HU

HUNGARIAN LESSON

Hungarian Grammar 2 · Chapter 10 · Cases in Use

🧭 Putting the Cases to Work — Esetek használatban

Nine chapters have given you the parts: the plural, the accusative, the dative, the nine place cases, the other seven endings, the possessives and the postpositions. This last chapter joins them. It shows which case a verb demands, how time expressions choose their cases, what happens after numbers, and then gives you a single procedure for choosing any ending, followed by a clinic of ten typical mistakes and the course recap.

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

To choose a case, ask in this order: **1.** what job does the noun do? **2.** if it is a place: static, to or from, and enclosed, surface or person? **3.** does the verb or the expression demand a particular case? **4.** build the word: stem, plural, possessive, case, then harmony and *v*-assimilation. If it is "under, behind, before, after, without", use a postposition instead.

1. What the verb governs

Some verbs demand a particular case, and English often hides it behind a preposition (*believe in*, *afraid of*) or none at all (*help*, *meet*). Learn each verb with its case, as a pair.

CASE	VERBS	EXAMPLE
Accusative	*lát, olvas, keres, kér, szeret*	**Keresem a kulcsomat.** · I'm looking for my key.
Dative	*segít, köszön, válaszol, telefonál, hisz* (believe someone)	**Hiszek neked.** · I believe you.
Inessive	*hisz* (believe in), *bízik* (trust), *reménykedik* (hope)	**Hiszek benned.** · I believe in you.
Instrumental	*találkozik, beszél, foglalkozik, egyetért*	**Találkozom Péterrel.** · I'm meeting Peter.

CASE	VERBS	EXAMPLE
Sublative	*gondol* (think of), *számít* (count on), *figyel* (pay attention to), *vigyáz* (look after), *emlékszik* (remember)	**Rád gondolok.** · I'm thinking of you.
Delative	*beszél* (about), *álmodik* (dream about), *hall* (hear about), *olvas* (read about)	**Beszélünk a filmről.** · We're talking about the film.
Ablative	*fél* (be afraid of), *függ* (depend on), *kap* (receive from), *kérdez* (ask), *tanul* (learn from)	**Félek a kutyától.** · I'm afraid of the dog.
Elative	*áll* (consist of), *él* (live on), *vizsgázik* (take an exam in)	**Magyarból vizsgázom.** · I'm taking a Hungarian exam.
Causal-final	*fizet* (pay for), *megy* (go to fetch), *harcol* (fight for)	**A kenyérért megyek.** · I'm going to get the bread.

> **One verb, several cases, several meanings**
>
> Verbs of speaking and believing show how much the case matters. **Beszélek Péterrel a filmről** = I talk *to* Peter *about* the film (instrumental plus delative). **Hiszek neked** = I believe *you* (what you say); **Hiszek benned** = I have *faith in* you. A single ending changes the meaning, so keep each verb with its case.

2. Cases in time expressions

Time words use a mixture of cases. Learn them as set groups.

KIND OF TIME	PATTERN	EXAMPLES
Clock times	*-kor* (Chapter 7)	**háromkor** · **fél háromkor** · **hétkor**
Days	superessive *-on / -en / -ön / -n*	**hétfőn** · **kedden** · **szerdán** · **csütörtökön** · **pénteken** · **szombaton**
Sunday, parts of the day	no ending	**vasárnap** · **reggel** · **délután** · **este**

KIND OF TIME	PATTERN	EXAMPLES
Seasons	mixed, learn each	**tavasszal** · **nyáron** · **ősszel** · **télen**
Months and years	inessive *-ban / -ben*	**szeptemberben** · **májusban** · **2026-ban**
This, next, last	superessive for weeks, inessive for months	**jövő héten** · **múlt héten** · **jövő hónapban** · **jövőre**
By a deadline	sublative *-ra / -re*	**szombatra** · **holnapra**
How long	accusative · *-ig* · *alatt* · *át*	**két órát** · **két óráig** · **két óra alatt** · **két órán át**
Ago	possessed *-e* · instrumental	**két hete** · **két héttel ezelőtt**
Every	*minden* + singular	**minden nap** · **minden hétfőn**

3. Cases after numbers and quantity words

After a number, *sok* (many), *néhány* (a few) or *minden* (every), the noun stays **singular** and takes the case normally.

