

TURKMEN

LANGUAGE  
FUNDAMENTALS

## 1.0: Brief Introduction to the Turkmen Language

The Turkmen Language belongs to the greater family of Turkic languages. The Turkic languages, together with the Mongolian and Manchu-Tungus languages, form the Altaic language group. Specifically, Turkmen is included in the sub-group of Southern Turkic languages, along with Turkish and Azeri. Among all the Turkic languages, there are similar grammatical structures, similar phonetics and some shared vocabulary.

In some ways Turkmen is an easy language to learn. Unlike Russian or Spanish, Turkmen has no genders. There are no irregular verbs. For the most parts, words are written exactly as they are pronounced. Finally, Turkmen's grammatical case system is remarkably simple once understood, and has almost no exceptions.

The greatest difficulty for beginning Turkmen speakers will probably be adapting to Turkmen's elaborate system of grammatical suffixes, or "tag words" and learning to re-order their speech so that the predicate (verb) is the last thing spoken. Also, many simple English grammatical structures (such as "to have", "to need", or "to be able to") are handled differently in Turkmen.

## 1.2 Brief Discussion on the Alphabets

The Turkmen alphabet was first written in Arabic, until about 1930, when a Latin script was introduced. The Latin script was replaced in 1940 when all Turkic people in the Soviet Union were required to adopt the Cyrillic script. Finally, in 1995, the "Täze Elipbiýi" or New Alphabet was formally introduced by the President to re-align Turkmenistan with the non-Soviet world. (Similar new alphabets have been introduced in Uzbekistan and other republics.) The New Alphabet is currently used for street signs and political slogans, but there is a severe deficit of other reading materials. But at the beginning it took a time to adapt. Due to some usage problems some alphabets were changed a few times. Last update was on 2000

## 1.3 Learning the New Alphabet

The new alphabet is much easier for native English speakers to read and understand than is the Cyrillic, and also seems better suited to the Turkmen language. For this reason we have used it in the grammar discussions of this text. Most all letters are pronounced more or less like their English counterparts. The unusual letters are as follows:

Alphabet English Equivalent

<b>Aa</b>	always the long a, as in "father"
<b>Ää</b>	always the short a, as in "cat"
<b>Çç</b>	ch, as in "cheese"

<b>Gg</b>	when starting a word, voiced like the English "g" in "go". Within words, voiced like the throaty "g" in "bag"
<b>li</b>	ee, as in see
<b>Oo</b>	always the long o, as in go
<b>Öö</b>	oo, as in good but rounder
<b>Rr</b>	r, pronounced with a slight trill
<b>Uu</b>	always the long u, as in flute
<b>Üü</b>	like u, but pronounced with rounded lips and higher in the throat
<b>Ww</b>	w, as in "water" (in Russian words, v, as in "very")
<b>Yy</b>	i, as in sit
<b>Ýý</b>	y, as in yes
<b>Ňň</b>	ng, as in song
<b>Žž</b>	zh, as in pleasure (mostly found in Russian words)
<b>Şş</b>	sh, as in wash

## 1.5 Vowel Harmony

One very interesting feature of Turkmen is that all vowels can be divided into two groups, the front vowels (inçe çekimli sesler) and the back vowels (ýogyn çekimli sesler). Front vowels are pronounced higher in the throat and are more nasal, while back vowels are pronounced lower in the throat and are more guttural. The front vowels are ä, e, i, ö, and ü. The back vowels are a, y, o, and u. The "harmony" lies in the fact that all Turkmen words of Turkic origin are pronounced either entirely with front vowels, like kädä (pumpkin) or köwüş (shoes), or with back vowels, like doganlyk (brotherhood) or mugallym (teacher). Grammatical and verb suffixes also follow vowel harmony, being divided into two groups for front-vowel words and back-vowel words. For example, the front-vowel plural suffix -ler would be added to kädä to form the word for "pumpkins," whereas the back-vowel plural suffix -lar would be added to mugallym to produce "teachers." In short, front vowels go with front vowels and back vowels with back. Subsequent suffix appendices will more completely explain applications of this rule.

Turkmen has many Russian words, such as telewizor (television) and radio (radio), that have simply been incorporated into the language. These are spelled exactly according to the original Russian and often have both front and back vowels within one word. Such is true for the numerous Turkmen words of Persian and Arabic origin, such as kitap (book), dükan (shop), and serdar (leader). In these cases, consistent with the general rule for vowel harmony in Turkmen, the final vowel of the word determines the vowel harmony for suffixation. Verbs in Turkmen adhere consistently to vowel harmony. All verbs belong to one of two groups determined by their infinitive forms: those ending in -mak, and those ending in -mek. The suffixes for all -mak verbs have only back vowels, whereas only front vowels will be found in the suffixes of -mek verbs. Examples of this will follow in the explanations of verb tenses.

Türkmen elipbiýinde 30 sany harp bar.  
There are 30 letters in Turkmen Alphabet.

**A a, B b, Ç ç, D d, E e, Ä ä, F f, G g, H h, I i, J j, Ž ž,  
K k, L l, M m, N n, Ň ň, O o, Ö ö, P p, R r, S s, Ş ş, T t,  
U u, Ü ü, W w, Y y, Ý ý, Z z**

No	Harpyň ady	Türkmen elipbiýinde okalysy	Pronunciation In English
1	<b>A a</b>	a - at	/a/ - <u>cut</u>
2	<b>B b</b>	be - baýdak	/b/ - <u>b</u> ottle
3	<b>Ç ç</b>	çe - çäýnek	(ch)- <u>ch</u> air
4	<b>D d</b>	de - düýe	/d/ - <u>d</u> ark
5	<b>E e</b>	e - elek	/e/ - <u>E</u> lene
6	<b>Ä ä</b>	ä - äýnek	/æ/ - <u>a</u> pple
7	<b>F f</b>	fe - fabrik	/f/ - <u>f</u> actory

