

Learn it yourself
Learn Frisian



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Foreword

Foarwurd

Welcome to this book about the Frisian language. It will help you learn Frisian easily. Please read the instructions with care and take your time with the exercises.

In this book, you will find new words in Frisian. Every new word and sentence has a way to show you how to say it. Try saying these words and sentences out loud.

This will help you learn better. Remember to write these words down and try to remember them.

Some parts of the book have exercises for you to do. You can write your answers in a notebook, or use a computer or tablet if you like. These exercises are short and easy. They will help you understand Frisian better. When you finish an exercise, you can check your answers at the bottom of the page.

For more help, you can visit a website called frisianwordbook.com.

Folle lok!/Good luck!

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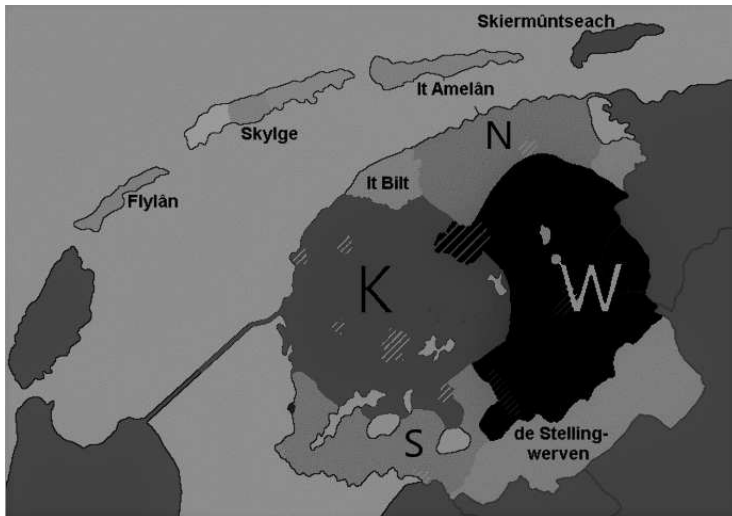
About the Frisian Language

Oer it Frysk

The Frisian language has been spoken for quite some time, even before the existence of Dutch and has undergone many changes since then. This is partly due to the influence of the Dutch language.

Despite these changes, the Frisian language still manages to distinguish itself from Dutch. In terms of vocabulary and grammar, Frisian lies somewhere between English and Dutch. Many Frisian words are similar to English words, whereas Dutch would use entirely different terms. Examples of such words include: 'tegearre', 'tsiis', 'kaai', 'wrâld', 'bolle', 'tink', 'skiep', 'dei', and 'rein'. The Dutch equivalents are 'samen', 'kaas', 'sleutel', 'wereld', 'stier', 'denk', 'schaap', 'dag', and 'regen'. Additionally, Frisian not only shares similarities with English but also with German, as seen in words like 'dû hast', 'wichtich', 'fleis', and many more. Lastly, Frisian also possesses Scandinavian features, such as the 'sk' that is found at the end of many words.

The variety of Frisian that is taught in this book is called 'West Frisian'. However, this should not be confused with the West-Frisian dialect spoken in North Holland. It is called 'West Frisian' because there is also North Frisian and East Frisian, which are other Frisian dialects spoken in Germany. The West Frisian language also consists of several dialects, as can be seen on the map below.



W= Wâldfrysk (Wood Frisian)

K = Klaaifrysk (Clay Frisian)

N = Noardhoeksk

S = Súdwesthoeksk

This map indicates the four major dialects of Frisian. It is clear that two of these dialects are dominant: Wâldfrysk and Klaaifrysk. Standard Frisian has emerged from these two dialects on a 50/50 basis. That's why sometimes you may encounter two correct options in the usage of words. The differences between the dialects are minor. The residents of Friesland can easily communicate with each other, even though there is sometimes teasing with the question: 'Wat seist no?' (what are you saying now?).

Here follow a few examples to illustrate the differences in the Frisian dialects.

