

Finland

Introduction to Finnish Society



Where is Finland? What are the Finnish people like?
What are the rights and obligations of residents in Finland?
In this chapter, you will learn about these and more.

In this module, you will learn about:

- Geographical location and population
- Climate conditions
- State and municipalities
- Main sources of livelihood
- Cultural habits
- Position of family members
- In Finland as an immigrant

Read about this module at
mof.fi/sections/finland/en
or scan the QR code below



Find this module online at
mof.fi/exercises/finland/en
or scan the QR code below



Geographical location and population

Finland is located in the northern part of the globe and positioned between Sweden and Russia. In the north, Finland shares a border with Norway. Estonia is located on the south side of Finland. The official languages in Finland are Finnish and Swedish. The population of Finland is approximately 5.5 million people. There are about 250 000 foreign-language speakers in the country.

1. From the text, circle the country or countries that are neighbours of Finland?

Estonia | Russia | Sweden | France | Germany | Canada | Norway

2. Do you know the name of the continent where Finland is?

3. There is a map on the following page. Mark the location of Finland on the map.
4. On the same map, draw the route from your current location to Finland. How long does a flight take from your current location to Finland in your opinion? Discuss this with your family or colleagues.
5. On the same map, draw the other routes that you have been through in other countries.



- Finland is in Northern Europe.
- Finland's neighbours are Sweden, Norway, Estonia, and Russia.
- The official languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish; however Finnish is much more common.



Climate Conditions

Finland has four distinct seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter. Each season has its own clothing needs and its own range of outdoor activities.

1. Let's look at the pictures found below. Which of them were not taken in Finland?
2. Are the climate conditions different from your home country or current country? How do you think the climate conditions would affect your daily life in Finland?





