SO

LANGUAGE COURSE

Somali Basic Conversation 1

12 Chapters

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Generated with Claude

SOMALI BASIC CONVERSATION 1

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Somali Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 1 · Greetings & Goodbyes

👋 Greetings & Goodbyes — Salaan iyo nabad gelyo

*Welcome to your first Somali conversation lesson. By the end of this chapter you will be able to greet people at different times of day, ask how they are, answer, thank them, apologise and say goodbye. Somali is written in the **Latin alphabet**, so you can read it as it stands, but a few letters do not sound the way an English reader expects, so this chapter starts with the sounds. Every dialog line has a **respelling beneath it**, with the syllable to lean on in CAPITALS. **I found little reliable guidance on Somali stress, and Somali has a pitch accent that a respelling cannot show, so treat the CAPITALS as a learner's guide only** and listen to a native speaker. **Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end: the sources I could reach for this chapter were thin, and most of the Somali here comes from general knowledge.***

🔤 The Sounds You Need First — Dhawaaqyada

*Most Somali letters sound close to English. These do not. In the respelling lines below, **c** and **x** are left as **c** and **x** because English has no sound to match them; learn them from this table.*

aa, ee, oo, uu long vowels (hold them) **c** throaty "ayn" sound **x** breathy, from the throat **q** a "k" made further back **dh** a "d" with the tongue curled back **kh** like *ch* in Scottish *loch* **sh** as in *ship* **'** a catch in the throat (glottal stop)

LETTER(S)	ROUGH SOUND	EXAMPLE WORD	SAY IT	ENGLISH
aa	long *a*	**shaah**	*shaah*	tea
ee	long *e*	**habeen**	*hah-BEEN*	night
c	throaty, as in Arabic *ʿayn*	**cunto**	*cUN-to*	food
x	breathy *h* from the throat	**xafiis**	*xah-FEES*	office
q	deep *k*	**qaxwo**	*QAHX-wo*	coffee

LETTER(S)	ROUGH SOUND	EXAMPLE WORD	SAY IT	ENGLISH
dh	curled-back *d*	**dhaqan**	*DHAH-qahn*	culture, custom
kh	Scottish *ch*	**khamiis**	*khah-MEES*	Thursday
sh	English *sh*	**shaah**	*shaah*	tea

Say It Right — Don't Panic About *c*, *x* and *q*

The search I ran noted that many beginners struggle with the throaty *x* and *c*, and that Somali uses pitch accent, so tone can matter. It gave no detail on *q*, *dh*, *kh* or *sh*. My descriptions of those sounds are general knowledge: listen to a Somali speaker, and expect to need many tries. The sound descriptions are rough guides, not phonetics.

Six Conversations — Wada hadal

*Read each one aloud. Somali does not split "you" into a polite and an informal form the way German or Greek does; the main difference is **one person** (sidee tahay) or **several** (sidee tihiin). Dialog 3 shows the group form.*

① Peace Be With You — Salaan

A:

Assalaamu calaykum!

as-sah-LAA-moo cah-LAY-koom!

Peace be upon you!

B:

Wacalaykum salaam! Sidee tahay?

wah-cah-LAY-koom sah-LAAM! SEE-dee tah-HAY?

And upon you peace! How are you?

A:

Waan fiicanahay, mahadsanid. Adiguna?

② Good Morning — Subax wanaagsan

A:

Subax wanaagsan!

SOO-bahx wah-NAAG-sahn!

Good morning!

B:

Subax wanaagsan! Iska warran?

SOO-bahx wah-NAAG-sahn! IS-kah WAR-rahn?

Good morning! How are you? (casual)

A:

Waan fiicanahay, mahadsanid.

waan fee-chah-nah-HAY, mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

I'm well, thank you.

waan fee-chah-nah-HAY, mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

ah-dee-GOO-nah?

I'm well, thank you. And you?

B:

Waan fiicanahay.

waan fee-chah-nah-HAY.

I'm well.

③ A Group in the Afternoon — Galab wanaagsan

A:

Galab wanaagsan!

GAH-lahb wah-NAAG-sahn!

Good afternoon!

A:

Sidee tihiin?

SEE-dee tee-HEEN?

How are you all? (to several people)

B:

Waan fiicannahay, mahadsanid.

waan fee-chahn-nah-HAY, mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

We're well, thank you.

④ Is It Peace? — Ma nabad baa?

A:

Ma nabad baa?

mah NAH-bahd BAA?

Is all well? (literally: is it peace?)

B:

Haa, waa nabad.

HAA, waa NAH-bahd.

Yes, it is peace. (all is well)

A:

Mahadsanid.

mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

Thank you.

⑤ Thanks and Sorry — Mahadsanid iyo raali ahow

A:

Fadlan, hal shaah.

fahd-LAHN, hahl shaah.

One tea, please.

B:

Haa. Raali ahow, waan daahay.

HAA. raa-LEE ah-HOW, waan DAA-hay.

Yes. Sorry, I'm late.

⑥ Goodbye — Nabad gelyo

A:

Nabad gelyo!

NAH-bahd GEL-yo!

Goodbye! (go in peace)

B:

Nabad gelyo! Macsalaama.

NAH-bahd GEL-yo! mah-cah-sah-LAA-mah.

Goodbye! Goodbye. (with peace)

A:

Waa hagaag. Mahadsanid!

waa hah-GAAG. mah-hahd-SAH-nid!

It's fine. Thank you!

B:

Mahad ma leh.

MAH-hahd mah LEH.

Don't mention it.

A:

Habeen wanaagsan!

hah-BEEN wah-NAAG-sahn!

Good night!

B:

Habeen wanaagsan!

hah-BEEN wah-NAAG-sahn!

Good night!

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

*Somali has no "sir / madam" split in the everyday greetings I found. The useful difference is between **one person** and **a group**. Where the two are the same, the table says so.*

SITUATION	TO ONE PERSON	TO SEVERAL PEOPLE
Peace greeting	**Assalaamu calaykum!** *as-sah-LAA-moo cah-LAY-koom*	the same
Reply to it	**Wacalaykum salaam!** *wah-cah-LAY-koom sah-LAAM*	the same
Good morning	**Subax wanaagsan!** *SOO-bahx wah-NAAG-sahn*	the same
Good afternoon	**Galab wanaagsan!** *GAH-lahb wah-NAAG-sahn*	the same
Good night	**Habeen wanaagsan!** *hah-BEEN wah-NAAG-sahn*	the same
How are you?	**Sidee tahay?** *SEE-dee tah-HAY*	**Sidee tihiin?** *SEE-dee tee-HEEN*
How are you? (casual)	**Iska warran?** *IS-kah WAR-rahn*	the same

SITUATION	TO ONE PERSON	TO SEVERAL PEOPLE
I'm well	**Waan fiicanahay.** *waan fee-chah-nah-HAY*	**Waan fiicannahay.** (we) *waan fee-chahn-nah-HAY*
And you?	**Adiguna?** *ah-dee-GOO-nah*	**Idinkuna?** *ee-deen-KOO-nah*
Thank you	**Mahadsanid.** *mah-hahd-SAH-nid*	the same
Please	**Fadlan.** *fahd-LAHN*	the same
Sorry / excuse me	**Raali ahow.** *raa-LEE ah-HOW*	the same
Goodbye	**Nabad gelyo! / Macsalaama.** *NAH-bahd GEL-yo / mah-cah-sah-LAA-mah*	the same

Peace Is the Word

The word **nabad** means “peace”, and it turns up in greetings (*Ma nabad baa?*) and in goodbye (*Nabad gelyo*, “go in peace”). The Arabic *Assalaamu calaykum* is also widely used; Somalia is a largely Muslim country. The “peace” meanings come from my general knowledge, not from the sources I found (one result showed *Nabad gelyo* only as a practice card without explaining it).

Somaliland, Djibouti and Everywhere Else

The greetings in this chapter are Standard (Northern) Somali, which is the base of most course material. I found no source on how these particular greetings differ in Somaliland or Djibouti, and I would rather say that than guess. From general knowledge: Somali is spoken in all three places, Arabic greetings are used throughout, and in Djibouti French greetings are common in daily life alongside Somali. Later chapters will mark regional differences where I can find a source for them; if you know of one, tell me.

Which Greeting When — Marka kee lagu salaamo

WHEN	SAY	NOTES
Any time	**Assalaamu calaykum!** *as-sah-LAA-moo cah-LAY-koom*	the all-purpose greeting; the reply is *Wacalaykum salaam*
Morning	**Subax wanaagsan!** *SOO-bahx wah-NAAG-sahn*	literally “good morning”
Afternoon	**Galab wanaagsan!** *GAH-lahb wah-NAAG-sahn*	from my general knowledge, not from the search
Going to bed	**Habeen wanaagsan!** *hah-BEEN wah-NAAG-sahn*	one search result gave this as “good night”

One Word, Many Greetings

Wanaagsan (“good”) follows the time of day: *subax wanaagsan*, *galab wanaagsan*, *habeen wanaagsan*. It is the Somali pattern that matches English “good ____”. A word order tip: Somali puts the describing word **after** the noun. In Chapter 2 you will meet *ah* (“to be”) in full.

🔤 To Be Well — Fiican ahaan

*Somali needs only **one** verb to say how you are: ah (“to be”), which changes with the person. The Basic 1 format gives a three-verb table, but for this chapter the better lesson is **one verb with three words for how you feel**: fiican (well), wanaagsan (good) and faraxsan (happy). The forms below are the simple present, shown as one word as they are usually written after waan, waad. **These forms are from general knowledge and I could not check them against a source**, so treat them as a first pass; Chapter 2 revisits them.*

WHO	FIICAN (WELL)	WANAAGSAN (GOOD)	FARAXSAN (HAPPY)
I (*aniga*)	**waan fiicanahay** *waan fee-chah-nah-HAY*	**waan wanaagsanahay** *waan wah-naag-sah-nah-HAY*	**waan faraxsanahay** *waan fah-rahx-sah-nah-HAY*
you, one person (*adiga*)	**waad fiicantahay** *waad fee-chahn-tah-*	**waad wanaagsantahay** *waad wah-naag-sahn-tah-*	**waad faraxsantahay** *waad fah-rahx-sahn-*

WHO	FIICAN (WELL)	WANAAGSAN (GOOD)	FARAXSAN (HAPPY)
	HAY	*HAY*	*tah-HAY*
he	**waa fiican yahay** *waa fee-CHAAN yah-HAY*	**waa wanaagsan yahay** *waa wah-NAAG-sahn yah-HAY*	**waa faraxsan yahay** *waa fah-RAHX-sahn yah-HAY*
she	**waa fiican tahay** *waa fee-CHAAN tah-HAY*	**waa wanaagsan tahay** *waa wah-NAAG-sahn tah-HAY*	**waa faraxsan tahay** *waa fah-RAHX-sahn tah-HAY*
we (*annagu*)	**waan fiicannahay** *waan fee-chahn-nah-HAY*	**waan wanaagsannahay** *waan wah-naag-sahn-nah-HAY*	**waan faraxsannahay** *waan fah-rahx-sahn-nah-HAY*
you, several (*idinku*)	**waad fiicantihiin** *waad fee-chahn-tee-HEEN*	**waad wanaagsantihiin** *waad wah-naag-sahn-tee-HEEN*	**waad faraxsantihiin** *waad fah-rahx-sahn-tee-HEEN*
they (*iyagu*)	**waa fiican yihiin** *waa fee-CHAAN yee-HEEN*	**waa wanaagsan yihiin** *waa wah-NAAG-sahn yee-HEEN*	**waa faraxsan yihiin** *waa fah-RAHX-sahn yee-HEEN*

Notice the Gender

Yahay is “he is” and *tahay* is “she is” (and also “you are” in *sidee tahay*). This is the first place Somali shows **gender**; masculine and feminine come up again with nouns from Chapter 2. General knowledge, not from the search.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 key words. Nouns are given without their article this chapter; the article ending (-ka, -ta and so on) is introduced in Chapter 2.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**nabad**	*NAH-bahd*	peace	noun

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
2	**salaan**	*sah-LAAN*	a greeting	noun
3	**subax**	*SOO-bahx*	morning	noun
4	**galab**	*GAH-lahb*	afternoon	noun
5	**habeen**	*hah-BEEN*	night	noun
6	**mahadsanid**	*mah-hahd-SAH-nid*	thank you	phrase
7	**fadlan**	*fahd-LAHN*	please	phrase
8	**raali ahow**	*raa-LEE ah-HOW*	sorry; excuse me	phrase
9	**haa**	*HAA*	yes	phrase
10	**maya**	*MAH-yah*	no	phrase
11	**sidee**	*SEE-dee*	how	adv
12	**fiican**	*fee-CHAAN*	well; good	adj
13	**wanaagsan**	*wah-NAAG-sahn*	good	adj
14	**faraxsan**	*fah-RAHX-sahn*	happy	adj
15	**aniga**	*ah-nee-GAH*	I; me	pronoun
16	**adiga**	*ah-dee-GAH*	you (one person)	pronoun
17	**idinka**	*ee-deen-KAH*	you (several people)	pronoun
18	**macsalaama**	*mah-cah-sah-LAA-mah*	goodbye	phrase
19	**nabad gelyo**	*NAH-bahd GEL-yo*	goodbye (go in peace)	phrase
20	**waa hagaag**	*waa hah-GAAG*	it's fine; OK	phrase

A Word That Changes Shape

You may see *adiga* and *adigu*, or *aniga* and *anigu*, for “you” and “I”: Somali pronouns take a different ending depending on their job in the sentence, which is why dialog 1 has *Adiguna* (“and you”). That is the focus-and-ending system, which this course introduces one piece at a time. General knowledge, not from the search; check it before relying on it.

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. You meet a colleague in the morning. What do you say?

▼ Show answer

Subax wanaagsan! (SOO-bahx wah-NAAG-sahn)

2. Ask a friend how they are, then ask a group.

▼ Show answer

One person: **Sidee tahay?** · several: **Sidee tihiin?** (SEE-dee tah-HAY · SEE-dee tee-HEEN)

3. Say “I'm well, thank you. And you?”

▼ Show answer

Waan fiicanahay, mahadsanid. Adiguna? (waan fee-chah-nah-HAY, mah-hahd-SAH-nid. ah-dee-GOO-nah)

4. You bump into someone. What do you say, and how might they reply?

▼ Show answer

Raali ahow! → **Waa hagaag.** (raa-LEE ah-HOW → waa hah-GAAG)

5. Say goodbye, then good night.

▼ Show answer

Nabad gelyo! · **Habeen wanaagsan!** (NAH-bahd GEL-yo · hah-BEEN wah-NAAG-sahn)

6. Say “we are happy” using the table.

▼ Show answer

Waan faraxsannahay. (waan fah-rahx-sahn-nah-HAY)

Not Yet Verified

Checked (two web searches on 2026-11-25; I read only the titles and summaries, from learner blogs and lesson sites): that *Subax wanaagsan* means “good morning” (given with the respelling “soo-bahx wah-nahg-sahn”); that *Habeen wanaagsan* is “good night”; that *Iska warran?* and *Sidee tahay?* are used for “how are you?”; that *Mahadsanid* is “thank you”; that *Macsalaama* is a goodbye; that the throaty *x* and *c* trouble beginners; that Somali is written in the Latin alphabet (adopted in 1972); and that Somali has a pitch accent.

Not found: a reliable account of *q*, *dh*, *kh* and *sh*; any source on *nabad* as “peace”, on *Nabad gelyo* or *Ma nabad baa?*; any difference in greetings between Somalia, Somaliland and Djibouti; and any source on stress.

