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Colloquial **Afrikaans**

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for Beginners

Bruce Donaldson

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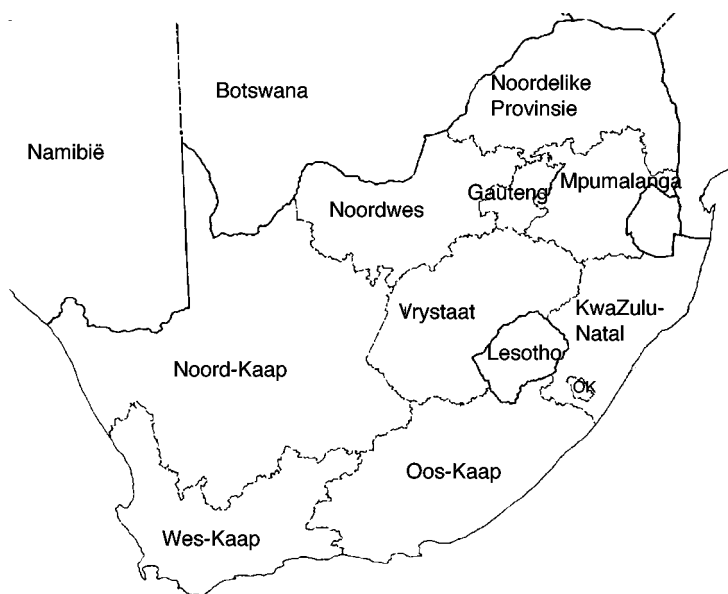
About this book

Afrikaans is descended from the Dutch of the first settlers who came to the Cape in the employ of the Dutch East India Company in 1652. It contains features of seventeenth-century Dutch dialects and influences absorbed from the other languages with which it came into contact in this new, exotic environment. Afrikaans is spoken by some six million people as their mother tongue and by an undetermined number (but certainly millions) of other South Africans as a second or third tongue, as it serves as the chief lingua franca of the rural areas of the country. It is also by far the most widely spoken language in Namibia where it serves as an indispensable lingua franca, despite the new government's policy since gaining independence from South Africa in 1990 of pushing English as the only official language.

At the level of the colloquial language there are basically three regional varieties of Afrikaans: South-Western Afrikaans (also called **Kaaps**), Eastern (Border) Afrikaans and North-Western Afrikaans (also called Orange River Afrikaans). The basis of the standard language is Eastern Afrikaans, a variety originally spoken by the white settlers of the Eastern Cape Province and taken inland by them to the former Boer republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal as a result of the Great Trek in the late 1830s. It is this variety of Afrikaans that is described in this book.

One can easily get by in South Africa, even as a resident of the country, without knowing Afrikaans, which is the case with many immigrants from abroad as well as with many blacks, but one misses a great deal of the true flavour of the country if one lives entirely in an English-speaking world. Whatever its tainted past as the language of the oppressor, Afrikaans is an indispensable part of South Africa and Namibia, and reduction of its official functions, as is currently being executed under the new government, will have little effect on its role as an idiom in which millions of South Africans of all races feel at home and which they need to express the South African experience. Afrikaans has proved itself to be

ingenious in inventing or translating vocabulary and expressions to keep abreast of the modern world; linguistic purity, at least at the level of its vocabulary, which is the only purity the average person is capable of assessing, is highly admired in Afrikaans-speaking circles. But Afrikaans is also gutsy and capable of great humour, and the most distinguishing characteristic of South African English is the enormous influence Afrikaans has had on it since the British occupied the Cape about two hundred years ago, some 150 years after the foundation of Cape Town by the Dutch.



Suid-Afrika

The two-and-a-half million white Afrikaners are not the only mother tongue speakers of the language. The three million people of mixed race, found predominantly but certainly not exclusively in the western and northern Cape, are for the most part Afrikaans-speaking, although some of those in urban environments have been Anglicised. The term 'coloureds' (**kleurlinge**) has long been in vogue for these people. There are objections from some quarters to this term for which reason the term **bruin mense** was coined in Afrikaans (it has no equivalent in English), but this too was coined by whites and is not considered an improvement on the term

‘coloured’ by many coloureds. Another politically neutral term of relatively recent coinage is **Afrikaanssprekendes** or even **Afrikaanses** to cover all mother-tongue speakers of the language, whether white or otherwise. Attempts to refer to the whole language community as **Afrikaners** have not been successful. This word continues to refer exclusively to whites of Dutch-German-Huguenot origin, formerly referred to as ‘Boers’ (**Boere**), a term which no longer has any official currency in South Africa.

