

Fifteen Finnish Verbs

AN INSTRUCTIONAL CHART BY MATTHEW HERBST

AN OPEN LETTER TO FINNISH

Dear Finnish,

Vocabulary is certainly a major hurdle in learning you, given that there is almost no overlap with any other major language. You achieve this lack of overlap by using beautifully unique combinations of letters, which sound quite alien to a western European person. Think *pyöräillä*, *tsemppiä*, or the stunning *henkilöllisyystodistus*. Unfortunately, and in my opinion completely unnecessarily, you fall into the same trap that many other languages fall into: employing basic, boring words that are almost indistinguishable. Finnish, you have so many weird and novel letter combinations, while also being unafraid of bulky words - that is great! So is it really necessary that *tapaan ystäväni* is a pleasant evening, while *tapan ystäväni* is a felony? How is a new learner supposed to disentangle *tässä kuussa etsin kuutta kuusta kuusta*? And most importantly - what is this mess of words below? If my goal is to be merely understandable, why is there no leniency? Why is there only exactly one correct combination of p, l, t, and vowel? *Hyvä suomea: en valita, mutta haluan valita!*