Not checked, from general knowledge: *Assalaamu calaykum* and its reply, *Galab wanaagsan*, *Sidee tihiin*, *Adiguna / Idinkuna*, *Fadlan*, *Raali ahow*, *Waa hagaag*, *Mahad ma leh*, *Haa / Maya*, *waan daahay*, the whole “to be well” table, the example words in the sound table (*cunto, xafiis, qaxwo, dhaqan, khamiis*), the word-shape tip, every respelling and every stress mark, and the notes on Djibouti. No dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-25): Polyglot Club, Somali basic greetings; Preply, How to learn Somali; Preply, Somali travel phrases; Ling, Somali phrases; Wikipedia, Somali grammar (listed by the first search). Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Coming Up in Chapter 2

Introducing yourself: **Magaceygu waa …** (“my name is …”), asking someone's name, the verb *ah* (“to be”) in full, and the article endings on names and nouns. (These phrases are from general knowledge and will be checked when the chapter is written.)

🤷 Introducing Yourself — Isbarasho

By the end of this chapter you will be able to say your name and ask someone else's, say what you are, introduce a friend and say that you are pleased to meet them. As in Chapter 1, every dialog line has a ***respelling beneath it****, with CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c and x stay as themselves (throaty sounds, see the Chapter 1 table).* ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① What's Your Name? — Magacaa?

A:

Assalaamu calaykum! Magacaa?
as-sah-LAA-moo cah-LAY-koom! mah-gah-CAA?
Peace be upon you! What's your name?

B:

Wacalaykum salaam! Magacaygu waa Hodan. Adiguna?
wah-cah-LAY-koom sah-LAAM! mah-gah-CAY-goo waa HO-dahn. ah-dee-GOO-nah?
And upon you peace! My name is Hodan. And you?

A:

Magacaygu waa Philip.
mah-gah-CAY-goo waa Philip.
My name is Philip.

② Pleased to Meet You — Kulan wanaagsan

A:

Anigu waa Cali.
ah-nee-GOO waa CAH-lee.
I'm Ali.

B:

Aad baan ugu faraxsanahay kulankaaga.
AAD baan oo-GOO fah-rahx-sah-nah-HAY koo-lahn-KAA-gah.
I'm very pleased to meet you.

A:

Aniguna sidaas oo kale.
ah-nee-GOO-nah see-DAAS oo KAH-leh.
Me too. (and I likewise)

③ Are You a Student? — Ma arday baad tahay?

④ No, I'm an Engineer — Maya, injineer baan ahay

A:

Ma arday baad tahay?

mah AHR-day baad tah-HAY?

Are you a student?

B:

Haa, arday baan ahay.

HAA, AHR-day baan ah-HAY.

Yes, I am a student.

A:

Aniguna waxaan ahay macallin.

ah-nee-GOO-nah wah-XAAN ah-HAY mah-cahl-LIN.

And I am a teacher.

A:

Ma macallin baad tahay?

mah mah-cahl-LIN baad tah-HAY?

Are you a teacher?

B:

Maya, macallin ma ihi. Injineer baan ahay.

MAH-yah, mah-cahl-LIN mah ee-HEE. in-jee-NEER baan ah-HAY.

No, I'm not a teacher. I'm an engineer.

⑤ This Is My Friend — Kani waa saaxiibkay

A:

Hodan, kani waa saaxiibkay. Magaciisu waa Axmed.

HO-dahn, KAH-nee waa saa-XEEB-kay. mah-gah-CEE-soo waa AX-med.

Hodan, this is my friend. His name is Ahmed.

B:

Soo dhowow, Axmed!

soo DHO-wow, AX-med!

Welcome, Ahmed!

C:

Mahadsanid.

mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

Thank you.

⑥ Do You Speak Somali? — Ma ku hadashaa Soomaali?

A:

Ma ku hadashaa Soomaali?

mah koo hah-dah-SHAA soo-MAA-lee?

Do you speak Somali?

B:

Haa, wax yar. Waan baranayaa.

HAA, wahx YAHR. waan bah-rah-nah-YAA.

Yes, a little. I'm learning.

A:

Aad baad u fiican tahay!

AAD baad oo fee-CHAAN tah-HAY!

You're very good!

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

*Somali does not have a separate polite "you", so the useful choice is between a **fuller** and a **shorter** way of saying things.*

MEANING	FULLER	SHORTER
What's your name?	**Magacaagu waa maxay?** *mah-gah-CAA-goo waa mah-XAY*	**Magacaa?** *mah-gah-CAA*
My name is …	**Magacaygu waa …** *mah-gah-CAY-goo waa*	**Anigu waa …** (I am …) *ah-nee-GOO waa*
I am a …	**Waxaan ahay …** *wah-XAAN ah-HAY*	**… baan ahay** *baan ah-HAY*
Pleased to meet you	**Aad baan ugu faraxsanahay kulankaaga.** *AAD baan oo-GOO fah-rahx-sah-nah-HAY koo-lahn-KAA-gah*	**Kulan wanaagsan.** *KOO-lahn wah-NAAG-sahn*
Welcome	**Soo dhowow.** (one person) *soo DHO-wow*	**Soo dhowaada.** (several) *soo dho-WAA-dah*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

*The verb comes at the **end** of a Somali sentence. In front of it sits a little word that carries the person: waxaan (I), waxaad (you), wuxuu (he), waxay (she, they). The verbs are ah (to be), joog (to stay, to live somewhere) and shaqee (to work).*

WHO	AH (BE)	JOOG (LIVE, STAY)	SHAQEE (WORK)
I: *waxaan*	**ahay** *ah-HAY*	**joogaa** *joh-GAA*	**shaqeeyaa** *shah-qay-YAA*
you: *waxaad*	**tahay** *tah-HAY*	**joogtaa** *johg-TAA*	**shaqeysaa** *shah-qay-SAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**yahay** *yah-HAY*	**joogaa** *joh-GAA*	**shaqeeyaa** *shah-qay-YAA*

WHO	AH (BE)	JOOG (LIVE, STAY)	SHAQEE (WORK)
she: *waxay*	**tahay** *tah-HAY*	**joogtaa** *johg-TAA*	**shaqeysaa** *shah-qay-SAA*
we: *waxaan*	**nahay** *nah-HAY*	**joognaa** *johg-NAA*	**shaqeynaa** *shah-qay-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**tihiin** *tee-HEEN*	**joogtaan** *johg-TAAN*	**shaqeysaan** *shah-qay-SAAN*
they: *waxay*	**yihiin** *yee-HEEN*	**joogaan** *joh-GAAN*	**shaqeeyaan** *shah-qay-YAAN*

Examples: ***Waxaan joogaa Edinburgh.*** *(I live in Edinburgh.)* · ***Waxay ka shaqeysaa dukaan.*** *(She works in a shop.)*

Waa, Waxaan, Baan — Three Ready-Made Patterns

Name or label: *Magacaygu waa Hodan.* Use *waa* to join two things; no form of *ah* is needed here.

Saying what you are: *Waxaan ahay arday* or *Arday baan ahay*. Both mean "I am a student"; the second puts the weight on *arday*.

Yes/no question: start with *ma*: *Ma arday baad tahay?*

"Not": *ma ihi* (I am not), *ma tihid* (you are not), *ma aha* (he or she is not). Learn them as whole phrases for now.

👤 My Name, Your Name — Magacayga, magacaaga

Somali adds "my, your, his, her" to the ***end*** *of the noun. With magac (name):*

WHOSE	… NAME IS (SUBJECT FORM)	SAY IT
my	**magacaygu**	*mah-gah-CAY-goo*
your (one person)	**magacaagu**	*mah-gah-CAA-goo*
his	**magaciisu**	*mah-gah-CEE-soo*

WHOSE	... NAME IS (SUBJECT FORM)	SAY IT
her	magaceedu	*mah-gah-CAY-doo*

Here the c is the Somali letter at the end of magac, the throaty sound, not an English "k" or "s".

🏷️ "The" Goes on the End — Qodobka

*Somali has no separate word for "the". It is an ending, and it shows the noun's **gender**: a **k**-type ending for masculine, a **t**-type for feminine. The first consonant changes to suit the sound before it. Learn each noun together with its ending.*

NOUN	THE ...	SAY IT	GENDER	ENGLISH
nin	ninka	*NIN-kah*	masculine	the man
buug	buugga	*BOOG-gah*	masculine	the book
guri	guriga	*GOO-ree-gah*	masculine	the house
aabbe	aabbaha	*AAB-bah-hah*	masculine	the father
naag	naagta	*NAAG-tah*	feminine	the woman
hooyo	hooyada	*HOH-yah-dah*	feminine	the mother
meel	meesha	*MEE-shah*	feminine	the place
gabadh	gabadha	*gah-BAH-dhah*	feminine	the girl

Don't Memorise Rules Yet

You can see *-ka, -ga, -ha* and *-ta, -da, -sha, -dha* above. Treat the pair (noun, noun with ending) as one item to learn. The gender is hard to guess from the meaning or shape of a word, and some plurals even switch it: *buugga* (the book, masculine) but *buugagta* (the books, feminine).

Names Work Differently

Somalis usually have no family surname. A full name is the person's own name, then their father's name, then their grandfather's name, and women normally keep theirs on marriage. So do not call someone “Mr” plus the last part of their name: that is a grandfather! Use their first name. Nicknames (*naanays*) are also very common. General knowledge, not checked for this chapter.

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source showing that introductions are worded differently in Somaliland or Djibouti, so none are marked as such. From general knowledge: English is widely used alongside Somali in Somaliland, and French in Djibouti, so you may hear words from either mixed into an introduction.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 key words. Nouns are shown with their “the” ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**magaca**	*mah-GAH-cah*	the name	noun (m)
2	**saaxiibka**	*saa-XEEB-kah*	the friend (male)	noun (m)
3	**saaxiibadda**	*saa-xee-BAHD-dah*	the friend (female)	noun (f)
4	**ardayga**	*ahr-DAY-gah*	the student	noun (m)
5	**macallinka**	*mah-cahl-LIN-kah*	the teacher	noun (m)
6	**injineerka**	*in-jee-NEER-kah*	the engineer	noun (m)
7	**ninka**	*NIN-kah*	the man	noun (m)
8	**naagta**	*NAAG-tah*	the woman	noun (f)
9	**dukaanka**	*doo-KAAN-kah*	the shop	noun (m)
10	**ah**	*ah*	to be	verb
11	**joog**	*johg*	to stay; to live (in a place)	verb

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
12	**shaqee**	*shah-QAY*	to work	verb
13	**baro**	*BAH-ro*	to learn	verb
14	**kani / tani**	*KAH-nee / TAH-nee*	this (masculine / feminine)	pronoun
15	**isaga**	*ee-sah-GAH*	he; him	pronoun
16	**iyada**	*ee-yah-DAH*	she; her	pronoun
17	**maxay**	*mah-XAY*	what	question word
18	**soo dhowow**	*soo DHO-wow*	welcome	phrase
19	**wax yar**	*wahx YAHR*	a little	phrase
20	**aad**	*AAD*	very; much	adv

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask someone their name, the short way and the long way.

▼ Show answer

Magacaa? · Magacaagu waa maxay?

2. Say your own name.

▼ Show answer

Magacaygu waa …

3. Say “I am a student” in two ways.

▼ Show answer

Waxaan ahay arday. · **Arday baan ahay.**

4. Introduce a male friend called Axmed.

▼ Show answer

Kani waa saaxiibkay. Magaciisu waa Axmed.

5. Say “she lives in Edinburgh”.

▼ Show answer

Waxay joogtaa Edinburgh.

6. Say “the book”, “the mother” and “the place”.

▼ Show answer

buugga · hooyada · meesha

Not Yet Verified

Checked (2026-11-25, web searches and two pages read): *Magacaa?*, *Magacaygu waa …*, *Anigu waa …*, *Waxaan ahay arday / macallin*, *Aad baan ugu faraxsanahay kulankaaga* (the source also spells the last word differently in its answer key), *Ma ku hadashaa …?* and *Haa / Maya* (Preply); the basic *-ka* and *-ta* article endings, *buugga*, *buugagta*, and the pronouns *aniga, adiga, isaga, iyada* (Wikipedia, Somali grammar). A search summary also gave *Magacaagu waa maxay?* **Not checked, from general knowledge:** the whole three-verb table, the negative forms, *baan / baad* sentences and *ma* questions, the possessive table apart from *magacaygu*, most of the article examples and their sound changes, *Kulan wanaagsan*, *Aniguna sidaas oo kale*, *Soo dhowow / Soo dhowaada*, *kani / tani*, *Waan baranayaa* as used here, *Aad baad u fiican tahay*, the naming customs, the regional notes, most vocabulary rows, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, How to introduce yourself in Somali; Wikipedia, Somali grammar.

Coming Up in Chapter 3

Numbers, age and contact details: counting from 0 to 100, saying how old you are and swapping phone numbers, in three parts.

🔢 Numbers, Age & Contact Details — Tirooyin, da' iyo xiriir

*This long chapter has three parts: **Part 1** counts from 0 to 10, **Part 2** goes up to 100 and a little beyond, and **Part 3** uses numbers for ages, phone numbers and addresses. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). **Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

Part 1 · 0 to 10

Say them in order until they come without thinking. Everything up to 99 is built from these.

NUMBER	SOMALI	SAY IT
0	eber	*EH-ber*
1	kow	*KOW*
2	laba	*LAH-bah*
3	saddex	*SAHD-dex*
4	afar	*AH-fahr*
5	shan	*shahn*
6	lix	*lix*
7	toddoba	*tod-DOH-bah*
8	siddeed	*sid-DEED*
9	sagaal	*sah-GAAL*

NUMBER	SOMALI	SAY IT
10	toban	*TOH-bahn*

Kow or Hal?

Use *kow* when counting (*kow, laba, saddex*) and *hal* for "one" in front of a thing: *hal shaah* (one tea). You may also meet the spellings *labo* and *sideed*. The *kow / hal* rule is general knowledge.

Part 2 · 11 to 100 and Beyond

*Teens and compounds are joined with iyo ("and"). The pattern shown here puts the **small number first**: shan iyo labaatan is "five and twenty", like the "four and twenty blackbirds" of the English rhyme.*

NUMBER	SOMALI	SAY IT
11	kow iyo toban	*KOW ee-yo TOH-bahn*
12	laba iyo toban	*LAH-bah ee-yo TOH-bahn*
13	saddex iyo toban	*SAHD-dex ee-yo TOH-bahn*
14	afar iyo toban	*AH-fahr ee-yo TOH-bahn*
15	shan iyo toban	*shahn ee-yo TOH-bahn*
16	lix iyo toban	*lix ee-yo TOH-bahn*
17	toddoba iyo toban	*tod-DOH-bah ee-yo TOH-bahn*
18	siddeed iyo toban	*sid-DEED ee-yo TOH-bahn*
19	sagaal iyo toban	*sah-GAAL ee-yo TOH-bahn*
20	labaatan	*lah-BAA-tahn*
30	soddon	*SOD-don*

NUMBER	SOMALI	SAY IT
40	**afartan**	*ah-FAHR-tahn*
50	**konton**	*KON-ton*
60	**lixdan**	*LIX-dahn*
70	**toddobaatan**	*tod-doh-BAA-tahn*
80	**siddeetan**	*sid-DEE-tahn*
90	**sagaashan**	*sah-GAA-shahn*
100	**boqol**	*BO-qol*

NUMBER	SOMALI	HOW IT IS BUILT
25	**shan iyo labaatan**	five and twenty
34	**afar iyo soddon**	four and thirty
67	**toddoba iyo lixdan**	seven and sixty
200	**laba boqol**	two hundred
1,000	**kun**	thousand
2,000	**laba kun**	two thousand

Which Way Round?

From general knowledge, you will also hear the tens first (*labaatan iyo shan*), and usage varies between speakers. I could not confirm where each order belongs, so neither is marked as Somaliland or Djibouti usage. Learn the unit-first order here and be ready to understand both.

Numbers with Nouns

The number goes **before** the thing: *laba buug* (two books), *saddex arday* (three students). The noun does not take its ordinary plural. Some nouns, mostly feminine ones, change their ending after

a number, which this course leaves for later (that last point is general knowledge).

Part 3 · Age and Contact Details

Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① How Old Are You? — Imisa jir baad tahay?

A:

Imisa jir baad tahay?

ee-MEE-sah JIR baad tah-HAY?

How old are you?

B:

Soddon jir baan ahay. Adiguna?