8 **G g**

ge - gerb



Gg

/g/ - **g**arage

9 **H h**

he - horaz



Hh

/h/ - **h**orn

10 **I i**

i - iňňe



Ii

/i/ - **E**ve

11 **J j**

je - jorap



Jj

(j) - **j**am

12 **Ž ž**

že - žiraf



Žž

(zh) - **g**arage

13 **K k**

ka - kirpi



Kk

/k/ - **c**arpet

14 **L l**

el - limon



Ll

/l/ - **l**emon

15 **M m**

em - maýmyn



Mm

/m/ - **m**onkey

16 **N n**

en - nar



Nn

/n/ - **n**ap

17 **Ň ň**

eň - töňňe



Ňň

(ng) - **s**pring

18 **O o**

o - otly



/o/ - Noah

Oo

19 **Ö ö**

ö - öküz



(ir:) - sir

Öö

20 **P p**

pe - pişik



/p/ - peaK

Pp

21 **R r**

er - ručka



/r/ - race

Rr

22 **S s**

es - saat



/s/- sircle

Ss

23 **Ş ş**

şe - şar



(sh) - shark

Şş

24 **T t**

te - top



/t/ - toe

Tt

25 **U u**

u - uçar



/u/ - underuood

Uu

26 **Ü ü**

ü - üzüm



(ü) - food (Australian)

[actually there's no exact word for representation of pronunciation of this letter in English]

Üü

27 **W w**

we - wertolýot



/v/ - van

Ww

28 **Y y**

y - yz



(?) - enam (in BM)

29 **Ý ý**

ýe - ýolbars



(y) - yield

30 **Z z**

ze - zemzem



/z/ - zebra

## 1.6 Long and Short Vowels

Another interesting feature of Turkmen is the use of long and short vowels. Short vowels are like those in English, like the a in "bar." Long vowels simply require pronouncing short vowels for the duration of two vowels. Often this difference in duration is all that distinguishes the meanings of two words, as in the pairs below:

SHORT		LONG	
at	horse	at	name
gyz	get excited! (imperative)	gyz	girl
bil	know! (imperative)	bil	waist
ot	grass	ot	fire
öç	extinguish! (imperative)	öç	revenge
gurt	curd, dry cheese	gurt	wolf, worm
düş	come down! (imperative)	düş	dream

## 1.7 Vocal Transformations

Certain consonant combinations are rendered differently in spoken Turkmen than their written forms would indicate. For example, the nd of mende (on my person) is pronounced "nn" when spoken (menne). The following chart will illustrate these combinations and examples with the spoken transformations rendered in the new alphabet.:

Written	Spoken	Written	Spoken	Translation
n + d	nn	sende	senne	on your person
l + d	ll	aldym	allym	I took
z + d	zz	agyзда	agyzza	in the mouth
s + d	ss	bäsdeş	bässeş	rival
s + t	ss	üsti	üssi	top, surface
ş + j	şş	goşjak	goşşak	will add
z + s	ss	ýazsyn	ýassyn	let him write
t + s	ss	gitse	gisse	if she goes
t + ç	çç	parahatçylyk	parahaççylyk	peace
ç + s	şş	açsa	aşsa	if it opens
ç + l	şl	açlyk	aşlyk	hunger, famine
ç + d	şd	geçdik	geşdik	we passed
ç + j	şş	içjek	işşek	will drink
g + b	gw	bagban	bagwan	gardener

## 2.0 The Case System

Like Russian or German, Turkic languages have a system of grammatical cases. Cases are defined by changes that occur to a word when it is placed in different grammatical context. English has cases for personal pronouns. For example: "I see him", "He sees me". Not: "Me sees he", "Him sees I". Turkmen, however, has six cases, and these cases are used for all words, not just personal pronouns. The six Turkmen cases are: the nominative, used for the subject of the sentence; the possessive, similar to English possessives; the dative, used to show directed action; the accusative, which is similar to the English "direct object"; the time/place, which shows locality; and the instrumental, which is used to show origin.



While six cases might seem a bit overwhelming at first, it should be noted that the case suffixes simply replace our English prepositions such as "from," "at," "with," "in," "on," and "to". Also, the rules for their use are remarkably simple and inflexible, unlike those of the Russian cases.

## 2.1 Cases of Pronouns

These follow fairly straightforwardly from the regular case endings. The only unusual exceptions being the mutation of ol to on in all cases, and the dative pronouns maña, saña, and oña.

Nomnative	men I	sen you (singular informal)	ol he, she, it	biz we	siz you (plural or formal)	olar they
Poss.	meniñ my	seniñ your	onyñ his, her, its	biziñ our	siziñ your	olaryñ their
Dative	maña ~to me	saña ~to you	oña ~to him, her, it	bize ~to us	size ~to you	olara ~to them
Accus.	meni ~ me	seni ~ you	ony ~ him, her, it	bizi ~ us	sizi ~ you	olary ~ them
T/Place	mende ~ upon me	sende ~ upon you	onda ~ upon him, her, it	bizde ~ upon us	sizde ~ upon you	olarda ~ upon them
Instrum.	menden ~ from me	senden ~ from you	ondan ~ from him, her, it	bizden ~ from us	sizden ~ from you	olardan ~ from them

### 3.0 Verbs

Like English, Turkmen has a great variety of verb tenses. Verbs in Turkmen are conjugated in plural and singular for first, second, and third persons. As in Romance languages and Russian, the subject of a sentence is often not spoken if it is obvious. Following is a selection of verb tenses and forms. All verbs are conjugated on the model of ýazmak, to write.

#### 3.1a- Present Comprehensive, long form

Translates to the English Present Simple or Present Progressive

Verb Form	Translation	Form	w/ MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazýaryn	I write/I am writing.	stem	+(ýar)yn	+(ýär)in
Sen ýazýarysyň	You write/You are writing	stem	+(ýar)syň	+(ýär)siň
Ol ýazýar	He writes/He is writing	stem	+(ýar)	+(ýär)
Biz ýazýarys	We write/We are writing	stem	+(ýar)ys	+(ýär)is
Siz ýazýarysyňyz	You write/You are writing	stem	+(ýar)syňyz	+(ýär)siňiz
Olar ýazýarlar	They write/They are writing	stem	+(ýar)lar	+(ýär)ler

To form the negative, add -ma or -me after the stem:

Men ýazmaýaryn = I am not writing. I don't write.

