

A QUICK LOOK AT VOLAPÜK

Introduction

This pamphlet has been written mainly with the linguist in mind. Its purpose is to introduce the reader to the grammar of Volapük, thus equipping him or her with the necessary knowledge to translate Volapük with the aid of a dictionary.

The vocabulary, although of high frequency, has been limited to let readers' attention be directed to acquiring the grammar rather than vocabulary.

The grammar is presented in four stages with sentences for translation after each stage to check readers' grasp of the grammar.

What is Volapük?

Volapük was invented by Johann Martin Schleyer in 1879, and is the oldest international auxiliary language about to enter the third millennium. It was, in fact, the start of the International Auxiliary Language Movement as we know it to-day.

Is Volapük easy to learn?

No language is easy to learn, but because of the regularity of its structure and the logic of its forms, the study of Volapük is an asset to personal development. Having studied the language, we find that our conception of language in general is greatly enhanced, and that our thought processes are considerably sharper.

Is this pamphlet all I need?

Although the able student will have obtained an adequate grasp of the grammar, a good dictionary will also be invaluable.

However, for those who have enjoyed this '*Quick Look at Volapük*' and would like to obtain a more detailed course, thereafter subscribing to the Circular Letter (*Sirkülapenäd*) which appears every month, and which contains a wealth of reading matter in Volapük, they will be able to obtain full details by writing to :

Flenef Bevünetik Volapüka,
24 Staniwell Rise,
SCUNTHORPE,
DN 17 1 TF
Great Britain.

If, on the other hand, you have enjoyed making the acquaintance of this first of all international auxiliary languages, but would now like to say goodbye, then you have certainly come away with a sharper perception of language itself.

And doesn't that make it all very much worth while ?

A SOUND GUIDE TO VOLAPÜK

The alphabet of **VOLAPÜK** has 27 letters, which are :

a, ä, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, ö, p, r, s, t, u, ü, v, x, y, z = 8 vowels and 19 consonants.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT EVERY SINGLE VOWEL AND CONSONANT MUST BE PRONOUNCED CLEARLY !

The **VOWELS** are pronounced in the following manner :

A as in	l A rd	O as in	r O te
Ä as in	m Ä re	Ö as in French	j Ö U
E as in	b E d	U as in	s U On
I as in	b EE r	Ü as in French	r UE

The **CONSONANTS** are pronounced as follows :

B as in	B all	N as in	N ame
C as in	CH ar GE *	P as in	P ill
D as in	D ull	R as in	R ain
F as in	F ile	S as in	S ingle
G as in	G oal	T as in	T ale
H as in	H ill	V as in	V ale
J as in	SH oe	X as in	FiX
K as in	K ettle	Y as in	Y ell
L as in	L ake	Z as in	bi DS /bi TS *
M as in	M an	* = Midway between the two sounds.	

In Volapük, **EVERY SINGLE LETTER, INCLUDING EVERY SINGLE VOWEL**, must be sounded !

Practise now with the numbers from 1 to 10 :

BAL, TEL, KIL, FOL, LUL, MÄL, VEL, JÖL, ZÜL, DEG

Practise these words of ONE SYLLABLE :

FLOR = flower; HIT = heat; FLUK = fruit; NIF = snow

In words of **MORE THAN ONE SYLLABLE**, it is **THE LAST SYLLABLE** which takes the stress :

FLOR**ÜP** - *flower-time* = Spring
HIT**ÜP** - *heat-time* = Summer
FLUK**ÜP** - *fruit-time* = Autumn
NIF**ÜP** - *snow-time* = Winter

Try **TWO CONSECUTIVE VOWELS**: REIN = **rain** (pronounced : RAY-**EEN**)
TOOD = **car** (pronounced : TOH-**OHD**)
Try **THREE CONSECUTIVE VOWELS**: NEAI = never (pronounced : NE-AH-**EE**)

FIRST PART/DIL BALID

Vödem/Vocabulary

Subsats/Nouns:

bür	-	an office
dom	-	a house
flen	-	a friend
hipul	-	a boy
man	-	a man
pened	-	a letter
stul	-	a chair
tood	-	a car
vom	-	a woman