SOD-don JIR baan ah-HAY. ah-dee-GOO-nah?

I'm thirty. And you?

A:

Shan iyo labaatan jir baan ahay.

shahn ee-yo lah-BAA-tahn JIR baan ah-HAY.

I'm twenty-five.

② A Child's Age — Da'da ilmaha

A:

Wiilkaagu imisa jir buu yahay?

WEEL-kaa-goo ee-MEE-sah JIR boo yah-HAY?

How old is your son?

B:

Toddoba jir buu yahay.

tod-DOH-bah JIR boo yah-HAY.

He is seven.

A:

Gabadhaaduna?

gah-bah-DHAA-doo-nah?

And your daughter?

B:

Afar jir bay tahay.

AH-fahr JIR bay tah-HAY.

She is four.

③ Phone Numbers — Lambarka telefoonka

A:

Lambarkaaga telefoonka waa maxay?

lahm-bahr-KAA-gah teh-leh-FOHN-kah waa mah-XAY?

What is your phone number?

④ Say That Again — Ku celi

A:

Raali ahow, ma fahmin. Fadlan ku celi.

raa-LEE ah-HOW, mah FAH-min. fahd-LAHN koo CEH-lee.

Sorry, I didn't understand. Please repeat.

B:

Waa eber, toddoba, toddoba, eber, eber, sagaal, eber, eber, kow, laba, saddex.

waa EH-ber, tod-DOH-bah, tod-DOH-bah, EH-ber, EH-ber, sah-GAAL, EH-ber, EH-ber, KOW, LAH-bah, SAHD-dex.

It's 07700 900123.

A:

Mahadsanid.

mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

Thank you.

B:

Haa. Lix, afar, siddeed.

HAA. lix, AH-fahr, sid-DEED.

Yes. Six, four, eight.

A:

Waa hagaag. Waan qorayaa.

waa hah-GAAG. waan qo-rah-YAA.

OK. I'm writing it down.

⑤ Where Do You Live? — Xaggee baad joogtaa?

A:

Xaggee baad joogtaa?

xahg-GEH baad johg-TAA?

Where do you live?

B:

Waxaan joogaa Edinburgh.

wah-XAAN joh-GAA Edinburgh.

I live in Edinburgh.

A:

Cinwaankaagu waa maxay?

cin-waan-KAA-goo waa mah-XAY?

What is your address?

B:

Waddada Queen Street, lambarka toban.

wahd-DAH-dah Queen Street, lahm-BAHR-kah TOH-bahn.

Queen Street, number ten.

⑥ Email — Iimaylka

A:

Iimayl ma leedahay?

EE-mayl mah lee-dah-HAY?

Do you have email?

B:

Haa, waan leeyahay. Waan kuu qorayaa.

HAA, waan lee-yah-HAY. waan koo qo-rah-YAA.

Yes, I do. I'll write it down for you.

A:

Aad baad u mahadsan tahay.

AAD baad oo mah-HAHD-sahn tah-HAY.

Thank you very much.

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

Where Somali offers a fuller and a shorter or alternative wording, both are shown.

MEANING	FULLER	SHORTER OR ALTERNATIVE
How old are you?	**Imisa jir baad tahay?** *ee-MEE-sah JIR baad tah-HAY*	**Imisa ayaad jirtaa?** *ee-MEE-sah ah-YAAD jir-TAA*
I am … years old	**Waxaan jiraa … sano.** *wah-XAAN ji-RAA … SAH-no*	**… jir baan ahay.** *JIR baan ah-HAY*
Your phone number?	**Lambarkaaga telefoonka waa maxay?** *lahm-bahr-KAA-gah teh-leh-FOHN-kah waa mah-XAY*	**Lambarkaaga?** *lahm-bahr-KAA-gah*
My number is …	**Lambarkaygu waa …** *lahm-bahr-KAY-goo waa*	the same
Please repeat	**Fadlan ku celi.** *fahd-LAHN koo CEH-lee*	**Mar kale?** *mahr KAH-leh*
Slowly, please	**Fadlan tartiib u hadal.** *fahd-LAHN tahr-TEEB oo HAH-dahl*	**Tartiib!** *tahr-TEEB*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

jir (to be … years old; also to exist), sheeg (to tell) and qor (to write). The person words are the ones from Chapter 2.

WHO	JIR (BE AGED)	SHEEG (TELL)	QOR (WRITE)
I: *waxaan*	**jiraa** *ji-RAA*	**sheegaa** *shee-GAA*	**qoraa** *qo-RAA*
you: *waxaad*	**jirtaa** *jir-TAA*	**sheegtaa** *sheeg-TAA*	**qortaa** *qor-TAA*

WHO	JIR (BE AGED)	SHEEG (TELL)	QOR (WRITE)
he: *wuxuu*	**jiraa** *ji-RAA*	**sheegaa** *shee-GAA*	**qoraa** *qo-RAA*
she: *waxay*	**jirtaa** *jir-TAA*	**sheegtaa** *sheeg-TAA*	**qortaa** *qor-TAA*
we: *waxaan*	**jirnaa** *jir-NAA*	**sheegnaa** *sheeg-NAA*	**qornaa** *qor-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**jirtaan** *jir-TAAN*	**sheegtaan** *sheeg-TAAN*	**qortaan** *qor-TAAN*
they: *waxay*	**jiraan** *ji-RAAN*	**sheegaan** *shee-GAAN*	**qoraan** *qo-RAAN*

Asking Age

Treat the question as you would in English: fine for children and classmates, tactful with older adults. Some older people may know the season or event of their birth better than the date. General knowledge, not checked.

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source showing different Somali wording for ages or phone numbers in Somaliland or Djibouti. From general knowledge, you may hear digits said in English in Somalia and Somaliland, and in French in Djibouti, even in a Somali sentence. Somalia and Somaliland use the phone code +252; Djibouti uses +253.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 key words besides the numbers. Nouns are shown with their "the" ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**tirada**	*ti-RAH-dah*	the number, amount	noun (f)

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
2	**lambarka**	*lahm-BAHR-kah*	the number (phone, house)	noun (m)
3	**da'da**	*DAH'-dah*	the age	noun (f)
4	**sanadka**	*sah-NAHD-kah*	the year	noun (m)
5	**telefoonka**	*teh-leh-FOHN-kah*	the telephone	noun (m)
6	**cinwaanka**	*cin-WAAN-kah*	the address	noun (m)
7	**waddada**	*wahd-DAH-dah*	the road, street	noun (f)
8	**wiilka**	*WEEL-kah*	the boy, son	noun (m)
9	**gabadha**	*gah-BAH-dhah*	the girl, daughter	noun (f)
10	**ilmaha**	*il-MAH-hah*	the child	noun (m)
11	**jir**	*jir*	to be (so many years) old	verb
12	**sheeg**	*sheeg*	to tell	verb
13	**qor**	*qor*	to write	verb
14	**ku celi**	*koo CEH-lee*	repeat (it)	verb
15	**fahan**	*FAH-hahn*	to understand	verb
16	**imisa**	*ee-MEE-sah*	how many, how much	question word
17	**xaggee**	*xahg-GEH*	where	question word
18	**iyo**	*EE-yo*	and	joining word
19	**tartiib**	*tahr-TEEB*	slowly	adv
20	**mar kale**	*mahr KAH-leh*	once more, again	phrase

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Count from one to five.

▼ Show answer

kow, laba, saddex, afar, shan

2. Say 18 and 47.

▼ Show answer

siddeed iyo toban · **toddoba iyo afartan**

3. What number is **lix iyo sagaashan**?

▼ Show answer

96

4. Ask someone how old they are.

▼ Show answer

Imisa jir baad tahay?

5. Say you are thirty-four.

▼ Show answer

Afar iyo soddon jir baan ahay.

6. You missed a phone number. Apologise and ask them to repeat it.

▼ Show answer

Raali ahow, ma fahmin. Fadlan ku celi.

Not Yet Verified

Checked (2026-11-25): the numbers 0 to 20, the tens, *boqol*, *kun*, *laba boqol*, *laba kun*, the unit-first compounds, and that the number comes before the noun (Preply, which contradicts itself in one place about the order; its examples are unit-first). A search summary of a medical phrase sheet gave *Imisa ayaad jirtaa?*, and one of an Australian government document used *lambarka* for "the number". I read neither document itself.

Not checked, from general knowledge: nearly all of Part 3, including all six dialogs, the three-verb table, the *jir* age sentences, phone, address and email wording, the *kow / hal* rule, the tens-first order, the cultural and regional notes, the vocabulary list, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, Numbers in Somali (read); Somali for doctors and Services Australia, Somali guide (search summaries only). The phone number in dialog 3 is from a range Ofcom reserves for fiction.

Coming Up in Chapter 4

Where you are from: countries, nationalities and languages, with **Waxaan ka imid …** ("I come from …").

Somali Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 4 · Where You're From

🌍 Countries & Nationalities — Dalalka iyo jinsiyadaha

By the end of this chapter you will be able to ask where someone is from, say where you come from, give your nationality and talk about which languages you speak. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end: most of the country names here are unchecked.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① Where Are You From? — Xaggee baad ka timid?

A:

Xaggee baad ka timid?

xahg-GEH baad kah ti-MID?

Where are you from?

B:

Waxaan ka imid Soomaaliya. Adiguna?

wah-XAAN kah ee-MID soo-MAA-lee-yah. ah-dee-GOO-nah?

I'm from Somalia. And you?

A:

Waxaan ka imid Iskotland.

wah-XAAN kah ee-MID is-KOT-land.

I'm from Scotland.

② Which City? — Magaaladee?

A:

Magaaladee baad ka timid?

mah-gaa-lah-DEH baad kah ti-MID?

Which city are you from?

B:

Hargeysa. Adiguna?

har-GAY-sah. ah-dee-GOO-nah?

Hargeisa. And you?

A:

Edinburgh. Waa magaalo qurux badan.

Edinburgh. waa mah-GAA-lo qoo-ROOX bah-DAHN.

Edinburgh. It's a very beautiful city.

③ Are You Somali? — Ma Soomaali baad tahay?

A:

④ Which Languages? — Luqadee?

A:

Luqadee baad ku hadashaa?

Ma Soomaali baad tahay?

mah soo-MAA-lee baad tah-HAY?

Are you Somali?

B:

Haa, Soomaali baan ahay. Adiguna ma Ingiriis baad tahay?

HAA, soo-MAA-lee baan ah-HAY. ah-dee-GOO-nah mah in-gi-REES baad tah-HAY?

Yes, I'm Somali. And are you English?

A:

Maya, Iskotish baan ahay.

MAH-yah, is-KOT-ish baan ah-HAY.

No, I'm Scottish.

⑤ From Djibouti — Jabuuti

A:

Ma Soomaaliya baad ka timid?

mah soo-MAA-lee-yah baad kah ti-MID?

Are you from Somalia?

B:

Maya, waxaan ka imid Jabuuti.

MAH-yah, wah-XAAN kah ee-MID jah-BOO-tee.

No, I'm from Djibouti.

A:

Ma ku hadashaa Faransiis?

mah koo hah-dah-SHAA fah-rahn-SEES?

Do you speak French?

B:

Haa, waan ku hadlaa.

HAA, waan koo had-LAA.

Yes, I do.

loo-qah-DEH baad koo hah-dah-SHAA?

What language do you speak?

B:

Waxaan ku hadlaa af Soomaali iyo Carabi.

wah-XAAN koo had-LAA ahf soo-MAA-lee EE-yo cah-RAH-bee.

I speak Somali and Arabic.

A:

Waxaan ku hadlaa Ingiriisi, waxaanan baranayaa af Soomaali.

wah-XAAN koo had-LAA in-gi-REE-see, wah-XAA-nahn bah-rah-nah-YAA ahf soo-MAA-lee.

I speak English, and I'm learning Somali.

⑥ What Does It Mean? — Maxaa loola jeedaa?

A:

Sidee af Soomaali loogu yiraahdaa “city”?

SEE-dee ahf soo-MAA-lee LOH-goo yi-RAAH-daa city?

How do you say “city” in Somali?

B:

Magaalo.

mah-GAA-lo.

Magaalo.

A:

Mahadsanid. Aad baad u fiican tahay.

mah-hahd-SAH-nid. AAD baad oo fee-CHAAN tah-HAY.

Thank you. You're very kind.

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

Somali has no separate polite "you", so the columns show a fuller and a shorter or alternative wording.

MEANING	FULLER	SHORTER OR ALTERNATIVE
Where are you from?	**Xaggee baad ka timid?** *xahg-GEH baad kah ti-MID*	**Waddankee ayaad ka timid?** (which country?) *wahd-dahn-KEH ah-YAAD kah ti-MID*
I'm from …	**Waxaan ka imid …** *wah-XAAN kah ee-MID*	**… baan ka imid.** *baan kah ee-MID*
I am (nationality)	**Waxaan ahay …** *wah-XAAN ah-HAY*	**… baan ahay.** *baan ah-HAY*
I speak …	**Waxaan ku hadlaa …** *wah-XAAN koo had-LAA*	**Waan ku hadlaa.** (I do speak it) *waan koo had-LAA*
I don't speak …	**Kuma hadlo …** *KOO-mah HAD-lo*	**Wax yar uun.** (just a little) *wahx YAHR oon*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

*ka imid (to come from), ku hadal (to speak) and baro (to learn). Note that ka imid is a **past** form, "came from", which is how Somali says "I'm from". The other two are in the present.*

WHO	KA IMID (CAME FROM)	KU HADAL (SPEAK)	BARO (LEARN)
I: *waxaan*	**ka imid** *kah ee-MID*	**ku hadlaa** *koo had-LAA*	**bartaa** *bar-TAA*
you: *waxaad*	**ka timid** *kah ti-MID*	**ku hadashaa** *koo hah-dah-SHAA*	**barataa** *bah-rah-TAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**ka yimid** *kah yi-MID*	**ku hadlaa** *koo had-LAA*	**bartaa** *bar-TAA*

WHO	KA IMID (CAME FROM)	KU HADAL (SPEAK)	BARO (LEARN)
she: *waxay*	**ka timid** *kah ti-MID*	**ku hadashaa** *koo hah-dah-SHAA*	**barataa** *bah-rah-TAA*
we: *waxaan*	**ka nimid** *kah ni-MID*	**ku hadalnaa** *koo hah-dahl-NAA*	**barannaa** *bah-rahn-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**ka timaadeen** *kah ti-maa-DEEN*	**ku hadashaan** *koo hah-dah-SHAAN*	**barataan** *bah-rah-TAAN*
they: *waxay*	**ka yimaadeen** *kah yi-maa-DEEN*	**ku hadlaan** *koo had-LAAN*	**bartaan** *bar-TAAN*

Little Words Before the Verb

Ka means roughly "from" and *ku* roughly "in, with". They sit **before the verb**, not before the place or language: *waxaan ka imid Jabuuti*, *waxaan ku hadlaa Carabi*. Learn each with its verb. General knowledge.

🗺️ Countries, People, Languages — Dalalka, dadka, luqadaha

COUNTRY	IN SOMALI	A PERSON (NATIONALITY)	LANGUAGE
Somalia	**Soomaaliya**	**Soomaali**	**af Soomaali**
Djibouti	**Jabuuti**	**Jabuutiyaan**	**af Soomaali, Carabi, Faransiis**
Ethiopia	**Itoobiya**	**Itoobiyaan**	**Amxaari** and others
Kenya	**Kiinya**	**Kiinyaan**	**Sawaaxili, Ingiriisi**
England	**Ingiriiska**	**Ingiriis**	**Ingiriisi**
Scotland	**Iskotland**	**Iskotish**	**Ingiriisi**
United States	**Maraykanka**	**Maraykan**	**Ingiriisi**

COUNTRY	IN SOMALI	A PERSON (NATIONALITY)	LANGUAGE
France	Faransiiska	Faransiis	Faransiis
Italy	Talyaaniga	Talyaani	Talyaani
Germany	Jarmalka	Jarmal	Jarmal
Hungary	Hangari	Hangariyaan	Hangariyaan
Yemen	Yaman	Yamani	Carabi

Where Somali Is Spoken

Somali is spoken across Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen, and by a large diaspora. It is an official language in Somalia (with Arabic), Somaliland and Ethiopia, and a major national language in Djibouti (Wikipedia, Somali language). So “Are you from Somalia?” is not a safe guess just because someone speaks Somali.

