

= Swedish language =

Swedish (svenska [² sv?n?ska]) is a North Germanic language , spoken natively by about 9 million people predominantly in Sweden and parts of Finland , where it has equal legal standing with Finnish . It is largely mutually intelligible with Norwegian and Danish (see the section " Classification ") . Along with the other North Germanic languages , Swedish is a descendant of Old Norse , the common language of the Germanic peoples living in Scandinavia during the Viking Era . It is currently the largest of the North Germanic languages by number of speakers .

Standard Swedish , spoken by most Swedes , is the national language that evolved from the Central Swedish dialects in the 19th century and was well established by the beginning of the 20th century . While distinct regional varieties descended from the older rural dialects still exist , the spoken and written language is uniform and standardized .

The standard word order is , as in most Germanic languages , V2 , which means that the finite verb appears in second position of a declarative main clause . Swedish morphology is similar to English ; that is , words have comparatively few inflections . There are two genders , no grammatical cases , and a distinction between plural and singular . Older analyses posit the cases nominative and genitive and there are some remains of distinct accusative and dative forms as well . Adjectives are compared as in English , and are also inflected according to gender , number and definiteness . The definiteness of nouns is marked primarily through suffixes (endings) , complemented with separate definite and indefinite articles . The prosody features both stress and in most dialects tonal qualities . The language has a comparatively large vowel inventory . Swedish is also notable for the voiceless dorso @-@ palatal velar fricative , a highly variable consonant phoneme .

= = Classification = =

Swedish is an Indo @-@ European language belonging to the North Germanic branch of the Germanic languages . In the established classification , it belongs to the East Scandinavian languages together with Danish , separating it from the West Scandinavian languages , consisting of Faroese , Icelandic and Norwegian . However , more recent analyses divide the North Germanic languages into two groups : Insular Scandinavian (Faroese and Icelandic) , and Continental Scandinavian (Danish , Norwegian , and Swedish) , based on mutual intelligibility due to heavy influence of East Scandinavian (particularly Danish) on Norwegian during the last millennium and divergence from both Faroese and Icelandic .

By many general criteria of mutual intelligibility , the Continental Scandinavian languages could very well be considered dialects of a common Scandinavian language . However , because of several hundred years of sometimes quite intense rivalry between Denmark and Sweden , including a long series of wars from the 16th to 18th centuries , and the nationalist ideas that emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries , the languages have separate orthographies , dictionaries , grammars , and regulatory bodies . Danish , Norwegian , and Swedish are thus from a linguistic perspective more accurately described as a dialect continuum of Scandinavian (North Germanic) , and some of the dialects , such as those on the border between Norway and Sweden , especially parts of Bohuslän , Dalsland , western Värmland , western Dalarna , Härjedalen , Jämtland and Scania , could be described as intermediate dialects of the national standard languages .

= = History = =

= = = Old Norse = = =

In the 8th century , the common Germanic language of Scandinavia , Proto @-@ Norse , had undergone some changes and evolved into Old Norse . This language began to undergo new changes that did not spread to all of Scandinavia , which resulted in the appearance of two similar dialects , Old West Norse (Norway and Iceland) and Old East Norse (Denmark and Sweden) .

The dialects of Old East Norse that were spoken in Sweden are called Runic Swedish while the dialects of Denmark are referred to as Runic Danish . The dialects are described as " runic " because the main body of text appears in the runic alphabet . Unlike Proto @-@ Norse , which was written with the Elder Futhark alphabet , Old Norse was written with the Younger Futhark alphabet , which had only 16 letters . Because the number of runes was limited , some runes were used for a range of phonemes , such as the rune for the vowel u which was also used for the vowels o , ø and y , and the rune for i which was also used for e .

From 1200 onwards , the dialects in Denmark began to diverge from those of Sweden . The innovations spread unevenly from Denmark which created a series of minor dialectal boundaries , or isoglosses , ranging from Zealand in the south to Norrland , Österbotten and northwestern Finland in the north .

