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Hungarian: An Essential Grammar 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
- vowel harmony
- the case system and its uses
- word order
- appendices include the formation of irregular verbs, complete noun declensions and irregular noun patterns

With numerous language examples bringing grammar to life, this truly essential reference work will prove invaluable to all students looking to master the patterns and irregularities of modern Hungarian.
Carol H.Rounds lectures in Hungarian at Columbia University, New York.

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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, paradigms, and examples. What at first seems unusual 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!

I would like to thank the people who have helped greatly in writing this book. I must begin by expressing my appreciation and great respect for my first Hungarian teacher, Daniel Abondolo, who taught me to look most systematically at this language and thereby help make it learnable; I also thank him for his helpful comments on the manuscript. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Erika Sólyom for her painstaking reading of the Hungarian examples and suggestions for improvement. I also thank Sophie Oliver at Routledge for her help and patience in seeing the project through. Finally, my greatest thanks are offered to my husband, John Schiemann, for his meticulous editorial comments, and numerous re-readings of the manuscript during the months of its preparation.

Second edition

Special thanks to all the students, linguists, readers, and scholars-at-large who have written me with their highly detailed comments on the first edition. This current edition has benefited greatly from your thoughtful observations and recommendations.

abl.	ablative
acc.	accusative
adess.	adessive
all.	allative
caus.-fin.	causal-final
comp.	comparative
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
px	possessive
relat.	relative
s1	first person singular
s2	second person singular

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s3
sg.
sociat.
sublat.
sup./superess.
superl.
sy
temp.
term.
trans.
zool.

third person singular
singular
sociative
sublative
superessive
superlative
somebody
temporal
terminative
translative
zoological

Hungarian uses the Roman alphabet in addition to some diacritics placed over some vowels. The diacritics resembling accent marks 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, the digraphs and 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 ú ú ü ű v (w) (x) (y) z zs**

Unless found in the spellings of foreign words and a few Hungarian names, 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.

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 those consonants pronounced differently than in English; their pronunciation equivalents are given in the International Phonetic Alphabet.

c	[ts]	as in cats
cs	[tʃ]	as in church
dzs	[dʒ]	as in jury
g	[g]	(always hard) as in go
j	[i]	as in yes
r	[r]	trill the tongue on the top of the mouth
s	[ʃ]	as in she
sz	[s]	as in sat
zs	[ʒ]	as in azure

cukor	sugar	ecet	vinegar
csal	deceive	bocsánat	excuse me
dzsem	jam	dzsessz	jazz
gaz	weed	igen	yes
jó	good	fáj	hurt
ró	carve	kérem	please
sárga	yellow	este	evening
szervusz	hi	asztal	table
zseb	pocket	garázs	garage

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 [ɟ] similar to a **dy** sound as in during
ly [j] as in yes (thus the same as the Hungarian letter j)
ny [ɲ] as in canyon
ty [c] similar to a **ty** sound as in studio

gyár factory **magyar** Hungarian
lyuk hole **személy** person
nyár summer **kenyér** bread
tyúk hen **kártya** card

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 as this 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 **nnny**: **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	[ɟ̃:ɟ]	s/he gives it
hagy+ja	→ hagyja	[hɟ̃:ɟ]	s/he leaves it
mutat+ja	→ mutatja	[mutɔc:ɟ]	s/he shows it
báty+ja	→ bátyja	[ba:c:ɟ]	his/her brother
kíván+juk	→ kívánjuk	[ki:va:ɲ:uk]	we wish it
any+ja	→ anyja	[ɟ̃ɲ:ɟ]	his/her mother

The consonant **l** may be included here with one deviation from the pattern. In an **lj** cluster, the **l** assimilates to the **j**, resulting in a pronunciation of long **jj**.

tanul+ja	→ tanulja	[tɔnuj:ɟ]	s/he studies it
énekel+junk	→ énekeljünk	[e:nekej:ynk]	let's sing

Consonants can be classified as voiced and unvoiced. Moreover, nine voiced/unvoiced consonant pairs can be determined where the main difference in pronunciation is one of voice, i.e., the place of articulation in the mouth remains largely the same, for example (unvoiced) p and (voiced) b. With few exceptions,¹ it is the consonants of these voiced/unvoiced pairings that affect and are affected by voice assimilation rules.

Consonants

Unvoiced pt k f szs c cs ty h

Voiced bd g v z sd zd zsgy jllymnnnyr

2.3.1 Voicing of unvoiced consonants

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

Unvoiced		Voiced	Examples	
p	→	b	népdal [ne:bdɒl]	folk song
t	→	d	kertben [kɛrdbɛn]	in the garden
k	→	g	lakbér [lɒgbe:r]	rent
s	→	z	kisgyerek [kiʒaɛɛɛk]	(small) child
c	→	dz	ketrecbe [kɛtrɛdzbe]	into the cage
cs	→	dzs	bográcsgulyás [bogra:dʒguja:ʃ]	kettle goulash
sz	→	z	részben [re:zbɛn]	in part
f	→	v	zsiráfból [ʒira:vbo:l]	from (a) giraffe

2.3.2 Devoicing of voiced consonants

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

¹The consonant v does not cause voicing of a preceding consonant, though it can be devoiced. The consonant h does not have a voiced pair, and although it can cause devoicing of a preceding consonant, it cannot become voiced.

Voiced		Unvoiced	Examples	
b	→	p	zsebkendő [ʒpkendø:]	handkerchief
d	→	t	tudtok [tut:ok]	you (pl.) know
g	→	k	megszeret [meksɛrɛt]	(start to) like/love
v	→	f	nyelvtan [ɲɛltɔn]	grammar
z	→	sz	dolgoztok [dɔlgostok]	you (pl.) work
zs	→	s	várazspálca [vɔra:ʃpa:lɔ]	magic wand
gy	→	ty	nagyterem [rɔɕtɛrɛm]	main hall
dz	→	c	edztek [ɛɕtɛk]	you (pl.) train
dzs	→	cs	bridzstól [britʃtø:l]	from bridge

2.4 Assimilation of sibilants

Hissing sibilants (**sz, z**) when followed by hushing sibilants (**s, zs**) become hushing sibilants (the above voicing and devoicing rules also apply where the phonetic environment dictates).

Hissing		Hushing	Becomes	Examples	
sz	+	s	ss (long s)	egészség [ɛge:ʃ:e:g]	health
z	+	s	ss	igazság [igɔʃ:a:g]	truth
sz	+	zs	zzs (long zs)	horgászzsinór [horga:ʒ:ino:r]	fishing line
z	+	zs	zzs	tíz zsinór [ti:ʒ:ino:r]	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** [ɔ] **aw** as in awl
- á** [a:] with your tongue toward the front of the mouth, say **aah**
- e** [ɛ] a sound between the **a** in bat and the **e** in bet
- é** [e:] **ay** as in say, but without the y-sound (diphthong) at the end
- i** [i] **e** as in he
- í** [i:] a longer version of the above, as the **ee** in green
- o** [o] **oh** as in note
- ó** [o:] a longer version of the above
- ö** [ø] purse your lips as though to say **oh** but say eh
- ő** [ø:] a longer version of the above
- u** [u] **oo** as in food
- ú** [u:] a longer version of the above
- ü** [y] purse your lips as though to say **oo** but say ee
- ű** [y:] a longer version of the above

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

- nap** day
- ár** price
- reggel** morning
- kérem** please
- mi** what
- tíz** ten
- kívánok** I wish
- jó** good
- köszönöm** thank you
- fő** main
- tud** know
- út** road
- üveg** bottle
- egyszerű** simple

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?

Chapter 3

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, ű

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 takes back vowel suffixes; should the word contain only front vowels it can take only front vowel suffixes.

lány girl

lánynak to a girl

no woman

nőnek to a woman

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 word's *last*

vowel requires a second stage in vowel harmony rules: if the vowel of the word's **last** syllable is front and rounded, it takes a front rounded suffix.¹ Although most suffixes have only front/back vowel variants, a few endings have rounded/unrounded variants making the rounded/unrounded distinction necessary (examples include the allative case, **-hoz/-hez/-höz**, or the plural suffix, **-ok/-ek/-ök**).

ismerős acquaintance

ismerőshöz to (the home of) an acquaintance

bűn crime

bűnök crimes

If the stem's **last** vowel is front and unrounded, it takes a front unrounded suffix:

füzet notebook

füzetek notebooks

gyerek child

gyerekhez to (the home of) a child

3.3 Neutral vowels

The (inherently) 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.²

3.4 Application of the rules of vowel harmony

The plural suffix offers a chance to see the full application of the rules of vowel harmony for it has both front and back variants as well as the rounded/unrounded distinction. The plural **k** can take the linking vowels **o** (back), **e** (front and unrounded), or **ö** (front and rounded).

¹ Thus determining front and back vowel harmony takes place at the level of the stem; determining round/unrounded harmony takes place at the level of adjacent syllables at the end of a word.

² 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.

Stem

asztal

table

gyerek

child

fűzet

notebook

ismerős

acquaintance

papír

paper

Description of stem's vowels

only back vowels

only neutral (front) vowels, last vowel unrounded

only front vowels, last vowel unrounded

only front vowels, last vowel rounded

back vowel with neutral vowel

Plural

asztalok

gyerekek

fűzetek

ismerősök

papírok

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 verbal prefixes 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 regular 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. Section **4.6** details the irregular verb stems and what form they take for individual verbal suffixes.

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.

Page 16
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 section 4.6.

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.

	-ik ending	~ regular 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 travel
Conditional:	utaznék	~ utazna he/she would travel

4.2 Definite and indefinite conjugations

For each mood and tense, Hungarian verbs have two conjugations. Broadly stated, the **definite conjugation** is used if the sentence contains a definite direct object; the **indefinite conjugation** is used at all other times. Thus,
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.

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.

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 (overt or implied), 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.²

Látom ezt/azt.

I see this/that.

Látom ezt/azt a házat.

I see this/that house.

The demonstrative pronouns are also frequently used cataphorically³ 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!

² 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.

³ 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 (ő)t.

I see him/her.

Látom (ő)ket.

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/-len**

There is one more personal form in all moods and tenses included here in the definite conjugations (though this is not because the object is inherently definite). A unique verb conjugational form (**-lak/-lek**) is used when the subject is **én** and the direct object is a second person pronoun (**téged, benneteket, titeket**). 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).

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 Present tense 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 consonants or a long vowel plus **t** require a linking vowel before the personal 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	

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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 kértok 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**). When digraphs (**sz**, **dz**, etc.) are long, i.e., doubled, they are written by doubling only the first letter of the digraph:⁴ **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

⁴ See section 2.2 on orthography and pronunciation of doubled digraphs.

1st person **én**
2nd person **te**
3rd person **ő, maga, ön**
Plural

1st person **mi**
2nd person **ti**
3rd person **ők, maguk, önök**

1st person singular subject with 2nd person (singular or plural) object after two consonants or long vowel **+t**

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 a sibilant]

Present tense definite conjugations

ad	olvas	játszik	kér	főz
énadom	olvasom	játszom	kérem	főzöm
te adod	olvasod	játszod	kéred	főzöd
ő adja	olvassa	játssza	kéri	főzi
miadjuk	olvassuk	játsszuk	kérjük	főzzük
ti adjátok	olvassátok	játsszatok	kéritek	főzitek
őkadják	olvassák	játsszak	kérik	főzik

Back vowel	Front vowel	
	unrounded	rounded
-om	-em	-öm
-od	-ed	-öd
-ja	-i	
-juk	-jük	
-játok	-itek	
-ják	-ik	
-lak	-lek	
-alak	-elek	

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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: Usages

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 4.7.3 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 vele, 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 Post 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, knit', **nyit** 'open', **süt** 'bake', **üt** 'strike', and **vet** 'toss'.

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 short form **-t** for all personal endings with the single exception of the third person singular indefinite which requires the long form (**-ott/-ett/-ött**). 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

Singular	Back vowel	Front vowel
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

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The following verbs trigger different endings according to their shape; 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]
read	olvas	[Class C, back vowel]

Past tense indefinite conjugations

süt	marad	szeret	olvas
énsütöttem	maradtam	szerettem	olvastam
te sütöttél	maradtál	szerettél	olvastál
ő sütött	maradt	szeretett	olvasott
misütöttünk	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 (singular or plural) object	-alak	-elek

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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
énütöttem	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 biciklizztünk 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.

Hungarian has only one past tense form. Time expressions and coverbs combine to express the meanings of the complex tense forms found in English. (See section 4.7.3 for a lengthier discussion of aspect and coverbs.)

Eloolvastam 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.

The auxiliary verb szokott 'usually' is found only in the past tense although its meaning may be either past or present. (See also section 11.5.12.)

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.

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.⁵

keres+j → keress-

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

ébreszt+j → ébressz-

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 following are the personal endings for the indefinite subjunctive conjugation. Note that the second person singular ending (**-ál/-él**) may be omitted entirely, resulting essentially in a zero ending. The optional endings for the **-ik** verbs are more archaic and usually found in older writings.

⁵Compare with the **j**- initial personal endings in the definite conjugation of the present tense where the same assimilation occurs, section 4.3.1.2.

⁶Only one verb ends in **-st**: **fest** 'paint'.

Subjunctive indefinite—personal endings

Singular		Back vowel	Front vowel
			unroundedrounded
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

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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	ébreszt	[front unrounded vowel, ends in - sz]
play	játszik	[back vowel, - ik verb, stem ends in sibilant]

Subjunctive indefinite conjugations

kér	fut	ébreszt	játszik
énkérjek	fussak	ébresszek	játsszak (~ játsszam)
te kérjél	fussál	ébresszél	játsszál
~ kérj	~ fuss	~ ébressz	~ játssz
ő kérjen	fusson	ébresszen	játsszon (~ játsszék)
mikérjünk	fussunk	ébresszünk	játsszunk
ti kérjetek	fussatok	ébresszetek	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 2nd 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**, **sz**). 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).

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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 (singular or plural) 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	ijesszed
~ várd	~ szeresd	- tartsd	- ijeszd
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 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!
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 in 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 jöjjelek 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 forbade him to leave the country.

Nem engedték, hogy pénzt vegyen ki a bankból.

They did not allow her to take money out of the bank.

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 elesse!

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.

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,⁷ 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)⁸

ért+ené+k → **értenék** (linking vowel **e** required)⁹

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 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 endings, 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	-nátok	-nétek
3rd person ők, maguk, önök	-nának	-nének

⁷Exceptions include **áll** 'stand', **száll** 'fly', **varr** 'sew', and **forr** 'boil'. Compare with the past tense where these verbs also conjugated as those ending in only one consonant.

⁸This use of a linking vowel is identical to that found in forming the infinitive of the same verb types.

⁹See note 8.

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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
énfordítanék	segítenék	mernék	úsznék (~ úsznám)
te fordítanál	segítenél	mernél	úsznál
ő fordítana	segítene	merne	úszna (~ úsznék)
mi fordítanánk	segítenénk	mernénk	úsznánk
ti fordítanátok	segítenétek	mernétek	úsznátok
őkfordítának	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	
Singular	Back vowelFront vowel
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, maguk, önök	-nák -nék
1st person singular subject with 2nd person (singular or plural) object	-nálak -nélek

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

love	szeret	[front vowel]
hold	tart	[back vowel, ends in two consonants]
give	ad	[back vowel]

Conditional definite conjugations

szeret	tart	ad
éhszeretném	tartanám	adnám
te szeretnéd	tartanád	adnád
ő szeretné	tartaná	adná
miszeretnénk	tartanánk	adnánk
ti szeretnétek	tartanátok	adnátok
ők szeretnék	tartanák	adnák

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

4.3.8 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 **elmegy** '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 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.

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**10 conjugates in the present tense in both definite and indefinite conjugations.

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

Ha 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?

The verb fog also combines with verbs that do have coverbs; 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 Lesz

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.

10The verb **fog** has another meaning 'catch'; in this meaning it conjugates in all moods and tenses.

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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.
in construction 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.11 Whereas the past tense always takes the short form **t**, the past participle may take the long form **o/e/ö+tt**

11For description of Class B see section **4.3.3**, Past tense.

