

# **The Essential Danish Grammar**

# I Language history

Like Swedish and Norwegian, Danish is a Scandinavian language that belongs to the German branch of the Indo-European family of languages. Danish is also related to German and English.

As to vocabulary Danish is closely related to German. Where inflection is concerned Danish has undergone a development which means that modern Danish, as opposed to modern German, has a rather reduced inflection system. This is a development that Danish shares with English.

## II Nouns

### 1. Gender

The Danish nouns are subdivided into classes according to their "grammatical gender" (Genus).

A division that originally was conditioned by the meaning of the noun.

The term "gender", meaning grammatical gender, is not to be confused with biological gender, meaning male and female, but is simply to do with classification of objects or names of objects (nouns).

English does not have this kind of classification.

It is generally supposed that the original Indo-European mother language contained three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter.

In Danish the masculine and feminine are fused into one gender which is called common gender. So modern Danish has two genders, common gender and neuter.

COMMON GENDER

(N-WORDS)

- en mand *a man*

NEUTER

(T-WORDS)

- et hus *a house*

Gender is indicated by articles. In the example above by the indefinite articles "en" and "et".

Furthermore the gender has consequences for pronouns and for adjective inflection.

In common speech common gender nouns with the article "en" are often called N-words. In common speech neuter nouns with the article "et" are often called T-words.

## 2. **Singular and plural**

The Danish nouns have singular and plural forms. Plural endings on Danish nouns are:

- 1) "-(e)r"
- 2) "-e"
- 3) ÷ (One group of nouns have the same singular and plural forms).

SINGULAR		PLURAL	
en kvinde	<i>a woman</i>	mange kvinde-r	<i>many women</i>
en hund	<i>a dog</i>	mange hund-e	<i>many dogs</i>
et får	<i>a sheep</i>	mange får	<i>many sheep</i>

## 3. **Indefinite and definite**

The Danish nouns have indefinite and definite forms.

The indefinite article of common gender nouns is "en" (*a/an*).

For neuter nouns it is "et" (*a/an*).

In the plural the indefinite pronoun "nogle" ("some") is used as the indefinite article for both grammatical genders (when the noun is referring to specific objects).

	INDEFINITE COMMON GEND.		INDEFINITE NEUTER	
SINGULAR	en kvinde	<i>a woman</i>	et hus	<i>a house</i>
PLURAL	nogle kvinder	<i>some women</i>	nogle huse	<i>some houses</i>

## Definite

The definite article in Danish is enclitic (an ending/a suffix placed on the noun).

Nouns that belong to the common gender class use the definite article "-(e)n".

Nouns that belong to the neuter gender class use the definite article "-(e)t".

In the plural the ending is "-(e)ne" for both genders.

**NB** The definite plural ending is added to the plural form of the noun, not to the singular form.

	DEFINITE		DEFINITE	
	COMMON GENDER		NEUTER	
SINGULAR	kvinde-n	<i>the woman</i>	hus-et	<i>the house</i>
PLURAL	kvinder-ne	<i>the women</i>	huse-ne	<i>the houses</i>

When the noun is qualified by an adjective the definite article is not an ending. Instead the article ("den", "det" and "de") is placed before the adjective. Historically "den", "det" and "de" are a weakened version of the demonstrative pronoun.

- den smukke kvinde      *the beautiful woman*
- det smukke hus          *the beautiful house*
- de smukke kvinder      *the beautiful women*
- de smukke huse          *the beautiful houses*

"Den" is used before nouns of the common gender class.  
(N-words)

"Det" is used before nouns of the neuter gender class.  
(T-words)

"De" is used in the plural whatever the gender is.

## No article

Danish nouns in the singular and plural can also appear without an article, some with indefinite or unspecific mean-

ing and some with a general meaning (when you generalise about things) f.ex:

- Han har hund      *He has a dog (dogs)*
- Han sælger biler      *He sells cars*
- Han elsker kvinder      *He loves women (= all women)*

A danish sentence can only begin with an indefinite noun if this is generic (applies to a whole group). For example

- En løve er et farligt dyr      *A lion is a dangerous animal*
- This statement refers in principle to all lions, ie the whole species.

In other situations you must use "der ..." constructions.

