

CHAPTER 1 - SOMALI SOUNDS AND SPELLING

THE SOMALI ALPHABET

LETTER	NAME	NOTES
a	alif	
aa	aa	
b	ba'	Can be double
c	ca	
d	da'	Can be double
dh	dha'	Can be double; often changes to r
e	e'	
ee	ee	
f	fa'	
g	ga'	Can be double
h	ha'	
i	i'	
ii	ii	
j	ja'	
k	ka'	Can never be final
kh	kha'	
l	la'	Can be double
m	ma'	Can be double; can never be final
n	na'	Can be double
o	o'	
oo	oo	
q	qa'	
r	ra'	Can be double
s	sa'	
sh	sha'	
t	ta'	Can never be final
u	u'	
uu	uu	
w	wa'	
x	xa'	
y	ya'	
'	hamsa	Can never be word initial

NOTE: Native Somali words *never* use **p**, **v**, or **z**.
For a linguistic description of these sounds see SRG: 13-23.

NOTE TO THE STUDENT. You don't have to memorize these words, but you should know how to pronounce them. Most will come up later, and you can learn them in context at that time.

Exercise 1: VOWEL SOUNDS.

af	mouth, language
far	finger; script
ama	or [conjunction]
aabi	offense, provocation
abaar	drought
baa	FOCUS marker
edeb	manners, behavior
bey	she [+ FOCUS]
fure	key
eeg	look (at/out)
meel	place
kee	which? [masculine]
in	that [relative conjunction]
ilig	tooth
yimi	he came
iigu	to me
siin	to give
kii	the one
og	knowing, aware [ADJ]
boqol	hundred
soco	walk, proceed
oon	be thirsty
soo	this way, hither [DEICTIC]
doon	will [future]; want; look for
ul	stick, piece of wood
guri	house
dumar	womankind
uun	just, only
buug	book
carruur	children

buu

he [+ FOCUS]

Exercise 2: LONG VERSUS SHORT VOWELS. Items in parentheses are grammatical indicators which will be explained in later chapters.

afaf	(ka)	languages	
afaaf	(ka)	entrance	
dad	(ka)	people	
daad	(ka)	flood	
gaadh	(-ay)	reach	
gadh	(ka)	beard; chin	
sac	(a)	cow	
saac	(a)	hour	
beri	(ga)	day, time period	
beerii		a garden [SUBJECT]	
soke	(da)	near, close	
sokee		be on the near side	
jidh	(ka)	body	
jiidh	(-ay)	run over	
jir	(-ay)	exist	Alt: jidh
jiir	(-ay)	run over	Alt: jiidh
qor	(-ay)	write	
qoor	(ta)	neck	
xor	(ta)	free	
xoor	(ta)	foam	
ful	(-ay)	be satisfied	
fuul	(-ay)	climb (up/on)	
guri	(ga)	house	
guuri	(-yey)	marry (off)	

Exercise 3: CONSONANT SOUNDS.

bas	bus
laba	two
aabbe	father
Abriil	April
barbar	side
hilib	meat
cun	eat
magacaa	your name
cuncun	itch
sac	cow
dab	fire
badan	very; much, many
hadda	now, at once
dad	people
dhul	ground, earth, land
hudheel	hotel
fadhdi	Stay put! (= continue to sit)
badh	half
fur	open
afar	four
Afrika	Africa
laf	bone
geel	camel [collective]
adiga	you [singular]
xaggee	where?, which way?
adag	hard, difficult
hal	one; she-camel
ahay	I am
shaah	tea
jir	be there; stay
gaajo	hunger, need

xaj

pilgrimage to Mecca

kan	this (masculine)
dukaan	shop, store
marka	when (conjunction)
kirkir	cut/slash with blunt knife
Not final -- it changes to -g	(arag = *arak; cf: arkay <i>I saw</i>)
khamri	liquor, alcohol
dhakhtar	doctor
wasakh	garbage, trash
libaax	lion
dilay	he killed (X)
Alla	God
isla	as soon as [conjunction]
bil	month; moon
ma	not [NEGATIVE]; QUESTION marker
iman	to come
immisa	how much?, how many?
dambe	behind; late, last
Not final -- it changes to -n	(nin = *nim; cf: niman <i>men</i>)
naag	woman
ani	me
cunno	food
dindin	seep, leak
niman	men
qof	person
aqal	house
waqti	time
suuq	market
run	truth
arag	see
berri	tomorrow
Maarso	March
bar	teach

saan	leather; footstep
cusub	new
isku	together
naas	breast
shilin	shilling
bisha	the month
hoosh	robbery, kidnapping
shaash	woman's headscarf
tag	go
socoto	traveller
Oktoobar	October
maanta	today
tartan	competition
Not final	
wiil	boy, son
daawo	medicine
ahow	Be! [IMPERATIVE]
xoolo	livestock, wealth
baxo	not go out
Axmed	Ahmed [name]
lix	six
yahay	he is
ayaa	FOCUS marker
yaryar	bits, small ones
hooy	hey!
Hamsa <i>never</i> occurs at the beginning of a word	
lo'	cattle
lo'aad	of cattle [GENITIVE PLURAL]
gam'i	cause to fall asleep

Exercise 4: SOUND [ʔ] GLOTTAL STOP OR HAMZA

ba'	(-ay)	get ruined
da'	(-ay)	rain, pour down
go'	(-ay)	be cut, detached
la'		lacking
lo'	(da)	cattle
ri'	(da)	female goat
ba'an		ruined, spoiled, wrong [Adj]
baaba'ay		wiped out, got eliminated
bi'i	(-yey)	ruin, wipe out, spoil
da'ay		rained, poured down
go'an		cut, ruptured; decided
Israa'iil		Israel
jaraa'id	(ka)	journals, newspaper
la'aa		one who lacked
la'aan	(ta)	lacking, being without
la'aantood		without them
le'eg		equal, amounting to
masaa'ib	(ka)	calamities, catastrophies
su'aal	(/sha)	question
go'doon	(/may)	be isolated
la'yahay		he is without
lo'da		the cattle [NP]
gam'i	(-yey)	cause to fall asleep
mas'uuliyad	(da)	responsibility

