

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #1

Welcome to Finland!

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#1

DIALOGUE - FINNISH

MAIN

1. Helen : Päivää, minä olen Helen.
2. Liisa : Hyvää päivää ja tervetuloa! Minä olen Liisa. Hauska tutustua.
3. Helen : Hauska tutustua.

ENGLISH

1. Helen : Hello, I'm Helen.
2. Liisa : Hello, and welcome! I'm Liisa. Nice to meet you.
3. Helen : Nice to meet you.

VOCABULARY

Finnish	English	Class
minä	I	pronoun
ja	and	conjunction
tutustua	to meet, to get to know	verb
tervetuloa	welcome	noun
olla	to be	verb
hauska	pleasant, fun	adjective
päivä	day	noun
hyvä	good	adjective

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Minä olen opiskelija. "I'm a student."	Yksi valkoviini ja kaksi olutta, kiitos. "One white wine and two beers, please."
Näkemiin, oli hauska tutustua. "Goodbye, it was nice to meet you."	Tervetuloa kotiini! "Welcome to my home!"
Tervetuloa kotiin! "Welcome home!"	He ovat ystäviäni. "They are my friends."

Onko sinulla siskoa?	Hän on hauska mies.
"Do you have a sister?"	"He is a funny man."
Mikä päivä tänään on?	Se on huhtikuun 15. (viidestoista) päivä.
"What day is it today?"	"It's April 15th."
Hauskaa päivää!	Tämä on hyvä!
"Have a nice day!"	"This is good!"
Tämä on oikein hyvä.	
"This is very good."	

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Hyvää päivää ("Hello")

Hyvää päivää is a phrase that consists of the word *hyvä*, meaning "good," and the word *päivä*, which means "day." In this expression, they are inflected for case, but you can ignore that for now. We will look at the case later. *Hyvä* has pretty much the same meaning as "good" in English. It can be the opposite of evil, or good as in good taste. This greeting is somewhat formal, and it can be used pretty much most of the day, from around 11 am or noon until about 6 or 7 pm. Other time-related greetings include *Hyvää huomenta*, or "good morning," which you can use until noon, and *Hyvää iltaa*, or "good evening," which you use after around 6 pm.

All of these are used when you meet people, not when you part ways. When you part ways, you can say *Näkemiin* in formal situations, or *Nähdään*, or *Hei hei*, or *Heippa*, or *Moikka* in casual situations. When you part ways in order to go to sleep, you say *Hyvää yötä*.

You can omit *hyvää* from all these greetings with only a slight change in the politeness level. If *hyvää* is omitted from *Hyvää yötä*, the word *yötä* is often changed to the plural form: *Öitä*.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of this Lesson is Introducing Yourself

Minä olen Helen

"I am Helen"

You can use this expression to tell someone your name when you meet for the first time. You can also use it to express other things about yourself, such as your profession or your psychological/physiological state (happy, tired, surprised, etc.) This is one of the key phrases you need when you want to say something about yourself.

Formation

The pattern of this expression is:

Minä olen A.

Minä is the first person singular pronoun, equivalent to "I." *Olen* is the first person singular form of the verb *olla*, "to be." We will talk more about verb conjugation in the next lesson. *A* is replaced by whatever you want to say about yourself, i.e. your name, profession, and so on.

Sample Sentences

1. *Minä olen Sari Lehtinen.*
"I am Sari Lehtinen."
2. *Minä olen opettaja.*
"I am a teacher."
3. *Minä olen iloinen.*
"I am happy."

Examples from this Dialogue

1. *Minä olen Helen.*
"I am Helen."
2. *Minä olen Liisa.*
"I am Liisa."

Note: this construction can be used to express some psychological and physiological states, but not all of them. For example, you will need a different construction to say you are hot or cold. We will get to those later.

Saying "Nice to meet you"

Saying "Nice to meet you" is a polite addition to introducing yourself. It is *Hauska tutustua* in Finnish. It literally means "nice to get to know." Just like in English, it is not a full sentence. There is only the adjective *hauska* "nice" and the infinitive verb *tutustua* "to get to know." You can also say *Hauska tavata*, which is literally "nice to meet."

About the "Declension stem" Column in the Vocabulary Table

As you may (or may not) know, few Finnish words always appear exactly the same when they are used in different sentences. Verbs, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and numerals all take various endings. The word stem to which these endings are attached is not always the same as the infinitive (in case of verbs) or nominative (in case of the other word classes) form of the word, so you'll need to know the stem in order to attach the endings correctly. You do not need to worry about that in this lesson, but we will start gradually looking into that in the next few lessons, so it might be good to get used to the idea. We will provide the stems of new words as they come up.

Finnish Writing System

Finnish is written with the Roman alphabet, which makes it more accessible to those who speak European languages in general. However, the Finnish alphabet has three more vowels than, for example, the English one - *ä*, *ä* and *ö*.

Consonants

The **k** sound (like "c" as in *cat*) - is always pronounced /k/

Example: *kissa* ("cat")

The **j** sound (like "j" as in *yes*) - is pronounced /j/

Example: *järvi* ("lake")

The **ng** sound (like "ng" as in *kengät*) - is usually replacing the consonant pair nk, like in *kenkä* ("shoe").

Example: *kengät*, *langat* ("shoes," "threads")

Vowels

The **å** is read as "Swedish o," or *ruotsalainen O* in Finnish. It appears in Swedish names in Finland, like *Åbo* or *Åland* and it's pronounced /o:/.

The **ä** sound (like "a" as in "cat") - is always pronounced /æ/.

Example: *äiti*, *ääni* ("mother," "voice/sound")

The **ö** sound (like "i" in "bird") - is pronounced /ø:/.

Example: *pöllö*, *löytää* ("owl," "to find").

Finnish vowels are pronounced a little differently than the English ones.

A is pronounced like the vowel in the English word "car". It can be found in the Finnish word *auto*.

E is pronounced like the vowel in the English word English. "they". It can be found in the Finnish word *hei*.

I is pronounced like the vowel in the English word "me" or It can be found in the Finnish word *kiitos*.

O is pronounced like the vowel in the English word "boats". It can be found in the Finnish words *orava* (squirrel) and *koulu* (school).

U is pronounced like the vowel in the English word "you" with the diphthong *ou*. In Finnish, it can be found in *tuuli* or *tuli*.

Y is pronounced a little bit like the vowel in the English word "you". It can be found in the Finnish words *kyllä* or *yö*.

Another speciality of the Finnish language is the double vowel and double consonant phenomenon. These just become long sounds, and it is really important to notice the doubles because the meaning of the word changes often if one vowel/consonant is left out.

For example, *kuka* is "who" and *kukka* is "flower." *Tuli* is "fire" and *tuuli* is "wind."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Finnish Introductions

Introducing yourself to a Finn is a rather straightforward process. Usually, you just need to say the appropriate greeting for the time of day, tell them your name using the *Minä olen A* phrase, and shake hands. Saying *Hauska tutustua* is a nice bonus, but not compulsory. In a business setting and other formal situations, a handshake is the way to go. In more casual situations, people may hug each other or have no physical contact at all. Hugging has become more common only in recent decades, and it is still something that is mainly done among relatives and good friends. It is also considered a somewhat feminine thing to do—men may hug women, but they do not really hug each other unless they have just scored a goal in an important match. A handshake, on the contrary, is rather formal, so it is not very common among friends, certainly not among young friends. Young people usually do not shake hands with each other.