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.

marad	remain	+	andó	→	maradandó	enduring
kel	sell well	+	endő	→	kelendő	(easily) marketable

4.4.2 Present, past, future participles: Usage

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

4.4.2.1

These participles may always be used as adjectives:

PRESENT

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

PAST

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

FUTURE

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

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

PRESENT

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

PAST

fel nő	grow up	fel nőtt	grown-up
vádol	accuse	vád lott	defendant
befő	become thick by boiling	bef őtt	fruit preserves

FUTURE

tesz	do	teend ő	task, agenda
jön	come	jöv end ő	future

4.4.2.3 Participles in extended adjectival constructions

In prose the participles are often found in extended adjectival constructions and compare (semantically, not stylistically) with relative clauses in colloquial speech. It may help to think of these extended participial-adjectival constructions 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.

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Zsuzsa egy múlt században épült házba akar beköltözni.
(participle as adjective)

Zsuzsa wants to move into a house **built** in the last century.
As seen in the previous example, participial-adjectival constructions can be rather lengthy in prose because they can be extended with adverbs, postpositional phrases, and other parts of speech in front of the participle. When translating from Hungarian, it is best to identify the noun being modified by the participle-adjective and continue to translate from right to left. In the following example, **film** 'movie' is the modified noun:

Magyar főszereplővel forgatott film nyitja a Brooklyn Nemzetközi Filmfesztivált.

A movie made with a Hungarian leading actor is opening the Brooklyn International Film Festival.

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.

Molsolyogva lépett be a szobába.

She entered the room **smiling**.

Tegyé!—mondta nevetve a kisfiú.

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

See section **17.10** 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 consonants¹² or long vowel+**t**, the linking vowel a/e is required before suffixing.¹³

¹²Exceptions include **áll** 'stand', **száll** 'fly', **varr** 'sew', and **forr** 'boil'.

¹³Compare with the conditional where the linking vowel is required under identical conditions.

olvas	+	ni	→	olvasni	to read
főz	+	ni	→	főzni	to cook
tanít	+	ani	→	tanítani	to teach
ért	+	eni	→	érteni	to understand
hall	+	ani	→	hallani	to hear

Infinitives can be the complement of other conjugated 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.

Ebédelni ebédtem, 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.)

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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 Potential: Formation

The potential is added to verb stems to convey 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.¹⁴ 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.

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 (see section **4.3.3** on past tense verb classes). 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**:

	Present		Past	
	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite
	játszhat	adhat	kezdhet	kérhet
	may play	may give	may begin	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	kezdhattétek	kérhattétek
ők	játszhatnak	adhatják	kezdhettek	kérhették
én - téged benneteket/ titeket		adhatlak		kérhettelek
	Subjunctive		Conditional	
	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite
	főzhet	kereshet	tanulhat	küldhet
	may cook	may look for	may study	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/ titeket		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 regularly with the present participle **-ó-ő** and the suffix **-atlan/-etlen** 'un-/in-; without' to form adjectives:

ért understand	érthető understandable	érthetetlen incomprehensible
eszik eat	ehető edible	ehetetlen inedible
hisz believe	hihető believable	hihetetlen unbelievable
iszik drink	iható potable	ihatatlan impotable
lát see	látható visible	láthatatlan invisible
olvas read	olvasható legible, readable	olvashatatlan illegible, unreadable

4.5.3 Causative: formation

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:

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

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

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

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

ázik	become soaked	áztat	soak something
bukik	fail	buktat	fail someone, e.g., in an exam
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	got 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	tisztíttat	mosat	kerestet
have sy order	have sy clean	have sy wash	have sy look for
énrendeltetek	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	hívat	küldet	olvastat
have sy wait	have sy call	have sy send	have sy read
énvárássak	hívassam	küldetnék	olvastatnám
te váráss(ál)	hívas(sa)d	küldetnél	olvastatnád
ő várásson	hívassa	küldetne	olvastatná
mivárássunk	hívassuk	küldetnénk	olvastatnánk
ti várássatok	hívassátok	küldetnétek	olvastatnátok
ők várássanak	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 added to verb stems to denote the subject has something done, i.e., the action is not done by the subject directly. 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 may be in the accusative case. This may well be interpreted as

using the causative ending to make an intransitive verb transitive. (See also section 4.5.4.1.)

A diákok vizsgáznak.

The students are taking an exam.

A tanár vizsgáztatta a diákokat.

The teacher had the students take an exam.

Minden este sétál a kutya.

The dog walks every night.

Minden este a szomszédom sétáltatja a kutyáját.

My neighbor walks her dog every night.

A gyerekek leülnek.

The children sit down.

Leültettem a gyerekeket.

I had the children sit down.

4.5.4.1

The causative ending is sometimes used to make an intransitive verb transitive; the **causative** interpretation is largely lost.

Intransitive

bukik fail

fürdik take a bath

szűnik cease, stop

változik change

Nagyon megváltozott a férje.

Her husband has really changed.

Tilos megváltoztatni az eredményeket.

It is forbidden to change the results.

Megszűnt a szegénység.

Poverty has ended.

Megszüntették a rendeletet.

They abolished the decree.

Transitive

buktat fail someone, e.g., in an exam

fürdet give someone a bath

szüntet stop, interrupt

változtat change

4.5.5 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.

olvas	read	olvasgat	read a bit
rendez	organize	rendezget	tidy up a bit
néz	watch	nézeget	look about
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	ütöget	mosogat	keverget
look about	keep striking	wash dishes	keep stirring
énnézegetek	ütögetem	mosogattam	kevergettem
te nézegetsz	ütögeted	mosogattál	kevergetted
ő nézeget	ütögeti	mosogatott	kevergette
minézegetünk	ütögetjük	mosogattunk	kevergettük
ti nézegették	ütögették	mosogattatok	kevergették
ők nézegetnek	ütögetik	mosogattak	kevergették
Subjunctive		Conditional	
Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite
sétálgat	hívogat	rendezget	olvasgat
stroll about	call repeatedly	tidy up	read a bit
énsétálgassak	hívogassam	rendezgetnék	olvasgatnám
te sétálgass(ál)	hívogass(sa)d	rendezgetnél	olvasgatnád
ő sétálgasson	hívogassa	rendezgetne	olvasgatná
mi sétálgassunk	hívogassuk	rendezgetnének	olvasgatnánk
ti sétálgassatok	hívogassátok	rendezgetnétek	olvasgatnátok
ők sétálgassanak	hívogassák		rendezgetnének olvasgatnak

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 Irregular verb stems

Many irregular verbs can be grouped to form small classes of verbs which, in fact, exhibit quite a bit of regularity within their respective classes. This section defines these classes of verbs in addition to the verbs that are irregular throughout the conjugation paradigms. Appendix 1 provides full conjugations of the verbs that exhibit irregularity within these classes.

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

These three verbs require different stems for 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	Past tense stem	Subjunctive stem	Conditional stem	Infinitive
van be	vagy- van(-)	volt-	legy- légy	vol- len-	lenni
jön come	varied	jött-	jöjj- gyere gyertek gyerünk	jön-	jönni
megy go	megy- men-	ment-	menj-	men-	menni

4.6.2 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	15Conditional 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
hisz believe	hisz-	hitt-	higgy- hidd	hin-	hinni
visz take, carry	visz-	vitt-	vigy- vidd	vin-	vinni
eszik eat	esz-	ett- evett 16	egy- edd	en-	enni
iszik drink	isz-	itt- ivott 17	igy- idd	in-	inni

4.6.3 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

15There 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.

16The third person singular indefinite past tense of this verb is formed from a u-stem and is given here in full. The rest of the past tense conjugates regularly from the stem.

17The third person singular indefinite past tense of this verb is formed from a **v-stem** and is given here in full. The rest of the past tense conjugates regularly from the **itt-** stem.

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you cannot tell by its shape whether a verb is a fleeting vowel stem, a pattern emerges with familiarity. In all cases¹⁸ the vowel which elides is **o/e/ö**; at least one of the consonants in the resulting cluster is always **j, l, ly, n, ny, m, r, 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
mosolygott he/she smiled

mosolygok I smile
mosolygó smiling (pres. part.)

érez- ~ **érz-**
éreztem I felt (it)
érzem I feel it

érezzük we feel it
éreztek you (pl.) feel it
érezni to feel
érzés feeling

üdvözl- ~ **üdvözl-**
üdvözölsz you (sg.) greet
üdvözölni to greet
üdvözlöm I greet him/her
üdvözet greeting

üdvözöltek they greeted (us)
üdvözlik they greet him/her

4.6.4 V-sterms

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:
¹⁸With the one exception of **őriz** 'guard'.

sző- ~ szöv	<i>Indefinite</i>	<i>Definite</i>	ró- ~ rov	<i>Indefinite</i>	<i>Definite</i>
én	szövök	szövöm		rovok	rovom
te	szősz	szövöd		rősz	rovod
ő	sző	szövi		ró	rója
mi	szövünk	szőjük		rovunk	rójuk
ti	szőtök	szövitek		rótok	rójatok
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</i>	<i>Subjunctive</i>		<i>Conditional</i>	<i>Present participle</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Adverbial participle</i>
<i>stem</i>	<i>stem</i>	<i>s2def</i>	<i>stem</i>			
főtt-	főj-		fő-	fővő	főni	főve
lőtt-	lőj-	lődd	lő-	lövő	lőni	love
nőtt-	nőj-	nődd	nő-	növő	nőni	nőve
nyűtt-	nyűj-	nyűdd	nyű-	nyűvő	nyűni	nyűve
szőtt-	szőj-	sződd	sző-	szövő	szőni	szőve
rótt-	rój-	ródd	ró-	rovó	róni	róva

4.6.5 -szik verbs

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.¹⁹ The **-szik** verbs can be divided into four main groups, depending on which consonants **sz** alternates with.

(a) **sz ~ d ~ v**: This group includes 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. ¹⁹**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 (stem) **alapul**.

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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
gyanakszik ~ 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
meghidegszik ~ meghidegedik	grow cold
gazdagszik ~ gazdagodik	become rich
gyarapszik ~ gyarapodik	increase
lerészegszik ~ lerészegedik	become drunk
megelégszik ~ meglegedik	be satisfied
melegszi ~ 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
ülepszik—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

gyülekszik ~ gyülekezik

szándékszik—szándékozik

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

4.7 Coverbs

Coverbs are verbal 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.

Only one coverb can be attached to a verb 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.

This section examines first the general (directional, manner, and aspectual) uses of coverbs and then focuses on their more individual uses.

4.7.1 Direction

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

kimegy go out
bemegy go in
felmegy go up
lemegy go down
elmegy go away, leave
odamegy go there
visszamegy go back

Beteszi a tollat a táskába.
Visszajöttünk a szabadságról.
Kiszedtem a pénzt a tárcából.
A pincér elviszi a tányérokat.

kijön come out
bejön come in
feljön come up
lejön come down
eljön come away
idejön come here
visszajön come back
He puts the pen into the bag.
We have returned from vacation.
I took the money out of the wallet.
The waiter takes away the plates.

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Felmennek a hegyre.

Laci lement a boltba kenyérért.

Odament a kerítéshez.

Kitette a széket a kertbe.

Felszállt a villamosra.

Elvették az útlevelemet tőlem.

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.

Leült a székre.

Felállt a székről.

4.7.2 Manner

Coverbs such as végig ‘all the way’, agyon ‘all the way, to death’, túl ‘beyond, too (excessive)’, and 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.

They are going up the mountain.

Laci went (down) to the store for bread.

He went over toward the fence.

She put the chair out into the garden.

She got on the tram.

They took my passport away from me.

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4.7.3 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 on-going; 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 English²⁰ (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)

Eolvassa 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.

²⁰ 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.

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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, ha 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.
Mentem át az utcán, amikor 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:

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

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, amikor későn jöttem haza.
She is very angry with me. She got angry when I came home late.

Some verbs occur only with coverbs:

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

4.7.4 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 it does not mean that it will have the same meaning with another verb. Each verb has its own inventory of possible coverbs, and it is sometimes surprising to find which coverbs may occur with certain verbs.²¹ The following are the coverbs' most common and predictable uses.

4.7.4.1 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.

Megvárlak.

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.

²¹ One example: **akaszt** 'hang (transitive)'.

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.)

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.)

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 jöjjek haza.

She sent word for me to come home.

Megkérdeztem tőle, hogy mikor kell a pénz.

I asked her when she needed the money.

4.7.4.2 *El*

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

Eltette a meleg ruhát jövő télig.

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.

Elolvasta a kötelező könyveket.

He read the required books.

Elvégezte a munkát.

He finished the work.

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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 elkísértek 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 házszámát.

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 2000-ben váltak el.

My parents divorced in 2000.

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 kocsi 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 lost 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.

Jói 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.

Jói meghízott a disznó.

The pig got nice and fat.

Teljesen elhízott, és már alig tud menni.

He got really fat and now he 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.

4.7.4.3 **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.

Begomboltam a kabátomat.

Becsomagoltam az ajándékot.

Be kell varrni a szakadást a nadrágján.

Befűztem a cipőmet.

He closed the window.

I buttoned up my coat.

I wrapped up the present.

He has to sew up the tear on his pants.

I tied my shoes.

4.7.4.4 *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 of 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 the unknown words in the dictionary and wrote them out.

Kiválasztotta a legszebb rózsát.

She chose the most beautiful rose.

4.7.4.5 **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 what I tell you. (lit., write on something)

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 to denote the onset of a change in mental state.

Feldühödtem, amikor hallottam, mi történt.

I became enraged when I heard what had happened.

Korán ébredtem fel.

I woke up early.

Mire feleszmélt, a rablók már eltűntek.

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

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

Felsírt, amikor az orvos beleszúrta a tűt.

He cried out when the doctor stuck in the needle.

Felragyogott az arca, amikor megpillantotta a régóta várt barátnőjét.

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

4.7.4.6 **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 were 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 Boleyn 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 cannot 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, amikor 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 immediately used the familiar 'te' form with me.

Az igazgató, sajnós, nagyon lenézi a kollégáit.

Unfortunately the director looks down on his colleagues.

Jói leszidta a sógorát, és azóta nem beszélnek egymással.

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

4.7.5 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)

Jói 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 usually restricted to the third person singular form (exceptions are **bele** and **rá**).

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 ellenélltak nekem. They stubbornly resisted me.
keresztül		Keresztülmentek az mezőn. They passed through the field.
körül		Körülnéztünk az üzletben. We looked around the shop.
mellé		Mellebészéltek. 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 throughout 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 otthagya 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 órákor jön vissza a munkahelyről. She comes back from work at six o'clock.

5.1 Articles

Nouns can be preceded by definite articles, indefinite articles or no articles at all.

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

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 Peter.** Peter 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:

5.3.1.1

Existential (there is/there are) and 'have' constructions:

Szép fa van a kertben.

There is a beautiful tree in the garden.

Neki gyönyörű haza 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

Suffixes5.2.1

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'.

More examples:

ismerős+öm+höz

to my acquaintance's house

'acquaintance'+s1 possessive+allative

barátnő+i+d+é+nek

for that belonging to your girlfriends

'girlfriend'+poss. pl.+s2 poss.+non-attributive poss.+dative

5.2.2 Vowel harmony

With few exceptions, 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., 16 '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'.

SINGULAR: 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 idiosyncracies with respect to noun stems and other suffixes are found under the individual suffix entry. A list of classes of irregular noun stems 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 a 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 **a**, **é** before the plural **-k**; otherwise, simply add **-k**.

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

5.3.2 Nouns ending in a consonant

When nouns end in a consonant they require linking vowels before the plural (and several 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**

4.3.2.1.1 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 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 vowels a, e. (Thus technically, v-stems and -**alom/-elem** vocabulary are low vowel nouns too.)
- 3 Except for **mű: műv-** where the vowel preceding v remains long.
- 4 Except **cimbalom** 'Hungarian cymbalo' which is a fleeting vowel word.

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, **lő** '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

SingularPlural		SingularPlural	
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 to	tövek

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	érzelmek
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 nouns⁵

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 **g**, **k**, **l**, **m**, **n**, **ny**, **r**, **s**, **sz**, and, less commonly, **cs** or **ly**.
Fleeting vowel nouns

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

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**.
⁵ See Appendix 3 for the few exceptions: some fleeting vowel words require the linking vowel **a**.