- Der kommer en bil      *There is a car coming*  
AND NOT    ~~En bil kommer~~
- Der er en mand der slår sin hund  
AND NOT    ~~En mand slår sin hund~~  
*There is a man who is beating his dog*

#### **4. Case**

Apart from the genitive, Danish nouns do not inflect for case. The genitive marker is the ending "-s".

- |   | SINGULAR, DEFINITE       |           | SINGULAR, DEFINITE, GENITIVE |
|---|--------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| • | kvinden <i>the woman</i> | kvinden-s | <i>the woman's</i>           |
| • | huset <i>the house</i>   | huset-s   | <i>of the house</i>          |

- |   | PLURAL, DEFINITE           |              | PLURAL, DEFINITE, GENITIVE |
|---|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| • | kvinderne <i>the women</i> | kvinderne -s | <i>the women's</i>         |
| • | husene <i>the houses</i>   | husene -s    | <i>of the houses</i>       |

## II Pronouns

### 1. Personal pronouns

The Danish personal pronouns have both subject and object forms:

	SINGULAR		PLURAL					
	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Object</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Object</i>				
1. P	jeg	<i>I</i>	mig	<i>me</i>	vi	<i>we</i>	os	<i>us</i>
2. P	du	<i>you</i>	dig	<i>you</i>	I	<i>you</i>	jer	<i>you</i>
3. P	han	<i>he</i>	ham	<i>him</i>	de	<i>they</i>	dem	<i>them</i>
	hun	<i>she</i>	hende	<i>her</i>	"		"	
	den	<i>it</i>	den	<i>it</i>	"		"	
	det	<i>it</i>	det	<i>it</i>	"		"	

The pronouns in the third person singular are divided into categories "human" and "non human":

#### HUMAN

##### *Subjekt*

han

hun

##### *Objekt*

ham (referring to male humans)

hende (referring to female humans)

#### NON HUMAN

den (referring to common gender nouns)

det (referring to neuter nouns)

The "human" category is subdivided into the two biological genders male and female.

The "non human" category is subdivided into two grammatical genders, "common gender" and "neuter".

The "non human" category typically includes names of things, places and animals.

## 2. **Reflexive pronouns**

Danish has reflexive verbs, for example "at vaske sig" ("to wash oneself").

"Sig" is the reflexive pronoun in the third person singular.

- Han vasker sig      *He washes (himself)*
- Hun vasker sig      *She washes (herself)*
- De vasker sig      *They wash (themselves)*

Apart from the third person the object pronoun is used as reflexive pronoun, fx:

- Jeg vasker mig      *I wash (myself)*
- Du vasker dig      *You wash (yourself)*

## 3. **Possessive pronouns**

The Danish possessive adjectives in the first and second person singular agree with the noun according to grammatical gender and number, for example:

- min bil      *my car*
- mit hus      *my house*
- mine biler      *my cars*
- mine huse      *my houses*

**NB** These examples are referring to the first person singular, the possessor being "I".

The three forms "min", "mit" and "mine" do not (in grammatical terms) agree with the possessor (First person singular "jeg", meaning "I"), but with the possession, which, in the above examples are common gender – "en bil" (a car) – neuter – "et hus" (a house) and the plural of both - "biler" and "huse".

### SINGULAR (POSSESSOR)

*Com. gend. possession Neuter possession Plural possession*

- |      |        |                |  |                |      |                |
|------|--------|----------------|--|----------------|------|----------------|
| 1. P | min    | <i>my/mine</i> | mit  | <i>my/mine</i> | mine | <i>my/mine</i> |
| 2. P | din    | <i>your(s)</i> | dit  | <i>your(s)</i> | dine | <i>your(s)</i> |
| 3. P | hans   | <i>his</i>     | (possessor: human, male)                                   |                |      |                |
|      | hendes | <i>her</i>     | (possessor: human, female)                                 |                |      |                |
|      | dens   | <i>its</i>     | (possessor: non human,<br>referring to common gender noun) |                |      |                |
|      | dets   | <i>its</i>     | (possessor: non human, referring to<br>neuter noun)        |                |      |                |

### PLURAL (POSSESSOR)

- |      |       |                 |
|------|-------|-----------------|
| 1. P | vores | <i>our(s)</i>   |
| 2. P | jeres | <i>your(s)</i>  |
| 3. P | deres | <i>their(s)</i> |

## 4. **Possessive reflexive adjective**

In the third person singular Danish has a possessive reflexive adjective "sin", "sit", "sine", inflected like "min", "mit", "mine".