Somaliland, Somalia and Djibouti

Someone may answer *Waxaan ka imid Somaliland* (you may see the Somali spelling *Soomaaliland*). Somaliland declared independence in 1991 and its international status is disputed, so use whatever name the person uses and do not “correct” it. From general knowledge: the north was a British protectorate, the south was ruled by Italy and Djibouti by France, which is why you may hear English, Italian or French words depending on where a speaker grew up.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 key words. Nouns are shown with their “the” ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**dalka**	*DAHL-kah*	the country	noun (m)
2	**waddanka**	*wahd-DAHN-kah*	the country, nation	noun (m)
3	**magaalada**	*mah-gaa-LAH-dah*	the city, town	noun (f)

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
4	**tuulada**	*too-LAH-dah*	the village	noun (f)
5	**luqadda**	*loo-QAHD-dah*	the language	noun (f)
6	**afka**	*AHF-kah*	the mouth; the language	noun (m)
7	**jinsiyadda**	*jin-see-YAHD-dah*	the nationality	noun (f)
8	**dadka**	*DAHD-kah*	the people	noun (m)
9	**badda**	*BAHD-dah*	the sea	noun (f)
10	**ka imid**	*kah ee-MID*	came from	verb
11	**ku hadal**	*koo HAH-dahl*	to speak (a language)	verb
12	**baro**	*BAH-ro*	to learn	verb
13	**dhalo**	*DHAH-lo*	to be born	verb
14	**qurux badan**	*qoo-ROOX bah-DAHN*	very beautiful	adj
15	**weyn**	*wayn*	big	adj
16	**yar**	*yahr*	small	adj
17	**waqooyi**	*wah-QOH-yee*	north	direction
18	**koonfur**	*KOHN-foor*	south	direction
19	**luqadee**	*loo-qah-DEH*	which language	question word
20	**iyo**	*EE-yo*	and	joining word

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask someone where they are from.

▼ Show answer

Xaggee baad ka timid?

2. Say “I'm from Scotland”.

▼ Show answer

Waxaan ka imid Iskotland.

3. Say “she is from Djibouti”.

▼ Show answer

Waxay ka timid Jabuuti.

4. Ask “are you Somali?”

▼ Show answer

Ma Soomaali baad tahay?

5. Say you speak English and you are learning Somali.

▼ Show answer

Waxaan ku hadlaa Ingiriisi, waxaanan baranayaa af Soomaali.

6. Ask how to say a word in Somali.

▼ Show answer

Sidee af Soomaali loogu yiraahdaa “…”?

Not Yet Verified

Checked (2026-11-25): *Xaggee baad ka timid?* and *Waxaan ka imid …* (Preply, introductions page); *Ma ku hadashaa …?* (same page); *af Soomaali* as the language's own name, and where Somali is spoken and its official status (Wikipedia, Somali language, part of the article). A search for Somali country names and two pages of a software translation list gave none of the names needed here.

Not checked, from general knowledge: every country, nationality and language name in the table apart from *af Soomaali*; the three-verb table; the other dialog lines and key phrases; the notes on *ka* and *ku*; the history in the Somaliland box; the vocabulary list; and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, How to introduce yourself in Somali; Wikipedia, Somali language.

Coming Up in Chapter 5

Your family: parents, brothers, sisters and children, the verb **leh** (“to have”), and saying whose is whose.

👨‍👩‍👧 Your Family — Qoyskaaga

By the end of this chapter you will be able to name your close relatives, say who you have and who you don't, and ask someone about their family. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① Is Your Family Big? — Qoyskaagu ma weyn yahay?

A:

Qoyskaagu ma weyn yahay?
qoys-KAA-goo mah wayn yah-HAY?
Is your family big?

B:

Haa, waa weyn yahay. Adiguna?
HAA, waa wayn yah-HAY. ah-dee-GOO-nah?
Yes, it's big. And yours?

A:

Maya, waa yar yahay.
MAH-yah, waa yahr yah-HAY.
No, it's small.

② Brothers and Sisters — Walaalo

A:

Walaalo ma leedahay?
wah-LAA-lo mah lee-dah-HAY?
Do you have brothers or sisters?

B:

Haa, waxaan leeyahay hal walaal iyo hal walaalo dumar ah.
HAA, wah-XAAN lee-yah-HAY hahl wah-LAAL EE-yo hahl wah-LAA-lo DOO-mahr ah.
Yes, I have one brother and one sister.

A:

Magacyadoodu waa maxay?
mah-gah-CYAH-doo-doo waa mah-XAY?
What are their names?

B:

Walaalkay waa Cumar, walaashayna waa Sahra.
wah-LAAL-kay waa COO-mahr, wah-LAA-shay-nah waa SAH-rah.
My brother is Omar, and my sister is Sahra.

③ My Parents — Waalidkay

A:

Hooyadaa maxay ka shaqeysaa?

hoh-yah-DAA mah-XAY kah shah-qay-SAA?

What does your mother do?

B:

Hooyaday waa macallimad.

hoh-yah-DAY waa mah-cahl-li-MAHD.

My mother is a teacher.

A:

Aabbahaana?

AAB-bah-HAA-nah?

And your father?

B:

Aabbahay waa dhakhtar.

AAB-bah-HAY waa DHAHKH-tahr.

My father is a doctor.

④ Are You Married? — Ma guursatay?

A:

Ma guursatay?

mah GOOR-sah-tay?

Are you married?

B:

Haa, waan guursaday. Laba carruur ah baan leeyahay.

HAA, waan GOOR-sah-day. LAH-bah cah-ROOR ah baan lee-yah-HAY.

Yes, I'm married. I have two children.

A:

Maashaa Allaah!

maa-SHAA al-LAAH!

How lovely! (said when praising)

⑤ No, I Don't — Maya, ma lihi

A:

Carruur ma leedahay?

cah-ROOR mah lee-dah-HAY?

Do you have children?

B:

Maya, carruur ma lihi. Laakiin bisad baan leeyahay.

MAH-yah, cah-ROOR mah LEE-hee. laa-KEEN BEE-sahd baan lee-yah-HAY.

No, I have no children. But I have a cat.

⑥ Who Is This? — Kani waa kuma?

A:

Sawirkan, kani waa kuma?

sah-WEER-kahn, KAH-nee waa KOO-mah?

In this photo, who is this?

B:

Kani waa adeerkay, tanina waa habaryartay.

KAH-nee waa ah-DEER-kay, TAH-nee-nah waa hah-bahr-YAHR-tay.

This is my uncle (father's brother), and this is my aunt (mother's sister).

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

Somali has no separate polite "you", so the columns show a fuller and a shorter or related wording.

MEANING	PHRASE	ALSO USEFUL
Do you have ...?	**... ma leedahay?** *mah lee-dah-HAY*	**Imisa ... ayaad leedahay?** (how many?) *ee-MEE-sah ... ah-YAAD lee-dah-HAY*
I have ...	**Waxaan leeyahay ...** *wah-XAAN lee-yah-HAY*	**... baan leeyahay.** *baan lee-yah-HAY*
I don't have ...	**... ma lihi.** *mah LEE-hee*	**Waxba ma lihi.** (I have nothing) *WAHX-bah mah LEE-hee*
This is my ...	**Kani waa ...** (male) *KAH-nee waa*	**Tani waa ...** (female) *TAH-nee waa*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

leh (to have), jecel (to love, to like) and joog (to live, stay: revision from Chapter 2). Somali often uses leh and jecel with the "to be" endings you met in Chapter 2, which is why they look alike.

WHO	LEH (HAVE)	JECEL (LOVE)	JOOG (LIVE)
I: *waxaan*	**leeyahay** *lee-yah-HAY*	**jeclahay** *jeh-clah-HAY*	**joogaa** *joh-GAA*
you: *waxaad*	**leedahay** *lee-dah-HAY*	**jeceshahay** *jeh-cesh-ah-HAY*	**joogtaa** *johg-TAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**leeyahay** *lee-yah-HAY*	**jecel yahay** *jeh-CEL yah-HAY*	**joogaa** *joh-GAA*
she: *waxay*	**leedahay** *lee-dah-HAY*	**jeceshahay** *jeh-cesh-ah-HAY*	**joogtaa** *johg-TAA*

WHO	LEH (HAVE)	JECEL (LOVE)	JOOG (LIVE)
we: *waxaan*	leenahay *lee-nah-HAY*	jecelnahay *jeh-cel-nah-HAY*	joognaa *johg-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	leedihiin *lee-dee-HEEN*	jeceshihiin *jeh-cesh-ee-HEEN*	joogtaan *johg-TAAN*
they: *waxay*	leeyihiin *lee-yee-HEEN*	jecel yihiin *jeh-CEL yee-HEEN*	joogaan *joh-GAAN*

🧬 My, Your, His, Her — Relatives

*In Chapter 2, "my name" was magacayga. Close relatives often take **shorter** endings.*

RELATIVE	MY	YOUR	HIS	HER
mother	hooyaday	hooyadaa	hooyadiis	hooyadeed
father	aabbahay	aabbahaa	aabbihiis	aabbaheed
brother	walaalkay	walaalkaa	walaalkiis	walaalkeed
sister	walaashay	walaashaa	walaashiis	walaasheed

One Word for Brother and Sister

Walaal covers both. The ending tells you which: *walaalka* is the brother, *walaasha* the sister. To be clear without "the", you can add *rag ah* (male) or *dumar ah* (female). When **speaking to** a brother or sister, you may hear *abboowe* and *abbaayo*; the source I read gives age meanings for these that I could not confirm.

🌳 Mother's Side, Father's Side — Reer hooyo, reer aabbe

English "uncle" and "aunt" are not enough: Somali asks which side.

RELATIVE	FATHER'S SIDE	MOTHER'S SIDE
uncle	**adeer** *ah-DEER*	**abti** *AHB-ti*
aunt	**eeddo** *EED-do*	**habaryar** *hah-bahr-YAHR*
grandfather	**awoowe** *ah-WOH-weh*	**awoowe**
grandmother	**ayeeyo** *ah-YAY-yo*	**ayeeyo**

The side for uncles and aunts follows Preply. For grandparents, Preply puts these two words on the father's side and gives habar for the maternal grandmother; from general knowledge ayeeyo and awoowe are used for both sides, so I have shown them that way.

Family and Clan

Family ties often reach much further than the English “immediate family”, and clan identity matters to many people. It can also be a very sensitive subject after years of conflict, so **do not ask someone's clan**. General knowledge, not checked.

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source showing different family words in Somaliland or Djibouti, so none are marked as such.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 key words. Nouns are shown with their “the” ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**qoyska**	*QOYS-kah*	the family	noun (m)
2	**waalidka**	*WAA-lid-kah*	the parent(s)	noun (m)

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
3	**hooyada**	*HOH-yah-dah*	the mother	noun (f)
4	**aabbaha**	*AAB-bah-hah*	the father	noun (m)
5	**wiilka**	*WEEL-kah*	the son, boy	noun (m)
6	**gabadha**	*gah-BAH-dhah*	the daughter, girl	noun (f)
7	**carruurta**	*cah-ROOR-tah*	the children	noun
8	**walaalka**	*wah-LAAL-kah*	the brother	noun (m)
9	**walaasha**	*wah-LAA-shah*	the sister	noun (f)
10	**xaaska**	*XAAS-kah*	the wife	noun (m)
11	**sayga**	*SAY-gah*	the husband	noun (m)
12	**awoowaha**	*ah-WOH-wah-hah*	the grandfather	noun (m)
13	**ayeeyada**	*ah-YAY-yah-dah*	the grandmother	noun (f)
14	**sawirka**	*sah-WEER-kah*	the picture, photo	noun (m)
15	**bisadda**	*bee-SAHD-dah*	the cat	noun (f)
16	**leh**	*leh*	to have	verb
17	**jecel**	*jeh-CEL*	to love, like	verb
18	**guurso**	*GOOR-so*	to marry	verb
19	**weyn**	*wayn*	big	adj
20	**laakiin**	*laa-KEEN*	but	joining word

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask someone if they have children.

▼ Show answer

Carruur ma leedahay?

2. Say “I have two children”.

▼ Show answer

Laba carruur ah baan leeyahay.

3. Say “my mother is a teacher”.

▼ Show answer

Hooyaday waa macallimad.

4. Which word is your mother's brother, and which your father's brother?

▼ Show answer

abti (mother's) · **adeer** (father's)

5. Say “his sister” and “her brother”.

▼ Show answer

walaashiis · **walaalkeed**

6. Say “we love our family” (*qoyskeenna* = our family).

▼ Show answer

Qoyskeenna waan jecelnahay.

Not Yet Verified

Checked against one page (Preply, Family members in Somali, read 2026-11-25): *qoys, hooyo, aabe, waalid, ilmaha, wiil, gabar, xaas, say, walaal, adeer, abti, eedo, habaryar, awoowe,*

ayeeyo and the sentences *Hooyaday waa macallimad* and *Aabahay waa dhakhtar*. That page has some internal inconsistencies, and it spells some words differently from this chapter (*aabe*, *eedo*). A search summary of other lesson pages listed several of the same words.

Not checked, from general knowledge: the whole of *leh* and *jecel* (the source has no use of *leh* at all), the possessive table apart from the two "my" forms above, the rest of the dialogs and key phrases, *rag ah / dumar ah*, the grandparent choice, the clan note, the other vocabulary, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, Family members in Somali.

Coming Up in Chapter 6

Your job: jobs and workplaces, and **Maxaad ka shaqeysaa?** ("What do you work at?").

Somali Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 6 · Talking About Your Job

💼 Your Job — Shaqadaada

By the end of this chapter you will be able to ask what someone does, say your job and where you work, talk about your family's jobs and say what you would like to be. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① What Do You Do? — Maxaad qabataa?

A:

Maxaad qabataa?

mah-XAAD qah-bah-TAA?

What do you do?

B:

Waxaan ahay injineer. Adiguna?

wah-XAAN ah-HAY in-jee-NEER. ah-dee-GOO-nah?

I'm an engineer. And you?

A:

Waxaan ahay macallin.

wah-XAAN ah-HAY mah-cahl-LIN.

I'm a teacher.

② Where Do You Work? — Xaggee baad ka shaqeysaa?

A:

Xaggee baad ka shaqeysaa?

xahg-GEH baad kah shah-qay-SAA?

Where do you work?

B:

Waxaan ka shaqeeyaa isbitaal.

wah-XAAN kah shah-qay-YAA is-bi-TAAL.

I work at a hospital.

A:

Ma kalkaaliso baad tahay?

mah kahl-kaa-LEE-so baad tah-HAY?

Are you a nurse?

B:

Maya, waxaan ahay dhakhtar.

MAH-yah, wah-XAAN ah-HAY DHAHKH-tahr.

No, I'm a doctor.

③ Your Father's Job — Shaqada aabbahaa

④ I'm a Student — Arday baan ahay

A:

Aabbahaa muxuu qabtaa?

AAB-bah-haa moo-XOO qahb-TAA?

What does your father do?

B:

Aabbahay waa taksiile.

AAB-bah-hay waa tahk-SEE-leh.

My father is a taxi driver.

A:

Hooyadaana?

hoh-yah-DAA-nah?

And your mother?

B:

Hooyaday waa kalkaaliso.

hoh-yah-DAY waa kahl-kaa-LEE-so.

My mother is a nurse.

A:

Ma shaqeysaa?

mah shah-qay-SAA?

Do you work?

B:

Haa. Waan shaqeeyaa, waxbarashana waan ku jiraa.

HAA. waan shah-qay-YAA, wahx-bah-RAH-shah-nah waan koo ji-RAA.

Yes. I work, and I'm studying too.

A:

Maxaad baranaysaa?

mah-XAAD bah-rah-nay-SAA?

