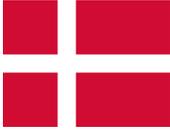


Danish grammar



This article is part of the series
on:
Danish language

Use:
Alphabet
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Grammar

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Dansk Sprognævn

Danish grammar is either the study of grammar in the Danish language, or the grammatical system itself in the Danish language.

Nouns

Declension

There are two noun classes in Danish: Common and Neuter. The common nouns use the *en* article and the neuter ones use *et*. They are often informally called n-words and t-words.

Here are some examples of regular declension

Noun class	Singular		Plural		Meaning
	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite	
Common	en dreng	drengen	dreng e	dreng ene	"boy"
	en sag	sag en	sag e r	sag erne	"case"
	en kvinde	kvind en	kvind e r	kvind erne	"woman"
	en ske	ske en	ske e r	ske erne	"spoon"
Neuter	et fængsel	fængs l et	fængs l e	fængs l er ne	"jail"
	et æble	æbl e t	æbl e r	æbl e rne	"apple"
	et lyn	lyn e t	lyn	lyn e ne	"flash of lightning"

Neuter monosyllabics are unchanged in plural. Other nouns take either -e or -er. Otherwise there is little correspondence between declension and noun class or sense and noun class. In order to correctly decline a noun, one must look it up in a dictionary or memorise the declension form and the noun class.

Note that if the final syllable ends in unstressed -e, -el, -en, or -er, the e will disappear if a grammatic ending starting with an e is added. E.g. the declension of "fængsel" above is quite regular. This is known as the Danish apocope.

There are many nouns with irregular plural. Here are some typical examples:

Gender	Singular		Plural		Meaning
	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite	
Common	en mand	manden	mænd	mændene	"man"
	en bonde	bonden	bønder	bønderne	"farmer"
	en drink	drinken	drinks	drinksene	"drink"
	en sten	stenen	sten	stenene	"stone"
	en risiko	risikoen	risici	risiciene	"risk"
Neuter	et barn	barnet	børn	børnene	"child"
	et hus	huset	huse	husene	"house"
	et våben	våbnet	våben	våbnene	"weapon"

Some have the "wrong" regular form, some have vowel change with or without a suffix, and some are foreign words using their native plural. In all cases it is only the plural indefinite that is irregular. Singular definite always just adds -en or -et. Plural definite adds -ne to the indefinite if it has a standard plural suffix, -ene if not.

Grammatical case

There are no case declensions in Danish nouns, except the genitive, which is normally applied as an -s ending, or simply with an apostrophe when the noun ends with an *s* already (also if the word ends in *x* or *z*). *Pigens hus* ("the girl's house"); *et hus' beboere* ("the inhabitants of a house"). Thus, one does not distinguish between persons and things in the genitive, as in English. The order of the genitive and the governed word is always the same as in English.

When the noun governed by the genitive can be considered part of the governing noun physically, the genitive is often replaced by a prepositional phrase, e.g. *låget på spanden* "the lid of the bucket", *bagsiden af huset* "the back of the house" rather than *spandens låg*, *husets bagside*, which are not incorrect but more formal.

Older case forms exist as relics in phrases like *i live* "alive" (*liv* = "life"), *på tide* "about time" (*tid* = "time"), *på fode* "on his foot" (*fod* = "foot"). Similarly, the genitive is used in certain fossilised prepositional phrases (with *til* "to"): *til fods* "on foot", *til vands/søs* "by water/sea", *gå til hånde* "assist" (*hånde* being an old genitive plural of *hand* "hånd", now replaced by *hænder*).

Articles

The **indefinite article**, *en*, *et*, is prepositive as in all European languages that have an indefinite article, and the origin of the word is the same as in the other Germanic languages, namely the numeral *én*, *ét* "one". There is no indefinite article in the plural.

The **definite article**, *-en*, *-et*, *-(e)ne*, is postpositive as in the other Scandinavian languages save the West Jutlandic dialect of Danish, which has the prepositive *æ* (inflexible). The postpositive article probably comes from an old pronoun, Old Norse *inn*, "that", related to English *yon* and German *jener*. The point of departure may be expressions like *ormr inn langi* > *ormrinn langi* "the long worm". Yet, Danish only uses the postpositive article when the noun does not carry an attributive adjective or a genitive, in which case a prepositive *den*, *det*, *de* is used instead (whereas Norwegian uses the prepositive and the postpositive articles at the same time in such cases):