			BACK VOWEL	
			Singular	Plural
			kalap	kalapok
			papír	papírok
			tányér	tányérok
			fiók	fiókok
FRONT VOWEL, LAST VOWEL UNROUNDED			FRONT VOWEL, LAST VOWEL ROUNDED	
			Singular	Plural
chair	szék	székek	crime	bűn
law	törvény	törvények	acquaintance	ismerős
notebook	füzet	füzetek	fruit	gyümölcs

5.3.3 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
lengthen vowel		stem loses length	no change in stem
add -k		add a/e+ -k	add o/e/ö+ -k

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 found 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		

Koszorú 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'.⁶

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)

5.4.1.3

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

⁶ This does not work with **cipő**, however; **félcipő** denotes a kind of shoe, not a single shoe.

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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 possession, 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** for all stem types.

Nominative		Accusative
levelek	letters	leveleket
kutyák	dogs	kutyákat

Chapter 6**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, and 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). 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 **-(V)t**, superessive **-(o/e/ö)n**, distributive **-(V)nként**, sociative **-(V)stul/- (V)stül**, and distributive-temporal **-(V)nta/- (V)nte** all require linking vowels when suffixing to consonant-final stems.² This may trigger other changes in the word stem.

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**); several cases offer no choice in vowel harmony (e.g., the terminative **-ig**).

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

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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.

The Hungarian case system

Grammatical cases

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

Locative cases

interior

illative	-ba/-be	into
inessive	-ban/-ben	in
elative	-ból/-ből	out of, out from

exterior

sublative	-ra/-re	onto
superessive	-(o/e/ö)n	on, at
delative	-ról/-ről	off, from

near

allative	-hoz/-hez/-höz	toward, to
adessive	-nál/-nél	near, at, by, with
ablative	-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	-(V)nként	per, each
essive	-ul/-ül	as

Less productive cases

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

2 Here, and throughout this chapter (V) denotes a possible need for a linking vowel. The choice of linking vowel is dependent upon the noun class; in the superessive, the o/e/ö linking vowel choice is independent of noun class, thus the choice is spelled out.

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 egyetem találkoztak.

The girls met at the university.

6.1.1.2

The nominative case may be used with terms of quantity as a modifier indicating 'how much' of a substance.

Egy korsó sort 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 Postpositions, 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.

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 tollat.

I asked for Zsuzsa's pen.

Kíváncsi volt a gyerek véleményére.

He was interested in the child's opinion.

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: -(V)t

The accusative **-(V)t** is attached in much the same way as the plural **-k** (see section 5.3) 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.³ Regular nouns ending in any other consonant still require the linking vowel **o/e/ö**.

The following table 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).

³ Note that it does not matter what the final consonant is for low vowel or fleeting vowel words—these nouns always require a linking vowel.

stems ending in
a or e:
stems ending in other vowels

low vowel nouns (lose length)
low vowel nouns (no loss of length)

v-stems4
-alom/-elem
fleeting vowel

regular noun ending in j, l, ly, n, ny, r, s, sz, z, zs
other regular nouns

lamp
cup
woman
car
boat
gate
needle
road
hand
house
pen
book
deer
lake
pipe
reward
mystery
bush
strawberry
mirror
plate
painting
acquaintance
hat
chair
fruit

Nominative singular	Accusative singular	Nominative plural
lámpa	lámpát	lámpák
csésze	csészét	csészek
no	not	nők
kocsi	kocsit	kocsik
hajó	hajót	hajók
kapu	kaput	kapuk
tű	tűt	tűk
út	utat	utak
kéz	kezet	kezek
ház	házat	házak
toll	tollat	tollak
könyv	könyvet	könyvek
őz	őzet	őzek
to	tavat	tavak
cső	csövet	csövek
jutalom	jutalmat	jutalmak
rejtelem	rejtelmet	rejtelmek
bokor	bokrot	bokrok
eper	epret	eprek
tükör	tükröt	tükrök
tányér	tányért	tányérok
festmény	festményt	festmények
ismerős	ismerőst	ismerősök
kalap	kalapot	kalapok
szék	széket	székek
gyümölcs	gyümölcsöt	gyümölcsök

Plural accusative: When suffixing the accusative case to a plural noun, the linking vowel a/e is always required after the plural -k no matter what noun class the plural is formed upon.

bushes	Nominative bokrok	Accusative bokrokat
fruits	gyümölcsök	gyümöcsöket
chairs	szék	székeket
windows	ablakok	ablakokat

4 Two exceptions are: szó ‘word’ szót (acc.), jó ‘good’ jót (acc.).

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.

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

Egy hetet töltöttünk a Balatonon.

We spent a week at the Balaton.

The accusative may be used on adjectives that in turn modify the action of a verb.

Nagyot sóhajtott.

He gave a big sigh.

Jót aludtak.

They slept well.

6.2 Locative case system

The locative cases serve mostly as adverbials and answer the question 'where', although they have many other non-locative 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** or **e** lengthen the vowel to **a**, **é**, respectively; for words ending in any other vowel, the cases attach directly with no change in the stem.

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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 (no distinction is made 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 following table illustrates the suffixing of locative cases with respect to noun type. Because the superessive - **(o/e/ö)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**.

Suffixing of locative cases

Noun stem types		Nominative singular	Superessive - (o/e/ö)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	no	non	nőben
	car	kocsi	kocsin	kocsiban
	boat	hajó	hajón	hajóban
	gate	kapu	kapun	kapuban
	needle	tű	tűn	tűben
low vowel and regular nouns	road	út	úton	útban
	hand	kéz	kézen	kézben
	house	ház	házon	házban
	book	könyv	könyvön	könyvben
	plate	tányér	tányéron	tányérban
	chair	szék	széken	székben
	fruit	gyümölcs	gyümölcsön	gyümölcsben
	lake	tó	tavon	tóban
v-stems	pipe	cső	csövön	csőben
alom/-elem	reward	jutalom	jutalmon	jutalomban
	mystery	rejtelem	rejtelen	rejtelemben
fleeting vowel	bush	bokor	bokron	bokorban
	strawberry	eper	epren	eperben
	mirror	tükör	tükrön	tükörben

6.2.2 Usage

The locative cases of Hungarian form a system with respect to three parameters of motion: motion toward, motion away from, no motion⁵ and three parameters of space: interior, exterior, near. Thus there are case endings corresponding to the English prepositions **into, in, out of, from, onto, on, off**.

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>odessive</i>	-tól/-től <i>ablative</i>

6.2.2.1 Interior

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

- (a) geographic names including countries: **Angliában** in England (except **Magyarország** Hungary);
- (b) most cities outside of Hungary: **Párizsból** from Paris;
- (c) cities within Hungary whose final consonant is **j, m, n, ny, r**: **Debrecenbe** to Debrecen; **Tihanyba** to Tihany;
- (d) 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.

⁵Here, 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.

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-story 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 ran 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 **onto, on, at, 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)n** 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 to, **toward, near(by), at, with, away from**. They are used to express positions at, near, or away from the vicinity of:

(a) vertical objects: **ajtóhoz** to/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.

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, amikor 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 illative 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.

The inessive may express the units into which an action is divided.

Dollárban fizetnek.

They pay us in dollars.

Nagy pelyhekben hullott a hó.

The snow fell in large flakes.

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?

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.

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 -ra/-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 lehűl 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.

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Könnyekre fakadt, amikor 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

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**).

Hozzászólt 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 érték 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 Peter.

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 kutyaiktól.

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**, and more.

6.4.1 Formotion

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 translativ **-vá/-vé** always assimilates to the word-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

ész+vel → **ésszel** with (a) mind

(a) girl

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 (an) ear

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

(c) The essive-formal **-ként** does not lengthen the word-final vowels a and e.

(d) The distributive **-(V)nként** requires a linking vowel when suffixing to stems ending in consonants. This is the same linking vowel required when forming the plural;⁶ all the stem alternations effected in the plural are found when forming this case 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.

⁶ *Hó* 'month', **havonként** 'monthly, per month' is an exception.

Csillának adtam egy könyvet.
Megmutatja Nórának a fényképeit.
Kinek telefonálsz?

I gave a book to Csilla.
She shows her pictures to Nóra.
Who 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 my good friend.

Unalmasnak találtam a cikket.

I found the article boring.

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 section 8.5.1 on possessives for discussion of obligatory and optional uses of the dative.)

Ennek az árát nem tudom.

Annak a férfinak a kocsija eladó.

Kinek a labdája ez?

Gábornak fáj a lába.

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.

Eljössz velem?

Már régóta jár Évával.

Busszal vagy metróval menjünk?

Örömmel!

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.

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

That man's car is for sale.

Whose ball is this?

Gábor's leg hurts.

I prefer to write with a pencil than a pen.

Are you coming with me?

He's been going with Éva for a long time.

Shall we go by bus or metro?

With pleasure! (I'd be delighted.)

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.

They treat me like a slave.

Rabszolgaként bánnak velem.

They treat me as if I were a slave.

Úgy bánnak velem, mintha

rabszolga lennék.

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 **-(V)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?

Óránként fizetnek.

They pay by the hour.

Egyenként léptek be a terembe.

They entered the hall one by one.

6.4.2.8 Essive **-ul/-ül**

The essive is used with the names of languages to express '*in* a language'.

Jói tud franciául olvasni.

He can read in French very well.

Nem beszél jól olaszul.

He doesn't speak Italian well.

The essive may denote how a noun is used.

István feleségül vette a húgomat.

István married my younger sister. (lit., took her as a wife)

6.5 Less productive cases

The following cases are limited in use.

6.5.1 Temporal **-kor**

This temporal **-kor** attaches to both front and back vowel words (i.e., has no front vowel pendant) and does not lengthen a stem-final **a** or **e**. It 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.

⁷ See section 11.1.3 for more adverbial uses of the essive.

6.5.2 Distributive-temporal -(V)nta/- (V)nte

This case requires a linking vowel when suffixing to stems ending in consonants. This is the same linking vowel required when forming the plural;⁸ all the stem alternations effected in the plural are found when forming this case as well.

The distributive-temporal 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 -(V)stul/- (V)stül

This case requires 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 this case as well.

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 Locotive -t/-ott/-ett/-ött

A few towns and several words may use this locative case to mean 'in'.⁹

Pécsett

in Pécs

Győrött

in Győr

Kolozsvárt or Kolozsvárott

in Kolozsvár

oldal side

oldalt sideways

egyenes straight

egyenest straight ahead

⁸**Hó** 'month', **havonta** 'monthly, per month' is an exception.

⁹ This is the same ending as found in deixis: **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 érték 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 (i.e., without a linking vowel) with the following exceptions:

(a) The linking vowel **a/e** is required after the plural form when suffixing the accusative case.

(b) The linking vowel **o/e/ö** is required after the plural when suffixing the superessive case **-n**.

(c) The temporal **-kor**, distributive **-(V)nként**, distributive-temporal **-(V)nta/ -(V)nte**, and sociative **-(V)stul/-(V)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	kerten	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	csészek	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	csészéig	óráig	óráig
<i>distributive</i>	családonként	——	csészénként	——	óránként	——
<i>essive</i>	családul	——	csészéül	——	órául	——
<i>temporal</i>	——	——	——	——	órákor	——
<i>distr.-temp.</i>	——	——	——	——	óránta	——
<i>sociative</i>	családostul	——	csészéstül	——	órástul	——
<i>locative</i>	(Kolozsvárt)	——	——	——	——	——

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 (see section 7.9).

7.1 Personal pronouns

The grammatical cases of pronouns differ in both formation and usage from the locative and oblique case pronouns.

7.1.1 Nominative and accusative cases

I	you (sg.) ²	she/he/we	you (pl.) ³	they
nom.én	te	ő	mi	ti
acc	engem(et)	téged(et)	őt	minket ~ titeket ~ őket
			bennünket	benneteket

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 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 and will trigger the indefinite conjugation of the verb or the **–(a)lak/–(e)lek** personal endings (see section 4.2 on definite vs. indefinite conjugations).

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

1 Adverbial pronouns are treated in Chapter 11, section 11.6.
2 The second person forms discussed here are familiar forms. The polite pronouns are discussed in 7.2.
3 See note 2.

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**.

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). Conversely, first and second person pronouns are implicit in the indefinite conjugations.

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.

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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. Not all cases can be pronominalized; those that can are listed 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	beléjük
<i>iness.</i>	bennem	benned	benne	bennünk	bennetek	bennük
<i>elat</i>	belőlem	belőled	belőle	belőlünk	belőletek	belőlük
<i>sublat</i> ⁴	rám	rád	rá(ja)	ránk	rátok	rajuk
<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
Beszélünk róluk.				We are speaking about them.		
Hiszek benned.				I believe in you.		
Rám vársz?				Are you waiting for me?		
⁴ Also, less colloquially, reám, read, reá(ja), reánk, reátok, reájuk.						

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**):5

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 cannot 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. 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 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?

5 Compare with the postpositions (section 9.5) and possessive constructions (Chapter 8, introduction), where this is also true.

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 adults to 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.⁶

Declension of reflexive pronouns

	sg.1	sg.2	sg.3	pl.1	pl.2	pl.3
nom.	magam	magad	maga	magunk	magatok	maguk
acc	magam(at)	magad(at)	magát	magunkat	magatokat	magukat
illat	magamba	magadba	magába	magunkba	magatokba	magukba
iness.	magamban	magadban	magában	magunkban	magatokban	magukban
elat.	magamból	magadból	magából	magunkból	magatokból	magukból
sublet.	magamra	magadra	magára	magunkra	magatokra	magukra
superess.	magamon	magadon	magán	magunkon	magatokon	magukon
delat.	magamról	magadról	magáról	magunkról	magatokról	magukról
all.	magamhoz	magadhoz	magához	magunkhoz	magatokhoz	magukhoz
adess.	magamnál	magadnál	magánál	magunknál	magatoknál	maguknál
abl.	magamtól	magadtól	magától	magunktól	magatoktól	maguktól
dat	magamnak	magadnak	magának	magunknak	magatoknak	maguknak
‘instr.	magammal	magaddal	magával	magunkkal	magatokkal	magukkal
caus.-fin.	magamért	magadért	magáért	magunkért	magatokért	magukért

⁶Compare above (7.1.1) with the personal pronouns, where this is also true.

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Jói 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.
Hungarian possessive pronouns have both a singular and a plural paradigm. Possessive pronouns decline as any possessed noun, though they must always be preceded by the definite article. The possessive endings for polite pronouns are the same as those for regular nouns (see possession, section **8.8**).

Possessor	Singular possession	Plural possession
mine	az enyém	az enyéim ~ az enyéme
yours (ti)	a tied (tiéd)	a tieid
his/hers	az övé	az övéi
yours (maga)	a magáé	a magáéi
yours (ön)	az one	az önéi
ours	a mienk (miénk)	a mieink
yours (ti)	a tietek (tiétek)	a tieitek
theirs	az övék	az övéik
yours (maguk)	a maguké	a magukéi
yours (önök)	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 lakásotokban öt szoba van, a mienkben 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 section **11.6.**)

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.

	Singular		Plural	
nom.	ez	az	ezek	azok
acc	ezt	azt	ezeket	azokat
illat	ebbe	abba	ezekbe	azokba
iness.	ebben	abban	ezekben	azokban
elat	ebből	abból	ezekből	azokból
sublat	erre	arra	ezekre	azokra
superess.	ezen	azon	ezen	azon
delat	erről	arról	ezekről	azokról
all.	ehhez	ahhoz	ezekhez	azokhoz
adess.	ennél	annál	ezeknél	azoknál
abl.	ettől	attól	ezektől	azoktól
dat	ennék	annak	ezeknek	azoknak
instr.	ezzel,	azzal,	ezekkel	azokkal
	evvel	avval		
caus.-fin.	ezért	azért	ezekért	azokért
term.	eddig	addig	ezekig	azokig
trans.	ezzé	azzé	ezekké	azokké
ess.-for.	ekként	akként	ezekként	azokként
temp.	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).

Demonstrative pronouns may also modify nouns. As modifiers the demonstrative pronoun must (1) agree in case and number of the noun it is modifying and (2) be 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.

A more literary demonstrative pronoun is **e**. This pronoun is used only attributively. Unlike its regular counterpart **ez**, it does not decline nor is it followed 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.

