

Speak Icelandic

The language of the Vikings was Old Norse. This language does not exist today but a language close to it is Icelandic. Here are some words in Icelandic for you to say. Most of the words are spelled correctly but some words are spelled in a way to help you say them more easily. These words are marked with a *.

English	Icelandic
ache	verkur
all	allur
apple	epli
arm	handleggur
aunt	furthur* or mothur systir*
back	bak
bad	vondur
bag	mie (my)
bad	poki
bird	fugl
boat	batur
bottle	flaska
boy	drengur
bread	brauth*
cheese	ostur
child	barn
cup	bolli
daughter	dottir
ear	eyra
eat	eta
eye	auga

English	Icelandic
face	andlit
finger	finger
fire	eldur
friend	vinur
girl	stulka
good bye	Verti seyell*
good day how are you?	Komdu seyell *
good morning	gothan *dag
grandfather	afi
grandmother	ammi
hair	har
hand	hurnd*,
head	hurfurth*
heart	hjarta
hunger	hungur
husband	bondi
knee	kne
lamp	lampi
leg	leggur
man	mathur*

English	Icelandic
money	peningar
no	nay*
no thanks	purkk* fyrir
neck	hals
plate	diskur
pleasant	skemmtilegur
room	herbergi
ship	skip
sick	sjurkur
sit	sitja
son	sonur
table	borth*
uncle	furthur* or mothur brothir*
walk	ganga
wife	kona
woman	kvennmathur
yes	ja

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Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet.

Using the worksheet

This activity is intended to give the students a very introductory look at a language very close to the one spoken by the Vikings. A large number of words we use today have origins in Old Norse, the language of the Vikings. Some people claim that on average one in every seven words we use comes from the language of the Vikings. Icelandic has been selected here as it is similar to Old Norse and is a living language – one used today. When the students look through the words, they will see some that are similar to the words they use in English. It is not intended that the students should write down the words but simply try to say them. Some words have been spelled phonetically because they contain characters which are not found in English. You may wish to use the activity with other activities in the book. For example you may wish to begin a Viking day by saying “Good morning. How are you?” You may like to link this activity with activity 20A ‘Words from Viking times’.

Younger students

You may like the students to go through the words and find those relating to the human body. They could try and learn them and test each other. They could learn a simple greeting and how to say yes and no. They could also learn the words connected with families. They can try and communicate simply by using other words in the list.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Learn some Icelandic words.
- Communicate using Icelandic words.

Older students

The students can learn as many words as they can. They can construct a simple play in which two Vikings are talking to each other or a Viking and an Anglo-Saxon (using modern English) try to communicate over perhaps buying some bread.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Learn some Icelandic words.
- Construct a simple play in which Icelandic words are used.