An early change that separated Runic Danish from the other dialects of Old East Norse was the change of the diphthong æi to the monophthong é , as in stæinn to sténn " stone " . This is reflected in runic inscriptions where the older read stain and the later stin . There was also a change of au as in dauðr into a long open ø as in døðr " dead " . This change is shown in runic inscriptions as a change from tauþr into tuþr . Moreover , the øy diphthong changed into a long , close ø , as in the Old Norse word for " island " . By the end of the period , these innovations had affected most of the Runic Swedish @-@ speaking area as well , with the exception of the dialects spoken north and east of Mälardalen where the diphthongs still exist in remote areas .

= = = Old Swedish = = =

Old Swedish (fornsvenska) is the term used for the medieval Swedish language . The start date is usually set to 1225 since this is the year that Västgötalagen (" the Västgöta Law ") is believed to have been compiled for the first time . It is among the most important documents of the period written in Latin script and the oldest Swedish law codes . Old Swedish is divided into äldre fornsvenska (1225 ? 1375) and yngre fornsvenska (1375 ? 1526) , " older " and " younger " Old Swedish . Important outside influences during this time came with the firm establishment of the Christian church and various monastic orders , introducing many Greek and Latin loanwords . With the rise of Hanseatic power in the late 13th and early 14th century , Middle Low German became very influential . The Hanseatic league provided Swedish commerce and administration with a large number of Low German @-@ speaking immigrants . Many became quite influential members of Swedish medieval society , and brought terms from their native languages into the vocabulary . Besides a great number of loanwords for such areas as warfare , trade and administration , general grammatical suffixes and even conjunctions were imported . The League also brought a certain measure of influence from Danish (at the time much more similar than today 's language) .

Early Old Swedish was markedly different from the modern language in that it had a more complex case structure and yet retained the original Germanic three @-@ gender system . Nouns , adjectives , pronouns and certain numerals were inflected in four cases ; besides the extant nominative , there were also the genitive (later possessive) , dative and accusative . The gender system resembled that of modern German , having masculine , feminine and neuter genders . The masculine and feminine genders were later merged into a common gender with the definite suffix -en and the definite article den , in contrast with the neuter gender equivalents -et and det . The verb system was also more complex : it included subjunctive and imperative moods and verbs were conjugated according to person as well as number . By the 16th century , the case and gender systems of the colloquial spoken language and the profane literature had been largely reduced to the two cases and two genders of modern Swedish .

A transitional change of the Latin script in the Nordic countries was to spell the letter combination " ae " as æ ? and sometimes as a ' ? though it varied between persons and regions . The combination " ao " was similarly rendered ao , and " oe " became oe . These three were later to evolve into the separate letters ä , å and ö . The first time the new letters were used in print was in Aff dyäffwlsens frästilse (" By the Devil 's temptation ") published by Johan Gerson in 1495 .

= = = Modern Swedish = = =

Modern Swedish (Swedish : nysvenska) begins with the advent of the printing press and the European Reformation . After assuming power , the new monarch Gustav Vasa ordered a Swedish translation of the Bible . The New Testament was published in 1526 , followed by a full Bible translation in 1541 , usually referred to as the Gustav Vasa Bible , a translation deemed so successful and influential that , with revisions incorporated in successive editions , it remained the most common Bible translation until 1917 . The main translators were Laurentius Andreæ and the brothers Laurentius and Olaus Petri .

The Vasa Bible is often considered to be a reasonable compromise between old and new ; while not adhering to the colloquial spoken language of its day , it was not overly conservative in its use of archaic forms . It was a major step towards a more consistent Swedish orthography . It established the use of the vowels " å " , " ä " , and " ö " , and the spelling " ck " in place of " kk " , distinguishing it clearly from the Danish Bible , perhaps intentionally , given the ongoing rivalry between the countries . All three translators came from central Sweden which is generally seen as adding specific Central Swedish features to the new Bible .