Wâldfrysk	Klaaifrysk	English
Dû	Do	You
Saterdei	Sneon	Saturday
Gjers	Gers	Grass
Rûmte	Romte	Room
Tûme	Tomme	Thumb

There are differences in spelling among the Frisian dialects, but the biggest differences lie in pronunciation. For example, Wâldfrysk speakers pronounce the words 'hy', 'wy', 'sy', and 'my' in a way that is reminiscent of English – which is also the spelling. However, Klaaifrysk speakers pronounce the same words like the Dutch 'hij', 'wij', 'zij', and 'mij'. Although the Wâldfrysk variant is the standard, the Klaaifrysk pronunciation is also permitted.

Frisian in Germany

In Germany, a variant of Frisian is spoken, namely Saterfrisian or Sealterfrysk. This language has about 2,000 speakers, of whom only a handful can speak and write it fluently. Sealterfrysk is spoken in a region below East Frisia, namely in Saterland.

In addition to Sealterfrysk, there are also Frisian dialects in North Frisia. The following dialects are spoken on the North Frisian islands in Germany: Söl'ring, Föhr-Amrum Frisian, and Heligolandic Frisian (Halunder). The remaining Frisian dialects are spoken on the mainland.

How Extensive Was the Frisian Language?

The Frisian language, one of the oldest languages in Northwest Europe, has a rich history dating back to the early Middle Ages. During the period when Frisia extended from what is now North Holland to the Weser in Germany, Frisian was the dominant language in this vast coastal area.

The language was not just a means of everyday communication but also a symbol of cultural and political identity. In an era where regional languages and dialects were the norm, Frisian gave the inhabitants of this area a sense of unity and shared identity. The language played a crucial role in trade, diplomacy, and literature.

Moreover, the Frisian language influenced neighboring languages and regions. It has left its mark in place names, loanwords, and even in some linguistic structures in both Dutch and some North German dialects.

However, with the territorial shrinkage of Frisia and the increasing influence of powerful neighbors like the Franks, the influence of Frisian began to wane. Despite periods of decline and marginalization, Frisian has managed to survive and is today still a living language in the province of Friesland in the Netherlands.

In modern times, the Frisian language is cherished as a vital part of regional identity. It is not just a language of the past but continues to be significant in the daily life, education, and culture of many Frisians.

How Big Was Frisia?

In the early Middle Ages, around the 7th and 8th centuries, the area known as 'Frisia' experienced its greatest expansion. During this period, Frisia extended over an impressive coastal region that started in what is now North Holland and continued up to the Weser in northern what is now Germany. This extensive region included not only parts of present-day Netherlands but also pieces of present-day Germany and even a part of Denmark.

The Frisians were a powerful people during this period, known for their trade networks and maritime skills. They had extensive trade relations with other European peoples, and their influence was felt in far-reaching regions.

However, this vast extent was not destined to last. With the rise of the Franks to the south and later the invasions and expansions of the Vikings, the territory of Frisia began to shrink. Especially the Frankish expansion under Charlemagne in the late 8th century led to a significant reduction of Frisian territory.

Nonetheless, the contemporary Frisians proudly remember this period of greatness and the rich history that accompanies it. The legacy of this time lives on in the culture, language, and traditions of modern Friesland. A Map of Frisia at Its Largest:



Friesland and the Connection with Scandinavia

The Frisian language, one of the oldest languages of Northwest Europe, has preserved much of its Germanic origins through the centuries.

The early Germanic tribes, including the Frisians, shared many cultural and linguistic characteristics with the peoples of present-day Scandinavia. In the early Middle Ages, there were many trade and migration routes between the area now known as Friesland and the Scandinavian countries. Vikings, originating from Scandinavia, settled in various parts of Europe, including Friesland. These early interactions and mingling of cultures undoubtedly contributed to the linguistic similarities between Frisian and the Scandinavian languages.

Although Frisian and the Scandinavian languages (Swedish, Norwegian, Danish) all belong to the Germanic language family, they each have undergone their own development. But the ancient Germanic roots are still visible in many basic words and structures. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are many similarities; just take a look at the following page.

