

Hungarian

An Essential Grammar



Carol Rounds



London and New York

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Hungarian

An Essential Grammar

This is a concise, user-friendly guide to the most important structures of this fascinating language.

All students of Hungarian, whether beginners or at intermediate and advanced levels, will welcome its clarity of presentation and jargon-free explanations. It is ideal for those studying independently or following a taught course.

Topics include:

- Verbal prefixes
- Aspect and tense
- Word-formation mechanisms
- Linking vowels
- The case system and its uses
- Word order

Appendices include the formation of irregular verbs, complete noun declensions and irregular noun patterns.

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Carol Rounds lectures in Hungarian at Columbia University, New York.

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Preface

This book is designed for all students of Hungarian – but perhaps especially for those who have been told it is too hard to learn. College students, business men and women, people of Hungarian heritage or spouses of Hungarians can use this book as an anchor in their quest to master the intricacies of Hungarian.

The Hungarian language is complex, wonderfully expressive and like no other language you know. This book guides you through the patterns of building words, phrases and sentences with clear explanations and paradigms. What at first seems complex to the Hungarian student becomes a regular and predictable – and therefore a *learnable* – pattern used to inspire your own Hungarian expression. Have fun with it!

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Abbreviations

abl.	ablative
acc.	accusative
adess.	adessive
all.	allative
caus.-fin.	causal-final
dat.	dative
delat.	delative
def.	definite
distr.	distributive
elat.	elative
ess.-for.	essive-formal
illat.	illative
indef.	indefinite
iness.	inessive
instr.	instrumental
intrans.	intransitive
lit.	literal(ly)
nom.	nominative
part.	participle
pl.	plural
pl1	first person plural
pl2	second person plural
pl3	third person plural
poss.	possessive
pres.	present
relat.	relative
s1	first person singular
s2	second person singular
s3	third person singular
sg.	singular

Abbreviations

sociat.	sociative
sublat.	sublative
superess.	superessive
sy	somebody
term.	terminative
transl.	translative

PART I

*Alphabet, pronunciation
and vowel harmony*

Alphabet

Hungarian uses the Roman alphabet in addition to some diacritics placed over some vowels. The accent mark(s) above the vowels indicate that the vowel is ‘long’ – see the pronunciation section to follow. Some consonants are digraphs, i.e., they consist of two letters; one consonant (*dzs*) is a trigraph. Although they are written with more than one letter, digraphs (and the trigraph) are each individual letters of the alphabet.

a á b c cs d dz dzs e é f g gy h i í j k l ly m n

ny o ó ö ő p (q) r s sz t ty u ú ü ű v (w) (x) (y) z zs

Unless found in the spellings of foreign words, the letters *q*, *w* and *x* are not used; the letter *y* is found only in old spellings (pronounced as the letter *i*) and in digraphs.

Chapter 2

Pronunciation

2.1 Consonants

2.1.1

Many of the consonants in Hungarian are pronounced as in English. All consonants are pronounced – there are no silent letters. The following are the consonants pronounced differently from those in English.

c as in cats	cukor ‘sugar’ ecet ‘vinegar’
cs as in church	bocsánat ‘excuse me’ csal ‘deceive’
g (always hard) as in go	igen ‘yes’ gaz ‘weed’
j as in yes	jó ‘good’ fáj ‘hurt’
r trill the tongue on the top of the mouth	kérem ‘please’ ró ‘carve’
s as in she	este ‘evening’ sárga ‘yellow’
sz as in sat	szervusz ‘hi’ asztal ‘table’
zs as in azure	garázs ‘garage’ zseb ‘pocket’

2.1.2 The palatal series

The following four consonants are palatalized, i.e., they are pronounced with the tongue gliding off the top of the palate.

gy similar to a <i>dy</i> sound as in <i>during</i>	magyar ‘Hungarian’ gyár ‘factory’
---	---

ly as in yes (thus the same as the Hungarian letter j)	személy ‘person’ lyuk ‘hole’
ny as in canyon	kenyér ‘bread’ nyár ‘summer’
ty similar to a <i>ty</i> sound as in <i>studio</i>	kártya ‘card’ tyúk ‘hen’

2.2 Consonant length

All consonants can be long or short. Long consonants are written as double consonants and are pronounced approximately twice as long as short ones. Great care should be paid to differences in length; it can change the meaning of a word, e.g.,

szeretem I love him/her vs. **szerettem** I loved him/her

Length of digraphs is indicated by doubling the first consonant of the digraph. For example, a long **sz** is written **ssz**: **vissza** ‘back’; long **ny** is written **nny**: **lánnyal** ‘with a girl’, etc.

2.2.1 Lengthening of consonants before j

The consonants **d**, **gy**, **t**, **ty**, **n**, **ny** are pronounced long when preceding the letter **j** (though this is not represented in the orthography):

ad + ja	→ adja	[addja]	s/he gives it
hagy + ja	→ hagyja	[haddja]	s/he leaves it
mutat + ja	→ mutatja	[mutattja]	s/he shows it
báty + ja	→ bátyja	[báttja]	his/her brother
kíván + juk	→ kívánjuk	[kivánnjuk]	we wish it
any + ja	→ anyja	[annja]	his/her mother

2.3 Voicing and devoicing of consonants

Consonants can be classified as voiced and unvoiced. The following are the voiced and unvoiced consonants of Hungarian:

Unvoiced p t k f sz s c cs ty h

Voiced b d g v z zs dz dzs gy j ly m n ny l r

2.3.1 Voicing of unvoiced consonants

Unvoiced consonants (except **h**) become voiced when preceding voiced consonants (except **j, ly, m, n, ny, l, r, v**). Some examples:

<i>Unvoiced</i>	<i>Voiced</i>	<i>Examples</i>	
p	→ b	népdal [nébdal]	folk song
t	→ d	kertben [kerdben]	in the garden
k	→ g	lakbér [lagbér]	rent
s	→ zs	kisgyerek [kizsgyerek]	(small) child
c	→ dz	ketrecbe [ketredzbe]	into the cage
cs	→ dzs	bográcsgulyás [bográdzsgulyás]	kettle goulash
sz	→ z	részben [rézben]	in part
f	→ v	kuglófban [kuglóvban]	in (a) cake

2.3.2 Devoicing of voiced consonants

Voiced consonants (except **j, ly, m, n, ny, l, r**) are devoiced when preceding unvoiced consonants. Some examples:

<i>Voiced</i>	<i>Unvoiced</i>	<i>Examples</i>	
b	→ p	zsebkendő [zsepkendő]	handkerchief
d	→ t	tudtok [tuttok]	you (pl.) know
g	→ k	megszeret [mekszeret]	(start to) like/love
v	→ f	nyelvtan [nyelftan]	grammar
z	→ sz	dolgoztok [dolgosztok]	you (pl.) work
zs	→ s	varázspálca [varáspálca]	magic wand

dz	→ c	edztek [ectek]	you (pl.) train
dzs	→ cs	bridzstől [bricstól]	from bridge
gy	→ ty	nagyterem [natyterem]	main hall

2.4 Assimilation of sibilants

Hissing sibilants (*sz, z*) when preceding hushing sibilants (*s, zs*) become hushing sibilants (the above voicing and devoicing rules also apply if applicable).

<i>Hissing</i>	<i>Hushing</i>	<i>Becomes</i>	<i>Examples</i>
sz	+ s	ss (long s)	egészség [egésség] health
z	+ s	ss	igazság [igasság] truth
sz	+ zs	zsz (long zs)	horgászzsinór [horgázzsinór] fishing line
z	+ zs		tíz zsinór [tízzsinór] ten lines

2.5 Vowels

Vowels can also be either long or short. Length in the vowels is marked by long marks over the vowel and long vowels are pronounced approximately twice as long as short ones. For two sets of vowel pairs, *a ~ á* and *e ~ é* there is a difference not only in length but of quality in the vowel as well. For all other vowel pairs the difference between them is primarily of length.

Hungarian has no diphthongs, i.e., each vowel is pronounced separately.

a	aw as in 'awl'	nap day
á	aa as in 'baa'	ár price
e	a sound between the a in 'bat' and the e in 'bet'	reggel morning
é	ay as in 'say', but without the y-sound (diphthong) at the end	kérem please

i	e as in 'he'	mi	what
í	a longer version of the above, as the ee in 'green'	tíz	ten
o	oh as in 'note'	kívánok	I wish
ó	a longer version of the above	jó	good
ö	purse your lips as though to say oh but say eh	köszönöm	thank you
ő	a longer version of the above	hétfő	Monday
u	oo as in 'food'	tud	know
ú	a longer version of the above	út	road
ü	purse your lips as though to say oo but say ee	üveg	bottle
ű	a longer version of the above	egyszerű	simple

2.6 Stress

The first syllable of every word is stressed.

Unless otherwise emphasized, the articles **a**, **az**, **egy**, and the particle **is** receive no stress. Thus in the following phrase, the only stressed element is the first syllable of **kutya**:

a *kutya* **is** the dog too

2.7 Intonation


2.7.1

Hungarian declarative sentences have a primarily descending intonation:

Szép idő van. The weather is beautiful.


2.7.2

A question containing a question word has a higher rise on the question word:

 **Milyen idő van?** What is the weather like?

2.7.3

A yes–no question has a rise–fall intonation where a high rise in intonation is found on the penultimate syllable of the sentence, a sharp fall is on the last syllable.

 **Szép idő van?** Is the weather nice?

(Note here that intonation may be the only way to differentiate between declarative and interrogative sentences.)

In yes–no questions with fewer than three syllables, the rise in intonation takes place on the final syllable followed by an immediate drop:

 **Ez az?** Is this it?

 **Kedves?** Is she nice?

Vowel harmony

Hungarian vowels are classified according to front vs. back assonance and rounded vs. unrounded. These terms come from describing the tongue position in the mouth and the roundedness of the lips, respectively. The following is the vowel inventory of Hungarian:

Back vowels: **a, á, o, ó, u, ú**

Front unrounded vowels: **e, é, i, í**

Front rounded vowels: **ö, ő, ü, ú**

Vowel harmony rules in Hungarian require that front or back assonance in the vowels of a stem be maintained throughout the entire word, thus for the most part – except for recent loan words – Hungarian words have either only back vowels in them or only front vowels.

3.1 Suffixing and back vs. front vowels

Because vowel assonance is maintained throughout the whole word, most suffixes have front and back vowel variants, e.g., the dative case **-nak** (back vowel) and **-nek** (front vowel). Thus, if a stem contains back vowels, it affixes back vowel suffixes; should the word contain only front vowels it can affix only front vowel suffixes.

3.2 Suffixing and rounded vs. unrounded vowels

When words contain only front vowels, a second distinction in vowel type may be necessary: the rounded/unrounded distinction in the *last* vowel requires a second stage in vowel harmony rules: if the stem's *last* vowel is front and rounded it takes a suffix with a front rounded vowel.

If the stem's *last* vowel is front and unrounded, it takes a front unrounded suffix. Although suffixes for most words have front/back vowel variants only a few endings have rounded/unrounded variants (examples include the allative case, **-hoz/-hez/-höz**, or the plural suffix, **-ok/-ek/-ök**).

3.3 Neutral vowels

Finally, the front unrounded vowels, **i, í, e** and **é**, may occur in stems containing either front or back vowels. As such they are considered neutral with respect to vowel harmony rules; a word containing back vowels and neutral vowels is considered a back vowel word. If *only* neutral vowels occur in a stem, however, the stem is considered to be of front vowel assonance and will require front vowel suffixes.¹

3.4 Application of the rules of vowel harmony

To show how vowel harmony works, we will use the plural suffix, which has both front/back vowel harmony and the rounded/unrounded distinction. The plural ending is either **-ok** (back), **-ek** (front and unrounded), or **-ök** (front and rounded).

Stem		Description of stem	Plural
asztal	table	only back vowels	asztalok
gyerek	child	only neutral (front) vowels, last vowel unrounded	gyerekek
füzet	notebook	only front vowels, last vowel unrounded	füzetek
ismerős	acquaintance	only front vowels, last vowel rounded	ismerősök
papír	paper	back vowel with neutral vowel	papírok

¹ This is particularly true for nouns although there are numerous exceptions; most verbs, however, that contain *only* the vowel **i** or **í** have back vowel assonance. Compare: **szív** 'heart' is a noun with front vowel assonance and **szív** 'inhale' is a verb with back vowel assonance.

PART II

Parts of speech

Verbs

The Hungarian conjugation includes the past and present indicative, the subjunctive (also used for the imperative) and conditional moods. There is no inflectional passive mood or future tense; the passive is expressed by means of other constructions with no agency, the future is expressed by the use of coverbs and/or the auxiliary verb **fog**.

Conjugation of verbs includes the suffixing of tense or mood and personal endings. The personal endings indicate the subject and may indicate the presence of a direct object (see section 4.2). With few exceptions, the rules of vowel harmony extend through the conjugations.

This chapter first illustrates the verb stem types of Hungarian followed by the conjugations and usage of the tenses and moods. The formation and usage of the non-finite forms (participles and the infinitive) as well as the highly productive verbal suffixes of modality (potential, causative, and frequentative) follow. For more on verbal derivational suffixes, see chapter 12 on word formation.

Verbal prefixes, henceforth referred to as coverbs, cause a particular problem for students of Hungarian; the end of this chapter contains extensive descriptions of the common uses of the most frequently used coverbs. Although some reference is made in this chapter to the order of verbs and coverbs in the sections on usage, refer to chapter 16 for a more complete explanation of Hungarian word order.

4.1 Verb stems

In general, Hungarian verb stems are identical with the third person singular present tense indefinite form. This is the citation form found in good dictionaries.

The shape of the verb stem determines in part the shape of the suffix which attaches to it. For most verbs, the verb stem remains the same throughout the conjugations. Some important exceptions are discussed in this section.

4.1.1 -ik verbs

A very large group of verbs end in **-ik** in the third person singular present tense indefinite conjugation (and as such, appear as the citation form). The verb stem for **-ik** verbs is found by removing the **-ik** ending; the verbs then conjugate on the **-ik**-less stem. For example, the verb **utazik** ‘travel’ has the stem **utaz-** to which the verbal endings attach, e.g., **utazni** ‘to travel (infinitive)’.

In addition to the stem change, **-ik** verbs also display a regular alternation in the personal endings of some conjugations. In the present tense, the ending **-om/-em/-öm** may be used for the first person singular indefinite conjugation instead of the regular ending (**-ok/-ek/-ök**).¹ A similar alternation is found in the first person singular in the subjunctive and conditional paradigms as well, though in these conjugations the regular endings have all but replaced the now archaic **-ik** endings.

regular ending ~ **-ik ending**

Present tense: **utazom** ~ **utazok** I travel

Subjunctive: **utazzam** ~ **utazzak** that I travel

Conditional: **utaznám** ~ **utaznék** I would travel

In the subjunctive and conditional conjugations there is also a separate ending for **-ik** verbs in the indefinite conjugation for third person singular: **-ék**. This ending is also considered a more archaic form, and is rarely used in speech.

-ik ending ~ *regular ending*

Subjunctive: **utazzék** ~ **utazzon** that he/she play piano

Conditional: **utaznék** ~ **utazna** he/she would play piano

¹ Much variation is found in the use of the first person endings of **-ik** verbs; this is dependent not only on the idiolect of the speaker, but the verb as well – some verbs are prone to take the **-ik** verb endings, some to take the regular. However, the **-om/ -em/ -öm** endings are always correct, if not always colloquial.

4.1.2 Fleeting vowel stems

In this large class of verb stems the last vowel is omitted when vowel-initial suffixes are added, yielding a stem-final consonant cluster. Although you cannot tell by its shape whether a verb is a fleeting vowel stem, a pattern emerges with familiarity. In all cases² the vowel which elides is *o/e/ö*; at least one of the consonants in the resulting cluster is always *j, l, ly, r, n, ny, m, z, or zs*.

The vowel is omitted only when the suffix attached begins with a vowel, thus there are no tri-consonantal clusters. Vowel-initial suffixes are found in the present and past tense conjugations as well as with present and past participles, and the noun-forming suffixes *-at/-et* and *-ás/-és*. The presence of a vowel-initial suffix does not always trigger vowel elision and, in fact, the absence of a consistent trigger is what makes this group of stems so irregular. Only the present participle *-ó/-ő* will consistently trigger the omission of the fleeting vowel.

mosolyog ~ mosolyg-

mosolyognak they smile **mosolyogtam** I smiled
mosolyogni to smile

mosolygok I smile **mosolygott** he/she smiled
mosolygó smiling (pres. part.)

érez ~ érz-

éreztem I felt (it) **érezzük** we feel it **érezni** to feel
érezem I feel it **érezitek** you (pl.) feel it **ézés** feeling

üdvözöl ~ üdvözl-

üdvözölsz you (sg.) greet **üdvözöltek** they greeted (us)
üdvözölni to greet
üdvözlöm I greet him/her **üdvözlik** they greet him/her
üdvözlet greeting

² With the one exception of *őríz* 'guard'.

4.1.3 v-stems

This is a small class of verbs whose third person singular form ends in a vowel, but requires a v-stem before suffixes beginning with a vowel.

The v-stem verbs are: **fő** cook **nő** grow **ró** carve
lő shoot **nyű** wear out **sző** weave

With the exception of **nyű**, the final vowel is shortened before the v: **ró**: **rov-** ‘carve’. The present tense paradigm illustrates the pattern of v-stem verbs:

sző ~ szöv	<i>indefinite</i>	<i>definite</i>	ró ~ rov	<i>indefinite</i>	<i>definite</i>
én	szövök	szövöm	rovok	rovom	
te	szósz	szövöd	rósz	rovod	
ő	sző	szövi	ró	rója	
mi	szövünk	szőjük	rovunk	rójuk	
ti	szőtök	szövitek	rótok	rójátok	
ők	szőnek	szövik	rónak	róják	

The following are the verb stems for the past, subjunctive and conditional as well as the non-finite verb forms for this class. (Note the deviation from the stem for the definite subjunctive *te* form.)

<i>past tense stem</i>	<i>subjunctive stem</i>		<i>conditional stem</i>	<i>present participle</i>	<i>infinitive</i>	<i>adverbial participle</i>
	<i>stem</i>	<i>s2def</i>	<i>stem</i>			
főtt-	főj-	—	fő-	fövő	főni	főve
lőtt-	lőj-	lődd	lő-	lövő	lőni	lőve
nőtt-	nőj-	nődd	nő-	növő	nőni	nőve
nyűtt-	nyűj-	nyűdd	nyű-	nyűvő	nyűni	nyűve
rótt-	rőj-	ródd	ró-	rovó	róni	róva
szőtt-	szőj-	sződd	sző-	szövő	szőni	szőve

4.1.4 -szik stems

Another class of verbs ends in **-szik** in the citation form. If a vowel precedes the **-szik** ending the verb conjugates normally. (Two exceptions are **esküszik** ‘swear’ and **alkuszik** ‘bargain’, to be discussed below.) If, however, a consonant precedes the **-szik** ending, the **-sz** of this ending alternates with other consonants throughout the verbal paradigm.³ The **-szik** verbs can be divided into four main groups, depending on which consonants **-sz-** alternates with.

(a) **sz ~ d ~ v**: This group include some very common verbs. There is considerable variation within this group; note in the following table the stem variants for the potential, causative and adverbial participles. The verbs **alszik** ‘sleep’ and **fekszik** ‘lie’ use the short form for the past tense, the rest of the verbs in this group use the long form.

The **sz ~ d ~ v** alternation is also found with five frequentative verbs having the present tense forms ending in **-kodik/-kedik** alternating with **-szik**. The present tense conjugation may occur in either stem variant; the other verb forms conform to the pattern established in the table for **cselekszik ~ cselekedik**.

cselekszik ~ cselekedik	do, act
dicsekszik ~ dicsekedik	boast
gyanaxszik ~ gyanakodik	suspect
növekszik ~ növekedik	grow, increase
törekszik ~ törekedik	strive, try

(b) **sz ~ d**: This alternation is found in a number of verbs including:

dulakszik ~ dulakodik	grapple, wrestle
furakszik ~ furakodik	push through
gazdagszik ~ gazdagodik	become rich
gyarapszik ~ gyarapodik	increase

³ Exceptions are **hallatszik** ‘be heard’, **játszik** ‘play’, **látszik** ‘appear’, and **tetszik** ‘be pleasing’ which do not have variable stems and conjugate regularly. The verb **alapszik** ‘found’, ‘establish’ is found only in the present tense and conjugates regularly. All other verb forms of **alapszik** require the synonymous verb (root) **alapul**.

lerészegszik ~ lerészegedik	become drunk
megelégszik ~ megelégedik	be satisfied
meghidegszik ~ meghidegedik	grow cold
melegszik ~ melegedik	become warm
megbetegszik ~ megbetegedik	become ill
mosakszik ~ mosakodik	wash oneself
öregszik ~ öregedik	become old, age
tanakszik ~ tanakodik	reflect, consider (tanakszik variant is rare)
telepszik ~ telepedik	settle
tolakszik ~ tolakodik	push oneself through, impose
ülekszik ~ ülepedik	settle, deposit
vastagszik ~ vastagodik	grow thick
verekszik ~ verekedik	fight
veszekszik ~ veszekedik	argue, fight
vetekszik ~ vetekedik	rival, vie

(c) **sz ~ z**: This alternation is found in only three verbs:

emlékszik ~ emlékezik	remember
gyülekszik ~ gyülekezik	assemble, gather
szándékszik ~ szándékozik	intend

(d) **sz ~ z ~ v**: This alternation is found only with the verb **igyekszik ~ igyekezik** 'strive'.

-szik verbs and stem variants

Consonant alternation	Present tense stem	Past tense, subjunctive, conditional, infinitival stem	Present part., past part.	Potential causative	Adverbial part.
sz ~ d ~ v	alsz- sleep	alud-	alvó aludt	al(ud)hat al(ud)tat	al(ud)va
	feksz- lie	feküd-	fekvő feküdt	fek(üd)het fek(üd)tet	fek(üd)ve
	esküsz- swear	esküd-	esküvő esküdött	esküdhet esküdtet ~ esket	esküdve
	haragsz- be angry	haragud-	haragvó haragudott	haragudhat haragudtat	haragudva
	nyugsz- be calm	nyugod-	nyugvó nyugodott	nyug(od)hat nyugtat	nyugodva
	alkusz- bargain	alkud-	alkuvó alkudott	alkudhat alkudtat	alkudva
	cseleksz- cseleked- do, act	cseleked-	cselekvő cselekedett	cselekedhet cselekedtet	cselekedve
	sz ~ d	öregsz- öreged- grow old	öreged-	öregedő öregedett	öregedhet —
veszeksz- veszeked- argue		veszeked-	veszekedő veszekedett	veszekedhet veszekedett	veszekedve
mosaksz- mosakod- wash		mosakod-	mosakodó mosakodott	mosakodhat mosakodtat	mosakodva
sz ~ z		emléksz- emlékez- remember	emlékez-	emlékező emlékezett	emlékezhhet emlékeztet
	sz ~ z ~ v	igyeksz- strive	igyekez-	igyekvő igyekezett	igyekezhhet igyekeztet

4.1.5 *The group of seven: lesz, tesz, vesz, hisz, visz, eszik, iszik*

This finite class of verbs exhibits a present tense *-sz*-stem which alternates with other consonants throughout the paradigms as illustrated in the following table. The personal endings for the tenses and moods attach regularly to the verb stems indicated by a dash; forms with no dash are complete second person singular forms; other exceptions are indicated. Full paradigms of these verbs are given in appendix 1.

The group of seven					
	Present tense stem	Past tense stem	Subjunctive stem ⁴	Conditional stem	Infinitive
lesz will be; become	lesz-	lett-	legy- légy	len-	lenni
tesz put; do	tesz-	tett-	tegy- tégy tedd	ten-	tenni
vesz take; buy	vesz-	vett-	vegy- végy vedd	ven-	venni
visz take, carry	visz-	vitt-	vigy- vidd	vin-	vinni
hisz believe	hisz-	hitt-	higgy- hidd	hin-	hinni
iszik drink	isz-	itt- ivott⁵	igy- idd	in-	inni
eszik eat	esz-	ett- evett⁵	egy- edd	en-	enni

⁴ There is a good deal of variation (in vowel length and stem shape) throughout the subjunctive paradigm for these verbs. See the full paradigm in appendix 1.

⁵ The third person singular indefinite past tense of these verbs is formed from a

4.1.6 The verbs *van* ‘be’, *jön* ‘go’, and *megy* ‘come’

These three verbs are irregular in all moods and tenses. The past tense and conditional are formed regularly from the stems indicated in the table. The present tense and subjunctive forms exhibit some variation in the stems; for full paradigms see appendix 1.

	Present tense stem(s)	Past tense stem	Subjunctive stem	Conditional stem	Infinitive
van	vagy-	volt-	legy-	vol-	lenni
be	van(-)		légy	len-	
jön	varied	jött-	jöjj-	jön-	jönni
come			gyere		
			gyertek		
			gyerünk		
megy	megy-	ment-	menj-	men-	menni
go	men-				

4.2 Definite and indefinite conjugations

For each mood and tense, Hungarian verbs have two conjugations. The **definite conjugation** is used if the sentence contains a definite direct object. The **indefinite conjugation** is used at all other times. Thus, in the translation of the sentences ‘I see a house’ and ‘I see the house’ the verb *lát* is conjugated differently because of the presence or absence of a definite direct object.

Látok egy házat. I see a house.

Látom a házat. I see the house.

v-stem and is given here in full. The rest of the past tense conjugates regularly from the *itt-* and *ett-* stems.

4.2.1 Determining the definiteness of an object

Several factors go into determining whether a direct object is to be considered definite. If a direct object does not conform to one of the points below, or if there is no direct object in the sentence at all, the indefinite conjugation of the verb is used. A direct object is considered definite if:

(a) it is preceded by the definite article **a** or **az**.

Látom a házat. I see the house.

(b) it is a demonstrative pronoun (**az** or **ez**, **azok** or **ezek**) or is modified by a demonstrative pronoun.⁶

Látom ezt/azt. I see this/that.

Látom ezt/azt a házat. I see this/that house.

The demonstrative pronouns are also frequently used cataphorically⁷ and as such they may be overt or implied. In either instance, they are still considered definite.

(Azt) látom, hogy esik az eső. I see that it is raining.

(c) it has a possessive suffix.

Látom a házat. I see your house.

Látom a házat. I see his/her house.

Since a possessed noun is almost always preceded by a definite article, this may also be considered a sub-class of (a). Although the definite article may be omitted in possessive constructions, any direct object with a possessive suffix is still considered definite. Note, also, that possessive and reflexive pronouns contain possessive suffixes and they are also considered definite.

Látom magam(at). I see myself.

Mutasd meg a tiedet! Show me yours!

⁶ A contextually frequent, though semantically singular, exception to this is found when the direct object **azt** has the meaning 'that kind of', 'such a'; in this case, the indefinite conjugation is used:

Azt kérek.
I would like that kind.

⁷ See section 7.9 for discussion of cataphoric pronouns.

(d) it is a proper noun.

Látom Zsuzsát/Budapestet. I see Zsuzsa/Budapest.

(e) it is a third person pronoun (overt or implied).

Látom (őt). I see him/her.

Látom (őket). I see them.

Látom (magát). I see you (singular, polite).

Látom (magukat). I see you (plural, polite).

Látom (önt). I see you (singular, very polite).

Látom (önöket). I see you (plural, very polite).

The third person direct object pronoun need not be overtly expressed and therefore the sentence **Látom** can mean ‘I see him/her/them/you’ (formal forms, sg. and pl.) – only context will provide the correct meaning. (It is common in speech, however, to overtly express the third person plural pronoun **őket** ‘them’ even when the context is otherwise clear.)

(f) it is the reciprocal pronoun, **egymás**.

Látják egymást. They see each other.

(g) it is a modifier ending in **-ik**, or is preceded by a modifier ending in **-ik** (e.g. **melyik**, **hányadik**).

Melyiket kéred? Which one would you like?

Melyik könyvet kéred? Which book would you like?

4.2.2 -lak/-lek

There is one more personal form in all moods and tenses we shall include here in the definite conjugations (though not because the object is inherently definite). A unique verb conjugational form (**-lak/-lek**) exists for verbs when the subject is **én** and direct object is a second person pronoun (**téged**, **titeket**, **benneteket**). With any subject other than **én**, however, second person objects occur with indefinite conjugations.

Látlak (téged). I see you (singular, familiar).

Látlak (benneteket/titeket). I see you (plural, familiar).

4.3 Conjugation and usage

4.3.1 Present tense: conjugation

The present tense (unlike the past and the other moods) has no marker of its own on the verb; personal endings are added directly to the stem.

4.3.1.1 Indefinite conjugation

As illustrated in the following table, the personal endings for the present tense indefinite conjugation have either two or three vowel choices dependent on vowel harmony. Verb stems ending in two vowels or a long vowel plus -t require a linking vowel before the endings that begin with a consonant. Finally, for verb stems ending in the sibilants *s, sz, z, dz*, the personal ending for *te* is *-ol/-el/-öl* instead of the *-sz* found for non-sibilant stems.

Present tense indefinite – personal endings			
Singular	Back vowel	Front vowel	
		unrounded	rounded
1st person én	-ok	-ek	-ök
-ik verbs (optional)	-om	-em	-öm
2nd person te	-sz		
after two consonants or long vowel + t	-asz	-esz	
after s, sz, z, dz	-ol	-el	-öl
3rd person ő, maga, ön	—		
-ik verbs	-ik		
Plural			
1st person mi	-unk	-ünk	
2nd person ti	-tok	-tek	-tök
after two consonants or long vowel + t	-otok	-etek	-ötök
3rd person ők, maguk, önök	-nak	-nek	
after two consonants or long vowel + t	-anak	-enek	

Due to their different shapes, the following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

wait	vár	[back vowel]
ask for	kér	[front unrounded vowel]
translate	fordít	[back vowel ending in long vowel + t]
cook	főz	[front rounded vowel ending in a sibilant]
play	játszik	[back vowel -ik verb with a stem ending in two consonants; the stem-final consonant is a sibilant]

Present tense indefinite conjugations

	vár	kér	fordít	főz	játszik
én	várok	kérek	fordítok	főzök	játszok (~ játszom)
te	vársz	kérsz	fordítasz	főzöl	játszol
ő	vár	kér	fordít	főz	játszik
mi	várunk	kérünk	fordítunk	főzünk	játszunk
ti	vártok	kértek	fordítotok	főztök	játszotok
ők	várnak	kérnek	fordítanak	főznek	játszanak

4.3.1.2 Present tense definite conjugation

In addition to observing vowel harmony rules, the personal endings of the present tense definite conjugation are subject to another phonological rule: the -j- of the j-initial endings (-ja, -juk/-jük, -játok, -ják) regularly assimilates to the final consonant of verb stems ending in a sibilant (s, sz, z, dz). Recall from chapter 1 that when digraphs (sz, dz, etc.) are long, i.e., doubled, they are written by doubling only the first letter of the digraph: sz + sz → ssz.

olvas + ja	→	olvassa	s/he reads (it)
vesz + jük	→	vesszük	we take (it)
hoz + játok	→	hozzátok	you (pl.) bring (it)
edz + jük	→	eddzük	we train him/her

Present tense definite – personal endings			
Singular	Back vowel	Front vowel	
		unrounded	rounded
1st person én	-om	-em	-öm
2nd person te	-od	-ed	-öd
3rd person ő, maga, ön	-ja		-i
Plural			
1st person mi	-juk		-jük
2nd person ti	-játok		-itek
3rd person ők, maguk, önök	-ják		-ik
1st person singular subject with 2nd person object after two consonants or long vowel + t	-lak -alak		-lek -elek

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- give **ad** [back vowel]
- read **olvas** [back vowel, ends in sibilant]
- play **játszik** [back vowel, ends in sibilant, **-ik** verb]
- ask for **kér** [front unrounded vowel]
- cook **főz** [front rounded vowel, ends in sibilant]

Present tense definite conjugations

	ad	olvas	játszik	kér	főz
én	adom	olvasom	játszom	kérem	főzöm
te	adod	olvasod	játszod	kéred	főzöd
ő	adja	olvassa	játssza	kéri	főzi
mi	adjuk	olvassuk	játsszuk	kérjük	főzzük
ti	adjátok	olvassátok	játsszátok	kéritek	főzitek
ők	adják	olvassák	játsszák	kérik	főzik

The form for verbs with the subject **én** 'I' and direct object **téged**, **titeket**, **benneteket** 'you' (familiar, sg. or pl.):

vár	wait	várlak	I wait for you
szeret	love	szeretlek	I love you
tart	hold	tartalak	I hold you
ért	understand	értelek	I understand you

4.3.2 Present tense: usage

4.3.2.1

The present tense can be used to indicate both present and habitual actions.

Sétálunk a parkban.	We are walking in the park.
Mari nagy cégnél dolgozik.	Mari works for a large firm.
Minden nap bemegyek a városba.	I go into the city every day.

4.3.2.2

The present tense may also be used to indicate future actions. In many instances coverbs and/or time expressions indicating a future date are

used with the present tense of the verb to express the future. (See section 4.6.3 on aspect and coverbs for more on the use of aspect to indicate future.)

Holnap egész nap dolgozom. I will be working all day tomorrow.

Jövő héten lemegyek a Balatonra. Next week I'm going to the Balaton.

Később írom meg házi feladatomat. I'll do my homework later.

4.3.2.3

The present tense is often used in colloquial Hungarian when relating a story that happened in the past. This is found in very colloquial English as well.

Bemegyek a boltba, és kit látok? Egyik amerikai barátomat, aki rögtön elkezd mesélni, hogy mi történik velem, amióta nem láttuk egymást.

I go into the store, and who do I see? An American friend, who immediately begins to tell me what has been going on with him since we last met.

4.3.2.4

Reported speech: In English reported speech tolerates both the past and present tense, for example, 'You said that you *were/are (still) reading.*' In Hungarian, on the other hand, reported speech is expressed in the tense in which it was originally stated.

Lajos mondta, hogy Szegeden akar lakni.

Lajos said that he *wants/wanted* to live in Szeged. (At the time of his statement he used the present tense.)

Lajos mondta, hogy három évvel ezelőtt Szegeden akart lakni.

Lajos said that three years ago he *wanted* to live in Szeged. (At the time of his statement, he used the past tense.)

4.3.2.5

The present tense is used in time expressions meaning ‘since’, ‘for a period of time’ if the action continues into the present.

Január óta dolgozom a könyvtárban.

I have been working in the library since January.

Mióta tanulsz magyarul?

How long have you been studying Hungarian?

4.3.3 **Past tense: conjugation**

The past tense marker appears between the verb stem and the personal endings. It has two shapes: (1) the long form, **-ott/-ett/-ött** (where the vowel alternation is dependent on vowel harmony rules) and (2) the short form, **-t**. The shape of the verb stem determines whether it will take the long or short form. Three classes of verb stems are pertinent:

Class A verbs always require the long form **-ott/-ett/-ött** and are defined as follows:

- 1 verbs ending in a long vowel + **t**
- 2 verbs ending in two consonants
- 3 monosyllabic verbs ending in a short vowel + **t**. Only eight verbs in the language have such a shape:

fut	run
hat	have an effect
jut	get, come to
köt	tie
nyit	open
süt	bake
üt	strike
vet	cast

Class B verbs always require the short form **t** and are defined as follows:

- 1 verbs ending in (single) **j, l, ly, n, ny, or r**.
- 2 many bisyllabic verbs ending in **-ad** or **-ed**.

Class C verbs require the long form in the third person singular indefinite conjugation and the short form for all other persons. Class C is (negatively) defined as containing all verbs not of class A or class B.

Exceptions:

- (a) Some verbs that look as though they belong to Class A but conjugate as Class C include **lát** ‘see’, **küld** ‘send’, **mond** ‘say’, **kezd** ‘begin’, **függ** ‘hang’, ‘depend’, **fedd** ‘reprove’.
- (b) Verbs that look as though they belong to Class A but conjugate as Class B are **áll** ‘stand’, **száll** ‘fly’, **varr** ‘sew’, **forr** ‘boil’.
- (c) The verb **fürdik** ‘bathe’ conjugates as either Class A or C: **fürödtem** ~ **fürdöttem** ‘I bathed’, only the long form is used in the third person singular: **fürdött** ‘she/he bathed’.

4.3.3.1 Past tense indefinite

After the correct past tense marker has been determined, the personal endings are attached with no further changes to the stem.

Past tense indefinite – personal endings		
	Back vowel	Front vowel
Singular		
1st person én	-am	-em
2nd person te	-ál	-él
3rd person ő, maga, ön	—	—
Plural		
1st person mi	-unk	-ünk
2nd person ti	-atok	-etek
3rd person ők, maguk, önök	-ak	-ek

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- bake **süt** [Class A, front rounded vowel]
- remain **marad** [Class B, back vowel]
- love **szeret** [Class C, front unrounded vowel]
- olvas **read** [Class C, back vowel]

Past tense indefinite conjugations

	süt	marad	szeret	olvas
én	sütöttem	maradtam	szerettem	olvastam
te	sütöttél	maradtál	szeretted	olvastál
ő	sütött	maradt	szeretett	olvasott
mi	sütöttünk	maradtunk	szerettünk	olvastunk
ti	sütöttetek	maradtatok	szerettetek	olvastatok
ők	sütöttek	maradtak	szerettek	olvastak

4.3.3.2 Past tense definite

Past tense definite – personal endings

Singular	Back vowel	Front vowel
1st person én	-am	-em
2nd person te	-ad	-ed
3rd person ő, maga, ön	-a	-e
Plural		
1st person mi	-uk	-ük
2nd person ti	-átok	-étek
3rd person ők, maguk, önök	-ák	-ék
1st person singular subject with 2nd person object	-alak	-elek

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

strike **üt** [Class A, front rounded vowel]

ask for **kér** [Class B, front vowel]

introduce **bemutat** [Class C, back vowel]

Past tense definite conjugations			
	üt	kér	bemutat
én	ütöttem	kértem	bemutattam
te	ütötted	kérted	bemutattad
ő	ütötte	kérte	bemutatta
mi	ütöttük	kértük	bemutattuk
ti	ütöttétek	kértétek	bemutattátok
ők	ütötték	kérték	bemutatták

The form for verbs with the subject **én** 'I' and direct object **téged, titeket, benneteket** 'you' (familiar, sg. or pl.):

ütöttelek	I struck you
kértelek	I asked you
bemutattalak	I introduced you

4.3.4 Past tense: usage

4.3.4.1

The past tense is used, as in English, to express actions that occurred in the past.

Tegnap bicikliztünk az erdőben.	Yesterday we were biking in the woods.
Múlt évben Franciaországban nyaraltak.	They vacationed in France last year.
Befejeztem a munkát.	I finished the work.

4.3.4.2

Hungarian has only one past tense form. The use of time expressions and coverbs combine to express the meanings of the complex tense forms found in English. See 4.6.3 on aspect and coverbs.

Eolvastam a könyvet. (past tense, with a coverb, only perfective aspect)

I read the book. / I have read the book. / I had read the book.

Olvastam a könyvet. (past tense, without a coverb, imperfective or perfective aspect)

I was reading the book. / I had been reading the book. / I read the book.

4.3.4.3

The auxiliary verb *szokott* ‘usually’ is found only in the past tense although its meaning may be either past or present.

Reggel kávézni szoktam, este inkább teázom.

In the morning I usually drink coffee, in the evening I drink tea.

Régen korcsolyázni szoktunk télen, de most már öregek vagyunk.

In the old days we would go ice skating in the winter, but now we are too old.

4.3.4.4

The past tense may also be used (in compound sentences) to indicate the completion of an action in the future.

Ha megebédeltem, lefekszem egy órára.

When I have finished my lunch, I will lie down for an hour.

Mihelyt megírtam a levelet, rohanok a postára.

As soon as I have written the letter I will rush to the post office.

4.3.5 *Subjunctive/imperative: conjugation*

The subjunctive serves as the imperative as well and for the sake of brevity will be referred to here only as the subjunctive. Its marker is -j- and it

is located between the verb stem and the personal endings. Depending on the verb stem, the *-j-* may be assimilated or otherwise altered. The following are the regular alternations of the subjunctive marker *-j-*:

- 1 In verb stems ending in a sibilant (*s, sz, z, dz*), the subjunctive *-j-* assimilates to the sibilant.⁸

keres + -j- → keress-

- 2 In verb stems ending in *-st*⁹ or *-szt*, the stem-final *-t* is lost and the subjunctive *-j-* assimilates to the sibilant.

ébrates + -j- → ébrates-

- 3 In verb stems ending in a long vowel + *t* or a consonant + *t* (except as defined in the previous paragraph), the subjunctive *-j-* becomes *-s-*.

segít + -j- → segíts-

- 4 In verb stems ending in a short vowel + *t*, both the stem-final *-t* and the subjunctive *-j-* become *s*.

mutat + -j- → mutass-

The personal endings show some variation in the subjunctive. The second person singular has both a long and short form; although the short form is becoming more common in colloquial speech, the long form expresses a somewhat milder command.

4.3.5.1 Subjunctive indefinite

The regular endings are used much more frequently with *-ik* verbs than the other optional endings found in the first and third persons singular; the optional endings are more archaic and often found in older writings.

⁸ Compare with the *-j* initial personal endings in the definite conjugation of the present tense where the same assimilation occurs.

⁹ Only one verb ends in *-st*: *fest* 'paint'.

Subjunctive indefinite – personal endings

Singular	Back vowel	Front vowel	
		unrounded	rounded
1st person én	-ak	-ek	
-ik verbs (optional)	-am	-em	
2nd person te	-(ál)	-(él)	
3rd person ő, maga, ön	-on	-en	-ön
-ik verbs (optional)		-ék	
Plural			
1st person mi	-unk	-ünk	
2nd person ti	-atok	-etek	
3rd person ők, maguk, önök	-anak	-enek	

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- ask for **kér** [front unrounded vowel]
- run **fut** [back vowel, ends in short vowel + **t**]
- wake **ébredt** [front unrounded vowel, ends in **-szt**]
- play **játszik** [back vowel, **-ik** verb, stem ends in sibilant]

Subjunctive indefinite conjugations			
kér	fut	ébreszt	játszik
én kérjek	fussak	ébresszek	játsszak (~ játsszam)
te kérjél ~ kérj	fussál ~ fuss	ébresszél ~ ébressz	játsszál ~ játssz
ő kérjen	fusson	ébresszen	játsszon (~ játsszék)
mi kérjünk	fussunk	ébresszünk	játsszunk
ti kérjétek	fussatok	ébresszettek	játsszatok
ők kérjenek	fussanak	ébresszenek	játsszanak

4.3.5.2 Subjunctive definite

In the definite conjugation, there is both a short and long form for the second person singular ending. The long form is given below in the table. The short form is arrived at by dropping the -j- of the subjunctive (or the consonant to which it had assimilated) and the vowel that follows it. For example,

kér + j + ed → **kérjed** (long form) ~ **kérd** (short form)

nyit + j + ad → **nyissad** (long form) ~ **nyisd** (short form)

ébreszt + j + ed → **ébresszed** (long form) ~ **ébreszd** (short form)

The one regular exception to this pattern is found in verb stems ending in a long vowel + t or a consonant + t (other than st, szt). For verbs of this large class, only the vowel following the subjunctive marker -j- is lost, the subjunctive marker is kept (in this class, the -j- becomes an s). For example,

tart + j + ad → **tartsad** (long form) ~ **tartsd** (short form).

Except for the short form in the second person singular, the personal endings of the subjunctive definite conjugation are identical to those for the past tense definite conjugation.

Subjunctive definite – personal endings

Singular	Back vowel	Front vowel
1st person én	-am	-em
2nd person te	-ad	-ed
3rd person ő, maga, ön	-a	-e
Plural		
1st person mi	-uk	-ük
2nd person ti	-átok	-étek
3rd person ők, maguk, önök	-ák	-ék
1st person singular subject with 2nd person object	-alak	-elek

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

wait	vár	[back vowel]
love	szeret	[front unrounded vowel, ends in short vowel + t]
hold	tart	[back vowel, ends in a consonant + t]
frighten	ijeszt	[front unrounded vowel, ends in -sz]

Subjunctive definite conjugations

	vár	szeret	tart	ijeszt
én	várjam	szeressem	tartsam	ijesszem
te	várjad	szeressed	tartsad	ijessed
	~ várd	~ szeresd	~ tartsd	~ ijesz
ő	várja	szeresse	tartsa	ijessze
mi	várjuk	szeressük	tartsuk	ijesszük
ti	várjátok	szeressétek	tartsátok	ijesszétek
ők	várják	szeressék	tartsák	ijesszék

The form for verbs with the subject *én* 'I' and direct object *téged, titeket, benneteket* 'you' (familiar, sg. or pl.):

vár	wait	várjalak	that I wait for you
szeret	love	szeresselek	that I love you
tart	hold	tartsalak	that I hold you
ijeszt	frighten	ijesszelek	that I frighten you

4.3.6 Subjunctive: usage

The subjunctive conjugation is also used for the imperative, i.e., it is the form used when giving commands. It is also used in several types of subordinate clauses.