Demonstrative pronouns may also combine with the prefix **ugyan-** to connote 'the same'. As with the unprefixated 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:

ilyen⁷ such, this kind

ugyanilyen the same kind (as this)

efféle, ilyenféle this sort of, this kind

ekkor this big

ugyanekkor the same size (as this)

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.

Ugyanekkor házát 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.

7 Less colloquial forms include **ily**, **emilyen** 'such, this kind'.

8 Less colloquial forms include **oly**, **amolyan** 'such, that kind'.

olyan⁸ such, that kind

ugyanolyan the same kind (as that)

afféle, olyanféle that sort of, that kind

akkor that big, so big

ugyanakkor the same size (as that)

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 it otherwise declines regularly.

Melyik tollat kéred?

Which pen would you like?

It can also take the plural possessive suffixes:

melyikünk

melyiketek, melyikötök

melyikük

Melyikötök Kis György?

Which one of you is György Kis?

7.7.3

The adjectival interrogative pronouns are:

milyen

mely

miféle, mifajta

mekkora

Milyen húst veszel ma?

Mekkora a lakása?

Miféle filmet szeret?

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?

which of us
which of you
which of them

what kind of
which
what sort of
how large
What kind of meat are you buying today?
How big is her apartment?
What sort of movie do you like?

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 and will occur with the indefinite conjugation of the verb (see section 4.2). 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 an interrogative pronoun; **amelyik, amilyen, amekkora, ahány, amennyi**. These relative pronouns decline as their corresponding pronouns do:

Nem keresünk annyit, amennyit szeretnénk.

We do not earn as much as we would like.

Nem ismered a szídarabot, amelyikről beszélek?

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

7.9 Cataphoric 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 back 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 overestimated as they define and direct the paths of discourse.

János nem szerette 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.

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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.

In Hungarian answers must immediately precede the conjugated verb (see section **16.4**). If, however, the answer is an entire clause, a cataphoric demonstrative pronoun can be placed before the conjugated verb instead; the pronoun, in turn, refers ahead to the full answer. This satisfies the word order requirement and directs the listener to the answer.

Mit írt neked a testvéred?
Azt írta, hogy meg akar látogatni jövő hónapban.

What did your brother write you?
He wrote that he wants to visit me next month.

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 ⁹	some amount of
valahány	some number of

⁹ **valamennyi**, paradoxically, also means 'every, all'. **Valamennyien jöttek.** 'Everyone came'.

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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.
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			semekkorá	of no size
numerical expressions:					
mennyi	how much	minden, mind	everything, all	semennyi	none at all
hány	how many				

Double negation is always required in sentences containing a negative pronoun. The negative **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.

Everyone speaks Hungarian here.

Nem találkoztam senkivel az úton.

I didn't meet anybody on the trip.

Nincs semmi a szekrényben.

There is nothing in the closet.

Itt senki sem/nem beszél magyarul.

No one speaks Hungarian here.

Senkivel nem/sem találkoztam azúton.

I didn't meet anybody on the trip.

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’ resulting in the meaning ‘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 that 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 **ők** (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
	bag	cup	car	puppet	shoe
my	az éntáskám	csészém	autóm	bábum	cipőm
your (sg.)	a te táskád	csészéd	autód	bábud	cipőd
his/her	az ő táskája	csészéje	autója	bábuja	cipője
our	a mi táskánk	csészénk	autónk	bábunk	cipőnk
your (pl.)	a ti táskátok	csészétek	autótok	bábutok	cipőtök
their	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 on 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)

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,

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)

my	-Vm	our	-unk, -ünk
your (sg.)	-Vd	your (sg.)	-Vtok, -Vtek, -Vtok
his/her	-(j)a, -(j)e	their	-(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 neighbour

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, **v**-stems, and the **-alom/-elem** class do not take a **j** (the exceptions are **kád, nád, vad, rúd, lúd, út, kút, föld2**).

Fleeting vowel words do not take a **j**.

Nouns ending in **f** and **ch** do take a **j**.

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.

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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 szomszédjuk
barát friend	back vowel, ends in t	a barátja	a barátjuk
kert garden	ends in consonant cluster	a kertje	a kertjük

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.

		(No loss of length)		(Loss of length)	
		váll	könny	pohár	ész
		shoulder	tear	glass	mind
my	az én	vállam	könnyem	poharam	eszem
your (sg.)	a te	vállad	könnyed	poharad	eszed
his/her	az ő	válla	könnye	pohara	esze
our	a mi	vállunk	könnyünk	poharunk	eszünk
your (pl.)	a ti	vállatok	könnyetek	poharatok	eszetek
their	az ő	válluk	könnyük	poharuk	eszük

v-stem—possessive singular

		ló	cső
		horse	pipe
my	az én	lovam	csövem
your (sg.)	a te	lovad	csöved
his/her	az ő	lova	csöve
our	a mi	lovunk	csövünk
your (pl.)	a ti	lovatok	csövetek
their	az ő	lovuk	csövük

-alom/-elem stems—possessive singular

		jutalom	érzelem
		reward	feeling
my	az én	jutalmam	érzelmem
your (sg.)	a te	jutalmad	érzelmed
his/her	az ő	jutalma	érzelme
our	a mi	jutalmunk	érzelmünk
your (pl.)	a ti	jutalmatok	érzelmetek
their	az ő	jutalmuk	érzelmük

		álom	terem	ököl
		<i>dream</i>	<i>hall</i>	<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	álunk	termünk	öklünk
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti	álmotok	termetek	öklötök
<i>their</i>	az ő	álmuk	termük	öklük

Regular-possessive singular

		nadrág	szék	ismerős
		<i>pants</i>	<i>chair</i>	<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-mour	-i-nk	
your (sg.)	-i-d	your (pl.)	-i-tok/-i-tek⁴
his/her	-i-	their	-i-k

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).

8.2.1 Vowel-final stems

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
		<i>clock</i>	<i>cup</i>	<i>freckle</i>	<i>gate</i>
<i>my</i>	az én	óráim	csészéim	szeplőim	kapuim
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te	óráid	csészéid	szeplőid	kapuid
<i>his/her</i>	az ő	órái	csészéi	szeplői	kapui
<i>our</i>	a mi	óráink	csészéink	szeplőink	kapuink
<i>your (pl.)</i>	a ti	óráitok	csészéitek	szeplőitek	kapuitok
<i>their</i>	az ő	óráik	csészéik	szeplőik	kapuik

8.2.2 Consonant-final stems

The plural **-i** cannot 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) nail</i>	<i>hat</i>
<i>my</i>	az én	tollaim	kertjeim	bűneim	körmeim	kalapjaim
<i>your (sg.)</i>	a te	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

4 There is no **-tök** option here because in the plural, there is never a front rounded vowel preceding the personal ending (see section 3.2 on vowel harmony).

5 There are, however, numerous exceptions, e.g., **barátjuk** ‘their friend’ ~ **barátaik** ‘their friends’.

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, the 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.

	idő	<i>time</i>	ajtó	<i>door</i>	<i>doors</i>	szül ő	<i>parent</i>	<i>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	edőnk	ajtónk		ajtaink~ajtóink	szülőnk		szüleink
<i>your (pl)</i>	a ti	időtök	ajtótok		ajtaitok~ajtóitok	szülőtök		születek
<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	hintó carriage	tinó steer
disznó pig	hordó vat	tudó lung
erdő forest	koporsó coffin	velő marrow
erő force	mező field	vessző stick
esztendő year	orsó spindle	vő son-in-law
fő head	tető roof	zászló flag

as well as nouns formed with the suffix -so:

belső interior, **első** (the) first, **felső** upper, **külső** exterior.

6An older form for ‘father’, **atya**, used mostly in religious terminology, declines exactly as **apa**.

7When **fiú** means ‘boy’, the possessive declension is regular; it is only irregular with the meaning ‘son’.

The following terms are irregular in forming the possessive:

		apa6 father	anya mother	bátya older brother		öcs younger brother	
				sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
my	az én	apám	anyám	bátyám	bátyáim	öcsém	öcséim
your (sg.)	a te	apád	anyád	bátyád	bátyáid	öcséd	öcséid
his/her	az ő	apja	anyja	bátyja	bátyái	öccse	öcséi
our	a mi	apánk	anyánk	bátyánk	bátyáink	öcsénk	öcséink
your (pl)	a ti	apátok	anyátok	bátyátok	bátyáitok	öcsétek	öcséitek
their	az ő	apjuk	anyjuk	bátyjuk	bátyáik	öccsük	öcséik
			fiú7 son		néne aunt		
			sg.	pl.	sg.		pl.
my	az én		fiam	fiaim	néném		nénéim
your (sg.)	a te		fiad	fiaid	nénéd		nénéid
his/her	az ő		fia	fiai	nénje		nénéi
our	a mi		fiunk	fiaink	nénénk		nénéink
your (pl)	a ti		fiatok	fiaitok	nénétek		nénéitek
their	az ő		fiuk	fiaik	nénjük		nénjeik

8.5 Nominal possession

In addition to pronouns indicating possession (my book, our garden, etc.), 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

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, azok**:

Ezeknek a szobáknak fehérek a falai.

The walls of these rooms are white.

Ennek az iskolának a homlokzata nagyon régi.

This school's façade 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
	the boy's book (one boy, one book)	the boy's books (one boy, several books)
Singular possessor	a fiú könyve ~ a fiúnak a könyve	a fiú könyvei ~ a fiúnak a könyvei
	the boys' book (several boys, one book)	the boys' books (several boys, several books)
Plural possessor	a fiúk könyve ~ a fiúknak a könyve	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, therefore do not require a linking vowel; **a** and **e** are lengthened to **a** 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 person 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.

8.7.2 Other cases

All other cases suffix regularly. For complete paradigms, see Appendix 2.

⁸ Compare with the accusative case of the personal and reflexive pronouns.

Beszálltunk a kocsijába.

Olvastam a sikereidről.

Állandóan gondol a barátaira.

Sokat fizetett a házáért.

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 without a linking vowel; it lengthens final vowels **a**, **e** to **a**, **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

Non-attributive possession
friend

	barát	singular	plural
s1poss.	barátom	baráté	barátéi
s2poss.	barátod	barátomé	barátoméi
s3poss.	barátja	barátodé	barátodéi
p11poss.	barátja	barátjáé	barátjáéi
p12poss.	barátunk	barátunké	barátunkéi
p13poss.	barátotok	barátotoké	barátotokéi
friends	barátjuk	barátjuké	barátjukéi

	barátok	barátoké	barátokéi
s1poss.	barátaim	barátaimé	barátaiméi
s2poss.	barátaid	barátaidé	barátaidéi
s3poss.	barátai	barátaié	barátaiéi
p11poss.	barátaink	barátáinké	barátainkéi
p12poss.	baratáitok	baratáitoké	baratáitokéi
p13poss.	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 Imréét 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 találom az apáméit.

These keys are your friend's. These keys are hers, but I can't find my father's.

Chapter 9**Postpositions**

Postpositions supplement the case system and provide additional ways of expressing temporal, spatial, or other abstractions. As the name implies, postpositions follow the nouns they govern instead of preceding them. Although the noun is usually in the nominative case, some postpositions require a different case marking on the nouns they govern.

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 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 on 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
íránt	towards, for	után	after
kívül	besides, except (for)		

9.2.2 Sample possessive paradigms of postpositions1

	(emphatic)	
szerintem	énszerintem	according to me
szerinted	teszerinted	" you (sg.)
szerinte	őszerte	" him/her
szerintünk	miszerintünk	" us
szerintetek	tiszerintetek	" you (pl.)
szerintük	őszertük	" them
	(emphatic)	
miattam	énmiattam	because of me
miattad	temiattad	" you (sg.)
miatta	őmiatta	" him/her
miattunk	mimiattunk	" us
miattatok	timiattatok	" you (pl.)
miattuk	őmiattuk	" them

1 Recall that for most purposes the formal forms of address behave like nouns; thus the postposition paradigms for **maga**, **maguk**, **ön**, **önök** are like those for nouns: **Maga nélkül** 'without you', **önök után** 'after you', etc.

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	mogul	behind
fölé	fölött/felett	fölül	above
alá	alatt	alól	below
mellé	mellett	mellől	next to
közé	között	közül	between
köré	körül		—
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 seprte 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**),

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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, him/her/it...
előttem, előtted, előtte, előttünk, előttetek, előttük
in front of me, you, him/her/ it...
előlem, előled, előle, előlünk, előletek, előlük
from in front of me, you, him/her/it...
alám, alád, alá(ja), alánk, aláták, 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 must be preceded by cases other than the nominative.
superessive **-(o/e/ö)n+**

alul	at the bottom of
át	across, through
belül	within
felül/fölül	at the top of
innen	this side of
keresztül	through
kívül²	besides, outside of, except for
túl	beyond

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**.

sublative **-ra/-re+**

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)
nézve with respect to
Rám nézve végtelenül nehéz volt az út.

delative **-ról/-ről+**

The trip was extremely difficult for me.
nézve as seen from
Közelebbről nézve láttuk, hogy az aláírás hamis volt.

allative **-hoz/-hez/-höz+**

Upon closer inspection we saw that the signature was fake.
hasonlóan similar to
képest compared to

ablative **-tól/-től+**

Hozzád képest Ilona gyakran megy moziba.
Compared to you, Ilona goes to the movies a lot.
fogva from, since
kezdve starting from
Januártól tanul. **kezdve szorgalmasabban**

instrumental **-val/-vel+**

He has been since January.
együtt together (with)
szemben opposite to, facing
A házzal szemben van egy gyönyörű gesztenyefa.
There is a beautiful chestnut tree across the way from the house.

Some postpositions are formed of a root, a possessive suffix, and a case.³ The third person singular forms can have pronouns or nouns as their objects.

(az én)	számomra	for my part
(a te)	számodra	for your (sg.) part
(az ő, János, a nők , etc.)	számára	for his/her, János', the women's part
(a mi)	számunkra	for our part
(a ti)	számotokra	for your (pl.) part
(az ő)	számukra	for their part

The postpositions

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...

pattern identically.

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.

³ Structurally these are simply nominal possessive constructions; they are included here as postpositions by convention only.

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:

ezekben a házakban

in these houses

ezek előtt a házak előtt

in front of 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

behind this house

ebben a házban

in this house

As is found with cases, postpositional phrases with **ez**, **ezek** may be reduced,⁵ a practice favored in good prose:

ez alatt a szék alatt → e szék alatt

under this chair

ezek között a szekrények között → e szekrények között

between these cupboards

⁴ Although the spelling does not reveal it, correct pronunciation of these phrases is like that of case-marked demonstratives where the final **-z** assimilates to the following consonant: compare **ez+ben** → **ebben** with

e+mögött → **[emmögött]**, **a+fölött** → **[affölött]**.

⁵ Compare with section **7.6.2.3**.

Chapter 10

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).

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Page 153					
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 a , 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:

	Singular	Plural
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**.

	Singular	Plural
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**.

	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
big	nagy	nagyok	happy	boldog	boldogok
rich	gazdag	gazdagok	blind	vak	vakok
thick	vastag	vastagok	base	aljas	aljasok
free	szabad	szabadok	other	más	mások

Adjectives formed with the derivation **-atlan/-etlen** or its variants decline as nouns, therefore they use **o/e/ö** 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

10.1.2 Accusative of adjectives

The accusative is suffixed to adjectives slightly differently than to nouns.
1 The **ö** linking vowel option is never used, however, since these adjectives never have a last vowel that is front and rounded.

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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 ending in **-a** or **-e** lengthen to **a**, **é**, respectively, when adding the accusative **-t**.

	Nominative	Accusative
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

	Nominative	Accusative
awful	borzasztó	borzasztót
edible	ehető	ehetőt
dense	sűrű	sűrűt
sad	szomorú	szomorút
old	régi	régit
curious	kíváncsi	kíváncsit

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

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**.

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**.

	Nominative	Accusative
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**.

	Nominative	Accusative		Nominative	Accusative
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.

	Nominative	Accusative
unnecessary	szükségtelen	szükségtelent
unknown	ismeretlen	ismeretlent
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.)

