



LINDESBERGS
KOMMUN

Introduction to Studies at Masugnen and SFI



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To new SFI students in Lindesberg

Aims

This brochure has two aims. The first is to give you information about the Swedish school system, adult education and SFI. The second is to give you information, helpful hints and ideas for how you can learn Swedish effectively. This will give you opportunities to take personal responsibility for your language studies and achieving your goals.

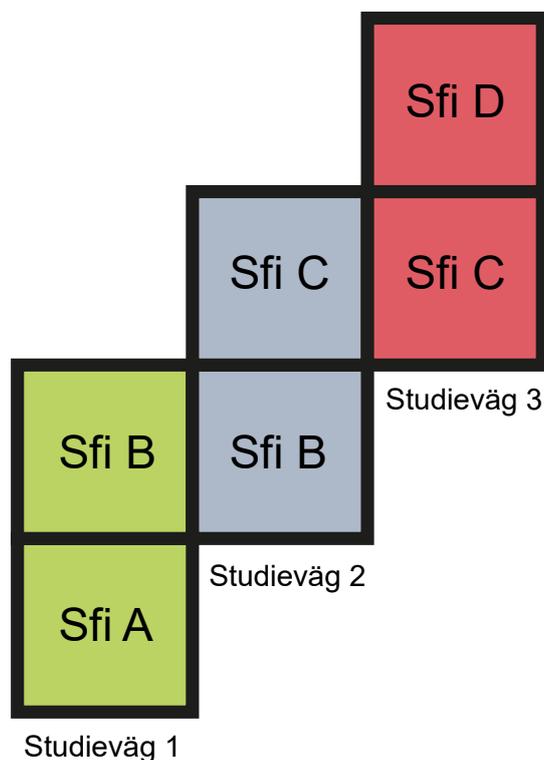
Educational activities at Masugnen

Masugnen is an adult education centre. We offer both academic and vocational courses, as well as technical and allied health training. Adult education is a voluntary form of education in which everyone is expected to take personal responsibility for their studies.

Our courses and tracks

There are four different SFI courses: A, B, C and D. You will begin at one of these levels depending upon your previous academic experience and your individual circumstances. Our goal is for you to pass all SFI courses regardless of the level at which you began.

The courses are divided into three tracks.



Track 1: Courses A and B are included in Track 1. You will take this track if you have no previous academic experience or went to school only briefly. Track 1 students are provided a great deal of help and support in their studies.

Track 2: Courses B and C are included in Track 2. You will take this track if you have attended school and completed your basic education. You will study Swedish at a normal study pace. You will also learn study skills to help you learn Swedish as quickly as possible.

Track 3: Courses C and D are included in Track 3. You will take this track if you have strong academic experience and have attended college or university. The pace of study in Track 3 is fast and demanding.

When you begin SFI, your placement in a course will be based on an assessment of your academic background and your goals for the future. We have a trial period of 14 days and may move you to another course/group during that period if we believe it would suit you better.

Attendance

It is important that you let us know if you are unable to attend. If you are ill or must stay home to care for a sick child, you must get in touch with your teacher. If you are ill at home for more than seven days, it is important that you can show a doctor's note to us and your caseworker – if you do not, it will be considered an unexcused absence. If you are absent for more than three consecutive weeks without contacting us, you will be dropped from SFI. We will notify you if this occurs. If you would like to resume your SFI studies, you will need to fill out an application on our website. If you need to take a break from your studies, it is important that you talk to your teacher first.

Adult learning

Adults have a wealth of experience gained through work, studies and hobbies. This experience is important foundation for further learning in all types of education. Our fundamental philosophy is that everyone has the capacity and the desire to learn and develop.

Personal responsibility is essential in adult education. You are actually the one who will be teaching yourself Swedish and you are responsible for your own progress. Your teachers are on hand to support you in achieving your goals.

As a participant in adult education, your opinions about your educational situation are valued. Swedish education aims to establish democratic values, gender equality and student influence. For these reasons, it is important that you tell us what you need help with and how you want to approach your language learning.

Academic and vocational guidance

All adult education students should have an individual plan for their SFI studies. It is also important to start thinking about your study goals. You may simply want to be able to read Swedish, or perhaps you have plans to go on to further academic education or a vocational training programme after SFI. Courses in English, maths and computer skills are available within the SFI programme. The guidance counsellors act as conversation partners who can help you make deliberate and carefully considered choices. The guidance counsellors will help you find answers to your questions about education and the labour market.

We have two academic and vocational guidance counsellors at Masugnen:

Helene Broberg	0581-816 04	helene.broberg@lindesberg.se
Nina Sundberg	0581-816 14	nina.sundberg@lindesberg.se

The Swedish school system

It can be useful to know a little bit about the Swedish school system before you begin studying in Sweden.

Compulsory school, upper secondary school and higher education

Compulsory (primary) school lasts for nine years in Sweden and all children are required by law to attend. School is free and most children start at age seven after they finish preschool. After leaving compulsory school, almost all young people go on to upper secondary school, usually for three years. Although upper secondary school attendance is voluntary, it is difficult to get a job straight out of compulsory school. Many young people who complete a vocational programme in upper secondary school begin working thereafter. There are also opportunities for adults to supplement their academic qualifications by studying certain subjects in adult upper secondary education. After leaving upper secondary school, many people go on to vocational college, University College or university.

The Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) and the National Agency for Education

The Riksdag decides the goals for SFI, various courses and educational programmes. Controlling documents – curricula and syllabi that define learning targets – govern all public education for children, youth and adults. The values that must govern our educational programmes are described in the curricula and syllabi.