HUNGARIAN	ENGLISH
két házban	in two houses
három barátommal	with three of my friends
sok könyvet	many books (object)
minden házban	in every house
néhány kábellel	with a few cables

A number can also describe a group of people with *-an / -en*: **Hányan vagytok?** (How many of you are there?) and **Négyen vagyunk.** (There are four of us.) Numbers take case endings too: **háromra** (by three o'clock, for three).

4. The decision procedure, worked through

Take the sentence *"After lunch I go to my friends' place with my sister by bus."* Each phrase answers one of the questions in the rule box.

ENGLISH	JOB	HUNGARIAN	CHAPTER
after lunch	time, "after"	**ebéd után**	9
by bus	means of transport	**busszal**	7
to my friends' place	"to a person's place"	**a barátaimhoz**	5, 8
with my sister	accompaniment	**a húgommal**	7, 8

Full sentence: **Ebéd után busszal megyek a barátaimhoz a húgommal.**

A second example with an object, a place and a verb of placing: *"We put the cables from the box into the cupboard."* The cables are definite (*a kábeleket*, Chapter 2), the box is an enclosed space ("out of"), the cupboard is an enclosed space ("into"), and the verb is definite because the object is: **A kábeleket a dobozból a szekrénybe tesszük.**

5. Error clinic: ten common mistakes

Each wrong sentence is a mistake that learners make. Try to fix it before you read the right column.

WRONG	RIGHT	WHY	CHAPTER
Megyek a barátomnak.	**Megyek a barátomhoz.**	direction, not a receiver	3, 5
Az iskolába vagyok.	**Az iskolában vagyok.**	static, so "in"	4
a nagyban házban	**a nagy házban**	adjectives take no case	1
Kapok a barátomból.	**Kapok a barátomtól.**	a person is the source	6

WRONG	RIGHT	WHY	CHAPTER
három házak	**három ház**	singular after a number	1
Látok a házamat.	**Látom a házamat.**	possessed object is definite	8
Beszélek magyaron.	**Beszélek magyarul.**	languages take *-ul / -ül*	7
A vonatban vagyok.	**A vonaton vagyok.**	transport takes the surface case	4
az asztalon alatt	**az asztal alatt**	postposition follows a bare noun	9
házval	**házzal**	the *v* copies a final consonant	7

6. A short text to read

Read the text, then look at the table underneath to see which case each phrase uses.

> Hétfőn reggel busszal megyek az egyetemre. Az egyetemen találkozom a barátommal, és együtt a könyvtárba megyünk. A könyvtárban három könyvet keresek a háborúról. Ebéd után a szüleimnek telefonálok, mert szombaton Szegedre utazom. Péntekig dolgozom, aztán vonattal megyek haza.
>
> On Monday morning I go to the university by bus. At the university I meet my friend, and together we go to the library. In the library I look for three books about the war. After lunch I phone my parents, because on Saturday I'm travelling to Szeged. I work until Friday, then I go home by train.

PHRASE	CASE OR POSTPOSITION	CHAPTER
Hétfőn	superessive (day)	4, 10
busszal	instrumental	7
az egyetemre	sublative	5
az egyetemen	superessive	4

PHRASE	CASE OR POSTPOSITION	CHAPTER
a barátommal	possessive + instrumental	7, 8
a könyvtárba	illative	5
a könyvtárban	inessive	4
három könyvet	accusative after a number	2, 10
a háborúról	delative (about)	6
Ebéd után	postposition	9
a szüleimnek	possessive + dative	3, 8
szombaton	superessive (day)	10
Szegedre	sublative (a town)	5
Péntekig	terminative	7
vonattal	instrumental	7

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

Cases working together in short exchanges.

① How many of you?

A:

Hányan vagytok?

How many of you are there?

B:

Négyen vagyunk: én, a húgom és két barátom.

There are four of us: me, my sister and two friends.

② Arrival

A:

Mikor érkezel?

When are you arriving?