Croatian	Nominative	Accusative
Dutch	horvát	horvátot
German	holland	hollandot
Serbian	német	németet
Turk	szerb	szerbet
Greek	török	törököt
Finn	görög	görögöt
Hungarian	finn	finnt
Albanian	magyar	magyart
Pole	albán	albánt
	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:

	Nominative		Accusative
	sg-	Pl.	
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 the adjective 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)

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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 csoportok nem objektívek.

Those groups are not objective.

Hol vetted azt az teleobjektívot?

Where did you buy that lens?

10.2.1 Full declension of adjectives

Other than the accusative, adjectives suffix cases exactly as nouns.

Declension of adjectives

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
	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>ablative</i>	magastól	magasaktól	kedvestől	kedvesektől
<i>dotive</i>	magasnak	magasaknak	kedvesnek	kedveseknek
<i>instrumental</i>	magassal	magasakkal	kedvessel	kedvesekkel
<i>tronslative</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 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
fekete	black	feketább	blacker
régi	old	régibb	older
olcsó	cheap	olcsóbb	cheaper
érthető	understandable	érthetőbb	more understandable
szomorú	sad	szomorúbb	sadder
keserű	bitter	keserűbb	more bitter

10.3.2

The following adjectives lose their final vowel **-ú/-ű** and then add the linking vowel **a/e** before the comparative **-bb**. (Compare these with their adverbial forms, section 11.1.1.)

lassú	slow	lassabb	longer
szörnyű	awful	szörnyebb	more awful
hosszú	long	hosszabb	longer
könnyű	easy, light	könnyebb	easier, lighter
ifjú	young	ifjabb	younger

10.3.3

The linking vowel **a/e** is used to link the suffix to adjectives ending in a consonant.

édes	sweet	édesebb	sweeter
piros	red	pirosabb	redder
különös	special	különösebb	more special

10.3.4

The following are some common exceptions:

jó	good	jobb	better
szép	beautiful	szebb	more beautiful
kicsi	small	kisebb	smaller
sok	many, a lot of	több	more

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:

nehéz	difficult, heavy	nehezebb	more difficult, heavier
bátor	brave	bátrabb	braver
derék	decent	derekabb	more decent
kevés	few, little	kevesebb	fewer, less

⁴ Compare with the adverbial forms where the **v**-stem is also evident.

10.3.8

Some stems are already a comparative degree.

felső

upper

also

lower

belső

inner

külső

outer

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 job szakács, mint én.

My father is a better cook 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 szebb városban lakik, mint én.

Rózsa lives in a more beautiful city than I do.

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'.

Peter egyre magasabb lesz.

Peter is getting taller and taller.

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 szorgalmasabb az István, annál jobb jegyet kap.

The more diligent István is, the better grade he gets.

Minél többet eszem, annál éhesebb leszek.

The more I eat the hungrier I get.

10.4.6 Degree of comparison

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

sokkal boldogabb

mennyivel könnyebb?

két órával hosszabb

three meters higher

much happier

how much easier?

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 section 7.6.3.)

	Nominative <i>singular</i>	Nominative <i>plural</i>	<i>Accusative</i> <i>singular</i>
such, like that	olyan	olyanok	olyat (less common: olyant)
such, like this	ilyen	ilyenek	ilyet (less common: ilyent)

10.7 Interrogative adjective milyen

10.7.1

Milyen, ‘what kind of’, as all adjectives, precedes the noun it modifies.

Milyen gyümölcsöt akarsz vásárolni?

What kind of fruit do you want to buy?

Milyen diák az Erzsébet?

What kind of student is Erzsébet?

10.7.2

For emphasis, milyen may be used to modify other adjectives.

Milyen jó zongorista a Tamás!

What a good pianist Tamás is!

Milyen szép ez a virág!

What a beautiful flower this is!

5 See section 7.6.3.1 for more on the use of these adjectival demonstratives.

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 section 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

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 kávét és vaját 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.

'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 are the part of speech addressing manner, place, and time of an action.

11.1 Adverbs of manner

11.1.1 -(a/e)n

The adverbial suffix **-(a/e)n** corresponds most closely to the English ‘-ly’ and is attached primarily to adjectives. Adverbs of manner tend to modify verbs and in Hungarian, they are placed before the verb unless another element of the sentence is focused. (See Chapter 16 for more on word order.) No linking vowel is required when suffixing to adjectives ending in **-a/-e**; this vowel, however, is lengthened to **á/é**.

drága	dear, expensive	drágán	dearly, expensively
fekete	black	feketén	pessimistically, on the black market
csúnya	ugly	csúnyán	not nicely
furcsa	strange	furcsán	strangely
ritka	rare	ritkán	rarely, seldom

Ritkán találkoznak.

They seldom meet.

Csúnyán beszélt az apjával.

He spoke rudely to his father.

The linking vowel **-(a/e)** is usually used when combining with adjectives ending in **-i/-ú/-ű**.

kíváncsi	curious	kíváncsian	curiously
savanyú	sour	savanyúan	sourly
keserű	bitter	keserűen	bitterly
célszerű	expedient	célszerűen	expediently
szomorú	sad	szomorúan	sadly

Kíváncsian nézett rám.

He looked at me curiously.

Szomorúan beszélt a tegnapi eseményekről.

She spoke sadly of yesterday's events.

The linking vowel **-(a/e)** is 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

Aranyosan viselkedett a nagyszüleinél.

He behaved sweetly at his grandparents' house.

Szépen beszél magyarul.

She speaks Hungarian beautifully.

11.1.1.1 Variations and exceptions

There is some variation in the use of linking vowels when combining with adjectives ending in **-ó/-ő** (these adjectives are often, though not always, present participles). With some exceptions, however, the linking vowel is preferred.

kiváló	outstanding	kiválóan	outstandingly
érthető	understandable	érthetően	understandably
látható	visible	láthatóan	visibly
olcsó	inexpensive	olcsón	inexpensively
forró	hot, boiling	forróan	hotly

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The following adjectives cannot combine with **-(a/e)n** and form their adverbs quite differently, with the essive (**-ul/-ül**) or a truncated version thereof.

jó	good	jól	well
rossz	bad, poor	rosszul	badly, poorly
vad	wild	vadul	wildly
derék	honest, good	derekul	honestly
remek	splendid	remekül	splendidly

Similarly, adjectives formed with the **-atlan/-etlen** suffix (or its variants, see section **12.2.3**) form their adverbs with the essive (**-ul/-ül**).

váratlan	unexpected	váratlanul	unexpectedly
hirtelen	sudden	hirtelenül	suddenly
hibátlan	faultless	hibátlanul	faultlessly

The following adjectives form their adverbs with **-on**:

nagy	big	nagyon	very, greatly
gazdag	rich	gazdagon	richly
vastag	thick	vastagon	thickly
szabad	free	szabadon	freely

The following adjectives lose their final vowel when forming the adverb:¹

hosszú	long	hosszan	at length
lassú	slow	lassan	slowly
könnyű	easy, light	könnyen	easily, lightly
szörnyű	awful	szörnyen	awfully
ifjú	young	ifjan	young, at an early age

Other stem changes:

bő	abundant	bőven	abundantly
hű	faithful	híven	faithfully (or hűen)
nehéz	heavy, difficult	nehezen	heavily, with difficulty
bátor	brave	bátran	bravely

¹ Compare with the comparative.

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 **-(a/e)n**, 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.

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 Essive -ul/-ül

The essive **-ul/-ül** is used to form adverbs from adjectives ending in **-atlan/ -etlen** (or its variants, see section 12.2.3). This ending lengthens word-final **-a** and **-e** to **a, é**, respectively; otherwise there are no changes in the stem when suffixing.

váratlan	unexpected	váratlanul	unexpectedly
hirtelen	sudden	hirtelenül	suddenly
hibátlan	faultless	hibátlanul	faultlessly

Váratlanul toppant be a sógorom.

My brother-in-law showed up unexpectedly.

Egészségtelenül táplálkozol.

You eat unhealthy foods (lit., 'unhealthily')

Ismeretlenül is üdvözlöm a férjedet.

My regards to your husband though we haven't even met yet.

The essive is required when expressing that some action occurs *'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.

The essive may also be added to nouns to describe how another 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 Essive-formal -ként

Similar to the essive, **-ként** is used with nouns to denote how the noun is used. It 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

The suffix **-képp(en)** has the same meaning as the essive-formal and is found in a few forms.

tulajdonképpen	actually, really, properly
mindenképpen	in any case
eképp(en)	in this way
aképpen	in that way

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	kevésbé	a little, somewhat
csak	only	körülbelül	approximately
csaknem	almost	külön	separately
csupán	merely, only	majdnem	almost
egészen	entirely, completely	még	still, yet
egy kicsit	a little	sőt	moreover
egyáltalán nem	not at all	pusztán	merely, only
egyébként	otherwise	méltán	deservedly, worthily
egyedül	alone	részint	partly, to a certain extent
együtt	together	teljesen	fully, completely
egyúttal	at the same time, in addition	szinte	almost, all but

elég	fairly, rather	önként	voluntarily
eléggé	fairly, rather	össze-vissza	randomly, confusedly
éppen	just, exactly	többé-kévésbé	more or less
folyton	incessantly	túl	too, over-
hiába	in vain	valahogy	somehow

11.1.7

When expressing **to what extent** an action is carried out, the accusative case is used adverbially:

sok	many	sokat	Sokat beszél a barátnőjéről. He talks a lot about his girlfriend.
kevés	few, little	keveset	Keveset sportolsz. You play (very) little sports.
elég	enough	eleget	Eleget hallottam már róla. I have heard enough about him.
nagy	big	nagyot	Nagyot nevettünk. We had a good laugh.
jó	good	jót	Jót aludtam. I had a good sleep./I slept well.

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.

Jói nézel ki.	You look good.
Jói esett ez a séta.	That walk felt good.
Rosszul 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 which modify other 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 -(a/e)n to adjectives already formed for the comparative and superlative (See sections 10.3 and 10.5 to form the comparative and superlative of adjectives and for other general comments related to the comparative and superlative.)

	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 iratoztak 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?

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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 most of all
egy kicsit a little	kevésbé less	legkevésbé least
rosszul badly	rosszabul 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 became 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 gondolok 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 bántik velem, mint régen.

She treats me much more nicely than before.

Peter egy kicsivel jobban tud svédül, mint a húga.

Peter 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'. Adverbs of number are formed by adding **-(a/e)n** to a number or other expression of quantity. (See section **14.3** for examples as there are numerous irregularities.)

Százan álltak a sorban.

A hundred people stood in line.

Hányan mentek Szentendrére vasárnap?

How many of you are going to Szentendre on Sunday?

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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.

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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 comp./superl.	Motion away
home	haza	itthon ²		itthonról
home	haza	otthon ³		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),	fentre	fenn ~ fent	fejjebb ~ följebb	fentről
upstairs	föntre	~ fönn ~ fönt	legfejjebb ~ legföljebb	föntről
			legfelül	felülről
above	felülre	felül	alább	alulról
(be)low, bottom	alulra	alul	legalul	
			közelebb	közelről
near	közelre	közel	legközelebb	
			legelől	előlről
front	előre	elől	legelől	előlről
back	hátra	hátul	legelől	hátulról
	hátrébb			
side	félre	oldalt		oldalról
elsewhere	máshova	másutt		máshonnan
		máshol		
far	messzire	messze	messzebb	messziről
			legmesszebb	
distant	távolra	távol	távolabb	távolról
			legtávolabb	

2 **itthon** refers to home when the speaker is at the home.

3 **otthon** refers to home when the speaker is elsewhere.

north	észak	from the... északról	in the... északon	to the... 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 and require no further case marking or post-positions:

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, immedia
egy pillanat	(in) a moment	most	now
egyelőre	for the time being	mostanában	nowadays
ekkor	at this time; then	múltkor	last time, recently

eleinte	at first	néha	sometimes
először	first, the first time	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	többe 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

valaha

once, in the past

valamikor

at some time, sometime

bármikor

any time, whenever

akármikor

whenever

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

(Ezerkilencszáznyolcvankilenc október huszonharmadika)

2008. június 17-e

(Kétezernyolc 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 17th.

Január elsején pihenni

We usually relax on the first of

szoktunk.

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 ‘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	csütörtökön	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 **-(o/e/ö)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

The use of cases in expressions of time is somewhat idiosyncratic and must be learned individually.

11.5.7.1 Superessive **-(o/e/ö)n**

Use with the following words to mean **during** or **in**.

hét	week	a héten
nyár	summer	nyáron
tél	winter	télen
nap	day	egy napon

during the week
in/during summer
in/during winter
on a/one day

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:

Hatrá/Hat órára otthon leszek.

I'll be home by six.

Hétfőre kell befejezni a munkát.

The work must be done by Monday.

Use the sublative to indicate **intended** time (note the opposition with the **-ig** case in the first of the following examples):

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 **-ról/-ről** case 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 **-(V)nként**

(See section **6.4.2.7** 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 to indicate at a particular time.

Karácsonykor a gyerekek aranyosan viselkednek.

At Christmas children behave nicely.

Hétkor fog telefonálni.

She will call at seven o'clock.

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11.5.7.8 Distributive-temporal **-(V)nta/- (V)nte**
See section 6.5.2 on how to form the distributive/temporal. 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, every week
óra	hour	óránta	hourly, every hour

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
négyszer	four times	tízszer	ten times
ötször	five times	sokszor	many times
hatszor	six times	többször	several times

Milliószor puszillak.
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

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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	in (under)/ within	(With this meaning alatt is a synonym of belül .) 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/ folyamán	in the course of
belül	(with)in
át/keresztül	through
között	between
hosszat	for... long
múlva	in, after
felé	towards
körül, tájban, táján	about, around
-számra	for... on end

A tárgyalások során/folyamán sokat tanultak egymásról.
They learned a lot about each other in the course of the negotiations.
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.
Use with the superessive case **-(o/e/ö)n**.
Egész életén at vártam rá.
I waited a lifetime for her.
Négy és öt óra között az irodámban leszek.
I'll be in my office between four and five o'clock.
Hét óra hosszat dolgoztak a házi feladatukon.
They worked for seven hours long on their homework.
Három nap múlva kezdődik a vizsgaidőszak.
The exam term begins in three days.
Tíz óra felé kezd fáradt lenni.
Towards ten o'clock he starts to get tired.
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.
Though not a true postposition, **-számra** combines with nouns similarly.
A régi barátok oraszamra 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—one with the postposition **óta**, the other with the third person singular possessive suffix **-(j)a/- (j)e**. Note that because the action continues into the present, the verb must be in the present tense. **óta** (postposition)

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?

-(j)a/- (j)e (third person singular possessive)

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**—one with the postposition **ezelőtt**, the other with the third person singular possessive suffix **-(j)a/- (j)e**. The verb must be in the past tense.

Use the postposition **ezelőtt** preceded by a time unit with the instrumental **-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.

Use 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.

As 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 either by suffixing the distributive **-(V)nként** to the time expression, or by placing the word **minden** 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**. Though it means 'usually', **szokott** is only used in the past tense conjugation. **Szokott** will otherwise conjugate normally for any person in both the indefinite and definite conjugations; 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.

Általában hétkor kel fel.

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')

Because it is common to refer to time in terms of the quarter hour, the postposition patterns are also used with them.

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 **'Hánykor?/Hány órakor?'** 'at what time (on the clock)?', the temporal case **-kor** is added to the end of the time expression.

Hánykor jöttek?

When did they come?

Tizenhárom óra negyvenhárom perckor indul a vonat.

The train leaves at 13:43.

11.5.14 Interrogatives of time

Mikor?

Hánykor?

Mennyi időre?

Mikorra?

Mikortól (kezdve/fogva)?

Mettől (kezdve/fogva)?

Meddig?

Mennyi ideig?

Mennyi időt?

Mióta?

Mennyi idő múlva?

Miközben

Mennyi időelőz el?

Mennyi idő alatt?

Mennyi időn belül?

Mennyi időn keresztül?

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 adverbial pronouns are formed by prefixing **a-** to the interrogatives.)

Hétkor/Hét órakor.

At seven/seven o'clock.

When?

At what time (on the clock)?

For how long? By what time?

By what time?

Since when? From what time?

Since when? From what time?

Until when? For how long?

How much time?

Until when/for how long?

How much time?

Since when?

In (after) how much time?

During what time? When?

How long ago?

During how much time?

