

Scandinavian Languages



Scandinavia, part of Northern Europe, consists of the two countries of the Scandinavian Peninsula, Norway and Sweden, with the addition of Denmark.

The three languages of Norwegian, Swedish and Danish are very similar and are mutually intelligible. All three are North Germanic languages, another branch of the Indo-European language family.

There are about 21,000,000 native Scandinavian language speakers in the world.

Language of the Vikings



The expansion of Nordic peoples in the Viking Age (c. 750-1050) led to the establishment of Scandinavian speech in Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, the Shetland Islands, the Orkney Islands, the Hebrides, and the Isle of Man, as well as parts of Ireland, Scotland, England, France (Normandy), and Russia. Scandinavian languages later disappeared in all these territories except the Faroes and Iceland.

During the period of expansion, all Scandinavians could communicate without difficulty and thought of their language as one, but the differing orientations of the various kingdoms in the Viking Age led to a number of dialectal differences developing.

First words

	Danish	Norwegian	Swedish
Welcome	Velkommen	Velkommen	Välkommen
Hello	Hej	Hallo	Hallå
Goodbye	Farvel	Ha det	Adjö
Yes	Ja	Ja	Ja
No	Ingen	Nei	Nej
Thank you	Tak skal du have (Tak)	Takk skal du ha (Takk)	Tack
Please	Vær venlig	Vær så snill	Snälla du
Sorry	Undskyld	Beklager	Förlåt
Good Morning	God morgen	God morgen	God morgon
Good afternoon	God ettermiddag	God ettermiddag	God ettermiddag
Come here	Kom her	Kom hit	Kom hit
Well done	Godt klaret	Bra gjort	Bra gjort

Look at the similarities and differences between the three languages.

Try and guess how to pronounce these words.

Numbers 1 to 10

	Danish	Norwegian	Swedish
One	en	en	ett
Two	to	to	två
Three	tre	tre	tre
Four	fire	fire	fyra
Five	fem	fem	fem
Six	seks	seks	sex
Seven	syv	syv	sju
Eight	otte	åtte	åtta
Nine	ni	ni	nio
Ten	ti	ti	tio

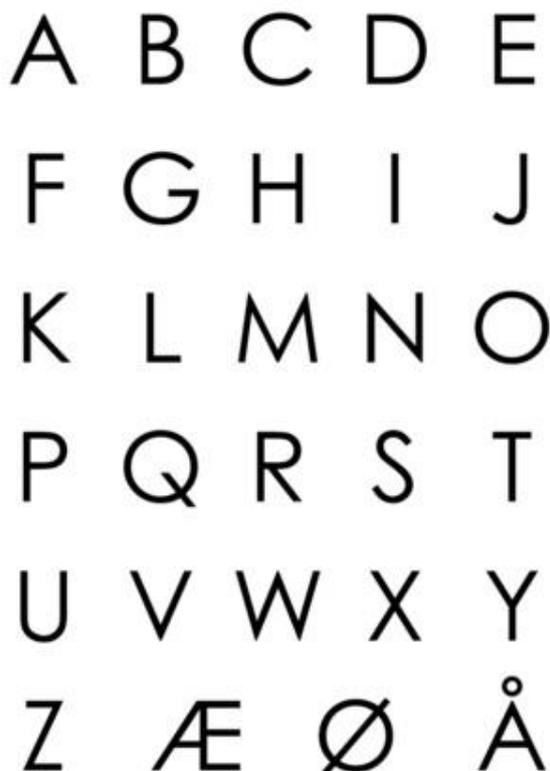
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Practice counting to 10.

Can you count backwards from 10 to 1

Alphabet

In Scandinavian languages the five basic vowel symbols of the Latin alphabet are supplemented by a number of special symbols that are used mostly to represent unlauded vowels.



A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O
P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y
Z	Æ	Ø	Å	

There is:

y (pronounced as German ü),

æ (used in Danish and Norwegian) and the

corresponding ä (used in Swedish),

ø (in Danish and Norwegian) and the corresponding ö (in Swedish)

å (also written aa, used in all three).

The consonant symbols are the usual Latin ones.

Loanwords containing the letters c, q, w, x, and z have generally been naturalized by substituting, respectively, k or s, kv, v, ks, and s (e.g., kontakt 'contact' but Norwegian sigar 'cigar' versus Danish and Swedish cigar).

Did you know...



From the three main Scandinavian languages such as Danish, Swedish and Norwegian -

Danish is claimed to be the hardest Scandinavian language to study due to its speaking standard. The manner of speaking in Danish is quicker, compared to the other Scandinavian languages.

This may come as a surprise, but the language website Babel, have ranked Norwegian as the easiest language to learn for English speakers. The reason is that from a linguistic perspective, the languages share a huge amount: the way verbs work, word order (in many but not all cases), and a large amount of shared vocabulary.

Norwegian is closer to English than either Danish or Swedish.

The Scandinavian languages Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, along with Icelandic and Faroese, are known as the Nordic languages. They are spoken daily by around 19 million people. Yet they are far from the only ones used in the region. The most notable of the other languages is Finnish, while Sami languages and several minority languages are also used.