

Question: Big dog, old bull, strong horse

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Danish, spoken in Denmark, and Swedish, spoken in Sweden, are closely related languages. This means that they have many similarities.

Read the Danish and Swedish phrases below, and look for patterns, similarities and differences. In particular, look at how articles (the words *the* and *a*) are used. Then complete the exercises below.

English	Swedish	Danish
a dog	<i>en hund</i>	<i>en hund</i>
a big dog	<i>en stor hund</i>	<i>en stor hund</i>
the dog	<i>hunden</i>	<i>hunden</i>
the big dog	<i>den store hund</i>	<i>den stora hunden</i>

A1. Identify which of these phrases are Danish and which are Swedish. Tick the appropriate box in the answer book. (8 pts)

a. <i>en tyr</i>	a bull
b. <i>en gammal tjur</i>	an old bull
c. <i>tyren</i>	the bull
d. <i>en gammel tyr</i>	an old bull
e. <i>den gamle tyr</i>	the old bull
f. <i>tjuren</i>	the bull
g. <i>den gamla tjuren</i>	the old bull
h. <i>en tjur</i>	a bull

A2. If the words for 'horse' are *häst* (Swedish) and *hest* (Danish), and the words for 'strong' are *stark* (Swedish) and *stærk* (Danish), complete the table below in your Answer book. (7 pts)

English	Swedish	Danish
a horse		
a strong horse		
the horse	<i>hästen</i>	
the strong horse		

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Solution

A1.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| a. <i>en tyr</i> | a bull |
| b. <i>en gammal tjur</i> | an old bull |
| c. <i>tyren</i> | the bull |
| d. <i>en gammel tyr</i> | an old bull |
| e. <i>den gamle tyr</i> | the old bull |
| f. <i>tjuren</i> | the bull |
| g. <i>den gamla tjuren</i> | the old bull |
| h. <i>en tjur</i> | a bull |

Dan	Swe
	✓
✓	
	✓
	✓
	✓
✓	
✓	
✓	

A2.

English

- a horse
- a strong horse
- the horse
- the strong horse

Swedish

- en häst*
- en stark häst*
- hästen*
- den starke häst*

Danish

- en hest*
- en stærk hest*
- hesten*
- den stærke hesten*

Explanation

The only differences you can see from the first set of given data is in a definite phrase with an adjective ('the big dog') that the Swedish adjective ends in *-e* while in Danish it's *-a*, and Danish keeps the *-en* ending seen in definite phrases without an adjective, whereas Swedish drops this. Using only this information you can tell that (e) must be Swedish and (g) Danish. This in turn tells you that 'bull' is *tyr* (D), vs *tjur* (S), and from that 'old' is *gammal* (D) vs *gammel* (S). One other thing you can pick up is that here, when adjectives take the *-a* or *-e* ending, the double m is simplified, and the following vowel dropped: *gamla* (D)/*gamle* (S), though actually you don't need that information for the final task.