



ESPERANTO LESSON

Esperanto Grammar 1 • Chapter 7

• Participles and Numbers

Esperanto Grammar 1

Chapter 7 · Participles, Prepositions and Numbers

Participles, Prepositions and Numbers — Participoj, prepozicioj kaj nombroj

Three sets of small, regular tools finish the toolkit. The participles turn a verb into a describing word and give you the passive. The prepositions are a short list, each with exactly one meaning. The numbers are built from twelve words, and with them you can give dates and tell the time.

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A participle is a verb root + **-ant-**, **-int-**, **-ont-** (active: does the action) or **-at-**, **-it-**, **-ot-** (passive: receives it), then a normal ending (**-a**, **-e**, **-o**). Each preposition has one fixed meaning, and the plain noun follows. Numbers are written by putting the words together, like **tricent sesdek kvin** (365).

Participles

	ACTIVE (DOES IT)	PASSIVE (HAS IT DONE TO)
Present (is ...ing / is being ...)	leganta reading	legata being read
Past (... ed / has been ...)	leginta having read	legita read, been read
Future (about to ...)	legonta about to read	legota going to be read

The tense (**-n-**, **-i-**, **-o-**) says when, and the **-t-** vs **no -t-** says whether the thing *does* the action or *has it done to it*. With the ending **-a** a participle is an adjective, with **-e** an adverb and with **-o** a noun:

ENDING	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
adjective	la dormanta viro · la fermita pordo	the sleeping man · the closed door

ENDING	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
adjective	la venonta semajno · la pasinta jaro	next week (the coming week) · last year (the past year)
adverb	Li venis ridante.	He came laughing.
noun (a person)	lernanto	a pupil, one who is learning

Watch out: -ant- or -at-? -int- or -it-?

Ask who does the action. **La skribinta viro** is the man *who wrote* (he did it). **La skribita letero** is the letter *that was written* (it received it). If the thing you describe performs the action, use **-nt-**; if the action is done to it, use **-t-**.

Compound tenses and the passive

With a form of **esti** and a participle you can be more exact than the simple tenses allow:

ESPERANTO	ENGLISH
Mi estas skribanta.	I am (in the middle of) writing.
Mi estis veninta.	I had come.
Mi estos veninta.	I will have come.
La libro estas legata de multaj.	The book is read by many (people).
La pordo estas fermita.	The door is (has been) closed.
La domo estis konstruita en la jaro 1900.	The house was built in 1900.

The simple tenses (**mi skribas**, **mi venis**, **mi venos**) are enough for everyday use, and the compound forms are a way to add precision. In the passive, the person or thing that does the action is introduced with **de** (by). English uses *-ing* more often than Esperanto does, so do not translate every *I am reading* as **Mi estas leganta**: **Mi legas** is the normal form.

Prepositions

Esperanto has a short list of prepositions, and each one keeps a single meaning. A noun after a preposition is plain, with no **-n**, apart from the direction rule you met in Chapter 2.

GROUP	PREPOSITION	MEANING
Place	en · el	in · out of
Place	sur · sub · super	on · under · above
Place	antaŭ · post	in front of, before · behind, after
Place	apud · inter · ĉe · ĉirkaŭ	beside · between, among · at · around
Movement	al · de · tra · trans · preter · kontraŭ	to · from, of, by · through · across · past · against
Time	dum · ĝis · antaŭ · post	during · until · before · after
Reason, means, company	pro · por · per · kun · sen	because of · for · by means of · with · without
Subject, relation	pri · laŭ · krom · anstataŭ · malgraŭ	about · according to · apart from · instead of · in spite of
Quantity	da · po	of (after an amount) · each, at the rate of
ESPERANTO	ENGLISH	
La libro estas sur la tablo, apud la telefono.	The book is on the table, beside the telephone.	
Mi iras kun amiko al la stacidomo.	I go with a friend to the station.	
Teo kun sukero, sed sen lakto.	Tea with sugar, but without milk.	
Ni parolas pri la vetero.	We are talking about the weather.	
Mi ne iros pro la pluvo.	I won't go because of the rain.	
Li laboras de lundo ĝis vendredo.	He works from Monday until Friday.	

Mi havas tri tasojn da teo.

I have three cups of tea.

Watch out: da, je and the plain noun

da goes between an amount word and what is counted: **tri tasoj da teo** (three cups of tea), **multe da tempo** (much time), **kiom da homoj** (how many people). Unlike English *of*, it is used only for quantities. **je** is the only preposition with no meaning of its own; use it when no other preposition fits, for example **je la tria** (at three o'clock). Where possible choose another word or the plain accusative instead. After **en**, **sur** and **sub** the noun is plain, and it gets **-n** only when it shows movement into, onto or under: **sur la tablon** (onto the table).

Time without a preposition

A length of time or a day can take the plain accusative **-n** instead of a preposition: **Mi laboris la tutan nokton.** (I worked all night.) **Mi venos lundon.** (I'll come on Monday, but **lunde** with *-e* is also used for "on Mondays".)

