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HUNGARIAN LESSON

Hungarian Grammar 2 · Chapter 8 · Possession and Cases

Hungarian Grammar 2

Chapter 8 · Possession and Cases Together

🏠 Possession — A birtoklás

*Hungarian has no word for "my", "your" or "his" in front of a noun. The **possessed noun** carries a personal ending that says whose it is: ház (house) becomes házam (my house), házad (your house). Because this ending sits before the case suffix, you have been meeting possessed nouns since Chapter 1 (házamban, barátomnak, könyvemet). This chapter gives the endings in full and shows how the cases attach to them.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A possessed noun takes **one of six personal endings** (my, your, his/her, our, your plural, their). A *plural* possessed noun adds **-i-** before the person (*házaim*, my houses). A noun owner stands bare in front of the possessed noun, which takes the **3rd person singular** ending (*a barátom háza*). Case suffixes then go after the possessive ending, as always.

1. The six endings

Three families of stems cover most nouns. The singular endings are:

OWNER	HÁZ (BACK, -A TYPE)	BARÁT (BACK, -O TYPE)	KERT (FRONT)	AUTÓ (VOWEL)
my	ház**am**	barát**om**	kert**em**	autó**m**
your (sg)	ház**ad**	barát**od**	kert**ed**	autó**d**
his, her	ház**a**	barát**ja**	kert**je**	autó**ja**
our	ház**unk**	barát**unk**	kert**ünk**	autó**nk**
your (pl)	ház**atok**	barát**otok**	kert**etek**	autó**tok**
their	ház**uk**	barát**juk**	kert**jük**	autó**juk**

More examples of the same families: **könyvem, könyved, könyve, könyvünk, könyvetek, könyvük** (front, like *kert* but with *-e* in the 3rd person); **ablakom, ablakod, ablaka** and **asztalom, asztalod, asztala** (the *-o* type); **tükröm, tükröd, tükre** (*tükör* drops its vowel before the ending).

> **The choices that are lexical**
>
> Whether a back noun takes *-am* or *-om*, and whether the 3rd person is *-a / -e* or *-ja / -je*, is decided word by word. Compare **háza** and **könyve** with **barátja**, **kertje** and **telefonja**. Learn the 3rd person form together with each new noun, as you learned the plural and the accusative.

2. Plural possessed nouns: -i-

When there is **more than one** thing owned, an **-i-** comes before the person ending. The first and second person endings lose the linking vowel of the singular, and the 3rd person singular becomes just *-i*.

OWNER	HÁZ (HOUSES)	BARÁT (FRIENDS)	KERT (GARDENS)
my	ház**aim**	barát**aim**	kert**jeim**
your (sg)	ház**aid**	barát**aid**	kert**jeid**
his, her	ház**ai**	barát**ai**	kert**jei**
our	ház**aink**	barát**aink**	kert**jeink**
your (pl)	ház**aitok**	barát**aitok**	kert**jeitek**
their	ház**aik**	barát**aik**	kert**jeik**

Compare **a házam** (my house) with **a házaim** (my houses), and **a barátom** (my friend) with **a barátaim** (my friends). The suffix *-i-* marks *the things owned are many*; it says nothing about how many owners there are.

3. A noun as the owner: a barátom háza

When the owner is a noun, it stands **bare** in front of the possessed noun, which takes the **3rd person singular** ending (or *-i* for several things), even if the owner is plural.

HUNGARIAN	ENGLISH	NOTE
a tanár autója	the teacher's car	bare owner
a barátom háza	my friend's house	owner itself possessed
a barátaim háza	my friends' house	plural owner, still *-a*
a gyerekek játékai	the children's toys	several things owned: *-i*
Péternek a könyve	Peter's book	dative owner (Chapter 3)

A pronoun owner is usually left out, because the ending already says who. If you add it, for emphasis, the pronoun comes with the article:

NEUTRAL	WITH THE PRONOUN (EMPHATIC)	ENGLISH
a házam	**az én házam**	my house
a házad	**a te házad**	your house
a háza	**az ő háza**	his/her house
a házunk	**a mi házunk**	our house
a házatok	**a ti házatok**	your (pl) house
a házuk	**az ő házuk**	their house

4. Possessed nouns are definite

A noun with a possessive ending counts as **definite**. As a direct object it therefore calls for the **definite conjugation** (*Hungarian Grammar 1, chapter 8*) and the accusative from Chapter 2.

HUNGARIAN	ENGLISH	OBJECT
Szeretek egy házat.	I like a house.	indefinite → *szeretek*
Szeretem a házamat.	I like my house.	possessed → *szeretem*
Keresem a kulcsomat.	I'm looking for my key.	possessed → *keresem*

5. Adding the cases

The case suffix goes **after** the possessive ending, and the harmony rules apply to the whole word. There is one change to know: a 3rd person singular ending *-a / -e* (or *-ja / -je*) **lengthens to -á / -é** before a case that starts with a consonant. The other persons stay as they are.