	Indefinite article	No article	Definite article	
			Postpositive	Prepositive
Common	<i>en bog</i> <i>en billig bog</i>	<i>Lones bog</i> <i>Lones billige bog</i>	<i>bogen</i>	<i>den billige bog</i>
Neuter	<i>et hus</i> <i>et stort hus</i>	<i>Peters hus</i> <i>Peters store hus</i>	<i>huset</i>	<i>det store hus</i>
Plural	<i>bøger</i> <i>billige bøger</i>	<i>Lones bøger</i> <i>Lones billige bøger</i>	<i>bøgerne</i>	<i>de billige bøger</i>

Pronouns

		Nominative case	Oblique case	Possessive			
				Common	Neuter	Plural	
Singular							
First person		jeg	mig	min	mit	mine	<i>I</i>
Second person	informal ¹⁾	du	dig	din	dit	dine	<i>you</i>
	polite ¹⁾	De	Dem	Deres			
Third person (personal)	masculine	han	ham	hans			<i>he</i>
	feminine	hun	hende	hendes			<i>she</i>
Third person (impersonal)	commune	den	den	dens			<i>it</i>
	neuter	det	det	dets			
Reflexive²⁾		-	sig	sin	sit	sine	<i>him, her, it</i>
Plural							
First person		vi	os	vor ³⁾	vort ³⁾	vore ³⁾	<i>we</i>
				vores			
Second person	informal ¹⁾	I	jer	jeres			<i>you (all)</i>
	polite ¹⁾	De	Dem	Deres			
Third person		de	dem	deres			<i>they</i>
Reflexive²⁾		-	sig	deres			

¹⁾ Since the 1970s, the polite form *De* (cf. German *Sie*) is no longer the normal form of addressing adult strangers. It is only used in formal letters or when addressing old people or members of the royal family. It is sometimes used by shop assistants and waiters to flatter their customers. As a general rule, one can use *du* almost in every situation without offending anyone.

²⁾ The reflexive pronoun is used when the object or possessive is identical to the grammatical subject of the sentence: *manden slog sin kone ihjel* "the man killed his (own) wife" ~ *manden slog hans kone ihjel* "the man killed his (somebody else's) wife". It is also used when referring to the subject of an infinite nexus, e.g. an accusative with infinitive: *Rødhætte bad jægeren hilse sin kone* "Little Red Riding Hood asked the hunter to greet his wife", where *sin* refers to the hunter. This difference is often not observed by Jutlandic speakers.

³⁾ *Vores* is the only form normally used in current spoken language; *vor*, *vort* and *vore* are more archaic, and perceived as formal or solemn.

Verbs

In Modern Danish the verb has nine distinct forms, as shown in the chart below.

Non-finite forms				
	Active forms		Passive forms	
Infinitive	(at) vente	to wait/expect	(at) ventes , (at) blive ventet	to be expected
Verbal noun	venten	a waiting		
Present participle	ventende	waiting/expecting		
Past participle			ventet	waited/expected
Finite forms				
Present tense	venter	wait(s)/expect(s)	ventes , bliver ventet	am/is/are expected
Past tense	ventede	waited/expected	ventedes , blev ventet	was/were expected
Imperative	vent	wait/expect	bliv ventet	be expected

Person and number

Verbs do not vary according to person or number: *jeg venter*, *du venter*, *han*, *hun*, *den*, *det venter*, *vi venter*, *I venter*, *de venter*. However, until the beginning of the twentieth century, it was normal to inflect the present tense in number in educated prose. There existed also a special plural form in the imperative. These forms are not used anymore, but one will find them in older prose and in the psalms:

	weak verbs			strong verbs		
	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural	
Present	venter	vente	wait(s)	tager	tage	take(s)
Past	ventede	ventede	waited	tog	toge	took
Imperative	vent!	venter!	wait	tag!	tager!	take

E.g. *Søger, saa skulle I finde* "Seek, and ye shall find" (Mt. 7:7, Lc. 11:9); in the 1992 translation *Søg, så skal I finde*.

Tenses

Like in other Germanic languages, the conjugation of verb tenses is divided into two groups: The first group, the so-called weak verbs, indicates the past tense by adding the suffixes *-ede* or *-te*. The second, called strong verbs, forms the past tense with a zero ending and, in most cases, certain vowel changes.

The future tense is formed with the modals verbs *vil* or *skal* and the infinitive, e.g. *tror du, det vil regne*, "do you think it's going to rain", *vi skal nok komme igen i morgen*, "we'll come again tomorrow". Often the present tense is also used as future, only with the addition of a time specification *i morgen køber han en bil*, "tomorrow he'll buy a car".

In the perfect, the word *har* ("have, has") is placed before the past participle: *han har købt en bil*, "he has bought a car". In certain words implying a movement, however, *er* ("am, are, is") is used instead: *han er gået sin vej*, "he has gone" (like German *er ist gegangen* or French *il est allé*). In such cases *har* is used for the activity, while *er* is used if the result is what is interesting. *Han har rejst meget*, "he has traveled a lot". *Han er rejst*, "he is gone", he is not here anymore.