Numbers

0–5	6–10	TENS AND UP
nul 0 · unu 1 · du 2 · tri 3 · kvar 4 · kvin 5	ses 6 · sep 7 · ok 8 · naŭ 9 · dek 10	cent 100 · mil 1000 · miliono 1,000,000

Numbers are built by putting the words together. Multiplying a ten or a hundred attaches the digit to it, and the pieces are separated by spaces:

NUMBER	ESPERANTO	BUILT FROM
11	dek unu	10 + 1
20	dudek	2 × 10
21	dudek unu	20 + 1

NUMBER	ESPERANTO	BUILT FROM
100	cent	
200	ducent	2 × 100
365	tricent sesdek kvin	3×100, 6×10, 5
1999	mil naŭcent naŭdek naŭ	1000, 9×100, 9×10, 9

Numbers do not take **-j** (but **unu** goes with a singular noun, so **unu libro**, **du libroj**). The related forms are built with a single ending each:

IDEA	ENDING	EXAMPLE
ordinal (1st, 2nd)	-a	unua, dua, tria, deka
ordinal, adverb (firstly)	-e	unue, due
times	-foje	unufoje, dufoje once, twice
multiples	-obla	duobla double
fractions	-ono	duono, triono, kvarono half, third, quarter
each	po	po du two each

The clock, the days, the months

ESPERANTO	ENGLISH
Kioma horo estas?	What time is it?
Estas la tria.	It is three o'clock.
Estas la kvara kaj dek.	It is ten past four.
Mi venos je la sesa.	I'll come at six.
tagmezo · noktomezo	noon · midnight

Days: lundo, mardo, merkredo, ĵaŭdo, vendredo, sabato, dimanĉo (Monday to Sunday). **Months:** januaro, februaro, marto, aprilo, majo, junio, julio, aŭgusto, septembro, oktobro, novembro, decembro. Neither is capitalised. A date is written like **la 26-a de oktobro 2026**, and read as **la dudek-sesa de oktobro**. Money uses the usual names: **eŭro** and **pundo** (pound) (check): **Kiom kostas? Tri eŭroj.**



In Use — En uzo

Read each exchange aloud and watch the prepositions and numbers.

① The train

A:

Kioma horo estas?

What time is it?

B:

Estas la tria kaj dek.

It's ten past three.

A:

La trajno foriras je la kvara.

The train leaves at four.

B:

Vi havas ankoraŭ kvindek minutojn.

You still have fifty minutes.

② Where is it?

A:

Kie estas mia libro?

Where is my book?

B:

Ĝi estas sub la seĝo, inter la gazetoj.

It's under the chair, among the newspapers.

③ A tired brother

A:

Kiu estas tiu dormanta viro?

Who is that sleeping man?

B:

Li estas mia frato. Li estas laca, ĉar
li laboris la tutan nokton.
He's my brother. He's tired, because he
worked all night.

Quick Reference — Rapida referenco

ITEM	RULE	EXAMPLE
Active participles	-ant- -int- -ont-	dormanta
Passive participles	-at- -it- -ot-	fermita
Passive	esti + passive participle, agent with de	legata de multaj
Prepositions	one meaning each; plain noun after	sur la tablo
Quantity	da	tri tasoj da teo
Numbers	12 words, spaced	tracent sesdek kvin
Ordinals, fractions	-a · -ono	tria · duono

Try It Yourself — Ekzercoj

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. Say "the sleeping man" and "the closed door".

▼ Show answer

la dormanta viro and la fermita pordo.

2. What is the difference between *la skribinta viro* and *la skribita letero*?

▼ Show answer

The first is the man who wrote (active, *-int-*). The second is the letter that was written (passive, *-it-*).

3. Translate "The book is read by many."

▼ Show answer

La libro estas legata de multaj.

4. Say "on the table", "under the chair" and "between the books".

▼ Show answer

sur la tablo, sub la seĝo, inter la libroj.

5. Say "tea with sugar, without milk".

▼ Show answer

teo kun sukero, sen lakto.

6. Say "I am going to Edinburgh" in two ways.

▼ Show answer

Mi iras al Edinburgo. or Mi iras Edinburgon.

7. Write 17, 40 and 365 in Esperanto.

▼ Show answer

dek sep, kvardek, tricent sesdek kvin.

8. Say "the third" and "firstly".

▼ Show answer

la tria and unue.

9. Say "It is ten past four" and "at six o'clock".

▼ Show answer

Estas la kvara kaj dek. **and je** la sesa.

10. Say "the 26th of October".

▼ Show answer

la dudek-sesa de oktobro (**written la 26-a de oktobro**).

Words used in this chapter

The prepositions listed above · **skribi** write · **dormi** sleep · **konstrui** build · **pasi** pass · **semajno** week · **jaro** year · **letero** letter · **gazeto** newspaper · **seĝo** chair · **telefono** telephone · **trajno** train · **minuto** minute · **horo** hour · **nokto** night · **tago** day · **tuta** whole · **laca** tired · **pluvo** rain · **vetero** weather · **sukero** sugar · **lakto** milk · **taso** cup · **eŭro** euro · **pundo** pound · **foriri** leave

Coming up in Chapter 8: Sentences and Putting It Together. Conjunctions, subordinate clauses with **ke**, negatives, word order, an error clinic and the end of the course.