What are you studying?

B:

Kombiyuutar.

kom-bi-YOO-tahr.

Computing.

⑤ What Would You Like to Be? — Maxaad rabtaa inaad noqoto?

A:

Maxaad rabtaa inaad noqoto?

mah-XAAD rahb-TAA in-AAD no-QOH-to?

What do you want to be?

B:

Waxaan rabaa inaan noqdo xisaabiye.

wah-XAAN rah-BAA in-AAN NOQ-do xi-saa-bi-YEH.

I want to be an accountant.

A:

Waa shaqo fiican!

waa SHAH-qo fee-CHAAN!

⑥ Looking for Work — Shaqo raadin

A:

Shaqo ma leedahay?

SHAH-qo mah lee-dah-HAY?

Do you have a job?

B:

Maya, hadda ma lihi. Shaqo ayaan raadinayaa.

MAH-yah, HAHD-dah mah LEE-hee. SHAH-qo ah-YAAN raa-di-nah-YAA.

No, not at the moment. I'm looking for work.

A:

Nasiib wacan!

nah-SEEB wah-CAHN!

Good luck!

That's a good job!

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

Somali has no separate polite "you". The columns show two ways of saying the same thing.

MEANING	ONE WAY	ANOTHER WAY
What do you do?	**Maxaad qabataa?** *mah-XAAD qah-bah-TAA*	**Maxaad samaysaa?** *mah-XAAD sah-may-SAA*
I am a …	**Waxaan ahay …** *wah-XAAN ah-HAY*	**… baan ahay.** *baan ah-HAY*
I work at …	**Waxaan ka shaqeeyaa …** *wah-XAAN kah shah-qay-YAA*	**… baan ka shaqeeyaa.** *baan kah shah-qay-YAA*
What does he do?	**Muxuu qabtaa?** *moo-XOO qahb-TAA*	**Maxay qabataa?** (she) *mah-XAY qah-bah-TAA*
I want to be …	**Waxaan rabaa inaan noqdo …** *wah-XAAN rah-BAA in-AAN NOQ-do*	**… baan rabaa inaan noqdo.** *baan rah-BAA in-AAN NOQ-do*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

qabo (to hold; to do, as a job), samee (to do, make) and rab (to want). Shaqee (to work) was in Chapter 2.

WHO	QABO (DO)	SAMEE (DO, MAKE)	RAB (WANT)
I: *waxaan*	**qabtaa** *qahb-TAA*	**sameeyaa** *sah-may-YAA*	**rabaa** *rah-BAA*
you: *waxaad*	**qabataa** *qah-bah-TAA*	**samaysaa** *sah-may-SAA*	**rabtaa** *rahb-TAA*

WHO	QABO (DO)	SAMEE (DO, MAKE)	RAB (WANT)
he: *wuxuu*	**qabtaa** *qahb-TAA*	**sameeyaa** *sah-may-YAA*	**rabaa** *rah-BAA*
she: *waxay*	**qabataa** *qah-bah-TAA*	**samaysaa** *sah-may-SAA*	**rabtaa** *rahb-TAA*
we: *waxaan*	**qabannaa** *qah-bahn-NAA*	**samaynaa** *sah-may-NAA*	**rabnaa** *rahb-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**qabataan** *qah-bah-TAAN*	**samaysaan** *sah-may-SAAN*	**rabtaan** *rahb-TAAN*
they: *waxay*	**qabtaan** *qahb-TAAN*	**sameeyaan** *sah-may-YAAN*	**rabaan** *rah-BAAN*

"I Want That I Become"

Somali has no ordinary "to be" after "want". It says *waxaan rabaa inaan noqdo …*, "I want that I become …". Learn the whole chunk and change only the last word. The verb after *inaan* has its own endings, which belong to a later grammar course.

👷 Jobs and Workplaces — Shaqooyin

JOB	SAY IT	ENGLISH
dhakhtar	*DHAHKH-tahr*	doctor
kalkaaliso	*kahl-kaa-LEE-so*	nurse
macallin	*mah-cahl-LIN*	teacher
injineer	*in-jee-NEER*	engineer
farsamayaqaan	*fahr-sah-mah-yah-QAAN*	technician
xisaabiye	*xi-saa-bi-YEH*	accountant

JOB	SAY IT	ENGLISH
xoghaye	*xog-HAH-yeh*	secretary
iibiye	*ee-bi-YEH*	salesperson
maamule	*maa-MOO-leh*	manager
wariye	*wah-ri-YEH*	journalist
beeraley	*bee-rah-LAY*	farmer
taksiile	*tahk-SEE-leh*	taxi driver

WORKPLACE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
xafiiska	*xah-FEES-kah*	the office
isbitaalka	*is-bi-TAAL-kah*	the hospital
dugsiga	*DOOG-si-gah*	the school
jaamacadda	*jaa-mah-CAHD-dah*	the university
dukaanka	*doo-KAAN-kah*	the shop
warshadda	*wahr-SHAHD-dah*	the factory

Spellings Vary

One course page writes “engineer” as *injiyeer*; this course keeps *injineer*, from general knowledge. Many modern job and technology words are borrowed, so expect more than one spelling.

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source showing different job words in Somaliland or Djibouti. From general knowledge, French job titles are common in Djibouti and English ones in Somaliland, so listen for borrowings.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 more words. Nouns are shown with their "the" ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**shaqada**	*SHAH-qah-dah*	the job, work	noun (f)
2	**shaqaalaha**	*shah-QAA-lah-hah*	the employee(s)	noun
3	**mushaharka**	*moo-shah-HAHR-kah*	the salary	noun (m)
4	**shirkadda**	*shir-KAHD-dah*	the company	noun (f)
5	**kombiyuutarka**	*kom-bi-YOO-tahr-kah*	the computer	noun (m)
6	**waxbarashada**	*wahx-bah-RAH-shah-dah*	education, study	noun (f)
7	**fasaxa**	*fah-SAH-xah*	the holiday, leave	noun (m)
8	**nasiibka**	*nah-SEEB-kah*	the luck	noun (m)
9	**qabo**	*QAH-bo*	to do (a job); hold	verb
10	**samee**	*sah-MEH*	to do, make	verb
11	**rab**	*rahb*	to want	verb
12	**noqo**	*NO-qo*	to become	verb
13	**raadi**	*RAA-di*	to look for	verb
14	**hadda**	*HAHD-dah*	now	adv
15	**mashquul**	*mahsh-QOOL*	busy	adj
16	**daallan**	*DAAL-lahn*	tired	adj
17	**adag**	*ah-DAHG*	hard, difficult	adj
18	**fudud**	*foo-DOOD*	easy, light	adj

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
19	hawlgab	*HOWL-gahb*	retired	adj
20	nasiib wacan	*nah-SEEB wah-CAHN*	good luck	phrase

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask someone what they do.

▼ Show answer

Maxaad qabataa?

2. Say “I am a nurse”.

▼ Show answer

Waxaan ahay kalkaaliso.

3. Say “I work at a school”.

▼ Show answer

Waxaan ka shaqeeyaa dugsi.

4. Say “my father is a doctor”.

▼ Show answer

Aabbahay waa dhakhtar.

5. Say “I want to be a teacher”.

▼ Show answer

Waxaan rabaa inaan noqdo macallin.

6. Say “she wants tea” (use *rab*).

▼ Show answer

Waxay rabtaa shaah.

Not Yet Verified

Checked against two lesson pages (read 2026-11-25): *dhakhtar, kalkaaliso, macallin, xisaabiye, xoghaye, iibiye, maamule, wariye, taksiile*; a close form of *beeraley* and *farsamayaqaan* (the page spells them *beeralley* and *farsamyaqaan*); *Maxaad samaysaa?*; *… muxuu qabtaa?*; *Hooyaday waa kalkaaliso*; *Waxaan rabaa inaan noqdo …*; and *Maxaad rabtaa inaad noqoto …?* Neither page is a dictionary, and one has formatting errors.
Seen elsewhere: *Maxaad qabataa?* (Preply, introductions page).
Not checked, from general knowledge: *injineer*, the workplace words, the three-verb table, *Maxaad ka shaqeysaa / Xaggee baad ka shaqeysaa* (I found no source), dialogs 4 and 6, the borrowing notes, the vocabulary list, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Harvard ELIAS, Somali self-introduction; LessonUp, Somali conversations about professions; Preply, How to introduce yourself in Somali.

Coming Up in Chapter 7

Days, dates and telling the time, in three parts.

🗓️ Days, Dates & Time — Maalmaha, taariikhda iyo saacadda

*This long chapter has three parts: **Part 1** days of the week, **Part 2** months and dates, **Part 3** telling the time, where Somali counts the hours differently from English. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1).* ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

Part 1 · Days of the Week

DAY	SOMALI	SAY IT
Saturday	**Sabti**	*SAHB-ti*
Sunday	**Axad**	*AH-xad*
Monday	**Isniin**	*is-NEEN*
Tuesday	**Talaado**	*tah-LAA-do*
Wednesday	**Arbaco**	*ahr-BAH-co*
Thursday	**Khamiis**	*khah-MEES*
Friday	**Jimco**	*JIM-co*

> **Saturday First, and Spelling Varies**
> The list starts on *Sabti* because a week is often counted from Saturday, with Friday the day of prayer and rest. Several names come from Arabic. You may also see *Jimce*, *Arbaca* and *Salaasa* (Tuesday).

Part 2 · Months and Dates

MONTH	SOMALI	SAY IT
January	**Janaayo**	*jah-NAA-yo*
February	**Febraayo**	*feb-RAA-yo*
March	**Maarso**	*MAAR-so*
April	**Abriil**	*ahb-REEL*
May	**Maajo**	*MAA-jo*
June	**Juun**	*joon*
July	**Luuliyo**	*LOO-li-yo*
August	**Agoosto**	*ah-GOHS-to*
September	**Sebteembar**	*seb-TEEM-bar*
October	**Oktoobar**	*ok-TOH-bar*
November	**Nofeembar**	*no-FEEM-bar*
December	**Diseembar**	*di-SEEM-bar*

Writing a Date

Day first, then month: *Jimco, 12 Abriil* (Friday, 12 April). The number comes before the month, as in British English.

Part 3 · Telling the Time

*In the traditional Somali way of counting, the day's hours start at **6 o'clock**, not at midnight. So 7 a.m. is **hour one**. To get the Somali hour, take the clock hour and **move six on or back** (it is the opposite side of the clock face).*

YOUR CLOCK	SOMALI	LITERALLY
7:00 a.m.	**saacadda kow subaxnimo**	hour one, morning
9:00 a.m.	**saacadda saddex subaxnimo**	hour three, morning
12 noon	**saacadda lix duhurnimo**	hour six, midday
3:00 p.m.	**saacadda sagaal galabnimo**	hour nine, afternoon
6:00 p.m.	**saacadda laba iyo toban fiidnimo**	hour twelve, evening
9:00 p.m.	**saacadda saddex habeennimo**	hour three, night

PATTERN	SOMALI	YOUR CLOCK
half past (*iyo bar*)	**saacadda saddex iyo bar**	9:30
quarter past (*iyo rubuc*)	**saacadda afar iyo rubuc**	10:15
quarter to (*rubuc u dhiman*)	**rubuc u dhiman saacadda shan**	10:45
minutes past	**saacadda laba iyo toban daqiiqo**	8:10
minutes to	**shan daqiiqo u dhiman saacadda lix**	11:55

Check Which Clock You Are Using

Flights, timetables and phones show the ordinary clock, and many speakers abroad use it in speech too. When an appointment matters, **confirm with the digits**. The source for the offset system contradicts itself in several of its English glosses, so the tables here apply one rule consistently. The advice about timetables and the diaspora is general knowledge.

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① What Day Is It? — Maanta waa maalinmee?

② What's the Date? — Taariikhda

A:

A:

Maanta waa maalinmee?

MAAN-tah waa maa-lin-MEH?

What day is it today?

B:

Maanta waa Khamiis.

MAAN-tah waa khah-MEES.

Today is Thursday.

A:

Berri waa Jimco!

BER-ri waa JIM-co!

Tomorrow is Friday!

Taariikhdu waa immisa?

taa-REEKH-doo waa im-MEE-sah?

What is the date?

B:

Waa shan iyo labaatan Nofeembar.

waa shahn ee-yo lah-BAA-tahn no-FEEM-bar.

It's the 25th of November.

③ Your Birthday — Dhalashadaada

A:

Dhalashadaadu waa bishee?

dhah-lah-shah-DAA-doo waa bi-SHEH?

What month is your birthday?

B:

Dhalashadaydu waa Sebteembar.

dhah-lah-shah-DAY-doo waa seb-TEEM-bar.

My birthday is in September.

④ What Time Is It? — Saacaddu waa immisa?

A:

Fadlan, saacaddu waa immisa?

fahd-LAHN, saa-CAHD-doo waa im-MEE-sah?

Please, what time is it?

B:

Waa saacadda saddex iyo bar.

waa saa-CAHD-dah SAHD-dex ee-yo bahr.

It's half past nine. (hour three and a half)

A:

Mahadsanid.

mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

Thank you.

⑤ When Is Class? — Fasalka

A:

Goormaa fasalku bilaabmaa?

gohr-MAA fah-SAHL-koo bi-laab-MAA?

⑥ Can You Come? — Ma iman kartaa?

A:

Sabtida ma iman kartaa?

sahb-TI-dah mah ee-MAHN kar-TAA?

When does the class start?

B:

Isniinta, saacadda laba subaxnimo.

is-NEEN-tah, saa-CAHD-dah LAH-bah soo-bahx-NI-mo.

On Monday, at eight in the morning.

Can you come on Saturday?

B:

Haa, waan iman doonaa.

HAA, waan ee-MAHN doo-NAA.

Yes, I'll come.

A:

Waa hagaag. Is arag Sabtida!

waa hah-GAAG. is AH-rahg sahb-TI-dah!

Good. See you on Saturday!

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

MEANING	ONE WAY	ANOTHER WAY
What time is it?	**Saacaddu waa immisa?** *saa-CAHD-doo waa im-MEE-sah*	**Immisa saac tahay?** *im-MEE-sah saac tah-HAY*
Could you tell me the time?	**Ma ii sheegi kartaa saacadda?** *mah ee SHEE-gi kar-TAA saa-CAHD-dah*	**Fadlan, saacadda?** *fahd-LAHN, saa-CAHD-dah*
When?	**Goorma?** *GOHR-mah*	**Maalintee?** (which day?) *maa-lin-TEH*
Next week	**toddobaadka dambe** *tod-do-BAAD-kah DAHM-beh*	**usbuuca dambe** *oos-BOO-cah DAHM-beh*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

For talking about your day: kac (to get up), tag (to go) and seexo (to sleep).

