

FINNISH (SOUMI)

COUNTRIES: Finland
Norway (Finnmarken)
Sweden (Noorbotten)
Ingria
U.S.S.R. (Petsanio)

POST: Helsinki

Like Hungarian, the Finnish language has its origin in the Finno-Ugrian language family. Spoken Finnish is quite ancient. Its only affinities with Hungarian are based mainly on structural similarities and a small quantity of common ancient words. Finnish is quite different from the Swedish and Russian spoken in the neighbouring countries and may at first seem to be a rather forbidding language. However, it is a very harmonious and very supple language that lends itself remarkably well to poetic expression. It expresses colour, sound and movement with tremendous richness.

Finnish spelling is clearly phonological in that each written letter corresponds to a sound. The pronunciation is also easy: the stress is always on the first syllable. The verbs, which have only one conjugation, have a very simple system of personal forms: a present-future and a single preterite. Finnish has 14 cases of declension and five kinds of infinitives. It is very rich in vowels but poor in consonants. There are neither genders nor articles in Finnish.