B:

Szombaton, háromkor. Busszal jövök Szegedről.

On Saturday, at three. I'm coming by bus from Szeged.

A:

A pályaudvaron várlak.

I'll wait for you at the station.

③ The weekend

A:

Mit csinálsz hétvégén?

What are you doing at the weekend?

B:

Péntekig dolgozom, szombaton a barátaimmal megyek a koncertre. Vasárnap pihenek.

I work until Friday, on Saturday I'm going to the concert with my friends. On Sunday I rest.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

The whole case system in one table.

CASE	SUFFIX	MEANING	CHAPTER
Nominative	none	subject; dictionary form	1
Accusative	-t (with linking vowels)	object; duration; measure	2
Dative	-nak / -nek	to, for (a person); owner	3
Inessive · Superessive · Adessive	-ban/-ben · -on/-en/-ön/-n · -nál/-nél	in · on · at	4
Illative · Sublative · Allative	-ba/-be · -ra/-re · -hoz/-hez/-höz	into · onto · to	5
Elative · Delative · Ablative	-ból/-ből · -ról/-ről · -tól/-től	out of · off, about · from	6

CASE	SUFFIX	MEANING	CHAPTER
Instrumental	-val / -vel	with, by means of	7
Translative	-vá / -vé	becoming	7
Causal-final	-ért	for, in exchange for, to fetch	7
Terminative	-ig	until, as far as, for (duration)	7
Essive	-ul / -ül · -ként	in a language · as	7
Temporal	-kor	at (a time)	7
Possessive endings	-m, -d, -a/-ja, -unk, -tok, -uk; plural -i-	my, your, his/her, our, your, their	8
Postpositions	noun + word	under, behind, before, after, without	9

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Mixed practice from the whole course. Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. "To school."

▼ Show answer

iskolába.

2. "At university."

▼ Show answer

az egyetemen.

3. "From my friend" (a gift from my friend).

▼ Show answer

a barátomtól.

4. "With my sister" (younger sister, *húg*).

▼ Show answer

a húgommal.

5. "In two houses."

▼ Show answer

két házban. Singular after a number.

6. "There are four of us."

▼ Show answer

Négyen vagyunk.

7. "On Saturday" and "in September".

▼ Show answer

szombaton and **szeptemberben**.

8. "I believe you" and "I believe in you".

▼ Show answer

Hiszek neked. and **Hiszek benned.**

9. "She is looking for her keys" (her = hers, *kulcs* keys as one object).

▼ Show answer

Keresi a kulcsát. A possessed object is definite.

10. "I'll wait for you at the entrance."

▼ Show answer

A bejáratnál várlak. *-nál* for "at", and *várlak* for "I … you".

🎓 Course Complete — Hungarian Grammar 2

WHAT YOU CAN NOW DO

You can build any Hungarian noun in any case: the plural, the possessive, and the case suffix with the right harmony and assimilation. You can sort places into inside, surface and person, and choose the static, "to" or "from" form. You can tell when to use a postposition, and you know the common verbs that demand a particular case.

CHAPTER	TITLE	THE KEY IDEA
1	How Cases Work	stem + plural + possessive + case; the map of all cases
2	The Accusative	-t, linking vowels, changing stems, pronouns
3	The Dative and "Of"	-nak / -nek, -é, "called", verbs that take the dative
4	Where? In, On, At	-ban, -on, -nál, and which place takes which
5	Where To?	-ba, -ra, -hoz, matched to Chapter 4
6	Where From?	-ból, -ról, -tól, and the complete 3 × 3 grid
7	Instrumental, Translative and the Rest	-val, -vá, -ért, -ig, -ul, -ként, -kor
8	Possession and Cases Together	the possessive endings, -i-, cases after possessives, van / nincs
9	Postpositions	alatt, mögött, után, nélkül, and their personal forms
10	Cases in Use	verb government, time, numbers, a decision procedure

What comes next: The natural follow-up is **Hungarian Grammar 3** on tenses and moods: the full past, the future, the conditional, and the imperative and subjunctive, with their definite forms. For practice in real situations, use the Hungarian Basic Conversation courses, now with the case system in your hands.