WHO	KAC (GET UP)	TAG (GO)	SEEXO (SLEEP)
I: *waxaan*	**kacaa** *kah-CAA*	**tagaa** *tah-GAA*	**seexdaa** *seex-DAA*

WHO	KAC (GET UP)	TAG (GO)	SEEXO (SLEEP)
you: *waxaad*	**kacdaa** *kahc-DAA*	**tagtaa** *tahg-TAA*	**seexataa** *see-xah-TAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**kacaa** *kah-CAA*	**tagaa** *tah-GAA*	**seexdaa** *seex-DAA*
she: *waxay*	**kacdaa** *kahc-DAA*	**tagtaa** *tahg-TAA*	**seexataa** *see-xah-TAA*
we: *waxaan*	**kacnaa** *kahc-NAA*	**tagnaa** *tahg-NAA*	**seexannaa** *see-xahn-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**kacdaan** *kahc-DAAN*	**tagtaan** *tahg-TAAN*	**seexataan** *see-xah-TAAN*
they: *waxay*	**kacaan** *kah-CAAN*	**tagaan** *tah-GAAN*	**seexdaan** *seex-DAAN*

Example: ***Waxaan kacaa saacadda kow subaxnimo.*** *(I get up at seven in the morning.)*

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source on how dates or clock times are said differently in Somaliland or Djibouti, so none are marked. From general knowledge, French month names and the French way of giving times may be heard in Djibouti. The official weekend also differs from country to country, so do not assume Saturday and Sunday.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 key words besides the day and month names. Nouns are shown with their "the" ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**maalinta**	*maa-LIN-tah*	the day	noun (f)
2	**toddobaadka**	*tod-do-BAAD-kah*	the week	noun (m)

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
3	**bisha**	*BI-shah*	the month	noun (f)
4	**sannadka**	*sahn-NAHD-kah*	the year	noun (m)
5	**taariikhda**	*taa-REEKH-dah*	the date; history	noun (f)
6	**saacadda**	*saa-CAHD-dah*	the hour; the clock	noun (f)
7	**daqiiqadda**	*dah-qee-QAHD-dah*	the minute	noun (f)
8	**subaxa**	*soo-BAH-xah*	the morning	noun (m)
9	**duhurka**	*doo-HOOR-kah*	the midday	noun (m)
10	**fiidka**	*FEED-kah*	the evening	noun (m)
11	**maanta**	*MAAN-tah*	today	adv
12	**berri**	*BER-ri*	tomorrow	adv
13	**shalay**	*shah-LAY*	yesterday	adv
14	**bar**	*bahr*	half	time word
15	**rubuc**	*ROO-booc*	quarter	time word
16	**u dhiman**	*oo dhi-MAHN*	(short) of, “to”	time word
17	**goorma**	*GOHR-mah*	when	question word
18	**kac**	*kahc*	to get up	verb
19	**tag**	*tahg*	to go	verb
20	**seexo**	*SEE-xo*	to sleep	verb

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Say “today is Monday”.

▼ Show answer

Maanta waa Isniin.

2. Say the date “Sunday, 25 December”.

▼ Show answer

Axad, 25 Diseembar

3. Ask what time it is.

▼ Show answer

Saacaddu waa immisa?

4. It is 10:00 a.m. on your clock. Which Somali hour is that?

▼ Show answer

saacadda afar subaxnimo

5. A friend says **saacadda laba fiidnimo**. When do you arrive?

▼ Show answer

8:00 p.m. (hour two of the evening). Confirm it in digits.

6. Say “we go tomorrow”.

▼ Show answer

Berri baan tagnaa.

Not Yet Verified

Checked against three Preply pages (read 2026-11-25): the day and month names, the day-month date order, *maanta, shalay*, *Dhalashadaadu waa bishee?*, *Dhalashadaydu waa …*, the time

questions, *Goormaa fasalku bilaabmaa?*, the six-hour offset, *iyo bar, iyo rubuc, u dhiman*, the part-of-day words ending in *-nimo*, and *waan iman doonaa*. The pages spell several months more than one way, and the time page contradicts itself in a number of its English glosses; it writes *saacad* where this chapter uses *saacadda*, and *beri, daqiiqo* where this chapter has *berri, daqiiqadda*. **Not checked, from general knowledge:** *saacadda* in the time phrases, the date question and answer, *Maanta waa maalinmee?*, *Is arag*, the three-verb table, the Saturday-first explanation, the clock advice, the regional notes, most vocabulary genders and endings, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, Days of the week in Somali; Preply, Months in Somali; Preply, Telling the time in Somali.

Coming Up in Chapter 8

Ordering food and drink at a café: **shaah**, **qaxwo**, ordering politely and asking for the bill.

☕ At the Café — Maqaaxida

By the end of this chapter you will be able to ask for a table and a menu, order food and drink, ask what is in a dish and pay. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① A Table — Miis

A:

Soo dhowow! Immisa qof?

soo DHO-wow! im-MEE-sah qof?

Welcome! How many people?

B:

Waxaan rabaa miis laba qof ah.

wah-XAAN rah-BAA miis LAH-bah qof ah.

I'd like a table for two.

A:

Fadlan i soo raac.

fahd-LAHN i soo raac.

Please follow me.

② Tea, Please — Shaah, fadlan

A:

Maxaad rabtaa?

mah-XAAD rahb-TAA?

What would you like?

B:

Shaah yar koob ah, fadlan.

shaah yahr koob ah, fahd-LAHN.

A small cup of tea, please.

A:

Caano ma leh?

CAA-no mah leh?

With milk?

B:

Haa, caano iyo sonkor.

HAA, CAA-no EE-yo SOHN-kor.

Yes, milk and sugar.

③ Lunch — Qado

A:

④ A Snack — Sambuus

A:

Liiska cuntada, fadlan.

LEES-kah coon-TAH-dah, fahd-LAHN.

The menu, please.

B:

Waa kan.

waa kahn.

Here it is.

A:

Waxaan rabaa hilib ari iyo bariis.

wah-XAAN rah-BAA HI-lib AH-ri EE-yo bah-REES.

I'd like goat meat and rice.

Ii keen sambuus iyo shaah.

ee keen sahm-BOOS EE-yo shaah.

Bring me a samosa and tea. (casual)

B:

Waa hagaag, sug daqiiqad.

waa hah-GAAG, soog dah-qee-QAHD.

All right, wait a minute.

A:

Basbaas i sii, fadlan.

bahs-BAAS i see, fahd-LAHN.

Give me some chilli, please.

⑤ What's in It? — Maxaa ku jira?

A:

Caano ma ku jiraan?

CAA-no mah koo ji-RAAN?

Is there milk in it?

B:

Maya, kuma jiraan.

MAH-yah, KOO-mah ji-RAAN.

No, there isn't.

A:

Mahadsanid, taas ayaan rabaa.

mah-hahd-SAH-nid, taas ah-YAAN rah-BAA.

Thank you, that's what I want.

⑥ The Bill — Xisaabta

A:

Xisaabta, fadlan.

xi-SAAB-tah, fahd-LAHN.

The bill, please.

B:

Waa kan.

waa kahn.

Here it is.

A:

Waxaan ku bixinayaa kaarka.

Cuntadu aad bay u macaan tahay.

wah-XAAN koo bi-xi-nah-YAA KAAR-kah.

coon-TAH-doo AAD bay oo mah-CAAN tah-HAY.

I'll pay by card. The food is delicious.

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

Somali has no separate polite "you". Politeness comes from fadlan and from the softer waxaan rabi lahaa.

MEANING	POLITER	PLAINER
I'd like …	**Waxaan rabi lahaa …** *wah-XAAN rah-BI lah-HAA*	**Waxaan rabaa …** *wah-XAAN rah-BAA*
Bring me …	**… fadlan.** *fahd-LAHN*	**Ii keen …** *ee keen*
Can I get …?	**Ma heli karaa …?** *mah HEH-li kah-RAA*	**… ma jiraa?** (is there …?) *mah ji-RAA*
The bill	**Xisaabta, fadlan.** *xi-SAAB-tah fahd-LAHN*	**Immisa waaye?** (how much is it?) *im-MEE-sah WAA-yeh*
Does it contain pork?	**Hilib doofaar ma ku jiraa?** *HI-lib DOO-faar mah koo ji-RAA*	—

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

cab (to drink), cun (to eat) and bixi (to pay, to give out).

WHO	CAB (DRINK)	CUN (EAT)	BIXI (PAY)
I: *waxaan*	**cabbaa** *cahb-BAA*	**cunaa** *coo-NAA*	**bixiyaa** *bi-xi-YAA*
you: *waxaad*	**cabtaa** *cahb-TAA*	**cuntaa** *coon-TAA*	**bixisaa** *bi-xi-SAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**cabbaa** *cahb-BAA*	**cunaa** *coo-NAA*	**bixiyaa** *bi-xi-YAA*
she: *waxay*	**cabtaa** *cahb-TAA*	**cuntaa** *coon-TAA*	**bixisaa** *bi-xi-SAA*

WHO	CAB (DRINK)	CUN (EAT)	BIXI (PAY)
we: *waxaan*	**cabnaa** *cahb-NAA*	**cunnaa** *coon-NAA*	**bixinaa** *bi-xi-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**cabtaan** *cahb-TAAN*	**cuntaan** *coon-TAAN*	**bixisaan** *bi-xi-SAAN*
they: *waxay*	**cabbaan** *cahb-BAAN*	**cunaan** *coo-NAAN*	**bixiyaan** *bi-xi-YAAN*

🍽️ On the Menu — Cunto iyo cabitaan

SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH
bariis	*bah-REES*	rice
baasto	*BAAS-to*	pasta
canjeero	*cahn-JEE-ro*	sourdough flatbread
muufo	*MOO-fo*	cornmeal bread
soor	*soor*	a maize porridge, like polenta
sambuus	*sahm-BOOS*	samosa
suqaar	*soo-QAAR*	small cubes of fried meat
hilib ari	*HI-lib AH-ri*	goat meat
hilib lo'	*HI-lib lo'*	beef
hilib digaag	*HI-lib di-GAAG*	chicken
maraq	*MAH-rahq*	broth, soup
biyo	*BI-yo*	water

SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH
shaah	*shaah*	tea
qaxwo	*QAHX-wo*	coffee
casiir cambe	*cah-SEER CAHM-beh*	mango juice
cabitaan fudud	*cah-bi-TAAN foo-DOOD*	soft drink

Tea and Hospitality

Tea (*shaah*) is a social drink, often sweet and sometimes spiced, and refusing it outright can seem abrupt: accept a little. Most Somalis are Muslim, so pork and alcohol are normally absent from Somali food. Many people eat with the right hand. All general knowledge, not from the sources.

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source on how café Somali differs in Somaliland or Djibouti, so no words are marked. From general knowledge, you may meet French menu words in Djibouti, and prices are in different currencies: the Somali shilling, the Somaliland shilling and the Djibouti franc.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 more words. Nouns are shown with their "the" ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	maqaaxida	*mah-QAA-xi-dah*	the café	noun (f)
2	makhaayadda	*mah-KHAA-yahd-dah*	the restaurant	noun (f)
3	miiska	*MEES-kah*	the table	noun (m)
4	cuntada	*coon-TAH-dah*	the food	noun (f)
5	liiska	*LEES-kah*	the list, menu	noun (m)

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
6	**xisaabta**	*xi-SAAB-tah*	the bill	noun (f)
7	**koobka**	*KOOB-kah*	the cup	noun (m)
8	**dhalada**	*dhah-LAH-dah*	the bottle; glass	noun (f)
9	**caanaha**	*CAA-nah-hah*	the milk	noun
10	**sonkorta**	*son-KOR-tah*	the sugar	noun (f)
11	**basbaaska**	*bahs-BAAS-kah*	the chilli	noun (m)
12	**liinta**	*LEEN-tah*	the lemon	noun (f)
13	**cab**	*cahb*	to drink	verb
14	**cun**	*coon*	to eat	verb
15	**bixi**	*BI-xi*	to pay, give out	verb
16	**sug**	*soog*	to wait	verb
17	**macaan**	*mah-CAAN*	sweet, delicious	adj
18	**kulul**	*koo-LOOL*	hot	adj
19	**qabow**	*qah-BOW*	cold	adj
20	**la'aan**	*lah-'AAN*	without (after the noun: *sonkor la'aan*)	phrase

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask for a table for two.

▼ Show answer

Waxaan rabaa miis laba qof ah.

2. Order a small cup of tea politely.

▼ Show answer

Shaah yar koob ah, fadlan.

3. Say “coffee without sugar”.

▼ Show answer

qaxwo sonkor la'aan

4. Ask if there is milk in it.

▼ Show answer

Caano ma ku jiraan?

5. Say “we eat rice”.

▼ Show answer

Waxaan cunnaa bariis.

6. Ask for the bill.

▼ Show answer

Xisaabta, fadlan.

Not Yet Verified

Checked against one page (Preply, How to order food in Somali, read 2026-11-25): the table, menu, bill and card phrases, *Waxaan rabaa …*, the polite “I would like” form, *Ma heli karaa*, *taas ayaan rabaa*, *sug daqiiqad*, *shaah yar koob ah*, and the food and drink words in the menu table (*maraq* appears there as chicken soup). The page has typos and spells some phrases several ways; this chapter writes *rabi lahaa*, *ii keen* and *ku jiraan* where the page has other spellings. Another drinks page refused the request, so there is no second source.
Not checked, from general knowledge: the milk and “without sugar” wording, *Immisa waaye?*,

the praise of the food, the three-verb table, the cultural, dietary and currency notes, the vocabulary list genders and endings, and every respelling and stress mark. **If you have an allergy, do not rely on these phrases alone.** No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, How to order food in Somali.

Coming Up in Chapter 9

Shopping and prices: asking how much, money, big and small, cheap and expensive.

🛍️ Shopping & Prices — Suuqa iyo qiimaha

By the end of this chapter you will be able to ask what something costs, say it is too expensive, ask for a discount, choose a size or colour and pay. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① How Much? — Immisa?

A:

Iska warran? Tani waa immisa?

IS-kah WAR-rahn? TAH-ni waa im-MEE-sah?

Hello. How much is this?

B:

Waa boqol shilin.

waa BO-qol shi-LIN.

It's a hundred shillings.

② Too Expensive! — Waa qaali!

A:

Tani aad bay qaali u tahay.

TAH-ni AAD bay QAA-li oo tah-HAY.

This is too expensive.

B:

Maya, waa jaban tahay!

MAH-yah, waa jah-BAHN tah-HAY!

No, it's cheap!

A:

Qiimo dhimis ma jiraa?

QEE-mo DHI-mis mah ji-RAA?

Is there a discount?

B:

Haa, sagaashan.

HAA, sah-GAA-shahn.

Yes, ninety.

③ Fruit — Miro

A:

④ Colour and Size — Midab iyo cabbir

A:

Moos ma haysaa?

moos mah hay-SAA?

Do you have bananas?

B:

Haa, moos iyo tufaax.

HAA, moos EE-yo too-FAAX.

Yes, bananas and apples.

A:

Miisaanka ii saar, fadlan.

mee-SAAN-kah ee saar, fahd-LAHN.

Weigh it for me, please.

Maro cas ma haysaa?

MAH-ro cahs mah hay-SAA?

Do you have red cloth?

B:

Maya, laakiin buluug baan haynaa.

MAH-yah, laa-KEEN boo-LOOG baan hay-NAA.

No, but we have blue.

A:

Ka weyn ma jiraa?

kah wayn mah ji-RAA?

Is there a bigger one?

⑤ I'll Take It — Waan qaadanayaa

A:

Waa hagaag, waan qaadanayaa.

waa hah-GAAG, waan qaa-dah-nah-YAA.

All right, I'll take it.

B:

Bac ma rabtaa?

bahc mah rahb-TAA?

Do you want a bag?

A:

Haa, fadlan i sii bac.

HAA, fahd-LAHN i see bahc.

Yes, please give me a bag.

⑥ Paying — Lacagta

A:

Mahadsanid, lacagta qaado.

mah-hahd-SAH-nid, lah-CAHG-tah QAA-do.

Thank you, take the money.

B:

Mahadsanid. Nabad gelyo!

mah-hahd-SAH-nid. NAH-bahd GEL-yo!

Thank you. Goodbye!

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

MEANING	ONE WAY	ANOTHER WAY
How much is it?	**Waa immisa?** *waa im-MEE-sah*	**Imisa ayay ku kacaysaa?** *im-MEE-sah ah-YAY koo kah-cay-SAA*
How much do you sell … for?	**Immisa ayaad ku iibinaysaa …?** *im-MEE-sah ah-YAAD koo ee-bi-nay-SAA*	**Immisa?** *im-MEE-sah*
Final price?	**Qiimaha ugu dambeeya?** *QEE-mah-hah oo-goo dahm-BAY-yah*	**Qiimo dhimis ma jiraa?** (a discount?) *QEE-mo DHI-mis mah ji-RAA*
Do you have …?	**… ma haysaa?** *mah hay-SAA*	**… ma jiraa?** (is there …?) *mah ji-RAA*
I'll take it	**Waan qaadanayaa.** *waan qaa-dah-nah-YAA*	**Kaas baan rabaa.** (I want that one) *kaas baan rah-BAA*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

iibso (to buy), iibi (to sell) and qaado (to take). Notice that buy and sell share a root.

