

BASIC SENTENCE STRUCTURES

The main principles for the structure in Norwegian main clauses are as follows:

1. There must be a verb and a subject

In Norwegian, the verb can never be left out, not the verb *å være* (to be) either:

Jeg <i>er</i> norsk.	(I am Norwegian)
Det <i>er</i> en mann.	(It is a man)

As the verb does not change in person or number in Norwegian, it does not tell us who is performing the action in the sentence, as it does in many other languages. Therefore, a Norwegian sentence should always have a subject telling us who is doing something:

<i>Han</i> kommer fra Norge.	(He comes from Norway)
Nå bor <i>han</i> i Oslo.	(Now he lives in Oslo)

2. The verb is in the second position

The verb must be the second element in a Norwegian main clause.

Han <i>snakker</i> norsk nå.	(He speaks Norwegian now)
Tom og Lisa <i>snakker</i> norsk nå.	
Nå <i>snakker</i> han norsk.	

In the second sentence, «Tom og Lisa» is a complex subject: Who speak Norwegian? Tom and Lisa. It therefore counts as one element even if there are three words.

3. The subject is in the first or third position

If the sentence does not start with the subject, the subject follows directly after the verb. If the subject is not first, and there is more than one verb, the subject will split the verbs:

<i>Han</i> snakker norsk nå.	
Nå snakker <i>han</i> norsk.	
<i>Han</i> kan snakke norsk nå.	
Nå kan <i>han</i> snakke norsk.	

Questions

Question words are counted as elements and should be followed directly by the verb:

Hvor bor du? (Where do you live?)

Questions for yes or no start with the verb:

Bor du her? (Do you live here?)

Bor han ikke i Oslo?