GESIÐA ENGLISCES LEORNUNGBOC

(Written course for learning Englisc, for ÞA ENGLISCAN GESIÐAS)

FORMA LEORNUNGDÆL

(LESSON 1)

I VERBS

Englisc calls a verb simply a word. The verb is the one essential word in a sentence; it defines the action that the sentence is about. Look again at Æþelred cyning fērþ tō Æscesdūne.

A verb can change its ending for *tense, number* and *person*, while its *stem* stays the same. The verb fērþ is present *tense* ('goes', not 'went'), singular *number* (*he* goes, only one of him, not *they* go), and third person (not *I* go; or *you* go, 2nd person; anybody else is 3rd person). The present singular 3rd person ending is –þ. The stem is fēr-.

Þǣr hē hīerþ his biscop [There he hears ('hear<u>th</u>') his bishop].

a) Write this last sentence again, but make it say he looks for his biscop. Use the verb 'seek', whose stem in Englisc is sēc-:

……………………………………………………………………………………..

Look at this sentence: Æþelred cyning and Ælfred his brōþor fēra<u>þ</u> tō Æscesdūne. […and his brother Alfred go…].

Now the verb is present *plural*; the present plural ending is –aþ

Æþelred and Ælfred mēta<u>þ</u> Wulfstan biscop þǣr […meet bishop Wulfstan…].

b) Rewrite this one, again making them look for Wulfstan:

……………………………………………………………………………………..

Æþelred fērde fram Æscesdūne.

The verb is singular again, but *past* […went ('fared') from…]. The past singular 3rd person ending is –de.

On Æscesdūne hē flīem<u>de</u> Bagsecg cyning [In Ashdown he put to flight King Bagseg (a Viking invader)].

Hē and his brōþor flīem<u>don</u> Bagsecg cyning and Sidroc eorl … […and Earl Sidroc…].

Now the verb is past plural; the past plural ending is –don.

…and fēr<u>don</u> ongēan fram Æscesdūne […and went back (again) from…].

c)   Put into Englisc 'he taught king Bagseg'. Use a verb whose stem lǣr– appears in lǣrunggewritu 'correspondence course':

………

d)   And now 'he and his brother taught King Bagseg':

………

There's a fuller table of verb endings in the Grammar for the lesson, but -þ, -aþ, -de and -don are the most important ones. The present tense endings are more complex than the past; there's a practice section on them in the Grammar Drills booklet, pages 49-69. It can't help containing other things than verbs, but the only ones you need to notice are the pronouns. Ic, þū, hē, wē and gē are obviously modern I, thou, he, we and ye, leaving only hīe strange – modern English has substituted 'they'.

II   NOUNS

Englisc calls a noun nama, a 'name'. It labels a person or thing, either by proper name (Ælfred) or description (brōþor). A noun can change its ending for *case* and *number*.

CASES: GENITIVE (POSSESSIVE)

Æþelredes brōþor wæs Ælfred [Ethelred's brother was Alfred].

In Modern Englisc we mark possession by the ending –'s, which is just a slightly simplified form of the –es of Englisc. Grammarians call this the *genitive case* of the noun. Englisc used it more thoroughly than we do.

Æþelredes cyninges brōþor wæs Ælfred [King Ethelred's brother…].

Not only do two nouns like this both add genitive endings. But in Englisc if there's a definite article (modern 'the') it changes too.

Se cyning wæs Æþelred [The king was…].

Þæs cyninges nama wæs Æþelred [The king's name was…].

e)   Rewrite it, making it 'the bishop's name':

……..

CASES: NOMINATIVE (SUBJECT) AND ACCUSATIVE (OBJECT)

Englisc showed by another case change a relationship that we usually show only by word order in Modern English.

Wē hīerdon Dūnstān biscop [We heard Bishop Dunstan].

Dūnstān biscop hīerde ūs [Bishop Dunstan heard us].

Here we too change from 'we' (doing the hearing, *subject* of the sentence) to 'us' (being heard, *object* of the sentence). If the subject and object are nouns, however, we make no difference. But Englisc can. If there's a definite article, it changes.

Se cyning flīemde Bagsecg [...put Bagseg to flight].

Se cyning is the subject of the sentence.

Bagsecg flīemde þone cyning [...put the king to flight].

Þone cyning is the object of the sentence.

Æþelred and Ælfred mētaþ þone biscop [...meet the bishop].

Þone biscop is the object of the sentence. Grammarians call the case marking the subject (se cyning) the *nominative case*; the case marking the object (þone cyning) is the *accusative case.* The noun here does not change between nominative and accusative.

   f)   Rewrite the last sentence, making 'the king and the bishop' the subject and 'the earl' the object:

   ……..

CASES: DATIVE (INDIRECT OBJECT)

When the object is an indirect one (as in our 'give it *me*', where the simple 'me' has the sense 'to me'), Englisc uses yet another case, the *dative* case. Here the noun does change.