WHO	IIBSO (BUY)	IIBI (SELL)	QAADO (TAKE)
I: *waxaan*	**iibsadaa** *eeb-sah-DAA*	**iibiyaa** *ee-bi-YAA*	**qaataa** *qaa-TAA*
you: *waxaad*	**iibsataa** *eeb-sah-TAA*	**iibisaa** *ee-bi-SAA*	**qaadataa** *qaa-dah-TAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**iibsadaa** *eeb-sah-DAA*	**iibiyaa** *ee-bi-YAA*	**qaataa** *qaa-TAA*
she: *waxay*	**iibsataa** *eeb-sah-TAA*	**iibisaa** *ee-bi-SAA*	**qaadataa** *qaa-dah-TAA*

WHO	IIBSO (BUY)	IIBI (SELL)	QAADO (TAKE)
we: *waxaan*	**iibsannaa** *eeb-sahn-NAA*	**iibinaa** *ee-bi-NAA*	**qaadannaa** *qaa-dahn-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**iibsataan** *eeb-sah-TAAN*	**iibisaan** *ee-bi-SAAN*	**qaadataan** *qaa-dah-TAAN*
they: *waxay*	**iibsadaan** *eeb-sah-DAAN*	**iibiyaan** *ee-bi-YAAN*	**qaataan** *qaa-TAAN*

⚖️ Opposites and Colours — Liddi iyo midabbo

SOMALI	ENGLISH	SOMALI	ENGLISH
weyn	big	**yar**	small
qaali	expensive	**jaban**	cheap
cusub	new	**duug ah**	old, used
cas	red	**buluug**	blue
cad	white	**madow**	black
cagaaran	green	**jaalle**	yellow

The describing word follows the thing: ***maro cas*** *(red cloth). To say "bigger", put ka in front:* ***ka weyn****.*

Where to Bargain

The source I read says bargaining belongs to open markets and street stalls, while supermarkets in cities such as Mogadishu and Hargeisa use fixed prices. Greet the seller first, and bargain with a smile. It gives no Somali bargaining routine, so the exchange in dialog 2 is a simple sketch.

Money in Somalia, Somaliland and Djibouti

Check the currency: the Somali shilling, the Somaliland shilling and the Djibouti franc are different, and US dollars are common in some places. Mobile money (such as EVC Plus, named by the source) is widely used. A price like “a hundred shillings” in the dialog is a language example, not a real price. Apart from the mobile-money mention, this is general knowledge; I found no source on Somali usage in Somaliland or Djibouti shops.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 more words. Nouns are shown with their “the” ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**suuqa**	*SOO-qah*	the market	noun (m)
2	**dukaanka**	*doo-KAAN-kah*	the shop	noun (m)
3	**qiimaha**	*QEE-mah-hah*	the price	noun (m)
4	**lacagta**	*lah-CAHG-tah*	the money	noun (f)
5	**bacda**	*BAHC-dah*	the bag	noun (f)
6	**miisaanka**	*mee-SAAN-kah*	the scales, weight	noun (m)
7	**midabka**	*mi-DAHB-kah*	the colour	noun (m)
8	**tufaaxa**	*too-FAA-xah*	the apple	noun (m)
9	**mooska**	*MOOS-kah*	the banana	noun (m)
10	**yaanyada**	*yaan-YAH-dah*	the tomato	noun (f)
11	**basasha**	*bah-SAH-shah*	the onion	noun (f)
12	**baradhada**	*bah-rah-DHAH-dah*	the potato	noun (f)
13	**rootiga**	*ROO-ti-gah*	the bread	noun (m)
14	**kalluunka**	*kahl-LOON-kah*	the fish	noun (m)

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
15	**cusbada**	*coos-BAH-dah*	the salt	noun (f)
16	**iibso**	*EEB-so*	to buy	verb
17	**iibi**	*EE-bi*	to sell	verb
18	**qaado**	*QAA-do*	to take	verb
19	**hayso**	*HAY-so*	to have (with you), keep	verb
20	**kaas**	*kaas*	that one	pronoun

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask how much something is.

▼ Show answer

Waa immisa?

2. Say “this is too expensive”.

▼ Show answer

Tani aad bay qaali u tahay.

3. Ask if there is a discount.

▼ Show answer

Qiimo dhimis ma jiraa?

4. Ask “do you have apples?”

▼ Show answer

Tufaax ma haysaa?

5. Say “I buy bread”.

▼ Show answer

Waxaan iibsadaa rooti.

6. Say “a big red one” in two words for the colour and size.

▼ Show answer

weyn (big) · **cas** (red)

Not Yet Verified

Checked against Preply's grocery page (read 2026-11-25): *Immisa?*, the “how much do you sell” question (the page words it *Immisa ayaad iibineysaa*, without *ku*), *Qiimaha ugu dambeeya?*, the weighing phrase (printed there as *iii saar*), *Fadlan i sii bac*, *lacagta qaado*, the fruit, vegetable, bread, fish and salt words, and the note on bargaining and fixed prices. A search summary of another Preply page gave *Imisa ayey ku kacaysaa*, *Tani aad bay qaali u tahay* and *Qiimo dhimis ma jiraa*; I did not read that page.

Not checked, from general knowledge: *jaban* (cheap), all the colours and opposites, “bigger”, most of the dialogs, the three-verb table, the currency notes, the noun endings and genders, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, Grocery shopping in Somali (read); Preply, Somali travel phrases (search summary only).

Coming Up in Chapter 10

Asking for directions: where is, left, right, straight on, near and far.

🧭 Asking for Directions — Jihooyinka

By the end of this chapter you will be able to ask where a place is, understand left, right and straight on, ask whether it is near or far, and ask someone to repeat. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① Where's the Bank? — Bangiga

A:

Raali ahow, xaggee buu ku yaal bangiga?

raa-LEE ah-HOW, xahg-GEH boo koo YAAL BAHN-gi-gah?

Excuse me, where is the bank?

B:

Toos u soco, kaddib midig u leexo.

toos oo SO-co, KAHD-dib MI-dig oo LEE-xo.

Go straight on, then turn right.

A:

Mahadsanid.

mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

Thank you.

② Is It Near? — Ma dhowdahay?

A:

Maktabadda ma dhowdahay halkan?

mahk-tah-BAHD-dah mah dhow-dah-HAY HAHL-kahn?

Is the library near here?

B:

Haa, waa dhow dahay.

HAA, waa dhow dah-HAY.

Yes, it's near.

③ Is It Far? — Ma fog yahay?

A:

Isbitaalka meel fog ma yahay?

is-bi-TAAL-kah meel fog mah yah-HAY?

④ The Station — Boosteejada

A:

Aaway boosteejada?

AA-way boos-TEE-jah-dah?

Is the hospital far?

B:

Haa, waa fog yahay. Tagsi waa inaad qaadataa.

HAA, waa fog yah-HAY. TAHG-si waa in-AAD qaa-dah-TAA.

Yes, it's far. You must take a taxi.

A:

Waa hagaag, mahadsanid.

waa hah-GAAG, mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

All right, thank you.

Where is the station?

B:

Geeska hore ka leexo bidix.

GEES-kah HO-reh kah LEE-xo BI-dix.

Turn left at the corner ahead.

⑤ Say It Again — Ku celi

A:

Ma ku celin kartaa jihooyinka?

mah koo CEH-lin kar-TAA ji-HOH-yin-kah?

Could you repeat the directions?

B:

Haa. Midig, kaddib toos.

HAA. MI-dig, KAHD-dib toos.

Yes. Right, then straight on.

A:

Fadlan i tus jidka.

fahd-LAHN i toos JID-kah.

Please show me the way.

⑥ Straight or Turn? — Toos mise leexo?

A:

Miyaan toos u socdaa mise waan leexdaa?

mi-YAAN toos oo SOC-daa MI-seh waan LEEX-daa?

Do I go straight or turn?

B:

Toos u soco. Dugsigu waa halkaas.

toos oo SO-co. DOOG-si-goo waa hahl-KAAS.

Go straight on. The school is there.

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

MEANING	ONE WAY	ANOTHER WAY
Where is ...?	Xaggee buu ku yaal ...? *xahg-GEH boo koo YAAL*	Aaway ...? *AA-way*

MEANING	ONE WAY	ANOTHER WAY
Where can I find ...?	**Xaggee baan ka heli karaa ...?** *xahg-GEH baan kah HEH-li kah-RAA*	**Halkan ... ma laga helaa?** (is there ... here?) *HAHL-kahn mah LAH-gah HEH-laa*
Is it near / far?	**Ma dhow yahay?** *mah dhow yah-HAY*	**Ma fog yahay?** *mah fog yah-HAY*
Show me the way	**Fadlan i tus jidka.** *fahd-LAHN i toos JID-kah*	**Jidka ... ma ii sheegi kartaa?** *JID-kah mah ee SHEE-gi kar-TAA*
You're welcome	**Adaa mudan.** *ah-DAA MOO-dahn*	**Mahad ma leh.** *MAH-hahd mah leh*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

soco (to walk, go), leexo (to turn) and raac (to follow). To give a direction to one person, use the bare verb: soco! (go!), leexo! (turn!), raac! (follow!).

WHO	SOCO (WALK)	LEEXO (TURN)	RAAC (FOLLOW)
I: *waxaan*	**socdaa** *SOC-daa*	**leexdaa** *LEEX-daa*	**raacaa** *raa-CAA*
you: *waxaad*	**socotaa** *so-co-TAA*	**leexataa** *lee-xah-TAA*	**raacdaa** *raac-DAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**socdaa** *SOC-daa*	**leexdaa** *LEEX-daa*	**raacaa** *raa-CAA*
she: *waxay*	**socotaa** *so-co-TAA*	**leexataa** *lee-xah-TAA*	**raacdaa** *raac-DAA*
we: *waxaan*	**soconaa** *so-co-NAA*	**leexannaa** *lee-xahn-NAA*	**raacnaa** *raac-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**socotaan** *so-co-TAAN*	**leexataan** *lee-xah-TAAN*	**raacdaan** *raac-DAAN*

WHO	SOCO (WALK)	LEEXO (TURN)	RAAC (FOLLOW)
they: *waxay*	**socdaan** *SOC-daan*	**leexdaan** *LEEX-daan*	**raacaan** *raa-CAAN*

🗺️ Directions and Places — Jihooyin iyo meelo

SOMALI	ENGLISH	SOMALI	ENGLISH
midig	right	**bidix**	left
toos	straight	**hore**	ahead, front
gadaal	back, behind	**dhex**	middle, inside
kor	above, up	**hoos**	under, down
waqooyi	north	**koonfur**	south
bari	east	**galbeed**	west

Two Sources, Two Spellings

The two pages I read differ: *toosan* and *toos*, *koofur* and *koonfur*, *dhaw* and *dhow*, and they use different words for “turn” (*leexo*, *jiiro*). Expect variation and recognise both.

Landmarks Beat Street Names

From general knowledge, directions are often given by landmarks (the mosque, the market, a big shop) more than by street names and numbers, so ask *near what?* if you are lost.

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source on how directions differ in Somaliland or Djibouti, so no words are marked.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 words for places and getting about. Nouns are shown with their "the" ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**bangiga**	*BAHN-gi-gah*	the bank	noun (m)
2	**isbitaalka**	*is-bi-TAAL-kah*	the hospital	noun (m)
3	**maktabadda**	*mahk-tah-BAHD-dah*	the library	noun (f)
4	**boosteejada**	*boos-TEE-jah-dah*	the station	noun (f)
5	**dugsiga**	*DOOG-si-gah*	the school	noun (m)
6	**masjidka**	*MAHS-jid-kah*	the mosque	noun (m)
7	**garoonka**	*gah-ROON-kah*	the airport; field	noun (m)
8	**mataxafka**	*mah-TAH-xahf-kah*	the museum	noun (m)
9	**jidka**	*JID-kah*	the road, way	noun (m)
10	**geeska**	*GEES-kah*	the corner	noun (m)
11	**isgoyska**	*is-GOYS-kah*	the junction	noun (m)
12	**khariidadda**	*khah-REE-dahd-dah*	the map	noun (f)
13	**tagsiga**	*TAHG-si-gah*	the taxi	noun (m)
14	**dhow**	*dhow*	near	adj
15	**fog**	*fog*	far	adj
16	**halkan**	*HAHL-kahn*	here	adv
17	**halkaas**	*hahl-KAAS*	there	adv
18	**kaddib**	*KAHD-dib*	then, after that	joining word
19	**mise**	*MI-seh*	or (in questions)	joining word

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
20	**tus**	*toos*	to show	verb

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask where the hospital is.

▼ Show answer

Xaggee buu ku yaal isbitaalka?

2. Tell someone to go straight on, then turn left.

▼ Show answer

Toos u soco, kaddib bidix u leexo.

3. Ask if it is far.

▼ Show answer

Ma fog yahay?

4. Ask someone to repeat the directions.

▼ Show answer

Ma ku celin kartaa jihooyinka?

5. Say “we turn right”.

▼ Show answer

Midig baan u leexannaa.

6. Name the four compass points.

▼ Show answer

waqooyi, koonfur, bari, galbeed

Not Yet Verified

Checked against two pages (Preply and Harvard ELIAS, read 2026-11-25): the direction and compass words, *near* and *far*, the place words, the “where is”, “near here”, “far”, repeat and show-me questions, *Aaway*, *Geeska hore ka leexo*, *Tagsi waa inaad qaadataa* and *Adaa mudan*. Some lines here are adapted from theirs: the pages write the dialog 1 and 2 answers differently, and their spellings differ from each other.

Not checked, from general knowledge: the three-verb table and commands, the shorter “ma dhow / fog yahay” forms, *Mahad ma leh*, *Dugsigu waa halkaas*, the landmarks tip, some noun genders and endings, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, Directions in Somali; Harvard ELIAS, Maps and directions.

Coming Up in Chapter 11

Booking a hotel: rooms, nights, check-in and check-out.

🏨 Booking a Hotel — Hudheelka

By the end of this chapter you will be able to ask for a room, say how many nights, ask the price, check in and out and report a simple problem. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). ***This is the least checked chapter so far: I found almost no hotel Somali to verify it against. Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① A Room — Qol

A:

Subax wanaagsan! Qol ayaan u baahanahay.

SOO-bahx wah-NAAG-sahn! qol ah-YAAN oo baa-hah-nah-HAY.

Good morning! I need a room.

B:

Imisa habeen?

im-MEE-sah hah-BEEN?

How many nights?

A:

Laba habeen.

LAH-bah hah-BEEN.

Two nights.

② The Price — Qiimaha

A:

Waa immisa qiimaha halka qol?

waa im-MEE-sah QEE-mah-hah HAHL-kah qol?

What is the price per room?

B:

Habeenkii waa konton doollar.

hah-BEEN-kee waa KON-ton DOL-lahr.

It's fifty dollars a night.

A:

Quraac ma ku jirtaa?

qoo-RAAC mah koo jir-TAA?

Is breakfast included?

B:

Haa, way ku jirtaa.

HAA, way koo jir-TAA.

Yes, it is.

③ I Booked — Waan ballansaday

④ Wi-Fi — Internet

A:

Qol baan ballansaday.

qol baan bahl-LAHN-sah-day.

I booked a room.

B:

Magacaa?

mah-gah-CAA?

Your name?

A:

Magacaygu waa Philip.

mah-gah-CAY-goo waa Philip.

My name is Philip.

B:

Waa kan furaha qolkaaga.

waa kahn foo-RAH-hah qol-KAA-gah.

Here is your room key.

A:

WiFi ma jiraa?

WY-fy mah ji-RAA?

Is there Wi-Fi?

B:

Haa. Lambarka sirta ah waa kan.

HAA. lahm-BAHR-kah SIR-tah ah waa kahn.

Yes. Here is the password.

A:

Mahadsanid.

mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

Thank you.

⑤ A Problem — Dhibaato

A:

Raali ahow, nalku ma shaqaynayo.

raa-LEE ah-HOW, NAHL-koo mah shah-qay-nah-YO.