POSSESSED NOUN	+ -BAN / -BEN	+ -NAK / -NEK	+ -VAL / -VEL
házam (my)	**házamban**	**házamnak**	**házammal**
kerted (your)	**kertedben**	**kertednek**	**kerteddel**
háza (his/her)	**házában**	**házának**	**házával**
könyve (his/her)	**könyvében**	**könyvének**	**könyvével**
barátja (his/her)	**barátjában**	**barátjának**	**barátjával**
házunk (our)	**házunkban**	**házunknak**	**házunkkal**
házaim (my houses)	**házaimban**	**házaimnak**	**házaimmal**

The same possessed form works for every case in Chapters 4 to 7: **a házamba**, **a házamból**, **a házamnál**, **a házamra**, **a házamért**, **a házamig**. The 3rd person becomes **a házába**, **a házából**, **a házánál**. Only the owner and the stem change; the case rules are the ones you already know.

6. Having: van and nincs

Hungarian has no verb "to have". Possession is expressed with *van* (there is) or *nincs* (there is not) and a possessed noun, with the nominative and no article.

HUNGARIAN	ENGLISH
Van egy házam.	I have a house.
Két testvérem van.	I have two brothers/sisters.
Nincs időm.	I have no time.
Nincs pénzem.	I have no money.
Vannak barátaim.	I have friends.
Nincsenek barátaim.	I don't have friends.
Péternek van egy autója.	Peter has a car.
Nekem van egy autóm.	I have a car (emphatic).

The owner can be put in the dative (Chapter 3) for emphasis or when it is a noun: **Kinek van kulcsa?** (Who has a key?). The question forms are **Kinek a háza?** (whose house) and **Kié?** (whose is it).

> **Watch out: no article, no accusative**
> The thing you have after *van* and *nincs* takes **no** accusative and, when it is a new thing, **no** article: **Van autóm** or **Van egy autóm**, not *Van az autómat*. With a known thing you say where it is instead: **Az autóm itt van** (my car is here).

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

Possession in short exchanges.

① Family

A:

② Where is my key?

A:

Van testvéred?

Do you have a brother or sister?

B:

Igen, két testvérem van: egy bátyám és egy húgom.

Yes, I have two: an older brother and a younger sister.

A:

És a szüleid?

And your parents?

B:

A szüleim Szegeden laknak.

My parents live in Szeged.

Hol van a kulcsom?

Where is my key?

B:

Nálad van, a táskádban.

You've got it, in your bag.

A:

Nincs ott!

It isn't there!

B:

Akkor az asztalodon, vagy a kabátod zsebében.

Then on your table, or in your coat pocket.

③ Whose car?

A:

Kinek az autója ez?

Whose car is this?

B:

A szomszédomé. Az ő autója piros, a miénk kék.

My neighbour's. His car is red, ours is blue.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

IDEA	FORM	EXAMPLE
Singular endings	-m, -d, -a/-ja/-e/-je, -nk (-unk/-ünk), -tok (-atok/-etek), -uk/-ük (-juk/-jük)	**házam** · **kertje** · **házunk**
Plural possessed	-i- before the person	**házaim** · **barátai**

IDEA	FORM	EXAMPLE
Noun owner	bare owner + 3rd person singular	**a barátom háza**
Pronoun owner	article + pronoun (emphatic)	**az én házam**
Case after a possessive	3rd person -a/-e lengthens; others stay	**házában** · **házamban**
Having	van/nincs + possessed noun (nominative)	**Van egy házam.**
Definiteness	possessed object → definite verb	**Keresem a kulcsomat.**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. "My house": *ház* + my.

▼ Show answer

házam.

2. "Your garden" (singular you): *kert* + your.

▼ Show answer

kerted.

3. "Our book": *könyv* + our.

▼ Show answer

könyvünk.

4. "Their car": *autó* + their.

▼ Show answer

autójuk.

5. "My friends": *barát* + several, mine.

▼ Show answer

barátaim.

6. "In my house."

▼ Show answer

a házamban.

7. "In his/her house."

▼ Show answer

a házában. The 3rd person *-a* lengthens before *-ban*.

8. "With my friend": *a barátom* + the "with" case.

▼ Show answer

a barátommal.

9. Say "I have no time."

▼ Show answer

Nincs időm.

10. Fix the sentence: *Látok a házamat* (I see my house).

▼ Show answer

Látom a házamat. A possessed noun is definite, so the verb takes the definite ending.

Coming up in Chapter 9: Postpositions. *előtt, mögött, alatt, fölött, mellett, között, után, helyett*, their "to" and "from" forms, and the personal forms (*mellettem, utána*).