Æþelred and Ælfred befæstaþ þone tūn þǣm biscope [...entrust the 'town' to the bishop (but a tūn needn't be as big as a 'town'; it's any enclosed dwelling area from a stockaded farm upwards)].

The same case is used after the preposition tō:

Æþelred and Ælfred sendaþ þone biscop Dūnstān tō þǣm tūne [...send the bishop Dunstan to the 'town']

And after other prepositions:

Se eorl Sidroc wæs þǣr on þǣm tūne […was there in the town]

g) Say that bishop Dunstan went (fer-) from (fram) the king:

……….

You must get used to the significance of these cases, because they can show what the sense is even when the order of words is unusual. For special emphasis Englisc can say:

Þone eorl flīemde se cyning Ælfred [King Alfred drove out the earl – we can't reproduce the heavy emphasis the abnormal word order gives þone eorl in an easy way].

NUMBER

Biscopas and abbodas and prēostas fērdon mid þǣm cyninge Ælfrede [Bishops and abbots and priests…].

We mark *plural number* by the ending –s (or –es); again, a simplified form of the Englisc –as. But again, Englisc also changes the definite article if there is one:

Þā cyningas Ælfred and Æþelred hīeraþ þā biscopas [King Alfred and King Ethelred hear the bishops].

Notice that in the plural the subject (nominative case) and the object (accusative case) have the same form, both article and noun.

But the genitive case is marked in the plural, and much more clearly than we manage with our awkward –s':

Þāra cyninga þēowas hīeraþ þone biscop [The kings' servants…].

Hē lǣdde þāra prēosta þēow tō þǣm abbode [He took (the stem lǣd- is our verb 'lead') the priests' servant…]

h) Rewrite it, making it the bishops' servant that he took to the abbot:

……….

The dative case too is marked in the plural. After prepositions:

Dūnstān biscop fērde tō þǣm beorgum […to the mountains (beorg is 'berg', as in 'iceberg', an 'ice mountain')].

Hē fērde mid his prēostum […with his priests].

And as an indirect object:

Þā cyningas befæstaþ þā tūnas þǣm abbodum […entrust the 'towns' to the abbots].

Again, there's a full table of these noun forms, with the appropriate forms of the article, in the Grammar. This time they're all important. The first drill in the Grammar Drills booklet (pages 1-49) practises them.

III   PRONOUNS

A pronoun is in Englisc naman speliend, that is 'representing a noun'. The noun it represents depends on how you use it. The modern third person pronoun 'he' can represent any single male except the speaker and the person spoken to. It's unchanged from Englisc, but Englisc could use it for *things* as well as persons; all the things you've met in this lesson would be hē. Pronouns, like nouns, change for case and number.

The possessive (*genitive*) form of hē is his, just as in Modern English.

The *dative* form is him. In modern English this form is also used as an accusative form.

The accusative form in Englisc is distinct: hine.

Ælfred cyning flīemde þone cyning Bagsecg fram his tūne […drove out king Bagseg…]

Hē flīemde hine tō þǣm mōre (He drove him out to the moorland).

Hē flīemde hine tō him mid his þegnum (He drove him out to it with his retainers).

And the *plural* forms in Englisc are quite different from modern ones, because we've adopted ones used by the Norse settlers in England. The plural *nominative* and *accusative* are the same as each other (as in the noun and the article): hīe. So for once we make a distinction the Englisc didn't, and in writing Englisc you have to be careful of this sort of thing, or it becomes obscure.

H̲īe flīemdon h̲īe tō þǣm more [T̲h̲e̲y̲ drove t̲h̲e̲m̲ out…]

The plural genitive is hiera. Remember:

Hē lǣdde þāra prēosta þēow tō þǣm abbode

   i)   Make it 'he took *their* servant to the abbot':

   …….

j)   Now '*they* took *his* servant…' (remember, you'll have to change the verb ending; it must be plural this time):

…….

The *plural dative* is the same as the singular dative, him. So Dūnstān biscop fērde tō him would have to be put in Modern English '..went to *them*' or '…went to *him*', depending on what noun was in the previous sentence for him to represent. Or of course, '…went to *it*' if the noun referred to a thing, like se mōr.

The Grammar sets out these forms of the *Third Person Masculine Pronoun* in a tidy table; the third Grammar Drill (pages 69-89) practises them.

FORMA LEORNUNGDÆL: FANDUNG

(LESSON 1 EXERCISES)

1) Put these into Modern English. Watch what the word-*forms* tell you about who is doing what, not just the word-*order*:
   a) Se biscop flīemde þā prēostas fram þǣm tūne, ac hiera þēow fērde tō Æscesdūne tō þǣm cyninge. Hine þæs cyninges þēowas lǣddon tō Æþelrede, and hē flīemde þone biscop.
   b) Ælfred cyning fērþ tō þǣm beorgum mid þǣm abbode Dūnstāne. Þǣr sēcþ hīe Ōswulf biscop, and him hīe befæstaþ þone tūn.