Within how much time?

For how long a time?

Interrogative	Demonstrative	Negative	Indefinite	Indefinite-2	Universal
hova where to	ide to here oda to there itt here ott there	sehova to nowhere	valahova to somewhere	akárhova bárhova to anywhere	mindenhova mindenüvé to everywhere
hol where	innen from here onnan from there	sehol nowhere	valahol somewhere	akárhol bárhol anywhere	mindenhol mindenütt everywhere
honnan where from	erre this way arra that way	sehonnan from nowhere	valahonnan from somewhere	akárhonnan bárhonnan from anywhere	mindenhonnan mindenünnen from everywhere
merre in which direction	eddig until now/ here addig until now/ there	semerre in no direction	valamerre in some direction	akármerre bármerre in any direction	mindenfelé in every direction
meddig how far how long	ekkor at this time akkor at that time	semeddig for no length of time or distance	valameddig for some length of time or distance	akármeddig bármeddig so far, up for any length of time or distance	mindedigdig until now
mikor when	soha sohasem sosem never	semikor at no time	valamikor at some time valaha once, sometime	akármikor bármikor whenever	mindig mindenkor 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	mindenkeppén 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 adverbial pronouns 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 voltunk Kuala Lumpurban.

We have never been to Kuala Lumpur.

Sehova sem megyek késő este.

I don't go anywhere late at night.

11.6.6 Indefinite

As is found in the nouns and adjectives, there are several indefinite adverbial 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.

Bármikor jöhetsz, csak gyere!

You may come any time, just come!

Akármikor telfonálok, elfoglalt.

Whenever I call she's busy.

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.

Chapter 12**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, e.g., to change a noun into an adjective, an adjective into a verb, a verb into a noun—or any combination of the above. The verb **megszentségtelenít** 'defile, profane' serves as an illustration of how several suffixes and a prefix combine with a single root:

szent holy (adj.); saint (noun)

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 section 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.¹ It is 100 percent productive (may be used with

¹ See section **4.4.1.1** on the formation of the present participle.

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all verbs) and denotes the (abstract) action of the verb. It can be 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/o)dolom/- (e)de/em**

This suffix is attached to verbs to form collective or abstract nouns. The longer variant is typically added to monosyllabic verb stems.

forr	boil	forradalom	revolution
hat	have an effect	hatalom	power

késik	be late	késedelem	delay
történik	happen	történelem	history
ír	write	irodalom	literature
fáj	hurt	fájdalom	pain

12.1.1.4 **-(o)many/-(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	reading (selection)
süt	bake	sütemény	pastry
tud	know	tudomány	knowledge, science

12.1.1.5 **-vány/-vény²**

This suffix is added to verbs to denote a result or product of an action.

áll	stand	állvány	stand, scaffolding
igazol	justify	igazolvány	certificate
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.

² The form **-evény** occurs as well, though rarely.

bánya	mine	bányász	miner
épít	build	építész	architect
erdő	forest	erdész	forester
gyógy-3	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-3	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 in meaning to the English suffix '-ist', this suffix is added to roots to denote one belonging to the general activity or school of the root.

egyetem	university	egyetemista	university student
gimnázium	high school	gimnázista	high school student
zongora	piano	zongorista	pianist
alkohol	alcohol	alkoholista	alcoholic

3 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.

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, it is frequently used to form adjectives as well (see section 12.2.2).

The suffix -s requires a linking vowel when attaching to stems ending in a consonant. In most cases, the linking vowel choice is the same as in forming the plural. When adding the suffix -s to stems ending in a or e, the vowel is lengthened to a, 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/-ség

Another widely used suffix, -ság/-ség makes nouns out of adjectives and other nouns. This suffix is attached directly to the stem with no linking vowel and does not lengthen stem-final -a/-e. 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. It is attached directly to the stem with no linking vowel and does not lengthen stem-final **-a/-e**.

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 of, or usual entourage of the person. If the stem ends in a or e, it is lengthened to **a, é**, respectively.

Kovács	a Kovácsék	the Kovács family
Gyula	a Gyuláék	Gyula and his family and/or friends
a barátom my friend	a barátomé	my friend and his family and/or friends

This suffix forms adjectives from nouns, adverbs, and postpositions. It is added directly to the stem with no linking vowel and does not lengthen stem-final a or e.

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
utóbb	later	utóbbi évek	recent years
tavaly	last year	tavalyi idő	last year’s weather

12.2.1.2

It is added to nouns to give them an attributive function.

nő	woman	női ruha	women’s clothing
hely	place	helyi idő	local time
tavas	spring	tavaszi zápor	spring shower
hegy	mountain	hegyi tó	mountain lake

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

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az asztal fölött
az asztal fölötti festmény
a háború után
a háború utáni évek

above the table
the painting over the table
after the war
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. (See the earlier section **12.1.2.4** for rules on forming new words with **-s**.)

12.2.2.1

It has the meaning ‘endowed with, qualified as having’.

vaj	butter	vajas kenyér	bread and butter (lit., buttery bread)
erdő	forest	erdős terület	wooded area

Concrete characteristics of a person or thing can be expressed with the use of **-s**.

név	name	neves professz	
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.

fiatal	young	fiatalos	youngish
beteg	sick	beteges	sickly, ailing
barna	brown	barnás	brownish
zöld	green	zöldeskék	greenish-blue
magyar	Hungarian	magyaros	in a Hungarian style

It can be attached to numerals to yield both adjectives and nouns.

tíz	ten	tizes szoba	room number ten
hat	six	hatos villamos	number six tram
száz	hundred	százas	one-hundred (forint) banknote
hét	seven	a hetes szám	the number seven

12.2.3 -tlan/-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. **-tlan, -tlen** is added to stems ending in a vowel; word-final vowel **a** or **e** is lengthened to **a, é**, respectively.

béke	peace	békétlen	restless, turbulent, quarrelsome
erő	force	erőtlen	weak, feeble, powerless
hiba	mistake	hibátlan	faultless
só	salt	sótlan	unsalted

2. **-talan, -télen** is added to stems ending in a single consonant.

érték	value	értéktelen	worthless
haszon	use	haszontalan	useless
bátor	brave	bátortalan	cowardly

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3. **-atlan, -etlen** is added to all verb stems.

ismer	know	ismeretlen	unknown
vár	expect, wait	váratlan	unexpected
kér	ask for	kéretlen	unrequested, unsolicited

Sometimes more than one variant can be attached to the same root, yielding two different meanings:

lélek	soul, spirit	lelketlen	heartless
		lélektelen	lacking in spirit, enthusiasm
gond	worry, care	gondatlan	careless
		gondtalan	carefree
tárgy	object, theme	tárgyatlan	(of sentences or verbs) having no object, intransitive
		tárgytalan	(a matter) not worth discussion, invalid, unnecessary
íz	taste, flavor	ízetlen	tasteless (abstract, as of decoration)
		íztelen	tasteless (concrete, as of food)

12.2.3.1 Grammatical features of -tlan/-tlen, -at/an/-etlen, **-talan/-telen**

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. (See section 4.5.2.)

hisz	believe	hihető	believable
		hihetetlen	unbelievable
lát	see	látható	visible
		láthatatlan	invisible
eszik	eat	ehető	edible
		ehetetlen	inedible
megváltoztat	change	megváltoztatható	changeable
		megváltoztathatatlan	immutable, irrevocable

12.2.3.1.2

Unlike most adjectives, those formed with **-tlan/-tlen** and their variants form their adverbs with **-ul/-ül**. (See section 11.1.3.)

váratlan	unexpected	váratlanul	unexpectedly
hibátlan	faultless	hibátlanul	faultlessly
12.2.3.1.3			
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**. It makes adjectives out of nouns which are, 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 téma	interesting theme	érdekes témájú könyv	book with an interesting them

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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

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 **a**, **é**, respectively.

téma	theme	tabu témájú	having a taboo theme
jövő	future	nagy jövőjű	having great future, up-and-coming

12.2.5 -ékeny/-ekony

This suffix forms adjectives from verb stems. It denotes an inclination to the activity.

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	(one) moment long
tenyér	palm (of the hand)	tenyérnyi	palm-sized
ujj	finger	ujjnyi	(one) finger wide

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 required for forming the plural; when added to stems ending in **a** or **e**, the vowel is lengthened to **a**, **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 create verbs for 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
level	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
sör	beer	sörözik	drink beer
tea	tea	teázik	drink tea
vacsora	dinner	vacsorázik	eat dinner

4 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’.

The suffix creates verbs indicating the use of a tool.

csavar	screw	csavaroz	fasten with a screw
kocsi	car	kocsizik	go by car, drive
gereblye	rake	gereblyézik	use a rake

12.3.1.4

The suffix produces verbs that denote supplying someone/something with something.

fal	wall	falaz	put up a wall
fegyver	weapon	felfegyverezik	arm

12.3.2 -15

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 a, 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 suimer (vacation)
vásár	market	vásárol	shop

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	vizsgázik	take a test	vizsgál	examine

5 See note 4.

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 **-it** are often the transitive counterpart of the intransitive verbs ending in **-ul/-ül**, see the following 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
széles	wide	szélesít	widen
nagyobb	bigger	nagyobbít	enlarge
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 -6	cure	gyógyít	heal
tan -7	learn	tanít	teach

12.3.4

-eszt/-aszt 12.3.4

This suffix is found on transitive verbs. It is not nearly as productive as the transitive suffix **-it**. 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 (something)	riaszt	alarmed

6 See note 3.

7 See note 3.

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	doctrine	tanul	learn

12.3.6 -ad/-ed

This suffix makes intransitive verbs, often suffixing on to stems that occur only as derivational roots. Verbs with this suffix often find their transitive counterparts in verbs ending in **-szt** (see above, **12.3.4**).

ébred	wake up	ijed	be frightened
fárad	become tired	riad	become alarmed
halad	progress, advance	szárad	become dry

8 See note 3.

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 **d (-kodik)** or **z (-kozik)**. Some variation in suffixing is found among the stems: monosyllabic stems may require a linking vowel before the suffix (**mos: mosakodik**); stems may drop their final vowel before the suffix (**szomorú: szomorkodik**). 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 in construction with these verbs.)

fésül	use a comb	fésülködik	comb one's hair
mos	wash	mosakodik	wash oneself
öltöz	dress (e.g., somebody)	öltözközik	get dressed
töröl	wipe	törölközik	dry oneself with a towel

12.3.7.2

It may be used to identify occupations.

lektor	lecturer	lektorkodik	work as a lecturer
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 behaviour.

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 **a, é**, respectively. As with the previous suffix in **12.3.7**, roots may exhibit some variation when adding **-skodik/-skedik/-sködik**. 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 -ókik/ődik

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. It is often attached to transitive verb stems.

Transitive		Intransitive	
kezd	begin	kezdődik	start (intrans.)
befejez	finish	befejeződik	come to an end, become finished
elvégez	finish	elvégződik	come to an end
csuk	close, shut	csukódik	close, shut (by itself)
zár	close, lock	záródik	close, lock (by itself)

Mikor kezdték az előadást?
Mikor kezdődött az előadás?
Becsukta az ajtót.
Becsukódik az ajtó.

When did they start the lecture?
When did the lecture start?
She closed the door.
The door is closing.

12.3.11 II(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**, **e**, respectively.

sok	much	sokall	consider something too much
kevés⁹	few	kevesell	consider something too little, not enough
fekete	black	feketélik	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 to 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 every sentence or two.

Diminutives take several shapes. The most common are given here.

⁹ See note4

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**, **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 a 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

Chapter 13

Conjunctions

13.1 Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions join clauses, phrases, or words. A comma is usually used before conjunctions joining clauses. Special attention should be paid to their placement—some occur after the words or clauses to which they refer, some occur before, and others are placed in the second position of a clause. The conjunctions *se*, *sem*, occur with the negative particle *nem*. 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 level, 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 in the second position of the clause.)

Peter moziba megy, én meg színházba megyek.

Peter 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...se(m) 'neither...nor' (As this conjunction is the negation of 'is', it likewise follows the word or phrase to which it refers.)

Nekem nem ízlett a bor, (s) Jánosnak se(m).

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' (This conjunction must appear with a negated verb or predicate.)

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 placed in the second position of the clause.)

Hazavittem a számítógépemet, 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 of 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.

13.1.4 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 berűgött, 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 találom a szem üvegemet.

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.

13.1.5 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'

Gondolkodom, 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

Subordinating conjunctions connect subordinate clauses to main clauses. In Hungarian, subordinating conjunctions are always preceded by a comma. **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, amikor 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 nagymamám.

She makes strudel just as my grandmother does.

	<i>Cardinal</i>	<i>Ordinal</i>
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	nyolvanadik
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	eze regy század lik k
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 used as a modifier. When not preceding a noun (or noun phrase) the long form **kettő** is used.

Két kocsi van a ház előtt. Two cars are in front of the house.

Hány kocsi? Kettő. How many cars? Two.

This rule is sometimes broken to avoid a possible misunderstanding with the word hét.

Kettőszáz 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	hatot	húszat	hetvenet	milliót
kettőt	hetet	harmincat	nyolcvanat	
hármat	nyolcat	negyvenet	kilencvenet	
négyet	kilencet	ötvenet	százat	
ötöt	tízet	hatvanat	ezret	

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**; (s3 poss.) **elseje**.

14.2.3

The rest of the declension is regular.2

14.2.4

The s3 possessive (used in dates) is formed with **a/e**.3

február huszonkettedike

május tizenhatodika

Hányadika van ma?

February 22nd

May 16th

What is today's date?

14.3 Adverbial use of expressions of quantity

If the subject of a sentence is **a number of people**, often the adverbial form of the number or other expression of quantity is 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 word.

3 See note 1.

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** $\frac{2}{6}$ **kéthatod** $\frac{4}{6}$ **négylenced** $\frac{1}{4}$ **egynegyed** $\frac{2}{4}$ **kétheted** $\frac{1}{5}$ **egyötöd** $\frac{2}{8}$ **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 s3 possessive is formed with or without the **j** (unless used in dates, then 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 1/2.

14.5 Decimals

Decimals are marked with a comma in Hungarian; the presence of a decimal is 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 lines, addresses, bank notes, 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 (ötszáztizenkettes) 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.

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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

-szor/-szer/-ször is used in multiplication expressions.

Háromszor négy az tizenkettő.

Three times four is twelve.

Kétszer kettő az négy.

Two times two is four.

Chapter 15

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!
Hű-ha!	Uh-oh.
Íme	Behold, voilà!
Isten őrizz!	God forbid!
Így van.	Right, that's the way it is.
Já?	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.
Na!	Well!
Naná!	You see? (I told you so.)
Nini!	Look! (children's word)

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Nos...
Nosza...
Pfuj!
Tyú!

Well...
Well...
Yuck!
Wow!

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Chapter 16**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 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, however, does not

mean that Hungarian word order is free; word order is used instead as a means of backgrounding and/or highlighting information.

'Topic-comment structure' is the term generally applied to Hungarian word order. By this it is meant that topics, viz., previously known or background information, begin the sentence; the 'comment' (or new information) follows. In this way topics set the communicative stage for the essential points of discourse. In Hungarian, the topic typically includes subjects, general time expressions, or reference to previously mentioned material.

Two main sentence types are pertinent for Hungarian in the discussion of word order; although both retain the topic-comment structure, word order restrictions are different for each type. The first type is the 'neutral sentence', the second is traditionally referred to as the 'focus' type. Both require an understanding of sentence positions; their characteristics are outlined below.

16.1 Sentence positions

To see how Hungarian word order works in neutral or focussed sentences, it is helpful to establish the following sentence positions: Topic—|| Neutral Preverb ||—Verb—X || ~Focus Preverb ||

16.1.1 Topic

The topic position is in the beginning of the sentence and is usually filled with subject(s), general time expressions, previously referred to expressions (i.e., known information) and/or any other information which serves to set the background for more essential information to come. It may contain several constituents or remain empty.

16.1.2 Preverb

The preverb occupies the position immediately before the conjugated verb. The preverb is the crux of the sentence for it is primarily here that the grammaticality of a sentence is determined. It is filled by different constituents 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 constituent (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 baby-sitting, 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.

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Whatever constituent 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.

10. **Zsuzsa el akar utazni Prágába.**²

Zsuzsa wants to travel to Prague.

