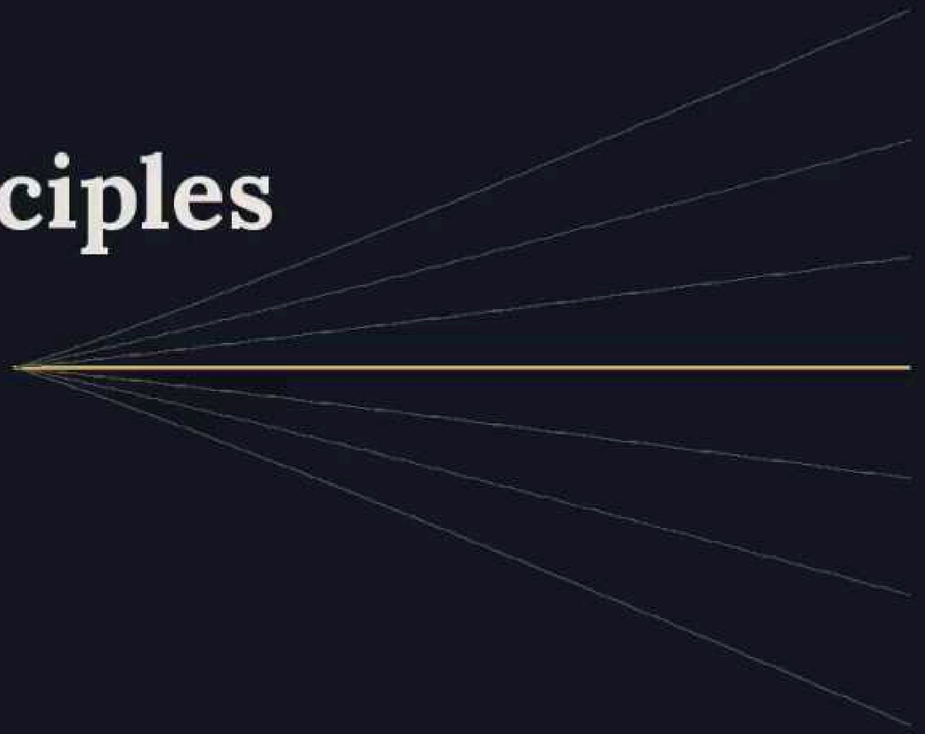
ANDERSON ACADEMY

ESPR 101 B · Introduction to Esperanto (Brief course)

Lecture 3 · about 7 min

Verbs, Questions, and Participles



A library of university-level courses

Questions or feedback: garyanderson@mail.grokbot.com · @garyanderson

This lecture

- Six verb endings
- No irregular verbs
- Questions and negation
- Participles

¶ 3.1

Esperanto has just six verb endings, no changes for person or number, and no irregular verbs at all.

The infinitive

Esperanto	English
lerni	to learn
legi	to read
vidi	to see
esti	to be

¶ 3.2

The dictionary lists verbs in this form.

Three tenses

Ending	Meaning
lernas	present: learn
lernis	past: learned
lernos	future: will learn

¶ 3.3

Notice the vowels a, i, and o, which you can remember as present, past, and future in that order.

One form for all persons

Esperanto	English
mi lernas	I learn
li lernas	he learns
ni lernas	we learn
ili lernas	they learn

¶ 3.4

Unlike in English, French, or Spanish, the verb never changes to match the subject.

Conditional and volitive

Esperanto	English
lernus	would learn
lernu	learn!
ni lernu	let us learn

¶ 3.5

The volitive, used for commands and wishes, ends in u: lernu, learn!

Polite requests

Esperanto	English
Bonvolu sidiĝi.	Please sit down.
Mi volas, ke vi venu.	I want you to come.

¶ 3.6

The volitive also appears after ke, that, in wishes and requests: mi volas, ke vi venu,

The six endings

- i: infinitive
- as: present
- is: past
- os: future
- us: conditional
- u: volitive

¶ 3.7

or with the forty or more forms of a French verb.

The verb esti

Esperanto	English
estas	is, am, are
estis	was, were
estos	will be

¶ 3.8

Notice that after esti the adjective takes no accusative, because it describes the subject rather than being an object.

Questions with ĉu

Esperanto	English
Vi parolas Esperanton	You speak Esperanto
Ĉu vi parolas Esperanton?	Do you speak Esperanto?

¶ 3.9

Do you speak Esperanto? Ĉu works like a spoken question mark.

Negation with ne

Esperanto	English
mi ne parolas	I do not speak
ne mi, sed li	not I, but he

¶ 3.10

There is no need for an auxiliary like the English do.

Useful verbs with infinitives

Esperanto	English
volas lerni	want to learn
povas legi	can read
devas iri	must go

¶ 3.11

The verbs voli, to want, povi, to be able, and devi, to have to,

Transitive and intransitive

Esperanto	English
mi komencas la lecionon	I begin the lesson
la leciono komenciĝas	the lesson begins

¶ 3.12

To say the lesson begins, Esperanto adds iĝ: la leciono komenciĝas.

Active participles

Suffix	Example
ant	lernanto: one learning
int	lerninto: one who learned
ont	lernonto: one who will learn

¶ 3.13

Lerninto means one who has learned.

Passive participles

Suffix	Example
at	legata: being read
it	legita: having been read
ot	legota: to be read

¶ 3.14

Notice again the vowels a, i, and o for present, past, and future:

Compound tenses

Esperanto	English
mi estas leganta	I am reading
la libro estas legita	the book has been read

¶ 3.15

In everyday speech the simple tenses are usually enough, and speakers use the compound forms mainly when precision matters.

Participles as adverbs and nouns

Esperanto	English
legante	while reading
leginte	having read
leganto	a reader
vojaĝanto	a traveller

¶ 3.16

With the noun ending o, they name people: leganto, a reader; vojaĝanto, a traveller.

ig and iĝ

Suffix	Example
• ig: to cause, to make	• bonigi: to improve
• iĝ: to become	• edziĝi: to marry, become a husband

¶ 3.17

These two suffixes turn many words into verbs and solve problems of transitive and intransitive use.

Practice

- Conjugate legi
- Ask with ĉu
- Deny with ne
- Next: word building

¶ 3.18

Then turn sentences into questions with ĉu and make them negative with ne: Ĉu vi legas? Mi ne legas.