4.3.6.1 The subjunctive as imperative

The subjunctive is used to give commands – polite or otherwise. Any coverb is removed to a post-verb position in commands. Imperative sentences always end in an exclamation mark.

Gyere ide!	Come here!
Csukja be az ajtót, legyen szíves!	Close the door, please!
Hívjál fel később!	Call me later!
Hagyjál békén!	Leave me alone!

When giving commands in the negative, the forms *ne, se* replace *nem, sem*, respectively.

Ne menjen el!	Don't leave!
Ne edd meg azt a barackot!	Don't eat that apricot!
Senki se zavarjon!	Don't anyone bother me!

Stricter, more threatening commands can be formed by *not* removing the coverb (or other adverbial) from the preverb position.

Megcsináld!	Do it!
Lassan menjél!	Walk slowly!

Strict negative commands are formed by placing the coverb before the negative particle.

Meg ne edd azt a barackot!	Don't (you dare) eat that apricot!
Ki ne nyissátok az ablakot!	Don't (you dare) open the window!

The subjunctive is used in the first person plural to mean 'let's'.

Együnk már!	Let's eat already!
Menjünk moziba!	Let's go to the movies!
Ne keljünk fel korán holnap!	Let's not get up early tomorrow!

The subjunctive combines with the frozen form **hadd** 'let' to express permission.

Hadd maradjon itthon, ha akar!	Let him stay home if he wants!
Hadd vegyem meg ezt az autót!	Let me buy this car!

4.3.6.2 Subjunctive and questions

The subjunctive is used in questions in the first person singular and plural, to express 'should I/we . . .?' or 'shall I/we . . .?' In this usage, the coverb is not removed from the verb (unless other focus elements are in the clause – see focus and word order chapter 16).

Megmondjam nekik az igazat?	Should I tell them the truth?
Táncoljunk?	Shall we dance?

The subjunctive is also used in indirect questions; the meaning is similar to the previous usage, expressing 'should/shall one . . .?'

Megkérdezték, hogy felírják-e az új szavakat.	They asked whether they should write down the new words.
Megérdeklődted, hogy elinduljál-e?	Did you inquire as to whether you should leave?

4.3.6.3 Subjunctive and subordinate clauses

The following are the most common uses of the subjunctive in subordinate clauses. Careful attention must be paid to the position of the coverb.

In subordinate clauses containing requests or commands, the coverb is (usually) removed from the preverb to a post-verb position; in other subordinate clauses the coverb remains in the preverb position.

4.3.6.3.1 Clauses containing indirect requests, commands

If the desire or will of the subject of the main clause is pressed upon the subject of the subordinate clause, the subordinate clause will contain the subjunctive verb. The verb in the main clause may be one of will: *akar* 'want', *kér* 'request', 'ask', *javasol* 'suggest', *ajánl* 'recommend'; or it may be any verb of communication through which a wish is conveyed: *mond* 'say', *ír* 'write', *üzen* 'send the message', etc.

Többen javasolták Lacinak, hogy udvaroljon a szomszéd lánynak.

Several people had suggested to Laci that he date the girl next door.

Azt írták, hogy jöjjenek haza.

They wrote me that I should come home.

Azt kérte a feleségétől, hogy szokjon le a dohányzásról.

He asked his wife to give up smoking.

If the main clause contains a prohibitive verb or expression, the subjunctive is used in the subordinate clause. Unless there are other focussed elements, a coverb in the subordinate clause remains in the preverb position.

Megtiltották, hogy elmenjen az országból.

They forbid him from leaving the country.

Nem engedték, hogy felhívjon.

They did not allow him to call me.

4.3.6.3.2 Clauses of purpose

The subjunctive is used to express 'in order to' or 'so that'; this is often combined with a main clause introduced by *azért* 'for that reason'.

(Azért) megyek Magyarországra, hogy meglátogathassam a rokonaimat.

I am going to Hungary so that I can visit my relatives.

Sokkal többet kell gyakorolnom, hogy igazán jól tudjak zongorázni.

I have to practice much more in order to play the piano really well.

Elviszi a pulóvert, hogy ne fázzon a kiránduláson.

She is taking the sweater so she won't be cold on the trip.

If the subjunctive clause of purpose is negated, it may begin with **hogy** . . . **ne** or **nehogy**; with **nehogy** the coverb is not removed from the preverb position.

Vigyázz, nehogy elessél!

Watch out that you don't fall!

Vigyázz, hogy ne essél el!

Watch out that you don't fall!

Another kind of clause of purpose – more subtle than the previous type – is one in which the action in the subordinate clause is a desired or expected result of the main clause:

Arra törekszik, hogy új állást kapjon.

He's trying to get a new job.

Figyelmeztetett arra, hogy ne felejtsem el.

He reminded me so I wouldn't forget.

Arra készültünk, hogy két napon belül elutazhassunk.

We were getting ready so that we could leave within two days.

Felhasználtam az alkalmat arra, hogy elszökjek.

I used the opportunity to get away.

Sohasem lesz annyi tehetségem ahhoz, hogy három nyelvet beszéljek.

I will never be talented enough to speak three languages.

4.3.6.3.3

Subordinate clauses following impersonal main clauses are also in the subjunctive.

Fontos, hogy elolvassák a cikket.

It is important that they read the article.

Szükséges, hogy előre telefonáljak?

Is it necessary that I call in advance?

Illik, hogy pontos legyél.

It is appropriate that you be punctual.

4.3.6.3.4

The subjunctive is used in subordinate clauses where the main clause expresses a lack, absence or inability (to fulfill a goal).

Nincs kivel kártyázzak.

I have nobody to play cards with.

Nem volt lehetőségük, hogy bemutatkozzanak az új igazgatónak.

They had no opportunity to introduce themselves to the new director.

4.3.7 *The conditional (non-past): conjugation*

The conditional marker is

-na/-ne for the third person singular indefinite form;

-né for the first person singular indefinite (i.e., there is no back vowel variant);

-ná/-né for all other persons.

The conditional is located between the verb stem and the personal endings. In verb stems ending in a long vowel + t or two consonants,¹⁰ the linking vowel a/e is required before the conditional marker.

olvas + né + k → olvasnék (no linking vowel)

BUT

tanít + ané + k → tanítanék (linking vowel **a** required)

ért + ené + k → értenék (linking vowel **e** required)¹¹

4.3.7.1 Conditional indefinite

In contrast to all the other conjugations, in this paradigm there is no vowel harmony in the regular first person singular ending. The endings

¹⁰ Exceptions include **áll** 'stand', **száll** 'fly', **varr** 'sew', and **forr** 'boil'. Recall that in the past tense, these verbs also conjugated as those ending in only one consonant.

¹¹ This use of a linking vowel is identical to that found in forming the infinitive of the same verb types.

for **-ik** verbs are rarely used in colloquial Hungarian. Because of the variations found in vowel length and vowel harmony, the following table combines the conditional and personal markers; thus these endings attach directly to the verb stem.

Conditional indefinite – personal endings		
Singular	Back vowel	Front vowel
1st person én		-nék
-ik verbs (optional)	-nám	-ném
2nd person te	-nál	-nél
3rd person ő, maga, ön	-na	-ne
-ik verbs (optional)		-nék
Plural		
1st person mi	-nánk	-nénk
2nd person ti	-átok	-nétek
3rd person ők, maguk, önök	-ának	-nének

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- translate **fordít** [back vowel, ends in long vowel + **t**]
- help **segít** [front vowel, ends in long vowel + **t**]
- dare **mer** [front vowel]
- swim **úszik** [back vowel, **-ik** verb]

Conditional indefinite conjugations

	fordít	segít	mer	úszik
én	fordítanék	segítenék	mernék	úsznék (~ úsznám)
te	fordítanál	segítenél	mernél	úsznál
ő	fordítana	segítene	merne	úszna (~ úsznék)
mi	fordítanánk	segítenénk	mernénk	úsznánk
ti	fordítánátok	segítenétek	mernétek	úsznátok
ők	fordítánának	segítenének	mernének	úsznának

4.3.7.2 Conditional definite

The personal endings for the definite conjugation exhibit no variation; the first and second person plural endings in the definite conjugation are identical to those in the indefinite conjugation. The following table combines the conditional marker with the personal endings; thus the endings given here attach directly to the verb stem.

Conditional definite – personal endings

	Back vowel	Front vowel
Singular		
1st person én	-nám	-ném
2nd person te	-nád	-néd
3rd person ő, maga, ön	-ná	-né
Plural		
1st person mi	-nánk	-nénk
2nd person ti	-nátok	-nétek
3rd person ők	-nák	-nék
1st person singular subject with 2nd person object	-nálak	-nélek

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- love **szere**t [front vowel]
 hold **ta**rt [back vowel, ends in two consonants]
 give **a**d [back vowel]

Conditional definite conjugations

	szeret	tart	ad
én	szere tném	ta rtaná m	a dná m
te	szere tnéd	ta rtaná d	a dná d
ő	szere tné	ta rtaná	a dná
mi	szere tnénk	ta rtaná nk	a dná nk
ti	szere tnétek	ta rtaná tok	a dná tok
ők	szere tnék	ta rtaná k	a dná k

The form for verbs with the subject **én** ‘I’ and direct object **téged**, **titeket**, **benneteket** ‘you’ familiar, sg. or pl.:

- szere**tné**lek** I would love you.
tartaná**lak** I would hold you.

4.3.8 The past conditional

The past conditional is formed simply by conjugating the substantive verb in the past tense and following it with the fixed form **volna**. An example paradigm is given below where the verb **elme**gy ‘leave’ is conjugated in the past tense and **volna** follows it:

- elmentem volna** I would have left
elmentél volna you (sg.) would have left
elment volna he/she would have left
elmentünk volna we would have left

elmentetek volna you (pl.) would have left

elmentek volna they would have left

When negating the past conditional construction, the negative particle is placed immediately before the conjugated verb; the coverb is removed to a position immediately after **volna**.

Nem mentem volna el. I would not have gone.

Nem hívott volna fel. She would not have called us.

Any other stressed or focussed element will change the word order in the same way as negation. (See section 16.4 on word order and focus.)

Kit látogattál volna meg, ha lett volna időd?

Whom would you have visited, if you'd had the time?

Because the formation of the past conditional is based on the past tense forms, full paradigms need not be listed here.

4.3.9 *Conditional: usage*

4.3.9.1

The conditional is used to express hypothetical conditions in the present, future or past. When used to express 'if ... then ...' conditions, both clauses are conjugated in the conditional mood.

Ha több időm lenne, akkor többet olvasnék.

If I had more time, then I would read more.

Nagyon örülne, ha meglátogatnád.

She would be very happy if you would visit her.

Azonnal elindulna, ha megtalálná a kulcsát.

He would leave right now if he could find his keys.

4.3.9.2

The conditional is used to make a polite request.

Megkérnélek egy szívességre.

I would like to ask you a favor.

Kölcsön adnál egy ezrest?

Would you loan me a thousand forints?

Vennél nekem egy fagyit?

Would you buy me an ice cream?

Lenne egy kérdésem.

I have a question.

Bekapcsolhatnám a tévét?

Might I turn on the television?

4.3.9.3

The conditional is used to express wishes and desires; it is always used after **bárcsak** 'if only'.

Bárcsak esne a hó!

If only it would snow!

Szeretném, ha gyakrabban találkozhatnánk.

I wish we could meet more often.

Bár megnézhettem volna én is azt a filmet.

If only I could have seen that film, too.

4.3.9.4

The conditional is used in clauses introduced by the conjunctions **anélkül** 'without', **ahelyett** 'instead of', and **mintha** 'as if'.

Anélkül, hogy elbúcsúzott volna tőlünk, hirtelen elhagyta az országot.

Without saying goodbye, he suddenly left the country.

Ahelyett, hogy cukrot tenne a teába, egy kis rumot tett bele.

Instead of putting sugar in the tea, she put some rum in.

Úgy nézel ki, mintha megijesztettek volna!

You look as though you've been frightened!

4.3.10 The future tense**4.3.10.1**

Although there is no inflectional future tense, future actions can be expressed in a number of ways. The present tense may combine with time expressions and/or coverbs to indicate the future.

Holnap felhívlak. I'll call you tomorrow.

Jövő télen veszek egy új autót. Next winter I will buy a new car.

4.3.10.2

The auxiliary verb **fog** is used to express the future tense – primarily with verbs with no coverbs. Word order patterns with **fog** are like those of other auxiliary verbs (see section 16.5 on word order). When used as a future auxiliary, **fog**¹² conjugates in the present tense in both definite and indefinite conjugations.

pihenni + fog 'will rest'		látni + fog 'will see'	
<i>indefinite</i>		<i>definite</i>	
én pihenni fogok	I	will rest	
te pihenni fogsz	you	"	will see him/her/ etc.,
ő pihenni fog	he/she	"	
mi pihenni fogunk	we	"	
ti pihenni fogtok	you	"	
ők pihenni fognak	they	"	

Mikor lesz időm, pihenni fogok.

When I have time, I am going to rest.

Mikor fogsz találkozni vele?

When are you going to meet with her?

¹² The verb **fog** has another meaning 'catch'; in this meaning it conjugates in all moods and tenses.

The verb **fog** also combines with verbs that do have coversbs; in this case, the expression is somewhat more emphatic.

Meg fogom várni. I will wait for him.

Ne félj, meg fogja javítani az autót! Don't worry, he will fix the car.

4.3.10.3

The verb **lesz** 'will be', 'become' is the future of the verb **van** 'be'; it is not an auxiliary verb.

Ha felnövök, orvos leszek.

I will be a doctor when I grow up.

Később éhes leszel, ha nem reggelizel.

You'll be hungry later if you don't have breakfast.

Lesz can replace **van** in any construction to express the future.

'have' construction:

Sohasem lesz elég pénze.

He will never have enough money.

the verb **van** with adverbial participles:

Egy hét múlva be lesz fejezve a munka.

The work will be finished in a week.

4.4 Non-finite forms

4.4.1 Past, present, and future participles: formation

4.4.1.1

The present participle is **-ó** or **-ő**. It is attached directly to the verb stem in regular verbs. The last vowel of fleeting-vowel verbs always elides and v-stem verbs always use the v-stem before the present participle.

ír write + **ó** → **író** writer; writing

játszik play + **ó** → **játszó** player; playing

énekel sing + **ő** → **éneklő** singer; singing

sző weave + **ő** → **szövő** weaver; weaving

4.4.1.2

The **past participle** is usually the same as the third person singular indefinite form of the past tense.

ad give **adott** given

ismer know **ismert** known

kifest paint **kifestett** painted

There are some exceptions in monosyllabic verbs belonging to Class B.¹³ Whereas the past tense always takes the short form -t, the past participle may take the long form o/e/ö + tt:

áll stand **állt ~ állott**

hal die **halt ~ halott**

ír write **írt ~ írott**

tör break **tört ~ törött**

4.4.1.3

The **future participle** is -andó/-endő. It is attached directly to the verb stem in regular verbs.

kel sell well + **endő** → **kelendő** (easily) marketable

marad remain + **andó** → **maradandó** enduring

4.4.2 *Present, past, future participles: usage*

The present, past, and future participles are similar in usage, though the future participle is by far a rarer form in Hungarian.

4.4.2.1

These participles may always be used as adjectives:

¹³ For description of Class B see 4.3.3. Past tense.

PRESENT

alszik	sleep	alvó kutya	sleeping dog
dolgozik	work	dolgozó emberek	working people
emelkedik	rise	emelkedő árak	rising prices
mosolyog	smile	mosolygó gyerek	smiling child
tanul	study	tanuló fiú	studying boy

PAST

ismer	know	jól ismert író	well known writer
kifest	paint	kifestett szoba	painted room
öltözik	dress	selyembe öltözött nő	woman dressed in silk

FUTURE

lesz	will be	leendő anya	mother-to-be
tesz	do	teendő munka	work to do

4.4.2.2

Many present and some past and future participles function as nouns:

PRESENT

fest	paint	festő	painter
ír	write	író	writer
szerkeszt	edit	szerkesztő	editor
tanul	study	tanuló	student

PAST

befő	become thick by boiling	befőtt	fruit preserves
felnő	grow up	felnőtt	grown-up
vádol	accuse	vádlott	defendant

FUTURE

jön	come	jövendő	future
tesz	do	teendő	task, agenda

4.4.2.3

In prose the participles are found in adjectival constructions and compare (semantically – not stylistically) with relative clauses in colloquial speech. It may help to think of them as relative clauses (modifying a previously mentioned noun) which have been condensed into adjectival constructions. Often the participial–adjectival constructions translate best into English as relative clauses, though English may also use a similar participial construction.

Az a fiú, aki integet, az öcsém. (relative clause)

That boy who is waving is my little brother.

Az az integető fiú az öcsém. (participle as adjective)

(lit.) That waving boy is my little brother.

Zsuzsa egy olyan házba akar beköltözni, ami a múlt században épült. (relat. clause)

Zsuzsa wants to move into a house which was built in the last century.

Zsuzsa egy múlt században épült házba akar beköltözni.

(participle as adjective)

Zsuzsa wants to move into a house built in the last century.

Participial-adjectival constructions can be rather lengthy in prose. When translating from Hungarian, it is best to identify the noun being modified and continue to translate from right to left.

4.4.3 *Adverbial participle*

The adverbial participle is *-va/-ve*. It is attached directly to the stem.

mosolyog smile + **va** → **mosolyogva** (while) smiling

énekel sing + **ve** → **énekelve** (while) singing

The adverbial participle modifies a conjugated verb; it expresses a continuing action occurring at the time of another action.

Mosolyogva lépett be a szobába.

She entered the room *smiling*.

Tegyel le! – mondta nevetve a kisfiú.

'Put me down!' said the boy *laughing*.

See section 17.9 for colloquial usage of the adverbial participle with *van* ‘be’.

4.4.4 Infinitive

The infinitive ending is *-ni* and it is attached directly to verb stems. In verb stems ending in two consonants¹⁴ or long vowel + *t*, the linking vowel *a/e* is required before suffixing.¹⁵

ért + eni → érteni to understand

főz + ni → főzni to cook

hall + ani → hallani to hear

olvas + ni → olvasni to read

tanít + ani → tanítani to teach

Undeclined infinitives are found as the complement of other verbs:

Szeretek olvasni. I like to read.

Aludni akarok. I want to sleep.

If the direct object of the infinitive is definite, the definite conjugation is used on the conjugated verb unless the verb is impersonal (e.g., *kell* ‘is necessary’, *lehet* ‘is possible’) or inherently intransitive (e.g., *megy* ‘go’, *igyekszik* ‘strive’).

Szeretném befejezni ezt a dolgot.

I would like to finish this paper.

Nem tudom kinyitni az üveget.

I can’t open the bottle.

Ki akarja elkészíteni a vacsorát ma este?

Who wants to make dinner tonight?

Note the following emphatic, topical use of the infinitive; it implies, and is usually followed by, a *de* ‘but’ clause.

Olvasni olvastam a könyvet, de nem volt jó.

(Well,) I read the book, but it wasn’t good.

¹⁴ Exceptions include *áll* ‘stand’, *száll* ‘fly’, *varr* ‘sew’, and *forr* ‘boil’.

¹⁵ Compare with the conditional where the linking vowel is required under identical conditions.

Ebédelni ebédeltem, de még éhes vagyok.
(Yes,) I did eat lunch, but I'm still hungry.

4.4.5 Declined infinitives

Declined infinitives are used in impersonal constructions. They are formed by attaching personal (possessive) endings to infinitives. The infinitive is first reduced to (a/e)n, i.e., without the final i. The following personal endings are then attached. (See section 17.7 on the use of impersonal constructions.)

Declined infinitives – Personal endings			
Singular	Back vowel	Front vowel	
		unrounded	rounded
1st person	-om	-em	-öm
2nd person	-od	-ed	-öd
3rd person	-ia		-ie
Plural			
1st person	-unk		-ünk
2nd person	-otok	-etek	-ötök
3rd person	-iuk		-iük

tanít teach	ad give	kezd begin	megy go	ül sit
tanítani	adni	kezdeni	menni	ülni
tanítanom	adnom	kezdenem	mennem	ülnöm
tanítanod	adnod	kezdened	menned	ülnöd
tanítania	adnia	kezdenie	mennie	ülnie
tanítanunk	adnunk	kezdenünk	mennünk	ülnünk
tanítanotok	adnotok	kezdenetek	mennetek	ülnötök
tanítaniuk	adniuk	kezdeniük	menniük	ülniük

4.5 Productive derivational endings

Hungarian has three derivational endings which can be attached to most verbs before the tense and mood endings: the potential, causative, and frequentative. For more derivational endings occurring less productively, see chapter 12 on word formation.

4.5.1 *The potential: formation*

The potential is added to verb stems to add the meaning ‘may’, ‘can’, or ‘is possible’ to the verb. The potential ending is **-hat/-het** and may be added to all verbs. In regular verbs it attaches directly to the verb stem, thereby creating a new verb stem subject to all tenses, moods and conjugations.¹⁶

ad	give	adhat	may give
játszik	play	játszhat	may play
kér	ask for	kérhet	may ask for
kezd	begin	kezdhet	may begin
főz	cook	főzhet	may cook

When the potential is attached it redefines the verb type: once in place, the verbs then conjugate as any other verb type ending in a short vowel + t. So, for example, though **játszik** ‘play’ is considered Class A in the past tense because its stem ends in two consonants, **játszhat** ‘may play’ is Class C. The change in stem has repercussions throughout the verbal paradigm; all conjugational patterns apply to the new stem.

Sample verb conjugations with the potential **-hat/-het**:

¹⁶ The potential form of **van** ‘be’ is formed from the **lesz** ‘will be’ root. See appendix 1 for the formation of the potential with irregular verbs.

	Present		Past	
	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite
	játszhat, may play	adhat, may give	kezdhet, may begin	kérhet, may ask for
én	játszhatok	adhatom	kezdhettem	kérhettem
te	játszhatsz	adhatod	kezdhetted	kérhetted
ő	játszhat	adhatja	kezdhetett	kérhette
mi	játszhatunk	adhatjuk	kezdhattunk	kérhattuk
ti	játszhattok	adhatjátok	kezdhattetek	kérhattétek
ők	játszhatnak	adhatják	kezdhettek	kérhették
én—téged/ benneteket		adhatlak		kérhettelek

	Subjunctive		Conditional	
	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite
	főzhet, may cook	kereshet, may look for	tanulhat, may study	küldhet, may send
én	főzhessek	kereshessem	tanulhatnék	küldhetném
te	főzhess(él)	kereshes(se)d	tanulhatnál	küldhetnéd
ő	főzhessen	kereshesse	tanulhatna	küldhetné
mi	főzhessünk	kereshessük	tanulhatnánk	küldhetnénk
ti	főzhessetek	kereshessétek	tanulhatnátok	küldhetnétek
ők	főzhessenek	kereshessék	tanulhatnának	küldhetnék
én—téged/ benneteket		kereshesselek		küldhetnélek

4.5.2 Use of the potential

The most common use of the potential is to denote ‘may’, ‘is allowed’.

Bejöhetsz.	You may come in.
Mehetünk?	May we go?
Jani itt maradhat, ameddig csak akar.	Jani can stay here as long as he wants.

It can also have the meaning ‘might, could’ in expressions of doubt or uncertainty.

Jó film lehet.
It might be a good movie.

Mennyibe kerülhet egy belvárosi lakás?
How much might a downtown apartment cost?

Hol szerezhettem ezt a tollat?
Where could I have gotten this pen?

It is often combined with the conditional to make a request very polite.

Megnézhetném azt a könyvet?
Could I have a look at that book?

Mondhatnék valamit?
Might I say something?

Combined with the past conditional, the potential has the meaning ‘could have + past participle’

Megvehetted volna azt az inget.
You could have bought that shirt.

Szorgalmasabban dolgozhattál volna a tervezeten.
You could have worked harder on the draft.

Meghívhattam volna, csak nem akartam.
I could have invited him, I just didn’t want to.

The potential combines with the present participle **-ó/-ő** and the suffix **-atlan/-etlen** ‘without’ to form adjectives:

ért understand	érthető understandable	érthetetlen incomprehensible
eszik eat	ehető edible	ehetetlen inedible
hisz believe	híhető believable	hihetetlen unbelievable
iszik drink	íható drinkable	íhatatlan undrinkable
lát see	látható visible	láthatatlan invisible
olvas read	olvasható legible, readable	olvashatatlan illegible, unreadable

4.5.3 The causative: formation

The causative is added to verb stems to denote the subject *has* something done, i.e., the action is not done by the subject directly.

The causative is **-at/-et** or **-tat/-tet** and is highly productive, though (for semantic reasons) it cannot be used on all verbs.

The **-tat/-tet** ending is added to verbs ending in a vowel + **t** and most polysyllabic verbs:

keres	look for	kerestet	have someone look for
olvas	read	olvastat	have someone read
rendel	order	rendeltet	have someone order
tisztít	clean	tisztítottat	have someone clean

The **-at/-et** ending is added to verbs ending in a consonant + **t** and most monosyllabic verbs:

ért	understand	értet	have someone understand
kér	ask for	kéret	have someone ask for
mos	wash	mosat	have someone wash
vár	wait	várat	have someone wait

The following monosyllabic verb stems take the **-tat/-tet** ending.

ázik	become soaked	áztat	soak something
bukik	fail	buktat	fail someone
él	live	éltet	keep someone alive
jár	go	jártat	to have someone/something walk or go
kel	rise	keltet	hatch
kopik	wear away	koptat	wear something down
lép	step	léptet	keep (a horse) at a slow pace
szokik	get used to	szoktat	accustom someone to
szopik	suck	szoptat	breastfeed
szűnik	cease, stop	szüntet	stop, interrupt
ül	sit	ültet	plant, have someone sit

As with the potential ending, verbs re-formed in the causative form new stem types. Once attached, the verbs conjugate as any regular verb ending in a short vowel + **t**.

Sample verb conjugations with the causative **-at/-et**, **-tat/-tet**.

	Present		Past	
	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite
	rendeltet, have sy order	tisztíttat, have sy clean	mosat, have sy wash	kerestet, have sy look for
én	rendeltetek	tisztíttatom	mosattam	kerestettem
te	rendeltetsz	tisztíttatod	mosattál	kerestetted
ő	rendeltet	tisztíttatja	mosatott	kerestette
mi	rendeltetünk	tisztíttatjuk	mosattunk	kerestettük
ti	rendeltettek	tisztíttatjátok	mosattatok	kerestettétek
ők	rendeltetnek	tisztíttatják	mosattak	kerestették

Subjunctive		Conditional	
Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite
várat, have sy wait	hívat, have sy call	küldet, have sy send	olvastat, have sy read
én várassak	hívassam	küldetnék	olvastatnám
te várass(ál)	hívas(sa)d	küldetnél	olvastatnál
ő várasson	hívassa	küldetne	olvastatná
mi várassunk	hívassuk	küldetnénk	olvastatnánk
ti várassatok	hívassátok	küldetnétek	olvastatnátok
ők várassanak	hívassák	küldetnének	olvastatnák

A verb formed with the causative may add the potential to its stem.

olvas + tat + hat → **olvastathat** may have someone read

rendel + tet + het → **rendeltethet** may have someone order

4.5.4 Use of the causative

The causative is used to denote that it is not the subject, rather someone else who performs the action of the verb. The one who performs the action may or may not be included in the sentence; when the performer is included, it is usually marked with the instrumental case *-val/-vel*.

Kivasaltattam az ingemet a férjemmel.

I had my husband iron my shirt.

A nővérem elszívatta velem az első cigarettát.

My older sister got me to smoke my first cigarette.

Mátyással hívatott egy taxit.

She had Mátyas call a taxi.

Egy új kabátot varratott az anyjával.

She had her mother sew her a new coat.

If there is no other direct object in the sentence, the performer of the activity is in the accusative case.

A tanár vizsgáztatta a diákokat.

The teacher had the students take an exam.

Minden este a szomszédom sétáltatja a kutyáját.

My neighbor walks her dog every night.

Leültettem a gyerekeket.

I had the children sit down.

The causative ending is sometimes used to make an intransitive verb transitive.

Intransitive

Transitive

bukik fail

buktat fail someone

fürdik take a bath

fürdet give someone a bath

szűnik cease, stop

szüntet stop, interrupt

változik change

változtat change

Nagyon megváltozott a férje.

Her husband has really changed.

Tilos megváltoztatni az eredményeket.

It is not allowed to change the results.

Megszűnt a szegénység.

Poverty has ended.

Megszüntették a rendeletet.

They abolished the decree.

4.5.5 The frequentative: formation

Frequentatives are added to verb stems to denote that the action is done repetitively, for a lengthy period of time, or without specific aim or purpose.

The most common frequentative ending is **-gat/-get** (for other, less productive frequentative suffixes, see chapter 12 on word formation). It is attached directly to the verb stem; most monosyllabic stems, however, require a linking vowel (*o/e/ö*) before the frequentative.

néz	watch	nézeget	look about
olvas	read	olvasgat	read a bit
rendez	organize	rendezget	tidy up a bit
üt	strike	ütöget	keep on striking

Verbs re-formed in the frequentative form new stem types. Once attached, the verbs conjugate as any verb ending in a short vowel + t.

Sample verb conjugations with the frequentative **-gat/-get**.

Present		Past	
Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite
nézeget, look about	ütöget, keep striking	mosogat, wash dishes	keverget, keep stirring
én nézegetek	ütögetem	mosogattam	kevergettem
te nézegetsz	ütögeted	mosogattál	kevergetted
ő nézeget	ütögeti	mosogatott	kevergette
mi nézegetünk	ütögetjük	mosogattunk	kevergettük
ti nézegették	ütögették	mosogattatok	kevergettétek
ők nézegetnek	ütögetik	mosogattak	kevergették

Subjunctive		Conditional	
Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite
sétálgat, stroll about	hívogat, call repeatedly	rendezget, tidy up	olvasgat, read a bit
én sétálgassak	hívogassam	rendezgetnék	olvasgatnám
te sétálgass(ál)	hívogas(sa)d	rendezgetnél	olvasgatnád
ő sétálgasson	hívogassa	rendezgetne	olvasgatná
mi sétálgassunk	hívogassuk	rendezgetnének	olvasgatnánk
ti sétálgassatok	hívogassátok	rendezgetnétek	olvasgatnátok
ők sétálgassanak	hívogassák	rendezgetnének	olvasgatnák

The frequentative may change the meaning of the verb more radically:

beszél	speak	beszélget	chat
hall	hear	hallgat	listen, be quiet
kér	ask for	kéreget	beg
lát	see	látogat	visit
mos	wash	mosogat	do the dishes

The frequentative may add the potential to its stem.

olvas	read	olvasgathat	may read a bit
néz	look at	nézegethet	may look about

4.6 Coverbs

Coverbs are prefixes that can be attached to (and subsequently separated from) verbs. Coverbs modify verbs in a variety of ways, including indicating the direction of motion, the manner of an action, and the beginning or completion of an action (aspect). By no means is this the extent of their semantic reach; sometimes coverbs change the meaning of the verb entirely.

Verbs attach only one coverb at a time. The position of coverbs in sentence word order is often affected when introducing focus, quasi-auxiliary verbs and imperatives. See chapter 16 for a complete discussion of word order and coverbs.

In this section we will first examine the general (directional, manner, and aspectual) uses of coverbs and then focus on their more individual uses.

4.6.1 Direction

The most common directional coverbs include **be** ‘in’, **ki** ‘out’, **fel** ‘up’, **le** ‘down’, **el** ‘away’, **oda** ‘toward there’, **ide** ‘toward here’, **vissza** ‘back’. Not surprisingly, verbs of motion are particularly inclined to take coverbs of direction, e.g., **megy** ‘go’ and **jön** ‘come’:

bemegy	go in	bejön	come in
kimegy	go out	kijön	come out

felmegy go up	feljön come up
lemegy go down	lejön come down
elmegy go away, leave	eljön come away
odamegy go there	idejön come here
visszamegy go back	visszajön come back

Beteszi a tollat a táskába.

He puts the pen into the bag.

Visszajöttünk a szabadságról.

We have returned from vacation.

Kiszedtem a pénzt a tárcából.

I took the money out of the wallet.

A pincér elviszi a tányérokat.

The waiter takes away the plates.

Felmennek a hegyre.

They are going up the mountain.

Laci lement a boltba kenyérért.

Laci went (down) to the store for bread.

Odament a kerítéshez.

He went over toward the fence.

Kítette a széket a kertbe.

She put the chair out into the garden.

Felszállt a villamosra.

She got on the tram.

Elvették az útleveletem tőlem.

They took my passport away from me.

Directional coverbs may also be used with verbs with no motion, thereby adding motion to them:

áll stand	feláll stand up	odaáll stand over there
ül sit	leül sit down	odaül sit over there
ad give	visszaad give back	bead turn in, deliver

Géza a széken ül. Géza is sitting on the chair.

Leült a székre. He sat down on(to) the chair.

Felállt a székről. He stood up from the chair.

4.6.2 Manner

Coverbs such as *végig* ‘all the way’, *agyon* ‘all the way’, ‘to death’, *túl* ‘beyond’, ‘too (excessive)’, *újra* ‘anew’ modify the verb with respect to how, or to what extent the action is executed.

ver	beat	agyonver	beat to death
él	live	túlél	survive
megy	go	végigmegy	go all the way
választ	elect	újraválaszt	re-elect

Végigmentek a piacon.

They walked all the way through the market.

A szülei túléltek a háborút.

Her parents survived the war.

Újraválasztották a népszerű elnököt.

The popular president was re-elected.

4.6.3 Aspect

In English the past, present and future tenses have several forms, e.g., *I was going*, *I went*, *I have gone* are all past tense forms of the verb ‘to go’. Because Hungarian has only one form for each tense, it relies on the use of coverbs and word order to indicate progressive or completed actions. The aspect of the verb is termed *imperfective* when the action is progressive or ongoing; the *perfective* aspect refers to actions that were or will be completed.

Although all coverbs can have a perfectivizing function, the two most common perfectivizing coverbs are *meg* and *el*.

In the past tense, the use of a coverb (perfective aspect) indicates that the action is complete; verbs without coverbs indicate that an action was

in progress. In the present tense, the verbs with no coverbs indicate actions in progress with no comment as to completion. Present tense verbs with coverbs, however, tend to be translated into the future tense in English¹⁷ (because for most verbs the completion of the action, in fact, comes at a time after the statement is made).

Írtam egy levelet. I was writing a letter. (imperfective)

Megírtam a levelet. I wrote the letter. (perfective)

Olvassa a könyvet. She is reading the book. (imperfective)

Elovassa a könyvet. She will read the book. (perfective)

In the subjunctive/imperative, there is no tense; the use of coverbs still indicates perfective aspect.

Egyél valamit! Eat something!

Edd meg a szendvicset! Eat (up) the sandwich!

Although present tense verbs prefixed with coverbs often indicate future tense, verbs and coverbs may also combine with the future auxiliary *fog*; the aspect is perfective and the meaning is often simply one of emphasis, though it is not necessarily so.

Megtanulja a verset. She will learn the poem.

Meg fogja tanulni a verset. She *will* learn the poem.

Conversely, present tense verbs without coverbs combine with the future auxiliary *fog* to indicate imperfective future.

Sírok. I am crying.

Sírni fogok. I am going to cry.

Pihen. She is resting.

Pihenni fog, mikor lesz ideje. She will rest when she has time.

Imperfective aspect may co-occur with coverbs. Here word order is crucial: the coverb must be removed to a post-verb position.

Átmentem az utcán. (perfective)

I walked across the street.

¹⁷ This does not mean, however, that the converse is true, i.e., you may not simply add a coverb to a verb to indicate future tense.

Mentem át az utcán, mikor eszembe jutott, hogy otthon várnak. (imperfective)

I was walking across the street when I remembered that I was expected at home.

Coverbs may also indicate the beginning of an action:

alszik	sleep	elalszik	fall asleep
haragszik	be angry	megharagszik	get angry
lát	see	meglát	espionage, catch sight of
sír	cry	elsírja magát	burst into tears
szerepel	like, love	megszeret	take a fondness or liking to

Amióta itt élek, megszerettem ezt a várost.

I have come to love this city since I've been living here.

Nagyon nehéz neki elaludni.

It is very hard for him to fall asleep.

Nagyon haragszik rám. Megharagudott, mikor későn jöttem haza.

She is very angry with me. She got angry when I came home late.

Some verbs occur only with coverbs.

megbetegszik	fall ill
megbénul	become paralyzed
megrészegszik	become drunk
megsüketül	go deaf

4.6.4 Common uses of some common coverbs

Coverbs have an infinite number of uses – only the most common are listed here. Simply because a coverb has one meaning with one verb does not mean that any verb can attach to the same coverb and result in the same meaning. Each verb has its own inventory of possible coverbs, and it is sometimes surprising to find what coverbs may occur with certain verbs.¹⁸

¹⁸ One example: *akaszt* 'hang (transitive)':

4.6.4.1 Meg

Use **meg** to indicate the completion of an action in the past, present or future.

Megírta a könyvet.	She wrote the book.
Megmosom a kezemet.	I (will) wash my hands.
Megvárlok.	I (will) wait for you (until you come).
Az orvos megvizsgálja a betegeket.	The doctor examines/will examine the patients.

Meg may indicate the beginning of an action:

Úgy megörültem neked, amikor megláttalak!	I was so delighted when I caught sight of you!
Apám két évvel ezelőtt megbetegedett.	My father fell ill two years ago.
Megfázol, ha nem vigyázol jobban magadra.	You will catch cold if you don't take better care of yourself.

Use **meg** to indicate the single instance of an action.

Megcsillant a gyémánt a napfényben.	The diamond flashed in the sunlight.
Megzörrentek a levelek.	The leaves rustled.
Húzd meg azt a kart!	Give that lever a pull!

Meg will often indicate the expected or successful occurrence of an action.

Minden nap megjön a kenyér a sarki boltba.	Every day the bread comes to the corner store. (It is expected to come.)
Megtalálta a pénztárcáját.	He found his wallet. (The use of meg presumes he had been looking for it.)

felakaszt 'hang up' **Felakasztja a kabátját a fogasra.** He hangs his coat on the rack.

leakaszt 'unhang' **Leakasztja a kabátját a fogasról.** He takes his coat off the rack. (lit., he hangs it down.)

Meg kell keresnem a szemüvegemet.

I have to look for (and find) my glasses. (The use of **meg** presumes finding the glasses.)

Végre megjött a tavasz!

Spring has finally arrived!

Use **meg** with verbs of communication, to (briefly) utter a statement:

Megmondtam neki a véleményemet.

I gave him my opinion.

Megüzente, hogy jöjsek haza.

She sent word for me to come home.

Megkérdeztem tőle, hogy mikor kell a pénz.

I asked her when she needed the money.

4.6.4.2 *El*

The coverb *el* has the directional meaning *away*.

Eltette a meleg ruhát jövő télíg.

He put the warm clothes away until next winter.

Elvették a jegyeket tőlünk.

They took (away) our tickets.

Elrúgta a labdát.

He kicked the ball away.

Elkérte tőlem a tollamat.

He asked me for my pen

Use *el* as a perfectivizing coverb to indicate the completion of an action.

Eloolvasta a kötelező könyveket.

He read the required books.

Elvégezte a munkát.

He finished the work.

El may indicate the beginning of an action.

Elindult a vonat. The train departed.

Elaludt a fiam a vonaton. My son fell asleep on the train.

Elgondolkozott azon, amit mondtam.

He began to think over what I said.

Elhallgattak a madarak.

The birds fell silent.

El may combine with a verb to indicate the action occurs all the way to a place.

Ugye eljössz a buliba?

You are coming to the party, right?

A fiúk elkísérték bennünket a buszmegállóig.

The boys escorted us to the bus stop.

Use el with verbs to indicate covering over a (wide) area.

A gaz elborította a mezőt.

The field was covered with weeds.

Régen eltakarták az arcukat egy fátyollal.

In the old days they covered their faces with a veil.

El can change the meaning of the verb by indicating the action is done incorrectly.

Elírtam a címét, és most nem találok a hászámát.

I wrote down the wrong address and now I can't find her building number.

Elnéztem a menetrendet, és lekéstem a vonatot.

I misread the schedule and missed the train.

Use el to mean *apart*.

A szüleim 1990-ben váltak el.

My parents divorced in 1990.

Elszakadt a szoknyám a villamoson.

My skirt tore on the tram.

El is found in construction with the postpositions *előtt*, *mellett*: the combination results in the meaning 'along'.

Az a kocs mindig elmegy a házunk előtt.

That car is always going by our house.

Az egész város mellett folyik el a Tisza.

The Tisza flows along the side of the whole city.

Use *el* to indicate using something up.

Elkártyázta az összes pénzét.

He spent all of his money on cards. (lit., He carded away all his money.)

Elittuk az egész havi fizetését.

We drank his whole month's salary.

Elhasználták a cukrot.

They used up the sugar.

El may indicate the lengthy duration of an action.

Jól elbeszélgették a napot.

They talked the whole day through.

Jó sokáig elüldögéltek a kávéházban.

They lounged around a good long time in the coffee shop.

Used with verbs of communication, *el* indicates that something is said or otherwise communicated (all the way) to the end.

Elmesélte az egész történetet.

He told the whole story.

Elmagyarázta, hogy kellett betörni a házba.

He explained at length how he had to break into the house.

Elénekelt nekem egy gyönyörű népdalt.

He sang me a beautiful folksong.

It is useful to compare the uses of *el* and *meg* when combined with the same verbs. When combined with verbs describing a change in physical or mental condition, the coverb *el* indicates an unfortunate turn of events and *meg* indicates an expected or usual change.

Jól meghízott a disznó. The pig got nice and fat.

Teljesen elhízott, és már alig tud menni. He got really fat and now can hardly walk.

Megfagyott a víz a mélyhűtőben. The water froze in the freezer.

Elfagyott a keze. His hand got frostbite.

Szépen megpirult a kenyér a sütőben.	The bread browned nicely in the oven.
Elpirultam a szégyentől.	I turned red with shame.
Megsóztam a levest.	I put salt in the soup.
Elsóztam a levest.	I put too much salt in the soup.

4.6.4.3 *Be*

The coverb *be* has the directional meaning *in, into*.

Benézett a szobába.	He looked into the room.
Beszálltam a kocsiba.	I got into the car.
Betette a ruhát a szekrénybe.	She put the dress in the closet.
Beszippantotta a friss levegőt.	He breathed in the fresh air.

Be combines with verbs to mean ‘cover entirely’, ‘envelop’ by some means or action.

Betakarta a gyereket, hogy ne fázzon az éjjel.
She covered up the child, so he wouldn’t get cold in the night.

Befestettem feketére a székeket.
I painted the chairs black.

Teljesen befedte a házat a hó.
The house was completely covered with snow.

Kend be az orrodát, hogy ne égjen le!
Put some cream on your nose so it doesn’t burn!

Use the coverb *be* with verbs meaning ‘close’, ‘fasten’.

Becsukta az ablakot.	He closed the window.
Begomboltam a kabátomat.	I buttoned up my coat.
Becsomagoltam az ajándékot.	I wrapped up the present.
Be kell varrni a szakadást a nadrágján.	He has to sew up the tear on his pants.
Befűztem a cipőmet.	I tied my shoes.

4.6.4.4 *Ki*

The coverb *ki* has the directional meaning ‘out’.

- Kimentek a kertbe.** They went out to the garden.
Kiveszik az almát a kosárból. They will take the apples out of the basket.
Kivitte a szemetet. He took out the garbage.
Kinéztek az ablakon. They looked out the window.

The coverb *ki* often combines with verbs to mean ‘undo’.

Kifűztem a cipőmet.

I untied my shoes.

Kibontották az összes csomagot.

They opened up all of the packages.

Ki kell csomagolni a bőröndöket, mielőtt elmegyünk várost nézni.

We have to unpack before we go out to see the town.

Ki combines with verbs to indicate selection.

Kinéztem magamnak egy szép új autót.

I've picked out a nice new car for myself.

Kikeresték és kiírták az ismeretlen szavakat a szótárból.

They looked up and wrote out the unknown words in the dictionary.

Kiválasztotta a legszebb rózsát.

She chose the most beautiful rose.

4.6.4.5 *Fel*

The coverb *fel* has the directional meaning ‘up’.

- Felmászott a hegyre.** She climbed up the mountain.
Felnéztünk a csillagokra. We looked up at the stars.
Feltette a vázát a polcra. She put the vase up on the shelf.
Felszaladt a lépcsőn. He ran up the stairs.

Fel combines with verbs to mean ‘on’.

Felvette a legszebb öltönyét.

He put on his best suit.

Felpróbált egy új kabátot, de nem tetszett neki.

She tried on a new coat, but she didn't like it.

Te soha nem írod fel, amit mondok neked.

You never write down (lit., write on) what I tell you.

Use fel with verbs to mean ‘furnish or supply with something’.

Felfegyverezték a hadsereget.

They armed the troops.

Ebből a pénzből nem tudok felruházkodni.

I can't provide myself with clothes with this money.