2) Put these into Englisc (no need to change any word orders):
   a) The bishop looks for his priests.
   b) The priests' servants meet the king, and conduct him to the abbot.
   c) The earl expels the abbot from his estate (use tūn), and he and the bishop entrust it to his servants. (Note that the use of 'to' here isn't the same as in (b); this affects how Englisc puts it.)
   d) The abbot's brother went to Ashdown to King Ethelred, but the king took him to his estate on the moors. (There's a word here you won't at once know what to do with. Make a guess from something in 1(a).)
   e) The priests went to the mountain with their servants, and they heard the bishop there.

FORMA LEONUNGDÆL: STÆFCRÆFT

(LESSON 1 – GRAMMAR)

THE SOUNDS OF THE ENGLISC LETTERS

Mostly not far off the modern ones. Sounds are hard to explain in writing: assuming you have the audio files, listen and imitate. But in any case note a few really important things.

I   The letters are much the same as today, but *j, k, q, x* and *z* never occur, or very rarely.

II   The letters do all sound. The word wrīte in Englisc has five clear sounds; the same spelling now represents only three, *w* and *e* being silent. There are no silent letters in Englisc.

III   CONSONANTS

c   Beside e, i, or æ, usually like modern *ch*: cild ('child')

f   Between vowels, like modern *v*; lifer ('liver')

g   Beside e, i, or æ, usually like modern *y*; geolo ('yellow'), dæg ('day')

h   In the middle or end of a word, like Scots *ch* in *loch*; riht ('right' – our *gh* comes from a time when the sound was still there)

sc   Usually like modern *sh*: scip ('ship')

þ   Like modern *th*: þorn ('thorn') – which is the name of the letter. The same sound can also be written ð ('eth'), but only þ is used in this course. The essential thing in writing þ is to make the vertical stroke go up *and* down from the loop.

IV   VOWELS

æ   Like modern *a* in *ash*: (æsc, like the name of the letter)

a   Like modern *a* in *can't*: nama (now pronounced *name*)

y   Like French *u* in *tu*: cyning (now pronounced *king*)

u   Like modern *u* in *put*: lufu (now pronounced *love*). When long (ū) like *u* in *crude*: hūs (now pronounced *house*)

The other long vowel to note specially is ī, like the *i* in *machine*: wīn (now pronounced *wine*) – but in general notice that there is a difference between a 'short' and a 'long' vowel.

WORD FORMS

I   The 'class 1 weak' VERB   hīer-an (to hear)

	Present tense		Past tense	
Singular				
1st person	Ic hīer -e	I hear	Ic hīer-de	I heard
2nd person	Þū hīer-st	You hear	Þū hīer-dest	You heard
3rd person	Hē hīer-þ	He hears	Hē hīer-de	He heard
Plural (all)	Wē/gē/hīe hīer-aþ	We/you/they hear	Wē/gē/hīe hīer-don	We/you/they heard

II   The 'strong' masculine NOUN   se cyning (the king)

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	Se cyning	Þā cyning-as
Accusative	Þone cyning	Þā cyning-as
Genitive	Þæs cyning-es	Þāra cyning-a
Dative	Þǣm cyning-e	Þǣm cyning-um

III   The 3rd person masculine PRONOUN hē (he)

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	hē	hīe
Accusative	hine	hīe
Genitive	his	hiera
Dative	him	him

FORMA LEORNUNGDÆL: WORDGETÆL

(LESSON 1 – VOCABULARY)

Note that all verbs are given in the *infinitive* form – that's the one used after 'auxiliary' verbs like 'will'. In Modern English it has no ending; in Englisc it normally ends –an.

I   WORDS NO LONGER IN USE IN ENGLISH

Ac	Conjunction	But
Befæstan	Verb	Would be 'befast' if it survived - entrust
Se beorg	Noun	Berg = mountain
Fēran	Verb	Go (related to the verb 'to fare')
Flīeman	Verb	Put to flight etc (related to the verb 'to flee')
Se þēow	noun	servant

II   WORDS STILL IN USE IN ENGLISH

Se abbod	noun	Abbot
And	conjunction	And
Se biscop	noun	Bishop
Se brōþor	noun	Brother
Se cyning	noun	King
Se eorl	noun	Earl
Fram	preposition	From
Hē	pronoun	He (but used for some *things* too). For other forms of this pronoun see the Grammar
Hīeran	verb	To hear
Lǣdan	verb	To lead (also to take, conduct, etc)

Mētan	verb	To meet
Mid	preposition	With
Se mōr	noun	Moor
Se nama	noun	Name
On	Preposition	On, also in
Ongēan	Adverb	(back) again
Se prēost	Noun	Priest
Sēcan	Verb	To seek
Tō	Preposition	To
Se tūn	Noun	Town (but used also of much smaller places of habitation)
Þǣr	Adverb	there