

Grammar of Lingua Franca Nova

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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, Naciones 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 Atlantica**

- 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** – *Tocatta 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 twenty-first 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 or Italian:

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

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

Diphthongs

When one vowel follows another, they are normally pronounced separately. But in four cases, when the second vowel is I or U, the two vowels form a diphthong:

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

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 [ej] 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**, **abitual**, **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:

B	[b]	as in “big”	voiced bilabial plosive	bebe
C	[k]	as in “cat”	voiceless velar plosive	clica
D	[d]	as in “dog”	voiced dental/alveolar plosive	donada
F	[f]	as in “fat”	voiceless labiodental fricative	fotografi
G	[g]	as in “get”	voiced velar plosive	garga
H	[h]	as in “hot”, or silent	voiceless glottal fricative	haicu
J	[ʒ]	as in “treasure”	voiced postalveolar fricative	jeolojia
L	[l]	as in “let”	voiced dental/alveolar lateral approximant	lingual
M	[m]	as in “man”	voiced bilabial nasal	mesma
N	[n]	as in “not”	voiced dental/alveolar nasal	negante
P	[p]	as in “pot”	voiceless bilabial plosive	paper
R	[r]	as in “roll”	voiced dental/alveolar trill	rubarbo
S	[s]	as in “set”	voiceless dental/alveolar fricative	sistemes
T	[t]	as in “ten”	voiceless dental/alveolar plosive	tota
V	[v]	as in “vat”	voiced labiodental fricative	vivosa
X	[ʃ]	as in “shop”	voiceless postalveolar fricative	xuxa
Z	[z]	as in “zoo”	voiced dental/alveolar fricative	zezea

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**. NG at the end of a syllable, as in **bumerang** or **gangster**, 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: [bløge], [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, psicologija**
 - ▶ 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], [sikologija].
- **ambargris, esflue, fortres, rontgen**
 - ▶ Certain rare words contain more complex combinations, with three or more consonants. If these are difficult, a schwa (a neutral vowel) can be added to the pronunciation: [ambarəgris], [esəflue], [forətres/fortəres], [rontəgen].

Non-Elefen letters

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

K	[k]	like C
Q	[k]	like C
W	[u] or [w]	like U
Y	[i] or [j]	like I
Ë	[jo]	like IO
Ï	[i] or [j]	like I
Ц	[ts]	like TS
Ч	[tʃ]	like TX
Щ	[ʃtʃ]	like XTX
Ы	[i]	like I
Э	[e]	like E
Ю	[ju]	like IU
Я	[ja]	like IA

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**
- **matemática**
- **albatrôs**
- **ranûr**

Adding a suffix can move the stress:

- **matemática** → **matematicâl**
- **radiogrâf** → **radiogrâfia** (no change)
- **radiogrâf** → **radiograf(|)îste**

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:

- **abâia**
- **cîui**
- **bonsâi**
- **cacâu**

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

- **trâe**
- **fêa**
- **tîo**
- **prôa**
- **jûa**

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**
- **rîtuo**
- **âlio**

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

- **conêo**
- **idêa**
- **sutrêe**
- **prodûi**

(But in **estîngui** and **vâcui**, 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 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 23 consonant clusters are allowed at the start of a syllable:

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

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**
- **mostrabilia** = **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*).

In some cases, for reasons of style or clarity, you may want to place the object of the verb at the beginning of the sentence. In these cases, the object must be followed by a comma, and an object pronoun is used after the verb:

- **La gatos**, me no gusta **los**. – Cats, I don't like them.

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 Paris. – The man who lived here went to Paris.
- El va visita en julio, **cuando la clima es bon**. – He will visit in July, when the weather is good.
- On no ia permete 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.

Nouns

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 mea 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 nesuada **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 intelijente**. – I met a beautifully intelligent woman.
- Me ia encontra un fem **bela, joven, e intelijente**. – 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 **Amazona** – 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
- mea ami **Simon** – my friend Simon
- la parola “**inverno**” – the word “inverno”
- la libro **La prinse peti** – the book *The Little Prince*

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

- La disionario es ance disponibile 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. Unlike **cada**, **tota** refers to the whole thing, rather than the separate individuals that comprise it:

- **Tota linguas** es absurda. – 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.
- On ia oia la musica tra **tota la vila**. – The music was heard throughout the town / all through the town.

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 vegetales** es la plu bon? – What vegetables are the best?
- Tu veni de **cual pais**? – What country do you come from?
- **Cual fenestras** es rompeda? – Which windows are broken?
- **Cual pinta** 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 can** ave un nom. – Each dog has a name.
- Me no ia leje **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 soffito. – 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 mea 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 ca 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.