It is of course impossible to cover every aspect of the grammar of Afrikaans in a book of this size. Those desiring more detail on any of the grammatical issues dealt with in this book are advised to consult the following book by the same author: *A Grammar of Afrikaans*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, 1993, which is the most comprehensive description of the language available in English. The best bilingual dictionary on the market is D.B. Bosman, I.W. van der Merwe and L.W. Hiemstra’s *Tweetalige Woordeboek/Bilingual Dictionary*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1984 (with numerous later editions). The same dictionary has appeared under the title *Reader’s Digest Afrikaans-Engelse Woordeboek/English-Afrikaans Dictionary*, Reader’s Digest, Cape Town, 1987 and includes many very useful additional comments on words in the form of comment boxes in the margin.

If the learner is keen to have access to reading matter in Afrikaans, the following are recommended as examples of the living language. The main daily paper in Gauteng is *Beeld*, its equivalent in the Western and Eastern Cape being *Die Burger*, both publications of Nasionale Pers. The main national Sunday paper is *Rapport*. The most widely read women’s weekly is *Die Huisgenoot*, which is an excellent example of natural sounding, non-literary Afrikaans, and the local equivalent of *Time* magazine, for want of a better comparison, is the monthly *Insig*.

What you need to gain some fluency in Afrikaans is exposure to the language, which can be easier said than done for those who do not live in South Africa.

Here are some Internet sites that may be useful in this respect. The first is: <http://www.dieknoop.co.za>. This page lists hundreds of Internet material and Web sites in Afrikaans as well as some in English about Afrikaans. The second is: <http://www.24.com>, the ‘front door’ leading to all the Web pages of *Nasionale Pers*, the largest media group in South Africa. Through this page, one gets easy access to *Kalhari.net*, an Internet bookshop, and to electronic versions of newspapers and magazines, as well as to publishers’ Web sites.

Stigting vir Afrikaans is a body that seeks to nurture a positive attitude towards Afrikaans in South African society following the tarnish it received during the apartheid era. The Foundation's quarterly publication, *Afrikaans Vandag*, is reproduced on the Web: <http://www.afrikaans.com>. Another useful site under the Foundation's auspices is that of Afriklub: <http://www.afriklub.co.za>.

Learning Afrikaans is great fun – **geniet dit!**

Layout of the lessons and how to work through them

Each lesson starts with a dialogue that contains examples in context of the language points that follow that dialogue. This applies to all dialogues throughout the book, as most lessons contain several language points. The dialogues in the first five lessons are supplied with translations. After that you can consult the Afrikaans-English glossary in the back of the book, but see how well you can understand them first without looking anything up. The dialogues can be found on the accompanying website www.routledge.com/cw/colloquials. For those with little or no knowledge of formal grammar, all grammatical concepts are illustrated by brief English examples where they occur for the first time, but there is also a glossary of grammatical terms in the back of the book. The answers to all exercises are also to be found in the back of the book, as is an English-Afrikaans glossary if you are searching for an Afrikaans word in order to do an exercise.

Please send all corrections and suggestions for improvements to future editions to the following postal or e-mail addresses: Bruce Donaldson, Department of German and Swedish Studies, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria, Australia 3052, e-mail: b.donaldson@language.unimelb.edu.au.

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Introduction



Pronunciation (Audio 1: 1–8)

Possibly the most difficult aspect of Afrikaans is the pronunciation but that is unfortunately where you have to start. Don't be discouraged by sounds that you may feel you will never be able to get your tongue around. With exposure to the language your accent will improve with time. Where the following Afrikaans sounds are compared to those in English words, these merely represent an approximation of their pronunciation. If you possess the cassettes you can compare these approximations with the actual sounds. Don't feel you have to master all the sounds before proceeding to the next lesson. Perfection comes with time and practice.

Short vowels

- a** This is a very short sound not unlike the vowel in 'but', e.g. **bal** 'ball', **matte** 'mats'.
- e** Generally speaking this vowel does not differ greatly from that in 'pet', e.g. **bed** 'bed', **hemp** 'shirt'. When followed by **r** plus **d**, **t**, or **s**, **e** is pronounced longer, i.e. more like the vowel in 'air' than that in 'pet', e.g. **perd** 'horse', **dertig** 'thirty', **pers** 'purple'.
- i** This vowel is identical to the **i** sound so typical of South African and New Zealand English. It is the same sound as the 'i' sound in 'girl' without the 'er' that follows it, e.g. **bitter** 'bitter', **dink** 'to think', **kind** 'child'.
- ie** This vowel is pronounced like that in 'peak', e.g. **dief** 'thief', **fiets** 'bicycle', **piesang** 'banana'; **familie** 'family'. When followed by **r**, this vowel is pronounced somewhat longer, like the vowel sound in 'fear', i.e. whereas in English this is pronounced 'feeuh', in Afrikaans **vier** is pronounced like 'fee' + a trilled 'r', omitting the 'uh', e.g. **dier** 'animal', **hier** 'here'.