Similarly, the pluperfect is formed with *havde* or *var*: *han havde købt en bil, han var gået sin vej*. NB. The perfect is used in many cases where English would have a simple preterite.

Moods

In Danish, there are two finite moods, indicative and imperative. Depending on interpretation, there may also be an optative.

1. The indicative mood is used everywhere, unless the imperative or optative is required.
2. The imperative is used in commands: "Kør langsomt!" (Drive slowly!), "Kom her!" (Come here!). (The imperative is the stem of the verb.)
3. The optative is rare and used only in archaic or poetic constructions. It's probably more correct to describe these as elliptical constructions leaving out a modal and just retaining an infinitive, e.g. "Gud være lovet!" (God be praised!), "Kongen længe leve!" (Long live the king!) -- completely analogous to the English use).

In short, Danish morphology offers very little in moods. Just like English, Danish depends on tense and modals to express modes.

Example: Where a language with an explicit subjunctive mood (such as German, Latin, or Icelandic) would use that mood in hypothetical statements, Danish uses a strategy similar to that of English. Compare:

- a. Real, or at least possibly real, situation in present time: *Hvis Peter køber kage, laver Anne kaffe*. "If Peter buys [some] cake, Anne makes coffee." Here, the present indicative is used.
- b. Real, or at least possibly real, situation in past time: *Hvis Peter købte kage, lavede Anne kaffe*. "If Peter bought [some] cake, Anne made coffee." Here, the past indicative is used.
- c. Unreal situation in present time: *Hvis Peter købte kage, lavede Anne kaffe*. "If Peter bought [some] cake, Anne made coffee." (Implying: But Peter doesn't actually buy any cake, so Anne doesn't make coffee—making the whole statement hypothetical.) Here, the past indicative is used.
- d1. Unreal situation in past time: *Hvis Peter havde købt kage, havde Anne lavet kaffe*. "If Peter had bought [some] cake, Anne had made coffee." (Implying that Peter didn't actually buy any cake and so Anne didn't make coffee—making the whole statement hypothetical.) Here, the pluperfect indicative is used.

A language with a full subjunctive mood, the way it typically works in Indo-European languages, would translate cases a. and b. with indicative forms of the verb, and case c. and d. with subjunctive forms. In the hypothetical cases (c. and d.), Danish and English creates distance from reality by "moving the tense one step back". Although these sentences do work, however, it would be normal in Danish as well as in English, to further stress the irreality by adding a modal (which is actually why they're called modals: an important function of modals is to serve as auxiliaries in periphrastic sentences to express mood). So that, instead of either example c. or d1, Danish and English would add "ville/would" in the main sentence, creating what may be considered a periphrastic subjunctive:

- d2. Unreal situation in past time: *Hvis Peter havde købt kage, ville Anne have lavet kaffe*. "If Peter had bought [some] cake, Anne would have made coffee."

(As will be seen from the examples, Danish, unlike English, switches from the normal subject-verb word order to verb-subject when a main clause follows a subordinate clause, but that's always the case and has nothing to do with the mood of the sentence.)

Voice

Like the other Scandinavian languages, Danish has a special inflection for the passive voice with the suffix *-s*, which is historically a reduced enclitic form of the reflexive pronoun *sig* ("himself, herself, itself, themselves"), e.g. *han kalder sig* "he calls himself" > *han kaldes* "he is called".

Danish has a competing periphrastic form of the passive formed with the verb *blive* ("to remain, to become").

In addition to the proper passive constructions, the passive also denotes:

1. a reciprocal form (only with the *s*-passive): *Hans og Jørgen mødtes på gaden* "John and Paul met on the street", *vi ses på onsdag* "we'll see each other on Wednesday", *I må ikke slås* "you shall not fight" (literally "beat each other").
2. an intransitive form (a lexicalised *s*-passive): *der findes / fandtes mange grunde til at komme* "there are / were many reasons why one should come" (literally: "are / were found").
3. an impersonal form: *der kæmpes / bliver kæmpet om pladserne* "there was a struggle for the seats".

In the preterite, the periphrastic form is preferred in non-formal speech except in reciprocal and impersonal passives: *de sås ofte* "they often saw each other", *der fandtes en lov imod det* "there was a law against it" (but real passive: *de blev set af politiet* "they were seen by the police", *der blev fundet en bombe* "a bomb was found").

The *s*-form of the verb can also imply habitual or repetitive action, e.g. *bilen vaskes* "the car is washed" (regularly) vs. *bilen bliver vasket* "the car is (being) washed" (right now, soon, next week, etc.)

