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HUNGARIAN LESSON

Hungarian Grammar 2 · Chapter 2 · The Accusative

🎯 The Accusative — A tárgyeset

*The accusative marks the thing an action is done to: I see the house, she reads a book. In Hungarian it is the suffix **-t**, sometimes with a linking vowel in front of it. This chapter shows which form to expect, which stems change before it, and how it behaves with plurals, possessives and pronouns.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

The **direct object** takes **-t**. After a vowel the *-t* is added directly (*autó → autót*). After most consonants a **linking vowel** comes first (*-ot / -at* for back words, *-et* for front, *-öt* for rounded front). A group of common endings (*-l, -r, -n, -s, -sz, -z* in longer words) takes *-t* directly: *asztal → asztalt*.

1. Which form: the three groups

STEM ENDS IN…	ACCUSATIVE	EXAMPLES
A vowel	**-t**	autó → autó**t** · fiú → fiú**t** · kávé → kávé**t**
Final *a* or *e*	**-t**, with the vowel lengthened	alma → alm**át** · kefe → kef**ét** · szoba → szob**át**
Most consonants, especially *k, g, t, d, p, b, v, m, h* and short stems	**-ot / -at / -et / -öt**	ablak → ablak**ot** · kert → kert**et** · könyv → könyv**et** · szék → szék**et**
Longer stems ending in *l, r, n, ny, s, sz, z, zs*	**-t** directly	asztal → asztal**t** · telefon → telefon**t** · orvos → orvos**t** · ember → ember**t** · kábel → kábel**t**

The choice among *-ot, -at, -et, -öt* follows the harmony rules from *Hungarian Grammar 1, chapter 2*: back stem, back vowel; front stem, front vowel; rounded front stem, usually *-et* (*könyvet*) or *-öt* when the stem keeps its rounding (*tükröt*).

> **Short words are the unpredictable ones**
>
> One-syllable stems ending in *l, r, z* often take a linking vowel, even though the longer words in the same group do not: **fal → falat**, **hal → halat**, **ház → házat**, but **kör → kört** and **sör → sört**. Treat the accusative as part of learning each short word, as you learned its plural in Chapter 1. A dictionary entry or a quick search settles any doubt.

2. Stems that change before -t

Some stems change in the accusative, just as they do before the plural (*Hungarian Grammar 1, chapter 4*). Learn the stem once and every suffix after it works.

CHANGE	NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE	ENGLISH
Long vowel shortens	**kéz**	**kezet**	hand
Long vowel shortens	**víz**	**vizet**	water
Long vowel shortens	**nyár**	**nyarat**	summer
Long vowel shortens	**út**	**utat**	road
A *v* appears	**ló**	**lovat**	horse
A *v* appears	**tó**	**tavat**	lake
A *v* appears	**fű**	**füvet**	grass
A *v* appears	**kő**	**követ**	stone
Stem vowel drops	**tükör**	**tükröt**	mirror

3. The accusative of plurals

The plural of Chapter 1 comes first, and the accusative follows it. After the plural *-k* the accusative always has a linking vowel: **-at** for back stems and **-et** for front stems.

SINGULAR	PLURAL	PLURAL ACCUSATIVE	ENGLISH
ablak	ablakok	ablakok**at**	the windows (object)
ház	házak	házak**at**	the houses
kábel	kábelek	kábelek**et**	the cables
alma	almák	almák**at**	the apples
autó	autók	autók**at**	the cars
tükör	tükrök	tükrök**et**	the mirrors

> **Numbers keep the singular**
>
> After a number the noun stays singular, and the accusative goes on that singular form: **két autót** (two cars), **három könyvet** (three books), **sok kábelt** (many cables). Use the plural accusative only when the object has no number or quantity word in front of it: **a könyveket**.

4. The accusative of possessed nouns

A noun that carries a possessive ending (*my house, your book*) takes the accusative too. Chapter 8 teaches the possessive endings; for now notice the shape, which is predictable: **-t** goes straight after the vowel of the third-person ending, and after the other persons it takes a linking vowel (*-at / -et*).

