

Lexical set	Swedish	Danish	Norwegian	Icelandic	Finnish
FLEECE	i:, i̥		i	i̥	i̥
HAPPY	i̥			i̥	ɪ̥
KIT	i̥		ɪ	ɪ	ɪ̥
DRESS	ɛ̥	ɛ̥	ɛ̥	ɛ̥	ɛ̥
TRAP	æ, ä	ɛ̥æ	æ	a	æ̥
GOOSE	u(true CV8), ʏ		ʉ	ʉ, ʏ	ʏ, ʏ, ø
FOOT	ʊ		ʉ	u, ʊ	ø̥
THOUGHT	ɑ, ʌ̥		ɔ, o	ɔ, ɒ	ɔ̥, ɒ̥
CLOTH	ɑ, ɔ̥	ɒ̥		ɒ	ɒ̥
LOT	ɔ̥			ɒ	ɒ̥
PALM (SPA)	ɑ̥ (true CV5)		a, ɑ	a	ḁ̈
BATH	æ, ä		æ, a Br: a, ɑ	a	ḁ̈, æ̥
NURSE	ɝ̥	ø̥	ɜ, œ	ɝ̥	ɝ̥̥, ɝ̥̥ ^w
STRUT	ʌ̥, ɜ̥	ɑ	ɔ, a	e̥	ʌ̥̥, ɛ̥̥
COMMA	ʌ̥ (free only)		ə	e̥	ɜ̥
LETTER	ɝ̥		ɝ̥ Br: ʌ̥	ɝ̥	ɜ̥, ɜ̥r
FACE	eɪ̥		ei, e	ei	e̥̥̥, e̥̥̥̥
PRICE	ḁ̥̥̈	ḁ̥̥, a	aɪ	ei, ai	e̥̥̥̥, ʌ̥̥̥̥
MOUTH	ḁ̥̥̈		aə	au	ʌ̥̥̥̥, ʌ̥̥̥̥̥̥

GOAT	ö̥	ə̥		ou̥	ou̥, ɔ̥
CHOICE	ɒ̥			ɔ̥	ɔ̥, ɔ̥
NEAR	i̥			ɪ̥	i̥ɪ̥
SQUARE	e̥		ɛɪ Br: ɛə	eɪ̥	eɪ̥, e̥ɪ̥
START	ḁ		aɪ Br: a	aɪ̥	ḁ̈, ḁ̈
NORTH	ɔ̥		oə, əɪ Br: o	ɔ̥	ɔ̥ ɪ̥
FORCE	ɔ̥			ɔ̥	ɔ̥ ɪ̥
CURE	ʊ̥			u̥, ʊ̥	ʊ̥ɪ̥, u̥ɪ̥

Consonant features

Lexical set	Swedish	Danish	Norwegian	Icelandic	Finnish
/θ/	θ	θ̥	t	initial: θ̥ medial: θ̥ final: θ̥, θ̥	t̥
/ð/	ð	initial: ð̥ medial: ð̥	d	initial: θ̥ medial: θ̥ final: θ̥, θ̥	ð̥
initial /l/	l̥	l		l	l̥
final /l/	l̥	ʊ	ɫ	ɫ	l̥w
post-vocalic /r/	varies	varies	varies	varies	∅, r̥w

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initial /r/	ɹ, r				r^w
dentalized [t̪, d̪, n̪, l̪]	✓	✓			t, d, n only
medial /t/	t	t^s, d^h			
/s/	ʂ	ʃ		ʂ	ʂ
/z/	ʂ	usu s	s	ts	s
/w/	w			v, u, v	v
/v/	v	v, f		v (hypercorrect w possible)	v
/ŋ/	ŋ				ŋ', ŋk
final cons devoicing	z only	Tendency	✓	✓	✓
treatment of final (unvoiced) stops	fully released	often held or dropped		freq. aspirated or ejective	
treatment of medial /p, t, k, b, d, g/	fully exploded	lightly articulated p, t, k, b, d, g			
treatment of medial /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ/	✓	lightly articulated f , v, θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ		✓	
Geminated cons					
ʃ	ç (tç in chef)			ʂ, ç	ʃ, ʒ
ʒ	ç	ʃ		j	
t̪ʃ	ç			tç	t̪ʃ

Lexical set	Swedish	Danish	Norwegian	Icelandic	Finnish
$\overline{d\zeta}$	$\overline{d\zeta}$			$\overline{d_j}, \overline{t\zeta}$	$\overline{t\zeta}$
glottalization		final stop-plosives are frequently glottally-reinforced [$\overline{t^h}$] or replaced [ʔ]			
initial /b/				often $p^=$	
initial /d/					often d
initial /p, k/					often $p^=, k^=$
/b, g/					often b, g

Note especially the rows for ‘final /l/’ and **NURSE** above—/l/ is the only feature listed for which every accent has its own unique realization. **NURSE** is close, with only Swedish and Icelandic sharing [ɤ].