The *s*-passive of the perfect participle is regular in Swedish both in the real passive and in other functions, e.g. *vårt företag har funnits sedan 1955* "our company has existed since 1955", *bilen har setts ute på Stockholms gator* "the car has been seen in the streets of S." In Danish, the real passive has only periphrastic forms in the perfect: *bilen er blevet set ude på Stockholms gader*. In the lexicalised and reciprocal passives, on the other hand, we find a combination of the verb *have* and the *s*-passive preterite: e.g. *mødtes* "have met", *har fandtes* "have existed" etc. (but strangely enough, the irregular *har set(e)s* "have seen each other" is much more common than *har sås*, which is considered substandard).

Present participles

The present participle is used to a much lesser extent than in English. The dangling participle, a characteristic feature of English, is not used in Danish. Instead Danish uses subordinate or coordinate clauses with a finite verb, e.g. *eftersom han var konge, var det ham, der måtte bestemme*, "Being the king, he had the last word". The present participle is used in two circumstances:

1. as an attributive adjective: *en dræbende tavshed*, "a boring (lit. killing) silence", *en galoperende inflation*, "a runaway inflation", *hendes rødmande kinder*, "her blushing cheeks".
2. adverbially with verbs of movement: *han gik syngende ned ad gaden*, "he walked down the street singing"

If the present participle carries an object or an adverb, the two words are normally treated as a compound orthographically and prosodically: *et menneskeædende uhyre*, "a man-eating monster", *en hurtig(t)løbende bold*, "a fast(-going) ball", *fodbold- og kvindeelskende mænd*, "men loving football and women".

Past participles

The past participle is used primarily in the periphrastic constructions of the passive (with *blive*) and the perfect (with *være*). It is often used in dangling constructions in the solemn prose style: *Således oplyst(e) kan vi skride til afstemning*, "Now being informed, we can take a vote", *han tog, opfyldt af had til tyrannen, ivrig del i forberedelserne til revolutionen*, "filled with hatred of the tyrant, he participated eagerly in the preparations for the revolution", *velankomne til Kastrup Lufthavn gik de næste par timer med indcheckning*, "having arrived to Copenhagen Airport well, the next couple hours were spent in the check-in".

The past participle of the weak verbs has the ending *-et* or *-t*. The past participle of the strong verbs originally had the ending *-en*, neuter *-et*, but the common form is now restricted to the use as an adjective (e.g. *en bunden opgave*), and it has not been preserved in all verbs. When it is combined with *er* and *har* to form passive and perfect constructions, the neuter form, which happens to be identical to the ending of the weak verbs, is used. In the Jutlandic dialects, *-en* is frequently used in such constructions.

As to the voice of the past participle, it is passive if the verb is transitive, and active if it is intransitive.

Infinitive and verbal nouns

The infinitive may be defined as a verb form that is equivalent to a noun syntactically. The Danish infinitive may be used as the subject or object of a verb like in English: *at rejse er at leve* "to travel is to live", *jeg elsker at spise kartofler* "I love to eat potatoes". Furthermore, the Danish infinitive may also be governed by a preposition (where English normally has the gerund): *han tog livet af sig ved at springe ud af et vindue* "he killed himself by jumping out of a window".

The infinitive normally has the marker *at*, pronounced $\alpha\updownarrow$ or in normal speech Λ , thereby being homonymous with the conjunction *og* "and", with which it is sometimes confused in spelling. The bare infinitive is used after the modal verbs *kunne*, *ville*, *skulle*, *måtte*, *turde*, *burde*.

A rarer form is the verbal noun with the ending *-en* (not to be confused with the definite article) which is used when the infinitive carries a pronoun, an indefinite article or an adjective: *hans evindelige skriegen var enerverende*, "his never-ending crying was enervating", *der var en løben og råben på gangene*, "people ran and cried in the hall". This use has a connotation of something habitual and is often used in a negative sense. It is used in formal information like *Henstilling af cykler forbudt*, "It is prohibited to leave your bike here." Whereas the infinitive is accompanied with adjectives in the neuter (*det er svært at flyve*, "it is difficult to fly"), the verbal noun governs the common gender. Due to the rarity of this form, Danes often mistakenly write *Henstilling af cykler forbudt* (lit. "Recommendation of bikes prohibited") instead, using a more familiar word form.

Verbal nouns like *viden* "knowledge" (literally: "knowing") or *kunnen* "ability" (literally: "being able") have become lexicalised due to the influence of German (*Wissen*, *Können*). Like the proper verbal noun, these forms have no plural, and they cannot carry the definite article; so, when English has *the knowledge*, Danish must use a pronoun or a circumlocution: e.g. *hans viden*, *denne viden*, *den viden man havde*.