Exercise 5: LONG vs SHORT CONSONANTS

abaar	(ta)	draught	
abbaar	(-ay)	aim at, face, confront	
beri	(ga)	day	
berri	(da)	tomorrow	
cadow	(ga)	enemy	
caddow	(caddaaday)	become white	
cadho	(da)	anger	Alt: caro
cadhdho	(da)	scabies	
Carab	(ka)	Arab	
carrab	(ka)	tongue	
caro	(da)	anger	
carro	(da)	dirt, soil	
gabal	(ka)	portion, part	
gabbal	(ka)	daylight	
galay		I/he entered	
gallay	(da)	maize, corn	
hore		first	
horree	(-yey)	precede	
salaan	(ta)	greeting	
sallaan	(ka)	ladder	
sideed		how ... you?	
sidded	(da)	eight [8]	
waran	(ka)	spear	
warran	(warramay)	inform, tell news	
xabad	(ka)	chest	
xabbad	(da)	bullet	

Exercise 6: SOUND [c] VOICED PHARYNGEAL FRICATIVE

caano	(/ha)	milk
cab	(-bey)	drink
cad	(ka)	white
cambe	(/ha)	mango
can	(ka)	cheek
cantuug	(-ay)	take a mouthful
casho	(/da)	dinner
cawo	(/da)	night
ceeb	(ta)	shame
ceel	(ka)	well
ciil	(ka)	grief
cilmi	(ga)	education
ciso	(/da)	respect
cod	(ka)	voice
col	(ka)	enemy
cun	(-ay)	eat
baaad	(ka)	sand
bocor	(ta)	squash
cadceed	(da)	sun
saacad	(da)	hour; watch
sacab	(ka)	applause
soco	(socday)	go, proceed
beec	(a)	price; sale
bucbuc	(a)	chubby (of a child)
jirac	(a)	ant with painful bite
kac	(-ay)	get up, rise
laac	(-ay)	reach out (for)
liic	(-ay)	lean
nac	(-ay)	hate
nacnac	(a)	candy
nanac	(a)	candy
nooc	(a)	type, kind, sort
sac	(a)	cow

shamac (a) candle

Exercise 7: SOUND [dh] POST-ALVEOLAR RETROFLEX STOP

dhal	(/sha)	child, offspring
dhac	(-ay)	fall down; happen
dhalaali	(-yey)	polish; melt
dhammaan	(ta)	all, entire
dhammee	(-yey)	finish, end
dhar	(ka)	cloth; clothes
dhaxal	(ka)	inheritance
dhintay	(dhimo)	he died
dhir	(ta)	plants
dhis	(-ay)	build
dhoof	(-ay)	travel
dhowr	(ka)	several
dhul	(ka)	land, ground, country
dhuuban		slim, thin
dhuun	(ta)	throat
qadhaadh	(ka)	bitter tasting
cadho	(/da)	anger
cidhiidhi	(ga)	narrow
cidhif	(ta)	edge
dhadhan	(ka)	taste
dhudhun	(ka)	forearm
hadhuudh	(ka)	maize
midho	(/ha)	seed, fruit
xadhig	(ga)	rope
ballaadh	(ka)	width, breadth
gaadh	(-ay)	reach
gabadh	(dha)	girl
gadh	(ka)	beard; chin
hadh	(ka)	shadow
jadh	(-ay)	chop
jidh	(ka)	body
jiidh	(-ay)	run over
miridh	(mirdhay)	get rusty

shaadh	(ka)	shirt
xidh	(-ay)	tie, close

Exercise 8: SOUND [kh] VOICELESS VELAR OR UVULAR
FRICATIVE

khad	(da)	ink
khal	(ka)	vinegar
khalaas	(ka)	finished, gone
khamaar	(-ay)	gamble
khamiis	(ka)	long robe
Khamiis	(ta)	Thursday
khamri	(ga)	liquor
kharaar	(ka)	bitter
khasaaro	(/ha)	loss
khatal	(-ay)	cheat, deceive
khatar	(ta)	danger
kheer	(ka)	goodness
khilaaf	(ka)	discord
khiyaali	(ga)	illusion
khoori	(ga)	canal
khudaar	(ta)	fruits and vegetables
akhri	(-yey)	read
akhtiyaar	(ka)	free will
dakhli	(ga)	income
dhakhtar	(ka)	doctor
khalkhal	(-ay)	become senile or confused
khumkhum	(ka)	type of incense
makhaayad	(da)	restaurant
sakhraan	(ka)	drunk
dhabbaakh	(a)	cook (male)
Obokh		city in Djebuuti
malaakh	(a)	chief
shiiikh	(a)	sheikh, man of religion
taariikh	(da)	history
takh	(-ay)	boil
tookh	(-ay)	brag, boast
wasakh	(da)	garbage, trash

Exercise 9: SOUND [q] VOICELESS UVULAR STOP

qaad	(-ay)	take (away), pick up, lift
qaan	(ta)	debt
qab	(-ay)	have, own, possess
qabow	(ga)	cold
qalin	(ka)	pen
qiime	(/ha)	price, value
qof	(ka)	person
qor	(-ay)	write
qosol	(-ay)	laugh
qurux	(da)	beauty
aqal	(ka)	house
boqol	(ka)	hundred
caaqil	(ka)	intelligent
daqiiqad	(da)	minute
doqon	(ka)	stupid
maqal	(maqlay)	listen, hear
maqan		absent
maqaar	(ka)	skin
noqo	(noqday)	return, go back
yaqaan		he knows
aqbal	(-ay)	accept
baqdin	(ta)	fear
barqo	(/da)	late morning
bilqan		spread across
dawaqsan		confused, dizzy
faqri	(ga)	poor, destitute
maqlay		I heard
Muqdisho		Mogadishu (capital city of Somalia)
baq	(-ay)	fear
daaq	(-ay)	graze
dariiq	(a)	street, road
duq	(a)	old person
fooq	(a)	story
laq	(-ay)	swallow
luuq	(a)	alley