- Hun elsker sin mand *She loves her husband (her own)*
- Han elsker sin kone *He loves his wife (his own)*
- Han elsker hans kone *He loves his wife (another man's)*



### III Adjectives

#### 1. Declination in number and gender

Most Danish adjectives have three forms.

Danish adjectives inflect in accordance with grammatical gender and number, but not in accordance with case.

BASIC FORM (COMMON GENDER)	T-FORM (NEUTER)	E-FORM (PLURAL)
• stor <i>big</i>	stor-t <i>big</i>	stor-e <i>big</i>

The Danish adjectives agree in gender and number with the noun they describe (qualify).

Gender inflection applies only to the singular.

In the plural it does not differentiate between "N"-words (Common gender) and "T"-words (Neuter).

#### ATTRIBUTIVE USE

- en stor bil  
*a big car*
- et stort hus  
*a big house*
- store biler  
*big cars*
- store huse  
*big houses*

#### PREDICATIVE USE

- bilen er stor  
*the car is big*
- huset er stort  
*the house is big*
- bilerne er store  
*the cars are big*
- husene er store  
*the houses are big*

#### 2. Strong and weak inflection

The adjectives have two different inflections, strong and weak.

The strong inflection ("stor", "stort" and "store") (as demonstrated in the examples shown above) is used in two cases:

In predicative use and in attributive use after indefinite articles, and when you have no articles at all.

The weak inflection ("store") of the adjective occurs after the definite markers like the definite article ("den", "det" or "de", used before adjectives), possessive pronouns and genitives.

When the adjectives' inflection is weak the E-form is used despite gender or number.

#### SINGULAR

- den store bil            *the big car*
- min store bil            *my big car*
- Peters store bil        *Peter's big car*
- det store hus            *the big house*
- mit store hus            *my big house*
- Peters store hus        *Peter's big house*

#### PLURAL

- de store biler            *the big cars*
- mine store biler        *my big cars*
- Peters store biler       *Peter's big cars*
- de store huse            *the big houses*
- mine store huse        *my big houses*
- Peters store huse       *Peter's big houses*

### **3. Comparison**

Danish adjectives can be inflected in three degrees.

The comparative is made by adding "-(e)re" to the basic form.

The superlative is made by adding "-(e)st" to the basic form.

POSITIVE	høj	<i>tall</i>
COMPARATIVE	høj-ere	<i>taller</i>
SUPERLATIVE	høj-est	<i>tallest</i>

With certain adjectives, especially long ones, comparative or superlative forms are made with the help of the adverbs "mere" (*more*) and "mest" (*most*).

POSITIVE	intelligent	<i>intelligent</i>
COMPARATIVE	mere intelligent	<i>more intelligent</i>
SUPERLATIVE	mest intelligent	<i>most intelligent</i>

## **IV Verbs**

### **1. Infinitive**

In Danish the infinitive form of the verb is constructed by adding "-e" to the verbs stem (the shortest form of the verb). The infinite form is used when a verb has noun characteristics, for example when it takes the grammatical role of subject.

- At rejse er dejligt                      *To travel is lovely*

Infinitives are used both in connection with modal verbs and a number of other verbs.

With modal verbs "at" disappears from before the infinitive.

- Jeg skal rejse (modal verb: "skal")    *I shall travel*
- Jeg elsker at rejse                      *I love to travel*

The infinitive is the form of the verb used as the reference word in dictionaries.

### **2. Participles**

Participles are verbal forms that are typically used as adjectives. In Danish there are two participles, present participle and perfect participle:

PRESENT PARTICIPLE:	spis-ende	<i>eating</i>
PERFECT PARTICIPLE:	spis-t	<i>eaten</i>

## 2. **Person and number**

Danish verbs do not inflect in accordance with person and number. The same verbal form is used in the singular and the plural and also in the first, second and third persons.

- Jeg spiser            *I eat/I am eating*
- Han spiser           *He eats/He is eating*
- De spiser            *They eat/They are eating*

## 3. **Tense**

Danish verbs traditionally inflect in four tenses.