Danish has various suffixes for turning a verb into a real noun:

- the suffix *-(n)ing*: *hængning* "hanging" (: *hænge*), *samling* "collection" (: *samle*). The suffix, which is still productive, is related to the German *-(n)ung* and the English *-ing*. The German type takes the feminine gender, and as one would expect, the Danish words take the common gender. The variant without *-n-* is used after stems ending in *n*, *nd*, *r* and consonant + *l*.
- the suffix *-else*: *bekræftelse* "confirmation" (: *bekræfte*). The suffix, which is still productive, takes the common gender.
- the suffix *-sel*: *fængsel* "jail" (: *fange*), *fødsel* "birth" (: *føde*). The suffix is used to form both concrete nouns (in the neuter) and abstract nouns (in the common).
- the verbal stem with no ending: *fald* "fall" (: *falde*), *tab* "loss" (: *tabe*), *kast* "throw" (: *kaste*), *håb* "hope" (: *håbe*). They are all neuter (contrary to the rule of German: *der Fall*).
- the verbal stem with some change of vowel or consonant: *gang* "walk(ing)" (: *gå*), *stand* "state" (: *stå*), *sang* "song" (: *syng*), *dåb* "baptism" (: *døbe*). They normally have the common gender.
- the suffix *-(e)st*: *fangst* "catching" (: *fange*), *ankomst* "arrival" (: *ankomme*), *hyldest* "ovation" (: *hylde*). The type takes the common gender.
- the suffix *-tion*, *-sion*: *funktion* "function" (: *fungere*), *korrektion* "correction" (: *korrigere*), *eksplosion* "explosion" (: *eksplodere*). This type is restricted to stems of Latin origin (which normally have the suffix *-ere* in the verbal forms, cf. German *-ieren*). They take the common gender.

Numerals

Overview

The Danish numbers are:

Number	Cardinal numbers		Ordinal numbers	
	Spelling	Pronunciation	Spelling	Pronunciation
0	<i>nul</i>		<i>nulte</i>	
1	<i>en : et</i>	[¹ e:ʔn] : [eɔ̃]	<i>første</i>	[¹ fœ(ɐ)sɔ̃]
2	<i>to</i>	[¹ tʰo:ʔ]	<i>anden : andet</i>	[¹ anɳ] : [¹ anəð]
3	<i>tre</i>	[¹ tʰɛa:ʔ]	<i>tredje</i>	[¹ tʰɛaðjə:ʔ]
4	<i>fire</i>	[¹ fi:ɐ]	<i>fjerde</i>	[¹ fjɛ:ɐ]
5	<i>fem</i>	[¹ fɛmʔ]	<i>femte</i>	[¹ fɛmɔ̃]
6	<i>seks</i>	[¹ sɛɔ̃s]	<i>sjette</i>	[¹ ɛɛ:ɔ̃]
7	<i>syv</i>	[¹ syʋʔ]	<i>syvende</i>	[¹ syʋʔnə]
8	<i>otte</i>	[¹ ɔ:ɔ̃]	<i>ottende</i>	[¹ ʌɔ̃nə]
9	<i>ni</i>	[¹ ni:ʔ]	<i>niende</i>	[¹ ni:ʔnə]
10	<i>ti</i>	[¹ tʰi:ʔ]	<i>tiende</i>	[¹ tʰi:ʔnə]
11	<i>elleve</i>	[¹ ɛlʋə]	<i>ellevte</i>	[¹ ɛlfɔ̃]
12	<i>tolv</i>	[¹ tʰʌʔ]	<i>tolvte</i>	[¹ tʰʌʔɔ̃]
13	<i>tretten</i>	[¹ tʰɛaɔ̃ɳ]	<i>trettende</i>	[¹ tʰɛaɔ̃nə]
14	<i>fjorten</i>	[¹ fjoɔ̃ɳ]	<i>fjortende</i>	[¹ fjoɔ̃nə]
15	<i>femten</i>	[¹ fɛmɔ̃ɳ]	<i>femtende</i>	[¹ fɛmɔ̃nə]
16	<i>seksten</i>	[¹ sajsɔ̃ɳ]	<i>sekstende</i>	[¹ sajs(ɔ̃)nə]
17	<i>sytten</i>	[¹ søɳɳ]	<i>syttende</i>	[¹ søɳnə]
18	<i>atten</i>	[¹ aɳɳ]	<i>attende</i>	[¹ aɳnə]
19	<i>nitten</i>	[¹ neɳɳ]	<i>nittende</i>	[¹ neɳnə]
20	<i>tyve</i>	[¹ tʰy:ʋ]	<i>tyvende</i>	[¹ tʰy:ʋnə]
21	<i>enogtyve</i>	[¹ e:ʔnɐ,tʰy:ʋ]	<i>enogtyvende</i>	[¹ e:ʔnɐ,tʰy:ʋnə]
22	<i>toogtyve</i>	[¹ tʰo:ʔɐ,tʰy:ʋ]	<i>toogtyvende</i>	[¹ tʰo:ʔɐ,tʰy:ʋnə]
30	<i>trediv</i>	[¹ tʰɛaɔ̃ʋə]	<i>tredivte</i>	[¹ tʰɛaɔ̃fɔ̃]
40	<i>fyrre</i> (arch. <i>fyrretyve</i>)	[¹ fœ:ɐ] ([¹ fœ:ɐ,tʰy:ʋ])	<i>fyrretyvende</i>	[¹ fœ:ɐ,tʰy:ʋnə]
50	<i>halvtreds</i> (arch. <i>halvtredsindstyve</i>)	[hal ¹ tʰɛas] ([hal ¹ tʰɛasɳ,tʰy:ʋ])	<i>halvtredsindstyvende</i>	[hal ¹ tʰɛasɳ,tʰy:ʋnə]
60	<i>tres</i> (arch. <i>tresindstyve</i>)	[¹ tʰɛas] ([¹ tʰɛasɳ,tʰy:ʋ])	<i>tresindstyvende</i>	[¹ tʰɛasɳ,tʰy:ʋnə]
70	<i>halvfjerds</i> (arch. <i>halvfjerdsindstyve</i>)	[hal ¹ fjã(ɐ)s] ([hal ¹ fjã(ɐ)sɳ,tʰy:ʋ])	<i>halvfjerdsindstyvende</i>	[hal ¹ fjã(ɐ)sɳ,tʰy:ʋnə]
80	<i>firs</i> (arch. <i>firsindstyve</i>)	[¹ fiɔ̃ʔs] ([¹ fiɔ̃ʔsɳ,tʰy:ʋ])	<i>firsindstyvende</i>	[¹ fiɔ̃ʔsɳ,tʰy:ʋnə]
90	<i>halvfems</i> (arch. <i>halvfemsindstyve</i>)	[hal ¹ fɛmʔs] ([hal ¹ fɛmʔsɳ,tʰy:ʋ])	<i>halvfemsindstyvende</i>	[hal ¹ fɛmʔsɳ,tʰy:ʋnə]
100	<i>hundred(e), et hundred(e)</i>	[¹ hun(ɛ)ɐð(ð), ('eɔ̃) ¹ hun(ɛ)ɐð(ð)]	<i>hundrede, et hundrede</i>	[¹ hun(ɛ)ɐð(ð), ('eɔ̃) ¹ hun(ɛ)ɐð(ð)]

101	<i>(et) hundred(e) (og) en</i>	[('ed) 'hun(ɐ)ɐð (ɐ) 'e:ʔn]	<i>(et) hundred(e) (og) første</i>	[('ed) 'hun(ɐ)ɐð (ɐ) 'fɛ(ɐ)sðə]
200	<i>to hundred(e)</i>	[('tʰo:ʔ 'hun(ɐ)ɐð(ð)]	<i>to hundrede</i>	[('tʰo:ʔ 'hun(ɐ)ɐð(ð)]
1,000	<i>tusind, et tusind</i>	[('tʰu:ʔsn̩, 'ed 'tʰu:ʔsn̩]	<i>tusinde, et tusinde</i>	[('tʰu:ʔsn̩, 'ed 'tʰu:ʔsn̩]
1,100	<i>et tusind et hundred(e)</i>	[('ed 'tʰu:ʔsn̩ 'ed 'hun(ɐ)ɐð(ð)]	<i>et tusind et hundrede</i>	[('tʰu:ʔsn̩ 'ed 'hun(ɐ)ɐð(ð)]
2,000	<i>to tusind</i>	[('tʰo:ʔ 'tʰu:ʔsn̩]	<i>to tusinde</i>	[('tʰo:ʔ 'tʰu:ʔsn̩]
1,000,000	<i>en million, en million</i>	[('e:ʔn mil(i)'jo:ʔn]	<i>millonte</i>	[mil(i)'jo:ʔndə]
2,000,000	<i>to millioner</i>	[('tʰo:ʔ mil(i)'jo:ʔnɐ]	<i>to millonte</i>	[('tʰo:ʔ mil(i)'jo:ʔndə]
1,000,000,000	<i>en milliard</i>	[('e:ʔn mil(i)'ja:ʔd]	<i>milliardte</i>	[mil(i)'ja:ʔdə]
2,000,000,000	<i>to milliarder</i>	[('tʰo:ʔ mil(i)'ja:ʔdɐ]	<i>to milliardte</i>	[('tʰo:ʔ mil(i)'ja:ʔdə]

