

Verbal Particles

There are two types of verbal particles: independent/relative particles and dependent particles. Independent/relative particles are followed by the relative form of the verb in the future tense, and by the independent form of the verb in all other tenses (and in the future tense with those irregular verbs that don't have a relative form). Dependent particles are followed by the dependent form of the verb.

Independent/Relative Particles

- a** relative: who, which, that
an leabhar a leugh mi *the book that/which I read*
- A often disappears in both speech and writing when it comes after a vowel, e.g. **dè nì thu?** for **dè a nì thu?** *What did you do?* (compare **ciamar a nì thu e?** *how will you do it?*)
- na** comprehensive relative: (all) that which, (all) those who/which, what
ghabh e na bha agam *he took what I had, he took that which I had*
- ma** if (used with present, past and future tenses)
ma thèid thu a dh'Alba *if you go to Scotland*

Dependent Particles

- cha** indicates a negative statement
chan eil iad an-seo. *They are not here.*
- Takes the form **cha** before consonants and **chan** before vowels.
Cha lenites non-dental consonants, i.e. consonants other than **d, t, s**.
- an** indicates positive questions
an cuala tu sin? *did you hear that?*
- Takes the form **am** before **b, f, m, p** and **an** before other letters.

- nach** has three functions: indicates negative questions, and introduces negative subordinate clauses and relative clauses:
nach cuala tu sin? *didn't you hear that ?*
thuirt e nach cuala e sin. *he said that he didn't hear that.*
an leabhar nach do leugh mi *the book that I didn't read.*
- Nach** usually lenites **f** only.
- gun** introduces positive subordinate clauses
thuirt e gun tig e a-màireach *he said that he'll come tomorrow.*
- Takes the form **gum** before **b, f, m, p** and **gun** before other letters.
- nan** if (used with conditional/imperfect tense)
bhithinn toilichte nan tigeadh i *I'd be happy if she came.*
- Takes the form **nam** before **b, f, m, p** and **nan** before other letters.
- mur** if not, unless
cha tèid mise mur tèid thusa *I won't go if you don't go, I won't go unless you go.*
- Some people say **mura** instead of **mur**.
- mun/mus** before
Falbhaidh mi mun till thu *I'll leave before you return.*
- Takes the form **mum** before **b, f, m, p** and **mun** before other letters. Some people say **mus** instead of **mus/mun**.
Some people say **mus** instead of **mus/mun**; **mus** usually lenites **f** only.