Pönops/Pronouns:

ob	-	I
or/ol	-	you (polite/familiar)
om	-	he
of	-	she
on/os	-	it
oy	-	one
ors/ols	-	you (polite/familiar)
oms	-	they (masc)
ofs	-	they (fem)
ons	-	they (neuter)

Värbs/Verbs:

binön	-	to be
finükön	-	to finish
golön	-	to go
kolkömön	-	to meet
labön	-	to have
löfön	-	to love
penön	-	to write
vilön	-	to want
visitön	-	to visit

Vöds votik/Other words: e (*ed* before a vowel) = and; in = in; ko = with; su = on

Gramat/Grammar:

1. There are no words for 'a' or 'the' in Volapük; however, in order to indicate foreign words in the language, the word 'el' is used for 'the':

tood - a/the car; bür - the/an office; **el** 'Sputnik' - the Sputnik

2. The infinitive ends in -ön.

binön - to be; labön - to have; penön - to write

3. To form the present tense, remove the ending -ön of the infinitive, and put the relevant pronoun in its place; if you want to *emphasize* the person involved, then place it also at the beginning as separate word; where a word is the recipient of an action (= *the direct object*) it has the ending -i. (Please note that the verb 'to be' does not have a direct object !)

Visitobs domi - we visit (we are visiting) the house; **of** vilof toodi - *she* wants (she *does* want) a car; binom flen - he is a friend; finükoms penedi - they finish (they are finishing) the letter; ed **ol** binol flen - and you are a friend.

4. 'Or' is the polite word for 'you' and is used to address people formally; however, for one child, one relative, or people with whom you are on familiar terms, also animals, use 'ol' 'Ors' is the plural of 'or'. In modern Volapük, however, the familiar word for 'you' (ol/ols) is generally preferred; it all depends on you, the user !

5. 'On' means 'it' when referring to something definite; the plural of 'on' is 'ons'; on the other hand, 'os' means 'it' when referring to something indefinite, also when 'it' refers to the weather or to (clock) time. Please note that 'os' has no plural !

Here is a bit of practice for you: (See Key for answers)

i) Translate into English : a) Pened binon in tood; ä) Man binom ko vom; b) Kolkömom jipuli; c) Penob penedi; d) Visitobs domi; e) Obs vilobs toodi; f) Seadofs inbür; g) Labom fleni; h) Golof ko penedi; i) Seadoy su stul; j) El 'paparazzo' visitom vom.

ii) Translate into Volapük : a) It is in the house; ä) You are a friend; b) You are setting on the letter; c) He is going with a friend; d) They are meeting a boy and a girl; e) A man is sitting on the chair; f) A woman is going with the girl; g) He is writing a letter in the house; h) They do have a car; i) The 'Edelweiss' is in the office.

SECOND PART/DIL TELID

Vocabulary/Vödem

Nouns/Subsats

blod - brother
 cil - child
 daut - daughter
 fat - father
 gespik - answer, reply
 läd - Mrs.
 lädül - Miss
 mot - mother
 nem - name

säk - question

son - son

söl - Mr.

sör - sister

Adjectives/Ladyeks

obik - my

obsik - our

ofik - her

ofsik - their (feminine)

olik - your (familiar singular)

olsik - your (familiar plural) adelo - to-day

omik - his (masculine singular) de - of

omsik - their (masculine plural)

onik - its (neuter singular)

onsik - their (neuter plural)

orik - your (polite singular)

orsik - your (polite plural)

Verbs/Värbs

kömön - to come

lükömön - to arrive

plidön - to like

primön - to begin

vobön - to work

Other words/Vöds votik

ab - but

ad - (in order) to

adelo - to-day

de - of

kif? - who? (feminine)

kikodo? - why?

kim? - who? (masculine)

kin? - what? (indefinite)

kiöpo? - where?

kis? - what? (indefinite)_

kitimo? - when?

lio? - how?

nen - without

no - no, not

odelo - tomorrow

si! - yes

Grammar/Gramat

6. To form the plural, simply add **-s** to the end.

dom, doms = a/the house, the houses; säk, säks = a/the question, the questions

labob dautis tel = I have two daughters; voms binofs sörs = the women are sisters.