Men iýmeýärin = I am not eating. I don't eat.

#### 3.1b - Present Comprehensive, short form

Translates to the English Present Simple or Present Progressive

Verb Form	Translation	Form	w/ MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazýan	I write/I am writing.	stem	+ýan	+ýän
Sen ýazýaň	You write/You are writing	stem	+ýaň	+ýäň
Ol ýazýar	He writes/He is writing	stem	+ýar	+ýär
Biz ýazýas	We write/We are writing	stem	+ýas	+ýäs
Siz ýazýaňyz	You write/You are	stem	+ýaňyz	+ýäňiz

	writing			
Olar ýazýarlar	They write/They are writing	stem	+ýarlar	+ýärler

To form the negative, add -ma or -me after the stem:

Men ýazmaýan = I am not writing. I don't write.

Men içmeýän = I am not drinking. I don't drink.

### 3.2a - Present Perfect

Translates to the English Present Perfect.

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazypdyrym	I have written.	stem	+(yp)dyrym	(ip)dirim
Sen ýazypsyň	You have written.	stem	+(yp)syň	(ip)siň
Ol ýazypdyr	He/she has written.	stem	+(yp)dyr	(ip)dir
Biz ýazypdyrys	We have written.	stem	+(yp)dyrys	(ip)diris
Siz ýazypsyňyz	You have written.	stem	+(yp)syňyz	(ip)siňiz
Olar ýazypdyrlar	They have written.	stem	+(yp)dyrlar	(ip)dirler

To form the negative, insert -man or -män in place of the -yp or -ip after the stem in the above endings:

Ol ýazmandyr = He/she has not written.

Olar gelmänderler = They have not come.

### 3.2b - Present Perfect (neg.)/Habitual Present (neg.)

Translates to the negative English Present Perfect (or to a negative form of a "Habitual Present Tense")\*, as such:

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazamok	I have not written.	stem	+(a)mok	+(e)mok

Sen ýazaňok	You haven't written.	stem	+(a)ňok	+(e)ňok
Ol ýazanok	He hasn't written.	stem	+(a)nok	+(e)nok
Biz ýazamzok	We haven't written.	stem	+(a)mzok	+(e)mzok
Siz ýazaňzok	You haven't written.	stem	+(a)ňzok	+(e)ňzok
Olar ýazanoklar	They haven't written.	stem	+(a)noklar	+(e)noklar

\*These forms can also indicate that a certain activity is generally not performed by the speaker:

Men ýazamok = I don't write. (as a habit)

Men çilim çekemok = I don't smoke. (as a habit)

### 3.3 - Future Certain

Translates to the English Future Simple with the tone of certainty.

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazjak	I will write.	stem	+jak	+jek
Sen ýazjak	You will write.	stem	+jak	+jek
Ol ýazjak	He will write.	stem	+jak	+jek
Biz ýazjak	We will write.	stem	+jak	+jek
Siz ýazjak	You will write.	stem	+jak	+jek
Olar ýazjak	They will write.	stem	+jak	+jek

To form the negative, add -däl after the verb:

Men ýazjak däl = I will not write.

Men gitjek däl = I will not go.

### 3.4 - Future Indefinite

Translates to English Future Simple with a tone of probability.

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazaryn	I (probably) will write.	stem	+(ar)yn	+(er)in

Sen ýazarsyň	You (probably) will write.	stem	+(ar)syň	+(er)siň
Ol ýazar	He(probably) will write.	stem	+(ar)	+(er)
Biz ýazarys	We (probably) will write.	stem	+(ar)ys	+(er)is
Siz ýazarsyňyz	You(probably) will write.	stem	+(ar)syňyz	+(er)siňiz
Olar ýazarlar	They (probably) will write.	stem	+(ar)lar	+(er)ler

To negate, add -m after the stem, except in the third person, where -maz is used. Men ýazmaryn = I (probably) won't write. Ol ýazmaz = He (probably) won't write. Sen gitmersiň = You (probably) won't go. Olar gitmezler = They (probably) won't go.

### 3.5 – Conditional

Expresses hypothetical situations, used like the English "if". Usually followed by a statement in the Future Indefinite tense.

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazsam	If I write...	stem	+(sa)m	+(se)m
Sen ýazsaň	If you write...	stem	+(sa)ň	+(se)ň
Ol ýazsa	If he writes...	stem	+(sa)	+(se)
Biz ýazsak	If we write...	stem	+(sa)k	+(se)k
Siz ýazsaňyz	If you write...	stem	+(sa)ňyz	+(se)ňiz
Olar ýazsalar	If they write...	stem	+(sa)lar	+(se)ler

To form the negative, add -ma or -me after the verb stem.  
 Men ýazmasam = If I do not write...  
 Men gitmesem = If I do not go.

### 3.6 - Past Definite

Translates to the English Past Simple.

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazdym	I wrote.	stem	+(dy)m	+(di)m
Sen ýazdyň	You wrote.	stem	+(dy)ň	+(di)ň
Ol ýazdy	He wrote.	stem	+(dy)	+(di)
Biz ýazdyk	We wrote.	stem	+(dy)k	+(di)k
Siz ýazdyňyz	You wrote.	stem	+(dy)ňyz	+(di)ňiz
Olar ýazdylar	They wrote.	stem	+(dy)lar	+(di)ler

To form the negative, add -ma or -me after the stem.

Men ýazmadym = I didn't write.

Men gitmedim = I didn't go.

### 3.7 - Obligatory Form

Translates to English "must," "should," or "ought to" with a verb.