In conclusion, the shared history, early migration and trade, and common Germanic roots have all contributed to the fascinating linguistic connection between Friesland and Scandinavia.

Frisian	Norwegian	Swedish	Danish	English
Bern	Barn	Barn	Barn	Child
Bernsbern	Barnebarn	Barnbarn	Barnebarn	Grandchild
Side	Side	Sida	Side	Side
Brún	Brun	Brun	Brun	Brown
Dêr	Der	Där	Der	There
Dyn	Din	Din	Din	Your
Falsk	Falsk	Falsk	Falsk	False
Farsk	Fersk	Färsk	Frisk	Fresh
Farve	Farge	Färg	Farve	Paint
Hêf, See	Hav	Hav	Hav	Sea
Sikehûs	Sykehus	Sjukhus	Sygehus	Hospital
Feie	Feie	Sopa	Feje	Wipe
Ferstean	Forstå	Förstå	Forstå	Understand
Finsk	Finsk	Finsk	Finsk	Finnish
Fisk	Fisk	Fisk	Fisk	Fish
Flagge	Flagg	Flagg	Flag	Flag
Foet	Fot	Fot	Fod	Foot
Frânsk	Fransk	Fransk	Fransk	Frans
Frij	Fri	Fri	Fri	Free
Froast	Frost	Frost	Frost	Frost
Fûgel	Fugl	Fågel	Fugl	Bird, Fowl
Gjirrich	Gjerrig	Girig	Gjerrig	Greedy
Hûd	Hud	Hud	Hud	Hide, Skin
Hûs	Hus	Hus	Hus	House
IISTiid	Istid	Istid	Istid	Ice Age
Ingelsk	Engelsk	Engelska	Engelsk	English

Ko	Ku	Ko	Ko	Cow
Krêft	Kraft	Kraft	Kraft	Power
Lampe	Lampe	Lampa	Lampe	Lamp
Loft	Luft	Luft	Luft	Sky
Mage	Mage	Mage	Mave	Stomach
Mûs	Mus	Mus	Mus	Mouse
Nij	Ny	Ny	Ny	New
Noarsk	Norsk	Norska	Norsk	Norwegian
Oalje	Olje	Olja	Olie	Oil
Poalsk	Polsk	Polska	Polsk	Polish
Priis	Pris	Pris	Pris	Price
Russysk	Russisk	Ryska	Russisk	Russian
Rust	Rust	Rost	Rust	Rust
Ryk	Rik	Rik	Rig	Rich
Sâlt	Salt	Salt	Salt	Salt
Skerp	Skarp	Skarp	Skarp	Sharp
Skip	Skip	Skepp	Skib	Ship
Skûm	Skum	Skum	Skum	Foam
Skotsk	Skotsk	Skotska	Skotsk	Scottish
Skriuwe	Skrive	Skriva	Skrive	Write
Skuon	Sko	Skor	Sko	Shoes
Spaansk	Spansk	Spanska	Spansk	Spanish
Spegel	Speil	Spegel	Spejl	Mirror
Stjer	Stjerne	Stjärna	Stjerne	Star
Tige tank	Tusen takk	Tusen tack	Tusind tak	Thank you
Tiid	Tid	Tid	Tid	Time
Treppe	Trapp	Trappa	Trappe	Stairs

Easiest rules in Frisian

Maklikste regels yn it Frysk

Frisian is not difficult to learn, and you can make significant progress by understanding the following rules:

- A Frisian word never starts with a 'c', 'v', or 'z':
The 'v' sound is always represented as 'f'.
The 'c' sound is always represented as 'k'.
- The Frisian alphabet does not include the letters 'q' and 'x', and the letter 'c' is rarely used in the Frisian language.
- A Frisian word never ends with a 'g'. Instead, the 'g' turns into a 'ch'. The exception is when a Frisian word ends with 'ng'; in this case, the 'g' remains unchanged.
- The short 'e' sound, similar to that in English, is written as 'y' or 'i'.