7. In order to make a question out of a statement, where there is a verb, this is followed by the unstressed interrogative **-li** ?

Kiöpo binon-**li** pened? = Where is the letter? Kömof-**li** ko flen? = Is she coming with a friend?

Voboms-**li** ko flens? = Are they working with friends? Visitons-**li**? Do they visit? (= both sexes)

Where there is no verb, the **-li**? may be used without one: no-**li**? = isn't it? odelo-**li**? = tomorrow?

8. The negative particle **no** goes *before* the verb:

No löfob fleni olik = I don't like your friend; **no** vilol-li primön? = Don't you want to begin?

9. The *genitive* and *dative* cases may be expressed in two ways, thus:

de daut *or* dauta; **de** dauts *or* dautas = *of* a/the daughter; *of* (the) daughters;

ad daut *or* daute; **ad** dauts *or* dautes = *to* a/the daughter; *to* (the) daughters.

10. Because apostrophes 's and s' are not found in Volapük, these possessives are expressed by either form of the *genitive* case.

Flen **de** hipul or flen hipula = the boy 's friend;

Nems **de** sörs or nems söras = the sister s' names;

Tood **de** fat obik or tood fata obik = my father's car.

11. The **imperative** (= *requesting or commanding*) are expressed by the endings **-ös** and **-öd**:
 (Singular) Kōmol**ös** ko flen ! = (Please) Come with a friend ! (= *expressing a wish*);
 (Plural) Kōmols**öd** ko flen ! = (You must) come with a friend ! (= *expressing a command*).

12. The **future tense** is formed by removing **-ön** from the infinitive, then by prefixing **o-** to the beginning and adding the necessary personal pronoun to the end :

Okōmobs odelo = we *shall* (= we *will*) come tomorrow.

13. The **past tense** (= *preterite*) is formed by also removing **-ön** from the infinitive, then by prefixing **ä-** to the beginning. (If you want to bring the past more into the present (= *present perfect*), put **-e** -at the beginning); finally add the necessary personal pronoun to the end:

Älöfol-li hipuli?	Did you (<i>use to</i>) love the boy ?
Elöfol-li hipuli ?	Have you loved the boy (<i>up to now</i>) ?
Äpenob penedi	I <i>was</i> writing a letter;
Epenob penedi	I <i>have</i> (<i>already</i>) written a letter;
No äslipom in бүр	He <i>wasn't</i> sleeping in the office;
No eslipom in бүр	He <i>hasn't</i> slept in the office; (<i>up to now</i>)
Äseadob	I <i>sat</i> / I <i>used to</i> sit / I <i>was</i> sitting / I <i>did</i> sit;
Eseadob	I <i>sat</i> / I've <i>sat</i> / I've <i>been</i> sitting;
No ävilobs	We <i>didn't</i> want, we <i>weren't</i> wanting;
No evilobs	We <i>haven't</i> wanted (<i>up to now</i>).

Here is a bit more practice for you: (*See Key for answers*)

- i) Translate into English: a) No plidob gespikis ad säks; ä) Äslipol-li in бүр fata? b) Lio binon-li nem söra orik?
 c) Kiöpo primon-li pened? d) Odelo fat obik openom penedi mote onsik; e) Si ! blod olik oslipom in dom obsik;
 f) Söl 'Smith' labom soni bal e dautis tel; g) Kitimo elükömof-li mot olik ? h) Ab kin äseadon-li in tood söla 'Smith'? i) Kikodo no evilobs-li primön nen blod obik?

- ii) Translate into Volapük: a) Finish the letter in your father's office ! ä) They were wanting to come with our friends; b) We will meet my brother's children tomorrow; c) Yes, Miss 'Jones' used to work with my father's friend; d) But his sister didn't have one daughter, she had two; e) No, we will not be starting today, we will be starting tomorrow. f) Did you meet your friends today? g) Where will he be when his mother comes? h) Were they her sisters? i) Please don't go to the office without my friends !

