

Icelandic definite article (English ‘the’) is added to the end of a noun like a suffix, and has different forms depending on the gender of the noun it is added to:

*Masculine nouns* get **-inn**, or just **-nn** if the noun ends in a vowel: **dagurinn**, **lampinn**

*Feminine nouns* get **-in**, or just **-n** if the noun ends in a vowel: **flugstöðin**, **rútan**

*Neuter nouns* get **-ið**, or just **-ð** if the final letter is an unaccented vowel: **hóтелиð**, **herbergið** (from **herbergi**, ‘room’, a neuter noun of which the **-i** is not an ending), but: **bakaríð**

### Exercise 2

Now add the correct form of the definite article to all remaining nouns in Exercise 1.

### Personal pronouns

The definite article is only one example of how the gender of nouns affects other parts of speech in a sentence. Another example is personal pronouns. When referring back to a noun, Icelandic pronouns must reflect the gender of that noun, irrespective of meaning. In Dialogue 1, we heard Jón Einarsson say about the coach: **hún stoppar hérna**, *lit.* ‘she stops here’. While it may sound strange in English to refer to an inanimate object as ‘he’ or ‘she’, in Icelandic it makes perfect sense to do so. Obviously, however, personal pronouns can also be used to refer directly to a particular individual and will, in that case, reflect the sex of that individual.

The following are the singular personal pronouns in Icelandic:

<b>ég</b>	I
<b>þú</b>	you
<b>hann</b>	he
<b>hún</b>	she
<b>það</b>	it

### Dialogue 2



*Magnús bumps into his friend Ásdís and her acquaintance Raj. Where is Raj from? Where is he going?*

MAGNÚS: Komdu sæl og blessuð Ásdís!

ÁSDÍS: Sæll og blessaður Magnús! Gaman að sjá þig! Hvað segirðu gott?

MAGNÚS: Allt fint, en þú?

ÁSDÍS: Allt ágætt.

MAGNÚS: Það er gott að heyra. Og hver er þetta?

ÁSDÍS: Þetta er Raj Aluwahlia, kunningi minn.

MAGNÚS: Komdu sæll Raj. Magnús Gíslason heiti ég. Ert þú útlendingur?

RAJ: Já, ég er frá Kanada. Ég er núna í fríi á Íslandi.

MAGNÚS: Þú talar mjög góða íslensku.

RAJ: Takk fyrir, það er gaman að heyra.

MAGNÚS: Jæja, og hvað ætlar þú að gera núna Raj?  
 RAJ: Ég er að fara í Bláa Lónið. Rútan fer eftir smástund.  
 MAGNÚS: Má bjóða þér far?  
 RAJ: Já, þakka þér kærlega fyrir.  
 ÁSDÍS: Allt í lagi, vertu blessaður Magnús. Það var gaman að hitta þig.  
 MAGNÚS: Sömuleiðis, vertu blessuð.  
 ÁSDÍS: Við sjáumst Raj, blessaður.  
 RAJ: Bless.  
 MAGNÚS: *Hello Ásdís!*  
 ÁSDÍS: *Hello Magnús! Good to see you! How are you?*  
 MAGNÚS: *I'm fine, and you?*  
 ÁSDÍS: *I'm fine.*  
 MAGNÚS: *That's good to hear. And who is this?*  
 ÁSDÍS: *This is Raj Aluwahlia, an acquaintance of mine.*  
 MAGNÚS: *Hello Raj. Magnús Gíslason is my name. Are you from abroad?*  
 RAJ: *Yes, I'm from Canada. I am presently on holiday in Iceland.*  
 MAGNÚS: *You speak very good Icelandic.*  
 RAJ: *Thank you, that's nice to hear.*  
 MAGNÚS: *And what are you going to do now, Raj?*  
 RAJ: *I am going to the Blue Lagoon. The coach is leaving in a little while.*  
 MAGNÚS: *Can I offer you a lift?*  
 RAJ: *Yes, thank you very much.*  
 ÁSDÍS: *All right, goodbye Magnús. It was nice to meet you.*  
 MAGNÚS: *Likewise. Goodbye.*  
 ÁSDÍS: *See you Raj, bye.*  
 RAJ: *Bye.*

### Vocabulary notes

<b>gaman að sjá þig</b>	good to see you ( <b>gaman</b> , 'fun', 'great', 'nice', and <b>sjá</b> , 'see')
<b>það er gott að heyra</b>	that is good to hear ( <b>gott</b> , from <b>góður</b> 'good', and <b>heyra</b> 'hear')
<b>útlending/ur, m.</b>	foreigner
<b>í frí</b>	on holidays (from <b>frí</b> , <i>n.</i> 'holidays', 'vacation', 'off')
<b>Íslandi</b> , from <b>Ísland</b> , <i>n.</i>	Iceland
<b>Bláa Lónið</b>	the Blue Lagoon, a famous natural pool of warm geothermal sea-water rich in minerals, silica and blue green algae and renowned for its healing powers
<b>allt í lagi</b>	okay, all right
<b>sömuleiðis</b>	likewise, same to you, same here

### Greetings and courtesies



As you may have noticed in the preceding dialogue, a number of greetings in Icelandic have slightly different forms depending on whether one is addressing a male or a female.