One target for all adult learning is to 'Give all adults opportunity to expand their knowledge and develop their skills with a view to promoting personal development, democracy, gender equality, economic development, employment and fair distribution of resources.'

Among else, these documents set grading criteria – the targets you must have attained in a course in order to receive a grade are defined. They do not determine exactly what you must know or how you must meet your target. The school and the teacher interpret the targets and assess your knowledge, while you and your teacher decide together how you will work towards attaining the targets. It is considered important that you, the student, are involved and have an influence on how you will attain course targets.

Learning a new language as an adult

There are helpful staff at Masugnen, dedicated and qualified teachers and a keen interest in using technology to facilitate learning for our students. Study programmes are flexible and focused on you as an individual.

When you study at Masugnen, you take personal responsibility for your studies, but you belong to a group with an assigned teacher. Each week, you will have at least 15 hours of scheduled classroom time with a teacher. It is important that you spend the other 25 hours a week studying on your own. Where you study is up to you. It is essential that you try to 'immerse yourself in Swedish' as much as you can. The more contact you have with the Swedish language, the more likely you are to succeed at learning your second language. This means you need to practice your Swedish as much as possible every day. We have many small study rooms at Masugnen where you can study on your own or with others.

Your teacher will do everything possible to help you learn Swedish, so the most important thing is that you learn how to teach yourself Swedish in the way that works best for you. You can combine your SFI studies with a work experience placement, a job or other courses for adult students, such as English, maths and computers. But your focus should be on learning Swedish as quickly as possible.

All teachers do their best to recognise the needs of individual students and teach every student in the optimal way. Focus is on you, the student. But this approach does require you to take great personal responsibility for your studies. Our goals are:

- All students should be treated as individuals; everyone is unique and we all have our own learning styles.
- Teaching should be a collaborative process between the teacher and the student.
- Students should be ACTIVE, RESPONSIBLE AND INDEPENDENT.
- Communication between teachers and students should be considered important. Talking and discussing is a great way to learn.
- You should be able to plan your studies and work independently, not just listen to a teacher talk.
- Everyone should learn Swedish based on their personal needs and circumstances. Because we all come from different backgrounds and our existing skills and knowledge also vary, we cannot all study the same thing at the same time and pace.

Use your Swedish

Listening to a teacher is not going to be enough for you to learn Swedish. If you want to learn a new language, you must surround yourself with the language, to 'immerse yourself' in the language. That means you should listen to, read, write and speak as much Swedish as possible. You will only learn a small fraction in school. You really must surround yourself with Swedish outside of school as well. You have to be active. Converse with others in Swedish, watch films and TV, read the news, listen to the radio and audiobooks, read magazines and books and use a variety of computer programs. Be brave and use the language as much as possible!

Most people who move to Sweden think it is hard to get started speaking Swedish. You should try to speak Swedish as much as possible at school, even during breaks. You will learn best if you talk to people who do not speak your first language. Another way to practice your Swedish is to study in pairs or in groups (at Masugnen or at someone's home) when no lessons are scheduled.

You are bound to make mistakes sometimes, but that is perfectly okay. It is through your mistakes that you learn what is right. If you do not understand something, by all means speak up and ask.

How you can learn more Swedish outside school

Get out and about among Swedish-speakers as often as you can, to both listen and talk. You should try and find places and situations where you can practice your Swedish, even during your free time. You have to take the first step and try to establish contacts and find people you can practice your Swedish with.

Suggestions for what you can do to improve your Swedish:

- ✓ Study together with classmates
- ✓ Talk to your neighbours
- ✓ Make friends with people who do not speak your first language (they don't have to be Swedish)
- ✓ Talk to the staff at the day-care centre when you drop off and pick up your child
- ✓ Talk to your children's friends and their parents
- ✓ Get involved in your children's leisure activities
- ✓ Get involved in a club or voluntary association
- ✓ Read books and watch children's programming in Swedish
- ✓ Go to the gym
- ✓ Participate in group activities (dance, fitness classes, etc.)
- ✓ Watch Swedish TV and read the subtitles/closed captions
- ✓ Listen to Swedish radio programmes
- ✓ Read various types of texts: books, magazines, newspapers, brochures, online texts, etc.
- ✓ Write letters, emails, text messages, chat posts, a diary, shopping lists, to-do lists in Swedish

The library

Go to the library! Swedish libraries are outstanding. You can borrow books for adults, young adults and children – absolutely free. Libraries also have magazines, newspapers, films and audiobooks. Easy-to-read books are kept on a special shelf. If you prefer to read non-fiction rather than stories, you can also take a look in the children's and young adult section, where you will find simple non-fiction books about everything under the sun. Ask any member of staff at the library and they will help you find your way. They are there for you!

How to learn to write better in Swedish

Reading – a lot – is the key to learning to write well. Be interested and attentive when you read, thinking about things like which words, grammatical conventions and punctuation marks the writer uses.

Listen carefully to your teacher when your texts are corrected. Your teacher is knowledgeable and experienced and knows what you need to learn to write more correctly. Try to learn from the critique you are given, improve your text and write a better text next time. Remember that you are primarily responsible for teaching yourself Swedish. Your teacher can help you along the way, but you have to do the hardest work. You have to take initiative, be active and let Swedish become a natural part of your life!

Build your vocabulary

Start by learning as many words and phrases as possible and to pronounce them with a Swedish linguistic melody. Also learn full expressions used in Swedish like 'Tack så mycket' or 'Vad heter du?'

Write down new words and phrases and translated them to your language. Set a goal for how many new words you should learn every day.

Finally...

you are actually your own teacher. Others can give you information, facts and support, but it is your job to teach yourself – no one else's. You have to be willing to learn and be prepared to work with the language. We are all happy to help you do that work.

Good luck!