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazmaly	I must write.	stem	+maly	+meli
Sen ýazmaly	You must write.	stem	+maly	+meli
Ol ýazmaly	He must write.	stem	+maly	+meli
Biz ýazmaly	We must write.	stem	+maly	+meli
Siz ýazmaly	You must write.	stem	+maly	+meli
Olar ýazmaly	They must write.	stem	+maly	+meli

To form the negative, add -däl after the verb.  
 Men ýazmaly däl = I must (should) not write.  
 Men gitmeli däl = I must (should) not go.

### 3.8 - Imperative Forms

In the singular and plural "you" forms, the verbs are simply rendered as commands, with the varying levels of politeness as noted below. Note that the personal pronouns are parenthetical, indicating that they are not spoken as part of the command form, but indicate to whom the command is being delivered.

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
(Sen) ýaz!	Write!	stem		
(Sen) ýazsana!	Write, please! (polite)	stem	+sana	+sene
(Siz) ýazyň	Write!	stem	+yň	+iň
(Siz) ýazsaňizlaň	Write, please! (polite)	stem	+saňizlaň	+seňizläň

The first person singular and plural forms translate not as commands, but more as expressions of "I'm going to," "may I," "let me," or "let us." The personal pronouns are necessary here.

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
(Men) ýazaýyn.	May I write. (Let me write.)	stem	+aýyn	+eýin
(Men) geçeýin.	Let me pass.	stem		
(Biz) ýazalyň	Let's write!.	stem	+alyň*	+eliň*
(Biz) gideliň	Let's go!	stem		

\*In colloquial speech, the endings are sometimes shortened to -aly and -ely.  
 To form the plural negative, add -ma or -mä after the stem:  
 Hat ýazmalyň = Let's not write a letter.  
 Bazara gitmäliň = Let's not go to the bazaar.

The third person forms are also not commands as much as they are urges or wishes, translated roughly as "let..." or "would that..."

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Ol ýazsyn	Let him write.	stem	+syn	+sin
Ol geçsin	Let him pass.	stem		
Olar ýazsynlar	Let them write!	stem	+synlar	+sinler
Olar geçsinler	Let them pass!	stem		

To form the negatives for all the above forms, add -ma or -me after the stems, according to vowel harmony:

Ol ýazmasyn = May he not write.

Olar gitmesinler = May they not go.

### 3.9 - Intentional Form

Translates to the English "intend to."

Verb Form	Translation	Form w/	MAK verbs	MEK verbs
Men ýazmakçy	I intend to write.	stem	+makçy	mekçi
Sen ýazmakçy	You intend to write.	stem	+makçy	mekçi
Ol ýazmakçy	S/he intend to write.	stem	+makçy	mekçi
Biz ýazmakçy	We intend to write.	stem	+makçy	mekçi
Siz ýazmakçy	You intend to write.	stem	+makçy	mekçi
Olar ýazmakçy	They intend to write.	stem	+makçy	mekçi

To form the negative, add däl after the verb.

Men ýazmakçy däl = I do not intend to write.

Men gitmekçi däl = I do not intend to go.



## 6.4.0 Relative Clauses

Relative clauses are formed in Turkmen simply by using verb suffixes based on the tense and vowel harmony of the verb. Who and which, used in English to form relative clauses, are not used as such in Turkmen.

Relative clauses in the present tense are formed by adding the suffixes -ýan and -ýän to the stems of MAK and MEK verbs, respectively:

**gelyän adamlar** = people who are coming

**ýazýan dostum** = my friend who is writing

Sentence structure is as follows:

**Aşgabatdan gelyän adamlar ýolda durdular.**

from-Ashgabat-coming-people-road-at-stopped

The people who are coming from Ashgabat stopped on the road.

**Kitap ýazýan dostum Çärjewde ýaşayar.**

book-writing-my friend-Charjew-in-lives

My friend who is writing a book is from Charjew.

Relative clauses in the past are formed by adding -an and -en to the stems of MAK and MEK verbs, respectively:

**gelen adamlar** = those who came

**ýazan dostum** = my friend who has written

Sentence structure is as follows:

**Tejenden gelen adamlar köp ýdiler.**

Tejen-from-came-people-much-they ate

The people who came from Tejen ate a lot.

**Bu kitaby okanlar ony gowy diýip tapdylar.**

This-book-read (plural)-it-good-that-they found

Those who read this book found it (to be) good.

In the future tense, the definite future forms of the verb (-jak and -jek) form the relative clauses. There are no unique suffixes:

**Biziň klasymyzy okatjak mugallym Eýrandan geldi.**

to-our-class-will teach-teacher-from Iran-came

The teacher who will teach our class came from Iran.

**Gökdepä giňjek okuwçylar duralgasynda garaşyp durlar.**

to Geok Depe-will go-students-stop-at-are waiting

The students who will go to Geok Depe are waiting at the stop.

## 5.0 Cases and their suffixes

	Vowel Endings	Consonant Endings
Nomnative	--- (no change) pagta - cotton Gök Depe - Goek Depe (a town)	--- (no change) gazan - pot käşir - carrot(s)
Possessive	nyň, niň (nuň, nüň) pagtanyň - ~ cotton's Gök Depeniň- ~ Goek Depe's	yň, iň (uň, üň) gazanyň- ~ pot's käşiriň- ~ carrots's
Dative	-a,-ä or -na, -ne pagta - ~ to cotton Gök Depä- ~ to Goek Depe	-a, -e gazana- ~ to the pot käşire- ~ to the carrots
Accusative	ny, ni pagtany - ~ the cotton (direct ob.) Gök Depeni- ~ Goek Depe (d.o.)	y, i gazany- ~ the pot (d.o.) käşiri- ~ the carrot(s) (d.o.)
Time/Place	da, de or nda, nde pagtada- ~ in cotton Gök Depede- ~ in Goek Depe	da, de gazanda- ~ in the pot käşirde- ~ in carrots
Instrumental	dan, den or ndan, nden pagtadan - ~ from cotton Gök Depeden- ~ from Goek Depe	dan, den gazandan- ~ from the pot käşirden- ~ from carrots

## The Nominative Case

answers **Kim**? Who?, **Näme**? What? , **Nire**? Where?