Oral Posture contrasts

- Swedish and Norwegian have relatively high jaw positions. Finnish is slightly lower, but perhaps not as low as the ‘average’ English speaker, and slightly retracted. Danish is quite open. Icelandic and Danish both tend not to move the jaw much.
- Finnish exhibits lip-corner protrusion. Norwegian has lip-corner retraction. Danish has relatively little lip-rounding, whereas Swedish has extremely active lips that move from spreading to ‘compressed’ lip-rounding to ‘protruded’ lip-rounding. Norwegian has ‘compressed’ lip-rounding only.

- Norwegians and Finns both tend towards laminality. ‘Rubbery’ or ‘gummy worm’ tongue-tips may be useful kinaesthetic images. Icelandic has exuberant alveolar trills [r], which leads to a forward feel centered in the front edge of the tongue.
- Swedish tongues favor front tongue arching and palatalization. Norwegian has some middle tongue arching.
- Icelandic, Finnish and Norwegian all have bright, forward-focussed tone. Swedish is focussed much further back, in the oropharynx. Danish tone placement is between the middle and the back of the mouth.
- Finnish and Danish English usually exhibit some tongue-root retraction. Swedish English *may* have some tongue-root advancement on FLEECE vowels (heavier accents only).
- Swedes also make great use of stiff, creaky or breathy voice for strong emphasis. Danes may also fall into creaky voice, or even stay for a while, but it doesn’t seem to have the same expressive use in Danish English.
- Swedish and Finnish both have some buccinator engagement.
- Swedish and Norwegian are the two most similar accents in the bunch. Here are some specific oral posture differences between them: Swedish has dental alveolars, Norwegian does not. The resonance is placed far back in the mouth in Swedish, but is quite front in Norwegian. Swedes will bring protruded lip-rounding into English, Norwegians won’t. Norwegians have spread tongue-tips and make some laminal contact with the alveolar ridge. Swedish tongues are pointier. Swedes like front tongue arching, Norwegians have some middle tongue arching. Swedes are in love with their glottal fry, and to a lesser extent, breathy voice, and use them both frequently and expressively; Norwegians, much less so.

Prosody and intonation contrasts

- Danish is spoken rapidly, and Danes will tend to speak rapidly when they speak in English. Danish English has unstressed syllable deletion, for example in *California* [k^hæɫ'fɔn.jə]. They will also tend to reduce consonant clusters and drop final consonants and even whole word endings, much as they do in Danish. Finns will tend to pronounce every letter in a word, as Finnish is a perfectly phonetic language. Swedish is much the same.
- Danish and Finnish both have narrow pitch variation. Danes, both male and female, will often make the most use of their lower register. Swedish and Norwegian have distinct lilts to them due to **pitch accent**. Norwegian uses a wider pitch range than Swedish, and a very broad Norwegian accent will sound much more like the Swedish Chef, of Muppets fame, than any actual Swede. (Any Swede will volunteer this!)
- Icelandic speakers, very much in contrast to Swedish and Norwegian speakers, will rely primarily on loudness to indicate stress/importance. Swedes and Norwegians will make great use of falling and falling-rising pitch contours, and some use of length. Finns will use loudness and length, but make much less use of pitch. Danes tend not to use stress very prominently, at all, speaking in a rapid, even flow.
- Norwegian has a sort of steady trudging forward motion. Sometimes it is 'down hill iambic'—the intonation of a phrase goes steadily down with an iambic rhythm.
- All of these languages have long and short syllables, which is one reason why Scandinavians often speak such good English—the length contrasts, stress-timing, and vowel reduction in English which seem to stymie so many other L2 speakers are easily mastered. On the other hand, speakers of Finnish, which has extreme vowel length contrasts, will often exhibit a slightly uncanny over-doing of length contrasts, sometimes haphazardly applied.
- Finnish and Icelandic both place primary stress on the first syllable of a word, a feature which may well carry over into English, especially with unfamiliar words. The other three languages have variable stress patterns.

And finally, for when you have that audiobook in which you need to differentiate your Norwegian characters from you Swedish ones, here's a quick table of some differences in specific vowels and consonants. (See also the oral posture and prosody contrasts above.)

	Swedish	Norwegian
dental alveolars	yes	no
final cons devoicing	/z/ only	yes
final /l/	l̥	ɫ
Back goose & foot	yes	no
nurse	ɚ	ɜ, œ
strut	ǣ, ɜ̥	ɔ, a
/θ/	/θ/	t