h



i



j



k



l



m



n

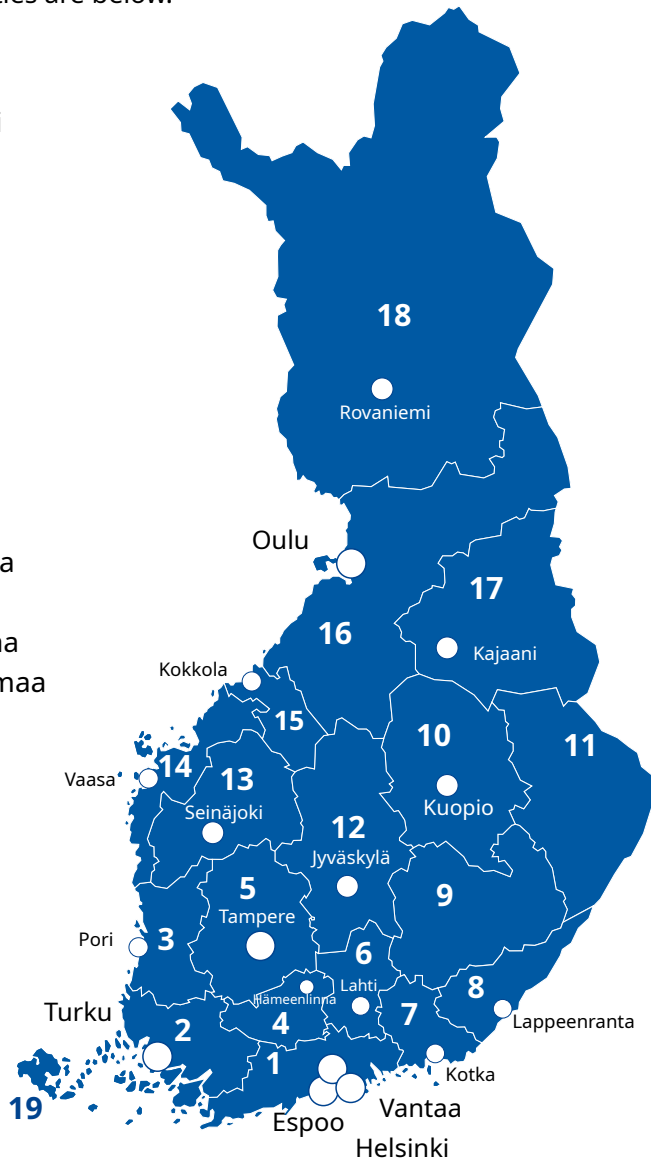


o

State and municipalities

1. Let's look at the map. The names of the regions as well as some cities are below.

- 1 Uusimaa
- 2 Varsinais-Suomi
- 3 Satakunta
- 4 Kanta-Häme
- 5 Pirkanmaa
- 6 Päijät-häme
- 7 Kymenlaakso
- 8 Etelä-Karjala
- 9 Etelä-Savo
- 10 Pohjois-Savo
- 11 Pohjois-Karjala
- 12 Keski-Suomi
- 13 Etelä-Pohjanmaa
- 14 Pohjanmaa
- 15 Keski-Pohjanmaa
- 16 Pohjois-Pohjanmaa
- 17 Kainuu
- 18 Lappi
- 19 Ahvenanmaa



Now let's look at the emblems of the regions.



Finland is divided into regions, and each region is divided into municipalities. In this exercise, you will learn about the location and characteristics of each region as well as the location of some cities. You will do that by reading the descriptions of the regions found below and checking the emblems found on the previous page. Try to find which region has which emblem. Let's read all the descriptions before starting.

- a. **Ahvenanmaa:** It is the smallest region of Finland, and it is autonomous and demilitarised. The emblem is the only one that has a moose on it.
- b. **Etelä-Karjala:** The emblem has two swords. Lappeenranta is located in this region.
- c. **Etelä-Pohjanmaa:** Seinäjoki is located in this region. The emblem has many white weasels on a blue background
- d. **Etelä-Savo:** The emblem has a bow and arrow pointing to your right, and the region is a neighbour of Kymenlaakso. The largest lake in Finland, Lake Saimaa, is located here.
- e. **Kainuu:** The emblem is similar to that of Pirkanmaa but has green instead of red. Kajaani is located here.
- f. **Kanta-Häme:** Hämeenlinna is the principal city of the region. The emblem has three stars, four white flowers, and an animal.
- g. **Keski-Pohjanmaa:** The emblem has one weasel. Kokkola is located here.
- h. **Keski-Suomi:** The emblem has a black bird. Jyväskylä is located here.
- i. **Kymenlaakso:** The emblem has a fish. Kotka is located here.
- j. **Lappi:** This emblem is for the largest and northernmost province, where Rovaniemi is located.
- k. **Pirkanmaa:** The only colours of this emblem are red and yellow. Tampere is located here.
- l. **Pohjanmaa:** This emblem has red weasels. Vaasa is located here.
- m. **Pohjois-Karjala:** The emblem has two swords and a crown. Lake Hattuvaara, which is the easternmost point of Finland and of the Schengen area, is located in here.
- n. **Pohjois-Pohjanmaa:** The emblem has twice the number of weasels compared to its southern neighbour. Oulu is located here.
- o. **Pohjois-Savo:** The emblem has a bow and an arrow. Kuopio is the largest city in this region.
- p. **Päijät-Häme:** The emblem has a mermaid and a bird. Lahti is located here.
- q. **Satakunta:** The emblem has an animal holding a sword. Pori is located here.
- r. **Uusimaa:** The emblem has a boat. Helsinki is in this region.
- s. **Varsinais-Suomi:** The emblem has two blue and yellow flags on it. Turku is in this region.



- Finland is a large country, and each region in Finland has its particular opportunities and its own history.
- You will be living in a municipality. All the municipalities provide integration services for newcomers.

Main sources of livelihood

How much do you know about Finland, its people, culture, and economy by now?
Let's read the questions found below and answer.

a. Are Finland and Sweden the only republics among the Nordic countries?

b. Does Finland use the euro as a currency?

c. Are machinery and wood important exports of Finland?

d. Do forests provide jobs for many Finns nowadays?

e. Do the technological and service fields employ a significant number of people in Finland?

f. Are there ten million people living in Finland?

g. Do Finnish people have a different name for Finland?

h. Is English an official language in Finland?

i. Is there a sport called swamp football in Finland?