Though it might seem as if the Bible translation set a very powerful precedent for orthographic standards , spelling actually became more inconsistent during the remainder of the century . It was not until the 17th century that spelling began to be discussed , around the time when the first grammars were written . The spelling debate raged on until the early 19th century , and it was not until the latter half of the 19th century that the orthography reached generally acknowledged standards .

Capitalization during this time was not standardized . It depended on the authors and their background . Those influenced by German capitalized all nouns , while others capitalized more sparsely . It is also not always apparent which letters are capitalized owing to the Gothic or blackletter typeface which was used to print the Bible . This typeface was in use until the mid @-@ 18th century , when it was gradually replaced with a Latin typeface (often antiqua) .

Some important changes in sound during the Modern Swedish period were the gradual assimilation of several different consonant clusters into the fricative [ʃ] and later into [ʃ] . There was also the gradual softening of [ʃ] and [k] into [j] and the fricative [ʃ] before front vowels . The velar fricative [ʁ] was also transformed into the corresponding plosive [ʁ] .

= = = Contemporary Swedish = = =

The period that includes Swedish as it is spoken today is termed nusvenska (lit . " Now @-@ Swedish ") in linguistic terminology and started in the last decades of the 19th century . The period saw a democratization of the language with a less formal written form that came closer to the spoken one . The growth of a public schooling system also led to the evolution of so @-@ called boksvenska (literally " book Swedish ") , especially among the working classes , where spelling to some extent influenced pronunciation , particularly in official contexts . With the industrialization and urbanization of Sweden well under way by the last decades of the 19th century , a new breed of authors made their mark on Swedish literature . Many scholars , politicians and other public figures had a great influence on the new national language that was emerging , and among them were prolific authors like the poet Gustaf Fröding , Nobel laureate Selma Lagerlöf , and radical writer and playwright August Strindberg .

It was during the 20th century that a common , standardized national language became available to all Swedes . The orthography was finally stabilized , and was almost completely uniform , with the exception of some minor deviations , by the time of the spelling reform of 1906 . With the exception of plural forms of verbs and a slightly different syntax , particularly in the written language , the language was the same as the Swedish of today . The plural verb forms appeared decreasingly in formal writing into the 1950s , when their use was removed from all official recommendations .

A very significant change in Swedish occurred in the late 1960s , with the so @-@ called du @-@ reformen , " the you @-@ reform " . Previously , the proper way to address people of the same or

higher social status had been by title and surname . The use of herr (" Mr " or " Sir ") , fru (" Mrs " or " Ma 'am ") or fröken (" Miss ") was considered the only acceptable mode of initiating conversation with strangers of unknown occupation , academic title or military rank . The fact that the listener should preferably be referred to in the third person tended to further complicate spoken communication between members of society . In the early 20th century , an unsuccessful attempt was made to replace the insistence on titles with ni (the standard second person plural pronoun) , analogous to the French Vous . (Cf . T @-@ V distinction .) Ni (plural second person pronoun) wound up being used as a slightly less familiar form of du (singular second person pronoun) used to address people of lower social status . With the liberalization and radicalization of Swedish society in the 1950s and 1960s , these previously significant distinctions of class became less important , and du became the standard , even in formal and official contexts . Though the reform was not an act of any centralized political decrees , but rather a sweeping change in social attitudes , it was completed in just a few years from the late 1960s to early 1970s . The use of ni as a polite form of address is occasionally encountered today in both the written and spoken language , particularly among younger speakers .

