

# Persian Grammar

**Persian** grammar is similar to that of many other [Indo-European languages](#), especially those in the [Indo-Iranian](#) family. [Middle Persian](#) had become more [analytical](#), having no [grammatical gender](#) and few [case](#) markings, and Persian has inherited such characteristics.

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## Word order

While Persian has a [Subject Object Verb](#) (SOV) word order, it is not strongly [left-branching](#). The main clause precedes a subordinate clause. The interrogative particle *āyā* (آیآ) which asks a [yes/no question](#), appears at the beginning of a sentence. [Modifiers](#) normally follow the nouns they modify, although they can precede nouns in limited uses. The language uses [prepositions](#), uncommon to many SOV languages. The one case marker, *rā* (را), follows the accusative noun phrase.

Normal sentences are structured subject-preposition-object-verb. If the object is specific, then the order is "(S) (O + "rā") (PP) V". However, Persian can have relatively free word order, often called "[scrambling](#)." This is because the parts of speech are generally unambiguous, and prepositions and the accusative marker help disambiguate the case of a given noun phrase. This scrambling characteristic has allowed Persian a high degree of flexibility for versification and rhyming.

## Nouns

*Main article:* [Persian nouns](#)

Persian nouns have no [grammatical gender](#). Persian nouns mark with an [accusative marker](#) only for the [specific accusative case](#); the other oblique cases are marked by prepositions. Possession is expressed by special markers: if the possessor appears in the sentence after the thing possessed, the *ezāfe* may be used; otherwise, alternatively, a pronominal genitive enclitic is employed. [Inanimate](#) nouns pluralize with *-hā*, while

animate nouns generally pluralize with *-ān* (with variants *-gān* and *-yān*), although *-hā* is also common.<sup>[1]</sup> Special rules exist for [some nouns](#) borrowed from Arabic.

## Pronouns

Persian is a [null-subject](#), or [pro-drop](#) language, so personal pronouns (eg. *I, he, she*) are optional. Pronouns generally are the same for all cases. The first-person singular accusative form *mæn rā* "me" can be shortened to *mæṛā*. Pronominal genitive enclitics (see above) are different from the normal pronouns, however.

Person	Normal Forms	
	Singular	Plural
1st	mæn من	mā ما
2nd	to تو	shomā شما
3rd	u او (non-human/human), vey وی (human only and formal)	ānhā آن‌ها (non-human/human), ishān ایشان (human only and formal)

Possession is often expressed by adding suffixes to nouns. These are added after inflection for number.

### Genitive enclitics

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	-æm	-emān
2nd	-æt	-etān
3rd	-æš	-ešān

Note that when the stem to which these are added ends in a vowel, a "y" is inserted for ease of pronunciation.

In colloquial speech, the personal pronouns can be used in conjunction with verbs to incorporate a direct object. For example: "Yesterday I saw him."

### Direct object incorporation

*diruz ura didæm* دیروز او را دیدم

*diruz didæmæš* دیروز دیدمش

## Adjectives

[Adjectives](#) typically follow the nouns they modify, using the [izāfa](#) construct.

However, adjectives can precede nouns in compounded derivational forms, such as *khosh-bækht* (*lit.* good-luck) 'lucky', and *bæd-kār* (*lit.* bad-deed) 'wicked'.

[Comparative](#) forms ("more ...") make use of the suffix *tær* (تر), while the [superlative](#) form ("the most ...") uses the suffix *tærin* (ترین).

# Verbs

Main article: [Persian verbs](#)

Normal verbs can be formed using the following morpheme pattern:

( NEG - DUR or SUBJ/IMPER ) - root - PAST - PERSON - ACC-ENCLITIC

- Negative prefix: *næ* - changes to *ne* before the Durative prefix
- Durative prefix: *mi*
- Subjunctive/Imperative prefix: *be*
- Past suffix: *d* - changes to *t* after unvoiced consonants
- Optative identifier: an "ā" is added before the last character of the present tense of singular third person. Although there are suggestions that this inflection has been abandoned, but significant remnants of its usage can still be observed in contemporary stylish Persian compositions and colloquial proverbs, as in *hærče bādā bād* (هرچه بادا باد) "come what may" and *dæst mærizād* (دست مریزاد) lit. "May that hand not spill [what it is holding]", meaning "well done".

## Person Suffixes

### Person Singular Plural

1st	æm	im
2nd	i	id
3rd	æd	ænd

## Accusative Enclitics

### Person Singular Plural

1st	æm	emān
2nd	æt	etān
3rd	æsh	eshān

## Conjugations

Example verb conjugations for [third-person singular](#) form of *khordæn* "to eat".