- o This vowel is similar to that in 'ought', but is shorter, e.g. **hond** 'dog', **kok** 'cook', **potte** 'pots'. In the combination **ons**, **o** is pronounced longer and is nasalised, e.g. **gons** 'to buzz', **ons** 'we'.
- oe This vowel is more or less the same as that in 'book', e.g. **boek** 'book', **doen** 'to do', **moeder** 'mother'. When followed by **r**, this vowel is pronounced somewhat longer, like the vowel in the second half of 'insure', e.g. **boer** 'farmer', **loer** 'to peer'.
- u This sound is not unlike the vowel in 'hurt' but is somewhat shorter, e.g. **bus** 'bus', **kussing** 'cushion', **stukkend** 'broken'. For those who know German, it is identical to the vowel in **können**.
- uu This is the same sound as in German 'Flüsse', which is not unlike the last sound in English 'few', e.g. **minute** 'minutes', **nuus** 'news', **u** 'you'. When followed by **r** it is pronounced longer, e.g. **suur** 'sour', **mure** 'walls'.

Note that the sound **uu**, as well as **aa**, **ee** and **oo**, all of which are dealt with below, are written double in closed syllables and single in open syllables, which is one of the basic rules of Afrikaans spelling (see p. 7).

Long vowels

- aa This vowel is similar to that in 'father' and is pronounced distinctly long, e.g. **haal** 'to fetch', **swaar** 'heavy'; **asem** 'breath', **blare** 'leaves'.
- ae This sound is identical to **aa** but is written this way for historical reasons, e.g. **dae** 'days', **hael** 'to/the hail', **swaer** 'brother-in-law'.
- ê This sound is pronounced like the vowel in 'air' and is commonly followed by **r**, e.g. **hê** 'to have', **lê** 'to lay/lie', **sê** 'to say'; **skêr** 'scissors', **wêreld** 'world'.
- ô This sound occurs in only a few words. It is basically the same sound as the **o** dealt with above, but it is pronounced longer, i.e. like the vowel in 'law', e.g. **môre** 'morning', **trôe** 'troughs'.
- û This sound occurs in very few words indeed. It is basically the same sound as **u** dealt with above, but it is pronounced longer, i.e. like the vowel in 'heard', e.g. **brûe** 'bridges', **rûe** 'backs'.

Double vowels

- aai** Pronounce like ‘eye’, e.g. **haai** ‘shark’, **kraai** ‘crow’, **maai** ‘mow’.
- eeu** Pronounce like Afrikaans **ie** + **oe**, e.g. **leeu** ‘lion’, **meeu** ‘seagull’.
- ieu** This spelling is not common. It sounds the same as **eeu**, e.g. **hernieu** ‘to renew’, **kieue** ‘gills’, **Nieu-Seeland** ‘New Zealand’.
- oei** Pronounce like Afrikaans **oe** + **ie**, i.e. more or less as in the French name ‘Louis’ (with a silent ‘s’), e.g. **boei** ‘buoy’, **koeie** ‘cows’, **poeier** ‘powder’. Note that **goeie** ‘good’ is pronounced like Afrikaans **g** + **oe** + **je**.
- ooi** Pronounce like Afrikaans **oo** + **ie**, e.g. **mooi** ‘pretty’, **nooiens** ‘girls’, **vlooië** ‘flees’.

Diphthongs

The sounds **ee**, **eu** and **oo** all end in an off-glide, i.e. a sound similar to the final sound (not letter) in ‘tour’.

- ee** This sound closely resembles that in ‘beer’ and ‘year’, e.g. **gee** ‘to give’, **leef** ‘to live’, **enige** ‘any’, **lewe** ‘life’, **stewel** ‘boot’.
- eu** Try pronouncing the vowel in ‘heard’ while preventing the lips from rounding, e.g. **heup** ‘hip’, **seun** ‘son’, **reus** ‘giant’.
- oo** This sound closely resembles that in ‘tour’ or ‘doer’, e.g. **brood** ‘bread’, **roos** ‘rose’, **rose** ‘roses’, **toring** ‘tower’.
- ei/y** This sound is written for historical reasons in two ways. It is a long diphthong similar to that in ‘lay’ in English, e.g. **eier** ‘egg’, **lei** ‘to lead’, **teiken** ‘target’, **by** ‘bee’, **ryp** ‘frost’, **yster** ‘iron’.
- ou** This sound is very similar to the vowel in English ‘know’, e.g. **blou** ‘blue’, **moue** ‘sleeves’, **skouer** ‘shoulder’. The distinction between this sound and **ui** is subtle.
- ui** This sound is one of the hardest to master. It starts with a sound similar to the vowel in ‘heard’, pronounced with rounded lips, and is followed by the vowel in ‘see’, e.g. **huis** ‘house’, **lui** ‘lazy’, **vuil** ‘dirty’.
- ai** This sound occurs in very few words, all of them loanwords. It is pronounced like the vowel in ‘bike’, e.g. **baie** ‘much’/‘many’, ‘very’, **kaia** ‘native dwelling’. See also **matjie** below, which contains the same sound.

