SO

SOMALI LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 · Chapter 3 · Numbers & Contacts

🔢 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?

④ Say That Again — Ku celi

A:

Raali ahow, ma fahmin. Fadlan ku celi.

lahm-bahr-KAA-gah teh-leh-FOHN-kah waa mah-XAY?
What is your phone number?

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.

raa-LEE ah-HOW, mah FAH-min. fahd-LAHN koo CEH-lee.
Sorry, I didn't understand. Please repeat.

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.

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.

Queen Street, number ten.

🔑 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*

WHO	JIR (BE AGED)	SHEEG (TELL)	QOR (WRITE)
you: *waxaad*	**jirtaa** *jir-TAA*	**sheegtaa** *sheeg-TAA*	**qortaa** *qor-TAA*
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)
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 …").