- A big part of Finland's total land area is covered in forest.
- The technological and service fields employ a significant amount of people.

Cultural habits

Let's take another look at the lesson webpage. The link can be found at the beginning of this module. Did you find it? It looks like mof.fi/sections/finland/en and you can find a lot of information that would help you find the missing words in this exercise.

a. Hand shaking and _____ are usual ways of greeting in Finland.

nodding hugging touching each other's noses

b. The Finns usually start a conversation with a stranger very _____.

fast carefully

c. Because of this the Finnish people may come across as shy and _____. Usually Finns do not ask for many turns to speak in public discussions and they usually get to the point quickly.

joyful rude impolite

d. Equality and justice are important values to the Finns. Also, Finns appreciate honesty and keeping _____. Working and being diligent are appreciated a lot. Punctuality and committing to the agreed times are important.

personal space to one's self promises

e. Some people in Finland use a lot of alcohol especially on the _____ and special festive holidays, which might confuse immigrants. Excessive use of alcohol can cause diseases and conflicts in the families.

first day of the month first day of the week weekends

Bonus task!

The Independence Day of Finland is on the 6th of September.

TRUE FALSE



- Finnish values include equality, justice, and honesty.
- Discrimination and violence are not tolerated at all.
- Punctuality is highly valued, both professionally and personally.

Position of family members

In Finland, family arrangements and types vary and can be different from what you may be used to.

1. In the following exercise, you will visit a webpage through the link or by scanning the QR code and read about equality in Finland. The webpage is on a website called InfoFinland. Visiting InfoFinland is very encouraged because it provides valuable information.



infofinland.fi/en/information-about-finland/finnish-society/equality-and-non-discrimination

Let's draw an arrow to form a sentence describing something you read from the text.

a	According to Finnish law, men and women	is always a crime.	u
b	A higher salary must not be paid to a man	taken into account when decisions regarding them are being made.	v
c	Children have the right to have their opinion	is prohibited and can lead to a penalty.	w
d	Violence that occurs in a family and in a relationship, such as physical and sexual violence,	have the same rights.	x
e	According to Finnish law, hitting children	without equality and inclusion.	y
f	Solutions to the world's problems will not be found	compared to a woman on the basis of gender.	z

Bonus task!

Which year did Finland become the first country in the world to pass a law that allowed women both to vote and to run for election?

1906 1926 1946



- Women and men, boys and girls are considered equal in Finland.
- Children or any person cannot be punished with any kind of violence; they cannot be hit, slapped, pulled from their hair, or subjected to any form of violence.
- Finland has a good kindergarten system, and all children between 7 and 17 go to primary and secondary education. Access to schools and early childhood education is guaranteed by law.

In Finland as an immigrant

In Finland, immigrants with legal status, like quota refugees, are full members of society and enjoy the same civil rights and obligations as other residents in Finland.

1. To do this exercise, you can visit a webpage through the link or the QR code. A selection of this webpage is included, but the full text is accessible only on the webpage.

Let's read the text:

infofinland.fi/en/living-in-finland/settling-in-finland/your-rights-and-obligations-in-finland



Everyone has the right to equal treatment. No one must be treated differently based on gender, age, religion or handicap, for example. Everyone has the right to freely express their opinions verbally or in writing. No one can be sentenced to death or tortured. Everyone has a right to the protection of their privacy. Everyone is free to choose their own religion. Should you not want to, you do not need to choose any religion.

Foreigners permanently residing in Finland who are over 18 have a right to vote in municipal elections. Foreigners who have the right to vote in municipal elections are also entitled to stand in the municipal elections. All persons living or residing in Finland must adhere to Finnish legislation.

Compulsory schooling (oppivelvollisuus) consists of one-year pre-primary education for 6-year-olds and nine-year basic education for children aged 7–16, i.e. they must complete the comprehensive school (peruskoulu) curriculum. Parents have the responsibility to take care of their children. Everyone is obliged to lend their aid in the event of an accident.