- oi** This sound occurs in only a few words. It is identical to the vowel in ‘boy’, e.g. **going** ‘hessian’, **toings** ‘tatters’.

Diphthongs in diminutives

The diminutive of nouns is exceedingly commonly used in both spoken and written Afrikaans (see p. 105). When a noun of one syllable that contains an **a**, **aa**, **an**, **aan**, **aen**, **e**, **en**, **i**, **in**, **o**, **oo**, **on**, **oon**, **oe**, **u** or **un** ends in **-djie** or **-tjie** (both pronounced ‘key’), diphthongisation of the vowel occurs. This may seem rather complex, and some of the resulting sounds are indeed quite difficult to pronounce, but this is a finer point of pronunciation which you can take your time to master.

a	mat mat	> matjie , pronounced ‘mikey’.
aa	maat mate	> maatjie , pronounced with the same vowel as in matjie but with a longer vowel.
an	hand hand	> handjie , pronounced ‘high + n + key’.
aan	aand evening	> aandjie , pronounced like ‘high + n + key’, but dropping the ‘h’ and with a longer vowel.
aen	wa wagon	> waentjie , pronounced with the same vowel as in aandjie .
e	bed bed	> bedjie , pronounced ‘bear + key’, but the vowel of ‘bear’ is pronounced short.
en	prent picture	> prentjie , pronounced ‘prayer + n + key’, but with a short vowel.
i	pit seed	> pitjie , pronounced ‘pay + key’.
in	kind child	> kindjie , pronounced ‘cane + key’.
o	pot pot	> potjie , pronounced ‘poy + key’.
oo	poot paw	> pootjie , pronounced with the same vowel as in potjie but with a longer vowel.
on	hond dog	> hondjie , pronounced ‘hoi + n + key’.
oon	oond oven	> oondjie , pronounced like ‘hoi + n + key’, but dropping the ‘h’ and with a longer vowel.
oe	voet foot	> voetjie , pronounced ‘fooey + key’.
u	put well	> putjie . The vowel here is the Afrikaans diphthong ‘ui + key’.
un	punt point	> puntjie . The vowel here is the Afrikaans diphthong ‘ui + n + key’.

Consonants

- b** There is little or no distinction between an English and an Afrikaans **b**, e.g. **bal** 'ball', **boek** 'book'; **skubbe** 'scales'. But at the end of a word a **b** is pronounced as a 'p', e.g. **rib** 'rib', **skub** 'scale'.
- c** This letter is only used in a few loanwords ending in **-ici**, in which case it is pronounced as 's', e.g. **akademici** 'academics', **musici** 'musicians', which are the plurals of **akademikus** and **musikus**.
- ch** This letter combination, which only occurs at the beginning of a few foreign words, is pronounced, depending on the word, either the same as a guttural Afrikaans **g**, e.g. **chaos** 'chaos', **christen** 'Christian', or as English 'sh', e.g. **chauvinisties** 'chauvinistic', **China** 'China', **chirurg** 'surgeon'. Note that many personal and place names contain **sch**, a Dutch spelling; where **sch** stands at the beginning of a word, it is pronounced 'sk' and where it stands at the end of a syllable or word, it is pronounced 's', e.g. **Schalk**, **Schoeman**; **Franschhoek**, **Stellenbosch**.
- d** There is no difference between an English and an Afrikaans **d**, e.g. **den** 'pine tree', **doen** 'to do'; **beddens** 'beds'. But at the end of a word a **d** is pronounced as a 't', e.g. **bed** 'bed', **dood** 'dead', **pad** 'road'. The combination **dj** in diminutives is pronounced 'k', e.g. **aandjie** 'evening', **oondjie** 'oven', **perdjie** 'horse' (see p. 4).
- f** There is no distinction between an English and an Afrikaans **f**, e.g. **fiets** 'bicycle', **fris** 'fresh'; **blaf** 'to bark'.
- g** This letter is pronounced like the 'ch' in Scottish 'loch', e.g. **gaan** 'to go', **gat** 'hole'; **berg** 'mountain', **tagtig** 'eighty'; **boggel** 'hump'; **energie** 'energy', **ingenieur** 'engineer'. Before the front vowels **ee** and **ie** the softer sound of German 'ich' may be heard, e.g. **geel** 'yellow', **geut** 'gutter', **giet** 'to pour'.
- gh** This letter combination, which only occurs at the beginning of a few English loanwords, is used to indicate that the **g** is pronounced as in English and not as an 'ach' sound, e.g. **ghitaar** 'guitar', **gholf** 'golf'.
- h** Afrikaans **h** is described by linguists as being voiced, which in layman's terms means it does not sound very breathy and in fact to an English ear often sounds as if it is almost being dropped, e.g. **haan** 'rooster', **hond** 'dog', **huis** 'house'.