Felhatalmazta az ügyvédet, hogy eladja a házát.

She gave the lawyer the authority to sell her house.

The coverb fel is used with verbs of motion to indicate ‘turning over’ or ‘upside down’.

Felfordították a hajót.

They capsized the boat.

Az utóbbi hír felkavarta a gyomrát.

The recent news turned his stomach.

Felborította a széket.

She knocked the chair over.

Teljesen fel van fordítva a ház.

The house is a mess (lit., turned upside down).

Fel combines with verbs to mean ‘appear from somewhere’.

A kislány hirtelen felbukkant a bokor mögül.

The little girl suddenly appeared from behind the bush.

Ki fedezte fel a rádiumot?

Who discovered radium?

Hirtelen felkerültek a feketelistára.

They suddenly turned up on the blacklist.

Fel is used with verbs describing the change of a mental state denoting the onset of the change.

Korán ébredtem fel.

I woke up early.

Mire feleszmélt, a rablók már eltűntek.

By the time he came to, the burglars had disappeared.

Feldühödtem, mikor hallottam, mi történt.

I became enraged when I heard what had happened.

Fel may indicate the (sudden) beginning of an action.

Felsírt, mikor az orvos beleszúrta a tűt.

He cried out when the doctor stuck in the needle.

Felragyogott az arca, mikor megpillantotta a régóta várt barátnőjét.

His face shone when he caught sight of his long awaited girlfriend.

4.6.4.6 Le

The coverb le has the directional meaning ‘down’.

Mikor fog leszállni a repülőgép?

When will the plane land?

Gyere le onnan!

Come down from there!

Lefeküdt az ágyra, és rögtön elaludt.

She lay down on the bed and fell asleep immediately.

Lenéztek az udvarra, hogy ott van-e a kutya.

They looked down into the courtyard to see if the dog was there.

Le combines with verbs to mean ‘off’.

Lesegíted a kabátomat?

Will you help me off with my coat?

Levette a cuccait az asztalról.

She took her things off the table.

Letört az odvas ág a fáról.

The rotten branch broke off the tree.

Le akart szállni a villamosról.

He wanted to get off the tram.

Le combines with verbs meaning 'to remove or take away', 'relinquish', 'give up'.

Lefegyverezték a hadsereget.

The troops were disarmed.

Anne Boleynt 1536-ban fejezték le.

Anne Boleyn was beheaded in 1536.

Télre kellett leszerelni a hajót.

The ship had to be dismantled for winter.

Le kell szoknia a dohányzásról.

He must give up smoking.

Bármit mondasz, nem tudsz lebeszélni arról, hogy elmenjek!

No matter what you say you can not talk me out of going.

Le is used with verbs meaning 'to cover the surface of something'.

Le kell takarni az ágyat valami szebb takaróval.

We have to cover the bed with a prettier spread.

Lehunytam a szememet, hogy pihenjek egy kicsit.

I closed my eyes to rest a bit.

Use the coverb *le* to indicate 'copying', 'reproducing' by some means.

Leírtam a címét a noteszembe.

I wrote his address into my notebook.

Le kell fényképezned azt a szobrot!

You have to take a picture of that statue!

Bár nem lett volna szabad, lemásolta a könyvet.

She made a copy of the book though she wasn't really allowed to.

Le combines with verbs to mean 'to lessen or reduce in some way'.

Egy idő után lecsillapodott a fájdalom.

After a while the pain lessened.

Lefogytál, amióta utoljára láttalak.

You have lost weight since I last saw you.

Lelassította a lépteit, mikor megpillantotta az idegent.

He slowed his walk when he saw the stranger.

Le may provide a negative connotation to verbs.

Bár nem is ismertem a férfit, rögtön letegezett.

Even though I didn't know the man, he used the familiar *te* form with me.

Az igazgató, sajnós, nagyon lenézi a kollégáit.

Unfortunately the director looks down on his colleagues.

Jól leszidta a sógorát, és azóta nem beszélnek egymással.

He really put his brother-in-law down and since then they don't speak.

4.6.5 More coverbs

Many more coverbs exist in addition to those outlined in the preceding section. Coverbs are derived from all parts of speech; sometimes it is only a writing convention that distinguishes coverbs from adverbs (i.e., they are written as one word with the verb, not two).

Jólesett a séta. The walk felt good. (**jól** is a coverb)

Jól érzi magát. He feels well. (**jól** is an adverb)

Egyetértek veled. I agree with you. (**egyet** is a coverb)

Egyet sóhajtott. She gave a sigh. (**egyet** is an adverbial)

Some pronominalized cases may serve as coverbs; these are often restricted to the third person singular form.

bele Beletette a cukrot a kávéba. She put the sugar into the coffee.

rá Ránézett a fiúra. He looked at the boy.

rajta Rajtakaptam a hazugságon I caught him in a lie.

hozzá Hozzáfordultam jó tanácsért. I turned to him for good advice.

neki Nekimentem a falnak. I bumped into the wall.

Many postpositions may also serve as coverbs.

át	Kétszer kellett átírni a szöveget. They had to rewrite the text twice.
alá	Aláírta az oklevelet. She signed the document.
ellen	Makacsul ellenálltak nekem. They stubbornly resisted me.
keresztül	Keresztülmentek a mezőn. They passed through the field.
körül	Körülnéztünk az üzletben. We looked around the shop.
mellé	Mellébeszéltek. They didn't speak to the issue. (lit., They spoke beside it.)
túl	Túlbecsüli a könyv értékét. He overestimates the value of the book.
végig	Végigjártuk a környéket. We walked through the whole area.

Additional important coverbs include the following.

elő	forth	Elővették a könyvüket. They took out their books.
félre	aside, mis-	Félretettek egy kis pénzt a jövőre. They put some money aside for the future. Félreértettem a helyzetet. I misunderstood the situation.
fenn	above, up	Fenntartotta magát a vízben. He stayed afloat in the water. (lit, kept himself up)
hátra	backward	Hátramaradtunk, mert fáradtak voltunk. We fell behind because we were tired.
haza	homeward	Hazajött a hétvégére. She came home for the weekend.

oda	toward there	Odamegyünk a kirakathoz. We will walk over to the display window.
ott	there	Szó nélkül otthagyta az állását. He left his job without a word.
össze	together	A pulóverem összement a forró vízben. My sweater shrank in the hot water. (lit., went together)
szét	apart	Szétesett a polc a nappaliban. The shelf fell apart in the living room.
tovább	further	Továbbadta az üzenetet. She passed the message on.
utána	after	Utána tudsz nézni az ügynek? Can you look into the matter?
vissza	back	Hat órakor jön vissza a munkahelyről. She comes back from work at six o'clock.

Chapter 5

Nouns

5.1 Articles

5.1.1 Definite article

The definite article is **a** or **az** ‘the’, the latter reserved for use before words beginning with a vowel. It does not agree in case or number with its noun.

a ház	the house	a házban	in the house
az esemény	the event	az események	the events

5.1.1.1

The definite article is used similarly as in English with the following additional uses:

before possessed nominals: **a gyerekem** ‘my child’ (except in ‘have’ constructions)

before possessive pronouns: **az enyém** ‘mine’

before nominals with a demonstrative pronoun: **ez a gyerek** ‘this child’

before many abstract nouns: **Ilyen az élet.** ‘Such is life.’

before a noun in order to give it a generic connotation:
Szeretem a banánt. ‘I like bananas.’

in colloquial speech before a person’s name:
Kedves a Péter. ‘Péter is nice.’

5.1.2 Indefinite article

The indefinite article is egy ‘a’, ‘an’.

Tegnap este elolvastam egy könyvet. I read a book last night.

5.1.3 Zero article

There are some cases where neither article is used:

5.1.3.1

Existential (there is/there are) and ‘have’ constructions:

Szép fa van a kertben. There is a beautiful tree in the garden.

Neki gyönyörű háza van. She has a beautiful house.

5.1.3.2

Before predicate nouns:

Csilla énekesnő, Tamás rendőr. Csilla is a singer, Tamás is a policeman.

5.1.3.3

Finally, articles need not be used before indefinite subjects, objects or adverbials occurring immediately before the verb. (When occurring after the verb, however, there is usually an article.)

Minden este János levest főz. János makes soup every night.

A Kovácsék (egy) szép lakásban laknak. The Kovácses live in a nice apartment.

Abban a lakásban (egy) kedves család lakik. A nice family lives in that apartment.

5.2 Nouns and suffixes

5.2.1 Suffixes

Hungarian is an agglutinative language, i.e., suffixes and prefixes can be attached to words to change their meaning and/or function in a sentence. Suffixes can be added to nouns to indicate plurality, possession, location, manner, etc. In fact, several suffixes can be added to the same word; for example we may attach two suffixes to the word **zseb** ‘pocket’: the plural **-k**, and a locative case **-ben** ‘in’ to yield **zsebekben** ‘in pockets’.

5.2.2 Vowel harmony

For the most part vowel harmony is maintained when adding suffixes; most suffixes come with two or more vowel choices either within the suffix itself or as a linking vowel between the stem and the suffix. Examples are abundant: the illative case has the variants **-ban/ben**; the allative case has the variants **-hoz/-hez/-höz**.

5.2.3 Gender

There is no gender in Hungarian in either nouns or pronouns.

5.2.4 Stem alternation

Suffixes, e.g., the plural, cases, and possessive suffixes, are attached directly to the end of a word, sometimes creating a change in the word stem, e.g., **ló** ‘horse’ has the stem **lov-** when forming the plural. It is helpful to recognize the different types of noun stems since each type attaches endings in its own way. Sometimes the difference in the way nouns decline is subtle, hence careful attention must be paid to the differences. The rest of this chapter classifies nouns according to their stem alternations.

5.3 Noun stems and the nominative case – singular and plural

Although not all suffixes cause a change in the noun stem, many do. For example, the delative case *-ról* ‘off’ attaches to the stem *ló* ‘horse’ with no change in the stem: *lóról* ‘off the horse’. When suffixing the plural *-k*, however, the noun reveals another stem, in this instance, a *v*-stem: *lovak* ‘horses’.

The singular nominative case is the dictionary entry form; however, almost all of the information about a noun stem is revealed when forming the nominative plural. Therefore noun stems and the nominative plural are presented simultaneously. Throughout this book reference will be made to noun stems and how the plural is formed. Any idiosyncrasies with respect to noun stems and other suffixes are found under the individual suffix entry. A list of highly irregular noun stems not presented here is found in appendix 3.

PLURAL: The plural marker is *-k*. It is not used after numbers or other expressions of quantity – these are always followed by the singular. There is a separate plural paradigm for the possessive declension – there the *-k* plural is not used. Cases may be added to words already formed in the plural.

Depending on the stem of the noun, the plural *-k* may or may not need a linking vowel preceding it; the plural *-k* is attached to nouns according to the following rules. (For discussion of vowel harmony rules, see chapter 3.)

5.3.1 Nouns ending in a vowel

If a noun ends in a vowel, no linking vowel is needed before the plural suffix; if the final vowel is *a* or *e*, it must be lengthened to *á* or *é* before the plural *-k*; otherwise, simply add *-k*.

Word final vowel					
Noun ends in a or e			Noun ends in other vowels ¹		
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	
lamp	lámpa	lámpák	woman	nő	nők
bag	táska	táskák	car	kocsi	kocsik
cup	csésze	csészék	boat	hajó	hajók
lesson	lecke	leckék	gate	kapu	kapuk
			needle	tű	tűk

5.3.2 Nouns ending in a consonant

When nouns end in a consonant they require linking vowels before the plural (and other suffixes, too). Most nouns require the linking vowel choice *o/e/ö* before these suffixes, a smaller number require the vowel choice *a/e*.

Some noun types also exhibit a change in the stem when adding linking vowels. The following are the most important noun stems grouped according to linking vowel choice and stem changes:

5.3.2.1 Nouns requiring the linking vowel *a/e*

5.3.2.1.1 Low vowel nouns²

This is a finite group of just over 100 nouns. There is no way of identifying these words by simply looking at them, hence they must be memorized. (A list of these nouns is found in appendix 3.) This group of nouns has a further subdivision: those that don't lose the length of the last vowel when suffixing and those that do. (Of course, if the word does not have a long vowel in the final syllable, loss of length is irrelevant.)

¹ Except *férfi* 'man' which has the plural *férfiak*.

² So called because the linking vowels these nouns require are the low vowel *a/e*. (Thus technically, *v*-stems and *-alom/-elem* vocabulary are low vowel nouns too.)

Low vowel nouns

		Loses length		No loss of length	
		Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
hand	kéz	kezek	house	ház	házak
letter	levél	levelek	book	könyv	könyvek
glass	pohár	poharak	deer	őz	őzek
road	út	utak	pen	toll	tollak
water	víz	vizek	matter	ügy	ügyek

5.3.2.1.2 V-stems

These nouns have a stem quite different from the nominative. The nominative ends in a long vowel, but the stem to which the plural ending attaches ends in a *v* preceded by a short vowel;³ this vowel may change in quality as well as length. For example, *ló* ‘horse’ has the stem *lov-*, but *tó* ‘lake’ has the stem *tav-*. There is some variation in suffixing within this group that will be pointed out for each suffix. A complete list of these nouns is found in appendix 3.

v-stems

		Singular		Plural				Singular		Plural	
pipe	cső	csövek	work	mű	művek	grass	fű	füvek	maggot	nyű	nyüvek
snow	hó	havak	word	szó	szavak	stone	kő	kövek	lake	tó	tavak
horse	ló	lovak	stem	tő	tövek						

³ Except for **mű**: **műv-** where the vowel preceding *v* remains long.

5.3.2.1.3 -alom, -elem nouns

A large class of nouns ends in the derivation **-alom** or **-elem**. These decline as a combination of both fleeting vowel (see below) and low-vowel nouns,⁴ i.e., the last vowel is omitted and a/e is the linking vowel choice.

-alom/-elem nouns

	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
reign	uralom	uralmak	mystery	rejtelem	rejtelmek
power	hatalom	hatalmak	feeling	érzelem	érezelmek
reward	jutalom	jutalmak	mercy	kegyelem	kegyelmek

5.3.2.2 Nouns requiring the linking vowel *o/e/ö*5.3.2.2.1 *Fleeting vowel nouns*

The last vowel of the noun is omitted when suffixing the plural **-k**. This is a large group of nouns that, like the low vowel nouns, must simply be memorized, although a pattern emerges with familiarity: fleeting vowel nouns have **o**, **e**, or **ö** in the last syllable and a final consonant of **l**, **m**, **n**, **ny**, **r**, **sz**, **s**, **k**, **g** and, less commonly, **cs** or **ly**.

Fleeting vowel

		BACK VOWEL			
		Singular	Plural		
		bush	bokor	bokrok	
		tower	torony	toronyok	
FRONT VOWEL, LAST VOWEL UNROUNDED		FRONT VOWEL, LAST VOWEL ROUNDED			
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	
twin	iker	ikrek	nail	köröm	körmök
strawberry	eper	eprek	mirror	tükör	tükrök

⁴ Except **cimbalom** ‘Hungarian cymbalo’ which is a fleeting vowel word.

5.3.2.2.2 Regular nouns

Most nouns are of this type – negatively defined as not belonging to any of the previous types. The linking vowel *o/e/ö* is supplied before the plural suffix *-k*.

Regular nouns					
		BACK VOWEL			
		Singular	Plural		
	hat	kalap	kalapok		
	paper	papír	papírok		
	plate	tányér	tányérok		
	drawer	fiók	fiókok		
FRONT VOWEL, LAST VOWEL UNROUNDED		FRONT VOWEL, LAST VOWEL ROUNDED			
		Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
chair	szék	székek	crime	bűn	bűnök
law	törvény	törvények	acquaintance	ismerős	ismerősök
notebook	füzet	füzetek	fruit	gyümölcs	gyümölcsök

5.3.4 Summary of plural formation

Nouns: plural						
Ends in a vowel			Ends in a consonant			
final vowel is a or e	other final vowel	low vowel (v-stems listed separately)		-alom/-elem	fleeting vowel	regular
lengthen vowel		stem loses length	no change in stem	last vowel elides		no change in stem
add -k		add a/e + -k			add o/e/ö + -k	

5.4 Number and usage

5.4.1 Singular

The singular is unmarked. In addition to the standard use of the singular to mark non-plural items, the singular is used in some constructions differently than in English.

5.4.1.1

The singular is used after numbers and other expressions of quantity.

Hat ló van az istállóban. There are six horses in the stable.

Hány diák van a teremben? How many students are in the classroom?

5.4.1.2

The singular is used with paired body parts and the clothing or accessories that accompany them.

kéz	hands	láb	legs; feet	szem	eyes
kesztyű	gloves	cipő	shoes	szemüveg	glasses
		nadrág	pants		

Koszor a cipő. The shoes are dirty.

Drága volt a szemüveg. The glasses were expensive.

If specific reference to only one of the pair is required, use **fél** 'half'.⁵

fél szem one eye **fél kéz** one hand **fél láb** one leg

Csak fél szemmel követte az eseményeket.

He followed the events only half-heartedly. (lit., 'with half an eye')

⁵ This does not work with **cipő**, however; **félcipő** denotes a kind of shoe, not a single shoe.

5.4.1.3

The singular may be used when referring to a general category (the definite article is usually used in these constructions).

Az alma a sarokban, a körte a polcon van.

The apples are in the corner, the pears are on the shelf.

A bálna a legnagyobb emlősállat.

Whales are the largest mammals.

5.4.2 *Plural*

In Hungarian the plural is used as in English except for those areas described previously in the usage of the singular. The plural **-k** is not used in the possessive paradigm where another plural (**-i-**) is used (see section 8.2).

The plural declension of nouns is formed by simply adding the cases to the plural form of the noun. The temporal, distributive and sociative cases are not used in the plural.

a diákok the students **a diákokról** about the students

a gépek the machines **a gépekben** in the machines

When forming the plural accusative, the linking vowel **a/e** is always required after the plural **-k**.

<i>nominative</i>		<i>accusative</i>
kutyák	dogs	kutyákat
levelek	leaves	leveleket

The case system

Hungarian has an extensive case system. Cases are used to mark the grammatical function of words in a sentence: the nominative case marks the subject; the accusative case marks the direct object. They are also used adverbially: they may indicate place, time, manner. Most often case-marked words correspond to prepositional phrases in English (Hungarian has no prepositions): for example *könyv* ‘book’ marked with the inessive case **-ben** ‘in’ becomes *könyvben* ‘in (a) book’.

Cases attach to the ends of words; they may follow the plural suffix **-k** or possessive suffixes. Although one or more suffixes may precede them, cases are always the final suffix of a word: *könyv* + **ek** + **ben** ‘book + plural suffix + inessive case’ → *könyvekben* ‘in books’. Cases may also be attached to nouns already marked for possession: **a könyvem** ‘my book’ plus the inessive case yields **a könyvemben** ‘in my book’. Although most commonly used with nouns, cases may also attach to adjectives, numerals, and demonstrative and interrogative pronouns. Cases do not attach to most personal pronouns – there is a separate paradigm for these (see section 7.1.2). The complete paradigm of cases is called a declension.

Cases attach directly to the end of a word; the following stem alternations occur regularly:

- (a) word-final **a** or **e** lengthens to **á**, **é**, respectively¹
- (b) the accusative **-t**, superessive **-n**, distributive **-nként**, sociative **-stul/-stül**, and distributive-temporal **-nta/-nte** all require linking vowels when suffixing to consonant-final stems. This may trigger other changes in the word stem.

¹ The two exceptions are the temporal (**-kor**) and the essive-formal (**-ként**); here there is no lengthening of the final vowel.

The Hungarian case system

Grammatical cases

nominative	—	<i>no ending; marks the subject</i>
accusative	-t	<i>marks the direct object</i>

Locative cases

illative	-ba/-be	into
inessive	-ban/-ben	in
elative	-ból/-ből	out of, out from
sublative	-ra/-re	onto
superessive	(-o/-e/-ö)-n	on, at
delative	-ról/-ről	off, from, about
allative	-hoz/-hez/-höz	toward
adessive	-nál/-nél	near, at
ablativ	-tól/-től	(away) from

Oblique cases

dative	-nak/-nek	to, for
instrumental	-val/-vel	with
translative	-vá/-vé	(turning) into
causal-final	-ért	for the purpose of
essive-formal	-ként	as
terminative	-ig	until, up to
distributive	(-o/-a/-e/-ö) -nként	per, each

Less productive cases

temporal	-kor	at (plus time expression)
distributive-temporal	(-o/-e/-ö)-nta	per, every (plus time expression)
sociative	(-o/-a/-e/-ö/ -stul/-stül	(together) with
locative	-t/(-o/-e/-ö)-tt	at

Vowel harmony is maintained when suffixing cases. Several cases have a three-way vowel harmony choice (e.g., the allative **-hoz/-hez/-höz**); most cases, however have only a front or back vowel choice (e.g., the elative **-ból/-ből** or the adessive **-nál/-nél**) and several cases offer no choice in vowel harmony (e.g., the terminative **-ig**).

The many cases in Hungarian may be divided into three groups: (1) the grammatical cases (nominative and accusative), (2) the locative cases (indicating place and/or motion to or from a place) and (3) the oblique cases (all the rest). All the locative and oblique cases will be referred to by both their name and shape (e.g., ‘adessive **-nál/-nél**’).

In addition to the productive cases, there are several more unproductive cases found in only limited use. These are dealt with at the end of the chapter.

6.1 Grammatical cases

6.1.1 Nominative

The nominative is the ‘zero’ case, i.e., there is no case-marking on the word. It is the citation form for nouns and adjectives in the dictionary.

6.1.1.1

Subjects are in the nominative case.

Elindult a vonat.

The train departed.

**A lányok az egyetemen
találkoztak.**

The girls met at the
university.

6.1.1.2

The nominative case is used as a modifier of quantity.

Egy korsó sört rendelt.

She ordered a mug of beer.

Egy fej salátát kellett vennem.

I had to buy a head of lettuce.

Megivott egy csésze teát.

He drank a cup of tea.

6.1.1.3

The objects of most postpositions are in the nominative. (See section 9.4 for exceptions.)

A függöny mögött találtam egy ceruzát.

I found a pencil behind the curtain.

Betette a táskát az asztal alá.

She put her bag down under the table.

6.1.1.4

If, in a possessive construction, the possessor immediately precedes the possessed item, the possessor may be in the nominative case. (See chapter 8 for complete rules on possession.)

Elkértem Zsuzsa tollát.

I asked for Zsuzsa's pen.

Kíváncsi volt a gyerek véleményére.

He was interested in the child's opinion.

6.1.1.5

Some time expressions use the nominative case.

Time expressions ending in the word *nap* 'day':

Minden nap/egész nap/vasárnap tanul.

She studies every day/all day/on Sunday.

Time expressions of 'ago' and 'since' formed with the possessive:

Már három hete van itt. He's been here for three weeks
already.

Hét hónapja utazott el. He left seven months ago.

6.1.2 Accusative: -t

6.1.2.1 Formation

The accusative *-t* is attached in much the same way as the plural *-k* with one difference: within the group of regular nouns there is a division.

Regular nouns ending in the consonants **j, l, ly, n, ny, r, s, sz, z, zs** require no linking vowel when suffixing the accusative case.² Regular nouns ending in any other consonant still require the linking vowel **o/e/ö**.

The table opposite gives the accusative for the different noun stem types. The plural nominative forms are provided here to illustrate the similarities and differences in suffixing (note that the only difference is found where the regular nouns require no linking vowel).

When suffixing the accusative case to a plural noun, the linking vowel **a/e** is always required.

6.1.2.2 Usage

6.1.2.2.1

The accusative case marks the direct object of the verb.

Felolvastam a leveleket az apámnak.

I read the letters to my father.

Jó napot kívánok.

Good day! (I wish you a good day.)

Meleg ruhát vettünk fel.

We put on warm clothes.

6.1.2.2.2

The accusative case may also be used in some time expressions:

Egy hetet töltöttünk a Balatonon.

We spent a week at the Balaton.

6.1.2.2.3

The accusative may modify a verb:

Nagyot sóhajtott. He gave a big sigh.

Jót aludtak. They slept well.

² Note that it does not matter what the final consonant is for low vowel or fleeting vowel words – they always require a linking vowel.

Accusative case suffixing

Noun stem types		Nominative singular	Accusative singular	Nominative plural
stems ending in a or e :	lamp	lámpa	lámpát	lámpák
	cup	csésze	csészét	csészek
stems ending in other vowels	woman	nő	nőt	nők
	car	kocsi	kocsit	kocsik
	boat	hajó	hajót	hajók
	gate	kapu	kaput	kapuk
	needle	tű	tűt	tűk
low vowel nouns (lose length)	road	út	utat	utak
	hand	kéz	kezet	kezek
low-vowel nouns (no loss of length)	house	ház	házat	házak
	pen	toll	tollat	tollak
	book	könyv	könyvet	könyvek
	deer	őz	őzet	őzek
v-stems ³	lake	tó	tavat	tavak
	pipe	cső	csövet	csövek
-alom/-elem	reward	jutalom	jutalmat	jutalmak
	mystery	rejtelem	rejtelmet	rejtelmek
fleeting vowel	bush	bokor	bokrot	bokrok
	strawberry	eper	epret	eprek
	mirror	tükör	tükröt	tükrök
regular noun ending in j, l, ly, n, ny, r, s, sz, z, zs	plate	tányér	tányért	tányérok
	painting	festmény	festményt	festmények
	acquaintance	ismerős	ismerőst	ismerősök
other regular nouns	hat	kalap	kalapot	kalapok
	chair	szék	széket	székek
	fruit	gyümölcs	gyümölcsöt	gyümölcsök

³ Two exceptions are: szó 'word' szót (*acc.*), jó 'good' jót (*acc.*)

6.2 Locative case system

The locative cases serve mostly as adverbials and answer the question ‘where’, although they have other semantic uses as well.

6.2.1 Formation

The locative cases are attached directly to the end of the word. They may be attached to words already formed for the plural or the possessive. All the locative cases require that words ending in a **a** or **e** lengthen the vowel to **á**, **é**, respectively; for words ending in any other vowel, the cases attach directly with no change in the stem.

With the exception of the superessive case **-n**, all the locative cases attach directly to stems ending in a consonant without requiring a linking vowel or making any changes in the stem of the word.

The superessive case requires the linking vowel **o/e/ö** when suffixed to all words ending in a consonant (the superessive makes no distinction between low vowel and regular nouns). For **v-stem** vocabulary, the **v-stem** is required; **-alom/-elem** vocabulary and fleeting vowel words omit the last vowel before suffixing the superessive case.

The table opposite illustrates the suffixing of locative cases with respect to noun type. Because the superessive **-n** case suffixes differently it is in a column of its own; all other locative cases suffix identically and are represented in the table by the inessive case **-ban/-ben**.

6.2.2 Usage

The locative cases of Hungarian form a system with respect to three parameters of motion: **motion toward**, **no motion**, **motion away**,⁴ and three parameters of space: **interior**, **exterior**, **near**. Thus there is a case ending corresponding to the English prepositions ‘into’, ‘in’, ‘out of’, ‘from’, ‘onto’, ‘on’, ‘off’.

⁴ Here, ‘no motion’ means there is no explicit motion *to* or *from* a place; there may, however be motion within the space defined under ‘no motion’, e.g.,

Sétálnak a parkban. They are walking in the park.

Suffixing of locative cases

Noun stem types		Nominative singular	Superessive -n	All other locative cases e.g., -ban/-ben
stems ending in a or e	lamp	lámpa	lámpán	lámpában
	cup	csésze	csészén	csészében
stems ending in other vowels	woman	nő	nőn	nőben
	car	kocsi	kocsin	kocsiban
	boat	hajó	hajón	hajóban
	gate	kapu	kapun	kapuban
	needle	tű	tűn	tűben
low-vowel	road	út	úton	útban
	hand	kéz	kézen	kézben
and	house	ház	házon	házban
	book	könyv	könyvön	könyvben
regular nouns	plate	tányér	tányéron	tányérban
	chair	szék	széken	székben
	fruit	gyümölcs	gyümölcsön	gyümölcsben
v -stems	lake	tó	tavon	tóban
	pipe	cső	csövön	csőben
alom/-elem	reward	jutalom	jutalmon	jutalomban
	mystery	rejtlem	rejtelmen	rejtelemben
fleeting vowel	bush	bokor	bokron	bokorban
	strawberry	eper	epren	eperben
	mirror	tükör	tükrön	tükörben

Locative system: parameters of motion and space			
	motion toward ⇨ ⇨ ●	no motion ●	motion away ● ⇨ ⇨
interior	-ba/-be <i>illative</i>	-ban/-ben <i>inessive</i>	-ból/-ből <i>elative</i>
exterior	-ra/-re <i>sublative</i>	-(o/e/ö) n <i>superessive</i>	-ról/-ről <i>delative</i>
near	-hoz/-hez/-höz <i>allative</i>	-nál/-nél <i>adessive</i>	-től/-től <i>ablative</i>

6.2.2.1 Interior

The interior set of cases correspond to the English prepositions *in, into, out of, from* (*the inside of*). They are used with

- geographic names including countries; **Angliában** ‘in England’ (except **Magyarország** ‘Hungary’);
- most cities outside of Hungary, **Párizsból** ‘from Paris’;
- cities within Hungary whose final consonant is **m, n, ny, j, r**: **Debrecenbe** ‘to Debrecen’; **Tihanyba** ‘to Tihany’;
- interiors of objects, buildings, and other spaces; a **fiókban** ‘in the drawer’, a **szívemben** ‘in my heart’.

6.2.2.1.1

The illative case **-ba/-be** is used to express motion to the interior of a place.

Bemegyek a régi házba. I am going into the old house.

Imre elment Olaszországba. Imre went to Italy.

Zsuzsa betett egy tollat a zsebébe. Zsuzsa put a pen into her pocket.

6.2.2.1.2

The inessive case **-ban/-ben** is used to express no motion in(side) a place.

Géza olvas a kertben. Géza is reading in the garden.

Kétemeletes házban lakom. I live in a two-storey house.

Három könyv van a táskámban. There are three books in my bag.

6.2.2.1.3

The elative case **-ból/-ből** is used to express motion out from the interior of a place:

A gyerekek kifutottak az teremből.

The children run out of the classroom.

Kitéptem egy lapot a füzetemből.

I tore a page out of my notebook.

Melyik városból jössz?

From which city are you coming?

6.2.2.2 Exterior

The exterior cases correspond to the English prepositions ‘on’, ‘at’, ‘onto’, ‘off’, ‘from (the surface of)’. They are used with

- (a) most place names within Hungary (or places that used to be governed by Hungary): **Budapest** ‘in Budapest’;
- (b) the name of Hungary itself: **Magyarországról** ‘from Hungary’;
- (c) public transportation: **villamoson** ‘on a tram’;
- (d) events: **sportmérkőzésen** ‘at a sports match’; **hangversenyre** ‘to a concert’;
- (e) surfaces and open spaces: **az asztalra** ‘onto the table’, **falon** ‘on a wall’, **jégen** ‘on ice’.

6.2.2.2.1

The sublative case **-ra/-re** is used to express motion toward an exterior.

Elmegyünk Budapestre. We are going to Budapest.

A táskám leesett a földre. My bag fell to the floor.

Felszállok erre az autóbuszra. I will get on this bus.

6.2.2.2.2

The superessive case (*o/e/ö*) is used to express a position on or at an exterior.

Híres egyetemen dolgozunk. We work at a famous university.

Ilona Magyarországon lakik. Ilona lives in Hungary.

A szótár az asztalon van. The dictionary is on the table.

6.2.2.2.3

The delative case *-ról/-ről* is used to express motion away from an exterior.

A szótár leesett az asztalról. The dictionary fell off the table.

Tegnap feljöttek Pécsről. They came up from Pécs yesterday.

Levette a hirdetést a falról. She took the advertisement off the wall.

6.2.2.3 Near

The near cases correspond roughly to the English prepositions ‘near(by)’, ‘at’, ‘with’, ‘toward’, ‘away from’. They are used to express positions at, near, or away from the vicinity of

- (a) vertical objects: **ajtóhoz** ‘toward a door’ **a fánál** ‘by the tree’;
- (b) people: **Kingához** ‘toward Kinga’;
- (c) a person’s home: **Dénesnél** ‘at Dénes’ place/house’;
- (d) a person’s place of business: **az orvosnál** ‘at the doctor’s office’.

6.2.2.3.1

The allative case *-hoz/-hez/-höz* expresses motion toward the vicinity of someone/something.

Elmentünk a fogorvoshoz. We went to the dentist('s office).

Leültünk az asztalhoz. We sat down at the table.

Odafutottak a kerítéshez. They ran up to the fence.

6.2.2.3.2

The adessive case **-nál/-nél** expresses a position near or in the vicinity of someone/something:

A kulcs Imrénél van.

Imre has the key. (lit.: The key is by Imre.)

A kutya az ágynál fekszik.

The dog is lying near the bed.

A Kovácséknál voltam két hétig.

I stayed with the Kovácses for two weeks.

6.2.2.3.3

The ablative case **-tól/-től** expresses motion away from the vicinity of someone/something:

Erzsébettől kaptam a könyvet.

I got the book from Erzsébet.

Boldogan jöttek el az orvostól.

They came happily from the doctor's (office).

Felkeltünk az asztaltól.

We stood up from the table.

6.3 Non-locative usage of locative cases

The locative cases may have more abstract meanings as well. They can be used in time expressions and other adverbial, not strictly spatial, expressions. Often, a verb or adjective will require the use of a specific case. Examples of some abstract or metaphoric uses of the locative cases are given below.

6.3.1 Illative -ba/-be**6.3.1.1**

Verbs with the coverb *bele* ‘into’ take an illative complement:

Belefáradt a munkába. He got tired of the work.

Mária beleszeretett Jánosba. Mária fell in love with János.

6.3.1.2

The illative may be used with a condition somebody gets into:

Az a fiú mindig nagy bajba kerül.

That boy always gets into big trouble.

Dühbe jött, mikor meglátta a jegyét.

She flew into a rage when she saw her grade.

6.3.2 Inessive -ban/-ben**6.3.2.1**

The inessive is used in time expressions:

A születésnapom decemberben van.

My birthday is in December.

Melyik évben laktál külföldön?

Which year did you live abroad?

6.3.2.2

Some verbs and adjectives require an inessive complement:

Biztos vagy benne? Are you sure of it?

Nem vettünk részt a vitában. We did not take part in the debate.

Hiszel Istenben? Do you believe in God?

Miben vagyunk bűnösök? What are we guilty of?

Rákban halt meg. He died of cancer.

6.3.2.3

The inessive is used with the condition or state a person is in.

Bajban vagyunk.

We are in trouble.

Jóban vagyok a főnökkel.

I'm in good with (I have a
good relation with) the boss.

6.3.2.4

The inessive may express the means by which an action occurs.

Dollárban fizetnek.

They pay us in dollars.

Nagy pelyhekben hullott a hó. The snow fell in large flakes.

6.3.3 *Elative -ból/-ből*

6.3.3.1

The elative may mark the origin of something – whether concerning persons, material or time.

Fizikus lett a bátyámból.

My elder brother became a physicist.

Milyen anyagból készült a ruha?

What material is the dress made of?

Melyik korból való az a festmény?

What era is that painting from?

6.3.3.2

The elative may mark the cause or manner of an action.

Nemcsak szerelemből házasodnak az emberek.

It is not only out of love that people get married.

Tévedésből vettem ezt a könyvet.

I bought this book by mistake.

Csak kíváncsiságból kérdeztem.

I only asked out of curiosity.

6.3.3.3

The elative has a partitive use.

Csak keveset evett a halból, mert nem ízlett neki.

He only ate a little of the fish because he didn't like it.

Kérsz még a süteményből?

Would you like some more pastry?

6.3.4 Sublative -ral/-re

6.3.4.1

The sublative is used in time expressions to indicate the time by which an action is done.

Hat órára jön haza.

He'll be home by six o'clock.

Jövő hétre lehül az idő.

The weather will cool down by next week.

Mához egy évre megint találkozunk.

We'll meet again a year from today.

6.3.4.2

Some verbs (especially those with the coverb *rá*) and adjectives require a sublative complement.

Büszke a gyerekeire.

She is proud of her children.

Kíváncsi vagyok Szabó új filmjére.

I am curious about Szabó's new movie.

Nem emlékszel rám?

Don't you remember me?

Mire van szükségetek?

What do you need?

Sokat gondol a barátnőjére.

He thinks about his girlfriend a lot.

Ránéztem az ablakra.

I glanced at the window.

A rendőr rámutatott a jelzőtáblára.

The policeman pointed to the sign.

6.3.4.3

The sublative may be used to mark the result or goal of an action.

Apró darabokra vágtam a hagymát.

I cut the onion into small pieces.

Magyarra fordította a könyvet.

He translated the book into Hungarian.

Könnyekre fakadt, mikor megnyerte a lottót.

She burst into tears when she won the lottery.

Fehérre festettünk minden falat.

We painted every wall white.

6.3.5 *Superessive* -(o/e/ö)n

6.3.5.1

The superessive is used with the days of the week and other time expressions.

Minden héten találkoznak.

They meet every week.

Hétfőn, szerdán és pénteken jár a francia órára.

He goes to French class on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

6.3.5.2

The following postpositions require that the noun preceding them be in the superessive case.

alul below

fölül above

kívül outside, besides

át across

innen this side of

túl beyond

belül within

keresztül across

végig along, to the end

Egy órán belül készült el a leves.

The soup was ready within an hour.

Imrén kívül senki sem volt pontos.

Besides Imre, nobody was on time.

6.3.5.3

Many verbs (especially those using the above postpositions as coverbs) take a superessive complement.

Melyik terven dolgozol?

Which plan are you working on?

Sokáig gondolkozott az ügyön.

She thought about the matter for a long time.

Átment az utcán.

He walked across the street.

6.3.6 *Delative -ról/-ről*

6.3.6.1

The delative often has the meaning ‘about’.

Nem szeret magáról beszélni.

She doesn't like to talk about herself.

Miről szól a cikk?

What is the article about?

Nem tudnak sokat Budapestről.

They don't know much about Budapest.

6.3.6.2

The delative is found in adverbial constructions with the sublative *-ra/-re*.

napról napra from day to day

szóról szóra word by word

időről időre from time to time

magyarról angolra from Hungarian into English

6.3.7 Allative -hoz/-hez/-höz

6.3.7.1

The allative is used with expressions of attaching something to, adding to, or communicating to someone or something (especially with verbs having the coverb *hozzá*).

Hozzászól a kérdéshez.	He addressed the question.
Melyik párthoz akarsz csatlakozni?	Which party do you want to join?
Mit iszol a vacsorához?	What will you drink with dinner?

6.3.7.2

Some verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and postpositions require an allative complement.

Mihez van kedved ma?	What are you in the mood for today?
Közel lakik a Nemzeti Múzeumhoz.	She lives near the National Museum.
Nem értek a geometriához.	I am not good at geometry.
Udvarias volt hozzám.	He was polite to me.
Nagyon hasonlít az anyjához.	She resembles her mother very much.

6.3.8 Adessive -nál/-nél

6.3.8.1

The adessive is used in comparative constructions:

Dénes magasabb Péternél.	Dénes is taller than Péter.
Az idei barack édesebb a tavalyinál.	This year's apricots are sweeter than last year's.

6.3.8.2

The adessive combines with plural pronouns to mean 'in one's country or part of the world'.

Nálunk sokan csak kint dohányoznak, nálatok hogy van?

Where I live many people smoke only outside, how is it in your country?

6.3.8.3

The adessive may be used in expressions of a person's condition or state.

Nem vagy észnél! You are out of your mind!

Most már magánál van. He's conscious now.

6.3.9 Ablative -tól/-től

6.3.9.1

The ablative is used with verbs expressing fear or separation.

Nem félek a kutyáktól. I am not afraid of dogs.

Megijedtünk a csontvázról. We were frightened by the skeleton.

Elváltak egymástól. They separated from each other.

6.3.9.2

The ablative is used to express the origin of an object or action in time and space (often used in conjunction with the terminative -ig).

Kettőtől otthon leszek.
I'll be home from two o'clock on.

Reggeltől estig dolgozik.
He works from morning till night.

Kitől kaptad a virágokat?
From whom did you get the flowers?

Budapesttől Párizsig beszélgettek a vonaton.
They talked on the train from Budapest to Paris.

6.3.9.3

The ablative may be used to denote the cause of an action.

Reszket a hidegtől. She is shivering from the cold.

Kivagyok a sok gondtól. I am worn out with all the worry.

Elájult a hőségtől. He fainted from the heat.

6.4 Oblique cases

In addition to the locative cases, there are cases denoting the English prepositions 'for', 'with', 'as', 'until', 'per', 'at' (with respect to time) and more.

6.4.1 Formation

The oblique cases are added to stems in the same way as the inessive with the following exceptions:

(a) The initial *v-* of the instrumental **-val/-vel** and translative **-vá/-vé** always assimilates to the stem-final consonant to which it suffixes.

víz + vé → **vízzé** (turning) into water

bor + vá → **borrá** (turning) into wine

barátok + val → **barátokkal** with friends

barátom + val → **barátommal** with my friend

If the consonant to which the case assimilates is a digraph, only the first letter of the digraph is doubled.

lány + val → **lánnyal** with (a) girl

ész + vel → **ésszel** with (a) mind

If the consonant to which the case assimilates is a double consonant, the resulting tri-consonant cluster is simplified to a double consonant.

toll + val → **tollal** with (a) pen

orr + val → **orral** with (a) nose

(b) The causal-final **-ért**, the terminative **-ig**, the essive-formal **-ként**, and the temporal **-kor** have no vowel harmony counterparts.

(c) The temporal **-kor** and the essive-formal **-ként** attach to words ending in **a** and **e** without lengthening the vowel.

(d) The distributive **-nként**, the sociative **-stul/-stül**, and the distributive-temporal **-nta**⁵ require a linking vowel when suffixing to stems ending in consonants. This is the same linking vowel required when forming the plural; all the stem alternations effected in the plural are found when forming these cases as well.

6.4.2 Usage of oblique cases

6.4.2.1 Dative *-nak/-nek*

6.4.2.1.1

The dative case marks the indirect object or the beneficiary of an action.

Csillának adtam egy könyvet.

I gave a book to Csilla.

Megmutatja Nórának a fényképeit.

She shows her pictures to Nóra.

Kinek telefonálsz?

Whom are you calling?

6.4.2.1.2

Many verbs and some adjectives take a dative complement.

Fekete Gyulának hívják.

His name is Gyula Fekete.

Fáradtnak látszol.

You look tired.

Jó barátomnak tartalak.

I consider you a good friend.

Unalmasnak találtam a cikket.

I found the article boring.

⁵ hó ‘month’, havonként, havonta ‘monthly’, ‘per month’ are exceptions.

Ez a lakás nem alkalmas nagy családnak.

This apartment does not suit a large family.

6.4.2.1.3

The dative is also used in impersonal constructions (see section 17.7 for more on impersonal constructions):

Gábornak tanulnia kell ma este.

Gábor must study this evening. (lit.) It is necessary for Gábor to study this evening.

Zsófiának fontos minden nap zongoráznia.

It is important for Zsófia to play the piano every day.

6.4.2.1.4

The dative marks the possessor in 'have' constructions (see section 17.4 for more on 'have' constructions):

Gyulának két húga van. Gyula has two younger sisters.

Láza van a lányomnak. My daughter has a fever.

6.4.2.1.5

The dative may mark the possessor in possessive constructions (see chapter 8 on possessives for discussion of obligatory and optional uses of the dative).

Ennek az árát nem tudom.

I don't know the price of this/its price.

Annak a férfinak a kocsija eladó.

That man's car is for sale.

Kinek a labdája ez?

Whose ball is this?

Gábornak fáj a lába.

Gábor's leg hurts.

6.4.2.2 Instrumental *-val/-vel*

6.4.2.2.1

The instrumental denotes the person, material, manner or means of transportation with which an action is done.

Inkább ceruzával írok, mint tollal.	I prefer to write with a pencil than a pen.
Eljössz velem?	Are you coming with me?
Már régóta jár Évával.	He's been going with Éva for a long time.
Busszal vagy metróval menjünk?	Shall we go by bus or metro?
Örömmel!	With pleasure! (I'd be delighted.)

6.4.2.2.2

The degree of comparison and other measures are expressed with the instrumental.

Imre két évvel fiatalabb, mint Kornél.	Imre is two years younger than Kornél.
Régen sokkal hosszabb volt a hajam.	My hair was much longer in the old days.
Vizet iszol? Én is kérek egy pohárral.	Are you drinking water? I would also like a glassful.

6.4.2.2.3

The agent of causative constructions is in the instrumental.

A szabóval varrattam egy új öltönyt.	I had the tailor sew me a new suit.
Jánossal hívtunk egy taxit.	We had János call a taxi.

6.4.2.2.4

Many verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and the two postpositions **együtt** ‘together’ and **szemben** ‘across’ take an instrumental complement.

Mikor találkoztok az elnökkel?

When are you meeting the president?

A láda tele van régi ruhával.

