

LESSON NOTES

Lower Beginner S1 #1

Talking About Yourself in Finnish

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FINNISH

1. Petri: Minä olen Petri Lahtinen. Olen ohjelmoija. Aloitan tänään uuden työn. Se on mielenkiintoista. Minulla oli onnea, kun sain paikan.

ENGLISH

1. Petri: I'm Petri Lahtinen. I'm a programmer. I'll start at a new job today. It's interesting. I was lucky to get the job.

VOCABULARY

Finnish	English	Class
paikka	place, position; seat; job	noun
ohjelmoija	programmer	noun
aloittaa	to start, to begin	verb
tänään	today	noun
uusi	new	adjective
työ	job, work	noun
mielenkiintoinen	interesting	adjective
onni	luck, fortune, happiness	noun
kun	when	conjunction
saada	to get, to receive	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Onko tämä varmasti oikea paikka?</p> <p>"Are you sure this is the right place?"</p>	<p>Ohjelmoija käytti tietokonetta.</p> <p>"The programmer used the computer."</p>
<p>Aloitan huomenna uuden kirjan.</p> <p>"I'll start a new book tomorrow."</p>	<p>Olen tänään kiireinen.</p> <p>"I'm busy today."</p>
<p>Tiinalla on uusi kampaus.</p> <p>"Tiina has a new hairstyle."</p>	<p>Etsin uutta työtä.</p> <p>"I'm looking for a new job."</p>
<p>Tämä kirja on todella mielenkiintoinen.</p> <p>"This book is really interesting."</p>	<p>Raha ei tuo onnea.</p> <p>"Money doesn't make you happy."</p>
<p>Tulen heti, kun tämä on valmis.</p> <p>"I'll come as soon as this is ready."</p>	<p>Mies saa rahaa.</p> <p>"The man receives money."</p>

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

***aloittaa* ("to start, to begin")**

The verb *aloittaa* is a transitive verb, so it always takes an object (although the object can be dropped from the sentence if understood from the context). So you can say *Tiina aloitti uuden kirjan* ("Tiina started a new book"), but you cannot say "The book started well" using this verb. For that purpose, you would need the related intransitive verb *alkaa*: *Kirja alkoi hyvin* ("The book started well").

***onni* ("luck, fortune, happiness")**

The Finnish word *onni* covers both the kind of luck you may or may not have when gambling, and the kind of happiness that may come from the small things in life, such as reading a good book or going to movies with a friend.

***paikka* ("place, position; seat; job")**

The word *paikka* can be used in many of the contexts where you would use "place" in English, both in a concrete and a figurative sense. It can also be used for a seat, for example in a theater: *Haluan hyvän paikan* ("I want a good seat"). It may also

be used for a job, and in this sense you will often see the compound word *työpaikka*, which can mean both a "job" and a "workplace," depending on the context.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of this Lesson is a Review of the Nominative, Partitive, and Genitive Cases.

Minä olen Petri Lahtinen. Minulla oli onnea, kun sain paikan.
"I'm Petri Lahtinen. I was lucky to get the job."

In this lesson, we review the basic use of the nominative, partitive, and genitive cases. They are the key to understanding Finnish since, unlike in English, the grammatical relationships between words are not tied to word order. Word order is relatively free in Finnish, and it is the case endings that show which word is the subject of the sentence and which is the object or complement. Let's look at each case in turn.

The Nominative Case

The nominative case is the dictionary form of a noun, adjective, numeral, or pronoun. It is often the case of the subject of a sentence. It indicates an entirety of some kind, as opposed to the partitive, which expresses a part of something. In *A on B* ("A is B") type sentences, B is in the nominative case when the subject is a specified, definite entity. In certain kinds of sentences (such as sentences with an unspecified human actor, also known as the Finnish "passive") there is no explicit subject, and then the object of the sentence may be in the nominative case.

For example:

1. ***Kalle on poika.***
"Kalle is a boy."
2. ***Omena on kylmä.***
"The apple is cold."
3. ***Maito kaatui pöydälle.***
"(All) the milk was spilled on the table."
4. ***Pojat pelaavat jalkapalloa.***
"The boys play soccer."
5. ***Poliisi ottaa varkaan kiinni.***
"The police will catch the thief."