It is used for the subject of the sentence and sometimes for non-specific direct objects.

**Gök Depe gowy.** = Goek Depe is nice.

## The Possessive Case

answers **Kimiň**? Whose?, **Nämäniň**? Of what? , **Niräniň**? Of where?

It is usually used to show simple possessive relationships.

**Gök Depäniň häkimligi** = Goek Depe's mayor's office.

However, it is sometimes used in ways unfamiliar to English speakers, most notably in prepositional contexts:

**Gök Depäniň ýanynda** = by Goek Depe, near Goek Depe.

## The Dative Case

answers **Kime**? To whom?, **Nämä**? Towards what? To what end? , **Nirä**? To where?

It describes a motion directed toward something.

Bu awtobus **Gök Depä gidýär** = This bus is going to Goek Depe.

It also describes abstract direction. **Maňa çay gerek** = Tea is necessary to me. (I need tea.)

Please note how the final vowels change in the following examples:

(Türkmenbaşy) **Bu awtobus Türkmenbaşsa gidýär.** (Mary) **Bu awtobus Mara gidýär.**  
(Çüli) **Bu awtobus Çülä gidýär.**

## The Accusative Case

answers **Kimi**? Who? Whom?, **Nämäni**? What? , **Niräni**? Where?

It is used for direct objects - things that are acted upon by the verb of the sentence.

**Men käşiri kesýärin.** = I'm cutting the carrots. It carries the specificity of an English "the" and is only used when the object is definite.

## The Time/Place Case

answers **Kimde**? Upon whom?, **Nämede**? At what? , **Nirede**? Where? At what place?

It translate to English in various ways depending on the context.

**Gök Depede ýaşayaryn** = I live in Goek Depe.

**Mende çay ýok** = I don't have any tea. (on me)

## The Instrumental Case

answers **Kimden**? From who?, **Nämeden**? From what? , **Nireden**? From where?

Like the English "from" it can be used to describe both physical origin, and more abstract concepts of origin.

**Bu köýnek Gök Depeden/pağtadan.** = This dress is from Goek Depe/ made from cotton.

## **5.1 Possessive Suffixes**

Unlike English, the Turkmen language also adds a suffix to the object of possession. This may at times be redundant

(**Meniň kakam geldi.** = My father-(my) came.) but often the possessive participle is omitted (**Kakam geldi.** = Father-(my) came.) so the suffix alone shows possession.

Vowel ending	Consonant Ending	Vowel ending	Consonant Ending
My <b>-m</b> kakam, my father ejem, my mother	My <b>-ym, -im (-um, üm)</b> balygym, my fish itim, my dog	Our <b>-myz, -miz</b> kakamyz, our father ejemiz, our mother	Our <b>-ymyz, -imiz(-umyz, ümiz)</b> balygymyz, our fish itimyz, our dog
Your (sing, informal) <b>-ň</b> kakaň, your father ejeň, your mother	Your (sing, informal) <b>-yň, -iň (-uň, üň)</b> balygyň, your fish itiň, your dog	Your (plural, formal) <b>-ňyz, ñiz</b> kakaňyz, your father ejeňiz, your mother	Your (plural, formal) <b>-yňyz, -iňiz(-uňyz, üňiz)</b> balygyňyz, your fish itiňiz, your dog
His, her, its <b>-sy, -si</b> kakasy, her father ejesi, her mother	His, her, its <b>-y, -i</b> balygy, his fish iti, his dog	Their <b>-sy, -si</b> kakasy, their father ejesi, their mother	Their <b>y, -i</b> balygy, their fish iti, their dog

## 6.0 The Absolute Possessive

meniňki	mine	biziňki	ours
seniňki	yours	siziňki	yours
onuňky	his/hers/its	olaryňky	theirs
kimiňki	whose?	Jereniňki	Jeren's

Bu meniň kitabym = this is my book  
Bu kitap meniňki = this book is mine

## 7.0 Nouns in Direct Relation

Turkmen contains certain pairs of nouns that are in "direct relation," or which together illustrate a concept, exist without use of the possessive suffixes. For example, the general concept of "bus stop" is rendered as **awtobus duralgasy**, whereas the possessive **awtobusyň duralgasy** would indicate "one bus's stop." In

these direct relation pairs, the first noun, in its nominative form, acts more as an adjective than a noun, specifying the general meaning of the two-word concept. Other examples are as such:

**maşyn ýagy**=motor oil (**maşynyň ýagy**=one car's oil)  
**miwe sogy**=fruit juice (**miweniň sogy**=one fruit's juice)  
**ýylan deresi**=snakeskin (**ýylanyň deresi**=that snake's skin)  
**mekdep howlysy**=schoolyard (**mekdebiň howlysy**=a school's yard)

Note that the second noun is in its "possessed" form with the appropriate **-i, -y, -si,** or **-sy** ending.

## 8.0 Comparatives & Superlatives

To form the comparative, the **-dan/den** suffix (than) is added to the noun being compared, and the suffix **-rak** or **-räk** is then added to the adjective. As in the following examples, the **-rak/räk** ending is not mandatory:

**Bu üzümler şol üzümlerden süýji**  
**Bu üzümler şol üzümlerden süýjiräk** = These grapes are sweeter than those grapes

The **-rak/räk** ending can be used to indicate a comparative idea without the actual comparative structure:

Olaryň köýnekleri kelteräk = Their dresses are (generally) shorter.