The chest is full of old clothes.

A házzal szemben van egy gyönyörű park.

There is a beautiful park across from the house.

6.4.2.3 Translative *-vá/-vé*

The translative has a fairly limited use; it combines with the verbs denoting a change in state, e.g., **válik** ‘become’, ‘turn into’, **lesz** ‘become’, **tesz** ‘make’ and **változtat** ‘change’ to express what something or someone changes *into*.

Hallgatag emberré vált, miután meghalt a felesége.

He became a quiet man after his wife died.

Ezt a kunyhót valódi palotává változtatták.

They have changed this shack into a real palace.

6.4.2.4 Causal-final *-ért*

6.4.2.4.1

The causal-final denotes cause, reason or purpose; it is often translated as ‘for’.

Mindent megtesz a családjáért.

He does everything for his family.

Elküldtem a boltba kenyérért.

I sent him to the store for bread.

Zsuzsa eljön a repülőtérre értem.

Zsuzsa is coming for (to meet) me at the airport.

6.4.2.4.2

It is used in financial transactions, marking either the price or merchandise – whichever is in the ‘for’ phrase in English.

Hatezer forintot fizetett a cipőért.

She paid six thousand forints for the shoes.

Hatezer forintért vette a cipőt.

She bought the shoes for six thousand forints.

Mennyiért lehet kapni egy jó üveg bort?

How much (money) can you get a good bottle of wine for?

6.4.2.4.3

The demonstrative pronoun in the causal-final case **azért** ‘for the (following) reason’ introduces clauses of purpose.

Azért megyünk a hegyekbe, hogy végre pihenhessünk egy kicsit.

The reason we are going to the mountains is so we can finally rest a bit.

Azért tanul angolul, hogy többet keressen a munkahelyén.

The reason he is studying English is to earn more money at work.

6.4.2.5 Essive-formal -ként

The essive-formal means ‘as’ and can be used instead of a clause introduced by **mint** ‘as’.

Egy évig tanárként dolgozott. She worked as a teacher for a year.

Egy évig dolgozott, mint tanár. "

Rabszolgaként bánnak velem. They treat me like a slave.

Úgy bánnak velem, mintha rabszolga lennék. They treat me as if I were a slave.

6.4.2.6 Terminative *-ig*

The terminative is used in both temporal and spatial expressions to denote 'until'. It is often paired with the ablative *-tól/-től*.

Elkísért bennünket a sarokig. He accompanied us to the corner.

Nyolctól ötig dolgozik. She works from eight until five.

Az út csak egy óráig tartott. The trip lasted only an hour.

6.4.2.7 Distributive *-nként*

The distributive expresses a regular division and can be translated as 'per', 'by', 'every'.

Mennyibe kerül a vacsora fejenként?
How much does the dinner cost per person?

Óráként fizetnek.
They pay by the hour.

Egyenként léptek be a terembe.
They entered the hall one by one.

6.5 Less productive cases

The following cases are limited in use.

6.5.1 Temporal *-kor*

This denotes 'at' for time expressions only.

Hat órakor jön haza.
He is coming home at six o'clock.

Szép, ha karácsonykor esik a hó.
It's pretty when it snows at Christmas.

Éjfélkor szoktam lefeküdni.
I usually go to bed at midnight.

6.5.2 Distributive-temporal -ntal/-nte

This suffix attaches to words denoting time expressions to mean ‘per’, ‘every’.

Hetente háromszor van magyar óra.

Hungarian class is three times per week.

Óránta közlik a híreket.

They broadcast the news every hour.

6.5.3 Sociative -stul/-stül

The sociative denotes ‘with’ with people or objects closely associated with each other.

Mindig családstul utazik.

He always travels with his family.

Mindenestül érkezett meg.

She arrived with all her belongings/bag and baggage.

6.5.4 Locative -t/-ott/-ett/-ött

A few towns and several words may use this locative case to mean ‘in’.⁶

Pécsett in Pécs

Győrött in Győr

Kolozsvárt or **Kolozsvárött** in Kolozsvár

oldal side **oldalt** sideways

egyenes straight **egyenes** straight ahead

⁶ This is the same ending as found in some adverbs of place: **itt** ‘here’, **ott** ‘there’, **másutt** ‘elsewhere’; and postpositions: **alatt** ‘under’, **előtt** ‘in front of’, etc.

6.6 Verbs and cases

The above examples illustrate how cases can have several meanings; of course words and phrases change in meaning when adding different cases; this is comparable to the use of different prepositional phrases in English.

Hiszek Jánosban.	I believe in János.
Hiszek Jánosnak.	I believe János.
Istvánról beszélek.	I am speaking about István.
Istvánnal beszélek.	I am speaking with István.

In the preceding examples, the meaning of the verb doesn't change, only the complement of the verb. Often, however, the meaning of a verb can change depending upon which case it governs.

Nem értem a leckét.	I don't understand the lesson.
Nem értek a fizikához.	I am no good at physics.
Sokáig tartott az előadás.	The lecture lasted a long time.
Sokáig tartotta a síró gyereket.	He held the crying child for a long time.
Attól tartok, hogy rossz jegyet fogok kapni.	I'm afraid I will get a bad grade.

Because the meaning of the verb can change so much, it is important to use a dictionary carefully; a good one will list the meanings of a verb (or other expression) according to the case it governs.

6.7 Plural declension

The plural declension is arrived at by simply forming the plural first and then adding the case suffix to the plural form. A case suffix is added directly to the plural form with the following exceptions:

- The linking vowel **a/e** is required after the plural form when suffixing the accusative case.
- The linking vowel **o/e/ö** is required after the plural when suffixing the superessive case **-n**.
- The temporal **-kor**, distributive **-nként**, distributive-temporal **-nta/-nte**, and sociative **-stul/-stül** are not used in the plural.

Examples of the plural paradigm

	Back vowel	Front unrounded vowel	Front rounded vowel
	lány	kert	ismerős
	girl	garden	acquaintance
<i>nominative</i>	lányok	kertek	ismerősök
<i>accusative</i>	lányokat	kerteket	ismerősöket
<i>inessive</i>	lányokban	kertekben	ismerősökben
<i>superessive</i>	lányokon	kerteken	ismerősökön
<i>instrumental</i>	lányokkal	kertekkel	ismerősökkel

6.8 Full declension of select nouns

For declensions of all noun types, see appendix 2.

	Singular 'family'	Plural 'families'	Singular 'cup'	Plural 'cups'	Singular 'hour'	Plural 'hours'
<i>nominative</i>	család	családok	csésze	csészék	óra	órák
<i>accusative</i>	családot	családokat	csészét	csészéket	órát	órákat
<i>illative</i>	családba	családokba	csészébe	csészékbe	órába	órákba
<i>inessive</i>	családban	családokban	csészében	csészékben	órában	órákban
<i>elative</i>	családból	családokból	csészéből	csészékből	órából	órákból
<i>sublative</i>	családra	családokra	csészére	csészékre	órára	órákra
<i>superessive</i>	családon	családokon	csészén	csészéken	órán	órákon
<i>delative</i>	családról	családokról	csészéről	csészékről	óráról	órákról
<i>allative</i>	családhoz	családokhoz	csészéhez	csészékhez	órához	órákhoz
<i>adessive</i>	családnál	családoknál	csészénél	csészéknél	óránál	óráknál
<i>ablative</i>	családtól	családoktól	csészétől	csészéktől	órától	óráktól
<i>dative</i>	családnak	családoknak	csészének	csészéknek	órának	óráknak
<i>instrumental</i>	családdal	családokkal	csészével	csészékkel	órával	órákkal
<i>translative</i>	családdá	családokká	csészévé	csészékké	órává	órákká
<i>causal-final</i>	családért	családokért	csészéért	csészékért	óráért	órákért
<i>essive-formal</i>	családként	családokként	csészeként	csészékként	óráként	órákként
<i>terminative</i>	családig	családokig	csészéig	csészékig	óráig	órákig
<i>distributive</i>	családonként	—	csészénként	—	óránként	—
<i>temporal</i>	—	—	—	—	órákor	—
<i>sociative</i>	családostul	—	csészéstül	—	órástul	—
<i>locative</i>	(Kolozsvárt)	—	—	—	—	—

Pronouns¹

Pronouns replace nouns; personal pronouns refer to people; demonstrative pronouns usually refer to things. Reflexive and reciprocal pronouns refer back to the subject(s) of a sentence. The personal pronouns of Hungarian include both familiar and several formal forms. The demonstrative pronouns have important discourse functions not found in English.

7.1 Personal pronouns

The formation and usage of pronouns in the grammatical cases is different from their formation and usage from the locative and oblique cases.

7.1.1 Nominative and accusative cases

	I	you (sg.) ²	she/he	we	you (pl.)	they
<i>nom.</i>	én	te	ő	mi	ti	ők
<i>acc.</i>	engem ~ (engemet)	téged ~ (tégedet)	őt	minket ~ bennünket	titeket ~ benneteket	őket

The first and second person singular pronouns have the option of omitting the accusative ending; it is common to do so – especially in the Budapest dialect. The first and second persons plural have two accusative

¹ Adverbial pronouns are treated in chapter 11.

² The second person forms discussed here are familiar forms. The polite pronouns are discussed in 7.2.

forms; they are used in free variation with no difference in style or meaning. All first and second person pronoun direct objects are considered indefinite.

Hungarian sentences do not require the use of a personal pronoun in the nominative or accusative case unless the pronoun is emphasized, contrasted, or referred to specifically. Otherwise it is most often omitted. Third person direct objects are implicit in the definite conjugation of the verb; it is common however to use the pronoun **őket** and omit the pronoun **őt** (unless otherwise emphasized).

As there is no gender marking in Hungarian, there is only one pronoun for *he* and *she*. In the nominative case, the third person pronouns can refer only to people; in the accusative, **őket** may refer to animals or objects, though **őt** is usually reserved for humans only; non-human direct objects may be referred to by the demonstrative pronouns, **azt, azokat, ezt, ezeket**.

Nominative pronouns:

Én egy sört fogok rendelni, te mit iszol?

I will order a beer, what will you have?

Mi angolul beszélünk, ők meg magyarul.

We speak English and they speak Hungarian.

Ő is, ti is jöttök szombaton.

Both he and you are coming on Saturday.

Accusative pronouns:

Látsz engem?

Do you see me?

Jánost is, téged is látlak.

I see both you and János.

Ott van Kati, most őt is látom.

There is Kati, now I see her, too.

Várom.

I am waiting for him/her/it.

Szeretem (őt).

I love him/her.

Szeretem őket.

I love them.

Mikor hívsz meg minket/bennünket vacsorára?

When will you invite us to dinner?

Holnap elviszlek titeket/benneteket a moziba.

I'll take you (pl.) to the movies tomorrow.

Because pronouns are often omitted, in the absence of context sentences with no overt direct objects are ambiguous in meaning.

Látsz?

Do you see me? Do you see us? Do you have the ability to see?

Látod?

Do you see him/her/it? Do you see them?

Várunk.

We are waiting for you (singular or plural). We are waiting.

Várnak.

They are waiting for me/us/you (singular or plural). They are waiting.

7.1.2 Locative and oblique cases

The pronouns of the non-grammatical cases are formed by using the case as a stem and suffixing the possessive endings. Pronominal forms do not exist for all cases; the existing pronominalized case forms are given here.

Declension of personal pronouns

	sg. 1	sg. 2	sg. 3	pl. 1	pl. 2	pl. 3
<i>Illat.</i>	belém	beléd	bele, belé(je)	belénk	belétek	belējük
<i>Iness.</i>	bennem	benned	benne	bennünk	bennetek	bennük
<i>Elat.</i>	belőlem	belőled	belőle	belőlünk	belőletek	belőlük
<i>Sublat.</i> ³	rám	rád	rá(ja)	ránk	rátok	rájuk
<i>Superess.</i>	rajtam	rajtad	rajta	rajtunk	rajtatok	rajtuk
<i>Delat.</i>	rólam	rólad	róla	rólunk	rólatok	róluk
<i>All.</i>	hozzám	hozzád	hozzá(ja)	hozzánk	hozzátok	hozzájuk
<i>Adess.</i>	nálam	nálad	nála	nálunk	nálatok	náluk
<i>Abl.</i>	tőlem	tőled	tőle	tőlünk	tőletek	tőlük
<i>Dat.</i>	nekem	neked	neki	nekünk	nektek	nekik
<i>Instr.</i>	velem	veled	vele	velünk	veletek	velük
<i>Caus.-fin.</i>	értem	érted	érte	értünk	értetek	értük

³ Also, less colloquially, *reám, reád, reá(ja), reánk, reátok, reájuk.*

Beszélünk róluk.	We are speaking about them.
Hiszek benned.	I believe in you.
Rám vársz?	Are you waiting for me?
Mikor jöttök hozzánk?	When will you come to our place?
Adok neki egy rózsát.	I'll give him/her a rose.
Nincs sok pénz nálam.	I don't have much money with me.

Emphasis of the pronominalized cases is obtained by prefixing the nominative pronoun to the case form; the third person plural prefix, however, is **ő** (without the final **k**):⁴

énbennem, tebenned, őbenne, mibennünk, tibennetek, őbennük, etc.

Terád várok, senki másra.
I am waiting for *you* and nobody else.

Énnekem küldd el a pénzt, ne a bátyámnak!
Send the money to *me*, not my brother!

Tiveletek akarok menni!
I want to go with *you*!

Őbennük egyáltalán nem lehet hinni!
You can not believe in *them* at all!

7.2 Polite forms of address

7.2.1 Usage

The pronouns **te** and **ti** are used to address friends, relatives, children and animals. The pronouns **maga** (singular) and **maguk** (plural) are used to address people you are not as familiar with as well as strangers with whom you wish to maintain a reserved but not too formal relation. They can, however, be quite rude or condescending and it is best to wait until someone addresses you as such before using them. The pronouns **ön** (singular) and **önök** (plural) are used to address people with whom you wish to maintain a formal relation. In letters, the polite pronouns are

⁴ Recall that this is also true with the postpositions and possessive constructions.

capitalized. As with all pronouns, when they are subjects or direct objects they may be omitted.

(Maga) milyen könyvet keres?

What kind of book are you (singular) looking for?

(Maguk) felszállnak a buszra?

Are you (plural) getting on the bus?

Kérdezhetek öntől valamit?

May I ask you (singular) a question, sir/ma'am?

Önök ott lesznek a tárgyaláson?

Will you (plural) be at the meeting?

Another common and polite form of address uses no pronoun at all. Instead the person's name or title is used with the third person conjugations of the verb.

Siet a professzor úr?

Are you in a hurry, professor?

Finally, the use of the verb **tetszik** (plural: **tetszenek**) plus the infinitive is a polite form often used by children with adults or by adults with much older adults. It uses no pronouns.

Nem tetszik/tetszenek tudni, mennyi az idő?

Do you (singular/plural) know what time it is?

7.2.2 Declension of polite pronouns

The polite pronouns are considered third person pronouns; as such they conjugate with the third person forms of the verb (both singular and plural); when they are direct objects (either overtly stated or implied) they are considered definite (see definite conjugation, section 4.2).

Maga and **maguk** are identical with the reflexive pronouns and decline as any possessed noun. **Ön** and **önök** decline as regular nouns. None of the polite pronouns decline as personal pronouns, rather as nouns.

Declension of polite pronouns

<i>Nom.</i>	maga	maguk	ön	önök
<i>Acc.</i>	magát	magukat	önt	önöket
<i>Illat.</i>	magába	magukba	önbe	önökbe
<i>Iness.</i>	magában	magukban	önben	önökben
<i>Elat.</i>	magából	magukból	önből	önökből
<i>Sublat.</i>	magára	magukra	önre	önökre
<i>Superess.</i>	magán	magukon	önön	önökön
<i>Delat.</i>	magáról	magukról	önről	önökről
<i>All.</i>	magához	magukhoz	önhöz	önökhöz
<i>Adess.</i>	magánál	maguknál	önnél	önöknél
<i>Abl.</i>	magától	maguktól	öntől	önöktől
<i>Dat.</i>	magának	maguknak	önnek	önöknek
<i>Instr.</i>	magával	magukkal	önnel	önökkel
<i>Caus.-fin.</i>	magáért	magukért	önért	önökért

7.2.3 Possessive constructions with polite pronouns

The polite pronouns, in keeping with their ‘nounness’, form possessives identical to the nominal possessive constructions:

your (sg.) book	a maga könyve ~ magának a könyve az ön könyve ~ önnek a könyve
your (pl.) book	a maguk könyve ~ maguknak a könyve az önök könyve ~ önöknek a könyve
your (sg.) books	a maga könyvei ~ magának a könyvei az ön könyvei ~ önnek a könyvei
your (pl.) books	a maguk könyvei ~ maguknak a könyvei az önök könyvei ~ önöknek a könyvei

7.3 Reflexive pronouns

The reflexive pronouns are used when the subject is referred to again in the same clause. It translates as *myself*, *yourself*, *himself/herself/oneself*, etc. Some idioms require the use of the reflexive pronoun where English does not.

The reflexive pronouns are the possessive forms of a stem **mag-**; as such they attach suffixes as any possessed noun and are considered definite when a direct object. It is common in the Budapest dialect to omit the accusative endings on the **magam** and **magad** forms.⁵

Declension of reflexive pronouns

	sg.1	sg.2	sg.3	pl.1	pl.2	pl.3
<i>Nom.</i>	magam	magad	maga	magunk	magatok	maguk
<i>Acc.</i>	magam(at)	magad(at)	magát	magunkat	magatokat	magukat
<i>Illat.</i>	magamba	magadba	magába	magunkba	magatokba	magukba
<i>Iness.</i>	magamban	magadban	magában	magunkban	magatokban	magukban
<i>Elat.</i>	magamból	magadból	magából	magunkból	magatokból	magukból
<i>Sublat.</i>	magamra	magadra	magára	magunkra	magatokra	magukra
<i>Superess.</i>	magamon	magadon	magán	magunkon	magatokon	magukon
<i>Delat.</i>	magamról	magadról	magáról	magunról	magatokról	magukról
<i>All.</i>	magamhoz	magadhoz	magához	magunkhoz	magatokhoz	magukhoz
<i>Adess.</i>	magamnál	magadnál	magánál	magunknál	magatoknál	maguknál
<i>Abl.</i>	magamtól	magadtól	magától	magunktól	magatoktól	maguktól
<i>Dat.</i>	magamnak	magadnak	magának	magunknak	magatoknak	maguknak
<i>Instr.</i>	magammal	magaddal	magával	magunkkal	magatokkal	magukkal
<i>Caus.-fin.</i>	magamért	magadért	magáért	magunkért	magatokért	magukért

⁵ Recall that this is true of the first and second person singular personal pronouns as well.

Jól érezzük magunkat ebben a városban.

We feel (ourselves) comfortable in this city.

Vidd el magaddal a pénzt!

Take the money with you.

Ilona nem szeret magáról beszélni.

Ilona doesn't like to speak about herself.

7.4 Reciprocal pronoun

The reciprocal pronoun is *egymás* and is translated as 'each other', 'one another'. The same pronoun is used regardless of person. *Egymás* declines as a regular noun; when it is the direct object, it is considered definite.

Gyakran látogatjuk egymást. We visit each other often.

Egymás mellett ülnek. They are sitting next to each other.

Sokat várunk egymástól. We expect a lot of each other.

7.5 Possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns translate as 'mine', 'yours', 'his/hers', etc. In Hungarian forms exist for plural as well as singular possession. They must always be preceded by the definite article. Possessive pronouns decline as any possessed noun; the possessive endings for polite pronouns are the same as those for regular nouns (see section 8.8).

Possessor	Singular possession	Plural possession
<i>mine</i>	az enyém	az enyéim ~ az enyémeik
<i>yours (te)</i>	a tied (tiéd)	a tieid
<i>his/hers</i>	az övé	az övéi
<i>yours (maga)</i>	a magáé	a magái
<i>yours (ön)</i>	az öné	az önéi
<i>ours</i>	a mienk (miénk)	a mieink
<i>yours (ti)</i>	a tietek (tiétek)	a tieitek
<i>theirs</i>	az övék	az övéik
<i>yours (maguk)</i>	a maguké	a magukéi
<i>yours (önök)</i>	az önöké	az önökéi

Megmutattam neked az én fényképeimet, most mutasd meg a tieidet!

I showed you my pictures, now you show me yours.

Ezek a könyvek az övéi.

These books are his/hers.

Ez a tied?

Is this yours (singular)?

A ti lakásokban öt szoba van, a miénkben csak négy.

In your apartment there are five rooms, in ours there are only four.

7.6 Demonstrative pronouns

Hungarian has demonstrative pronouns to replace nouns, adjectives, number and adverbs. (The adverbial pronouns are treated in chapter 11 on adverbs.)

7.6.1 Ez/Az

The demonstratives *ez* ‘this’ and *az* ‘that’ have some anomalies in their declension.

In the singular declension of the non-grammatical cases, the final **-z** of the demonstrative pronouns assimilates to the initial consonant of most suffixed cases.

Because the initial **v-** of the instrumental case (**-val/-vel**) regularly assimilates to the consonants to its left, two forms exist for the demonstrative pronoun in the singular of this case.

Note the irregularity (**-dd-**) in the terminative **-ig** case formation.

The plurals and accusatives are formed regularly.

Declension of demonstrative pronouns **ez, az**

	Singular		Plural	
<i>Nom.</i>	ez	az	ezek	azok
<i>Acc.</i>	ezt	azt	ezeket	azokat
<i>Illat.</i>	ebbe	abba	ezekbe	azokba
<i>Iness.</i>	ebben	abban	ezekben	azokban
<i>Elat.</i>	ebből	abból	ezekből	azokból
<i>Sublat.</i>	erre	arra	ezekre	azokra
<i>Superess.</i>	ezen	azon	ezen	azon
<i>Delat.</i>	erről	arról	ezekről	azokról
<i>All.</i>	ehhez	ahhoz	ezekhez	azokhoz
<i>Adess.</i>	ennél	annál	ezeknél	azoknál
<i>Abl.</i>	ettől	attól	ezektől	azoktól
<i>Dat.</i>	ennek	annak	ezeknek	azoknak
<i>Instr.</i>	ezzel, evvel	azzal, avval	ezekkel	azokkal
<i>Caus.-fin.</i>	ezért	azért	ezekért	azokért
<i>Termin.</i>	eddig	addig	ezekig	azokig
<i>Transl.</i>	ezzé	azzé	ezekké	azokké
<i>Ess.-form.</i>	ekként	akként	ezekként	azokként
<i>Temp.</i>	ekkor	akkor	—	—

7.6.2 Usage of ez and az

7.6.2.1

The demonstrative pronouns may be used to replace a noun or have a deictic function.

Azt láttam. I saw that/it.

Ezeket megvesszük. We will buy these (things).

7.6.2.2

Demonstrative pronouns may also modify nouns. As modifiers the demonstrative pronoun must (1) agree in case and number with the noun it is modifying and (2) the noun must always be immediately followed by the definite article.

Azt a filmet akarom megnézni.

I want to watch that movie.

Ennek a lánynak fekete a haja.

This girl's hair is black.

Erre a buszra szállunk fel.

We are getting on this bus.

Azokról az emberekről beszéltünk.

We were talking about those people.

Whether used as a modifier or a noun replacement, the demonstrative pronoun is considered definite when it is the direct object.

7.6.2.3

A more literary demonstrative pronoun is *e*. This pronoun is used only attributively. Unlike its regular counterpart *ez*, it does not decline nor is the noun it modifies preceded by the definite article.

E házban lakott az egész család.

The entire family lived in this house.

E nagyszerű lovon ült a herceg.

The prince sat on this magnificent horse.

7.6.2.4

Demonstrative pronouns may also combine with the prefix *ugyan-* to connote 'the same'. As with the unprefixed forms, they can replace nouns or modify them.

János megnézte a Szerelem című filmet. Ugyanezt láttam én is.

János saw the movie titled 'Love'. I saw the same one.

Ugyanazt a térképet vettem meg, mint te.

I bought the same map as you.

7.6.3 Adjectival demonstrative pronouns

7.6.3.1

The following pronouns can modify nouns or replace adjectives:

ilyen ⁶	such, this kind	olyan ⁶	such, that kind
ugyanilyen	the same kind (as this)	ugyanolyan	the same kind (as that)
efféle, ilyenféle	this sort of	afféle, olyanféle	that sort of
ekkora	this big	akkora	that big, so big
ugyanekkora	the same size (as this)	uganakkora	the same size (as that)

Ilyen az élet.

Such is life.

Olyanokat tud mondani, hogy nem hiszek a fülemnek.

She says such things, that I can't believe my ears.

Akkora a háza, mint egy kastély.

Her house is as big as a castle.

Ugyanekkora házat vettem én is.

I bought a house the same size.

7.6.3.2

The pronouns *ilyesmi* 'such a thing (as this)' and *olyasmi* 'such a thing (as that)' are demonstrative pronouns. They are very common in colloquial usage and decline as regular nouns.

Ilyesmit soha életemben nem hallottam.

I never heard such a thing in my life.

Nem szokott olyasmiket mondani.

She doesn't usually say things like that.

⁶ Less colloquial forms include *ily*, *emilyen* 'such', 'this kind' and *oly*, *amolyan* 'such', 'that kind'.

7.6.4 Numerical demonstrative pronouns

These demonstrative pronouns replace expressions of quantity.

ennyi	this much/many	annyi	so/that much/many
ugyanennyi	this same amount/ number	ugyanannyi	that same amount/ number

Én ugyanannyit fizettem az autóért, mint te.

I paid as much for the car as you did.

Sohasem láttam ennyi embert egy helyen!

I have never seen this many people in one place!

7.7 Interrogative pronouns

7.7.1

The interrogative pronouns **ki** ‘who’ and **mi** ‘what’ decline exactly as regular nouns. They can be singular or plural. When direct objects, they are considered indefinite.

Kit láttál tegnap este az étteremben?

Who did you see last night in the restaurant?

Mik azok a kezekben?

What are those in your hand?

Kitől kaptad azt a könyvet?

From whom did you receive that book?

Miről szól a film?

What is the movie about?

Kire vártok?

Who are you waiting for?

7.7.2

The interrogative pronoun **melyik** ‘which’ is considered definite when a direct object. Its plural is **melyek**, and otherwise declines regularly.

Melyik tollat kéred? Which pen would you like?

It can also take the plural possessive suffixes:

melyikünk	which of us
melyiketek, melyikőtök	which of you
melyikük	which of them

Melyikőtök Kis György?

Which one of you is György Kis?

7.7.3

The adjectival interrogative pronouns are:

milyen	what kind of	mely	which
miféle, mifajta	what sort of	mekkora	how large

Milyen húst veszel ma? What kind of meat are you buying today?

Mekkora a lakása? How big is her apartment?

Miféle filmet szeret? What sort of movie do you like?

7.7.4

The numerical interrogative pronouns are **mennyi** ‘how much’, **hány** ‘how many’, **hányadik** ‘what ordinal number’. They may either modify nouns or replace numerals.

Mennyi pénz van nálad?

How much money do you have on you?

Mennyibe kerül a vonatjegy?

How much does the train ticket cost?

Hány kiló krumplit kér?

How many kilos of potatoes would you like?

Hányadik emeleten laknak?

Which floor (lit., what numbered floor, fourth?, fifth?, etc.) do they live on?

7.8 Relative pronouns

The relative pronouns **aki** ‘who’, **ami** ‘what’, ‘which’, ‘that’ decline exactly as their corresponding interrogative pronouns. **Amely** is another relative pronoun with the same meaning as **ami**; **ami** is more common in colloquial speech. When direct objects, these pronouns are always considered indefinite. Relative pronouns are always preceded by a comma.

Ismered a lányt, akiről beszélek?

Do you know the girl (who) I’m talking about?

Eolvastam a könyvet, amit küldtél nekem.

I read the book that you sent me.

**A kedvenc szobrom, amelyet Varga Imre alkotott,
Óbudán áll.**

My favorite statue, which Imre Varga sculpted, is in Óbuda.

Additional relative pronouns are formed by prefixing **a-** to the interrogative pronoun; they decline as their corresponding pronouns do: **amelyik**, **amilyen**, **amekkora**, **ahány**, **amennyi**.

Nem keresünk annyit, amennyit szeretnénk.

We do not earn as much as we would like.

Nem ismered a színdarabot, amelyikről beszélek?

Don’t you know the play which I am talking about?

7.9 Cataphoric use of pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns (of nouns, adjectives and number) are commonly used cataphorically, i.e., to refer ahead or refer back to something previously mentioned. Most commonly, the back vowel forms (**az**, **olyan**, **annyi**, etc.) refer to a later, forthcoming clause; the front vowel forms (**ez**, **ilyen**, **ennyi**, etc.) refer to an earlier clause, sentence or utterance. English does not have a close equivalent to these pronouns; they are often left untranslated or another circumlocution is employed. Their importance in clear Hungarian prose cannot be underestimated.

János nem szeretette azt, hogy beszéltek róla. Ezt én sem szeretem.

János didn’t like (the fact) that they were talking about him. I don’t like it either.

Annak örülök, hogy hazamehetek karácsonyra.

I am glad (of the fact) that I can go home for Christmas.

Megnyerte a lottót, és ekkor kezdődött a baj.

He won the lottery and that is when the trouble started.

Annyi cipője van neki, hogy nem fér el a szekrényben.

She has so many shoes that they don't fit in the closet.

7.10 Indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns are formed by adding the prefix *vala-* to the interrogatives.

nouns:

valami	something
valaki	someone
valamelyik	one or the other

adjectives:

valamilyen	some kind of
valamiféle	some kind of
valamekkora	of some size

numerical expressions

valamennyi ⁷	some amount of
valahány	some number of

Other indefinite pronouns are formed by attaching the prefixes *akár-* '(just) any', 'no matter (who, what,' etc.), *bár* 'any' to the interrogative pronouns.

Akármit mondasz, elindulok holnap.

No matter what you say, I'm leaving tomorrow.

Melyik CD-t akarja hallgatni? Bármelyiket, nekem mindegy.

Which CD would you like to listen to?	Any one at all, it's all the same to me.
---------------------------------------	--

⁷ *valamennyi*, paradoxically, also means 'every', 'all': *Valamennyien jöttek.* 'Everyone came.'

There can be a slight difference in the meaning between the two prefixes:

Akárki jöhet a konferenciára.

Bárki jöhet a konferenciára.

Anyone may come to the conference.

The first sentence has the meaning that any type of individual may come to the conference; the second that the conference is open to all, i.e., the first sentence says more about the pronoun subject, the second says more about the whole situation.

7.11 Negative and universal pronouns

The negative pronouns are formed by attaching the prefix *se-/sem-* to the interrogative pronoun. The universal pronouns are usually formed by prefixing the word **minden**. There are several exceptions in prefixing as the table below shows. The negative and universal pronouns decline exactly as their corresponding pronouns (except **minden**, which declines as a regular noun).

nouns:

ki	who	mindenki	everyone	senki	nobody
mi	what	minden/ mind	everything, all	semmi	nothing
melyik	which	mindegyik	each, every	semelyik	not one

adjectives:

milyen	what kind		semmilyen	no kind	
miféle	what kind	mindenféle	all kinds	semmiféle	no kind
mekkora	how big		semekkora	of no size	

numerical expression:

mennyi	how much	minden, mind	every- thing, all
semennyi	none at all	hány	how many

Double negation is always required in sentences containing a negative pronoun. The negatives **nem/ne/nincs** can be replaced by **sem/se/sincs** if a negative pronoun precedes it in the sentence; otherwise, **nem/ne/nincs** must be used.

Itt mindenki magyarul beszél. Itt senki sem/nem beszél

magyarul.

Everyone speaks Hungarian here.

No one speaks Hungarian
here.

**Nem találkoztam senkivel
az úton.**

I didn't meet anybody on the trip.

**Senkivel nem/sem
találkoztam az úton.**

I didn't meet anybody on the
trip.

Nincs semmi a szekrényben.

There is nothing in the closet.

**Semmi nincs/sincs a
szekrényben.**

There is nothing in the closet.

Possession

Hungarian indicates possession with a personal possessive ending attached to the noun. Thus, for example, in the word **autóm** the ending **-m** ‘my’ is attached to the word **autó** ‘car’ to mean ‘my car’. Cases may subsequently follow possessive endings: **autóm + ban** ‘in my car’. The plural **-k** may not be used with possessive endings; instead there is a separate plural possessive paradigm which uses the plural marker **-i**: **autóim** ‘my cars’.

Although the possessive is usually attached to nouns, it may sometimes attach to adjectives being used as nouns: **drága** ‘dear’; **drágám** ‘my dear (one)’.

Nouns marked with a possessive ending are usually preceded by the definite article. Although the definite article is rarely omitted in colloquial speech, it is often omitted in writing – especially at the beginning of sentences.

For emphasis or purposes of contrast, the personal pronoun may precede the possessed word. In this case, the definite article is always used. The personal pronouns are always in the nominative form with one exception: the third person plural pronoun is **ő** (not **ők!**), i.e., it is identical with the third person singular pronoun.¹ In the following tables the personal pronouns are used for the sake of clarity.

8.1 Singular possessive endings

Possessive endings (as with the plural and accusative endings) may effect a change in the word stem and may or may not need a linking vowel when suffixed. The third person endings are the trickiest (and least predictable) to form; the first and second person endings are stable.

¹ Compare with the postpositions and declension of personal pronouns.

8.1.1 Vowel-final stems

For words ending in a vowel, the possessive endings are always

my	-m	our	-nk
your (sg.)	-d	your (pl.)	-tok, -tek, -tök
his/her	-ja, -je	their	-juk, -jük

For words ending in a or e the vowel is lengthened to á, é, respectively, when adding the possessive ending. Other vowel-final words have no change in the stem.

Vowel-final stems-possessive singular

		táska	csésze	autó	bábu	cipő
		<i>bag</i>	<i>cup</i>	<i>car</i>	<i>puppet</i>	<i>shoe</i>
<i>my</i>	az én	táskám	csészém	autóm	bábum	cipőm
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te	táskád	csészéd	autód	bábud	cipőd
<i>his/her</i>	az ő	táskája	csészéje	autója	bábuja	cipője
<i>our</i>	a mi	táskánk	csészénk	autónk	bábunk	cipőnk
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti	táskátok	csészétek	autótok	bábutok	cipőtök
<i>their</i>	az ő	táskájuk	csészéjük	autójuk	bábujuk	cipőjük

8.1.2 Consonant-final stems

For words ending in a consonant the possessive endings are somewhat different than for those ending in a vowel.

The same noun classes recognized for the nominative plural must be recognized here. (See section 5.3 for a review of noun classes.) The noun classes determine both the shape of the stem and the linking vowel choice when suffixing the possessive.

stems which require the linking vowel choice **a/e**:

low vowel nouns (both classes: loss of length/no loss of length)

v-stem (**v-stem** is required when suffixing possessive)

-alom/-elem class (omits the last vowel when suffixing)

all other nouns require the linking vowel choice **o/e/ö**:

fleeting vowel nouns (omit last vowel when suffixing)

regular nouns

Possessive endings for consonant-final stems (*V* stands for linking vowel)

<i>my</i>	-Vm	<i>our</i>	-unk, -ünk
<i>your (sg.)</i>	-Vd	<i>your (pl.)</i>	-Vtok, -Vtek, -Vtök
<i>his/her</i>	-(j)a, -(j)e	<i>their</i>	-(j)uk, -(j)ük

As the table illustrates, the **én**, **te**, and **ti** forms require a linking vowel (which is determined by stem-type).

regular noun: **barát** friend **a barátom** my friend

low vowel noun: **toll** pen **a tollad** your (sg.) pen

regular noun: **testvér** sibling **a testvéretek** your (pl.) sibling

The **mi** possessive ending begins with a vowel; therefore, no linking vowel is required.

szomszéd neighbor **a szomszédunk** our neighbor

hely place **a helyünk** our place

The third person forms do not use a linking vowel; here, however, it must be determined whether the ending includes a **j**. (Both the third person singular and plural suffixes behave identically, i.e., if one includes the **j** in the suffix, then so does the other.) There are some rules, tendencies and much free variation in determining the presence or absence of **j**.

Rules:

Words ending in **j, gy, ly, ny, ty, s, sz, z, zs, c, cs** do not take a **j** (except **nagy**).

Low vowel words (including **v**-stems) do not take a **j** (the exceptions are **kád, nád, vad, rúd, lúd, út, kút, föld**²).
 Fleeting vowel words do not take a **j**.
 Nouns ending in **f** and **ch** do take a **j**.

Tendencies:

Nouns formed with the derivational ending **-at/-et** rarely take a **j**.
 Back vowel words ending in **p, t, k, b, d, g** usually take a **j**.
 Words ending in consonant clusters often take a **j**.
 Words ending in **h** usually do not take a **j** (exceptions are **pléh, sah**).

Examples of third person possessives

	description	his/her	their
festmény painting	ends in ny	a festménye	a festményük
garázs garage	ends in zs	a garázsa	a garázsuk
tál bowl	low vowel word	a tála	a táluk
kosár basket	low vowel word	a kosara	a kosaruk
ló horse	v -stem	a lova	a lovuk
tükör mirror	fleeting vowel word	a tükre	a tükrük
feladat task	derivation -at	a feladata	a feladatuk
szomszéd neighbor	back vowel, ends in d	a szomszédja	a szom0- szédjük
barát friend	back vowel, ends in t	a barátja	a barátjuk
kert garden	ends in consonant cluster	a kertje	a kertjük

² Note that these exceptions all end in the dentals **d** or **t**; with the exception of **hát** 'back', we may say that all low vowel words ending in **d** or **t** require the **j**-initial third person possessive suffixes. Also note that the words, **híd, rúd, lúd, út** and **kút**, which customarily lose length of the vowel when adding the plural, accusative, and first and second person possessive suffixes, do *not* lose length when adding the third person possessive suffixes.

For any stem-type not described above there is no consistent way to guess whether the third person suffixes include a *j* or not. In addition, there is free variation in some vocabulary where the suffix takes either the *j*-initial or the *j*-less suffix; however, the *j*-initial suffix is becoming more common in the modern language.

8.1.2.1 Possessive paradigms according to stem-type

Low vowel possessive singular

		(No loss of length)		(Loss of length)	
		váll	könny	pohár	ész
		<i>shoulder</i>	<i>tear</i>	<i>glass</i>	<i>mind</i>
<i>my</i>	az én vállam könnyem poharam eszem				
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te vállad könnyed poharad eszed				
<i>his/her</i>	az ő válla könnye pohara esze				
<i>our</i>	a mi vállunk könnyünk poharunk eszünk				
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti vállatok könnyetek poharatok eszetek				
<i>their</i>	az ő válluk könnyük poharuk eszük				

v-stem possessive singular

		ló	cső
		<i>horse</i>	<i>pipe</i>
<i>my</i>	az én lovam csövem		
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te lovad csöved		
<i>his/her</i>	az ő lova csöve		
<i>our</i>	a mi lovunk csövünk		
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti lovatok csövetek		
<i>their</i>	az ő lovuk csövük		

-alom/-elem stems possessive singular

		jutalom <i>reward</i>	érzelem <i>feeling</i>
<i>my</i>	az én	jutalmam	érzelmem
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te	jutalmad	érezmed
<i>his/her</i>	az ő	jutalma	érezme
<i>our</i>	a mi	jutalmunk	érezmünk
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti	jutalmatok	érezmetek
<i>their</i>	az ő	jutalmuk	érezmük

Fleeting vowel possessive singular

		álmom <i>dream</i>	terem <i>hall</i>	öklöm <i>fist</i>
<i>my</i>	az én	álmom	termem	öklöm
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te	álmod	termed	öklöd
<i>his/her</i>	az ő	álma	terme	ökle
<i>our</i>	a mi	álmunk	termünk	öklünk
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti	álmotok	termetek	öklötök
<i>their</i>	az ő	álmuk	termük	öklük

Regular possessive singular

		nadrág <i>pants</i>	szék <i>chair</i>	ismerős <i>acquaintance</i>
<i>my</i>	az én	nadrágom	székem	ismerősöm
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te	nadrágod	széked	ismerősöd
<i>his/her</i>	az ő	nadrágja	széke	ismerőse
<i>our</i>	a mi	nadrágunk	székünk	ismerősünk
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti	nadrágotok	széketek	ismerősötök
<i>their</i>	az ő	nadrágjuk	székük	ismerősük

8.2 Plural possessive endings

The plural possessive paradigm marks the plurality of the possessed item,³ e.g., my dogs, his sisters.

In the possessive paradigm the plural suffix is **-i** (never **-k**), followed by the personal endings. The personal endings are slightly different in the plural paradigm, but unlike the singular paradigm, they are unchanging:

my	-i-m	our	-i-nk
your (sg.)	-i-d	your (pl.)	-i-tok/-i-tek⁴
his/her	-i	their	-i-k

8.2.1 Vowel-final words

The plural **-i** attaches directly to words ending in a vowel. If the vowel is a or e, it is lengthened to **á** or **é**.

Vowel-final stems – possessive plural

		óra	csésze	szeplő	kapu
		clock	cup	freckle	gate
my	az én	óráim	csészéim	szeplőim	kapuim
your (sg.)	a te	óráid	csészéid	szeplőid	kapuid
his/her	az ő	órái	csészéi	szeplői	kapui
our	a mi	óráink	csészéink	szeplőink	kapuink
your (pl.)	a ti	óráitok	csészéitek	szeplőitek	kapuitok
their	az ő	óráik	csészéik	szeplőik	kapuik

³ Note that (unlike English) if each possessor has only one of a particular item, then the singular possessive paradigm is used.

Az orvos megvizsgálta a torkukat.

The doctor examined their throats (they each have one throat).

⁴ There is no **-tök** option here because in the plural there is never a front rounded vowel immediately preceding the personal ending.

8.2.2 Consonant-final words

The plural -i can not attach directly to words ending in a consonant. Instead, it must be preceded by -(j)a/-(j)e (identical with the third person possessive singular). As a rule, if the third person possessive includes a j in the singular paradigm for consonant-final words, then the j-initial suffix is employed throughout the plural paradigm as well.⁵

Consonant-final stems – possessive plural

	toll	kert	bűn	köröm	kalap
	<i>pen</i>	<i>garden</i>	<i>crime</i>	<i>(finger/toe)</i>	<i>hat</i>
				<i>nail</i>	
<i>my</i>	az én tollaim	kertjeim	bűneim	körmeim	kalapjaim
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a ti tollaid	kertjeid	bűneid	körmeid	kalapjaid
<i>his/her</i>	az ő tollai	kertjei	bűnei	körmei	kalapjai
<i>our</i>	a mi tollaink	kertjeink	bűneink	körmeink	kalapjaink
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti tollaitok	kertjeitek	bűneitek	körmeitek	kalapjaitok
<i>their</i>	az ő tollaik	kertjeik	bűneik	körmeik	kalapjaik

8.3 ó~a and ő~e stems

Several nouns display an alternation in their final vowel in the third person forms of possession: in back-vowel stems the word-final ó becomes a before the third person possessive suffixes. Similarly, in front-vowel stems, word-final ő becomes e before the suffix. Because the plural possessive is based on the singular possessive third person forms, this alternation may be continued there as well.

⁵ There are, however, numerous exceptions, e.g., *barátjuk* ‘their friend’ ~ *barátaik* ‘their friends’.

		idő <i>time</i>	ajtó <i>door doors</i>		szülő <i>parent parents</i>	
<i>my</i>	az én	időm	ajtóm	ajtaim ~ ajtóim	szülőm	szüleim
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te	időd	ajtód	ajtaid ~ ajtóid	szülőd	szüleid
<i>his/her</i>	az ő	ideje	ajtaja ~ ajtója	ajtai ~ ajtói	szüleje~ szülője	szülei
<i>our</i>	a mi	időnk	ajtónk	ajtaink ~ ajtóink	szülőnk	szüleink
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti	időtök	ajtótok	ajtaitok ~ ajtóitok	szülőtök	szüleitek
<i>their</i>	az ő	idejük	ajtajuk ~ ajtójuk	ajtaik ~ ajtóik	szülejük~ szülőjük	szüleik

There is much free variation among these forms. Other nouns which exhibit this alternation are:

csikó	foal	erdő	forest	vessző	stick
disznó	pig	erő	force	vő	son-in-law
hintó	carriage	esztendő	year		
hordó	vat	fő	head, person		
koporsó	coffin	mező	field		
orsó	spindle	tető	roof		
tinó	steer	tüdő	lung		
zászló	flag	velő	marrow		

nouns formed with the suffix -ső

belső interior, **első** (the) first, **felső** upper (part), **külső** exterior

8.4 Kinship terms

The following terms are irregular in forming the possessive:

		apa ⁶ <i>father</i>	anya <i>mother</i>	bátya <i>older brother</i>		öcs <i>younger brother</i>	
				<i>sg.</i>	<i>pl.</i>	<i>sg.</i>	<i>pl.</i>
<i>my</i>	az én	apám	anyám	bátyám	bátyáim	öcsém	öcséim
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te	apád	anyád	bátyád	bátyáid	öcséd	öcséid

⁶ An older form for 'father', *atya*, used mostly in religious terminology, declines exactly as *apa*.