muuq	(a)	appearance
naq	(-ay)	arbitrate

Exercise 10: SOUND [r] VOICED ALVEOLAR TRILL OR ROLL

raaji	(-yey)	postpone, delay	
rag	(ga)	men, mankind	
rah	(a)	frog	
ri'	(da)	female goat	
riyo	(/da)	dream	
roon		better, excellent	
run	(ta)	truth	
bare	(/ha)	teacher	
caro	(/da)	anger	Alt: cadho
cirif	(ta)	edge	Alt: cidhif
ciriiri	(ga)	narrow	Alt: cidhiidhi
faras	(ka)	horse	
fure	(/ha)	key	
geri	(ga)	giraffe	
haruur	(ka)	sorghum	Alt: hadhuudh
kari	(-yey)	cook [v1=]	
mirir	(-ay)	rust	Alt: miridh
miro	(/ha)	grain	Alt: midho
qaraar	(ka)	bitter taste	Alt: qadhaadh
xarig	(ga)	rope	Alt: xadhig
kursi	(ga)	chair	
marmar		sometimes	
afar	(ta)	four	
ballaar	(ka)	width	Alt: ballaadh
fur	(-ay)	open	Alt: fudh
gaar	(-ay)	reach	Alt: gaadh
gabar	(ta)	girl	Alt: gabadh
har	(-ay)	stay behind	Alt: hadh
jar	(-ay)	chop	Alt: jadh
jir	(-ay)	exist	Alt: jidh
jiir	(-ay)	run over	Alt: jiidh
qar	(ka)	cliff	Alt: qadh
qor	(-ay)	write	
qoor	(ta)	neck	Alt: qoodh
shaar	(ka)	shirt	Alt: shaadh

xir
yar

(-ay)
(ka)

close, tie
small

Alt: xidh

Exercise 11: SOUND [x] VOICELESS PHARYNGEAL
FRICATIVE

xaad	(da)	body hair
xaal	(ka)	matter, affair
xaar	(ka)	excrement
xaas	(ka)	family; wife
xad	(ka)	limit, boundary
xaday		he stole (it)
xanuun	(ka)	pain, ache
xidid	(ka)	vein, root
xiis	(-ay)	long for, miss
xilli	(ga)	season, time of year
xir	(-ay)	close, tie, shut, imprison
xoolo	(/ha)	animal (domestic)
xoor	(ta)	foam
xor		free
xun	(ka)	bad
xurriyad	(da)	freedom
xushmad	(da)	respect
raxmad	(da)	kindness
xiidxiito	(/da)	plover bird
xodxodo	(xodxotay)	woo, court
baxay		he went out
saxan	(ka)	plate
waxa		the thing that [FOCUS MARKER]
lax	(da)	ewe
libaax	(a)	lion
madax	(a)	head
malax	(da)	pus
sax	(-ay)	correct, check
wax	(a)	thing

Exercise 12: TONE PAIRS. [See SRG: 20-23, 124, 130-131.]

árdey	student	[n5-m-sg]
ardéy	students	[n5-f-pl]
àwr	male camel	[n5-m-sg]
áwr	male camels	[n5-f-pl]
bèer	liver	[n4-m-sg]
béer	farm, garden	[n1-f-sg]
damèer	male donkey	[n1-m-sg]
daméer	female donkey	[n1-f-sg]
díbi	ox, bull	[n5-m-sg]
dibí	oxen	[n5-f-pl]
èy	dog	[n5-m-sg]
éy	dogs	[n5-f-pl]
gèes	horn	[n2-m]
geés	side, direction	[n0-f]
ínan	boy	[n2-m]
inán	girl	[n2-f]
islàan	old man	[n2-m]
isláan	old woman	[n1-f]
khamiis	long robe	[n2-m]
Khamiis	Thursday	[n1-f]
órgi	billy goat	[n5-m-sg]
orgí	billy goats	[n5-f-pl]
Soomáali	a Somali	[n5-m-sg]
Soomaalí	Somalis	[n5-f-pl]
yèy	wolf	[n5-m-sg]
yéy	wolves	[n5-f-pl]

Exercise 13: ADDITIONAL STUDY.

In preparation for this course, familiarize yourself with the major grammatical categories in Somali. Please browse through the Table of Contents and read the following pages in SRG: 20-23, 124, 130-131.

Exercise 14: LISTENING TO SOMALI INTONATION.

If possible, locate a tape recording of actual speech in Somali. Listen very carefully to the intonation contours that the speakers use.

CHAPTER 2 - BASIC STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

DIALOG 1: SOME BASIC GREETINGS AND EXPRESSIONS.

Ma nabad **baa**? Is it peace? [a greeting]
Waa nabad. It is peace. [in answer]

Maxaad sheegtey? Lit: What did you tell?
[greeting] = How are you?
Waa nabad. It is peace. [in answer]

Iska warran? How are you?
[Lit: Tell about yourself.]

Waan ladnahay. I am well. /or/
Waan nabad qabaa. I have peace
(= I'm doing well).

Adiguse? And you? /or/
Adigu sideed tahay? How are you?
Waan fiicanahay. I'm fine.

Soomaaliya ku soo Welcome to Somalia!
dhowoow!
Mahadsanid. Thank you.

=====
=====

GRAMMATICAL NOTES.

The three most important grammatical markers come up in this lesson:

Ma marks POSITIVE (non-negative) QUESTIONS [see SRG: 5, 207f, 219-221]

Baa marks FOCUS (new or emphasized information) [see Chapters 12 and 23; SRG: 5, 6, 62-64, 205f].

Waa marks positive (non-negative) DECLARATIVE STATEMENTS [see Chapter 12; SRG: 5, 23, 69-73, 207].

Note the WORD ORDER: **baa** comes *after the head noun*, whereas **waa** comes *before the head noun*.

The pronoun **adigu** is the SUBJECT (-u) FORM of **adiga**, and **waan** is the DECLARATIVE FORM of **aniga**. Because the usage of

pronouns in Somali is complex, we will not treat them in detail prior to Chapter 8. However, we can here get a quick glimpse of how the forms are interrelated. See SRG: 4, 110, 161-164.

<u>PRONOUNS</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>WAA FORM</u>	<u>MEANING</u>
aniga	anigu	waan	I
adiga	adigu	waad	you [sg]
isaga	isagu	wuu	he
iyada	iyadu	wey	she
annaga	annagu	waannu	we [exclusive]
innaga	innagu	weynu	we [inclusive]
idinka	idinku	weydin	you [plural]
iyaga	iyagu	wey	they

DIALOG 2: GREETINGS FOR THE TIME OF DAY.