11. **Amerikaiak vagyunk.**

We are American.

12. **Peter jól megtanulta a leckét.**

Peter 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

¹ The indefinite article, however, may be used and the same word order maintained (in this case, the verbal complement is 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.

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of place (sentences 1, 5, 6, 8, 9), adverbs of manner (sentences 2, 12), verbal complements (sentences 7, 11), or
coverbs (sentences 3, 4, 10, 12). 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	Peter	jól meg-	tanulta	a leckét.

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 **Dénes
könyvet olvas.** (Dénes is reading a book.)
2 See section 16.4 for more on this sentence type.

13. **Ki olvas könyvet?** (contains a question word)
Who is reading a book?
14. **Dénes olvas könyvet.** (as answer to the previous question, **Dénes** is the answer, the focussed element)
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	Verb	X
13		Ki	olvaskönyvet?	
14		Dénes	olvaskönyvet.	
15	Dénes	nem	olvaskönyvet.	
16		Csak Dénes	olvaskönyvet.	

The table illustrates the permutations of word order for focussed elements in a sentence. In sentence 13, although **Ki** ‘who’ is the sentence subject, 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 **Dénes könyvet olvas**, 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 a flexibility of word order nonetheless 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.

3 The answer **Dénes** need not begin the sentence, but it must be in the focus preverb position.

	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 17)
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 never 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.

	Type of focus	Topic	Focus	Verb	X
17	Question	Reggel	kik	játszanaka	kertben?
18	Answer	Reggel	a gyerekek	játszanaka	kertben.
19a	Question	A gyerekek	mikor	játszanaka	kertben?
19b	Question		Mikor	játszanaka	kertben
					a gyerekek?
20	Answer	A gyerekek	reggel	játszanaka	kertben.
21	Negation	A gyerekek	sohasem	játszanaka	kertben reggel.
22	Negation	A gyerekek	nem reggel	játszanaka	kertben, hanem délután.
23	Stress	A gyerekek	csak reggel	játszanaka	kertben, este 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 constituent. 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.

Were they <i>nice</i> ?	Topic	Focus	Verb	X
Did the people wait <i>a long time</i> ?		Kedvesek voltak?	Sokáig vártak	az emberek?
	Az emberek	sokáig	vártak?	
Will you wait for me?		Meg	vársz	engem?
		Meg	fogsz	várni engem?
Are you waiting for <i>me</i> ?		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.

Who doesn't want coffee?	Topic	Focus	Verb	X
Why doesn't Peter want to dance?		Ki nem	kér	kávét?
Who 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 (see sections 16.5.1–2). If the infinitive has no verbal complement/modifier, then it fills the preverb position itself (see section 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 the coverb is separated from the infinitive.

Le tetszik szállni az autóbusról?

(< 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.

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 quasiauxiliary verb.

4 In addition to their use as auxiliary verbs, these verbs may also stand alone, hence the term 'quasi-auxiliary'.

A diákoknak sokat kell olvasniuk.

The students must read a lot.

Anita levelet akar írni.

Anita wants to write a letter.

Gyula Pécsen fog lakni.

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.

(< sokat olvas)

(< levelet ír)

(< Pécsen lakik)

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	

Chapter 17

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 (viz., 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./ Attila a házban van. (adverbial complement)

Attila is here./Attila is well./ Attila is in the house.

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 régiek. (predicate adjective)

The books are old.

The first and second person (singular and plural) always use the verb *van* ‘be’ (in its correctly conjugated form, of course).

Vidám/Angol tanár vagyok. (predicate adjective/noun)

I am cheerful/an English teacher.

Jói vagyok, köszönöm. (adverbial complement)

I’m well, thank you.

Magyarok vagyunk.

We are Hungarian(s).

Egy gyönyörű kertben vagyunk.

We are in a beautiful garden.

Szép vagy.

You are beautiful.

Roszul vagy?

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 gazdag lennék/volnék!

If only I were rich.

Ott lennél/volnál, ha tudnál.

You would be there if you could.

(predicate adjective/noun)

(adverbial complement)

(predicate adjective/noun)

(adverbial complement)

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.

The negation of all other 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 régiek.

The books are not old.

Nem vagyok otthon./Nem vagyunk otthon.

I am not at home./We are not at home.

Peter nem rajzol jól.

Peter 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, viz., '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 22nd.

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 meaning 'to have'; instead it uses a compound construction using *van* 'be'. The following are the components of the 'have' construction:

- (a) the possessor is in the dative case; should this be a pronoun, it may be omitted.
- (b) 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
- (c) the verb **van** is in the third person and agrees in number with the possessed item(s) (which, in fact, is the grammatical subject).
- (d) 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.

She/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.

17.4.2 Possessed item is plural

(Nekem) kedves testvéreim vannak.

I have nice siblings.

¹ Compare with the possessive construction where the definite article is almost always used.

(Neked) kedves testvéreid vannak.

You (sg.) have nice siblings.

(Neki)/Zsuzsának, kedves testvérei vannak.

She/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 tanárain 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 (polite, sg.) must have a lot of problems with him.

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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 (valamihez)	(something)	is somebody’s business
"	fogalma sincs	(someone)	has no idea

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.
Semmi közöd hozzá!
Fogalmam sincs!

My mother is always right.
It's none of your business!
I have no idea!

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: *Singular possessed:**Plural possessed:*

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 no szobája—a nőnek a szobája	the woman’s room (one woman, one room)
a no 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

(Nekem) szép szobám van.

I have a nice room.

(Neked) szép szobád van.

You (sg.) 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 (pl.) have a nice room.

(Nekik) szép szobájuk van.

They have a nice room.

A nőknek szép szobájuk van.

The women have a nice room.

Plural possessed

(Nekem) szép szobáim vannak.

I have nice rooms.

(Neked) szép szobáid vannak.

You (sg.) 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 (pl.) have nice rooms.

(Nekik) szép szobáik vannak.

They have nice rooms.

A nőknek szép szobáik vannak.

The women have nice rooms.

17.6 'Have' and its possible translations

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 advertisement.

The construction with **megvan** (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'.

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(Nekem) tanulnom kell.
(Neked) tanulnod kell.
(Neki)/Tamásnak tanulnia kell.
(Nekünk) tanulnunk kell.
(Nektek) tanulnotok kell.
(Nekik)/A fiúknak tanulniuk kell.

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 megnézni 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.

Néhez dolgoznunk, mikor szép idő van kint.

It is hard for us to work when the weather is nice outside.

I must study.
You (sg.) must study.
She/He/Tamás must study.
We must study.
You (pl.) must study.
They/The boys must study.

17.7.3 Impersonal constructions without declined infinitives

It is very common to use the infinitive without the possessive endings in 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 **4.5.1**). Compare the following:

Itt lehet szép cipőt kapni.

One can get nice shoes here.

Itt kaphatunk szép cipőt.

We can get nice shoes here.

17.8 General 'you', 'one'

Any construction may include a reference to 'one', or 'people in general' by using the term **az ember** 'one'; it may be any part of speech and may translate into English as 'people', 'you', 'we', 'one'.

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.

17.9 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.

17.10 Adverbial participles 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 sütvé.

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 ending is in the preverb position.

Az ajtó nyitva van. The door is open.

Az üzlet zárva van. The shop is closed.

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 megsütvé.

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.

² See section **4.4.3** on how to form the adverbial participle.

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 **16**.

17.11 Answering questions

17.11.1 Affirmative

Yes-no questions may be answered affirmatively in several ways.

17.11.1.1

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.

17.11.1.2

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.

17.11.1.3

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.

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.

In questions 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.

"

Emphatic affirmative answers are persze, hogyne 'of course'.

Kifizetted a számlát?

Did you pay the bill?

Persze.

Of course.

Tetszett az szálloda?

Did you like the hotel?

Hogyne.

Of course.

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.

"

To emphatically contradict a question asked in the negative use *dehogynem*, *dehogyisnem* 'but, of course'.

Nem akarod megkóstolni ezt a vörösbort?

Don't you want to have a taste of this red wine?

Dehogynem (akarom). ~ Dehogyisnem.

Of course, I do.

17.11.2 Negative

Yes-no questions are usually answered with **nem** 'no' in the negative.

Elolvastad a verset?

Did you read the poem?

Nem.

No.

Emphatic negative answers use *dehogy*, *dehogyis* 'of course not'.

Befejezted a munkát?

Did you finish the work?

Dehogy!

Of course not.

Dehogyis!

"

	<i>Present indef.</i>
én	viszek
te	viszel
ő	visz
mi	viszünk
ti	visztek
ők	visznek
én (téged/ benneteket/titeket)	

	<i>Subjunctive indef.</i>
én	vigyek
te	vigyél
ő	vigyen
mi	vigyünk
ti	vigyetek
ők	vigyenek
én (téged/ benneteket/titeket)	

infinitive: **vinni**
adverbial participle: **vive**
potential: **vihet**
1Note that not all non-.nite forms appear with the irregular verbs.

<i>def.</i>	<i>Past indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
viszem	vitem	vitem
viszed	vitél	vited
viszi	vitt	vitte
visszük	vittünk	vittük
viszitek	vittetek	vittétek
viszik	vittek	vitték
viszlek		vittelek

<i>def.</i>	<i>Conditional indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
vigyem	vinnék	vinném
vigyed/vidd	vinnél	vinnéd
vigye	vinne	vinné
vigyük	vinnénk	vinnénk
vigyétek	vinnétek	vinnétek
vigyék	vinnének	vinnék
vigyelek		vinnélek

present participle: **vivő**
past participle: **vitt**
future participle: **viendő**

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vesz²
take; buy

	<i>Present indef.</i>
én	veszek
te	veszel
ő	vesz
mi	veszünk
ti	vesztek
ők	vesznek
én (téged/ benneteket/titeket)	

Subjunctive indef.

én	vegyek
te	végy/vegyél
ő	vegyen
mi	vegyünk
ti	vegyetek
ők	vegyenek
én (téged/ benneteket/titeket)	

infinitive: **venni**
adverbial participle: **véve**
potential: **vehet**
2 The verb **tesz** conjugates exactly as **vesz**.

	<i>def.</i>	<i>Past indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
	veszem	vettem	vettem
	veszed	vettél	vettél
	veszi	vett	vette
	vesszük	vettünk	vettük
	veszitek	vettetek	vettétek
	veszik	vettek	vették
	veszlek		vettelek

def.
vegyem

Conditional indef.
vennék

vegyed/vedd	vennél	ve
vegye	venne	nném
vegyük	vennék	vennéd
vegyétek	vennétek	venné
vegyék	vennének	vennék
vegyelek		vennétek
		vennék
		vennélek

present participle: **vevő**
past participle: **vett**
future participle: **veendő**

én
te
ő
mi
ti
ők
én (téged/benneteket/titeket)

Subjunctive indef

én higgyék
te higgy/higgyél
ő higgyen
mi higgyünk
ti higgyetek
ők higgyenek
én (téged/ benneteket/titeket)

infinitive: **hinni**
present participle: **hívő**
adverbial participle: **híve**
past participle: **hitt**
potential: **hihet**
future participle:

Present indef.
hiszek
hiszel
hisz
hiszünk
hisztek
hisznek
hiszlek

def

higgyem
higgyed/hidd
higgye
higgyük
higgyétek
higgyék
higgyelek

def.
hiszem
hiszed
hiszi
hisszük
hiszitek
hiszik

Past indef.
hittem
hittél
hitt
hittünk
hittetek
hittek
hittelek

def.
hittem
hitted
hitte
hittük
hittétek
hitték

Conditional indef

hinnék
hinnél
hinne
hinnénk
hinnétek
hinnének

def

hinném
hinnéd
hinné
hinnénk
hinnétek
hinnék
hinnélek

	<i>Present indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>Past indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
én	eszek ~ eszem	eszem	ettem	ettem
te	eszel	eszed	ettél	etted
ő	eszik	eszi	evett	ette
mi	eszünk	esszük	ettünk	enné nk
ti	esztek	eszitek	ettetek	ettetek
ők	esznek	eszik	ették	ették
én (téged/ benneteket/titeket)		(meg)eszlek		(meg)ettelek
	<i>Subjunctive indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>	<i>Conditional indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
én	egyek ~ egyem	egyem	ennék - ennék	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				
adverbial participle				
past participle: evett				
potential: ehet				
future participle:				

	<i>Present indef.</i>
én	iszok ~ iszom
te	iszol
ő	szik
mi	iszunk
ti	isztok
ők	isznak
én (téged/ benneteket/titeket)	

	<i>Subjunctive indef.</i>
én	igyak ~ igyam
te	igyál
ő	igyon/igyék
mi	igyunk
ti	igyátok
ők	igyanak
én (téged/ benneteket/titeket)	

infinitive: **inni**:
adverbial participle:—
present participle: **ivó**
past participle: **ivott**
potential: **ihat**
future participle:

	<i>def.</i>	<i>Past indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
	iszom	ittam	ittam
	iszod	ittál	ittad
	isza	ivott	itta
	isszuk	ittunk	ittuk
	isszátok	ittatok	ittátok
	isszák	ittak	itták
	(meg)iszlak		(meg)ittalak
	<i>def.</i>	<i>Conditional indef.</i>	<i>def.</i>
	igyam	innék ~ innám	innám
	igyad/idd	innál	innád
	igya	inna/innék	inná
	igyuk	innánk	innánk
	igyátok	innátok	innátok
	igyák	innának	innák
	(meg)igyalak		(meg)innálak

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>Conditional</i>
én	leszek	lettem	legyek	lennék
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/levő**
adverbial participle: **léve, lévén**
past participle: **volt, lett**
potential: **lehet**
future participle: **leendő**
van be

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>Conditional</i>	
én	vagyok	voltam	legyek	volnék	~ lénnék
te	vagy	voltál	légy/legyé		- lennél
ő	(van)3	volt	legyen	volna	~ lenne
mi	vagyunk	voltunk	legyünk	volnánk	~ lennénk
ti	vagytok	voltatok	legyetek	volnátok	~ lennétek
ők	(vannak)4	voltak	legyenek	volnának	~ lennének

infinitive: **lenni**
adverbial participle:
potential: **lehet**
present participle: **való~levő/lévő**
past participle: **volt**
future participle: **leendő**
3 See section **17.1.1** for determining the presence or absence of **van/vannak**.
4 See note 3

megy go

	Present	Past	Subjunctive	Conditional
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**
adverbial participle: **menve**
potential: **mehet**
present participle: **menő**
past participle: **ment**
future participle:

jön come

	Present	Past	Subjunctive	Conditional
én	jövök	jöttem	jöjjek	jönnék
te	jössz	jöttél	jöjjél/gyere	jönnél
ő	jön	jött	jöjjön	jönné
mi	jövünk	jöttünk	jöjjün k/gyerünk	jönnénk
ti	jöttök	jöttetek	jöjjetek/gyertek	jönnétek
ők	jönnek	jöttek	jöjjenek	jönnének

infinitive: **jönni**
adverbial participle: **jöve**
potential: **jöhet**
present participle: **jövő**
past participle: **jött**
future participle: **jövendő**

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!

Ne gyertek be a házba!

Azt üzente, hogy hazajöjjél.

Nem akarja, hogy kijöjjünk a vízből.

Sample inflectional/derivational paradigm (for first person singular)

I('ll) iron my shirt.

I ironed my shirt.

Should I iron my shirt?

Iron my shirt!

I would iron my shirt.

I would have ironed my shirt.

I may/can iron my shirt.

I could iron my shirt.

I could have ironed my shirt.

I must iron my shirt.

I had to iron my shirt.

I should iron my shirt.

I should have ironed my shirt.

Lest I should have to iron my shirt.

I'll have you iron my shirt.

I had you iron my shirt.

Come here!

Don't come into the house!

He sent word that you should come home.

He doesn't want us to come out of the water.

Kivasalom az ingemet.

Kivasaltam az ingemet.

Kivasaljam az ingemet?

Vasald ki az ingemet!

Kivasalnám az ingemet.

Kivasaltam volna az ingemet.

Kivasalhatom az ingemet.

Kivasalhatnám az ingemet.

Kivasalhattam volna az ingemet.

Ki kell vasalnom az ingemet.