<i>his/her</i>	az ő	apja	anyja	bátyja	bátyái	öccse	öcséi
<i>our</i>	a mi	apánk	anyánk	bátyánk	bátyáink	öcsénk	öcséink
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti	apátok	anyátok	bátyátok	bátyáitok	öcsétek	öcséitek
<i>their</i>	az ő	apjuk	anyjuk	bátyjuk	bátyáik	öccsük	öcséik

		fiú⁷		néne	
		son		aunt	
		<i>sg.</i>	<i>pl.</i>	<i>sg.</i>	<i>pl.</i>
<i>my</i>	az én	fiam	fiaim	néném	nénéim
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te	fiad	fiaid	nénéd	nénéid
<i>his/her</i>	az ő	fia	fiai	nénje	nénéi
<i>our</i>	a mi	fiunk	fiaink	nénénk	nénéink
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti	fiatok	fiaitok	nénétek	nénéitek
<i>their</i>	az ő	fiuk	fiaik	nénjük	nénéjük

8.5 Nominal possession

In addition to pronouns indicating possession (my book, our garden, etc.) other nouns may possess items (John's book, the story of his life, etc.).

8.5.1 Marking the possessor

In Hungarian the nominal possessive relationship has two variants: (1) the possessor is unmarked (i.e., in the nominative case) and (2) the possessor is marked with the dative case. In both instances, the possessed item is marked with a third person possessive ending.

Kornél kalapja ~ Kornélnak a kalapja	Kornél's hat
egy anya gyerekei ~ egy anyának a gyerekei	a mother's children

⁷ When *fiú* means 'boy', the possessive declension is regular; it is only irregular with the meaning 'son'.

**Magyarország fővárosa ~
Magyarországnak a fővárosa**

the capital of
Hungary

8.5.1.1

When the possessor is in the nominative case, the possessed noun is not preceded by the definite article and the possessor must immediately precede the possessed noun or noun phrase.

Nem értettem a szöveg lényegét.

I did not understand the point of the text.

Gyula kutyája nem harap.

Gyula's dog does not bite.

A lakosság húsz százaléka a fővárosban lakik.

Twenty percent of the population lives in the capital.

8.5.1.2

When the possessor is in the dative case the possessed noun is most often preceded by the definite article and the possessor may occur before or after the possessed noun (or may be entirely displaced).

Imrének fáj a lába. ~ Fáj a lába Imrének. ~ Imrének a lába fáj.

Imre's foot hurts.

The definite article is not used if the possessed noun is otherwise determined.

A lakoságnak húsz százaléka a fővárosban lakik.

Twenty percent of the population lives in the capital.

8.5.1.3

The possessor must be in the dative case if

(a) it is **ez**, **az**, **ezek**, or **azok**:

Annak a címét elfelejtettem.

I forgot its title.

(b) it is modified by **ez**, **az**, **ezek**, or **azok**:

Ezeknek a szobáknak fehérek a falai.

The walls of these rooms are white.

Ennek az iskolának a homlokzata nagyon régi.

This school's facade is very old.

(c) it is **ki/kik** or **mi/mik**.

Kinek a kutyája ez?

Whose dog is this?

Minek az ára ez?

What is this the price of?

8.5.2 Marking the possessed

The following table illustrates the possessive endings for singular and plural nominal possession. Note that, unlike the pronominal paradigm, the number (singular or plural) of the possessor is indicated on the possessor, the number of the possessed is indicated on the possessed.

	Singular possessed	Plural possessed
Singular possessor	the boy's book (one boy, one book) a fiú könyve ~ a fiúnak a könyve	the boy's books (one boy, several books) a fiú könyvei ~ a fiúnak a könyvei
Plural possessor	the boys' book (several boys, one book) a fiúk könyve ~ a fiúknak a könyve	the boys' books (several boys, several books) a fiúk könyvei ~ a fiúknak a könyvei

Note the difference in the way *anya* is marked in the following. In both sentences *anya* 'mother' is possessed by a plurality of individuals; in the first sentence, however, it is possessed by a pronoun, in the second, by a noun.

Pronominal possession:

Ismerem az (ő) anyjukat.

I know their mother.

Nominal possession:

Ismerem a fiúk anyját.

I know the boys' mother.

8.6 Possession and formal forms of address

The terms *maga*, *maguk*, *ön*, and *önök* form their possessives as nominal possession.

Meleg a maga kabátja ~ magának a kabátja?

Is your coat warm?

Ezek az önök fényképei ~ önöknek a fényképei?

Are these your pictures?

8.7 Possessive declension

8.7.1 Accusative

Third person singular possessive forms end in a vowel and therefore do not require a linking vowel; *a* and *e* are lengthened to *á* and *é* before the accusative.

Keressük a kocsiját/szemüvegét/leveleit.

We are looking for his car/glasses/letters.

The linking vowel for the accusative case is *a* or *e* after all other possessive endings.

Elkérték a jegyünket. They asked for our tickets.

Elveszik a kabátotokat. They'll take your coats.

The accusative is optional after nouns possessed by the first or second persons singular; after all other possessive endings it may not be omitted.⁸

Ismerem a bátyád ~ bátyádat.

I know your brother.

Meglátogattuk az egyik ismerősöm ~ ismerősömet.

We visited a friend of mine.

Otthon hagytam a könyveim ~ könyveimet.

I left my books at home.

⁸ Compare with the accusative case of the personal and reflexive pronouns.

8.7.2 Other cases

All other cases suffix regularly. For complete paradigms, see appendix 2.

Beszálltunk a kocsijába.	We got into his car.
Olvastam a sikereidről.	I've read about your successes.
Állandóan gondol a barátaira.	She is always thinking about her friends.
Sokat fizetett a házáért.	She paid a lot for her house.

Non-
attributive
possession

8.8 Non-attributive possession: *é, éi*

The suffix *é*, plural *éi*, is attached to nouns to denote ‘belonging to’. It is added directly to nouns; it lengthens final vowels *a*, *e* to *á*, *é*; otherwise no other stem changes occur. It can attach to singular, plural, or possessed nouns and may be followed by a case. The interrogative form is *kié* in the singular; the plural *kiéi* is seldom used.⁹

	<i>friend</i>	<i>non-attributive possessive</i>	
		<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
	barát	baráté	barátéi
<i>sg1poss</i>	barátom	barátomé	barátoméi
<i>sg2poss</i>	barátod	barátodé	barátodéi
<i>sg3poss</i>	barátja	barátjáé	barátjáéi
<i>pl1poss</i>	barátunk	barátunké	barátunkéi
<i>pl2poss</i>	barátotok	barátotoké	barátotokéi
<i>pl3poss</i>	barátjuk	barátjuké	barátjukéi
	friends		
	barátok	barátoké	barátokéi
<i>sg1poss</i>	barátaim	barátaimé	barátaiméi
<i>sg2poss</i>	barátaid	barátaidé	barátaidéi
<i>sg3poss</i>	barátai	barátaié	barátaiéi
<i>pl1poss</i>	barátaink	barátainké	barátainkéi
<i>pl2poss</i>	barátaitok	barátaitoké	barátaitokéi
<i>pl3poss</i>	barátaik	barátaiké	barátaikéi

⁹ In the plural, a question form with a nominal possession construction is preferred:

Kinek a táskái azok? ‘Whose bags are those?’ replaces **Kiéi azok a táskák?** ‘Whose are those bags?’.

Ez a lakás Zsuzsáé. Zsuzsa lakását már béreltem, de Imrét sohasem.

This apartment is Zsuzsa's. I have rented Zsuzsa's apartment, but never Imre's.

Ezek a kulcsok a barátodéi. Ezek a kulcsok az övéi, de nem találok az apáméit.

These keys are your friend's. These keys are hers, but I can't find my father's.

Postpositions

Postpositions supplement the case system and provide additional ways of expressing temporal, spatial, or other abstraction relationships. As the name implies, postpositions follow a noun phrase instead of preceding it. The noun phrase is usually in the nominative case, though some postpositions require a noun phrase marked with a different case.

Postpositions share several characteristics with cases. In addition to the abstract postpositions there is a locative system; postpositions may be used as roots to which personal suffixes are attached; demonstrative pronouns exhibit a pattern of agreement as similarly found with cases; verbs may govern postpositional phrases; and like phrases marked with the oblique cases, postpositional phrases function as adverbials, thus they also share word order patterns.

9.1 Some postpositions of time

közben	during
múlva	in, after (+ time expression)
óta	since
tájt	around, about

Három nap múlva jövök haza.

I'll come home in three days.

Az előadás közben senki sem beszélt.

No one spoke during the lecture.

9.2 Postpositions with possessive suffixes

Possessive suffixes attach to postpositions ending in consonants as they would to low-vowel noun stems. Added emphasis may be supplied by prefixing the personal pronoun to the postposition. As with the possessive declension of nouns, the third person plural possessive pronoun in this case is *ő* (not *ők*).

9.2.1 Some postpositions taking possessive suffixes

által	by (means of)	miatt	because of
ellen	against	nélkül	without
helyett	instead of	szerint	according to
iránt	towards, for	után	after
kívül	besides, except		

9.2.2 Sample possessive paradigms of postpositions¹

	(emphatic)		
szerintem	émszerintem	according to me	
szerinted	teszerinted	"	you (sg.)
szerinte	őszerte	"	him/her
szerintünk	miszerintünk	"	us
szerintetek	tiszerintetek	"	you (pl.)
szerintük	őszertük	"	them

¹ Recall that for most purposes the formal forms of address behave like nouns; thus the postposition paradigms for *magá*, *maguk*, *ön*, *önök* are like those for nouns: *Maga nélkül* ‘without you’, *önök után* ‘after you’, etc.

	(emphatic)		
miattam	énmiattam	because of me	
miattad	temiattad	"	you (sg.)
miatta	őmiatta	"	him/her
miattunk	mimiattunk	"	us
miattatok	timiattatok	"	you (pl.)
miattuk	őmiattuk	"	them

Velem vagy, vagy ellenem?

Are you with me or against me?

János nélkül nem megyünk, ő se megy nélkülünk.

We will not go without János, he won't go without us either.

Ne aggódjatok őmiattuk!

Don't worry on account of *them*!

9.3 Postpositions of location

The following are postpositions that adhere to the same tri-part directional system as found with the locative cases.

Motion toward ⇒ ●	No motion ●	Motion away ● ⇒	
elé	előtt	elől	in front of
mögé	mögött	mögül	behind
fölé	fölött/felett	fölül	above
alá	alatt	alól	below
mellé	mellett	mellől	next to
közé	között	közül	between
köré	körül	—	around
felé	—	felől	in the direction of

Négy szék van az asztal körül.

There are four chairs around the table.

Felakasztotta a festményt a két ablak közé.

She hung the painting up between the two windows.

A szőnyeg alá seperte a port.

He swept the dust under the rug.

9.3.1

These postpositions may also add possessive suffixes. Note that with postpositions ending in a vowel (elé, mögé, fölé, alá, közé, köré, and felé), the third person singular forms may occur with or without the -ja/-je suffix.

elém, eléd, elé(je), elénk, elétek, eléjük

toward in front of me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

előttem, előtted, előtte, előttünk, előttetek, előttük

in front of me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

előlem, előled, előle, előlünk, előletek, előlük

from in front of me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

alám, alád, alá(ja), alá(nk), alátok, alájuk

toward beneath me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

alattam, alattad, alatta, alattunk, alattatok, alattuk

beneath me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

alólam, alólad, alóla, alólunk, alólatok, alóluk

from beneath me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

Gyere ide mellém!

Come here next to me!

Ki áll mögötted?

Who is standing behind you?

Elénk tárult a balatoni táj.

The Balaton landscape unfolded before us.

9.4 Postpositions governing cases

The following postpositions govern cases other than the nominative.

superessive	(-o/-e/-ö)-n +	alul	at the bottom
		át	across, through
		belül	within
		felül/fölül	at the top
		innen	this side of
		keresztül	through
		kívül²	besides, outside of, except for
		túl	beyond

Egy órán belül elkészül.

It will be ready within an hour.

Tiszán innen, Dunán túl . . .

This side of the Tisza, beyond the Danube . . . (folk song)

sublative	-ra/-re +	nézve	with respect to
-----------	------------------	--------------	-----------------

Rám nézve végtelenül nehéz volt az út.

The trip was extremely difficult for me.

relative	-ról/-ről +	nézve	as seen from
----------	--------------------	--------------	--------------

Közelebről nézve láttuk, hogy az aláírás hamis volt.

Upon closer inspection we saw that the signature was fake.

² kívül has two paradigms with personal endings:

kívülem, kívüled, kívüle, kívülünk, kívületek, kívülük as well as rajtam kívül, rajtad kívül, rajta kívül, rajtunk kívül, rajtatok kívül, rajtuk kívül.

allative	-hoz/-hez/-höz + hasonlóan	similar to	képest	compared to
			Hozzád képest Ilona gyakran megy moziba.	Compared you, Ilona goes to the movies a lot.
ablative	-tól/-től +		fogva	from, since
			kezdve	starting from
			Januártól kezdve szorgalmasabban tanul.	He has been studying more diligently ever since January.
instrumental	-val/-vel +		együtt	together
			szemben	opposite to, facing
			A házzal szemben van egy gyönyörű gesztenyefa.	There is a beautiful chestnut tree across the way from the house.

9.5 Complex postpositions

9.5.1

Some postpositions are formed of a root, a possessive suffix, and a case.³ The third person singular forms can be used nominally as well as pronominally, thus the preceding noun phrase may be in either the nominative or dative case.

(az én) **számomra** for my part

(a te) **számodra** for your (sg.) part

(az ő), **valaki, mindenki**, etc. **számára** for his/her, someone's, everyone's part

³ Structurally these are simply nominal possessive constructions; they are included here as postpositions by convention only.

(a mi)	számunkra	for our part
(a ti)	számotokra	for your (pl.) part
(az ő)	számukra	for their part

The following postpositions pattern identically:

ellenemre, ellenedre, ellenére,etc.

in spite of me, you, him/her/it . . .

kedvemért, kedvedért, kedvéért, etc.

for my, your, his/her sake . . .

részemre, részedre, részére, etc.

for my, your, his/her part . . .

javamra, javadra, javára, etc.

in my, your, his/her favor . . .

Számomra is lesz hely?

Will there be room for me too?

Annak ellenére, hogy esett az eső, a fiúk tovább fociztak a kertben.

Despite the fact that it was raining, the boys continued to play soccer in the yard.

A maga kedvéért tettem meg.

I did it for your sake.

9.5.2

The following postpositions occur with the third person possessive suffix only, i.e., they are not used with pronouns:

folyamán	in the course of
jóvoltából	thanks to, due to
következtében	as a consequence of
mentén	along
révén	through, by means of
során	in the course of
útján	through, by means of

A patak mentén találtam egy aranygyűrűt.

I found a gold ring along by the stream.

A hosszú tárgyalás folyamán mindenki el tudta mondani a véleményét.

Everyone was able to voice his opinion in the course of the long discussion.

9.6 Demonstratives and postpositions

In the same way that demonstratives agree in case and number with the noun they modify, so do they agree in postposition. Compare the following:

ezek előtt a házak előtt ezekben a házakban
in front of these houses in these houses

Similarly, the final *-z* of the demonstratives is not tolerated before postpositions (and cases) beginning with a consonant:⁴

e mögött a ház mögött ebben a házban
behind this house in this house

As is found with cases, postpositional phrases with *ez*, *ezek* may be reduced:

ez alatt a szék alatt → e szék alatt
under this chair

ezek között a szekrények között → e szekrények között
between these cupboards

9.7 Postpositions as prepositions

The following postpositions may also be used as prepositions. They require the same cases as when used as postpositions.

⁴ Although the spelling does not reveal it, correct pronunciation of these phrases is like those of case-marked demonstratives where the final *-z* assimilates to the following consonant: compare *ez + ben* → *ebben* with *e + mögött* → [emmögött], *a + fölött* → [affölött], i.e., in both instances the pronunciation includes a doubling of the consonant: the written down form of the postposition, however, does not indicate this doubling.

át	through, across	szemben	facing, opposite
együtt	together	túl	beyond
keresztül	through		

Túl a Tiszán van egy csikós ...

There is a cowboy beyond the Tisza river ... (folksong)

Adjectives

Adjectives qualify nouns and pronouns. When used attributively, adjectives in Hungarian precede the noun they modify and do not agree in case or number with the noun.

Hosszú szoknyákat viselnek. They are wearing long skirts.

Érdekes cikkről beszélnek. They are talking about an interesting article.

10.1 Declension of adjectives

Adjectives, when not used as modifiers, decline for case and number.

Predicate adjectives must agree in number with their subjects:

A fiú magas. The boy is tall.

A fiúk magasak. The boys are tall.

Adjectives may occur in all cases (though never when used attributively).

Kérem a pirosat. I would like the red one.

A barnáról beszél. He is speaking about the brunette.

Megitta a feketét. She drank the coffee (lit., the black one).

Fáradtnak látszol. You seem tired.

10.1.1 Nominative plural of adjectives

The plural suffix **-k** is added to adjectives in a slightly different manner than nouns. When required, the linking vowel choice is **a/e** (exceptions are listed below).

10.1.1.1 Adjectives ending in a vowel**10.1.1.1.1** Adjectives ending in a/e

Word-final a or e is lengthened to *á*, *é*, respectively.

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>		<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
brown	barna	barnák	black	fekete	feketék
dear	drága	drágák	gray	szürke	szürkék

10.1.1.1.2 Adjectives ending in -i/-ú/-ű

These adjectives require the linking vowel a/e.

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>		<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
Canadian	kanadai	kanadaiak	one from Pest	pesti	pestiek
long	hosszú	hosszúak	simple	egyszerű	egyszerűek

10.1.1.1.3 Some exceptions

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
small	kicsi	kicsik
vain	hiú	hiúk
thick	sűrű	sűrűk

10.1.1.1.4

Adjectives ending in *ó* or *ő* witness some variation in forming the plural. Participles, for example, allow both variants – with or without the linking vowel:

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
visible	látható	láthatóak ~ láthatók
intelligible	érthető	érthetőek ~ érthetők
permanent	állandó	állandóak ~ állandók

10.1.1.1.5

Other adjectives ending in **-ó/-ő** never take a linking vowel:

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
good	jó	jók
tiny	apró	aprók
cheap	olcsó	olcsók

10.1.1.2 Adjectives ending in a consonant

10.1.1.2.1

Adjectives require the linking vowel **a/e** before the plural **-k**.

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
pretty	csinos	csinosak
worthwhile	értelmes	értelmesek
strong	erős	erősek
interesting	érdekes	érdekesek
patient	türelmes	türelmesek
hardworking	szorgalmas	szorgalmasak

10.1.1.2.2

Exceptionally, the following adjectives require the linking vowel **o** before the plural **-k**.

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>		<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
big	nagy	nagyok	happy	boldog	boldogok
rich	gazdag	gazdagok	blind	vak	vakok
thick	vastag	vastagok	base	aljas	aljasok
free	szabad	szabadok	other	más	mások

10.1.1.2.3

Adjectives formed with the derivation *-atlan/-etlen* or its variants decline as nouns; therefore they use *o/e*¹ for the linking vowel in the plural.

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
unhealthy	egészségtelen	egészségtelenek
unhappy	boldogtalan	boldogtalanok
impatient	türelmetlen	türelmetlenek
invisible	láthatatlan	láthatatlanok

10.1.1.2.4

Ethnonyms are the words used to indicate someone's ethnicity, home country or city. In Hungarian these words are not capitalized. Ethnonyms that do not end in *-i* decline as nouns and require the *o/e/ö* linking vowel choice. Ethnonyms ending in *-i* decline as adjectives and require the linking vowel *a/e*.

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
Hungarian	magyar	magyarok
Spaniard/Spanish	spanyol	spanyolok
Greek	görög	görögök
Czech	cseh	csehek
Pole/Polish	lengyel	lengyelek
Turk/Turkish	török	törökök
one from Budapest	pesti	pestiek
one from Vienna	bécsi	bécsiek
American	amerikai	amerikaiak
Londoner	londoni	londoniak

¹ The *ö* linking vowel option found with nouns is never used since these adjectives never have a last vowel that is front and rounded.

10.1.2 The accusative of adjectives

The accusative is suffixed to adjectives slightly differently than to nouns.

10.1.2.1 Adjectives ending in vowels

Adjectives ending in vowels suffix the accusative case **-t** in the same way as nouns ending in vowels.

10.1.2.1.1

Adjectives end in **a** or **e** lengthen to **á**, **é**, respectively, when adding the accusative **-t**.

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>
yellow	sárga	sárgát
ugly	csúnya	csúnyát
weak	gyenge	gyengét
blond	szőke	szőkét

10.1.2.1.2

Adjectives ending in any other vowel add the accusative **-t** directly to the end of the word.²

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>
awful	borzasztó	borzasztót
edible	ehető	ehetőt
dense	sűrű	sűrűt
sad	szomorú	szomorút
old	régi	régit
curious	kíváncsi	kíváncsit

² Note how this differs from the formation of *plural* adjectives: in the plural, a linking vowel is needed before adjectives ending in **-i/-ú/-ű**.

10.1.2.2 Adjectives ending in consonants

10.1.2.2.1

Regular adjectives ending in a consonant require the linking vowel *a/e* before the accusative *-t*.³

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>
blue	kék	kéket
valuable	értékes	értékeset
ready	kész	készet
tall	magas	magasat
low	alacsony	alacsonyat
sure	biztos	biztosat

10.1.2.2.2

The following adjectives are exceptions and require the linking vowel *o* before the accusative *-t*.

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>		<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>
big	nagy	nagyot	happy	boldog	boldogot
rich	gazdag	gazdagot	blind	vak	vakot
thick	vastag	vastagot	free	szabad	szabadot

10.1.2.2.3

Adjectives formed with the derivation *-atlan/-etlen* or its variants decline as nouns; since they end in *-n* they take no linking vowel before the accusative.

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>
unnecessary	szükségtelen	szükségtelent
unknown	ismeretlen	ismeretlent

³ Note how this differs from the formation of the accusative in the *noun*: in the noun no linking vowel is required if the word ends in *j, l, ly, n, ny, r, s, sz, z, zs*.

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>
unchangeable	megváltozhatatlan	megváltozhatatlant
carefree	gondtalan	gondtalant

10.1.2.2.4

Ethnonyms ending in a consonant decline as nouns: there is no linking vowel after the consonants *j, l, ly, n, ny, r, s, sz, z, zs*; otherwise, the linking vowel is *o/e/ö* before the accusative *-t*. (See section 6.1.2.1 on the accusative of nouns.)

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>
Croat	horvát	horvátot
Dutch	holland	hollandot
German	német	németet
Serbian	szerb	szerbet
Turk	török	törököt
Greek	görög	görögöt
Finn	finn	finnt
Hungarian	magyar	magyart
Albanian	albán	albánt
Pole	lengyel	lengyelt

10.1.3 Other irregularities in the accusative and plural of adjectives

10.1.3.1

The following adjectives witness a change in the stem when forming the plural and accusative:

	<i>nominative</i>		<i>accusative</i>
	<i>sg.</i>	<i>plural</i>	
difficult	nehéz	nehezek	nehezet
honest	derék	derekak	derekat
few	kevés	kevesek	keveset
brave	bátor	bátrak	bátrat

10.1.3.2 *kicsi—kis*

The adjective *kicsi* ‘small’ has a short form *kis*. The short form is used when it is used attributively; otherwise the long form *kicsi* is used. (Similarly *kettő* – *két* ‘two’, see section 14.1.2.)

Kis lakásban lakom.	I live in a small apartment.	(attribute)
Egy kis kávét kérek.	I would like a little coffee.	(attribute)
A lakásom kicsi.	My apartment is small.	(predicate adjective)
Csak egy kicsit tudok franciául.	I only know a bit of French.	(accusative)

10.2 Adjectives used as nouns

Adjectives may function as nouns; when they do, they decline as nouns.

Azok az épületek ismerősek.

Those buildings are familiar.

Azok ismerősök.

They are acquaintances.

10.2.1 *Full declension of adjectives*

Other than in the accusative, adjectives suffix cases exactly as nouns.

Declension of adjectives

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
	'high, tall'		'kind'	
<i>nominative</i>	magas	magasak	kedves	kedvesek
<i>accusative</i>	magasat	magasakat	kedveset	kedveseket
<i>illative</i>	magasba	magasakba	kedvesbe	kedvesekbe
<i>inessive</i>	magasban	magasakban	kedvesben	kedvesekben
<i>elative</i>	magasból	magasakból	kedvesből	kedvesekből
<i>sublative</i>	magasra	magasakra	kedvesre	kedvesekre
<i>superessive</i>	magason	magasakon	kedvesen	kedveseken
<i>delative</i>	magasról	magasakról	kedvesről	kedvesekről
<i>allative</i>	magashoz	magasakhoz	kedveshez	kedvesekhez
<i>adessive</i>	magasnál	magasaknál	kedvesnél	kedveseknél
<i>ablativ</i>	magastól	magasaktól	kedvestől	kedvesektől
<i>dative</i>	magasnak	magasaknak	kedvesnek	kedveseknek
<i>instrumental</i>	magassal	magasakkal	kedvessel	kedvesekkel
<i>translative</i>	magassá	magasakká	kedvessé	kedvesekké
<i>causal-final</i>	magasért	magasakért	kedvesért	kedvesekért
<i>essive-formal</i>	magasként	magasakként	kedvesként	kedvesekként
<i>terminative</i>	magasig	magasakig	kedvesig	kedvesekig

10.3 Forming the comparative

The comparative expresses the degree of an adjective, e.g., old: older. To form the comparative the suffix **-bb** is added to the adjective.

10.3.1

If the adjective ends in the vowels **a** or **e**, the vowel is lengthened when adding **-bb**; adjectives ending in other vowels witness no change in the stem.

drága	dear, expensive	drágább	dearer, more expensive
érthető	understandable	érthetőbb	more understandable
fekete	black	feketebb	blacker
keserű	bitter	keserűbb	more bitter
olcsó	cheap	olcsóbb	cheaper
régi	old	régibb	older
szomorú	sad	szomorúbb	sadder

10.3.2

The following adjectives lose their final vowel -ú/-ű (compare these with their adverbial forms):

hosszú	long	hosszabb	longer
ifjú	young	ifjabb	younger
könnyű	easy	könnyebb	easier
lassú	slow	lassabb	slower
szörnyű	awful	szörnyebb	more awful

10.3.3

The linking vowel a/e is used to link the suffix to adjectives ending in a consonant.

édes	sweet	édesebb	sweeter
különös	special	különösebb	more special
piros	red	pirosabb	redder

10.3.4

The following are some common exceptions:

jó	good	jobb	better
kicsi	small	kisebb	smaller
sok	many, a lot	több	more
szép	beautiful	szébb	more beautiful

10.3.5

Of the exceptional adjectives forming their plural and accusative with the linking vowel **o**, only **nagy** 'big', **nagyobb** 'bigger' is exceptional in the comparative.

10.3.6

Adjectives with a v-stem⁴

bő	abundant	bővebb	more abundant
hű	faithful	hűbb ~ hívebb	more faithful

10.3.7

Note the stem changes in the following:

bátor	brave	bátrabb	braver
dérek	decent	derekabb	more decent
kevés	few, little	kevesebb	fewer, less
nehéz	difficult, heavy	nehézebb	more difficult, heavier

10.3.8

Some stems are already a comparative degree:

alsó	lower	felső	upper
belső	inner	külső	outer

⁴ Compare with the adverbial forms where the v-stem is also evident.

10.3.9

Adjectives with the comparative suffix decline as regular adjectives.

10.4 Using the comparative**10.4.1**

Comparative statements are commonly made with the conjunction **mint** ‘than’.

Pál érdekesebb történeteket mesél, mint Attila.

Pál tells more interesting stories than Attila.

Az apám jobban főz, mint én.

My father cooks better than I.

10.4.2

If the noun in the **mint** clause is in the nominative case, it can instead be inflected with **-nál/-nél**; the conjunction **mint** is subsequently omitted.

Pál érdekesebb történeteket mesél Attilánál.

Pál tells more interesting stories than Attila.

Az apám jobban főz nálam.

My father cooks better than I.

10.4.3

If the compared item or action is something other than a pronoun or noun in the nominative, comparison can only be made with the **mint** construction.

Rózsa szebben ír, mint rajzol.

Rózsa writes more beautifully than she draws.

István kevesebb húst eszik, mint zöldséget.

István eats less meat than vegetables.

10.4.4 egyre

Used before the comparative degree, this means ‘more and more’/‘less and less’.

Péter egyre magasabb lesz. Péter is getting taller and taller.

Zsuzsa egyre jobban síel. Zsuzsa is skiing better and better.

Egyre kevesebbet beszél az órán. He speaks less and less in class.

10.4.5 minél ..., annál ...

Used before the comparative degree, these words join two clauses of comparison:

Minél szorgalmasabban tanul István, annál jobban szereti a matematikát.

The more diligently István studies, the more he likes mathematics.

Minél többet eszem, annál éhesebb leszek.

The more I eat, the hungrier I get.

10.4.6 Degree of comparative

The degree of a comparison, e.g., *three meters higher*, uses the -val/-vel case on the degree preceding the comparative form:

három méterrel magasabb three meters higher

sokkal boldogabb much happier

mennyivel könnyebben? how much more easily?

két órával hosszabb two hours longer

10.5 Superlative

The superlative (old: oldest) is formed by attaching the prefix *leg-* to the comparative. No changes are otherwise effected in the stem.

wider	szélesebb	widest	legszélesebb
cheaper	olcsóbb	cheapest	legolcsóbb
upper	felső	uppermost	legfelső
lower	alsó	lowermost	legalsó

10.6 Demonstrative adjectives⁵

(These are also used pronominally, see 7.6.3.)

	<i>nominative singular</i>	<i>nominative plural</i>	<i>accusative singular</i>	
such, like that	olyan	olyanok	olyat	(less common: olyant)
such, like this	ilyen	ilyenek	ilyet	(less common: ilyent)
what kind of	milyen	milyenek	milyet	(less common: milyent)

10.7 Interrogative adjectives

(These are also used pronominally, see 7.7.3.)

10.7.1 **milyen** ('what kind of', 'what is (something) like')

When used as a predicate adjective, **milyen** translates as 'what is (something) like'.

Milyenek azok a férfiak? What are those men like?

Milyen az a könyv? What is that book like?

Otherwise, attributively, **milyen** translates as 'what kind of'.

Milyen gyümölcsöt akarsz vásárolni?

What kind of fruit do you want to buy?

⁵ See section 7.6.3.1 for more on the use of these adjectival demonstratives.

10.7.2

For emphasis, **milyen** may be used to modify adjectives.

Milyen jó zongorista a Tamás! What a good pianist Tamás is!

Milyen szép ez a virág! What a beautiful flower this is!

10.7.3

When modifying adverbs, **milyen** translates into English as ‘how’ – both interrogatively and emphatically.

Milyen gyorsan fut? How fast does she run?

Milyen gyorsan fut! How fast she runs!

10.8 Relative adjectives

(These are also used pronominally, see 7.8.) Subordinate clauses with relative adjectives may begin with the conjunction **mint** ‘as’; they may omit **mint**; or the clause may begin with **mint** and omit the relative adjective.

amilyen as, such as

Olyan fekete a szeme, mint amilyen a korom.

Olyan fekete a szeme, amilyen a korom.

Olyan fekete a szeme, mint a korom.

Her eyes are as black as soot.

10.9 Indefinite adjectives

10.9.1 ‘Some’

When modifying mass nouns, the word ‘some’ is implied in Hungarian; the phrase **egy kis** ‘a little’, ‘some’ may also be used.

Kávét és vaját szeretnék venni. ~ Egy kis kávé és vaj szeretnék venni.

I would like to buy (some) coffee and butter.

Kérsz teát?

Would you like some tea?

When modifying count nouns, use **néhány** ‘several’, ‘a few’, ‘some’ or **egy pár** ‘a couple’.

Néhány körtét evett.

She ate several pears.

Tegnap este írtam egy pár levelet.

I wrote a couple of letters last night.

10.9.2 ‘Any’

Hungarian does not have the equivalent of English ‘any’ (found in negative sentences). It is already implied in the negative sentence.

Sohasem olvas újságot.

He never reads (any) newspapers.

Ezen a nyáron nem veszek új ruhát.

I am not buying (any) new clothes this summer.

For emphasis, the constructions **egy . . . sem** ‘not one’ or **egyetlen . . . sem** ‘not a single . . .’ may be used.

Egy szót sem szólt.

He didn’t say one word.

Ebben az évben egyetlen jó filmet sem láttunk.

We haven’t seen one good film this year.

Egyetlen rossz tanítványom sincs.

I don’t have a single bad student.

10.10 Numerical adjectives

Numbers may be used as adjectives by suffixing **-s**. (See section 12.2.2 for forming and using **-s**.)

Az ötvenes években született.

She was born in the fifties (lit., the fifty-ish years).

Az egyes villamos ma nem jár.

The number 1 tram is not running today.

A 408-as irodában dolgozik.

He works in Room 408.

Adverbs

Adverbs are the part of speech addressing manner, place and time of an action.

11.1 Adverbs of manner: *Hogy(an)? . . . How?*

11.1.1 -an/-en

Most adverbs of manner are made by adding the suffix **-(a)n/-(e)n** to the corresponding adjective. No linking vowel is required when suffixing to adjectives ending in **-a/-e**; this vowel, however, is lengthened to **á/é**:

csúnya	ugly	csúnyán	not nicely
drága	dear, expensive	drágán	dearly, expensively
fekete	black	feketén	pessimistically, on the black market
furcsa	strange	furcsán	strangely
ritka	rare	ritkán	rarely, seldom

The linking vowel **a/e** is usually used when combining with adjectives ending in **-í/-ú/-ű**:

célszerű	expedient	célszerűen	expediently
keserű	bitter	keserűen	bitterly
kíváncsi	curious	kíváncsian	curiously
savanyú	sour	savanyúan	sourly
szomorú	sad	szomorúan	sadly

There is some variation in the use of linking vowels when combining with adjectives (these are mostly participles) ending in **-ó/-ő**. With some exceptions, however, the linking vowel is preferred:

érthető	understandable	érthetően	understandably
forró	hot, boiling	forrón	hotly
kiváló	outstanding	kiválóan	outstandingly
látható	visible	láthatóan	visibly
olcsó	inexpensive	olcsón	inexpensively

The linking vowel **a/e** is always required when suffixing to adjectives ending in a consonant:

aranyos	sweet, cute	aranyosan	sweetly, charmingly
biztos	sure	biztosan	surely
boldog	happy	boldogan	happily
kedves	nice	kedvesen	nicely
szép	beautiful	szépen	beautifully

Exceptions:

The following adjectives cannot combine with **-an/-en**:

derék	honest, good	derekul	honestly
jó	good	jól	well
remek	splendid	remekül	splendidly
rossz	bad, poor	rosszul	badly, poorly
vad	wild	vadul	wildly

The following adjectives form their adverbs with **-on**:

gazdag	rich	gazdagon	richly
nagy	big	nagyon	very, greatly, strongly
szabad	free	szabadon	freely
vastag	thick	vastagon	thickly

The following adjectives lose their final vowel when forming the adverb:¹

hosszú	long	hosszan	at length
ifjú	young	ifjan	young, at an early age
könnyű	easy, light	könnyen	easily, lightly
lassú	slow	lassan	slowly
szörnyű	awful	szörnyen	awfully

Other stem changes:

bátor	brave	bátran	bravely
bő	abundant	bőven	abundantly
hű	faithful	híven	faithfully (or hűen)
nehéz	heavy, difficult	nehezen	heavily, with difficulty

11.1.2 -lag/-leg

The suffix **-lag/-leg** also forms adverbs from adjectives (and participles). Although it is difficult to predict when adverbs are formed with **-lag/-leg** as opposed to **-an/-en**, the former is most often used with adjectives formed with **-i**, and the two variants are rarely used with the same adjective.

eredeti	original	eredetileg	originally
gyakorlati	practical	gyakorlatilag	in practice, practically
lehető	possible	lehetőleg	possibly
politikai	political	politikailag	politically
valószínű	probable	valószínűleg	probably

Ezt a konferenciát eredetileg csak évente egyszer tartották.

Originally this conference was held only once a year.

¹ Compare with the comparative.

Mária politikailag jól ismeri Kínát, de nyelvismerete gyenge.

Mária knows China well politically, but her knowledge of the language is poor.

This suffix is sometimes attached to nouns as well:

arány	proportion	aránylag	proportionately
eset	case, instance	esetleg	perhaps
tény	fact	tényleg	really
viszony	relation	viszonylag	relatively

11.1.3 The essive -ul/-ül

This ending lengthens word-final a and e to á and é, respectively; otherwise there are no changes in the stem when suffixing.

The essive case -ul/-ül is used to form adverbs from adjectives ending in (a)tlan/-(e)tlen:

Váratlanul toppant be a sógorom.

My brother-in-law showed up unexpectedly.

Egészségtelenül táplálkozol.

You eat unhealthy foods (lit., 'not healthily').

Ismeretlenül is üdvözlöm a férjedet.

My regards to your husband though we haven't even met yet.

The essive case is required when expressing an action 'in a language': **magyarul** 'in Hungarian', **görögül** 'in Greek'. Note in the following examples that the English expressions may translate as direct objects, not adverbs:

Tudok magyarul, angolul és franciául.

I know Hungarian, English and French.

Zsuzsa már jól beszél oroszul, és most németül is tanul.

Zsuzsa speaks Russian well and is studying German now, too.

This case may also be added to nouns to denote how the noun is used.

István feleségül vette a húgomat.

István married my younger sister (lit., took her *as a wife*).

Ez a régi épület iskolául szolgál.

This old building serves as a school.

Segítségül kellett hívnom a szomszédomat.

I had to call my neighbor for (lit., as) help.

11.1.4 The essive-formal case -ként

Similar to the essive, **-ként** is used with nouns to denote how the noun is used. This is usually translated as ‘as’ in English.

Mérnök, de egyelőre tanárként dolgozik.

She is an engineer, but for the time being she is working as a teacher.

Egy emberként beszéltek a tárgyalások alatt.

They spoke as one man during the negotiations.

Laci önként jelentkezett a rendőrségen.

Laci turned himself in voluntarily at the police station. (lit., ‘as himself’)

11.1.5 -képp(en)

The suffix **-képp(en)** has the same meaning as the essive-formal and is found in a few forms:

aképpen in that way

eképp(en) in this way

mindenképpen in any case

tulajdonképpen actually, really, properly

11.1.6 More adverbs of manner

alig hardly

igen indeed

általában in general, usually

ingyen free, gratis

annyira so much, to such an extent

is is so so

bizony	surely, certainly	kevésé	a little, somewhat
csak	only	körülbelül	approximately
csaknem	almost	külön	separately
csupán	merely, only	majdnem	almost
egyáltalán nem	not at all	még	still, yet
egyedül	alone	méltán	deservedly, worthily
elég	fairly, rather	önként	voluntarily
eléggé	fairly, rather	össze-vissza	randomly, confusedly
egészen	entirely, completely	pusztán	merely, only
egyébként	otherwise	részint	partly, to a certain extent
egy kicsit	a little	sőt	moreover
egyúttal	at the same time, in addition	szinte	almost, all but
együtt	together	teljesen	fully, completely
éppen	just, exactly	többé- kevésbé	more or less
folyton	incessantly	túl	too, over-
hiába	in vain	valahogy	somehow

11.1.7

With some expressions, the accusative case is used adverbially:

elég enough **eleget** **Eleget hallottam már róla.**
I have heard enough about him.

jó good **jót** **Jót aludtam.**
I had a good sleep./I slept well.

kevés few **keveset** **Keveset sportolsz.**
You play (very) few sports.

nagy	big	nagyot	Nagyot nevtünk. We had a good laugh.
sok	many	sokat	Sokat beszél a barátnőjéről. He talks a lot about his girlfriend.

11.1.8

Verbs of seeming, sounding like, looking like, feeling, may take an adverbial complement – not an adjective, as in English. The adverbial may be an adverb of manner or an adjective or noun marked in the dative case.

Jól nézel ki.	You look good.
Jól esett ez a séta.	That walk felt good.
Roszul érzi magát.	He feels bad, poorly, not well.
Ez nekem jól hangzik.	That sounds good to me.
Jó ötletnek hangzik.	It sounds like a good idea.
Fáradtnak látszol.	You seem tired.
Eleinte könnyűnek tűnt.	It seemed easy at first.

11.1.9 *Adverbial participles*

Adverbial participles are adverbs of manner made from verbs. See section 4.4.3 on how to form them.

Tréfálkozva mondta, hogy tíz gyereket akar. She said jokingly that she wants ten children.
Ásítva kávézott. He drank his coffee yawning.

11.2 **Comparative and superlative of adverbs of manner**

The comparative and superlative of adverbs of manner are formed by adding the adverbial suffix **-an/-en** to adjectives already formed for the

comparative and superlative (See sections 10.3 and 10.5 to form the comparative and superlative of adjectives.)

Comparative and superlatives of adverbs of manner

	adjective		adverb	
	positive	comparative	comparative	superlative
beautiful	szép	szebb	szebben	legszebben
rare	ritka	ritkább	ritkábban	legritkábban
loud	hangos	hangosabb	hangosabban	leghangosabban
good	jó	jobb	jobban	legjobban
few	kevés	kevesebb	kevesebben	legkevesebben
much, many	sok	több	többen	legtöbben

Kati sokkal szebben énekel nálam, de Csilla énekel a legszebben.

Kati sings much more beautifully than I, but Csilla sings the most beautifully.

Ebben az évben többen iratkoztak be a magyar tanfolyamra, mint tavaly.

This year more people signed up for the Hungarian course than last year.

Hol lehet legolcsóbban benzint venni?

Where can one buy gas most cheaply?

Csinosabban öltözködik most, mint régen.

She dresses more prettily now than before.

Note also the following irregular adverbial forms:

	positive	comparative	superlative
nagyon	very much	inkább more so, rather	leginkább mostly, most of all
egy kicsit	a little	kevésbé less	legkevésbé least
rosszul	badly	rosszabbul worse	legrosszabbul worst

Nagyon szeretem a svájci csokoládét is, de leginkább a belga csokoládét szeretem.

I like Swiss chocolate very much, but I like Belgian chocolate most of all.

Márta egy kicsit tud németül, kevésbé tud franciául, és legkevésbé olaszul tud.

Márta knows a little German, less French and knows the least Italian.

11.2.1

Adjectives with the derivational suffix (a)tlan/-(e)tlen (or its variants) and comparative or superlative affixes use the adverbial ending -ul/-ül.

cruel	kegyetlen	kegyetlenebb
	kegyetlenebbül	legkegyetlenebbül
unhappy	boldogtalan	boldogtalanabb
	boldogtalanabbul	legboldogtalanabbul

Az öreg még kegyetlenebbül is bánik a szomszédjaival most, hogy beteg lett.

The old man treats his neighbors even more cruelly now that he has become ill.

11.2.2 egyre

Use *egyre* with the comparative form of adverbs to mean *more and more so* or *less and less so*.

A szülei egyre gyakrabban utaznak külföldre.

His parents travel abroad more and more frequently.

Egyre többen tanulnak angolul az iskolában.

More and more people study English in school.

Imre egyre korábban kel fel.

Imre gets up earlier and earlier.

11.2.3 minél . . . , annál . . .

Use this with the comparative of adverbs to compare clauses.

Minél jobban tudsz főzni, annál többen jönnek hozzád vacsorázni.

The better you know how to cook the more people come to your house for dinner.

Minél ritkábban írsz nekem, annál ritkábban gondolkodom rád.

The more seldom you write me, the more seldom I think about you.

11.2.4

The instrumental case *-val/-vel* is used to express the degree of comparison of the adverb.

Sokkal kedvesebben bánik velem, mint régen.

She treats me much more nicely than before.

Péter egy kicsivel jobban tud svédül, mint a húga.

Péter knows Swedish a little bit better than his sister.

11.3 Adverbs of number

Expressions of quantity can be used as adverbs when denoting the number of people in the subject. In these constructions the subject is translated into English as either a pronoun or 'people'.

Százan álltak a sorban.

A hundred people stood in line.

Hányan mentek Szentendrére vasárnap?

How many of you are going to Szentendre on Sunday?

Kevesen voltunk az előadáson.

There were few of us at the lecture.

11.4 Adverbs of space

Most expressions of space are formed with the case system and are discussed in chapter 6.

11.4.1 Locative system

Consistent with the locative system in case-marking, adverbs of space have a tri-part distinction with respect to motion toward, no motion, and motion away. The following table illustrates the locative system for deixis and interrogatives of place.