THIRD PART/DIL KILID

Vocabulary/Vödem

<u>Nouns</u>	/	<u>Subsats</u>				
bovül		a cup	gretik	great	sedön	to send
buk		a book	gudik	good	segolön	to go out
kaf		coffee	hitik	hot	spikön	to speak
kafibötöp	a café	nulik	nitedik	interesting	<u>Other words</u> /	<u>Vöds votik</u>
poldan		a policeman	new	das	that	
tied		tea	smalik	small	dö	about
vat		water	verätik	correct	if	if
vär		a glass	<u>Verbs</u> /	<u>Värbs</u>	is	here
			drinön	to drink	plu	more
<u>Adjectives</u> /	<u>Ladveks</u>		dunön	to do, to make	pro	for
at, ats	this, these		givön	to give	se	out
badik	bad		lilön	to hear	vemo	a lot, very
bäldik	old		remön	to buy	ven	when
et, ets	that, those		sagön	to say	u (<i>ud</i> before a vowel)	or

Grammar/Gramat

14. Adjectives are invariable when they *follow* their noun, unless separated from it by another word which is **not an adjective**; however, if they *precede* their noun, then they **must** agree with that noun:-

Buk smalik nitedik = a small interesting book;
 Labob buki smalik nitedik = I have a small interesting book;
 Labob bukis smalik e nitedikis = I have small and interesting books;
 Labob smalikis nitedikis bukis = I have small interesting books.

15. Adverbs are formed by the simple addition of **-o**.

gudik / gudiko = good, well; badik / badiko = bad, badly

16. The comparative and superlative are formed by adding **-um** and **-ün** respectively to function as adjectives and adverbs :

nulik / nulikum / nulikün = new, newer, newest;
 verätik / verätikumo / verätiküno = correct, more correctly, most correctly.

17. The present participle (*drinking*) is formed by replacing the infinitive **-ön** with **-öl** :

drinön / drinöl = to drink, drinking;
 lilön / lilöl = to hear, hearing;
 spikön / spiköl = to speak, speaking.

18. The conditional is formed by adding **-övä** to the *personal pronoun* at the end of the verb :

Sedobövä penedi blode obik = I would send a letter to my brother;
 Penomövä penedi = He would write a letter;
 Mot oba lilofövä cilis = My mother would hear the children;
 Poldans plidomsövä ad kömön = The policemen would like to come;
 Läd okolkömofovä sölis odelo = The lady would be meeting the gentlemen tomorrow.

19. To express a future event which had *not yet taken place* in the past, simply add **ö-** to the relevant verb:

Äsagof, das ökömof = She said that should would come;
 Ävilons, das öremobs toodi = They wanted us to buy the car.

20. To say: **Let** (*me, us, him, her, them*) **do something**, we use the verb **leadön** followed by the infinitive of the verb :

Leadobsös primön vobi !	=	Let's begin work !
Leadonsös vobön !	=	Let them work !
Leadölös obi visitön cilis !	=	(You) let me visit the children !

Here is a bit more practice for you. (*See Key for answers*)

i) Translate into English: a) Man at binom vemo gretik. ä) Kolkömoböv moti olik, if älabob toodi. b) Ven äbinobs in kafibötöp, mot obik äremof bovüli tieda pro blod bäldikum obik. c) Poldan esagom, das elogom fleni orik in dom. d) Ädrinobs kafi hitik se bovüls smalik. e) Segölöl se kafibötöp, ekolkömob fleni bäldik. f) Äsagoy, das poldan öspikomöv ko blod obik dö hipuls et. g) Egivob buki nitedikün flene. h) Kisi ödunölöv-li, if äbinol ob ? i) Remobsös toodi at !

ii) Translate into Volapük: a) Who gave the correct answer to the question? ä) Did you drink the water out of that glass? b) If they were here, they would speak with your father about these boys. c) Today I gave my old books to my older sister. d) Would the boy's answer be good or bad? e) Being old friends, we talked a lot. f) Let us begin tomorrow! g) Would you meet my mother if you had my car? h) He did not hear correctly. i) A small girl was talking with that interesting old man.