Here are some common Icelandic greetings and courtesies, with their male and female forms where applicable:

*How do you do*

1 Semi-formal	<b>Komdu sæll</b>	to a man
	<b>Komdu sæl</b>	to a woman
2 Informal	<b>Komdu blessaður</b>	
	<b>Komdu sæll og blessaður</b>	to a man
	<b>Komdu blessaður og sæll</b>	
	<b>Komdu blessuð</b>	
	<b>Komdu sæl og blessuð</b>	to a woman
	<b>Komdu blessuð og sæl</b>	

*Hello how are you*

1 Hello	<b>Sæll</b>	
	<b>Blessaður</b>	to a man
	<b>Sæll og blessaður</b>	
	<b>Sæl</b>	
	<b>Blessuð</b>	to a woman
	<b>Sæl og blessuð</b>	
2 How are you	Q: <b>Hvað segirðu (gott)?</b>	<i>lit.</i> ‘What do you say?’
	A: <b>Allt gott,</b>	<i>lit.</i> ‘Everything good/fine/okay, and you?’
	<b>Allt fínt, en þú?</b>	
	<b>Allt ágætt,</b>	
	Q: <b>Hvernig hefurðu það?</b>	<i>lit.</i> ‘How do you have it?’
	A: <b>(Ég hef það) bara gott/fínt, en þú?</b>	<i>lit.</i> ‘(I have it) just fine, and you?’
	Q: <b>Hvað er að fréttu (af þér)?</b>	<i>lit.</i> ‘What’s the news (from you)?’
	A: <b>Allt gott,</b>	<i>lit.</i> ‘Everything
	<b>Allt fínt, en hjá þér?</b>	good/fine/okay,
	<b>Allt ágætt</b>	and from you?’

*Good day*

<b>Góðan daginn/</b>	<i>lit.</i> ‘good day’, is the equivalent of English ‘good morning’ and ‘good afternoon’, and is a widely used greeting in formal situations (going into shops, classrooms, offices, etc.). It is also used in informal situations first thing in the morning after one gets up.
<b>Góðan dag</b>	
<b>Gott kvöld/</b>	‘Good evening’, used after 6 p.m. as above.
<b>Góða kvöldið</b>	
<b>Góða nótt</b>	Good night

*Goodbye*

Same as ‘how-do-you-do’, but replace **komdu** with **vertu**:

**vertu sæll/sæl**  
**vertu blessaður/blessuð**

In informal situations, it is also common to use:

**þess þess**, or just: **þess**

the equivalent of 'bye (bye)' in English, or:

**við sjáumst**, see you (*lit.* 'we [will] see each other')

*Thank you*

- |               |                                  |   |
|---------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 Semi-formal | <b>Þakka þér (kærlega) fyrir</b> | <i>lit.</i> 'Thank you (kindly/ very much)' |
| 2 Informal    | <b>Takk (fyrir)</b>              | 'Thanks'                                    |
|               | A: <b>Það var ekkert</b>         | <i>lit.</i> 'It was nothing', not at all    |

*Other common courtesies*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Excuse me                                     | <b>Fyrirgefðu Afsakið</b>                               |
| 2 Welcome                                       | <b>Velkominn</b> to a man<br><b>Velkomin</b> to a woman |
| 3 Can you tell me (where...is?)                 | <b>Getur þú sagt mér (hvar...er)?</b>                   |
| 4 Q: 'What is your name?'                       | <b>Hvað heitir þú?</b>                                  |
| A: 'My name is...'                              | <b>Ég heiti...</b>                                      |
| 5 Q: 'Where are you from?'                      | <b>Hvaðan ert þú?</b>                                   |
| A: '(I am) from...'                             | <b>(Ég er) frá...</b>                                   |
| 6 'What is this called in Icelandic?'           | <b>Hvað heitir þetta á íslensku?</b>                    |
| 7 'Can I offer you (a ride, a seat, a coffee)?' | <b>Má bjóða þér (far, sæti, kaffi)?</b>                 |

### Athugið (NB)

In Iceland, the distinction between semi-formal and informal is not quite the same as in, for instance, the UK. In Iceland, everyone is addressed by their first name, without any titles, irrespective of social standing or age. While it is common to greet a complete stranger with more formality than a friend, it is unlikely you will seriously offend if you use a less formal greeting.

### Exercise 3



You are a tourist visiting Reykjavík for the first time. You are looking to find **Dómkirkja**, the cathedral, without much success it seems, so you decide to ask. Fill in the gaps in the following dialogue, using the information provided above.

YOU: (1. *Good day*) \_\_\_\_\_.

MAN: Góðan dag.

YOU: (2. *Excuse me, can you tell me where the Dómkirkja is?*) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_?

MAN: Dómkirkjan, já, hún er hérna rétt við Hótel Borg.

YOU: (3. *Thank you very much.*) \_\_\_\_\_.

MAN: Það var ekkert. Ert þú útlendingur?

YOU: (4. *Yes, I am English*) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.