6. **Varas** otetaan kiinni.
"The thief will be caught."

Examples from the dialogue:

1. **Minä** olen **Petri Lahtinen**.
"I'm **Petri Lahtinen**."
2. Olen **ohjelmoija**.
"I'm a **programmer**."

The Partitive Case

The partitive case indicates a part or an unspecified amount or number of something. The object is in the partitive case when the action only affects part of the object or is ongoing or habitual. In *A on B* type sentences, *B* is in the partitive when it's an adjective modifying a mass noun. Also the subject can be in the partitive if it's indefinite or unspecified. The partitive is used in negative sentences and questions. The partitive ending is **-a/-ä** or **-ta/-tä**, depending on the last letters of the word.

For example:

1. **Maija** söi **omenaa**.
Maija ate **some apple**."
2. **Maito** on **kylmää**.
"The milk is **cold**."
3. **Pojat** pelaavat **jalkapalloa**.
"The boys play **soccer**."
4. **Maitoa** kaatui pöydälle.
"Some milk was spilled on the table." (Literally: "Some milk fell on the table.")
5. **Maalari** maalasi **taloa**.
"The painter was painting **a house**."
6. **Oletko** nähnyt **Tiinaa**?
"Have you seen **Tiina**?"

7. *En ole nähnyt **Tiinaa**.*
"I haven't seen **Tiina**."

Examples from this Dialogue:

1. *Se on **mielenkiintoista**.*
"It's interesting."
2. *Minulla oli **onnea**, kun sain paikan.*
"I was lucky to get the job."

The Genitive Case

The genitive case indicates either possession or (when it's the object that is in the genitive case) the fact that the action affects the entire object or that the action is complete. The genitive ending is **-n**.

For example:

1. ***Tiinan** hame on sininen.*
"**Tiina's** skirt is blue."
2. *Maija söi **omenan**.*
"Maija ate **an (entire) apple**."
3. *Äiti kaatoi **maitolasin**.*
"Mother knocked over **a glass of milk**."
4. *Maalari maalasi **talon** punaiseksi.*
"The painter painted **the house** red."

Examples from this dialogue:

1. *Aloitan tänään **uuden työn**.*
"I'll start a new job today."
2. *Minulla oli onnea, kun sain **paikan**.*
"I was lucky to get **the job**."

Changes in the Word Stem

One of the trickier parts of Finnish grammar for beginners is consonant gradation. It means that certain kinds of word stems change depending on what kind of an ending is attached to them. It may seem daunting at first, but you will get a feeling for it, because you see it all the time. Consonant gradation affects the last consonants of a word if there is one or more *k*, *p*, or *t*. One of the consonants may be dropped (*kk*

For example:

1. *Tämä **paikka** on vapaa.*
"This seat is free."
2. *Haluan hyvän **paikan**.*
"I want a good seat."
3. ***Äiti lukee** kirjaa.*
"Mother is reading a book."
4. *Minä **luen äidin** kirjaa.*
"I'm reading Mother's book."
5. *Tämä muki on **isompi**.*
"This mug is bigger."
6. *Haluan **isomman** mukin.*
"I want a bigger mug."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Attitudes to Work in Finland

In the past, many people worked for the same company all their lives. These days, this is very seldom the case. Young people may stay in one company for 2-4 years before moving on to another company in search of a better salary or more interesting tasks. Young people may be anxious about the requirements set by employers, but on the other hand, many young people are also very particular about what they want to do. They are very much aware of the great portion of their time they spend working, and they want work to be interesting and enjoyable. Just making money is not good enough for many. If the work turns out to be boring or meaningless, they are quick to start investigating other options. The post-World War II generations worked hard because they were expected to. Their

grandchildren work hard if they like what they are doing. If they don't like it, they do just what they have to or find another job—if they can. Unemployment, though not quite as bad as in some other European countries, is a big problem.