FOURTH PART/DIL FOLID

Vocabulary/Vödem

Nouns/Subsats

düp	-	an hour
neif	-	a knife
säned	-	supper, tea

Adjectives/Ladyeks

koldik	-	cold
malädik	-	ill

nemögik	-	impossible
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Verbs/Värbs

jelodön	-	to defend
kötön	-	to cut
lavön	-	to wash
sevädükön	-	to introduce
vüdön	-	to invite

Other words/Vöds votik

ad	-	for (the purpose of)
fa	-	by
me	-	by (means of)
tü	-	at (time)

Grammar/Gramat

21. To form the pluperfect (= *I had*) remove *-ön* from the infinitive and prefix **i-** to the beginning. Finally, add the necessary person pronoun to the end.

Iremobs bovüli tieda - we *had* bought a cup of tea;
 Ilabof toodis tel - she *had* two cars;
 Ilükolkömons - li ? - *Had* they arrived ?

22. Likewise, to form the conditional perfect (= *I would have* -ed), remove *-ön* from the infinitive and prefix **u-** to the beginning with the necessary personal pronoun at the end.

Uvobobs - we *would have* worked

As before, a future event not yet completed in the past would have the prefix **ü-** :

Esagoms, das üvoboms - They said they *would have* worked

23. Reflexive pronouns (= *himself, herself, itself, oneself, yourself, yourselves, themselves*) are expressed by **ok/oks** which is modified according to its function in the sentence; the idea of each other is expressed by **od/ods**, which again is modified according to its function :

Älöfofs okis	-	they used to love <i>themselves</i> ;
Älöfofs odis	-	they used to love <i>each other</i> ;
Ojelodom oki	-	he will defend <i>himself</i> ;
Ojelodoms odis	-	they will defend <i>each other</i> ;
Ekötof oki	-	she's cut <i>herself</i> ;
Ekötof ofi	-	she's cut <i>her</i> (= someone else);
Iplidols odis	-	you had liked <i>each other</i> ;
Iplidols okis	-	you had liked <i>yourselves</i> .

24. The passive in the various tenses is formed by adding the prefix **p-** to the various active tenses; (in this respect **pa-** is the present passive form). Any agent (= [erspm/thing *doing* the action is expressed by the word **fa** (= *by*). Here are some examples in the different tenses:

löfob - I *love*; **palöfob** (**fa** mot obik) - I *am* loved (*by* my mother);
 elöfol - you've loved; **pelöfol** (**fa** fat olik) - you've *been* loved (*by* your father);
 älöfom - he *loved*; **pälöfom** (**fa** cils okik) - he *was* loved (*by* his own children);
 ilöfof - she'd loved; **pilöfof** (**fa** daut obik) - she'd *been* loved (*by* my daughter);
 olöfof - one *will* love; **polöfof** (**fa** blods) - one *will be* loved (*by* the brothers);
 ulöfobs - we'll *have* loved; **pulöfobs** (**fa** sons obsik) - we'll *have been* loved (*by* our sons).

25. The definite article **el** (See # 1) is only used in Volapük to denote *foreign words* which have not been assimilated into the language. This word is modified just like any ordinary noun:

Els <pararazzi>; espikob ko jiel <Sheila>; ologobs hiel **li** <Rob> odelo!

26. Time is expressed thus:

<u>Clock time:</u>	Binos düp folid - it's 4 o'clock; Binos minuts deg pos düp folid - it's 4.10; Binos düp folid e laf - it's 4.30; Binos minuts teldeg bü düp lulid - it's 4.40; Binos foldil bü düp lulid - it's 4.45.
<u>Date:</u>	Tü del balid yanula - on the first (day) of January.
<u>Age:</u>	Bäldoti kinik cil at labon-li ? - how old is this child ? Labon bäldoti yelas kil - it is three years old.

Here is a last bit of practice for you: (*See Key for answers*)

Translate into English:

i) a) Evüdob ofi ad sänedön; ä) Fa hiel <Ian> päprimon, pened at fa jiel <Joan> pefinükon; b) Blod obik ilavom oki me vat koldik; c) Ikötof oki me neif; d) Sevädükolös ofi obe !; e) Äbinos verätik, das om no ivilom kömön; f) Si! Ükömob ko of, if no ibinob malädik; g) Elükömöl, fat obik eprimom ad vobön ko oms. h) Tü del kilid yanula cil olabon bäldoti yelas fol.