Vigesimal system

Counting above forty is in part based on a base 20 number system, called vigesimal: *halvtred-s(inds-tyve)* = $2\frac{1}{2} \times 20$, *tre-s(inds-tyve)* = 3×20 , *halvfjerd-s(inds-tyve)* = $3\frac{1}{2} \times 20$, *fir-s(inds-tyve)* = 4×20 , *halvfem-s(inds-tyve)* = $4\frac{1}{2} \times 20$ (*halvtredje*, *halvfjerde* and *halvfemte* (lit. "halfthird", "halffourth" and "halffifth") being old words for $2\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$ and $4\frac{1}{2}$). This is unlike Swedish and Norwegian, both of which use a decimal system.

The word *fyrre* / *fyrretyve* = "40" does not belong to the vigesimal system. The optional second part of the word is not the number *tyve*, "20", but an old plural of *ti*, "ten" (like in English *forty*, German *vierzig*); the first part is a variant of the number *fire*, "four". Similarly, *trediv*e is a compound of *tre*, "three", and a weakened form of the old plural of *ti*, "ten".

Vigesimal systems are known in several European languages: French, Breton, Welsh, Albanian, and Basque. Some scholars speculate that the system belongs to an "Old European" (i.e. pre-Indo-European) substratum, whereas others argue that the system is a recent innovation of the Middle Ages. See Vigesimal.

Sequence of numbers

The ones are placed **before** the tens with an intervening *og* ("and"): *toogfyrre* (42), *seksoghalvfjers* (76). The ones and the tens are placed **after** the hundreds with an optional *og*: *to hundred (og) femoghalvfjers*. This system is similar to that of German (*zweiundvierzig*, *zwei Hundert fünfundsiebzig*), but unlike that of Swedish (*fyrriotvå*, *tvåhundra**sjuttio**fem*).

Adjectives and adverbs

Declension

There are three forms of the adjective in Danish:

1. **basic form** or **common**, used with singular words of the common gender ("n-words").

en billig bog, "a cheap book"; *en stor dreng*, "a big boy"

2. **t-form** or **neuter**, used with singular words of the neuter gender ("t-words") and as an adverb.

et billigt tæppe, "a cheap carpet"; *et stort hus*, "a big house"

han bor billigt, "he has a low rent (lit. lives cheaply)"

3. **e-form** or **plural / definite**, used in the plural and with a definite article, a pronoun or a genitive.

den billige bog, "the cheap book"; *hans store hus*, "his big house"

billige bøger, "cheap books"; *store huse*, "big houses"

Only words ending in a consonant takes -e. Only words ending a consonant or the vowel å take -t. Others are unchanged.

Agreement

The adjective must agree with the word that it qualifies in both gender and number. In accordance with most languages, but contrary to German, this is the general rule also when the adjective is used predicatively: *huset er stort*, "the house is big", or *bøgerne er billige*, "the books are cheap" (cf. German *das Haus ist groß, die Bücher sind billig*).

An exception to the rule of agreement are the superlative and, in regular prose, the past participle when used in the verbal meaning (e.g. *børnene er sluppet løs*, "the children have been let out", but *børnene er løsslupne*, "the children are unrestrained").

Definite form

The definite *e*-form is historically identical to the so-called weak declension of the Germanic adjective, cf. German *ein großes Haus*, "a big house" ~ *das große Haus*, "the big house". But whereas the German definite form is not used after a genitive (*Peters großes Haus*) or the endingless forms of the possessive and indefinite pronouns (*mein, kein großes Haus*), and conversely, it is used after the indefinite pronoun in the forms that have an ending (*meinem, keinem großen Haus = dem großen Haus*), the Danish definite form is used in all instances after any determiner save the indefinite article:

Singular		Plural	
Indefinite form	Definite form	Indefinite form	Definite form
<i>en billig bog</i> <i>bogen er billig</i>	<i>Lones billige bog</i> <i>hendes billige bog</i> <i>min billige bog</i> <i>den billige bog</i>	<i>billige bøger</i> <i>bøgerne er billige</i>	<i>Lones billige bøger</i> <i>hendes billige bøger</i> <i>mine billige bøger</i> <i>de billige bøger</i>
<i>et stort hus</i> <i>huset er stort</i>	<i>Peters store hus</i> <i>hans store hus</i> <i>mit store hus</i> <i>det store hus</i>	<i>store huse</i> <i>husene er store</i>	<i>Peters store huse</i> <i>hans store huse</i> <i>mine store huse</i> <i>de store huse</i>
basic form t-form	e-form		

