passive participle, an adjective that means “-ed”, i.e. “such that it has or has had … done to it”:
  - • **ama** – to love → **amada** – beloved
  - • **clui** – to close → **cluida** – closed
  - • **conose** – to know → **conoseda** – known
  - • **jela** – to freeze → **jelada** – frozen
  - • **nesesa** – to need → **nesesada** – needed / necessary
  - • **putri** – to rot → **putrida** – rotten

One does not use **-da** to indicate the past tense of verbs:
  - • La caxa es **covreda** par la tela. - at this time, the cloth covers the box.
  - • La tela **ia covre** la caxa. - in the past, the cloth covered the box.

- **able** is added to a verb to make an adjective that means “-able”, “capable of having … done to it”, or “worthy of having … done to it”:
  - • **ama** – to love → **amable** – lovable
  - • **come** – to eat → **comable** – edible
  - • **infla** – to inflate → **inflable** – inflatable
  - • **loda** – to praise → **lodable** – praiseworthy
  - • **nota** – to note → **notable** – notable
  - • **titila** – to tickle → **titilable** – ticklish

**Suffixes forming nouns**

- **or** means “-er”. When added to a verb, it makes a noun meaning a person who performs the specified action, often typically or habitually. When added to a noun, it makes a noun meaning a person who works with the specified thing, or plays the specified sport:
  - • **aida** – to help → **aidor** – helper
  - • **deteta** – to detect → **detetor** – detective
  - • **dirije** – to direct → **dirijor** – director
-ador also means “-er”, but creates nouns meaning a tool or machine that performs the specified action, or works on the specified thing:

- cafe – coffee → caferia – cafe
- pan – bread → paneria – bakery, baker’s shop
- beli – beautify → beleria – beauty salon
- campana – bell → campaneria – bell tower
- fruto – fruit → fruteria – orchard
- monce – monk → monceria – monastery
- planeta – planet → planeteria – planetarium
- xef – chief / leader → xeferia – headquarters

-eria is added to a noun or verb to make a noun meaning a place, often a shop, associated with the specified action or thing:

- ajil – agile → ajilia – agility
- felis – happy → felisia – happiness
- jelosa – jealous → jelosia – jealousy
- neutra – neutral → neutría – neutrality
• madre – mother → madria – motherhood
• enfante – child → enfantia – childhood
• sultan – sultan → sultania – sultanate
• fria – cold → fria – coldness
• vea – old / old person → veia – old age

Words like enfantia and sultania can denote a time or place in which the quality exists.

The names of many fields of study also end in ia (or ica) but this is part of the root, and not a suffix. The names of the corresponding practitioners are formed with -iste. -iste is also used to form the names of believers in a religion or philosophy (as derived from the adjectival suffix -iste), the names of musicians, and the names of certain other people that end in “-ist-” internationally:

• jeografia – geography → jeografiste – geographer
• psicolojia – psychology → psicolojiste – psychologist
• cimica – chemistry → cimiciste – chemist
• eletrica – electricity → eletriciste – electrician
• musica – music → musiciste – musician
• Crixna – Krishna → crixnaiste – Krishnaist
• ideal – ideal → idealiste – idealist(ic)
• gitar – guitar → gitariste – guitarist
• solo – solo → soliste – soloist
• jornal – journal → jornaliste – journalist
• sicle – cycle → sicliste – cyclist

-isme forms the names of belief systems, replacing -iste in the name of the believer. It also occurs in certain other words that end in “-ism-” internationally:

• dauiste – Taoist → dauisme – Taoism
• altruiste – altruist(ic) → altruisme – altruism
• raziste – racist → razisme – racism
• sindicatiste – syndicalist → sindicatisme – syndicalism
• turiste – tourist → turisme – tourism
• simbol – symbol → simbolisme – symbolism
• canibal – cannibal → canibalisme – cannibalism
Less productive suffixes

The following suffixes are only applied to specific words, as defined in the dictionary.

