

2.1 Amser Presennol ‘bod’: Present Tense of ‘bod’

Niwtral
Neutral

Cwestiwn/Pwyslais
Question/Emphasis

Negyddol
Negative

(ry)dw i	(y)dw i	(dy)dw i ddim
rwyt ti	wyt ti	dwyt ti ddim
mae e/hi	ydy/yw e/hi	dydy/dyw e/hi ddim
(ry)dyn ni	(yd)yn ni	(dy)dyn ni ddim
(ry)dych chi	(yd)ych chi	(dy)dych chi ddim
maen nhw	(yd)yn nhw	(dy)dyn nhw ddim

The columns above show the conjugation of the present tense of the verb ‘bod’ – *to be*. The **neutral** column on the left above contains the forms for *I am, you are, he/she is, we are, you are, they are* (or alternatively *I do, he does* and so on). As with many languages, Welsh has two forms for *you*, the informal and singular **ti**, and the formal or plural **chi**.

We saw in 1.5 that word order is different in Welsh, and that the verb comes before the person. Consequently, the pronouns (i.e. words used in place of nouns) **i, ti, e, hi, ni, chi, nhw** shown above mean *I, you, he, she, we, you they*, but they come **after** the verb (the words which mean *am, are, is* and so on). As is the case with English, the pronoun needs to match the right form of the verb. Just as we cannot say *he am* or *we is* in English, so we cannot say *rwyt nhw* or *mae ti* in Welsh. These forms are used with (or without) **yn** in the same way as shown for **mae** in 1.5 and 1.6:

Rydw i’n athro	<i>I am a teacher</i>	Rydyn ni’n gweithio	<i>We are working</i>
Rwyt ti’n dawel	<i>You are quiet</i>	Rydych chi’n hapus	<i>You are happy</i>
Mae hi yn yr ysgol	<i>She is in the school</i>	Maen nhw yma	<i>They are here</i>

Note that the **yn** which means *in* (e.g. **yn yr ysgol**) does **not** abbreviate to **’n** after a vowel.

2.2 Talfyriadau / Abbreviated forms

You will see that there are (brackets) around certain forms. These note abbreviations. It is perfectly fine to use either these abbreviated forms or the full-length versions. To put them into context, English has the forms *I’m, you’ll, we’ve* and *they’d* for *I am, you will, we have* and *they would*. Alternatively, *they’d* can also be short for *they had* (people often don’t realise the complexities of their own language until they try to learn another one). Anyone learning English, however, would not get very far before coming across its abbreviated forms, and so their equivalents have been included here in Welsh too. All this means is that **rydw i** or **dw i** can be used just like *I am* or *I’m* and so on. A quick glance at what is going on here will show you that those forms which are two syllables long (e.g. **rydw, rydyn, rydych**) have been reduced to one syllable. The others (e.g. **rwyt, mae, maen**) do not need to be shortened. It is worth mentioning that forms may be shortened in more than one way, for example, by dropping the **ry** at the beginning or by dropping the **yd** in the middle, so that **rydyn ni’n gweithio** (*we are working*) may be shortened to **dyn ni’n gweithio** or **ryn ni’n gweithio**. To avoid overcomplicating things, only the one way has been shown above.

2.3 Rhediadau gwahanol / Different conjugations

The columns above have been divided into **neutral**, **question/emphasis** and **negative**. Here is a brief description of each:

2.3.1

The **neutral** column contains those forms used to make a so-called “**normal**” **statement**, i.e. one where no emphasis is involved, such as those shown in 2.1 above, which all contain pronouns. It is important to note that in Welsh, the third person singular form of the verb, in this case **mae**, is used with **all nouns**, whether singular or plural, e.g.

Rydw i yn yr ysgol	<i>I am in the school</i>
Rwyt ti yn yr ysgol	<i>You are in the school</i>
Mae e yn yr ysgol	<i>He is in the school</i>
Mae’r plentyn yn yr ysgol	<i>The child is in the school</i>
Mae’r plant yn yr ysgol	<i>The children are in the school</i>
Rydyn ni yn yr ysgol	<i>We are in the school</i>
Rydych chi yn yr ysgol	<i>You are in the school</i>
Maen nhw yn yr ysgol	<i>They are in the school</i>

Note the position of the definite article (the **’r** which means **the**) in these sentences:

Mae’r plentyn yn yr ysgol
Mae’r plant yn yr ysgol.

The **question/emphasis** column shows those forms which are used to turn a statement into a **question**, but which may also be used to indicate an **emphatic statement**. We shall look at questions first.

In English, inversion of word order is used to indicate the difference between a statement and a question, so that, for instance, **we are** is a statement, but **are we?** is a question. Welsh does not do this. It leaves the words in the same order, but alters the verb (and also tone of voice). In most cases in the present tense, this involves dropping the **r** from the front, so that **rwyt ti** becomes **wyt ti** and so on. The only exceptions to this are the third person forms **mae**, which becomes **ydych chi** (or **yw** – more on this later!) and **maen**, which becomes **ydyn nhw**.

Here are the statement examples from 2.3.1 above turned into questions:

Ydw i yn yr ysgol?	<i>Am I in the school?</i>
Wyt ti yn yr ysgol?	<i>Are you in the school?</i>
Ydy e yn yr ysgol?	<i>Is he in the school?</i>
Ydy’r plentyn yn yr ysgol?	<i>Is the child in the school?</i>
Ydy’r plant yn yr ysgol?	<i>Are the children in the school?</i>
Rydyn ni yn yr ysgol?	<i>Are we in the school?</i>
Rydych chi yn yr ysgol?	<i>Are you in the school?</i>
Rydyn nhw yn yr ysgol?	<i>Are they in the school?</i>

As there is no single **yes** or **no** answer in Welsh, the same forms used to ask these questions are also used to answer them, but adjusted to match the person, for example:

Wyt ti'n mynd i'r gwaith heddiw?
Are you going to work today?