- j** This letter is pronounced as an English 'y', e.g. **jaar** 'year', **juk** 'yoke', **jy** 'you'. In just a few English loanwords it is pronounced as in English, e.g. **jellie**, **junior**.
- k** This letter is pronounced like 'k' in English but without aspiration (i.e. breathiness following the sound), e.g. **kat** 'cat', **keer** 'to turn'; **boek** 'book'; **rokke** 'dresses'.
- l** An Afrikaans **l** is said to be 'thicker' than in English, particularly after a vowel, e.g. **lei** 'to lead', **loop** 'to walk'; **belle** 'bells'; **sal** 'will', **wil** 'to want'.
- m** There is no distinction between an English and an Afrikaans **m**, e.g. **maan** 'moon', **mat** 'mat'; **lammers** 'lambs'; **kam** 'comb'.
- n** There is no difference between an English and an Afrikaans **n**, e.g. **nooit** 'never'; **bone** 'beans'; **been** 'leg'.
- ng** This combination is always pronounced as in 'singer', never as in 'finger', e.g. **honger** 'hunger', **vinger** 'finger'; **sing** 'to sing'.
- p** This letter is pronounced like 'p' in English but without aspiration (see **k**), e.g. **pan** 'pan', **pes** 'plague'; **koppe** 'heads'; **pop** 'doll'.
- r** An Afrikaans **r** must always be pronounced, even at the end of words. It is pronounced by trilling the tip of your tongue against your teeth, as in Italian, e.g. **riet** 'reed', **rooi** 'red'; **brood** 'bread', **praat** 'to talk'; **kar** 'car', **word** 'to become'; **baard** 'beard', **woord** 'word'; **broer** 'brother', **duur** 'expensive', **leer** 'to learn', **mier** 'ant'; **moeder** 'mother', **poeier** 'powder'.
- s** This letter is pronounced as in English, e.g. **sokkie** 'sock', **suiker** 'sugar'; **mossie** 'sparrow'; **hoes** 'to cough', **roos** 'rose'.
- sj** This letter combination is used to transcribe a 'sh' sound in certain loanwords (see also **ch**), e.g. **sjampanje** 'champagne', **sjiek** 'chic'; **hasjisj** 'hashish'.
- t** This letter is pronounced like 't' in English but without aspiration (see **k**), e.g. **tafel** 'table', **tel** 'to count', **trein** 'train', **trek** 'to pull', **tuis** 'at home'; **botter** 'butter'; **gat** 'hole'.
- tj** This letter combination is used in some loanwords to render an English 'ch' sound, e.g. **tjap** 'stamp', **tjek** 'cheque', **tjop** 'chop'. The combination **tj** that commonly occurs in diminutives is pronounced 'k', e.g. **byttjie** 'bee', **matjie** 'mat', **netjies** 'neat' (see p. 4).
- v** This letter is pronounced as an English 'f', e.g. **val** 'to fall', **vel** 'skin', **vrek** 'to die'; **koevert** 'envelope', **rivier** 'river'. In loanwords **v** is usually pronounced as in English, e.g. **variasie** 'variation', **visueel** 'visual'; **televisie** 'television'.
- w** This letter is usually pronounced as an English 'v'. As an

Afrikaans **v** is pronounced 'f', there is no confusion between **w** and **v**, e.g. **water** 'water', **weet** 'to know'; **growwe** 'coarse', **nuwer** 'newer', **waarskuwing** 'warning'. When **w** follows a consonant (i.e. it can only occur after a **d**, **k**, **s** or **t**), it is pronounced as in English, e.g. **dwaal** 'to wander', **kwaad** 'angry', **swak** 'weak', **twee** 'two'.

- z** This letter occurs in only a few foreign names where it is pronounced as in English, e.g. **Zambië**, **Zoeloe**, **Tanzanië**. In personal and place names where the Dutch spelling with **z** is retained, **z** is pronounced as an 's', e.g. **Van Zyl**, **Zeekoevlei**.

Stress

The general rule is that indigenous Afrikaans words carry the main stress on the first syllable (` indicates that the following syllable is stressed), e.g. **'goedkoop** 'cheap', **'handdoek** 'towel', **'kennisgewing** 'notice', **'burgemeester** 'mayor', **'lessenaar** 'desk', **'platteland** 'countryside'. There are quite a number of exceptions for which no rule can be given. The Afrikaans prefixes **be-**, **ge-**, **her-**, **ont-** and **ver-** never take the stress, e.g. **be'loof** 'to promise', **ge'loof** 'faith', **her'haal** 'to repeat', **ont'moeting** 'meeting', **ver'loor** 'to lose'.