Subax wanaagsan.	Good morning.
Maalin wanaagsan.	Good day.
Galab wanaagsan.	Good afternoon.
Habeen wanaagsan.	Good night.

The above are Europeanized greetings. The more traditional greetings are:

MORNING GREETING

Nabad ma ku barideen?	Have you [plural] had a peaceful night?
Nabad ma ku baridey?	Have you [singular] had ...
Waa nabad.	Yes.

MORNING OR EVENING GREETING

Bariido wanaagsan.	Have a good night.
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NIGHTTIME GREETING

Nabad ku bari! Be in peace for the night!

Nabad ku barya! [addressed to group = plural]

Exercise 1: DECLARATIVE STATEMENTS WITH WAA.

Waa	buug.	It is a	book.
	laabbis		pencil.
	koob.		cup.
	sac.		cow.
	libaax.		lion.
	Khamiis.		Thursday.
	Faarax.		Farah [name].
	guri.		house.
	suuq.		market.
	shimbir.		bird.

Exercise 2: QUESTIONS WITH MA ... BAA.

Ma	buug	baa?	Is it a	book?
	laabbis			pencil?
	koob			cup?
	sac			cow?
	libaax			lion?
	Khamiis			Thursday?
	Faarax			Farah? [name]
	guri			house?
	suuq			market?
	shimbir			bird?

Exercise 3: QUESTION AND DECLARATIVE ANSWER.

Use the vocabulary above in the following pattern:

Ma	buug	baa?	Waa	buug.
—	laabbis	—?	—	laabbis.

Exercise 4: FURTHER DRILLS ON WAA:

Isagu waa	macallin.	He is a	teacher.
	dhakhtar.		doctor.
	karraani.		clerk.
	dhabbaakh.		cook.
	askari.		soldier.

Iyadu waa	macallimad.	She is a	teacher.
	dhakhtarad.		doctor.
	karraaniyad.		clerk.
	dhabbaakhad.		cook.
	askariyad.		soldier.

Exercise 5: QUESTION AND ANSWER DRILLS.

Isagu ma _____ baa?
Isagu waa _____.

Iyadu ma _____ baa?
Iyadu waa _____.

Exercise 6: MAKING DESCRIPTIVE STATEMENTS.

Ruush waa waddan weyn.	Russia is a big country.
Mareykan	America
Shiina	China
Awstraaliya	Australia
Braasiil	Brazil
Keeniya waa waddan yar.	Kenya is a small country.
Sacuudi Carabiya Saudi Arabia	
Beljiyam	Belgium
Kuwait	Kuwait

Soomaaliya

Somalia

Exercise 7: QUESTION AND ANSWER.

Listen carefully to your teacher and try to answer correctly based on the sense of the question.

Soomaaliya ma waddan weyn baa? Maya, ma aha.	Is Somalia a big country? No, it is not.
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Soomaaliya ma waddan yar baa? Haa, waa waddan yar.	Is Somalia a small country? Yes, it is a small country.
--	--

Exercise 8: EXPANDED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Maanta ma Talaada baa? Haa, waa Talaada.	Is today Tuesday? Yes, it is Tuesday.
---	--

Iyadu ma Mareykan baa? Haa, waa Mareykan.	Is she American? Yes, she is American.
--	---

Iyadu ma macallimad baa? Haa, waa macallimad.	Is she a teacher? Yes, she is a teacher.
--	---

Isagu ma dhakhtar baa? Haa, waa dhakhtar.	Is he a doctor? Yes, he is a doctor.
--	---

Isagu ma macallin baa? Haa, waa macallin.	Is he a teacher? Yes, he is a teacher.
--	---

Isagu ma askari baa? Haa, waa askari.	Is he a soldier? Yes, he is a soldier
--	--

Isagu ma injineer baa? Haa, waa injineer.	Is he an engineer? Yes, he is an engineer.
--	---

Ma qabow baa? Is it cold? Haa, waa qabow.	Yes, it is cold.
--	------------------

Ma kulayl baa? Is it hot?

Haa, waa kulayl.

Yes, it is hot.

Exercise 9: DICTATION.

Write these sentences on a separate sheet of paper.

We'll start with some useful phrases in this context!

Ma ku celin kartaa?

Mar labaad dheh!

Mar kale dheh!

Could you repeat it?

Say it a second time!

Say it another time!

Iska warran?

Waan nabad qabaa.

Waan fiicanahay.

How are you?

I'm fine.

I'm well.

Saaybeeriya waa meel qabow.

Aasiya waa qaarad weyn.

Siberia is a cold place.

Asia is a large continent.

Exercise 10: TRANSLATION AND VOCABULARY REVIEW.

Study the lesson. Afterwards, write down the meaning of the following words:

buug

laabbis

guri

suuq

meel

wanaagsan

weyn

yar

kulayl

qabow

maanta

subax

maalin

galab

haa

maya

mahadsanid

nabad

dhakhtar

dhakhtarad

macallin

macallimad

askari

askariyad

karraani

waddan

Aasiya

Mareykan

Soomaaliya

Ruush

Shiina

Sacuudi Carabiya

adigu

isagu

libaax

sac

iyadu

shimbir

CHAPTER 3 - SOMALI NAMES AND NATURAL GENDER

DIALOG 1: ASKING ONE'S NAME.

Magacaa?	[What's] your name?
Magacaygu waa Yuusuf.	My name is Joseph.
Magacaa?	[What's] your name?
Magacaygu waa Cabdi.	My name is Abdi.
Cabdi ayo?	Abdi what?
Cabdi Faarax.	Abdi Farah.
Cabdi, barasho wanaagsan.	Abdi, good to know you.
Barasho wanaagsan.	Good to get acquainted.

=====
=====

GRAMMAR NOTE.

In this chapter the masculine noun **magac** *name* has the POSSESSIVE PRONOUN suffixes **-ay(ga)** *my*, **-aa(ga)** *your*, **-iis(a)** *his*, and **-eed(a)** *her* attached. Some complicated changes take place with these forms, so they will not be taken up in detail until Chapter 13, after you have mastered GENDER (Chapter 4) and SOUND CHANGES AFFECTING NOUNS (Chapters 5 & 6).