= = = Former language minorities = = =

From the 13th to 20th century , there were Swedish @-@ speaking communities in Estonia , particularly on the islands (e.g. , Hiiumaa , Vormsi , Ruhnu ; in Swedish , known as Dagö , Ormsö , Runö , respectively) along the coast of the Baltic , communities which today have all but disappeared . The Swedish @-@ speaking minority was represented in parliament , and entitled to use their native language in parliamentary debates . After the loss of Estonia to the Russian Empire in the early 18th century , around 1 @,@ 000 Estonian Swedish speakers were forced to march to southern Ukraine , where they founded a village , Gammalsvenskby (" Old Swedish Village ") . A few elderly people in the village still speak Swedish and observe the holidays of the Swedish calendar , although the dialect is most likely facing extinction .

From 1918 ? 1940 , when Estonia was independent , the small Swedish community was well treated . Municipalities with a Swedish majority , mainly found along the coast , used Swedish as the administrative language and Swedish @-@ Estonian culture saw an upswing . However , most Swedish @-@ speaking people fled to Sweden before the end of World War II , that is , before the invasion of Estonia by the Soviet army in 1944 . Only a handful of older speakers remain .

= = Geographic distribution = =

Swedish is the official national language of both Sweden and Finland (in Finland besides Finnish language who is the biggest official language of Finland) . As of 2006 , it was the first or sole native language of 7 @.@ 5 to 8 million Swedish residents . In 2007 around 5 @.@ 5 % (c . 290 @,@ 000) of the population of Finland were native speakers of Swedish , though the percentage has been declining steadily since Finland became part of Russia after the Finnish War 1808 ? 1809 . The Finland Swedish minority is concentrated in the coastal areas and archipelagos of southern and western Finland . In some of these areas , Swedish is the predominant language ; in 19 municipalities , 16 of which are located in Åland , Swedish is the sole official language . Åland county is an autonomous region of Finland .

According to a rough estimation , as of 2010 there were up to 300 @,@ 000 Swedish @-@ speakers living outside Sweden and Finland . The largest populations were in the United States (up to 100 @,@ 000) , the UK , Spain and Germany (c . 30 @,@ 000 each) and a large proportion of the remaining 100 @,@ 000 in the Scandinavian countries , France , Switzerland , Belgium , the Netherlands , Canada and Australia . A considerable majority of Swedish residents born outside Sweden (c . 1 @.@ 5 million) speak Swedish and according to the ELDIA Project , there were c . 2 @,@ 390 @,@ 000 second @-@ language speakers in Finland . According to a survey by the European Commission , 44 % of respondents from Finland who did not have Swedish as a native language considered themselves to be proficient enough in Swedish to hold a conversation , for a

total of about 5 million second @-@ language speakers . The total number of native speakers could be up to 8 @.@ 6 million with an additional 4 ? 5 million second language speakers in Sweden and Finland . Due to the close relation between the Scandinavian languages , a considerable proportion of speakers of Danish and especially Norwegian are highly fluent in Swedish for a total number of speakers that could be as high as 15 million .

There is considerable migration between the Nordic countries , but owing to the similarity between the cultures and languages (with the exception of Finnish) , expatriates generally assimilate quickly and do not stand out as a group . According to the 2000 United States Census , some 67 @,@ 000 people over the age of five were reported as Swedish speakers , though without any information on the degree of language proficiency . Similarly , there were 16 @,@ 915 reported Swedish speakers in Canada from the 2001 census . Although there are no certain numbers , some 40 @,@ 000 Swedes are estimated to live in the London area in the United Kingdom . Outside Sweden and Finland , there are about 40 @,@ 000 active learners enrolled in Swedish language courses .

= = = Official status = = =

Swedish is officially the main language of Sweden . Swedish is also one of two official languages of Finland . In Sweden it has long been used in local and state government and most of the educational system but remained only a de facto primary language with no official status in law until 2009 . A bill was proposed in 2005 that would have made Swedish an official language but failed to pass by the narrowest possible margin (145 ? 147) due to a pairing @-@ off failure . A proposal for a broader language law , designating Swedish as the main language of the country and bolstering the status of the minority languages , was submitted by an expert committee to the Swedish Ministry of Culture in March 2008 . It was subsequently enacted by the Riksdag and entered into effect on 1 July 2009 .