To form the superlative, the words **iň** or **has** (most) are added before the adjective:

**Maral meniň iň gowy okuwçym** = Maral is my best pupil.

**Bu maşynlardan seniňki has owadan** = Of all these cars yours is the most beautiful.

**Sekizinji klaslaryň iň ökde okuwçylaryny saýla** = Choose the most talented pupils of the eighth grade.

## 9.0 Some Unusual Structures in Turkmen Grammar

### A. Comparisons "As... as"

Your hat is as expensive as hers. =

**Seniň şýapaň hem onuňky ýaly gymmat.**

*Your hat and hers as expensive.*

Your dog is as big as his. =

**Seniň itiň hem onuňky ýaly uly.**

*Your dog and his as big.*

Their students are as good as ours. =

**Onuň owkuwçylar hem biziňki ýaly gowy.**

*Their students and ours as good.*

### B. I (verb) (noun) to (verb)

I want him to come. =

**Onuň gelmegini isleýärim.**

*His to come I want.*

She wants you to listen. =

**Ol seniň eşitmegiňi isleýär.**

*She your to listen wants*

I was asking her to do so. =

**Onuň şeýle etmegini haýyş edýärdim.**

*Her so to do I was asking.*

I want him to come. =

**Onuň gelmegini isleýärim.**

*His coming I want.*

## 10.0 Goşylmalar (suffixes)

Letters, **goşylmalar** (suffixes), are added to verbs to change their function.

### 10.1: Passive

Adding these **goşylmalar** (suffixes) changes the verb to passive voice where the doer of the sentence is unspoken. **-yl/-il; -ul/-ül; -l**

**Meniň ejem uly halyny dokady.**=

*My mother made/wove a big carpet.*

**şu haly ýünden dokyldy.=**

This carpet was made/woven from wool.

**şu ýyl iki ýazyjy täze hekaýalary döretdiler.=**

This year two writers created new stories.

**Ýañy-ýakynda şäherimiz hakynda täze goşgy döretildi.=**

A new poem was written about our city.

## 10.2: Reflexive

Adding these **goşylmalar** make the verb reflexive where the action of the sentence has its effect on the person or thing that does the action.

**-yn/-in; -un/-ün; -n**

**Günde meniň joralarymy görýärim.=**

I see my girlfriends everyday.

**Ol işe gidip görenip gaýtdy.=**

He went to work, showed himself and left.

**Kakam paltany maşyna söýedi.=**

My father leaned the axe against the car.

**Men ardamyny diwara söýendim.=**

I leaned my back against the wall.

## 10.3: Reciprocal

Adding these **goşylmalar** make the verb exchanged between two people or groups, or given and received in return.

**-yş /-iş ; -uş /üş ; -ş**

**Maral jigisini gyjatlady.=**

Maral hugged her little brother/sister.

**Dostlar gyjaklaşdylar we oglaşdylar.=**

The friends hugged and kissed each other.

**Sen Selbini gördüňmi?=  
Did you see Selbi?**

**Biz göreş ip salamlaşdyk.=**

We saw and greeted each other.



## 10.4: Causitive

Adding these **goşylmalar** makes the subject of the verb also the cause of an action or state.

**-dyr/-dir; -dur/-dür;-yr/-ir; -ur/-ür; -uz,-üz; -ar/-er; -der/-dar; -t**

**Men şu kitap bilen gyzyklanamok.=**

I am not interested in this book.

**Meniň mugallymym maňa Türkmen goş gularany öwrenmäge gyzyklandyrdy.=**

My teacher got me interested in Turkmen poetry.

**Mergen öýe gelip derrew yatdy.=**

Mergen came home and went to sleep right away.

**Gülşat çagalaryny giç ýatardy.=**

Gulshat put her children to bed late.

**Men Aýnabady görenimde güldim.=**

When I saw Ainabat, I laughed.

**Ol gülkünçli degişme aýdanynda dostlaryny gülderdi.=**

He made his friends laugh when he told a funny joke.

**Men ýerde çökip güllerini çöpledim.=**

I knelt on the ground and picked flowers.

**Çopan düýäni çökerdi.=**

The shepherd made the camel kneel down.

**Tomsuna hemme adama ir turýar.=**

Everyone gets up/wakes up early in the summer.

**Sagat onda maňa turuzsana! =**

Wake me up at 10 o'clock!

**Ol işini etdi.=**

He did the work.

**Ol meni holynda işletdi.=**

He made me work in the yard.

Only **görmek=to see** uses goşulma **-kez** in its causitive form:

**Olar bizi köçede gördiler.=**

They saw us on the street.

**Men suratlarymy jorama görkezýärim.=**

I am showing my friend my pictures.

## 11.0 Four Important Modal Verbs: *otyr*, *ýatyr*, *dur*, *ýör*

Four verbs in Turkmen, **oturmak**, **ýatmak**, **durmak**, and **ýörmek**, have special 3rd person singular forms, **otyr**, **ýatyr**, **dur**, and **ýör**, respectively, that can be used alone or with compound verb structures to indicate a continuous action or the physical position of something. Personal endings are added to these 3rd person forms as such:

Men	otyrn	Men	ýatyrn	Men	durun
Sen	otyrsyň	Sen	ýatyrsyň	Sen	dursuň
OI	otyr	OI	ýatyr	OI	dur
Biz	otyryz	Biz	ýatyryz	Biz	durus
Siz	otyrasyňyz	Siz	ýatyrasyňyz	Siz	dursuňyz
Olar	otyrlar	Olar	ýatyrlar	Olar	durlar

\*The 3rd person singular, *ýör*, is used alone only in certain regional dialects.

Examples of the use of the three above forms are as follows:

**Myrat şu wagt ýatyr**=Myrat is sleeping now.

**Meniň dostum mugallymlar jaýynda otyr**=My friend is sitting in the teachers' room.

**Maşynym mekdebiňiziň önünde dur**=My car is in front of your school.

In compound structures, these verbs' meanings are retained only in that they indicate the position of the doer of the action:

**OI okap ýatyr**=He is reading. (while lying down)

**Men çay içip otyryn**=I'm drinking tea. (while seated)

**OI taýda toý gidip dur**=There's a party going on over there. (in one place)

**Sag-aman işläp ýörsiňizmi?**=Are you (safely) working? (continuously)

Physical objects capable of continuous action but not movement such as cars, refrigerators, electricity, and televisions, use *dur* in compound structures:

**Swet ýanyp dur**=The lights are on.

**Holodilnik işläp dur**=The refrigerator is running.

**Duhowka ýanyp dur**=The oven is hot (on).

## 12.0 Selected Suffixes and Prefixes

### 12.1: -çy/-çi

The suffix **-çy** or **-çi**, according to vowel harmony, functions like **-ist** or **-er** in English to denote occupation, profession, or position.