The suffix **-u** is used to mark the SUBJECT on forms like **magacaygu** *my name*, **magaciisu** *his name* and **magaceedu** *her name*, as it did on **adigu** on page 17.

CULTURAL NOTE

Somali NAMES consist of one's own name followed by that of one's father and one's grandfather. Thus, **Cabdullaahi Axmed Ciisa** means *Abdullahi* who is the *son of Ahmed* and the *grandson of Issa*. His son might in turn be named **Guuleed Cabdullaahi Axmed**, i.e., *Victor* who is the *son of Abdullahi* and the *grandson of Ahmed*.

Somalis also greet by shaking hands, but some may maintain physical contact much longer than an American would be used to. So, in certain areas of the

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country, a brief handshake might be considered unfriendly.

Exercise 1: ROLE PLAY.

The teacher will ask you your name, introducing the Somali handshake as well.

Magacaa?
Magacaygu waa _____.

[What's] your name?
My name is...

Subax wanaagsan.
Subax wanaagsan.

Good morning.
Good morning. [or another
appropriate time]

_____, barasho wanaagsan.
Barasho wanaagsan.

_____, good to know you.
Good to be acquainted.

Ma nabad baa? How are you?
Waa nabad.

Fine.

=====
=====

DIALOG 2: ASKING A MAN'S NAME.

Magaciis?
Magaciisu waa Yuusuf.
Yuusuf, maxaad Lit: Joseph, what did you
sheegtey?
Waa nabad.

[What's] his name?
His name is Joseph.
tell? = how are you?
Lit: It is peace. = Fine.

Exercise 2a: USING MEN'S NAMES.

Magaciis?
Magaciisu waa _____.

[What's] his name?
His name is _____.

Substitute the MEN'S NAMES on the following page in the above dialog:

Aadan	Adam
Axmed	Ahmed
Cabdalle	Abdalla
Cabdiraxmaan	Abdirahman
Cabdullaahi	Abdullahi
Cali	Ali
Cawad	Awad
Cilmi	Ilmi
Cusmaan	Osman, Ottoman
Daahir	Dahir
Daauid	David
Diiriye	Diriye
Faarax	Farah
Guuleed	Victor
Ibraahim	Abraham
Ismaaciil	Ishmail
Jamaal	Jamal
Jimcaale	Jimale
Liibaan	Liban
Makaahiil	Michael
Maxamed	Mohammed
Nuur	Nur
Rooble	Roble
Saalim	Salem
Saciid	Saeed
Saleebaan	Solomon
Sugulle	Sugule
Suleymaan	Solomon
Suufi	Sufi
Warsame	Warsame
Xaashi	Hashi
Xassan	Hassan
Xuseen	Huseen
Yuusuf	Joseph

Exercise 2b: FURTHER USE OF MASCULINE NAMES.

Ninka magaciis? What is the man's name?

[Lit: The man - his name?]

Ninka magaciisu waa

The man's name is

Yuusuf

Joseph.

Aadan

Adam

Cumar

Omar

Maxamuud

Mahmud

Cabdi

Abdi

Guuleed

Victor

____, barasho wanaagsan.

____, good to know you.

Barasho wanaagsan.

Good to know you.

DIALOG 3: ASKING A WOMAN'S NAME.

Magaceed?

[What's] her name?

Magaceedu waa Xaliimo.

Her name is Halima.

Xaliimo ayo?

Halima what? (lit: who?)

Xaliimo Maxamed.

Halima Mohammed.

Xaliimo, ma nabad baa?

Halima, how are you?

Waa nabad.

Fine.

CULTURAL NOTE.

Even a girl uses her father's name after her own, not her mother's. Furthermore, she will continue to use her father's name after marriage, i.e., she does not assume her husband's name or family name.

Exercise 3a: USING WOMEN'S NAMES.

Magaceed?

[What's] her name?

Magaceedu waa _____.

Her name is _____.

Substitute the WOMEN'S NAMES on the following page in the dialog or frame

above:

Asli	Asli
Caasha	Asha
Canab	Anab
Deeqa	Deka
Farxiya	Farhia
Fatxiya	Fathia
Fowsiya	Fowzia
Hodan	Hodan
Indhadeeq	Indadek
Jamiilo	Jamila
Jawaahir	Jawahir
Khadra	Khadra
Leyla	Leila
Luul	Lul
Maryan	Mary
Muuna	Mona
Raxma	Rahma
Rooda	Rhoda
Ruqiya	Rukia
Ruun	Run
Sacdiya	Sadia
Saciida	Saeeda
Sahra	Sarah
Salaado	Salada
Salma	Salma
Samsam	Zamzam
Siraad	Sirad
Xaawo	Eve
Xaliimo	Halima
Xusniya	Husnia

Exercise 3b: FURTHER USE OF FEMININE NAMES.

Naagta magaceed?	What is the woman's name?
Naagta magaceedu waa Asli.	The woman's name is Asli.
Xaawo	Eve
Leyla	Leila
Caasha	Asha
Maryan	Mary

_____, barasho wanaagsan.
Barasho wanaagsan.

_____, good to know you.
Good to know you.

Exercise 4: CONVERSATION PRACTICE.

Do the following conversation. Afterwards, talk to your teacher and classmates using similar phrases:

Maxaad sheegtey?	Lit: What did you tell? [greeting] = How are you?
Nabad. Ma nabad baa?	Lit: Peace. Is it peace? = Fine. How are you?
Nabad. Magaciis?	Fine. What is his name?
Magaciisu waa _____.	His name is _____.
_____, maxaad sheegtey?	_____, how are you?
Nabad.	Fine.
Ma nabad baa? How are you?	
Nabad, Alxamdulilah.	Fine, thanks to God.

Exercise 5: TRANSLATION PRACTICE.

Translate the following dialog segments:

Ma nabad baa?
Nabad.

Magacaa?
Magacaygu waa Yuusuf.

Yuusuf ayo?
Yuusuf Cumar.

Magaceed?
Magaceedu waa Maryan.

Maryan ayo?

Maryam Cilmi.

Exercise 6: DICTATION PRACTICE.

Write down the sentences which your teacher will dictate to you. Do not worry about the meaning of some of the new words for the present. These are basic words and structures which you will get to know as this course progresses.