POSSESSED NOUN	ACCUSATIVE	ENGLISH
házam (my house)	**házam**at	my house (object)
könyvem (my book)	**könyvem**et	my book (object)
barátod (your friend)	**barátod**at	your friend (object)
háza (his/her house)	**ház**át	his/her house (object)
könyve (his/her book)	**könyv**ét	his/her book (object)

5. Pronouns and question words

Personal pronouns have their own accusative forms, which you must learn. A pronoun object is usually left out, because the verb ending already carries it (*Hungarian Grammar 1, chapter 9*: *látlak*, "I see you"). The accusative pronoun appears for emphasis or contrast.

NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE	ENGLISH
én	**engem**	me
te	**téged**	you (singular, informal)
ő	**őt**	him, her
mi	**minket**	us
ti	**titeket**	you (plural, informal)
ők	**őket**	them
ez / az	**ezt / azt**	this / that
mi?	**mit?**	what?
ki?	**kit?**	whom?

6. The accusative and the two conjugations

The accusative is also the signpost for the definite and indefinite conjugations from *Hungarian Grammar 1, chapters 6 to 8*. A definite object (*a házat, a barátomat*) calls for the definite endings, and an indefinite object (*egy házat, két autót*) calls for the indefinite endings.

HUNGARIAN	ENGLISH	OBJECT
Látok egy házat.	I see a house.	indefinite → *látok*
Látom a házat.	I see the house.	definite → *látom*
Mit látsz?	What do you see?	question word → indefinite → *látsz*

7. The accusative for time and measure

Besides the object, the accusative also expresses **how long** something lasts and **how much** something measures.

HUNGARIAN	ENGLISH	USE
Három órát vártam.	I waited for three hours.	duration
Két hetet maradok.	I'm staying for two weeks.	duration
A csomag két kilót nyom.	The parcel weighs two kilos.	weight

> **Watch out: no accusative after van**
>
> "I have a house" is **Van egy házam**, with the nominative. *Van* and *nincs* do not take an accusative object, because the thing "being there" is the subject. Chapter 8 returns to this.

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

The accusative in short exchanges. Find the -t in each one, and see which conjugation the verb picks.

① What do you see?

A:

Mit látsz?

What do you see?

B:

Egy házat és két autót látok.

I see a house and two cars.

A:

És engem látsz?

And do you see me?

B:

Téged is látlak!

② Who are you looking for?

A:

Kit keresel?

Who are you looking for?

B:

A barátomat keresem. És a telefonomat is.

My friend. And my phone as well.

I see you too!

③ At the café

A:

Mit kér?

What would you like?

B:

Egy kávét és két sört, kérem.

A coffee and two beers, please.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

STEM	ACCUSATIVE	EXAMPLE
Vowel	-t (a, e lengthen)	**autót** · **almát** · **kefét**
Most consonants	-ot / -at / -et / -öt	**ablakot** · **házat** · **kertet**
Longer stems in l, r, n, s, sz, z	-t	**asztalt** · **orvost** · **telefont**
Changing stems	learn the stem	**kezet** · **lovat** · **tükröt**
Plural	-k + -at / -et	**házakat** · **kábeleket**
Possessed	-at / -et or -át / -ét	**házamat** · **házát**
Pronouns	own forms	**engem** · **téged** · **őt**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. Put *ablak* (window) in the accusative.

▼ Show answer

ablakot. Back stem, consonant *k*: linking vowel *-o-*.

2. Put *kert* (garden) in the accusative.

▼ Show answer

kertet. Front stem: *-et*.

3. Put *orvos* (doctor) in the accusative.

▼ Show answer

orvost. A longer stem ending in *s* takes *-t* directly.

4. Put *alma* (apple) in the accusative.

▼ Show answer

almát. The final *a* lengthens.

5. Put *kéz* (hand) in the accusative.

▼ Show answer

kezet. The long vowel shortens.

6. Put *ló* (horse) in the accusative.

▼ Show answer

lovat. The stem gains a *v*.

7. Put the plural *házak* in the accusative.

▼ Show answer

házakat. Plural + *-at*.

8. Put *könyvem* (my book) in the accusative.

▼ Show answer

könyvemet. Possessed noun + *-et*.

9. Translate with emphasis: "You see *me*."

▼ Show answer

Engem látsz. The accusative pronoun *engem* carries the emphasis.

10. Translate: "I waited for three hours."

▼ Show answer

Három órát vártam. Duration takes the accusative, and the noun stays singular after the number.

Coming up in Chapter 3: The Dative and "Of". The *-nak / -nek* ending for the receiver, the possessor in *Péternek a könyve*, verbs that take the dative, and the *-é* of "Peter's".