Spelling

Afrikaans spelling is more or less phonetic and is thus easy once you have mastered a few hard and fast rules which clarify the changes that often take place when one

- makes a noun plural by adding an **-e** (see p. 21) or
- inflects an adjective by adding an **-e** (see p. 37).

You will meet these concepts as you work your way through the book, but here is a general summary of the principles of Afrikaans spelling.

Certain vowel and consonant letters are either doubled or written singly depending on whether the syllables concerned are open or closed. To understand the rationale behind this spelling system, one needs to understand the distinction between open and closed syllables. A closed syllable is one that ends in a consonant and an open syllable is one that ends in a vowel, e.g. **aap** 'monkey', **peer** 'pear', **roos** 'rose' and **muur** 'wall' are closed, but the first syllable in **ape**

‘monkeys’, **pere** ‘pears’, **rose** ‘roses’ and **mure** ‘walls’ is open. Note that when syllabifying an Afrikaans word (i.e. as in hyphenating a word at the end of a line), each new syllable begins with a consonant, e.g. **a-pe**, **pe-re**, **ro-se**, **mu-re**; this is in keeping with long vowels in open syllables being written singly. Compare the short vowel in the first syllable of **katte** ‘cats’, **beddens** ‘beds’, **potte** ‘pots’, **putte** ‘wells’.

Let us first deal with nouns. The following three words illustrate the changes that can occur: **aap** – **ape** ‘monkeys’, **toon** – **tone** ‘toes’, **muur** – **mure** ‘walls’ (see p. 21).

The same applies to adjectives when the **-e** ending is added: **kaal** – **kale** ‘naked’, **bloot** – **blote** ‘naked’, **puur** – **pure** ‘pure’ (see p. 37).

When two vowels that belong to separate syllables stand side-by-side and could be read as one sound, a dieresis is placed on the second vowel to show that it forms part of a new syllable. This occurs in indigenous words where two vowels that were historically separated by a **g** are now contiguous due to the dropping of the **g**, e.g. **oë** ‘eyes’ (< **oog** ‘eye’), **hoë** ‘high’ (< **hoog** + **e**). In a few cases, a dieresis is put on an **e** when an intervocalic **d** has dropped out, e.g. **breë** ‘wide’ (< **breed** + **e**) (see p. 21 and 37).

1 Meeting and greeting people

In this lesson you will learn about:

- meeting and greeting people
- addressing people
- saying goodbye
- personal pronouns
- the indefinite article
- the definite article
- expressing nationality and profession
- expressing possession
- the demonstratives



Dialogue 1 (Audio 1: 9)

Meeting and greeting

PERSON A: Goeie môre, Piet. Hoe gaan dit met jou?

PERSON B: Dit gaan goed, dankie. En met jou?

PERSON A: Ek mag nie kla nie.

OR

PERSON A: Môre, Piet. Hoe gaan dit?

PERSON B: Goed, dankie. En self?

PERSON A: Ek kan nie kla nie.

PERSON A: Good morning, Piet. How are you?

PERSON B: Fine, thanks. And you?

PERSON A: I can't grumble.



Dialogue 2 (Audio 1: 10)

Meeting and greeting

- SAREL: Naand, Piet. Hoe gaan dit (met jou)?
 PIET: (Dit gaan) goed, dankie. En self?
 SAREL: Goed. En met jou vrou?
 PIET: Ook goed. Piet, laat ek jou aan my broer Koos voorstel.
 SAREL: Aangename kennis.
 KOOS: Bly te kenne.
 PIET: (Ek) sien (vir) jou later, Sarel.
 SAREL: Tot siens, Piet. Tatta, Koos.
 PIET: (Alles van die) beste.
- SAREL: *Evening, Piet. How are you doing?*
 PIET: *Well, thanks. And you?*
 SAREL: *Fine. And your wife?*
 PIET: *Fine too. Piet, let me introduce you to my brother Koos.*
 SAREL: *How do you do?*
 KOOS: *Nice to meet you.*
 PIET: *(I'll) see you later, Sarel.*
 SAREL: *Goodbye, Piet. Bye, Koos.*
 PIET: *All the best.*

When meeting someone for the first time, while shaking hands, you say **aangename kennis** 'nice to meet you'/'how do you do'. A less common variant of this is **bly te kenne**. Otherwise the usual greetings for people you already know are as follows, depending on the time of day: (**goeie**) môre, (**goeie**) middag, (**goeie**)naand. The **goeie** is commonly dropped in colloquial speech. **Goeie nag**, like its English equivalent, is reserved for taking your leave of someone. **Hallo**, pronounced exactly as in English, is used as in English too.

Hoe gaan dit (met jou/u)? is the standard way of asking someone how they are, dropping the **met jou/u** in particular if you are not sure how to address them (see Language points below).