Naagtan magaceedu waa Xaliimo.	This woman's name is Halima.
Waa Cabdi naagtiis.	She is Abdi's wife.
Iyada iyo Cabdi wey isqabaan.	She and Abdi are married. [Lit: they have each other]
Yuusuf iyo Cabdi maanta bey isbardeen. each other today.	Joseph and Abdi got to know
Yuusuf waa Xaliimo walaalkeed.	Joseph is Halima's brother.

Exercise 7: FREE CONVERSATION.

Engage your teacher and/or classmate(s) in a dialog using expressions you have learned in this and the previous two chapters. Write some of these in the space below.

Exercise 8: VOCABULARY DRILL.

Translate the following words into Somali.

good

peace

know

name

my name

your name

his name

her name

tell

man

woman

who?

CHAPTER 4
SOMALI NOUNS AND GRAMMATICAL GENDER

PATTERN 1: MASCULINE OR K-CLASS NOUNS.

dhakhtar	a doctor
dhakhtar ka .	the doctor.
Dhakhtar kii mee? Where is the doctor?	
Dhakhtarkii waa kan .	The doctor is here.

telefoon	a telephone
telefoon ka .	the telephone.
Telefoon kii mee? Where is the telephone?	
Telefoonkii waa kaa .	The telephone is there.

macallin	a teacher
macallin ka .	the teacher.
Macallin kii meeyey?	Where is the teacher?
Macallinkii waa kaas .	The teacher is there.

nin	a man
nin ka .	the man.
Nin kii mee?	Where is the man?
Ninkii waa keer .	The man is there (not far).

GRAMMATICAL NOTE.

All of the above are MASCULINE NOUNS which take a suffix beginning with **-k**. The standard form (one which you will generally find in a dictionary) is **-ka** *the*, which is used to mark NEW INFORMATION or something just being introduced in a conversation. Once something has been introduced or if it is generally known, the suffix is **-kii**, as in the examples.

Matching these definite article suffixes are DEMONSTRATIVE forms:

-kan	this
-kaa or -kaas	that (not far away)
-keer	that (far away)

Meeyey means *where is (he/it)?* and can only be used with masculine nouns, whereas **mee** *where is?* has no gender meaning at all and can be used with any noun. See SRG: 153-154; 224.

Pay attention to the changes going on between these two types of nouns. Although this has traditionally been called GENDER (which is split between MASCULINE and FEMININE), it may be more helpful to think of CLASSES OF NOUNS (one being a **k-CLASS** and the other a **t-CLASS**). The Somali language breaks up the universe into two groups (which might be compared to the Chinese split between Yin and Yang or the Pacific Islander and Australian Aboriginal concept of two moieties). In Somali, gender has a far reaching grammatical impact on such patterns as plural forms and verb agreement.

Each Somali noun has the following characteristics:

GENDER - MASCULINE (k-marked) or FEMININE (t-marked) taken up in this and the next two chapters.

NUMBER - SINGULAR or PLURAL (the most common plural endings are **-o** or **-yo**, discussed in Chapter 18; but other endings are taken up in Chapter 29).

DECLENSION - the way a noun is changed or inflected based on what kind of **PLURAL FORM** it has (as well as its gender and tone in the singular); altogether there are *eight noun declensions* in Somali.

This means that you will ultimately have to learn four forms for each noun. For example, **nin man** is a **Declension 4 noun** with the following forms:

(1) Singular root	nin	(a) man	
(2) with article		nin-ka	the man
(3) Plural form		niman	(some) men
(4) with article		niman-ka	the men

In Lesson Three we studied NAMES, which follow NATURAL GENDER. That is, a man's name is MASCULINE and a woman's name is FEMININE. Many Somali nouns are like names and follow a meaningful pattern:

aabbe	(/ha)	father	masculine
hooyo	(/da)	mother	feminine
nin	(ka)	man	masculine
wiil	(ka)	boy	masculine
gabadh	(dha)	girl	feminine

Some words that are spelled the same in their ROOT FORM are distinguished by DIFFERENT GENDER ENDINGS and/or TONE [see SRG: 20-23, 124]:

ey	(ga)	dog [male/gen.]	masculine
ey	(da)	bitch; dogs [pl]	feminine
inan	(ka)	boy	masculine
inan	(ta)	girl	feminine
walaal	(ka)	brother	masculine
walaal	(/sha)	sister	feminine

However, Somali is a language based on GRAMMATICAL GENDER. That is, the way a noun is handled does not always make sense. It is simply a means of marking words.

beri	(ga)	day	masculine
maalin	(ta)	day	feminine
magaalo	(/da)	town, city	feminine
beled	(ka)	town, settlement	masculine
jid	(ka)	road, path	masculine
daw	(ga)	path, way	masculine
dariiq	(a)	road, street	masculine
waddo	(/da)	road, avenue	feminine
dumar	(ka)	womenkind	masculine
hablo	(/ha)	girls	masculine
bas	(ka)	bus	masculine
dayuurad	(da)	airplane	feminine
subax	(da)	morning	feminine
habeen	(ka)	night	masculine
lacag	(ta)	money	feminine
shilin	(ka)	shilling	masculine
kol	(ka)	time, instance	masculine

goor

(ta)

time, occurrence

feminine

Sometimes gender is used to keep words that would otherwise be identical (HOMONYMS) distinct:

hal	(/sha)	female camel	feminine
hal	(ka)	one [numeral]	masculine
waa	[it] is	DECLARATIVE	CLASSIFIER
waa	(ga)	time, era	masculine

For the present, we will focus our attention on basic SINGULAR FORMS that have **-k** or **-t** articles, and deal with complexities in later chapters.

Exercise 1: MASCULINE NOUNS - NO CHANGE.

Add **-ka** to the words you learned in earlier lessons:

dhakhtar	doctor	dhakhtarka
habeen	night	habeenka
injineer	engineer	injineerka
koob	cup	koobka
laabbis	pencil	laabbiska
macallin	teacher	macallinka
Mareykan	America	Mareykanka
nin	man	ninka
waddan	country	waddanka
walaal	brother	walaalka

Exercise 2: OTHER MASCULINE NOUNS - NO CHANGE.