-eta is added to certain nouns to create a name for a version of something that has been reduced in a particular way. This includes the names of young animals and inner garments. -eta can similarly be added to a few verbs and adjectives to create words for reduced versions of actions and qualities:

- **bebe** – baby → **bebeta** – newborn baby
- **caro** – cart → **careta** – wheelbarrow
- **imaje** – image → **imajeta** – thumbnail
- **lente** – lens → **lenteta** – contact lens
- **mone** – money → **moneta** – coin
- **orolojo** – clock → **orolojeta** – watch
- **bove** – cow / ox → **bovetta** – calf
- **ovea** – sheep → **oveta** – lamb
- **calsa** – stocking → **calseta** – sock
- **camisa** – shirt → **camiseta** – undershirt / T-shirt
- **jaca** – jacket → **jaceta** – vest (US) / waistcoat (Br)
- **pluve** – to rain → **pluveta** – to drizzle
- **rie** – to laugh → **rieta** – to giggle
- **parla** – to speak → **parleta** – to chat
- **bela** – beautiful → **beleta** – pretty, cute

-on is added to certain nouns to create a name for a version of something that has been augmented in a particular way. This includes the names of outer garments:

- **abea** – bee → **abeon** – bumblebee
- **caxa** – box → **caxon** – crate
- **dente** – tooth → **denton** – fang / tusk
- **dito** – finger → **diton** – thumb
- **padre** – father → **padron** – patriarch / boss
- **sala** – room → **salon** – living room
- **seja** – chair → **sejon** – armchair
- **calsa** – stocking → **calson** – tights / pantyhose
- **jaca** – jacket → **jacon** – overcoat

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-eta and -on are not synonyms for peti and grande: it's quite possible to have un careta grande or un salon peti. Instead, they form words with specific new meanings that can be loosely described as being smaller or larger versions of the original.

-o and -a are added to a few nouns that denote members of the family, to switch the meaning between male and female respectively:

• tio, tia – uncle, aunt

The names of some trees are formed by changing the final -a of the name of the fruit or nut to -o:

• pera – pear → pero – pear tree

-esa is added to a few nouns denoting historical male social roles to form the female equivalent:

• prinse – prince → prinsesa – princess

**Technical affixes**

International scientific and medical terms are formed from Latin and Greek sources by means of a large number of technical prefixes and suffixes. These affixes are used in Elefen too, and follow Elefen’s rules of transcription.

The suffixes -i and -uple are used to name fractions and multiples.

**Compound nouns**

A compound noun can be formed by combining a verb with its object, in that order. The result means a person or thing that performs the specified action on the specified object:

• corti, ungia – shorten, nail → cortiungia – nail clipper
• covre, table – cover, table → covretable – tablecloth
• fura, bolsa – steal, handbag → furabolsa – pickpocket
• lansa, petra – throw, stone → lansapetra – catapult
• para, morde – stop, bite → paramorde – muzzle
• para, pluve – stop, rain → parapluve – umbrella
• pasa, tempo – pass, time → pasatempo – pastime
• porta, mone – carry, money → portamone – wallet
• porta, vose – carry, voice → portavose – spokesperson
• brinca, dorso – hop, back → brincadorso – leapfrog (the game, named after its players)
If the object begins with a vowel, this is retained unless it’s the same as the final vowel of the verb, as in portavion.

Elefen does not allow two consecutive nouns to form a compound. Instead, a preposition has to be placed between the two nouns. For example:

- avia de mar – seabird
- casa per avias – birdhouse
- xef de polisia – chief of police

In rare cases, such an expression has a special non-literal meaning and is treated as if it was a single fixed word. For example, a leon-de-mar (sea lion) is not a lion. In such cases, the words are joined with hyphens, and any adjectives follow the second noun. Hyphens can also be used for more literal compounds when this improves clarity:

- un leon-de-mar grande – a large sea lion
- un leon grande de mar – a large lion from the sea
- un avion grande de mar – a large seaplane (because a seaplane is a type of airplane)
- un avion-de-mar grande – a large seaplane (alternative)
- un avion de mar grande – a large seaplane (ambiguous, because it seems to be saying that the sea is large)
Abbreviations

A number of abbreviations are used in Elefen. They are not written with periods (dots).

There are several abbreviations for common words or phrases. These are not capitalized, except at the beginning of a sentence:

- **acc** (ance conoseda como) – a.k.a. (also known as)
- **aec** (ante la eda comun) – BCE (before the common era) / BC (before Christ)
- **ec** (de la eda comun) – CE (common era) / AD (*anno domini*)
- **etc** (e tal cosas, e tal continuante) – etc (*et cetera*), and so on
- **lfn** – LFN (Lingua Franca Nova)
- **n** (numero) – number
- **nb** (nota bon) – NB (nota bene), please note
- **ovn** (ojeto volante nonidentifiada) – UFO (unidentified flying object)
- **p** (paje, pajes) – p (page), pp (pages)
- **pd** (per dise) – i.e. (*id est*), that is, that is to say
- **pe** (per esemplo) – e.g. (*exempli gratia*), for example
- **pf** (per favore) – please
- **ps** (pos scrive) – PS (*post scriptum*), postscript
- **tv** (televisa, televisador) – TV (television)
- **v** (vide) – see (introducing a cross-reference)