Motion toward (comparative) ⇒ ●	Motion toward ⇒ ●	No motion ●	Motion away ● ⇒
	hova? (to) where?	hol? where?	honnan? from where?
idébb more toward here	ide (toward) here	itt here	innen from here
odább ~ odébb more toward there	oda (toward) there	ott there	onnan from there
	merre? in which direction?	merre? where about?	merről? from which direction?
errébb further this way	erre in this direction, this way		erről from this direction
arrább ~ arrébb further that way	arra in that direction, that way		arról from that direction

Hol van a táskám? Itt van az asztal alatt.

Where is my bag? Here it is under the table.

Merre vezet ez az ösvény? Menjünk arra!

Where does this path lead? Let's go in that direction.

Honnan jössz?

Where do you come from?

Hova mentek fürödni?

Where are you going swimming?

The following common adverbs occur with one or more directional pendants, some with comparative or superlative forms as well. As can be seen in the table, the paradigm is not as complete as with the other deictic elements.

	Motion toward	No motion	No motion comparat./superlative	Motion away
home	haza	itthon²		itthonról
home	haza	otthon		otthonról
together	együvé	együtt		
together	össze	össze összébb	összébb	
inside	bentre	benn~bent	beljebb	bentről
inside, within	belülre	belül	legbelül	belülről
outside	kintre	kinn~kint	kijjebb	kintről
outside, besides	kívülre	kívül	legkívül	kívülről
down(stairs)	lentre	lenn~lent	lejjebb	lentről
up (above), upstairs	fentre föntre	fenn~fent ~fönn~fönt	fejebb~följebb legfejebb~legföljebb	fentről föntről
above	felülre	felül	legfelül	felülről
below, bottom	alulra	alul	alább legalul	alulról
near	közelre	közél	közelebb legközelebb	közéről
front	előre	elől	legelől	előlről
back	hátra hátrébb	hátul	leghátul	hátról
side	félre	oldalt		oldalról
elsewhere	máshova	másutt máshol		máshonnan
far	messzire	messze	messzebb legmesszebb	messziről
distant	távolra	távol	távolabb legtávolabb	távolról

² **itthon** refers to home when the speaker is at the home; **otthon** refers to home when the speaker is elsewhere.

11.4.2 *Compass points*

		<i>from the ...</i>	<i>in the ...</i>	<i>to the ...</i>
north	észak	északról	északon	északra
south	dél	délről	délen	délre
east	kelet	keletről	keleten	keletre
west	nyugat	nyugatról	nyugaton	nyugatra
northwest	észak-nyugat			
northeast	észak-kelet			
southwest	dél-nyugat			
southeast	dél-kelet			

11.5 *Time expressions*

Time expressions may be conveyed with the use of cases, postpositions, a combination of the two, or no marking at all.

11.5.1

Many time expressions are fixed – requiring no further case marking or postpositions:

addig	up until then	máskor	at some other time
akkor	at that time; then	még	yet, still
az előbb	just a moment ago	még nem	not yet
az idén	this year	még mindig	still
azonnal	immediately	mindig	always
eddig	up until now	mindjárt	soon, immediately
ekkor	at this time; then	most	now
eleinte	at first	mostanában	nowadays

először	first, the first time	múltkor	last time, recently
egyelőre	for the time being	néha	sometimes
egy pillanat	(in) a moment	nemrég	recently
éppen (most)	just now	nemsokára	soon
gyakran	often	nyomban	at once
hamar	soon	örökké	forever
holnap	tomorrow	régen	a long time ago
holnapután	day after tomorrow	régóta	since a long time
jövőre	next year	ritkán	rarely
később	later	rögtön	immediately
későn	late	sokáig	for a long time
korán, korábban	early, earlier	tavaly	last year
ma	today	tegnap	yesterday
majd	soon, in a while, later	tegnapelőtt	day before yesterday
már	already, now	többé nem	no longer
már nem	no more, no longer	többé soha	never more

Holnap Budapesten leszek, és holnapután Prágába utazom.

Tomorrow I will be in Budapest and the day after tomorrow I travel to Prague.

Tavaly rengeteget havazott, de az idei évre inkább esőt jósolnak.

Last year it snowed a lot, but this year they are predicting more rain.

Nemsokára otthon leszünk.

We'll be home soon.

Majd felhívlak, mikor több időm lesz.

I'll call you (soon, later) when I have more time.

Régen gyakran szokta mondani, hogy szeret, de most már nagyon ritkán mondja.

A long time ago he would often tell me that he loved me, but now he says it very rarely.

Mikor először volt Londonban, nem tudott még angolul.

The first time he was in London he didn't yet speak English.

11.5.2 *Vague time*

akármikor whenever

bármikor anytime, whenever

valaha once, in the past

valamikor at some time, sometime

Bármikor jöhetsz, csak gyere!

You can come any time, just come!

Valaha egy hatalmas kastély volt itt.

Once there was an enormous castle here.

Valamikor biztosan hallottam már azt a darabot, csak nem emlékszem, hogy mikor.

I'm sure I've heard that piece at some time, I just don't remember when.

11.5.3 *Dates*

Dates are expressed by giving the year first, then the month, and finally the day of the month expressed as the ordinal number with the third person singular possessive suffix. There is a period after the year and the month is not capitalized.

1989. október 23-a (Ezerkilencszáznolcvankilenc október huszonharmadika)

2000. június 17-e (Kétezer június tizenhetedike)

To indicate 'on' a certain date, add the superessive case (*o/e/ö-n*) to the date:

Június 17-én születtem.	I was born on June 17.
Január elsején pihenni szoktunk.	We usually relax on the first of January.
Hatodikán jön.	He's coming on the sixth.

11.5.4 *Times of day*

hajnal	dawn	reggel	(in the) early morning
délelőtt	morning, before noon	nappal	during the day
délután	(in the) afternoon	alkony	twilight
este	(in the) evening	éjszaka	(at) night

11.5.5 *Days of the week*

Use the superessive case (o/e/ö-n) to indicate 'on'. (Except for *vasárnap* 'on Sunday'.) Note that the days of the week are not capitalized.

hétfő	Monday	hétfőn	on Monday
kedd	Tuesday	kedden	on Tuesday
szerda	Wednesday	szerdán	on Wednesday
csütörtök	Thursday	csütörökön	on Thursday
péntek	Friday	pénteken	on Friday
szombat	Saturday	szombaton	on Saturday
vasárnap	Sunday	vasárnap	on Sunday

Hétfőn megyünk vissza dolgozni.

We are going back to work on Monday.

Szerdán lesz a zongoraóráám.

My piano lesson will be on Wednesday.

Vasárnap meglátogatjuk a szüleinket.

On Sunday we'll visit our parents.

Only when modified by *ez* ‘this’ or *az* ‘that’ does *vasárnap* ‘Sunday’ require the superessive (-n).

Ezen a vasárnapon lemegyünk Szegedre.

This Sunday we are going to Szeged.

11.5.6 Months

The inessive case (-ban/-ben) is used to express ‘in’, ‘during’ a month. Note that names of the months are not capitalized in Hungarian.

január	januárban	in January
február	februárban	in February
március	márciusban	in March
április	áprilisban	in April
május	májusban	in May
június	júniusban	in June
július	júliusban	in July
augusztus	augusztusban	in August
szeptember	szeptemberben	in September
október	októberben	in October
november	novemberben	in November
december	decemberben	in December

Júliusban lemegyünk a Balatonra.

In July we are going to the Balaton.

Decemberben jönnek a barátaim.

My friends are coming in December.

Novemberben esni szokott az eső.

It usually rains in November.

11.5.7 Time expressions using cases

These are sometimes limited to certain lexical items.

11.5.7.1 Superessive: *(o/e/ö)-n*

Use with the following words to mean ‘during’ or ‘in’.

hét	week	héten	during the week
nap	day	napon	on (a) day
nyár	summer	nyáron	in/during the summer
tél	winter	télen	in/during the winter

Minden héten írok a szüleimnek.

I write my parents every week.

Múlt nyáron Japánba utaztunk.

We traveled to Japan last summer.

Télen korcsolyázni lehet a tavon.

In the winter one can skate on the lake.

Melyik napon jössz?

What day are you coming?

11.5.7.2 Inessive *(-ban/-ben)*

Use with the following words to mean ‘during’ or ‘in’.

hónap	month	év	year
század	century	pillanat	moment
perc	minute	másodperc	second
idő	time	kor	age
dél	noon		

Melyik hónapban születted?

(In) which month were you born?

Rossz időben érkeztek.

They arrived at a bad time.

Ebben az évben kezdett iskolába járni.

She began school this year.

Délben ebédelni szoktak.

They usually eat lunch at noon.

11.5.7.3 Sublative (-*ra/-re*)

Use this case to indicate ‘by’ a specified time:

Hatra/Hat órára otthon leszek.

I’ll be home by six.

Hétfőre kell befejezni a munkát.

The work must be done by Monday.

Use to indicate ‘intended’ time (note the opposition with the -*ig* case):

Egy hétre mentem, de egy hónapig maradtam.

I went for a week, but I stayed a month.

Mennyi időre utazol el?

How long are you traveling for?

Use in tandem with the allative (-*hoz/-hez/-höz*) in the following construction:

mához egy hétre a week from today

Use with the delative (-*ról/-ről*) in the following construction:

napról napra from day to day

időről időre from time to time

11.5.7.4 Terminative -*ig*

Use this case to mean ‘for’ or ‘until’ a terminal point of time (often used in conjunction with the ablative -*tól/-től*).

3-tól 6-ig leszek az irodámban.

I will be in my office from 3 to 6.

Reggeltől estéig beszéltek.

They spoke from morning until night.

Két évig laktunk Debrecenben.

We lived in Debrecen for two years.

A tanfolyam egy hónapig tartott.

The course lasted one month.

Reggelig vártak.

They waited until morning.

11.5.7.5 Instrumental *-val/-vel*

Use this case with the following words to mean 'during' or 'in'.

tavas	spring	tavasszal	in the spring
ősz	fall	ősszel	in the fall
éj	night	éjjel	at night
nap	day	nappal	during the day.

Tavasszal találkoztunk.

We met in spring.

Ősszel sokat esik az eső.

It rains a lot in the fall.

Ebben a városban az autóbuszok éjjel-nappal járnak.

In this city the buses run day and night.

11.5.7.6 Distributive *(-Vnként)*

(See section 6.4.1 on how to suffix the distributive.) This case is used to express regularly recurring time.

Hetenként hívja fel az édesanyját.

He calls his mother every week.

Óránként közlik a híreket.

They announce the news every hour.

A buszok tíz percenként járnak.

The buses run every ten minutes.

11.5.7.7 Temporal *(-kor)*

This case is used with the hours of the day and some holidays.

Karácsonykor a gyerekek aranyosan viselkednek.

At Christmas children behave nicely.

Hétkor fog telefonálni.

She will call at seven o'clock.

11.5.7.8 Temporal-distributive (-*ntal/-nte*)

Use with the following words to mean 'per', 'every'.

nap	day	naponta	daily, every day
hó	month	havonta	monthly, every month
hét	week	hetente	weekly
óra	hour	óránként	hourly

Havonta fizetnek.

I get paid monthly.

Hetente háromszor találkoznak.

They meet three times per week.

11.5.7.9 Multiplicative (-*szor/-szer/-ször*)

Add this case to numbers and some expressions of quantity to indicate the number of times.

egyszer	once	hétszer	seven times
kétszer	twice	nyolcszor	eight times
háromszor	three times	kilencszer	nine times
négyyszer	four times	tízszer	ten times
ötször	five times	sokszor	many times
hatszor	six times	többször	several times

Milliószor pusziállak.

I send you a million kisses. (lit., I kiss you a million times.)

Csak egyszer voltam Lengyelországban.

I've only been to Poland once.

Naponta többször telefonál.

He calls several times a day.

Add *-szor/-szer/-ször* to fractions to indicate the ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘third’, etc. time. Note the irregular form for ‘first’.

először (the) first time **harmadszor** (the) third time
másodszor (the) second time **negyedszer** (the) fourth time

Most először vagyok Tahitin.

I am in Tahiti now for the first time.

Csak akkor értettem, mikor másodszor mondta.

I only understood it the second time he said it.

11.5.7.10 Accusative (-t)

This case has a limited use in time expressions, usually occurring with only a few verbs.

Két hetet töltöttünk Spanyolországban.

We spent two weeks in Spain.

Egy órát vártunk.

We waited one hour.

11.5.8 *Time expressions with postpositions*

(Note that some postpositions require a case on the time expression preceding them.)

közben during **Senki nem beszél az előadás közben.**

No one speaks during the performance.

alatt during (With this meaning **alatt** is a synonym of **közben**.)

A háború alatt sokan éheztek.

Many people went hungry during the war.

alatt under/ (With this meaning **alatt** is a synonym of **belül**.)

(with)in **Egy óra alatt fejeztem be a házi feladatot.**

I finished the homework in (under) an hour.

után after **Hívjál fel tíz óra után.**

Call me after ten o'clock.

előtt before **Magyar óra előtt mindig találkoznak.**

They always meet before Hungarian class.

fogva/ kezdve from/ since Use with the ablative case **-tól/-től:**
Januártól kezdve/fogva már nem jár az előadásra.

She has not been coming to the lecture since January.

során/ folya- mán in the course of **A tárgyalások során sokat tanultak egymásról.**
They learned a lot about each other in the course of the negotiations.

belül (with)in Use with the superessive case **o/e/ö-n.**
A fiunk egy hónapon belül jön haza.
Our son will be home (with)in a month.

át/keresz -tül through Use with the superessive case **o/e/ö-n:**
Egész életen át vártam rá.
I waited a lifetime for her.

között between **Négy és öt óra között az irodámban leszek.**
I'll be in my office between four and five o'clock.

hosszat long **Hét óra hosszat dolgoztak a házi feladatukon.**
They worked for seven hours long on their homework.

múlva in, after **Három nap múlva kezdődik a vizsgaidőszak.**
The exam term begins in three days.

felé toward **Tíz óra felé kezd fáradt lenni.**
Towards ten o'clock he starts to get tired.

körül, tájban, táján about, around These are all synonyms.
Nyolc óra körül vacsorázunk.
We eat dinner around eight o'clock.

Éjfél tájban szokott hazajönni.
She usually comes home around midnight.

Az ünnepek táján jön meglátogatni.
He will come to visit us around the holidays.

-számra for . . . on end Though not a true postposition, **-számra** combines with nouns similarly.

A régi barátok óraszámra tudtak beszélni.
The old friends could talk for hours on end.

Hétszámra várták a hivatalos engedélyt.

They waited for weeks on end for official permission.

11.5.9 'Since'

Hungarian has two ways of expressing 'since' or 'for' a period of time. Note that because the action continues into the present, the verb must be in the present tense.

the postposition **óta**:

1995 óta Budapesten lakunk.

We have been living in Budapest since 1995.

Két év óta vagyok itt.

I have been here for two years.

Mióta tanulsz magyarul?

How long have you been studying Hungarian?

the third person singular possessive **(j)a/(j)e**:

Két éve vagyok itt.

I have been here for two years.

Három hónapja dolgozunk rajta.

We have been working on it for three months.

Mennyi ideje tanulsz magyarul?

How long have you been studying Hungarian?

11.5.10 'Ago'

Two constructions can be used to express 'ago'. The verb must be in the past tense.

The postposition **ezelőtt** with **-val/-vel**:

Egy évvel ezelőtt kezdtem magyarul tanulni.

I began to study Hungarian one year ago.

Itt volt három perccel ezelőtt.

He was here three minutes ago.

The third person singular possessive (j)a/(j)e:

Egy éve kezdtem magyarul tanulni.

I began to study Hungarian one year ago.

Itt volt három perce.

He was here three minutes ago.

Since both the ‘since’ and ‘ago’ constructions use the third person singular possessive the verb tense may be the only way to distinguish between the meaning of the two:

Három hónapja dolgozunk rajta.

We have been working on it for three months.

Három hónapja dolgoztunk rajta.

We worked on it three months ago.

11.5.11 *Every*

The word ‘every’, can be expressed with either the distributive case (-Vnként) or the word *minden* may be used before the time expression.

Minden kedden/Keddenként találkoztak.

They met every Tuesday.

Minden hónapban/Havonként legalább egyszer mennek hangversenyre.

Every month they go to at least one concert.

11.5.12 *Usually*

The word ‘usually’ may be expressed by either the adverbial *általában* or the verbal construction with *szokott*. *Szokott* may conjugate for any person in both the indefinite and definite conjugations; though it means ‘usually’, *szokott* is only used in the past tense conjugation. It takes an infinitival complement.

Reggel teázni szoktam.

I usually drink tea in the morning.

Hétkor szokott felkelni.

She usually gets up at seven o'clock.

Tavasszal esős idő szokott lenni.

In the spring the weather is usually rainy.

Mit szoktál csinálni a szabad idődben?

What do you usually do in your free time?

11.5.13 Clock time

The question *Mennyi az idő?* or *Hány óra van?/Hány óra?* ‘What time is it?’ may be answered using quarter-hour segments. The expressions refer to the coming full hour. The word *óra* ‘hour’ cannot be used with any fraction of the hour. The word *van* ‘is’ is always optional.

It is 1:00. **Egy óra (van).**

It is 1:15. **Negyed kettő (van).** (lit.) a quarter (on the way) to two

It is 1:30. **Fél kettő (van).** (lit.) half (on the way to) two

It is 1:45. **Háromnegyed kettő (van).** (lit.) three quarters (on the way) to two

Otherwise clock time is expressed with reference to the nearest quarter using the following pattern of postpositions:

X perc múlva = in X minutes

X perccel múlt = X minutes past

5:55 **öt perc múlva hat (óra)** (lit.) in five minutes it will be
6:00

These postpositional patterns are also used with quarter-hour time segments:

2:13 **két perc múlva negyed három**
(lit.) in two minutes it will be 2:15

3:47 **két perccel múlt háromnegyed négy**
(lit.) it is two minutes past 3:45

7:33 **három perccel múlt fél nyolc**
(lit.) it is three minutes past half of eight

Official times may be stated using the full numbers. The 24-hour clock may be used:

15:55 **tizenöt óra ötvenöt perc**

(lit.) fifteen hours fifty-five minutes

3:47 **három óra negyvenhét perc**

(lit.) three hours forty-seven minutes

In response to the question **Mikor?** 'when', **Hánykor?**/**Hány órakor** 'at what time (on the clock)' the temporal case **-kor** must be added to the end of the time expression.

Hánykor jöttek?

When did they come?

Hétkor/Hét órakor.

At seven/seven o'clock.

Tizenhárom óra negyvenhárom perckor indul a vonat.

The train leaves at 13:43.

11.5.14 *Interrogatives of time*

Mikor?

When?

Hánykor?

At what time (on the clock)?

Mennyi időre?

For how long? By what time?

Mikorra?

By what time?

Mikortól (kezdve/fogva)?

Since when? From what time?

Mettől (kezdve/fogva)?

Since when? From what time?

Meddig?

Until when? For how long? How much time?

Mennyi ideig?

Until when/for how long?

Mennyi időt?

How much time?

Mióta?

Since when?

Mennyi idő múlva?

In (after) how much time?

Miközben?

During what time? When?

Mennyi idővel ezelőtt?

How long ago?

Mennyi idő alatt?

During how much time?

Mennyi időn belül?

Within how much time?

Mennyi időn keresztül?

For how long a time?

11.6 Adverbial pronouns

The adverbial pronouns reflect all the meanings of manner, space and time found among the adverbs. The following chart summarizes the possible adverbial pronouns. (The relative adverbials are formed by prefixing *a-* to the interrogatives.)

Adverbial pronouns					
Interrogative	Demonstrative	Negative	Indefinite	Indefinite-2	Universal
hova where to	ide to here oda to there	sehova from nowhere	valahova to somewhere	akárhova bárhova to anywhere	mindenhova mindenüvé to everywhere
hol where	itt here ott there	sehol nowhere	valahol somewhere	akárhol bárhól anywhere	mindenhol mindenütt everywhere
honnan where from	innen from here onnan from there	sehonnan from nowhere	valahonnan from somewhere	akárhonnan bárhonnan from anywhere	mindenhonnan mindenünnen from everywhere
merre in which direction	erre this way arra that way	semerre in no direction	valamerre in some direction	akármerre bármerre in any direction	mindenfelé in every direction
meddig how far how long	eddig until now/here addig until now/there	semeddig for no length of time or distance	valameddig for some length of time or distance	akármeddig bármeddig for any length of time or distance	mindeddig so far, up until now
mikor when	ekkor at this time akkor at that time	semmikor at no time soha sohasem sosem never	valaha once, sometime valamikor at some time	akármikor bármikor whenever	mindig mindenkör always
hogy(an) how	így in this way úgy in that way	sehogy(an) in no way	valahogy(an) in some way	akárhogy(an) bárhogy(an) in any way	mindenképpen mindenhogy(an) anyway, in any case

11.6.1 Interrogative

Mikor született Bartók?	When was Bartók born?
Hova akarsz menni ma este?	Where do you want to go tonight?
Honnan jön a lárma?	Where is the noise coming from?

11.6.2 Relative

The relative adverbials are formed by prefixing *a-* to the interrogative. An exception is *amíg* 'while', which often replaces *ameddig* 'as long as'.

Odaraktam a kabátomat, ahol a többi kabát van.

I put my coat where the other coats are.

Amióta találkoztam vele, másra nem is tudok gondolni.

Since I met him I can't think of anything else.

Amíg veszekedtek a nappaliban, leégett a vacsora a konyhában.

While they were arguing in the living room, the dinner burned in the kitchen.

11.6.3 Demonstrative

Erre gyere, erre!

Come here, this way!

Úgy kell vágni a hajamat, hogy ne lássák, hogy kopaszodom.

You have to cut my hair so that you can't see that I'm going bald.

All demonstrative pronouns may be prefixed with *ugyan-* to denote 'same'.

Szólt a telefon és ugyanakkor csengettek.

The phone rang and at the same time the doorbell did too.

Most már ugyanúgy teniszezel, mint a tanárod.

You play tennis the same way now as your teacher.

11.6.4 Cataphoric use of demonstrative adverbials

As with other demonstrative pronouns, the demonstrative adverbials may be used to refer ahead to a forthcoming clause or back to an earlier statement. The back vowel demonstratives refer ahead; front vowel demonstratives refer back.

Úgy beszél franciául az a német lány, mintha Párizsban született volna.

That German girl speaks French as if she were born in Paris.

Bárcsak így tudnék franciául én is.

If only I knew French like that.

Arra megyek, amerre viszel.

I'll go where you take me.

Addig üsd a vasat, amíg meleg!

Strike while the iron is hot!

Ott akarok lakni, ahol csend van.

I want to live where it is quiet.

11.6.5 Negative

The verb must always be negated when using negative adverbials (double negation); the exceptions are *sohasem*, *sosem* 'never' where the negative particle is already built into the word.

Sohasem/sosem voltunk Kuala Lumpurban.

We have never been to Kuala Lumpur.

Sehova sem megyek késő este.

I never go anywhere late at night.

11.6.6 Indefinite

As is found in the nouns and adjectives, there are several indefinite pronouns. The *vala-* prefix denotes 'some (undefined)' and the *akár-* and *bár-* prefixes denote 'any, ~ever'

Valamikor szeptemberben ismerkedtek meg.

They became acquainted sometime in September.

Akármikor telefonálok, elfoglalt.

Whenever I call she's busy.

Bármikor jöhetsz, csak gyere!

You may come any time, just come!

11.6.7 *Universal*

Mindenképpen keress fel, ha Budapesten vagy.

No matter what, look me up if you are in Budapest.

Mindenhol koszos volt.

It was dirty everywhere.

Imre mindig csak enni akar.

Imre always wants to eat.

Word formation

Word formation (also called derivation) is perhaps the richest area of Hungarian grammar. Suffixes can be added singly or in combination to change one part of speech into another or otherwise qualify the root. The verb **megszentségtelenít** ‘defile’, ‘profane’ is an illustration of how several suffixes and a prefix combine with a single root.

szent holy; saint

szentség holiness, sanctity (addition of the noun-forming suffix **-ség** ‘-ness’)

szentségtelen impious, sacrilegious (addition of the adjective-forming suffix **-telen** ‘un-’)

megszentségtelenít defile, profane (addition of verb-forming suffix **-ít** and coverb **meg**)

Some of the suffixes are extremely productive, others are more limited in their use. This chapter lists the most important derivational suffixes.

12.1 Noun-forming suffixes

12.1.1 Nouns formed from verbs

12.1.1.1 -ás/-és

This suffix is added to verb stems; it usually attaches to the same stems as the present participle. It is 100 percent productive (may be used with all verbs) and denotes the (abstract) action. It is translated by the gerund in English.

dohányzik	smoke	dohányzás	act of smoking
énekel	sing	éneklés	act of singing
ír	write	írás	act of writing
olvas	read	olvasás	act of reading

Abbahagyta az olvasást. He stopped reading.

Nem tetszett neki az éneklés. He didn't like the singing.

The *-ás/-és* suffix may also denote the result of an action.

főz	cook	főzés	cooking, cuisine
ír	write	írás	writing (sample)
kér	ask for	kérés	request
mond	say	mondás	saying

Nagyon találó az a közmondás. That proverb is quite apt.

Lenne egy pár kérésem. I have a few requests.

12.1.1.2 *-at/-et*

This suffix is added to verb stems to denote a result of the verb.

épül	build	épület	building
felad	assign	feladat	assignment
felel	answer	felelet	answer, response
ír	write	irat	document
mond	say	mondat	sentence

12.1.1.3 *-alom/-elem, -(a)dalom/-(e)delem*

This suffix is attached to verbs to form collective or abstract nouns

forr	boil	forradalom	revolution
hat	have an effect	hatalom	power
ír	write	irodalom	literature
jön	come	jövedelem	income

késik	be late	késedelem	delay
történik	happen	történelem	history

12.1.1.4 *-(o)mány/-(e)mény*

This suffix is added to verbs to denote a result of the action.

ad	give	adomány	grant
fest	paint	festmény	painting
gyűjt	collect	gyűjtemény	collection
kezd	begin	kezdemény	initiative
költ	compose, invent	költemény	poetry, poem
olvas	read	olvasmány	a piece/selection of reading
süt	bake	sütemény	pastry
tud	know	tudomány	knowledge, science

12.1.1.5 *-vány/-vény*

This suffix is added to verbs to denote a result or product of an action.

áll	stand	állvány	stand, scaffolding
igazol	justify	igazolvány	certificate
jön	come	jövevény	newcomer
kér	ask for	kérvény	questionnaire
kiad	publish	kiadvány	publication
köt	tie	kötvény	bond, security
mutat	show	mutatvány	specimen; spectacle

12.1.2 *Nouns formed from noun, adjective or verb stems*

12.1.2.1 *-ász/-ész*

This suffix is added to stems (of nouns, adjectives or verbs) to form occupations.

bánya	mine	bányász	miner
épít	build	építész	architect
erdő	forest	erdész	forester
gyógy-¹	cure	gyógyász	doctor
hal	fish	halász	fisherman
mű	opus	művész	artist
nyelv	language	nyelvész	linguist
szín	scene	színész	actor
szobor	statue	szobrász	sculptor
szül	give birth	szülész	obstetrician

12.1.2.2 -ászat/-észet

This suffix (formed by adding *-at/-et* to the previous suffix) is added to stems to denote the field of work associated with the aforementioned occupations.

épít	build	építészet	architecture
gyógy-²	cure	gyógyászat	medicine
mű	opus	művészet	art
nyelv	language	nyelvészet	linguistics
szobor	statue	szobrászat	sculpture
szül	give birth	szülészet	obstetrics

12.1.2.3 -ista

Similar to the English suffix ‘-ist’, this suffix is added to roots to denote one belonging to the general activity or school of the root.

alkohol	alcohol	alkoholista	alcoholic
egyetem	university	egyetemista	university student

¹ The hyphen indicates that this form is found only as a stem, or combinatory form. i.e., it does not occur as a self-standing word.

² See n. 1 above.

gimnázium	high school	gimnázista	high school student
zongora	piano	zongorista	pianist

This suffix is found in many cognates with English.

buddhista	Buddhist	nacionalista	nationalist
germanista	Germanist	optimista	optimist
imperialista	imperialist	pesszimista	pessimist
kapitalista	capitalist	szocialista	socialist

12.1.2.4 -s

This is perhaps the most widely used derivational suffix. In addition to making nouns, its most common use is in forming adjectives (see section 12.2.2).

The suffix *-s* requires a linking vowel when attaching to stems ending in a consonant. In most cases, the choice of linking vowel is the same as in forming the plural. When adding the suffix *-s* to words ending in *a* or *e*, the vowel is lengthened to *á*, *é*, respectively; with stems ending in other vowels, there is no change in the stem.

The suffix *-s* makes nouns from other nouns to denote the person who operates or works at or with that noun.

asztal	table	asztalos	carpenter
ének	song	énekes	singer
könyvtár	library	könyvtáros	librarian
óra	watch	órás	watchmaker
tánc	dance	táncos	dancer
taxi	taxi	taxis	taxi driver
telefon	telephone	telefonos	telephone operator
zöldség	vegetable	zöldséges	greengrocer

12.1.2.5 -ság/-ség³

Another widely used suffix, *-ság/-ség* makes nouns out of adjectives and other nouns. Its general meaning is similar to the English suffixes ‘-ness’ or ‘-hood’, but it has a collective function as well.

anya	mother	anyaság	motherhood
barát	friend	barátság	friendship
boldog	happy	boldogság	happiness
buta	stupid	butaság	stupidity
egész	whole	egészség	health
hegy	mountain	hegység	mountain range
képtelen	incapable	képtelenség	inability
lehető	possible	lehetőség	possibility

12.1.2.6 -né

This suffix is added to a name or noun to mean ‘Mrs.’ or the person’s wife.

Kövér Csaba		Csaba Kövér	
Kövér Csabané		Mrs. Csaba Kövér	
Kövérné		Mrs. Kövér	
pék	baker	pékné	baker’s wife
pap	minister	papné	minister’s wife

12.1.2.7 -ék

This suffix is added to a name or noun to denote the family, or usual entourage, of the person.

Kovács	a Kovácsék	the Kovács family
Gyula	a Gyuláék	Gyula and his family and/or friends

³ This suffix never lengthens a final a or e when attaching.

a barátom my friend **a barátoméék** my friend and his family
and/or friends

12.2 Adjective-forming suffixes

12.2.1 -i

This suffix forms adjectives from nouns, adverbs and postpositions.⁴

12.2.1.1

It is often added to expressions of place or time and can be translated by 'of' or a possessive construction in English.

fent	above	fenti lakás	upstairs apartment
közel	nearby	közeli bolt	nearby store
ma	today	mai újság	today's newspaper
tavaly	last year	tavalyi idő	last year's weather
utóbb	later	utóbbi évek	recent years

12.2.1.2

It is added to nouns to give them an attributive function.

hegy	mountain	hegyi tó	mountain lake
hely	place	helyi idő	local time
nő	woman	női ruha	women's clothing
tavas	spring	tavaszi zápor	spring shower

12.2.1.3

The suffix -i may be added to postpositions to turn the entire postpositional phrase into an attribute.

a ház előtt	in front of the house
a ház előtti kert	the garden in front of the house

⁴ See n. 3 above.

az asztal fölött	above the table
az asztal fölötti festmény	the painting over the table
a háború után	after the war
a háború utáni évek	the post-war years

12.2.1.4

The suffix *-i* is 100 percent productive when added to place names to denote a person or other entity from that place. Note that although the place name is written with a capital letter, the adjectival form is not. Although the resulting forms always decline as adjectives, they may be used as nouns as well.

Budapest	budapesti	(a person/thing) from Budapest
London	londoni	(a person/thing) from London
Madrid	madridi	(a person/thing) from Madrid
Szeged	szegedi	(a person/thing) from Szeged

A budapestiek büszkék lehetnek a városukra.

People from Budapest can be proud of their city.

Külföldön a szegedi paprika a leghíresebb.

Paprika from Szeged is the most famous abroad.

12.2.2 -s

This suffix is added to nouns, adjectives and numerals to make new adjectives.

12.2.2.1

It has the meaning ‘endowed with’, ‘qualified as having’. This suffix also makes nouns (see section 12.1.2.4).

vaj	butter	vajas kenyér	bread and butter (lit., buttery bread)
erdő	forest	erdős terület	wooded area

12.2.2.2

Concrete characteristics of a person or thing can be expressed with the use of -s.

név	name	neves professzor	famous professor
ötlet	idea	ötletes gyerek	clever or ingenious child
család	family	családos férfi	man with a family (children)
kalap	hat	kalapos hölgy	lady with a hat
kert	garden	kertes ház	house with a garden
szemüveg	glasses	szemüveges bácsi	man (uncle) with glasses

12.2.2.3

The suffix -s can be attached to time expressions to indicate duration. Note that the time expression is consequently written as one word.

tíz perc	ten minutes	tízperces szünet	ten-minute break
egy év	one year	egyéves tanfolyam	one-year course
két hét	two weeks	kéthetes szabadság	two-week vacation
egy óra	one hour	egyórás előadás	one-hour lecture

12.2.2.4

Attached to an adjective -s can modify the meaning of the adjective.

barna	brown	barnás	brownish
beteg	sick	beteges	sickly, ailing
fiatal	young	fiatalos	youngish
magyar	Hungarian	magyaros	in a Hungarian style
zöld	green	zöldeskék	greenish-blue

12.2.2.5

It can be attached to numerals to yield both adjectives and nouns.

hat	six	hatos villamos	number six tram
hét	seven	a hetes szám	the number seven
tíz	ten	tizes szoba	room number ten
száz	hundred	százás	one-hundred (forint) banknote

12.2.3 -atlan/-tlen, -atlan/-etlen, -talan/-telen

This suffix is attached to nouns, adjectives, and verbs and denotes ‘without’, or ‘qualified as not having’.

arány	proportion	aránytalan	disproportionate
rend	order	rendetlen	messy
ismer	know	ismeretlen	unknown

The suffix has three variants. Although there are many exceptions, the following are the tendencies in forming words with this suffix.

- 1 -atlan, -tlen is added to stems ending in a vowel; word-final vowel a or e is lengthened to á or é, respectively.

béke	peace	békétlen	restless, turbulent, quarrelsome
erő	force	erőtlen	weak, feeble, powerless
hiba	mistake	hibátlan	faultless
só	salt	sótlan	unsalted

- 2 -talan, -telen is added to stems ending in a single consonant:

bátor	brave	bátortalan	cowardly
érték	value	értéktelen	worthless
haszon	use	haszontalan	useless

- 3 -atlan, -etlen is added to all verb stems.

ismer	know	ismeretlen	unknown
kér	ask for	kéretlen	unrequested, unsolicited
vár	expect, wait	váratlan	unexpected

12.2.3.1 Grammatical features of the *-tlan/-tlen* suffix

12.2.3.1.1

This suffix is commonly found with verbs formed with the potential suffix *-hat/-het* and forms the antonym of the potential present participle.

eszik	eat	ehető	edible
		ehetetlen	inedible
hisz	believe	hihető	believable
		hihetetlen	unbelievable
lát	see	látható	visible
		láthatatlan	invisible
megváltoztat	change	megváltoztatható	changeable
		megváltoztathatatlan	immutable, irrevocable

12.2.3.1.2

Sometimes more than one variant can be attached to the same root, yielding two different meanings.

íz	taste, flavor	ízetlen	tasteless (abstract, as of decoration)
		íztelen	tasteless (concrete, as of food)
gond	worry, care	gondatlan	careless
		gondtalan	carefree
lélek	soul, spirit	lelketlen	heartless
		lélektelen	lacking in spirit or enthusiasm
tárgy	object, theme	tárgyatlan	(of sentences or verbs) having no object, intransitive
		tárgytalan	(a matter) not worth discussion, invalid, unnecessary

12.2.3.1.3

Unlike most adjectives, those formed with **-tlan/-tlen** and their variants form their adverbs with **-ul/-ül**.

hibátlan	faultless	hibátlanul	faultlessly
váratlan	unexpected	váratlanul	unexpectedly

12.2.3.1.4

The suffixes **-s** and **-tlan/-tlen** (and its variants) often form antonyms.

arányos	proportionate	aránytalan	disproportionate
egészséges	healthy	egészségtelen	unhealthy
figyelmes	considerate	figyelmetlen	inconsiderate
hasznos	useful	haszontalan	useless
nős	married man	nőtlen	bachelor
rendes	tidy	rendetlen	disorderly
rendszeres	systematic	rendszeretlen	unsystematic
sós	salty	sótlan	saltless
udvarias	polite	udvariatlan	impolite
ügyes	clever, agile	ügyetlen	awkward, inept

12.2.4 -ú/-ű (-jú/-jű)

This suffix has a similar meaning to the suffix **-s**.

12.2.4.1

It makes adjectives out of nouns and is used when it is in turn modified by another adjective.

fekete haj	black hair	fekete hajú lány	a girl with black hair
kék szem	blue eyes	kék szemű kisfiú	blue-eyed boy
jó étvágy	good appetite	jó étvágyú beteg	a patient with a good appetite

érdekes	interesting	érdekes témájú	book with an
téma	theme	könyv	interesting theme

12.2.4.2

Adjectives derived by **-ú/-ű** may have a stronger (more permanent, inalienable) connection to the noun they are modifying. Adjectives derived by **-s** (may) have a looser (more temporary) connection to the noun.

hosszú ruhás lány a girl with a long dress

hosszú hajú lány a girl with long hair

12.2.4.3

The variants **-jú** and **-jű** are attached to stems ending in a vowel; if the final vowel is **a** or **e** it is lengthened to **á** or **é**, respectively.

erő force **nagy erejű** having great power

téma theme **tabu témájú** having a taboo theme

12.2.5 -ékeny/-ékony

This suffix forms adjectives from verb stems. It denotes an inclination to the activity expressed in the next stem.

érez feel **érzékeny** sensitive

félt fear for; be jealous of **féltékeny** jealous

folyik flow **folyékony** fluent

hajlik bend, lean **hajlékony** flexible, pliable

tör break **törékeny** fragile

12.2.6 -nyi

This suffix is added to nouns to form adjectives of measure or size.

méter meter **méternyi** (one) meter long

pillanat moment **pillanatnyi** (lasting) a moment

tenyér	palm	tenyéryni	palm-sized
ujj	finger	ujjnyi	width of a finger

12.3 Verb-forming suffixes

12.3.1 -z(ik)⁵

This suffix yields perhaps the most common way of making verbs out of nouns. When added to stems ending in a consonant it requires a linking vowel – usually the same vowel as is required for forming the plural; when added to stems ending in a *a* or *e*, the vowel is lengthened to *á* or *é*, respectively. These verbs may or may not take the *-ik* ending. The *-z(ik)* suffix has many uses; only a few are mentioned here.

12.3.1.1

This suffix is commonly added to stems to denote using the stem in playing sports or music or otherwise spending time at an activity.

foci	soccer	focizik	play soccer
fuvola	flute	fuvolázik	play the flute
kosárlabda	basketball	kosárlabdázik	play basketball
levél	letter	levelezik	correspond
tenisz	tennis	teniszezik	play tennis
zongora	piano	zongorázik	play the piano

12.3.1.2

It can be used with foods or meals.

kávé	coffee	kávézik	drink coffee
reggeli	breakfast	reggelizik	eat breakfast

⁵ If the stem is a low-vowel noun that loses length when forming the plural, it will usually lose length when suffixing *-z(ik)* and *-l* as well: *út* ‘trip’, *utazik* ‘travel’; *nyár* ‘summer’, *nyaral* ‘spend summer vacation’.

sör	beer	sörözik	drink beer
tea	tea	teázik	drink tea
vacsora	dinner	vacsorázik	eat dinner

12.3.1.3

To use an instrument or tool.

csavar	screw	csavaroz	fasten with a screw
gereblye	rake	gereblyézik	use a rake
kocsi	car	kocsizik	go by car, drive

12.3.1.4

To supply/furnish with an object.

fal	wall	falaz	put up a wall
fegyver	weapon	felfegyverezik	arm

12.3.2 -I⁶

This suffix is also widely used to form verbs from nouns. When added to stems ending in a consonant, it requires a linking vowel (usually the same one as required when forming the plural of the stem). When added to stems ending in a or e, the vowel is lengthened to á or é, respectively.

ebéd	lunch	ebédel	eat lunch
ének	song	énekel	sing
kéz	hand	kezel	handle, treat
lapát	shovel	lapátol	dig with a shovel
nyár	summer	nyaral	spend the summer (vacation)
vásár	market	vásárol	shop

⁶ See n. 5 above.

Note that the same stem may take both verb-forming suffixes and result in two different meanings:

rend	order	rendez	organize	rendel	place an order
vizsga	test	vizsgál	take a test	vizsgál	examine

12.3.3 -ít

This suffix makes transitive verbs. It is added to stems ending in a consonant; if the stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped before suffixing. Verbs ending in **-ít** are often the transitive counterpart of the intransitive verbs ending in **-ul/-ül**; see section 12.3.5.

12.3.3.1

This suffix is commonly added to adjectives.

csúnya	ugly	csúnyít	make ugly
éles	sharp	élesít	sharpen
fekete	black	feketít	blacken
kész	ready	készít	prepare
nagyobb	bigger	nagyobbít	enlarge
széles	wide	szélesít	widen
szép	beautiful	szépít	beautify

12.3.3.2

It may be added to nouns and other roots.

alak	form	alakít	shape (something)
alap	base	alapít	establish
gyógy-⁷	cure	gyógyít	heal
tan	study	tanít	teach

⁷ See n. 1 above.

12.3.4 -esz/-aszt

This suffix is found on transitive verbs. It is not nearly as productive as the transitive suffix *-ít*. It is often attached to stems that occur only as roots of derivations. These verbs often have intransitive counterparts ending in *-ad/-ed*; see section 12.3.6.

ébreszt	wake someone up	halaszt	postpone
fáraszt	tire (someone)	ijeszt	frighten, startle
fejleszt	develop	riaszt	alarmed

12.3.5 -ul/-ül

This suffix forms intransitive verbs and often is the counterpart to the transitive verbs formed with *-ít*. It is added to stems ending in a consonant; should the stem end in a vowel, the vowel is dropped.

12.3.5.1

The suffix *-ul/-ül* is often added to adjectives.

ép	intact	épül	be built
kész	ready	készül	become prepared, ready
sárga	yellow	sárgul	turn yellow
szép	beautiful	szépül	become beautiful

12.3.5.2

This suffix may be added to non-adjective stems as well.

alak	form	alakul	take shape
alap	base	alapul	be founded
gyógy ⁸	cure	gyógyul	be cured
tan	learn	tanul	learn

⁸ See n. 1 above.

12.3.6 -ad/-ed

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. Verbs with this suffix often find their transitive counterparts in verbs ending in *-sz*t (see above, section 12.3.4).

ébred	wake up	ijed	become frightened
fárad	become tired	riad	become alarmed
halad	progress, advance	szárad	become dry

12.3.7 -kodik/-kedik/-ködik, kozik/-kezik/-közik

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. There is no way to predict whether the suffix will contain a *d* (*-kodik*) or a *z* (*-kozik*). This suffix has many uses; only a few are listed here.

12.3.7.1

Often the meaning is reflexive, i.e., to do the activity to oneself. (The reflexive pronouns are never used with these verbs.)

fésül	use a comb	fésülködik	comb one's hair
mos	wash	mosakodik	wash oneself
öltöz	dress (trans.)	öltözködik	get dressed
töröl	wipe	törölközik	dry oneself with a towel

12.3.7.2

It may be used to identify occupations.

lektor	lector	lektorkodik	work as a lector
pincér	waiter	pincérkedik	work as a waiter

12.3.7.3

This suffix may describe a way of behaving.

szemtelen	impertinent	szemtelenkedik	misbehave
szerelmes	in love	szerelmeskedik	act lovey-dovey
szomorú	sad	szomorkodik	act sad

12.3.7.4

It may be added to other roots to express mutual behavior.

barát	friend	barátkozik	make friends
szeret	love	szeretkezik	make love

12.3.8 -skodik/-skedik/-sködik

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. After stems ending in a consonant it requires the linking vowel *o/e/ö*; stems ending in *a* or *e* lengthen to *á* or *é*, respectively. It denotes behaving as the noun or adjective of its root.

cimbora	pal	cimboráskodik	fraternize
hülye	idiot(ic)	hülyéskedik	act stupidly
nagylelkű	generous	nagylelkűsködik	act generously
tanú	witness	tanuskodik	bear witness

12.3.9 -odik/-edik/-ödik

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. It is most often attached to adjectives, but is found with other roots as well. Verbs formed with this suffix usually find their transitive counterparts with verbs ending in *-ít*.

halvány	obscure, dim	halványodik	become obscure, fade
kanyar	curve	kanyarodik	bend, curve (as in a road or river)
keskeny	narrow	keskenyedik	become narrow

12.3.10 -ódik/-ődik

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. It is often attached to transitive verb stems.

befejez	finish	befejeződik	come to an end, become finished
csuk	close, shut	csukódik	close, shut (by itself)

elvégez	finish	elvégeződik	come to an end
kezd	begin	kezdődik	start (intrans.)
zár	close, lock	záródik	close, lock (by itself)

Mikor kezdték az előadást? When did they start the lecture?