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 sta ja asi tra **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**. – 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 interesa** a cada dia. – He has less interest every day.

All quantifiers can 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 repinti la sala? – Do you want to repaint the room?
 - ▶ Me prefere evita **tal labora**. – I prefer to avoid such work.
- 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. A similarity determiner is never the first word in a *singular countable* noun phrase. It is always preceded by another determiner – or by two, if one of them is a predeterminer (e.g. **tota la otra libro**).
- 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.
- **Un otra problem** es la manca de aira fresca asi. – Another problem is the lack of fresh air in here.
- Nos no ia tradui ancora **acel otra 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.

- Do es Joana? **El** es en la jardin. – Where is Joana? She’s in the garden.
- Do es mea come de matina? **Lo** es en la cosina. – Where is my breakfast? It’s in the kitchen.

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.

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:

- Lo 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 mea 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.

Determiner 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

- **un/la otra, (la) otras** – another, the other (one), (the) others
- **la mesma, la mesmas** – the same one, the same ones
- **un tal, tales** – such a one, one like that, ones like that

Examples:

- **Estas** aspeta bela! – These looks nice!
- Prende **cualse**. – 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) is 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.
- Quanto pizzas 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 **sentos**, **mil**, or **milion**, the plural **-s** is added:

- On ia ave **miles** de persones a la conserta. – There were thousands of people at the concert.
- A cada anio, **milliones** 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 ance 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** (or **lunlotra**) 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** (or **pos lunlotra**, one after another), and **la un sur la otra** (or **sur lunlotra**, one on top of the other):

- La xicos colpa **la un la otra** / **lunlotra**. – The boys are hitting each other.
- Me pila mea crepes **la un sur la otra** / **sur lunlotra**. – 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 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 riabile. – The superstitions – I like that word! – that I have investigated are ridiculous.
- El esperia un sonia **cual** el teme. – She experiences a dream of which she is afraid.
- *Compare:* El esperia 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**)

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.

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 = adverb*)
- la nara **vera e longa** – the true (and) long story (*vera = adjective*)
- la om **grande, forte, e stupida** – the big, strong, stupid man (*three adjectives*)

In some cases, an adjective is placed before the noun: for style in poetry or stories, or 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 brillante** 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 atenciosa** 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 mea 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 also be placed after the object of the verb, or at the end of the sentence:

- El dansa **bon**. – He dances well.
- **Pronto** el va cade. – Soon he will fall.
- **Surprendente**, el es un xico **multe bon**. – Surprisingly, he is a very good boy.
- Me no oia tu **multe bon**. – I cannot hear you very well.
- *but*: 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** sorprendente. – 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:

- **apena** – hardly, barely
- **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** – still
- **aora** – now
- **alora** – then (*at that time*)
- **denova** – again
- **ja** – already
- **nunca** – never
- **sempre** – always
- **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 cuando**. 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 sirculo **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 riabile. – The manner in which you walk is ridiculous.
- Me parla **como** me pensa. – I speak as/how I think.
- La describe 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 titulo. – 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 **abitua** come en la note. – I used to eat during the night.
- Me ia come **abitual** 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 existe, 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 duda 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.”

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 leje **xocada** la reporta. – He read the report in shock. (*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 **asorbe 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** pinti la sala. – The room is being painted.
- **On** no sabe cuanto persones teme arañas. – 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 mea 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 pinti 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*)

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 Efeven 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 Efeven, **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, one can move the real subject 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 introduces a special kind of noun clause, called an “infinitive clause”, whose meaning is like a clause introduced by **ce**. The infinitive is still really a verb, capable of being followed by adverbs and an object, and of negation by the word **no** placed before it. Importantly, it does not accept a subject or an indicator of tense or mood. These are conveyed by the context.

The most common use of an infinitive clause is as the object of another verb. The subjects of both verbs are usually the same, but they can be different if the meaning suggests this, as in the example with **proibi come** below:

- 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.
- La empleor proibi **come sanduitxes en la ofisia**. – The employer forbids eating sandwiches in the office.

Infinitives are also often found after prepositions, where they can still accept **no** before them, and adverbs and an object after them:

- Me viaja per **vide la mundo**. – 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 mundo sin **lasa impresas de pede**. – You can’t walk through the world without leaving footprints.

By contrast, the verbal noun is just a noun, and is normally preceded by **la** or another determiner. The noun denotes either an occurrence of the verb’s action, or its immediate result. It can accept adjectives, but a preposition (most commonly **de**) must be used if an object needs to be included:

- Sua **condui** ia es vera xocante. – His behaviour was really shocking.
- El ia destrui sua **labora** intera. – She destroyed her entire work.