Ki kellett vasalnom az ingemet.

Ki kellene vasalnom az ingemet.

Ki kellett volna vasalnom az ingemet.

Nehogy ki kelljen vasalnom az ingemet.

Kivasaltatom veled az ingemet.

Kivasaltattam veled az ingemet.

Should I have you iron my shirt?
I would have you iron my shirt.
I would have had you iron my shirt.
I can/may have you iron my shirt.
I could have you iron my shirt.
I could have had you iron my shirt.
I must have you iron my shirt.
I had to have you iron my shirt.
I should have you iron my shirt.
I should have had you iron my shirt.
My shirt is ironed.
My shirt was ironed.
My shirt will be ironed.
Let my shirt be ironed!
My shirt would be ironed.
My shirt would have been ironed.
My shirt may/might be ironed.
My shirt could be ironed.
My shirt may have been ironed.

**Kivasaltassam veled az ingemet?
Kivasaltassam veled az ingemet.
Kivasaltattam volna veled az ingemet.
Kivasaltathatom veled az ingemet.
Kivasaltathatnám veled az ingemet.
Kivasaltathattam volna veled az ingemet.
Ki kell vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.
Ki kellett vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.
Ki kellene vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.
Ki kellett volna vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.
Az ingem ki van vasalva.
Az ingem ki volt vasalva.
Az ingem ki lesz vasalva.
Legyen kivasalva az ingem!
Az ingem ki lenne/volna vasalva.
Az ingem ki lett volna vasalva.
Az ingem ki lehet vasalva.
Az ingem ki lehetne vasalva.
Az ingem ki lehetett volna vasalva.**

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I will iron my shirt!
And I ironed it too,
I didn't even iron it.
I was doing a little ironing.

Ki fogom vasalni az ingemet.
Ki is vasaltam.
Ki sem vasaltam.
Vasalgattam egy kicsit.

	Back vowel	<i>singular</i> house	<i>plural</i> houses	Front vowel	<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>odessive</i>	háznál	házaknál	könyvnél	könyveknél		
<i>ablative</i>	háztól	házaktól	könyvtől	könyvektől		
<i>dotive</i>	háznak	házaknak	könyvnek	könyveknek		
<i>instrumental</i>	házzal	házakkal	könyvvel	könyvekkel		
<i>translative</i>	házzá	házakká	könyvvé	könyvekké		
<i>causal-final</i>	háziért	házakért	könyvért	könyvekért		
<i>essive-formal</i>	háziént	házakként	könyvként	könyvekként		
<i>terminative</i>	háziig	házakig	könyvig	könyvekig		
<i>distributive</i>	háziént	—	könyvenként	—		
<i>essive</i>	háziul	—	könyvül	—		
<i>sociative</i>	háziastul	—	könyvestül	—		

	Back vowel		Front vowel	
	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
	glass	glass	hand	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>odessive</i>	pohárnál	poharaknál	kéznél	kezeknél
<i>ablative</i>	pohártól	poharaktól	kéztől	kezektől
<i>dotive</i>	pohárnak	poharaknak	kéznek	kezeknek
<i>instrumental</i>	pohárral	poharakkal	kézzel	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>essive</i>	pohárul	—	kézül	—
<i>sociative</i>	poharastul	—	kezeztül	—

	Back vowel		Front vowel	
	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
	bag	bags	melon	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>odessive</i>	táskánál	táskáknál	dinnyénél	dinnyéknél
<i>ablative</i>	táskától	táskáktól	dinnyétől	dinnyéktől
<i>dotive</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>essive</i>	táskául	—	dinnyéül	—
<i>sociative</i>	táskástul	—	dinnyéstül	—

	Back vowel		Front, unrounded vowel		Front, rounded vowel	
	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
	girl	girls	chair	chairs	guard	guards
<i>nom.</i>	lány	lányok	szék	székek	őr	örök
<i>acc.</i>	lányt	lányokat	széket	székeket	őrt	öröket
<i>illat.</i>	lányba	lányokba	székbe	székekbe	őrbe	örökbe
<i>iness.</i>	lányban	lányokban	székben	székekben	őrben	örökben
<i>elat</i>	lányból	lányokból	székből	székekből	őrből	örökből
<i>sublat</i>	lányra	lányokra	székre	szekékre	őrré	örökre
<i>sup.</i>	lányon	lányokon	széken	székeken	örön	örökön
<i>delat</i>	lányról	lányokról	székről	székekről	őrről	örökről
<i>all.</i>	lányhoz	lányokhoz	székhez	székekhez	örhöz	örökhöz
<i>adess.</i>	lánynál	lányoknál	széknél	székeknél	örnél	öröknél
<i>abl.</i>	lánytól	lányoktól	széktől	szekéktől	örtől	öröktől
<i>dat</i>	lánynak	lányoknak	széknek	székeknek	örnek	öröknek
<i>instr.</i>	lánnyal	lányokkal	székkel	székekkel	örrel	örökkel
<i>trans.</i>	lánnyá	lányokká	székké	székekké	örre	örökké
<i>caus.-fin.</i>	lányért	lányokért	székért	székekért	örért	örökért
<i>ess.-for.</i>	lányként	lányokként	székként	székekként	örként	örökként
<i>term.</i>	lánvig	lányokig	székig	székekig	örig	örökig
<i>distr.</i>	lányonként	—	székenként	—	örönként	—
<i>essive</i>	lánzul	—	székül	—	örül	—
<i>sociat.</i>	lánzustul	—	székestül	—	őrestül	—

	Back vowel		Front, unrounded vowel		Front, rounded vowel	
	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
	bush	bushes	twin	twins	mirror	mirrors
<i>nom.</i>	bokor	bokrok	iker	ikrek	tükör	tükrök
<i>acc</i>	bokrot	bokrokat	ikret	ikreket	tükröt	tükröket
<i>illat</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	tükörré	tükrökre
<i>sup.</i>	bokron	bokrokon	ikren	ikreken	tükrön	tükrökön
<i>delat</i>	bokorról	bokrokról	ikerről	ikrekről	tükörről	tükrökről
<i>all.</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>trans.</i>	bokorrá	bokrokká	ikerré	ikrekké	tükörré	tükrökké
<i>caus.-fin.</i>	bokorért	bokrokért	ikerért	ikrekért	tükörért	tükrökért
<i>ess.-for.</i>	bokorként	bokrokként	ikerként	ikrekként	tükörként	tükrökként
<i>term.</i>	bokorig	bokrokig	ikerig	ikrekig	tükörig	tükrökig
<i>distr.</i>	bokronként	—	ikrenként	—	tükrönként	—
<i>essive</i>	bokorul	—	ikerül	—	tükörül	—
<i>sociat.</i>	bokrostul	—	ikrestül	—	tükröstül	—

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
	lake	lakes	stone	stones	word	words
<i>nom.</i>	to	tavak	kő	kövek	szó	szavak ~szók
<i>acc</i>	tavat	tavakat	követ	köveket	szót	szavakat
<i>illat.</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>all.</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>trans.</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	—

	Low vowel (no loss of length)		Low vowel (loss of length)		V-stem	
	ház house		level letter		ló horse	
	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
nom.	my house	my houses	your letter	your letters	his/her horse	his/her horses
acc	házam	házaim	leveled	leveleid	lova	lovai
illat	házamat	házaimat	leveledet	leveleidet	lovát	lovait
iness.	házamba	házaimba	leveledbe	leveleidbe	lovába	lovaiba
elat	házamban	házaimban	leveledben	leveleidben	lovában	lovaiban
sublat	házamból	házaimból	leveledből	leveleidből	lovából	lovaiból
sup.	házamra	házaimra	leveledre	leveleidre	lovára	lovaira
delat	házamon	házaimon	leveleden	leveiden	lován	lovain
all.	házamról	házaimról	leveledről	leveidről	lováról	lovairól
adess.	házamhoz	házaimhoz	leveledhez	leveleidhez	lovához	lovaihoz
ablat	házamnál	házaimnál	levelednél	leveidnél	lovánál	lovainál
dat	házamtól	házaimtól	leveledtől	leveidtól	lovától	lovaitól
instr.	házamnak	házaimnak	levelednek	leveidnek	lovának	lovainak
trans.	házammal	házaimmal	leveleddel	leveiddel	lovával	lovaival
caus. -fin.	házammá	házaimmá	leveleddé	leveiddé	lovává	lovaivá
ess. -for.	házamért	házaimért	leveledért	leveidért	lováért	lovaiért
term.	házamként	—	levelédként	—	lovaként	lovaiként
	házamig	házaimig	leveledig	leveleidig	lováig	lovaig

	-alom		fleeting vowe		regular noun
	jutalom reward		álom dream		kép picture
	singular	plural	singular	plural	singular plural
	our	our	your	your	their their
	reward	rewards	dream	dreams	picture pictures
nom.	jutalmunk	jutalmaink	álmotok	álmaitok	képük képeik
acc	jutalmunkat	jutalmainkat	álmotokat	álmaitokat	képüket képeiket
illat.	jutalmunkba	jutalmainkba	álmotokba	álmaitokba	képükbe képeikbe
iness.	jutalmunkban	jutalmainkban	álmotokban	álmaitokban	képükben képeikben
elat	jutalmunkból	jutalmainkból	álmotokból	álmaitokból	képükből képeikből
sublat	jutalmunkra	jutalmainkra	álmotokra	álmaitokra	képükre képeikre
sup.	jutalmunkon	jutalmainkon	álmotokon	álmaitokon	képükön képeiken
delat	jutalmunkról	jutalmainkról	álmotokról	álmaitokról	képükről képeikről
all.	jutalmunkhoz	jutalmainkhoz	álmotokhoz	álmaitokhoz	képükhöz képeikhez
adess.	jutalmunknál	jutalmainknál	álmotoknál	álmaitoknál	képüknél képeiknél
ablat	jutalmunktól	jutalmainktól	álmotoktól	álmaitoktól	képüktől képeiktől
dat	jutalmunknak	jutalmainknak	álmotoknak	álmaitoknak	képüknek képeiknek
instr.	jutalmunkkal	jutalmainkkal	álmotokkal	álmaitokkal	képükkel képeikkel
trans.	jutalmunkká	jutalmainkká	álmotokká	álmaitokká	képükké képeikké
caus. -fin.	jutalmunkért	jutalmainkért	álmotokért	álmaitokért	képükért képeikért
ess. -for.	jutalmunkként—		álmotokként—		képükként—
term.	jutalmunkig jutalmainkig		álmotokig álmaitokig		képükig képeikig

The rules for the declension of the following list of low vowel nouns are given in sections 5.3.2.1, 6.1.2.1, and 8.1.2.1 Full declensions of low vowel nouns are found in Appendix 2. Deviations from the regular declension of these noun types are given below in parentheses.

Monosyllabic (no loss of length)

ág branch
agy brain
ágy bed
áll chin
ár awl (s3px: árja)
ár price
árny shade
báj charm (acc.: bájt)
díj prize, fee
enyh relief
fal wall
fog tooth
föld land (s3px: földje)

hölgy lady
íj bow
ín tendon (acc.: ínt)
ív arch
íz taste
jel sign (acc.: jel(e)t)
kád tub (s3px: kádja)
könyv book
láb leg, foot
lyuk hole
máj liver
mell breast
meny daughter-in-law

szárny wing
szíj strap
szög nail
szörny monster
szügy breast (zool.)
táj landscape
tál bowl
talp heel
tár repository (acc.: tár(a)t)
tárgy object
társ mate
térd knee
toll pen, feather

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fűl ear
gyár factory
had army, troops
haj hair
háj fat
hal fish
hárs linden
has belly
hát back
ház house
héj peel
hely place
hold moon

Monosyllabic loses length

bél intestine
dél south, noon
dér white frost
ég sky
ér vein
ész mind
fél half
hét seven, week
híd bridge (s3px: **hídja**)
jég ice
kéz hand

méz honey
nád reed (s3px: **nádja**)
nyáj flock
nyak neck
nyál saliva
nyár poplar
nyárs spit, skewer
ól sty (acc.: **ólat-ólt**; s3px: **olja**)
őz deer
rügy bud
száj mouth
szál stick, piece
szár stalk

kút fountain, source (s3px: **kútja**)
légy fly
lúd goose (s3px: **lúdja**)
mész lime
nyár summer
nyél handle
nyíl arrow
nyúl rabbit
réz copper

tőgy udder
tölgy oak
törzs trunk, tribe
ügy matter
vád accusation (s3px: **vádja**)
vágy desire
vaj butter
váll shoulder
vár fortress
vas iron
váz vase
völgy valley

rúd rod, pole s3px: **rúdja**)
sár mud
szél edge
szén coal
szűz virgin
tél winter
tér space, plaza
tűz fire
úr sir, gentleman
út road, trip (s3px: **útja**)
víz water

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Bisyllabic (no loss of length)
arany gold
fonal yarn,thread
oldal side (acc.: **oldalt**)
vonal line

Bisyllabic loses length

agár greyhound
bogár bug
cserép tile
darázs wasp
egér mouse
elég enough
fedél roof
fenék bottom
fonal yarn, thread
gyökér root

kanál spoon
kenyér bread
kerék wheel
kosár basket
kötél rope
közép center
levél letter
madár bird
mocsár swamp
mozsár mortar

nehéz difficult
parázs glowing embers
pohár glass
sugár ray, beam
szamár donkey
szekér cart
szemét garbage
tehén cow
tenyér palm
veréb sparrow

V-stems
Nominative singular and plural and singular accusative forms:

<i>nom. (sg.)</i>	<i>nom. (pl.)</i>	<i>acc. (sg.)</i>	
cső	csövek	csövet	pipe
fű	füvek	füvet	grass
hó	havak	havat	snow
kő	kövek	követ	stone
ló	lovak	lovat	horse
mű	művek	művet	work, opus
nyű	nyüvek	nyüvet	maggot
szó	szavak	szót	word
tó	tavak	tavat	lake
tő	tövek	tövet	stem

<i>nom. (sg.)</i>	<i>nom. (pl.)</i>	<i>acc. (sg.)</i>	<i>s3 poss.</i>	<i>-s</i>	
daru	daruk ~ darvak	darut		---	crane
falú	fafaluk ~ falvak	fafalut ~ falvat	faluja ~ falva	---	village
hamu	hamuk ~ hamvak	hamut ~ hamvat	hamuja	hamvas	ash
jó	jók	jót	java	---	good
odú	odúk ~ odvak	odút ~ odvat	odúja ~ odva	odvas	hollow
tetű	tetvek	tetűt	tetűje ~ tetve	tetves	louse

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>	
kehely	kelyhek	kelyhet	chalice
pehely	pelyhek	pelyhet	flake
teher	terhek	terhet	load

Fleeting vowel words requiring the 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>s3poss.</i>	
ajak	ajkak	ajkat	ajka	lip
fátyol	fátylak	fátylat ~ fátyolt	fátyla	veil
jászol	jászlak	jászlat	jászla	manger
kazal	kazlak	kazlat	kazla	(hay)stack
sátor	sátrak	sátrat ~ sátort	sátra	tent
vászon	vásznak	vásznat	vászna	canvas

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>		
agár	agarat	~ agárt	greyhound
agyar	agyarat	~ agyart	tusk
bagoly	baglyot	~ bagolyt	owl
fátyol	fátylat	~ fátyolt	veil
hely	helyet	~ helyt	place
iker	ikret	~ ikert	twin
jászol	jászlat	~ jászolt	manger
jel	jelet	~ jelt	sign
kebel	keblet	- kebelt	bosom
kehely	kelyhet	~ kehelyt	chalice
lepel	leplet	~ lepelt	shroud
máz	mázat	~ mázt	glaze
olaj	olajat	~ olajt	oil
öböl	öblöt	~ öbölt	bay/gulf
pehely	pelyhet	~ pehelyt	flake

reneszánsz	reneszánszot	~ reneszánszt	Renaissance
rozs	rozsot	~ rozst	rye
sátor	sátrat	~ sátort	tent
szatyor	szatyrot	~ szatyort	bag
tár	tárat	~ tárt	store
vonat	vonatot	~ vonatot	line
and nouns ending in -ns (the single -t accusative is always correct)			
aspiráns	aspiránst	~ aspiránst	grad student
páciens	pácienset	~ pácienset	patient

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