<b>iş</b>	work	<b>işçi</b>	worker
<b>okuw</b>	school	<b>okuwçy</b>	pupil

In certain cases where the verbs are made into nouns, the suffix becomes **-jy** or **-ji**:

<b>diňlemek</b>	to listen	<b>diňleýji</b>	audience/listener
<b>okamak</b>	to read	<b>okajy</b>	reader
<b>ýasamak</b>	to craft	<b>ýasajy</b>	master

### 12.2: -dar

The suffix, **-dar** can make personal nouns out of other nouns. It is unaffected by vowel harmony.

<b>bergi</b>	debt	<b>bergidar</b>	debtor
<b>tarap</b>	side	<b>tarapdar</b>	suppoter

### 12.3: -keş

The suffix **-keş** personalizes certain nouns indicative of a particular cistom or habit.

<b>gybat</b>	gossip	<b>gybatkeş</b>	gossipper
<b>nas</b>	chewing tobacco	<b>naskeş</b>	tobacco chewer
<b>çilim</b>	cigarette	<b>çilimkeş</b>	smoker

## 12.4: -siz/-suz/-syz

The suffixes **-siz**, **-suz**, or **-syz**, according to vowel harmony, mean *without* or *un-*.

<b>tertip</b>	order	<b>tertipsiz</b>	disorderly
<b>howp</b>	danger	<b>howpsyz</b>	secure
<b>jan</b>	spirit	<b>jansyz</b>	inanimate

## 12.5: -lik/-lük/-lyk/-luk

These suffixes function to create abstract nouns, like *-hood*, *-ness*, or *-ity* in English. They adhere to vowel harmony.

<b>gözel</b>	beautiful	<b>gözellik</b>	beauty
<b>köp</b>	much, many	<b>köplük</b>	collective
<b>çaga</b>	child	<b>çagalyk</b>	childhood
<b>mert</b>	brave	<b>mertlik</b>	braveness

These suffixes can also make nouns and adjectives from numerical expressions.

<b>bäş</b>	five	<b>bäşlik</b>	five-Dollar/Manat note
<b>bir ýyl</b>	one year	<b>bir ýyllyk</b>	a year's worth
<b>on üç</b>	thirteen	<b>on üçlük</b>	bus #13

These suffixes make nouns and adjectives which show purpose.

<b>gün</b>	day	<b>gündelik</b>	diary
<b>ýetmek</b>	to suffice	<b>ýeterli</b>	enough
<b>el</b>	hand	<b>ellik</b>	glove

## 12.6: The prefix bi-

The prefix **bi-** expresses the idea of *without*-. It does not affect, nor is subject to, vowel harmony.

<b>tarap</b>	side	<b>bitarap</b>	neutral
<b>günä</b>	sin, guilt	<b>bigünä</b>	innocent

The above forms can then combine with the **-lik/-lük/-lyk/-luk** forms to form nouns.

**bitaraplyk** neutrality  
**bigünälik** innocence

## 12.7: -daky/-däki

These suffixes adhere to the rules of vowel harmony and act as adjective clauses do in English, as in the following examples:

**Men şol kinodaky gyzy halamok.**

I don't like the girl in that film.

**Tejendäki mugallymlar biziň ýygnağymyza gelýärler.**

The teachers from Tejen are coming to our meeting.

**Aşgabatdaky çörek biziňkiden gowy.**

The bread in Ashgabat is better than ours.

**Öýüňizdäkilere köp salam aýt!**

Say "hi" to those at your house.

**10njy "A" klasdaky okuwçylaryň tertibi gowy däl.**

The pupils of the 10th "A" class are not well behaved.

**Eliňdäkini aýyr!**

Get rid of what's in your hand!

**Parkyň içindäki gazly suw şäherimiziň iň gowysy.**

The juice in the park is the best in our city.

**Mekdebiň ýanyndaky howlyda toý bar.**

There's a party in the yard next to the school.

**Men şu köýnekdäki ýakany gowy görýärin.**

I like the yoke (collar) of this dress.

**Öten ýyldaky hasyl bu ýylydakydan köpdi.**  
Last year's harvest was more than this year's

### 13.0 Expressing Needs and Desires

Although in Turkmen there is a way to express a wish to do something that parallels the English use of infinitives, such as **Men çay içmek isleýärim** (I want to drink tea), a far more common way to express desires involves a construction unlike any in English, utilizing the verb **gelmek** as a helping verb: **Meniň çay içesim gelýär** (My-tea-drinking-comes). This would roughly translate as "I want to drink tea." or "I feel like drinking tea." The main verb **içmek** has the personal ending **-esim** added to the stem, with **gelmek** in the 3rd person singular, **gelýär**. Note the use of possessive pronouns rather than personal pronouns in the following charts:

#### -mak verbs

Meniň	ýaz-asy	gelýär	I 'd like to write
Seniň	ýaz-asyň	gelýär	You 'd like to write
Onuň	ýaz-asy	gelýär	S/he 'd like to write
Biziň	ýaz-asymyz	gelýär	We 'd like to write
Siziň	ýaz-asyňyz	gelýär	You 'd like to write
Olaryň	ýaz-asy	gelýär	They 'd like to write

#### -mek verbs

Meniň	gel-esim	gelýär	I 'd like to come
Seniň	gel-esiň	gelýär	You 'd like to come
Onuň	gel-esi	gelýär	S/he 'd like to come
Biziň	gel-esimiz	gelýär	We 'd like to come
Siziň	gel-esiňiz	gelýär	You 'd like to come
Olaryň	gel-esi	gelýär	They 'd like to come

The negative is formed by changing the **gelýär** to **gelmeýär** or **gelenok**:

**Meniň hiç zady iýesim gelenok.** I don't feel like eating anything.

The past tense is also possible, as such:

**Meniñ bir zady bilesim geldi.** I wanted to know something.

## 14.0 Indicating Possibility: mümkin

The word **mümkin** is used to indicate possibility or to ask permission for an action, using infinitive verbs, such as:

**Çilim çekmek mümkinmi?** Is it possible to smoke? (May I smoke?)

**Girmek mümkinmi?** May I come in?

**Jañ etmek mümkinmi?** May I make a call?

Grammatically, it can be used to signify "may" or "might," as in:

**Men ertir siziñ mekdebiñize geläymegim mümkin.**

I might come to your school tomorrow.