Translate into Volapük:

ii) a) Who has drunk the water out of this glass? ä) You will be invited to that house at three o'clock; b) Let us defend ourselves! c) My father had wanted to wash it; d) The letter was not written by me; e) Having seen Gladys, he wanted to talk with her; f) He introduced himself to me today; g) It had been impossible! h) It's one o'clock, and at two o'clock my son will be here !

KEY TO THE COMPREHENSION CHECK

PART ONE

i) a) The letter is in the car; ä) A man is with the woman; b) He meets (*or: is meeting*) a girl; c) I write (*or: am writing*) a letter; d) We visit (*or: are visiting*) the house; e) We want (*or: do want / or: are wanting*) a car; f) They sit (*or: do sit / or: are sitting*) in the office; g) He has a friend; h) She is going with the letter; i) One sits (*or: is sitting*) on the chair; j) The <paparazzo> visits (*or: does visit / or: is visiting*) the woman.

ii) a) Binos in dom; ä) Binol flen; b) Seadol su pened; c) Golom ko flen; d) Kolkömons hipuli e jipuli; e) Man seadom su stul; f) Vom golof ko jipul; g) Penedom penedi in dom; h) Labons toodi; i) El <Edelweiß> binon in бүр.

PART TWO

i) a) I do not like the answers to the question; ä) Did you sleep (*or: were you sleeping*) in the father's office? b) What is your sister's name? c) Where does the letter begin? d) Tomorrow my father will write (*or: will be writing*) a letter to their mother; e) Yes, your brother will sleep (*or: will be sleeping*) in our house; f) Mr. Smith has a (*or: one*) son and two daughters; g) What time has your mother arrived? h) But who was sitting in Mr. Smith's car? i) Why didn't you want to begin without my brother?

ii) a) Finükolös penedi in бүр fata (*or: de fat*) olik! ä) Ävilons kömön ko flens obsik; b) Okolkömobis cilis bloda (*or: de blod*) obik odelo; c) Si! Lädül <Jones> ävobof ko flen fata obik; d) Ab sör omik no älabof dauti bal, älabof tels; e) No, no oprimobs adelo, oprimobs odelo; f) Ekolkömol - li flenis olik adelo? g) Kiöpo obinom - li ven mot oma (*or: de om*) okömo? h) Äbinofs-li sörs ofik? o) No gololsös lü бүр nen flens obik!

PART THREE

i) a) This man is very big. ä) I would meet my mother if I had a car. b) When we were in the café, my mother bought a cup of tea for my elder brother. c) The policeman said that he saw your friend in the house. d) We were drinking hot coffee out of small cups. e) Going out of the café I met an old friend. f) One said *or: it was said* that a policeman would speak with my brother about those boys. g) I've given a most interesting book to a friend. h) What would you do if you were me? i) Let's sell this car!

ii) a) Kin egivon-li gespiki verätik säke? ä) Ädrinol-li vati se varet? b) If äbinons is, öspikons ko fat olik dö hipuls at; c) Adelö egivob bukis bäldik obik söre (*or: ad sör*) obik bäldikum. d) Binonöv - li gespik hipula (*or: de hipul*) gudik u badik(a)? e) Binöl flens bäldik, äspikobs vemo. f) Leadobsös primön odelo! g) Kolkömolöv - li moti obik if ölabol toodi obik? h) No älilom verätiko. i) Jipul smalik äspikof ko man bäldik nitedik et.

PART FOUR

i) a) I invited her to supper. ä) Begun by Ian, this letter was finished by Joan. b) My brother had washed himself in cold water. c) She had cut herself with a knife. d) Introduce her to me! e) It was correct that *he* hadn't wanted to come. f) Yes, I would have come with her if I hadn't been ill. g) Having arrived, my father began to work with them. h) On the third day of January the child will be four.

ii) a) Kin edrinon - li vati se vär at? ä) Povüdol dome (*or: ad dom*) et tü düp kilik. b) Leadobs jelodön obis! c) Fat obik ivilom lavön osi. d) Pened no päpenon fa ob. e) Elogöl jeli <Gladys>, evilom spikön ko of. f) Esevädükom oki obe adelo. g) Ibinos nemögik! h) Binos düp balid e tü düp telid son obik obinom is!