- La valsa e 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.
- Tu ave no **comprende** de la problemes. – You have no understanding of the problems.
- “LFN” es un **corti** de “Lingua Franca Nova”. – “LFN” is an abbreviation of “Lingua Franca Nova”.
- La universo ia es extrema 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**.

An infinitive clause can be used as the subject of a sentence:

- **Nada** es un eserse gustable. – Swimming / To swim is an enjoyable exercise.
- **Nada en fango** no es un eserse gustable. – Swimming in mud / To swim in mud is not an enjoyable exercise.
- **Scrive la novela** ia aida el a boni sua stilo. – Writing the novel helped her to improve her style.

But, in writing, if an infinitive clause is long, the reader may risk mistaking the infinitive verb for a command, at least until they get to the main verb of the sentence. One can avoid this by changing the infinitive to a verbal noun by adding **la** or another determiner before it, or by using the plural:

- **La nada en fango** no es un eserse gustable. – Swimming in mud is not an enjoyable exercise.
- **La scrive de la novela** ia aida el a boni sua stilo. – Writing the novel / The writing of the novel helped her to improve her style.
- **Eras** es umana, **pardonas** es divin. – To err is human, to forgive is divine.

Prepositions

A **preposition** is a special word that introduces a noun phrase, forming a **prepositional phrase**. A prepositional 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 boat 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 artal. – 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 min tredes 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 sacco** (“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 sacco **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 experia 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 cuando means “before” as a conjunction (“before the time when”):

- Nos vide la lampo **ante cuando** 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 tera 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 la pajes dudes-sinco **asta** cuatrades-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!

ca

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 tera ave plu cosas **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** tua 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 secur **contra** acua. – This camera is waterproof.

- La elinicas antica ia batalia **contra** Persia. – The ancient Greeks fought against Persia.
- La scala es **contra** la serca. – 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 la 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 conjesto 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 cuando means “since” as a conjunction (“from the time when”):

- **De cuando** 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** elinica. – 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 dejetada **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, Osteraic, Slovensco, e Polscia. – The Czech Republic is between Germany, Austria, Slovakia, 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 serca? – 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 sorprendeda **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** nosa spiores. – We discovered your secrets via our spies.
- La prisonida ia evade **par** asconde su un camion. – The prisoner escaped by hiding under a truck.
- Me va destrui la serca **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 perilosa **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** exemplo, 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** paraplue. – 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 tota **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 razones 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 soffito. – The floor is below the ceiling.
- Antilopes ia reposa **su** la arbores. – Antelopes were resting under the trees.
- On ave un table de sanduitxes **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 soffito es apena visible **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 pupa 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 **qual** 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 **qual** 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**, **cuando**, **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 explica **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, **cuando** 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 nesesas 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 sorprendeda **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 certa **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? = Tua 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: “Quando nos va parti?” → Me no ia sabe **cuando** nos va parti.
 - ▶ I didn’t know: “When will we depart?” → I didn’t know when we would depart.

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 they depart?” → He doesn’t know whether they 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 sacco 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 sacco 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.
- Ta ce nos 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 **lo cual**, **e lo**, **e esta** or **e acel** can be used instead:

- El pote salta a un metre alta, **e esta** ia surprinde me. – He can jump a meter high, which surprised me.
- Me ia eleje aprende elefen, **lo cual** ia es un deside multe bon. – I chose to learn Elefen, which was a very good decision.

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 work 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**, **cuando**, **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 rinoseros 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 permite ce me fa la cosas **como** me ia desira. – I wasn’t allowed to do things as I wanted.

An adverbial clause introduced by an adverb subordinator (**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 permite 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: “Quando 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 celebra **es**?” → Me va vole sabe do la celebra **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** cuando me va parti. – I don’t know the hour when I will leave.

An infinitive verb can also be thought of as introducing a type of noun clause.

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
- **sentto** – 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 **sentto** 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 **sentto**, 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
- **sentto-un** – 101
- **sentto-des-du** – 112
- **tresentto-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
- **cuatrodes-sinco mil sessento-setedes-oto** – 45 678
- **novesento-otodes-sete milion sessento-sinco-des-cuatro mil tresento-dudes-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, 10^9)
- **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
- **ecto-** (h) – 100
- **cilo-** (k) – 10^3
- **mega-** (M) – 10^6
- **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 **sentto-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
- **sentti** – 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 way 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
- **cuatuple** – 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. **Cuadrída** and **cubída** are alternatives for “squared” and “cubed”:

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

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 cuadrál** 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 torre?** – How high is the tower?
- **Cuanto de altura la torre tiene?** – How much height does the tower have?
- La torre **es cuanto alta?** – The tower is how high?
- La torre **tiene cuanto de altura?** – The tower has how much height?
- La torre **es 40 metros alta.** – The tower is 40 meters high.
- La torre **tiene 40 metros de altura.** – The tower has a height of 40 meters / The tower is 40 meters in height.
- La torre **es un metro más alta que la casa.** – The tower is one meter higher than the house.
- La torre **tiene un metro más de altura que la casa.** – The tower has a height one meter more than the house.
- La torre **es dos veces más alta que la casa.** – The tower is two times higher than the house.
- La torre **tiene dos veces la altura de la casa.** – The tower has two times the height of the house.
- La casa **tiene la mitad de la altura de la torre.** – The house has half the height of the tower.
- La torre **es el doble de alta que la casa.** – The tower is twice as high as the house.
- La torre **tiene el doble de altura que la casa.** – The tower has double the height of the house.

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

40 metros 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”.

The same options apply to other measurements, such as:

- **larga, largia**
- **grande, grandia**
- **pesosa, pesa**
- **longa, longia**
- **larga, tempo**
- **vea, eda**
- **basa, basia**
- **profonda, 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

When a prefix ending with a consonant is added to a word that starts with the same consonant, this consonant is only written once (**inter** + **rede** → **interede**, **non** + **nesesada** → **nonesesada**).

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

- **sosia** – society → **antisosial** – anti-social
- **avion** – airplane → **antiavional** – anti-aircraft
- **proton** – 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:

- **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** – prejudice

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 → **suidise** – 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. It simplifies to **supr-** before A:

- **computador** – computer → **supracomputador** – supercomputer
- **pasa** – to pass → **suprapasa** – to surpass
- **dramosa** – dramatic → **supradramosa** – overdramatic / sensational

- **fem** – woman → **suprafem** – superwoman
- **natural** – natural → **supranatural** – supernatural
- **analise** – analyze → **supranalise** – overanalyze

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
- **crea** – create → **creosa** – creative
- **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** – optimistic
- **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 → **franses** – 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 → **elasan** – Greek
- **Arabia** – Arabia → **arabian** – 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 caixa es **covreda** par la tela. - at this time, the cloth covers the box.
- La tela **ia covre** la caixa. - 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
- **fumi** – to smoke → **fumor** – smoker
- **gania** – to win → **ganior** – winner
- **jogla** – to juggle → **joglor** – juggler
- **parla** – to speak → **parlor** – speaker (person)
- **pexa** – to fish → **pexor** – fisherman
- **carne** – meat → **carnor** – butcher
- **vaso** – pot → **vasor** – potter

- **futbal** – football → **futbalor** – footballer
- **tenis** – tennis → **tenisor** – tennis player

-ador also means “-er”, but creates nouns meaning a tool or machine that performs the specified action, or works on the specified thing:

- **caldi** – heat → **caldador** – heater
- **computa** – compute → **computador** – computer
- **fax** – fax → **faxador** – fax machine
- **lava** – wash → **lavador** – washing machine / dishwasher
- **parla** – speak → **parlador** – loudspeaker
- **surfa** – surf / browse → **surfador** – (web) browser
- **umidi** – dampen → **umidador** – humidifier

-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:

- **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

-ia is equivalent to “-ness” or “-ity” or “-ship” or “-hood” in English. It forms abstract nouns that serve as the names of qualities. When **-ia** is added to a word that ends in **-ia**, the word doesn’t change:

- **ajil** – agile → **ajilia** – agility
- **felis** – happy → **felisia** – happiness
- **jelosa** – jealous → **jelosia** – jealousy
- **neutra** – neutral → **neutria** – 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
- **psicologia** – psychology → **psicolojiste** – psychologist
- **cimica** – chemistry → **cimiciste** – chemist
- **eletrica** – electricity → **eletriciste** – electrician
- **musica** – music → **musiciste** – musician
- **Crixna** – Krishna → **cixnaiste** – 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** – handcart
- **imaje** – image → **imajeta** – thumbnail
- **lente** – lens → **lenteta** – contact lens
- **mone** – money → **moneta** – coin
- **orolojo** – clock → **orolajeta** – watch
- **bove** – cow / ox → **boveta** – 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

-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.

When a preposition is used as a technical prefix, it follows the same rule as **supra-**: if it has two or more syllables and ends with a vowel, and the rest of the word starts with the same vowel, this vowel appears only once (**contra** + **ataca** → **contrataca**).

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 → **cortiuugia** – 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 conosedada 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, televisor) – 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** (Naciones 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 Efen:

- **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 (– or —) 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.