Now that you read the text, let's read the questions and answer them.

a. Can all immigrants vote and stand in the municipal elections?

b. Are you obliged to have a religion in Finland?

c. Does compulsory education last six years?

d. Is death penalty allowed?

e. Do religious and free speech rights in Finland mean that Muslim communities can use Islamic law instead of Finnish law?



- In Finland, you can freely and privately do what you want as long as you respect the law.
- In Finland, you can trust the authorities.
- In Finland, everyone has the same rights and obligations.
- Everyone is equal, and people respect and help each other.

2. Integrating well into the Finnish society requires efforts in learning the local language. Approximately 90% of Finns speak Finnish as their native language. You will need the knowledge of Finnish or Swedish language in studies, work and everyday life. The sooner you learn the basic skills in local language, the faster you integrate in the Finnish society. Check basic greetings and words in Finnish at the end of this workbook!

Let's read more about these two national languages:

infofinland.fi/en/living-in-finland/finnish-and-swedish/why-should-i-study-finnish-or-swedish



Let's read the questions and answer them.

- a. What are the two national languages of Finland?

- b. If you want to study or work in Finland, what should you do first?

- c. What other benefits there are if you learn the local language?

- d. Is the knowledge of Finnish or Swedish a requirement for obtaining the Finnish citizenship?

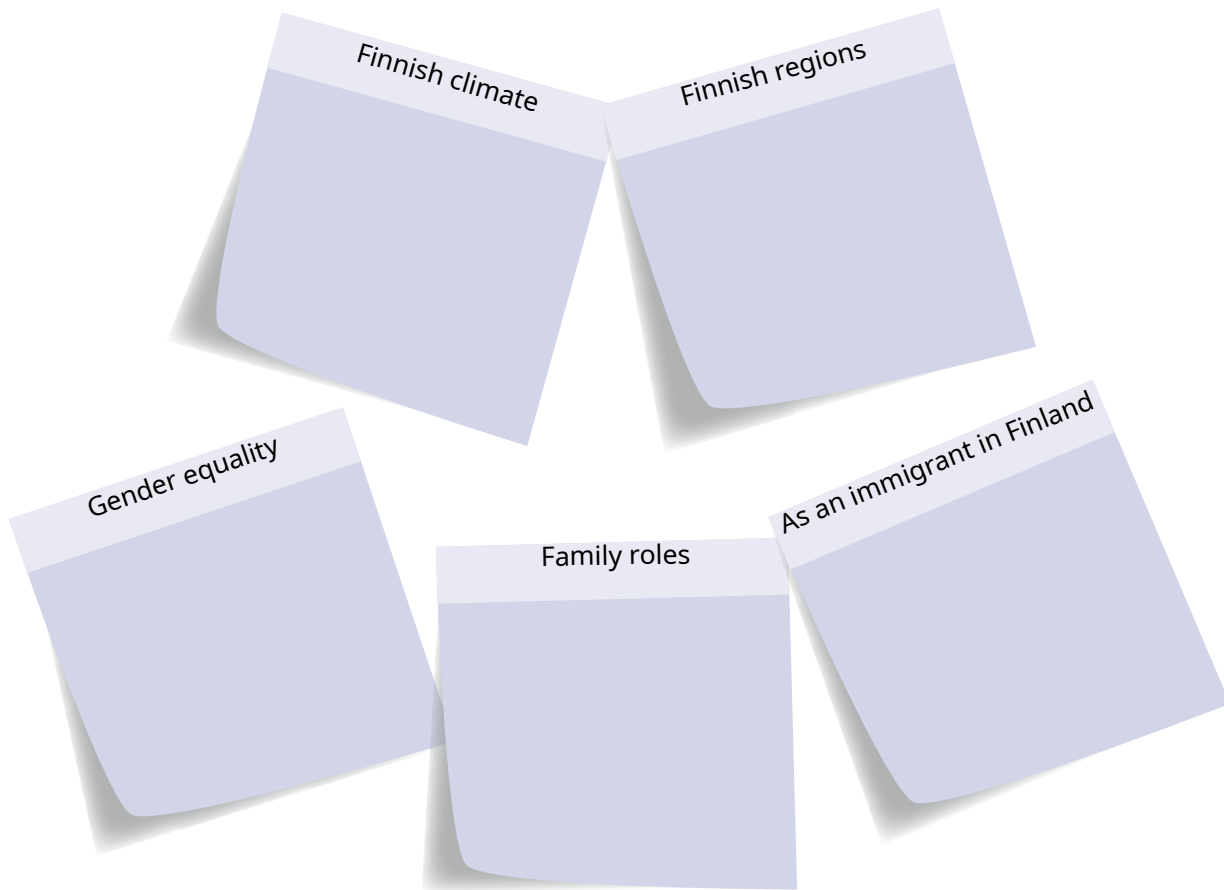
e. Bonus task: Check some important sentences in Finnish and try to say them:
infofinland.fi/en/living-in-finland/finnish-and-swedish/important-sentences-in-finnish