Mikor kezdődött az előadás? When did the lecture start?

Becsukta az ajtót. She closed the door.

Becsukódik az ajtó. The door is closing.

12.3.11 -ll(ik)

This suffix is added to adjectives and expressions of quantity; the verb denotes that something appears to have the quality of the root – sometimes in excess. Stems ending in a consonant require the linking vowel (and other stem alternations) found in forming the adverb. Word-final a and e are lengthened to á and é, respectively.

sok	much	sokall	consider something too much
kevés	few	kevesell	consider something too little, not enough
fekete	black	feketéllik	show, appear black

Kevesellte a fizetést. He thought the pay was too low.

12.3.12 -ászik/-észik

This suffix forms verbs denoting a trade or hobby.

vad	wild	vadászik	hunt
madár	bird	madarászik	hunt birds
sólyom	hawk	sólymászik	hunt hawks

12.4 Diminutives

Diminutives are suffixes added to names, nouns, and sometimes adjectives and denote the smallness of, or fondness toward, a person or object. They are very common in Hungarian; parents almost always use them with the names of their children, and depending on the idiosyncracies of the speaker, they can find their way into many sentences.

Diminutives take several shapes. The most common are given here.

12.4.1 -cska/-cske

This diminutive can be attached to most nouns and some adjectives. After nouns ending in a consonant, it requires the linking vowel used to form the plural; any other stem changes required in the plural are also required when attaching this suffix. Word-final vowels *a* or *e* are lengthened to *á* or *é*, respectively.

girl	lány	lányocska	face	arc	arcocska
cloud	felhő	felhőcske	hand	kéz	kezecske
milk	tej	tejecske	house	ház	házacska
fork	villa	villácska	horse	ló	lovacska
big	nagy	nagyocska	bird	madár	madaracska

12.4.2 -ka/-ke

This diminutive is usually attached to polysyllabic words not ending in *-k* or *-g*. It attaches directly to the stem and does not require the linking vowel or the stem changes found when forming the plural.

poor	szegény	szegényke	piece	darab	darabka
cow	tehén	tehénke	bird	madár	madárka
person	ember	emberke	table	asztal	asztalka
small	kicsi	kicsike	short	rövid	rövidke

12.4.3 -i

This suffix is used with stems that have already been shortened.

cigarette	cigaretta	cigi
chocolate	csokoládé	csoki
thank you	köszönöm	köszi

12.4.4

Perhaps the most common use of diminutives is with people's names. Often the names are shortened and several different diminutives may be attached. A name with front-vowel assonance may change to a nickname with back-vowel assonance and vice versa. The **-ka/-ke** suffix is the most common with names and the first person singular possessive suffix is often attached. Several common variations with names are given here.

John	János: Jani, Janika, Jánoska, Jancsi, Jancsika, Jancsó, Jancsóka
Charles	Károly: Károlyka, Karcsi, Karesz
George	György: Gyuri, Gyurika
Stephen	István: Isti, Istvánka, Pista, Pisti, Pistike, Pityu
Elizabeth	Erzsébet: Erzsi, Erzsike, Erzsó, Erzsóka, Zsóka, Bözsi, Bözsike, Böske, Örzse, Örzsi, Örzsike
Mary	Mária: Mari, Marika, Maris, Mariska, Marcsi

The first person singular possessive suffix is often attached to diminutives when addressing the person directly.

Erzsikém, gyere ide! Come here, Erzsi!

Úgy szeretlek, Jánoskám. I love you so much, János.

Children (and people speaking with them) commonly use the following diminutives:

father	apa	apu, apuka, apus, apuska, api, apika, apuci, papus
mother	anya	anyu, anyuka, anyus, anyuska, anyuci

rabbit	nyúl	nyuszi, nyuszika, nyulacska, nyuszóka
dog	kutya	kutyu, kutyus, kutyuska
cat	macska	cica, cica-mica, cicus

Diminutives

Conjunctions

13.1 Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions join clauses, phrases or words. A comma is usually used before conjunctions joining clauses. The following are the most important coordinating conjunctions in Hungarian.

13.1.1 Connecting conjunctions

These may be single words or pairs of words:

és ‘and’

Imre és János most vacsorázik.

Imre and János are eating dinner now.

Esik az eső és fúj a szél.

It's raining and the wind is blowing.

s ‘and’ (pronounced as one with the following syllable):

Megjött a levél, s rögtön elolvasta.

The letter arrived and he read it immediately.

Zsófia s én együtt dolgozunk. Zsófia and I work together.

meg ‘and’ (when joining clauses, **meg** is usually in the second position of the clause):

Péter moziba megy, én meg színházba megyek.

Péter is going to the movies and I am going to the theater.

Kettő meg kettő, az négy.

Two and two are four.

is ‘too’, ‘also’ (this word always follows the phrase to which it refers):

Nekünk van kutyánk, macskánk is.

We have a dog and a cat (too).

se, sem ‘neither’, ‘nor’

Nekem nem ízlett a bor, (s) Jánosnak sem.

I didn’t like the wine, and neither did János.

sőt ‘moreover’, ‘indeed’, ‘even’

Nagyon tetszik a húgod, sőt, meghívtam vacsorára.

I really like your sister, I even invited her to dinner.

is ... is ‘both ... and’

Apám is, anyám is Budapesten lakik.

Both my father and mother live in Budapest.

mind ... mind ‘both ... and’

Mind a gyerekek, mind a felnőttek szerették azt a játékot.

Both the children and the adults loved that game.

sem ... sem, se ... se ‘neither ... nor’

Sem kalapot, sem kesztyűt nem hord télen.

He wears neither a hat nor gloves in the winter.

Mi történt veled? Se nem írsz, se nem telefonálsz.

What is up with you? You neither write nor call me.

nemcsak ... hanem ... is ‘not just ... but ... too’

Nemcsak főz a férjem, hanem porszívóz is!

My husband doesn’t just cook, he vacuums too!

13.1.2 *Contrasting conjunctions*

de ‘but’

Meghívtam a bátyámat, de nem tud eljönni.

I invited my brother, but he is unable to come.

hanem ‘but’, ‘rather’ (Always preceded by a *nem*-clause.)

Nem Prágába akar menni, hanem Bécsbe.

She doesn't want to go to Prague, rather to Vienna.

mégis ‘(but) still’, ‘even so’

Az előadás unalmas volt, mégis tanultam valamit belőle.

The lecture was boring, but I still learned something from it.

mégsem ‘(but) still . . . not’

Rengeteget eszik, mégsem hízik.

He eats so much, but still he doesn't put on weight.

azonban ‘however’, ‘but’ (This word is usually in the second position of the clause.)

Hazavittem a számítógépet, a könyveimet azonban az irodában hagytam.

I brought my computer home, but I left my books in the office.

ellenben ‘on the other hand’

A bátyám nagyon gazdag, ellenben az öcsém elég szegény.

My older brother is very rich, my younger brother on the other hand is rather poor.

viszont ‘but, on the other hand’

Imádom a nyarat, viszont a telet egyáltalán nem bírom.

I love summer, but I can't stand winter at all.

13.1.3 Conjunctions of choice

vagy ‘or’

Eljössz velem, vagy itthon maradsz?

Are you coming with me or staying home?

vagy . . . vagy ‘either . . . or’ (Used when the choice between two options results in two different outcomes.)

Ma este vagy moziba megyünk, vagy színházba.

We are either going to the movies or to the theater tonight.

akár.akár ‘whether ... or’ (Used when the choice between two options results in the same outcome.)

Akár hiszed, akár nem, a hatéves fiam már tud síelni.

Whether you believe it or not, my six-year-old son already knows how to ski.

13.1.5 Explanatory conjunctions

These conjunctions are used to explain or account for the assertion in the preceding clause.

ugyanis ‘for’, ‘since’, ‘because’

A felesége jól beszél magyarul, ugyanis egy évig Budapesten élt.

His wife speaks Hungarian well, for she lived in Budapest for a year.

hiszen ‘for’, ‘since’, ‘because’

Nagyon berúgott, hiszen egymaga megivott egy egész üveg bort.

He got very drunk, for he drank a whole bottle of wine by himself.

tudniillik ‘because’, ‘since’

Nem tudom olvasni az újságot, tudniillik nem találok a szemüvegemet.

I can’t read the newspaper, because I can’t find my glasses.

The explanatory conjunctions **azaz** and **vagyis** provide a more detailed explanation of the preceding phrase or assertion.

azaz ‘that is to say’

A pincér szorgalmasan dolgozott, azaz nem csak álldogált a konyhában.

The waiter worked hard, that is to say, he did not just hang about the kitchen.

vagyis ‘in other words’

A betegnek ágyban kell maradnia, vagyis nem szabad sokat mozognia.

The patient must stay in bed, in other words, he must not move around much.

13.1.6 Concluding conjunctions

These conjunctions suggest the consequence of the preceding phrase.

ezért ‘for this reason’, ‘this is why’

Későn érkeztem haza, ezért nem hívtalak fel.

I came home late, that’s why I didn’t call you.

tehát ‘therefore’, ‘thus’

Gondokodom, tehát vagyok.

I think, therefore I am.

ennélfogva ‘consequently’, ‘thus’

Egész nap csak énekelt, ennélfogva tönkretette a hangját.

She sang the whole day, consequently she ruined her voice.

13.2 Subordinating conjunctions

hogy ‘that’ (used to introduce an imbedded sentence)

Tudod, hogy holnaptól megyek szabadságra?

Do you know that my vacation begins tomorrow?

Érted, hogy mit mondok?

Do you understand what I am saying?

mint ‘as’ (used in clauses of comparison)

A szeme olyan zöld, mint a smaragd.

His eyes are as green as emeralds.

Úgy fut, mint a nyúl.

She runs like a rabbit.

ha ‘if’, ‘when’

Ha Budapesten vagy, mindenképpen keress fel!

When you are in Budapest, by all means look me up.

Ha több időm lenne, zongorázni tanulnék.

If I had more time I would learn to play the piano.

mintha ‘as if’, ‘as though’ (usually followed by the conditional form of the verb)

Úgy tesz, mintha boldog lenne.

She acts as though she is happy.

hacsak ‘if only’

Hacsak tehetem, ott leszek a bulin.

I’ll be at the party if I possibly can.

(a)mikor ‘when’

Éppen leültünk, mikor megszólalt a telefon.

We had just sat down when the phone rang.

miután ‘after’

Miután megfürdetem a lányomat, egyszerre leteszem aludni.

After I bathe my daughter, I’ll put her to bed.

mielőtt ‘before’

Mielőtt hazamentek, megisztok egy kávét?

Will you have a cup of coffee before you go home?

(a)mióta ‘since’

Amióta megnősült, sokkal vidámabb.

He is a lot more cheerful since he got married.

bár ‘although’

Nem írtam a barátaimnak, bár gyakran gondoltam rájuk.

I didn’t write my friends, though I thought of them often.

mert ‘because’

Nem mentek el kirándulni, mert esni kezdett az eső.

They didn’t go on the outing because it started to rain.

mivel ‘because’, ‘since’

A lépcsőn kellett felmenniük, mivel rossz a lift.

Since the elevator is not working, they had to take the stairs.

13.2.1 -e ‘whether’

The particle -e is placed on the verb of the subordinate (‘whether’) clause (if the sentence contains no verb the particle is placed on the nominal

predicate). In Hungarian, the ‘whether’ and ‘if’ clauses are not interchangeable: if, in the English sentence, ‘whether’ can substitute for ‘if’, use only the ‘whether’ construction in Hungarian.

Nem tudjuk, hogy Pál eljön-e.

We don’t know whether (if) Pál is coming.

Kíváncsi vagyok, hogy drága-e az étterem.

I wonder whether (if) the restaurant is expensive.

13.2.2 *Relative pronouns*

Subordinate clauses may be introduced by relative pronouns. These are formed in Hungarian simply by prefixing *a-* to an interrogative pronoun.

Ismered a lányt, aki a másik asztalnál ül?

Do you know the girl who is sitting at the other table?

Nem értem az elméletet, amiről beszélnek.

I don’t understand the theory they are talking about.

Úgy készíti a rétest, ahogy a nagyanyám.

She makes strudel just as my grandmother does.

Numerals

14.1 Cardinal and ordinal numbers

	Cardinal	Ordinal
0	nulla	nulladik
1	egy	első
2	kettő (két)	második
3	három	harmadik
4	négy	negyedik
5	öt	ötödik
6	hat	hatodik
7	hét	hetedik
8	nyolc	nyolcadik
9	kilenc	kilencedik
10	tíz	tizedik
11	tizenegy	tizenegyedik
12	tizenkettő	tizenkettedik
13, etc.	tizenhárom	tizenharmadik
20	húsz	huszadik
21, etc.	huszonegy	huszonegyedik
30	harminc	harmincadik
31, etc.	harmincegy	harmincegyedik

40	negyven	negyvenedik
41, etc.	negyvenegy	negyvenegyedik
50	ötven	ötvenedik
51, etc.	ötvenegy	ötvenegyedik
60	hatvan	hatvanadik
61, etc.	hatvanegy	hatvanegyedik
70	hetven	hetvenedik
71, etc.	hetvenegy	hetvenegyedik
80	nyolcvan	nyolcvanadik
81, etc.	nyolcvanegy	nyolcvanegyedik
90	kilencven	kilencvenedik
91, etc.	kilencvenegy	kilencvenegyedik
100	száz	századik
101	százegy	százegyedik
200	kétszáz	kétszázadik
1,000	ezer	ezredik
1,100	ezeregyszáz	ezeregyszázadik
2,000	kétezer	kétezredik
10,000	tízezer	tízezredik
100,000	százezer	százezredik
1,000,000	(egy)millió	(egy)milliomodik

14.1.1

Hungarian uses the singular after all numbers or expressions of quantity:

Két bátyám van.

I have two brothers.

Körülbelül háromezer diák tanul ezen az egyetemen.

Approximately three thousand students are at this university.

14.1.2

The number *two* – or any number ending in *two* – **kettő** uses the shorter form **két** when preceding nouns.

Két kocsi van a ház előtt. Two cars are in front of the house.

Hány kocsi? Kettő. How many cars? Two.

The long form may also be used before nouns to avoid a possible misunderstanding with the word **hét**.

Kétszáz forintba kerül. It costs *two* hundred forints.

14.2 Declension of numerals**14.2.1**

The accusative of cardinal numbers is irregular (the plural is rare, but formed along the same pattern):

egyet	négyet	hetet	tízet
negyvenet	hetvenet	százat	
kettőt	ötöt	nyolcat	húszat
ötvenet	nyolcvan	ezret	
hárm	hat	kilencvenet	harmincat
hatvan	kilencvenet	milliót	

Csak egyet kérünk. We would like just one (of them).

Ezret láttam. I saw a thousand (of them).

Ezreket láttam. I saw thousands (of them).

14.2.2

The accusative of the ordinal numbers requires the low linking vowel *a/e* before the *-t*:¹

harmadikat **negyediket**

¹ Except *első*: (acc.) *elsőt*; (third person poss.) *elseje*.

14.2.3

The rest of the declension is regular.²

14.2.4

The possessive third person singular possessive suffix (used in dates) is formed with *a/e*.³

február huszonkettedike	February 22
május tizenhatodika	May 16
Hányadika van ma?	What is today's date?

14.3 Adverbial use of expressions of quantity

If the subject of a sentence is *a number of people*, the adverbial form of the number or other expression of quantity is often used. The verb must be in the plural and the word **ember** is omitted. Often it is only the verb conjugation that indicates the subject.

ketten	hatan	tízen	negyvenen	kevesen
hárman	heten	tizenegyen	százan	hányan
négyen	nyolcan	húszan	ezren	többen
öten	kilencen	harmincan	sokan	ezreken

Ketten mentünk moziba.	The two of us went to the movies.
Többen jöttek, mint múltkor.	More people came than last time.
Hányan maradtok itt?	How many of you are staying here?
Sokan voltunk az előadáson.	Many of us were at the lecture.
Tízen vártak a sorban.	Ten people were waiting in line.

² The word *három* 'three' declines as a fleeting vowel sound.

³ See n. 1 above.

14.4 Fractions

14.4.1

Fractions are easily formed from the ordinal numbers by removing the last letters **-ik**. The word **fél** (or **egyketted**) ‘half’ is an exception.

$\frac{1}{3}$ egyharmad	$\frac{2}{3}$ kéthatod	$\frac{4}{5}$ négykilenced
$\frac{1}{4}$ egynegyed	$\frac{2}{4}$ kéthetted	
$\frac{1}{5}$ egyötöd	$\frac{2}{5}$ kétnyolcad	

14.4.2

The accusative is formed by adding the vowel **o/e/ö** before **-t** (**fél** ‘half’ loses vowel length: **felet**).

Csak egyötödöt kérek szépen. I would like only one fifth, please.

14.4.3

The third person singular possessive is formed with or without the **j** (unless used in dates, when it is always formed without the **j**):

harmada ~ harmadja	one third (of it)
negyede ~ negyedje	one fourth (of it)

14.4.4

Also in use:

másfél $1\frac{1}{2}$

14.5 Decimals

Decimals are marked with a comma in Hungarian; the presence of a decimal may be articulated by the word **egész** ‘whole’.

36.7 36,7 **harminchat egész hét ~ harminchat egész héttized**

20.07 20,07 **húsz egész nulla hét ~ húsz egész hétszázad**

14.6 Nouns and adjectives derived from numbers

Numbers are used to indicate tram, bus, metro or lines, addresses, banknotes, etc. When referring to something by its number, use the derivational ending -s. With the exception of **kettő** 'two' the numbers add this derivational ending exactly as though adding an accusative ending:

egyes kettes hármás

négyes ötös hatos

hetes nyolcas kilences

tizes tizenegyes huszas

harmincas negyvenes százás

ezres hányas

Fel kell szállnom a négyes villamosra.

I have to board the number 4 tram.

Tudsz adni egy százast?

Can you give me a 100 forint/dollar note?

Zsuzsa az 512-es (ötszáz tizenkettes) szobában dolgozik.

Zsuzsa works in room 512.

Hányas a cipőd?

What size (lit. number) are your shoes?

14.7 Multiplicative -szor/-szer/-ször

14.7.1

This suffix is added to numbers, fractions and other expressions of quantity to mean 'time(s)'.

Csak egyszer voltam Londonban.

I've only been to London once.

Most már ötödször olvasom ezt a könyvet.

I'm reading this book for the fifth time.

Hányszor láttad már a kedvenc filmedet?

How many times have you seen your favorite movie?

Milliószor csókollak.

I kiss you a million times.

14.7.2

This suffix is used to multiply numbers.

**Háromszor négy az
tizenkettő.**

Three times four is twelve.

Kétszer kettő az négy.

Two times two is four.

Interjections

Interjections are isolated words or phrases outside the rules of grammar. They may express joy, fear, frustration, pain, etc. The following are some common interjections in Hungarian:

Csitt!	Sshhh!
Ejnye, ejnye!	Tsk, tsk!
Ejnye-bejnye!	Tsk, tsk!
Ez az.	That's it.
Hát ...	Well ...
Hurrá!	Hurray!
Hú-ha!	Uh-oh.
Íme	Behold, voilà!
Isten őrizz!	God forbid!
Így van.	Right, that's the way it is.
Ja?	Really/Is that so?
Jaj, istenem!	Oh my God!
Jaj-jaj	Oh, no!/Oh, dear.
Jézus, Mária	Jesus and Mary!
Kár.	It's a shame.
Lám.	There we go.
Na!	Well!
Naná.	You see? (I told you so.)

Nini!	Look! (children's word)
Nos ...	Well ...
Nosza ...	Well ...
Pfuj!	Yuck!
Tyú!	Wow!

Interjections

PART III

Sentence structure

Sentence elements and word order

Word order in Hungarian is quite different from English in a number of ways. In English, it is the word order of sentences that tells us what the subject and object are. For example in the sentence, ‘The dog chased the postman’, we know the subject is ‘the dog’. In ‘The postman chased the dog’ we know the subject is ‘the postman’. Though both sentences contain the same words, because of the difference in word order, the meanings of the two are entirely different – particularly from the postman’s point of view!

Before examining the differences from English in Hungarian word order, the similarities should be clear. The subject–verb–object word order found in English is very common in Hungarian too, especially when the object is preceded by an article:

Mária szereti az anyját. Mária loves her mother.
(subject–verb–object)

Lajos ír egy levelet. Lajos is writing a letter.
(subject–verb–object)

The above Hungarian sentences, however, may be written in a variety of word orders and would have English equivalents requiring either a change in intonation or a different expression altogether. The following Hungarian sentences have the possible English equivalents given (among others).

Szereti Mária az anyját. Mária *loves* her mother.

Mária az anyját szereti. Mária loves her *mother*.

In Hungarian, the extensive case system clearly marks the grammatical function, i.e., part of speech, of nouns or noun-phrases. Because subjects and objects are easily distinguished by their case markings, Hungarian need not rely on word order to determine grammatical function. Therefore, Hungarian allows a freedom of word order unknown in English. This,

of speech depending on whether the sentence is neutral or focussed. Although the preverb position may be empty, it is rarely filled by more than one constituent.

16.1.2.1 Neutral preverb

In neutral sentences the preverb position is filled by

- (a) a coverb (**be, ki, le, fel, el, meg**, etc.),
- (b) an adverb or adverbial phrase (**jól, itt, a házban**, etc.) or
- (c) a verbal complement. See section 16.2 for a full description of verbal complements.

16.1.2.2 Focus preverb

Focus is a category in Hungarian that consists of

- (a) question words or phrases,
- (b) answers to questions,
- (c) negation or negated phrases,
- (d) stressed words or phrases.

When a focussed element is introduced in a sentence it *must* occupy the **focus preverb** position. As a consequence of this, any element which would occupy the preverb position in a neutral sentence is removed to a position immediately behind the conjugated verb. Thus it may be helpful to think of the focussed element as ‘kicking out’ the neutral preverb element. The topic position is unaffected by focus; it remains the communicative backdrop of the sentence.

16.1.3 Verb

This is the position for the conjugated verb; other verbal forms (infinitives, participles, etc.) are found elsewhere in the sentence. In neutral sentences, if the verb is prefixed with a coverb, the coverb occupies the preverb position.

16.1.4 X

This position is filled by any part of speech (except the conjugated verb); it may contain several constituents; it may be empty. For the most part, the constituents may occur in the X position in any order without a difference in meaning. In sentences with focus, however, it is usual that the first element of X is the element that was removed from the neutral preverb position. (The initial position of X is identical with the position immediately following the verb.)

16.1.5 A note on grammaticality

Broadly speaking, the well-formedness of a sentence depends on how the position immediately preceding the conjugated verb is filled; the sentence is ungrammatical if the **preverb** position is incorrectly filled. The **topic** and X positions have less to do with grammaticality and more to do with the logical flow or presentation of information; thus they exhibit a greater freedom of word order. The word order of the **preverb** and **verb** positions is fixed.

16.2 Verbal complements

Verbal complements may be any part of speech, but they are characteristically what might be considered a ‘natural’ complement to the verb.

16.2.1

The verbal complement may be the predicate nominative or predicate adjective.

Én mérnök vagyok. I am an engineer.

Magasak vagytok. You (pl.) are tall.

16.2.2

In there is/there are constructions, the verbal complement is the subject.

Sok szék van a teremben. There are many chairs in the room.

Víz van a pohárban. There is water in the glass.

16.2.3

In 'have' constructions, the verbal complement is what one has (the grammatical subject):

Nekem két testvérem van. I have two siblings.

Lacinak kevés ideje van. Laci has little time.

16.2.4

The verbal complement is often the direct object:

Dénes könyvet olvas. Dénes is reading a book.

This sentence has the more literal, though clumsy, English translation 'Dénes is book-reading'. The complement of the verb is the direct object *könyvet* 'book'. This is a common sentence type in Hungarian which conveys the idea that a generic activity is taking place with no reference to specifics, i.e., in this case no individual book is mentioned. In Hungarian this sentence structure can be applied to many activities, as long as the verbal complement is not individuated. In English only a limited number of idiomatic constructions of this type occur (some examples would include babysitting, apartment-hunting, people-watching).

More examples of direct object verbal complements include:

Apám újságot vesz. My father is buying a newspaper.

Tévét nézek. I am watching television.

János tollat keres. János is looking for a pen.

16.2.5

Verbal complements may also be adverbials:

Moziba megyünk. We are going to the movies.

Színházba mennek. They are going to the theater.

Erzsi egyetemre jár.

Erzsi attends college.

A Kovácsék vidéken laknak. The Kovácses live in the countryside.

Whatever part of speech occupies the preverb position – whether it is a subject, object or adverbial – it is typically not preceded by an article – definite or indefinite.¹

16.3 Neutral sentence structure

Neutral sentences have a level intonation pattern; they are further characterized by *not* containing elements with heavy stress or emphasis, interrogatives, answers or negation.

With the sentence positions established as above, we may consider the word order of the following sentences:

- 1 **Attila itt van.**
Attila is here.
- 2 **Klára szépen énekel.**
Klára sings beautifully.
- 3 **Az orvos megvizsgálja a beteget.**
The doctor will examine the patient.
- 4 **Megvizsgálja az orvos a beteget.**
The doctor will examine the patient.
- 5 **Múlt évben a szülei Budapesten laktak.**
Last year his parents lived in Budapest.
- 6 **Múlt évben Budapesten laktak a szülei.**
Last year his parents lived in Budapest.
- 7 **Dénes könyvet olvas a nappaliban.**
Dénes is reading a book in the living room.
- 8 **Reggel a gyerekek a kertben játszanak.**
In the morning the children play in the yard.
- 9 **Reggel a kertben játszanak a gyerekek.**
In the morning the children play in the yard.

¹ The indefinite article, however, may be used and the same word order maintained (in this case, the verbal complement not a generic, but an individuated one):

Apám egy újságot vesz. My father is buying a newspaper.
János egy tollat keres. János is looking for a pen.

- 10 **Zsuzsa el akar utazni Prágába.**²
Zsuzsa wants to travel to Prague.
- 11 **Amerikaiak vagyunk.**
We are American.
- 12 **Péter jól megtanulta a leckét.**
Péter learned the lesson well.

The above sentences are categorized according to sentence position in the following table. Topic position is filled by subjects and/or time expressions or remains empty. The preverb position is filled with adverbs or adverbials of place (sentences 1, 5, 6, 8, 9), adverbs of manner (sentences 2, 12), verbal complements (sentences 7, 11, 12) or coverbs (sentences 3, 4, 10). Sentence 12 illustrates the word order for the preverb position containing two elements. The coverb is usually not separated from the verb in these instances. (But see focus structure below.)

	Topic	Neutral preverb	Verb	X
1	Attila	itt	van.	
2	Klára	szépen	énekel.	
3	Az orvos	meg-	vizsgálja	a beteget.
4		Meg-	vizsgálja	az orvos a beteget.
5	Múlt évben a szülei	Budapesten	laktak.	
6	Múlt évben	Budapesten	laktak	a szülei.
7	Dénes	könyvet	olvas	a nappaliban.
8	Reggel a gyerekek	a kertben	játszanak.	
9	Reggel	a kertben	játszanak	a gyerekek.
10	Zsuzsa	el	akar	utazni Prágába.
11		Amerikaiak	vagyunk.	
12	Péter	jól meg-	tanulta	a leckét.

² See section 16.4 for more on this sentence type.

16.4 Sentence structure with focus elements

Focussed sentences have an intonation pattern containing the main (often heavy) stress on the focussed element. Focus affects the word order of neutral sentences by usurping the preverb position for itself and removing the neutral preverb element to a position immediately behind the verb. The topic position remains unaffected.

Focussed sentences contain interrogatives, answers, negation or emphasis (stressed words or phrases).

Consider the following sentences with focus elements. These are all permutations of the neutral sentence (5) **Dénes könyvet olvas**. Dénes is reading a book.

- 13 **Ki olvas könyvet?** (Contains a question word)
Who is reading a book?
- 14 **Dénes olvas könyvet.** (As answer to the previous sentence, **Dénes** is the answer, the focussed element)³
Dénes is reading a book.
- 15 **Dénes nem olvas könyvet.** (Contains negation)
Dénes is not reading a book.
- 16 **Csak Dénes olvas könyvet.** (Contains a stressed element – the **csak**-phrase.)
Only Dénes is reading a book.

Sentence	Topic	Focus preverb	Verb	X
13		Ki	olvas	könyvet?
14		Dénes	olvas	könyvet.
15	Dénes	nem	olvas	könyvet.
16		Csak Dénes	olvas	könyvet.

The table illustrates the permutations of word order for focussed elements in a sentence. In sentence (13), although **Ki** ‘who’ is the sentence subject,

³ The answer **Dénes** need not begin the sentence, but it must be in the focus preverb position.

it is found in focus position because it is a question word. In sentence (14), *Dénes*, though it is the subject, is the answer to the question *Ki?* of the previous sentence, and therefore is found in the focus position. Negation occupies the focus position in sentence (15). Emphatic or stressed phrases (as illustrated here by the phrase beginning with *csak* ‘only’) are found in focus position. In all four sentences the focus position has usurped the preverb position of neutral sentences. The word *könyvet* ‘book, *acc.*’, which had occupied the preverb position in the neutral sentence (5), has consequently been removed to a position immediately behind the verb.

To further examine the possibilities of word order, consider again sentence (8):

Reggel a gyerekek a kertben játszanak.

In the morning the children play in the yard.

We may rephrase the sentence as a question ‘Where do the children play in the morning?’ In Hungarian it is most common to begin questions with the interrogative, but there is nonetheless a flexibility of word order which depends on how the speaker wishes to frame the question. The only firm requirement is that the interrogative *hol* ‘where’ be immediately before the conjugated verb. The topic position may be filled or empty.

‘Where do the children play in the morning?’			
Topic	Focus	Verb	X
	Hol	játszanak	reggel a gyerekek?
	Hol	játszanak	a gyerekek reggel?
Reggel	hol	játszanak	a gyerekek?
A gyerekek	hol	játszanak	reggel?
Reggel a gyerekek	hol	játszanak?	
A gyerekek reggel	hol	játszanak?	

Similarly, other sentences with focussed elements relative to sentence (8) include questions such as ‘who?, when? what do the children do in the morning?’ Naturally, answers can be offered as well. The sentence – or

certain elements of the sentence – can be negated (i.e., it is *not the children who* play in the yard . . .). Finally, any part of the sentence can be stressed for communicative need. (It is easiest for our purposes here to demonstrate stress by creating a *csak*-phrase – always inherently stressed in Hungarian.) The following table illustrates the word order possibilities for such focussed sentences. Note the free variation of word order in the Topic and X positions and the fixed word order of the focus and verb positions.

- 17 **Reggel kik játszanak a kertben?**
Who plays in the garden in the morning?
- 18 **Reggel a gyerekek játszanak a kertben.** (answer to (1))
The children play in the garden in the morning.
- 19a **A gyerekek mikor játszanak a kertben?**
19b **Mikor játszanak a kertben a gyerekek?**
When do the children play in the garden?
- 20 **A gyerekek reggel játszanak a kertben.** (answer to (19a, b))
The children play in the garden in the morning.
- 21 **A gyerekek sohasem játszanak a kertben reggel.**
The children never play in the garden in the morning.
- 22 **A gyerekek nem reggel játszanak a kertben, hanem délután.**
The children don't play in the garden in the morning, rather in the afternoon.
- 23 **A gyerekek csak reggel játszanak a kertben, este soha.**
It is only in the morning that the children play in the garden, never in the evening.
- 24 **Reggel a gyerekek csak a kertben játszanak, a házban soha.**
The children play only in the garden, never in the house.

	Type of focus	Topic	Focus	Verb	X
17	Question	Reggel	kik	játszanak	a kertben?
18	Answer	Reggel	a gyerekek	játszanak	a kertben.
19a	Question	A gyerekek	mikor	játszanak	a kertben?
19b	Question		Mikor	játszanak	a kertben a gyerekek?
20	Answer	A gyerekek	reggel	játszanak	a kertben.

	Type of focus	Topic	Focus	Verb	X
21	<i>Negation</i>	A gyerekek	sohasem	játszanak	a kertben reggel.
22	<i>Negation</i>	A gyerekek	nem reggel	játszanak	a kertben, hanem délután.
23	<i>Stress</i>	A gyerekek	csak reggel	játszanak	a kertben, este soha.
24	<i>Stress</i>	Reggel a gyerekek	csak a kertben	játszanak,	a házban soha.

In the above sentences the neutral preverb position of (8) **a kertben** has been ‘kicked out’ to a position immediately behind the verb by each element of focus – a position which coincides with the beginning of X. Note that this is not an exhaustive list of possible permutations. The topic position is filled according to context and previously mentioned material; often in natural dialogue, only one-word answers are given and questions usually begin with the question word.

16.4.1 More on focus

16.4.1.1 Questions

Yes–no questions are characterized by not having a question word in them. In this instance the word or phrase being questioned is in the focus position. This may be any part of speech. If it is the verb, the coverb is in the focus position. It is often difficult for English speakers to determine what is specifically being questioned. See section 2.7.3 for intonation patterns of yes–no questions.

	Topic	Focus	Verb	X
Were they nice?				Kedvesek voltak?
Did the people wait <i>a long time?</i>			Sokáig	vártak az emberek?
		Az emberek	sokáig	vártak?
Will you wait for me?			Meg	vársz engem?
			Meg	fogsz várni engem?
Are you waiting for me?			Engem	vársz?
Are you looking for <i>Ildikó?</i>			Ildikót	keresed?

16.4.1.2 Questions and negation

If a sentence contains both a question word and negation, they both occur in the focus preverb position; the question word precedes the negation.

	Topic	Focus	Verb	X
Who doesn't want coffee?		Ki nem	kér	kávét?
Why doesn't Péter want to dance?	Péter	miért nem	akar	táncolni?
Whom didn't you invite to the party?		Kit nem	hívtál	meg a bulira?

16.4.1.3 Imperatives

An imperative sentence usually begins with the conjugated imperative verb followed by the coverb.

Vedd meg azt az inget! Buy that shirt!

Gyertek ide! Come here!

If the imperative is negated, the negation fills the focus position.

Ne menjetek el nélkülem! Don't go without me!

Ne csukd be az ajtót! Don't close the door!

See the Subjunctive section 4.3.6 for further discussion on possible word orders.

16.5 Word order of the quasi-auxiliary⁴ verbs: *kell*, *akar*, *tud*, *lehet*, *szokott*, *tetszik*, *fog*

The verbs *kell* ‘be necessary’, *akar* ‘want’, *tud* ‘know how, can, be able’, *lehet* ‘be possible’, *szokott* ‘used to, usually’, *tetszik* ‘be pleasing’, *fog* ‘will (future)’ often occur in constructions with a second verb in the infinitive. When they do, they require that the preverb position be filled. In such sentences, the quasi-auxiliary is the conjugated verb (accordingly it occupies the verb position) and the preverb position is filled with the verbal complement or modifier of the *infinitive* – not of the conjugated verb (16.5.1–2). If the infinitive has no verbal complement/modifier, then it fills the preverb position itself (16.5.3).

16.5.1

Although the quasi-auxiliary verbs do not have coverbs, the coverb of the infinitive with which they occur fills the preverb position, thus separating itself from the infinitive.

Le *tetszik szállni az autóbuszról?* (< *leszáll*)

Are you getting off the bus?

Be *tudod fejezni a munkát?* (< *befejez*)

Can you finish the work?

Fel *fog hívni holnap.* (< *felhív*)

He will call me tomorrow.

Fel *kell mennem Pestre.* (< *felmegy*)

I have to go up to Budapest.

El *szokott aludni a vonaton.* (< *elalszik*)

He usually falls asleep on the train.

⁴ In addition to their use as auxiliary verbs, these verbs may also stand alone – hence, the term ‘quasi-auxiliary’.

16.5.2

If the infinitive of the verb does not have a coverb, its modifying adverb, adverbial or verbal complement fills the preverb position of the quasi-auxiliary verb.

A diákoknak sokat kell olvasniuk. (< **sokat olvas**)

The students must read a lot.

Anita levelet akar írni. (< **levelet ír**)

Anita wants to write a letter.

Gyula Pécsen fog lakni. (< **Pécsen lakik**)

Gyula will live in Pécs.

16.5.3

If the infinitive has neither a coverb, modifying adverb, adverbial or verbal complement, the infinitive itself occupies the preverb position.

Márta aludni akar. Márta wants to sleep.

Reggel mosni szokott. In the morning he usually does the laundry.

Nekünk tanulnunk kell. We have to study.

Este zongorázni lehet. At night you (one) may play the piano.

16.5.4

In non-neutral sentences, the focus element must occupy the focus position immediately before the conjugated verb; in this case the modifier of the infinitive (coverb, adverb, etc.) precedes the infinitive.

Neutral: **Le tetszik szállni az autóbusról?**

Are you getting off the bus?

Focus: **Nem tetszik leszállni az autóbusról?**

Aren't you getting off the bus?

- Neutral: **Fel fog hívni holnap.**
He will call me tomorrow.
- Focus: **Mikor fog felhívni?**
When will he call me?
- Focus: **Holnap fog felhívni.** (answer to question)
He will call me *tomorrow*.
- Neutral: **A diákoknak sokat kell olvasniuk.**
The students must read a lot.
- Focus: **Kinek kell sokat olvasnia?**
Who has to read a lot?
- Focus: **Miért kell sokat olvasniuk?**
Why do they have to read a lot?
- Neutral: **Gyula Pécssett fog lakni.**
Gyula will live in Pécs.
- Focus: **Gyula fog Pécssett lakni, nem a húga.**
Gyula is going to live in Pécs, not his sister.
- Focus: **Gyula nem fog Pécssett lakni.**
Gyula is not going to live in Pécs.
- Neutral: **Márta aludni akar.**
Márta wants to sleep.
- Focus: **Ki akar aludni?**
Who wants to sleep?
- Focus: **Márta akar aludni.** (answer to question)
Márta wants to sleep.

16.5.5

More verbs that often follow the word order patterns of quasi-auxiliaries:

bír	can, manage to	próbál	try
kezd	begin	szándékozik	wish
kíván	wish	szeretne	would like
mer	dare	talál	happen to
óhajt	desire		

Special constructions

17.1 Usage of *van* ‘be’

17.1.1 Present tense

In the present tense *van* ‘be’ is used in the third person (singular and plural) only in sentences containing existential (i.e., there is/there are) constructions or adverbial complements. Otherwise predicate nouns and adjectives do not occur with the verb *van/vannak*. Compare the following:

Attila itt van./Attila jól van. (adverbial complement)
Attila is here./Attila is well.

Attila gazdag/tanár. (predicate adjective/noun)
Attila is rich/a teacher.

Van Isten? (existential construction)
Is there a God?

Régi könyvek vannak a szekrényben. (existential construction)
There are old books in the closet.

A könyvek régiék. (predicate adjective)
The books are old.

The first and second persons (singular and plural) always use the verb *van* ‘be’ (in its correctly conjugated form, of course).

Angol tanár/vidám vagyok. (predicate adjective/noun)
I am an English teacher/cheerful.

Jól vagyok, köszönöm. (adverbial complement)
I’m well, thank you.

Magyarok vagyunk. (predicate adjective/noun)

We are Hungarian(s).

Egy gyönyörű kertben vagyunk. (adverbial complement)

We are in a beautiful garden.

Szép vagy. (predicate adjective/noun)

You are beautiful.

Roszul vagy? (adverbial complement)

Are you ill?

17.1.2 Past tense

Usage in the past tense is regular: the verb is used in all persons whether it is an adverbial construction or not. The past tense stem of *van* is **volt**. The verb *lesz* 'will be, become' has the stem **lett** in the past tense and means 'became'.

Attila tanár volt, de most fogorvos.

Attila was a teacher, but now he is a dentist.

Meleg lett./Meleg volt.

It got hot. /It was hot.

17.1.3 Subjunctive/imperative

The subjunctive/imperative is formed from the *lesz* 'will be, become' variant and is used in all persons.

Legyél pontos! Be on time.

Apám akarja, hogy mérnök legyek. My father wants me to be an engineer.

17.1.4 Conditional

The conditional may be formed from either the **volna-** or **lenne-** stem; the latter is somewhat more common.

Bárcsak itt lenne! If only she were here.

Bárcsak itt volna! If only she were here.

17.1.5 Future

The verb *lesz* ‘will be’ is the future form of *van* ‘be’. It is used in place of the future *fog* construction. It is not used as an auxiliary verb.

Mikor lesz már jó idő? When will there be some good weather?

Remélem, hogy boldog leszel. I hope you will be happy.

17.2 Negation and *van* ‘be’

The negation of *van* is *nincs/nincsen*; the negation of *vannak* is *nincsenek*.

Attila nincs itt./Attila nincs jól./Attila nincs a házban.
Attila is not here./Attila is not well./Attila is not in the house.

Nincsenek régi könyvek a szekrényben.
There are no old books in the closet.

In all other cases the negation of verbs (or nominal and adjectival predicates) is *nem*.

Attila nem gazdag./Attila nem tanár.
Attila is not rich./Attila is not a teacher.

A könyvek nem régiék.
The books are not old.

Nem vagyok otthon./Nem vagyunk otthon.
I am not at home./We are not at home.

Péter nem rajzol jól.
Péter does not draw well.

Nem may be used to negate a phrase other than the verb, in which case it may occur in sentences containing *van/vannak*; a negated phrase usually requires a *hanem* ‘rather’, ‘but’ phrase later in the sentence:

Attila nem a házban van, hanem a kertben.
Attila is not in the house, but in the garden.

Nem Attila van a házban, hanem Tamás.
It is not Attila who is in the house, rather Tamás.

17.3 Existential constructions

17.3.1

Existential constructions, i.e., ‘there is/there are’ constructions, use the verb **van** in Hungarian. The verbal complement is ‘what’ there is/are and therefore fills the preverb position in neutral sentences.

Sok gyerek van a parkban. There are many children in the park.

Víz van az asztalon. There is water on the table.

Nincs igazság a Földön. There is no justice in the world.

17.3.2

Hungarian also uses the existential constructions in many expressions of time and weather.

Hétfő van. It is Monday.

Szeptember 22-e van. It is September 22.

Két óra van. It is two o'clock.

Szép idő van. The weather is beautiful.

Hűvös/meleg/hideg van. It is chilly/hot/cold.

Vihar/szél/van. There is a storm/wind.

17.3.3

It is helpful to consider the ‘have’ construction an existential construction (see section 17.4 for more discussion).

Zsuzsának három gyereke van. Zsuzsa has three children.

(Nekünk) sok munkánk van. We have a lot of work.

17.4 'Have' construction

Hungarian does not have a verb with the meaning 'to have'; instead it uses a compound construction using **van** 'be'. The following are the components of the 'have' construction:

- The possessor is in the dative case; should this be a pronoun, it may be omitted.
- The possessed item is marked with a possessive ending which agrees with the possessor. In the 'have' construction, the definite article is never used before the possessed item.¹
- The verb **van** is in the third person and agrees in number with the possessed item(s) (which, in fact, is the grammatical subject).
- In neutral sentences the possessor is in the topic position, the possessed item is in preverb position (but see below for other word orders).

17.4.1 Possessed item is singular

(Nekem) szép kutyám van.

I have a beautiful dog.

(Neked) szép kutyád van.

You (sg.) have a beautiful dog.

(Neki), Gábornak, Magának szép kutyája van.

S/he/Gábor/You (*polite sg.*) have a beautiful dog.

(Nekünk) szép kutyánk van.

We have a beautiful dog.

(Nektek) szép kutyátok van.

You (pl.) have a beautiful dog.

(Nekik), a lányoknak, Maguknak szép kutyájuk van.

They/The girls/You (*polite pl.*) have a beautiful dog.

¹ Compare with the possessive construction where the definite article is almost always used.

17.4.2 *Possessed item is plural*

(Nekem) kedves testvéreim vannak.

I have nice siblings.

(Neked) kedves testvéreid vannak.

You (sg.) have nice siblings.

(Neki), Zsuzsának kedves testvérei vannak.

S/he/Zsuzsa/has nice siblings.

(Nekünk) kedves testvéreink vannak.

We have nice siblings.

(Nektek) kedves testvéreitek vannak.

You (pl.) have nice siblings

(Nekik) A barátainak kedves testvéreik vannak.

They/My friends have nice siblings.

17.4.3 *egy and the 'have' construction*

It is common to use an indefinite article before a (singular) possessed item. At such times, it usually follows the verb:

(Nekem) van egy jó ötletem!

I have a good idea.

(Nekünk) van egy régi szótárunk.

We have an old dictionary.

17.4.4 *Moods and tenses of the 'have' construction*

The verb *van* may occur in all its forms yielding past and future tenses, subjunctive, conditional, and potential moods of the 'have' construction:

(Nekem) jó tanárim voltak az egyetemen.

I had good teachers in college.

(Neked) jó állásod lesz, ha idejössz dolgozni.

You will have a good job if you come here to work.

Évának több pénze lenne, ha többet dolgozna.

Éva would have more money if she would work more.

Magának sok baja lehet vele.

You (formal, sg.) must have a lot of problems with him/her/it.

