

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #1

Say "Hello" in Turkish Anytime, Anywhere!

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#1

DIALOGUE - TURKISH

MAIN

1. Merve : Merhaba
2. Hakan : Merhaba.
3. Merve : Nasılsın?
4. Hakan : İyiyim, teşekkürler. Ya sen?
5. Merve : Ben de iyiyim. Sağ ol.

ENGLISH

1. Merve : Hello.
2. Hakan : Hello.
3. Merve : How are you?
4. Hakan : Fine thanks. And you?
5. Merve : I am doing fine as well. Thank you.

VOCABULARY

Turkish	English	Class
İyi	good	adjective
teşekkür	a word showing appreciation, thanking.	noun
nasıl	how, in what way	adverb
merhaba	hello, hi	
sağ olmak	literal meaning: "May you be safe and sound" This expression is also used to say "thank you" in Turkish	expression

SAMPLE SENTENCES

İyi hissediyorum. "I feel good."	"The class was really good, and I can't wait for the next one."
O, iyi bir insan. "She is a good person."	Hediye için çok teşekkürler! "Thanks a lot for the present!"

Uzaktan kumandayı nasıl kullanacağımı anlatır mısın? "Tell me how to use the remote control."	Nasılsınız? "How are you?" (Formal)
Otele nasıl geri dönerim? How do I get back to the hotel?	Merhaba, nasılsın? Uzun zamandır görüşemedik. "Hello, how are you? We haven't seen each other in a long time."
İnsanlar "Merhaba" der "The people say, 'Hello.'"	Sağ ol, çok yardımcı oldun! (informal) "Thank you. You were a great help."

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Merhaba meaning "hello" is the most common expression used in both formal and informal greetings. You can use it when you are introduced to someone for the very first time or when you bump into a friend or colleague somewhere. Another way of saying "hi" is *selam* but this should only be used on informal occasions. You can combine *Merhaba* by using other words that indicate different times of the day when you want to put more emphasis on the time. For example: *Merhaba! Günaydın* meaning "Hello! Good Morning" or *Merhaba! Tünaydın* meaning "Hello! Good Afternoon." or *Merhaba! İyi Akşamlar!* meaning "Hello! Good Evening!"

Teşekkür is a loanword from Arabic and is one of the most frequently used ones in the Turkish language. The word itself can be adapted to both formal and informal occasions. On informal occasions, you can simply add words to emphasize the meaning like: *Çok teşekkür ederim* meaning "Thank you very much." In a formal context, *Teşekkürler!* would be used.

Sağ ol has various meanings but the initial one is to thank someone. The literal translation for this expression is "May you be safe and sound." In Turkish, usually suffixes define the formality of the dialogue due to the fact that they are related to the object of the sentence. For example: *Sağ ol* is neutral without any suffix therefore it is connected to *sen* meaning "you"; second person singular. However when you say *Sağ olun* or *Sağ olunuz* you add the suffix *-niz, nuz* to indicate the second person plural. This adds courtesy and politeness to your sentence.

You might also hear this expression at funerals. Let's illustrate this with an example: *Çok üzgünüm. Başınız sağ olsun.* meaning "I am so sorry. May you be safe and sound." The other person will reply: *Teşekkür ederim. Siz sağ olun* meaning "Thank you. May you be safe." Alternatively, in order to emphasize the fact that he/she is returning back the courtesy *Dostlar sağ olsun* may be said, meaning "May friends be safe and sound."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of this Lesson is on Understanding the Function of Personal Suffixes When Greeting People in Turkish

Nasılsın?

"How are you?"

The original form of this sentence is *Sen nasılsın?* meaning "How are you?" in an informal context and *Siz nasılsınız?* in a formal context. However, Turkish tends to shorten the sentences for a more natural expression and this is only possible because of the extensive use of the suffixes in Turkish grammar. Let's explain this more by breaking the sentence down: *Sen* is "you" for second person singular, *nasıl* is an interrogative word meaning "how." *Nasıl-s-ın*. *S* here is a buffer letter and *-ın* is the suffix for second person singular. So if you delete *sen* meaning "you" in the informal sentence and *siz* meaning "you" second person plural in the formal sentence, it will still carry on the same meaning while keeping a logical grammatical order.

Personal Ending Suffixes and Buffer Letters

To reply to the mentioned question *Nasılsın?*, say *İyiyim, teşekkürler* meaning "I am fine, thanks." Here, *iyi* means "good" as in "a good mood. *-im* is a suffix that indicates a personal ending. *y* is a buffer letter.

"The buffer letters" have the function of connecting letters, as they usually connect two vowels. In Turkish, two vowels cannot be next to each other for it is a language that is read as it's written. When a word that ends with a vowel takes a suffix that starts with a vowel, we put the buffer letter in between them. In Turkish we call buffer letters *kaynaştırma harfi*, the meaning of which is "combining letter."

There are four buffer letters in Turkish: *-y, -ş, -s, -n*.

These letters are taught to young adults with a phrase *Yaşasın!* which means "Hurray! or Yay!" in English. If you remove all the vowels from this word you are left with all the existing buffer letters in Turkish. More information will be provided in more advanced lessons.

For example:

1. *Ne yapıyorsun?*
"What are (you) doing?"
2. *Hastayım*
"(I) am sick."

Examples from this lesson:

1. *Nasılsın?*
"How are you?"
2. *İyiyim.*
"(I) am fine."

Examples from this dialogue:

1. *Nasılsın?*
"How are (you)?"

2. *İyiyim.*
"(I) am fine."

Sample Sentences

1. *Sağ ol, çok yardımcı oldun.*
"Thank (you). (You) helped a lot."
2. *Bugün nasılsın?*
"How are you today?"

Language Tip

Our key point for this lesson is on grammar explaining the Personal Suffixes, Singular.

First person singular *-(y)im*: "I am"

If the root word ends in a vowel, the variants are: *-(y)ım, -(y)im, -(y)um, -(y)üm.*

Second person singular (informal) *-sin*: "you are." Its variants are *-sin, -sın, -sun, -sün*

No suffix for "he/she/it is"

Third person "he/she/it"

Personal suffix for the third person is *-dır*. However, in daily speech, this ending is not used.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Meeting Etiquette in Turkey

Turkish people are very vocal with their gestures, a trait that derives from their Mediterranean heritage. In Turkish culture, smiling and shaking hands are vital ways of creating a good, strong bond. To make a good first impression, try holding your hand out to give a firm handshake, smile and say *Merhaba!* at the same time. Don't be shy with your smiles during the greeting and conversation. If you are talking to elders or other people that you respect, bow your head a little when leaving. This should be just a slight tilt, but nothing extravagant. Turkey is very diverse and eclectic in terms of people's cultural backgrounds. You may greet some Turkish men who give a slight tap on their chest with the palm of their hands when they greet. Sociologically, this can be interpreted as traditionalism and conservatism. You will also discover that Turkish people are very political, so much so that you will see them voicing their political beliefs on a daily basis. You might see that some men tap each others' heads. This shows that they are firm believers of the Turkish-Islamic right wing.