- Integration requires effort: You have a personal responsibility to learn the language and search for opportunities.
- The Finns' attitude towards immigrants is usually friendly.
- Discrimination is forbidden by law in Finland.

Now that you have finished the module, let's summarise by writing the important thoughts that you learned about each theme mentioned below!



- Finland is going to be your new home. The more information you know, the better. Let's focus on learning Finnish and let's ask questions whenever needed.

Answers

Geographical location and population

1. Estonia | Russia | Sweden | France | Germany | Canada | Norway
2. Europe
3. The position of Finland on the map is the following.



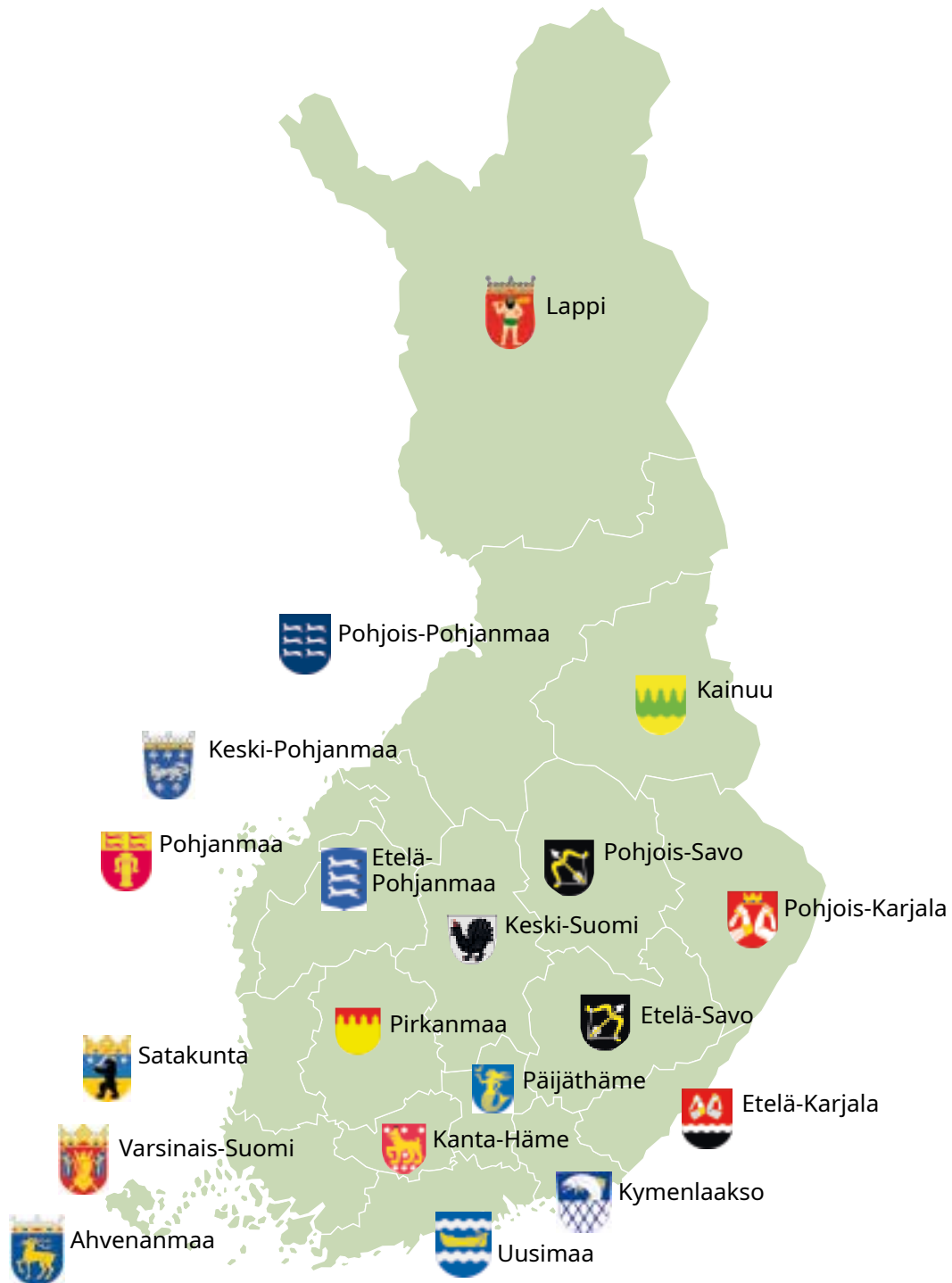
4. The answers vary; ask your instructor or use a search engine.
5. The answers vary depending on your personal history.