	PRESENT	PAST	PRESENT PERFECT	PAST PERFECT
1)	hent-er	hent-ede	har hent-et	havde hent-et
	<i>fetch(es)</i>	<i>fetch(ed)</i>	<i>has/have fetch(ed)</i>	<i>had fetch(ed)</i>
2)	spis-er	spis-te	har spis-t	havde spis-t
	<i>eat(s)</i>	<i>ate</i>	<i>has/have eaten</i>	<i>had eaten</i>
3)	gå-r	gik	er gået	var gået
	<i>go(es)</i>	<i>went</i>	<i>has/have gone</i>	<i>had gone</i>

### **Present**

#### **Form**

The present form is made by adding "-(e)r" to the stem.

- jeg spis-er            *I eat/I am eating*
- jeg gå-r                *I walk/I am walking*

#### **Usage**

The present form is used for actions and events that take place at the time of speaking.

- Drengen spiser (lige nu)    *The boy is eating (right now)*

Danish does not have a progressive verb form as in English "is eating". The actions' continuing duration (durative aspect) throughout the speaking time is emphasized by the use of position verbs.

- Drengen sidder og spiser  
*The boy is eating (litt.: sits and eats)*
- Drengen ligger og sover  
*The boy is sleeping (litt.: lies and sleeps)*

The present form can also be used with actions that repeat themselves or are habitual. (habitual aspect)

- Drengen spiser altid klokken 12  
*The boy always eats at 12 o'clock*
- Solen går ned om aftenen  
*The sun sets in the evening*

## **Past (Preterite)**

### ***Form***

The Danish past form is made in three ways.

- Group 1 with the ending "-ede"
- Group 2 with the ending "-te"
- Group 3 Irregular inflection (a smaller group of frequently used verbs).

### ***Usage***

The past form is used typically in relation to finished actions that take place at definite times or during definite time periods in the past.

- Drengen spiste klokken 12  
*The boy ate at 12 o'clock*
- Han arbejdede i Tyskland under krigen  
*He worked in Germany during the war*

The actions continuing duration throughout the time of speaking can be emphasized by using the past form in combination with verbs of position.

- Drengen sad og spiste  
*The boy was eating (litt.: sat and ate)*

- Drengen lå og sov  
*The boy was sleeping (litt.: lay and slept)*

### ***Special usage***

The past tense can be used with present situations when one is expressing counter-factual meaning, i.e. situations that are not real but only wished or imagined.

- Bare jeg var konge (nu)    *If only I were King (now)*

The past form can also be used when expressing feelings:

- Det var en overraskelse!    *What a surprise!*

## **Perfect**

### ***Form***

The present perfect form consists of an auxiliary verb "har" or "er" (*has/have* or *is/am/are*) and the perfect participle with the ending "-(e)t".

- Han har spis-t        *He has eaten*
- Han er komm-et     *He has come*

All verbs that have an object (transitive verbs), use forms of the auxiliary verb "at have" (*to have*).

Some verbs that do not have an object (intransitive verbs), for example some verbs of movement, use forms of the auxiliary verb "at være" (*to be*).

### ***Usage***

The perfect form has two central areas of use.

1) About actions that take place at indefinite times in the past but still have consequences for the present .

- Han har rejst meget i udlandet  
*He has travelled a lot abroad.*

The time of the persons journey is not defined but the action

or activity has consequences for the present.

The sentence can therefore be interpreted in the following way:

- *He has (now) much experience with foreign countries as a result of his travels.*

**NB** In certain situations the present perfect form can however be used in combination with specific time indication fx "i morges" (this morning):

- Hun har vasket op i morges  
*She did the washing up this morning*

Used in this (referential) way the present perfect can mean:

= Jeg erfarer at hun har vasket op i morges

- *I understand (from report or from evidence) that she washed up this morning*

2) When one describes actions that take place in sequence. The perfect form is used for describing an action that takes place before another action in the present or in the future:

- Når jeg har spist, vasker jeg altid op  
*When I have eaten, I always do the dishes*
- Når han er kommet, vil jeg lave en god middag  
*When he has come, I'll make a good dinner*

The first example refers to a habitual action.

The second example refers to a future action.

This usage is often called "relative tense" as one sees two actions in relation to each other. One follows the other.

## **Past perfect**

### ***Form***

The past perfect form is constructed with the help of an auxiliary verb "havde" (*had*) or "var" (*was/were*) and a participle.