Add **-ka** to these new vocabulary items:

af	mouth; language	afka
bas	bus	baska
dab	fire	dabka
dad	people	dadka
dukaan	shop, store	dukaanka
hiblib	meat	hiblibka
nambar	number	nambarka
roob	rain	roobka
saaxiib	friend	saaxiibka

wiil

boy

wiilka

Exercise 3: FEMININE NOUNS - NO CHANGE.

Add: **-ta** to the words you learned in earlier lessons:

galab	afternoon	galabta
Khamiis	Thursday	Khamiista
maalin	day	maalinta
naag	woman, wife	naagta
shimbir	bird	shimbirta

Exercise 4: OTHER FEMININE NOUNS - NO CHANGE.

Add **-ta** to these new vocabulary items:

abaar	drought, famine	abaarta
carruur	children	carruurta
dhib	trouble, problem	dhibta
goor	time, occasion	goorta
lacag	money	lacagta
run	truth	runta

Exercise 5: PATTERN PRACTICE [MASCULINE NOUNS].

Hilib	(kii)	baan arkay.	I saw some / (the)	meat.
Dhakhtar	(kii)	baan arkay.	I saw a / (the)	doctor.
Macallin	(kii)			teacher.
Nin	(kii)			man.
Wiil	(kii)			boy.
Inan	(kii)			boy.
Telefoon	(kii)			telephone.
Laabbis	(kii)			pencil.
Dab	(kii)			fire.
Dukaan	(kii)			shop.

Note: **baan** is the result of FUSION of **baa** (the FOCUS word discussed in Chapter 2)

and the PRONOUN **aan** *I*.

Exercise 6: PATTERN PRACTICE [FEMININE NOUNS].

Lacag	(tii)	baan arkay.	I saw some / (the)	money.
Carruur	(tii)			children.
Naag	(tii)		I saw a / (the)	woman.
Shimbir	(tii)			bird.
Gabar	(tii)			girl.
Inan	(tii)			girl.

Exercise 7: TRANSLATION PRACTICE.

Translate the following sentences:

Injineerkii meeyey?

Injineerkii waa kan.

Runtii baan arkay.

Telefoonkii mee?

Telefoonkii waa kaas.

Exercise 8: TRANSCRIPTION PRACTICE.

Write down what your teacher says to you.

Khamiistii baan arkay.

I saw (it) on the Thursday.

Galabtii baan arkay.

I saw (it) in the afternoon.

Xafiiskan magaciisu
waa "M.R.M."

The name of this office
is "M.R.M."

Exercise 9: VOCABULARY REVIEW.

Fill in the blanks; please keep the answers on the right side of the page covered until you are done.

naag ()	_____		[ta - woman]
_____ (ta)	children		[carruur]
_____ (ka)	doctor		[dhakhtar]
dukaan (ka)	_____		[shop, store]
_____ ()	money		[lacag - ta]
habeen ()	_____		[ka - night]
laabbis (ka)	_____		[pencil]
_____ (ta)	day		[maalin]
walaal (ka)	_____		[brother]
_____ (ka)	language		[af]
hibil ()	_____		[ka - meat]
_____ (ka)	country		[waddan]
macallin ()	_____		[ka - teacher]
_____ (ka)	friend		[saaxiib]
dab ()	_____		[ka - fire]

CHAPTER 5 - CHANGES AFFECTING MASCULINE NOUNS

PATTERN: DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE EXPRESSIONS.

Note how the final vowel in the following root words changes to match the vowel of the suffix:

Q: Kani waa maxay?

What is this?

A1: Kani waa **buste**.

This is a blanket.

[indefinite]

A2: Waa **bustaha** cusub.

It is the new blanket.

[new information / some topic being introduced]

or the answer could be:

A3: Waa **bustihii**. It is the blanket.

[previously known or discussed / given information]

Repeat the following examples, noting all the changes that occur:

Kani waa _____. Waa _____ cusub.

fure	a key	furaha	the new key
buug	a book	buugga	the new book
taksi	a taxi	taksiga	the new taxi
guri	a house	guriga	the new house
daw	a road	dawga	the new road
suuq	a market	suuqa	the new market

Waa maxay?	Waa _____.	Waa maxay?	Waa _____.
fure	a key	furihii	the key
buug	a book	buuggii	the book
taksi	a taxi	taksigii	the taxi
guri	a house	gurigii	the house
daw	a road	dawgii	the road
suuq	a market	suuqii	the market

Note that there is a distinction between DEFINITE (with an article) and INDEFINITE

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(without an article) equivalent to the English articles *the* versus *a*.

Remember that there are two kinds of DEFINITE INFORMATION: **new** (just being introduced in a conversation) which is marked by **-a**; and **given** (known by the speakers or already discussed) which is marked by **-ii**. All changes described for the ARTICLES **-ka** and **-kii** in this chapter will also apply to the DEMONSTRATIVES **-kan** *this*, **-kaas** *that*, etc. Review these forms in Chapter 4.

Exercise 1: CHANGE OF -E TO -A AND OF -KA TO -HA.

With masculine nouns that end in a vowel, the **k-** ending changes to **-h-**, and the vowel will match that of the suffix. So, for nouns that end in **-e**, change the final vowel of the root to **-a** and change the masculine ending **-ka** to **-ha**:

dukaanle	shopkeeper	dukaanlaha
hilible	butcher	hiliblahaha
madaxweyne	president	madaxweynaha
aabbe	father	aabbaha
bare	teacher	baraha
buste	blanket	bustaha
fure	key	furaha
jaalle	comrade	jaallaha

Exercise 2: CHANGE OF -E TO -I AND OF -KA TO -HII.

With masculine nouns that end in a vowel, the **k-** ending changes to **-h-**, and the vowel will match that of the suffix. So, for nouns that end in **-e**, change the final vowel of the root to **-i** and change the masculine ending **-ka** to **-hii**:

dukaanle	shopkeeper	dukaanlihii
hilible	butcher	hiliblihii
madaxweyne	president	madaxweynihii
aabbe	father	aabbihii
bare	teacher	barihii
buste	blanket	bustihii
fure	key	furihii
jaalle	comrade	jaallihii

Exercise 3: CHANGE OF -O TO -A AND OF -KA TO -HA.

