

# Free *Esperanto* Taster Course

## First Lesson



Here is your **first lesson** in the International Language **Esperanto**. This, and the next eleven lessons which make up this **free** introductory course, will show you how Esperanto works, teaching you its grammar and a basic vocabulary.

We will assign you an accredited tutor. All you have to do is study each lesson and send your translations by e-mail to the tutor, who will send you the next

lesson along with your corrected work. If you prefer to work on paper, you can send your translations by post (with a stamped, self-addressed envelope).

You will find **Esperanto** much **easier** to learn than other languages. In a fraction of the time it would take in **any other language** you will be able to communicate with penfriends all round the globe, and visit them **without a language problem**.



**Pronunciation** and the Esperanto alphabet will be fully dealt with throughout the course; a phonetic pronunciation of words (based on English sounds) is shown {“like this”}, but if you do need extra help, a **pronunciation CD** is on sale from the Esperanto-Asocio de Britio (call 0845 230 1887 or write to the address below), or you can listen on-line at <http://www.esperanto.org.uk/education/> (in the learning support section).

Each Esperanto letter is pronounced in **one** way only, and there are **no silent letters**. All Esperanto words of more than one syllable have the **stress** on the **next-to-last syllable**, thus:

Esperanto estas lingvo {“*ess-pair-AN-to ESS-tass LEEN-gvo*”}

- 1 These two words always stay the same, and **never** alter:

la = the

kaj {rhymes with “eye”} = and

- 2 All **nouns** (words naming things, places, ideas) end in -o.

Esperanto's o is pronounced midway between the “o” in “go” and “got”.  
It **never** ends with a rounded “w” sound, like \*low\*.

besto = (an) animal

domo = (a) house

kato {“kahto”} = (a) cat

libro {“leebro”} = (a) book

lakto {“lahkto”} = milk

kafo {“kahfo”} = coffee

hundo {“hoondo”} = (a) dog

There is no need for an equivalent to the English ‘a’ or ‘an’:

libro = a book **or** just book, according to the context.

- 3 **Plurals** are formed by the addition of the letter -j. This is **always** pronounced as the English “y”, so that jes (= yes) is pronounced exactly the same way as the English “yes”. -oj rhymes with “toy”.

bestoj {“bestoy”} = animals

katoj {“kahtoy”} = cats

- 4 **Verbs** are words which describe some form of action or existence, and the **present tense** usually describes something which happens or is happening. In Esperanto, verbs in the present tense always end in -as {“-ass”}. This **never** alters in singular or plural.

Here are your first sentences in Esperanto:

La bestoj estas katoj. = The animals are cats.

Hundo trinkas. = A dog drinks (or: is drinking).

La kato ludas {“loodas”}. = The cat plays (or: is playing).

Hundoj kuras {“kooras”}. = Dogs run.

- 5 Note carefully: ‘is drinking’, ‘is running’ etc.:

Hundoj kuras. = Dogs run **or** Dogs are running.

**Never** translate from the English, for example,

‘The dog is playing’ as \*‘La hundo estas ludas’\*

‘Kato ludas’ can be translated into English as ‘A cat plays’, or as ‘A cat is playing’. **But** ~ there is only **one** translation of these two sentences into Esperanto: ‘Kato ludas’. So ~ a verb ending in -as should not have estas in front of it or in the same phrase.

- 6 **Negatives:** *ne* {as in “net”} = no, not. Placed in **front** of the **verb**, this says that something is **not so**, or is **not** happening.

Hundoj ne kuras. = Dogs do not run.  
or Dogs are not running.

La rozo ne estas frukto. = The rose is not a fruit.

(Esperanto's word rozo has a “z” sound, so is spelt with the letter Z.)

- 7 **Prepositions** are words such as ‘**by**’, ‘**under**’, ‘**in**’, etc. Here are a few prepositions; you will meet more of them in future lessons.

En la domo. = In the house.

Sur {“soor”} la libroj. = On the books.

Apud {“ahpood”} la taso. = Near the cup.

Estas kato sub la tablo. = There is a cat under the table.

The following vocabulary is used in the exercise which follows. We recommend that you learn new words as you go along, otherwise you will have to refer back constantly to earlier lessons. You may find it helpful to make your own list from English to Esperanto, using a small notebook and a different page for each initial letter.

banano: banana

besto: animal

butiko: shop

domo: house

fenestro: window

floro: flower

frukto: (a) fruit

herbo: grass

hundo: dog

infano: child

kafo: coffee

kato: cat

karto: card

lakto: milk

letero: letter

libro: book

planko: floor

pomo: apple

pordo: door

rozo: rose

sako: bag

sukero: sugar

tablo: table

taso: cup

vazo: vase

estas: is / am / are

kuras: run / runs

legas: read / reads

ludas: play / plays

sidas: sit / sits

skribas: write / writes

staras: stand / stands

trinkas: drink / drinks

al: to

apud: by, near

en: in

kaj: and

kun: with

la: the

ne: no / not

sub: under

sur: on

Remember to pronounce **every** Esperanto letter. Take care with **r**, which is rolled, as in Scottish pronunciation. A listener must be able to hear the difference between **kato** (cat) and **karto** (card).

*Make sure that you have learned all the preceding paragraphs and words, and now put your learning to the test by translating the 20 sentences that follow.*

*Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper, and leave space for your tutor to add comments. They will help you if you make mistakes; that's all part of the process of learning Esperanto. However, your progress will be at least five times faster than with other languages.*

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***Translate the following sentences into English/Esperanto.***

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|--|--|
| 1 La letero estas sur la tablo.          | 12 The children are playing with the dog.          |
| 2 La hundoj kuras al la domo.            | 13 Apples and bananas are fruits.                  |
| 3 Kato ne ludas kun hundoj.              | 14 The child is playing and not reading.           |
| 4 Estas butiko apud la domo.             | 15 A dog is standing near the door.                |
| 5 La rozoj estas apud la fenestro.       | 16 A cat is sitting in the shop.                   |
| 6 Coffee is in the cup.                  | 17 The children are in the house with the animals. |
| 7 Milk and sugar are on the table.       | 18 The dog isn't drinking.                         |
| 8 The cat is drinking under the table.   | 19 The child doesn't write.                        |
| 9 The books are on the floor.            | 20 The bag is on the floor in the house.           |
| 10 There are flowers in the vase.        |  |
| 11 The animals are running on the grass. |  |
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*When you have completed the exercises, send your answers (and any questions you may have) by e-mail, with a subject line "free Esperanto taster course first lesson answers" to [eab@esperanto.org.uk](mailto:eab@esperanto.org.uk).*

*Or, if you prefer to use paper instead of e-mail, post them **with a stamped, self-addressed envelope** to:*

***Esperanto-Asocio de Britio***, Esperanto House,  
Station Road, Barlaston, STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST12 9DE

*We will allocate an accredited tutor to you, who will mark your work, and return it to you with the **second** lesson and some advice notes to help your language studies.*

***A large-print version of this course is available as A4-sized pages; if you need these, do ask.***

*If, after trying this lesson, you feel you'd prefer to pay for a more detailed course, do please call 0845 230 1887, or write to the above address, or browse <http://www.esperanto.org.uk/education> (courses) to see our range of beginners' correspondence courses.*