Excuse me, the light isn't working.

B:

Waan ka xumahay. Hadda ayaan hagaajinaynaa.

waan kah xoo-mah-HAY. HAHD-dah ah-YAAN hah-gaa-ji-nay-NAA.

I'm sorry. We'll fix it now.

⑥ Checking Out — Ka bixid

A:

Maanta waan baxayaa. Xisaabta, fadlan.

MAAN-tah waan bah-xah-YAA. xi-SAAB-tah, fahd-LAHN.

I'm leaving today. The bill, please.

B:

Waa kan. Safar wanaagsan!

waa kahn. SAH-fahr wah-NAAG-sahn!

Here it is. Have a good journey!

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

MEANING	ONE WAY	ANOTHER WAY
I need a room	**Qol ayaan u baahanahay.** *qol ah-YAAN oo baa-hah-nah-HAY*	**Qol ma haysaa?** (do you have a room?) *qol mah hay-SAA*
For … nights	**… habeen** *hah-BEEN*	**Hal habeen uun.** (just one night) *hahl hah-BEEN oon*
What is the price?	**Waa immisa qiimaha halka qol?** *waa im-MEE-sah QEE-mah-hah HAHL-kah qol*	**Imisa ayey ku kacaysaa?** *im-MEE-sah ah-YAY koo kah-cay-SAA*
I'm sorry (about a problem)	**Waan ka xumahay.** *waan kah xoo-mah-HAY*	**Raali ahow.** *raa-LEE ah-HOW*
Help me, please	**I caawi, fadlan.** *i CAA-wi, fahd-LAHN*	**Ma i caawin kartaa?** *mah i CAA-win kar-TAA*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

u baahan (to need), gal (to go in) and bax (to go out, leave). U baahan uses the "to be" endings.

WHO	U BAAHAN (NEED)	GAL (GO IN)	BAX (LEAVE)
I: *waxaan*	**u baahanahay** *oo baa-hah-nah-HAY*	**galaa** *gah-LAA*	**baxaa** *bah-XAA*
you: *waxaad*	**u baahan tahay** *oo BAA-hahn tah-HAY*	**gashaa** *gah-SHAA*	**baxdaa** *bahx-DAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**u baahan yahay** *oo BAA-hahn yah-HAY*	**galaa** *gah-LAA*	**baxaa** *bah-XAA*
she: *waxay*	**u baahan tahay** *oo BAA-hahn tah-HAY*	**gashaa** *gah-SHAA*	**baxdaa** *bahx-DAA*

WHO	U BAAHAN (NEED)	GAL (GO IN)	BAX (LEAVE)
we: *waxaan*	**u baahannahay** *oo baa-hahn-nah-HAY*	**galnaa** *gahl-NAA*	**baxnaa** *bahx-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**u baahan tihiin** *oo BAA-hahn tee-HEEN*	**gashaan** *gah-SHAAN*	**baxdaan** *bahx-DAAN*
they: *waxay*	**u baahan yihiin** *oo BAA-hahn yee-HEEN*	**galaan** *gah-LAAN*	**baxaan** *bah-XAAN*

Two Kinds of Sorry

Raali ahow is “excuse me / pardon me” to get attention or after bumping into someone. *Waan ka xumahay* is “I'm sorry (that happened)”. This distinction is general knowledge.

Booking in Practice

Many hotel staff in cities may also speak English, Arabic or French, and booking is often done by phone, message or through an agent. Check current official travel advice before planning any trip to the region. General knowledge, not from a source.

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source on hotel Somali in Somaliland or Djibouti, so no words are marked. The currency in the dialog is US dollars as an example only.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 hotel words. Nouns are shown with their “the” ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**hudheelka**	*hoo-DHEEL-kah*	the hotel	noun (m)
2	**qolka**	*QOL-kah*	the room	noun (m)

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
3	**habeenka**	*hah-BEEN-kah*	the night	noun (m)
4	**sariirta**	*sah-REER-tah*	the bed	noun (f)
5	**furaha**	*foo-RAH-hah*	the key	noun (m)
6	**albaabka**	*ahl-BAAB-kah*	the door	noun (m)
7	**daaqadda**	*daa-QAHD-dah*	the window	noun (f)
8	**musqusha**	*moos-QOO-shah*	the toilet	noun (f)
9	**qubayska**	*qoo-BAYS-kah*	the shower, bath	noun (m)
10	**nalka**	*NAHL-kah*	the light, lamp	noun (m)
11	**quraacda**	*qoo-RAAC-dah*	the breakfast	noun (f)
12	**dhibaatada**	*dhi-baa-TAH-dah*	the problem	noun (f)
13	**safarka**	*SAH-fahr-kah*	the journey	noun (m)
14	**u baahan**	*oo BAA-hahn*	to need	verb
15	**ballanso**	*bahl-LAHN-so*	to book, make an appointment	verb
16	**gal**	*gahl*	to go in	verb
17	**bax**	*bahx*	to go out, leave	verb
18	**nadiif**	*nah-DEEF*	clean	adj
19	**wasakh**	*wah-SAHKH*	dirt; dirty (*wasakh ah*)	adj
20	**uun**	*oon*	only, just	adv

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Say you need a room.

▼ Show answer

Qol ayaan u baahanahay.

2. Say “three nights”.

▼ Show answer

saddex habeen

3. Ask if breakfast is included.

▼ Show answer

Quraac ma ku jirtaa?

4. Say you have booked a room.

▼ Show answer

Qol baan ballansaday.

5. Say the light is not working.

▼ Show answer

Nalku ma shaqaynayo.

6. Say “we need a key”.

▼ Show answer

Fure baan u baahannahay.

Not Yet Verified

Checked against two pages (Preply travel phrases and Ling, read 2026-11-25): only *Qol ayaan u baahanahay*, *Waa immisa qiimaha halka qol?* (Ling glosses it “one bedroom”), *Imisa ayey*

ku kacaysaa, *I caawi* and *Waan ka xumahay*, plus *safar* as “journey”. Part of the Preply page was cut off and was only summarised. A search found no Somali hotel-booking material.

Not checked, from general knowledge: everything else, including nights, booking, breakfast, keys, Wi-Fi, the problem and check-out lines, the three-verb table, the two kinds of sorry, the vocabulary list, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, Somali travel phrases; Ling, Somali phrases.

Coming Up in Chapter 12

The final chapter: buses, taxis, planes, tickets and delays, with a recap of the whole course.

🚌 Getting Around — Gaadiidka

The last chapter. By the end you will be able to ask where someone is going, find the bus or station, ask a taxi fare, buy a ticket, ask when something leaves and understand that it is late. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① Where Are You Going? — Halkee u socotaa?

A:

Halkee u socotaa?
HAHL-keh oo so-co-TAA?
Where are you going?

B:

Magaalada Beledweyne.
mah-gaa-LAH-dah beh-led-WAY-neh.
To the town of Beledweyne.

A:

Maxaad qaadan rabtaa?
mah-XAAD QAA-dahn rahb-TAA?
What are you going to take?

B:

Diyaarad.
di-YAA-rahd.
A plane.

② How Long? — Immisa saacadood?

A:

Immisa saacadood ayaad jidka ku jiraysaa?
im-MEE-sah saa-cah-DOOD ah-YAAD JID-kah koo ji-ray-SAA?
How many hours will you be on the road?

B:

Hal saac.
hahl saac.
One hour.

A:

Goormaad soo noqon doontaa?
gohr-MAAD soo NO-qon doon-TAA?
When will you come back?

B:

Laba maalmood kaddib.
LAH-bah maal-MOOD KAHD-dib.
In two days.

③ The Bus Station — Meelaha basaska

A:

Xaggee baan ka heli karaa gaadiidka?

xahg-GEH baan kah HEH-li kah-RAA gaa-DEED-kah?

Where can I find transport?

B:

Boosteejadu waa halkaas.

boos-TEE-jah-doo waa hahl-KAAS.

The station is over there.

④ A Taxi — Tagsi

A:

Tagsigu meeqa ayuu qaataa?

TAHG-si-goo MEE-qah ah-YOO qaa-TAA?

How much does the taxi charge?

B:

Toban doollar.

TOH-bahn DOL-lahr.

Ten dollars.

A:

Waa hagaag. Toos u soco, kaddib bidix.

waa hah-GAAG. toos oo SO-co, KAHD-dib BI-dix.

All right. Go straight, then left.

⑤ A Ticket — Tikidh

A:

Hal tikidh, fadlan.

hahl TI-kidh, fahd-LAHN.

One ticket, please.

B:

Xaggee?

xahg-GEH?

Where to?

A:

Hargeysa. Goorma ayuu baxaa baska?

har-GAY-sah. GOHR-mah ah-YOO bah-XAA BAHS-kah?

Hargeisa. When does the bus leave?

B:

⑥ A Delay — Dib u dhac

A:

Diyaaraddu ma soo daahday?

di-YAA-rahd-doo mah soo DAAH-day?

Is the plane late?

B:

Haa, way daahday. Fadlan sug.

HAA, way DAAH-day. fahd-LAHN soog.

Yes, it's late. Please wait.

A:

Dhib ma leh. Mahadsanid.

dhib mah leh. mah-hahd-SAH-nid.

No problem. Thank you.

Saacadda laba subaxnimo.

saa-CAHD-dah LAH-bah soo-bahx-NI-mo.

At eight in the morning.

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

MEANING	ONE WAY	ANOTHER WAY
Where are you going?	**Halkee u socotaa?** *HAHL-keh oo so-co-TAA*	**Xaggee baad u socotaa?** *xahg-GEH baad oo so-co-TAA*
When does it leave?	**Goorma ayuu baxaa ...?** *GOHR-mah ah-YOO bah-XAA*	**Goormaa ... dhoofayaa?** *gohr-MAA dhoo-fah-YAA*
How much is the fare?	**Imisa ayey ku kacaysaa?** *im-MEE-sah ah-YAY koo kah-cay-SAA*	**Meeqa?** *MEE-qah*
Show me the way	**Jidka ma ii tilmaami kartaa?** *JID-kah mah ee til-MAA-mi kar-TAA*	**Fadlan i tus jidka.** *fahd-LAHN i toos JID-kah*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

raac (to travel on, ride), noqo (to return, become) and sug (to wait).

WHO	RAAC (RIDE)	NOQO (RETURN)	SUG (WAIT)
I: *waxaan*	**raacaa** *raa-CAA*	**noqdaa** *noq-DAA*	**sugaa** *soo-GAA*
you: *waxaad*	**raacdaa** *raac-DAA*	**noqotaa** *no-qo-TAA*	**sugtaa** *soog-TAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**raacaa** *raa-CAA*	**noqdaa** *noq-DAA*	**sugaa** *soo-GAA*

WHO	RAAC (RIDE)	NOQO (RETURN)	SUG (WAIT)
she: *waxay*	**raacdaa** *raac-DAA*	**noqotaa** *no-qo-TAA*	**sugtaa** *soog-TAA*
we: *waxaan*	**raacnaa** *raac-NAA*	**noqonnaa** *no-qon-NAA*	**sugnaa** *soog-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	**raacdaan** *raac-DAAN*	**noqotaan** *no-qo-TAAN*	**sugtaan** *soog-TAAN*
they: *waxay*	**raacaan** *raa-CAAN*	**noqdaan** *noq-DAAN*	**sugaan** *soo-GAAN*

Which Transport Exists?

The lesson page I read includes the exchange "Can you take the train?" — *Tareen ma laha*, "there is no train". From general knowledge, Somalia has no working passenger railway, while Djibouti has a rail link to Ethiopia. So *tareen* is mostly a word for travel elsewhere. Check current official travel advice before planning any journey in the region.

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source on how transport Somali differs in Somaliland or Djibouti, so no words are marked. Dialog place names (Beledweyne, Hargeisa) are examples only.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 travel words. Nouns are shown with their "the" ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**gaadiidka**	*gaa-DEED-kah*	the transport	noun (m)
2	**baska**	*BAHS-kah*	the bus	noun (m)
3	**tagsiga**	*TAHG-si-gah*	the taxi	noun (m)

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
4	**tareenka**	*tah-REEN-kah*	the train	noun (m)
5	**diyaaradda**	*di-YAA-rahd-dah*	the aeroplane	noun (f)
6	**gaariga**	*GAA-ri-gah*	the car	noun (m)
7	**markabka**	*MAHR-kahb-kah*	the ship	noun (m)
8	**baaskiilka**	*baas-KEEL-kah*	the bicycle	noun (m)
9	**waddada**	*wahd-DAH-dah*	the road	noun (f)
10	**tikidhka**	*TI-kidh-kah*	the ticket	noun (m)
11	**garoonka diyaaradaha**	*gah-ROON-kah di-yaa-rah-DAH-hah*	the airport	noun (m)
12	**shufeerka**	*shoo-FEER-kah*	the driver	noun (m)
13	**duuliyaha**	*DOO-li-yah-hah*	the pilot	noun (m)
14	**raac**	*raac*	to ride, travel on	verb
15	**noqo**	*NO-qo*	to return; to become	verb
16	**sug**	*soog*	to wait	verb
17	**dhoof**	*dhoof*	to depart, travel away	verb
18	**daah**	*daah*	to be late	verb
19	**degdeg**	*DEG-deg*	quick, express	adj
20	**dhib ma leh**	*dhib mah leh*	no problem	phrase

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask someone where they are going.

▼ Show answer

Halkee u socotaa?

2. Ask for one ticket, politely.

▼ Show answer

Hal tikidh, fadlan.

3. Ask when the bus leaves.

▼ Show answer

Goorma ayuu baxaa baska?

4. Say “there is no train”.

▼ Show answer

Tareen ma laha.

5. Say “we are waiting” (use *sug*).

▼ Show answer

Waan sugaynaa. (we are waiting) · **Waan sugnaa.** (we wait)

6. A friend's flight is late. Ask them to wait, and say it is no problem.

▼ Show answer

Fadlan sug. Dhib ma leh.

🎓 Course Complete — Koorsada waa dhammaatay

You have finished Somali Basic Conversation 1. Here is what you can now do.

CHAPTER	YOU CAN NOW …
1 Greetings & Goodbyes	greet at different times, ask how someone is, thank, apologise and say goodbye
2 Introducing Yourself	give and ask names, say what you are, introduce a friend
3 Numbers, Age & Contacts	count to 100, say your age and swap phone numbers
4 Where You're From	say where you come from and which languages you speak
5 Your Family	talk about relatives and say what you have
6 Your Job	say what you do, where you work and what you want to be
7 Days, Dates & Time	name days and months and tell the Somali hour
8 At the Café	order food and drink and ask for the bill
9 Shopping & Prices	ask prices, ask for a discount and pay
10 Directions	ask where places are and follow simple directions
11 Hotel	ask for a room, check in and report a problem
12 Getting Around	ask about transport, buy a ticket and cope with a delay

Before You Go Further

Throughout this course much of the Somali, and all the respellings and stress marks, came from general knowledge or from learner websites rather than a textbook or dictionary. Before building on it, **have a Somali speaker listen to you and read through the chapters**, and take their version over this one. The next course is **Somali Basic Conversation 2**. A grammar course, Somali Grammar 1, will explain the patterns you have been using as ready-made phrases.

Not Yet Verified

Checked (read 2026-11-25): from Harvard's transport lesson (read as a model-extracted summary, not the page's full text): *bas, tareen, diyaarad, gaari, markab, baaskiil, waddo*, dialog 1 and most of dialog 2, *Tareen ma laha, shufeer* and *duuliye*. From Preply and Ling: *Xaggee baan ka*

heli karaa gaadiidka?, the taxi-fare question and the route question. From a Preply time page: *Goormaa … dhoofayaa?*

Not checked, from general knowledge: the ticket word and ticket dialog, *Goorma ayuu baxaa …?*, the whole delay dialog, the airport phrase, the three-verb table, the railway note, the recap, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Harvard ELIAS, Transport and communications; Preply, Somali travel phrases; Ling, Somali phrases; Preply, Telling the time in Somali.