Swedish is the sole official language of Åland (an autonomous province under the sovereignty of Finland) where the vast majority of the 26 @,@ 000 inhabitants speak Swedish as a first language . In Finland as a whole Swedish is one of the two " national " languages , with the same official status as Finnish (spoken by the majority) on the state level and an official language in some municipalities .

Swedish is one of the official languages of the European Union and one of the working languages of the Nordic Council . Under the Nordic Language Convention , citizens of the Nordic countries speaking Swedish have the opportunity to use their native language when interacting with official bodies in other Nordic countries without being liable to any interpretation or translation costs .

= = = Regulatory bodies = = =

The Swedish Language Council (Språkrådet) is the official regulator of Swedish in Sweden but does not attempt to enforce control of the language , as for instance the Académie française does for French . However , many organizations and agencies require the use of the council 's publication Svenska skrivregler in official contexts , with it otherwise being regarded as a de facto orthographic standard . Among the many organizations that make up the Swedish Language Council , the Swedish Academy (established 1786) is arguably the most influential . Its primary instruments are the glossary Svenska Akademiens ordlista (SAOL , currently in its 14th edition) and the dictionary Svenska Akademiens Ordbok , in addition to various books on grammar , spelling and manuals of style . Even though the dictionaries are sometimes used as official decrees of the language , their main purpose is to describe current usage .

In Finland a special branch of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland has official status as the regulatory body for Swedish in Finland . Among its highest priorities is to maintain intelligibility with the language spoken in Sweden . It has published Finlandssvensk ordbok , a dictionary about the differences between Swedish in Finland and Sweden .

= = Dialects = =

According to a traditional division of Swedish dialects , there are six main groups of dialects :

Norrland dialects

Finland Swedish

Svealand dialects

Gotland dialects

Götaland dialects

South Swedish dialects

The traditional definition of a Swedish dialect has been a local variant that has not been heavily influenced by the standard language and that can trace a separate development all the way back to Old Norse . Many of the genuine rural dialects , such as those of Orsa in Dalarna or Närpes in Österbotten , have very distinct phonetic and grammatical features , such as plural forms of verbs or archaic case inflections . These dialects can be near @-@ incomprehensible to a majority of Swedes , and most of their speakers are also fluent in Standard Swedish . The different dialects are often so localized that they are limited to individual parishes and are referred to by Swedish linguists as sockenmål (lit . " parish speech ") . They are generally separated into six major groups , with common characteristics of prosody , grammar and vocabulary . One or several examples from each group are given here . Though each example is intended to be also representative of the nearby dialects , the actual number of dialects is several hundred if each individual community is considered separately .

This type of classification , however , is based on a somewhat romanticized nationalist view of ethnicity and language . The idea that only rural variants of Swedish should be considered " genuine " is not generally accepted by modern scholars . No dialects , no matter how remote or obscure , remained unchanged or undisturbed by a minimum of influences from surrounding dialects or the standard language , especially not from the late 19th century onwards with the advent of mass media and advanced forms of transport . The differences are today more accurately described by a scale that runs from " standard language " to " rural dialect " where the speech even of the same person may vary from one extreme to the other depending on the situation . All Swedish dialects with the exception of the highly diverging forms of speech in Dalarna , Norrbotten and , to some extent , Gotland can be considered to be part of a common , mutually intelligible dialect continuum . This continuum may also include Norwegian and some Danish dialects .

The samples linked below have been taken from SweDia , a research project on Swedish modern dialects available for download (though with information in Swedish only) , with many more samples from 100 different dialects with recordings from four different speakers : older female , older male , younger female and younger male . The dialect groups are those traditionally used by dialectologists .

