SO

SOMALI LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 · Chapter 4 · Where You're 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.