- Han havde spis-t            *He had eaten*
- Han var komm-et            *He had come*

### *Usage*

The past perfect is primarily used to describe an action that takes place before another action in the past. (Relative tense)

- Da jeg havde spist, vaskede jeg op  
*When I had eaten, I washed up*

## **4. Modality**

### **1. Modal verbs**

When expressing wishes, intentions, prohibitions or demands there are no special forms of the verb (modes) to express this.

Instead it is usual to use modal verbs in combination with an infinitive:

- Jeg vil (gerne) rejse (wish)            *I want to travel*
- Jeg skal rejse (intention)            *I am going to travel*
- Han må ikke rejse (prohibition) *He is not allowed to travel*

**NB:** Old Danish used to have a "wish form" but it is now only found in a number of fixed phrases:

- Leve kongen!            *Long live the King*

### **2. Imperative**

The Imperative form is the shortest possible form of the verb:

- Spis din mad!            *Eat your food!*
- Kom her!            *Come here!*

The imperative is not only used with orders, which is the basic meaning, but also f.ex when one offers advice, makes suggestions or makes requests.



- Gå til lægen, det er mit råd  
*Go to the doctor, that's my advice*

## 5. **Active og passive**

The Danish verbs have active and passive forms. although this applies only to transitive verbs (verbs that have an object).

Danish has two passive forms.

### 1. "Blive"-passive

"Blive"-passive is made with the help of a form of the verb "at blive" and the perfect participle.

#### AKTIV

PRESENT	PAST	PRESENT PERFECT	PAST PERFECT
hent-er	hent-ede	har hent-et	havde hent-et
<i>fetch(es)</i>	<i>fetched</i>	<i>has fetched</i>	<i>had fetched</i>

#### PASSIV

PRESENT	PAST	PRESENT PERFECT	PAST PERFECT
bliver hentet	blev hentet	er blevet hentet	var blevet hentet
<i>is fetched</i>	<i>was fetched</i>	<i>has been fetched</i>	<i>had been fetched</i>

"Blive"-passive has two main functions.

a) When the thing that something happens to is presented as the theme. (Our primary focus of communication we call "the theme"):

- Hunden bed katten (Theme: "Hunden")  
*The dog bit the cat*
- Katten blev bidt af hunden (Theme: "Katten")  
*The cat was bitten by the dog*

These two sentences have the same meaning, but in the first sentence it is the dog, (the doer of the biting), that is the theme of the communication.

In the second sentence it is the cat (the thing that the action is directed towards) that is the theme of the communication.

b) When one generally wishes to downplay the actioner (the doer), this is ultimately done by not mentioning him, her or it:

- Katten blev bidt                    *The cat was bitten*

In this sentence who or what that did the biting is omitted.

## 2. "S"-passive

In Danish a so called "S"-passive can be made from a number of verbs. It is constructed by adding "-s" to the present and past forms.

S-passive cannot be made from the present perfect or past perfect forms.

	PRESENT	PAST
AKTIV	hent-er <i>fetch(es)</i>	hent-ede <i>fetched</i>
S-PASSIV	hen-tes <i>is fetched</i>	hen-tede-s <i>was fetched</i>

S- passive is mostly used with repeated or habitual actions.

- Børnene hentes hver dag kl. 9

*The children are picked up every day at 9 o'clock*

## V Adverbs

### 1. Adverbs of manner

The adjectives' T-form can be used as an adverb, i.e. in order to describe an action or an event expressed via a verb.

Below the action of singing is described with the help of the adverb "smukt" (*beautifully*).

- Hun synger smuk-t            *She sings beautiful-ly*

These types of adverbs are called adverbs of manner.

## 2. **Modal adverbs**

A number of Danish adverbs express the speakers attitude, often in relation to the amount of certainty involved. This applies to the adverb "nok" which can roughly be translated to "jeg tror at" ("I think that").

- Hun kommer *nok* i morgen
- = *Jeg tror at* hun kommer i morgen  
*I think that she will come tomorrow*

## 3. **Adverbs of place**

A number of Danish adverbs are used to indicate direction or place, for example "ind" (about a movement from outside to inside) and "inde" (about an inside position), "ud" (about a movement from inside to outside) and "ude" (about an outside position).