Överkalix , Norrbotten ; younger female

Burträsk , Västerbotten ; older female

Aspås , Jämtland ; younger female

Färila , Hälsingland ; older male

Älvdalen , Dalarna ; older female ; traditionally considered a dialect , but now often recognized as Elfdalian , a separate language

Gräsö , Uppland ; older male

Sorunda , Södermanland ; younger male

Köla , Värmland younger female

Viby , Närke ; older male

Sproge , Gotland ; younger female

Närpes , Ostrobothnia ; younger female

Dragsfjärd , Southwest Finland ; older male

Borgå , Eastern Uusimaa ; younger male

Orust , Bohuslän ; older male

Floby , Västergötland ; older female

Rimforsa , Östergötland ; older female

Årstad @-@ Heberg , Halland ; younger male
Stenberga , Småland ; younger female
Jämshög , Blekinge ; older female
Bara , Scania ; older male

= = = Standard Swedish = = =

Standard Swedish is the language used by virtually all Swedes and most Swedish @-@ speaking Finns . It is called rikssvenska or standardsvenska (" Standard Swedish ") in Sweden . In Finland högsvenska (" High Swedish ") is used for the Finnish variant of standard Swedish and rikssvenska refers to Swedish as spoken in Sweden in general . The word högsvenska is seldom used in Sweden .

There are many regional varieties of the standard language that are specific to geographical areas of varying size (regions , historical provinces , cities , towns , etc .) . In mass media it is no longer uncommon for journalists to speak with a distinct regional accent , but the most common pronunciation and the one perceived as the most formal is still Central Standard Swedish .

Though this terminology and its definitions have long been established among linguists , most Swedes are unaware of the distinction and its historical background , and often refer to the regional varieties as " dialects " . In a poll that was conducted in 2005 by the Swedish Retail Institute (Handelns Utredningsinstitut) , the attitudes of Swedes to the use of certain dialects by salesmen revealed that 54 % believed that rikssvenska was the variety they would prefer to hear when speaking with salesmen over the phone , even though several dialects such as gotländska or skånska were provided as alternatives in the poll .

= = = Finland Swedish = = =

Finland was a part of Sweden from the 13th century until the loss of the Finnish territories to Russia in 1809 . Swedish was the sole administrative language until 1902 as well as the dominant language of culture and education until Finnish independence in 1917 . The percentage of Swedish speakers in Finland has steadily decreased since then . The Swedish @-@ speaking population is mainly concentrated in the coastal areas of Ostrobothnia , Southwest Finland and Nyland where the percentage of Finland Swedes partly is high , with Swedish being spoken by more than 90 % of the population in several municipalities , and on Åland , where Swedish is spoken by a vast majority of the population and is the only official language . Swedish is an official language also in the rest of Finland , though , with the same official status as Finnish . The country 's public broadcaster , Yle , provides two Swedish @-@ language radio stations , Yle Radio Vega and Yle X3M , as well a TV channel , Yle Fem .

= = = Immigrant variants = = =

Rinkeby Swedish (after Rinkeby , a suburb of northern Stockholm with a large immigrant population) is a common name among linguists for varieties of Swedish spoken by young people of foreign heritage in certain suburbs and urban districts in the major cities of Stockholm , Gothenburg and Malmö . These varieties could alternatively be classified as sociolects , because the immigrant dialects share common traits independent of their geographical spread or the native country of the speakers . However , some studies have found distinctive features and led to terms such as Rosengård Swedish (after Rosengård in Malmö) , a variant of Scanian . A survey made by the Swedish linguist Ulla @-@ Britt Kotsinas showed that foreign learners had difficulties in guessing the origins of Rinkeby Swedish speakers in Stockholm . The greatest difficulty proved to be identifying the speech of a boy speaking Rinkeby Swedish whose parents were both Swedish ; only 1 @.@ 8 % guessed his native language correctly .

= = Phonology = =

Swedish dialects have either 17 or 18 vowel phonemes , 9 long and 9 short . As in the other Germanic languages , including English , most long vowels are phonetically paired with one of the short vowels , and the pairs are such that the two vowels are of similar quality , but with the short vowel being slightly lower and slightly centralized . In most dialects , the short vowel sound pronounced [ʔ] or [æ] has merged with the short / e / (transcribed ʔ ʔ ʔ in the chart below) .