17.4.5 Negation and the 'have' construction

Negation of the 'have' construction is consistent with the regular rules of negation and focus word order: the negation of **van**, **vannak** is **nincs(en)**, **nincsenek**, respectively; otherwise use the regular patterns of negation. Negation occupies the focus position; the possessed item is consequently removed to a position immediately behind the verb.

(Nekem) nincs tollam.

I don't have a pen.

(Neked) nincsenek rokonaid Budapesten?

Don't you have (any) relatives in Budapest?

Erzsinek soha nem volt saját kocsija.

Erzsi never had her own car.

(Nekünk) nem lesz elég időnk.

We will not have enough time.

(Nektek) ne legyen már rossz kedvetek!

Don't be in a bad mood!

17.4.6 Common expressions with the 'have' construction

(valakinek) kedve van (someone) is in a mood (to do something)

" **ideje van** " has time

" **melege van** " is (too) warm, hot

" **igaza van** " is right

" **köze van** (something) is somebody's business
(valamihez)

" **fogalma** (someone) has no idea
sincs

Nincs kedvünk dolgozni ma.	We don't feel like working today.
Lesz időd holnap?	Will you have some time tomorrow?
Melegem van.	I'm hot.
Anyámnak mindig igaza van.	My mother is always right.
Semmi közöd hozzá!	It's none of your business!
Fogalmam sincs!	I have no idea!

Comparison of possessive and 'have' constructions

17.5 Comparison of possessive and 'have' constructions

Because of the subtle differences between the two, it is helpful to compare the possessive paradigm with the 'have' construction. Note that in the possessive paradigm for nominal possessors the plurality of the possessor is marked on the possessor and *not* on the possessed. This difference in marking does not occur in the 'have' construction.

Possessive paradigm			
Pronominal possessors:			
<i>Singular possessed:</i>		<i>Plural possessed:</i>	
az én szobám	my room	az én szobáim	my rooms
a te szobád	your (sg.) room	a te szobáid	your (sg.) rooms
az ő szobája	his/her room	az ő szobái	his/her rooms
a mi szobánk	our room	a mi szobáink	our rooms
a ti szobátok	your (pl.) room	a ti szobáitok	your (pl.) rooms
az ő szobájuk	their room	az ő szobáik	their rooms
Nominal possessors:			
a nő szobája	~ a nőnek a szobája	the woman's room (one woman, one room)	
a nő szobái	~ a nőnek a szobái	the woman's rooms (one woman, several rooms)	
a nők szobája	~ a nőknek a szobája	the women's room (several women, one room)	
a nők szobái	~ a nőknek a szobái	the women's rooms (several women, several rooms)	

The 'have' construction

Singular possessed:

Plural possessed:

(Nekem) szép szobám van.

I have a nice room.

(Neked) szép szobád van.

You have a nice room.

(Neki) szép szobája van.

She/He has a nice room.

A nőnek szép szobája van.

The woman has a nice room.

(Nekünk) szép szobánk van.

We have a nice room.

(Nektek) szép szobátok van.

You have a nice room.

(Nekik) szép szobájuk van.

They have a nice room.

A nőknek szép szobájuk van.

The women have a nice room.

(Nekem) szép szobáim vannak.

I have nice rooms.

(Neked) szép szobáid vannak.

You have nice rooms.

(Neki) szép szobái vannak.

She/He has nice rooms.

A nőnek szép szobái vannak.

The woman has nice rooms.

(Nekünk) szép szobáink vannak.

We have nice rooms.

(Nektek) szép szobáitok vannak.

You have nice rooms.

(Nekik) szép szobáik vannak.

They have nice rooms.

A nőknek szép szobáik vannak.

The women have nice rooms.

17.6 Differences in 'have' constructions

The verb 'have' in English may be translated into Hungarian in a variety of ways depending on the circumstances of ownership and possession.

- (a) **Sok pénze van.** She has a lot of money. (She's rich.)
- (b) **Sok pénz van nála.** She has a lot of money with her.
- (c) **Megvan a pénze.** She's got her money (for the train ticket, etc.).

The ‘have’ construction in (a) is used when someone possesses or owns something or has an inalienable relation to it.

Gábornak háza/két húga/sok munkája/hosszú lába/van.

Gábor has a house/two younger sisters/a lot of work/long legs.

The construction with the adessive **-nál/-nél** case is used when a person is carrying something along with him or her.

Nincs nála az olvasószemüvege.

She doesn’t have her reading glasses with her.

Kinél van a kulcs?

Who has the key?

Nem volt nála szótár, tehát nem tudta lefordítani a reklámot.

He didn’t have a dictionary with him, so he couldn’t translate the ad.

The construction with **megvan** in (c) is used when a person has an expected item with him/her, it is not lost, and/or it is ready for use. Unlike the ‘have’ construction in (a) where a definite article is never used, sentences with **megvan** always use the definite article.

Megvan a házi feladatod?

Have you got your homework?/Is your homework ready?

Megvan a repülőjegyem, az útlevelem, kész vagyok az utazásra.

I’ve got my plane ticket and my passport, I’m ready to travel.

Ha nincs meg a kulcs, hogy tudunk bemenni?

If we don’t have the key, how will we get in?

This is also the construction used to express having something that belongs to someone else.

Megvan a telefonszámom, ugye?

You’ve got my telephone number, haven’t you?

17.7 Impersonal constructions

Impersonal constructions are characterized by having no personal pronoun in subject position. In Hungarian, impersonal constructions consist of the following:

- (a) a dative-marked ‘subject’ (i.e., what would correspond to the subject in English). If this is a pronoun it may be omitted.
 (b) a third person verb or predicate adjective
 (c) an infinitive declined to agree with the person of the dative-marked ‘subject’

(Nekem) tanulnom kell.	I must study.
(Neked) tanulnod kell.	You (sg.) must study.
(Neki)/Tamásnak tanulnia kell.	She/he/Tamás must study.
(Nekünk) tanulnunk kell.	We must study.
(Nektek) tanulnotok kell.	You (pl.) must study.
(Nekik)/A fiúknak tanulniuk kell.	They/The boys must study.

17.7.1 Verbs occurring in impersonal constructions

fáj	hurt	lehet	may
illik	be suitable, fitting	muszáj	must
kell	must	sikerül	succeed, manage

Jenőnek várnia kell.

Jenő has to wait.

Sikerült (neked) elérned a főnököt?

Did you manage to reach the boss?

17.7.2 Adjectives occurring in impersonal constructions

értelmes	be worth(while)	szabad	be allowed
hasznos	be useful	szükséges	be necessary
jó	be good	szükségtelen	be unnecessary
könnyű	be easy	rossz	be bad
nehéz	be difficult	tilos	be forbidden

Nem érdemes megnéznem a filmet.

It is not worth it for me to see the film.

Neked nem szabad tejet innod.

You are not allowed to drink milk.

(Neki) könnyű volt válaszolnia.

It was easy for him/her to answer.

Nehéz dolgoznunk, mikor szép idő van kint.

It is hard for us to work when the weather is nice outside.

17.7.3 Impersonal constructions without declined infinitives

It is very common to use the infinitive without the possessive endings in the impersonal constructions. Thus, the following three sentences have the same meaning:

(Nekem) dolgoznom kell. I have to work.

Nekem dolgozni kell. "

Dolgozni kell. "

Conversely, the impersonal construction without a dative complement or declined infinitive may refer to any person at all:

Dolgozni kell. I, you, we, they, people, etc. have to work.

The verb *lehet* is only used without declined infinitives; when the person must be specified, the potential suffix *-hat/-het* is used on the substantive verb (see section 4.5.2). Compare the following:

Itt lehet szép cipőt kapni. One can get nice shoes here.

Itt kaphatunk szép cipőt. We can get nice shoes here.

17.7.4 Impersonal 'you', 'one'

Any construction may be made impersonal by using the impersonal *az ember* 'one'; it may be any part of speech and may translate into English in a variety of ways.

Az embernek szórakoznia is kell néha.

People have to/You have to/One has to have fun sometimes, too.

Sajnos az ember nem tud pénz nélkül élni.

Unfortunately, we/you/people can't live without money.

17.8 Agent-less sentences (passive)

Modern Hungarian does not have a passive inflection, but the use of the third person plural conjugation with no subject or subject pronoun can be translated as a passive in English.

Óránként közlik a híreket.

They broadcast the news every hour./The news is broadcast every hour.

Ritkán fordítják jól Kosztolányit.

Kosztolányi is rarely translated well.

17.9 Adverbial participle with van

In the spoken language it is common to form constructions with the adverbial participle (-va/-ve)² of a substantive verb and use the verb **van** as an auxiliary. This construction usually results in describing the state or condition of the subject and is often translated into the passive voice in English.

In these constructions **van** is the conjugated verb and can occur in any mood or tense; in neutral sentences the preverb position is filled by the coverb of the substantive verb.

A kenyér meg van sütve. The bread is baked.

Meg vagyok fázva. I have a cold.

Meg lesztek híva. You (pl.) will be invited.

A munka be lett fejezve. The work got done.

In the absence of a coverb, the substantive verb marked with the adverbial participle is in the preverb position.

Az ajtó nyitva van. The door is open.

Az üzlet zárva van. The shop is closed.

² See section 4.4.3 on how to form the adverbial participle.

When these constructions are negated (or other focussed elements occur), the negation occupies the focus preverb position and the coverb is not separated from its verb.³

A kenyér nincs megsütve.	The bread is not baked.
Az ajtó nincs nyitva.	The door is not open.
Az üzlet nincs bezárva.	The shop is not closed.
Nem vagyok megfázva.	I do not have a cold.
Nem lesztek meghíva.	You will not be invited.
A munka nem lett befejezve.	The work did not get finished.

17.10 Answering questions

17.10.1 Answering questions in the affirmative

Yes–no questions may be answered affirmatively in several ways.

17.10.1.1

They may always be answered by *igen* ‘yes’.

Eljössz moziba ma este?	Will you come to the movies tonight?
Igen.	Yes.
Lajos orvos?	Is Lajos a doctor?
Igen.	Yes.

³ It may be helpful to realize that the coverb has been removed from the neutral preverb position to a position immediately behind the conjugated verb – thereby re-prefixing to its verb. This is consistent with rules of word order and focus outlined in chapter 15.

17.10.1.2

If the question refers to the verb, the verb may be used to answer in the affirmative (it may need to be re-conjugated to fit the sense of the answer). If the verb has a coverb, repetition of the coverb alone is sufficient.

Eljössz moziba ma este? Will you come to the movies tonight?

El. Yes.

Eljövök.

Tanulsz? Are you studying?

Tanulok. Yes.

Kell a toll? Do you need the pen?

Kell. Yes.

17.10.1.3

If the question pertains to a particular word other than the verb, the affirmative answer may be a repetition of that word.

Lajos orvos? Is Lajos a *doctor*?

Orvos. Yes.

Lajos orvos? Is *Lajos* a doctor?

Lajos. Yes.

17.10.1.4

The affirmative answer may be a combination of the above.

Tanulsz? Are you studying?

Igen, tanulok. Yes, I am.

Eljössz moziba ma este? Will you come to the movies tonight?

Igen, el(jövök). Yes, I will.

Lajos orvos? Is Lajos a doctor?
Igen, orvos. Yes, he is.

17.10.1.5

In sentences with predicate nouns or adjectives, the affirmative answer may take yet another shape:

Lauri finn? Is Lauri Finnish/a Finn?

Igen, az. Yes, he is (that).

Az. Yes.

Toll ez? Is this a pen?

Toll. Yes.

Igen. "

Az. "

Igen, toll. "

Igen, az. "

Igen, ez az. "

17.10.1.6

Emphatic affirmative answers are **persze**, **hogyne** 'of course'.

Kifizetted a számlát? Did you pay the bill?

Persze. Of course.

Tetszett a szálloda? Did you like the hotel?

Hogyne. Of course.

17.10.1.7

When contradicting a question asked in the negative, use **de** or **de, igen** 'but', 'yes'. The verb may or may not be repeated.

Nem kérsz már kávét? You don't want any more coffee?

De, igen, kérek. Yes I do.

De, kérek. "

De, igen. "

De. "

17.10.1.8

To emphatically contradict a question asked in the negative use **dehogy-**
nem, dehogyisnem 'but, of course'.

Nem akarsz megkóstolni ezt a vörösbort?

Don't you want to have a taste of this red wine?

Dehogy-nem (akarom). ~ **Dehogyisnem.**

Of course, I do.

17.10.2 Answering questions in the negative

17.10.2.1

Yes-no questions are usually answered with **nem** 'no' in the negative.

Eloolvastad a verset? Did you read the poem?

Nem. No.

17.10.2.2 Emphatic negative answers use **dehogy, dehogyis** 'of course not'.

Befejezted a munkát? Did you finish the work?

Dehogy! Of course not.

Dehogyis! "

Appendix I

Some irregular verbs

lesz become, will be

	<i>present</i>	<i>past</i>	<i>subjunctive</i>	<i>conditional</i>
én	leszek	lettem	legyek	lénnék
te	leszel	lettél	légy/legyél	lennél
ő	lesz	lett	legyen	lenne
mi	leszünk	lettünk	legyünk	lennénk
ti	lesztek	lettetek	legyetek	lennétek
ők	lesznek	lettek	legyenek	lennének

infinitive: **lenni**

present participle: **való, levő/lévő**

past participle: **volt, lett**

future participle: **leendő**

adverbial participle: **léve, lévén**

potential: **lehet**

¹ The verb **tesz** is conjugated exactly as **vesz**.

Appendix ISome
irregular
verbs**vesz¹ take; buy**

	<i>present</i>		<i>past</i>	
	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
én	veszek	veszem	vettem	vettem
te	veszel	veszed	vettél	vetted
	<i>present</i>		<i>past</i>	
	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
ő	vesz	veszi	vett	vette
mi	veszünk	veszük	vettünk	vettük
ti	vesztek	veszitek	vettetek	vettétek
ők	vesznek	veszik	vettek	vették
én (téged/benneteket/ titeket)		veszlek		vettelek
	<i>subjunctive</i>		<i>conditional</i>	
	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
én	vegyek	vegyem	vennék	venném
te	végy/vegyél	vegyed/vedd	vennél	vennéd
ő	vegyen	vegye	venne	venné
mi	vegyünk	vegyük	vennénk	vennénk
ti	vegyetek	vegyétek	vennétek	vennétek
ők	vegyenek	vegyék	vennének	vennék
én (téged/benneteket/ titeket)		vegyelek		vennélek

infinitive: **venni**present participle: **vevő**past participle: **vett**future participle: **veendő**adverbial participle: **véve**potential: **vehet**

visz take, carry

<i>present</i>		<i>past</i>		
<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	
én	viszek	viszem	vittem	vittem
te	viszel	viszed	vittél	vitted
ő	visz	viszi	vitt	vitte
mi	viszünk	visszük	vittünk	vittük
ti	visztek	viszitek	vittetek	vittétek
ők	visznek	viszik	vittek	vitték
én (téged/benneteket/ titeket)		viszlek		vittelek

<i>subjunctive</i>		<i>conditional</i>		
<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	
én	vigyek	vigyem	vinnék	vinném
te	vigyél	vigyed/vidd	vinnél	vinnéd
ő	vigyen	vigye	vinne	vinné
mi	vigyünk	vigyük	vinnénk	vinnénk
ti	vigyetek	vigyétek	vinnétek	vinnétek
ők	vigyenek	vigyék	vinnének	vinnék
én (téged/benneteket/ titeket)		vigyelek		vinnélek

infinitive: vinni

present participle: vivő

past participle: vitt

future participle: viendő

adverbial participle: vive

potential: vihet

Appendix ISome
irregular
verbs**hisz believe**

		<i>present</i>		<i>past</i>	
	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	
én	hiszek	hiszem	hittem	hittem	
te	hiszel	hiszed	hittél	hitted	
ő	hisz	hiszi	hitt	hitte	
mi	hiszünk	hisszük	hittünk	hittük	
ti	hisztek	hiszitek	hittetek	hittétek	
ők	hisznek	hiszik	hittek	hitték	
én (téged/benneteket/ titeket)		hiszlek		híttelek	

		<i>subjunctive</i>		<i>conditional</i>	
	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	
én	higgyek	higgyem	hinnék	hinném	
te	higgy/higgyél	higgyed/hidd	hinnél	hinnéd	
ő	higgyen	higgye	hinne	hinné	
mi	higgyünk	higgyük	hinnénk	hinnénk	
ti	higgyetek	higgyétek	hinnétek	hinnétek	
ők	higgyenek	higgyék	hinnének	hinnék	
én (téged/benneteket/ titeket)		higgyelek		hinnélek	

infinitive: **hinni**present participle: **hívő**past participle: **hitt**adverbial participle: **híve**potential: **hihet**

eszik eat

		<i>present</i>		<i>past</i>	
	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	
én	eszek ~ eszem	eszem	ettem	ettem	
te	eszél	eszéd	ettél	etted	
ő	eszik	eszi	evett	ette	
mi	eszünk	esszük	ettünk	ettük	
ti	esztek	eszitek	ettetek	ettétek	
ők	esznek	eszik	ettek	ették	
én (téged/ benneteket/ titeket)		(meg)eszlek		(meg)ettelek	

		<i>subjunctive</i>		<i>conditional</i>	
	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	
én	egyek ~ egye	egyem	ennék ~ enném	enném	
te	egyél	egyed/edd	ennél	ennéd	
ő	egyen ~ egyék	egye	enne ~ ennék	enné	
mi	együnk	együk	ennénk	ennénk	
ti	egyetek	egyétek	ennétek	ennétek	
ők	egyenek	egyék	ennének	ennék	
én (téged/ benneteket/ titeket)		(meg)egyelek		(meg)ennélek	

infinitive: enni

present participle: evő

past participle: evett

potential: ehet

Appendix ISome
irregular
verbs**iszik drink**

	<i>present</i>		<i>past</i>	
	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
én	iszok ~ iszom	iszom	ittam	ittam
te	iszol	iszod	ittál	ittad
ő	iszik	issza	ivott	itta
mi	iszunk	isszuk	ittunk	ittuk
ti	isztok	isszátok	ittatok	ittátok
ők	isznak	isszák	ittak	itták
én (téged/ benneteket/ titeket)		(meg)iszlak		(meg)ittalak

	<i>subjunctive</i>		<i>conditional</i>	
	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
én	igyak ~ igyam	igyam	innék ~ innám	innám
te	igyal	igyd ~ idd	innál	innád
ő	igyon ~ igyék	igya	inna~innék	inná
mi	igyunk	igyuk	innánk	innánk
ti	igyatok	igyátok	innátok	innátok
ők	igyanak	igyák	innának	innák
én (téged/ benneteket/ titeket)		(meg)igyalak		(meg)innálak

infinitive: inni

present participle: ivó

past participle: ivott

potential: ihat

megy come

	<i>present</i>	<i>past</i>	<i>subjunctive</i>	<i>conditional</i>
én	megyek	mentem	menjek	mennék
te	mész ~ mégy	mentél	menj ~ menjél	mennél
ő	megy	ment	menjen	menne
mi	megyünk	mentünk	menjünk	mennénk
ti	mentek	mentetek	menjetek	mennétek
ők	mennek	mentek	menjenek	mennének

infinitive: menni

present participle: menő

past participle: ment

adverbial participle: menve

potential: mehet

jön go

	<i>present</i>	<i>past</i>	<i>subjunctive</i>	<i>conditional</i>
én	jövök	jöttem	jöjjek	jönnék
te	jössz	jöttél	jöjjél ~ gyere	jönnél
ő	jön	jött	jöjjön	jönne
mi	jövünk	jöttünk	jöjjünk ~ gyerünk	jönnénk
ti	jöttök	jöttetek	jöjjetek ~ gyertek	jönnétek
ők	jönnek	jöttek	jöjjenek	jönnének

infinitive: jönni

present participle: jövő

past participle: jött

adverbial participle: jöve

potential: jöhet

Appendix I
Some
irregular
verbs

In the imperative the forms *gyere*, *gyertek*, *gyerünk* are more common; the forms *jöjjél*, *jöjjetek*, *jöjjünk* are more common in the subjunctive use of this verb.

Gyere ide!	Come here!
Ne gyertek be a házba!	Don't come into the house!
Azt üzente, hogy hazajöjjél.	He sent word that you should come home.
Nem akarja, hogy kijöjjünk a vízből.	He doesn't want us to come out of the water.

The verb *van* 'be'

	<i>present</i>	<i>past</i>	<i>subjunctive</i>	<i>conditional</i>	
én	vagyok	voltam	legyek	volnék	~ lennék
te	vagy	voltál	légy~legyél	volnál	~ lennél
ő	(van)	volt	legyen	volna	~ lenne
mi	vagyunk	voltunk	legyünk	volnánk	~ lennénk
ti	vagytok	voltatok	legyetek	volnátok	~ lennétek
ők	(vannak)	voltak	legyenek	volnának	~ lennének

infinitive: *lenni*

present participle: *való* ~ *levő/lévő*

past participle: *volt*

future participle: *leendő*

potential: *lehet*

Sample inflectional/derivational paradigm (for first person singular)

I('ll) iron my shirt.	Kivasalom az ingemet.
I ironed my shirt.	Kivasaltam az ingemet.
Should I iron my shirt?	Kivasaljam az ingemet?
Iron my shirt!	Vasald ki az ingemet!
I would iron my shirt.	Kivasalnék az ingemet.
I would have ironed my shirt.	Kivasaltam volna az ingemet.
I may/can iron my shirt.	Kivasalhatom az ingemet.
I could iron my shirt.	Kivasalhatnám az ingemet.
I could have ironed my shirt.	Kivasalhattam volna az ingemet.
I must iron my shirt.	Ki kell vasalnom az ingemet.
I had to iron my shirt.	Ki kellett vasalnom az ingemet.
I should iron my shirt.	Ki kellene vasalnom az ingemet.
I should have ironed my shirt.	Ki kellett volna vasalnom az ingemet.
Lest I should have to iron my shirt.	Nehogy ki kelljen vasalnom az ingemet.
I'll have you iron my shirt.	Kivasaltatom veled az ingemet.
I had you iron my shirt.	Kivasaltattam veled az ingemet.
Should I have you iron my shirt?	Kivasaltassam veled az ingemet?
I would have you iron my shirt.	Kivasaltatnám veled az ingemet.

Appendix I

Some
irregular
verbs

I would have had you iron my shirt.	Kivasaltattam volna veled az ingemet.
I can/may have you iron my shirt.	Kivasaltathatom veled az ingemet.
I could have you iron my shirt.	Kivasaltathatnám veled az ingemet.
I could have had you iron my shirt.	Kivasaltathattam volna veled az ingemet.
I must have you iron my shirt.	Ki kell vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.
I had to have you iron my shirt.	Ki kellett vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.
I should have you iron my shirt.	Ki kellene vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.
I should have had you iron my shirt.	Ki kellett volna vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.
My shirt is ironed.	Az ingem ki van vasalva.
My shirt was ironed.	Az ingem ki volt vasalva.
My shirt will be ironed.	Az ingem ki lesz vasalva.
Let my shirt be ironed!	Legyen kivasalva az ingem!
My shirt would be ironed.	Az ingem ki lenne/volna vasalva.
My shirt would have been ironed.	Az ingem ki lett volna vasalva.
My shirt may/might be ironed.	Az ingem ki lehet vasalva.
My shirt could be ironed.	Az ingem ki lehetne vasalva.
My shirt may have been ironed.	Az ingem ki lehetett volna vasalva.
I will iron my shirt.	Ki fogom vasalni az ingemet.

And I ironed it too.

I didn't even iron it.

I was doing a little ironing.

Ki is vasaltam.

Ki sem vasaltam.

Vasalgattam egy kicsit.

Appendix I

Some
irregular
verbs

Appendix 2

Sample noun declensions

Low vowel, no loss of length

	back vowel		front vowel	
	<i>singular</i> 'house'	<i>plural</i> 'houses'	<i>singular</i> 'book'	<i>plural</i> 'books'
<i>nominative</i>	ház	házak	könyv	könyvek
<i>accusative</i>	házat	házakat	könyvet	könyveket
<i>illative</i>	házba	házakba	könyvbe	könyvekbe
<i>inessive</i>	házban	házakban	könyvben	könyvekben
<i>elative</i>	házból	házakból	könyvből	könyvekből
<i>sublative</i>	házra	házakra	könyvre	könyvekre
<i>superessive</i>	házon	házakon	könyvön	könyveken
<i>delative</i>	háZRól	házakRól	könyvről	könyvekről
<i>allative</i>	házhoz	házakhoz	könyvhöz	könyvekhez
<i>adessive</i>	háznál	házaknál	könyvnel	könyveknél
<i>ablative</i>	háztól	házaktól	könyvtől	könyvektől
<i>dative</i>	háznak	házaknak	könyvnek	könyveknek
<i>instrumental</i>	házzal	házakkal	könyvvel	könyvekkel
<i>translative</i>	házzá	házakká	könyvvé	könyvekké
<i>causal-final</i>	háZért	házakért	könyvért	könyvekért
<i>essive-formal</i>	házként	házakként	könyvként	könyvekként
<i>terminative</i>	házig	házakig	könyvig	könyvekig
<i>distributive</i>	házanként	—	könyvenként	—
<i>sociative</i>	házastul	—	könyvestül	—

Low vowel, loses length

Appendix 2 Sample noun declensions

	back vowel		front vowel	
	<i>singular</i> 'glass'	<i>plural</i> 'glass'	<i>singular</i> 'hand'	<i>plural</i> 'hands'
<i>nominative</i>	pohár	poharak	kéz	kezek
<i>accusative</i>	poharat	poharakat	kezet	kezeket
<i>illative</i>	pohárba	poharakba	kézbe	kezekbe
<i>inessive</i>	pohárban	poharakban	kézben	kezekben
<i>elative</i>	pohárból	poharakból	kézből	kezekből
<i>sublative</i>	pohárra	poharakra	kézre	kezekre
<i>superessive</i>	poháron	poharakon	kézen	kezeken
<i>delative</i>	pohárról	poharakról	kézőről	kezekről
<i>allative</i>	pohárhoz	poharakhoz	kézhez	kezekhez
<i>adessive</i>	pohárnál	poharaknál	kéznel	kezeknél
<i>ablative</i>	pohártól	poharaktól	kéztől	kezektől
<i>dative</i>	pohárnak	poharaknak	kéznek	kezeknek
<i>instrumental</i>	pohárral	poharakkal	kézze	kezekkel
<i>translative</i>	pohárrá	poharakká	kézzé	kezekké
<i>causal-final</i>	pohárért	poharakért	kézért	kezekért
<i>essive-formal</i>	pohárként	poharakként	kézként	kezekként
<i>terminative</i>	pohárig	poharakig	kézig	kezekig
<i>distributive</i>	poharanként	—	kezenként	—
<i>sociative</i>	poharastul	—	kezesül	—

Appendix 2Sample noun
declensions**Regular noun, ending in vowel**

	back vowel		front vowel	
	<i>singular</i> 'bag'	<i>plural</i> 'bags'	<i>singular</i> 'melon'	<i>plural</i> 'melons'
<i>nominative</i>	táska	táskák	dinnye	dinnyék
<i>accusative</i>	táskát	táskákat	dinnyét	dinnyéket
<i>illative</i>	táskába	táskákba	dinnyébe	dinnyékbe
<i>inessive</i>	táskában	táskákban	dinnyében	dinnyékben
<i>elative</i>	táskából	táskákból	dinnyéből	dinnyékből
<i>sublative</i>	táskára	táskákra	dinnyére	dinnyékre
<i>superessive</i>	táskán	táskákon	dinnyén	dinnyéken
<i>delative</i>	táskáról	táskákról	dinnyéről	dinnyékről
<i>allative</i>	táskához	táskákhoz	dinnyéhez	dinnyékhez
<i>adessive</i>	táskánál	táskáknál	dinnyénél	dinnyéknél
<i>ablative</i>	táskától	táskáktól	dinnyétől	dinnyéktől
<i>dative</i>	táskának	táskáknak	dinnyének	dinnyéknek
<i>instrumental</i>	táskával	táskákkal	dinnyével	dinnyékkal
<i>translative</i>	táskává	táskákká	dinnyévé	dinnyékké
<i>causal-final</i>	táskáért	táskákért	dinnyéért	dinnyékért
<i>essive-formal</i>	táskaként	táskákként	dinnyeként	dinnyékként
<i>terminative</i>	táskáig	táskákig	dinnyéig	dinnyékig
<i>distributive</i>	táskánként	—	dinnyénként	—
<i>sociative</i>	táskástul	—	dinnyéstül	—

Regular noun, ending in consonant

	back vowel		front, unrounded vowel		front, rounded vowel	
	<i>singular</i> 'girl'	<i>plural</i> 'girls'	<i>singular</i> 'chair'	<i>plural</i> 'chairs'	<i>singular</i> 'guard'	<i>plural</i> 'guards'
<i>nom.</i>	lány	lányok	szék	székek	őr	őrök
<i>acc.</i>	lányt	lányokat	széket	székeket	őrt	őröket
<i>ill.</i>	lányba	lányokba	székbe	székekbe	őrbe	őrökbe
<i>iness.</i>	lányban	lányokban	székben	székekben	őriben	őrökben
<i>elat.</i>	lányból	lányokból	székből	székekből	őrből	őrökből
<i>sublat.</i>	lányra	lányokra	székre	székekre	őrrre	őrökre
<i>sup.</i>	lányon	lányokon	széken	székeken	őrön	őrökön
<i>delat.</i>	lányról	lányokról	székről	székekről	őrről	őrökről
<i>allat.</i>	lányhoz	lányokhoz	székhez	székekhez	őrhöz	őrökhöz
<i>adess.</i>	lánynál	lányoknál	széknél	székeknél	őrnél	őröknél
<i>abl.</i>	lánytól	lányoktól	széktől	székektől	őrtől	őröktől
<i>dat.</i>	lánynak	lányoknak	széknek	székeknek	őrnek	őröknek
<i>instr.</i>	lánnyal	lányokkal	székkel	székekkel	őrrel	őrökkel
<i>transl.</i>	lánnyá	lányokká	székké	székekké	őrré	őrökké
<i>caus.-fin.</i>	lányért	lányokért	székért	székekért	őrért	őrökért
<i>ess.-for.</i>	lányként	lányokként	székként	székeként	örként	őrökként
<i>term.</i>	lányig	lányokig	székig	székekig	őrig	őrökig
<i>dist.</i>	lánnyonként	——	székenként	——	őrönként	——
<i>social.</i>	lánnyastul	——	székestül	——	őrestül	——

Fleeting vowel

	back vowel		front, unrounded vowel		front, rounded vowel	
	<i>singular</i> 'bush'	<i>plural</i> 'bushes'	<i>singular</i> 'twin'	<i>plural</i> 'twins'	<i>singular</i> 'mirror'	<i>plural</i> 'mirrors'
<i>nom.</i>	bokor	bokrok	iker	ikrek	tükör	tükrök
<i>acc.</i>	bokrot	bokrokat	ikret	ikreket	tükröt	tükröket
<i>ill.</i>	bokorba	bokrokba	ikerbe	ikrekbe	tükörbe	tükrökbe
<i>iness.</i>	bokorban	bokrokban	ikerben	ikrekben	tükörben	tükrökben
<i>elat.</i>	bokorból	bokrokból	ikerből	ikrekből	tükörből	tükrökből
<i>sublat.</i>	bokorra	bokrokra	ikerre	ikrekre	tükörrre	tükrökre
<i>sup.</i>	bokron	bokrokon	ikren	ikreken	tükrön	tükrökön
<i>delat.</i>	bokorról	bokrokról	ikerről	ikrekről	tükörről	tükrökről
<i>allat.</i>	bokorhoz	bokrokhoz	ikerhez	ikrekhez	tükörhöz	tükrökhöz
<i>adess.</i>	bokornál	bokroknál	ikernél	ikreknél	tükörnél	tükröknél
<i>abl.</i>	bokortól	bokroktól	ikertől	ikrektől	tükörtől	tükröktől
<i>dat.</i>	bokornak	bokroknak	ikernek	ikreknek	tükörnek	tükröknek
<i>instr.</i>	bokorral	bokrokkal	ikerrel	ikrekkel	tükörrel	tükrökkel
<i>transl.</i>	bokorrá	bokrokká	ikerré	ikrekké	tükörré	tükrökké
<i>caus.-fin.</i>	bokorért	bokrokért	ikerért	ikrekért	tükörért	tükrökért
<i>ess.-for.</i>	bokorként	bokrokként	ikerként	ikreként	tükörként	tükrökként
<i>term.</i>	bokorig	bokrokig	ikerig	ikrekig	tükörig	tükrökig
<i>distr.</i>	bokronként	—	ikrenként	—	tükrönként	—
<i>sociat.</i>	bokrostul	—	ikrestül	—	tükröstül	—

V-stems

	singular 'lake'	plural 'lakes'	singular 'stone'	plural 'stones'	singular 'word'	plural 'words'
<i>nom.</i>	tó	tavak	kő	kövek	szó	szavak ~ szók
<i>acc.</i>	tavat	tavakat	követ	köveket	szót	szavakat
<i>ill.</i>	tóba	tavakba	kőbe	kövekbe	szóba	szavakba
<i>iness.</i>	tóban	tavakban	kőben	kövekben	szóban	szavakban
<i>elat.</i>	tóból	tavakból	kőből	kövekből	szóból	szavakból
<i>sublat.</i>	tóra	tavakra	kőre	kövekre	szóra	szavakra
<i>sup.</i>	tavon	tavakon	kövön	köveken	szavon	szavakon
<i>delat.</i>	tóról	tavakról	kőről	kövekről	szóról	szavakról
<i>allat.</i>	tóhoz	tavakhoz	kőhöz	kövekhez	szóhoz	szavakhoz
<i>adess.</i>	tónál	tavaknál	kőnél	köveknél	szónál	szavaknál
<i>abl.</i>	tótól	tavaktól	kőtől	kövektől	szótól	szavaktól
<i>dat.</i>	tónak	tavaknak	kőnek	köveknek	szónak	szavaknak
<i>instr.</i>	tóval	tavakkal	kővel	kövekkel	szóval	szavakkal
<i>transl.</i>	tóvá	tavakká	kővé	kövekké	szóvá	szavakká
<i>caus.-fin.</i>	tóért	tavakért	kőért	kövekért	szóért	szavakért
<i>ess.-for.</i>	tóként	tavakként	kőként	kövekként	szóként	szavakként
<i>term.</i>	tóig	tavakig	kőig	kövekig	szóig	szavakig
<i>distr.</i>	tavanként	—	kövenként	—	szavanként	—
<i>sociat.</i>	tavastul	—	kövestül	—	szavastul	—

Possessive declension

Low vowel
(no loss of length)

ház house

singular *plural*
'my house' 'my houses'

Low vowel
(loss of length)

levél letter

singular *plural*
'your letter' 'your letters'

V-stem

ló horse

singular *plural*
'his/her
horse' 'his/her
horses'

	házam	házaim	leveled	leveleid	lova	lovai
<i>nom.</i>	házamat	házaimat	leveledet	leveleidet	lovát	lovait
<i>ill.</i>	házamba	házaimba	leveledbe	leveleidbe	lovába	lovaiba
<i>iness.</i>	házamban	házaimban	leveledben	leveleidben	lovában	lovaiban
<i>elat.</i>	házamból	házaimból	leveledből	leveleidből	lovából	lovaiból
<i>sublat.</i>	házamra	házaimra	leveledre	leveleidre	lovára	lovaira
<i>sup.</i>	házamon	házaimon	leveleden	leveleiden	lován	lovain
<i>delat.</i>	házamról	házaimról	leveledről	leveleidről	lováról	lovairól
<i>allat.</i>	házamhoz	házaimhoz	leveledhez	leveleidhez	lovához	lovaihoz
<i>adess.</i>	házamnál	házaimnál	levelednél	leveleidnél	lovánál	lovainál
<i>abl.</i>	házamtól	házaimtól	leveledtől	leveleidtől	lovától	lovaitól
<i>dat.</i>	házamnak	házaimnak	levelednek	leveleidnek	lovának	lovainak
<i>instr.</i>	házammal	házaimmal	leveleddel	leveleiddel	lovával	lovaival
<i>transl.</i>	házammá	házaimmá	leveleddé	leveleiddé	lovává	lovaivá
<i>caus.-fin.</i>	házamért	házaimért	leveledért	leveleidért	lováért	lovaier
<i>ess.-for.</i>	házamként	—	leveledként	—	lovaként	lovaiként
<i>term.</i>	házamig	házaimig	leveledig	leveleidig	lováig	lovaig

	<i>-alom</i>		fleeting vowel		regular noun	
	jutalom reward		áalom dream		kép picture	
	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
	'our reward'	'our rewards'	'your dream'	'your dreams'	'their picture'	'their pictures'
<i>nom.</i>	jutalmunk	jutalmaink	álmotok	álmaitok	képük	képeik
<i>acc.</i>	jutalmunkat	jutalmainkat	álmotokat	álmaitokat	képüket	képeiket
<i>ill.</i>	jutalmunkba	jutalmainkba	álmotokba	álmaitokba	képükbe	képeikbe
<i>iness.</i>	jutalmunkban	jutalmainkban	álmotokban	álmaitokban	képükben	képeikben
<i>elat.</i>	jutalmunkból	jutalmainkból	álmotokból	álmaitokból	képükből	képeikből
<i>sublat.</i>	jutalmunkra	jutalmainkra	álmotokra	álmaitokra	képükre	képeikre
<i>sup.</i>	jutalmunkon	jutalmainkon	álmotokon	álmaitokon	képükön	képeiken
<i>delat.</i>	jutalmunkról	jutalmainkról	álmotokról	álmaitokról	képükről	képeikről
<i>allat.</i>	jutalmunkhoz	jutalmainkhoz	álmotokhoz	álmaitokhoz	képükhöz	képeikhez
<i>adess.</i>	jutalmunknál	jutalmainknál	álmotoknál	álmaitoknál	képüknél	képeiknél
<i>abl.</i>	jutalmunktól	jutalmainktól	álmotoktól	álmaitoktól	képüktől	képeiktől
<i>dat.</i>	jutalmunknak	jutalmainknak	álmotoknak	álmaitoknak	képüknek	képeiknek
<i>instr.</i>	jutalmunkkal	jutalmainkkal	álmotokkal	álmaitokkal	képükkel	képeikkel
<i>transl.</i>	jutalmunkká	jutalmainkká	álmotokká	álmaitokká	képükké	képeikké
<i>caus.-fin.</i>	jutalmunkért	jutalmainkért	álmotokért	álmaitokért	képükért	képeikért
<i>ess.-for.</i>	jutalmunkként	—	álmotokként	—	képükként	—
<i>term.</i>	jutalmunkig	jutalmainkig	álmotokig	álmaitokig	képükig	képeikig

Appendix 3 Noun types and exceptions

Low vowel nouns

(Deviations from regular declension of these noun types are in parentheses. Regular declensions are found in appendix 2.)

Monosyllabic (no loss of length)

láb leg, foot	ágy bed	ín tendon (acc.: ínt)
kád tub (sg3px ¹ : kádja)	vágy desire	meny daughter-in-law
nád reed (sg3px: nádja)	háj fat	árny shade
vád accusation (sg3px: vádja)	máj liver	szörnny monster
had army, troops	nyáj flock	szárny wing
hold moon	száj mouth	talp heel
föld land (sg3px: földje)	táj landscape	ár price
térd knee	héj peel	ár awl (sg3px: árja)
ág branch	íj bow	gyár factory
fog tooth	díj prize, fee	nyár poplar
szög nail	szíj strap	szár stalk
agy brain	nyak neck	tár repository (acc. tár(a)t)
	lyuk hole	vár fortress
	hal fish	has belly
	fal wall	
	nyál saliva	

¹ sg3px = 'third person singular possessive suffix'.

hölgy lady	szál stick, piece	vas iron
tölgy oak	tál bowl	hárs linden
völgy valley	áll chin	nyárs spit, skewer
tőgy udder	váll shoulder	társ mate
tárgy object	jel sign	hát back
ügy matter	mell breast	ív arch
rügy bud	toll pen, feather	ház house
szügy breast (zool.)	ól sty (acc.: ólat~ólt; sg3px: olja)	váz vase
báj charm (acc.: bájt)	fül ear	íz taste
	hely place	őz deer
		törzs trunk, tribe

Monosyllabic loses length

híd bridge (sg3px: hídja)	nyél handle	ész mind
lúd goose (sg3px: lúdja)	szél edge	mész lime
rúd rod, pole (sg3px: rúdja)	tél winter	hét seven, week
ég sky	nyíl arrow	út road (sg3px: útja)
jég ice	nyúl rabbit	kút fountain, (sg3px: kútja)
légy fly	szén coal	kéz hand
bél intestine	nyár summer	réz copper
dél south, noon	sár mud	szűz virgin
fél half	ér vein	tűz fire
	dér white frost	víz water
	tér space, plaza	
	úr sir, gentleman	

Bisyllabic (no loss of length)

oldal side (acc.: oldalt)
fonal yarn, thread
vonal line
arany gold

Appendix 3

Noun types
and
exceptions

Bisyllabic loses length

veréb sparrow	cserép tile	mozsár mortar
elég enough	közép center	egér mouse
fenék bottom	mocsár swamp	szekér cart
kerék wheel	madár bird	gyökér root
kanál spoon	agár greyhound	kenyér bread
fonál yarn, thread	bogár bug	tenyér palm
fedél roof	sugár ray, beam	szemét garbage
kötél rope	pohár glass	nehéz difficult
levél letter	szamár donkey	darázs wasp
tehén cow	kosár basket	parázs glowing embers

V-stems

Nominative singular and plural and singular accusative forms:

	<i>nom. sg.</i>	<i>nom. pl.</i>	<i>acc. sg.</i>
snow	hó	havak	havat
good	jó	jók	jót
horse	ló	lovak	lovat
word	szó	szavak	szót
lake	tó	tavak	tavat
pipe	cső	csövek	csövet
stone	kő	kövek	követ
stem	tő	tövek	tövet
grass	fű	füvek	füvet
opus	mű	művek	művet
maggot	nyű	nyüvek	nyüvet

Other sometime *v*-stems:

	<i>nom. (sg.)</i>	<i>nom. (pl.)</i>	<i>acc. (sg.)</i>	<i>sg3px.</i>	<i>adjective</i>
louse	tetű	tetvek	tetűt	tetűje ~ tetve	tetves
village	falu	faluk ~ falvak	falut ~ falvat	faluja ~ falva	
ash	hamu	hamuk ~ hamvak	hamut ~ hamvat	hamuja	hamvas
crane	daru	daruk ~ darvak	darut	daruja	
hollow	odú	odúk ~ odvak	odút ~ odvat	odúja ~ odva	odvas

Metathesis

Consonant switching takes place in the following nouns when suffixing endings requiring a linking vowel:

	<i>nom. sg.</i>	<i>nom. pl.</i>	<i>acc. sg.</i>
load	teher	terhek (pl.)	terhet (acc.)
flake	pehely	pelyhek (pl.)	pelyhet (acc.)
chalice	kehely	kelyhek (pl.)	kelyhet (acc.)

Fleeting vowel words requiring the linking vowel *a*

In the following words, the last vowel is omitted and the required linking vowel is *a* when suffixing endings requiring a linking vowel:

	<i>nom. sg.</i>	<i>nom. pl.</i>	<i>acc. sg.</i>	<i>sg3px.</i>
lip	ajak	ajkak	ajkat	ajka
haystack	kazal	kazlak	kazlat	kazla
manger	jászol	jászlak	jászlát	jászla
veil	fátyol	fátylak	fátylat ~ fátyolt	fátyla
canvas	vászon		vásznat	vászna
tent	sátor	sátrak	sátrat ~ sátort	sátra

Words with variation in accusative

The accusative singular may take either form with the following nouns. (There may be some nuanced change in meaning.)

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>	
greyhound	agár	agarat	~ agárt
tusk	agyar	agyarat	~ agyart
owl	bagoly	baglyot	~ bagolyt
veil	fátyol	fátylat	~ fátyolt
place	hely	helyet	~ helyt

Appendix 3

Noun types
and
exceptions

twin	iker	ikret	~ ikert
manger	jászol	jászlat	~ jászolt
sign	jel	jelet	~ jelt
bosom	kebel	keblet	~ kebelt
chalice	kehely	kelyhet	~ kehelyt
shroud	lepel	leplet	~ lepelt
glaze	máz	mázat	~ mázt
oil	olaj	olajat	~ olajt
bay/gulf	öböl	öblöt	~ öbölt
flake	pehely	pelyhet	~ pehelyt
Renaissance	reneszánsz	reneszánszot	~ reneszánszt
rye	rozs	rozsot	~ rozst
tent	sátor	sátrat	~ sátort
bag	szatyor	szatyrot	~ szatyort
store	tár	tárat	~ tárt
line	vonal	vonalat	~ vonalt

and nouns ending in -ns (the single -t accusative is always correct):

graduate student	aspiráns	aspiránsot	aspiránst
patient	páciens	pácienset	pácienst

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