Elefen also retains a few abbreviations from other languages that are recognized internationally, including the standardized abbreviations for metric units:

- **cd** (disco compata) – CD (compact disc)
- **pc** (computador personal) – PC (personal computer)
- **cm** (sentimetre) – cm (centimeter)
- **km** (cilometre) – km (kilometer)
- **mg** (miligram) – mg (milligram)
- **μm** (micrometre) – μm (micrometer)
- **MB** (megabait) – MB (megabyte)
The abbreviated forms of proper nouns and titles use capital letters. But minor words such as la and de – which are not capitalized in the full form of the name – are not included in the abbreviation. Such nouns are often introduced by la, even when abbreviated:

- **dr** (dotor) – Dr (as part of a person’s name)
- **sr** (senior) – Mr (as part of a person’s name)
- **sra** (seniora) – Mrs, Miss, Ms (as part of a person’s name)
- **la NU** (Nasiones Unida) – the UN (United Nations)
- **la RU** (Rena Unida) – the UK (United Kingdom)
- **la SUA** (Statos Unida de America) – the USA (United States of America)

Some proper nouns are best known internationally as untranslated abbreviations, and these are retained in Elefen:

- **IBM** – IBM (International Business Machines Corporation)
- **KGB** – KGB (Комитет государственной безопасности, Committee for State Security)
Punctuation

In general, Elefen leaves the choice of punctuation up to the writer, the only standards being those of clarity and consistency. There are certain basic conventions, though, which are the same as in most European languages.

The first word in a sentence should start with a capital letter.

Primary punctuation marks

An ordinary sentence ends with a period or full stop ( . ).

If a sentence is a direct question, it ends with a question mark ( ? ).

An exclamation mark ( ! ) can be used at the end of a sentence that would have an emotional intensity if spoken.

A comma ( , ) indicates a natural pause in a sentence, or is sometimes just included to clearly separate one part of a sentence (such as a clause) from another. Commas are also used to separate the items of a list.

When writing numbers, the decimal point can be written as either a comma or a period (dot). Adjacent groups of three digits can be separated by spaces.

The colon ( : ) introduces a more detailed presentation of what precedes it. Use a capital letter after a colon if what follows is a complete sentence, but not if it’s just a list or part of a sentence.

The semicolon ( ; ) can be used in place of a period between two sentences that closely reflect or balance each other. It can also separate the items of a list where these are lengthy or contain their own commas.

Don’t place a space to the left of a primary punctuation mark. But do place a space to the right, except at the end of a paragraph.

Quotation marks

A quotation mark appears at the start and end of words that are presented as a direct quotation. There are various forms of quotation mark in the world, including ’ " <…> «…».
In Elefen, the form " is normally used, as it’s clear, easy to type, and international. When one quotation appears within another, ’ is placed around the inner quotation – there’s an example below. In good typography, as in books, the curved forms “” and ‘’ are used, but these are unnecessary in everyday communication. Don’t place spaces between the quotation marks and the quoted text.

In some languages, a dash ( — ) appears in the middle of dialogue when a new person begins to speak, instead of quotation marks. We recommend avoiding this in Elefen, because it’s less clear, and can be confused with other uses of dashes.

When quoting the words of a character in a story, the quotation is often accompanied by a tag indicating who is speaking, and their manner. For such sentences in Elefen, it’s best to place a dash between this tag and each part of the quotation. That way it’s easy to preserve the exact punctuation of the original sentence:

• La vendor murmura – “Ma lo no es tan simple, mea ami.”
• “Me acorda.” – la om responde felis.
• “Perce tu es asi?” – la fem demanda.
• “Cisa” – la bonvolor sujesta – “me pote aida.”
• “Me ave un ami nomida Freda,” – el esplica – “ci es un tortuga.”

When writing about languages and quoting a word or phrase in order to mention it, just use quotation marks:

• Me gusta la parola “xuxa”.
• Sua sposa ia comenta – “Me gusta la parola ‘xuxa’.”

**Minor punctuation marks**

The ellipsis ( … ) suggests a pause, or indicates that some words have been left out.

Dashes ( – o — ) and parentheses ( (…) ) surround comments inserted into the normal flow of a sentence.

The apostrophe ( ’ ) indicates that a vowel has been omitted. This normally only occurs in verse.

In Elefen, currency symbols (€, ¥, £, $, etc) are written before or after the digits of prices, according to the custom of the country in question.

Additional punctuation marks exist, but their usage has little connection to the rules of Elefen.