Three degrees of comparison

The Danish adjectives and adverbs are inflected according to the three degrees of comparison. The comparative has the ending *-ere* (sometimes *-re*) and the superlative has the ending *-st* (sometimes *-est*): e.g. *hurtig, hurtigere, hurtigst*, "quick, -er, -est"; *fræk, frækkere, frækkest*, "impertinent, audacious"; *lang, længere, længst* (with umlaut), "long, -er, -est". The choice between *-st* and *-est* is determined by the syllable structure (to avoid uncomfortable consonant clusters), whereas the variant *-re* is used only in a few frequent comparatives.

In many cases, especially in longer words and words of a Latin or Greek origin, the comparative and superlative are formed with the adverbs *mere* and *mest* instead: e.g. *intelligent, mere intelligent, mest intelligent*.

The comparative is inflexible, and it is not used with the definite article (in which case Danish uses the superlative instead). The conjunction of comparison is *end*, "than".

The superlative is inflected like the positive (the *t*-form being identical to the *n*-form); *længst, længste*. When used as a predicate, the basic form is used instead of the *e*-form: *hans ben er længst*, "his legs are the longest".

Irregularities

The inflection of some adjectives is irregular:

- Ny (new) and fri (free) take *-t* and optionally *-e*, even though they end in vowels.
- Several common adjectives with the suffix *-s* (historically the ending of the genitive) are inflexible, e.g. *fælles*, "common" (: *fælle*, "fellow"); *ens*, "identical" (: *en* "one"); *træls*, "annoying" (: *træl*, "slave") (one also hears *trælst, trælse*).
- Adjectives with the very common *-sk* ending are special. If they are polysyllabic or refer to a country, geographic area or ethnic group, they never take *-t*. Et klassisk stykke (a classical piece), et svensk hus (a Swedish house). Otherwise the *-t* is optional. Et friskt pust, or et frisk pust (a breath of fresh air).
- Some words never take the *t*-ending: stems ending in another *-t* (e.g. *mat*, "weak"; *sort*, "black") stems ending in *-et (-ed)* [-əð] (e.g. *tobenet*, "biped"; *elsket*, "loved"; *fremmed*, "foreign").
- The *t*-form sometimes undergoes phonetical changes that are not reflected orthographically, especially shortening of the preceding vowel or assimilation of a preceding consonant: e.g. *god* [gø:?(ð)] : *godt* [gʌð]; *ny* [ny:?(j)] : *nyt* [nyð]; *syg* [sy:?(j)] : *sygt* [sygð]. The adjectives ending in *-en* (originally past participles of the strong verbs) have either *-ent* [-ənd] or *-et* [-əð] in the *t*-form: e.g. *et sunke(n)t skib*, "a sunken ship"; *et give(n)t antal*, "a given number" (the choice is often a matter of style or tradition).
- Adjectives in *-vis* have an optional *-t* in the *t*-form: *et gradvis(t) salg*, "a phased sale".
- Some adverbs may be formed with the basic form instead of the *t*-form, especially those ending in *-ig* and *-lig* *-vis*: *det forstår han selyfølgelig ikke*, "of course, he doesn't understand"; The *t*-less form of such adverbs is obligatory when the adverb is isolated (i.e. with no corresponding adjective) or the meaning of the adverb is essentially different from that of the adjective (e.g. *endelig*, "finally, at last" ~ *endeligt*, "definitively"). In other cases, the *t*-less form is preferred when the adverb qualifies an adjective (e.g. *væsentlig(t) større*, considerably larger").
- The comparative and superlative of some frequent adjectives have umlaut: e.g. *lang, længere, længst*, "long, longer, longest"; *ung, yngre, yngst*, "young, younger, youngest"; *stor, større, størst*, "big, bigger, biggest".
- One adjective is suppletive: *lille*, "little, small" (*n*- and *t*-form and definite *e*-form) ~ *små* (plural *e*-form), *småt* (adverb *t*-form). Six adjectives are suppletive in the three degrees of comparison: *god, bedre, bedst*, "good, better, best"; *dårlig, værre, værst*, "bad, worse, worst"; *gammel, ældre, ældst*, "old, older, oldest", *mange, flere, flest*; "many, more, most"; *megen/-et, mere, mest*, "much, more, most"; *lille / lidt, mindre, mindst* "little, less / smaller, least / smallest". Irregular, but not suppletive are *få, færre, færrest*, "few, fewer, fewest" and *nær, nærmere, nærmest*, "close, closer, closest".

References

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