Language points

Addressing people

The second person singular is expressed by **jy/jou** or **u**. The distinction between the former and the latter is officially one of intimacy

versus polite distance respectively. But in practice the latter is a particularly elevated sounding form that is seldom heard in a normal conversational environment. It is quite common to hear **jy** being used in combination with **Meneer** 'sir' and **Mevrou** 'madam', e.g.

Ekskuus, Mevrou, kan jy asseblief vir my beduie waar die poskantoor is?

Excuse me, madam, could you please tell me where the post office is?

It is far more common in practice to express politeness in addressing someone by using a title rather than **u**. Afrikaans society is very hierarchical and you are advised to respect the use of titles wherever possible if you want to avoid treading on toes. Anyone with a doctor's or professorial title, for example, is most likely to be addressed by the repetitive use of **Dokter** or **Professor** where in English we would simply say 'you' and 'your', e.g.

Goeie môre, Dokter. Dokter se vrou het nou net gebel.

Good morning, doctor. Your wife just rang.

Meneer and **Mevrou** can be used in exactly the same way in situations where one feels obliged to watch one's p's and q's, e.g.

Sal Meneer my asseblief help om hierdie tas te dra?

Will you please help me carry this suitcase?

If in doubt as to the appropriate form of address to strangers or vague acquaintances, the foreigner is advised to err on the side of overformality by using **Meneer/Mevrou** with **u** or to use **Meneer/Mevrou** in lieu of any pronoun.

Saying goodbye

There is a variety of expressions used when taking your leave of someone in Afrikaans. All the following have exact equivalents in English:

tot siens	goodbye
tatta	bye
(Ek) sien jou	(I'll) see you.
(Ek) sien jou later	(I'll) see you later.

Very nice, truly Afrikaans expressions used when guests are departing, for example, are **mooi loop/ry** 'goodbye', but with the

added connotation of ‘may you get home safely’ and said to those departing, while **mooi bly** is the retort said to those whose place you are leaving.

To any of the above farewell greetings you can optionally add any of the following:

(alles van die) beste	all the best
laat dit goed gaan	all the best/take care
voerspoed	all the best
geniet die dag	have a nice day

Personal pronouns

The subject pronouns are:

<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
ek	I	ons	we
jy	you	julle	you
u	you	u	you
hy	he		
sy	she	hulle	they
dit	it		

When followed by the verb **is**, **dit** is very commonly pronounced and written **dis**. The common question tags ‘is he?’, ‘are you?’, ‘won’t they?’, etc. are expressed simply by **is dit?** (South African English ‘is it?’), e.g.

A: Hy woon nou in Kaapstad.

B: Is dit?

A: He now lives in Cape Town?

B: Does he?

A: Hy woon nie meer in Kaapstad nie.

B: Is dit?

A: He no longer lives in Cape Town.

B: Doesn’t he?

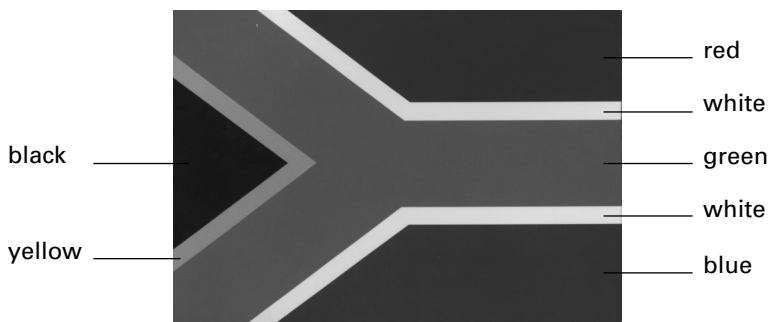
The object pronouns are:

<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
my	me	ons	us
jou	you	julle	you
u	you	u	you
hom	him		
haar	her	hulle	them
dit	it		

In English we refer to all inanimate objects as 'it'. Although **dit** is used in this way in Afrikaans too, it is just as common to refer to inanimate objects as **hy/hom**, e.g.

Wat dink jy van die nuwe vlag? Ek dink hy is pragtig.

What do you think of the new flag? I think it's beautiful.



Die Suid-Afrikaanse vlag

The indefinite article

The indefinite article in Afrikaans is **'n**, which is usually pronounced much the same as English 'a' in 'a house', even when the word that follows begins with a vowel, e.g. **'n huis** 'a house', **'n man** 'a man', **'n vrou** 'a woman', **'n appel** 'an apple', **'n oond** 'an oven'. If a sentence begins with **'n**, the first letter of the next word is capitalised, e.g. **'n Mens moet deesdae versigtig wees** 'One has to be careful these days'.

The definite article

Afrikaans does not distinguish between masculine, feminine and neuter nouns like many European languages do – it is the same as English in this respect. Consequently, the definite article (i.e. 'the') is **die** for all nouns whether singular or plural, e.g. **die man** 'the man', **die vrou** 'the woman', **die huis** 'the house', **die huise** 'the houses'.



