SO

SOMALI LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 · Chapter 6 · 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

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.

④ I'm a Student — Arday baan ahay

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:

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!

Waa shaqo fiican!

waa SHAH-qo fee-CHAAN!

That's a good job!

nah-SEEB wah-CAHN!

Good luck!

🔑 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
19	**hawlgab**	*HOWL-gahb*	retired	adj

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
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.