

DANISH

COUNTRIES: Denmark
Southern Sweden

POST: Copenhagen

Danish is a Scandinavian language and is found in the Germanic language group. Danish is of course rich in words of Germanic origin, but it has also borrowed from Latin, French and English. It contains many compound words and derivatives the meanings of which are easy to grasp when one knows the components. On the other hand, there are many cases in which the components have a very specific meaning. This sometimes makes it difficult to tell the precise meaning of a word in very long combinations.

The pronunciation is generally quite difficult. A given letter can have various sounds in different situations. Since the intervals between them are quite brief, these sounds at first appear impossible to distinguish. The same applies to the weak distinction between vowels and consonants. Unlike Swedish, Danish does not have coloured vowels. Its consonants are soft or muted in the final position or between two vowels, in words in which the Swedish and Norwegian maintain hard consonants. Sentences in Danish do not have the characteristic melody to the same extent. Its rules of accentuation are generally the same as those of German. On the other hand, in the midst of certain syllables one finds a peculiarly Danish phonetic phenomenon called the "stod" or glottal stop, during which the utterance is stopped and replaced for a very brief moment by an altogether unique and barely perceptible sound.