

PERSONAL VERB ENDINGS

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

The simple present expresses habitual actions, general truths, repeated events, and stable characteristics. The tense marker attaches to the verb stem and combines with personal endings.

1. Function / Meaning

The simple present denotes:

- Regular or habitual actions.
- Timeless facts and definitions.
- General tendencies and characteristic behaviour.

It does not describe an action in progress at the exact moment of speaking.

2. Forms

The basic marker is -(A)r.

The vowel A follows two-way vowel harmony:

a, ı, o, u → -ar

e, i, ö, ü → -er

Examples:

gel- → gelir

yap- → yapar

bak- → bakar

bil- → bilir

bekle- → bekler

öğren- → öğrenir

In many verbs, the surface form appears as -ır, where the vowel follows four-way harmony:

a / ı → ır

e / i → ir

o / u → ur

ö / ü → ür

Examples:

al- → alır

gel- → gelir

gör- → görür

tut- → tutar

dön- → döner

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3. Stem Types

a) Consonant-final stems

Most consonant-final stems take -(A)r:

yap → yapar

bak → bakar

çalış → çalışır

otur → oturur

b) Vowel-final stems

Vowel-final stems generally take -r; the stem vowel adjusts regularly:

ye → yer

de → der

dö → döner

These forms are lexical and fixed.

4. Person Marking

Personal endings attach to the simple present form:

1st singular → -(A)rım / im / um / üm

2nd singular → -(A)rsın

3rd singular → -(A)r (no additional ending)

1st plural → -(A)rız / ız / uz / üz

2nd plural → -(A)rsınız / sünüz

3rd plural → -(A)rlar / ler

Examples:

gelirim

gelirsin

gelir

geliriz

gelirsiniz

gelirler

yaparım

yaparsın

yapar

yaparız

yaparsınız

yaparlar

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5. Negative and Interrogative

Negative

In Turkish, the simple present negative does not use one single ending for every person.

The core piece is **-mA** (which becomes -ma or -me depending on vowel harmony).

Everything is built on top of this small piece.

Here is the important idea: in four of the six persons, an extra -z appears after -mA, giving the familiar -mAz sound. But in the ben and biz forms, that -z disappears. This is why "ben gelmem" feels different from "o gelmez", even though they come from the same verb.

Look at how it works with gelmek (to come):

ben → gelmem (the -z drops)

sen → gelmezsin

o → gelmez

biz → gelmeyiz (the -z drops)

siz → gelmezsiniz

onlar → gelmez(ler)

The same pattern with yapmak (to do):

ben → yapmam

sen → yapmazsın

o → yapmaz

biz → yapmayız

siz → yapmazsınız

onlar → yapmaz(lar)

A simple way to remember it:

ben and biz are the two "soft" forms. They end in **-mam / -mem** and **-mayız / -meyiz**, with no -z.

All the others (sen, o, siz, onlar) keep the -z and give you the clear **-mAz** sound.

So if you ever feel unsure, start from the o form, which is the simplest (gelmez, yapmaz, okumaz). Then adjust: for ben and biz, drop the -z and soften the ending.

Interrogative

The question particle mi follows the verb form and harmonizes independently:

simple present form + personal ending + mi

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Examples:

Gelir misin?
Yapar mı?
Gelir miyiz?
Yapmaz mısınız?

Examples

- Her gün erken kalkarım. — I get up early every day.
- Akşamları kitap okur. — He/She reads books in the evenings.
- Hafta sonları spor yaparız. — We do sports on weekends.
- Araba kullanır. — He/She drives a car.
- Kahve içmez. — He/She does not drink coffee.
- Sık sık seyahat ederler. — They travel often.
- Su 100 derecede kaynar. — Water boils at 100 degrees.
- Kuşlar uçar. — Birds fly.
- Bilir misin? — Do you know?
- Gitmezsiniz. — You (plural/honorific) do not go.

Notes

- -(A)r follows two-way vowel harmony (a / e).
- Many verbs show a surface -Ir pattern in accordance with four-way vowel harmony.
- Vowel-final stems typically take -r.
- Negative forms use -mAz with a / e alternation.
- Third person singular has no additional personal ending.