Ydw, rydw i'n mynd i'r gwaith heddiw
Yes, I am going to work today

Note that although the question forms are used to ask and answer the question, the normal statement forms are used if the answer is then confirmed with a full sentence.

Ydy Tom yn athro ym Mhen-y-bont?
Is Tom a teacher in Bridgend?

Ydy, mae Tom yn athro ym Mhen-y-bont
Yes, Tom is a teacher in Bridgend

We saw above that the third person singular is used with all nouns, even plural ones. Take care when answering these, as the correct answer form is the plural, for example:

Ydy'r llyfrau yn y llyfrgell?
Are the books in the library?

Ydyn, mae'r llyfrau yn y llyfrgell
Yes (they are), the books are in the library

2.3.2

It was noted that the forms in the middle column are used not only for questions, but also for statements that contain an element of **emphasis**. This method is used to rearrange the word order in sentences which would contain **yn** followed by a **noun or adjective** in a neutral statement, such as the following:

Mae Tom yn athro

This is a statement with no emphasis, which states that *Tom is a teacher*.

Athro ydy Tom

This is also a statement, but emphasises that Tom is a *teacher*, as opposed to some other profession. i.e. *A teacher is Tom*

Similarly:

Mae'r plant yn hapus

The children are happy

Hapus ydy'r plant

*The children are **happy** (not sad) – and, incidentally, the last line in the Welsh version of Row, row, row the boat.*

This same pattern can be found in English, although it is mostly reserved for artistic effect, for example, in songs. The Gilbert and Sullivan opera *The Mikado* contains a song which starts with the words **three little maids from school are we**, while the song *Younger than Springtime* from the musical *South Pacific* has several examples in its lyrics such as **softer than starlight are you** and **younger than springtime am I**.

Welsh, however, makes far greater use of emphasis than English and has more formalised grammatical rules to accommodate its use.

It should be noted that sentences which would contain **yn** followed by a **verbnoun** or which would not contain **yn** at all, do not change the verb from the neutral to the emphatic form, they just alter the word order.

Here is an example of a neutral sentence containing **yn** followed by a **verbnoun**:

Mae Sian yn gweithio

Sian is working

If we wish to emphasise that Sian is **working** as opposed to sleeping this would change to:

Gweithio mae Sian

Here is an example of a neutral sentence which does not contain **yn** at all:

Mae'r plant wrth y drws

The children are at the door

If we wish to emphasise that the children are at the door as opposed to somewhere else, this would change to:

Wrth y drws mae'r plant.

2.3.3.

The **negative** column shows those forms which are used to turn a positive neutral statement into a **negative neutral statement**. It can be seen that all the forms in this column are identical to the question/emphasis column, but with the letter **d** at the beginning and **ddim** after the **subject** (the person concerned).

Here are the question examples from 2.3.2 above turned into negative statements:

Dydw i ddim yn yr ysgol	<i>I am not in the school</i>
Dwyt ti ddim yn yr ysgol	<i>You are not in the school</i>
Dydy e ddim yn yr ysgol	<i>He is not in the school</i>
Dydy'r plentyn ddim yn yr ysgol	<i>The child is not in the school</i>
Dydy'r plant ddim yn yr ysgol	<i>The children are not in the school</i>
Dydyn ni ddim yn yr ysgol	<i>We are not in the school</i>
Dydych chi ddim yn yr ysgol	<i>You are not in the school</i>
Dydyn nhw ddim yn yr ysgol	<i>They are not in the school</i>

Negative answer forms are the same as positive ones, but with **nac** placed in front:

Wyt ti'n mynd i'r gwaith heddiw?	Nac ydw, dydw i ddim yn mynd i'r gwaith heddiw
<i>Are you going to work today?</i>	<i>No, I'm not going to work today</i>

Ydy Tom yn athro ym Mhen-y-bont?	Nac ydy, dydy Tom ddim yn athro ym Mhen-y-bont
<i>Is Tom a teacher in Bridgend?</i>	<i>No, Tom is not a teacher in Bridgend</i>

We saw above that the third person singular is used with all nouns, even plural ones. The same care should be taken when answering these in the negative:

Ydy'r llyfrau yn y llyfrgell?
Are the books in the library?

Nac ydyn, dydy'r llyfrau ddim yn y llyfrgell
No (they are not), the books are not in the library

2.4 Ydy / Yw

Ydy and **yw** are virtually interchangeable. They are, in fact, both abbreviations of the longer form **ydyw**, which is hardly used today, other than in very formal written texts. It therefore doesn't matter if you choose:

Athro ydy Tom or Athro yw Tom

Hapus ydy'r plant or Hapus yw'r plant

And, likewise, in the negative:

Dydy Tom ddim yn athro ym Mhen-y-bont or Dyw Tom ddim yn athro ym Mhen-y-bont

Dydy'r llyfrau ddim yn y llyfrgell or Dyw'r llyfrau ddim yn y llyfrgell

The major occasion when the one is chosen over the other is when asking, and particularly when answering, questions, where **ydy** is the better choice:

Ydy Tom yn athro ? Ydy (as opposed to **yw**).