The short form ("ind" and "ud") indicates a movement. The long form (E -form), indicates staying within an area, for example;

- Han går ud i skoven *He goes out (in)to the wood*
- Han går ude i skoven *He walks around in the wood*

In the first example the person leaves one place and comes to another place "out to the wood".

In the second example he does not leave the wood. He stays in the same area, namely the wood.

## 4. **Phrasal adverbs**

Sometimes a verb and an adverb form a fixed phrase, for example "at sigt op" (*to quit (a job)*).

- Han har sagt op *He has given in his notice*
- Han har sagt sit job op *He has given up his job*

## VI Prepositions

### 1. Prepositional phrases

Prepositions are typically used in connection with nouns or nominals. Preposition + nominal = prepositional phrase.

- Han sidder *på* bordet      *He is sitting on the table*

PREP. NOM.

Prepositions can also govern infinitives or subordinate clauses.

- Han venter *på* at komme ind      *He is waiting to get in*
- Han venter *på* at de kommer  
*He is waiting for them to come*

### 2. Time and place

Prepositions are typically used in expressions about time and place.

- Bogen ligger *på* bordet      *The book is on the table*
- Jeg bor *i* Danmark      *I live in Denmark*
- Jeg arbejder *om* fredagen      *I work on Fridays*

### 3. Preposition + adverb

In Danish prepositions are often used in combination with adverbs of place and direction like "ind" and "nede".

- Han gik ind i skoven      *He went into the wood*
- Han går nede *på* stranden      *He is walking down on the beach*

### 4. Syntax

Prepositional phrases are typically placed at the beginning or at the end of a sentence:

- I Danmark bor der 5 millioner mennesker  
*In Denmark there live 5 million people*
- Der bor 5 millioner mennesker i Danmark  
*There live 5 million people in Denmark*

## VII Subordinate Clauses

### 1. "At"- and "om"-clauses

The conjunctions "at" (= *that*) and "om" (= *if*) are the general markers of subordination in subordinate clauses.

"At" is used to introduce statements, "om" is used to introduce questions. "At" and "om" are used in subject and object clauses and in clauses governed by prepositions (see VI, 1):

- Han sagde at de ville komme (object-clause, statement)  
*He said that they would come*
- Han spurgte om de ville komme (object-clause, question)  
*He asked if they would come*

### 2. Relative clauses

Danish does not, in the strictest sense, have relative pronouns, instead conjunctions and adverbs are used:

- Manden der skrev brevet, er død ("der" = subjectmarker)  
*The man who wrote the letter is dead*
- Brevet som jeg fik i går, er blevet væk  
*The letter that I got yesterday, has disappeared*
- Pigen som jeg venter på, er fra Island  
*The girl that I am waiting for is from Iceland*
- Drengen hvis mor er død, græder  
*The boy whose mother is dead, is crying*
- Der er mange hunde i huset hvor jeg bor  
*There are many dogs in the house where I live*

### 3. Conjunctions of time

The most frequently used conjunctions of time are "da" and "når" both meaning *when*. "Da" is used only for past time, and only when referring to a single event:

- Han lo da han så mig *He laughed when he saw me*
- Han lo altid når han så mig  
*He always laughed when he saw me*

## VIII Word order

Whilst Danish is not a case language and is generally low on inflection, word order plays an important role.

The typical word order is SVO (subject verb object).

- Han spiser et æble                      *He is eating an apple*

### 1. Questions

In Danish, questions of the yes/no type are constructed by placing the verb at the beginning of the sentence followed by the subject.

- Han spiser kød              (Statement)  
*He eats meat*
- Spiser han kød?              (Question)  
*Does he eat meat?*

In questions that use a question word the verb immediately follows the question word.

- Hvad spiser du?                      *What are you eating?*
- Hvem spiste kødet?                      *Who ate the meat?*

### 2. Sentence adverbs

So called sentence adverbs i.e. adverbs that define a whole sentence, for example "ikke" (*not*), are placed after the verb and subject but before the object.

- Han spiser ikke kød                      *He doesn't eat meat*
- Spiser han ikke kød?                      *Doesn't he eat meat?*

If the object is an unstressed pronoun like "det" (*it*) then "ikke" is placed after the object.

- Han spiser det ikke                      *He doesn't eat it*
- Spiser han det ikke?                      *Doesn't he eat it?*