Regarding 'Y' & 'I':

In Frisian, when a word transforms from an 'I-form' to another form, the 'y' vowel often becomes an 'i'. Consider the following example:

- 'Ik **y**t' (I eat)
- 'Wy **i**te' (We eat)
- In English: 'I eat' and 'We eat'

When a word changes into a form other than the 'I-form', the 'y' vowel becomes an 'i', as demonstrated in the example above.

Frisian Letters

Fryske Letters

This page will focus on some of the Frisian letters. There is an (almost) similar English pronunciation on the right side of the page to give you a good idea of the Frisian pronunciation.

‘â’	‘aw’	as in ‘Dawn’
‘ê’	‘he’	as in ‘Where’
‘g’	‘g’	as in ‘Girl’
‘i’	‘i’	as in ‘Bin’ or ‘e’ as in ‘Me’
‘i’/‘y’	‘e’	as in ‘He, She, We’
‘j’	‘y’	as in ‘You’
‘û’	‘o’	as in ‘Two’
‘w’	in Frisian is a sound in between ‘v’ and ‘w’ at the beginning of words.	
‘oe’	‘oo’	as in ‘Good’
‘ie’/‘ii’	‘ea’	as in ‘Leader’
‘ij’	‘y’	as in ‘By’
‘ei’	it is near to ‘y’	as in ‘My’
‘oa’	‘or’	as in ‘Bore’
‘ea’	‘ea’	as in ‘Gear’
‘ch’	as in Scottish ‘loch’	
‘iuw’	like ‘ee’ in ‘bee’ and ‘oo’ in ‘boot’ said together quickly.	

The letters b, d, t, f, h, k, l, m, n, s are (nearly) the same as English.

The little ‘hat’ (circumflex) on top of these letters: â, ô, ê make the sound of the regular ‘a’, ‘o’, ‘e’ longer. This *is not always* the case with ‘û’.

Pronouns

Foarnamwurden

Ik

Pronunciation:

I

* 'Ik' is also found in the Dutch language. However, this similarity is not due to Dutch influence, as 'Ik' was already present in Old Frisian, a language that predates Dutch.

Ik fyn it kâld.

[Eek fin it kahld]

I find it cold.

Dû/Do

Pronunciation:

You

*The choice between 'Dû' and 'Do' reflects a dialectal difference in Frisian. 'Dû' is used in Wâldfrysk (Wood Frisian), while 'Do' is prevalent in Klaaifrysk (Clay Frisian). Both forms are standardized within the language.

Dû bist myn freon.

[Do bist meen fray-on]

You are my friend.

Hy

Pronunciation:

He

Hy tinkt nei oer it libben.

[He tinkt nay oor it lib-ben]

He thinks about life.

Sy

Pronunciation:

She

Sy hat in hûn.

[Se haht in hoon]

She has a dog.

Wy

Pronunciation:

We

Wy wolle nei hûs.

[Ve vol-le nay hoos]

We want to go home.

Jim

Pronunciation:
You all

Jim hawwe it dien.

[Yim how-we it deen]
You have done it.

Jo

Pronunciation:
You (formal)

Jo binne bliid.

[Yoh bin-ne bleed]
You are happy (blithe).

Sy/Hja

Pronunciation:
They

Sy fine it noflik.

[Se fee-ne it nof-lik]
They find it nice.

*The term 'Hja' is not widely used nowadays. It's typically found in books or other forms of written text. 'Sy' is the more commonly used term in contemporary usage.

My

Pronunciation:
Me

Dat is foar my.

[Daht is for me]
That is for me.

Dy

Pronunciation:
You

Hy jout om dy.

[He yowt ohm dee]
He cares about you.

Him

Pronunciation:
Him

It komt fan him.

[It komt fon him]
It comes from him.

Dyn

Pronunciation:
Your

It is dyn hûs.

[It is deen hoos]
It is your house.