### Active Voice

Mood	Tense	Romanization	Perso-Arabic
<a href="#">Indicative</a>	<a href="#">Present</a>	mikhoræd	می خورد
Indicative	<a href="#">Preterite</a>	khord	خورد
Indicative	<a href="#">Imperfective preterite</a>	mikhord	می خورد
Indicative	<a href="#">Perfect</a>	khordeæst	خورده است
Indicative	<a href="#">Imperfective perfect</a>	mikhordeæst	می خورده است
Indicative	<a href="#">Pluperfect</a>	khorde bud	خورده بود
Indicative	<a href="#">Imperfective pluperfect</a>	mikhorde bud	می خورده بود

Indicative	<a href="#">Future</a>	khāhæd khord	خواهد خورد
Indicative	<a href="#">Present progressive</a>	dāræd mikhoræd	دارد می خورد
Indicative	<a href="#">Preterite progressive</a>	dāsht mikhord	داشت می خورد
<a href="#">Subjunctive</a>	Present	bekhoræd	بخورد
Subjunctive	Preterite	khorde bāshæd	خورده باشد
Subjunctive	Imperfective preterite	mikhorde bāshæd	می خورده باشد
Subjunctive	Pluperfect	khorde bude bāshæd	خورده بوده باشد
Subjunctive	Imperfective pluperfect	mikhorde bude bāshæd	می خورده بوده باشد

### Passive Voice

Mood	Tense	Romanization	Perso-Arabic
Indicative	Present	khorde mishævæd	خورده می شود
Indicative	Preterite	khorde shod	خورده شد
Indicative	Imperfective preterite	khorde mishod	خورده می شد
Indicative	Perfect	khorde shodeast	خورده شده است
Indicative	Imperfective perfect	khorde mishodeast	خورده می شده است
Indicative	Pluperfect	khorde shode bud	خورده شده بود
Indicative	Imperfective pluperfect	khorde mishode bud	خورده می شده بود
Indicative	Future	khorde khāhæd shod	خورده خواهد شد
Indicative	Present progressive	dāræd khorde mishævæd	دارد خورده می شود
Indicative	Preterite progressive	dāsht khorde mishod	داشت خورده می شد
Subjunctive	Present	khorde shævæd	خورده شود
Subjunctive	Preterite	khorde shode bāshæd	خورده شده باشد
Subjunctive	Imperfective preterite	khorde mishode bāshæd	خورده می شده باشد
Subjunctive	Pluperfect	khorde shode bude bāshæd	خورده شده بوده باشد
Subjunctive	Imperfective pluperfect	khorde mishode bude bāshæd	خورده می شده بوده باشد

### **Compound verbs**

[Light verbs](#) such as *kærdaen* "to do, to make" are often used with nouns to form what is called a [compound verb](#), [light verb construction](#), or [complex predicate](#). For example, the word "*sohbæt*" means "conversation", while "*sohbæt kærdaen*" means "to speak". One may add a light verb after a noun, adjective, preposition, or prepositional phrase to form a compound verb. Only the light verb (e.g *kærdaen*) is conjugated; the word preceding it is not affected. For example:

*dāræm sohbæt mikonæm* ("I am speaking")  
*sohbæt kærde æm* ("I have spoken")

*sohbæt khāhæm kærd* ("I will speak")

As can be seen from the examples, the head word (in this case, *sohbæt*) remains unchanged throughout the conjugation, and only the light verb *kærdæn* is conjugated. They may be compared to [English verb particle constructions](#), such as *hand down* (leave as an inheritance) and *set up* (arrange), or [German](#) compound verbs, such as *radfahren* (to ride by bicycle) and *zurückgehen* (to go back).

Some other examples of compound verbs with *kærdæn* are:

- *fekr kærdæn*, "to think"
- *færāmush kærdæn*, "to forget"
- *gærye kærdæn*, "to cry"
- *telefon kærdæn*, "to call, to telephone"
- *tæmir kærdæn*, "to fix"

### Auxiliary Verbs

- *bāyæd* - 'must': Not conjugated
- *shāyæd* - 'might': Not conjugated
- *tævānestæn* - 'can': Conjugated
- *khāstæn* - 'want': Conjugated. Subordinating clause is subjunctive
- *khāstæn* - 'will': Conjugated. Main verb is tenseless

## Prepositions

[Prepositions](#) in Persian generally behave similarly to those in English – they precede their object. They include the following:

Prepositions	
Persian	English
ændær ((اندر))	in (literary)
æz ((از))	from
bā ((با))	with
bær ((بر))	on, upon
bærā-ye ((برای))	for
be ((به))	to
bi ((بی))	without
chon ((چون))	like (formal)
dær ((در))	at, in
mesl-e ((مثل))	like
tā ((تا))	till, until
hæm-chon ((همچون))	like, as, such (formal)