Following the rule described in Exercise 1 above, add the masculine suffix to these nouns ending in -o:

biyo	water	biyaha
ilmo	child, baby	ilmaha
xoolo	livestock	xoolaha
fardo	horses	fardaha
gacmo	hands	gacmaha
hablo	girls	hablaha

Exercise 4: CHANGE OF -O TO -I AND OF -HA TO -HII.

Following the rule described in Exercise 2 above, add the masculine suffix to these nouns ending in -o:

biyo	water	biyihii
ilmo	child, baby	ilmihii
xoolo	livestock	xoolihii
fardo	horses	fardihii
gacmo	hands	gacmihii
hablo	girls	hablihii

Exercise 5: CHANGE OF -KA TO -GA.

If a masculine noun ends in -g, -w, -y, or -i, the **k** will change to a **g**:

buug	book	buugga
ilig	tooth	iligga
rag	men [COL]	ragga
daw	way, road	dawga
ey	dog	eyga
oday	old man	odayga
askari	soldier	askariga
beri	day	beriga
guri	house	guriga
karraani	clerk	karraaniga
Soomaali	Somali man	Soomaaliga

CHANGES AFFECTING MASCULINE NOUNS

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taksi

taxi

taksiga

Exercise 6: CHANGE OF **-GA** TO **-GII**.

buug	book	buuggii
ilig	tooth	iliggii
rag	men [COL]	raggii
daw	way, road	dawgii
ey	dog	eygii
oday	old man	odaygii
askari	soldier	askarigii
beri	day	berigii
dibi	bull, ox	dibigii
guri	house	gurigii
karraani	clerk	karraanigii
Soomaali	Somali man	Soomaaligii
taksi	taxi	taksigii

Exercise 7: CHANGE OF **-KA** TO **-A**.

If a masculine noun ends in the consonant **-c**, **-h**, **-q**, **-kh**, or **-x**, the **k** is lost, leaving only the vowel **-a**:

dhinac	side, direction	dhinaca
magac	name	magaca
sac	cow	saca
rah	frog	raha
shaah	tea	shaaha
dhabbaakh	cook	dhabbaakha
shiiikh	religious official	shiiikha
daaq	vegetation	daaqa
dariiq	road, street	dariiqa
suuq	market	suuqa
libaax	lion	libaaxa
madax	head	madaxa
wax	thing, matter	waxa

Exercise 8: CHANGE OF -A TO -II.

Under the same conditions outlined in Exercise 7, a final **-a** changes to **-ii**. A final SHORT **a** of the root may change to **i** to match this suffix. Note the alternate possibilities:

dhinac	dhinacii	dhinicii
magac	magacii	magicii
sac	sacii	sicii
rah	rahii	
shaah	shaahii	
dhabbaakh	dhabbaakhii	
shiikh	shiikhii	
daaq	daaqii	
dariiq	dariiqii	
suuq	suuqii	
libaax	libaaxii	
madax	madaxii	madixii
wax	waxii	wixii

Exercise 9: PATTERN PRACTICE.

Repeat after your teacher:

Kani waa **bare**. This is a teacher.

Isagu waa **baraha** cusub. He is the new teacher.

Use the following in the above pattern:

askari	a soldier
askariga cusub	the new recruit
dhabbaakh	a cook
dhabbaakha cusub	the new cook
dukaanle	a shopkeeper
dukaanlaha cusub	the new shopkeeper

karraani
karraaniga cusub

a clerk
the new clerk

Exercise 10: ANSWERS WITH DEFINITE INFORMATION.

Repeat after your teacher:

Waa ayo? Who is it?
 Waa dukaanlihii. It is the shopkeeper.

Your teacher will read the first (indefinite) form, substitute the second (definite) form in a sentence.

hilible	a butcher
hiliblihii	the butcher
madaxweyne	a president
madaxweynihii	the president
aabbe	father
aabbihii	the father
jaalle	comrade
jaallihii	the comrade

Exercise 11: EXPANDED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Repeat after your teacher:

Waa maxay?	What is it?
Waa buste.	It is a blanket.
Waa bustihii.	It is the blanket.

Use the following in the above pattern:

fure	a key
furihii	the key
biyo	water
biyihii	the water
xoolo	livestock
xoolihii	the livestock
fardo	horses
fardihii	the horses
hablo	girls
hablihii	the girls

Exercise 12: TRANSLATION.

Translate the following sentences into English:

Kani waa fure guri.

Waa biyo.

Kani waa bustaha cusub.

Isagu waa bare wanaagsan.

Isagu waa madaxweynihii.

Exercise 13: TRANSCRIPTION PRACTICE.

Repeat the following after your teacher, then write them down in Somali without looking at the text. Some words are used here which you have not learned before in order to test your ability to hear and write down Somali correctly.

Fure ma haysaa? Do you have a key?

Furaha guriga baan hayaa. I have the house key.

Buug ma haysaa? Do you have a book?

Buugga af Soomaaliga baan hayaa. I have the Somali book.

Aabbe meeyey? Where is Father?

Aabbe wuu baxay. Father went out.

Exercise 14: VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR REVIEW.

Translate the following into Somali:

INDEFINITE	DEFINITE NEW	DEFINITE KNOWN
a key	the (new) key	the key
a teacher	the (new) teacher	the teacher
a number	the (new) number	the number
a man	the (new) man	the man
some rain	the (new) rain	the rain
a boy	the (new) boy	the boy
a soldier	the (new) recruit	the soldier
some water	the (new) water	the water
a thing	the (new) thing	the thing
a language	the (new) language	the language

Exercise 15. IDENTIFICATION.

Translate the following into English; identify both the ROOT WORD and the SUFFIXES:

magacan	magacaas	magicii
buuggii	buuggan	buuggaas
suuqan	suuqaas	suuqii
gurigaas	gurigii	gurigan
macallinkii	macallinkan	macallinkaas
barahan	barahaas	barihii
dhakhtarkaas	dhakhtarkii	dhakhtarkan
madaxweynahan	madaxweynahaas	madaxweynihii
dawgaas	dawgii	dawgan
biyihii	biyahan	biyahaas
sicii	sacan	sacaas
libaaxaas	libaaxii	libaaxan
dibigii	dibigan	dibigaas
xoolahan	xoolahaas	xoolihii
telefoonkan	telefoonkii	telefoonkaas