Dialogue 3 (Audio 1: 11)

Koos en Hennie is kollegas. Hulle ontmoet mekaar in 'n winkelsentrum en gesels 'n bietjie.

- KOOS: Goeiemôre, Hennie, hoe gaan dit?
 HENNIE: Dit gaan baie goed, en met jou?
 KOOS: Nee*, uitstekend, dankie. Hoe gaan dit met jou vrou en die kinders?
 HENNIE: Ook goed. Wat is nou weer jou vrou se naam, Koos?
 KOOS: Hildegard.
 HENNIE: Ag ja, dis reg. Waarvandaan kom sy?
 KOOS: Sy kom van Duitsland af.
 HENNIE: My vrou is ook 'n buitelanders, weet jy?
 KOOS: Is sy? Van watter land kom sy?
 HENNIE: Van Nederland. Koos, weet jy, ek moet die kinders by die skool oplaai. Ek sien jou.
 KOOS: Tot siens, Hennie. Sê groete vir jou vrou.
 HENNIE: Ja, ek sal so maak. Sê ook groete vir joune. Tot siens.

Koos en Hennie are colleagues. They meet each other in a shopping centre and chat a bit.

- KOOS: Good morning, Hennie, how are you going?
 HENNIE: Fine, and you?
 KOOS: Great, thanks. How's your wife doing and the kids?
 HENNIE: Fine too. What's your wife's name again, Koos?
 KOOS: Hildegard.
 HENNIE: Oh, yes, that's right. Where does she come from?
 KOOS: She comes from Germany.
 HENNIE: My wife is also a foreigner, did you know?
 KOOS: Is she? What country does she come from?
 HENNIE: From Holland. Koos, you know, I have to pick the children up from school. I'll see you.
 KOOS: Bye, Hennie. Give my regards to your wife.
 HENNIE: Yes, I'll do so. Regards to yours too. Goodbye.

* This idiomatic **nee** is commonly inserted before a positive answer.

Language points

Expressing nationality and profession

Nationalities and professions are expressed as in English, e.g.

Hy is 'n Nederlander.	He is a Dutchman.
Hy is 'n onderwyser.	He is a teacher.

As in English there is no specifically feminine form of nationalities, e.g.

Sy is 'n Suid-Afrikaner/Australiër.
She is a South African/an Australian.

As only the words for 'Englishman' (**Engelsman**) and 'Frenchman' (**Fransman**) end in **-man**, as in English, just these two nationalities must be expressed by using the adjective with reference to women, e.g.

Sy is Engels/Frans. She is English/French.

It is of course possible to express all nationalities, both males and females, in this way, as in English, e.g.

Hy is Nederlands/Australies. He is Dutch/Australian.
Sy is Nederlands/Australies. She is Dutch/Australian.

There is a list of common nationalities on p. 176.

But when it comes to expressing the feminine of professions, the situation is a little more complex. Where the profession is dominated by females there is no problem as the feminine form is more usual than the masculine, e.g. **sekretaresse** 'secretary', **verpleegster** 'nurse', **tikster** 'typist'. But whereas it is possible, for example, to render the feminine of **onderwyser** 'teacher' with **onderwyseres**, **dosent** 'lecturer' with **dosente** and **skrywer** with **skryfster**, in practice such endings are usually dispensed with, e.g.

Lina Spies is 'n bekende digter/digteres.
Lina Spies is a well-known writer.

Me. Van Staden is 'n bankbestuurder/bankbestuurderes.
Ms. Van Staden is a bank manager.

Exercise 1

Consulting the list of nationalities at the back of the book if need be, write down the words that would complete the table below. Note that all these words are written with capital letters, as in English.

<i>Land</i>	<i>Inwoner (manlik)</i>	<i>Taal/Nasionaliteit</i>
–	Duitser	–
–	Engelsman	–
Frankryk	–	–
–	–	Nederlands
–	–	Sweeds
België	–	–
Suid-Afrika	–	–
–	Australiër	–
Amerika	–	–

Expressing possession

Possession is expressed in the following ways:

1 By possessive adjectives as in English:

<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
my	my	ons	our
jou	your	julle	your
u	your	u	your
sy	his		
haar	her	hulle	their
sy	its		

Note that there is no difference between the subject and object pronouns and possessive adjectives in the plural, although **julle** and **hulle** as possessives are commonly shortened to **jul** and **hul** when the full form has been previously used in the sentence, e.g. **Wat gaan julle met jul kinders doen?** ‘What are you going to do with your children?’

2 In contexts where possession is expressed in English by apostrophe s (or s apostrophe) Afrikaans uses the particle **se**, e.g. **die land se regering** ‘the country’s government’, **my pa se broer** ‘my father’s brother’. The **se** construction is even more common in