Climate conditions

1. The pictures that are not from Finland are: b, g, I, m, and o.
2. The answers vary, however you will need to prepare well for the cold. In different seasons you can have different outdoor activities, like swimming in summer and skiing in winter. In winter, outside temperature can be low, but thanks to heating systems available in all houses, indoor environments are warm throughout the year, and an active lifestyle is possible any time.

State and municipalities

1. A map with the names and emblems of the regions can be seen below.



Main sources of livelihood

1. The answers can be found on the following table.

a.	No	In the Nordic countries, only Finland and Iceland are republics. Sweden, Denmark, and Norway are kingdoms.
b.	Yes	
c.	Yes	Electronics, chemicals, and heavy machinery are important exports as well.
d.	No	In the past, forests provided livelihood for many Finns, however nowadays since agriculture has become mechanized, it only provides work for a small number.
e.	Yes	Many Finns work in the technological field and many Finnish companies are involved in the technology and service sectors. The well-known Nokia phone company started in Finland, and the company's name refers to the city of Nokia; you should visit it!
f.	No	In 2017 the population was 5.5 million. Check how many live in Finland by visiting the Digital and Population Data Services Agency's website on dvv.fi .
g.	Yes	Finland's name in Finnish is Suomi.
h.	No	Only Finnish and Swedish are official, with Finnish being the most used language in the country.
i.	Yes	You don't believe it? Read about it from Wikipedia by visiting the following link en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swamp_football .

Cultural habits

1. The answers can be found on the following table.

a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
nodding	carefully	rude	promises	weekends

Bonus question: False. The Independence Day of Finland is on the 6th of December.

Position of family members

1. The answers can be found on the following table.

a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.
x	z	v	u	w	y

Bonus question: 1906

In Finland as an immigrant

1. The answers to the questions on page 20-21

a.	Only foreigners permanently residing in Finland who are over 18 have the right to vote and stand in municipal elections.
b.	Everyone is free to choose their own religion. Should you not want to, you do not need to choose any religion.
c.	Compulsory education is for persons aged 6-16.
d.	No one can be sentenced to death.
e.	Religious communities, including Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and others are free to practice their religion, but must always adhere to the Finnish law. In Finland, the Finnish laws supersede any religious law.

2. The answers to the questions on page 22:

a.	Finnish and Swedish
b.	Study the language
c.	Managing everyday life and making friends with Finns
d.	Yes