SO

SOMALI LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 · Chapter 2 · Introducing Yourself

Somali Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 2 · Introducing Yourself

🤦 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*

abc 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.