**Men hat ýazaýmagym mümkin.**

I might write a letter.

### -mak verbs

Men	ýaz-aýmagym	mümkün	I might write
Sen	ýaz-aýmagyň	mümkün	You might write
OI	ýaz-aýmagy	mümkün	S/he might write
Biz	ýaz-aýmagymyz	mümkün	We might write
Siz	ýaz-aýmagyňyz	mümkün	You might write
Olar	ýaz-aýmagy	mümkün	They might write

## -mek verbs

Men	gel-äýmegim	mümkün	I might come
Sen	gel-äýmegiň	mümkün	You' might come
Ol	gel-äýmegi	mümkün	S/he might come
Biz	gel-äýmegimiz	mümkün	We might come
Siz	gel-äýmegiňiz	mümkün	You might come
Olar	gel-äýmegi	mümkün	They might come

The negative is formed as such:

### **Men ertir mekdebiňize gelmezligim mümkin.**

I might not come to your school tomorrow.

### **Men hat ýazmazlygym mümkin.**

I might not write a letter.

## -mak verbs

Men	ýaz-mazlygym	mümkün	I might not write
Sen	ýaz-mazlygyň	mümkün	You might not write
Ol	ýaz-mazlygy	mümkün	S/he might not write
Biz	ýaz-mazlygymyz	mümkün	We might not write
Siz	ýaz-mazlygyňyz	mümkün	You might not write
Olar	ýaz-mazlygy	mümkün	They might not write

## -mek verbs

Men	gel-mezligim	mümkün	I might not come
Sen	gel-mezligiň	mümkün	You' might not come
Ol	gel-mezligi	mümkün	S/he might not come
Biz	gel-mezligimiz	mümkün	We might not come
Siz	gel-mezligiňiz	mümkün	You might not come
Olar	gel-mezligi	mümkün	They might not come



## 15.0 -dygy/ digi

**Men oňa alty-da geljekdigimi aýtdym.**

I told him I would come at 6:00.

**Siz maňa näme isleýändigiňizi aýdyň.**

Tell me what you want.

**Ol maňa köp zat öwrenýändigini aýtdy.**

He told me he's learning a lot.

**Ol maňa seniň gelendigiňi aýtdy.**

She told me that you came (had come).

**Köwüşň bahasynyň näççdigini aýdyp biljekmi?**

Can you tell me how much your shoes cost?

**Mugallymyň nirededigini bilýärsiňmi?**

Do you know where the teacher is?

**Men ol gyzyň menden ulydygyny bilýärim.**

I know that girl is taller than I.

**Men seniň kitabyň meniňkiden gowydygyny bilýärim.**

I know your book is better than mine.

**Biz şu kitabyň sözlükdigini bilýäris.**

We know this book is a dictionary.

## 16.0 Double Verbs

Whereas in English we conjugate all verbs and place "and" between them when two actions are done at once or at relatively the same time, Turkmen employs a structure that puts the two verbs together. The first verb is reduced to its stem and the participial ending **-yp** or **-ip**, according to vowel harmony, is added. The ending of the second verb determines the doer of the action indicated, as below.

**Biz iýip gelýäris.**

We ate before coming. (lit. *We-eat-come*)

### **Nahar iýip okuwa gidiň!**

Eat before going to school. (lit. *Food-eat-to-school-go*)

### **Swedi öçürip gaýt.**

Go turn off the light. (lit. *Light-turn off-come back*)

The participial **-ip** and **-yp** endings have negative counterparts, **-män** and **-man**, also added to the stem of the first verb

### **Çagalar iýmän okuwa gitdiler.**

The children went without eating.

### **Okuwçylar okaman sapaga gelýärler.**

The pupils come to the lesson without studying.

## **16.1 Expressing Ability: -p/-yp/-ip bilmek**

A modal structure involving bilmek is used to convey the idea of being able to do something.

**Men Türkmençe okap bilýärim** = I can read Turkmen

**Ol Rusça ýazyp bilenok** = He can't write Russian

**Biz bazara gidip biljek däl** = We won't be able to go to the bazaar

## **16.2 Doing an Action for Someone: -p/-yp/-ip bermek**

A modal structure involving bermek is used to express the doing of an action for someone:

**Men size jaýy salyp berdim** = I built a house for you

**Şol gapyny ýapyp bermesene** = Don't close that door

**Şol käsäni saňa alyp bererin** = I'll give you that teacup

According to vowel harmony the main verb's stem is followed by the participial ending **-yp** or **-ip**, and bermek appears according to the doer of the action and the tense.

### 16.3 Attempted Action: -p/-yp/-ip görmek

A modal structure involving görmek is used to express the idea of trying to do something, or the idea of doing-and-seeing:

**Bu nahary datyp gör** = Try this food

**Men pikir edip göreýin** = Let me think about it (and see)

**Şol köýnegi geýip gördi** = She tried on that dress

### 16.4 Anticipated Action: -jak/-jek bolmak

A modal structure involving the future tense and bolmak is used to indicate the idea of being about to do something:

**Sen ýatjak bolýaňmy?** = Are you about to sleep?

**Olar saňa jaň etjek bolýarlar** = They're about to call you

**Garaşyň, men iýjek bolýaryn** = Wait, I'm going to (about to) eat