There are 18 consonant phonemes , two of which , / ʔ / and / r / , vary considerably in pronunciation depending on the dialect and social status of the speaker . In many dialects , sequences of / r / with a dental consonant result in retroflex consonants . / r / has a guttural or " French @-@ R " pronunciation in the South Swedish dialects ; consequently , these dialects lack retroflex consonants .

In stressed syllables , there are two tones , which give Swedish much of its characteristic sound . Prosody is often one of the most noticeable differences between its dialects .

= = Vocabulary = =

The vocabulary of Swedish is mainly Germanic , either through common Germanic heritage or through loans from German , Middle Low German , and to some extent , English . Examples of Germanic words in Swedish are mus (" mouse ") , kung (" king ") , and gås (" goose ") . A significant part of the religious and scientific vocabulary is of Latin or Greek origin , often borrowed from French and , lately , English . Some 1 ʔ 200 words are also borrowed from Scandoromani or Romani , often as slang varieties ; a commonly used word from Romani is tjej (" girl ") .

A large number of French words were imported into Sweden around the 18th century . These words have been transcribed to the Swedish spelling system and are therefore pronounced recognizably to a French @-@ speaker . Most of them are distinguished by a " French accent " , characterized by emphasis on the last syllable . For example , nivå (fr. niveau , " level ") , fåtölj (fr. fauteuil , " armchair ") and affär (" shop ; affair ") , etc . Cross @-@ borrowing from other Germanic languages has also been common , at first from Middle Low German , the lingua franca of the Hanseatic league and later from standard German . Some compounds are translations of the elements (calques) of German original compounds into Swedish , like bomull from German Baumwolle (" cotton " , literally tree @-@ wool) .

As with many Germanic languages , new words can be formed by compounding , e.g. nouns like nagellackborttagningsmedel (" nail polish remover ") or verbs like smygfilma (" to film in secret ") . Similar to German or Dutch , very long , and quite impractical , examples like produktionsstyrningssystemprogramvaruuppdatering (" production controller system software update ") are possible , but it is seldom this ungainly , at least in spoken Swedish and outside of technical writing . Compound nouns take their gender from the head , which in Swedish is always the last morpheme . New words can also be coined by derivation from other established words , such as the verbification of nouns by the adding of the suffix -a , as in bil (" car ") and bila (" travel (recreationally) by car ") . The opposite , making nouns of verbs , is also possible , as in tänk (" way of thinking ; concept ") from tänka (" to think ") .

= = Writing system = =

The Swedish alphabet is a 29 @-@ letter alphabet , using the 26 @-@ letter ISO basic Latin alphabet plus the three additional letters Å / å , Ä / ä , and Ö / ö constructed in the 16th century by writing " o " and " e " on top of an " a " , and an " e " on top of an " o " . Though these combinations are historically modified versions of A and O according to the English range of usage for the term diacritic , these three characters are not considered to be diacritics within the Swedish application , but rather separate letters , and are independent letters following z . Before the release of the 13th edition of Svenska Akademiens ordlista in April 2006 , w was treated as merely a variant of v used only in names (such as " Wallenberg ") and foreign words (" bowling ") , and so was both sorted and pronounced as a v. Other diacritics (to use the broader English term usage referenced here)

are unusual in Swedish ; é is sometimes used to indicate that the stress falls on a terminal syllable containing e , especially when the stress changes the meaning (ide vs. idé , " winter lair " vs. " idea ") as well as in some names , like Kastrén ; occasionally other acute accents and , less often , grave accents can be seen in names and some foreign words . The letter à is used to refer to unit cost (a loan from the French) , equivalent to the at sign (@) in English .

