

[philoprogress1-15b] PII Lesson 04 Assignments and Grammar
Welcome to lesson four of Progress in Irish by Máiréad Ní Ghráda.

Read the lesson on page 6 of your book and listen to the audio file (Lesson04.mp3) which is available in the Audio folder of our Files section.

Homework: Complete the seven exercises in the "Cuir Gaeilge air seo" section on page 6 of the book and forward to me for evaluation.

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Grammar:

The verbal noun: This week's lesson introduces a further nine verbal nouns into our vocabulary. They are shown here with the preposition "ag" which, as I explained in lesson 1, is used to translate the English *present participle*, or the "-ing" part of the verb:

ag canadh - singing, chanting
ag éisteacht - listening
ag féachaint - looking
ag imeacht - going away
ag léamh - reading
ag obair - working
ag rince - dancing
ag scríobh - writing
ag súgradh - playing

These are used in the manner demonstrated in lesson 1:

[verb] + [subject] + [ag] + [verbal noun]

Tá + an páiste + ag + léamh - The child is reading.
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The personal pronoun: Strictly speaking, a personal pronoun is used to refer back to a person or thing that has been previously mentioned. In the English sentence "Mary was here yesterday and she stayed for a few hours," the word "she" is a personal pronoun and refers back to "Mary."

In this week's lesson we see the personal pronoun used as the SUBJECT in a sentence:

1st person, singular (I): mé
2nd person, singular (you): tú
3rd person, singular, masculine (he, it): sé
3rd person, singular, feminine (she, it): sí

2nd person, plural (you): sibh
3rd person, plural (they): siad

See the file "Personal pronouns.pdf" in our Files section.

Although it is not shown separately in this lesson, the 1st person plural personal pronoun for "we" is "muid" (or "sinn"). See the next item in this email concerning the combined form of the verb.

The combined form of the verb: We can combine the present tense of a verb with the 1st person singular or 1st person plural subject to form one word. In the case of "tá" we do this by adding "-im" (1st person singular) or "-imid" (1st person plural):

Táim ag obair - I am working,
Táimid ag obair - We are working.

+ + + + +

The verb: So far in this course we have been using "tá" (is, am, are) which is actually the present tense of the Irish verb "bí."

The vast majority of Irish verbs are *regular*. In other words, they maintain their "basic form", or *stem*, throughout the tenses.

There are eleven Irish verbs which follow a different pattern and these verbs are *irregular* in that they do not keep the same form throughout all the tenses. The good news is that there are ONLY eleven Irish verbs that are irregular, unlike many languages which have a great many. The bad news is that these eleven irregular Irish verbs are quite common and "bí" is one of those.

The *stem* of the verb is the form you will find in a dictionary.

Dealing with the irregular verb "Bí" we have seen that the simple present tense statement form is "tá":

Tá an páiste tinn. - The child is ill. (positive statement)

To make a negative statement with this verb we use "Níl":

Níl an páiste tinn. - The child is not ill. (negative statement)

"Níl" is constructed of two words. The negative verbal particle "ní" (which usually causes lenition) and the present tense *dependant* form of the verb "fuil". Ní + fuil. Because "fh" is silent, this is shortened to "níl".

To ask a positive question in the present tense, we use "An" in front of the verb. It causes eclipsis and requires the *dependant* form of the verb which, in the present tense of the verb "bí", is "fuil". The letter "f" becomes "bhf" when eclipsed:

An bhfuil an páiste tinn? - Is the child ill?

There are only a handful of irregular verbs that have a special *dependant* form which must be used after "An" or "Ní (Níl)". We will learn these as we encounter them throughout the course.

For the time being, we can summarise the verb "Bí" with the following:

tá - present tense positive statement,
níl - present tense negative statement,
an bhfuil - present tense positive question.

From the very short list of irregular Irish verbs, "bí" is the most irregular. Later in the course we will see how to form a negative question, "Is the child not ill?" etc., but don't worry about that for now.

The adverb: This week's lesson introduces the adverb of time "anois", although we are not shown any examples of its use in the text on page 6 of the book. An adverb is usually placed at the end of a clause or sentence in much the same position as the English construction:

[verb] + [subject] +... [adverb]

Tá an bhróg salach anois. - The shoe is dirty now.

+ + + + +

Conjunctions: We can use a conjunction to join two or more grammatically complete sentences together to form one sentence. When used in this way, a conjunction is known as a *coordinating conjunction* and we are introduced to two in this week's lesson:

agus - and

ach - but

These conjunctions can be inserted between two sentences in much the same way as they would in English. Consider the following two complete sentences:

Tá an páiste tinn - The child is ill

Tá sé ag gol - He is crying

We can create one complete sentence simply by using the following construction:

[Tá an páiste tinn] + conjunction + [tá sé ag gol]

These conjunctions can also be used to form a single subject:

[subject] + [conjunction] + [subject]

Seán agus Nóra

an fear agus an buachaill

Tá Seán agus an buachaill ag léamh anois. - Sean and the boy are reading now.