The German ü is treated as a variant of y and sometimes retained in foreign names and words , e.g. müsli (" muesli / granola ") . A proper diaeresis may very exceptionally be seen in elaborated style (for instance : " Äida ") . The German convention of writing ä and ö as ae and oe if the characters are unavailable is an unusual convention for speakers of modern Swedish . Despite the availability of all these characters in the Swedish national top @-@ level Internet domain and other such domains , Swedish sites are frequently labelled using a and o , based on visual similarity (mainly to avoid lingering technical problems with the use of characters which are outside of the limited 7 @-@ bit ASCII set) .

The Swedish alphabet is completely identical to the Finnish alphabet .

In Swedish orthography , the colon is used in a similar manner as in English , with some exceptions : the colon is used for some abbreviations , such as 3 : e for tredje (" third ") and S : t for Sankt (" Saint ") , and for all types of endings that can be added to numbers , letters and abbreviations , such as a : et (" the a ") and CD : n (" the CD ") , or the genitive form USA : s (" USA 's ") .

= = Grammar = =

Swedish nouns and adjectives are declined in genders as well as number . Nouns belong to one of two genders ? common for the en form or neuter for the ett form ? which also determine the declension of adjectives . For example , the word fisk (" fish ") is a noun of common gender (en fisk) and can have the following forms :

The definite singular form of a noun is created by adding a suffix (-en , -n , -et or -t) , depending on its gender and if the noun ends in a vowel or not . The definite articles den , det , and de are used for variations to the definitiveness of a noun . They can double as demonstrative pronouns or demonstrative determiners when used with adverbs such as här (" here ") or där (" there ") to form den / det här (can also be " denna / detta ") (" this ") , de här (can also be " dessa ") (" these ") , den / det där (" that ") , and de där (" those ") . For example , den där fisken means " that fish " and refers to a specific fish ; den fisken is less definite and means " that fish " in a more abstract sense , such as that set of fish ; while fisken means " the fish " . In certain cases , the definite form indicates possession , e.g. , jag måste tvätta håret (" I must wash my hair ") .

Adjectives are inflected in two declensions ? indefinite and definite ? and they must match the noun they modify in gender and number . The indefinite neuter and plural forms of an adjective are usually created by adding a suffix (-t or -a) to the common form of the adjective , e.g. , en grön stol (a green chair) , ett grönt hus (a green house) , and gröna stolar (" green chairs ") . The definite form of an adjective is identical to the indefinite plural form , e.g. , den gröna stolen (" the green chair ") , det gröna huset (" the green house ") , and de gröna stolarna (" the green chairs ") .

Swedish pronouns are similar to those of English . Besides the two natural genders han and hon (" he " and " she ") , there are also the two grammatical genders den and det , usually termed common and neuter . Unlike the nouns , pronouns have an additional object form , derived from the old dative form . Hon , for example , has the following nominative , possessive , and object forms :

hon ? hennes ? henne

Swedish also uses third @-@ person possessive reflexive pronouns that refer to the subject in a clause , a trait which is restricted to North Germanic languages :

Anna gav Maria sin bok . ; " Anna gave Maria her [Anna 's] book . " (reflexive)

Anna gav Maria hennes bok . ; " Anna gave Maria her [Maria 's] book . " (not reflexive)

Swedish used to have genitive that was placed at the end of the head of a noun phrase . In modern Swedish , it has become an enclitic -s , which attaches to the end of the noun phrase , rather than the noun itself .

hästen ; " the horse " ? hästens " the horse 's "

hästen på den blommande ängens svarta man ; " the horse in the flowering meadow 's black mane
"

In formal written language , it used to be considered correct to place the genitive -s after the head of the noun phrase (hästen) , though this is today considered dated , and different grammatical constructions are often used .

Verbs are conjugated according to tense . One group of verbs (the ones ending in -er in present tense) has a special imperative form (generally the verb stem) , but with most verbs the imperative is identical to the infinitive form . Perfect and present participles as adjectival verbs are very common :